

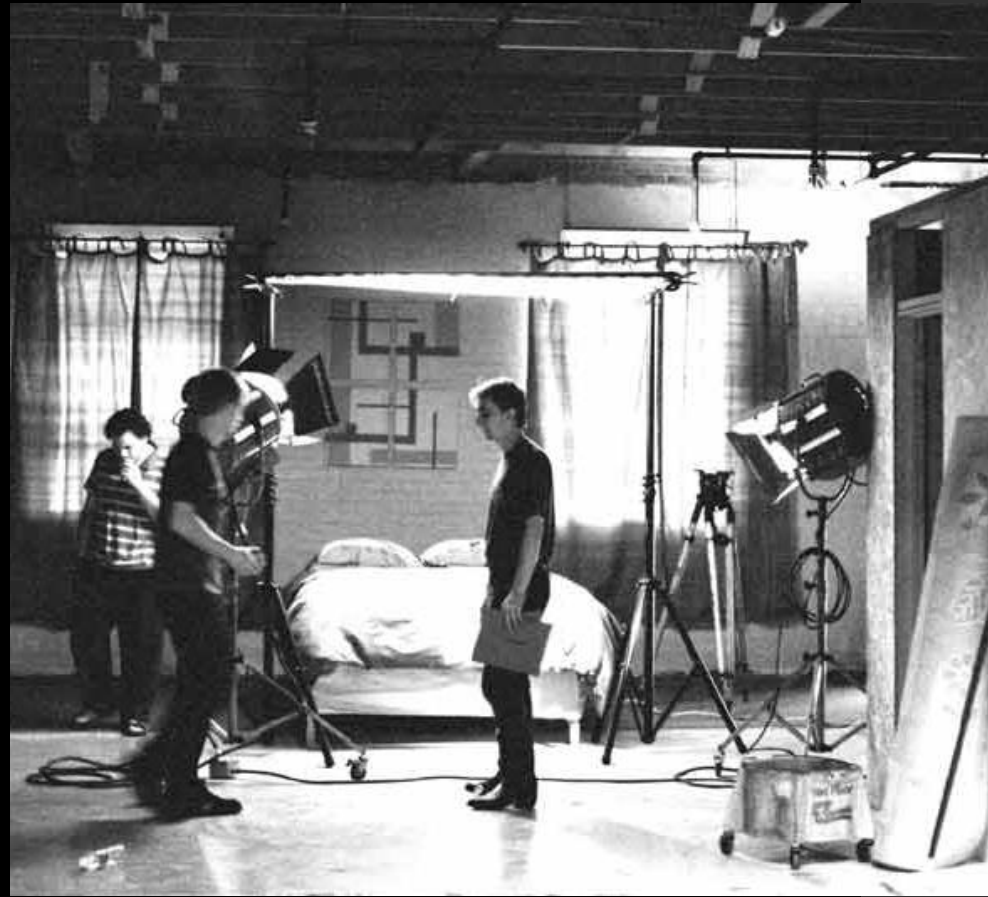
LIGHTING & COLOR

Film Studies



Lighting

- Filmmakers employ natural and artificial lighting to achieve a wide range of visual effects as well as to influence the audience's response to a scene.
- The angle and direction of light gives the audience clues about where and what time of day the scene is taking place and where they are supposed to look.
- How well the movie is lit influences how the audience perceives the production values (and therefore the quality) of the movie.



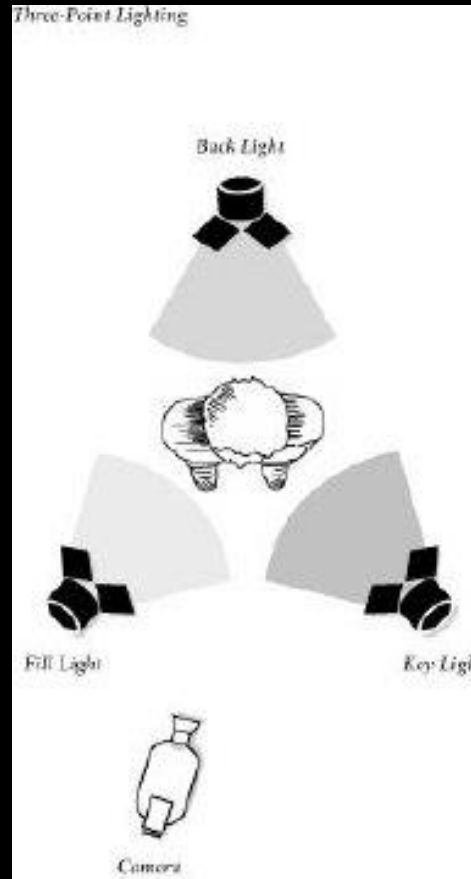
Lighting

- Light can be classified in several ways including:
- How sharp are the shadows?
- What is the angle of the light?
- How bright is the light?
- What color is the light?
- How many lights are there?



