

# Montage Theory in the Movie the Devil Wears Prada

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**Abstract.** Feminism has always been a topic of discussion, and movies about feminism are also emerging in an endless stream. Gender equality in society and women's realization of self-worth and pursuit of dreams have always been advocated today. Therefore, it is meaningful to study feminism. The research theme of this paper is the application and role of montage theory in the film. This paper will mainly analyze the different montage shots in the Devil Wears Prada to analyze how to present the main theme of feminism. Through the analysis of the film lens, it is found that the montage technique clips several separate shots together to present a better effect, showing the confidence and persistence of the protagonist Andy in the workplace, and successfully shaping a female image who bravely pursues her dream.

**Keywords:** Montage theory; The Devil Wears Prada; Feminism.

## 1. Introduction

Feminism is the advocacy of women's rights on the basis of the equality of the sexes. The study on this field mainly aim to pursue gender equality and provide women with more freedom and respect in the world. Throughout the history, women were considered inferior to men sometimes. Many movies present the idea of feminism to improve women's social status and give them more voice. Feminist film criticism mainly analyzes film works from the aspects of the female image in the film, the internal composition of the film works, the reaction of the audience, and the gender difference in cultural control. Its basic position is that gender is physiological, social gender is cultural and historical, and social gender reflects the discrimination and oppression of women in the male centered society. [1-5].

This paper mainly focuses on the connection between montage theory and how it helps to convey the idea of feminism. At the beginning of film development, there was no concept of montage, because at that time, the camera was in a fixed position and shot everything continuously. Later, after research, people began to try to shoot with cameras at different positions and from different distances and heights. Then connect the lenses together, which can show different effects. This is the beginning of montage theory.

Through the technique of montage, the film has achieved great freedom in the time and space of narration. It can create suspense or promote the development of the plot by juxtaposing the movements in different spaces Montage theory in film means connecting different shots together that leaves a shock and anticipation for the audience. It has been used widely in lots of famous films throughout the world. This technique put together several shots that can tell a story that is not understandable by only one shot. It helps to evoke an idea or a state of mind. In the movie the Devil Wears Prada, Montage has been used throughout the whole movie to deliver its central theme. "The Devil Wears Prada" tells the story of a graduate (Andy), who just left campus, who accidentally got the opportunity to work in a fashion magazine and was also Miranda 's assistant. Andy, who is out of step with fashion, is suffering from all kinds of discomfort in the magazine. Miranda, the boss known as "female devil", tortures her and makes her full of complaints and negative energy all the time. Fortunately, she is smart and diligent. She quickly realized that she eventually became a fashion master. Andy is another Miranda because he is smart and hard-working. In her work, she was gradually appreciated by the leaders and had great development opportunities. The difference is that Miranda gave up her friends and family. She devoted herself to her work and was loyal to reason; Andy can't let go of the people around her. She chooses sensibility. Miranda finally chose to help Andy, gave her a letter of recommendation, and realized her dream of being a reporter. Maybe it can

also be understood that she is helping Andy to become another self in her heart. At the end of the film, when Andy and Miranda meet and smile at each other, it should be that they both understand each other and respect each other's decisions - Miranda is still her proud fashion familiar devil, and Andy is her dream reporter of the New York Times.

## **2. Feminism in the movie The Devil Wears Prada**

As a trend of thought for women to study themselves and liberate themselves, feminism has gradually developed into a global movement, which has made indelible contributions to the global women's Liberation. This thesis will analyze the film *The Devil Wears Prada* from the perspective of feminism. Women in traditional movies are all portrayed as gentle and ornamental. Their fields are limited to marriage and family, and they usually rely on the image of men. However, men are generally molded into a more authoritative image with decision-making ability and have more important social responsibilities. Many women's movies have changed such stereotypes for many people, and let us see the power of women [6-8].

In the film, Andy's contradictions in her relationship and work are also depicted. As a woman, there are irreconcilable contradictions between career and family. Women should be considerate, patient, and responsible in the family. They need to be ambitious in the workplace. The portrayal of Miranda in the film reflects the difficult life situation of women in the workplace and their obligation to balance their families.

At the beginning of the film, Andy must try to change myself to become more fashionable. She keeps changing her hair style, clothes, and shoes. Her thoughts are also changing. She is gradually used to these fashion trends and is more and more enthusiastic about her work. The peace and happiness that she once felt satisfied no longer exist, and her relationship with her boyfriend is also facing a crisis. Andy gradually lost her friendship and love. Later, she chose to give up this ostensible job. Some people may judge her choice by saying it is wrong, but it reflects Andy's process of finding herself and realizing her self-worth. Women are liberated and free in society and being able to choose freely is the progress of feminism, so that more women can bravely pursue what they want without being bound by traditional ideas.

