

**MODELING APPRAISAL IN FILM: A SOCIAL SEMIOTIC  
APPROACH**

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## Summary

The thesis adopts a systemic functional (social semiotic) approach to systematically model the complex semiotic resources and the process of meaning making in film. Working with the framework of Appraisal theory, the study investigates the multimodal construction and discursive patterns of Character Emotion, Character Judgment and Character Attribute in a stratified semiotic model.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the theoretical background that motivates the current study. Situated in both film studies and social semiotic multimodal discourse analysis, the study aims to provide a social semiotic modeling of the multimodal construction of Appraisal meaning in film in a coherent framework. The main theoretical framework and methodology for achieving these research aims are briefly introduced in this chapter.

Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 set out the foundations of the current study. Chapter 2 reviews relevant approaches to filmic meaning. In particular, cognitive theories of filmic emotion which inform the current study of Character Emotion and viewer engagement are introduced. Chapter 3 outlines the main theoretical foundations underpinning the thesis, which include the systemic functional model of language and visual image and the Appraisal theory.

Chapter 4 to Chapter 6 present the main theoretical frameworks and analyses. Chapter 4 focuses on the representation of Character Emotion. A framework integrating cognitive and social semiotic perspectives is proposed to theorize the complex emotion resources. The configuration of emotion resources in shots and syntagmas is investigated,

and the relation between patterns of Character Emotion and film genre is explored. Chapter 5 is concerned with the representation of Character Judgment and Character Attribute. The semiotic resources are systemized, and the discursive patterns of Character Attributes are discussed in relation to the shaping of film genres. In Chapter 6, Appraisal meaning is investigated at the level of discourse semantics, in terms of Appraisal Prosody. A metafunctional framework is developed to model the patterns of Appraisal in narrative film. Based on the patterns, discursive mechanisms of viewer engagement are proposed.

In Chapter 7, I conclude by summarizing the major findings of the research and its contribution to both Appraisal theory and film studies. The limitations of the current study and the possible directions of further study are also discussed.

To summarize, the study provides a social semiotic modeling of the multimodal representation of Appraisal meaning and its discursive patterns in the domain of film. In so doing, it contributes to the study of filmic meaning on the one hand, and to Appraisal theory in the context of multimodal discourse on the other.

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

If we can find ways of making the connection between technical details and sources of interpretation more explicit and reliable, we will be in a far stronger position for pursuing analysis (Bateman and Schmidt, 2011: 9).

The quote from Bateman and Schmidt (2011) succinctly expresses the objective of this thesis, which is to propose an analytical framework for systematically modeling the complex semiotic resources and the process of meaning making in film. This study attempts to find the ‘ways of making the connection’ from the *social semiotic*<sup>1</sup> perspective, drawing upon theoretical and methodological tools from *systemic functional linguistics* (SFL henceforth) (Halliday, 1978; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). Specifically, the study investigates how Appraisal meaning (Martin and White, 2005) is constructed with multi-semiotic resources, what discursive patterns are formed, and how the patterns of Appraisal function in shaping film genre and engaging viewer’s interest.

The research contributes to the current state of the art of the sociofunctional approach to film discourse envisaged by John Bateman and his colleagues (e.g. Bateman, 2007; Bateman and Schmidt, 2011; Tseng, 2009). Complementing the cognitive approach which attributes film comprehension to human’s cognitive capacity, Bateman and Schmidt (2011: 1) argue that “films are constructed in ways that guide interpretation *even*

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<sup>1</sup> The terms ‘social semiotic’, ‘systemic functional’, and ‘sociofunctional’ (Bateman and Schmidt, 2011) are used interchangeably in this thesis to refer to the approach inspired by Michael Halliday’s theory.

*prior* to handing over the task of understanding to some viewer's common sense" (emphasis original). Their method for modeling meaning construction process is premised on SFL, a fundamental principle of which is that language performs three metafunctions, namely, ideational (construing experience), interpersonal (enacting social roles) and textual (organizing the text). Bateman (2007), Bateman and Schmidt (2011), and Tseng (2009) are concerned with the textual function, and their aim is to investigate "the textual logic of understanding a film's narrative" (Bateman and Schmidt, 2011: 2). Complementing their efforts, the current thesis attends to the domain of interpersonal semantics, in particular Appraisal meaning. From the perspective of Appraisal studies (e.g. Hood, 2004; Martin and White, 2005; White, 1998), this research extends the existing study to the new domain of complex multimodal discourse, exploring new issues of modeling the semiotic construction and discursive patterns of Appraisal in film.

These two aspects of theoretical background, which are further situated in the broader context of film studies and systemic functional multimodal discourse analysis, are elaborated in Section 1.2. After positioning the study in context, I shall explain the research focus and analytical method in Section 1.3. Then in Section 1.4, the significance of the study derived from its connection with previous studies and its own research design is summarized. Finally, the organization of the thesis is outlined in Section 1.5.

## **1.2 Situating the Present Study**

Film as research object first connects the present study to the realm of film studies and the aim of this study is to provide a new approach to theorize filmic meaning, drawing upon and complementing cognitive film theories. Second, by taking the social semiotic

approach, the study is posited in the field of systemic functional (social semiotic) multimodal discourse analysis. It explores the domain of film and deals with the theoretical and methodological issues of meaning making in film, based on and developing existing theories, in particular, Appraisal theory.

### **1.2.1 Film Studies**

The social semiotic approach and the focus on Appraisal meaning connects the study to the cognitive film studies, especially the study of Appraisal related concepts (e.g. Character Emotion and Character Attributes). I shall, therefore, briefly discuss cognitive approaches to filmic meaning, in particular filmic emotion, and clarify how the current approach is both different and significant.

Cognitive film theorists, such as David Bordwell (e.g. 1985, 1989) and Noël Carroll (e.g. 1996, 2003), claim that the comprehension of film relies on the viewer's natural perceptual and cognitive capacity. This capacity is often described with notions such as 'scripts' (Bartlett, 1932) or 'schemata' (Schank and Abelson, 1977). Films, then, "present cues, patterns and gaps that shape the viewer's application of schemata and the testing of hypothesis" (Bordwell, 1985: 33). Therefore, this approach essentially involves mapping out the story schemata that are tantamount to the result of the spectator's cognitive processing, and from this perspective the aim of film description is to examine how film devices provide cues for the spectator's narrative comprehension (Tseng, 2009: 2).

Within this cognitive paradigm, one central issue is how films elicit emotions from viewers (e.g. Carroll, 2003; Grodal, 1997; Smith, 2003; Tan, 1996). These studies propose various mechanisms through which films elicit emotional responses. The

understanding of Character Attributes is also regarded as an automatic process enabled by viewers' cognitive capacity (Thompson, 1988). In his theory of character engagement, Smith (1995: 190) is also explicitly concerned with "the spectator's construction of character".

Situated within the context of cognitive film studies, the current study aims to offer a new approach to address the issues of Character Emotions and Character Attributes. Instead of focusing on the viewer's cognitive and emotional response, this study provides a semiotic discussion of how concepts like emotions and values are *represented* in film with the complex interaction of multimodal resources. This is essential to the understanding of the meaning making process in film because Character Emotions and Attributes are semiotic discursive constructs. However, previously it has not been systematically addressed due to the lack of a robust semiotic theory. Film semiotics is rejected by cognitive theorists on the ground that film cannot be studied using models of language (e.g. Bordwell and Carroll, 1996). Regarding this position, Bateman (2007) and Bateman and Schmidt (2011) make a crucial point that the disavowal of linguistic analogy lies in the conceptualization of language with the obsolete structural theory. They further argue that:

We consider them [semiotic theories] crucial for understanding film. Without them, basic properties of complex signifying practices are left only poorly articulated and articulable. Moreover, film in particular is such a complex signifying practice that we can ill afford to approach it without the powerful analytic tools that an appropriate semiotics provides. Linguistically-inspired semiotics then has much to

offer precisely because linguistics as a science has now explored many of the semiotic dimensions necessary in considerable detail. If moved to an appropriate level of theoretical abstraction, this knowledge stands us in good stead for the consideration of film (Bateman and Schmidt, 2011: 32).

The ‘appropriate semiotics’ they refer to is the social semiotic theory, which just provides the necessary theoretical foundation for systematic accounts of meaning making in film, as has been demonstrated by both Bateman and Schmidt (2011) and Tseng (2009). Adopting a social semiotic approach, the current study is then situated in the social semiotic multimodal discourse analysis, which is introduced in Section 1.2.2.

## **1.2.2 Systemic Functional (Social Semiotic) Multimodal Discourse Analysis<sup>2</sup>**

### **1.2.2.1 Overview of the Field and Its Theoretical Basis**

The SF informed study of multimodality is aptly summarized by O’Halloran and Smith (2011: 1) as the mapping of *domains* of enquiry and exploration of theoretical and methodological *issues*. On the one hand, scholars are exploring an increasing range of domains, for example, visual image (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006; O’Toole, 1994), scientific/mathematical discourse (Lemke, 1998a; O’Halloran, 2000, 2005), three dimensional objects (Martin and Stenglin, 2007; O’Toole, 1994), websites (Djonov, 2005; Zhang and O’Halloran, forthcoming) and film (Bateman, 2007; Bateman and Schmidt, 2011; O’Halloran, 2004; Tseng, 2009); on the other hand, different issues arising from

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<sup>2</sup> Although the approaches of ‘systemic functional multimodal discourse analysis’ and ‘social semiotic multimodal discourse analysis’ are different in some aspects (see Jewitt, 2009; O’Halloran, 2008), particularly in terms of bottom-up and top-down methods of analysis, the distinction is not maintained in this thesis as the approach combines research methods from both traditions.



the exploration of the new domains are addressed, giving rise to new theoretical approaches and methodologies. In this context, the current study is positioned as the exploration of new theoretical issues in a new domain.

Before proceeding to the SF informed studies, an overview of the key notions of SFL should be provided first. SFL is a theory that regards grammar as social semiotic resources for making meaning, rather than a code or a set of rules for producing correct sentences (Halliday, 1978: 192). As such, it entails some fundamental principles that distinguish it from other linguistic theories. First, it prioritizes paradigmatic relations. It views language as *systems*, and meaning is created through making and combining choices from the systems. Second, the conceptualization of language as system further entails that it is *stratified* (Halliday, 1978: 183). That is, it is a three-level coding system consisting of discourse semantics, lexicogrammar and phonology/graphology, and the relation between them is that of *realization*. Third, the semantic system is organized into *metafunctional* components, which includes ideational, interpersonal and textual function<sup>3</sup>. The intersection of strata and metafunction is illustrated in Figure 1.1.

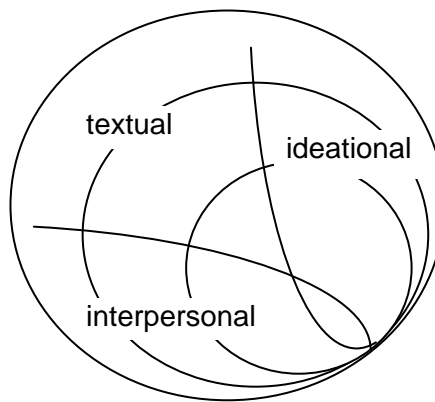


Figure 1.1 The intersection of strata and metafunction (Martin and White, 2005: 12)

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<sup>3</sup> The ideational metafunction includes experiential and logical metafunctions. The focus of this study is mainly the experiential aspect, that is, the 'process types'.

### **1.2.2.2 Exploring the Domain of Film**

Despite the sustained and growing interest in multimodality in the past two decades, the SF informed analysis of film is still comparatively scarce. Aside from the early attempts of van Leeuwen (1991), Iedema (2001) and O'Halloran (2004), the main large scale studies to date are Bateman and Schmidt (2011) and Tseng (2009). These studies can be categorized into two camps: multiple-unit metafunctional analysis (e.g. Iedema, 2001; O'Halloran, 2004; Pun, 2008) and the study of the textual dimension of film (e.g. Bateman, 2007; Bateman and Schmidt, 2011; Tseng, 2008; van Leeuwen, 1991). Based on the idea of rank scales and metafunctions in SFL (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004), the first approach provides two analytical tools: constituent structures of frame, shot, scene, sequence, etc., and interpersonal, representational, and compositional metafunctions. The second approach, informed by the SF theory of cohesion and logical relations (e.g. Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Hasan, 1984; Martin, 1992), provides tools for examining shot relations and how the film is organized into a coherent discourse. Some of the works are reviewed below to get a glimpse of what has been done and what remains unexplored.

Iedema (2001) proposes that the aim of social semiotic analysis is to enable us to question the ways in which the tele-cinematic text presents the 'social reality'. To achieve this end, Iedema (2001) presents six units of analysis: frame, shot, scene, sequence, generic stage and work as a whole. He also uses the metafunctions of representation, orientation and organization to examine filmic meaning. However, Iedema (2001) doesn't offer detailed text analysis of the multiple layers and metafunctions. O'Halloran (2004) also adopts a multiple-unit metafunctional approach, based on the constituent structure

approach of O'Toole (1994). O'Halloran undertakes a detailed analysis of two mise-en-scenes of the movie *Chinatown* (Polanski, 1974) with *Adobe Premiere*. The systematic metafunctional analysis of film is one of the earliest attempts from the SF perspective.

However, as small scale studies, the complex issue of film signification is not thoroughly solved, for example, how particular meanings (e.g. textual, interpersonal) are created with the interaction of multimodal resources. As O'Halloran (2004: 111) acknowledges, "the challenge remains for us to capture and analyze choices across all semiotic resources in such a way that the dynamics of meaning making can truly be investigated". One problem is that while the 'units' of analysis are identified, 'semiotic strata', which are fundamental in the investigation of meaning making, are not distinguished. Meanwhile, to 'capture and analyze choices' would rely on the SF notion of 'system', which is not pursued in these studies.

In comparison to O'Halloran (2004), both Tseng (2009) and Bateman and Schmidt (2011) are based on the notions of 'strata', 'system' and 'metafunction'. As Tseng (2009: 38) points out, "what is needed in film... is a stratified view distinguishing a lower stratum of film devices and technical elements, a further stratum organizing these devices/elements into structures, and finally the stratum of discourse semantics which assigns meaning to the configurations of the other strata". Tseng (2009) formulates complex paradigmatic systems describing the functional choices that are available to filmmakers for presenting and retrieving character identities throughout a film. Tseng also proposes a method for interrelating the elements of character, objects and settings through types of cohesive chains from a syntagmatic perspective. Bateman and Schmidt (2011: 2) set out the objective towards "a detailed analytic framework that is significantly

more supportive of systematic and empirically-grounded investigations of the filmic medium”. They then provide elaborated models of the paradigmatic and syntagmatic organizations of film meaning, which are reviewed in Chapter 2.

However, as noted in Section 1.1, these studies focus on the textual dimension of film meaning. As Tseng (2009: 60) explicitly disclaims, “due to space constraints, other significant discourse dimensions, such as *emotions and evaluations* in film motivated by the interpersonal metafunction will not be discussed here”. Therefore, the current study is a continuation of the social semiotic approach to film analysis, focusing on the interpersonal dimension of Appraisal. The study of Appraisal, in turn, locates us in the context of Appraisal theory.

### **1.2.3 Appraisal Theory**

Developed in the 1990s as the renewed interest in interpersonal meaning, Appraisal theory has now become an important area of study in SF theory (Hunston and Thompson, 2000; Martin and White, 2005; White, 1998). The Appraisal system is composed of three interacting domains: Attitude, Engagement and Graduation. Attitude<sup>4</sup> is concerned with human feelings, including emotional reactions (Affect), judgments of behavior (Judgment) and evaluation of things (Appreciation). Engagement is concerned with the resources for adopting a stance in relation to alternative positions. Graduation attends to the grading of feelings and stance according to particular scales, such as intensity.

Appraisal theory has been applied to the analysis of a wide range of discourse types, for example, news reports (White, 1998), casual conversation (Eggins and Slade, 1997),

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<sup>4</sup> Initial capital is used to refer to the Appraisal category of ‘Attitude’, and lower case ‘attitude’ is used to refer to the commonsensical use of the word.

legal judgments (Körner, 2000), narratives (Rothery and Stenglin 2000; Macken-Horarik, 2003), popular science (Fuller, 1998) and academic discourse (Hood, 2004). Researchers have also attended to Appraisal meaning in visual images (e.g. Economou, 2006; Macken-Horarik, 2004; Martin, 2001). However, to date there has been no systematic account of Appraisal in multimodal discourse, let alone film discourse. In this sense, the current study is an attempt to investigate Appraisal meaning in the new domain of dynamic multimodal discourse.

The necessity of extending Appraisal framework to include multimodal resources arises out of the observation that “the functional complexity of evaluation inevitably draws into play an extensive range of linguistic and non-linguistic resources” (Hood, 2004: 43). This point is also noted by Martin and White (2005: 69):

Work on paralanguage (gesture, facial expression, laughter, voice quality, loudness, etc.) and attendant modalities of communication (image, music, movement, etc.) are central arenas for further research on the realization of Attitude as we move from a functional linguistics to a more encompassing social semiotic perspective.

In response to these observations, in this thesis it will be suggested that a wide range of semiotic resources, including those that are nonverbal, can be brought together and considered systematically within a unified framework of meaning making. Aside from the multimodal construction of Appraisal, this study also develops Appraisal theory in another significant aspect, namely, patterns of Attitude in different types of discourse. Such patterns, their construction and logogenetic development, have been examined in

other genres such as news reports (White, 1998), academic discourse (Hood, 2004) and narrative discourse (Martin and Rose, 2008). Continuing these efforts, this study examines the patterns of Appraisal in multimodal film narrative, with a particular focus on their role in shaping the film genres and engaging viewers' interest.

### **1.3 Explaining the Research Design**

With the theoretical context elucidated in Section 1.2, the research design of the present study can now be introduced. The three fundamental aspects of the research, namely, the theoretical focus, the methodology of analysis and the data used, are explained in Sections 1.3.1, 1.3.2 and 1.3.3 respectively.

#### **1.3.1 The Research Focus**

The main goal of the research is to model interpersonal meaning in film. The theoretical framework relies on the Appraisal theory (Martin and White, 2005) and the analytical approach is informed by the social semiotic theory. Appraisal theory is drawn upon because it is able to bring together under a coherent framework a wide range of essential issues in film that are frequently investigated in isolation. In this sense, it offers a more comprehensive means for systematically modeling interpersonal semantics than has been otherwise available (Hood, 2004: 14). Meanwhile, to model the process of meaning making, the study employs social semiotic principles, in particular the notions of strata, system and metafunction. The application of these principles is elaborated in Chapter 3. In this section, the main tenets of the social semiotic analysis of Appraisal are introduced.

In terms of Appraisal meaning, the focus is on the two subcategories of Attitude: Affect and Judgment. The third category of Appreciation is excluded mainly because the thesis does not aim at any aesthetic evaluation of film (cf. Bateman and Schmidt, 2011). Meanwhile, the term ‘emotion’ is used to replace ‘Affect’, to be consistent with the studies of film and psychology<sup>5</sup>. Another dimension that characterizes the research focus is the source and target of the Attitude. As Martin and White (2005: 71) stress, it is important to note the source of the Attitude and what is being appraised. With these two dimensions, the scope of Appraisal meaning in this thesis is illustrated in Figure 1.2 (arrows are used because the figure is not intended as a system network). In studying character as ‘Appraiser’, the focus is on *Character Emotion* and *Character Judgment*; in studying character as ‘Appraised’, the focus is on viewers’ emotional response and their Judgment of *Character Attributes*.

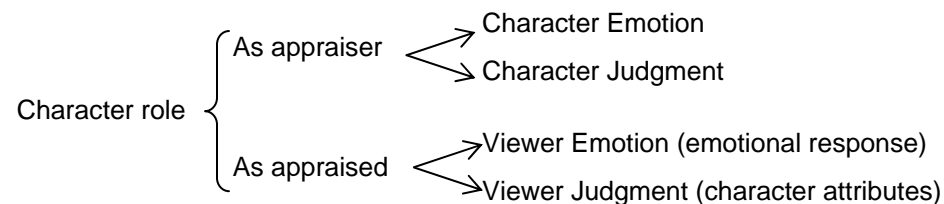


Figure 1.2 Scope of Appraisal meaning

This research terrain is then investigated at different levels of abstraction (i.e. semiotic strata) (cf. Section 1.2). At the level of *lexicogrammar*, paradigmatic systems are proposed to map out the semiotic resources for the construction of Appraisal. Specifically, the cognitive theories of emotion structure (Frijda, 1986; Ortony et al., 1988) are drawn upon to systemize the complex resources. A similar strategy is adopted in the

<sup>5</sup> Although ‘emotion’ and ‘affect’ are distinguished in psychology, the distinction is not significant to this study and is not maintained.

modeling of Character Judgment. In modeling Character Attributes, which is the target of Viewer Judgment, the system mainly draws upon ideational and interpersonal semantics in SFL. With these systems, it is possible to “transcend the boundaries of a discursive description through the analysis of the actual choices which are made against the backdrop of other possible choices which could have been made” (O’Halloran, 2009: 101). The choices made in specific contexts then form patterns at the level of *discourse semantics*. These patterns, which are related to the higher levels of *film genre* and *viewer engagement*, are investigated from both synoptic and dynamic perspectives. On the one hand, synoptic patterns of Character Emotion and Character Attribute are related to specific types of film narrative; on the other, the logogenetic development of Character Emotion and Character Attribute is investigated in terms of the shaping of the generic structure of narrative film and the engagement of viewer’s interest.

Aside from the overarching social semiotic approach, the research framework is also an interdisciplinary one. This is necessary because the multimodal phenomenon is “inherently an interdisciplinary exercise” which involves different domains of knowledge (Machin, 2007: x). As Forceville (2007: 1237) insists, “it is crucial that scholars embarking on the field of multimodality possess or acquire more than passing knowledge of at least one mode outside the one they have been primarily trained in”. Therefore, this study fully takes into account the state of the art in film studies on relevant topics and a detailed review is provided in Chapter 2. Meanwhile, the systemization of emotion resources draws heavily upon the scientific knowledge of emotion and the formulation of the resources of Character Attributes is also based on theories and models in pragmatics, nonverbal communication, and cognitive linguistics.



### **1.3.2 The Method of Analysis**

Aside from a robust theoretical approach, a rigorous method of analysis is also a prerequisite for the thorough investigation of multimodal discourse and for the development of the theoretical tools. For these two purposes, the analysis is carried out from multiple perspectives: it is both top-down and bottom-up, both qualitative and quantitative, both synoptic and dynamic, as elaborated below.

#### **1.3.2.1 Top-down and Bottom-up Perspectives**

The research design combines top-down conceptualization and bottom-up description. That is, paradigmatic systems are developed based on existing theories to guide the analysis and then detailed text analysis is provided to test the systems. On the one hand, a system is required for a robust textual analysis in the SF approach (Lim, 2011: 84). As Forceville (2007: 1236) points out, purely bottom-up descriptions “seldom result in non-trivial explanations why the texts convey what they supposedly do convey, let alone in the formulation of—however tentative—patterns or generalizations”, and therefore, he continues, “textual analyses must be complemented by top-down conceptualizations to avoid infinite detail”. On the other hand, the viability and productivity of the systems must be tested through fine-grained text analysis, which provides feedback to the systems at the same time. This binocular perspective is consistent with Halliday’s (1994: xxii) emphasis on both system and text: “discourse analysis has to be founded on a study of the system of the language. At the same time, the main reason for studying the system is to throw light on discourse”. Hence, in the recursive process between theory guiding

analysis and analysis informing theory, both the analytical interpretation of the multimodal text is enriched and the theoretical apparatus is refined (Lim, 2011: 84).

Such top-down and bottom-up combination is maintained throughout the thesis. In each chapter, theoretical frameworks are developed and illustrated with examples, and then detailed text analyses along the previous theorized parameters are provided based on transcription and annotation.

### **1.3.2.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis**

The importance attached to text analysis brings with it the issue of qualitative versus quantitative analysis. The current research design foregrounds qualitative analysis, that is, an in-depth analysis of a relatively small number of texts. Such an approach allows insights into texts that are not available through quantitative studies of large corpora. As Hood (2004: 15) observes, “an advantage of a detailed study of the discourse semantics of individual texts is that it enables the exploration of multiple aspects of meaning that are realized dynamically across a web of inter-related inner-modal and inter-modal choices”. However, within the dominant qualitative approach, quantitative methods are also used to examine the distribution and patterns of Appraisal meaning. As an aspect of the in-depth analysis of individual texts, Appraisal tokens are counted and statistical software is used to model the quantitative aspect of Appraisal patterns. Such quantitative analysis offers a more objective justification of the theoretical propositions made about the nature of the text (Lim, 2011: 86). Furthermore, the combination of both methods also counts as a response to Martin and White’s (2005: 260) proposal that “finding the right

balance between qualitative and quantitative analysis is an important challenge as we try to deepen our understanding of evaluation in discourse”.

### **1.3.2.3 Synoptic and Dynamic Analysis**

The research is designed to model film discourse with synoptic and dynamic analysis. The former considers the text as product, focusing on the overall features, while the latter approaches the text as process, that is, in terms of its logogenetic development (see Halliday and Matthiessen, 1999; Martin and Rose, 2007). The dynamic aspect may not be significant in static images or architecture, but is of great significance in film discourse. As Macken-Horarik (2003: 316) insists, “two perspectives on the meaning are required: an on-line perspective which processes significance dynamically and an overview perspective which construes it synoptically”. In this thesis, patterns of Character Emotion and Character Attribute are considered synoptically in terms of how they are related to the specific types of film narrative, and dynamically in terms of the shaping of the narrative genre and the engagement of viewers’ interest, as explained in Section 1.3.1.

### **1.3.3 Data**

The last component in the research design is the data of analysis, the selection of which is of utmost importance in testing and informing the theoretical framework. The main films analyzed in this thesis are *Gladiator* and *Pretty Woman*, which are highly regarded classics in the genre of action film and romantic comedy respectively. An episode from the situation comedy *Friends* is also analyzed on various points. These three film texts

are selected because of the richness and complexity of Appraisal meaning in them. The characters and main plots of these films are briefly introduced below.

(1) *Gladiator* (2000)

Director: Ridley Scott.

Main characters: Maximus (Russell Crowe), Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix), Lucilla (Connie Nielsen), Marcus (Richard Harris), Quintus (Tomas Arana), Juba (Djimon Hounsou), Proximo (Oliver Reed), Senator Gracchus (Derek Jacobi).

Storyline: Maximus is a powerful Roman general, who is chosen as heir to the throne by the aging Emperor, Marcus Aurelius. Marcus' son, Commodus, who resents the choice, kills his own father and Maximus' family. Maximus is saved by Juba and becomes a slave, and then a gladiator. He proves himself as a great gladiator and gets the opportunity to seek revenge. After several confrontations with Commodus in the auditorium, Maximus plans a coup with the help of the princess Lucilla and Senator Gracchus. The coup fails and Commodus proposes a duel with Maximus. Maximus kills Commodus in the duel and restores the balance in Rome.

(2) *Pretty Woman* (1990)

Director: Garry Marshall

Main characters: Edward Lewis (Richard Gere), Vivian Ward (Julia Roberts), Philip Stuckey (Jason Alexander), James Morse (Ralph Bellamy).

Storyline: Edward is a rich, ruthless businessman who specializes in taking over companies and then selling them off piece by piece and Philip Stuckey is his lawyer. Edward travels to Los Angeles to buy Mr. Morse's company and meets the prostitute

Vivian. Edward offers Vivian money for staying with him for an entire week and romance ensues between them. After several ups and downs, they are finally together.

(3) *Friends, Season 4, Episode 12* (1998)

Director: David Crane and Marta Kauffman

Main Characters: Rachel Green (Jennifer Aniston), Monica Geller (Courteney Cox), Phoebe Buffay (Lisa Kudrow), Joanna (Alison LaPlaca).

Storyline: in the episode analyzed in this study, Rachel intends to get the job as assistant buyer and she finally gets it from her boss Joanna; Monica gets the job as head chef; Phoebe get the job of wedding catering.

Other classic films which are analyzed to illustrate particular theoretical points, for example *Patch Adams* (Shadyac, 1998), *Scent of a Woman* (Brest, 1992), and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Spielberg, 1981) will not be introduced here. A different genre of moving images, namely, television advertisements, is also analyzed at various points. These different types of films are used both for the comparison of their genre differences (e.g. attribute structures in Chapter 5) and for the analysis of their similarity as belonging to the same genre of narrative (e.g. Appraisal Prosody in Chapter 6).

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

As alluded to in the theoretical background and the research focus in Sections 1.2 and 1.3, the significance of the research can be summarized as three points: (1) providing a new approach to the study of Appraisal meaning in film; (2) exploring Appraisal in a new domain with new frameworks of Attitude construction and pattern of Attitude; (3)

providing a metalanguage for investigating phenomenon such as Character Emotion, Character Attributes and viewer engagement, which is applicable to film literacy. These contributions are elaborated in more detail below.

First, this study offers a social semiotic approach to the study of film. It complements cognitive studies which attribute film comprehension to cognitive inferencing by providing mechanisms of how Character Emotions and Attributes are represented. The focus on Appraisal meaning complements Bateman and Schmidt's (2011) and Tseng's (2009) investigation of textual meanings.

Second, this study offers a systematic account of how different semiotic resources construct Appraisal, extending the linguistic framework of Martin and White (2005). Of particular significance is the employment of cognitive psychological theories, which demonstrates the effectiveness of cross-disciplinary theorization of Appraisal meaning. It also models the patterns of Attitude in relation to film genre and viewer engagement, thus improving the understanding of textual mechanisms of viewer engagement. In particular, the theorization of film genre and viewer engagement is achieved by the dynamic modeling of Appraisal Prosody.

Third, the research framework provides a useful metalanguage for discussing meaning making in film. The significance of such a metalanguage is noted by O'Toole (1994) who aims to develop a 'shared language' for discussing and teaching art. As Machin (2009: 182) explains, O'Toole's (1994) motive of describing painting with SF theory is "to replace terms such as 'evoke' and 'suggest' that we often use to discuss works of art with systematic and stable terms that allow us to talk in concrete terms about how such a composition communicates".

Such ‘systematic and stable terms’ are even more significant in film literacy, or in the broader context of visual literacy (e.g. Elkins, 2007; Messaris, 1994). The semiotic approach emphasizes the aspect that all meanings in film are *constructed*. Focusing on the semiotic discursive representation of perhaps the most complex concepts of Character Emotion and Character Attribute, the paradigmatic systems proposed in this thesis provide a metalanguage for teaching the complex mechanisms of meaning making in film. This approach complements the current ‘interpretive’ education which focuses on identifying cues and interpreting their symbolic meanings in relation to social values and ideology by providing a systematic description of the fundamental meaning making resources. Aside from the significance in the understanding of film, it may also be used in the teaching of how to ‘construct’ Appraisal meanings in the making of film.

### **1.5 Outline of the Thesis**

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical background that motivates the current thesis, as well as a brief introduction of the main research focus and methodology. In Chapter 2, relevant theories in the context of film studies are reviewed. Echoing Forceville’s (2007) insistence on the necessity of knowledge of the target modality (see Section 1.3.1), the cognitive and semiotic approaches to filmic meaning (e.g. Bordwell, 1985, 1989; Metz, 1974) are introduced. After the discussion of these general theoretical positions, cognitive studies of filmic emotion (e.g. Carroll, 2003; Smith, 2003; Tan, 1996) and theories of film genre and ideology (e.g. Altman, 1999, Neale, 2000; Mulvey, 1975; Ryan and Kellner, 1988) are introduced. The relevance of these studies to the current thesis is also explained.

Chapter 3 sets out the main theoretical foundations underpinning the thesis, which include the SF theory (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004), its application to the visual modality (e.g. Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006; O'Toole, 1994), and the Appraisal theory (e.g. Martin and White, 2005; Martin and Rose, 2008). This chapter also explains how the theories are adopted and developed in the current thesis.

Chapter 4 to Chapter 6 present the main theoretical frameworks and analyses. Chapter 4 focuses on the representation of Character Emotion. A framework integrating cognitive and social semiotic perspectives is proposed to theorize the complex emotion resources. At the strata of discourse semantics, the configuration of emotion resources in shots and syntagmas is investigated. The negotiation of emotion in exchange structure is also examined. Moving up further along the scale of abstraction, the relations between patterns of Character Emotion and film genre are explored. Finally, elaborated analyses of the two films *Gladiator* and *Pretty Woman* are provided using the frameworks.

Chapter 5 is organized in a similar fashion. The semiotic resources for constructing Character Judgment and Character Attribute are systemized, and then the discursive patterns of Character Attributes in the shaping of film genres are discussed. Finally, *Gladiator* and *Pretty Woman* are analyzed and their structures of Character Attribute are compared.

In Chapter 6, Appraisal meaning is investigated at the level of discourse semantics, in terms of Appraisal Prosody. A metafunctional framework is developed to model the patterns of Appraisal in narrative film. Based on the patterns, discursive mechanisms of viewer engagement are proposed. Finally, the Appraisal patterns and mechanisms of viewer engagement in four types of film narratives, namely, action film, romance film,



situation comedy and TV advertisement, are analyzed to show the similarity of the narrative genre in terms of Appraisal prosody.

In Chapter 7, I conclude by summarizing the major findings of the research and its contribution to both the study of Appraisal theory and the study of film discourse. Lastly, the limitation of the current study and the possible directions of further study are discussed.

