

# Film Analysis

*Higher Media: Analysis*

*Core Skill*



PLFind





# Aims

*To illustrate & apply basic critical methodology of film analysis:*

- **Signs:** denotation, connotation, motivation
- **The shot:** distance, angle, movement; their motivations and connotations
- **Mise-en-scène:** analysis; lighting
- **Editing:** types of edit; types of editing
- **Sound:** types of sound; sound and image; music
- **Bull's Eye Model** of analysis
- **Narrative:** plot, story, diegesis; genre conventions & hybridisation; conflict, structure and resolution, codes
- Film as **construction** of *meaning*, *mood* and *representation*

# Signs: *Connotation & Motivation*

**Sign:** any unit of meaning  
(graphic, aural, verbal)

**Denotation:** the  
description of a sign

**Connotation:** the meaning  
associated with a sign

**Motivation:** the reason a  
film element is included:

1. Realism
2. Narrative
3. Intertextuality
4. Artistic

A sign can ***connote*** and/or be ***motivated***.

# Bonus Round!



**There are 12 films used to illustrate the following concepts...**

**How many can you name?**



## Extreme Long Shot (ELS)

- ▶ Shows location
- ▶ Often used as an initial establishing shot in a sequence



## Long Shot (LS)

- ▶ Shows location/relationships
- ▶ Often used as an initial establishing shot in a sequence

# The Shot: Camera Distance 1



### Medium Long Shot (MLS)

- ▶ Shows location/relationships
- ▶ Often used as an initial establishing shot in a sequence



### Medium Shot (MS)

- ▶ Waist up
- ▶ Focus on character(s)

# The Shot: Camera Distance 2



### Medium Close Up (MCU)

- ▶ Chest up
- ▶ Focus on character(s)



### Close Up (CU)

- ▶ Head of person
- ▶ Conveys character's state of mind
- ▶ Involves spectator

# The Shot: Camera Distance 3



## Close Up (CU)

- ▶ Can be of objects



## Extreme Close Up (ECU)

- ▶ Part of face
- ▶ Often used at climax of dramatic scene

# The Shot: Camera Distance 4





**The Shot: Camera Angle 1**



## Straight-on Angle

- ▶ Connotes equilibrium (normality) and makes spectator feel comfortable



## Canted Angle

- ▶ Connotes disequilibrium (physical or mental) and produces sense of unease in spectator

# The Shot: Camera Angle 1



## High Angle

- ▶ Motivation can be point-of-view (POV) shot
- ▶ Can connote lack of power



## Low Angle

- ▶ Motivation can be POV shot
- ▶ Can connote power

# The Shot: Camera Angle 2



**Pan:** (*panorama*)  
camera swivels left or  
right on axis. Used  
for:

- ▶ Showing scene
- ▶ Following movement
- ▶ Show POV as head turns
- ▶ Guiding attention

# The Shot: Camera Movement

## 1: Pan



**Whip Pan:** very rapid pan. Used for:

- ▶ Rapid head-turn POV
- ▶ Style
- ▶ Transitions from one scene to another (aka whip-pan transition)

# The Shot: Camera Movement

## 2: Whip-Pan



**Tilt:** camera swivels up or down. Used for:

- ▶ Showing scene on different levels
- ▶ Following movement
- ▶ Show POV as head moves up/down
- ▶ Establishing shot e.g.

ext: tilt up high building/CUT/ int: room in building

# The Shot: Camera Movement

## 3: Tilt



- ▶ **Track (dolly):** camera on wheels. Can track in/out, left/right, slow/fast.
- ▶ **Crane:** camera on crane so can move in/out, up/down space
- ▶ **Aerial shot**

# The Shot: Camera Movement

## 4: Track, Crane, Aerial



MOVIECLIPS.COM







In October of 1994  
 three student filmmakers disappeared  
 in the woods near Burkittsville, Maryland  
 while shooting a documentary...  
 A year later their footage was found.

# THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT.

Everything you've heard is true.

ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS A HAXAN FILMS PRODUCTION HEATHER DONAHUE MICHAEL WILLIAMS JOSHUA LEONARD "THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT" PRODUCTION DESIGNER BEN ROCK ART DIRECTOR RICARDO R. MORALES  
 DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY NEAL FREDERICKS MUSIC BY ANTONIO CORA COSTUME DESIGNER BOB EICK AND KEVIN J. FOXE CO-PRODUCED BY MICHAEL MONELLO  
 PRODUCED BY GREGG HALE & ROBIN COWIE WRITTEN, DIRECTED AND EDITED BY DANIEL MYRICK & EDUARDO SANCHEZ  
 www.blairwitch.co.uk THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT A DESIGNER & DAN DONNET F.I.E.



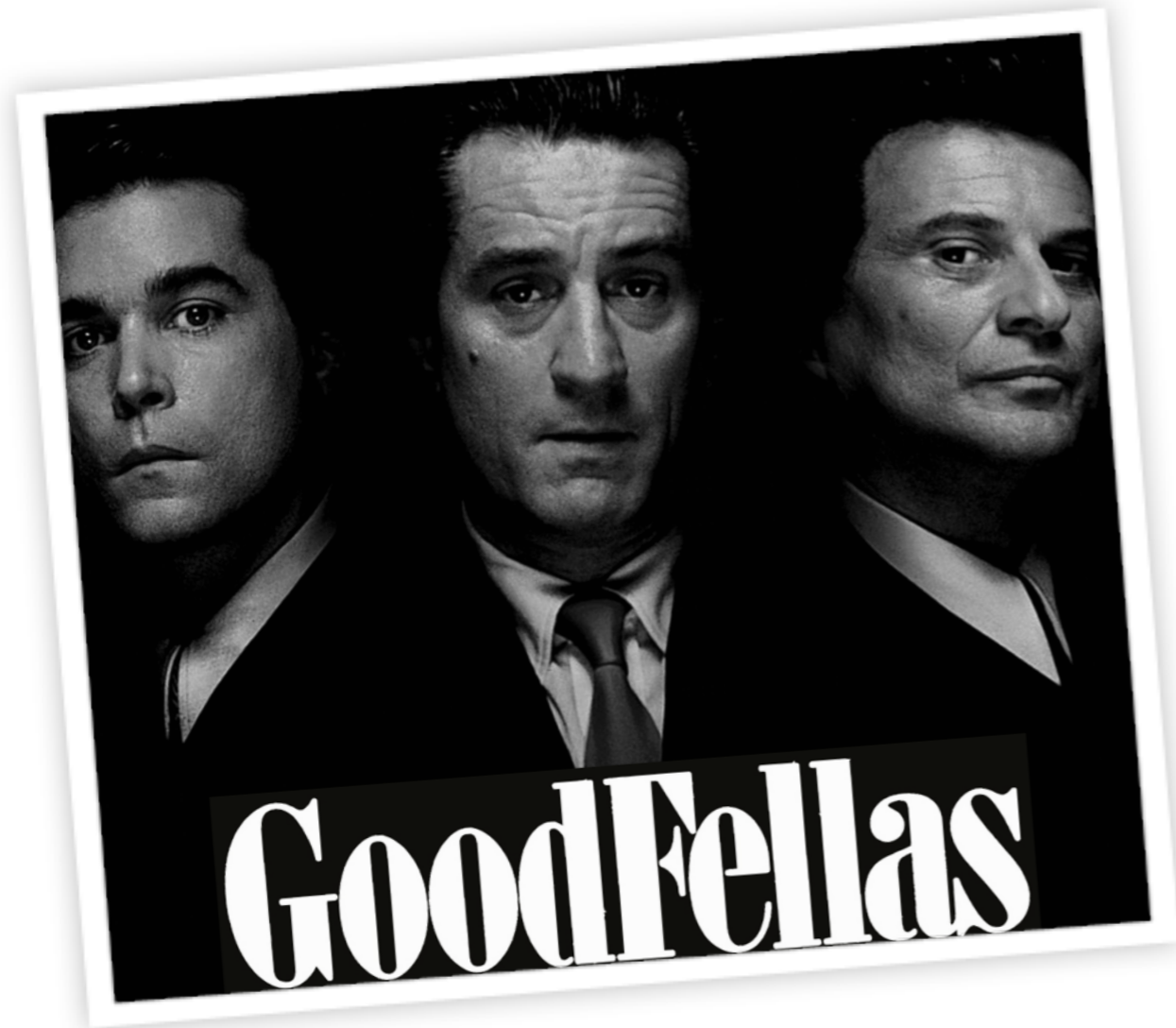


**Handheld:** portable camera so get jiggling image. Used for:

- ▶ Realist documentary look
- ▶ Convey dynamism of action

# The Shot: Camera Movement

## 5: Handheld & Steadicam



**Steadicam:** portable camera with weights which is 'worn' by camera operator. Used to:

- ▶ Steady image
- ▶ Film scene without multiple takes
- ▶ Allow freer camera movement/ follow the action

