

STUDENT: FP

ASSIGNMENT: FINAL META RESPONSE

Recurring Trends

Considering that I often edit videos, I think this was one of the reasons why writing about the editing of the films was common throughout my responses. However, comparing and contrasting was also present in my writing as the semester progressed. Another thing I noticed was that in my writings, I sometimes mentioned the material we talked about in class.

Throughout most of my responses, I wrote from a film editor perspective. For example in the response for the film *The Goddess*, I wrote about how intellectual montage was present in the film and how it helped us understand what was going to happen with the woman and her son. Through the montage we concluded that it was time for a change for both of them. At other times, I talked about the amounts of cuts in a scene and how that was important in the film. For example for *Romance of a Fruit Peddler* and *Never Weaken*, I argued that *Never Weaken* successfully built suspense because it had more cuts in a scene than *Romance of a Fruit Peddler*. When writing about things like these, I was very specific since I tended to count the seconds of the shots before a cut or just simply described the scene very well. My responses were not broad and I never said things like the editing was good without explaining why. I think that the reason why I focused a lot on these types of things is because I have pay close attention while I edit my own videos.

Other things that I tended to talk about, although not as much as editing, was about the political history of China or connecting what we learned in class to what we were seeing in the film. For example in *The Goddess*, I wrote about women oppression in China because in class we talked about the rights of women and how they were shaped by

political issues. Most of the times, I tried bringing in concepts from the lecture into the film we watched that week and I think this made my responses easier to write.

Changes

The first half of my responses tended to be about editing and a minimal amount about other things like the history of China, but as the semester progressed I began to diverge from editing.

At the beginning of the semester, I was not making connections between the material we learned in class and the film we watched. Therefore, I only talked about how the editing work or cinematography worked. However, I soon began to make connection between class lecture and the film or I compared different films using the concepts we learned in class.

One thing that I noticed is that I soon began to compare and contrast films that we had watched. For example, I once compared *In the Heat of the Sun* and *Hero* to explain how they used the color of the scenes to signify that what we were seeing was not real.

However, the clearest example in which I compared films was at the end of the semester where I compared *Crazy Stone* and *Waiting Alone* comedy. I said that the comedy was darker in *Crazy Stone* than in *Waiting Alone*. I also wrote that in *Crazy Stone* we were laughing at someone rather than laughing with someone like we did in *Waiting Alone* with Chen Wen.

In other responses, I actually included concepts that we had talked about in class. For example in the last response for *Inseparable*, I talked about the 3 act structure screenwriting technique we talked about in class. I tried applying that structure to the

film, although I was a bit off. Another example is when we talked about 5th generation and 6th generation filmmakers and we watched their films. I argued why it was that they belonged to that generation using the concepts and the ideas we discussed about them in class. Things like these were the ones I began to do in my responses in the second part of the semester.

Although I think that my writing was consistent and very specific, I think that my writing did developed. I structured my arguments better and this help my responses flow better. For example, I always had a topic sentence or two that told what my argument was and what I was going to talk about. This worked better for me and for the reader because I could always go back to that topic sentence to see if I was following my argument. For the reader, from the start he already knew what to expect.

I also noticed that my writing was more and more specific as the semester progressed. After my first response, for *Shadow Magic*, I was not so broad about my arguments and my descriptions of the movie. I narrowed my argument down to one example and then I explained why my example worked. Following this format worked very well since I received the grade of three for all my responses except one.

Evaluate the Assignment as a Learning Tool

One word that defines the film responses assignment is excellent, but only in your class since through the responses we had the opportunity to interact and share our ideas with you. I have had a couple of other classes that required weekly responses for a film that we watched in a given week. However, the responses that I have done for other classes were graded and I was never given feedback. It was more about the grade rather

than the learning. In those classes, I never received critique that allowed me to improve. However, in your class it was a lot different and more of a learning tool.

From the first response that we submitted, you were already giving us feedback even though you did not have to provide it since you were going to give everyone a three. Personally, I really appreciated that because your first weekly response feedback was a call to attention for me and that allowed me to push myself throughout the remaining of the semester. It all started wrong when you pointed out that I got the title of *Shadow Magic* wrong and you said that it bothered you. Although this was my mistake for not submitting the revised one, I think that I'm glad I made that mistake because it told me a lot about your expectations for the responses. Not only did you point out the title mistake but you told me to be very specific as oppose to being broad like I was in my first response.

You told me to explain my argument and to elaborate. In other words you told me to back up my arguments and to "expand and dive into." This was the lengthiest feedback you gave me and that is something I liked. You wanted to push me for better work and it did since in the majority of my responses I received a three. However, the grade was not the most important to me. What was important is that I was learning with class lectures but also with the films. I could learn more about what we talked in class through the screenings. After having the lecture class, whether it was about communism, Mao, 5th generation directors, the screenings and responses helped me better understand those subjects. Writing through the responses was a way for me to test myself on the material and to give my opinion.

Another thing that I liked about the responses was that it was an interaction between the students and the professor. In the responses we wrote our thoughts and understanding of the concepts we learned throughout the semester. In the feedback, you wrote yes I agree, offered clarification, or you offered other options that made me think beyond. In a class, I think the interaction between the professor and the student is important even if it is not in person. It is important because the professor gets to know how the student thinks and he provides him feedback that can help him improve his thinking.

To me this weekly response assignment is better than a research paper. In a research paper, the student is not writing down their thoughts without thinking if it is right or wrong. Most of the times we find ourselves looking for right answers. Students find themselves citing things that are said by other people rather than writing about what they think like we did in all the reading responses. In the responses you never told us it is right or wrong, so you receive a one or a three. You told us why you would agree with an explanation. You were never forcing us to write something that you would like to read. You allowed us to express ourselves about the film through our writing. Your only requirement was for us to have our OWN argument and to support it with our OWN words and thoughts. It is also better to have a grade spread out with small assignments, like the responses, rather than having one grade to worry about. With a research paper we may and or we may not learn new things as we research. With the writing responses we were force to write and learn. Also most of the times we write research papers, we never receive feedback. Receiving feedback is crucial because mistakes may be pointed it out. From the feedback we learn what to do and what not to do. This was the case with the

feedback you gave use. You did not necessarily tell us what to do but it was more about improving and pushing ourselves. However, like I have said before, the weekly film responses have only worked in your class because you give solid feedback. In other classes, I only worried about turning it in on time and getting a good grade because there was no feedback. That is why I thank you for the time you spent writing everyone good feedback about what we wrote. Thanks!!!

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