## Chapter 2 Approaches to Filmic Meaning and Emotion

### 2.1 Introduction

As explained in Chapter 1, film as research object situates the present thesis in the field of film studies. It is therefore essential to review the main traditions in the study of filmic meanings. But before moving to the different approaches, I shall first examine what ‘meaning’ means in film. David Bordwell, a leading film theorist, delineates four categories of filmic meaning in his widely influential book of *Making Meaning* (Bordwell, 1989):

1. Referential: the meaning created by constructing the diegetic world, that is, the basic putting together of images/words/sounds/etc to understand the work literally.
2. Explicit: the direct ‘message’ of a work, or the ‘point’. Bordwell considers the referential and explicit meanings the ‘literal’ meanings and part of ‘comprehension’.
3. Implicit: indirect, symbolic meanings which are more in line with the traditional idea of ‘theme’.
4. Symptomatic: the ‘repressed’, involuntary meanings, often showing the opposite of literal meanings. Symptomatic meanings are often economic, political, or ideologically based. Implicit and symptomatic meanings form part of ‘interpretation’.

These four levels of meaning establish close relations between interpretation and comprehension, compared to the more interpretation-orientated approaches such as psychoanalysis and the Marxist tradition. The systematic analysis of literal meaning is considered essential for more abstract interpretation of the implicit meanings. As Bateman and Schmidt (2011: 3) argue, “in order to achieve good analyses of film, we believe that it is better, before proceeding to interpretation, to make explicit just what is ‘in’ the filmic material under investigation”. The review of literature in this section is carried out exactly in this manner, although the investigation of filmic meaning in the following chapters is organized by the more rigorous stratified model of SFL (see Chapter 3). In Section 2.2, the semiotic and cognitive approaches to filmic meaning are introduced (Bateman and Schmidt, 2011; Bordwell, 1985, 1989; Metz, 1974). Then Section 2.3 focuses on the studies of filmic emotion, in which the well known models of Carroll (2003), Smith (1995), Smith (2003), Tan (1996), and so on are discussed. In Section 2.4, I move from the explicit meanings to more abstract meanings of genre and ideology (e.g. Altman, 1999; Neale, 1990; Ryan and Kellner, 1988). The review, however, is not intended as a thorough survey of the theories of filmic meaning and emotion, rather, the aim is to explicate the implications of these approaches and models for the current study as well as the significance of the present study in the context of these studies.

## **2.2 Approaches to Filmic Meaning**

Since the advent of film studies, filmic meaning has been widely discussed in different approaches. One central issue of the study of filmic meaning is the analogy between film

and language. Theorists debate on whether or not the analogy can be drawn and how it should be drawn. On the one hand, aside from the early proponents such as Pudovkin (1926) and Eisenstein (1963), the analogy is mainly supported in the semiotic approach. A number of important studies were published on the language of film in the 1960s and 1970s by structural semioticians, such as Christian Metz (1974), Gianfranco Bettetini (1968) and Peter Wollen (1969). On the other hand, the analogy is rejected in the cognitive approach which has gained popularity in the field since 1980s (e.g. Bordwell, 1985, 1989; Carroll, 1996, 2003; Thompson, 1988). However, more recently, with the development of social semiotic theory (Halliday, 1978; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004), significant advances have been made in reclaiming the linguistic analogy (e.g. Bateman, 2007; Bateman and Schmidt, 2011; Tseng, 2009). These three approaches are discussed in this section. However, only the most representative works shall be introduced, namely, that of Metz (1974), Bateman and Schmidt (2011) and Bordwell (1985). Other important works in the semiotic or cognitive traditions, for example, film enunciation (Casetti, 1998; Metz, 1991) and the cognitive semiotic approach (Buckland, 2000) are not included as they are not directly drawn upon.

### **2.2.1 The Structural Semiotic Approach**

Within the semiotic camp, while linguistic analogy is generally accepted, different researchers diverge in how film is similar to language. For example, Pasolini (1988) proposes that cinema forms a ‘language of reality’ with its own double articulation of ‘cinemes’ (by analogy to phonemes) and ‘im-signs’ (by analogy to morphemes). However, Metz (1974) argues that the cinema is not a language system (*langue*) but a

language (langage). That is, film text cannot be conceived as generated by an underlying language system because it lacks the arbitrary sign, minimal units, and double articulation. Nonetheless, they do manifest a language-like systematicity. Therefore, for Metz, the true analogy between film and language consists in their common syntagmatic structure (Stam, 2000: 115). As Metz (1974: 101) argues, although each film image is a free creation, combinations of them are much more tight, and it is exactly the arrangement of these images into an intelligible sequence that brings us to the heart of the semiological dimension of film. The arrangement of shots, or the working of *montage* in the term of Russian formalists (e.g. Eisenstein, 1963), is central to many theoretical accounts of filmic meaning, for example, Pudovkin (1926) and Burch (1973). Amongst them, Metz's (1974) *Film Language* has been the most influential and is briefly introduced in this section.

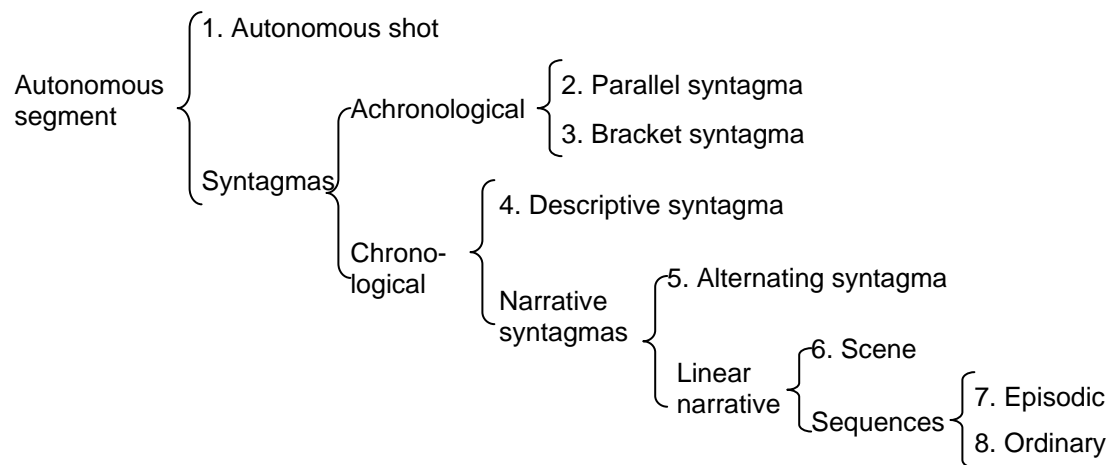


Figure 2.1 The grand syntagmatique (based on Metz, 1974: 146)

Based on Saussure's (1959) structural theory that the focus of linguistics should be on the abstract signifying system of a language, Metz (1974) argues that the object of film semiotics is to disengage from the heterogeneity of meanings of the cinema its basic

signifying processes and its combinatory rules. Metz (1974) then develops a system of options of shot combinations in the visual track, which is termed *grande syntagmatique*. The model divides the narrative syntax of the cinema into eight structural configurations, as shown in Figure 2.1.

The grand syntagmatique constitutes a typology of the ways in which time and space can be ordered through editing within the segments of a narrative film. The eight types of syntagmas are briefly explained as follows:

1. autonomous shot: the first distinction is made between autonomous shots and syntagmas. The former refers to a single shot without connection to adjacent shots, for example, a single-shot sequence or inserts such as non-diegetic insert, subjective, explanatory insert and so on.
2. parallel syntagma: syntagmas are then divided into various types, depending on how the shots are related. Parallel syntagma is an achronological syntagma in which two different series alternate, such as images of the rich and the poor.
3. bracket syntagma: an achronological syntagma which gives typical examples of a certain order of reality without temporal sequence.
4. descriptive syntagma: a chronological syntagma which show objects successively to suggest spatial coexistence, for example, to situate the action in establishing shot.
5. alternating syntagma: a narrative cross-cutting which implies temporal simultaneity, such as the alternation of the pursuer and the pursued.
6. scene: shots which implies spatiotemporal continuity.

7. episodic sequence: a symbolic summary of stages in an implied chronological development. An example Metz provided is the sequence in *Citizen Kane* (1941) in which the progressive deterioration of Kane's marriage is portrayed as a set of successive episodes at the breakfast table.
8. ordinary sequence: a linear narrative sequence in which actions are perceived as continuous, but are treated elliptically to eliminate unimportant details.

The grand syntagmatique proposes an abstract classification of the meaningful possibilities for conjoining shots in narrative film and sets up a 'more scientific' and 'rigorous' approach for the analysis of filmic meaning, but it has been challenged and revised from different approaches since its appearance (e.g. Burch, 1973; Colin, 1995) (see Bateman, 2007 for a detailed discussion). However, as Bateman and Schmidt (2011: 99) point out, only some of the criticisms are valid, and even when valid, most often for the wrong reasons. They further argue that "the lack of a detailed semiotic framework capable of addressing issues of multimodality and discourse effectively blocked off further development" (Bateman and Schmidt, 2011: 99). In light of this, they reconstruct the grande syntagmatique based on Halliday's sociofunctional semiotics (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004), and their model is elucidated in Section 2.2.3.

### **2.2.2 The Cognitive Model of Film Meaning**

The linguistic analogy and 'grand theories' as in Metz (1974) are rejected by the cognitive film theorist who "seeks to understand human thought, emotion, and action by appeal to processes of mental representation, naturalistic processes, and (some senses) of

rational agency” (Bordwell and Carroll, 1996: xvi). Introduced in the mid 1980s with David Bordwell’s (1985) seminal work of *Narration in the Fiction Film*, the cognitive film theory is now supported by diverse figures such as Noël Carroll, Gregory Currie, Torben Grodal, Edward Branigan, Murray Smith and others. Cognitive film studies today is primarily interested in how spectators make sense of and respond to films, together with the textual structures and techniques that give rise to spectatorial activity and response (Plantinga, 2002: 23). However, the kinds of methodologies and intellectual commitments that fall under the rubric ‘cognitive film theory’ are broad, owing to the inherent elusiveness of ‘cognitive theory’. While David Bordwell works with a schema-based model, other cognitivists draw upon different theories, for example, Grodal’s (1997) *Moving Pictures* refers more to the physical processes of the embodied brain in relation to cognitive processes, and Buckland’s (2000) *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film* draws on the embodied philosophy of Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Disagreement also exists among cognitivists, for example, Currie (1999) explicitly questions Bordwell’s (1985) constructivist position. Therefore, as Plantinga (2002: 22) asserts, “cognitivists have developed an approach rather than a well-defined theory”. In this section, I shall focus on the work of the most influential cognitivist David Bordwell, whose theory is known as the Bordwellian model.

In the Bordwellian model, filmic meaning is investigated based not on structural linguistics, but on the notion of ‘schema’ in cognitive psychology. Schemata are abstract, transcendental, static, top-down structures of the mind that organize perceptual input into coherent mental representations and they constitute the generative capacity of the mind to comprehend perceptions recurrently (Buckland, 2000: 29). It follows that cognitivists’



concern is how viewers make sense of the inherently incomplete form of discourse using their capacity of inference generation. From this perspective, Bordwell (1985) has developed a compelling theory of filmic narration, known as the constructivist approach. He proposes a two-tier construct of *fabula* and *syuzhet* as formulated by the Russian Formalists:

The imaginary construct we create, progressively and retrospectively, was termed by formalists the *fabula* (sometimes translated as ‘story’). More specifically, the *fabula* embodies the action as a chronological, cause-and-effect chain of events occurring within a given duration and spatial field...The *syuzhet* (usually translated as ‘plot’) is the actual arrangement and presentation of the *fabula* in the film. It is a more abstract construct, that is, the patterning of a story as a blow-by-blow recounting of the film could render it (Bordwell, 1985: xii).

Bordwell’s theory is primarily a top-down account of information processing, in which the perceptual data, namely, narrative films, are conceived as a set of cues interacting with the spectator’s cognitive capacity, triggering and constraining the activity of inference generation (Buckland, 2000: 30). One main task of film analysts is thus to describe the cues and their roles in triggering and constraining viewers’ comprehension. A wide range of works have been published which describe functions and stylistic conventions of filmic devices which cue spectators to various dimensions of film comprehension (e.g. Bordwell, 1989, 2007; Carroll, 1996; Thompson, 1988). Aside from explaining the comprehension of film narrative, researchers also attempt to theorize

viewer's emotional response to film from the cognitive perspective. This aspect of meaning making is directly related to the current study and is reviewed in Section 2.3.

### **2.2.3 The Sociofunctional Semiotic Approach**

As introduced in Chapter 1, the sociofunctional approach focuses on the semiotic construction of filmic meaning, which aims to “reclaim a place for an appropriate semiotics adequate for the task of analyzing film and able to do full justice to the range of forms and meanings at issue” (Bateman and Schmidt, 2011: 24). The ‘appropriate semiotics’ they refer to is the sociofunctional theory developed by Michael Halliday (1978, 1994). The sociofunctional theory is elucidated in Chapter 3, and in this section, I shall briefly introduce Bateman and Schmidt's (2011) justification of the semiotic approach and their reconstruction of Metz's (1974) semiotic model.

Bateman and Schmidt (2011) justify their position by addressing the two criticisms of applying semiotic principles to film (see also Tseng, 2009 for the argument for the linguistic approach). The first one is the charge of linguistic imperialism, that is, the imposition of models derived from the language system on other areas of signification; the second is the accusation of an overly static, a-historical and non-social view of meaning. The first point, that is, whether a semiotic theory is necessary in film studies, is answered by a lengthy quote from Bateman and Schmidt (2011: 32) in Section 1.2.1 (p. 4). As for the second point, Bateman and Schmidt (2011: 39) argue that the view of a static, structural nonsocially-aware linguistics is no longer tenable. Traditional semiotics and early text linguistics study meaning by employing the notion of semiotic code as rigid ‘systems of rules’. But in the sociofunctional linguistics they adopt, language is not

interpreted as a set of structures but as “a network of systems, or interrelated sets of options for making meaning” (Halliday, 1994: 16). The advances in the sociofunctional theory of discourse semantics (e.g. Martin, 1992) also provide Bateman and Schmidt (2011) with a new perspective in drawing the analogy between language and film. That is, meaning making mechanisms operational in film resemble the linguistic mechanisms at the level of *discourse*, rather than the compositional semantics within *sentences*. Therefore, the interpretation of filmic meaning is a discourse interpretation and not a property of some filmic ‘grammar’ working in terms of compositional semantics and a syntax (Bateman and Schmidt, 2011: 80). This position redefines the semiotic approach to film and is arguably the most significant development in film semiotics since Metz’s (1974) structural model. After setting out the general theoretical orientation, Bateman and Schmidt (2011) reconstruct the *grande syntagmatique* from the sociofunctional perspective.

Bateman (2007) and Bateman and Schmidt (2011) point out that the major problem with the *grande syntagmatique* is that it tries to squeeze paradigmatic relations into a syntagmatic structure. Van Leeuwen (1991: 86) also notes the problem in his early attempt to reconstruct the *grande syntagmatique*: “Metz bases many of his distinctions on the conjunctive relations between shots (paradigmatic), but presents his theory as a typology of sequences (syntagmatic)”. Therefore, inheriting the strong favor of paradigmatic relations in systemic functional linguistics (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004), Bateman (2007) and Bateman and Schmidt (2011) propose the *grande paradigmatique*, reproduced in Figure 2.2. However, as the focus of this study is the interpersonal semantics, the discussion of the textual dimension is kept very brief.

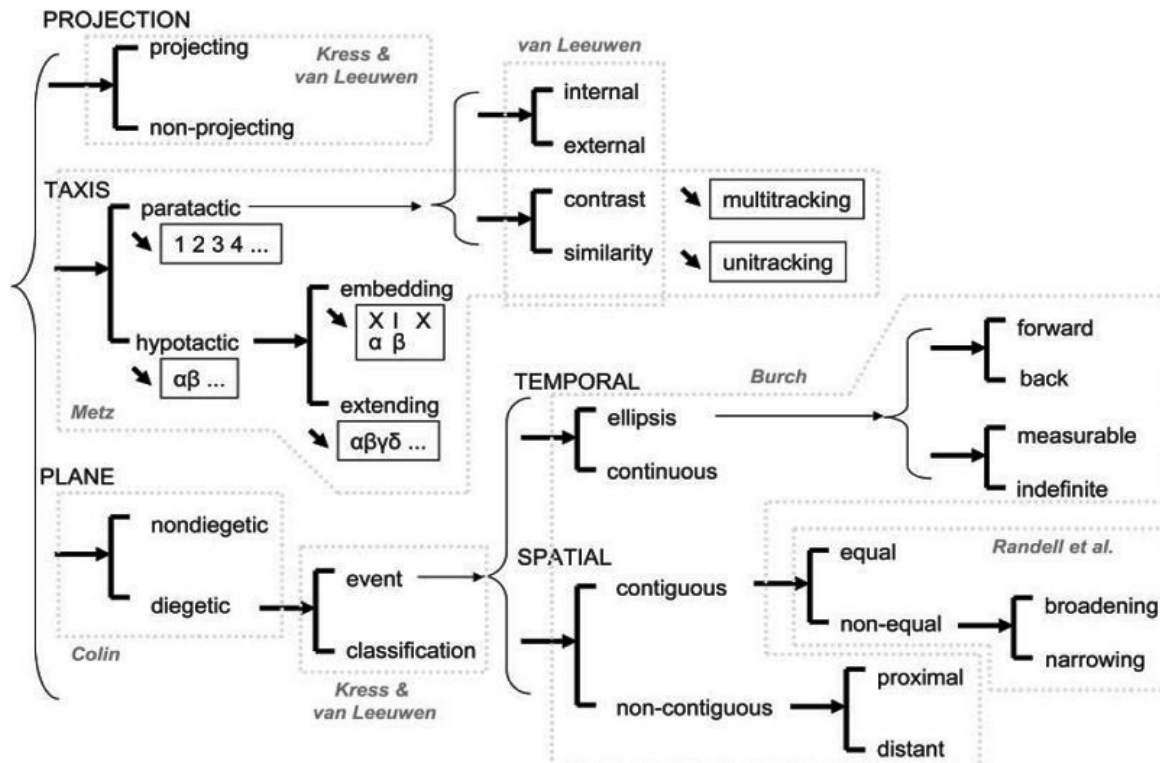


Figure 2.2 The grande paradigmatique (Bateman, 2007: 44)

Utilizing the powerful descriptive tool of the system network, the model reconstructs the relations between adjacent shots as a network consisting of a three-way cross-classification along the dimensions of projection, taxis and plane. *Projection* accounts for the possibility that the shot of a participant is followed by the mental world of the participant, similar to projected clause in language. *Taxis* is the main contributor to the syntagmatic possibilities. The hypotactic relation is relatively straightforward, in which embedding refers to inserted sequences and extending is simple addition. In paratactic structure, external relations construct relations between the ‘world of events in the story’ (relation among events); internal relations construct relations in the telling of the story (relation among topics) (Bateman, 2007: 43). Bateman (2007: 43) maintains that in both internal and external relations, the function of the sequence is to make a comparison. The

comparison can be one of ‘contrast’ or of ‘similarity’. ‘Similarity’ corresponds to Metz’s bracket syntagma in Figure 2.1, which depicts ‘typical examples of the same order of reality’. In ‘contrast’, a constant repeated relationship that is itself already intrinsically contrastive is required. *Plane* consists mainly of temporal and spatial relations, as theorized by Burch (1973). But Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1996) classification process for static images is also included to study images as frozen entities. The distinction between event and classification is itself placed under ‘diegetic’/‘nondiegetic’ alternation as only diegetic segments have the opportunity of expressing topic events, classifications and spatiotemporal relations (Bateman, 2007: 45).

Bateman and Schmidt (2011) also propose a formal specification of the syntagmatic axis of chronological cinematographic documents, which shall not be elaborated here. Through examining the two fundamental ways in which signs can be related, their framework provides effective tools for the systematic investigations of filmic meanings. By adopting the sociofunctional semiotics, their work also demonstrates that “an appropriate semiotics is adequate for the task of analyzing film and is able to do full justice to the range of forms and meanings at issue” (Bateman and Schmidt, 2011: 99). As has been introduced in Section 1.2.2, the present study takes the same approach as that of Bateman and Schmidt (2011), so aside from the *grande paradigmatique*, their theoretical points are constantly referred to throughout the thesis.

### **2.3 Approaches to Filmic Emotion and Viewer Engagement**

Bordwell and Thompson (2004: 44) distinguish two kinds of filmic emotions: those *represented in the artwork* and those *felt by the spectator* (emphasis original). Generally,

cognitive film theorists are more interested in viewer's emotional response than how emotions are represented in film, and a rich literature on viewers' emotional responses to narrative fiction films has been produced. In this section, I shall briefly review five studies of how films elicit viewer's emotions and engage their interest: Carroll's (2003, 2008) theory of criterial prefocusing, Tan's (1996) theory of thematic structure and character structure, Smith's (2003) mood cue approach, Smith's (1995) structure of sympathy, and Zillmann's (1994) theory of emotional involvement with character. These five works are closely related to the current study: the first three are mainly related to the investigation of filmic representation of emotion in Chapter 4 and viewer engagement in Chapter 6, Smith (1995) informs the study of Character Attributes in Chapter 5, and Zillmann (1994) is drawn upon in the study of viewer engagement in Chapter 6. Other smaller scale discussions, for example, the theories of emotion contagion of Plantinga (1999) and Coplan (2006), the study of emotional closeness between viewers and characters (Eder, 2006), are not reviewed here, but will be drawn upon where relevant in ensuing discussions.

### **2.3.1 Noël Carroll (2003): Criterial Prefocusing**

Noël Carroll is perhaps the foremost figure in the study of filmic emotions. He has applied insights from cognitive philosophy to a broad range of film topics, with how films evoke emotions from the viewer as one of his central concerns. In this section, I shall briefly introduce Carroll's (2003) theory of *criterial prefocusing*. He argues that the film is so structured that the descriptions of the object and events are criterially apposite to arouse certain emotional states. For example, misfortunes are designed to elicit pity,

because the criterion for pity is the suffering of others. However, a criterially prefocused film can be viewed dispassionately, for example, the suffering of other may not invoke pity. Carroll then proposes the second condition, which is a concern or *pro attitude* on the part of the viewer about the fictional characters and events in the film. Carroll (2003: 70) concludes that the structure of viewers' emotional involvement with narrative fiction films typically comprises a criterially prefocused film text plus certain concerns or pro attitudes. The result is sympathetic emotion toward the protagonist, which is the most pervasive emotion from the beginning to the end of a movie (Carroll, 2008: 178).

The notion of pro attitude is key to the engagement of viewer emotion in film narrative. The pro or con attitude is normally constructed in the beginning of a film so that 'concern' is established as early as possible. As Coplan (2006: 32) explains, narrative fiction films typically engage us by inviting us to empathize or sympathize with certain characters early on in a film and thus we are usually empathetically or sympathetically engaged to some degree from the beginning. Smith (1999: 120) also notes that "a primary task for a film's early sequences is to establish an emotional orientation that will guide the audience through the film". Once this pro/con attitude is established, the filmmaker is able to manipulate the viewer's emotion through manipulating the fate of the protagonist and antagonist during the course of narrative. This is mostly done by fulfilling and disrupting the protagonist's goals and interests. As Carroll (2008: 179) points out, the narrative trajectory usually involves the accomplishment of these goals in face of various obstacles. The viewers follow this quest from the perspective of sympathy, cheering with the protagonists onwards as they advance and feeling consternation when they falter.

Carroll (2003) also relates filmic emotion to film genre. He observes that certain genres appear to have as their abiding point the elicitation of specifiable states in the audience. For example, Aristotle thought that the arousal of pity and fear was an essential feature of Greek tragedy (quoted from Carroll, 2003: 74). Carroll proposes that the first step in applying the theory to a genre is to identify the dominating emotions that a genre aims to instill in the audience. For example, in his analysis of melodrama, he first identifies pity as the primary emotion this genre is designed to elicit. Pity is constructed by criterially prefocusing on bad things happening to those people we like or admire. Then the filmic construction of the ‘bad things’ (i.e. the events which elicit Character Emotion) and viewers’ pro attitude can be examined.

To sum up, Carroll’s (2003, 2008) notions of criterial prefocusing and pro attitude are significant for the present discussion of viewer engagement. Drawing upon Carroll’s theory, a working model of viewer engagement is developed and mapped onto the logogenetic development to film in Chapter 6.

### **2.3.2 Ed S. Tan (1996): Thematic Structure and Character Structure**

In his widely influential book, Tan (1996) investigates from a cognitivist’s perspective how interest, which he argues is the major emotion experience in film viewing, is stimulated and sustained in the structure of narrative. He argues that interest is determined by the dynamics of anticipations and outcomes, and the two resources that shape this dynamics are *thematic structure* and *character structure*. But before examining these two structures, Tan (1996) provides a general theoretical account of how emotion is played upon through the systematic *changes* of the situational meaning structure in



different stages of film narrative. Adopting the canonical narrative structure of Orientation^Complication^Resolution, Tan (1996: 58) models the change as follows: the Balance is disturbed, and then restored, after a number of Complications. In Orientation, the intensity of emotion is low and the valence is positive. In the Complication stage, the balance is disturbed by an event which has a highly negative valence for the protagonist (e.g. loss of loved ones). This event produces such emotions as sadness, pity and anger, as well as emotions directed toward the future, such as fear and desire for improvement of the situation. The disturbance introduces constant changes to the valence of the situation, and thus produces emotions such as hope, fear, uncertainty and relief in the viewer. Finally, the disturbance is restored in Resolution. The valence of the situational meaning (for the protagonist and the viewer) is positive (e.g. villains punished, lovers reunited) and the emotion is positive, such as relief, joy, and triumph. However, the Resolution may also be a negative one (e.g. the hero fails and dies) or a mixture of positive and negative (e.g. the hero succeeds but dies). Tan (1996) calls the total emotional process during the narrative an *emotion episode* because it is based on ongoing changes. His explication of the relation between narrative stages, situational meaning and emotional engagement is significant for the present study. Building on his idea, a more systematic and refined model of the strategic placement of narrative elements is provided in Chapter 6.

After the general theoretical discussion, Tan (1996) focuses on thematic structure and character structure, which are two major sources of interest. A *theme* is defined as “a generic cognitive structure containing events and one or more characters with a hierarchy of aims and plans” (Tan, 1996: 127). Popular themes include Betrayal, Self-sacrifice,

Courting, Revenge, Plotting, and so on. Each theme is a *schema* which contains a number of complications and resolutions that we know from previous knowledge. In this sense, the activation of a theme is followed by *expectancy* concerning the action elements that have not yet been instantiated, and before they are, an active theme is always accompanied by *uncertainty*. The uncertainty is constrained by our generic knowledge of the theme and such 'partial uncertainty' results in interest. In popular genre films, the characters' goals and concerns are mostly universal and automatically recognized, such as Betrayal, Revenge, Love, and so on. Themes may work at the global level of the narrative or may work as recursive local plot elements. An example of the former is the Competition Goal theme, in which the whole story is about the good guys battling with bad guys (e.g. police movies). Local themes are about the sub-goals that are entailed in the global goals. In *Ocean's Eleven* (Soderbergh, 2001), for example, the goal of robbing a bank is attained through the realization of many sub-goals such as recruiting for a team and so on. The notions of expectancy and concern in the thematic structure are fundamental mechanisms of viewer engagement.

Tan's (1996) second mechanism of narrative engagement is character structure. Assuming that the comprehension of film characters is the same as that of real life people, Tan (1996) proposes that character comprehension is guided impression formation that extends to the entire film narrative. A basic process in impression formation is *typing*, or *categorization*. Following Chatman (1978), he argues that the characters that appear in classical cinema are not actually individuals, but are best described as a collection of traits that are required to realize the prototypical causality of the action. In a similar way as thematic structure, trait typing and social stereotyping function as a rich source of

expectancy and prediction concerning events and actions. When a category (e.g. politician, gang member, depressed/suicidal person) is activated, quite specific expectations concerning the further course of events are evoked.

The second dimension of character structure, which is more relevant to the present study, is what Tan (1996: 167) calls “affective investment and return”. The process of typing is not affect neutral and characterization automatically leads to identification. Drawing on psychological studies, he argues that such ‘affective categorization’ which includes a general assessment of good/bad and like/dislike, is formed in quite an early stage, as soon as sufficient behavioral information is collected. The consequence of this affective investment is that viewers share, adopt or endorse the character’s goals and concern and we are concerned about what happens to him/her (see also Zillmann, 1994). Subsequent events befalling the characters thus evoke emotions in the viewer and films can engage the viewer’s emotion by manipulating the fate of the characters. Tan (1996: 174) defines this type of viewer emotion as *empathy*, which refers to an emotion characterized by the fact that the situational meaning structure (i.e. the appraisal of the Eliciting Condition of emotion) of the situation for a character is part of the meaning for the viewer. A fundamental empathetic emotion is *sympathy*, which further entails *compassion* and *admiration*, felt when the character is weak and strong in relation to the viewer respectively. However, he didn’t continue to examine the logogenetic development of empathetic emotions which is a key aspect of viewer engagement. Building on his theory, this study shall model character development and the patterns of compassion and admiration in film narrative in Chapter 6.

### **2.3.3 Greg Smith (2003): the Mood Cue Approach**

Smith (2003) proposes the *mood cue approach* to study the relation between film and emotion response. He argues that the primary emotive effect of film is to create *mood*, which is defined as a predisposition toward experiencing emotion. To explicate the evocation of mood, Smith (2003) considers texts as composed of a series of *emotion cues*, such as cues of narrative situation, facial and body information, music, sound, mise-en-scene, and lighting. Cues are the smallest unit for analyzing a text's emotional appeals. Emotion cues are the building blocks that are used to create the larger structures such as *emotion markers*, which are configurations of highly visible textual cues for the primary purpose of eliciting brief moments of emotion. Mood, then, is sustained by a succession of cues, some of which are organized into larger structures (narrative obstacles, emotion markers), some of which are not.

Smith (2003) argues that emotion cues cannot elicit emotion all by themselves; they depend on viewers' cognitive schemata about a genre of social activity. This position explicitly connects his theory to that of Bordwell (1985). The schemata for generic sequences contain information about the kinds of emotion cues usually used and guide us in making hypotheses concerning what emotional events will soon occur. That is, viewers approach a film with an enormous collection of 'microscripts' they have gathered from real-world experience and from encounters with other genre texts, from example, scripts for feuding lovers, showdowns, fight sequences, romantic reconciliations, chases, and so on. These microscripts encourage viewers to anticipate what will happen next narratively, stylistically, and emotionally. Emotion cues confirm or question viewers' initial choice of

a script, modifying or supporting or escalating our mood. In this sense, this model is similar to Tan's (1996) theory of thematic structure.

However, the mood-cue approach differs from previous cognitive scholars' work on filmic emotion in that it takes all stylistic cues into consideration in its analysis, rather than simply providing a character-oriented understanding of emotion (see also Grodal, 1997). Another significant insight related to the current study is that the approach provides a classification of films according to their emotional density. A film with dense emotional information attempts to elicit emotions with great frequency and specificity. These texts contain many redundant emotion cues which are used frequently and in a highly foregrounded manner.

#### **2.3.4 Murray Smith (1995): Character Engagement**

Premised on the assumption that characters are central to the rhetorical and aesthetic effects of narrative texts, Smith (1995) sets out a detailed description and functional explanation of character engagement. Working within the cognitive paradigm, he first asserts that comprehending and interpreting fictional narratives is an imaginative activity in which we make inferences, formulate hypothesis, categorize representations, and utilize many other cognitive skills (Smith, 1995:74). He then proposes three levels of imaginative engagement with characters, namely, recognition, alignment and allegiance, which comprise the *structure of sympathy*.

*Recognition* describes the spectator's construction of the character: the perception of a set of textual elements as an individuated and continuous human agent. The recognition of characters draws upon the 'person schema', that is, a mental set or conceptual

framework of the essential features of a human agent. Recognition in film is normally dependent on exterior, perceptible traits—the body, the face, and the voice. Smith (1995: 113) also relates the exterior traits to interior traits, a point which is further developed in the current study (see Section 5.4.2).

*Alignment* refers to the process by which spectators are placed in relation to characters in terms of access to their actions and to what they know and feel. Smith (1995) proposes two ways of aligning viewers: spatio-temporal attachment and subjective access. Attachment concerns the way in which the narration restricts itself to the actions of a single character, or moves more freely among the spatio-temporal paths of two or more characters. Subjective access pertains to the degree of access we have to the subjectivity of characters. Together, they regulate the apportioning of knowledge among characters and viewers systematically throughout the narrative, resulting in a *structure of alignment*.

*Allegiance* pertains to the moral evaluation of characters by the spectator. Based on recognition and alignment, viewer allegiance is constructed by assigning a character a set of morally desirable attributes. Smith (1995: 190-193) then discusses the filmic mechanisms of attribute construction, including character action, iconography, music and so on. Drawing upon this framework, more systematic theorization of the construction of Character Attribute is provided in Chapter 5. Another key insight of Smith (1995) is that he relates patterns of Character Attributes to film genre. He distinguishes between two kinds of moral structures according to the feature of Character Attributes: Manichean and Graduated. The former refers to the clear-cut opposition between the good and the bad while the latter refers to the mixture of good and bad in the characters. The construction of moral structure is further developed from a semiotic perspective in Chapter 5.

Aside from the structure of sympathy, Smith (1995) also examines those reactions under the aegis of *empathy* (cf. Tan, 1996 in Section 2.3.2 for the different uses of the term). He distinguishes these two concepts based on the psychological terminology of *central* and *acentral* imagining. Central imagining (empathy) is a scenario of imaginative *substitution* while acentral imagining (sympathy) is a matter of *sharing*. The distinction can be captured partly through linguistic clues. While central imagining is often expressed in the form ‘I imagine ...,’ acentral imagining is expressed in the form ‘I imagine that. ...’. Empathy is further categorized into emotion *simulation* and *mimicry* according to the role of volition within them. Simulation is a voluntary process in which we imaginatively project ourselves into the situation of the characters and hypothesize the emotions they are experiencing; mimicry is an involuntary reaction which relies upon an almost perceptual registering and reflexive simulation of the emotion of another person via facial and bodily cues. It is similar to the notion of emotion *contagion* in psychology (Izard, 1977), which is also discussed by film theorists (e.g. Coplan, 2006; Plantinga, 1999).

