

Understanding Cinema - Climate

Training Session

Autumn 2015

Getting to Know the Group

Favourite film of the last few years.

Introduction

What exactly is climate?

It comes from a Greek word. It was created by ancient geographers, who divided the weather in to 24 zones.

The official definition is now about how regions are affected - it's tied in to locale.

Where you are. Micro climates, too.

Session Sturcture:

- Intro
- Training
- Rules of the Game
- Ex 3
- Any Questions

Weather – Noun

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| 1 | 1 | The day-to-day meteorological conditions, esp temperature, cloudiness, and rainfall, affecting a specific place . |
| | 2 | (Modifier) relating to the forecasting of weather ⇒ a weather ship |
| 2 | | A prevailing state or condition |

Climate – Noun

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| 1 | | The long-term prevalent weather conditions of an area, determined by latitude, position relative to oceans or continents, altitude, etc |
| 2 | | An area having a particular kind of climate |
| 3 | | A prevailing trend or current of feeling ⇒ ■ the political climate |

Warm Up Exercise

Identify different types of weather phenomena & seasons – describe images that come to your mind when you think of them.

- What sensations do they engender?
- Mask & counter-mask
- What movies can you think of with elements of these weather in them?

Key Concept – Film as a Medium of Choice

Remember that film is a medium of choice.

- The film maker has chosen to show you this image – why have they chosen to show it to you?
What do they want you to think about, consciously or subconsciously?

The glory of working with the elements such as this is that we relate to them in a subconscious way.

- There are archetypes of behaviour and thought that we associate with weather in an instant. It's a very powerful medium.
It gives us so much information.

Training Session

The meteorologists in ancient time had two approaches:

- to declare what was there and what was to come,
- They used instruments to measure weather factors, which then went in to mathematical models now.

It's also tied in to military interests.

- Crimea and the weather. If they had been aware that the weather was going to cause the French such trouble in battle they would have had a chance of winning. So they asked a meteorologist to figure things out for them.

The code that the meteorologist founded is still used to define the weather today.

A founding historian Emmanuel Le Roy Laudurie - history of the climate since 1000.

- A farmer's son.
- He wanted to prove how climactic fluctuations could have a physical affect on the lives of men.
- He used historical records from christenings and other contextual records to figure out the past weather. And thermo metrical registers for the last 200 years.

He notices the cycle of weather and how that affected the lives of people.

- How it affected political matters, industry and every day life.
- How the weather impacted on people.
- There were storms before the French Revolution believe it or not.

Core concept: Meteorology is not a science on its own, but one that unites all the sciences together.

Storm hunters

The secularisation of the weather – in relation to God & Man

The Scots words for snow

Weather and Film

It's hard to film the climate.

- It happens in a large space and on a large scale, we can but film small instance of it.

- The filming of ice on the news, small details give us the bigger picture.
- Comparison as a principal element within this.
- Focussing on the details gives the larger picture.

Climate is a localised phenomenon.

- Think of our climate compared to that of the other groups across the world, such as in Guadeloupe.

Climate surrounds and envelops what we film.

Weather is an unifying phenomenon, one that binds us all together.

Cinema allows us to see that after the rain there's the sun.

The weather is real. This is vital.

It's s real thing. We can't fake it with ease.

Will look at interior and exterior - and the intersections between them.

Rain

Summer with Monika – 2 mins clip

It's not a metaphorical scene representing anything, it's just simply the weather and how it affects them.

Look at the way the image moves – the ripples, the clouds.

What do we think it means?

The Little Fugitive – Start at 0.43 – 5.29

How people react in the rain.

It's about finding the little brother, and how the weather gets in the way, and then how he refinds him. The weather distances the people, and allows him to find his brother.

It's a real storm. They knew it would work for their story when they filmed it.

In this extract the rain - the rain is the cause, but we see the effects of the rain.

The drops etc. The idea of the storm is better illustrated by the details than by the global picture of the storm.

Notice that the shots are very documentary like.

The Bicycle Thieves - 3mins 15

Notice how the rain makes all the bicycles go off...

Notice the editing.

What in their behaviour shows that the weather is raining?

