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Understanding people's views and visions.

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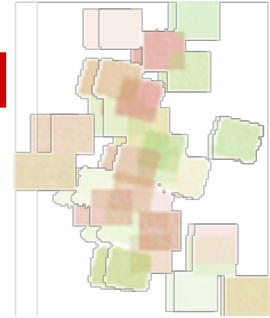
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European Master in Intercultural Communication (EMICC)

Understanding people's views and visions.

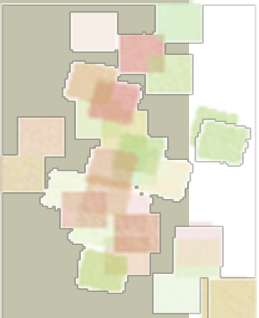
A semiotic and cultural approach of online amateur audiovisual productions.

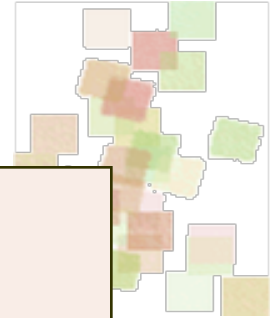


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21st, 22nd and 23rd of October 2009





Introduction





Area of study

□ General statement:

- ✓ A trend of "**democratization**" and mass consumption "of the technical means of shooting film and recording sound"
 - camcorders, digital cameras, mobile phones, webcams, etc.
- ✓ A trend of mass "**amateur**" recording of all kinds of situations and events in daily life, private life and also social, public life.

□ Examples: shooting/editing

- ✓ of travels, holidays,
- ✓ of family celebrations, commemorations,
- ✓ of people, friends, colleagues,
- ✓ of cultural events (concerts, lectures, ...)

But also:

- ✓ of political events, protest movements, revolts,
- ✓ if moments and situations in professional life, ...



Area of study

All this immense mass of more or less ephemeral audiovisual productions ...

- ✓ ... takes the form of **recording "as is"** ("video in the rough") or of reportages, documentaries, ... **edited and "staged"** according to informal aesthetic codes
- ✓ ... is stored as:
 - mere personal **"folders"**,
 - discs (**DVD**),
 - **audiovisual archives**,
 - personal **"channels"** on major web sites that aggregate all types of video (such as YouTube ou Daily Motion),
 - video (photo) **blogs**,
 - personal **sites**,
 - ...
- ✓ ... constitutes an **exceptional heritage witnessing the present moment in history** as an experience lived by (almost) every Tom, Dick and Harry, by every down-and-out in (almost) every region of the world ...



Area of study

- ❑ All this immense production "amateur" is therefore an excellent corpus for ... :
 - ✓ ... better understanding the "**cultural models**" (**representations**) that give meaning to contemporary life and that defines people's identities, visions and values.
- ❑ Finally, thanks to digital technology and the Internet –
 - ✓ ... we can access this kind of **production everywhere in the world**
 - ✓ ... and therefore undertake **comparative studies** ("**intercultural**") on specific topics such as:
 - the **everyday life** of people
 - their **family and personal life**
 - **events** that punctuate social, political or cultural life.





Area of study

□ Goals of this course...

1) understand the role and the importance of these audiovisual productions in the construction, circulation and transmission of **models** and **cultural representations**:

- **knowledge**, beliefs, values, ...
- **representations**, images, stereotypes, ...

2) analyze and understand the critical "**gaze**" or visual assessment (in film and photography) of individuals and social groups on the world around them as well as themselves.

3) analyze and understand "**the grammar**" of audiovisual media (i.e. the techniques for framing images and editing people, objects, situations that are represented in audiovisual documents).



Area of study

□ Goals of the course...

4) Introduce progressively a **theoretical framework** for the "reasoned" analysis and the critique of audiovisual productions:

- **tools and methods of description** of audiovisual productions (in particular films but also photographs)
- more specifically: the **semiotics of the audiovisual text**
- **methods (hermeneutics) of interpretation** of the "meaning" of these audiovisual productions
- **references** (scientific, philosophic, ...).

5) Work concretely – and in a detailed manner – on a **variety of examples**: amateur video, reportages, documentaries, photo montages, ...

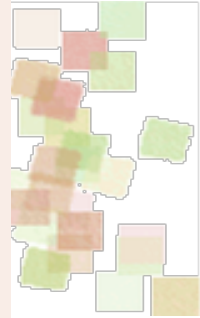
- Presentation and discussion of **concrete analyses**;
- Concrete analyses in the form of "**group work**".

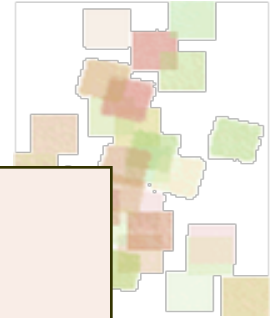


1st Part

- Filming the Piazza del Campidoglio in Rome -

a montage of a basic amateur film realized in 2006 by the author





Chapter 1

- Example of an amateur video clip: interpretation and discussion -





1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

References, links

- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)

- ❑ Here is a 42 second video clip ... (no credits, no postproduction, ...):
- ❑ We'll watch it several times to understand that even such a basic audiovisual production has a degree of **internal complexity** that makes it apt to meet more or less different **expectations (assumed)**

- ❑ [Online access to the amateur video ...](#)



1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

References, links

- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)

- ❑ What does this video clip show us? A **first quick reading** reveals among other things:
 - ✓ a square surrounded by palaces with an imposing statue in the middle;
 - ✓ people on the site, some moving, others looking, others are collected into small groups, ...
 - ✓ the whole "scene" takes place under a blue summer sky;
 - ✓ a place that seems to attract people - *a tourist site*?
 - ✓ a place whose architectural character shows us that this is not a contemporary place but an *historical site*;
 - ✓ a place whose architecture shows that it can not be a working-class location but *one identified with an elite* or possibly a *place of collective cultural reference*, a *place of power*;
 - ✓ ...



1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

References, links

- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)

❑ But even a cursory reading gives us an idea of:

1 - The conditions of production of the video:

- ✓ The images are not stabilized (it's a handheld shoot, with not technical assistance such as a tripod, ...);
- ✓ There is only one source of light, i.e. the natural daylight of a very sunny day;
- ✓ Some images appear to be overexposed and somewhat out of focus;
- ✓ There is no background music;
- ✓ There's no voiceover commentary;
- ✓ Finally, there are no credits at the beginning or end.



1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

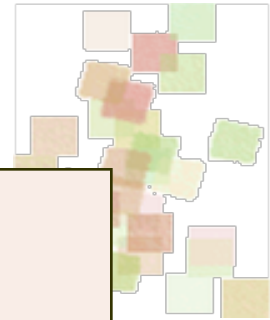
References, links

- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)

2 – the genre of the video.

It seems obvious that this is an **amateur film created for personal consumption**:

- ✓ Uses simple and 'spontaneous' techniques of visual framing and camera movements.
- ✓ No work on the soundtrack.
- ✓ No significant control of a "**dramatic narrative**" or of a "**plot development**" in the succession of images.
- ✓ A holiday movie? A souvenir?
- ✓ A film expressing / communicating an emotion?
- ✓ A nearly "raw" film" that may be intended to be part of a more significant "documentary movie collection" (i.e. a personal collection, "**personal archives** "...)?



Chapter 2

- Visual shots and themes -





1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

**Visual shots and
themes**

**References,
links**

- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)

More detailed analysis:

1 – The clip is composed of eight distinct shots:

(cf. [analytical help in Word](#) for a more detailed analysis)

- ✓ **4 shots** show the **external facades** of several palaces (shot 1, shot 2, shot 3, shot 4)
- ✓ **Two shots** show us **two statues** (plan 5 and shot 8) with a huge one in the middle of the square (plan 5)
- ✓ **Un shot** shows a large lateral **staircase** (plan 7)
- ✓ Finally **one shot** shows a **detail** of the square, i.e. a passageway (plan 6)

What does this tell us?

- ✓ **The selection of shots** that compose this clip suggest:
 - **Priority is given to architecture** (external facades, staircase, statues, the square, ...) and to **the place itself** "without respect to context".



1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

Visual shots and themes

References, links

- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)

- ❑ A visual shot is characterized by an:
 - ✓ **Eidetic aspect:** people, objects, movements... represented
 - ✓ **Plastic aspect:** chromatic (color), topographic (organization of the visual frame of a plan)

- ❑ The objects, situations represented visually ... form **themes**, i.e. **places of knowledge**:
 - ✓ **First level of themes** (= **iconic**) according to the capacity of visual recognition of the viewer ...
 - housing estates, facades, statues, squares, stairs, blue sky, groups of buildings, people moving, birds, ...
 - ✓ **Second level of themes** (= **figurative**) : depending on the **level of knowledge** of the viewer (the interpreter)
 - historic location, touristic site, architectural composition of the Renaissance, a place of power, highly symbolic site in terms of the of the city or country's history ...



1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

Visual shots and themes

References, links

- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)

- ❑ The distinction between iconic themes and figurative themes:
 - ✓ Sometimes difficult to establish, to recognize
- ❑ **"Iconic" themes:** generally the lexicon, the visual vocabulary of the spectator or a community of spectators (in analogy with the vocabulary applying to natural languages)
- ❑ **Figurative theme:** the visualization of knowledge (historical, social, professional, ... personal, private, ...)
- ❑ Other important thematic dimension:
 - ✓ **"Abstract "themes** such as the **emotional** themes (the emotions, feelings, ...), **moral, aesthetic** or **intellectual** (epistemic)
 - ✓ Dimension to explain **"why"** the person is shooting (to show, to talk, ...) concerning any object in a given situation, etc.. (personal, cultural **motivation** ...)
- ❑ **Example:** *The front facade of one of the palaces in the film...*
 - ✓ Aesthetic Testimony? Testimony of those in power? Testimony of "official history"?...