Smith’s (1995) model of character engagement is summarized in Figure 2.3. The distinctions made in the model enable us to describe and explain the complex responses to character in a more systematic and discriminating way than the concept of identification allows. As indicated above, the concepts in this model, especially those of allegiance and moral structure, are essential to the current study and are drawn upon in the discussion of Character Attributes in Chapter 5.

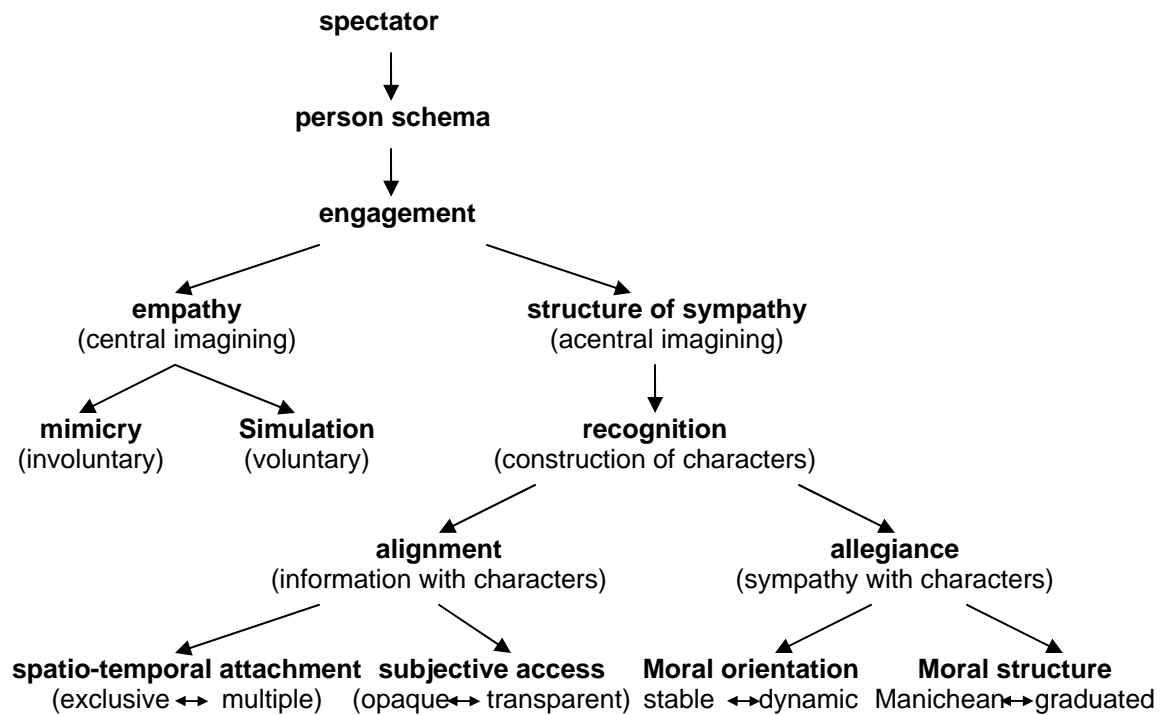


Figure 2.3 Character Engagement (Smith, 1995: 105)

### 2.3.5 Dolf Zillmann (1994): Mechanisms of Emotional Involvement

Dolf Zillmann is not a film theorist, but a renowned scholar on ‘entertainment’. Among his remarkable contributions to various topics in the field, there is an influential discussion on the mechanisms of emotional involvement with drama (Zillmann, 1991, 1994). He is concerned with the popular notion of identification with characters as well, similar to Smith (1995). Different from Smith (1995), he focuses on the concept of *empathy*. In his paper, though, empathy is defined as “the tendency to feel oneself *into* a situation” (Zillmann, 1994: 39, emphasis original), similar to that of Tan (1996). Zillmann (1994: 40) elaborates on the definition of empathy as any experience that is a response (a) to information about circumstances presumed to cause acute emotions in another individual and/or (b) to the bodily, facial, paralinguistic, and linguistic expression of emotional experiences by another individual and/or (c) to another individual’s actions



that are presumed to be precipitated by acute emotional experiences, this response being (d) associated with an appreciable increase in excitation and (e) construed by respondents as feeling with or feeling for another individual.

Zillmann (1991, 1994) then proposes a model of viewers' empathetic response to characters. The first step is *perception*, similar to Smith's (1995) notion of recognition. Then viewers make *moral judgments* about the characters mainly based on the perception of their actions. The third step is *disposition formation*, that is, the liking or disliking of the character, similar to Smith's (1995) notion of allegiance, or Carroll's (2003) notion of pro attitude. In step four, once the affective disposition is established, viewers actively expect or fear particular outcomes. Positive affective dispositions toward characters make viewers hope for good fortunes and fear misfortunes. In contrast, negative affective dispositions toward persons or personas make viewers fear good fortunes. In the fifth step, affective dispositions toward characters control *empathetic responses*. Specifically, positive affective dispositions toward characters allow empathic reactions, whereas negative affective dispositions impair them. The intensity of empathic or counter-empathic reactivity is proportional to the positive or negative initial affect toward the character: the stronger the positive affect is, the more intense the empathic reaction; the stronger the negative sentiment is, the more intense the counter-empathic reaction (Zillmann, 1994: 44). Finally, this correspondence between affective disposition and approval/disapproval of outcomes for the model is based on appraisals that entail *moral judgment*. The model is summarized in Figure 2.4.

This model of emotional involvement significantly informs the theorization of viewer engagement in this thesis. Complementary to Zillmann's (1994) focus on viewer's

‘reception’, frameworks are proposed to investigate how film narrative is ‘designed’ to engage viewers’ emotion and interest in Chapter 6.

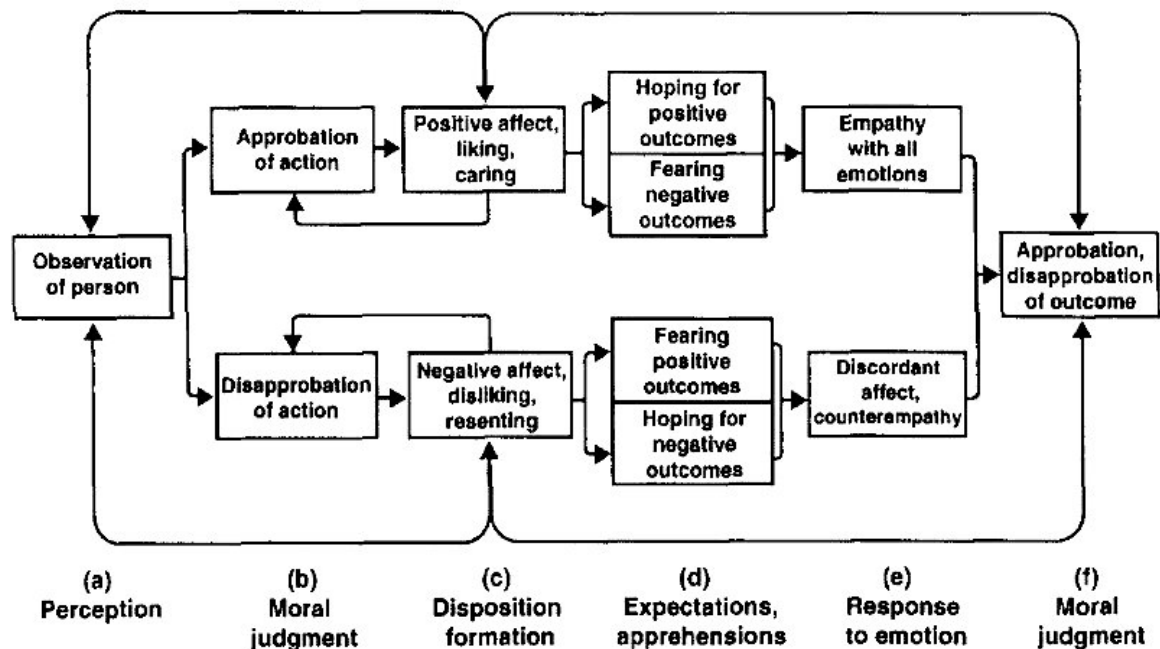


Figure 2.4 The formation of empathy and counter-empathy (Zillmann, 1994: 46)

## 2.4 Genre and Ideology

In this section, the discussion move from denotative semiotics to connotative semiotics and introduce some studies of film genre and ideology. The discussion is kept very brief because the investigation of genre and ideology in the current thesis draws mainly on social semiotic theories to be reviewed in Chapter 3. It is nonetheless necessary for the comparison of the significance of different approaches.

### 2.4.1 Film Genre

Genre has occupied an important place since the beginning of film studies. Theories of film genre have been proposed since 1940s (e.g. Bazin, 1956; Warshow, 1948). In the 1960s, Lawrence Alloway (1963) applies the theory of iconography to the systematic

analysis of genres and cycles, which becomes quite influential. However, the exclusive focus on iconographic conventions confines this approach only to genres which are particularly suited to iconographic interpretation, such as the well-established genres of western and gangster film (e.g. McArthur, 1972). Since 1980s, researchers seem to have come to an agreement that genre is a multi-dimensional phenomenon (e.g. Altman, 1984; 1999; Neale, 1990, 2000; Schatz, 1981; Williams, 1984). As Neale (2000: 25) points out, “genre is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and...what seems clear is that all these dimensions need to be taken into account”.

The most influential multi-dimensional approach to film genre is perhaps Altman’s (1999) syntactic/semantic/pragmatic model, building on his earlier syntactic/semantic model (Altman, 1984). Altman (1984: 10) defines the syntactic and semantic aspects of genre as follows:

While there is anything but general agreement on the exact frontier separating semantic from syntactic views, we can as a whole distinguish between generic definitions which depend on a list of common traits, attitudes, characters, shots, locations, sets, and the like—thus stressing the semantic elements which make up the genre—and definitions which play up instead certain constitutive relationships between undesignated and variable placeholders—relationships which might be called the genre’s fundamental syntax. The semantic approach thus stresses the genre’s building blocks, while the syntactic view privileges the structures into which they are arranged.

By examining the features of film elements and their co-patterning, this approach offers a useful descriptive vocabulary for interpreting individual texts and relating them to given genres. However, as Altman (1999: 207) admits, “I underemphasized the fact that genres look different to different audiences, and that disparate viewers may perceive quite disparate semantic and syntactic elements in the same film”. He therefore adds a pragmatic dimension to take into consideration the ‘user factor’. In this way, genre is presented as a multivalent term valorized by diverse user groups. However, the issue of user reception, including the reason for different readings of the same film, the relationship among those users, and the effect of the multiple conflicting uses, may pose much difficulty in actual analysis.

Compared to Altman’s (1999) model, the dimensions of genre are more closely mapped out in the metafunctional and multi-strata model of SFL (see Section 3.3.5). Therefore, the current study shall apply the SF model to the analysis of the multimodal construction of film genre, with a focus on the interpersonal meaning.

#### **2.4.2 Social Values and Ideology**

Film is produced by, read in, and gains meaning from, its cultural positionings (Fuery, 2000: 92). For this reason, there have been a wide range of film theories that deal with the issue of cultural values and ideology in film, including Neo-Marxist theories, cultural theory, as well as certain psychoanalytical approaches. As connotative semiotic, ideology is constructed by a wide range of semiotic resources in various ways. As Giannetti (1999) notes, cultural values and ideology can be implicit or explicit in film. There are explicit ideologies in many movies, such as the propaganda movies in the Soviet Russia. But

more often, the characters don't talk at length about what they believe in, instead, viewers have to dig beneath the surface and construct their value systems on the basis of their goals, their actions in certain situations, and so on (Giannetti, 1999: 398). For example, filmmakers may promote certain values by creating sympathetic characters with such traits as courage, generosity, kindness, loyalty, and so on.

A number of classic studies in the 1970s, known as *apparatus theories*, focus on the ideological effects of the basic filmic devices such as the use of camera and editing. These studies include Baudry (1971), Comolli (1971/1985), and Mulvey (1975), to name just three. These authors maintain that cinema is by nature ideological because its mechanisms of representation, mainly including camera and editing, are not ideology free. In the essay "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematic Apparatus", Baudry (1971) argues that the apparatus flatters infantile narcissism by exalting the spectatorial subject as the center and origin of meaning. He postulates an unconscious substratum in identification, in the sense that cinema, as a simulation apparatus, not only represents the real but also stimulates intense 'subject-effect' (quoted in Stam, 2000: 162). Comolli (1971/1985) argues that the natural realism of the film image is in fact a result of codification processes. Therefore, cinema, even in its technology, is part of the complex of determinations which makes up the social whole, and responds to the economic and ideological demands. Mulvey's (1975) seminal essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", regarded as an inaugural text for feminist film theory, argues that dominant cinema re-inscribes patriarchal conventions by privileging the male in terms of both narrative and spectacle. The male is made the active subject of the narrative and the female the passive object of spectatorial gaze. Visual pleasure in cinema thus reproduces

a structure of male looking and female to-be-looked-at-ness, which mirrors the asymmetrical power relations in the real social world. More recently, Ryan and Kellner's (1988) monograph *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film* provides a comprehensive account of various ideology-related issues in film, such as gender, race, class, and so on.

Compared to these theories, the analysis of ideology in this study is mainly informed by the sociofunctional approach, in which a more complex relation is maintained between the abstract ideology on the one hand, and the concrete semiotic resources and low level meanings on the other. Therefore, the ideological position of the film is investigated through the systematic analysis of the multimodal meaning making resources.

## **2.5 Summary of Chapter 2**

This chapter provides a brief survey of the approaches to filmic meaning and filmic emotion. The theories reviewed first serve as foundations on which the current study is based; second, the significance and contribution of the current study within the landscape of existing studies is also manifested. In terms of filmic meaning, the sociofunctional approach is adopted and interpersonal meaning (e.g. emotion and attitude) is investigated complementing Bateman and Schmidt's (2011) focus on textual meaning. For emotion specifically, the cognitive theories mainly focus on viewers' emotional response. As Smith (2003: 4) points out, "emotions are carefully packaged and sold, but they are rarely analyzed with much specificity by film scholars". One aim of the current study (Chapter 4), therefore, is to investigate how emotive meaning is represented with the multimodal resources in film. Character Attributes and viewer engagement are also theorized from

the discursive perspective, instead of spectator psychology. That is, how characters are semiotically constructed and how film narrative is designed to engage viewers are investigated in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 respectively.

## **Chapter 3 Theoretical Foundations: The Social Semiotic (Systemic Functional) Approach**

As Bateman and Schmidt (2011: 24) point out, “the analysis of film demands powerful theoretical and technical tools whose principal focus is signification itself. Without this, there is little guidance of what lower-level patterns to focus on and why, and accounts proposed at higher levels of abstraction remain overly subject to intuitive and impressionistic descriptions”. Therefore, in this chapter, I shall review the main theoretical foundations underpinning the analysis, which include the systemic functional theory (e.g. Halliday, 1978; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Martin, 1992), its application to the visual modality (e.g. Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006; O’Toole, 1994), and Appraisal theory (e.g. Martin and White, 2005; White, 1998). How these theories are adopted and developed in the current thesis is also explained.

### **3.1 The Systemic Functional Model of Language**

SFL is centrally concerned with how the organization of language is related to its use, and this concern is pursued by modeling both language and social context as semiotic systems in a relationship of *realization* with one another (Martin, 1997: 4, emphasis in the original). As Halliday’s (1978) framework of ‘language as system’ and ‘language as institution’ states:

The salient facts about language as system are (a) that it is *stratified* (it is a three-level coding system consisting of semantics, lexicogrammar and phonology) and (b)



that its semantic system is organized into *functional* components (ideational, interpersonal, textual). Language as institution indicates the fact that language is variable, and there are two kinds of variation, (a) dialect (variation according to the user), and (b) *register* (variation according to the use) (Halliday, 1978: 183, emphasis added).

Halliday's (1978) views summarize the fundamental principles of the SF (social semiotic) approach to language. First, SFL models social context and language as stratified semiotic systems. Second, it is a systemic theory in which grammar is viewed not as formal rules, but as resources of meaning. Third, it is a functional theory, which is centrally concerned with language in use. That is, language is viewed not (primarily) as a formal system, but as a resource which performs various social functions. These three principles are key theoretical tools for the modeling of Appraisal in this study and are elaborated below.

### **3.1.1 Text and Context in the Stratified Semiotic Model**

SFL has developed as both an intrinsic and extrinsic theory of language functions (Martin and White, 2005: 26). That is, SFL models both language and social context as semiotic systems realizing one another. In this model, context is bi-stratified as genre and register (Martin, 1997) and language is tri-stratified as phonology/graphology, lexicogrammar and discourse semantics (Halliday, 1978), as represented in Figure 3.1. In Martin's (1992) model, there is a further stratum of ideology realized by genre, which is, however, not included in most of his later models. Nonetheless, ideology will be briefly

investigated in the present discussion. These strata are elaborated in the following, starting with the linguistic strata.

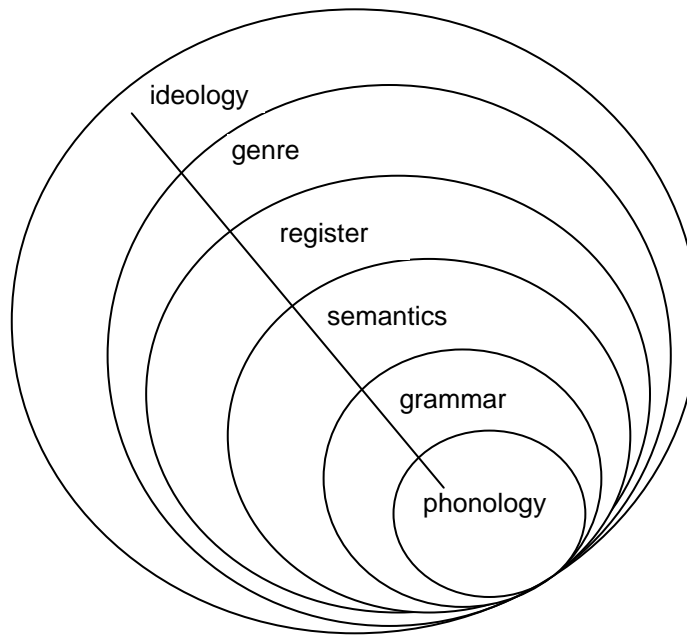


Figure 3.1 The stratified model of text and context (Martin, 1992: 496)

### 3.1.1.1 The Strata of Text

Building on Hjelmslev's (1961) model of the content plane and expression plane, Halliday (1978) proposes a stratified semiotic system involving three levels of abstraction: phonology/graphology, lexicogrammar and (discourse) semantics. The first level is the expression plane, which deals with the organization of phonemes into syllables for spoken language, or letters into sentences for written language. The latter two levels form the content plane. Lexicogrammar is concerned with the recoding of phonological and graphological patterns as words and clauses, as in Halliday (1994); discourse semantics is concerned with resources for integrating clauses with one another into cohesive texts, as in Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Martin (1992). Martin (1992) is more explicitly concerned with discourse semantics, identifying the dimensions of identification

(tracking participants), ideation (construing experience), negotiation (interacting in dialogue) and appraisal (negotiating attitudes) (see also Martin and Rose, 2007).

The relation between these strata is described in SFL as realization (Halliday, 1978), or metaredundancy (Lemke, 1995). The notion of realization is key to the modeling of the semiotic construction of Appraisal in this study. Situated at the level of discourse semantics, Appraisal is realized by various resources at the level of lexicogrammar and the aim of this study is to theorize these resources in the context of multimodal discourse.

### **3.1.1.2 The Strata of Context**

Drawing on Hjelmslev's (1961) model of connotative and denotative semiotic systems, Martin (1992) proposes that language functions as the expression form of register (context of situation), which in turn functions as the expression form of genre (context of culture). Register is used to refer to the connotative semiotic system constituted by the variables field, tenor, and mode (Martin, 1992: 502)<sup>6</sup>. The definitions of the three variables are succinctly provided by Halliday (1985: 12):

Field: What is going on, what is happening, what is the nature of the social action that is taking place: "what is it that the participants are engaged in, in which the language figures as some essential component?"

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<sup>6</sup> For Halliday, register locates at the semantic level of the linguistic system, where the categories of field, mode and tenor are regarded as the features of the context of situation and thus belong to one level up. The contextual model of Martin (1992, 1997) which we adopt extends the notion of register to refer to the independent semiotic system independently located between language and genre as one of the contextual strata.

Tenor: Who is taking part, what is the nature of the relationship of the participants, what are their statuses and roles, including the speech roles they are taking on in dialogue and the whole cluster of socially significant relationships in which they are involved.

Mode: What part is the language playing, what is it that the participants are expecting the language to do for them in that situation, including the channel of communication (spoken or written).

As a study of Appraisal, this thesis is mainly concerned with the variable of tenor, which is investigated through the patterns of Appraisal and patterns of character relations in film discourse. Meanwhile, the notion of field is employed in modeling the multi-dimensional construction of Character Attributes and Appraisal Prosody.

Martin (1992) further introduces the more abstract stratum of genre, which is realized by recurrent patterns of variation at the level of register (configurations of field, tenor and mode)<sup>7</sup>. The advantages of approaching genre as a connotative semiotic system in its own right rather than as a configuration of registers are summarized in Martin (1992, 1999). The most important one is that since genre is not correlated with any one particular register variable or any one particular metafunction, it can be characterized as multi-functional, redounding simultaneously with field, tenor and mode as well as with ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings (Martin, 1999: 31). This is significant for the present study, one aim of which is to investigate the role of Appraisal in shaping film genre. Theories for the analysis of genre are reviewed in detail in Section 3.3.5.

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<sup>7</sup> Genre is conceptualized as a variable of register by many SF theorists (e.g. Halliday, 1978). However, Martin's (1992) model is adopted in this study and no discussion of other approaches shall be provided.

At the highest level of abstraction is ideology, which is realized through the resources of language, register and genre. Research in these areas is still quite exploratory and will not be pursued further here (cf. Halliday, 1978; Martin, 1992; Martin and Rose, 2007). However, the notion of ideology is essential to film discourse and cannot be omitted. As Bateman and Schmidt (2011: 39) point out, it is our task to demonstrate that the SF model is fully compatible with the more sophisticated accounts of ideology that are necessary for treatments of semiotic artifacts such as film. In this study, ideology is pursued from the point of the Appraisal category of Judgment and how the discursive patterns of Character Attributes realize social values, especially the ‘moral’ of the film, is investigated.

### **3.1.2 The notion of System**

The ‘systemic’ principle regards grammar as systems of paradigmatic choices. The notion of choice is central in SF Theory, in the sense that the grammar of language is conceptualized as resource for making meanings, rather than a code, or a set of rules for producing correct sentences (Halliday, 1978: 192). As Halliday (1994: 15-16) declares, “one of the things that distinguishes SFL is that it gives priority to paradigmatic relations; it interprets language not as a set of structures but as a network of systems, or interrelated sets of options for making meaning”.

In SFL, the interlocking options are represented as system networks. The network shows (1) the condition under which the choice is available (entry condition), (2) the system name, and (3) the terms from which one has to be chosen. But sometimes the entry condition and/or the system name may not be labeled. An example of a complete

network is provided in Table 3.1. The square bracket represents the logic of ‘or’ (i.e. only one term can be selected). The system can also represent simultaneous choices (by curly bracket) to handle cross-classification, as in Figure 3.2.

Entry condition	System name	Terms
Clause	MOOD TYPE	Indicative Imperative

Table 3.1 Components of system network

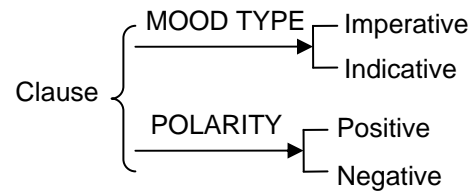


Figure 3.2 Illustration of system network

The notion of systemic choice is fundamental to the current study, both in the modeling of the semiotic resources of Attitude construction and in the modeling of Appraisal patterns. Premised on the principle that all the emotions and attributes of the characters are not spontaneous as in real life, but semiotic choices motivated by the filmmaker’s ‘interest’ (cf. Kress, 2010; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006), this study aims to theorize the resources and patterns of Appraisal as systems of choice and to examine the patterns of the choices made in relation to the social cultural context of sign production (i.e. genre and ideology of the film).

### **3.1.3 The notion of Metafunction**

Prioritizing paradigmatic relations enables Halliday (1994) to identify the abstract metafunctions of language, which are ideational, interpersonal and textual functions. The ideational metafunction is concerned with construing experience; the interpersonal metafunction is concerned with enacting interpersonal relations; the textual metafunction is concerned with organizing ideational and interpersonal meaning as discourse (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). The present study of Appraisal is one aspect of the interpersonal meaning and a detailed account is provided in Section 3.3.

As explained in Section 3.1, these three metafunctions are realized by the stratum of lexicogrammar, where the ideational function is construed by the system of Transitivity, the interpersonal by Mood and Modality, and the textual by Theme. In terms of Transitivity, Halliday (1994) identifies the main process types of material, behavioral, verbal, mental, relational and existential. Mood is the resource for enacting social relations; it models exchanges as giving or demanding information and goods/services. Theme is the resource for organizing ideational and interpersonal meanings into sequences. No further details shall be provided here as the modeling of the metafunctions of multimodal discourse in the present study draws more directly on the grammar of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) which is elaborated in Section 3.2 below.

Halliday (1979) further associates metafunctions with different kinds of structure: particulate structure for ideational meaning, prosodic structure for interpersonal meaning, and periodic structure for textual meaning (see also Martin, 1992, 1997). Particulate structure is segmental, organizing elements into mono-nuclear (orbital) or multi-nuclear (serial) patterns, as the configuration of process and participant in clause. In prosodic

structures, meaning is distributed throughout the clause as a continuous cumulative motif or coloring. For Appraisal meaning specifically, the definition of prosody is explained in Section 3.3.3. Periodic structure organizes meaning into waves of information, with different wave lengths piled up one upon another (Martin and White, 2005: 19). The types of structure associated with different metafunctions are illustrated as Figure 3.3

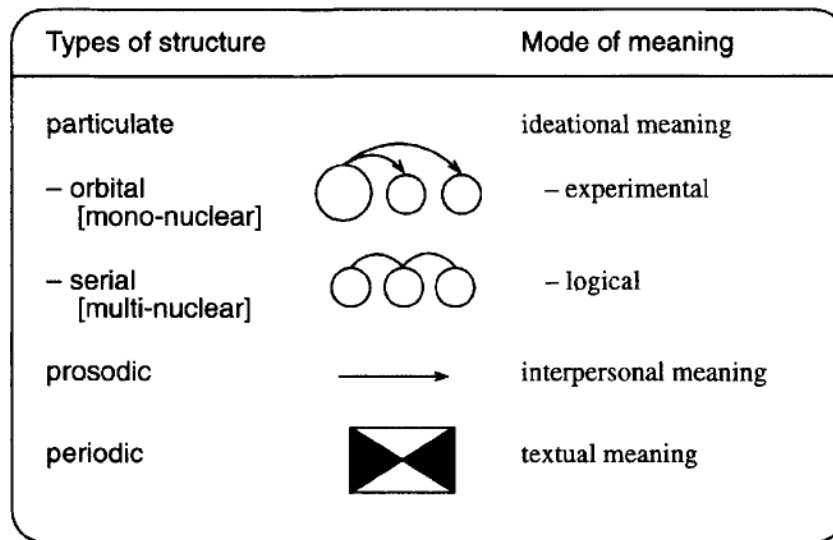


Figure 3.3 Types of structure in relation to modes of meaning (Martin and White, 2005: 10)

An understanding of metafunctions and their characteristic structural patterns is crucial for the modeling of Appraisal. A key point made in this thesis is that Appraisal should be studied in relation to the ideational and textual metafunctions, both in terms of the semiotic resources of its construction and in terms of the patterns of Appraisal meaning. This point is elaborated in Section 3.3.

### 3.2 The Systemic Functional Visual Grammar

The systemic functional theory was originally developed in relation to language, but it has also been applied to other semiotic systems more recently. As a result, this theoretical



approach has come to be known as *systemic functional semiotics* (Knox, 2009; Unsworth, 2008). Social semioticians argue that the theoretical principles reviewed in Section 3.1 apply also to semiotic resources other than language. The seminal work in applying SF theory to the analysis of visual images was undertaken by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and O'Toole (1994). In what follows, the basic concepts of the descriptive framework proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), which are adopted for some of the visual analyses in this thesis, are reviewed. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), visual images, like language, fulfill the metafunctions of the representation of the experiential world (representational meaning), the interaction between the participants represented in a visual design and its viewers (interactive meaning), and the compositional arrangements of visual resources (compositional meaning)<sup>8</sup>.

### **3.2.1 Representational Meaning**

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 45-113) identify two types of structure in terms of representation: narrative structure and conceptual structure. The distinction between them is the ways in which the image participants are related to each other, that is, whether it is based on the “unfolding of actions and events, processes of change”, or based on their “generalized, stable and timeless essence”.

There are five types of process within the category of *narrative representation*. The first four types, actional, reactional, verbal and mental processes all involve a distinct agent (Actor, Senser, Sayer, etc.) and are categorized as agentive processes. An actional process represents the action with or without a goal. Reactional process is typically

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<sup>8</sup> The dimension of ‘modality’ which mainly refers to the realness of the image is less relevant to the current study and is not included in the discussion here.

formed by the eyeline of a represented participant. Verbal and mental processes are constructed by dialogue balloons and thought bubbles respectively. Finally, the non-agentive process of conversion involves a change of state in the represented participant. In this case, the goal of one process is at the same time the actor of another process.

In *conceptual structure*, the participants are related through taxonomic relations, part-whole relation or symbolic relations, termed classificational process, analytical process and symbolic process respectively. A classificational process relates represented participants to each other in terms of taxonomy, with these participants as the subordinates of another participant, which is their superordinate. The taxonomy can be overt or covert, depending on whether the superordinate is present in the image. In analytical process, participants are related based on a part-whole structure. The two types of represented participants involved in an analytical process are Carrier (i.e. the whole), and Possessive Attributes (i.e. the parts that constitute the whole). Symbolic process defines the meaning or identity of a represented participant, and can be further divided into symbolic attributive and symbolic suggestive. There are two participants in the symbolic attributive process, and the meaning is established in their relation; whereas only one participant is involved in the symbolic suggestive process, and the symbolic meaning is derived within the participant itself. The process types are summarized in Figure 3.4.

The investigation of representational meaning in this study is largely based on the framework displayed in Figure 3.4, for example, in the theorization of the Eliciting Conditions of emotion and the construction of Character Attributes. However, as the

object of the present study is moving images, the meaning of the processes is necessarily different, as explained in Chapter 5.

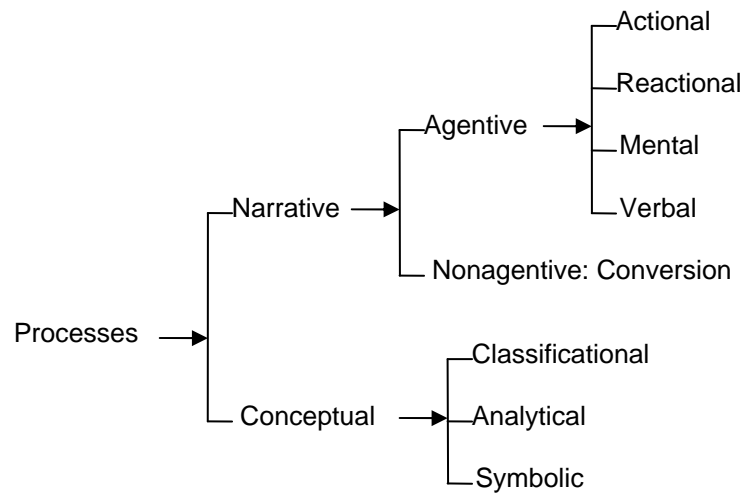


Figure 3.4 Process types in visual images (based on Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006)

### 3.2.2 Interactive Meaning

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 129) identify three dimensions of interactive meaning: contact, social distance, and attitude. Each of these dimensions includes options to specify the symbolic relations between the viewer and the represented participants. In terms of *contact*, the distinction is made between those images describing people or anthropomorphized things that look straight at the viewer and those images in which represented participants do not gaze at the viewer. Based on Halliday's (1994) speech functions, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 117-118) term the former as 'demand' pictures and the latter as 'offer' pictures. The second dimension of visual interaction is *social distance*, which is concerned with how images depict the represented participants as close to or far away from the viewer through shot distance. Long shot constructs the image-viewer relation as distant and close shot constructs the relation as intimate. In terms of *attitude*, the present research primarily focuses on subjective, perspectival images, and

skips the technical, objective drawings that “disregard the viewer” (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 131). The resource of camera positioning enables the creation of the symbolic relations of involvement and detachment along the horizontal axis, as well as different power relations along the vertical axis. To be specific, the horizontal angle of frontality maximally involves viewers with what is represented; whereas those images with the oblique angle depict the visual participants as ‘others’ or ‘strangers’. For vertical angles, symbolic power is typically given to the viewer in low angle representation, and to the represented participants in high angle representation. In the eye-level angle, the relation established is symbolic equality. The interactive meaning is summarized in Figure 3.5.