# The Shot: Camera Movement

## 5: Handheld & Steadicam

***Goodfellas,***  
(dir. Martin Scorsese, USA, 1990)

**Long take using steadicam**

***Touch of Evil,***  
(dir. Orson Welles, USA, 1958)

**Long take using  
handheld and crane**

# The Shot: *Camera manipulation*

There are a number of 'effects' that can be achieved by manipulating the camera lens.

The two most common are **zoom** and **focus**.

Example: Wide Angle Lens (24mm f/2.8)



# Camera Lens

Example: Normal Lens (50mm f/1.4)



Example: Telephoto Lens (85-200mm f/4)



Each picture is taken with the same camera body fixed on a tripod and using the same settings. All that has been changed is the lens.



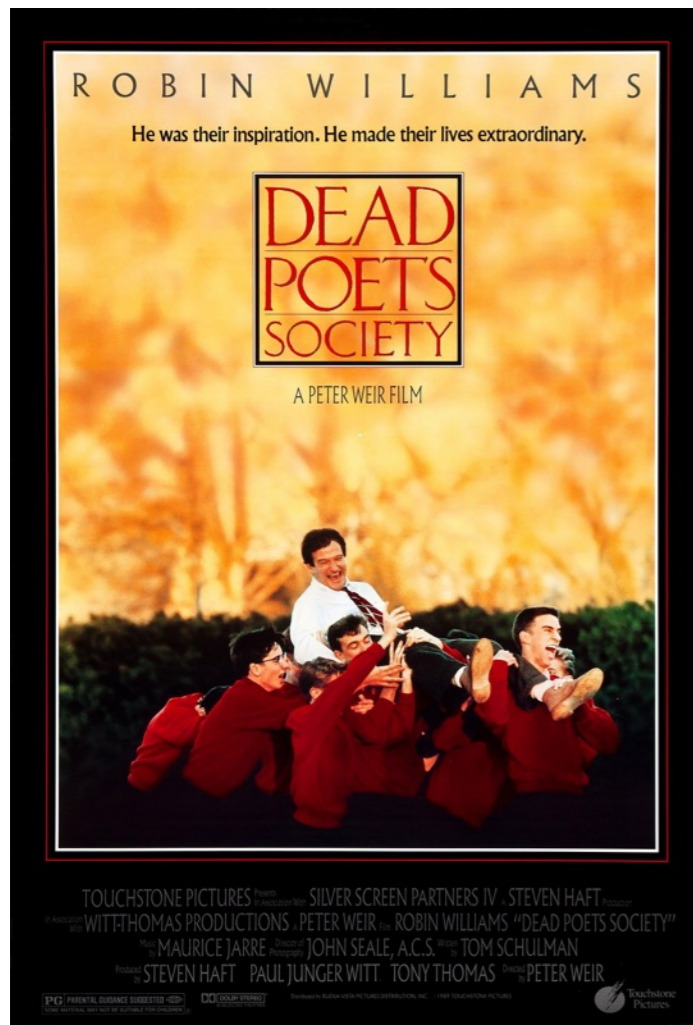
# The Shot: *Zoom*



**Zoom:** zoom lens can create illusion of camera moving in/out; can zoom in/out. Used to:


- ▶ Pick something out of a larger scene
- ▶ Suggest action/movement
- ▶ Lead the audience

# The Shot: *Rack Focus*



**Rack focus:** the focus point of the image is changed. This is a manual process... real filmmakers don't use 'Autofocus'! Used to:

- ▶ change focus in scene to **new point of interest**
- ▶ can add to the **narrative** by leading/manipulating the audience's attention



***Dead Poets Society,***  
(dir. Peter Weir, USA, 1989)



***The Adventures of Priscilla,  
Queen of the Desert,***

(dir. Stephan Elliott, Australia, 1995)

# The Shot: *Depth of Perspective*

**Depth of perspective shot (aka. Dolly Zoom):** there is a particular effect that can be achieved by combining camera movement with a camera zoom. In the following sequence, Spielberg uses a **dolly track** to move the camera closer to Chief Brody (*Roy Scheider*) while simultaneously **zooming out**. This has the effect of keeping Chief Brody roughly the same size on the screen — and therefore the focus of interest — but **watch the background** as it happens. Consider the following:

- ▶ What is suggested by the shot?
- ▶ Why has Spielberg used it?



# *Jaws,*

(dir. Steven Spielberg, USA, 1975)

# The Shot: *Homework* (be still, my beating heart!)

**Shot Analysis:** Watch the following *John Lewis* Christmas Advert from 2014.



***John Lewis Christmas Advert,***  
(dir. Dougal Wilson, UK, 2014)



# Mise-en-scène

Mise-  
en-  
scène

Hold on to your hats,  
and pay attention...

Mise-en-scène  
is really, really  
important...

# Mise-en-scène

Mise-  
en-  
scène

**Mise-en-scène:** is French for ‘put in the picture’ and covers **everything** that is put into a scene. For example...

- ▶ setting
- ▶ objects (props)
- ▶ people
- ▶ make up
- ▶ costumes
- ▶ composition (*ie: figure arrangement and movement*)
- ▶ lighting
- ▶ ...

# Mise-en-scène

Mise-  
en-  
scène

***Mise-en-scène*** can be motivated by  
***realism*** or ***symbolise themes*** or  
***comment on action*** (e.g. excess)

# Setting

Mise-  
en-  
scène





**Props:** In practical terms, a prop is considered to be anything movable or portable on a stage or a set, distinct from the actors, scenery, costumes and electrical equipment.



# People

Mise-  
en-  
scène



# People

Mise-  
en-  
scène

**People:** a director will populate a set in order to help create the desired setting against which the action is to be played out.

In terms of ***mise-en-scène***, people are used in the same way that the setting and props are used.



# Make up

Mise-  
en-  
scène

**Make up:** used to transform a character, as well as to make them appear 'natural'.

**Make up** can also be used to suggest **character traits**: eg. scars to suggest a villain, 'cheap' make up to suggest a character with low values, ...



# Make up

Mise-  
en-  
scène



“Natural”: Emmanuelle Béart in *Manon des Sources* (dir. Claude Berri, France, 1986)

# Make up

Mise-  
en-  
scène



“villain”: Donald Pleasance in *You Only Live Twice* (dir. Lewis Gilbert, UK, 1967)

# Make up

Mise-  
en-  
scène



“medical”: John Hurt in *The Elephant Man* (dir. David Lynch, USA-UK, 1980)

