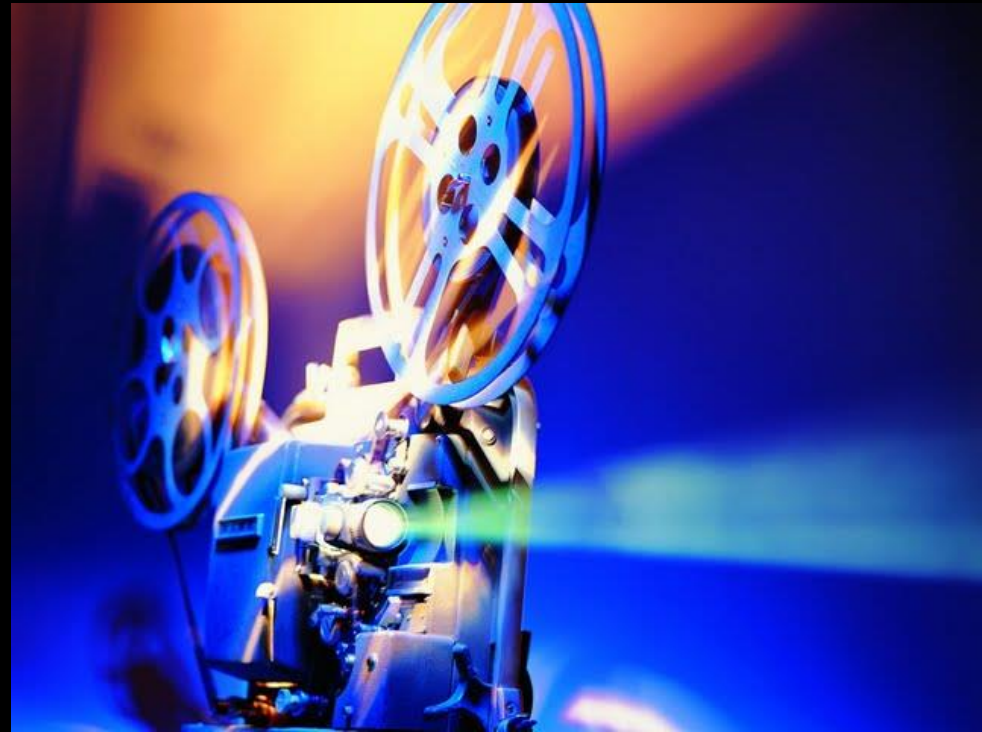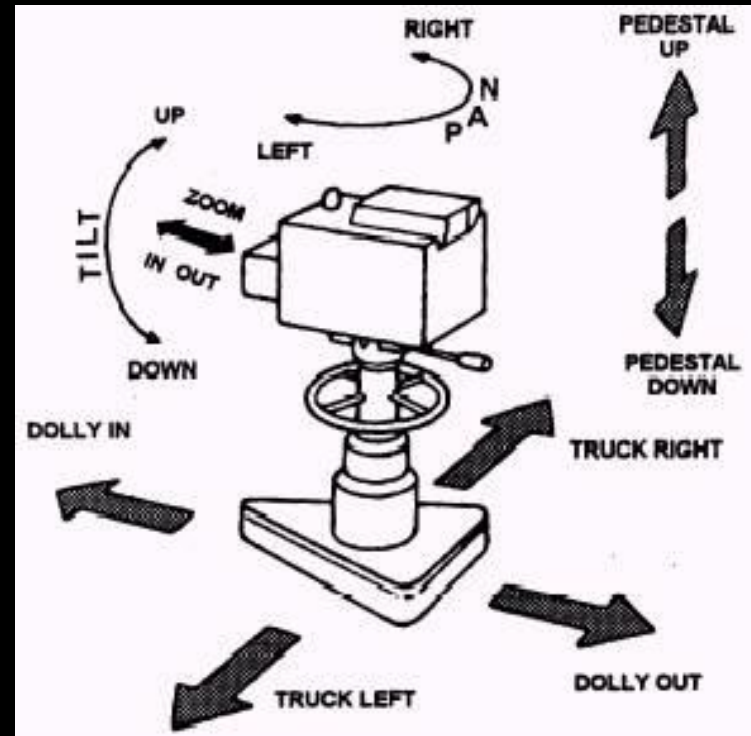# CAMERA MOVEMENT