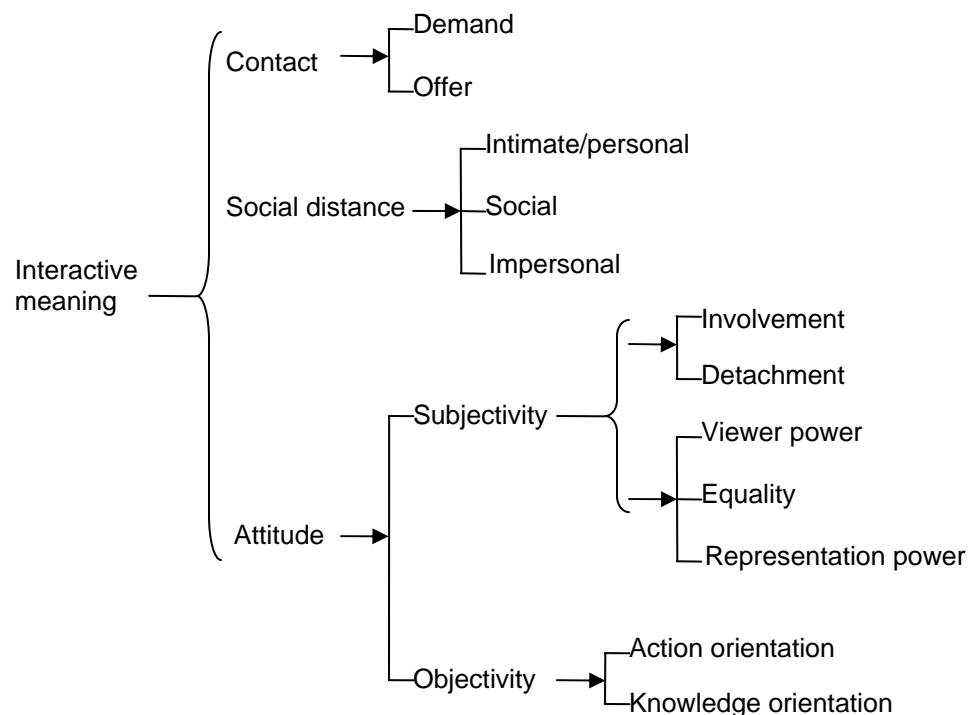


Figure 3.5 Interactive meaning in visual images (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 149)

The resources of interactive meaning (i.e. camera positioning) are important in filmic communication, especially the communication of Character Emotion (Carroll, 1996;

Plantinga, 1999). Camera positioning is also able to encode Character Attributes, for example, the character represented by low angle is judged as powerful or strong (Dyer, 1989; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006; Messaris, 1994). However, the association between camera positioning and interactive meaning cannot be taken as invariant rules because camera use may be motivated by different reasons. This issue, as well as the role of camera in the construction of Character Attributes, is addressed in Section 5.4.3.

### 3.2.3 Compositional Meaning

Compositional meaning relates the representational and interactive meanings into a meaningful whole through three interrelated systems: information value, salience, and framing (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 177). Information value is realized through the placement of visual elements. The dimensions of the visual space are represented in Figure 3.6.

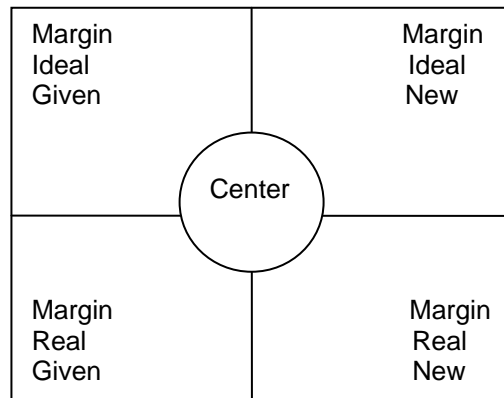


Figure 3.6 Dimensions of visual space (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 197)

The spatial orientations of ‘left’ and ‘right’ are assigned the information value of ‘given’ and ‘new’; ‘top’ and ‘bottom’ are assigned the value of ‘ideal’ and ‘real’;

‘central’ and ‘marginal’ are construed in terms of the importance of the information. Saliency deals with how some elements can be made more eye-catching, more conspicuous than others, through size, sharpness of focus, color contrast, and so on (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 202). The third aspect in visual composition, framing, is concerned with the disconnection and connection of visual elements.

In the current study of dynamic discourse, the textual aspect of meaning mainly refers to the organization of the image sequences in the narrative and the use of ‘composition’ in the sense defined by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) is limited. For example, as Thibault (2000: 330) observes, what is ‘new’ in a shot is normally not based on left-right structuring, but on what is progressively made salient or focal along with all those other features that lie within its scope.

### **3.3 Appraisal Theory**

As introduced in Chapter 1, the systematic analysis of the interpersonal meaning in film discourse is based on Appraisal theory (Martin and White, 2005). In this section, a brief account of the main tenets of the theory is provided, including the systems at the level of semantics and the lexicogrammatical resources for their construction<sup>9</sup>. The notion of Appraisal Prosody which extends the resources of Appraisal from lexicogrammar to higher level textual resources such as cohesive links is also introduced (e.g. Hood, 2004; Lemke, 1998). Finally, the role of Appraisal in shaping genre and engaging viewer’s/reader’s interest is discussed, based on Labov and Waletzky (1967), Martin (1992) and Martin and Rose (2008).

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<sup>9</sup> The review is mainly based on Martin and White (2005). Later developments of the theory in various contexts are not included, as they are not directly related to the present study (e.g. Hood, 2010).

### 3.3.1 The Semantics of Appraisal

Designed to model interpersonal meaning at the level of discourse semantics, the Appraisal system encompasses the three sub-systems of Attitude, Engagement and Graduation. Attitude is the most sophisticated system, which includes values of emotional response (Affect), values by which human behavior is socially assessed (Judgment) and values which address the aesthetic qualities of objects and entities (Appreciation). The system is shown as Figure 3.7.

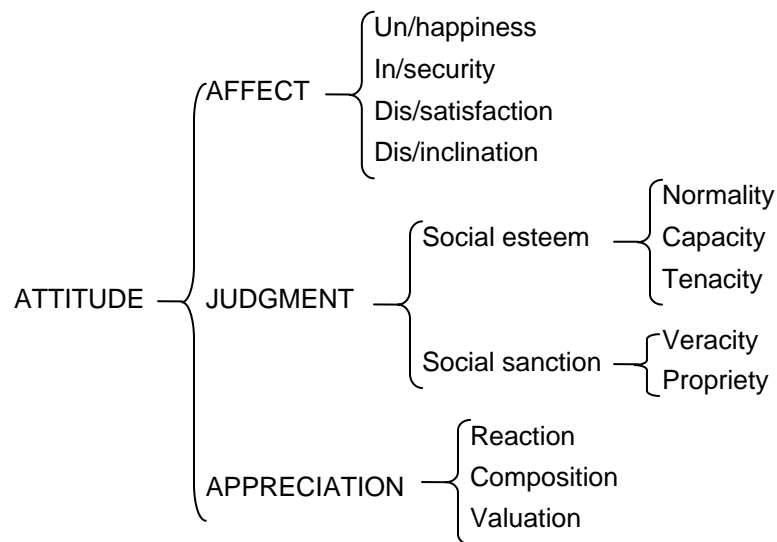


Figure 3.7 The system of Attitude (based on Martin and White, 2005: 42-48)

Affect deals with resources for construing emotional reactions, and it is further categorized into un/happiness, in/security, dis/satisfaction and dis/inclination. Un/happiness also includes *affection* towards other people, which is treated as a separate category in this study. Judgment is concerned with the assessment of human behavior according to social sanction and social esteem. Judgment of social esteem involves sub-categories of normality (how usual someone is), capacity (how capable someone is) and

tenacity (how resolute someone is). In terms of capacity, it is useful to distinguish between the inner qualities that are part of the character's personality (e.g. brave, kind) and the extrinsic qualities that are associated with social identity (e.g. power and status). Therefore, two types of capacity, namely intrinsic and extrinsic, are distinguished. The latter category is termed 'power' and the term 'capacity' is kept for inner quality. Judgment of social sanction is concerned with veracity (how truthful someone is) and propriety (how ethical someone is). In the present thesis, veracity and propriety are brought under the term *morality*. Appreciation is formulated in terms of the entity's aesthetic impact. The present study is mainly concerned with the semantics of Affect and Judgment, which is the focus of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 respectively. The categories we analyze and their abbreviations are summarized in Table 3.2.

Affect	+/-inc (inclination)	+/-hap (happiness) +/-aff (affection)	+/-sat (satisfaction)	+/-sec (security)
Judgment	+/-nor (normality)	+/-cap (capacity) +/-pow (power)	+/-ten (tenacity)	+/-mor (morality)

Table 3.2 Categories of Affect and Judgment

The sub-system of Engagement within Appraisal draws on Bakhtin's (1981) notions of dialogism and heteroglossia. It comprises networks of options for opening up or closing down the dialogic space for alternative voices in a text. According to Martin and White (2005: 94), the Engagement network covers all those locutions which provide the means for the authorial voice to position itself with respect to, and hence to engage with, the other voices and alternative positions construed as being in play in the current communicative context. The focus of Engagement in the present study, however, is not



the manipulation of dialogic space, but rather the discursive mechanisms of viewer engagement. In particular, this study is concerned with how the patterns of Appraisal meaning work to engage the viewer's emotions and interest. This aspect of Appraisal is investigated in Chapter 6.

The third sub-system of Appraisal is Graduation, which accommodates meaning making resources for scaling Attitudinal meanings and Engagement values. Graduation operates across two axes of scalability—that of grading according to intensity or amount, and that of grading according to prototypicality and the preciseness by which category boundaries are drawn (Martin and White, 2005: 137). The former is referred to as 'force' and the latter as 'focus'. The present study of the intensity of Character Emotions and Attributes mainly draws upon the framework of 'force' which includes the two key variables of quality and quantity. However, the use of the terms in film is different from that in language. For example, the degree of the morality a character (Judgment of morality) is characterized by the two dimensions of quality (nature of the actions) and quantity (number of tokens that invoke the Judgment), as elaborated in Section 5.5.

### **3.3.2 The Linguistic Construction of Appraisal**

Situated at the level of discourse semantics, Appraisal meanings are realized across different lexicogrammatical resources (Hood 2004; Martin and White 2005). Martin and White (2005) distinguish between *inscribed* Attitude (direct) and *invoked* Attitude (indirect). Their framework is reproduced as Figure 3.8 below.

*Inscribe* means that Attitude is directly constructed by attitudinal lexis, such as 'happy', 'sad', 'good' and 'bad'. Martin and White (2005) provide dozens of such words

in their framework. In terms of *invocation*, *provoke* refers to implicit Attitude which is evoked through lexical metaphors, as in ‘we fenced them in like sheep’. *Flag* means that some kind of Graduation is deployed to alert readers to the feelings at risk, as in ‘we smashed their way of life’. Hood and Martin (2007) provide a detailed discussion of how the resources of Graduation within Appraisal framework are used to invoke Attitude in academic discourse. It needs to be noted that Graduation doesn’t only ‘flag’ Attitude; it also grades directly constructed Attitude. *Afford* refers to cases when ideational meaning alone implies evaluation, as in ‘we brought the disease’. These four strategies decrease in terms of the explicitness of the Attitude they encode. In terms of Martin (2008), they decrease in their ‘commitment’ to the Attitude.

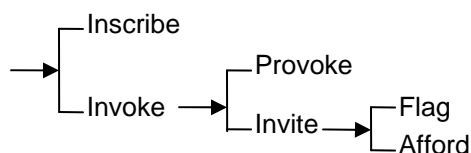


Figure 3.8 Strategies for constructing Attitude (Martin and White, 2005: 67)

Acknowledging both inscribed and invoked Attitude makes it possible for cross-coding among Affect, Judgment and Appreciation (Martin and White, 2005: 67). For example, when an activity is explicitly Appreciated as valuable, a Judgment of whoever accomplished it might be invoked. Such cross-coding is referred to as Attitudinal metaphor by Lemke (1998b). This is not only a significant expansion of evaluative resources for language, but also constitutes an important strategy for multimodal Attitude construction. For instance, the facial expression of happiness in communication may involve positive Judgment or Appreciation of whoever/whatever caused it. However, Martin and White’s (2005) theorization excludes nonverbal resources, which may signify

Attitude in quite different ways. Therefore, a main task of the thesis is to develop a framework which brings together the complex multi-semiotic in terms of their construction of Attitude. Drawing upon cognitive theories of emotion, the framework of the multimodal construction of Affect (emotion) is presented in Chapter 4 and a similar model for Judgment is presented in Chapter 5.

### **3.3.3 Appraisal Prosody**

Researchers have noted the discursive aspect of Appraisal at an early stage of the theory (e.g. Lemke, 1998b; White, 1998) and it is now understood more thoroughly in the recent developments of Appraisal theory as *Appraisal Prosody* (e.g. Hood, 2006; Martin and Rose, 2008; Thompson and Zhou, 2000).

The notion of prosody has been extended in SFL from phonology to grammar and discourse semantics (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Martin, 1992). As Martin (1992) and others have noted, the realizations of interpersonal meaning, including modalities and Attitudes, tend to be more ‘prosodic’ than the more segmental and localized realizations of ideational meanings (see Section 3.1.3 above). For Appraisal specifically, prosody refers to the way that interpersonal meaning spreads or diffuses across clauses and across longer phases of discourse (Hood, 2006: 37). The study of Appraisal Prosody broadens the scope of Appraisal resources from isolated lexical items to textual devices.

In his seminal essay, Lemke (1998b) investigates the prosodic realization of Appraisal across clause and sentence boundaries in terms of *propagation*. He argues that evaluation extends following the grammatical and logical links that organize it as structured and cohesive text. He discusses propagation both within clauses and across

clauses. Hood (2006) discusses this type of propagation in terms of *radiation*. In the following text from her analysis, the positive valuation of the word ‘refinements’ radiates to the following text and lends the words ‘excluded’, ‘used two measures’ and ‘weighted’ positive meaning. Hood (2006) further endorses her point by changing the first sentence to “There are certain problems associated with his methodology” and argues that the evaluative connotation of the following three words is changed to negative.

His methodology showed certain other refinements. First, he excluded overseas students... Secondly, he used two measures of performance... Finally, he weighted the degree class obtained according to its rarity value in each faculty. (Hood, 2006: 45)

This feature is discussed in Martin and Rose (2008) as well and they use the term *Attitude scoping* (see also Lemke, 1998b). They extend the notion of Appraisal Prosody to the macrostructure of narrative, that is, the six ‘narrative stages’ identified by Labov and Waletzky (1967):

- (1) Abstract – encapsulating or summarizing the whole story.
- (2) Orientation – locating events in time and space, introducing main participants.
- (3) Complicating Action – introducing the threatening, disruptive action.
- (4) Evaluation – indicating why the story has been told, its point.
- (5) Resolution – the threat of the Complication stage is addressed and overcome.
- (6) Coda – providing general view of the action, returns to the here and now.

In the model of Labov and Waletzky (1967), Evaluation is considered as a discrete stage. Developing their insight that Evaluation influences other stages of the narrative, Martin and Rose (2008: 68) propose that Evaluation scopes both backwards, evaluating the preceding events as Complication, and forward, expecting the following events to be a Resolution, as is illustrated in Figure 3.9 (see also Martin, 1992).

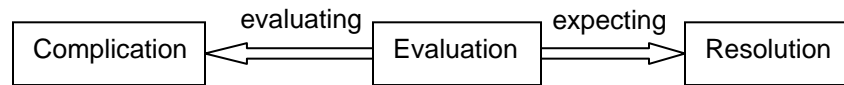


Figure 3.9 Scope of Evaluation in narrative

Aside from studying Appraisal Prosody, Martin and Rose (2008) also examine Appraisal from the perspective of story phases, in which Appraisal meaning is explicitly related to the structure of narrative and viewer engagement. The framework is elaborated in Section 3.3.4.

### 3.3.4 Appraisal Prosody and Viewer Engagement

In this section, the modelling of the dynamic reconfiguring of Appraisal meanings in the logogenetic development of narrative discourse is introduced. Such Appraisal pattern in the macrostructure of discourse is also termed Appraisal Prosody and the use of the term in this thesis is mainly in this sense. In narrative discourse, Appraisal Prosody is crucial in the effective management of viewers' emotion and interest, and is therefore essential in the modeling of interpersonal meaning. In this regard, the framework of Martin and Rose (2008) which examines patterns of Appraisal in relation to story phases is closely related to viewer engagement and is therefore significant for the present study.

Martin and Rose (2008: 82) argue that each phase type performs a certain function to engage the reader as the story unfolds, by constructing its field of activities, people, things and places, by evoking emotional responses, or by linking it to common experiences and interpretations of life. The main phase types and their functions are summarized in Table 3.3.

phase types	engagement functions
setting	presenting context
reactions	behavioral/attitudinal outcome
problem	counter-expectant creating tension
solution	conterexpantant releasing tension
comment	intruding narrator's comments
reflection	intruding participant's thoughts

Table 3.3 Common story phase types and their functions (Martin and Rose, 2008: 82)

The key principle that organizes these narrative phases is *expectancy* and the narrative is carried forward by swings in expectancy from phase to phase (Martin and Rose, 2008: 85). The narrator engages the reader by manipulating the expectancy, that is, by fulfilling or disrupting it, through a series of phases in each stage. A short text in Table 3.4, adapted from Martin and Rose (2008), suffices to illustrate the point.

Orientation	setting	Once upon a time, the king of Hastinapura, called Shantenu, went to the river side to hunt. While hunting, he saw a very beautiful woman.
	reaction	Having seen that woman, he fell in love. It was her he

		wishes to make a wife.
	problem	But she said “I will become your woman, but you may never ask me any questions”.
	solution	He then married her, and to him a child was born.
Complication	problem	However, the child she threw into the river.
	reaction	He asked why.
	solution	She said “I am going to leave you because you asked me questions”.
Evaluation		Shantenu the king was very sad in the palace.
Resolution	problem	One day he caught the sight of a small boy. But he didn’t know it was his son.
	solution	His wife arrived and said “that is your son and you may take him to the palace.

Table 3.4 Example of narrative phases (adapted from Martin and Rose, 2008: 84)

In the Orientation stage, the way in which the phases serve as pulses of expectancy is illustrated in Figure 3.10. The setting creates an expectancy of the reaction, which is followed by a counter-expectancy of problem, which in turn expects solution.

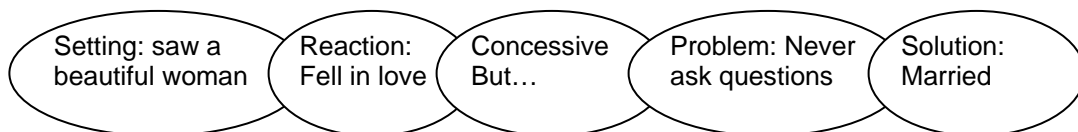


Figure 3.10 Phases as pulses of expectancy

This chain of events invites the readers to identify with the king and also their empathy with his emotions. The narrative then manipulates his emotions to engage the

viewers' emotion. A trajectory of Appraisal is formed across the phases and stages, which is roughly represented as Figure 3.11.

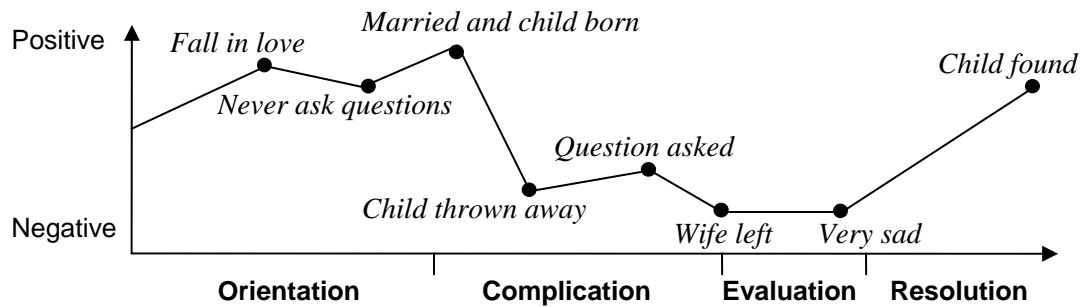


Figure 3.11 Emotion prosody of King Shanteun

The pattern is much more complex in film and one aim of this thesis is to provide a systematic modeling of Appraisal Prosody and their functions in viewer engagement. The theoretical framework and analysis are provided in Chapter 6.

### 3.3.5 Appraisal and Genre

It was clarified in Chapter 1 that one main objective of this thesis is to explore the functions of Appraisal patterns in shaping film genre. The purpose of this section, therefore, is to provide theoretical foundations for the analysis in this respect. The discussion is mainly based on the frameworks developed by Martin (1992, 1997) and Martin and Rose (2008).

#### 3.3.5.1 The Interpersonal Dimension of Genre

As explained in Section 3.1, genre is conceptualized as an independent semiotic stratum realized by patterns of ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings. However, as



Martin (1992) observes, genre theory has tended to inherit from grammarians a bias for the ideational, to the extent that textual analyses have given preference to constituencies. As White (1998: 74) also points out, genre analyses, both within and outside SFL, have tended to adopt a particulate approach to modeling textual structuring, breaking texts down into discrete chunks, typically organized sequentially along a pathway towards some goal or point of textual completion. For example, Hasan's (1996) model of the Generic Structure Potential prioritizes the sequential ordering of elements in different stages.

Martin (1992) warns that there is danger if genre analyses are limited to describing the particulate constituencies formed from these sequences of functional phases or stages. To avoid this, he proposes to look beyond the particulate model of experiential meanings to consider the patterns of interpersonal meaning. In light of this proposal, patterns of Character Emotion and Character Attributes are considered in relation to film genre in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 respectively and the role of dynamic aspect of Appraisal meaning in shaping film narrative is investigated in Chapter 6. The modeling of the patterns also draws upon both the typological and the topological methods, which are reviewed in Section 3.3.5.2.

### **3.3.5.2 Typological versus Topological Perspectives**

The topological approach (as opposed to the typological perspective), introduced to SFL by Lemke (1995) and Martin and Matthiessen (1992), is drawn upon in various works on semantics and genre (e.g. Martin, 1992, 1997; Martin and White, 2005; Martin and Rose, 2008). Under typologies, exemplified in SFL by system networks, the description is

concerned with characterizing text types according to the particular patterns of register realized through particular configurations of ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning (cf. Martin and Rose, 2008). Topologies, in contrast, explore the various parameters along which items may be more or less similar or different (White, 1998: 28). Therefore, it allows us to compare genres from as many angles as we wish (Martin and Rose, 2008: 131). Such an approach is needed in this context because, in practice, texts are rather more mixed than typological description allows (White, 1998: 77). Figure 3.12 is an example of the topological view of probability, along the two dimensions of valence and subjectivity. In this way, the various expressions of probability are organized along the two axes within this broad semantic landscape.

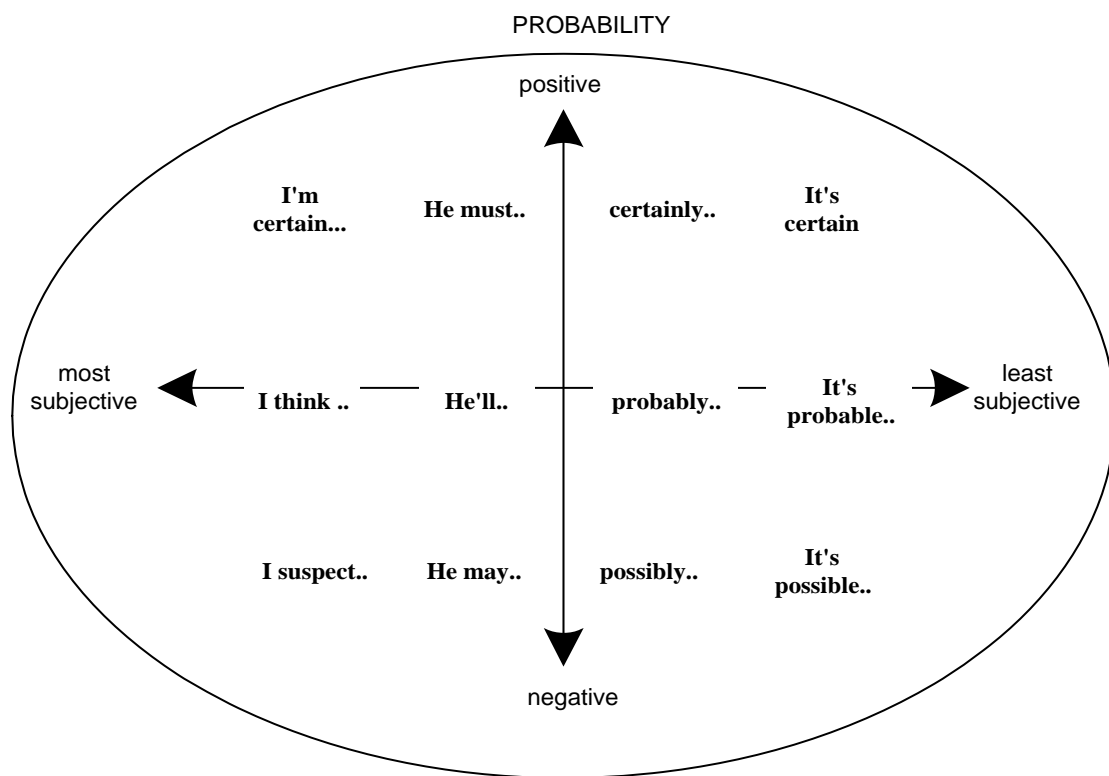


Figure 3.12 Topological view of probability (White, 1998: 30)

In this topological view, a set of semantic regions are defined by several parameters. Items are located in different regions to indicate the degrees of difference and similarity. However, as Martin and Rose (2008: 133) suggest, the precise positioning of the elements in the landscape is not at issue here, and it would have to be based on the quantitative analysis of a relevant corpus. The analysis of Character Emotion and Attribute in relation to film genre is mainly pursued from a topological perspective. Specifically, I shall examine how film genres vary along certain parameters of the Appraisal meaning in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

### 3.4 Summary of Chapter 3: the General Framework

Having introduced the fundamental principles of the SF model of language and visual images, and the basic tenets of Appraisal theory, we are now in a position to summarize the general framework of analysis, in relation to the notions of strata, system and metafunctions. The framework is firstly premised on the notion of strata. As Bateman and Schmidt (2011: 35) argue, an important aspect of any work investigating a semiotic system is to identify the system's strata. Therefore, in this study, different levels of filmic meanings are investigated in a stratified meaning hierarchy, as illustrated in Figure 3.13.

Ideology .....	Film ideology
Genre .....	Film genre
Register .....	Tenor (film-viewer relations)
Discourse semantics.....	Appraisal meaning/patterns
Lexicogrammar.....	Appraisal resources
Expression plane .....	Material (audio/visual tracks)

Figure 3.13 Analytical strata of the current thesis

As evidenced in Figure 3.13, the main theoretical focus of this thesis is to examine just how Appraisal meaning in film discourse is constructed by various semiotic resources and how the patterns of Appraisal function to engage viewers and shape the film genre. Two points need to be stressed with respect to the uniqueness of film discourse. First, this thesis does not aim to equate grammatical categories in language with filmic elements/devices. This point is aptly noted by Tseng (2009: 45):

What is borrowed from SFL therefore is the relation of meaning realization across strata and SFL's context-based model of discourse semantics. More specifically, this research aims at investigating how meanings in film discourse are construed within certain contexts and are realized through filmic devices, rather than probing into how filmic devices/elements are comparable or not to the grammatical features in verbal language.

This position echoes the current dispute on what counts as a semiotic mode and whether nonlinguistic modes have a grammar (e.g. Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 2010; O'Halloran, 2011). According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2002: 346), any semiotic resource can be called a mode and has its 'grammar' if it is sufficiently developed for sign-making. However, this position is challenged by many authors because most nonverbal signs are not as conventionalized as language and hence their meanings are more fluid. This is exactly the reason why the cognitive film theorists reject a film grammar (e.g. Bordwell, 2005) (cf. Section 2.2.3). Following O'Halloran (2011: 121), the term *semiotic resource* is used to describe the resources (or modes) (e.g. language, image, gesture and

architecture) which integrate across sensory *modalities* (e.g. visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory) in multimodal discourse. In the study of Appraisal specifically, the meaning making mechanisms in language, facial expression, action, and so forth in the visual and auditory modalities are called *Appraisal resources*, analogous to the lexicogrammar of language. From this perspective, rather than assigning meanings to different film devices (e.g. camera angle), the aim of this study is to systematically model the resources and to explain why these resources are able to signify particular Appraisal meanings (e.g. whether it is based on conventionality, indexicality, or iconicity).

Next, the systematic modeling of Appraisal resources and patterns of Appraisal meaning is based on the notion of ‘system’. The aim is to develop paradigmatic systems to map out the resources available to filmmakers. In this way, it is possible to see what semiotic choices (i.e. choices at the level of lexicogrammar) and discursive choices (i.e. choices at the level of discourse semantics) are made by filmmakers in specific contexts for particular communicative purposes. To model the multimodal resources for representing Character Emotion, the psychological theories of the cognitive structure of emotion (Frijda, 1986; Ortony et al., 1988) are drawn upon to systemize the complex resources, an approach proved by cognitive linguists to be effective in modeling the semiotic expression of abstract concepts (e.g. Kövecses, 1986, 2000). A similar strategy is adopted in modeling Character Judgment. In modeling Character Attributes, which is the target of viewer Judgment, the Appraisal meaning potential in representational (i.e. different process types) and interactive resources (e.g. camera positioning) is explored. The discursive choices of Character Emotions and Character Attributes are also modeled

as paradigmatic systems and are examined in relation to film genre and viewer engagement.

Another fundamental principle adopted in this study is the notion of metafunction. It is argued that Appraisal meaning cannot be isolated from the ideational and textual metafunctions. The adherence to this principle is manifested in the theorization of the Appraisal resources and the patterns of Appraisal Prosody. First, the role of representational (ideational) meaning is fully acknowledged in the modeling of Appraisal resources in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, both as Eliciting Conditions of Character Emotion/Judgment, and as resources of Character Attributes. Second, a metafunctional framework of Appraisal Prosody is proposed in Chapter 6 to model the interaction between the metafunctions in constructing the narrative genre.

To summarize, the social semiotic (systemic functional) theory provides powerful theoretical tools for a comprehensive semiotic study of filmic meaning. On the one hand, Appraisal theory brings together a wide range of meanings and resources into a coherent framework; on the other, the fundamental principles of SFL equip us with effective means to disentangle the complexity of filmic resources and to unveil the dynamic process of meaning making and the patterns of the meanings. Finally, as noted in Section 1.3.1, as a cross-disciplinary study, other theories, such as psychological theory, cognitive metaphor theory, and nonverbal communication theories, are drawn upon. These theories will be discussed where relevant in the following chapters.

## **Chapter 4 The Multimodal Representation of Emotion: Integrating Cognitive and Semiotic Approaches**

### **1. Introduction**

While there are a number of cognitive studies which focus on how film devices elicit emotion from the viewer (e.g. Carroll, 2003; Grodal, 1997; Smith, 2003; Tan, 1996), few theorists provide a systematic account of how emotions are represented in film. Complementary to the cognitive approach, this chapter aims to develop a semiotic theory that systematically models the filmic construction of emotion. Meanwhile, the cognitive position that human perceptual system and folk psychology are systematically exploited in film meaning making is also acknowledged (Carroll, 1996; Newman, 2005: 119). The necessity of drawing upon psychological theories of emotion in studying emotion representation is noted by Smith (2003: 40) who argues that “a good approach to filmic emotions should be rooted in a coherent body of empirically based psychological theories”. Therefore, the present study aims to provide a comprehensive multimodal account of how emotion is represented in film, drawing upon the methods and findings from two traditions: cognitive appraisal theory<sup>10</sup> (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Scherer, 1984) and social semiotic theory (Halliday, 1978; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004).

According to cognitive appraisal theory, the appraisal of emotion antecedents drives response patterning in terms of physiological reactions, motor expression, and action preparation (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Scherer, 1984; Smith, 1989). For example, anger may be produced by an unfair intentional act of another person, which is appraised

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<sup>10</sup> The cognitive appraisal theory in psychology and Appraisal theory in SFL are two different theories. In this thesis, initial capital letter is used when the ‘Appraisal theory’ is referred to.

as an obstruction to reaching a goal, and is expressed with physiological changes (e.g. raised heart rate) and aggressive actions. These components thus form a scenario or schema consisting of the appraisal of events, subjective feelings and expressions. Cognitive linguists, notably Kövecses (1986, 2000), investigate linguistic expressions in relation to the cognitive components of emotion. Kövecses (2000) argues that descriptive expressions of emotion are mostly metaphorical, and that these metaphorical expressions can be systemized according to a ‘folk model’ of emotion consisting of five stages: Cause, Emotion, Control, Loss of Control and Behavioral Expression, displayed in Figure 4.1.

Cause → Emotion → Control → Loss of control → Behavioral expression

Figure 4.1 Folk model of emotion scenario (Kövecses, 2000)

In this model, thousands of seemingly unrelated linguistic metaphors (e.g. ‘I am going to explode’) are instances of conceptual metaphors (e.g. ‘ANGER IS HEAT’) which are instances of higher-level metaphors from different stages of the model (e.g. ‘loss of control’). Adopting this cognitive linguistic method, this study argues that literal expressions and nonverbal resources also fall into the cognitive structure of emotion and the framework for emotion representation is based on the components of emotion.

The second theoretical basis is the social semiotic theory introduced in Chapter 3. From this perspective, emotive meanings (and the discursive organization in shots and syntagmas) are realized by the linguistic and nonverbal resources (rendered in audio and visual tracks) and at the same time patterns of emotive meaning constitute an important dimension of film genre. This stratified semiotic model allows us to perform a comprehensive investigation of meaning making in film. Meanwhile, according to social semiotic theory, texts consist of paradigmatic choices made at different strata



(Matthiessen and Halliday, 2009). In the case of film, *the causes and the character's linguistic and nonverbal expressions of emotion are not spontaneous as in real life, but are semiotic discursive constructs designed by filmmakers*. The semiotic approach thus enables us to move beyond cognitive psychological studies to map out the choices available and what choices are made in specific instances of filmmaking.