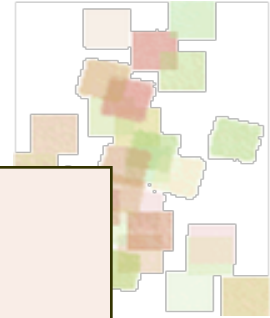
1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

**Visual shots and
themes**

**References,
links**

- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)

- ❑ Finally, a distinction between
 - ✓ **the episodic**, the anecdotic
 - ✓ and the "culturally relevant", the **noetic** (the intellectual, ideological or again axiological) dimension.
- ❑ The distinction partially identical with that between
 1. the level of **iconic** themes (the **episodic**, anecdotic)
 2. and the level of **figurative** and **proprioceptive** themes (the **noetic**).
- ❑ **Example:** the filmed "architectural ensemble« (in our video) is ...
 - ✓ ... a "remarkable "object, something to visit and film;
 - ✓ ... a remarkable Renaissance palace;
 - ✓ ... an monument crucial to the history of a country and art in general;
 - ✓ ... the image of a perfect aesthetic ideal;
 - ✓ ... the image of the supreme power of a State;
 - ✓ ... the site of a few sublime private moments ...



Chapter 3

- Editing visuals shots: the « montage » -





1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

Editing/montage

References, links

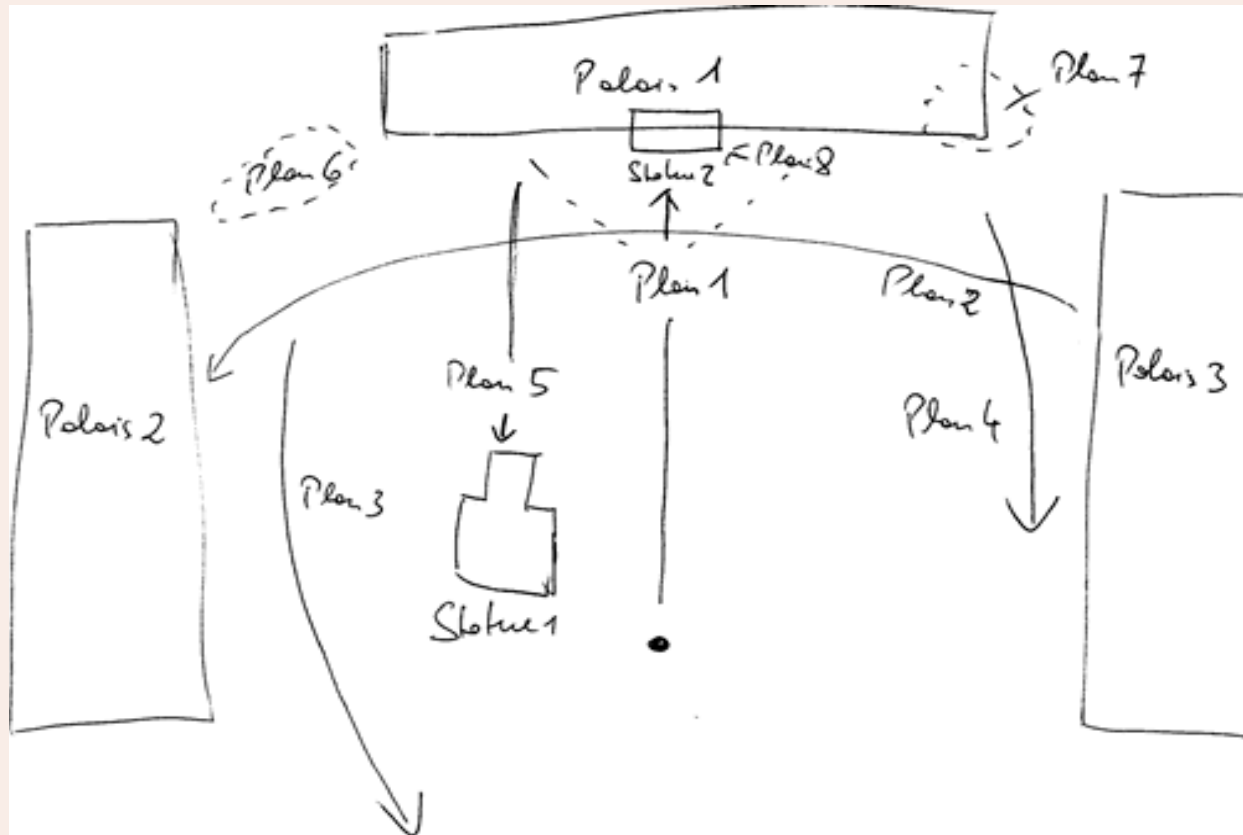
- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)

2 – Montage of the eight shots: defines the narrative structure of the text, its syntagmatic development from the beginning to the end.

- ❑ Thus, the **succession of the eight shots** is the result of the author's choice and this choice is materialized during the edit/montage.
- ❑ The "logic" of the edit/montage can appear to be more or less natural and "obvious":
 - ✓ ... an edit aligned on **movement** in space,
 - ✓ ... an edit aligned on **visual panning** of area,
 - ✓ ... an edit that follows the **chronology** of the events,
 - ✓ ... an edit organized around the **causality** of the events,
 - ✓ ... an edit organized around the **structure** of an object (a facade, ...).
- ❑ But, the edit/montage can also express very different concepts or forms, ones that are sometimes extremely rich in their concatenation (particularly in fiction films ...):
 - ✓ In the form of **drama**,
 - ✓ In the form of **a puzzle**,
 - ✓ In the form of **an investigation**,
- ❑ The determinant element = **the plot**.

❑ Concerning this clip, the edit is rather typical of its genre:

✓ **Edit/montage = visual scan + focus on characteristic details**



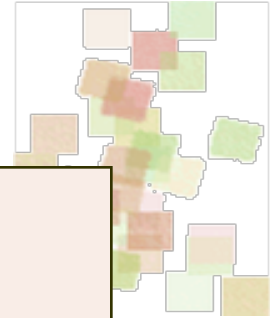
(Drawing showing the "logic" of the edit of eight shots that make up the amateur video)

1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

Editing/montage

**References,
links**

- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)



Chapter 4

- **Creating the image ("mise en image ») of objects, situations during the shoot -**





1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

“Mise en image”

References, links

- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)

- ❑ **3 - “Mise en image” (Creating the image)**
- ❑ **Creating the image is a complex operation that aims at **visually reproducing** (ou **producing**) an object or a situation.**
- ❑ **It can be analysed using the **five following procedures**:**
 1. The **camera position** (point of view) in relation to the object being filmed:
 - Neutral position, high angle, low angle ...
 2. **Camera mouvement:**
 - Static position of camera, pan, tracking shot
 3. The **framing** of the object through a variety of different shots:
 - Establishing shot, long shot, medium shot, close-up, ...
 4. The **zoom** or **optical tracking**:
 5. **In or out of the visual field:**



1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

“**Mise en image**”

References, links

- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)

- ❑ *Mise en image* of the eight visual shots (of our amateur video):
- ❑ Cf. [Analytical help](#) for more detailed analysis.
- ❑ *Mise en image* and **representation** of an objet during a shoot:
 - ✓ representation of the "**whole thing**"(of a front facade , ...);
 - ✓ representation of the **context** (of its **rootedness**, of its **identity through a sense of belonging**) of an edifice or a statue in the form of a double opposition:
 - The "**constructed/unconstructed**"(i.e. architecture vs blue sky) and "**closed/open**"(square surrounded by buildings vs urban open space);
 - ✓ representation of **imposing objects** (stairs, facade from a low angle)
 - ✓ representation of the **static, of the perennial** (exemplified by **architectural structures**) vs the **ephemeral, the mobile** (represented by the **human element**, i.e. people in the square appearing in every shot but never becoming the subject in this amateur video).



1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

“Mise en image”

References, links

- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)

Some broader implications:

- ✓ The “mise en image” is clearly an “active” process of **constructing a visual representation** of the object or situation filmed;
- ✓ The construction of such visual depiction is based, among other things on the **technical procedures** already listed as well as other factors such as time management (temporality), the author’s prior **knowledge** and **values** , the intended audience etc.;
- ✓ The *mise en image* expresses the **view** of the author on the pro-filmic reality (i.e. **his interpretation**);
- ✓ The author’s view can be (and most often is) very **conventional** ... and then can be confused with the very object represented;
- ✓ So: **be careful** not to confuse the author’s view (his construction of reality) with pro-filmic reality;
- ✓ Reference: “**anthropology of the point of view**”; “**deconstruction of the point of view**”(according to Barthes or Derrida).



1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

“Mise en image”

References, links

- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)

- ❑ **4 -"The filmic discourse": -**
- ❑ There is an author who wishes to **communicate** to a **receiver** his **point of view** (i.e. his vision or interpretation) concerning a pro-filmic situation;
- ❑ The **audiovisual text** (film, photography, text, ...) contains and embodies this wish in the form of a discourse –
 - ✓ The **contents** of the discourse (themes, subjects, stories, ...)
 - ✓ The **expression** of the discourse (shots, visual elements, images).
- ❑ How to **analyze**, understand the discourse ? Building on:
 - ✓ The **shots** and the **objects represented**,
 - ✓ The **procedures of *mise en image*** of the objects/situations,
 - ✓ The **edit/montage of the shots**,
 - ✓ **Prior knowledge** : of the field, of audiovisual discourse, ...



1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

“Mise en image”

References, links

- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)

- ❑ On a very basic (and intuitive) level, the analysis, understanding of a discourse (film) should answer the following five questions:
 - ✓ Who are the **participants** involved (author, recipient)?
 - ✓ What is the **context** (framework of production, of exploitation, frame of reference ...)?
 - ✓ What is the **genre of the discourse**?
 - ✓ **What is it about** and what is its **purpose**?



1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

“Mise en image”

References, links

- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)

- ❑ **Special point: Subject or purpose --**
 - ✓ also known as the **discursive theme** (as distinct from iconic, figurative and "proprioception" themes, ...):
 - ✓ Theme that expresses the **intention** of the author's discourse;
 - The intention may be **more or less conscious**, premeditated or, on the contrary, **unconscious**, uncontrolled ...
 - The **analyzed intention** (i.e. as a subject of discourse) is always an **interpretation**, i.e. intention as it is understood by the recipient
- Finally, the **author interpreting** his intention supplies one interpretation among others.