Three-Point Lighting

- The standard lighting scheme for classical narrative cinema.
- In order to present an actor's face (or any object) with a sense of depth, light from three directions is used.
- A **backlight** picks out the subject from its background, a bright **key light** highlights the object, and a **fill light** from the opposite side ensures that the key light casts only faint shadows.



Three-Point Lighting

- **Key Light:** main source of light in a scene; comes from one side or another.
- **Fill Light/ Filler:** a balancing light used to eliminate shadows created by key light; often directed at a star's face to provide a balanced lighted perspective.
- **Back Light:** illuminates the back of a scene and the head and back of a subject; often creates a "halo effect" around the head and shoulders of the subject.
- A fourth light source is usually aimed at the background behind the actor to illuminate the setting. Otherwise the actors might look like they are floating in space.



Three-Point Lighting



Breakfast at Tiffany's (1961)

Three-Point Lighting



Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1953)

High-Key Lighting

- A lighting scheme in which the fill light is raised to almost the same level as the key light.
- This produces images that are usually very bright and that feature few shadows on the principal subjects.
- This bright image is characteristic of genres such as musicals and comedies.
- **Soft Lighting:** creates an evenly lit world, where things are known or soon-to-be known. Usually does not create suspense or fear, and does not create strong moral distinctions between characters.



High-Key Lighting



The Wizard of Oz (1939)

High-Key Lighting



Marie Antoinette (2006)

Low-Key Lighting

- A lighting scheme that employs very little **fill light**, creating strong contrasts between the brightest and darkest parts of an image and often creating strong shadows that obscure parts of the principal subjects.
- This lighting scheme is often associated with "hard-boiled" or suspense genres such as *film noir*.
- **Hard Lighting:** sharply contrasts illuminated and shadowed areas; suggests mystery, ominous situations, and fear.



Low-Key Lighting



Citizen Kane (1941)