In the combined approach, the multimodal emotion resources in film are brought into a coherent framework in which the filmmaker's semiotic choices are examined in relation to the cognitive structure of emotion. In Section 4.2, a brief account of the cognitive components of emotion is provided. Following this, paradigmatic systems of the semiotic representation of the two cognitive components of Eliciting Condition and Expression are developed in Section 4.3. Moving to the level of discourse semantics, the filmic organization of Eliciting Condition and Expression is examined in Section 4.4. In section 4.5, the synoptic patterns of Character Emotion are related to film genre. In section 4.6, the previously developed models are applied to the analysis of two film episodes. The role of Character Emotion as cohesive devices is also investigated in the analysis in terms of *emotion chain* and *emotion interaction*. The discussion concludes with a description of how the social semiotic approach, combined with cognitive theories of emotion, is able to provide a thorough theoretical account of emotion representation in film.

## **4.2 Resources of Emotion Representation**

### **4.2.1 The Cognitive Components of Emotion**

The main theoretical basis for the investigation of emotion representation is cognitive appraisal theories which argue that emotion antecedents drive response patterning in

terms of physiological reactions, motor expression, and action preparation (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Oatley and Johnson-Laird, 1987; Scherer, 1984; Scherer and Ellgring, 2007; Smith, 1989). Therefore, although with slight differences, cognitive theorists agree that all emotions include antecedents, the interpretation and evaluation of antecedents, subjective feelings, physiological changes and behavioral reactions. In this study, the three-stage scenario involving the Eliciting Condition, the Feeling State, and Expression is adopted, shown in Figure 4.2<sup>11</sup>.

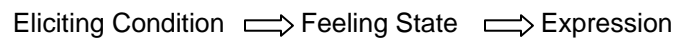


Figure 4.2 The cognitive components of emotion

In film, the Eliciting Condition (i.e. the ideational content in SF terms) can be represented as narrative events prior to Expression. As soon as the Eliciting Condition is reacted to, the reaction, which may be verbal or nonverbal, belongs to the Expression stage. In this sense, the internal Feeling State can only be inferred based on Eliciting Condition or Expression. Language, however, is able to encode the Feeling State symbolically with emotion lexis (e.g. ‘happy’, ‘angry’). For example, we can report the Feeling State of others as in ‘he is angry now’. In the expression of one’s own emotion, however, which is the main concern of this study, linguistic expression belongs to the Expression stage whether it recounts the Eliciting Condition (e.g. ‘I got the job’) or the Feeling State (e.g. ‘I feel happy’). Therefore, in this chapter, I shall examine the multimodal construction of Eliciting Condition (prior to expression) and the character’s Expression (inclusive of verbal recount of Feeling State).

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<sup>11</sup> The terms ‘Eliciting Condition’ and ‘antecedent’ are used interchangeably to refer to the events/objects that cause the emotion. Initial capital letters are used when the three stages in Figure 4.2 are referred to.

The emotion scenario or schema describes how our knowledge of emotion is stored in memory (e.g. Bartlett, 1932; Schank and Abelson, 1977). This schematic representation significantly facilitates our recognition of emotion because one or several of the components are able to activate our knowledge of a specific emotion. For example, slapping someone can be recognized as anger because it activates our ‘anger schema’. However, not every component can activate a corresponding schema unambiguously. This is explained by the *prototype theory*, according to which there are prototypical members as well as non-prototypical members of a category (Rosch, 1978). Prototype theory has been applied to emotion studies by Fehr and Russell (1984) and Shaver et al. (1987), and both studies suggest that real emotional events are perceived and understood with reference to emotion prototypes or scripts. Shaver et al. (1987) provide a detailed description of the prototypical contents of basic emotion by asking respondents to describe the antecedents, the feeling, the physical signs, and the verbal and nonverbal expressions. The reports fall into the two major categories of *antecedents* and *responses*<sup>12</sup>, which provides rationale for the focus on these two components in this study. The antecedents and responses prototype basic emotions are consistent with our knowledge of the emotions. For example, the prototype of fear is briefly summarized as follows:

**Antecedents:**

- (a) The event is dangerous or threatening to the self—most commonly, an anticipation of physical harm, loss, rejection, or failure.
- (b) Situational factors (unfamiliar situation, being in the dark, being alone)

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<sup>12</sup> In this thesis, the term ‘response’ is used to refer to the interactive move in conversation, and ‘emotional response’ is called ‘expression’ or ‘reaction’.

**Responses:**

- (a) The person feels jittery and jumpy, perspires, trembles, and looks quickly around.
- (b) The person's voice shakes or trembles and he or she verbalizes nervousness or fear.
- (c) The person screaming, yelling, crying, and pleading for help.
- (d) There are coping attempts (hiding from the threat or freezing, and being quiet) and a pair of internal reactions (picturing disaster and becoming disoriented or cognitively impaired).
- (e) There may be self control efforts, like self comforting and acting unafraid.

The schema theory and the prototype theory of emotion have significant implications for the representation of emotion in film. First, since emotion is a scenario, the representation of one component can activate our knowledge of the whole. So in film, partial representation of the emotion scenario is also able to communicate emotion. But more often, the two most significant components in emotion representation, the Eliciting Condition and the Expression, are represented consecutively to engage the viewers' interest: if a character's response is represented and the Eliciting Condition is withheld, viewers would be eager to know what happened; if an emotion invoking event is represented, viewers would anticipate how the relevant characters respond to it. The working of Eliciting Condition and Expression are elaborated in Sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 respectively.

Second, prototypical emotions are chosen for the best communicative effect. As a result, the emotions portrayed in Hollywood genre movies are quite basic (e.g. anger, fear,

see Izard, 1977 for the concept of ‘basic emotion’) (Carroll, 1996: 130). The reason is that they are more easily understood and are more likely to invoke viewers’ empathy. As psychologists have demonstrated, the basic level of emotion knowledge is the level of choice for maximizing information about an emotional event while maintaining cognitive and communicational economy (Cantor and Mischel, 1979; Rosch, 1978). The Eliciting Conditions and Expressions of these emotions are also prototypical, because they are more easily recognized as belonging to particular emotion scenarios. As Frijda (1986) argues, only when certain prototypical configurations arise is the emotion clearly anger, or joy, or other emotions. A quote from Shaver et al. (1987: 1077) summarizes the point:

If one were to represent fear, say in a novel or a film, one would want to communicate the threat of harm or death, if possible in an unfamiliar or unpredictable environment and in a situation in which the protagonist is vulnerable or lacking in control; to portray the potential victim’s jitteriness and tendency to imagine disaster (perhaps in ‘flash-forwards’); and to show the victim either screaming or utterly speechless. Taken together, these elements of fear, which of course are often used to depict this emotion, could not possibly be mistaken for any other basic emotion.

#### **4.2.2 The Appraisal of Eliciting Conditions**

It is argued in Section 4.2.1 that individual components of the emotion scenario can be recognized as representing the emotion. As Ortony et al. (1988: 3) note, “it is apparent that writers can reliably produce in readers an awareness of a character’s affective states

by characterizing a situation whose construal is assumed to give rise to them...and millions of readers, often over decades or even centuries, all infer similar emotions from the described situations”. Two questions arise from this statement. First, why does a situation give rise to a particular emotion instead of another? Second, why do ‘millions of readers’ recognize similar emotions from a particular situation? For example, how can most people infer grief from the utterance ‘my grandfather has passed away’? The answers are provided by the cognitive theories of appraisal.

First, each emotion has particular antecedents, or situational meaning structures (Frijda, 1986). That is, emotion can be distinguished by the appraisal of Eliciting Conditions. Researchers provide various situational meaning structures, or appraisal profiles, for basic emotions (e.g. Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Ortony et al., 1988; Scherer, 1984). For example, according to Lazarus’ (1991) theory of core relational themes, the theme of grief is the irrevocable loss of loved ones, so the utterance ‘my grandfather has passed away’ encodes the grief of the speaker as a prototypical case of the grief theme. A more clearly structured theory of appraisal is provided by Ortony et al. (1988). They classify the Eliciting Conditions into three categories: events (happenings), agents (people) and objects (things). These targets of appraisal are evaluated according to desirability, praiseworthiness and appealingness respectively. The appraisal of the desirability of an event is based on its effect on the appraiser’s goal; the appraisal of the praiseworthiness of an action is based on social cultural standards; the appraisal of the appealingness of an object is based on the appraiser’s attitudes (taste). Such a theorization gives clear cognitive structure to emotions, as illustrated in Figure 4.3. In this model, the grief in our above example is event-based, self orientated and prospect irrelevant.

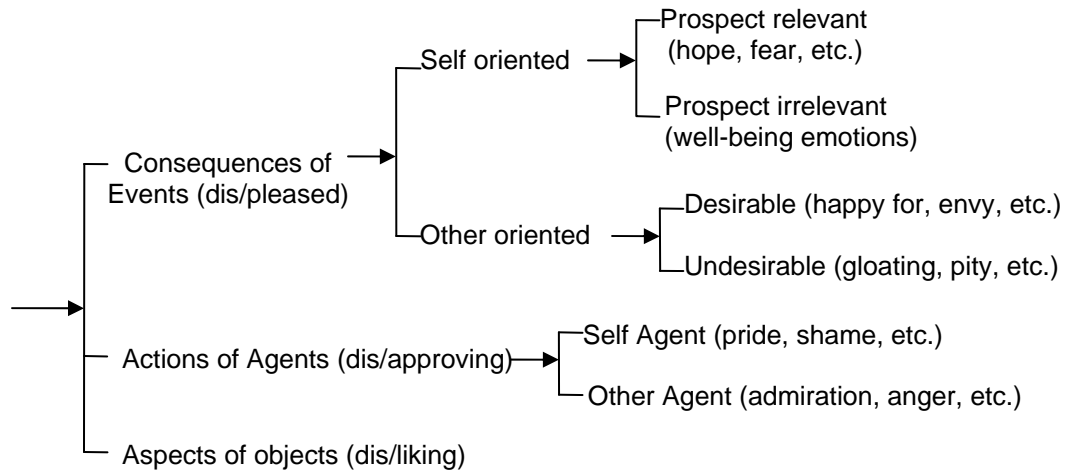


Figure 4.3 The structure of Eliciting Conditions (Ortony et al., 1988: 19)

The cognitive appraisal theories explain the connection between appraisal and the individual's emotion (the first question), but haven't explained how we understand the appraisal and emotions of others (the second question at the beginning of this section). In the example of "my grandfather has passed away", we don't know how he/she appraises the event, but most of us would infer that the emotion communicated is sadness. This can be explained if the appraisal outcomes of the same Eliciting Conditions among cultural members or even across cultures are similar or shared, which is exactly what social psychologists find (Bless et al., 2004; Macrae and Bodenhausen 2000). Numerous studies have shown that repeated experiences with similar objects or events lead to the construction of generic mental representations of objects or events in which features shared by many or most members of a category are central (e.g. Posner and Keele, 1968; Rumelhart and Ortony, 1977). Reisenzein (2001) further points out that most schemas in fact already contain appraisal outcomes, so that there is no more need to actively compute an appraisal in case a schema has been activated. Therefore it seems reasonable to conclude that occurring emotions in some cases do not reflect an individual's response to

the objective features of an event, but rather to the activated schemas, resulting in schematic emotions (von Scheve and von Luede, 2005: 317).

Meanwhile, emotion psychologists find that the appraisal profiles for the major emotions are very similar across the large number of diverse countries (Scherer, 1997). Coulter (1979: 133) similarly notes that, “types of situations are paradigmatically linked to the emotion they afford by convention. The link is neither deterministic nor biological, but socio-cultural”. Experiments have also shown that both children and adults can report and agree on typical antecedents of several common emotions (e.g. Harris, 1985; Smith and Ellsworth, 1985).

However, I am not arguing for a strong universalist position, because differences in the nature and patterns of antecedent events do exist across cultures (Scherer and Wallbott, 1994). But the differences are mostly of a quantitative nature, such as the relative significance of a specific event in causing a certain emotion. Therefore, it seems safe to assume that basic emotions and their Eliciting Condition and Expression in films can be understood by most audience. Meanwhile, to guarantee mass understanding from different cultures, films not only choose to portray the *prototypical scenarios* (both Eliciting Condition and Expression) of *basic emotions*, but also employ *redundant cues*. These filmic strategies are explored in more detail in Section 4.3 and in film analysis in Section 4.6.

Shared appraisal is central to the understanding of others people’s emotions, including those represented in film, and as a result we are able to infer the possible emotion based on the Eliciting Condition. It thus explains why events in films can elicit unanimous reactions from a wide range of viewers. A more important role of shared



appraisal is the film's engagement and manipulation of viewers' emotion. Although filmmakers do not have access to viewers' goals and preferences, they are able to speculate (correctly most of the time) their emotional reactions based on shared cultural knowledge. It is thus possible for filmmakers to 'design' emotions and optimize their impact on viewers. This includes the representation of certain objects (e.g. monsters in horror movies), the construction of events that happen to the characters, as well as the discursive organization of the emotion invoking events. The filmic and discursive strategies for 'designing' emotion are elaborated in Sections 4.3 and 4.4.

#### **4.2.3 The Multimodal Resources of Emotion Expression**

Modern studies of emotion expression have been modality specific, that is, they focus on language (Kövecses, 1986, 2000; Martin and White, 2005; Wierzbicka, 1990), the face (e.g. Ekman, 1972; Ekman and Friesen, 1975, 1978), the voice (e.g. Banse and Scherer, 1996; Banziger and Scherer, 2005; Scherer, 2003), and the body (e.g. Wallbott, 1998). Multimodal accounts are rarer. Scherer and Ellgring (2007) experiment with the combined expression of the face, the voice, gestures and body movements; Scherer and Wallbott (1985) and Planalp and Knie (2002) provide separate theoretical accounts of the inter-relations between verbal and nonverbal expressions. The theorization of the linguistic resources in this study is mainly based on Martin and White (2005) and Kövecses (1986, 2000), which are introduced in Section 3.3 and Section 4.1 respectively. In this section, I shall review the nonverbal resources, as well as cross-modal relations in emotion expression, so that the interpretation of the emotion expressions in film is given a solid basis.

#### 4.2.3.1 Nonverbal Behavior

The first attempt to relate emotion to nonverbal behavior is Charles Darwin's (1872) *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*. Darwin lists the behavioral expressions and possible emotions, shown in Table 4.1.

Expressions	Possible Emotions
Blushing	Shame, modesty
Body contact	Affection
Clenching fists	Anger
Crying	Sadness
Frowning	Anger, frustration
Laughing	Pleasure
Perspiring, screaming	Pain
Hair standing on end	Fear/anger
Shrugging	Resignation
Sneering	Contempt
Trembling	Fear, anxiety

Table 4.1 Behavioral expressions and possible emotion (Darwin, 1872)

Modern studies of nonverbal behavior mainly focuses on the human face, which is considered as the “primary site of emotion expression” (Ekman et al., 1981: 79). It is generally accepted that “certain configurations of facial muscle groups are universally judged to be associated with particular emotions” (Ekman and O’Sullivan, 1991: 167). The strong connection between facial expression and inner feeling makes researchers believe that each emotion involves a ‘facial affect program’, which leads to the so called

Affect Program Theory (Ekman, 1972: 216). Accordingly psychologists have developed portraits of facial patterns to account for basic emotions of happiness, surprise, fear, anger, disgust, and sadness (e.g. Ekman and Friesen, 1975, 1978; Izard, 1971), which have provided useful tools for analyzing emotion representation. This is the most convenient proposal for a semiotic theory of emotion representation. If this theory is correct, the combination of facial muscles can denote emotive meaning unambiguously, like the lexicogrammar of language. This position, however, is disputed by many psychologists, for example, Carroll and Russell (1997) and Ortony and Turner (1990). Carroll and Russell (1997: 165) argue that patterns of facial expressions arise only secondarily, through the coincidental co-occurrence of two or more different components. Using Hollywood films as data, they find that professional actors' happiness is represented by smiles in 97% of cases. In contrast, actors judged as surprised, afraid, angry, disgusted, or sad rarely show the predicted patterns of facial expression (found in 0 to 31% of cases) (Carroll and Russell, 1997). This study challenges the position that facial expressions are hardwired in the emotion experience and suggests the need for a comprehensive multimodal analysis that takes into consideration the available resources for the representation of emotion.

Another important resource of emotion expression is the voice, which involves parameters of time, amplitude, and frequency (Kappas, Hess, and Scherer, 1991). From the hearers' point of view, they are translated into tempo (speech rate for speech), loudness and pitch respectively. It is widely accepted that these three dimensions are all related to the arousal level of emotion (Banse and Scherer, 1996; Banziger and Scherer, 2005; Pakosz, 1983). The combination of these parameters is often called *melody*,

especially in music. Researchers agree that melody expresses emotions, in speech as well as in music (Fonagy and Magdics, 1972; van Leeuwen, 1999). Van Leeuwen (1999) formulates the melodic features of joy, tenderness, anguish and surprise through the choice from pitch range, pitch level, pitch movement, tempo and voice quality. For example, joy is characterized by “wide pitch range at high pitch level; the melody rises, then falls sharply, then stays level (or descends slightly); lively tempo; pitch glides” (van Leeuwen, 1999: 95).

However, the evidence for emotion-specific patterns in vocal features is not as strong as that for facial expression (Wallbott, 1998: 880). These parameters are generally considered in relation to the arousal level of emotion. The emotive meanings of body movements, gestures and actions are even less clear, in that different patterns of bodily activity do not fall into clusters characteristic of discrete emotions (Planalp, 1998: 34). Therefore, it is reasonable to consider these resources as continuous expressions of underlying dimensions of emotion, such as activation and valence.

#### **4.2.3.2 Multimodal Expressions and Cross-modal Relations**

Multimodal accounts of emotion are rare, despite the acknowledgement that emotions are almost always expressed by multimodal signs in face, voice, gestures, and so forth (Scherer and Ellgring: 2007: 158). Scherer and Ellgring (2007), for example, investigate how professional actors use prototypical multimodal configurations of expressive actions to portray different emotions. The resources they consider are the facial expressions (action units), vocal variables (frequency, amplitude, etc.) and bodily actions (gestures). In terms of recognition rate, they find that multimodal variables can achieve cross-

validated predictions which are significantly higher than what is possible with monomodal discrimination. In terms of cross-modal relations, they examine the stable groupings of behaviors from different expressive modalities and then examine their relative frequency for different emotions. For example, joyful surprise is expressed by facial Action Unit 26 (AU26) (jaws drop), fast speech rate, and head shaking. Multimodal resignation (e.g. depression) is co-constructed by the low vocal arousal cluster combined with slow speech rate, upper body collapse, AU14 (dimpler), AU41 (eyelids drop), back of hands pointing forward, and self-manipulators (e.g. rubbing hands).

The finding that combinations of facial, vocal and bodily cues can better predict emotions than the single modalities certainly suggests the need for multimodal analysis. However, Scherer and Ellgring (2007) show that the coders' recognition rate of the multimodal expression of professional actors is only slightly more than 50%. There are two main reasons for this result. First, as they acknowledge, the portrayal segments consist of brief standardized utterances, with often only a single facial expression and a single gesture per segment. The more idiosyncratic and unpredictable material actions, such as slamming the door in a real-life anger scenario, are not considered. This limitation is common to most psychological studies which have limited variables, while other unconsidered variables may be more significant. This is related to the second problem, that is, the Eliciting Condition is not provided to the coders. According to the cognitive appraisal theory, emotion is distinguished by the cognitive appraisal of antecedent events. If these events are taken out, the recognition rate decreases. To fully understand the communication of emotion, we need to take into consideration all variables, such as the situational context and the multimodal expression of emotion. This

may be impractical for psychological experiments, but systematic multimodal discourse analysis is able to shed light on this issue.

Scherer and Ellgring's (2007) notion of cross-modal clusters provides us an effective way of talking about cross-modal relations. However, cross-modal relations are more than their patterns of co-deployment, but include interactions at different levels. Ekman and Friesen (1969) identify five ways in which nonverbal behaviors contribute the verbal content: they may duplicate, replace, amplify, highlight and contradict what is said. Scherer and Wallbott (1985) provide a more comprehensive discussion by distinguishing verbal and nonverbal interaction in terms of the functions of nonverbal behavior at four levels: semantic, syntactic, pragmatic and dialogic. Semantic function is similar to Ekman and Friesen's (1969) typology. Syntactic function refers to the nonverbal ordering of the sequence and occurrence of verbal behavior, which includes the segmentation of the behavioral stream and the synchronization of verbal and nonverbal units. Pragmatic function entails the expression of identity, personal traits, and psychological states on the one hand and the signaling of reactions to the interaction partner on the other. The dialogic function of nonverbal behavior concerns the assertion of an existing relationship between the participants in a conversation and the regulation of the contributions of the participants to the conversation (cf. Kendon, 1972; Schegloff, 1972).

#### **4.2.4 Emotion in Interaction**

Emotion has been by far treated as a personal phenomenon, instead of an interpersonal one. However, the interactive dimension of emotion cannot be neglected. As Buck (1984: 288) points out, no discussion of emotion would be complete without some consideration

of how it functions within interaction settings. This dimension is the focus of communication theories of emotion.

Communication studies are different from psychology in that the unit of analysis is not the individual's expressions, but the communication process in which at least two individuals are involved: a sender and a receiver (Buck, 1984). Communication theorists argue that interpersonal communication is crucial for both the elicitation and expression of emotion. First, the primary antecedent of many, perhaps most, emotional experiences is interpersonal interaction (Andersen and Guerrero, 1998: 57). As Bowlby (1979) argues, most intense emotions arise when people are forming, maintaining, disrupting, terminating or renewing close relational ties with others. Second, emotions are inherently interpersonally expressive phenomena. Research has clearly shown that emotion expressions are highly communicative and many expressions are intended for the reception of others (Anderson and Guerrero, 1998: 57; Buck, 1984). In fact, emotional expressions that are present in public situations are often not present in private, which demonstrates that these expressions function as forms of interpersonal communication rather than merely expressions of internal feelings (Andersen and Guerrero, 1998: 73).

The significance of interpersonal interaction in emotion makes it an important aspect of representation in film. As in real life, many, if not most, Character Emotions are caused by and expressed during interactions. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the roles and patterns of emotion in communication. I shall briefly discuss the relevant communication theories and then focus on the interaction structure in which emotion is elicited, expressed, and negotiated.

In terms of more general communication theory, Dillard and Wilson (1993) propose three types of communication which involve emotion: emotion-motivated communication, emotion-manifesting communication and emotion-inducing communication. In a similar way, Fiehler (2002) distinguishes three broad classes of communication tasks: the manifestation of emotions, the interpretation of emotions, and the interactive processing of emotions. For *manifestation*, he distinguishes between the *expression* of emotional experiences and the *thematization* of them. In the former, the emotion expressions merely accompany the exchange of other information, and in the latter, the emotion experience is made explicitly the topic of interaction. Fiehler (2002) further proposes four strategies in the thematization of experiences and emotions: (a) verbal labeling of experiences and emotions, (b) description of experiences and emotions, (c) designation or description of the events and circumstances relevant to the experience and (d) description or narration of the situational circumstances of an experience. However, he points out that the thematization of emotion is not frequent, and most often, the topic of verbal communication is something other than emotion (Fiehler, 2002: 86). For *processing*, he proposes four strategies: (a) ‘entering’ refers to all strategies with which the interaction partner accepts the displayed emotion as appropriate and handles it with expressions of sympathy; (b) ‘analyzing’ refers to strategies by which the suitability of the manifested emotion in terms of intensity and/or type is problematized; (c) ‘calling into question’ refers to strategies by which displayed emotions are not accepted as appropriate; and finally (d) ‘ignoring’ refers to strategies by which the interaction partner, despite having perceived and interpreted the emotion consciously, obviously avoids acknowledging it and dealing with it interactively.



Fiehler's (2002) theory of *processing* generalizes the responses to the emotional information in communication. To better account for the exchange of emotional information, such as speaker roles and the exchanged commodity, the SF theory of interpersonal semantics is drawn upon (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Martin and Rose, 2007; O'Donnell, 1990). The SF interpersonal semantics offers a basic structure of exchange which includes Initiation, Response and Follow-up (cf. Berry, 1981; Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) propose the choices of speech functions and responses in interaction, as illustrated in Table 4.2.

	<b>Initiation</b>	<b>Expected response</b>	<b>Alternatives</b>
Give goods and services	Offer	Acceptance	Rejection
Demand goods and services	Command	Undertaking	Refusal
Give information	Statement	Acknowledgement	Contradiction
Demand information	Question	Answer	Disclaimer

Table 4.2 Speech functions and responses (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 69)

It distinguishes between speaker roles (give or demand) and the exchanged commodity (goods-and-services or information). These choices are then realized by different speech functions in Initiation and Response. The speech functions thus provide us with a framework to discuss the elicitation and negotiation of emotion.

Martin and Rose (2007) and O'Donnell (1990) both provide basic move options in the exchange structure. Their models are combined and reproduced as Figure 4.4 with minor adaptations.

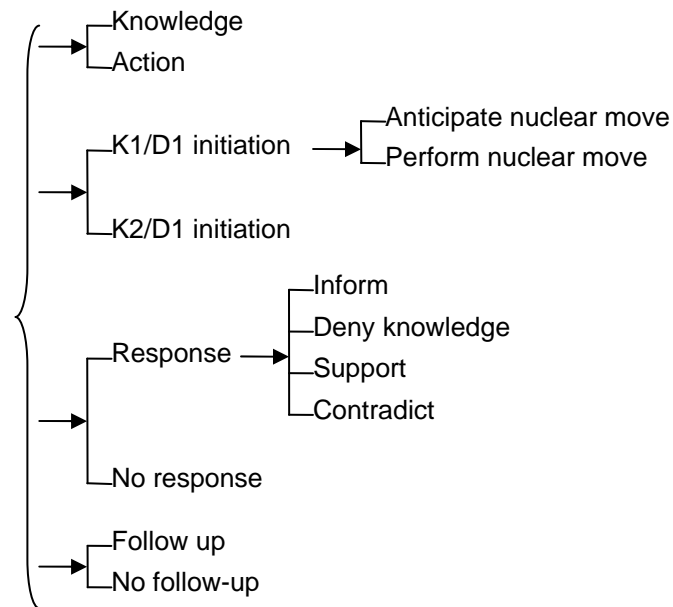


Figure 4.4 Basic negotiation options in exchange (Martin and Rose, 2007: 253)

The first entry distinguishes between whether it is *knowledge* or *action* that is exchanged, similar to Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) distinction between information and goods-and-services. The speakers are termed primary knower (K1) and secondary knower (K2) in knowledge-orientated interaction, and primary doer (D1) and secondary doer (D2) in action-orientated interaction. The rest three entries model the three steps of Initiation, Response and Follow-up. The second entry is the Initiation. While the initiator in action-oriented interaction is always D1 (offer or command), the initiator in knowledge-oriented interaction can be K1 or K2. K1 typically gives information and K2 typically demands information (see Table 4.2). K1/D1 may also 'anticipate' the nuclear move by delaying the information/goods-and-services, as in 'Guess who won the game' (delaying information) and 'would you like some coffee' (delaying action). The third entry is the Response, which includes four different options (cf. the options in Table 4.2). The fourth entry is Follow-up, which may or may not be present.

The SF frameworks provide us with analytical tools for investigating emotion in interaction. However, these frameworks require adaptations as nonverbal resources are taken into consideration in the current analysis. Frameworks for analyzing emotion in multimodal interaction are presented in Section 4.3.2.3.

### **4.3 Multimodal Construction of Eliciting Condition and Emotion Expression**

In this section, frameworks for investigating the multimodal construction of the Eliciting Condition and Expression of emotion are developed. The basic organizing assumption is that meaning making in film can be explained with the stratified semiotic model in which the cognitive components of emotion, organized by shots and syntagmas, are realized by the multimodal semiotic resources in audio and visual tracks.

#### **4.3.1 The Multimodal Construction of Goal/Standard and Eliciting Condition**

##### **4.3.1.1 Goal, Standard and the Appraisal of Eliciting Condition**

As previously explained, the appraisal of the Eliciting Condition, rather than the Eliciting Condition itself, leads to emotion. However, the appraisal of events is culturally shared, so we understand, at least to some extent, other people's appraisal of an event. Ortony et al.'s (1988) framework reviewed in Section 4.2.2 is used to theorize the appraisal of Eliciting Conditions. Ortony et al. (1988) distinguish three types of Eliciting Conditions, namely, event, action and object, which are evaluated according to un/desirability, praiseworthiness/blameworthiness and un/appealingness respectively. The evaluation of the desirability of event is determined by the appraiser's *goals*, in which goals are fulfilled or disrupted, giving rise to *event-based emotions* of being pleased (e.g. joy,

satisfaction) and displeased (e.g. distress, grief). The evaluation of the praiseworthiness of action is determined by the appraiser's *standard* about what is right (standard agreement) and wrong (standard contradiction), giving rise to *attribution emotions* of approving (e.g. pride, admiration) and disapproving (e.g. shame, reproach). The evaluation of the appealingness of object is determined by personal *preferences* or attitudes, giving rise to *object-based emotions* (i.e. like/dislike). The last category is not considered in terms of the evaluation of Eliciting Conditions, because personal preferences are themselves emotions (e.g. the preference to a particular painting). Meanwhile, the appraisal in relation to *belief* is added to the system to accommodate *surprise*, which is not considered as emotion in Ortony et al. (1988). However, surprise is considered as a basic emotion in most theorizations (e.g. Ekman and Friesen, 1975; Frijda, 1986; Izard, 1977) and is also a significant category of filmic emotions. Surprise can be viewed as disruption of the mental status, or *belief* about the situation, as a result of some unexpected Eliciting Condition. The framework of how emotions are elicited is presented as Figure 4.5 ('0' means the option is not available). This study foregrounds the role of 'goal' in emotion elicitation for its prevalence in the films analyzed.

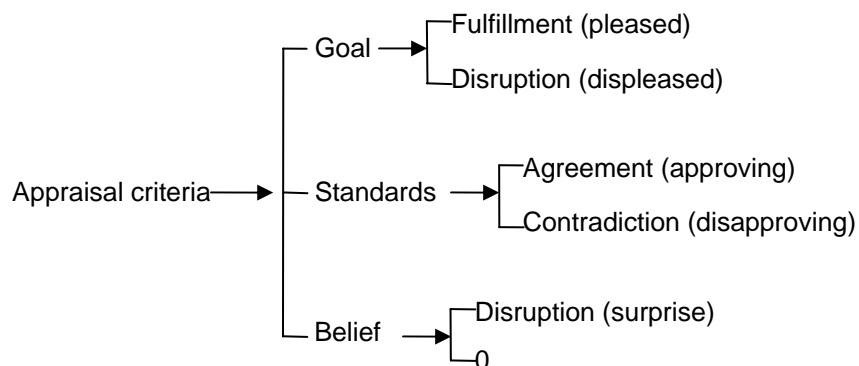


Figure 4.5 Cognitive appraisal and emotion

An important point Ortony et al. (1988) make is that event-based emotions (well-being emotions in particular, see Figure 4.3) and attribution emotions can be combined and form *compound emotions*. A typical compound emotion is anger, which implicates both the violation of standards and the disruption of goals (Ortony et al., 1988: 153). In other words, anger involves the attribution of responsibility of an undesirable outcome to an agent. In *Pretty Woman*, for example, Vivian is insulted by Stuckey because Edward told Stuckey she is a prostitute. The combination of the insult and attributing it to Edward's behavior results in her anger towards Edward.

Although Eliciting Conditions are always appraised according to goals or standards, the goal/standard may or may not be represented, resulting in explicit and implicit appraisal. In *implicit* construction, only the Eliciting Condition is represented and the evaluation is assumed. In *explicit* construction, we are provided the knowledge of the specific character's goals so that how he/she evaluates the event is clear. If represented, character goal and value orientation may be constructed explicitly or implicitly. That is, the goal/standard may be *inscribed* linguistically, or *invoked* by the narrative events. In inscription, the character's goal/standard is directly represented by the character's or other character's utterance. For example, in the film *Gladiator*, Maximus, the protagonist, clearly states "I will have my vengeance in this life or the next". Commodus' goal of being an emperor is instead indirectly represented in his utterance. Commodus believes that his father will name him as new emperor and this belief makes him excited. He says excitedly "He's made his decision; he's going to announce it! He will name me". The excitement towards the prospect of being an emperor implies his desire for the throne. The choices of representing character goal/standard are shown in Figure 4.6.

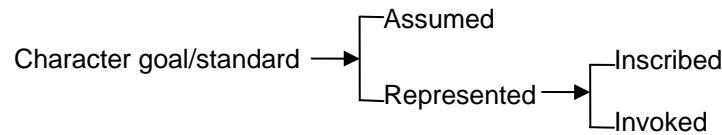


Figure 4.6 The representation of character goal/standard

The appraisal of Eliciting Condition is further analyzed in Section 4.6. From a logogenetic perspective, the strategic arrangement of goal fulfillment and disruption constructs an Emotion Prosody that serves an important narrative function (cf. Martin, 1996). The complex ways in which Emotion Prosody interacts with other discourse element to engage the viewers is discussed in Chapter 6.

#### 4.3.1.2 The Representation of Eliciting Condition

Having explained how Eliciting Conditions are appraised in relation to goals, standards and beliefs, I shall now discuss how they can be represented. I am not trying to categorize the material world ‘out there’, but the ways in which the outer world affects the character’s subjectivity. This is significant in film because different ways are represented differently in shot organization. The system is shown in Figure 4.7, where five ways of how the Eliciting Condition influences the character are identified.

