

Examples from an Essay

Example 1:

In “The *Auteur* Theory,” Peter Wollen states that “... it would be true to say that it is the lesser *auteurs* who can be defined... by a core of basic motifs which remain constant, without variation, [but] the great directors must be defined in terms of shifting relations, in their singularity as well as their uniformity” (Nichols 540). Such is the case of Martin Scorsese. He is an *auteur* whose central core of redemption and combative themes of Church and violence overwhelmingly shape his films; yet within these pervasive motifs his characters take on subtle nuances that singularly define their independence.

Renoir once claimed that a director spends his whole life making one film. Scorsese’s “one film” consists of the binary struggle between violence and religion, community and individuality and the diabolical and holy. There is no perfect symmetry in his world yet there is a governing rule that guides his *auteur* approach.

Example 2: Paraphrasing

His fascination with rituals, painful self-sacrifice (crucifixion), and religious community finally led Scorsese to Cathedral Prep, a minor seminary of the archdiocese of New York, but because of poor grades he was asked to leave. However, it was his friendship with a young priest at Saint Patrick's that provided him with his first role model of a man in the arts (Lourdeaux 221).

Example 3:

It is this pervasive Catholic thought that forms his ideology. To better understand how ideology relates to film we must look to Jean-Luc Comolli and Jean Narboni, two critics who formulated the mission statement for *Cahiers du Cinema*. They suggest that "the tools and techniques of filmmaking are a part of 'reality' themselves, and furthermore 'reality' is nothing

but an expression of the prevailing ideology" (Mast, Cohen, and Braudy 685). Furthermore, Comolli and Narboni argue that "[c]inema is one of the languages through which the world communicates itself to itself. They constitute its ideology for they reproduce the world as it is experienced when filtered through the ideology" (Mast, Cohen, and Braudy 685). In other words, when a filmmaker, like Scorsese, sets out to create a film he is burdened by the haunting need to reproduce life, not as it really is, but as it appears to be when refracted through his own, particular ideology. Thus, every element of filmmaking: writing, lighting, filming, narrative structure, acting; all parts of production must follow his particular, ideological discourse.

Example 4:

This notion of ideology was used by Marxists to identify underlying cultural values that appear in film. On the other hand, it can also be used as a suggestion to why Scorsese's films are fueled by subconsciously Catholic undercurrents. In *Italian and Irish Filmmakers in America*, Lee Lourdeaux quotes Leo Braudy who claims that Scorsese has a Catholic way of regarding the visible world. And, unlike the Protestant (and often Jewish) denigration of visual materiality in favor of verbal mystery, he mines the transcendental potential within the visual world – objects, people, places, and stories are irradiated by the meaning from within (14). In the Catholic faith, God "graciously uses the things we can see, feel, hear, and touch to reveal his presence and love, and even to give himself to us and share his life with us fully" (Schreck 8). By comparison, Scorsese uses these same sensibilities to transform the world as he sees it through an imaginatively Catholic eye and subconsciously places it on film.

The best way of breaking down this Catholic influence in Scorsese's work and analyzing it is to concentrate on a study by Lourdeaux. He takes three characteristics of Catholic identity (communion, mediation, and sacramentality) and correlates them to Catholic directors and their works (16-19). For the remainder of my discussion these three elements will serve as points of

departure in hopes of better understanding the Catholic significance in Scorsese's films as it relates to his narratology.

Example 5: Works Cited

Works Cited

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