Middle School Film Studies
Unit 8
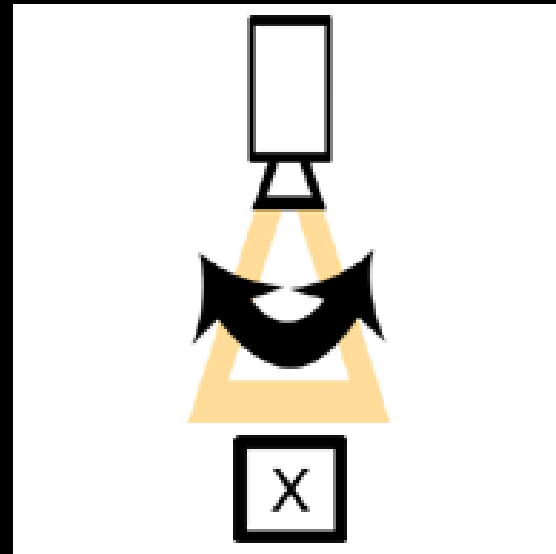
Camera Movement

- Describes the physical movement of the camera during the course of a given shot.

Pan

- A camera movement in which a fixed camera pivots to the right or left.

- On the screen, it produces a mobile framing that scans the space horizontally.

- A pan can show a moving object or a sweeping landscape.

Whip Pan

- An extremely fast movement of the camera from side to side, which briefly causes the image to blur into a set of indistinct horizontal streaks.

- Often, an imperceptible cut will join two whip pans to create a trick transition between scenes.

- Commonly used in action sequences (e.g. in Kung-Fu movies).

Tilt

- A camera movement in which camera body pivots upward or downward on a stationary support.

- It produces a mobile framing that scans the space vertically.

- This will also change the angle of framing, from high to low, for example.

- Reveals a vertical object (like a person or building).

- Can be used to build suspense as a person is gradually revealed.
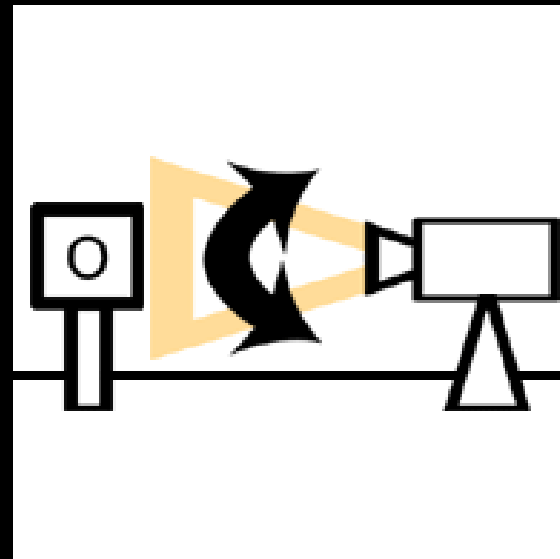
Pedestal Shot

- In a pedestal move, the camera body will physically be lowered or elevated.

- The difference between tilts and pedestals is that in the former, the camera lens is just being aimed up or down, whereas in the latter, the camera is being moved vertically.

- It therefore does not change the angle like a tilt would.

Follow Shot

- A shot in which the framing shifts to keep a character or characters onscreen.

- The camera may pan, track, tilt, or crane to keep the characters in the frame.

- Reframing allows the characters' actions to take precedence over the camera movement.

Tracking Shot

- A mobile framing in which the camera travels through space forward, backward, or laterally.

- A tracking shot usually follows a character or object as it moves along the screen.

- Contrary to the pan, which mimics a turning head, a tracking shot physically accompanies the entire range of movement.

- It therefore creates a closer affinity with the character or object moving, since the spectator is not just watching him/her moving, but moving *with* him/her.

Dolly Shot

- The camera is placed upon a wheeled support.

- It can be free moving, or fixed upon rails to allow identical movement between takes.

- Dollies are often used when recording a subject that moves away or toward the camera, in which case the goal is often to keep the subject at the same distance from the camera.

Crane Shot

- A shot with a change in framing rendered by having the camera above the ground and moving through the air in any direction. It is accomplished by placing the camera on a crane (basically, a large cantilevered arm) or similar device.

- Crane shots often include long or extreme long shots: they give the camera a sense of freedom and flight and often give the viewer a feeling of omniscience over the characters.

- Crane shots are often combined with long takes.

Handheld/ Steadicam

- The use of the camera operator's body as a camera support, either holding it by hand or using a gyroscopic stabilizer and harness.

- Newsreel filmmakers favored smaller cameras that were quickly adopted by documentary and avant-garde filmmakers, notably the cinéma verité movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

- Also used by young filmmakers since they were cheap and lent the images a greater feeling of spontaneity.

- They give a film an unstable, jerky feel, and allow for a greater degree of movement and flexibility than bulkier standard cameras.

- Gyroscopically stabilized "steadicams" were invented in the 1970s and made it possible to create smooth tracking shots without cumbersome equipment.

