

**Figure 3: Heirarchized Categories of Formal Analysis (and a Checklist for Self-Training)**

Aspect	Techniques	Specific Technical and/or Stylistic Choices
Synchronic Visual Analysis ("The Frame")		
Camera	Camera Movement	Fast, slow, static, tense, steady, hand-held...
	Planar focus/definition	Blurry/crisp (plane), soft/sharp (overall), naturalistic...
	Zoom	Fast, slow, push-pulled, distorted...
	Perspective/P.O.V (point of view)	Do we see from <i>someone's</i> point of view, or a "third person"? Very few films are shot entirely from one or the other.
Composition/Framing <i>(//photography, painting)</i>	Focus	Does your eye naturally move to or stay on a person or thing? Does your eye roam around? Contrasts and lines are usually at work if so...
	Planes	Are they distinct? Perspectival effects?
	Distance/"intimacy"	How many faces/bodies are in the shot? What distance does that create?
	Proportion	How do figures (bodies, things) relate to each other and to the space they're in?
Lighting <i>(//theater)</i>	Chiaroscuro	Expressionistic versus naturalistic? Emotional effects?
	Focus-effects	Does lighting draw your eye?
	Naturalism	Is it stagey or natural?
	Color biases/tints	Is there a "color scheme" between scenes? Is it significant?
Text	Titles & intertitles	Often marking location, time, identity, or chapter titles
	Subtitles	Do we get to know things the characters don't?
	Diegetic text	How easy does the film make it to read letters, signs, etc?
Synchronic Spatial Analysis ("The Space")		
Design (a.k.a. Mise-en-scène) <i>(//theater)</i>	Set Design	How is the space is represented, whether built in a studio or on location?
	Wardrobe	Naturalistic or stylized?
Acting	Gesture, body language	What choices did the <i>actors</i> make in relation to the space they're in? Do they make it feel bigger, smaller, menacing, cozy, etc?
Diachronic Analysis ("Montage")		
Editing	Perspectival cuts	Cutting to and from a character's perspective is <i>easier</i> to follow if visually <i>contrastive</i> and even disjunctive—thus 180 shot and drastic cuts into and out of perspectives.
	Changes in distance: Cuts versus camera movement	Is there a pattern to when the camera moves or zooms versus when a cut achieves the same transition?
	Changes in angle/frame	Rolls, pans, tracks, etc...
	Shot duration/"length"	How long are the individual shots of which a scene is comprised? Does this change between scenes?
	Pacing and rhythm	Jump-cuts and ellipses are easy to miss! How does time narrated relate to the time it takes to narrate?
	Sequence logic	Is it followable when the camera moves and/or cuts are made? Consciously or unconsciously, do they follow a logic (often relying on the events)?
Soundtrack	Sound design	How do diageitic sounds and music (in the space) blend w/environmental sound, w/voice-overs, and w/other "outside" sounds? Relative volume? Is it naturalistic?
	Score (non-diegetic)	Emotional effect? Reinforce or weaken scene boundaries and editing?
	Sound versus image	Does sound work in parallel with image, or against it, in a "commentative, asynchronous, or oppositional" way?(214)

**Figure 2: Advanced Languages Courses as curricular bridge with unique priorities; analytic spectrum**

Level of interpretation (Spectrum from "internal" to "external")	Approaches & Topics	Sketch out the Curricular Priorities for your department's...			
		...Introductory Language (immersion)	...Advanced Language (critical skills)	...Upper-div <b>Film</b> Courses	...Upper-div non-film Courses
Diagetic (within fictional universe of the film)	Language used by characters*				
	Psychology of characters, realism of events				
Extradiagetic (style, production)	Film medium, stylistic analysis				
Rhetorical (intended interpretation)	Intended message, impact, or influence on viewer				
Cultural & Transcultural (original audience's cultural context vs. L2 class context)	Unintended/accidental cultural content; subtexts in contemporary history and culture				
	Comparing C1 context to C2 context				

**Figure 4: A sample lesson-sequence**  
 Piloted in UC Berkeley's Spanish Department, Fall 2012 (fill out yours from LEFT to RIGHT!)

