



**ANNOTATING MEDIA TEXT:
FILM TERMINOLOGY REVIEW**



COLLATERAL (2004)

USING DIALOGUE AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPING CHARACTER

SCENE(S): "Night Shift" (1) and "The Passenger" (2).

TIME: 00:00:00—00:15:53

PURPOSE: *To examine how character can be developed through dialogue and staging as much as through action.*

- 1) In the opening sequence of the film, how does the director, Michael Mann, distinguish Tom Cruise and Jason Statham from the other figures in the crowd?

- 2) When first introduced to Jamie Foxx's character in the taxi garage, what do you notice is different about him in comparison to the other drivers (i.e. what is he doing)?
 - a. What does this suggest about him?

- 3) Why would Mann show us a routine moment like Foxx wiping down his cab, checking his headlights and taillights before exiting the shop?

- 4) What do you think is the significance of the island picture in the overhead visor?

- 5) Why does the music change every few second of the film (i.e. what is happening to Foxx's character during these times)?

- 6) The "Bet" between Jada Pinkett Smith and Foxx is significant because it shows us what about Foxx?

- 7) What is the name of Foxx's *dream* limousine company?
 - a. What previous moment in the film alluded to this?

- 8) In having Foxx determine that Smith's character is a lawyer, simply by analyzing her clothes and brief case, Mann is establishing that Foxx is a _____ so that later in the film when he meets Cruise's character it puts us, the audience, on edge because we can see that _____ but Foxx cannot.
 - a. How else does Mann create a mood of tension when Cruise enters Foxx's cab (you may have to answer question 9 before you can answer this one)?

- 9) When Cruise enters the scene, exiting the building Smith was just dropped off at, once again he stands out from the crowd because of what classic "villainous" article of clothing?
 - a. How does this article of clothing make him seem out of place (consider time of day/location, etc)?

- 10) Consider how the conversation between Smith and Foxx is framed in the cab. How does the conversation between Cruise and Foxx differ? In other words, how has Mann made Cruise and Foxx *literally* disconnected from one another?

SCENE ANALYSIS EXEMPLAR

STUDENT WRITE-UP ON OCTOBER SKY

The following is an exemplar of a student's viewing notes and analysis of October Sky.

VIEWING NOTES

NARRATIVE DEVELOPMENT	TECHNICAL STRATEGIES	EFFECTS ON AUDIENCE
<p><i>What is presented in the text?</i></p> <p>List the events that occur in the text.</p>	<p><i>How is the text presented?</i></p> <p>List the technical aspects that are involved in producing the text (<i>editing, shots, recorded sound</i>).</p>	<p><i>What is the effect of the text?</i></p> <p>List the effects the text has on its audience.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waking to alarm • Work clothes • Tying shoes • Takes out hat • Reflection of self in mirror • Picture of idol • Men moving against Homer in shift change • Doors close • Looks up to sky through cage • Sees satellite overhead as descends below • Told to turn on light • Follows minors • Fellow minor nods approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound – clock vs. Violin • CU blue clothes – tone; and CU shoes • Eye level with hero – low angle to Homer • See only reflection of self • Like fish going upstream • Silent • Wipe • Overhead/point of view • Dialogue • Medium shot • Music tone change • CU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jarring reality of clock • Depressing tone with colour and music • New helmet • Contrast – giving up dream-new reflection of self presented • Door open to his new reality • Men move unquestioningly without thought but with routine • His former self lost – unseen in dark and behind door • Freedom of sky noted and fascination with satellites is not more • Better understand his thinking of loss • Body language – hesitant • Inexperience – told to turn on light – not a natural in this environment • His life will be illuminated in a new way • pride

ANALYSIS

Separated From the Sky

The scene opens with Homer's alarm clock ringing, indicating that it is time for his shift at the mine. The **sound** of the alarm clock is contrasted with the violin and the blue **low-key lighting** tones that establish the **mood** of sadness and loss. Homer rises, dressing himself in dull, faded blue work clothes, the working man's uniform; a **close-up** of him tying his boots prepares him for his first steps as a mine employee. From the plastic he unwraps his new company issued hard helmet. This scene is shown as a reflection in the mirror emphasizing the **contrast** between who he has become **compared** to who he dreamed of being. His idol's picture is at **eye level** reminding the viewer of the reality that will not be Homer's. The **low angle** camera looks up at Homer emphasizing that his power must now come as a mine worker, rather than as one who learns from books and seeks knowledge. With his helmet on, the physical **transformation** is complete. Homer is now a mine worker.

There is a **cut** to the inside of the mine elevator and we watch as Homer and some other workers walk towards the elevator to replace the workers whose shift is over. These men change shift silently and unquestioningly, long since creatures of this routine. Homer appears to be swimming against the sea of workers like a new fish in old waters. He enters the elevator and the doors, in a **wipe**, close with a clang. Physically he cannot go back and symbolically he cannot go back to what he once knew. As the elevator descends Homer looks to the sky through the elevator cage, and like a caged animal he can only look up at the freedom he once knew and the dream he had of building rockets and travelling through space. This **point of view shot** and the **close-up shots** throughout the scene allows us to feel Homer's pain and longing. The **internal framing** in the **reaction shot** suggests Homer's entrapment and inability to escape this situation. To further

emphasize what he has lost, a satellite is shown travelling overhead. Homer is inexperienced and the only **dialogue** to this point is Homer being told "turn your light on, boy". By turning on his light, his life is now illuminated in a way he had not dreamed of, for he is now moving further from the sky and his goal.

As he moves off the elevator another miner approaches him with a nod of approval that expresses pride in Homer's decision. The **close-up** of Homer's expressionless face suggests he feels otherwise.



Chris Cooper and Jake Gyllenhaal in October Sky. (Universal)



MOONLIGHT MILE (2002)

ANNOTATING MEDIA TEXT

SCENE(S): "Opening Titles/The Wake-Up Call" (1). TIME: 00:00:00—00:08:29

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Empty space for student input	Empty space for student input	Empty space for student input