Another female image in the film is Miranda. Her appearance is a female image with short hair and a thick voice. It can be seen that the position of the leader belongs to men or women with male characteristics. Although she made great achievements in her work, she lost her happy marriage and family and became a workaholic. On the surface, she is beautiful in the workplace, but her personal life is very bad. A pair of twin daughters lacked discipline, and she experienced two divorces. This actually reveals that there is still a lack of tolerance for women in society. If women want to succeed in their careers, they need to pay for their happiness in marriage. How to find a balance between career success and family happiness is a problem that needs to be considered.

## **3. Montage theory in the movie The Devil Wears Prada**

### **3.1 Introduction of Montage**

The consensus of montage theorists is that the combination of lenses is the source of the appeal of film art, and the juxtaposition of two lenses forms new characteristics and generates new meanings. Montage thinking conforms to the dialectics of thinking, that is, to reveal the internal relationship between things and phenomena, and to understand the essence of things through perceptual representation.

Montage generally includes picture editing and picture synthesis. Picture composition: a unified picture work composed of many pictures or patterns juxtaposed or superimposed. Picture editing: the way or process of making this kind of artistic combination is to arrange and combine a series of shots shot in different places, from different distances and angles, and in different ways, to narrate the plot and depict the characters. Through the segmentation and combination of shots, scenes and paragraphs,

the materials are selected and selected to make the primary and secondary contents of the performance clear and achieve a high degree of generalization and concentration.

Montage theory is a systematic film aesthetic theory and practical principle that Eisenstein put forward in the 1920s to study the characteristics of films based on the dialectics of perceptual thinking and rational thinking. It also generally refers to the theory of editing and lens splitting in world films. Montage's theory and practice are the combination of pioneer spirit and revolutionary will. After the baptism of the October Revolution, Russian filmmakers actively threw themselves into the practice of film creation, tried to use the weapons of film to inspire the masses and publicize the revolution. At the same time, under the influence of avant-garde art at the beginning of the 20th century, especially influenced by Futurism and constructivism, they paid attention to exploring brand-new film language and established the montage theory system. Montage helps to guide the audience's attention and stimulate their association. Although each shot only shows a certain content, it can regulate and guide the emotions and psychology of the audience and inspire the audience to think by combining certain sequences of shots. It also creates unique film time and space. Each shot is a record of real time and space. After editing, it realizes the reconstruction of time and space [9-12].

### 3.2 Contrast montage



**Fig. 1** The contrast montage in the movie the Devil Wears Prada

Narrative montage aims to explain and clean up and show events. According to the practical process, logical sequence, and causality of plot development, it divides and combines shots, scenes and paragraphs to show the coherence of actions, promote plot development and guide the audience to understand the plot. Narrative montage is characterized by clear context, logical coherence and comprehensibility. [13-14].

Contrast montage is a type of narrative montage which creates mutual emphasis and conflict through the strong contrast of the content (Such as poverty and wealth, hardship and happiness, life and death, nobility and inferiority, victory and failure) and form (such as the size of the scene, the

elevation of the angle, the brightness of the light, the warmth and intensity of the color, the strength of the sound, the movement and the stillness) to express the creator's raincoat or strengthen the content, emotion or thought expressed.

The opening of the film is a group of contrast montages. Through a group of shots of women getting up early and dressing up, it shows the audience the huge difference in life choices between people in the fashion industry and Andy, who lives outside the fashion industry. The use of contrast montage highlights the life habits and character of the heroine Andy. Andy and several other female characters appeared in the film. This happens in different places at the same time, and then clips together. Each shot stays for a few seconds, showing the preparation of each character for the interview. It can be seen that Andy is the most common one. Other people are very exquisite, and life is also very fashionable. There are many expensive cosmetics, large closets and exquisite breakfast. Contrast montage highlights the contrast between several people. This compares Andrea with other girls who have exquisite life. They all put on designer clothes and beautiful make-up. They have expensive perfumes and lipsticks. They wear luxurious jewelry. The delicate and fashionable girls contrast with Andrea who does not even do her make-up and just gets ready by brushing her teeth and grabbing a bagel. The shots help to establish the idea that women like Andrea have other qualities more important than beauty. Andrea is not a traditional woman who only thinks about how to look charming to others. What shape Andrea is her hardworking and tenacity. It breaks the stereotype that women should always make themselves look attractive. It is their own choice to become whatever kind of people they want to be. [15-16].

