

THE CHURCH AND THE FEUDAL SOCIETY IN THE WESTERN WORLD
- FILM STUDY -
- European Section -
(Chapter : The Mediterranean Sea in the 12th century AD)

NOTIONS :

Feudalism / feudal society ; Christendom / Christian belief and practise

OBJECTIVES :

- understanding the key-role played by the Church in Medieval Western societies
- identifying the obligations the feudal contract brought with it
- characterising the values of the lords and knights, and confronting them with reality

HOW ?

- by learning specific film vocabulary; and by using it to comment on film extracts.
- Film study : two extracts from *The Cid*, by Anthony Mann, 1964, 2 h 50, V.O.-s.t. fr.

1/ FILES FOR MOVIE STUDIES : METHODOLOGY

| What's a film made of ? | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| <i>A movie...</i> | | | | | |
| <i>...is divided into many sequences : i.e. parts of the story dealing with a single subject or action ; also called "scenes" ; there is a large number of them in a movie</i> | The Bar fight | The meeting between Pam & Joe | The gunfight | The death of the bad guy | The new departure |
| <i>Each sequence consists of shots :</i> | Medium shot : Joe kisses Pam | Close shot : their eyes shed tears | Medium shot : dialog | Large shot : alone in the wilderness | Medium shot : "The bad guy is here ! Run !" |

Shots & angle shots

Each shot is carefully chosen, structured ; it is the result of the director's intention.
 What did he intend to show ?

Shots

(a shot is the part of a sequence)

(valeur de cadre, échelle des plans, grosseur de plans)

| Very close to the character (psychological approach) | | Close to the character(s), full-length (relation with others) | | | | Far from the character(s) (relation with the context) | |
|---|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|-------------|------------------|--|--------------|
| Very close shot (detail) | Close shot (face,...) | Chest shot | American shot (basin) | Medium shot | Full-length shot | Large shot | General shot |

Angle shots

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Frontal view | Oblique, side view | High angle shot (to take a high angle shot of sthg) | Low-angle shot (to film from below) |
|--------------|--------------------|---|-------------------------------------|

Camera Movements

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Tracking (travelling) La caméra suit une action en mouvement en roulant sur un rail | Panoramic shot / Panning La caméra reste fixe sur son socle mais suit une action en mouvement | Shoulder camera La caméra suit une action portée à l'épaule ; effet très réaliste ; image chaotique, dans l'action. |
|---|---|---|

→ To comment on a shot, also observe :

The position of the character(s), the source of the light, the opposition between dark & light colours, the symbols, tools, features presented on the screen, in the frame.

→ To comment on a film extract, use words and phrases :

I think that... I reckon, suppose, see, observe, understand ...

It shows... It symbolises, suggests, highlights, puts forward, brings out, reveals, indicates, underlines, presents, justifies,...

This proves that... This testifies to sthg, this clearly shows...

The author means to say that... He intends to do sthg, he tends to say sthg, he argues sthg, he underlines that,...

The message put across by this extract is... It deals with...

In the foreground, in the background.

The focus of the shot is... It's focused on (sthg, so.) ; it focuses on...

→ Distinguish these notions from image effects and sound effects :

fade-in, fade-out, slow motion, integration of artificial elements (incrustation of digital elements).

First exercise : Prince Ben Youssef threatens Spain.

→ Brief oral test on two shots from the first sequence of the film :

identify the characteristics of these 2 shots, make brief comments on them.

- 1- "Prince Ben Youssef swears to kill and burn Spain, the Sea behind him".
- 2- "To rule the World !" (sunset with fade-out to the next sequence).

GLOSSARY :

Who does what ?

A director ; to direct ; the direction of actors / actresses.

Analyser la mise en scène d'un plan= to study the acting of a shot.

A editor ; to edit ; the editing of a movie.

Tournage = a shoot.

A cameraman, cameramen.

Preneur de son = a boom operator.

2/ MEDIEVAL CHRISTENDOM : study of the second sequence

- *make a brief home search on the Cid (10 lines), using all-English dictionaries or encyclopaedias.*
- 2^{sd} sequence : The Spanish village slaughter.
- Time-code : 5min20 to 7min20.

A- OBSERVE THE SEQUENCE AND TAKE NOTES

| What you see | What you hear |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Where does the scene take place ? | What dialogs (key-words) ? |
| When ? | What sounds ? |
| Who appears ? What is his social rank ? | What music ? Kinds of music : |
| What is he doing ? | - lyrical |
| What are the important features – objects present in the frame ? | - emphatic |
| Where does the light come from ? | - tragic |
| How many shots ? What angle shots are significant ? | - sad |
| | - nervous |
| | - slow |
| | - religious |
| | - solemn |
| | - thundering |
| | other ? |

B- COMMENT ON THE SEQUENCE

- a- What kind of values can you attribute to the Cid ?
- b- What role does religion play in the Cid story, from the very beginning of the film ? Explain why.

3/ FEUDALISM AND SOCIAL LINKS : study of the third sequence

- 3rd sequence : Prince Moumar is pardoned by Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar ; pledge / oath of allegiance.
- Time-code : 7min20 to 10min30.

A- OBSERVE THE SEQUENCE AND TAKE NOTES

| What you see | What you hear |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Where does the scene take place ? | What dialogs (key-words) ? |
| When ? | What sounds ? |
| Who appears ? What is their social rank ? | What music ? Kinds of music : |
| What are they doing ? | - lyrical : |
| What are the important features – objects present in the frame ? | - emphatic |
| Where does the light come from ? | - tragic |
| How many shots ? What angle shots are significant ? | - sad |
| | - nervous |
| | - slow |
| | - religious |
| | - solemn |
| | - thundering |
| | other ? |

B- COMMENT ON THE SEQUENCE

- a- What context do the Spanish populations face in 11th century AD ?
- b- Whom do wars separate ? What elements show that this is a hard struggle in this sequence ?
- c- What does Prince Mouminar do after being released ?
- d- What's the importance of this allegiance between the two men ?

4/ FEUDALISM? ASSETS AND DRAWBACKS FOR THE WESTERN WORLD : study of the fourth sequence

Written test ; 1 hour to take notes then synthesis. Graded out of 10.