# Make up

*Mise-  
en-  
scène*



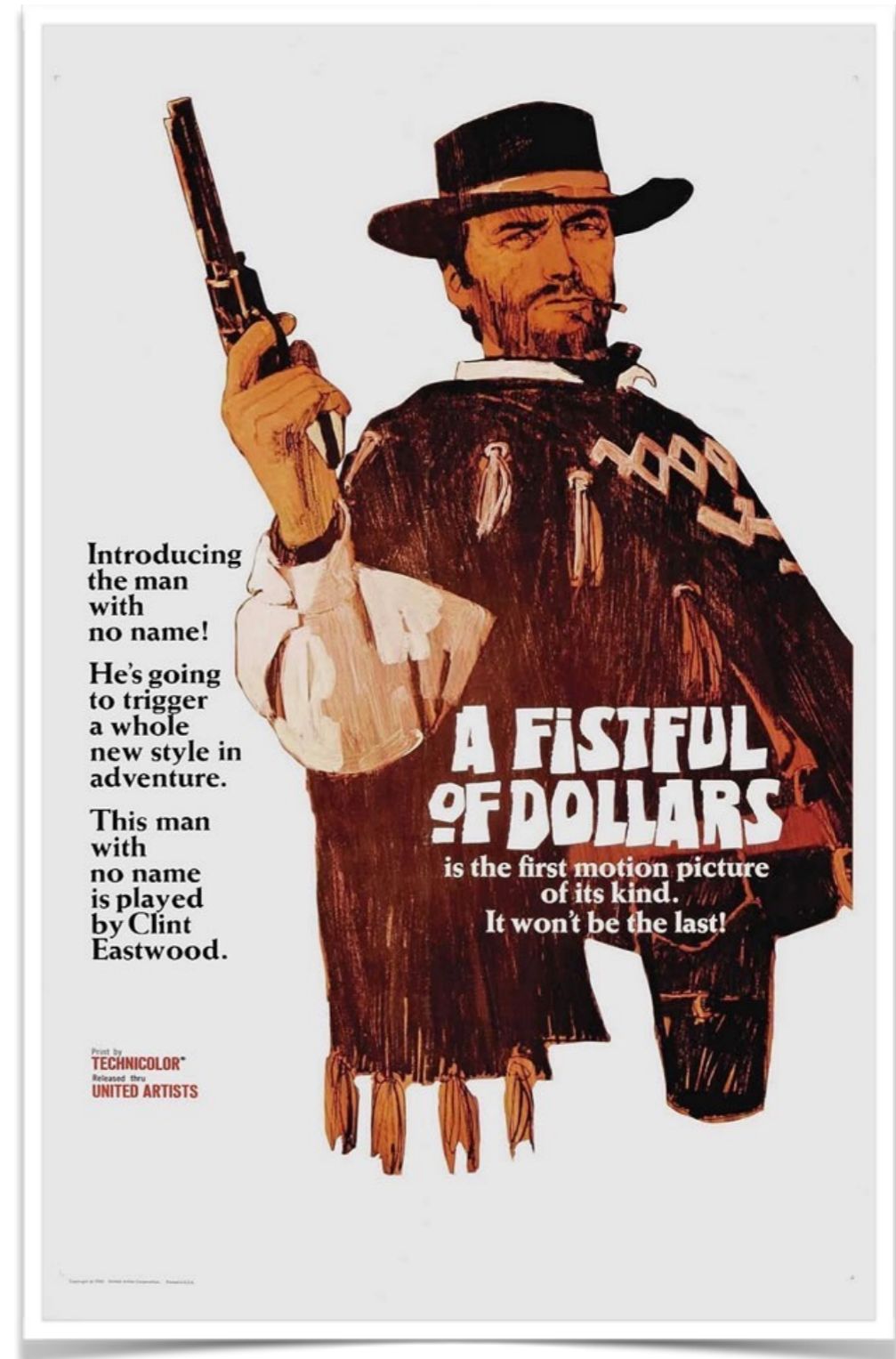
“horror”: Doug Bradley in Hellraiser (dir. Clive Barker, UK, 1987)

# Costume

Mise-  
en-  
scène

**Costume:** is an essential part of creating the 'reality' of a text.

There are certain **conventions** of costume that are used to make a text immediately accessible for an audience...



# Composition

*Mise-  
en-  
scène*

**Composition:** refers to how the actors and extras are arranged and moved on the set.



***The Fisher King,***

(dir. Terry Gilliam, USA, 1991)