Thoughts on Movement

- Although camera movements are often implemented to add excitement to shots, their best use is when new information is revealed.

- Camera movements can be distracting and even annoying when overused or used without a reason.

- Editing and focus are other ways to achieve movement, but they do not involve literal movement of the camera.
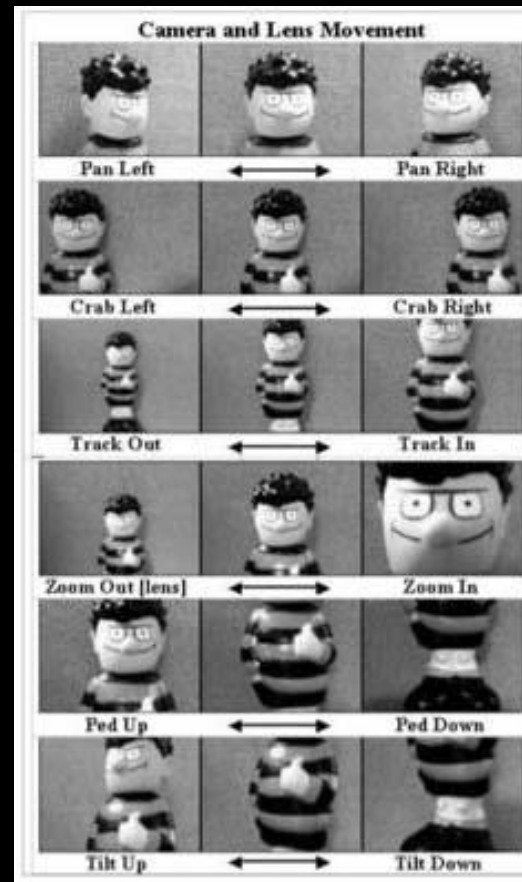
Examples

- [Camera Movement Tutorial](#)

- [Camera Movement and the Art of Cinematography](#)

Camera Movement: Examples

- In the following film clip, identify the camera movement the director makes use of and its effect.
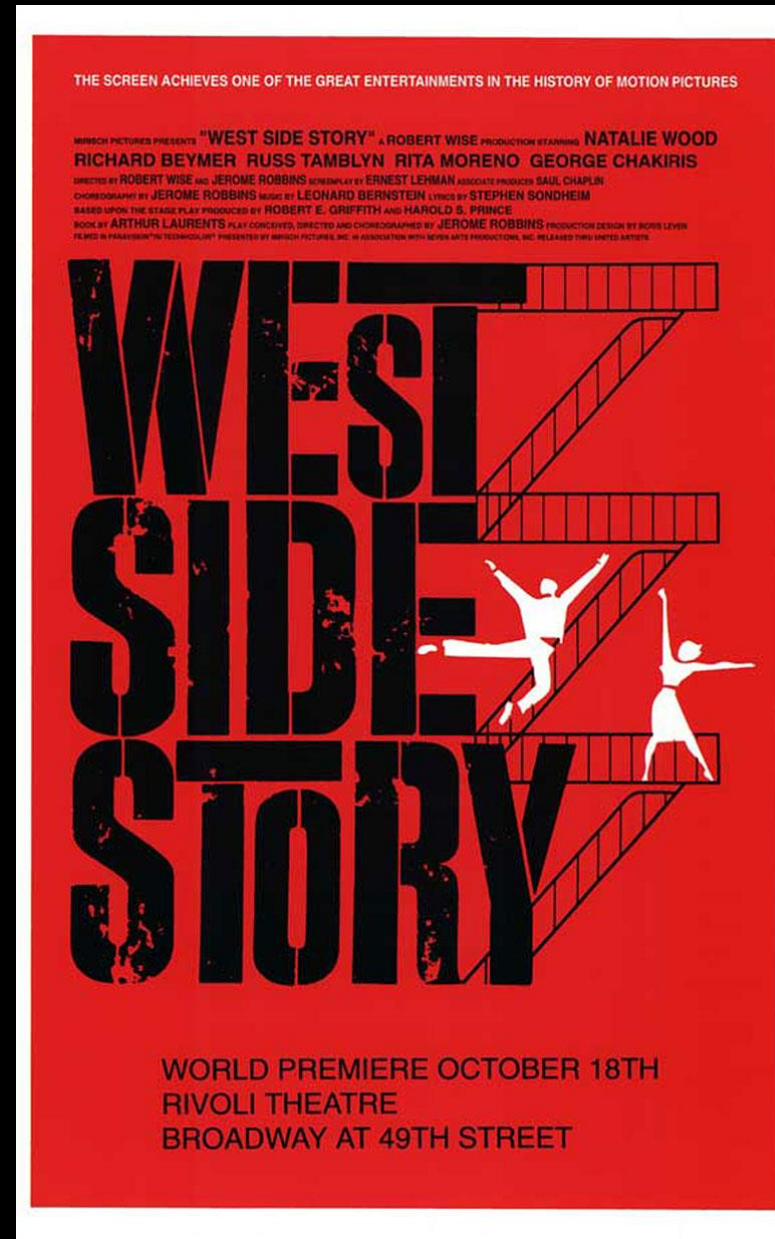
- *Gone with the Wind (1939)*