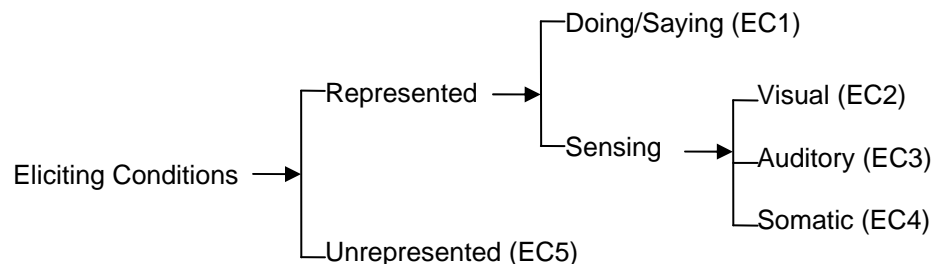


Figure 4.7 The representation of Eliciting Conditions

The primary distinction is made between Eliciting Conditions whose relation to the emoters is *represented* and those which are *unrepresented*. If the relation is represented, the cause of emotion may be what the emoter does or says (EC1). For example, a character may feel proud for accomplishing something or feel guilty for saying something. The Eliciting Condition can also be what the character sees/hears/feels through visual (EC2), auditory (EC3) or somatic (EC4) senses. For example, a person may be terrified by the snake he/she sees, saddened by the bad news he/she hears, or delighted by the kiss he/she receives. If the relation is unrepresented (EC5), the Eliciting Condition is presented to the viewer as a narrative event, but the viewers don't know how the emoter accesses that event. For example, in *Gladiator*, the event that the old emperor is dead (Eliciting Condition) is presented to the viewers, then in a shot the tearful face of his daughter is featured, but how she accesses the Eliciting Condition is not shown.

The Eliciting Condition in film is represented using audio-visual resources, where the *shot* is the basic unit. The five types of Eliciting Conditions result in different syntagmatic organizations of Eliciting Condition and Expression, which are essential for the understanding of filmic representation of emotion and shall be elaborated Section 4.4.

#### **4.3.2 The Representation of Multimodal Emotion Expressions**

It is maintained that film characters' linguistic and nonverbal expressions of emotion are not spontaneous as in real life, but are semiotic discursive constructs designed by filmmakers. Therefore, the first dimension in the framework involves the *semiotic resources* of verbal and nonverbal expression. The framework also includes *discursive choices*, which concerns the quantity of expression (simple/complex) as well as the

context of expression (individual/interactive). The dimensions with their respective systems are displayed in Figure 4.8.

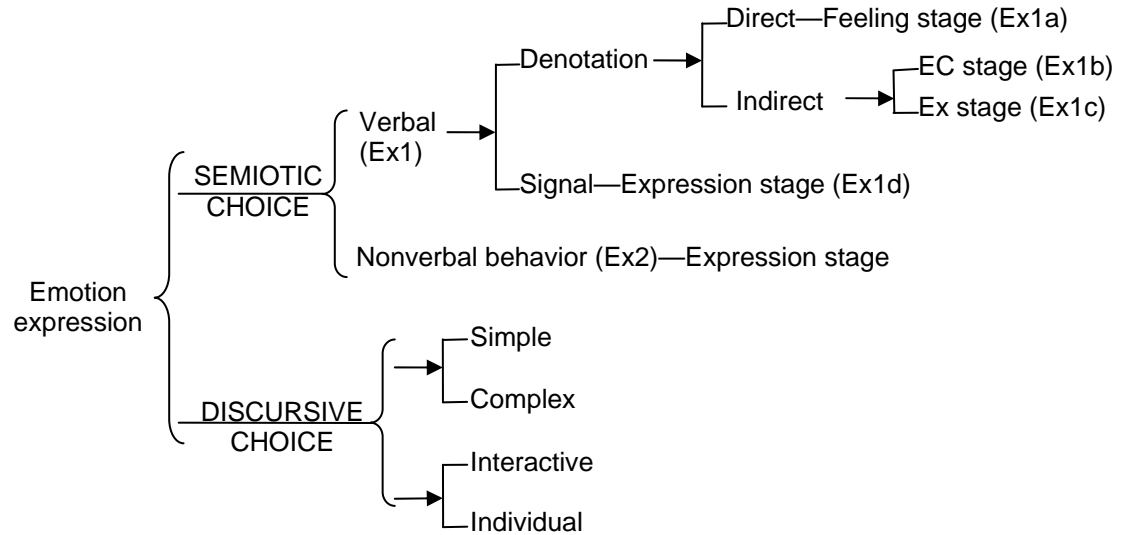


Figure 4.8 The representation of emotion Expression ('EC' stands for Eliciting Condition, 'Ex' stands for Expression)

#### 4.3.2.1 The Multimodal Resources of Emotion Expression

The expression of emotion is mainly studied in two disciplines—linguistics which focuses on the verbal expression and psychology which focuses on nonverbal expression. In the Peircean tricotomy of iconic, indexical and symbolic signs, language is symbolic, making it the most complex resource for emotion expression, while nonverbal behaviors are indexical, which signify emotion through causal-continuity relations (Forceville, 2005).

The system for analyzing linguistic expressions of emotion integrates the social semiotic approach of Appraisal theory (Martin and White, 2005) and cognitive components of emotion. The first distinction for linguistic expressions of emotion is between *signal* and *denotation* (Bednarek, 2008). Kövecses (2000) makes a similar



distinction, with the categories of ‘expressive’ and ‘descriptive’ expressions of emotion. *Signals* typically include expletives such as ‘wow’, ‘yuk’, ‘oh, my god’, and so forth. They express the emotion in a more reflective way rather than ‘describing’ it. On the other hand, *denotations* describe some elements of the emotional experience. There are two choices for the denotation of emotion: direct and indirect. *Direct* denotation is simpler and includes the literal emotion terms which ‘inscribe’ the Feeling State of the emotion scenario directly. The second option is *indirect* expression. Martin and White (2005) provide descriptions of several linguistic strategies such as lexical metaphor, intensification, etc. However, such strategies are not clearly structured. Based on the cognitive components of emotion, two types of indirect expressions can be distinguished: those describing the Eliciting Condition and those describing the Expression in the emotion scenario. As such, linguistic denotation of emotion is clearly categorized according to the cognitive components of emotion. In the utterance ‘I am so angry, my boss just fired me for no reason, I smashed the door heavily’, the three clauses describe the Feeling State, the Eliciting Condition and the Expression stage respectively. Following the previous convention, those recounting the Eliciting Condition is labeled ‘t1’ and those recounting the Expression stage is labeled ‘t2’.

Different from language, nonverbal behaviors are indexical signs. However, nonverbal expressions in film are different from those in real life because they are not spontaneous. That is to say, films ‘design’ the facial expression, gesture and so forth based on the real life expressions. Therefore, an iconic stage is added to the process of signification and the visually represented behaviors are considered as icons of indexes, rather than indexes themselves, as is shown in Figure 4.9. This study does not aim to

work out a ‘grammar’ of nonverbal behavior (see Feng and O’Halloran, forthcoming; Martinec, 2001 for attempts of this kind), rather, as the nonverbal expressions of emotion can normally be unambiguously recognized in Hollywood movies, I shall merely interpret the meanings of facial expressions or vocal features based on the studies reviewed in Section 4.2.3. Together with other contextual cues, facial expressions are interpreted as representing discrete emotions (e.g. laughter for happiness, crying for sadness) and vocal features (loudness, pitch level) are interpreted as representing the arousal level of emotions.



Figure 4.9 The semiotic status of visually represented emotive behavior

#### 4.3.2.2 Cross-modal Relations in Emotion Expression

Cross-modal relation is an essential dimension of the multimodal expression of emotion. Cross-modal relation is studied both by linguists who focus on image-text relations (e.g. Liu and O’Halloran, 2009; Martinec and Salway, 2005; Royce, 1998), and psychologists who focus on the clustering of different modalities (e.g. Scherer and Ellgring, 2007) and the relation between language features (e.g. intonation) and gesture (Kendon, 1972, 1980; Loehr, 2004; McClave, 1991; McNeil, 1992). Psychologists and communication theorists have also developed more general models of cross-modal relations, for example, Scherer and Wallbott (1985) (see section 4.2.3.2 for review). For the current purpose of investigating emotion expression, a simple framework of cross-modal relations is developed. Focusing on the semantic level, two broad categories of *congruent* relations and *incongruent* relations are identified. Congruent relations are typical, especially

among nonverbal expressions. For example, facial expression and gesture/action seldom contradict each other. However, the relations between verbal and nonverbal expressions are more complex, especially between language and facial expression. Four options are proposed in verbal-nonverbal relations: repetition, amplification, contrast and contradiction, as is shown in Figure 4.10.

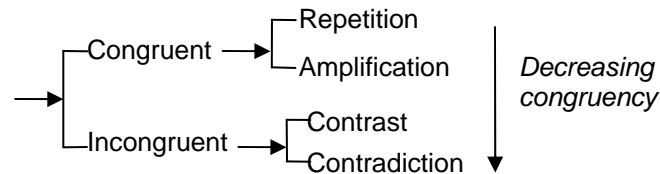


Figure 4.10 Cross-modal relations in emotion expression

When the verbal information describes the bodily reaction, they *repeat* each other, for example, saying ‘my heart is beating fast’ when my heart is actually beating fast. Here the language represents the Expression stage of the emotion. In the expression of one’s own emotion, such exact repetition is rare. The gesture or action may repeat part of the verbal information. For example, if I make a ‘punch’ action when I say ‘I want to punch him in the face’, the behavioral ‘punch’ and the verbal ‘punch’ repeat each other. The more typical verbal-nonverbal relation is *amplification*, in which different modalities encode the same, or at least congruent, emotions. The verbal information may represent the Eliciting Condition, the Feeling State or the Expression stages. Simple examples include the co-patterning of ‘I got promoted’ (Eliciting Condition) with a smiling face, and ‘I am so excited’ (Feeling State) with a smiling face. One point which distinguishes the present framework from previous ones is that the verbal description of Eliciting Condition is regarded as emotional information. A common position is that language provides non-emotional information and nonverbal behavior adds an emotional stance, so

that nonverbal behavior *complements* language in terms of emotion (e.g. Ekman and Friesen, 1975). In the framework developed in this study, however, as long as an emotion is expressed, any linguistic message is taken as part of the expression (i.e. emotionally charged). Therefore, expressions in other modalities only add onto, or *amplify* the linguistic expression which already contains emotion information, rather than complement it with emotion. For example, ‘it is raining outside’ may be non-emotional taken alone, but when it is uttered together with sad facial expression or certain vocal features, the linguistic utterance becomes the Eliciting Condition which is already appraised in relation to the speaker’s goal and is therefore not emotion-free. This position is in accordance with our framework of linguistic expressions in Section 4.3.2.1

Verbal and nonverbal meaning may also be *incongruent* for various reasons. First, both verbal and nonverbal information are true and the emoter has two different Attitudes simultaneously, that is, there are two appraisal processes going on. However, in such cases, it is unlikely that a person is sad and happy at the same time, so the incongruence is that of *contrast*, instead of contradiction. Contrast occurs across different types of emotions (e.g. attribution emotion and object-based emotion) or across the three subcategories of Attitude, namely, Emotion, Judgment and Appreciation. In a scene in *Gladiator*, Lucilla says to her brother: “Your (Commodus) incessant scheming is hurting my head”. ‘Hurting my head’ encodes the woman’s negative Affect while ‘your incessant scheming’ inscribes negative Judgment of morality. The accompanying facial expression, however, is affectionate smile. The contrast between verbal and facial expressions is due to the two different appraisal targets: Commodus’ action for negative emotion (action-based) and their intimate relation for the positive emotion (object-based). This aspect of

contrast is further explained in terms of the relation between Emotion and Judgment in Section 5.3.3.

The second type of incongruence is *contradiction*, which typically arises out of the fact that one modality, more likely the linguistic one, is not representing the true emotion. There are many reasons for the concealing of true emotion, such as unwillingness to share, display rules, and so forth. In film, when a character is lying about his/her emotion (or Judgment), viewers are usually provided with unambiguous information of his/her true emotion as well as the reason for lying in the narrative context. For example, in *Gladiator*, when Lucilla finds out that Maximus is still alive, her emotional reactions at least include surprise (belief disruption) and joy (goal fulfillment), based on her nonverbal reactions and the narrative context. But when Commodus asks her ‘What did you feel when you saw him?’, she answers ‘I felt nothing’, which is apparently a lie. We also understand why she lies, that is, for fear of her brother’s cruelty. But in this case, the verbal and nonverbal expressions are not synchronized, that is, her true emotion is not displayed in her (mis) recount of her emotion. In another example from *Pretty Woman*, which is a more prototypical case in the definition of contradiction, Vivian’s verbal and nonverbal expressions represent contradictory emotions. When Edward asks her whether she is ok, she answers ‘I am fine’, but her facial expression shows unhappiness. However, even in this case the Eliciting Condition from the previous plot also helps with the identification of unhappiness, so the contradiction is not just between verbal and nonverbal expressions, but reflects the deeper level discrepancy between Emotion and Expression.

To summarize this section, I have sketched a framework for examining cross-modal relations in emotion expression based on the deep level mechanisms of appraisal process. The distinction between congruent and incongruent relations suffices for the analysis of verbal and nonverbal expressions, as shall be demonstrated in Section 4.6.

#### **4.3.2.3 Discursive Choices of Representation**

Emotion expression may be as simple as a single facial expression, or as complex as involving several scenes, depending on the filmmaker's choice. *Simple* representation depicts the synchronized expression which involves maximally one unit from one or more modes, for example, the expression of one clause, accompanied with one facial expression and/or one gesture. *Complex* representation includes consecutive expressions from one or more modes. For example, the film can first represent the facial expression, followed by linguistic expressions and a series of emotional actions. Distinction is also made between *interactive* and *individual* expressions. Interactive expressions are those expressed to interactant/s, which are subsequently analyzed in relation to the structure of the interaction. Other types of expression which are not expressed to interactant/s are called individual expression. Interactive and individual expressions employ the same verbal and nonverbal expressions and can be simple or complex.

Simple expression, whether interactive or individual, is represented by the *reaction shot*, although reaction shots are able to depict complex expressions as well. The most prominent element in the reaction shot is facial expression, which is the exclusive focus of many film analysts (e.g. Carroll, 1996; Plantinga, 1999). Facial expressions may occur alone in the reaction shot and are featured at a close distance, but more often, facial

expressions are accompanied by other verbal or nonverbal expressions. When gestural or bodily cues are represented, medium shot is used to depict the gesture or torso, as displayed in Table 4.3, reproduced from Season 4, Episode 12 of *Friends* (15 minutes into the episode). The reaction shot may stand alone, but it usually works together with Eliciting Condition shot and comprises syntagmas, such as Point-of-View (POV) structure and reverse shots, as will be discussed in Section 4.4.


Visual image	Visual features	Soundtrack
	Medium shot Smiling face Upward posture/arms	I am an assistant buyer. High pitch

Table 4.3 The reaction shot

In the rest of this section, I shall focus on interaction-based expression. By studying emotion expression in the structure of interaction, a significant move is made from treating emotion as a personal phenomenon to treating it as an interpersonal one. In interaction, simple expressions are those expressed in one move while complex expressions are those expressed in several moves.

The simple expression move is situated in the basic unit of interaction, namely, the *exchange* (Martin, 1992; Martin and Rose, 2007). At the level of exchange, two types of interactive expression can be distinguished: those which are emotion expressions *motivated* by the previous move and those which express a *pre-existing* emotion, as displayed in Figure 4.11.

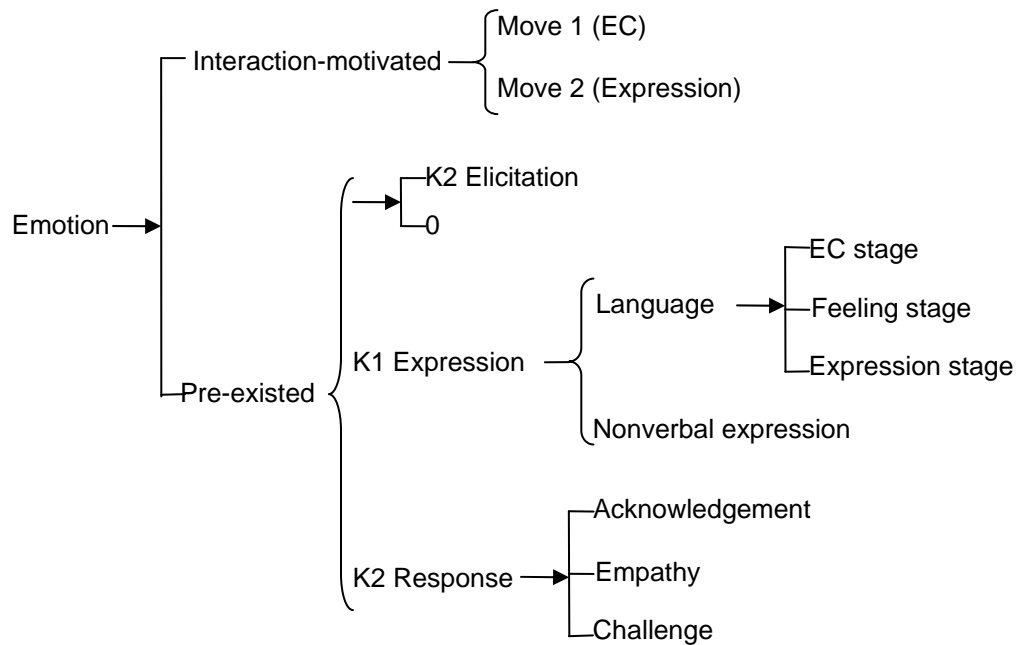


Figure 4.11 The communication of emotion in multimodal interaction

The upper part of Figure 4.11 shows the structure of interaction-motivated expression, in which one move is the Eliciting Condition and the other move is the Expression. This case is discussed in EC-Ex configuration in Section 4.4. The lower part of Figure 4.11 shows the expression of the pre-existing emotion. The Expression move may be preceded by the elicitation of the secondary knower (K2) who asks about the primary knower's (K1) emotion, or otherwise the Expression is the first move. For the Expression to be an interactive move, linguistic expression needs to be present and it can represent the Eliciting Condition stage, the Feeling stage or the Expression stage. Also, the linguistic expression is normally accompanied by nonverbal behavior. When the emotion is expressed to others, there is typically a Response in the following move, which includes the choices of acknowledgment, empathy, and challenge. Acknowledgment signals the receipt of information, such as 'ohm', 'oh, really' and 'I see'. It also includes the emotional signals such as 'oh, my god' and I shall call such



signals ‘emotional acknowledgment’. Acknowledgment shows understanding of the emotion and reflexive reaction to it. Empathy is a more desirable response in that the hearer shows willingness to ‘feel with’ the emoter. Challenge is the opposite of empathy, in which the hearer deems the emotion as unduly or wrong.

Interaction is typically represented by reverse shots, in which the two speakers are depicted in turn as they speak. The two shots in Table 4.4 from *Friends* Season 4, Episode 12 (13.3 to 13.4 minutes) illustrate how the choices in reverse shots are made.

	Visual image	Visual features	Soundtrack
Shot 1		Medium shot Smiling face	Monica: The owner of Alexandra came here to yell at me, but instead I made him some sauce and he offered me the job as head chef.  [High pitched voice, loud and fast]
Shot 2a		Medium shot Wide open mouth and eyes	Rachel: Oh, my god!  [High pitched voice]
Shot 2b		Medium shot Sad face	Rachel: You just ruined everything I practiced the whole way
Shot 2c		Medium shot Smiling face	Rachel: But I am so happy

Table 4.4 Interaction in reverse shots

In shot 1 (move 1), Monica (K1) expresses her emotion to Rachel. The Expression involves linguistic resource which represents the Eliciting Condition, the facial expression, as well as the high pitched, high tempo, loud voice. Rachel (K2) responds to Monica in the second shot (move 2), which shows surprise and empathy. Rachel's first move (shot 2a) is an *emotional acknowledgment* which indicates that she understands the information and it impacts on her subjective state. The second move (shot 2b) is a *challenge*, in which Rachel describes the consequence of Monica's expression. The valence of the consequence to her goal is negative, marked by the word 'ruin', which constructs Rachel's negative Attitude, and it is reinforced by her facial expression. Then in the third move (shot 2c), Rachel *empathizes* with Monica's feeling despite the fact that Monica ruined her plan for expressing her own excitement.

However, as with all realizational relations, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the interaction structure and the shot structure: two or more turns/moves may be represented by one shot and one turn/move may be represented by several shots. In the example from *Pretty Woman* in Table 4.5 (73.9 minutes into the film), the two moves of Elicitation and Expression are represented in a single shot.






	Medium  shot	Stuckey: Having a nice time, Vivian?  Vivian: Yeah, I am having a great time.
---	--------------------	---

Table 4.5 The single shot realization of interaction

The combination of single units from the modalities such as facial expression and gesture are considered by psychologists studying multimodal expression of emotion (e.g.

Scherer and Ellgring, 2007). As noted in Section 4.2.2.3, the limitation of this approach is that the limited variables are unable to account for the complexity of emotion expressions, especially idiosyncratic actions in specific contexts. These complex expressions are significant in the representation of emotion. Very often, the immediate reaction is followed by several shots or scenes of expression (individual expression), or the emotion is expressed in multiple-turn interaction (interactive expression). Many complex Expressions involve both individual and interactive expressions and may extend across several shots or even several scenes. A simple example from *Patch Adams* (Shadyac, 1998) suffices to illustrate the representation of complex expression. It is a scene in front of the heroine Corinne's room after she and her admirer Patch spent a pleasant evening (61 to 61.6 minutes in the film).

	Visual image	Visual features	Soundtrack
Shot 1		Close medium shot Kissing	
Shot 2		Close medium shot Smiling face	Corinne: Good night Patch: (Laughing sound)
Shot 3		Medium shot	Patch: No, this is not a good night
Shot 4		Medium shot Smiling face	Patch: This is a great night







Shot 5		Medium shot Smiling face	Patch: You know?
Shot 6		Medium shot Smiling face	
Shot 7		Medium shot Smiling, waving hands	
Shot 8a		Medium shot	Patch: Wow
Shot 8b		Medium shot Smiling face	
Shot 8c		Medium shot Dancing	

Table 4.6 The representation of complex expression

Corinne thanks Patch for what he has done and kisses him. Patch's expressions in shots 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to Corinne, while the expressions in shot 8 are individual. Patch's excitement is first expressed in the face in shot 2 as reaction to the Eliciting Condition in shot 1. Then in the same shot, Corinne says good night and Patch laughs happily. He then says in the two following shots that this is not a good night, but a great night. His positive evaluation of the night is an attitudinal metaphor which indirectly constructs his positive

emotion. The utterance is also accompanied by facial expression and gesture (shot 4). After a shot of Corinne's response, shot 6 cuts back to Patch's smiling face. Finally, in shot 8, after Corinne leaves, Patch first makes the 'wow' sound which indicates his excitement (shot 8a), then he laughs happily (shot 8b) and dances as he walks away (shot 8c). This multiple-shot expression includes facial expression, linguistic expression and material action and communicates the intensity of Patch's happiness.

As a discursive choice, the expression depicted is determined by many factors, including the intensity of emotion and the genre of the film. Complex expressions of emotion tend to appear in female-oriented genres like melodrama and romance, while in male-oriented genres like action movie, emotions are often expressed over shorter time periods. In the melodrama *Patch Adams*, for example, Patch's grief after Corinne was murdered is expressed over nine minutes. The expressions include the immediate facial reaction after learning about the news, crying at Corinne's coffin, leaving the medical school, intention to jump off the cliff, and his speech which blames God for the murder. Such full-fledged expression is undoubtedly motivated by his intense grief and despair, but the filmmaker's choice to allocate nine minutes to Patch's display of emotion is certainly a discursive choice and reflects the generic feature of melodrama. The discursive choice is quite different in *Gladiator* which is a combination of an epic and a male-oriented action film. When Maximus sees that his family has been murdered, burned and crucified, he cries with much anguish at the sight of their corpses. However, this is the only expression of grief and the film only gives it several seconds before moving on to another stage of the narrative. Maximus' emotion is as intense as Patch's, but the story design chooses a compact way to depict the emotion.

#### 4.4 Filmic Organization of Eliciting Condition and Expression

In Section 4.3, I discussed filmic choices/resources for representing Eliciting Condition and Expression, which are normally both represented to guarantee the accurate depiction of emotion. A further issue to address is how they are co-deployed. The organization of the Eliciting Condition and Expression is an important aspect of filmic representation of emotion, which constitutes part of the ‘textual logic’ of film. Previous studies only explain the working mechanism of one or two filmic resources, for example, Carroll’s (1996) theorization of the Point-Of-View structure. In this section, a comprehensive account of the shot-connecting devices is provided and how causal relations between the Eliciting Condition and Expression are represented by formally connected shots is examined. Generally, the causal relation is *implicitly* realized, as there are no explicit film connectives corresponding to conjunctive words (Bateman, 2007: 45).

The EC-Ex (Eliciting condition and Expression) configuration is systematically organized by shots and syntagmas. However, as with previous models, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the choices from EC-Ex configuration and the choices of their filmic organization. For example, two interaction turns can be realized by reverse shots or a single shot. Nevertheless, patterns can be found between the semantic layer and the discursive organization.

To account for the EC-Ex configuration, the ‘grande syntagmatique’ proposed by Metz (1974) and later revisions by van Leeuwen (1991) and Bateman (2007) are drawn upon. The options for connecting the Eliciting Condition and Expression are significantly fewer than Metz’s grande syntagmatique because the causal-temporal relation between the Eliciting Condition and Expression means that many types of relations, for example,

those depicting conceptual relations (e.g. classification) between events are not relevant. The choices available for representing EC-Ex configuration are shown in Figure 4.12. The primary choice is between single shot representation and conjunctively relatable units (CRUs), to use the term of van Leeuwen (1991). The CRUs are either related through projection or thorough temporal relations. The types of CRUs are elaborated in Sections 4.4.2 to 4.4.4 in the following.

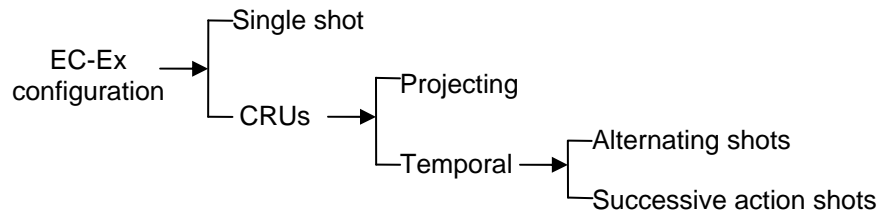


Figure 4.12 Shot organization of EC-Ex configuration

It should be pointed out that what is examined is the shot relations which connect the Eliciting Condition and the immediate linguistic or kinetic Expression within the basic unit of CRU. There are cases where the Eliciting Condition and the Expression are not organized within one CRU. First, the Eliciting Condition is presented to the viewer as a narrative event and somehow the emoter knows it but we do not know how he/she accesses it (the case of EC5 in Figure 4.7). Second, the filmmaker creates a separate scene for the character to express his/her emotion. For example, in Season 4, Episode 12 in *Friends*, Rachel is given the job of assistant buyer during her conversation with her supervisor Joana. There are naturally emotional reactions immediately after learning about the news, but the film cuts to another scene and Rachel only expresses her emotion in the scene after that. Third, as pointed out in Section 4.3.2.3, complex expressions may extend across several scenes and hence extend beyond the single CRU.

#### **4.4.1 The Single Shot Representation**

The representing capacity of one shot is indefinite. The things it represents can be as simple as a single facial expression or as complex as a whole film. The Eliciting Condition and Expression can be represented within one shot in many ways. One special type is when the Eliciting Condition is represented by linguistic recount as part of Expression (see Figure 4.8). In this case, Eliciting Condition is related to Expression as part of it and they are typically represented by reaction shots. Normally, the Eliciting Condition is verbally recounted, accompanied by nonverbal expression (with or without verbal recount of expression). A good case in point is the image in Table 4.3. Rachel's speech recounts the Eliciting Condition and the Expression is simultaneously constructed by vocal features, the facial expression and the gesture.

Other types of shot will not be specified as there are so many things a shot can depict. In terms of Eliciting Condition and Expression, all options in Figure 4.7 can be represented in a single shot. For example, the single shot which depicts the character and the object he/she is looking at, the multiple turns of interaction, or the action and reaction portrayed by one tracking shot. However, such configurations are more often represented by conjunctively relatable shots, which are discussed below.

#### **4.4.2 Projecting Shots and the POV Structure**

Projection depicts the character and what he/she sees and thinks (Bateman, 2007). I shall focus on the former, which is represented by the POV structure. POV structure typically portrays what the character sees and how he/she reacts to it, constituting the EC2^Expression type (cf. Figure 4.7). Carroll (1996) develops a cogent theory of POV



representation of emotion. According to Carroll, the point-glance shot sets out a global range of emotions that broadly characterize the neighborhood of affective states the character could be in. The point-object shot, then, delivers the object or cause of the emotion, thereby enabling us to focus on the particular emotion. A celebrated example is the two shots at the beginning of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Spielberg, 1981), as is shown in Table 4.7 (5.5 minutes into the film). The point-object shot shows the close-up of a skeleton, followed by the point-glance shot which shows the terrified face of a character.

Admittedly, this structure is the most convenient and easy-to-understand technique to represent emotion. Two points need to be stressed, building on Carroll's (1996) classic theory. First, POV structure is only one of the many mechanisms of emotion representation, as pointed out by Smith (1995) and Plantinga (1999) and suggested in Figure 4.12. Second, there are variations to the POV structure. One obvious variation is the order of the object and reaction. Naming the point-object and point-glance shot A and shot B respectively, we can get  $A^B$  and  $B^A$  structures. Then it seems that Carroll's (1996) treatment of reaction as 'ranger finder' and object as 'focuser' only applies to the  $B^A$  structure. Second, the POV shots may be elaborated by subsequent shots. That is, the object or the reaction may be portrayed by more than one shot, as they often are. Taking  $A^B$  structure as an example, it is often reiterated by another pair of object-glance configuration ( $A^B + A'^B$ ), showing the object from a different angle and the character's reaction with slight variation, as shown in Shot 3 and Shot 4 in Table 4.7, which follow the first two shots immediately. Variations of this reiteration include showing the object again without showing the character ( $A^B + A' + A'' + \dots$ ) and showing the character's reaction in several shots ( $A^B + B' + B'' + \dots$ ). The multiple reaction shots are commonly

used to highlight the character's emotion, along with the long duration and close distance of the shot. This technique is not only used to guarantee viewers' accurate recognition of the emotion portrayed, but also to invoke their empathy (Plantinga, 1999).





 <p>1</p>	 <p>2</p>
 <p>3</p>	 <p>4</p>

Table 4.7 The POV structure

#### 4.4.3 Alternating Shots

Alternating shots portray two or more series of events or interacting partners in turn. The most common example is the shot-and-reverse shot structure which depicts two interacting partners. The Eliciting Condition in the reverse shot structure is typically verbal (i.e. EC3), although it can also be the nonverbal EC4. In shot 1 and shot 2 from *Patch Adams* in Table 4.6 the first shot shows Corinne kissing Patch and the reverse shot shows Patch's expression of excitement and they form the EC4^Expression configuration.

In the interactions where the Eliciting Condition includes verbal information, the reverse shots are normally consistent with the speaker turns and the examination of the interaction structure shows the speaker roles and how the emotion is communicated. The

general framework is illustrated in Figure 4.13, complementing the interaction framework in Figure 4.8. As with Figure 4.8, the unit of analysis is *exchange*, and the focus of investigation is the options of *move*, such as initiation and response.

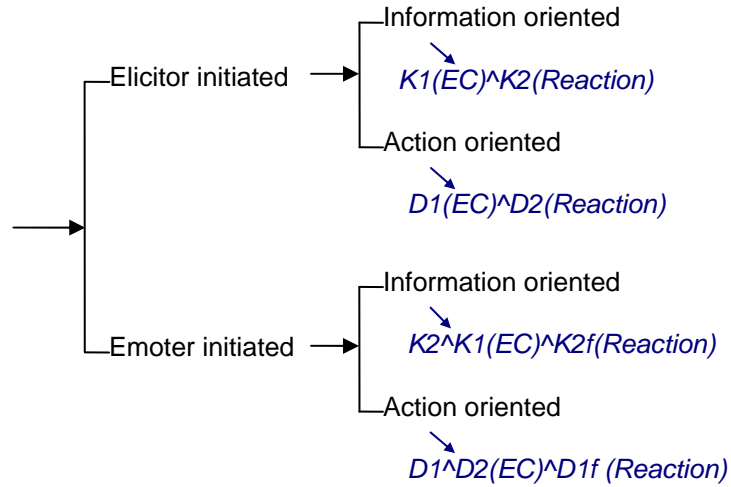


Figure 4.13 Interaction structure and EC-Ex configuration

The structure of information-oriented exchange is  $K1^K2$  (Martin and Rose, 2007; O'Donnell, 1990), in which the two turns represent the Eliciting Condition and Expression respectively. One character says something in the first shot and is followed by another character's reaction in the reverse shot. A piece of information can be reacted to in various ways, for example, with surprise if it is unexpected, with excitement if it is congruent with the hearer's goal, or with indignation if it violates moral standards. This simple structure is illustrated by the reverse shots from *Friends* in Table 4.8.

In shot 1, Monica's Expression of emotion is also the Eliciting Condition of Rachel's emotion which is expressed in shot 2. The reaction is unambiguously surprise, with the verbal signal 'oh, my god' in high pitch voice and the open mouth. The Eliciting Condition and Expression corresponds to the speaker turns, organized by reversed shots,

realized by facial expression, language and voice, and finally rendered as audio-visual tracks. The relation between different layers of semiosis is illustrated in Figure 4.14.