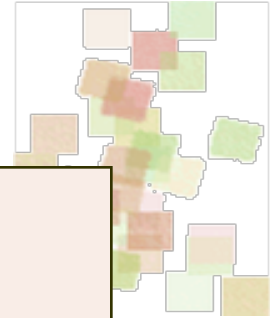
1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

“Mise en image”

References, links

- 1) [The amateur video](#)
- 2) [Analytical help for more detailed description of amateur video](#)

- ❑ The subject, the purpose of our sample video?
- ❑ The *mise en image* of objects, situations, ... in our amateur video suggests priorities, "hierarchies" that are clear enough to suggest that:
 - ✓ the priority of the **architectural** dimension compared to that of the people in the square and what they are doing, the shining sun (none of these elements ever become the actual subject matter in our example);
 - ✓ priority is given to the **whole** (vs., for example, details, figures, ...);
 - ✓ priority is given to the "**monumental**" (the perennial ...);
 - ✓ the constant presence of the **mighty**, the **awesome**.
- ❑ **Implied discourse/purpose:**
 - ✓ Show the square in question in terms of its **aesthetic** dimension and its "ahistorical" superiority...



Chapter 5

-Some more general remarks -





1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

Discussion

□ The discussion of this first example has shown us several important things:

1 - Distinction between different levels of viewing and interpreting:

- ✓ The “quick” impressionist reading limited to “what you see”:
 - Pre-critical reading,
 - Non-specialist reading
 - Reading as an everyday life act,
 - ...

- ✓ Systematic, methodical reading and interpretation, based on knowledge of the organization and processing of a text.



1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

Discussion

2 - Reading/interprétation ("what you see" in a movie ...)

- ✓ This is a **selection** (conscious or unconscious) of "things" that interest us, that challenge us, ...
 - and that on the basis of our **own culture** (individual or social, i.e. as a member of a social group, community, etc..)
 - and our interests, needs, desires, or: **expectations**.
- ✓ Saying: "we see in an image what we want to see"...
- ✓ See the phenomenon of "**cultural bias**" or "cognitive bias"
- ✓ See also the theory of **cognitive dissonance** (Leon Feistinger)
- ✓ Special cases: readings - fantasies ...



1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

Discussion

3 –Two important distinctions:

A) First distinction:

- ❑ 1/ The **outside the text**, the "pro-filmic" situation
 - ✓ The outside world, "reality" itself (social, historical, cultural)
- 2) the **text** itself -
 - ✓ The (**diegetic**) universe of the text
= The pro-filmic situation that is represented, "crafted" within
and by the text (and according to the intention of the author).

B) Different types of "pro-filmic situations " (to be discussed later)

- ✓ **Pro-filmic situations "as is"**
- ✓ **Modified pro-filmic situations change (by the presence of the camera)**
- ✓ **"Staged" pro-filmic situations (for film).**



1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

Discussion

4 – Complexity of the "textual work" based on various kinds of knowledge and know-how.

- ❑ **So far we have encountered:**
 - ✓ The activity of the **selection** of scenes (objects, situations, ...) belonging to a pro-filmic situation
 - ✓ The procedures of **mise en image of scenes** (objets, situations, ...) that have been selected
 - ✓ The **editing/montage of shots**: the "linearization" of shots following a certain narrative logic





1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

Discussion

5 – The **variable nature of the concept (and of the "reality") of the text.**
This varies depending on the context in which it appears:

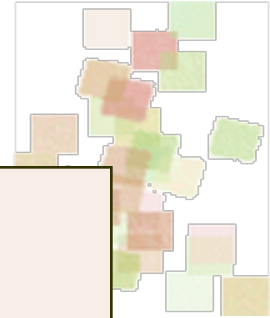
- ✓ The **text produced by an author** (a community of writers) following a certain intention
- ✓ The **text transmitted through technical means** and received by the addressee, its "public"
- ✓ The **text revisited** (reread, interpreted, ...) by its reader
- ✓ The **text transmitted** by the reader / author with other readers (who, again, etc. etc.)



1st example – a
amateur video of the
Piazza del
Campidoglio in Rome

Discussion

- ✓ The **text stored** as an object of collection (heritage, ...);
- ✓ The **text as a virtuality**: draft, outline, pre-existing elements, ...;
- ✓ The **actual text** (as it appears to me as the product of an author, as an annotation, as a stored product, ...);
- ✓ The **potential text**: the text as a construct that potentially could have been / will be achieved in a very different way (different selections, different shots, different edits, ...).



Chapter 6

- For further training and preparation... -





2nd example – a
amateur video of
visiting a temple in
Taiwan

□ **Viewing at home of another sample of amateur video showing the visit of a Chinese temple by a group of Taiwanese tourists - video uploaded in 2009 by a writer named "wongmingyou" who has his own video channel on YouTube .**

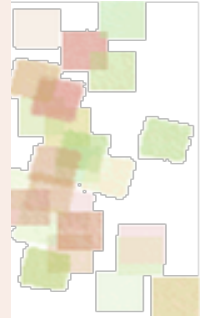
- ✓ **Access to the video clip;**
- ✓ **Access to the "wongminyou" channel on YouTube**

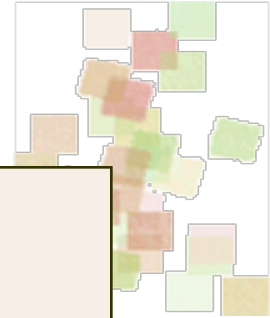


2nd Part

- Filming the visit of temple -

a montage of an amateur film uploaded in 2009 by an anonymous person with the pseudonym “wongminyong” and diffused via a You Tube channel





Chapter 1

- Contemporary culture and audiovisual production -





Contemporary culture and audiovisual production

Reading:

M. Castells et al.

« Mobile Communication and Society » (MIT Press 2006)

- ❑ The production of information by the means of audiovisual media (and especially film and photography):
 - ✓ is no longer reserved for specialists, professionals –
 - ✓ its use has been “democratized” and has spread throughout society (at least in large parts of the world)
 - ✓ so that ownership and use of audiovisual media constitute a **new form of literacy** competing with traditional literacy (writing)
- ❑ A particularly important role is assumed by a set of recent technologies and services such as:
 - ✓ **wireless communication**, satellite and mobile
 - ✓ **peer-to-peer** networks,
 - ✓ **Wweb 2**, social networks,
 - ✓ **VOD** (video on demand), **personal blogs** (video-, photo-blogs, music blogs, ...)
 - ✓ **Repositories** of online videos (YouTube, Daily Motion, ...), photos, music, etc..



Contemporary culture
and audiovisual
production

Reading:

M. Castells et al.
« Mobile
Communication and
Society » (MIT Press
2006)

- Reference: Castells et al. : *Mobile Communication and Society*, MIT Press 2006) – 6 main features of modern « information society »:
 - ✓ (Mobile) network society;
 - ✓ New mobile youth culture;
 - ✓ Profound changes in the management of spatial and temporal barriers of traditional social practices (examples:
 - « remote security »;
 - « ubiquitous learning »;
 - « virtual communities »; ...); ...
 - ✓ New practices of socio-political mobilization (outside the framework of established socio-political institutions);
 - ✓ Enew alliances between economic development, literacy and mobile networks;
 - ✓ Profound transformations of language, languages and types of discourse through digital media, digital practices of communication (texting, e-mail, ...)



Contemporary culture and audiovisual production

Reading:

M. Castells et al.

« Mobile
Communication and
Society » (MIT Press
2006)

- Also: important sociocultural changes in dealing with information and knowledge production, sharing and diffusion:
 - ✓ the **production and dissemination of information** is no longer reserved for a professional elite;
 - ✓ the **transmission of information** is no longer restricted to institutions and professions in the education sector (school, university);
 - ✓ the **storing of information** is no longer reserved for heritage institutions such as libraries, archives, museums, ...).



Contemporary culture
and audiovisual
production

Reading:

M. Castells et al.

« Mobile
Communication and
Society » (MIT Press
2006)

□ These are, very generally speaking:

- ✓ the main features of **the world of amateur mass audiovisual production**
- ✓ in which, in principle, **practically anyone** can slip into **the role** of a ...
 - ... **videographer,**
 - ... **journalist,**
 - ... **critic,**
 - ... **(community) expert and adviser**
 - ... **teacher,**
 - ... **publisher,**
 - ... and finally, the (more or less active, ambitious, competent, ...) **spectator** ...



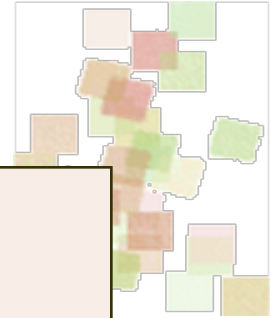
Contemporary culture
and audiovisual
production

- ❑ The images produced by and circulated among the millions and millions of amateur photographers and videographers are, for a **semiotician** or **(visual) anthropologist** ...
 - ✓ ... great and inexhaustible **corpus of data** allowing him/her to better understand:
 - the **actors** (any individuals, social groups, youth, adults, parents, ...) that produce them, circulate them, use, transmit, and store them,
 - the **world** (or rather worlds) inhabited by these actors (i.e. the objects and situations they can film, edit and forward or upload),
 - the **visions** and **values** promoted by these actors and with which they identify,
 - the **languages** they use and develop to express themselves and to communicate,
 - and, finally, the announcement of the **cultures of tomorrow**, cultures that will shape the social world for the coming generations.



Contemporary culture and audiovisual production

- ❑ However, this pervasive culture of production, circulation and appropriation of information through the medium of digital broadcasting represents, in terms of culture, a **radical break**:
 - ✓ the split between those who **participate** in this cultural game and others who **do not participate**
 - ✓ A break or disruption because of :
 1. ... **socio-economic** reasons (above all)
 2. ... of the **absence of competency** (i.e. the absence of an appropriate level of digital literacy)
 3. ... finally, sometimes also of the **deliberate refusal** to play the game.
- ❑ In other words: in mass amateur audiovisual productions – we don't see "everything" and not everyone is there, far from it!