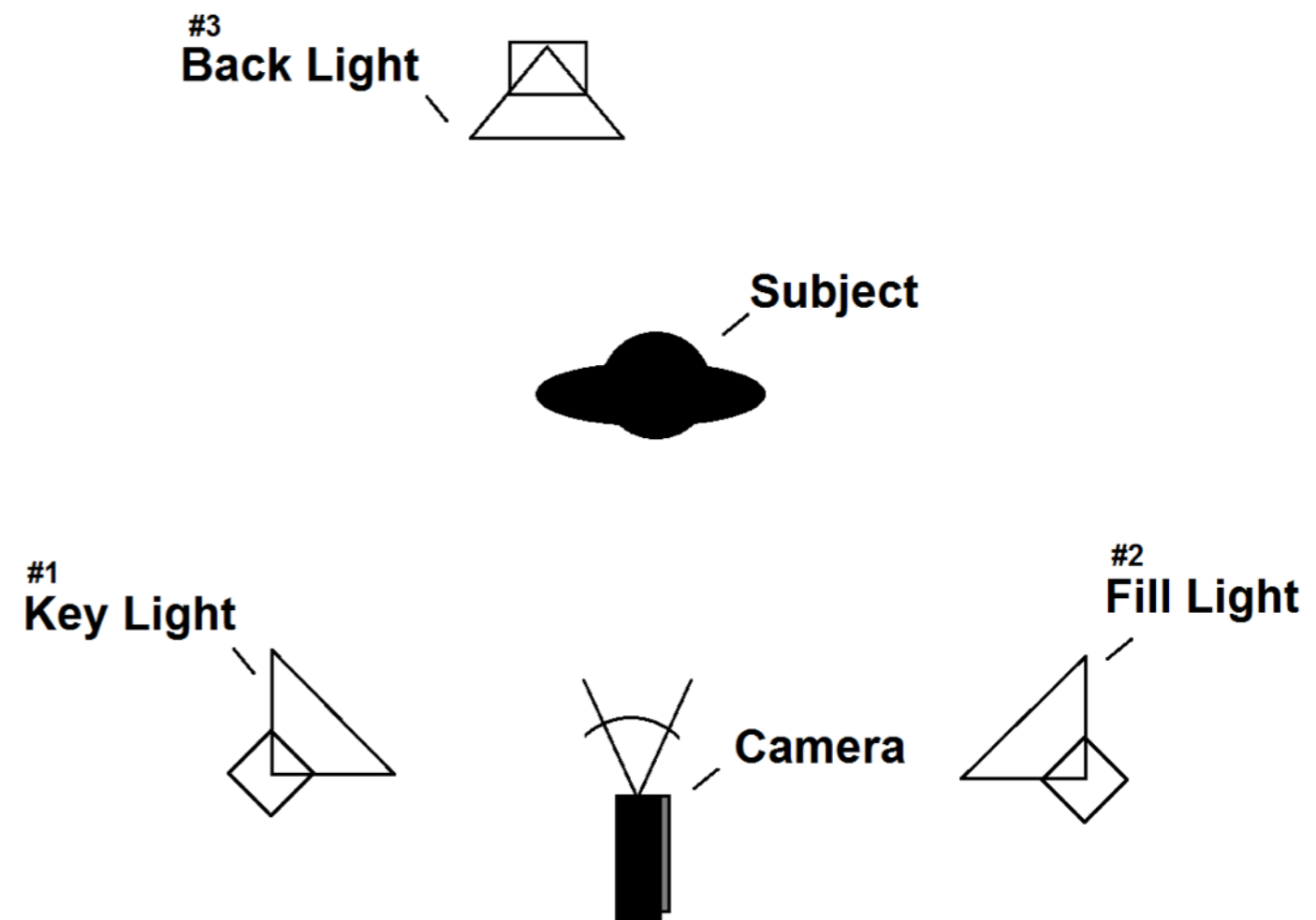
**Composition**

# Lighting

Mise-  
en-  
scène

The 'classic' system of lighting for films is known as the **Three point system of lighting**.