Visual image	Visual features	Soundtrack
	Medium shot Smiling face	Monica: The owner of Alexandra came here to yell at me, but instead I made him some sauce and he offered me the job as head chef. [High pitched voice, loud and fast]
	Medium shot Wide open mouth and eyes	Rachel: Oh, my god. [High pitched voice]

Table 4.8 K1^K2 structure in reverse shots

Emotion components	Eliciting Condition	Expression
Interaction structure	Offer information	Response
Discursive organization	Shot	Reverse shot
Semiotic resource	Facial, vocal, linguistic	Facial, vocal, linguistic

Figure 4.14 Semiotic strata in reverse shots

In action-oriented interaction, D2 reacts to D1's speech act like in K1^K2 structure. The D1^D2^D1f structure is also common, in which D1 reacts to D2's acceptance/undertaking or rejection/refusal. The expected (goal congruent) responses normally cause positive emotions and the unexpected responses cause negative emotions. The example in Table 4.9 from *Gladiator* (39.2 minutes into the film) illustrates emotional reaction to the goal-incongruent response. Commodus orders Maximus' death

and Maximus asks Quintus to look after his family (D1) in the first shot. This request is denied (D2) in the second shot. In shot 3, Maximus screams loudly and rushes forward to attack Quintus (D1f). This is a typical  $D1^{\wedge}D2^{\wedge}D1f$  structure, organized as reverse shots and realized with verbal and nonverbal resources in close medium shots. Maximus' anger toward Quintus is unambiguously represented with the Eliciting Condition (Quintus' refusal) and his aggressive behavior. The semiotic pattern is similar to that in Figure 4.14 above.

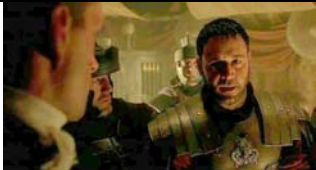


Visual image	Visual features	Soundtrack
		Promise me that you will look after my family
		Your family will meet you in the after life
	Forward posture to attack	Nonverbal sound, screaming

Table 4.9  $D1^{\wedge}D2^{\wedge}D1f$  structure in reverse shots

#### 4.4.4 Successive Action Shots

Successive action shots capture the Eliciting Condition and Expression as two successive actions, namely, the action and the reaction. The actions may be continuous or discontinuous in form, but the two shots depict them as succeeding actions from one participant. The shots feature what the character does or says (EC1) as Eliciting

Condition and how he/she responds to his/her action/speech. However, such configuration of Eliciting Condition and Expression are less common because reaction usually does not immediately follow action. The emoter often responds to the effect of his/her action, instead of the action, so there is typically a shot of the result of the action before the reaction shot. For example, in *Friends*, there is a scene in which Monica is playing table football with her friends. The first shot shows her action of playing the ball, the second shot shows the ball she scored and the third shot show her excitement. The second shot and the third shot form a POV structure.

To summarize, this section examines the discursive resources for organizing the Eliciting Condition and Expression. It shows that different choices of Eliciting Condition-Expression configuration are organized in different shot structures. Figure 4.15 summarizes these organizational relations. The explication of this relation is an effort towards the systematic modeling of how textual resources in film ‘enable’ the interpersonal semantics.

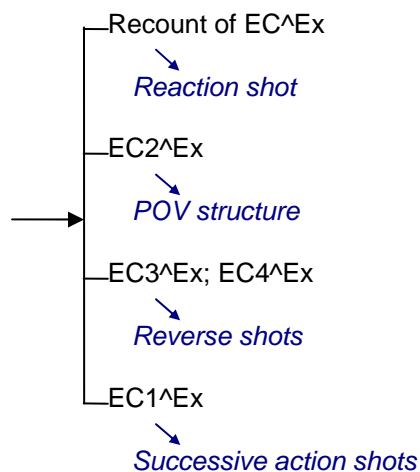


Figure 4.15 Eliciting Condition-Expression configuration and filmic realization

#### **4.5 Character Emotion and Film Genre**

In Sections 4.3 and 4.4, frameworks are proposed to model the representation of emotion at the levels of lexicogrammar and discursive structure. In this section, I briefly investigate how the patterns of Character Emotion shape film genre, based on the theories proposed in Section 3.3.5.

As reviewed in Section 2.3.1, Carroll (2003) is one of the few film theorists who explicitly relates emotion to film genre. He observes that certain genres are characterized by the very emotion they intend to arouse, the best example being perhaps horror movies. However, the significance of such typological relation between emotion and genre is limited because, as Carroll (2003: 74) acknowledges, all popular film genres generally engage a range of different emotions. For this reason, the topological perspective which maps out the general semantic patterns of difference along certain dimensions seems to be pertinent in modeling the patterns of emotion in different film genres (see Kagan, 1983 for an early attempt of a topology of film genres).

The first step is to set out the dimensions of emotion, drawing upon the so called ‘dimensional approach’ in psychology. This approach claims that emotions are best described by the use of underlying dimensions, and various dimensions are proposed (e.g. Averill, 1975; Russell, 1980; Wundt, 1905). Although there is discussion on how many dimensions are necessary to differentiate the emotions, in most studies, two dimensions are reported to be able to account for the major amount of variance in emotions (Desmet, 2002: 15). An often quoted model is developed by Russell (1980), which represents the two dimensions of ‘pleasantness’ and ‘activation’ on the horizontal and vertical axes

respectively. Instead of using the terms ‘pleasant’ and ‘unpleasant’ on the horizontal axis, I shall call this dimension ‘valence’ with the values of positive and negative, to be consistent with Appraisal theory. Different types of emotion are then arranged in different locations in the two dimensional space, as is illustrated in Figure 4.16.

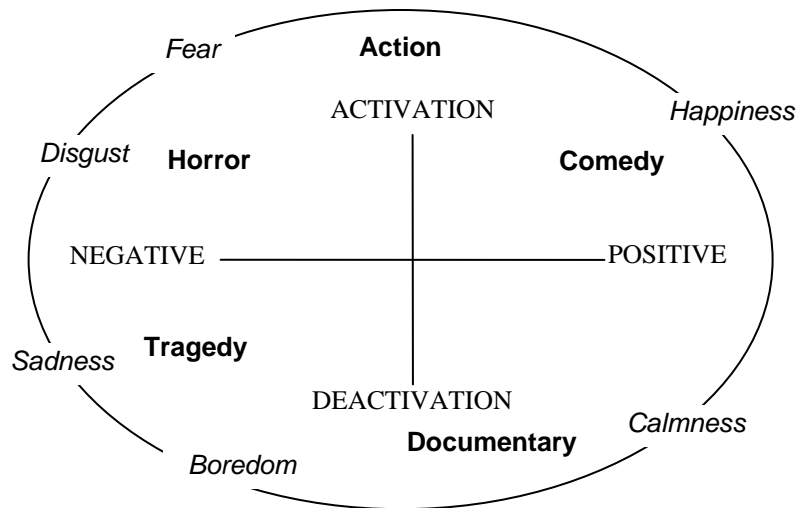


Figure 4.16 The topology of emotions and film genre

With these two dimensions, then, we are able to position different film genres in the space. Different from Carroll (2003), the categorization is based on the pattern of Character Emotion (that of the protagonist), with which viewer emotions are largely consistent as a result of identification or empathy (Carroll, 2008; Smith, 1995; Tan, 1996). We can therefore position tragedy at the negative pole of valence because the protagonist’s emotion is negative, documentary at the pole of deactivation because the characters are usually not emotionally charged<sup>13</sup>. The significance of this approach is twofold. First, focusing on Character Emotion rather than viewer’s emotional response makes it possible to model the emotional pattern more objectively. Second, the

<sup>13</sup> This by no means indicates that documentaries are boring for the viewers, even though for many genres, viewer emotions are congruent with the emotions of the protagonist.



topological view is more flexible than Carroll's (2003) approach which defines genre based on emotion typology. However, the explanatory power is still limited to a few emotionally defined genres like tragedy and horror. If we are to study the genre of horror, for example, we can perform a quantitative analysis of the protagonist's emotions and locate the genre accurately in the two dimensional space. As the focus of the thesis is not on these particular genres, this point shall not be further pursued.







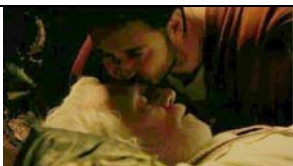
Nevertheless, the value of this attempt is that the limitation of this *static*, or *synoptic* view of Character Emotion prompts us to view it from a *dynamic* perspective. It is observed that films tend to portray characters in different emotional states across different stages of the narrative. For example, in many films the characters' emotions alternate in terms of valence and it makes little sense to position its genre at any point along the horizontal axis. I argue that it is the *dynamic change* of Character Emotion that is more significant for film communication. Therefore, this dynamic aspect of Character Emotion, which is significant in modeling the genre of film narrative and explicating filmic mechanisms of viewer engagement, is investigated in Chapter 6.

#### **4.6 Applying the Model: Analysis of *Gladiator* and *Pretty Woman***

In this section, the frameworks developed in Sections 4.3 and 4.4 are applied to film analysis to demonstrate their effectiveness in disentangling the complexity of the multimodal representation of emotion. Two episodes are selected from the action film *Gladiator* and the romantic comedy *Pretty Woman* respectively. The two episodes differ in that in the first one the emotion representation is predominantly visual while in the second one verbal conversation plays a more important role.

#### 4.6.1 The Representation of Emotion in *Gladiator*

The scene from *Gladiator* (36.3 to 38.5 minutes in the film) is transcribed in Table 4.10, with shot number, visual image and dialogue. I shall analyze the representation of emotion in this short scene using the framework proposed in Sections 4.3 and 4.4, which includes the representation of Eliciting Condition and Expression, the organization of them in shot structure and interaction structure, as well as the cinematographic realization.

Shot	Visual image	Dialogue
1a		Commodus: Lament with me brother.
1b		Commodus: Our great father is dead.
2		
3		
4		Maximus: How did he die?
5		Commodus: The surgeon said there was no pain. His breath gave out as he slept.
6		Maximus: Father.

7		Commodus: Your emperor asks for your loyalty, Maximus.
8		Commodus: Take my hand,
9		
10		Commodus: I only offer it once.
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		



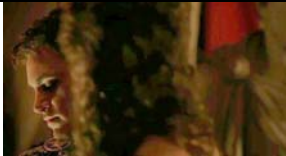

16		Commodus: Quintus!
17		
18		
19		Lucilla: Hail Caesar.

Table 4.10 Data transcription from *Gladiator*

The analysis unfolds in a shot-by-shot manner and summaries of each character's emotion based on the cognitive structure of emotion in Figure 4.2 are provided. Two successive themes of the scene are distinguished in this scene, depending on the 'field' of the activity: lamentation and subjugation. The lamentation theme is examined first. In shot 1 viewers are given access to emotion expression of Commodus, with a close-up, frontal shot of the face. He is 'lamenting' for his father's death; his face is tearful, registering sadness. The accompanying speech, "Lament with me, my brother, our great father is dead", constructs emotion through representing the conventional action associated with the death of loved ones and the Eliciting Condition. In terms of EC-Ex relation, the Eliciting Condition is part of the linguistic Expression. However, the Eliciting Condition, that is, Marcus' death exists before the recount in linguistic Expression and in the framework in Figure 4.7 it relates to the emotion through the

material process of ‘doing’ (EC1), i.e. he performed the action of killing and he feels the emotion. The emotion of this shot should be the least ambiguous since it is a prototypical instance of grief, that is, the irrevocable loss (death) of a loved one (Ortony et al., 1988: 91). However, while the shot communicates sadness unambiguously, our previous knowledge that it is Commodus who killed his father brings Commodus’ emotional state into question. It is clear that the death of Marcus fulfills Commodus’ goal (of attaining the throne). However, the reaction of the goal fulfillment is not expressed. With this background knowledge, the meaning of Commodus’ facial expression becomes confusing—we are not sure how much he feels the grief and what is really going on in his mind. So while he intends to communicate sadness to Maximus, something else about his subjective state is recognized. Such analysis is thus able to unveil the complexity of Commodus’ subjectivity. The recognition that he is hiding from Maximus is validated by his looking down after uttering ‘my brother’. This avoidance of eye contact has become a clichéd way of suggesting to the viewer that the character is hiding something from his/her interlocutor. Commodus’ subjective state is modeled in Figure 4.17 (the arrow represents causal relations).

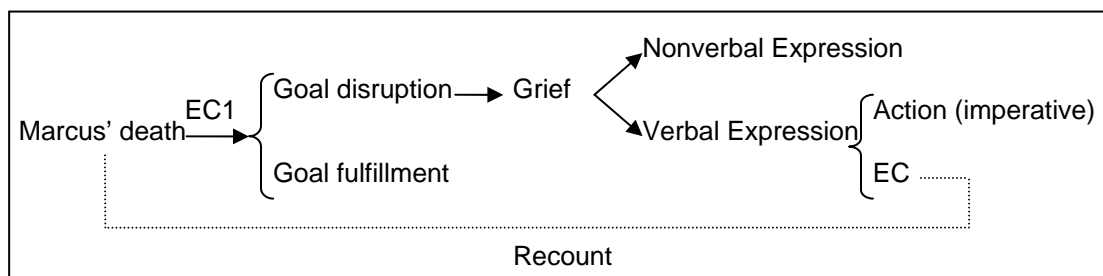


Figure 4.17 The EC and Expression of Commodus’ emotion

The next shot features Maximus’ reaction at Commodus’ utterance which represents Marcus’ death through spoken language (EC3 in Figure 4.7). The event is goal disruption

for Maximus, but the emotion of grief is not expressed. Instead, his emotion is directed towards Commodus. His facial expression registers shock and suspicion as he stares at Commodus, represented in close-up in shot 2. In terms of interaction structure, Commodus' recount is *challenged* by Maximus. This suspicion is well grounded because it contradicts his knowledge that Marcus was quite well in their conversation earlier that day. Then his gaze moves to Marcus' body and he walks to him to check for signs of life, which echoes his earlier suspicion. The confirmation that Marcus is dead and the fact that he was well earlier that day leads Maximus to a new suspicion: the cause of Marcus' death (that he is murdered). He may also have found something strange when checking Marcus' body. This doubt is realized as a question, inquiring about how he died. The elicitation and expression of Maximus' emotion is illustrated in Figure 4.18.

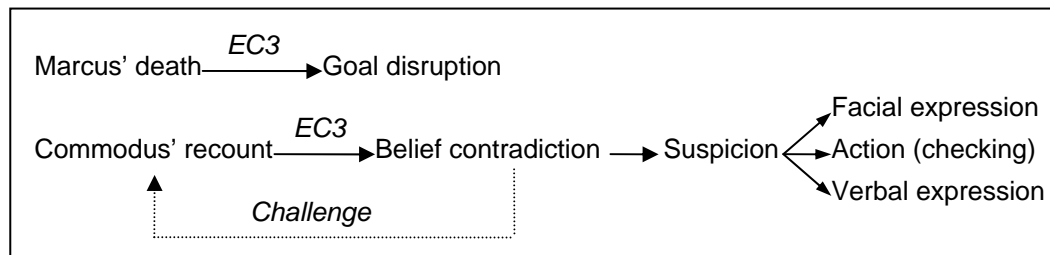


Figure 4.18 The EC and Expression of Maximus' emotion (a)

The next shot is notable for its audio-visual asynchrony. As Maximus asks the question "how did he die", the camera is panned to bring the tearful face of Lucilla into focus. We then hear the voice of Commodus, but the camera stays on Lucilla, showing her tearful face in close-up in shot 4. The panning starts even before Maximus' question and lasts until after Commodus' answer. After Maximus' question, Lucilla opens her mouth a little, as if trying to respond to Maximus, only to be answered by Commodus. This may be the reason why the camera is panned to Lucilla instead of Commodus, the

speaker, because his response is constructed as unexpected. However, this interpretation does not tell the whole story because the focus is still on Lucilla even after Commodus finishes his answer. The fact that viewers are not visually aligned with Commodus may indicate that this statement is unreliable, reinforcing what we already know from the previous story. Apparently, Commodus is lying to cover the fact that he murdered his father, which Lucilla may be aware of (this gets clear when Lucilla slaps Commodus in a shot later). So Lucilla reacts to Commodus' statement with surprise, with her expressions of opened eyes (from half-closed eyes of grief) and lowered jaw are featured in close-up in shot 5. Commodus attributes to 'the surgeon' to lend credibility to his statement, as the surgeon is supposed to be the authoritative source of such information. Lucilla's emotions in the two shots are summarized in Figure 4.19.

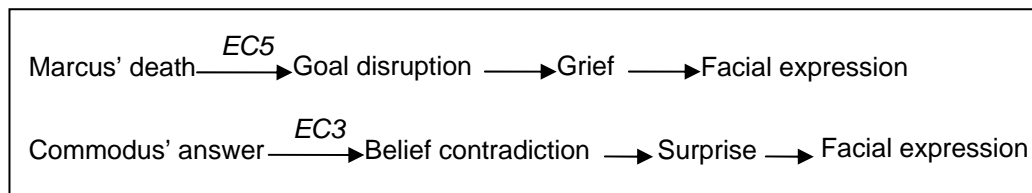


Figure 4.19 The EC and Expression of Lucilla's emotion (a)

In the next shot, Maximus kisses Marcus on the forehead and whispers 'father', clearly showing affection. This is the end of the 'lamenting' theme. The emotion of Maximus is illustrated in Figure 4.20. The emotion is object-based emotion in Ortony et al.'s (1988) term, which pre-existed and how it is elicited is not specified.

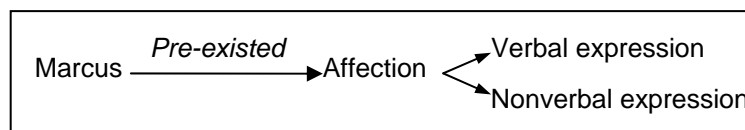


Figure 4.20 The EC and Expression of Maximus' emotion (b)

The second theme of the scene is termed 'subjugation'. The main emotional resource is verbal and nonverbal Expressions. The 'ulterior' purpose of summoning Maximus is manifested as Commodus utters "your emperor asks for your loyalty, Maximus. Take my hand. I only offer it once". The linguistic expression which constructs Commodus' goal (which is also his subjective state of inclination/desire) of subjugating Maximus is carefully designed. The first clause uses a mood metaphor, requesting service (imperative) through offering information (statement) ('your emperor asks for your loyalty'). Getting no immediate compliance, Commodus proceeds to the second clause, an imperative to add more weight to his request ('take my hand'). Commodus also extends his hand as he speaks. It makes the request more concrete in the sense that now the choice of Maximus is made very simple: to take or not to take Commodus' hand. Then the third clause uses another mood metaphor in which the request (demanding service) is represented as an offer ('I only offer it once'). The emphasis that Maximus has only one opportunity carries much persuasive weight, even bordering on threat. These three clauses which redundantly construct the request clearly indicate Commodus' goal of getting Maximus' loyalty, that is, his *inclination*, or desire to get Maximus' loyalty.

The following shots (shot 8 to shot 14) highlight the reactions of Maximus and Lucilla and at the same time create suspense in viewers concerning how Maximus will respond. The suspense is constructed by Commodus' waiting with stretched hand, close shot of Lucilla's reaction, and the prolonged close shot of Maximus' reaction. Commodus' utterance of 'take my hand' is followed by brief reaction shots of Maximus and Lucilla. The utterance of 'I only offer it once' is accompanied by the close shot of Maximus who is staring at Commodus gravely in disbelief. He then ignores/challenges



Commodus' offer and walks away (shot 15). These alternating shots between Maximus, Commodus and Lucilla last for fifteen seconds before Maximus' rejection is acted out. This prolonged process not only manipulates viewers' suspense, but also builds up the tension of conflict between Maximus and Commodus. Maximus' walking away disrupts Commodus' goal and leads to anger/hatred. The anger is expressed in facial expression in close-up in shot 15 and further motivates his order of Maximus' death. The interaction of the emotions of Commodus, Maximus and Lucilla is illustrated in Figure 4.21. On the one hand, Commodus' goal is disrupted and anger results; on the other, Commodus' goal provokes reactions from both Maximus and Lucilla.

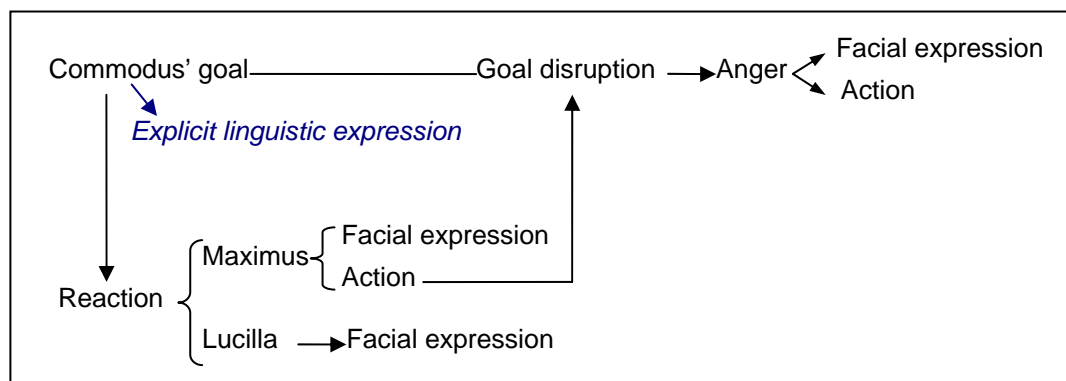


Figure 4.21 Emotion interaction in the 'subjugation' theme

After Maximus leaves, there is a short sequence of Commodus and Lucilla. Lucilla stares at Commodus angrily in shot 17 (the face is still sad at the same time) and then slaps Commodus in shot 18. The emotion of anger is unambiguously represented in the facial expression and the slapping action. However, Lucilla's following action, namely, kissing Commodus' hand and utters "hail, Caesar" in shot 19, may be somewhat confusing to the viewers. Taken out of context, the action of kissing certainly indicates affection. But given Lucilla's knowledge that Commodus killed his father and her

previous action, this interpretation seems problematic. It is only from the story later that we can infer it is out of her fear of her brother.

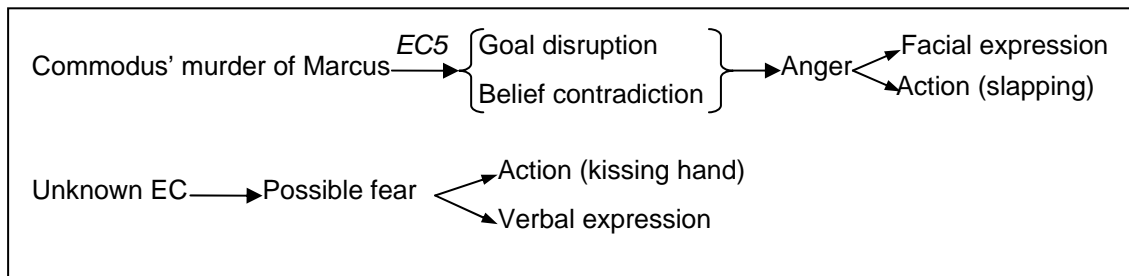


Figure 4.22 The EC and Expression of Lucilla's emotion (b)

The analysis above explains the representation of emotion in terms of the Eliciting Condition, Expression, their cinematographic representation, as well as their organization in the structure of shots and interaction, in accordance with our framework set out in the previous sections. The choices in the emotion scenario are visualized in diagrams which disentangle the complexity of the characters' emotions. I shall take the analysis a step further by explicating two further dimensions of discourse semantics, namely, the horizontal *emotion interaction* between characters and the vertical *emotion chain* in the discourse development, with a focus on the latter. Through examining the emotion chain, we move up a scale in the discursive level from logical relations in Section 4.4 to local coherence. This effort complements Tseng's (2009) investigation of the roles of action chain and identity chain. The emotion chains and interactions of the scene are illustrated as Figure 4.23. The vertical chain and the horizontal interaction are interwoven into a complex network which maps out the emotive meaning in this scene. The horizontal line connects the *emoter* (the box) and the *elicitor* of the emotion (the intersection of horizontal and vertical lines, marked with black dot). It is clear that the main elicitors are Marcus and Commodus, the consistency of which determines the consistency (hence

coherence) of the emotions of Maximus and Lucilla, as reflected in the vertical lines. The emotions towards Marcus are sympathetic (affection and sadness) while the emotions towards Commodus are antipathetic (suspicion and anger). Commodus' emotions in the third exchange are elicited by Maximus, whose refusal action connects Commodus' desire and anger. Taken together with prior analysis of individual emotions, the chart in Figure 4.23 not only maps out the full picture of the emotions in this scene, but also explains how emotive meanings interact to achieve local coherence.

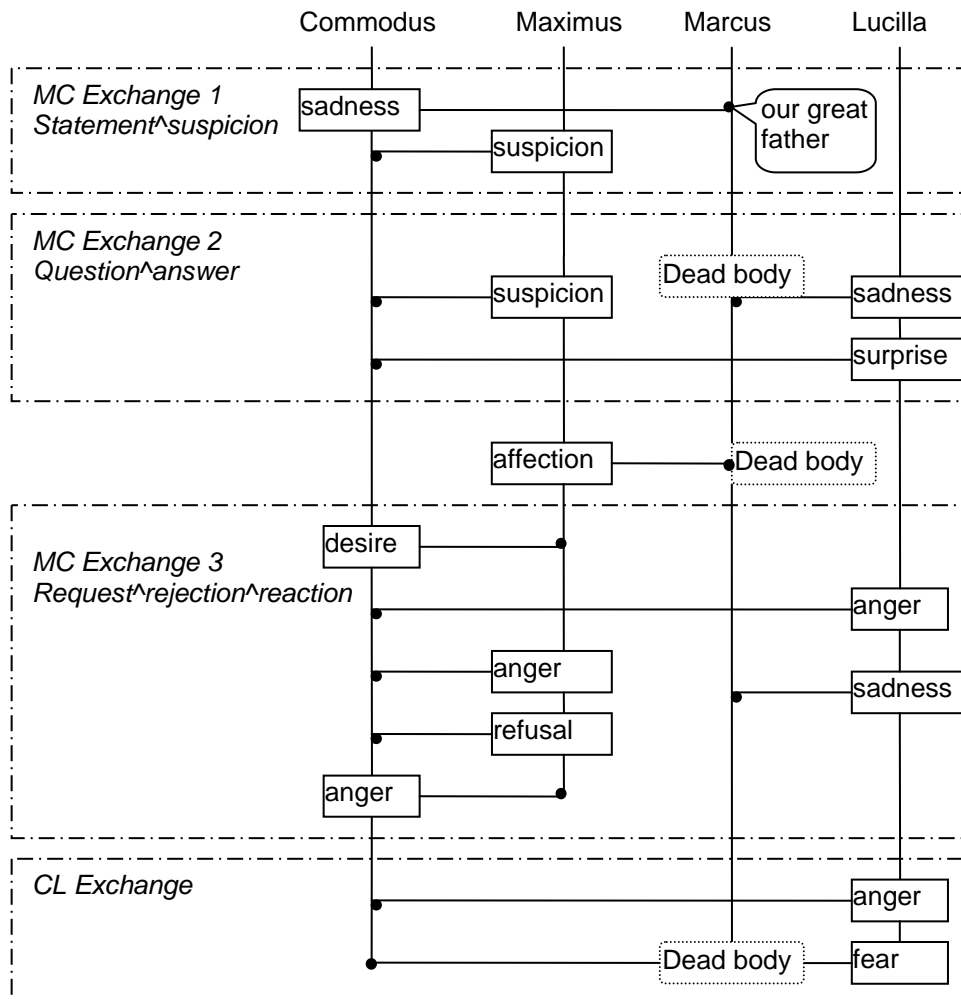

















Figure 4.23 The network of emotion interaction and emotion chain

#### 4.6.2 The Representation of Emotion in *Pretty Woman*

In this section, two scenes from *Pretty Woman* (74.9 to 77.4 minutes), in which language plays a primary role, are analyzed. The two scenes, as transcribed in Table 4.11, are perhaps the most emotional ones in *Pretty Woman* and are classic scenes in romantic films. Although the way emotions are *elicited* is simple, the *Expressions* of emotion are complex. Different from the scene in *Gladiator*, in these scenes the shot doesn't change so rapidly. One shot usually represents two or more turns without alternation, and there are also many tracking shots following the movement of the speaking characters. Therefore, it makes more sense to focus on the interaction structure, instead of shot structure. Given these two differences, the aim of this analysis is to explicate the working of linguistic and nonverbal resources in emotion expression in *multimodal interaction*, which are fundamental in both films and everyday communication. The frameworks applied are therefore mainly emotion Expression (Figure 4.8) and emotion in interaction (Figure 4.11). In the following, a detailed analysis based on these frameworks is provided.

Shot	Visual image	Dialogue
First scene (73.9 to 74.7 minutes in the film)		
1		Stuckey: Having a nice time, Vivian?  Vivian: Yeah, I'm having a great time.
2a		Stuckey: Must be quite a change from Hollywood Boulevard, hmm?  Vivian: What?

2b		Stuckey: Yeah, Edward told me. But don't worry. Your secret is safe with me. Listen. Maybe, uh, you and I could get together sometime after Edward leaves.
2c		Vivian: Yes, sure, why not
2d		Stuckey: Well, then we'll just have to do that, hmm?
3a		
3b		
Second scene (74.9 to 77.4 minutes in the film)		
4a		<p>Vivian: Display unhappiness</p> <p>(1) Edward: You all right?</p> <p>Vivian: I'm fine.</p> <p>Edward: Fine. Oh, that's good. Seven 'fines' since we left the match.</p>
4b		<p>(2) Edward: Could I have another word, please?</p> <p>Vivian: Asshole. There's a word.</p> <p>Edward: Think I liked 'fine' better.</p>

4c		<p>(3) Vivian: Just tell me one thing, why do you dress me up...</p> <p>Edward: Well for one thing, it suits you...</p>
4d		<p>(4) Vivian: No. What I mean is, if you were gonna tell everybody I'm a hooker, why didn't you just let me wear my own clothes, okay?</p> <p>Edward: I did not, I did not—</p> <p>(5) Vivian: I mean, in my own clothes, when someone like that guy Stuckey comes up to me, I can handle it, I'm prepared.</p>
4e		<p>Edward: I'm very sorry. I'm not happy with Stuckey at all for saying that or doing that. But he is my attorney. I've known him for ten years. He thought you were some kind of an industrial spy. The guy's paranoid.</p>
4f		<p>(6) Vivian: What are you, my pimp now? You know, you think you can just pass me around to your friends? I'm not some little toy!</p> <p>Edward: No you're not my toy. I know you're not my toy.</p>
5a		<p>(7) Edward: Vivian. Vivian! I'm speaking to you. Come back here. I hate to point out the obvious, but you are, in fact, a hooker, and you are my employee.</p>
5b		<p>Vivian: Look, you don't own me! I decide! Okay? - I say who, I say when, I--I say who!</p>





6		Edward: I refuse to spend the next three days fighting with you! I said I was sorry. I meant it! That's the end of it.
7		(8) Vivian: I am sorry I ever met you. I'm sorry I ever got into your stupid car. Edward: As if you had so many more appealing options.
8a		(9) Vivian: I've never had anyone make me feel as cheap as you did today. Edward: Somehow I find that very hard to believe.
8b		Vivian is leaving (10) Edward: Where you going? Vivian: I want my money. I wanna get out of here. Vivian then leaves

Table 4.11 Data transcription from *Pretty Woman*

The first scene mainly represents the Eliciting Condition of Vivian's emotion in her interaction with Philip Stuckey. In the first exchange (shot 1), Stuckey inquires about Vivian's emotion status and Vivian gives an answer, and they form a K2^K1 structure (cf. Figure 4.11). Vivian's expression of emotion involves the facial expression of smile, linguistic inscription, and the vocal features of the utterance (e.g. the stress on 'great'). Then in the next exchange, Stuckey asks another question which indicates that he knows she is a prostitute. This question is not answered, but *reacted* with surprise as Vivian says "what". Stuckey provides an explanation in the first move in the third exchange. Then in his second move, he makes pass at Vivian. Vivian's facial expression shows embarrassment in shot 2b, but she puts on a smile and gives a positive reply (shot 2c). In

shot 2d, Vivian's face clearly shows dislike as Stuckey touches her. After Stuckey leaves, Vivian's facial expression shows uneasiness (shot 3a) and in shot 3b she touches her neck with her hand which further indicates her embarrassment. Although the exact type of emotion cannot be determined, based on shared appraisal, we are certain that the event is undesirable, her well-being is sabotaged, and the emotion belongs to the category of un/happiness. Vivian's emotions are summarized in Figure 4.24.

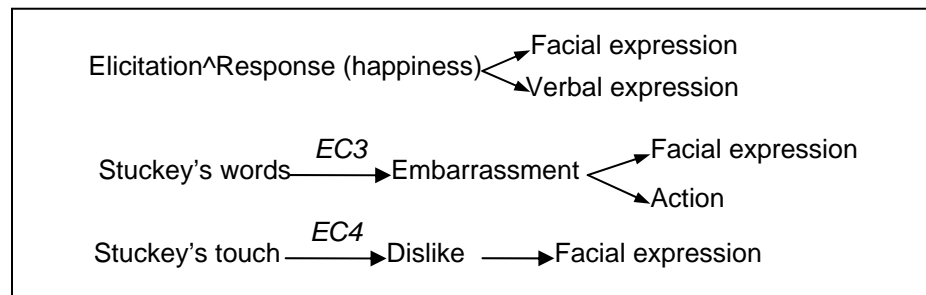


Figure 4.24 Vivian's emotions in the first scene

In the second scene, Vivian's emotion is anger and the previous scene is part of the Eliciting Condition. According to Ortony et al. (1988), the elicitation of anger involves both goal disruption (undesirability) and standard disruption (blameworthiness). In this case, Edward's behavior of telling Stuckey is standard disruption and the insult and displeasure she experienced is goal disruption. These two Eliciting Conditions are called ECa and ECb respectively, and their combination results in Vivian's anger. Vivian's anger is expressed in her interaction with Edward, which is analyzed below.