Chapter 2

- A second amateur video clip: analysis and interpretation -





2nd example – a amateur video of visiting a temple in Taiwan

Reading:

A.J. Greimas et al.,
« **Sémiotique** »
(Hachette 1979)

P. Stockinger,
« **Document audiovisuel** »
(Hermès 2003)

- ❑ The analysis of a first sample video clip helped us:
 - ✓ ... to exemplify **an approach of describing** an audiovisual media object inspired by structural semiotics (cf. **A.J. Greimas, P. Stockinger; 2003**)
 - ✓ ... to understand the main **techniques of audiovisual authorship**: selecting objects, shots, "mise en image",
 - ✓ ... to understand the **different levels of topics (i.e. thematic structures)** that are involved in the development of a **message**, of a **discourse** taken to be specific to a filmed document or simply **inferred** by the reader / viewer.

- ❑ We will now consider:
 - ✓ ... a **second excerpt from an amateur video** whose author is of Taiwanese origin and who has his own "channel" on YouTube;



2nd example – a amateur video of visiting a temple in Taiwan

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- ❑ Before viewing this clip, some "facts":
 - ✓ The video is accessible via **You Tube**;
 - ✓ the name of its author is "**wongminjou**";
 - ✓ the length of the sample is **3 minutes 50 seconds**;
 - ✓ The video shows us the visit of the **Shueisian temple** in Dingcaiyan, Taiwan) by a group of tourists;
 - ✓ unlike the first clip presented in the first part, this one is **more developed**. It includes:
 - ... a kind of **title** in unsimplified Chinese (indicating the location of visit);
 - ... explanatory **subtitles**;
 - ... **orchestral music** (background) .
- ❑ Here is the **[online version of the video](#)** on You Tube.



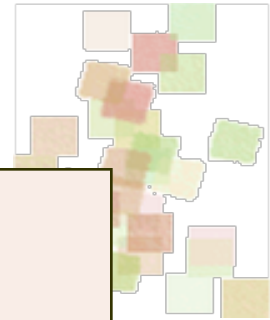
2nd example – a
amateur video of
visiting a temple in
Taiwan

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- ❑ Our description of this sample:
 - ✓ will be **more condensed, shorter** than the one of the first video clip;
 - ✓ will leave aside a detailed analysis of each visual plan.

- ❑ It will examine more particularly:
 1. The **pro-filmic situation itself** (more complex than that of the "visit of the Campidoglio square in Roma in the first video clip we analyzed);
 2. The development of **diegetic scenes** (i.e. that are part of the semantic structure of the audiovisual text) and their **syntagmatic assembly** into a "coherent whole";
 3. Some **features** of the ***mise en image*** of these scenes;
 4. The **underlying themes** of the clip, in particular, the messages
 5. The **wider consequences** of such an analysis ...



Chapter 3

- The pro-filmic situation -





2nd example – a
amateur video of
visiting a temple in
Taiwan

The pro-filmic situation

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- ❑ The pro-filmic situation --
 - ✓ ... is, in general, the situation, the **world** (social, historical, natural, ...) "as is" and prior to the shoot, to the "recording" of it
 - ✓ ... constitutes, in the strictest and most technical sense, the **referent of a filmic text**, i.e. its "**domain**" -
 - ... from which the author "**picks up**" or extracts moments, events, objects, etc. which ...
 - ... constitute the "**material**" of the **diegetic scenes** (descriptive, narrative, dialogical ...) that compose the content of a film.

- ❑ Furthermore, a pro-filmic situation may be captured:
 1. ... in a "**prepared**" form (i.e. directed in order to be recorded);
 2. ... in an "**unprepared**" form, nevertheless **modified** by the fact that it is in the midst of being captured;
 3. ... in an "**unprepared**" and "**unmodified**" form (i.e. the recording itself goes unnoticed).



2nd example – a
amateur video of
visiting a temple in
Taiwan

**The pro-filmic
situation**

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- ❑ In the framework of the **analysis (interpretation)** of a filmic text (such as our video clip) –
 - ✓ ... we can **only reconstruct** the pro-filmic situation.
- ❑ This **reconstruction** can:
 - ✓ 1 - be based on **extrapolations** from what we "**see**" in the filmic text
 - ☞ of importance here:
 - First, the distinction between "**within the visual frame**" and "**out of the visual frame**" and
 - second, the **spatiotemporal continuity** of the events, objects, ... themselves filmed and shown in a text, an audiovisual creation.
 - ✓ 2 - also rely on **other information** (knowledge of the world or environment that constitutes the referent of a film, rushes, ...)



2nd example – a
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**The pro-filmic
situation**

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- The fact is that in the case of the analysis of a filmic text, the pro-filmic situation **represents a hypothesis** (more or less certain, obvious ...) that...
 - ✓ ... it is important to clarify so as not to lose sight of the distinction:
 - i. between **the world "as it is"** (pro-filmic) and the **world as it is represented...** (diegetic)
 - ii. or between **the object, person, event, ...**
 - on the one hand, **"as they are"** and
 - on the second hand, as **filmed** and as a constituent of the **diegetic universe** of a text (audiovisual), however rudimentary or simple it may be.



2nd example – a amateur video of visiting a temple in Taiwan

The pro-filmic situation

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

❑ Some interesting **examples** here are:

✓ Film documents from the **early history** of film (late 19th century)

- for reasons that are primarily **technical** but also related to the absence of a technique of “**audiovisual writing**” (écriture”, in French) appropriate to the new medium,
- these documents merely sets a **static framework for recording** the flow of extra-diegetic events (i.e. belonging to the pro-filmic situation).

❑ **Two small online examples:**

✓ 1 / **The Gordon Highlanders** - a military parade (William Walker, 1899)

3 / **Prinsengracht** (Mutoscope, 1899 - Nederlands Filmmuseum): the camera on a barge moves while picking up moments, events and objects belonging to its referential world: the Prinsengracht Canal in Amsterdam on a sunny day in 1899)



2nd example – a amateur video of visiting a temple in Taiwan

The pro-filmic situation

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

□ **Explanation:**

- ✓ **The parade of the Highlanders** --
 - **moments extracted** from the parade, according to a certain point of view, without hierarchy, etc..:
 - **construction of reality** but not reality itself
- ✓ **Also - the boats on the canal (Prinsengracht), the small boat which avoids the collision:**
 - simple construction of the surrounding reality by "**copy**" (partial) and "**extraction**";
 - it's as if a man standing on a barge "retains" of the surrounding reality only those things that arrive "by chance" in his field of vision ...



2nd example – a amateur video of visiting a temple in Taiwan

The pro-filmic situation

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- **Note:** this very simple “audiovisual writing” (*écriture audiovisuelle*):
 - is certainly crucial, for technical reasons for the early history of the audiovisual medium
 - but is constantly used for various reasons throughout the history of this medium
 - especially since the advent of tools for capturing images and sounds such as **mobile phones** or the **ultra-portable digital camcorder**.
 - and constitutes a kind of **spontaneous** (but nevertheless very cultural) **transcription of reality** achieved through the use of these technical means.
- 2 examples of a (“raw”) shoot of a pro-filmic situation in the form of a single shot (of more or less long duration)
 - ✓ **Manifestation au Lycée Montgrand à Marseille** (December 2008)
 - ✓ **La petite démonstration de force des CRS** (Grenoble, April 2008)



2nd example – a amateur video of visiting a temple in Taiwan

The pro-filmic situation

Link:

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- ❑ Some comments on the document « **Manifestation au Lycée Montgrand à Marseille en décembre 2008** »:
 - ✓ **"raw" recording** consisting of one long continuous shot;
 - ✓ **this shot "extracts" a moment lasting** about 5 minutes from the event;
 - ✓ the pro-filmic situation began before the recording starts and continues after it stops.

- ❑ But this passage is neither neutral nor, of course, "comprehensive":
 - ✓ shoot of the clip = from the **point of view of the author-narrator**;
 - ✓ perspective **"from the students viewpoint"** (the police is always shown as a – visually and hence semantically - "opposite" elements);
 - ✓ perspective of a committed protagonist (the **"activist student"** vs. the **"committed policeman"** vs. a **neutral, omniscient, etc.. author**);

- ❑ It is therefore a visual document of the category **"activist testimony"**.

- ❑ **Same comments** for the other example: a film of a **riot squad intervention in Grenoble in April 2008**.



2nd example – a amateur video of visiting a temple in Taiwan

The pro-filmic situation

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- ❑ Returning to our clip:
 - ✓ The pro-filmic situation (the world as the referent of our video clip) can be identified roughly as --
 - “The visit of a Buddhist temple by a group of tourists”.
- ❑ Using a set of **information sources**, we can determine with a fair degree of accuracy:
 - ✓ which temple it is,
 - ✓ where it is located,
 - ✓ what it looks like
 - ✓ etc..
- ❑ Similarly, it would also be possible for us to identify fairly accurately some of the people we see in the film – by consulting a range of available information, services (social networks, ...).



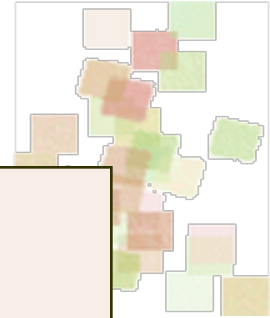
2nd example – a
amateur video of
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**The pro-filmic
situation**

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- ❑ In any case the **pro-filmic reality "overflows"**, so to speak, the selected representations in the film; it is much richer than its filmic representation.
- ❑ In our film clip, we notice among other things:
 - ✓ **people** riding a bicycle,
 - ✓ **people** forming a **group** in front of a building that we identify as a Buddhist temple,
 - ✓ **people** who are **listening** to someone, **moving**, **observing**, **taking pictures** of objects, ...
 - ✓ **facades**, exterior and interior, **paintings** and **figures** ...
 - ✓ **environments** that provide the context of the **temple**, different parts of the interior of the temple, people forming the group, etc..
- ❑ These can be thought of as extractions, which thus account for the **material** of the **scenes** that compose the **film's universe of meaning**.



