

GCE A LEVEL



WJEC Eduqas GCE A LEVEL in FILM STUDIES

COMPONENT 2

Meshes Of The Afternoon

(Deren and Hammid, 1943, USA)

ANALYSIS SHEET FOR EVALUATIVE COMMENTARY



Meshes Of The Afternoon (Deren and Hammid, 1943, USA) - Analysis Sheet for Evaluative Commentary

Part 1: Brief Reference

What did you like about the film?	What didn't you like?
What ideas could you use? Narrative or style?	What ideas won't you use? Why?

Part 2: In-Depth Study - Narrative

Narrative Feature	Example	Your own example/ideas
Establishing protagonist - what information do we find out? How is it conveyed?	Unusually, we don't see the protagonist's face until the dream section... and then we aren't sure if this <i>is</i> her, as we've only seen her shadow and fragmented body parts: hands, sandalled feet and eye. Creates mystery from the start.	What <i>can</i> we tell about her from the first 5 mins?
Establishing other characters - what information do we find out? How is it conveyed?	The cloaked, mirror-faced figure is dressed similarly to the protagonist. Is this a dream reflection of her? There are also doubles of the protagonist - or are they the same person? The only other character is the male lover that awakens (or does he?). His behaviour is tender, suggesting intimacy.	Are all of the characters actually fragmented reflections of just one?
Establishing location (time and place) - what information do we find out? How is it conveyed?	Time and place are deliberately ambiguous, but it appears to be a warm climate, and mid-20th century (the newspaper, telephone and record player). The sandals, cloak of the mysterious figure and beach suggest Mediterranean.	What evidence is there that the whole film is set within a dream?
Creating Enigmas - what are they? How are they created?	The film is intensely enigmatic from the start - who is the protagonist? Who is the figure? Why does the key turn into a knife? What is a waking experience and what is a dream?	What other questions are created by the narrative as it continues?

Narrative binary oppositions	Waking vs dream life. However, simple oppositions are deliberately elided with 'doubles', reflections and repeats.	
Crisis - how was this conveyed?	Again, the plot is ambiguous. The dream seems a reflection or development of the 'waking' section at the start. Is that where the 'crisis' begins - the use of disorienting camera angles and editing seem threatening; but so do events of the first section.	Where do <i>you</i> think the 'crisis' occurs?
Resolution - is it closed or open narrative?	The ending is closed - she is dead - But also ambiguous: did she commit suicide while awake (when we saw her eye close); did a figure from her dream murder her? Whose dream are we even in? Could it be the man's?	What do <i>you</i> think happens at the end?

Part 3: Meaning and Effect

<p>What did you think was the intention of the filmmaker(s)? Intellectual message? Emotional response?</p> <p>Maya Deren said the film is an attempt to show "the interior experiences of the individual... to take a single incident... and develop it into a critical emotional experience." The whole film has a dream-like quality, so we're never sure what is 'real' and what isn't.</p>	<p>How was this achieved? In addition to the above techniques, jump cuts and disorienting camera angles/movement (especially 5:40-6:35) evoke the confusion and shifting geometry of a 'dream house'.</p> <p>Your own idea:</p>
<p>Aesthetic binary oppositions</p> <p>Subjective and objective camera and editing are confused throughout. The 'waking' first section seems entirely from the protagonist's POV; the dream more objective. But this is ambiguous.</p>	<p>Effect of these oppositions?</p> <p>Creates a dream-like, strange atmosphere. The recurring objects (key, knife, mirror) seem symbolic - but of what?</p>

Inspirations - what ideas did this film give you for your own short film?

Establishing characters, setting, plot, theme	Creating enigmas
Narrative structure (non-/linear? Open/closed ending?)	Striking use of technical features