

SM2105 Narrative Srtg & Aesthetics

2020 Sem B

Project 1 - Photo Sequence

Verwandlung

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<https://youtu.be/RAVqyg8RZul>

Inspired by Kafka's *Die Verwandlung*. I am trying to let the character in this photo sequence to observe his life in an objective perspective by giving away his eye to an unknown artificial force. However the story can go either way from start to ending, or from ending to start.

My work's shape of narrative flow is a circle. And it is a linear narrative.

Structure

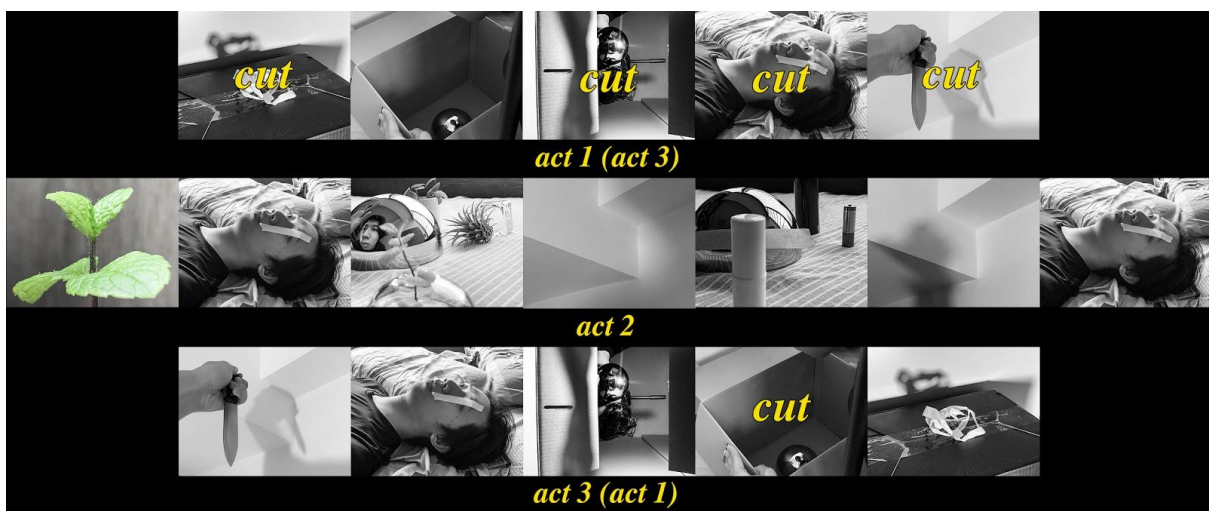
For start to ending, the story goes like this:

1. A man found a man-made hemispheric mirror in a box and he is so fascinated with it. An eye for an eye. He then cut his left eye out to get the hemispheric mirror and experienced the joy of obtaining an omniscient perspective.
2. He observed every life and man and even his inner self. But the deeper he look, the more evil and dark side of mankind he discovered. Darkness grows in his mind. He struggled to suppress the destructive thoughts in his mind.

3. He opened the box again and he closed the box. The band-aid on the left eye are taken off and being put on the sealed box. No one knows did he return the mirror.

For ending to start, the story goes like this:

1. A man opened the box and took away the hemispheric mirror inside it. He cut his left eye out to get the hemispheric mirror and obtain an omniscient perspective.
2. He observed the dark and cold world and found hope in it. But he realized if he wants tranquility and joy, he need to abandon man-made substance and back to nature.
3. He returned the mirror.



the structure of Verwandlung

I created this structure by thinking the plot in two separate part. The set up/resolution sequence, and the confrontation sequence. Both part need to be invertible. I created the confrontation sequence first, in chronological order the mood is from joyful to frightening, nature to artificial. Vice versa.

Then I work on the set up/resolution sequence. It is a simple action that the man opens the box and take the mirror from it, then cut his eye off. But I only disclose one frame in act 1. And I show the audience the rest of the frames in act 3. It works because the audience can still noticed an eye was removed after the man take the mirror. And in act 3 I showed a different camera angle that was shot inside the box.

Metaphor

Nature vs Man. Good (or neutural) vs Evil. Natural vs Artificial. But we need both to live and survive.

The hemispheric mirror is an artificial object which let us see more perspective. In the story it represent an omniscient perspective. Just like technology let us mouse about the subtile of nature but it can also be used in evil ways.

The only shot with color represents nature. It is joyful and pretty but also fragile. It is also the kindness in man.

The band-aid represents trauma and sacrifice. In the shot where plants are tranformed into man-made cylinder. The face of the man was covered by the band-aid and we see a narrow view through the mirror. In the last shot the band-aid is taken off and put on the box to represent a sense of relief.

The knife represent destruction. It can either be seen as a tool for the man to cut his eye off, or a destructive thoughts in his mind.

Other narrative elements

Fade in and dissove. I used dissove and fade in at the begining when the rythm is slower. Fade in to show an awaken state of the man. And dissove of the plant close up to fit the rythm.

Match cut. I create similar images to link up the plot throughout the sequence. Like the empty wall shot, adding a shadow and at last a hand holding a knife. These three shots represent the mind of the man. The two shots with the mirror on the left, surrounded by plants and man-made cylinder, representing changes of the man's observation. This makes the sequence easily invertible.

The Kuleshov effect. I only have one medium close up of the man. And I inserted this shot throughout the sequence as an reaction shot. This let the audience perceive different feeling of the man. For example, the man is calm after seeing the plant. Or the man is frightening after having a destructive thought (knife) in his mind. By having different shot size, from medium close up and enlarging to extreme close up, I can lead the audience feeling with the same image.

Sound. To make the sound more organic, I record it while watching playback of the edited sequence. In 1:19 you can hear slightly delayed knocking sound after the shot had cut. This makes the sound more coherent and the continuity of the plot. Starting from 1:03 I added sound of distant car passing by and cut to the man-made cylinder shot at 1:11, to create the tension of artificial and nature. Also in 0:18 and 1:35, I added background music playing (does that count as ambient?) in a bookstore with very low volume, feedback and delay effect. The music playing I believe is 'Jesus bleibet meine Freude'. It is a classical music piece by J.S. Bach. This can either represnt redemption or violence. In the era this piece is created, it is used to praise god. But in modern times, classical music are often used in extremely violence scene which create contrast and discover 'the beauty' in violence.