**QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING COLOR**

1. If possible, watch the most powerful or memorable moments in the film on a VCR or DVD player with the color on the TV turned off. What is altered in each of the segments viewed in black and white?

2. If the film uses bright, saturated colors, turn the color down on the TV so that the colors are muted. What effects does this have on the film?

3. Is color used expressionistically anywhere in the film so that we experience the world of the film through the mind and feelings of a central character?

4. Are trademark colors used in costuming or set decoration to help us understand the personalities of any of the characters? If so, what do these colors convey about the characters?

5. Are obvious changes in color used as transitional devices in the film? If so, how effective are these transitions?

6. How important is atmospheric color in the film? Do the uses of atmospheric color reflect some purpose on the director’s par? If so, what is that purpose?

**QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING VISUAL DESIGN**

*On Color Versus Black and White*

1. Was the filmmaker’s choice of color or black and white correct for this story? What factors do you think influenced this decision? Try to imagine the film as it would appear in the other film type. What would the differences in total effect be? (If the film is in color, try watching the first 10 minutes on a VCR or DVD player with the television color turned off.)
2. Are any special color effects used to achieve a unique overall look? If so, what was the director trying to achieve with the unusual effect? How successful is the overall effect carried out?

*On Screen Format*

1. Was the film originally shot for a standard screen or a wide screen? Does the choice of screen format suit the story being filmed?

2. Try imagining the film in the opposite format: What would be gained or loss?

*On Production Design/Art Direction*

1. How important is the set or location to the overall look of the film? Is it essentially a realistic or authentic set, or is it stylized to suggest a heightened reality?

2. Was the movie filmed primarily on location or in the studio? What effect does the place of filming have on the style or look of the film?

3. How do the setting serve as personalized environments to enhance or reinforce the actors’ performances? To what degree do the settings underscore or enhance the mood or quality of each scene?

4. Is the setting so powerful and dominant that it upstages the actors?

5. If the film is a period piece, a fantasy, or a science fiction story taking place in a future time or on a strange planet, is the set convincing enough to make us believe (during the film) that we are really in another time and place? If so, what factors or details present in the set contribute to its convincing effect? If the set is not completely convincing, why does it fail?

6. Which of the four environmental factors (temporal factors; geographic factors; social structures and economic factors; and customs, moral attitudes, and codes of behavior) play significant roles in the film? Could the same story take place in any environment?

7. Which environmental factors are most important? What effect do these factors have on the plot or the characters?

8. Why did the filmmaker choose this particular location for filming this story?

9. How does the film’s setting contribute to the overall emotional atmosphere?

10. What important interrelationships exist between the setting and the characters or between setting and plot?

11. Is the setting symbolic in any way? Does it function as a microcosm?

*On Lighting*

1. Is the lighting of the film as a whole (a) direct, harsh, and hard; (b) medium and balanced; or (c) soft and diffused? Does high-key or low-key lighting predominate? How do the lighting decisions fit the film’s story?

2. Does the lighting throughout seem artificial, coming from places where there are no visible light sources, or does it seem to emanate naturally from sources visibly or suggested on-screen?

3. Is the lighting designed to give the film the look of a painting? How effective is this technique, and how well does the painterly style fit the subject matter of the film?

4. How does the lighting contribute to the overall emotional attitude or tone of the film?

 *On Costume and Makeup Design*

1. What details of costuming and makeup help the actors be “in character”? Do these factors also play a role in creating a sense of time and place?

2. Does the makeup for the film’s major characters simply enhance the natural look of the actors or significantly transform their appearances? If significant or sometimes subtle changes (such as aging) are required by the script, how effectively are these changes achieved?

**QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING CINEMATOGRAPHY**

*On the Cinematic Film*

1. To what degree is the film cinematic? Cite specific examples from the film to prove that the director succeeds or fails in (a) keeping the image constantly alive and in motion, (b) setting up clear, crisp visual and aural rhythms, (c) creating the illusion of depth, and (d) using the other special properties of the medium.

2. Does the cinematography create clear, powerful, and effective images in a natural way, or does it self-consciously show off the skills and techniques of the cinematographer?

*On Cinematic Points of View*

Although the director probably employs all four cinematic viewpoints in making the film, one point of view may predominate to such a degree that the film leaves the impression of a single point of view. With this in mind, answer these questions:

1. Do you feel that you were primarily an objective, impersonal observer of the action, or did you have the sense of being a participant in the action? What specific scenes used the objective point of view? In what scenes did you feel like a participant in the action? How were you made to feel like a participant?

2. In what scenes were you aware that the director was employing visual techniques to comment on or interpret the action, forcing you to see the action in a special way? What techniques were used to achieve this? How effective were they?

*On Elements of Cinematic Composition*

1. Which methods does the director use to draw attention to the object of greatest significance?

2. Does the director succeed in keeping the screen alive by avoiding large areas of dead screen?

3. What are the primary or most memorable techniques used to create the illusion of three-dimensionality?

*On Specialized Visual Effect*

1. Although a thorough analysis of each visual element is impossible, make a mental note of the pictorial effects that struck you as especially effective, ineffective, or unique, and consider them in light of these questions:

a. What was the director’s aim in creating these images, and what camera tools or techniques were employed in the filming of them?

b. When made these memorable visual images effective, ineffective, or unique?

c. Justify each of these impressive visual effects aesthetically in terms of its relationship to the whole film.

2. Are special lighting effects used for brief moments in the film? If so, what are the effects intended, and how successful are they?