Chapter 3

- Diegetic scenes -





2nd example – a amateur video of visiting a temple in Taiwan

Diegetic scenes

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- ❑ Concerning the concept of "scene":
- ❑ The **scene** should not be confused with the **shot** (visual, acoustic)
 - ✓ the shot: **technical unit** between two cuts of the camera;
 - ✓ the scene: **semantic unit** similar, by analogy, to that of a scene in the theatre (scene =
 - unity of **place**,
 - unity of **time**
 - unity of **action**,
 - **dialogic** unity,
 - ...);
 - ✓ the scene is therefore "staged" in a **single** shot or **multiple** shots, as a "**block**" or a **progressive construction**, etc..
 - ✓ in other words: a visual shot (with sound, ...) takes over the representation and development (partial) of a scene but is not identical with the scene.



2nd example – a amateur video of visiting a temple in Taiwan

Diegetic scenes

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

□ Typology of scenes developed in our video clip:

- ✓ **Scenes of learning:**
 - explanations of the temple by the guide;
 - listening to the guide's explanations;
 - visual examination of the objects in the temple,
- ✓ **Scenes of ownership or appropriation:**
 - ✓ taking pictures (details of the temple),
 - ✓ shooting (details of the temple, the group)
- ✓ **Scenes of interaction (rather limited):**
 - ✓ between group and guide;
 - ✓ between group members
 - ✓ between group members and the author (person who is filming)
- ✓ **Scenes of presentation of the setting, the context:**
 - ✓ scenes outside the temple
 - ✓ scenes in the temple
- ✓ **Scenes of coming together and moving around of the group**



2nd example – a
amateur video of
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Diegetic scenes

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- ❑ The analysis of the genres of scenes of an audiovisual document makes it possible to:
 - ✓ understand the **specificity** of its content (i.e. its semantic profile);
 - ✓ to understand, in terms of reciprocity, what an audiovisual document **shares** with other audiovisual productions;
 - ✓ to express assumptions as well about the **message** of the document;
 - ✓ to undertake **more targeted**, more **focused studies**, such as
 - the **type of visit** (of the museum) that is staged: field trip; standard visit (vs. coquetry, comedy, ...)
 - the staging of various **social roles**: the visitor, the guide, the group ...
 - **expressions of deference / respect or not-respect** of the cultural objects of reference (buildings, ...);
 - events, people, objects, ... which falls under the category "**souvenirs**," "**personal remembrance**".



2nd example – a amateur video of visiting a temple in Taiwan

Diegetic scenes

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

❑ Our video clip:

- ✓ is an excerpt that gives a clear priority to the **staging of persons, groups**, and therefore to a (**spontaneous**) "**sociology of the group**" (only two or three small scenes are really devoted to details - figures, murals - of the temple);
- ✓ we discover an interest in people who:
 - are spatially and intellectually **close to** the guide;
 - are **filming, photographing** (objects in the temple!);
 - signify with gestures their **attention**, their **participation**.
 - Thus: people who are "**applied**", "**interested**" and "**serious**";
- ✓ there's also a real interest in the **feminine gender** in the scenes of interaction between the author (who filmed) and people in the group.
- ❑ This clip is thus very different from the first clip analyzed in which the "**sociological dimension**" plays no role in favor of the location and its "**architectural**" features.



2nd example – a amateur video of visiting a temple in Taiwan

Diegetic scenes

Reading:

E. Goffman, « The Presentation of Self in Every Day Life » (Anchor 1959)

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- ❑ Without going into too much detail, what are the themes and the discourse conveyed by audiovisual this clip?
- ❑ The dominance of the "**sociological**" interest makes it clear that the theme is **social**, more particularly,
 - ✓ through the **figurative** theme of the "**small informal group**" (friends, colleagues, or simply those interested in the place)
 - ✓ as it is characterized through a kind of **connotative** (proprioceptive) halo:
 - people who listen => "**concentrated**", "**interested**"
 - people who make no noise => "**good conduct**", "**civilized**"
 - people who smile, but not too much => "**pleasing**", "**delicate**", ...
 - people who photograph the monument => "**active** in the preservation of traditions"
- ❑ Clearly, this type of analysis leads directly to the general issue:
 - ✓ **representation of oneself** (and the other)
 - ✓ in the sense of creation and management of a "**social face**" (according to E. Goffman).



2nd example – a
amateur video of
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Diegetic scenes

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- ❑ Note: we leave aside at this point a more detailed analysis of each of the scenes that account for the semantic level of the video clip.
- ❑ That said, a more detailed and explicit analysis of a scene requires a **set of parameters** such as:
 - ✓ **Actors and Roles:** Who are the actors involved in a scene (people, groups, anthropomorphic beings, ...) and what roles they will perform?
 - ✓ **Location:** where does the scene take place?
 - ✓ **Action:** what are the actions and activities that organize the scene?
 - ✓ **Time:** when, at what particular moment does a scene take place? How long does it last?
 - ✓ **Setting:** what is the context (social, natural, symbolic, ...) in which the scene takes place?



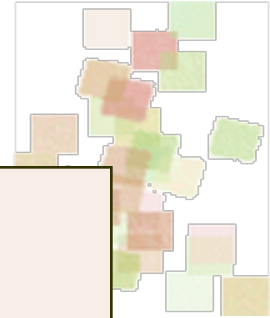
2nd example – a amateur video of visiting a temple in Taiwan

Diegetic scenes

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- ✓ **Shot:** In which shot(s) is the scene visualised, represented and developed?
- ✓ **Auditory shot,** what is the acoustic background of the scene - music, sound, speech, ...
- ✓ **Mise en image:** what are the techniques used for the *mise en image* of the scene –
 - Point of view,
 - Framing (shot setup)
 - Visual field/ out of frame or reverse field,
 - camera movement,
 - ...
- ✓ **Location in the edit/montage:** where does the scene take place within the narrative trajectory that characterizes the edit of an audiovisual text?
- ✓ **Thematic levels and purpose reconstruction:** what are the main iconic/figurative themes (topics)? how to characterize the “connotative halo”? What discourse purpose?



Chapter 4

- Comments on the edit/montage of the amateur video clip -





2nd example – a
amateur video of
visiting a temple in
Taiwan

Montage

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- ❑ Without going into too much detail, we can realize quite easily that the editing, i.e. the syntagmatic integration of scenes into a coherent whole, is dominated by **three major moments**:
 - ✓ **First**: the coming together of the group of tourists getting ready to go biking together;
 - ✓ **Second**: the group meeting in front of the Buddhist temple they are going to visit:
 - Waiting for the arrival of the guide to the temple
 - Commentary of the guide in front of the temple to the group about to enter the temple
 - ✓ **Third**: the visit of the temple interior:
 - Entering the temple
 - Finally, a succession of several scenes in different places within the temple
- ❑ Everything ends in a rather impromptu way with a scene inside the temple



2nd example – a
amateur video of
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Montage

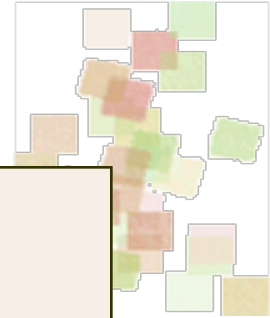
Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- ❑ The **principle of construction** of this edit/montage is very simple:
 - ✓ the **chronology of a visit** (= the most important moments punctuating the visit) +
 - ✓ the **significant places of the visit** (meeting place, the waiting area outside the museum, place of visit itself)

- ❑ The chronology of **important moments** and the spatial itinerary through **significant places** of the visit:
 - ✓ serve therefore to **edit** and **integrate**, one after the other, each of the different scenes,
 - ✓ in order to produce a "**movie of memories** (**personal? for the whole group?**)" around a day of visiting a monument

- ❑ This is a fairly typical edit for amateur audiovisual productions whose goal seems to keep "**historical traces**" of personal "**memories**", for the family or small informal groups (friends, colleagues, ...).



Chapter 5

- Comments on the *mise en image* of situations
in the amateur video clip -





2nd example – a
amateur video of
visiting a temple in
Taiwan

Mise en image

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- ❑ *Mise en image*: Here, we focus on one particular aspect, namely the **movement of the camera** which is very significant in our case ...
- ❑ **Reminder: Camera Movement - three major types:**
 - ✓ **pan** (panoramique)
 - ✓ **tracking** ("travelling")
 - ✓ **zoom** ("optical travelling")
- ❑ The most frequently used in our clip: the **pan** and the **zoom**.
- ❑ Important for the **study of the gaze/the "visual assessment"** (of the person who is filming) directed towards the other with a varying degree of **"insistence"**
- ❑ Here: supple **circular movements** mimicking the movements of the **body** and especially the **gaze** that tries to embrace a situation or a particular detail of a situation
- ❑ Study of **psychological focus**, of **"centres of interest"** and their translation into a **specific set of gestures** ...