<i>Thematic Unit</i>	<i>Cultural Analysis Goal (cultural topics supplemental to thematic unit)</i>	<i>Logic of the Exercise (relevant formal analysis → thematic synthesis)</i>	<i>Key Formal Aspects</i>	<i>Supplemental Formal Aspects</i>	<i>Film Genre</i>	<i>Title and Director</i>
Identity	Recognize alternative/ queer families; relativize gender norms	Show melodrama's clearcut, exaggerated conventions of sympathy, interiority, and identity; manipulation	Acting, Score Composition	Lighting, acting,	Sentimental Melodrama	The Law of Desire (Pedro Almodóvar, 1987)
Heritage	Read cultural myths and conjectures ideologically	Reading mise-en-scene as ideological/polemic; reading origin myths as same	Montage, Voice-over, composition	Sound design, lighting, body language	Historical fiction	The Southern Cross (Patricio Guzmán, 1992)
Historical Memory	Think about narrative sympathy vis-à-vis political sympathy/identity	Show the deliberate and formally highlighted non-narrative details and their utility for sympathy and historical interpretation	Significant non-narrative and background details	Soundtrack, pacing, chapter	Historical drama, coming-of-age	Machuca (Andrés Wood, 2004)
Judgment & Prejudice	Treat documentary and nonfiction as rhetorical/constructed	De-naturalize the connotative and persuasive aspects of documentary interviews	Perspectival Camerawork, Connotative camerawork & set design	Handheld camerawork, intertitles	Political documentary	Cocalero (Alej. Landes, 2007)
Humor & Imagination	Problematize standards of "realism" and access to techn. & economic opportunity	Discuss science fiction's conjecture mode in terms of realist codes of verisimilitude	"Realism" and verisimilitude; historical/political conjecture	Representation of labor, crowds, and urban spaces	Science Fiction	Sleep Dealer (Alex Rivera, 2008)

**Micro bibliography:** • Monaco, James. *How to Read a Film: The World of Movies, Media, and Multimedia : Language, History, Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981, 1992, 2000, 2009. • Pegrum, Mark. "Film, Culture and Identity: Critical Intercultural Literacies for the Language Classroom," in *Language and Intercultural Communication*, vol. 8:2 (2008), pp. 136-154. • Sturm, Jessica L. "Using Film in the L2 Classroom: A Graduate Course in Film Pedagogy", in *Foreign Language Annals*, Vol. 45:2 (2012), pp. 246–259.

# Identity and Film: Introduction and Clips

How do the past, identity, and their mental processes get represented in a melodrama?

We're going to watch together a climactic scene from the Spanish film, **The Law of Desire** (1987), by director Pedro Almodóvar. Forget the rest of the film, which is about a murder: we're going to study just this isolated scene. In it, we're going to see how various processes of identity and personal communication are represented. For us, the key question is the one that the protagonist puts to his doctor at the beginning of the scene: who am I? We should focus on how the other characters answer this questions, and how they build for the amnesiac patient a past, a family plot, and an identity based on those stories from the life of his sister.

We're going to watch the film together twice: once, with subtitles, to focus on the way characters communicate both verbally and non-verbally. Then, we're going to watch it again without subtitles to study how the style and film form influence our experience of the clip. After our discussion, you'll have a short list of questions to answer at home in complete sentences and to discuss tomorrow. You'll find these on the other side of this sheet.