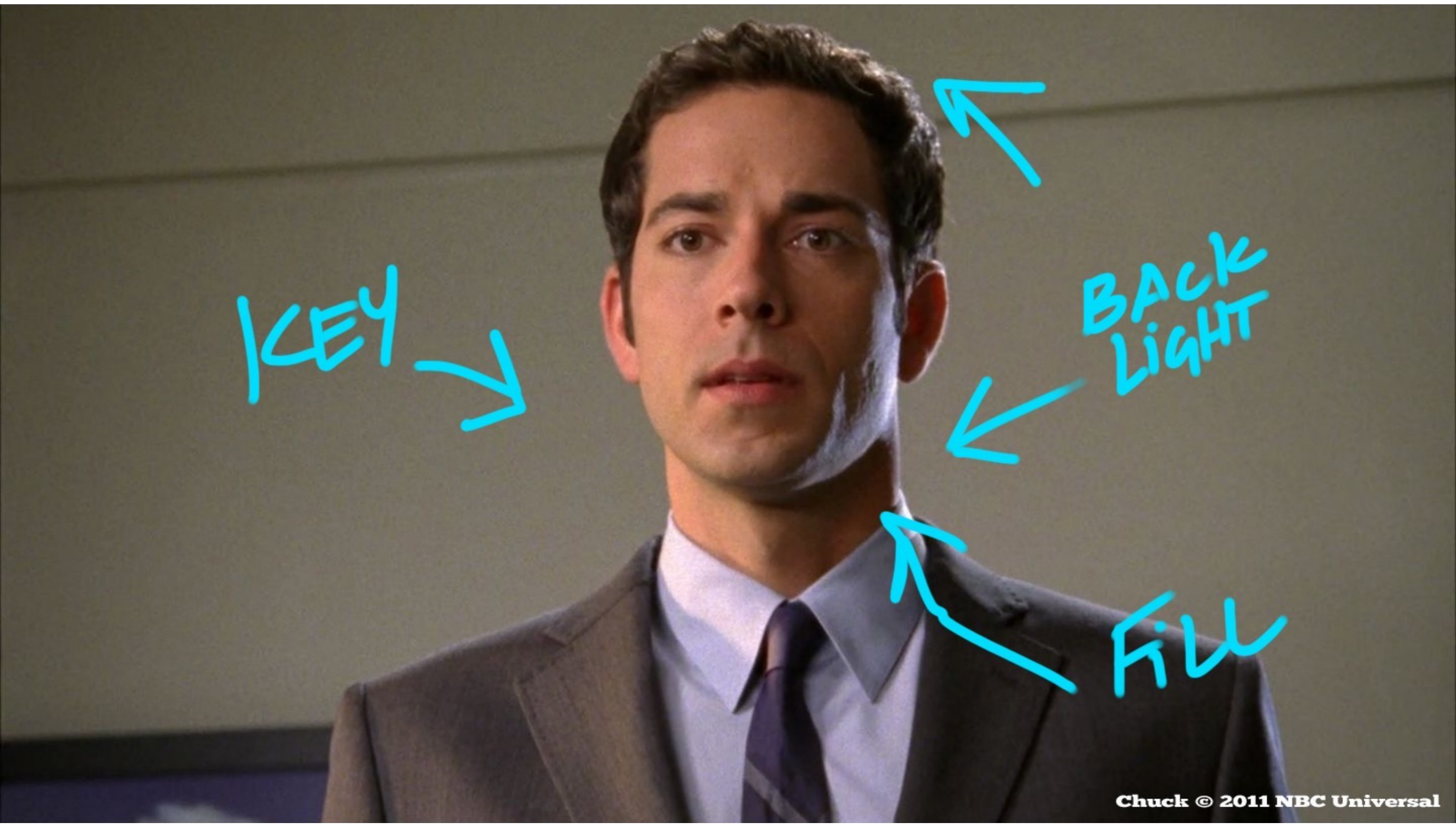
- ▶ Key light: main source of light
- ▶ Backlight: adds highlights and differentiates actor from background
- ▶ Fill light: softens shadows from key light





# Lighting

Mise-  
en-  
scène



# Lighting

High Key Lighting  
Low Key Lighting

*Mise-  
en-  
scène*

There are many variations on this, but the two most common ones are **high key lighting** and **low key lighting**.

# Lighting

High Key Lighting  
Low Key Lighting

*Mise-  
en-  
scène*

## High key lighting:

- ▶ Bright lighting with little shadow
- ▶ Attractive faces
- ▶ Connotes normality



# Lighting

High Key Lighting  
Low Key Lighting

Mise-  
en-  
scène

## Low key lighting:

- ▶ Key light dimmed (*may be moved – kick light*)
- ▶ Shadows
- ▶ Connotes unease, evil
- ▶ Feature of ‘film noir’