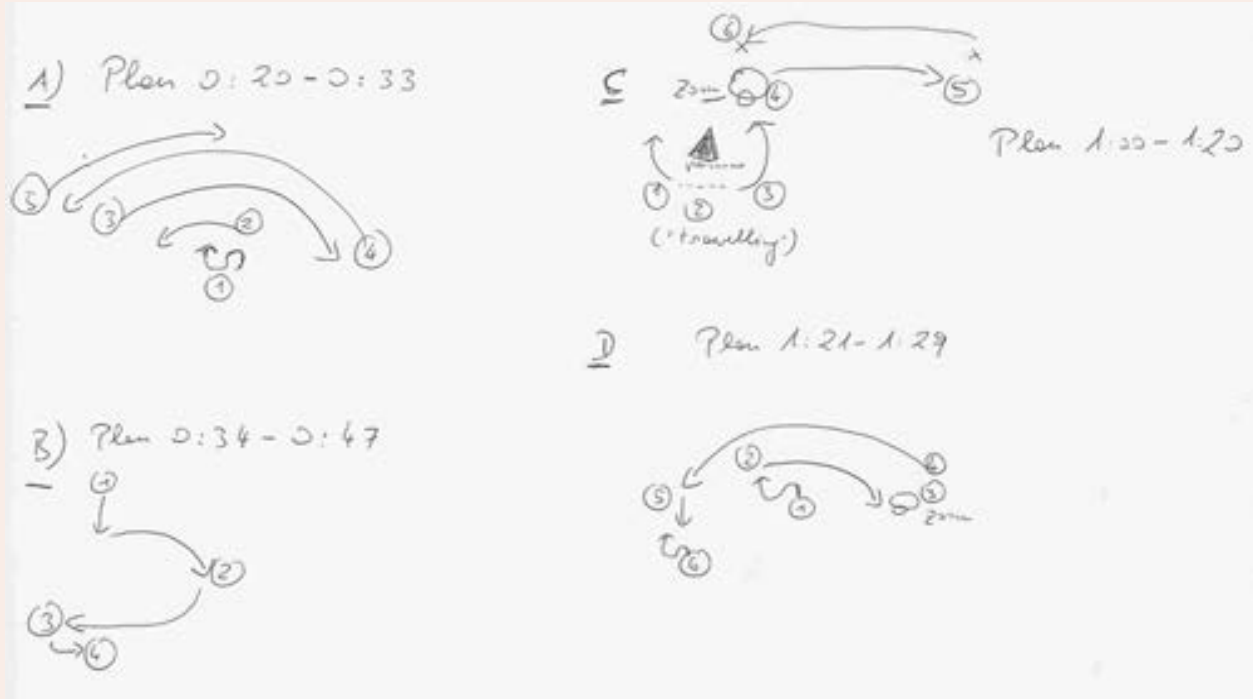
2nd example – a amateur video of visiting a temple in Taiwan

Mise en image

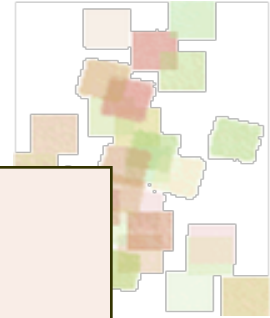
Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- Here are some typical figures (« plastic figures ») of the camera movements in our video clip.



- These figures constitute the **visual texture** of the filmic document
- Visual texture that copes, renders the **psychological evidence** of a « **bodily rooted** » video



Chapter 6

- Some general remarks -





2nd example – a
amateur video of
visiting a temple in
Taiwan

General observations

Link:

[The amateur video](#)

- ❑ The systematic study of this kind of audiovisual clip can - and should - be **expanded in different directions**, for example:
 - ✓ other productions **by the same author** (i.e., in our case, "wongminjou");
 - ✓ **amateur productions of comparable scope** (travel, friends, family, ...);
 - ✓ **productions** belonging to the history of audiovisual media;
 - ✓ and, finally, the different audiovisual genres including, in particular, **documentaries** and **reportages**.

- ❑ Interest:
 - ✓ Deepening the sociological issues of **representation**, including that of **self-representation**;
 - ✓ Analysis of **major themes** running through, for example, amateur productions about travel, tourism, people, friends, etc..
 - ✓ Comparative work on **audiovisual writing** (shot, edit, *mise en image*)
 - ✓ ...



2nd example – a
amateur video of
visiting a temple in
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General observations

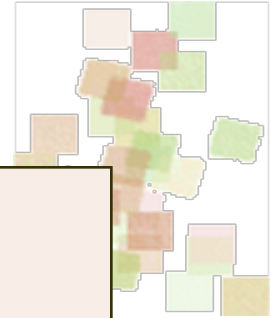
- ❑ Examples for expanding our study of the video clip featuring the visit of a monument, a touristic location;
 - ✓ "Personal Archives" from "wongminjou" [Wongminjou's Channel](#) (following the terminology required by YouTube)
 - ✓ [The Travel Film Archive](#) containing a large number of professional and amateur films, contemporary and also historical
 - ✓ [EU Screen](#) – the European portal of audiovisual heritage (Fashion, Holidays, Lifestyle, Landscape, ...)
 - ✓ [INA.fr](#) - the portal of the Institute National de l'Audiovisuel, which contains a great many hours of TV (and also amateur) productions on the theme of tourism



2nd example – a
amateur video of
visiting a temple in
Taiwan

General observations

- ❑ For a historical perspective:
- ❑ **Burton Holmes Film Reels of Travel**
 - ✓ 1 – Seeing Paris 1920 ([Part 1](#); [Part 3](#))
 - ✓ 2 – [Around the World in 4 Minutes](#) (1920)
 - ✓ 3/ [Highlights of Village Life](#) – The Neareast Mission of the American Board (1920)
- ❑ [Cinémémoire – Cinémathèque des films amateur de Marseille](#) for families and fans collecting and distributing films on Marseille, the south of France and former French colonies.
- ❑ [Europa Film Treasures](#) – an online video library providing access to documentaries, reportages and amateur films on topics that interest us here



Chapter 7

- For further training and preparation... -





3rd example – “Moving Memories”

- ❑ Viewing at home of the third sample of an edit/montage of filmic shoots of Japanese amateur filmmakers in the first half of the 20th century representing every day scenes of their community living in California and Oregon, USA.

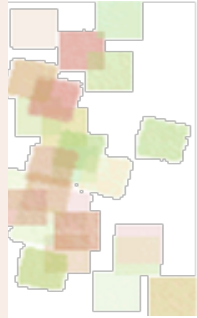
- ✓ Access to the montage « [Moving Memories](#) » (edited by Robert A. Nakamura of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, USA).



3rd Part

- The analysis and interpretation of « Moving Memories » -

a montage of amateur films made by Japanese
immigrants in the United States between 1920 and 1936





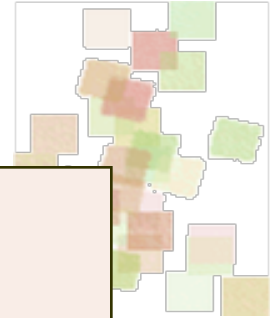
3rd example – “Moving Memories”

- ❑ Today, we’ll be working together on a rather exceptional filmic document.
 - ✓ We’ll be seeing a series of films made by Japanese amateur filmmakers between 1920 and 1936.
 - ✓ The Japanese filmmakers were part of the Japanese immigration movement to the United States’ west coast (California and Washington).
 - ✓ The series of films are part of the film collection of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles – film collection documenting the history of the Japanese community in USA.



3rd example – “Moving Memories”

- ❑ Some few words concerning **Japanese immigration** and Japanese community in USA:
 - ✓ The Japanese immigration to USA started in the last decades of the 19th century due to economic reasons.
 - ✓ The Japanese community in the United States:
 - had prospered greatly during the first decades of the 20th century
 - before being persecuted and sequestered into camps following the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 by the Japanese army.
 - ✓ Like many other communities, the Japanese community in the United States:
 - is fighting to have recognize the wrongs it suffered in the past,
 - to preserve its cultural heritage,
 - and to have a much better representation in public life, namely in American media.



Chapter 1

- The montage of the amateur films produced by the Japanese immigrants -





3rd example – “Moving Memories”

Links

- 1) The montage
« [Moving Memories](#) »
- 2) [Analytical guide](#)

- ❑ Before starting to vision the filmic document, some small explanations.
- ❑ This course is intended to provide a refined and explicit analysis of **one sequence belonging to the edit/montage** in question, as well as the various filmic shots that compose it.
- ❑ The systematic exploration and interpretation of a video montage from a **“culturalist”/intercultural perspective** will be done around the following three axes:
 - ✓ 1/ Analysis of the filmed **scenes** and “typology” of scenes.
 - ✓ 2/ Interpreting, explaining, and commenting the filmed scenes.
 - ✓ 3/ The importance of this filmic montage for the problematics of **“media, cultural diversity, and interculturality”**:
 - **specific goal**: put forth an interpretation of the edit/montage that considers its role in building a certain vision of Japanese immigration to the U.S.A
 - **overall objective** is to better understand how a film develops one vision of historical and social reality to its audience.



3rd example –
“Moving Memories”

Links

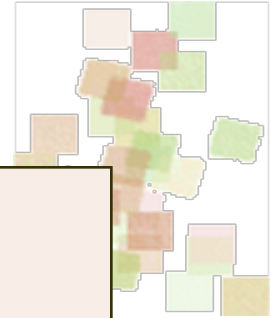
- 1) The montage
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❑ In concrete terms, we are going to proceed through the following steps:

1. First of all, we will simply watch the filmic document and then have an informal discussion about it.
2. Next, we will re-watch intensively the second sequence of the montage and analyze it in detail.
3. Finally, we will discuss a small questionnaire I have prepared and which will help us to produce a well argued description and interpretation of the montage.

❑ Note: don't be surprised by the occasional commentaries. The montage was prepared for the 2007-2008 seminar "[International Migrations](#) " by Monica Raisa Schpun (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, E.H.E.S.S.) in Paris.

❑ [Access the online version of this edit/montage – Enjoy!](#)



Chapter 2

- Some explanatory commentaries -





3rd example –
“Moving Memories”

**General
observations**

Links

- 1) The montage
« [Moving Memories](#) »
- 2) [Analytical guide](#)

- ❑ Some commentaries:
- ❑ The montage “Moving Memories”(created by Robert A. Nakamura; produced by Karen L. Ishizuka) shows us scenes from the daily live of the Japanese community during the first half of the 20th century:
 - ✓ family life,
 - ✓ work,
 - ✓ school,
 - ✓ social life,
 - ✓ celebrations,
 - ✓ athletic competitions,
 - ✓ etc.
- ❑ The montage is composed of:
 - ✓ black and white films
 - ✓ that are accompanied by “overlaid” music (added later)
 - ✓ with a few voiced-over commentaries here and there.
- ❑ The entire filmic document is presented as a montage by the [Japanese American National Museum](#) in Los Angeles, California.