<p><u>Characters</u>, in order of appearance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pablo Quintero, film director and amnesiac (realizado por Eusebio Poncela)</li> <li>- Doctor Martín, his benevolent doctor (realizado por Nacho Martínez)</li> <li>- Unnamed lawyer, hired by Dr. Martín (realizado por Agustín Almodóvar)</li> <li>- Tina Quintero, estranged sister of the amnesiac (realizada por estrella mdarileña, Carmen Maura)</li> </ul>	<p><u>Escenas</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1: The amnesiac patients wakes up and is defended from the police who want to interrogate him by his doctor.</li> <li>- 2: The doctor and the lawyer discuss this defence strategy until they are interrupted by the patient's sister (note how the lawyer looks at the sister)</li> <li>- 3: The sister tries to "recuperate" her brother's memory and "bring him up to date" with an emotional, confessional monologue about family and identity</li> </ul>
<p><u>Vocabulary</u> used in the scene:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Estar liado = have amorous relations, usually secretly or illegitimately. It's a very "adult" term, which sounds out of place applied to an incestuous relationship at a young age.</li> <li>- ¿Qué más da? = What difference does it make? What does it matter?</li> <li>- ", supongo" (al final de una frase y enfáticamente) = ", o no?" or ", would you deny it?"</li> </ul>	<p>Useful <u>Critical concepts</u> for discussing film and sexual identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- melodrama: a way of telling stories in which the sentimental manipulation of the reader/viewer matters more than realism.</li> <li>- <i>telenovela</i>: a television genre characterized by suddenplot twists, surprises, and highly episodic structure.</li> <li>- <i>vidente</i>: film viewer (irregular/false cognate)</li> <li>- transgendered: a person who identifies with a gender they weren't born to (<i>social</i> concept).</li> <li>- transexual: a person whose sex has been changed surgically and/or hormonally (<i>biological</i> concept).</li> <li>- transvestite: a person persona who dresses in a way inconsistent with their assigned gender (<i>fashion</i> concept)</li> </ul>

## Lesson-Plan and Discussion Guide

- Optional Discussion Topics: front-load cultural and generic context
  - How do we discuss a film? How does one discuss filmic *style*? In this series of lessons, we'll discuss and analyze film with incrementally more sophistication, but for now, let's stay somewhat on the surface and discuss identity
  - Are there criteria specific to melodrama? Are the ways we watch, enjoy, and judge a melodrama different from the way we watch, enjoy, and judge a serious drama or an important novel? How are melodramatic characters, and our sympathy for them, different?
  - Has everyone here seen a *telenovela*? This isn't exactly a telenovela, but it's a parody of how they work.
- [show clip#1 – with English subtitles]
- While the clip runs or before starting it, write on the board the four topics you want to discuss separately, plus where they fall in the timeline:
  - 1.) clip **without** subtitles, 2.) the characters (attitude, body language), 3.) sentiments (sympathy, aggression), 4.) clip **with** subtitles, 5.) The dialogue (what they say, exactly), 6.) The form (melodrama & manipulation) 7.) Take-home assignment
- After the clip starts and before discussing, announce that you'd like to discuss these topics separately!
  - Announce it each time you go from one topic to another, and politely *defer* questions or answers that are more appropriate to a future topic as they come up!
- 2.) the characters (attitude, body language) ~10min
  - Describe Tina. How does she speak, walk, treat men?
  - How does Pablo act? Is he suspicious? Expressive?
- 3.) sentiments (sympathy, aggression) ~5min
  - Does Pablo seem to understand what the other characters say to him?
  - Do Pablo's reactions make sense to you? Are there times you don't understand them?
  - Do you feel sympathy for Pablo? Does Tina's monologue affect you, or is it simply a character speaking? Is the actress, Carmen Maura, effective in her delivery of the monologue?
- 4.) <show clip#2 – no subtitles>
- 5.) The dialogue (what they say, exactly) ~15min
  - [Mention transcript function on LFLFC—they can refer to exact wording in their answers.]
  - Let's discuss the actual facts to be clear. What happened in Morocco?
  - How does Tina speak? Is it consistent, or does her tone and attitude change within the monologue?
    - Are there lines that seem addressed to herself and not Pablo? Which ones?
  - There are points where Tina commits grammatical mistakes, for instance, changing the subject of a verb and messing up the noun-verb agreement of a sentence. What sense would it make to include those errors in the film? What effect do those errors have?
- 6.) The form (melodrama & manipulation) ~5min
  - How do the movements of the camera and the frame affect your sympathy with the passive position of Pablo, and his reactions to what the other characters tell him?
  - Was it confusing to you? What was confusing, specifically? Is Tina's monologue hard to understand at the speed she delivers it? What effect does that difficulty have on the viewer?
- 7.) Take-home assignment: Send them home with Discussion questions and tell them to bring written answers in complete sentences!