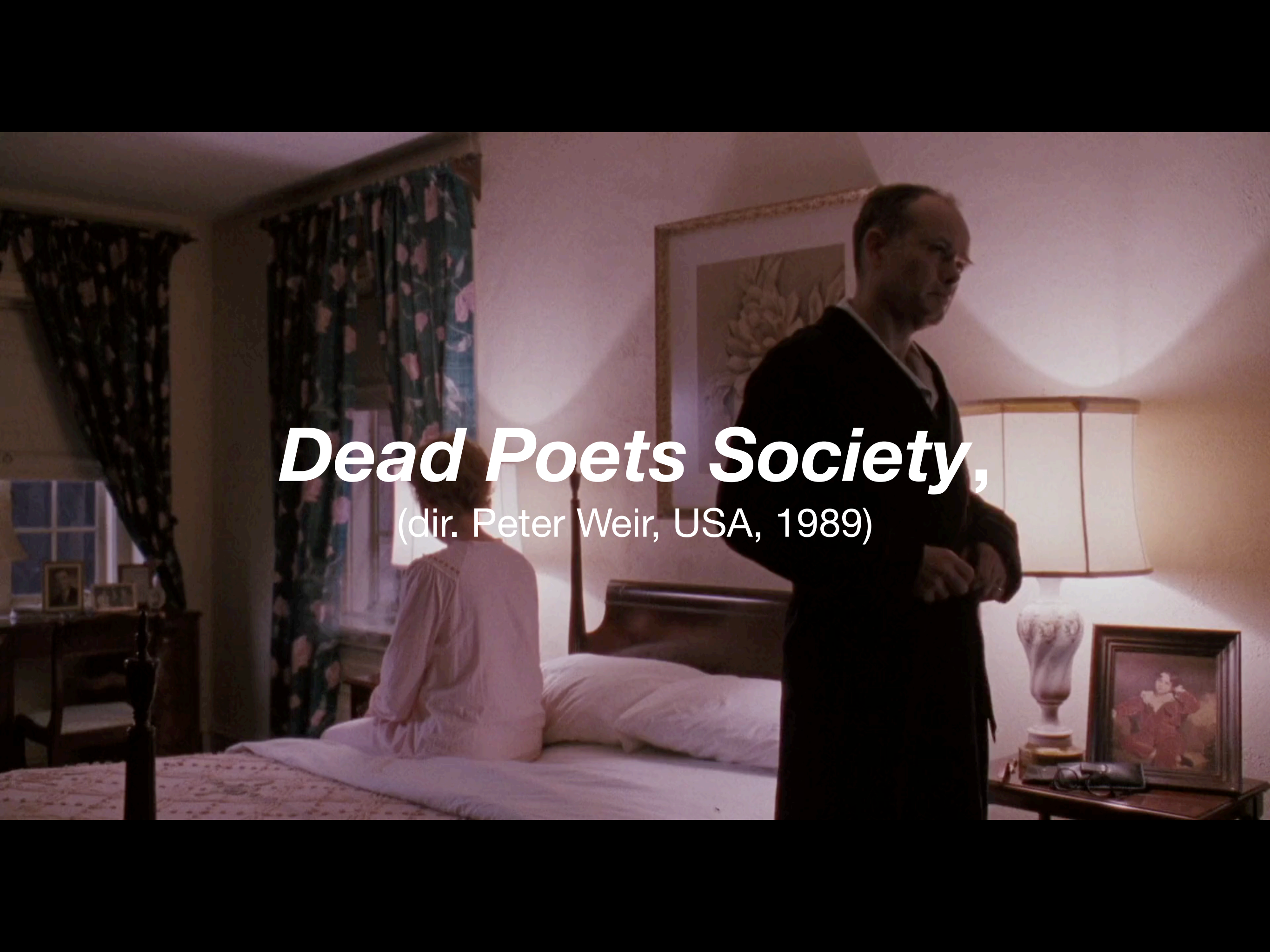
# Mise-en-scène

Mise-  
en-  
scène

## Pulling it all together

You will now be shown an extract from *Dead Poets Society* (dir. Peter Weir, USA, 1989). As you watch it, try to analyse the *mise-en-scène*, and you should also try to be aware of how *mise-en-scène* can be:

- ▶ motivated by realism
- ▶ symbolise themes
- ▶ comment on action



***Dead Poets Society,***  
(dir. Peter Weir, USA, 1989)