Camera Movement: Examples

- In the following film clip, identify the camera movement the director makes use of and its effect.

- *Touch of Evil* (1958)

Camera Movement: Examples

- In the following film clip, identify the camera movement the director makes use of and its effect.

- *West Side Story* (1961)

Camera Movement: Examples

- In the following film clip, identify the camera movement the director makes use of and its effect.
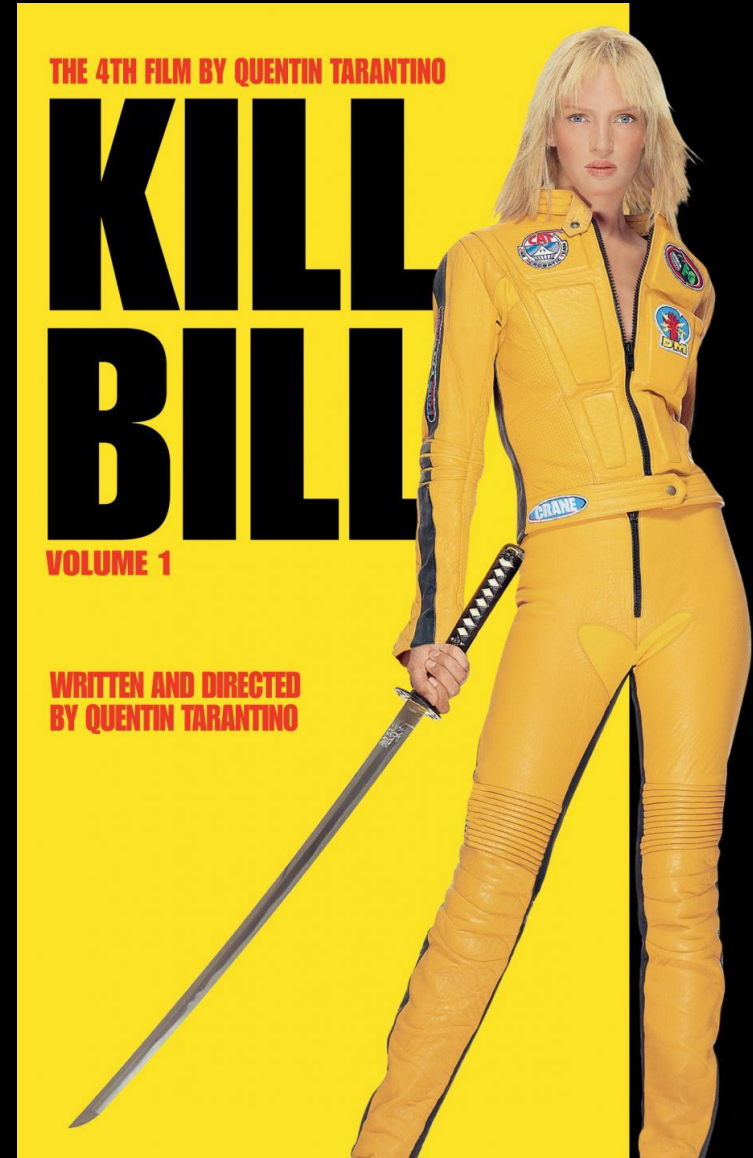
- *The Shining* (1980)

Camera Movement: Examples

- In the following film clip, identify the camera movement the director makes use of and its effect.

- *Goodfellas* (1990)

Camera Movement: Examples

- In the following film clip, identify the camera movement the director makes use of and its effect.

- *Kill Bill, Volume 1* (2003)

Camera Movement: Examples

- In the following film clip, identify the camera movement the director makes use of and its effect.

- *The Polar Express* (2004)

Camera Movement Quiz

1. What is a pan?

2. What is a whip pan?

3. What is a tilt?

4. What is a pedestal shot?

5. What is a follow shot?

6. What is a tracking shot?

7. What is an dolly shot?

8. What is a crane shot?

9. What is the purpose of the Steadicam?

10. What's a problem with too much camera movement?

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