### 3.3 Repeating montage



**Fig. 2** The repeating montage in the movie The Devil Wears Prada

Repeating montage is also a type of narrative montage. It is when the same protagonist does the same action at different times, which is equivalent to the way of narration in literature. Through

careful planning and repeated appearance at critical moments, this technique highlights the changes in the fate, personality and psychology of the characters, shapes the characters and deepens the theme by using the lens or important scene with certain implication. Repeating montages create artistic effects such as emphasis, contrast, appeal, rendering and so on. Public elements such as characters, scenes, scenery, actions, objects, language, and color can be repeated through careful conception to achieve unique moral and artistic effects.

This scene repeats Miranda throwing her handbags and clothes onto her assistant Andrea's table. This is a type of narrative montage as it put together different repeating sections. The characters, setting and action in the shots are the same, but the lines and the styles of the clothes and bags differ. Repeating montage is a common narrative means in movies. Its main purpose is to explain the plot, show the story, divide it according to the development process of the story and the causal relationship between the front and back, and recombine the paragraphs and scenes so that the audience can understand the story more easily. In the movie, the use of repeating montage emphasizes the theme of women and shows the embodiment of women's self-worth in the workplace. Andy, the assistant at runway, is responsible for tackling all the problems encounter in Miranda's life. The repeating montage here in the movie repeats the daily routine and the heavy workload of Andy. It reflects the busy life Andy has during work. She never gives up and always try hard to solve all the problems in life. Moreover, the repeating montage also helps to shape the characteristic of Miranda. She is callous but she has high working efficiency and productivity. She is an epitome of women in the society who is a workaholic, but lacking a happy family.

### 3.4 Parallel montage



**Fig. 3** The Parallel montage in the movie *The Devil Wears Prada*

The last type of narrative montage is Parallel montage, which is a parallel representation of two or more plot clues. It can be different time and space, the same time and space and different places, or the same place and different time and space. Assembled together to form a complete structure. Several connected plots are interlaced to express a common theme.

This is a very classic changing scene. This is a parallel montage that the director uses phone booths, passing taxis, and other elements to help present Andrea's changing into different outfits. Andrea is keep changing clothes on her way to the company. She becomes more graceful and attractive. The director put the different shots together to form a montage. First, she was wearing sunglasses with a green coat with a leopard grain design, then when people pass through the camera, she changes into a black coat with a stylish orange hat and after a black car passed through, she turned into a white push coat and white checked hat. The scene perfectly shows the audience her dazzling beauty, which helps to convey the idea that women can be as confident as men in the workplace. The background music of this scene has strong beats which correspond with the power and determination of Andrea. The parallel montage here presents the change of Andy. She is growing and becoming a more mature assistant. The use of montage with music helps to convey the theme of feminism by showing the confident woman in workplace.

#### 4. Conclusion

This article focuses on the movie *The Devil Wears Prada*, and analyzed the feminism and the use of montage. Through the analysis of the film, we can find that there are feminist elements from the characterization to the plot. Andy finally bravely pursued freedom and realized her self-worth as a woman. At the same time, the film presents a difficult problem faced by women in today's society, how to balance work, life and family. This also reflects the real life, and many women also have such problems. Through the images of Andy and Miranda, this film encourages more women to get rid of the shackles brought by men and traditional concepts and pursue themselves bravely. The study of feminism has enabled more women in the world to bravely pursue their self-worth and realize gender equality in the real sense of the world as soon as possible. Since ancient times, due to the influence of many traditional cultures, women have always been an image attached to men. And women's freedom and equality are also what the society has been pursuing. As an environment for visually presenting society, movies also call for women's independence and freedom to a certain extent by studying the feminism in movies. Furthermore, montage is a very useful technique to convey the main theme of the film. It connects separate sections and shots to form a big picture of the story to deliver ideas. In the movie *The Devil Wears Prada*, the use of montage shapes a girl Andrea who is shiny and confident in the workplace and achieve her goals through her persistent. There is still much to be studied about the montage theory. The classification of montages is not limited to narrative montages, and the use of montages is also reflected in many other films, which play a different effect and are presented in different ways. Through more in-depth and extensive research, it will also promote the development of Japanese montage theory.

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