

ISSUES TO DISCUSS REGARDING THE FILM ANALYSIS ESSAY

1. Correction Symbols
 - a. Look at the list on the website and try to do an inventory of your grammatical problems.
 - b. Use the inventory to help you revise for the portfolio (if you choose to revise this essay) as well as to make you more aware of your tendencies prior to future assignments.
2. Rubric Sheet—Don't lose it. You will need to resubmit it for the portfolio (if you choose to revise this essay).
3. Steps in the Writing Process—Look this document over and see where we are currently.
4. Typical Grade for First Submission—3-4 range.
If your result is lower than a 3, then:
 - a. Get additional help—from me and other resources.
 - b. Subscribe to a good grammar program—Grammarly is mentioned on the syllabus—\$60 USD for three months.
5. Workshop Score
 - +++ Insanely high
 - ++ High
 - +
 - +√
 - √
 - √-- Low
 -
 - 0Some Outstanding Effort on Workshops This Time

Issues with the Essays Themselves

1. Theses are rather weak overall—they do not address the theme
 - a. Regarding literary vocabulary—WE use the vocabulary to interpret films, not the director.
 - b. Don't confuse the "what it does" for "what it says"—Theme means what the movie is saying to you as a viewer, not what the film is trying to DO.
2. Introductions don't introduce
 - a. Define key terms
 - b. Put film titles in *italics*—like this!
 - c. Don't assume your reader understands you or has watched the film.
 - d. Identify characters and issues before discussing them in detail.
 - e. Ex. "In this film, MacReady is a private, independent and distrustful renegade living in a cabin apart from the rest of the crew, several hundred meters away from the main facility. His sympathy for Dr. Blair, however, allows the doctor

to be forthcoming with him after carrying out a geometric progression on his computer in order to determine the likelihood that the creature will infect all members of the crew.”

Do you know what I’m writing about here? Do you know the title of the film and who the characters are? If not, you may very well have had the same problem I had in reading many of these essays.

3. Cohesion Problems—Issues with Logical Sequencing
4. Conclusions don’t conclude
 - a. Sum things up.
 - b. Show the overall implications from your discussion.
 - c. Possibly hook back to your opening in the introduction.
5. Plot and Character—When discussing plot and character, employ the vocabulary we covered in class.
 - a. DO NOT SUMMARIZE THE PLOT!
 - b. You could provide a very brief overview of the film in the introduction if you wish to do so, but no plot summaries
 - c. ANALYZE THE PLOT—DO NOT SUMMARIZE IT!
6. DO NOT WRITE ABOUT THE AUDIENCE!!!!
 - a. I do not care about who watches a film, how they feel about it, how well they understand it, or how meaningful it is for them. These issues are highly IRRELEVANT!!!! Who cares about the audience of a movie?
 - b. Analyze the film, not the audience.
7. Do not try to assume you know the director’s intentions, unless you read about them directly or interviewed the director first hand.
 - a. Keep in mind that creative works always exceed a creator’s intentions.
 - b. Also the intentions of a creator do not always succeed in being part of the creation or being registered with an audience.
 - c. If the intentions of a director or author are all that ever count, we should just interview these people and forget about writing papers about their work.
8. Do not judge or evaluate the film. Analyze it.
9. Topic Sentences—Facts are not topic sentences. Topic sentences are subpoints to be demonstrated in the particulars of a paragraph, so they need to be general enough to cover the particulars. Therefore, facts cannot be topic sentences since facts are not general sentences.
10. Always introduce and explain quotations.
 - a. Show the significance of them.
 - b. Don’t simply throw quotations into a paper unannounced.
 - c. It leads to coherence problems.
11. Pronouns
 - a. Learn how to use demonstrative pronouns, primarily “this.” “This” should never be alone: This _____.
 - b. Examine article on pronouns on website

1. Bad Example

“The director, John Carpenter, employed plot, character, setting, irony, tone, and imagery to convey his message about a scary alien to his audience.”

The director doesn't employ these categories. The critic does. No sense of theme here.

2. Better Example

“*The Thing* attempts to show how paranoia can infect a crew of scientists based in Antarctica and how this paranoia emerges from a powerful feeling of fear and anxiety about an alien creature that has the capacity to exactly replicate a specific human form in order to conceal itself and feed on other human beings.”

This is a “what it does” example. It's what the film does, but it isn't what the film SAYS.

3. Best Example

“Eschewing character development in favor of atmosphere, John Carpenter, in his film, *The Thing*, paints a dark and ominous canvas of terror and anxiety; the film is an exploration of the experience of universal paranoia, where a crew of scientists in Antarctica are forced to suspect each of their colleagues as having turned into an alien, who just happens to be able to perfectly replicate the human form of the person it attacks and consumes and potentially threatens to do the same to the rest of the human race, assuming it manages to escape to the general population.”

This is a “what it says” example. The theme of a film is what you think it's trying to communicate to you after viewing it. This perception is deeply personal though some renderings of theme are certainly more compelling and sophisticated than others.