# Identity and Film: Writing Exercise

How do the past, identity, and their mental processes get represented in a melodrama?

## Family and Identity

1. In your individual presentations, many people spoke about the importance of family in the formation of identities. Thinking about the film clips specifically, what role does family play in these scenes?
  - How are the identities of Tina and Pablo determined by their family circumstances?
  - Is it possible to overcome circumstances and create an identity independent of your family?
2. What other texts or images have we seen together that show the impact of family on individual identity?
3. Can a family also influence someone's regional or national identity? Why or why not?

## Memory, the past, and identity

4. Another central theme in the scenes is memory. What role does memory play in the formation of identity?
  - How do individual memories of the past influence one's identity in the present?
  - How do images of one's family or parents influence it?
5. Why is it so important for Tina that Pablo remember their shared past?
  - Is it possible to have a clear idea of one's identity without remembering the past?
6. The scene shows the importance of the past in the identity of an individual and of a family. Is the past as important to a collective identity (national, regional, cultural, religious, political)?
  - Give concrete examples.
7. Where do we see the influence of memories in other texts (or images) that we've studied?

## Prejudice and the documentary form: How documentaries make people into representatives of ways of life

Nowadays, the war on drugs has become, for many Latin Americans, a war of ideas: Who holds the blame for the existence of an industry that supplies the global market with such sophistication and impunity? How can we defeat this industry if it's so interwoven with governments and police forces, without punishing entire populations of innocent people? What rights do the U.S. government and military have when they battle this industry beyond their borders? No one has easy answers to these questions, whatever their politics or beliefs, because their entire interpretation is based on presumptions and prejudices about what drugs are and what responsibility a government has for its own economy. Many recent documentaries, which strive to achieve an international viewing public, foreground these questions with the testimonies of people who have experienced these issues in a way very different from how they are experienced in the US or in Europe.

For example, **Cocalero**, a 2005 documentary, tries to explain to the world the presidential campaign of Evo Morales, and how the candidate relates to the *cocalero*<sup>1</sup> industry where his political career began. In the two clips, an anonymous old farmer and a representative of a "chacra" or farming cooperative speak about their experiences with coca, which is for them simply a plant that one grows, harvests, and sells like any other. For them, the political questions around coca and cocaine depend on certain concepts of coca that are *prejudicial*. Watch the two clips and answer these questions **in complete sentences, on another sheet of paper** to examine the anti-prejudicial rhetoric of the documentary and its characters. Bring that sheet of paper to class tomorrow and **take notes on the answers of your classmates**. This would make a great topic for a future composition <wink, wink>.

<http://bSpace.berkeley.edu/...>

Clip #1: Anonymous old man in the outskirts of La Paz, Bolivia  
(isolated scene with no context provided by intertitles or subtitles)

- 1.) How should we understand the old man's words "ours" and "theirs"? What do the phrases "turn into drug" and "sacred leaf" imply about the Bolivian use of coca before the industrialization of cocaine? Describe not only his words but also his *physical attitude* and *verbal tone*.
  
- 2.) What should we assume about his relationship to the local community, which administers the "communitarian justice" he mentions? What do we know (or not know) about the indigenous, rural communities of Bolivia?
  
- 3.) How is our interpretation influenced by using as backdrop the cliffs and hills of the outskirts of La Paz? What does it imply about the speaker and his relationship to the earth and to the issue?
  
- 4.) While the farmer speaks, images of other farmers engaged in some kind of agricultural labor pass by on the screen. What do they appear to be doing, and what is the director implying by showing them while the old man speaks? What can we know, or not know, without further information?