Walden – 40 seconds / 1 min / 3 mins 49

Autumn; Summer; Winter / Spring

About creating the impression of the seasons. Think of it as a visual poem.

- How does it make you feel?

The polar opposite is where the weather represents an emotional reality for the character.

Casablanca - 2 mins 10

How the rain acts as the tears of Rick & Elsa on the note, left out in the street.

Parting in the rain – but she never comes.

Taxi Driver – 3 or 4 mins

The manipulation of weather to create a sensational response.

What is the sensational response you have to the weather depicted in this clip?

Breakfast at Tiffany's – Full clip 9 mins

The unifying nature of the rain.

The artificial nature of the rain in this.

Snow – Transforming the World

The Little Match Girl – Mention

Where a young woman is left out in the snow to sell her matches, but can't find anyone to sell them to.

Shelters under a single beam of wood that's then taken away from her.

4 Seasons by Artavazd Peleshian – Snow – 2 mins

It's a series of shots where the image becomes more vivid by the weather, becomes more alive by way of the weather.

It's interesting to see how a film maker makes cinematic material out of the elements. We can almost see nothing but the rain, it's as if the world was another world, a world of the elements a world of rain, it's not ours anymore.

He does a mix of shot types, showing rain on materials almost in obscure space, so we don't know what they are.

Focus doesn't matter, it's the feeling of it that he's gone for.

The music acts in counterpoint to the image.

There is no better use of such a style of image in cinema, to Bergala's mind.

Fog

Hedgehog in the Fog - Excerpt

It totally transforms how we much of the world we can see. Talk about the weather this week.

Amarcord – 2 mins 15 & 3 mins 15

The dance scene in the fog & lost in the fog

How it creates a space in our minds.

Mention The Others.

Storms

The Tempester / Storm Tamer – Excerpts From

Showing the weather in all its brutality.

The observation of the weather.

What is the music doing in this clip?

- Think of *Whisky Galore* & *I Know Where I'm Going*
- Mention *Oceans*

Inside / Outside

Etre & Avoir – 1min & 4 mins – A Core Film

Snow – Vital to show students

Returning to school clip – very good for showing what can be done

Notice the sound bridges and how they are used to create a unified, whole world.

The Umbrellas of Cherbourg - 6 mins

Contrasting the start of the film with the end of it.

The contrast between insides and outside Getting ready to go out.

The snow was not ideal for filming it was not particularly well done he says.

The little house in the snow and finishing a film. Truffaut does it.

It lends a fairy tail feeling to the film.

The Shining – Mention

Not going to show it, but talk about the end clip where he's running around in the snow.

Amarcord – Snow Scene

Inside and out with warmth

Stalker- 5 mins

It becomes an event where the interplay of light sound and the weather is what it's all about.

The light changes long before the rain arrives. It changes the space.

As it was filmed in a studio they can do as they chose, so the rain is very controlled, it's just where he wanted it robe and nowhere else.

Carlito's Way – 3 mins

It recalls singing in the rain.

A light is used to render the rain visible, to let us see the rain curtain.

What a cracking clip.

The intercutting. The contrast between wet man outside and warm dancers inside, there's a lot in that clip.

A storm in cinema adds a lot to a romantic side of things.

Wizard of Oz – 4 mins

The tornado – contrast between inside and out. Safety & danger.

All that Heaven Allows – 3mins 45

The contrast of interior and exterior. Blocking the world out.

Citizen Kane – 4 mins 27

Think about how the interior exterior represents the internal conflict of the characters.

Structures

Melancholia – 5 mins

The building of structures to fend off the outside world.

The end of the world...

Nanook of the North – 6 mins

It's a wonderful economical exploration of architecture. Nothing is wasted at all.

It's all to isolate human warmth.

The gestures he uses as he works are fascinating.

Badlands – 10 mins

They're running away as he's killed her father.

Bergala thinks that he's the great film maker of the elements.

The thin red line features a great attention to nature and weather.

In this clip they return to a primitive existence but rather elaborate.

Where they can have a room for an afternoon nap etc.

It's clear that it's been made by a team of 20 but that's ok as we accept the fiction.