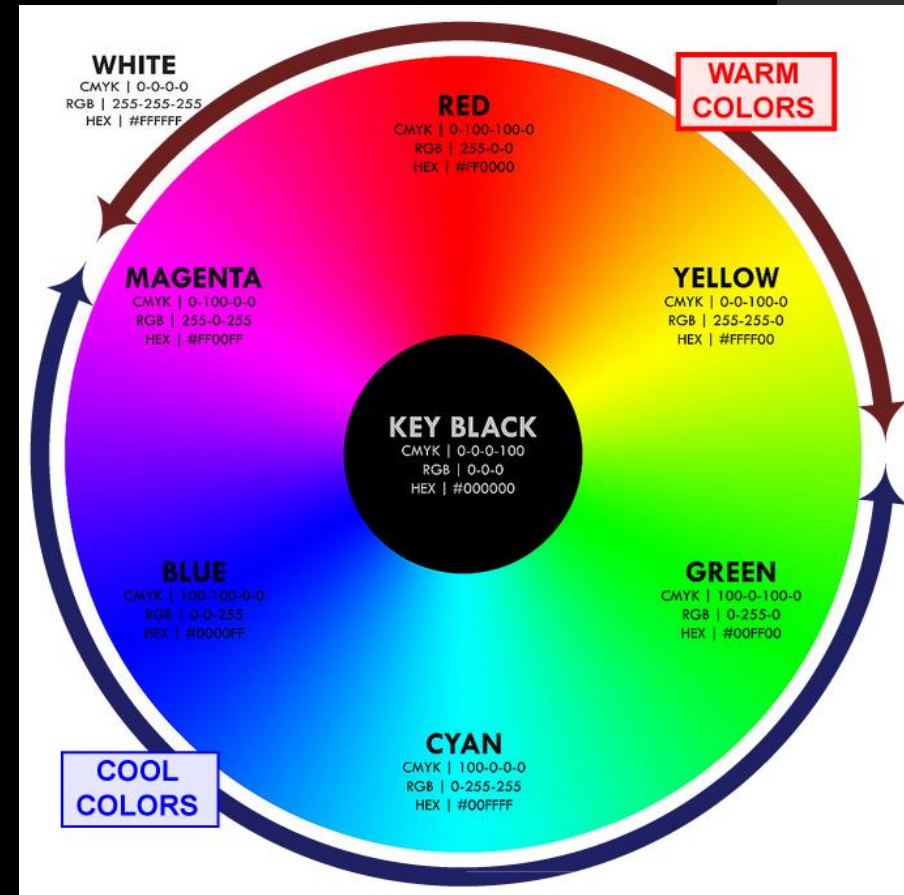
Color

- While all early films were shot in black and white, the cinema soon included color by dyeing the film stock or painting or stenciling colors onto the film.
- By the 1930s, filmmakers were including actual color sequences in their films.
- Apart from the added realism or glamour that a color image can provide, color is also used to create aesthetic patterns and to establish character or emotion in narrative cinema.
- In Federico Fellini's *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965) colors separate the reality and the fantasy daydreamings of the title character.



Warm and Cool Colors

- Depending upon the colors used, the palate of a film can be described as “warm,” or “cool.”
- What effect might this have on the viewer’s experience of the film?
- Do particular films come to mind?