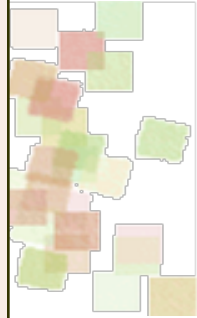
3rd example –
“Moving Memories”

General observations

Links

- 1) The montage
« [Moving Memories](#) »
- 2) [Analytical guide](#)

- ❑ The whole montage “Moving Memories” is composed of eight main episodes + 2 paratextual sequences:
 1. **Generique**
 2. **1st episode:** presentation of “Moving memories” by R.A. Nakamura (reference to Japanese tradition and contribution to modern USA)
 3. **2nd episode:** Home movies from Georges Keiichiro Sayan (mainly: family life, private scenes)
 4. **3rd episode:** Home movies from Kurakichi Nishikawa (mainly: agricultural work and prosperity);
 5. **4th episode:** Home movies from Naokichi Hashizumi (mainly: family life and urban scenes)
 6. **5th episode:** Home movies from Masahachi Nakata (work life, private scenes, commemorative scenes, recreational scenes, urban life scenes)
 7. **6th episode:** Home movies from Setsuo Aratani (working scenes, social happenings, community life scenes)
 8. **7th episode:** Home movies from Hiromi Inouye (community scenes)
 9. **8th episode:** Home movies from Reverend Sensho Sasaki (community scenes)
 10. “Sayonara”.



3rd example – “Moving Memories”

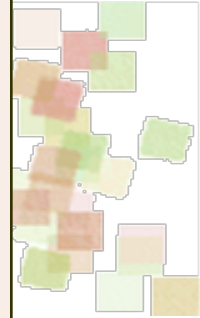
General observations

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- ❑ Each episode includes a **selection of filmic shots** done by **one single amateur filmmaker**.
- ❑ This detail is important, because it means we must differentiate two analytical levels that it is imperative not to confuse:
 - ✓ **1st analytical level:**
 - the **“filmic shots”** by an amateur filmmaker depicting various sciences of daily life of the Japanese community during the 1920-1936 period.
 - ✓ **2nd analytical level:**
 - the **“montage”** done by a person or a team from the Japanese American National Museum. This refers to the entire succession of filmic shots and their linear organization, which was done by the directors of the montage.





3rd example –
“Moving Memories”

General
observations

Links

- 1) The montage
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- ❑ In other words:
- ❑ 1/ the *filmic shot* may be considered as an historical document showing us –
 - ✓ **how certain representatives** (obviously from a rather affluent upper-middle-class) of Japanese immigration from the early 20th century up to 1936
 - ✓ **saw themselves and community life** in the United States.
- ❑ The filmic shot **does not show** us social reality “as it is”
 - ✓ but rather **one vision** and a model based on that vision fashioned by
 - ✓ the **knowledge, values, desires, interests, etc.** of the person(s) that made it.





3rd example – “Moving Memories”

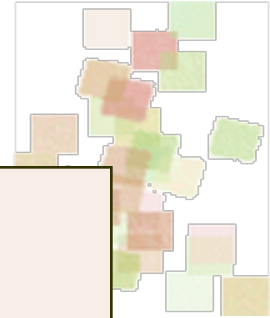
General observations

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- ❑ 2/ on the other hand, the *montage of selected shots* must be considered
 - ✓ as a document that shows us how one **interprets, reconstructs** the **past**,
 - ✓ and **writes/rewrites it** (to use a term of French historian **Michel de Certeau**) with respect
 - to the **present** of the author of the montage and
 - with respect to the **“contemporary culture”** that constitutes his/her cognitive and affective referential framework.





Chapter 3

- The sequence « Home movies from Georges Keiichiro Sayan » -





3rd example –
 “Moving Memories”

“Home Movies”
 from G.K. Sayan

Links

- 1) The montage
 « [Moving Memories](#) »
- 2) [Analytical guide](#)

❑ Systematic description of the 2nd episode:

1. The **scenes** composing this episode;
2. The **composition of the scenes**: actors, roles, activities, objects, ...;
3. The **edit/montage** of the sequence;
4. The role of the **narrator** (« voice over »);
5. The **thematic interpretation** of the first sequence: **figurative** level, the **cultural** level and the « **pathemic** » (emotional) level;
6. The distinction between « **realized text** » and « **potential text** » or the distinction of what is « shown » and what is « not shown ».



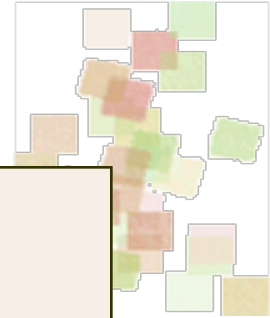
3rd example –
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- ❑ Access to the sequence « [Home movies from Georges Keiichiro Sayan](#) »
- ❑ Scenes:
 - ✓ Some **13 scenes** (for a more detailed description, consult the document « [Scenes and shots composing the sequence ...](#) »)
- ❑ Typology of scenes:
 - ✓ **Domestic scenes**
 - Playing/amusements and sport
 - housework (domestic work)
 - ✓ **People scenes**
 - family scene
 - scenes with elder generation
 - scenes with young generation
 - scenes with domestic workers
 - ✓ **Symbolic scenes (flags)**
 - ✓ **Deictic scenes vs « referential 3rd person » scenes**
 - self-presentation in front of camera



Chapter 4

- Some commentaries -





Some general observations:

1 - Visual captation of pro-filmic situation:

- ✓ dominance of the relationship « 1 pro-filmic situation <-> 1 visual shot » :
 - a rather simple "intellectual" construction: no real filmic development of a situation into a diegetic « scene »,
 - as this would be the case for example, in documentaries, fiction films, etc.

2 - Music/sound

- ✓ no real development of the contest between the pro-filmic situation /shot and the sound level (orchestral music):
 - music is here primarily to "paint" a mood, an emotionality that is applied, in an undifferentiated way, to everything we see (and hear).

3rd example –
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- 1) The montage
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3rd example –
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3 - The level of the **narrator (voice over)** :

✓ **Two movements:**

- the first (scenes 3 and 4 included) where narrator gives his/her interpretation,
- and then a second (from the scene 5 on) where the narrator is absent.

✓ The narrator provides a **framework for the understanding/ interpretation of what we see** –

- either by commenting on the various scenes or providing information not conveyed in the images: historical context, the fate of a particular person, etc..)
- #### ✓ Once this work is completed, he leaves the edit/montage –
- and the audience can appreciate on its own the rest of the images accompanied by music as a kind of proof of what the narrator has already told them...



3rd example –
"Moving Memories"

"Home Movies"
from G.K. Sayan

Links

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4 - Relationship between "people filmed <--> camera":

- ✓ 1 - Some shots show **some real staging for the camera** (and thus reveal posterior decision-making):
 - the three girls who form a group,
 - the group of teenagers posing for the camera,
 - the elderly couple advancing towards the camera.
- ⇒ = "staging" of the pro-filmic situation for filming
- ✓ 2 - Some other shots: **some people discover they are being filmed** and direct their gaze (approvingly) towards the eye of the camera
 - ⇒ = pro-filmic situation changed by the presence of the camera, the possibility of being filmed
- ✓ 3 - Third category of shots: the **people are unaware of the filming**, the camera interprets "freely" the filmed situation...
 - ⇒ = pro-filmic situation "as is"



5 - The **edit/montage** : (shot by shot and scene by scene)

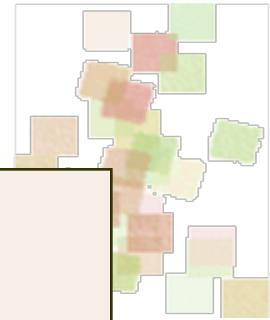
- ✓ **Double syntagmatic** (here: linear) **construction** of the principle sequence:
 - 1 / **establishment of the social framework** (family, level of affluence, leisure);
 - 2/ **progressive construction** of a **double social relationship**
 - 2.1/ between "master" and "maid"
 - 2.2/ between "youth" and "adults" (i.e. - metaphorically - between "success" and "what guarantees the reproduction of social success")

3rd example –
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Chapter 5

- The filmed situations (objects, people, activities, ...) -





3rd example –
“Moving Memories”

“Home Movies”
from **G.K. Sayan**: The
filmed situations

Links

- 1) The montage
« [Moving Memories](#) »
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□ The principal types of filmed situations (objects, people, ...) of the first sequence and its 13 scenes, are :

- ✓ 1 – General (social) setting
- ✓ 2 – Actors assuming specific roles
- ✓ 3 – Activities
- ✓ 4 – Location
- ✓ 5 – Time
- ✓ 6 – Artifacts, objects
- ✓ 7 - Expressions



3rd example –
 “Moving Memories”

“Home Movies”
 from G.K. Sayan: The
 filmed situations

Links

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- ❑ **1 – General (social) setting :**
 - ✓ the domestic life
- ❑ **2 - The actors** assuming, each one a specific **role** (defined below):
 - ✓ The child (children);
 - ✓ The young girl (in a group of two or three);
 - ✓ The young man;
 - ✓ The father/the mother (the parents);
 - ✓ The adult;
 - ✓ The elderly couple ;
 - ✓ The workers
 - ✓ ...



3rd example –
 “Moving Memories”

“Home Movies”
 from **G.K. Sayan**: The
 filmed situations

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❑ 3 - Activities :

✓ *“Leisure”/“not finalized”:*

- playing in the garden, rolling in the grass, going out (for a stroll?), pushing a push-chair, ...

✓ *“Mutually reinforcing” :*

- getting into a group, showing the group, hugging another person, smiling (at someone, something or the camera)

✓ *“Domestic work”*

- hammering, shoveling, carrying a box, sewing, ...

❑ 4 - Locations :

✓ garden, in front of houses, streets of a residential area

❑ 5 - Time :

✓ day



3rd example –
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❑ 6 - Artifacts, objects :

✓ Clothing

- *female - unmarked vs. elegant, fluid, modern*
- *adult male* (unmarked vs. elegant, creased trousers, long- and short -sleeved shirt , hat ...)
- *child* (shorts, shirt, ...)
- *sports* (for judo/karate)

✓ Non-functional Object (push-chair, ...) vs Functional object/Tool (box, hammer, shovel, needle, fabric, ...)

✓ Buildings

- house – exterior; covered hall; ...

