Audiovisual Aesthetics

Seminar 1

Jon Inge Faldalen
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• University lecturer at the Department of Media and Communication
  – Teaching *Film history, Norwegian film history, Alternative film, Contemporary TV fiction, Media Aesthetics, Audiovisual aesthetics*...

• Audiovisual critic and journalist (*Rushprint, Dagbladet*)

• Latest publication: «Still Einstellung: Stillmoving Imagenesis», *Discourse*, 2014
Today’s goals

• Introduction

• Short presentation of fellow students

• Form groups
  – “Producer” is responsible for making a list of participants in the group (name + e-mail) and distributing this list to me (j.i.faldalen@media.uio.no), Anders (anders.fagerjord@media.uio.no) and the entire group.

• Begin work on short film
The Man Who Lives In Movies

Joachim Trier
Commercial for Canal Digital
DOGMA 95

DOGMA 95 is a collective of film directors founded in Copenhagen in spring 1995.

DOGMA 95 has the expressed goal of countering "certain tendencies" in the cinema today.

DOGMA 95 is a rescue action!
In 1960 enough was enough! The movie was dead and called for resurrection. The goal was correct but the means were not! The new wave proved to be a ripple that washed ashore and turned to muck.
Slogans of individualism and freedom created works for a while, but no changes. The wave was up for grabs, like the directors themselves. The wave was never stronger than the men behind it. The anti-bourgeois cinema itself became bourgeois, because the foundations upon which its theories were based was the bourgeois perception of art. The auteur concept was bourgeois romanticism from the very start and thereby ... false!

To DOGMA 95 cinema is not individual!

Today a technological storm is raging. the result of which will be the ultimate democratisation of the cinema. For the first time, anyone can make movies. But the more accessible the media becomes, the more important the avant-garde. It is no accident that the phrase "avant-garde" has military connotations. Discipline is the answer ... we must put our films in uniform, because the individual film will be decadent by definition!

DOGMA 95 counters the individual film by the principle of presenting an indisputable set of rules known as THE VOW OF CHASTITY.

In 1960 enough was enough! The movie had been romanticised to death, they said; yet since then the use of cosmetics has exploded. The "supreme" task of the decadent film-makers is to fool the audience. Is that what we are so proud of? Is that what the "100 years" have brought us? Illusions via which emotions can be communicated? ... By the individual artist's free choice of trickery?

Predictability (dramaturgy) has become the golden calf around which we dance. Having the characters' inner lives justify the plot is too complicated, and not "high art". As never before, the superficial action and the superficial movie are receiving all the praise.

The result is barren. An illusion of pathos and an illusion of love.

To DOGMA 95 the movie is not illusion!

Today a technological storm is raging of which the result is the elevation of cosmetics to God. By using new technology anyone at any time can wash the last grains of truth away in the deadly embrace of sensation. The illusions are everything the movie can hide behind.

DOGMA 95 counts the film of illusion by the presentation of an indisputable set of rules known as THE VOW OF CHASTITY.

THE VOW OF CHASTITY:

I swear to submit to the following set of rules drawn up and confirmed by DOGMA 95:
1. Shooting must be done on location. Props and sets must not be brought in (if a particular prop is necessary for the story, a location must be chosen where this prop is to be found).
2. The sound must never be produced apart from the images or vice versa. (Music must not be used unless it occurs where the scene is being shot).
3. The camera must be hand-held. Any movement or immobility attainable in the hand is permitted. (The film must not take place where the camera is standing; shooting must take place where the film takes place).
4. The film must be in colour. Special lighting is not acceptable. (If there is too little light for exposure the scene must be cut or a single lamp be attached to the camera).
5. Optical work and filters are forbidden.
6. The film must not contain superficial action. (Murders, weapons, etc. must not occur.)
7. Temporal and geographical alienation are forbidden. (That is to say that the film takes place here and now.)
8. Genre movies are not acceptable.
9. The film format must be Academy 35 mm.
10. The director must not be credited.

Furthermore I swear as a director to refrain from personal taste! I am no longer an artist. I swear to refrain from creating a "work", as I regard the instant as more important than the whole. My supreme goal is to force the truth out of my characters and settings. I swear to do so by all the means available at the cost of any good taste and any aesthetic considerations. Thus I make my VOW OF CHASTITY."

Copenhagen, Monday 13 March 1995

On behalf of DOGMA 95

Lars von Trier

[Signature]

Thomas Vinterberg

[Signature]
Interview and present fellow student (6 mins.)

- *Interview the person next to you for 3 minutes*
- What is your name?
- Have you studied film, television or computer games before?
- If any, what is your favorite film, television series and computer game?
- What do you expect to learn from this class?
- *Present the person to the class*
Deep Space.

The eerie blue-green planet of Aquilae slowly drifts into view. A small speck, orbiting the planet, glints in the light of a near by star.