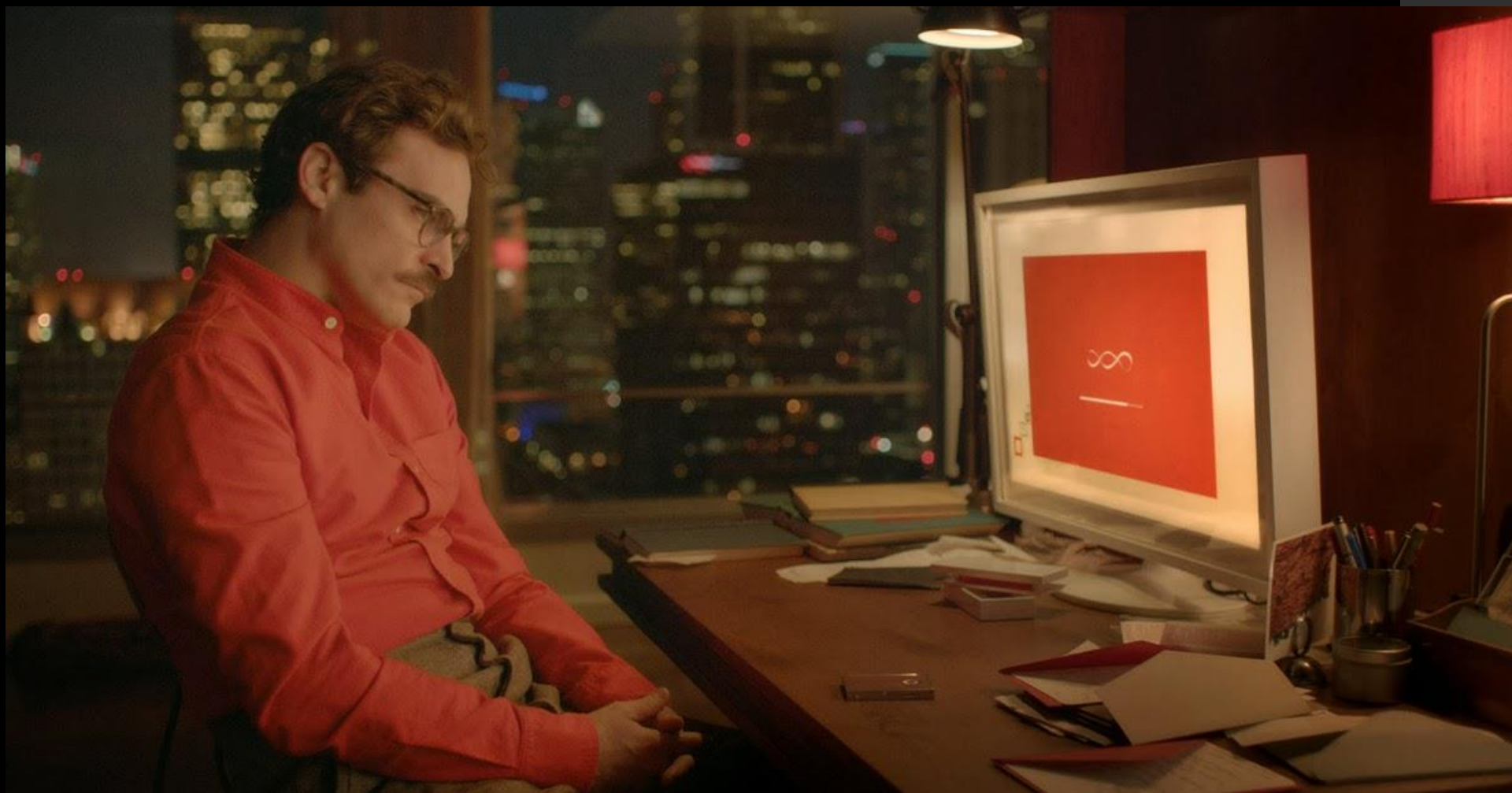


Warm and Cool Colors





The Usual Suspects (1995)



Her (2013)



The Matrix (1999)



The Matrix (1999)



Scott Pilgrim vs. the World (2010)



O Brother, Where Art Thou? (2000)



Amélie (2001)



Moonrise Kingdom (2012)



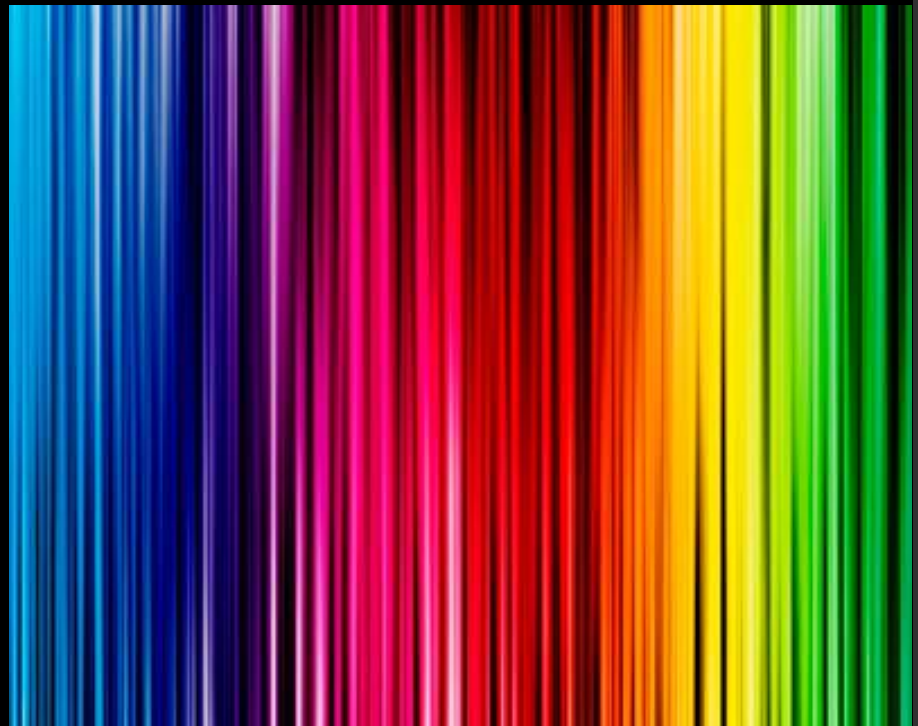
Big Fish (2003)



Pleasantville (1998)

Color Associations

- What attributes do you associate with:
 - Red
 - Pink
 - Yellow
 - Orange
 - Purple
 - Green
 - Turquoise
 - Beige
 - Black
 - Gray
 - White
 - Brown



Contrast

- The ratio of dark to light in an image.
- If the difference between the light and dark areas is large, the image is said to be “high contrast.”
- If the difference is small, it is referred to as "low contrast."
- Most films use low contrast to achieve a more naturalistic lighting. High contrast is usually associated with the low key lighting of dark scenes in genres such as horror and film noir.
- A common cliché is to use contrast between light and dark to distinguish between good and evil.