✓ Created Environment

- garden, park



3rd example –
 “Moving Memories”

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□ 7 - Expressions :

✓ Facial expressions:

- smiling, squinting (smile)

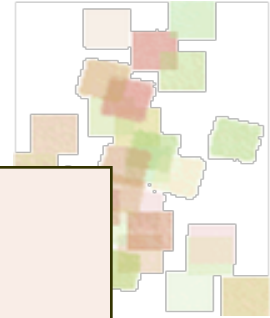
✓ Gestures and posture:

▪ *Non-finalised expressions:*

- movements of greeting, holding one hand in the other, hand resting on the shoulders of someone...;
- slow walk becoming an upright posture;
- position behind another person and one person moving slightly backwards in relation to another;
- female bodies moving in synchrony;
- rolling on the ground; ...

▪ *Finalised expressions:*

- work routines
- « purposeful movements »



Chapter 6

- The thematic dimension of social roles -





3rd example –
 “Moving Memories”

“Home Movies”
 from G.K. Sayan: The
 social roles

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❑ The « figurative » dimension of social roles:

❑ We discover in this sequence:

- ✓ A **typical family setting** that is *also* a setting with domestic help. Indeed, there are:
 - on the one hand, **“the masters, the lords”** and
 - on the other **“the domestic help, who work”**.

❑ Two main social roles:

- ✓ the role of the **“master”** (who is not working, having fun and posing, ...)
- ✓ and the role of the **“domestic help”** (who are working)



3rd example –
"Moving Memories"

"Home Movies"
from G.K. Sayan: The
social roles

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- ❑ The world of the "master":
 - ✓ **differentiated staging**, nuanced couples (H / F), groups, individuals of all ages (children, the elderly, youth, ...)
- ❑ The world of the "domestics help":
 - ✓ there is **no such well differentiated staging**: one woman, two women, three men shown separately
 - ✓ **Note**: in the other sequences of the montage "Moving Memories", the role of "**the socially deprived**" (represented by the workers, ...)
 - ✓ is typically staged via the "**mass**"-
 - the mass of people "who work the land, who carry the wood, who saw wood, etc..)



3rd example –
 “Moving Memories”

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 from **G.K. Sayan**: The
 social roles

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- ❑ Contrarily, the role of "master" is in fact represented / composed by an **orchestra of actors** (while this is not the case for the role of domestic help!)
 - ✓ The **child** : “master of the future”;
 - ✓ The **young girl, the young boy**: a character who has to transfer this role from de generation to generation;
 - ✓ The **father/the mother (the parents)**: who take care of the success of the social reproduction of the “master” role;
 - ✓ The **adult**: who is the representation itself of the (social, economic, ... success) and hence the symbol of the “master”
 - ✓ The **elderly couple**: who represents the tradition, the (long) history of the “master”, a sort of its “ennoblement”.



3rd example –
 “Moving Memories”

“Home Movies”
 from **G.K. Sayan**: The
 social roles

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□ **How to determine these social roles ?** Through clusters of visual items “showing”:

1 - the **“circulation”** (A.J. Greimas) **of objects between actors:**

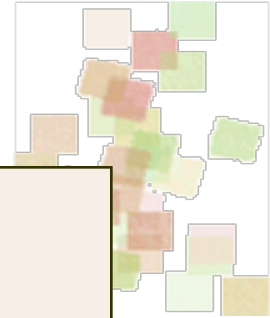
- who has – “is in junction with” - which (functional, non-functional, clothing, ... object(s)?

2 – the **activities that occupy people:**

- who exercises which activity?

3 – the **occupancy of places** by people:

- who occupies which places?



Chapter 7

- The thematic dimension of *cultural affiliation* -





3rd example –
 “Moving Memories”

“Home Movies”
 from **G.K. Sayan**: The
 cultural affiliation

Links

- 1) The montage
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- ❑ Important theme in this edit/montage:
 - ✓ the **“Western style”** of the people in the edit/montage (= another sociocultural theme).
- ❑ This is a **general cultural theme**, i.e. in the sense that it expounds the problem of:
 - ✓ **cultural rootedness,**
 - ✓ **acknowledgment of a specific identity,**
 - ✓ **invitation to be considered with respect to a given set of references (cultural references), ...**
- ❑ In this edit/montage, the **“Western style”** is represented through items such as:
 - ✓ the **housing**
 - ✓ the **clothing,**
 - ✓ the **urban surrounding,**
 - ✓ the **(leisure) activities,**
 - ✓ **etc.**



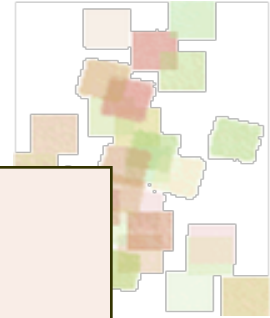
3rd example –
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- ❑ Once more again, in order to **determine an “abstract” cultural theme**, to demonstrate that it “really” exists in an audiovisual text such as this edit/montage ...:
 - ✓ ... we have to examine specific classes of **figurative themes**, of figures such as
 - **artifacts, buildings, tools and instruments;**
 - **activities and social practices;**
 - **bodily expressions and verbal expressions;**
 - **social networks;** ...
- ❑ But the next question is the following one: *this “western style”* --
 - is it only a sort of **“superficial, visible adaptation”** ?
 - or also a **psychological, an “inner” one** ?
- ❑ How to handle such a – “psychological” - question ?



Chapter 8

- The thematic dimension of *pathos* -





3rd example –
 “Moving Memories”
“Home Movies”
 from **G.K. Sayan**: The
 pathos

Links

- 1) The montage
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- ❑ The thematic organization:
 - ✓ the **“pathos” of the actors** (places, objects, expressions, ...)
- ❑ **Invariant theme** : Family and domestic **happiness** and the **absence of violent opposition**
- ❑ Another theme – the **pathos** (the **“emotion”**) one can experience through the (figurative) presentation of the actors representing the role of the **“master”**:
 - ✓ the **children** -> joy, “the little wild ones”
 - ✓ the **young teens** (girls and boys) -> “levity and carelessness but restrained” (going out together, forming a group but one that doesn’t squabble (“as toddlers do...”))
 - ✓ the **adults** -> protection, gravitas, ...
 - ✓ the **elderly** -> accomplishment, stature, ...



3rd example –
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 from **G.K. Sayan**: The
 pathos

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- 1) The montage
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- ❑ Question: how to determine this kind of « **proprioceptive** » themes?
- ❑ Once more again in analyzing carefully clusters of **iconic** and **plastic** « items » as well as **figurative** themes:
 - ✓ the expressions (facial, gestures ...) : who represents him/herself in what way?
 - ✓ the activities : who does what?
 - ✓ the “circulation” of objects: which objet “belongs” whom?
 - ✓ ...



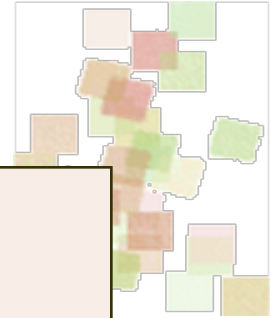
3rd example –
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 pathos

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- ❑ The problem here is, once more again :
 - ✓ the “passage” from the **iconic** and **plastic percept** to the **figure** and then
 - ✓ from the figure to the “abstract” (**pathemic**) theme.

- ❑ Example: *“Smile in the direction of the camera”*
 - ✓ 1: **twisting** of the mouth, synchronous movement of the head and fixing the gaze
 - ✓ 2: the visual figure of the **smile** that is directed towards someone, a target
 - ✓ 3: (connotative – affective, emotional, ... -) stance standing for (graceful, discrete, tactful, ..) **“openness”, “cordiality”, “heartliness”...**



Chapter 9

- The potential text and the realized text -





3rd example –
“Moving Memories”

“Home Movies”
from **G.K. Sayan**: The
potential text and the
realized text

Links

- 1) The montage
« [Moving Memories](#) »
- 2) [Analytical guide](#)

- ❑ The **potential text** vs the **realized text**
- ❑ This is to ask the question:
 - ✓ What the text **does not show** (does not stage), what it **excludes**.
 - ✓ But what it could - **potentially** – have shown
 - ✓ and what that might mean in terms of **changing the meaning** of the text and of the visions and perspectives transmitted by the text.
- ❑ **Examples of such “thematic exclusions”**
 - ✓ Presence of **other ethnic communities** in the montage “Moving Memories” ?
 - ✓ People from the Japanese community **received in other communities** ?
 - ✓ **Socially antagonistic situations?**
 - ✓ **Reasons of immigration?**
 - ✓ ...



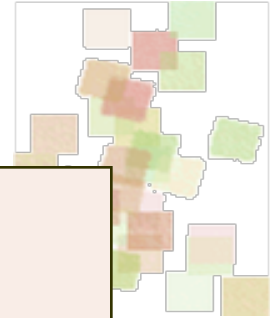
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potential text and the
realized text

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- 2) [Analytical guide](#)

- ❑ The “**potential text**”:
 - ✓ is the “**universe**” composed of all those themes that are more or less possible with respect to a given text;
 - ✓ the realized text is one possibility of the potential text based on the **selection** and **exclusion** (and also **forgetting**) of themes
- ❑ The “**thematic exclusion**” or again the “**thematic forgetting**” that characterizes a text:
 - ✓ is a crucial question for understanding the role of the audiovisual text in the **production** and **transmission** of **cultural vision** and of representations of oneself and the world.
- ❑ The **questioning** of the “thematic exclusion” or “forgetting” in a text also helps us:
 - ✓ to understand better the **constructive/constructural nature of an audiovisual text**
 - ✓ and to (critically) “**deconstruct**” (cf. Jacques Derrida) the visual evidences as what they are, viz.: human constructions based on ideologies (knowledge, values, assumptions, conventions, ...).



Appendix

- The group work -





Group work

The group work:

- ❑ The whole « class » divides in **small groups of two students**;
 1. each group **visions several time** the whole edit/montage « Moving Memories »;
 2. tries to **analyse critically** this edit/montage with the help of the questionnaire;
 3. and produces a **small written report** that has to be sent to me till the end of november 2009.
 4. once evaluated, these reports will be **published on the web site** of this course.

- ❑ In order to realise this « home work », three resources:
 1. **Questionnaire** to guide the critical viewing of this edit/montage.
 2. **Guide** for working with a video clip.
 3. **Guide** to write ups (in word format).