Suddenly a sleek fighter-type spacecraft settles ominously into the foreground moving swiftly toward the orbiting speck. Two more fighters silently maneuver into battle formation behind the first and then three more craft glide into view. The orbiting speck is actually a gargantuan space fortress which dwarfs the approaching fighters. Fuel pods are jettisoned. The six fighters break off into a power dive attack on the huge fortress. Laser bolts strike from the fighters creating small explosions on the complex surface of the fort. Return fire catches one of the fighters and it bursts into a million pieces. Another of the craft plows into a gun emplacement jutting from the fortress causing a hideous series of chain reaction explosions. The chaos of battle echoes through the vastness of space.

It is the thirty-third century, a period of civil wars in the galaxy. A rebel princess, with her family, her retainers, and the clan treasure, is being pursued. If they can cross territory controlled by the Empire and reach a friendly planet, they will be saved. The Sovereign knows this, and posts a reward for the capture of the princess.

She is being guarded by one of her generals, (Luke Skywalker) and it is he who leads her on the long and dangerous journey that follows. They take along with them two hundred pounds of the greatly treasured "aura spice", and also two Imperial bureaucrats, whom the general has captured.

The two terrified, bickering bureaucrats crash land on Aquilae while trying to flee the battle of the space fortress. They accidentally discover a small container of the priceless "aura spice", and are rummaging around the rocks pushing and pulling each other trying to find more when they are discovered by Luke Skywalker and taken to his camp.

The princess and the general are disguised as farmers, and the bureaucrats join their party with the intention of stealing their "land speeder" and "aura spice". It doesn't take them too long to realize the general isn't a farmer and that they are captives about to embark on a dangerous mission. The two bureaucrats are essentially comic relief inserted among the general seriousness of the adventure.
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Assignment for film production
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• “Person A is in a relationship with person B. A comes home one day, and finds B in bed with person C.”

• The film should be three minutes long, and have a humorous outcome.
Film production

- You will form groups, and each group will make a three-minute film in accordance with the *Dogme 95 vow of chastity* (see http://www.dogme95.dk/the-vow-of-chastity/). This means, e.g., that the camera will be hand-held, actors will use their own clothes, there will be no extra lighting, only props present at the location can be used, and there will be no extra-diegetic music.

- Making a film will give you an opportunity to work hands-on with all aspects of audiovisual storytelling. You will practice film studies vocabulary, and your close connection with all the small decisions that need to be made will make you remember the theory better. Your goal is not a professional-looking production, but to practice what you learn in the course. **The finished film must be approved by a teacher before you can take the exam in MEVIT1110.**

- We will give you the beginning of the story in the first seminar, and then it is up to you to write the rest.
Film production

• Form groups of minimum six, maximum eight people (this is best done in the first seminar). Each group should have both women and men, and assign the roles listed below. You will work on the films and get supervision in the seminars, but most of the work will be done outside the classroom.

• It is likely that every group already have a camera they can use. A modern smartphone is more than good enough. If you do not have a camera, contact us. We also assume most groups will do the editing on one of the team members’ computer, tablet or mobile phone. If none of you have any editing software, you can use a computer in the Department of media and communication.
Roles in group during production

- **Producer**
  - The producers are the group leaders, and are responsible for planning and keeping the production schedule, including the sequence of the film sessions. If the group disagrees on something, the producer decides after listening to all parties. Producers report to Anders.

- **Director**
  - The directors instruct the actors and are responsible for the creative vision for the film. Directors are the creative leaders, who take the final decisions on manuscript, shots, and editing after listening to the others.

- **Photographer**
  - The photographers plan each shot and films the action.

- **Actor 1, Actor 2, Actor 3**

- **Script**
  - Scripts help the director to keep track of takes and ensure continuity. It is the scripts who note what clothes the characters were wearing in the previous scene, and how their hair looked. The scripts may also help out as extra actors if the manuscript requires.

- **Production assistant**
  - Production assistants helps with everything during production. For our teams they will be especially useful for helping with sets, props, and costumes, as we have no dedicated team members for these parts of the production. The PAs may also help out as extra actors if the manuscript requires.

  - All team members take part in post-production, yet the producers stay in charge of the schedule, and the directors still have the final word on the look of the film.
Milestones

• 11 September: Treatment due
• 25 September: Pre-production finished: Shooting script, storyboard, and production plan due
• 2 October: Production finished
• 9 October: Finished film due
Course content

The course Audiovisual Aesthetics is a theoretical and analytical introduction to the narratives, styles and genres of audiovisual media, such as film, television and computer games.

These audiovisual media are diverse variants of what historically have been termed moving images, defined by media philosopher Noël Carroll as "a mode of communication and expression that can be implemented cinematically, videographically, digitally, and/or in ways which we still have to conceive".

Learning outcome

After completing the course, the student should be able to:

- Describe audiovisual narrative, style and genre using proper terminology
- Analyse the narrative, style and genre of an audiovisual work
- Give an account of the development and characteristics of the Hollywood style
- Write a theoretical and/or analytical essay
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