Low Contrast



High Contrast



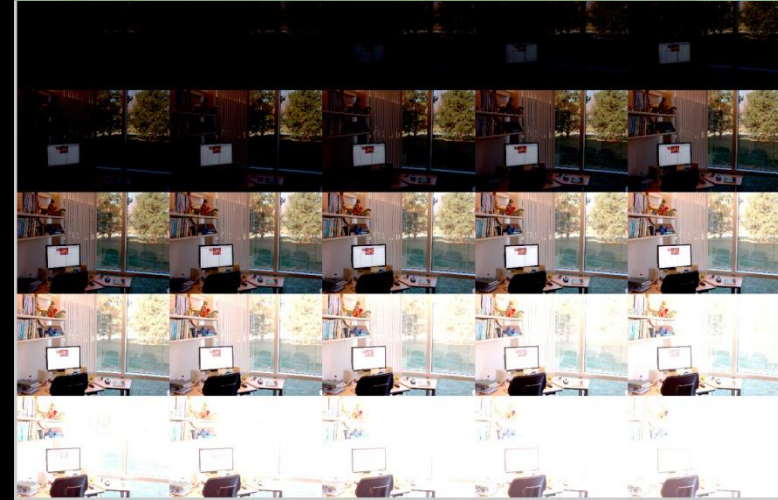
High Contrast



Low Contrast

Exposure

- A camera lens has an aperture that controls how much light passes through the lens and onto the film.
- If the aperture is widened, more light comes through and the resultant image will become more exposed.
- If an image is so pale that the detail begins to disappear, it can be described as “overexposed.”
- Conversely, a narrow aperture that allows less light through will produce a darker image than normal, known as “underexposed.”
- Exposure can be manipulated to guide an audience's response to a scene.



Quality

- The look of an image, its balance of dark and light, the depth of the space in focus, the relation of background and foreground, etc., all affect the reception of the image.
- For instance, the optical qualities of grainy black and white in *Battle of Algiers* (1965) seem to guarantee its authenticity.
- On the other hand, the shimmering Technicolor of a musical such as *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) suggests glamour and excitement.



Examples

- [How to Set Up Three Point Lighting](#)
- [Lighting for Film Noir](#)
- [The History and Science of Color Film](#)

Lighting and Color: Examples

- In the following film clip, identify the use of lighting/ color and its effect on the scene.
- *Touch of Evil* (1958)
opening scene



Lighting an Color: Examples

- In the following film clip, identify the use of lighting/ color and its effect on the scene.
- *The Wizard of Oz* (1939)
18:40-



Lighting and Color: Examples

- In the following film clip, identify the use of lighting/ color and its effect on the scene.
- *Manhattan* (1979)
opening scene



WOODY ALLEN
DIANE KEATON
MICHAEL MURPHY
MARIEL HEMINGWAY
MERYL STREEP
ANNE BYRNE

MANHATTAN

"MANHATTAN" ^{Music by} GEORGE GERSHWIN
A JACK ROLLINS-CHARLES H. JOFFE Production
Written by WOODY ALLEN and MARSHALL BRICKMAN Directed by WOODY ALLEN
Produced by CHARLES H. JOFFE Executive Producer ROBERT GREENHUT Director of Photography GORDON WILLIS