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<sup>1</sup> "Cocalero" refers to the coca-leaf industry. Coca leaves are the raw material for cocaine, but they are also used in other ways locally. Used as a noun, it refers to a farmer of coca, whether a farmhand or owner of a farm.



Clip #2: Zurita talks about the prejudices of foreigners from her cooperative farm in El Chacare

As signalled by the title, this scene opens a new chapter and introduces Zurita and her cooperative farm in the coca-growing region of El Chapare, which the documentarians are visiting for the first time.

5.) What is Zurita doing during the interview? Where is she, and how does the director choose to represent that place? Describe the place and the way it's represented while Zurita is speaking.

6.) How does Zurita represent North Americans, and those that say "coca is a drug"? What does her phrase, "*hacer conocer la coca*" ("making introductions for the *coca*"), imply about the people being introduced, and about *coca* itself? Describe not only her words but also her *physical attitude* and her *verbal tone*.

7.) What should we feel while she narrates her experiences in a North American airport? Do the images of Zurita cooking in her kitchen without modern tools and her thick, rural accent influence or change that reaction?

8.) Where is the camera while Zurita speaks, and what does it imply about our relationship to her? How should we react to the end of the clip, when the cameraman takes a hand off the camera to accept a bowl of soup, which is to say, when we as viewers take virtually hold the bowl?

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Synthetic Questions – from technical aspects to rhetorical and stylistic analysis

9.) In the opinions of those interviewed, what would it take for foreigners to see how coca functions in Bolivia's traditional culture? Obviously both of them take the opportunity to speak almost directly to those foreigners—Of what do they want to convince them? What do they want us to see?

10.) What does the director, for his part, want us to see? How does he represent his subjects to make more effective his rhetorical attack on international prejudices using local facts and perspectives?

## Coca Prejudices and Policies in a globalized world:

**Do the indigenous and rural populations of Bolivia have the right to grow coca, even if they can't stop part of the crop from ending up as cocaine?**

Today in class we discussed in detail the short interviews with a member and a representative of the Bolivian populations that feel victimized by the international policies of the United States. You analyzed how the scenes are constructed in filmic terms to influence the viewer's sympathy and understanding. You've spoken synthetically about the prejudices implied in this debate about policies and peoples.

Tomorrow you're going to stage a philosophical debate about the difficult position in which governments like Bolivia's find themselves: should they antagonize the United States and defend the traditional production of coca, or should they comply with the mandates of the United States and emphatically prohibit the crops to pre-empt the cocaine production that no one can seem to stop? You'll argue one side or the other, not of your choice: you will either side with the cocalero population or with the policies of the U.S., or to put it another way, pro- or anti-coca policies, and you'll have to reason with civil and convincing arguments. On each side of the debate, there are valid points to be made and it is essential to separate prejudices from scientific facts, and the interests of various groups from absolute morality.

Tonite, look over the **answers** you prepared for today and the **notes** you took on your classmates' answers. Try to turn them into arguments pro- or anti- coca production. Use these questions to organize your thoughts:

Revisen las **respuestas** que preparaste antes de venir a la clase hoy, y los **apuntos** que tomaste sobre las respuestas de tus compañeros. Úsenlos para armar argumentos pro y contra. Piensa en estas cuestiones:

- Who is responsible for illegal drug production? Who has the right to punish whom?
  1. Does the old man's solution ("community justice") strike you as realistic? Why or why not?
  2. If the government has already outlawed cocaine production and the massive export of coca unsuccessfully, do they have the right to prohibit coca itself?
- Central government and political decisions
  3. What price would Bolivia pay if it antagonized a country as strong and economically influential as the United States? Who suffers if the United States threatens to break commercial ties, or if they impose an embargo?
  4. Does the United States have a right to punish the entire country of Bolivia for illegal exports that are so hard to wipe out? If not, how else can they possibly eradicate cocaine made from Bolivian coca?