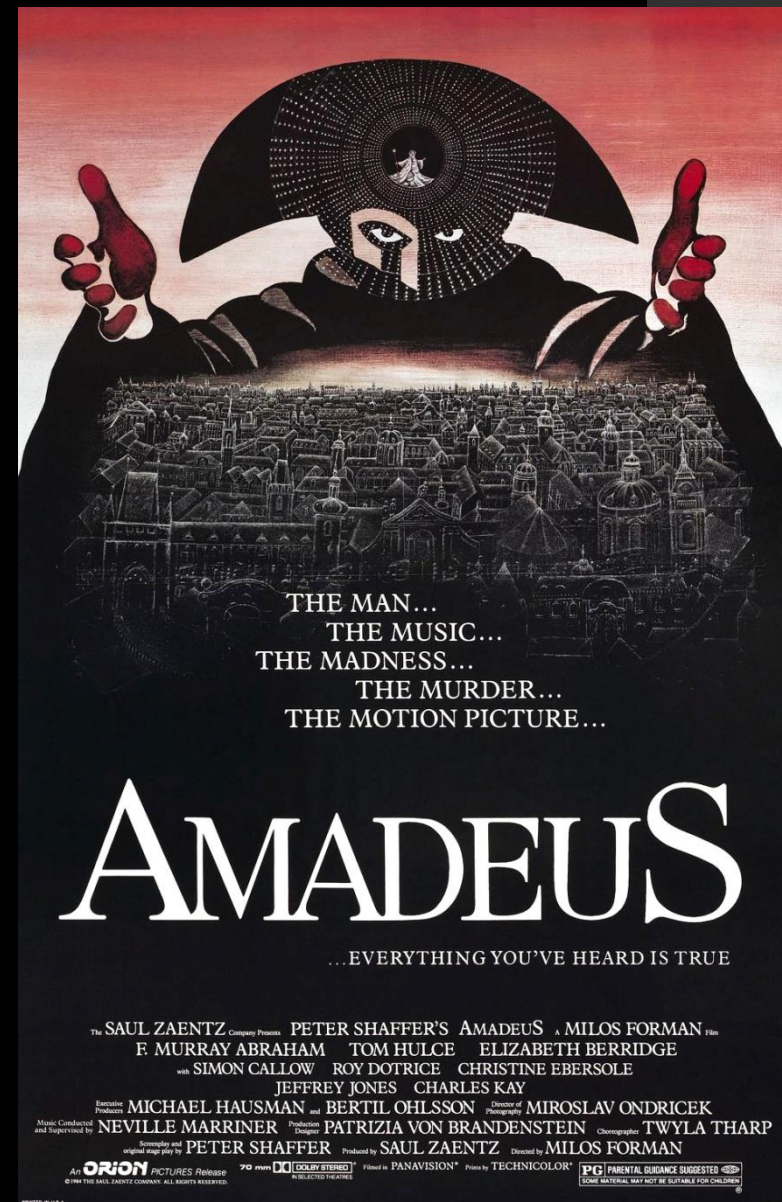
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Lighting and Color: Examples

- In the following film clip, identify the use of lighting/ color and its effect on the scene.
- *Amadeus* (1984)
opening scene



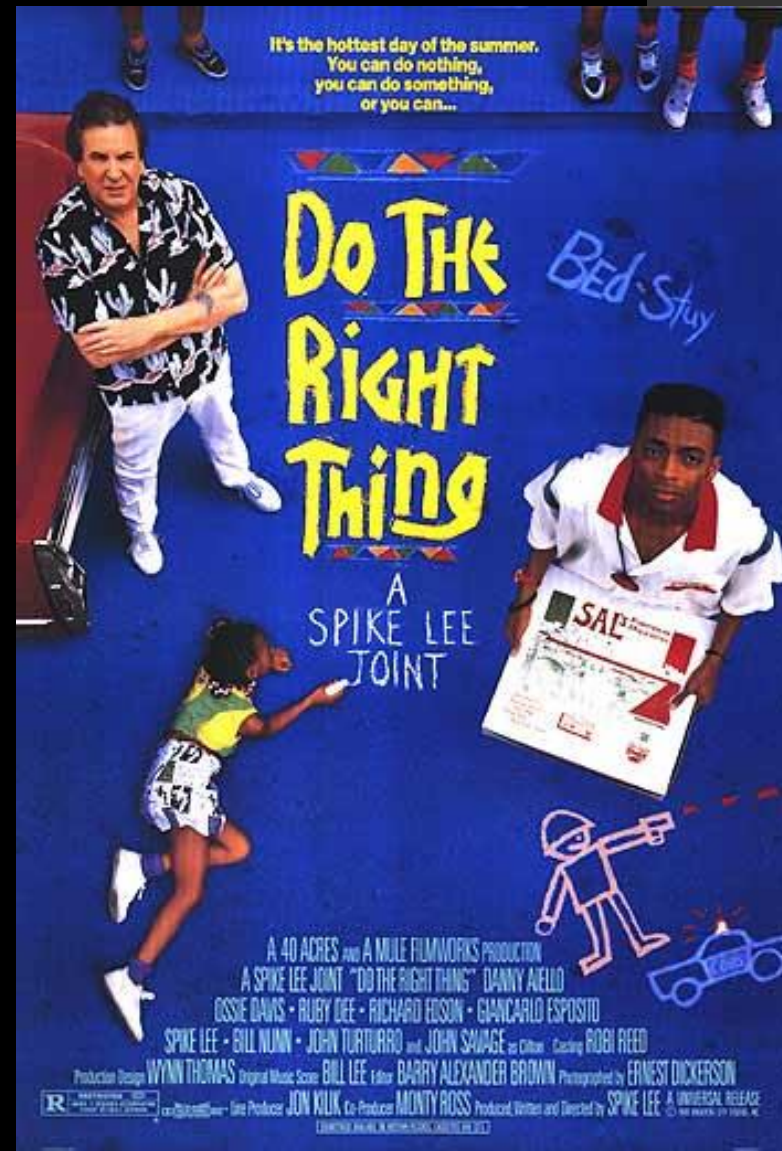
Lighting and Color: Examples

- In the following film clip, identify the use of lighting/color and its effect on the scene.
- *Three Colors: Red* (1994) opening scene



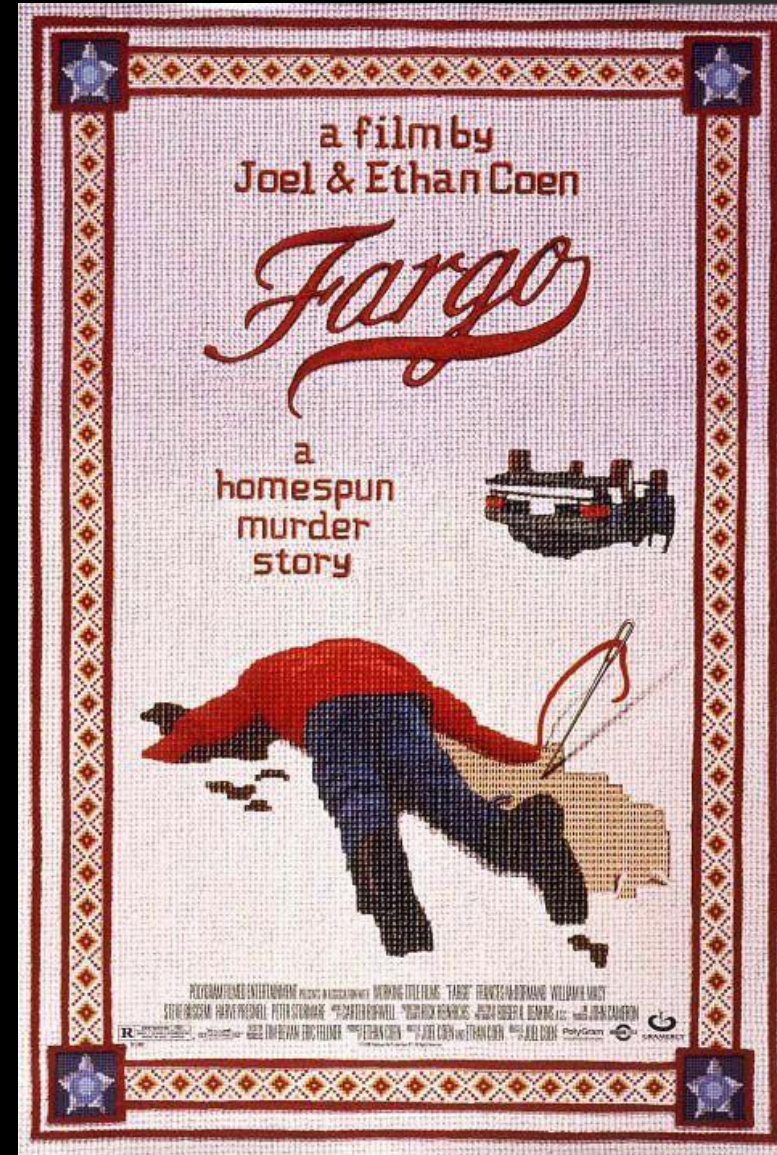
Lighting and Color: Examples

- In the following film clip, identify the use of lighting/color and its effect on the scene.
- *Do the Right Thing* (1989)
chapter 2



Lighting and Color: Examples

- In the following film clip, identify the use of lighting/color and its effect on the scene.
- *Fargo* (1996)
18:00 -



Lighting and Color Quiz

1. What is three-point lighting?
2. What is high-key lighting?
3. What is low-key lighting?
4. What does “contrast” refer to?
5. What does “exposure” refer to?
6. What does “film quality” refer to?
7. How are musicals typically lit?
8. How are comedies typically lit?
9. How is a film noir typically lit?
10. How is a horror film typically lit?