The interaction has ten exchanges and the commodity of exchange includes both the emotion and its Eliciting Conditions. According to the topic of the exchange, they are divided into four *transactions*. The first transaction includes the first two exchanges, in which the topic is Vivian's emotion. Exchange 1 is illustrated in shot 4a in Table 4.11.



Vivian's emotional status is first displayed nonverbally. Then Edward asks about her emotion, and Vivian answers "I am fine" in an unhappy manner. Vivian's response shows *incongruence* between verbal and nonverbal expressions (cf. Figure 4.10), through which she expresses not only her unhappiness, but also her unwillingness to communicate with Edward. In the second exchange, Edward demands Vivian's emotion further by asking for another word and Vivian answers "asshole" which is a linguistic signal of negative emotions, especially anger. These two exchanges are both simple K2 (inquiry)^K1 (expression) structure.

The topic of the second transaction (Exchanges 4 to 7) is the Eliciting Condition that Edward told Stuckey that Vivian is a prostitute and that Vivian felt insulted by Stuckey. In Exchange 4, Vivian recounts the Eliciting Condition that Edward revealed her identity (ECa), but Edward denies it. Exchange 5 communicates the Eliciting Condition that Stuckey comes up to her and insults her (ECb). It is a subjunctive expression which equals to saying "I was not in my clothes and I was not prepared (so I felt insulted)". The anger is also expressed by the forward posture and the facial expression (shot 4d). Edward's response consists of three acts. In the first two he empathizes with the Eliciting Condition in his apology and in his Attitude that he is 'not happy with Stuckey at all'. In the third act, Edward explains why he told Stuckey Vivian is a hooker. This explanation, however, provokes Vivian's another expression of anger in Exchange 6, which again communicates the Eliciting Condition that Edward revealed Vivian's identity (ECa). She interprets his behavior as being a pimp and challenges this behavior by saying that she is not a toy. The accompanying forward posture and hand gesture are also expressive of the anger (shot 4f). Her challenge is then responded supportively by Edward. Exchange 7 is

initiated by Edward who makes the statement that Vivian is a hooker and is his employee. This statement is intended to justify his behavior of telling Stuckey, but it is challenged by Vivian. This challenge is the climax of her expression, judging from her posture and facial expression in shot 5b as well as the loudness and pitch level of the voice.

The topic of the third transaction moves from negotiating the Eliciting Condition to Feeling State. In Exchange 8, Vivian expresses her regret of meeting Edward. This move is challenged by Edward. In Exchange 9, Vivian recounts her feeling of being humiliated. The recount also attributes the responsibility to Edward ('you make me feel cheap') which justifies her anger to him. This expression is also challenged by Edward. Finally, the resolution is that Vivian wants to leave. Her utterance in Exchange 10, which constitutes another transaction, is a commissive speech act, which is then enacted by the material action of leaving.

To sum up, the linguistic expressions of emotion in this multiple-turn interaction include both denotation and signal, and the former includes all stages of Eliciting Condition, Feeling State and Expression stage (cf. Figure 4.8). Complementary to Fiehler's (2002) framework which focuses on ways of thematizing emotion (expression of Feeling State in the framework in this thesis) (see Section 4.2.3), this model provides a more structured analysis of expressions where emotion is not thematized. It is more significant because, as Fiehler (2002: 86) acknowledges, emotions are not thematized in most emotion communications. The nonverbal features are also analyzed and their relation to verbal expressions is mostly *amplification* (cf. Figure 4.10).

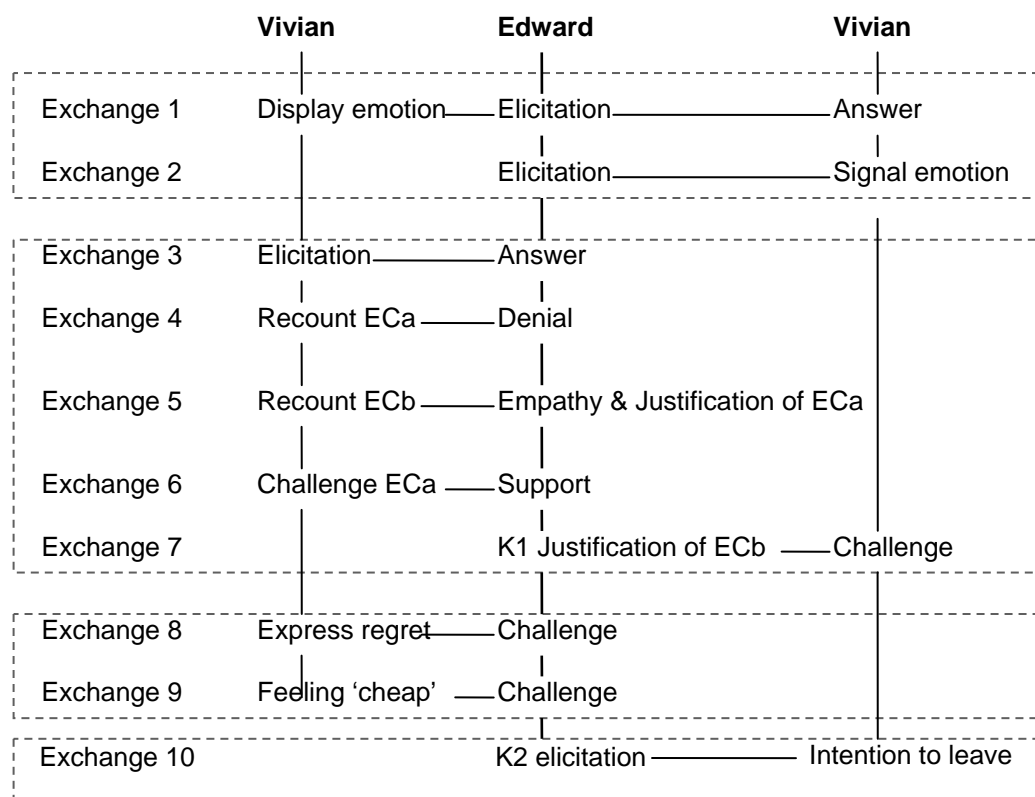


Figure 4.25 Summary of linguistic expressions of emotion in interaction

As with Figure 4.23 in the analysis of *Gladiator*, the patterns of emotion interaction and the construction of local coherence are shown in Figure 4.25. First of all, the four transactions (in broken-line boxes) are connected as communicating different stages of one single emotion, which gives unity to all its expressions. The connection of all Vivian's expressions is represented by the vertical lines. In this sense, this scene is much simpler than the scene in *Gladiator* because there is only one emotion, that is, anger, although the pattern of response is more complex, as is explicated below. Within each transaction, for example the second one, which is the most complicated among the four, coherence is achieved by negotiating the same topic, which is Edward's revealing of Vivian's identity (ECa), represented by the vertical lines in the first column.

Second, the coherence is achieved by turn relations within each exchange, shown as the horizontal lines. The Figure shows both Vivian^Edward exchanges and Edward^Vivian exchanges, depending on who initiates the interaction. So the two 'Vivians' in the figure indicate her two roles as initiating or responding, but not both. As is clearly shown, each initiation is followed by a particular response, connected by the horizontal lines.

Third, the responses also form a pattern that gives texture to the interaction. I shall focus on the responses of Edward (represented as vertical lines which are thicker than those connecting Vivian's expression), in which some initiations are also included. The change of Edward's reaction shapes Vivian's expression and the whole interaction to some extent. In the first transaction, Edward initiates. His Attitude towards Vivian is positive: he is concerned about her emotion. In the second transaction, Edward's response is generally supportive: he acknowledges Vivian's position and empathizes with her feelings. But his Attitude comes to a change in Exchange 7, in which he seems to be irritated and justifies his behavior by pointing out that she is just a prostitute and his employee. In this move, Edward distances himself from Vivian by asserting his power position. Then in a following move, which is not exchanged (shot 6), he further asserts his authority by 'ordering' Vivian to stop the accusation. But his efforts of justification and asserting authority only provoke more intense anger expressions from Vivian and his reactions become totally negative in the third transaction. The tension between them abates in the fourth transaction, in which Edward again initiates the interaction and shows concern. In all, Edward's reactions to Vivian's emotion forms a trajectory of concern, support, justification, asserting power, challenge and back to concern. As a result, the

tension between them develops in a curve-like manner from trough to peak and then back to trough. This development, which not only cues Vivian's expression of emotion but also contributes to the coherence of the interaction, constitutes an important dimension of emotion representation.

To sum up, the explication of the pattern of response (thicker vertical lines), as well as turn relation in exchanges (horizontal lines) and the connectedness of Vivian's expressions (vertical lines), enables us to understand the complexity of the interaction not only in terms of emotion expression and response but also in terms of how the elements hang together as a coherent discourse. The analysis counts as another attempt besides the model in Section 4.4 to relate patterns of interpersonal meaning to the textual semantics of film discourse.

#### **4.7 Summary of Chapter 4**

This chapter provides a semiotic theorization of how emotion is represented in film, complementing cognitive approaches which focus on how film elicits emotion from the viewers. The stratified semiotic model is applied to film discourse to investigate how emotive meaning is realized through the choices of verbal/nonverbal resources and filmic devices. Meanwhile, the framework draws upon the cognitive theories of emotion which brings the representational choices into a coherent framework at the semantic level, and then choice systems for the representation of the two main components of Eliciting Condition and Expression are developed. At the level of discursive organization, the choices available in the shot organization of the Eliciting Condition and Expression are examined. The role of Character Emotion in the construction of local coherence is also elucidated in the analysis of the two film episodes. Moving up further along the semiotic

strata, the role of Character Emotion in shaping film genre is explored from a topological perspective.

This chapter concludes that the social semiotic approach, combined with the cognitive account of emotion structure, is able to explain how emotion is constructed in film, although not all resources are fully discussed (e.g. the use of music, color, etc.). Such semiotic discussions complements current studies which focus on film viewer's emotion. It does not only explain how various film techniques work to represent emotion, but is also significant for the study of viewer emotion since Character Emotion is the most important source that elicits viewer emotion, as demonstrated in Chapter 6.

## **Chapter 5 The Representation of Character Judgment and Character Attributes**

### **5.1 Introduction**

As introduced in Chapter 2, for cognitive film analysts, understanding film is a cognitive capacity that is part of a more general ‘sense seeking’ behavior in humans. This position is evidenced from Thompson (1999) who regards character recognition as an automatic process enabled by the viewer’s cognitive capacity. In his theory of character engagement, Smith (1995) also perceives character as a collection of inert, textually described traits and it is our cognitive capacity that constructs the traits as integral, discrete character.

Complementary to this approach, in this study Character Judgment and Character Attribute are seen as the result of complex semiotic discursive choices which serve to guide viewers’ mental representation (cf. Bateman and Schmidt, 2011). This position allows us to examine how Character Judgment and Character Attributes are constructed and what patterns they form in specific genres of film. The aim of this chapter, then, is to provide a model for the systematic analysis of the semiotic construction and discursive patterns of Character Attributes reported by other characters and invoked by the representational and interactive resources. The general framework of analysis, together with a brief review of related studies, is presented in Section 5.2. Then in the next two sections, detailed theoretical frameworks for modeling the semiotic construction of Character Judgment and Character Attributes are developed. The discursive choices of Character Attributes are examined in relation to the construction of viewer engagement,

genre and ideology in Section 5.5. Finally, the frameworks are applied to the analysis of the construction and patterns of Character Attributes in two film texts in Section 5.6.

## **5.2 Theoretical Framework**

Character Attribute is not an objective existence, but the result of Judgment according to certain social standards. In this section, a theoretical framework for investigating Judgment is developed, mainly based on Appraisal theory (Martin and White, 2005). The framework first distinguishes the role of character as Appraiser and character as Appraised (cf. Section 1.3.1). In Section 5.3 and Section 5.4, I shall investigate how characters express their Judgments about other characters and themselves and how the Character Attributes are constructed as targets of Judgment respectively.

As introduced in Section 3.3, in Appraisal theory, Character Attributes are judged according to the standards of social esteem and social sanction. According to social esteem, a person is admired or criticized, according to the categories of normality (how special), capacity (how capable), power (social status) and tenacity (how dependable). According to social sanction, a person is praised or condemned according to the standard of morality. In this study, Character Attributes are examined according to these five categories.

The framework of analysis is also informed by several previous studies which deal with Character Attributes. First, the investigation of the construction of Character Attributes at the initial introduction of a character draws upon Tseng's (2009) theory of presenting characters. Tseng's (2009) system includes the two sub-systems of *mode of realization* and *salience*, as shown in Figure 5.1. In terms of presenting through salience,



she distinguishes between *immediate* presentation through close shot, and *gradual* presentation which can be *dynamic* (e.g. bring a character into focus by zooming in) or *static* (e.g. shots of body parts or sound of the character speaking before he/she shows up).

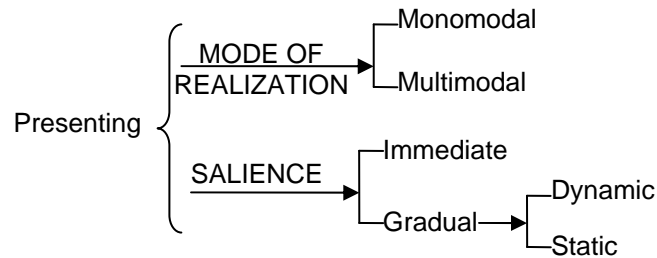


Figure 5.1 The system of presenting characters (Tseng, 2009: 97)

Tseng's (2009) concern is with the 'identification' of the character, that is, the identity tracking of people and things (cf. Martin, 1992). Complementing her study of the ideational and textual dimension of presenting characters, the present framework takes into consideration the interpersonal dimension by arguing that Character Attributes are presented at the same time. This interpersonal (evaluative) dimension is an essential part in the presentation of characters. As Thompson (1999: 13) puts it, "as soon as the characters appear, or even before we see them, they are assigned a set of clear traits". Different from Thompson's cognitive position, however, the 'traits' are seen as semiotic discursive constructs, rather than viewer's cognitive constructs. In the present analysis, the focus is on what Character Attributes are invoked and how they are constructed when the characters are presented. Meanwhile, for Tseng (2009), a character is considered as 'presented' if he/she can be re-identified when he/she reappears, so her analysis stops at the moment the character is 'presented'. In contrast, the object of the present analysis is sometimes longer because the character actions after the character is 'presented' (but within the same scene) may also be considered. To demonstrate the significance of

modeling Character Attributes when they are introduced, analyses and comparisons of the presentation of four characters in two films are provided in Section 5.6.

The theorization of the construction and patterns of Character Attributes is also related to Smith's (1995) study of *character engagement*. Smith (1995) proposes the widely influential 'structure of sympathy' to explain viewers' cognitive and emotional reaction to film characters, as reviewed in Section 2.3.4. He also distinguishes between Manichean and Graduated moral structures according to the feature of Character Attributes. Smith's (1995) notions of 'allegiance' and 'moral structure' are crucial to the understanding of the working mechanisms of film discourse and viewer engagement, and are therefore addressed from a semiotic discursive perspective in this chapter. The frameworks for systematically mapping out the multimodal construction and the discursive choices of Character Attributes are developed in Sections 5.4 and 5.5 respectively. These frameworks are applied to analyze the construction of allegiance and Manichean/Graduated moral structures in Section 5.6.

Patterns of Character Attribute (e.g. the moral structure) are also significant for realizing social values and ideology in film. Social values are related to Character Attributes because our Judgments of human behavior are highly determined by social cultural values and the attitudes of what to admire/criticize (social esteem) and what to praise/condemn (social sanction) are formed social-culturally (White, 1998: 45). There are various ways that social values and ideology can be realized in film, as elaborated in Section 5.5 and analyzed in Section 5.6.

To summarize the general theoretical framework, the two levels of Judgment, namely, the *multi-semiotic construction* of Character Judgment and Attributes, and the *discursive*

*patterns* of Character Attributes, are investigated. Moving up along the scale of abstraction to genre and ideology, the framework also takes into consideration how the patterns of Character Attributes shape specific film genres and reflect the social values and ideology of the filmmaker. Together, these aspects of concern provide a comprehensive social semiotic analysis of an essential aspect of filmic meaning.

### **5.3 Character as Appraiser: The Filmic Representation of Character Judgment**

#### **5.3.1 The Multimodal Construction of Character Judgment**

Similar to the representation of Character Emotion, characters use multimodal resources to express their Judgment of other characters and themselves. The three-staged model for emotion representation is also applicable to the construction of Judgment, forming the scenario of Figure 5.2.

Eliciting Condition  $\Rightarrow$  Judgment concept  $\Rightarrow$  Resultant action

Figure 5.2 The model of Judgment in film

Based on Figure 5.2, the Judgment system is shown as Figure 5.3. As with the representation of emotion, the primary distinction is between *direct* and *indirect* Judgment. Direct Judgment is mainly expressed linguistically, although some emblematic gestures are also conventionalized to encode certain Judgments. The linguistic resources can be literal, using attitudinal lexis (e.g. ‘brave’, ‘kind’), or metaphorical. The metaphorical expressions significantly expand the signifying power of language, as discussed in detail in Section 5.3.2.

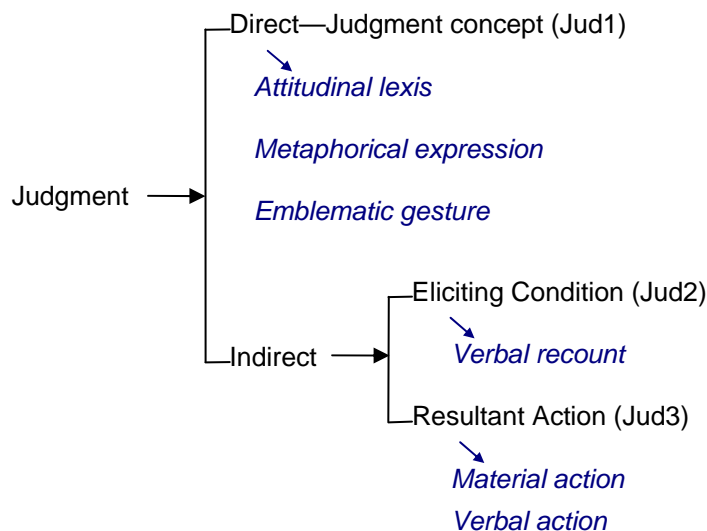


Figure 5.3 The systemic choices for expressing Judgment

Indirect Judgment can be expressed in two ways, by recounting the event that elicits the Judgment (i.e. the ideational content) or by saying/doing things that are motivated by the Judgment. Eliciting Condition of the Judgment is mainly represented by language, although other semiotic modes like painting or sign language may also be used. For example, the expression ‘she donated all her money to the poor’ represents the Eliciting Condition that invokes positive Judgment of morality. Similar to the fact that a person’s emotional reaction to an Eliciting Condition is specified by his/her goals, the attitudinal meaning of an eliciting event can only be inferred in relation to the appraiser’s *standard* of Judgment (i.e. value orientation). In most cases, the value orientation is assumed as similar among cultural members, that is, as social norms or standards. However, there may be cases where the Appraiser’s standard is different from or contradicts the standard of a certain culture. Such cases are common for the Attitude of the villains represented in film and their aberrant Attitude also serves to intensify their evilness.

A special kind of Eliciting Condition worth noting is the *identity* of the Appraised. In many cases, identity is inferred based on Character Attributes. In other cases, however, identity may be recognized first and invokes Judgment based on our stereotyped knowledge of that identity or profession (e.g. doctors, statesman, etc.). Such identities are constructed in many ways, which can be broadly categorized into cues from Appraiser and cues exhibited by the Appraised. The second category, namely, the embodied processes (e.g. what he/she does, wears, etc.) are elucidated in Section 5.4.5. In terms of cues from the Appraiser, identity is inscribed directly (if it is indirect, identity is invoked based on the aggregation of Character Attributes, rather than serving the function of invoking attributes). The most straightforward way is through the relational identifying process (e.g. He is the President of the United States) (cf. Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). The identity can also be revealed through the ideational content of address terms, for example, ‘President xxx’, ‘your majesty’, and so on. Meanwhile, the choice of the address term signals the Appraiser’s Judgment of his/her relation in terms of power and distance (cf. Brown and Gilman, 1960).

Judgment may also result in various actions, including immediate material actions and more abstract verbal actions (speech acts), and they constitute the second way of indirect construction. The behavioral/actional expression of Judgment is not as clear as that of emotion, although some actions are conventionalized to signal Judgment. An obvious example is the action of bowing or kneeling, which signals the Appraiser’s Judgment of the status of the Appraised. Such actions, however, need to be considered within specific social cultural contexts. For example, bowing may be an act of courtesy in Japan and kneeling may be used for begging, although both may reveal the respective

status of the interactants. In terms of verbal action, there are two kinds of verbal representations of Resultant Action. Language may be used to *recount* the nonverbal behavior just mentioned; it can also represent more abstract actions, typically *commissive speech acts*, which commits the speaker to some future actions (cf. Searle, 1975). For example, in a given context, the utterance ‘I will never do business with him again’ invokes ‘my’ negative Judgments about ‘him’.

As with the coding of Emotion, indirect expression of Eliciting Condition is labeled ‘t1’ and indirect expression of Resultant Action is labeled ‘t2’. The following examples are taken from *Gladiator* to illustrate the expressions of Judgment.

- (1) Marcus: Commodus is not a moral man.
- (2) Senator Gaius: He (Commodus) neglects even the fundamental task of government.
- (3) Marcus: I want you (Maximus) to become the protector of Rome after I die. I will empower you to one and alone- to give power back to the people of Rome and end the corruption that has crippled it.
- (4) Maximus: (bowing before Commodus) Your highness.

Example (1) is Direct Judgment using attitudinal lexis of ‘moral’. Example (2) is Indirect Judgment which recounts the Eliciting Condition of the Judgment. Indirect Judgment may be vague and semantic analysis is sometimes needed to show how it is encoded (Bateman, 2010, personal communication). In this example, ‘neglect’ is a behavior that is reproached, and the neglect of ‘fundamental’ responsibility is more

reproachable. The word ‘even’ intensifies the Appraiser’s Judgment. Example (3) is Indirect Judgment through the resultant speech act. The first sentence is a directive speech act and the second a commissive. By giving this important job to Maximus, Marcus first shows that he trusts Maximus (veracity). Second, the nature and responsibility involved in the job, that is, being ‘protector of Rome’ and ‘give power back to the people of Rome and end the corruption’, involves certain qualities that Marcus finds in Maximus, which include capacity (he can do it) and morality (he will do it). Therefore, although we cannot be definite of Marcus’ subjectivity, his Judgment of Maximus through speech acts in terms of tenacity, capacity and morality is evident. In Example (4), Maximus expresses his Judgment of Commodus’ status (capacity) using verbal and behavioral resources. The term ‘your highness’, which is used to address royal or noble families, reveals the status of Commodus. Meanwhile, Maximus’ choice of the term, instead of others (e.g. calling his name), signals his Judgment of Commodus’ status and their interpersonal relation. Maximus also uses the action of bowing to signal this Judgment. The Judgments and their realizations of these four examples are summarized in Table 5.1.

Appraiser	Appraised	Judgment	Realization
Marcus	Commodus	-mor	Attitudinal lexis
Gaius	Commodus	-cap, t1	Eliciting Condition
Marcus	Maximus	+ten, +cap, +mor, t2	resultant speech act
Maximus	Commodus	+cap, t1, t2	Address term Behavioral expression

Table 5.1 Example of Judgment coding

It should be noted that Judgment is always made by an individual in specific contexts and the attitudinal meaning cannot be isolated from context. As Martin and White (2005: 52) point out, a given lexical item may vary its attitudinal meaning according to the context. The example they provide is the attitudinal meaning of 'slow'. It encodes negative capacity in most contexts, but conveys an entirely positive Judgment in the phrase 'the slow food movement (as compared to fast food)'. The notion of 'context dependence', however, should not be restricted to the meaning of attitudinal lexis. In the present framework, it is expanded in two ways. First, the Judgment conveyed by the recount of the Eliciting Condition can only be inferred with the knowledge of the Appraiser's value orientation. As is noted above, an event may be judged quite differently based on different social values. Second, different semiotic resources should be taken together in the analysis of Judgment. In particular, Judgment may be accompanied by Affect which complicates the Attitude. Such accompaniment is common in both real life and film and will be investigated in Section 5.3.3. But before moving on to that, I shall first discuss the role of metaphor in the linguistic expression of Judgment.

### **5.3.2 The Role of Metaphor in Expressing Judgment**

The primary linguistic resource of Judgment is naturally attitudinal lexis, which inscribes Judgment in the most direct way, such as the words 'powerful', 'kind', and others. However, there is a more complex way of encoding Judgment concepts, that is, through metaphors. Metaphors make language a more powerful tool for encoding abstract concepts, as is advocated by the conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) and demonstrated in the analysis of emotion concepts by Kövecses (1986, 2000).



However, the metaphorical representation of human quality such as capacity and morality receives less attention (but see Lakoff, 1996; Goatly, 2007).

Lakoff (1996) studies the metaphorical expression of morality in the domain of politics. He proposes the 'Metaphor of Moral Strength', MORALITY IS RESISTING A PHYSICAL FORCE, which entails a set of correspondences between the moral and physical domains, including BEING GOOD IS BEING UPRIGHT, BEING BAD IS BEING LOW, DOING EVIL IS FALLING, EVIL IS A FORCE and MORALITY IS STRENGTH (Lakoff, 1996: 72). Goatly (2007) focuses on another dimension of Judgment, namely, capacity. He identifies several conceptual metaphors for the representation of power, including the orientational metaphors of POWER IS UP, IMPORTANT IS CENTRAL and so on. He also proposes metaphors for humans, such as QUALITY IS MONEY, HUMAN IS MACHINE and HUMAN IS ANIMAL. The studies demonstrate the power of metaphor for encoding abstract concepts of human quality. Based on previous studies, I shall briefly sketch a framework for the study of the metaphorical representation of human attributes.

Two general principles for the metaphorical expression of Judgment are identified: dehumanization and concretization. That is, human beings are compared to non-human beings and attributes of human beings are compared to either substances or attributes of non-human beings. Thus the generic-level metaphors include HUMAN BEINGS ARE NON-HUMAN BEINGS (CONTAINER/ANIMAL/MACHINE...), ATTRIBUTES ARE SUBSTANCE and ATTRIBUTES OF HUMAN BEINGS ARE ATTRIBUTES OF NON-HUMAN BEINGS. In the expression 'his heart is full of courage and his head full of wisdom' (Tenacity, Capacity), the person is understood as container and his attributes are substance in it. In the expression 'he is a chicken', the person is understood as non-human being and the conventional attribute of

chicken is projected onto him. Finer-grained entailments of the metaphors and their realizations will not be discussed here (see Feng, 2008 for detailed analysis).

Another type of metaphor that cannot be neglected is the orientational metaphor, through which abstract concepts are understood in terms of spatial orientation such as up, down, central and so on. In Judgment, there is a pair of metaphors of up-down orientation that is of particular significance: POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES ARE UP and NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES ARE DOWN. Examples include ‘he fell ill’ (capacity, ILL IS DOWN), ‘he is an upright person’ (morality, MORAL IS UP) and ‘his father holds a high position in the military’ (capacity, STATUS IS UP). The orientational metaphors of Judgment may also be realized visually (El Refaie, 2003; Feng and O’Halloran, forthcoming; Forceville, 1996; Goatly, 2007) and their role in the construction of Character Attributes is discussed in section 5.4.

### **5.3.3 The Relation between Judgment and Emotion**

According to Martin and White (2005), Judgment is conceptualized as ‘institutionalized Affect’. Complementing this perspective, this section attempts to explain the relation between Judgment and Affect (Emotion) from a cognitive psychological perspective. Based on cognitive appraisal theory and data analysis, congruent and incongruent relations between Judgment and Emotion are distinguished. *Congruent* relations are based on the cognitive appraisal theory that some emotions are motivated by the Judgment of people’s actions (Ortony et al., 1988). The appraisal of the praiseworthiness/blameworthiness of an action based on social cultural standards leads to what they call ‘attribution emotions’. Table 5.2 presents the structure of the emotion types resulting from approving or disapproving the actions of agents.

IDENTITY OF AGENT	APPRAISAL OF AGENT'S ACTION	
	PRAISEWORTHY	BLAMEWORTHY
SELF	Pride	Shame
OTHER	Admiration	Reproach

Table 5.2 Attribution emotions (Ortony et al., 1988: 136)

Judgment and Emotion in this sense are two aspects (or stages) of one psychological construct (i.e. appraisal process). It follows that the semiotic expression of ‘attribution emotions’ entails corresponding Judgments, that is, *the Judgment is the Eliciting Condition of the Emotion*. This constitutes one way of the indirect realization of Attitude in Martin and White (2005) and also explains the underlying mechanism of *attitudinal metaphor* (that is, the use of one to encode the other, see Lemke, 1998b). The entailed Judgment (which elicits the Emotion) may also be verbalized. In Table 5.3 from Season 4, Episode 12 of *Friends* (11.4 minutes), Rachel’s (character to the right) facial expression, posture, and pitch level all suggest anger. The verbal expression ‘you are just a horrible person’ inscribes the Judgment of Joana’s action which elicits the anger.

In the example in Table 5.3, the emotion is behaviorally manifested (Ex2 in Figure 4.8). In other cases, the resultant speech act may invoke both Emotion and Judgment, constituting *multiple invocation*. In the utterance of Marcus in Example (3) in Section 5.3.1, Marcus’ decision to make Maximus his successor not only invokes the positive Judgment, but also his Emotion of trust towards Maximus. In another example from *Gladiator*, when Commodus enters Rome, some citizens shout “Go away; you will never rule us, Commodus”. This expression invokes both their negative Emotion and negative

Judgment of Commodus, and as in the examples above, it is likely the Emotion is caused by the Judgment.


Visual image	Emotion expression	Judgment expression
	Facial expression,  Posture  Pitch level	You are just a horrible person.

Table 5.3 Coupling of Emotion and Judgment

		
1	2	3

Table 5.4 Incongruent Emotion and Judgment (a)



Visual image	Visual features	Soundtrack
	Close shot	Commodus: Can I count on you when the time comes?
	Close shot  Smiling face	Maximus: Your highness, when you father releases me, I intend to go home.

Table 5.5 Incongruent Emotion and Judgment (b)

Emotion and Judgment may also be *incongruent*, involving two different cognitive appraisal processes. The two examples in Tables 5.4 and 5.5 from *Gladiator* are good cases in point. In the first shot in Table 5.4 (13.4 minutes into the film), the woman (Lucilla) makes a comment “Your (Commodus) incessant scheming is hurting my head”. This is an expression of both Emotion and Judgment. ‘Hurting my head’ encodes the woman’s negative Emotion while ‘your incessant scheming’ inscribes negative Judgment of morality. However, the Judgment is not reinforced, but weakened by other semiotic resources. The comment is made in a joking way while Lucilla is lying in bed leisurely and playing with the bouquet in her hands, as is shown in shot 1. In shot 2, her comment is reacted to with a smile, followed by a smile of Lucilla in shot 3. The atmosphere seems to be warm and affectionate. The comment is as a result not a serious negative Judgment. The Attitude constructed by the verbal and nonverbal resources is illustrated as Table 5.6. To summarize, there are two appraisal processes going on in the expression: the appraisal of Commodus’ action, which leads to the negative Judgment and negative Emotion, and the appraisal of their intimate relation (as a loving sister). The analysis also shows the significance of multimodal analysis in the identification of Attitude.

Appraiser	Appraised	Attitude	construction
Lucilla	Commodus	-mor	Verbal
		-hap, t1	Verbal
		+affection	Body/face

Table 5.6 The encoding of incongruent Attitude

Table 5.5 (19.5 minutes into the film) is another case of the expression of divergent appraisals. In the second shot, Maximus is talking to Commodus. His verbal expression

encodes disinclination (refusal) to Commodus' request of helping him. However, this negative Attitude orientation is expressed in a manner that indicates his appraisal of Commodus' status. He uses 'your highness' before the (indirect) refusal, and the refusal is accompanied by polite smile. Taken together, Maximus' expression appraises Commodus' request as well as the status relation between them.

To sum up, this section provides an explanation of the relation between the expressions of Emotion and Judgment based on the underlying process of cognitive appraisal. It is found that this perspective is able to clarify the cognitive mechanism of congruent and incongruent relations. In the context of multimodal discourse, the unveiling of this deeper level mechanism is also significant in explicating intersemiotic relations in Attitude expression (cf. Section 4.3.2.2).

#### **5.4 Character as Appraised: The Representation of Character Attributes**

In this section, Character Attributes, which are the target, or Eliciting Condition of viewer Judgment, are explained. Similar to the categorization of the Eliciting Condition of emotion in Section 4.3.1, the aim of this section is to map out the Eliciting Condition of viewer Judgment (i.e. Character Attributes) based on the resources of representational and interactive meanings.

Few studies have investigated the semiotic representation of Character Attributes. When they do, they tend to focus on viewers' cognitive capacity of categorizing and recognizing the attributes rather than how they are textually constructed (e.g. Tan, 1996; Newman, 2005). Even when the representation of character is analyzed, the focus is on the depth or complexity of character, rather than their attributes (e.g. Newman, 2005; Tan,

1996). More closely related to the present study, Tseng (2009) investigates the theoretical ties that are used to systematically cluster together distinct actions into film events based on Hasan's (1984) identity chain and action chain. However, Tseng's (2009) focus is the textual aspect of character's identity and action, that is, how they are identified and connected to construct a cohesive discourse.

Complementing these studies, this section provides a systematic account of how Character Attributes are represented in film. Smith's (1995) study of how the morality of character is constructed includes an attempt of this kind, as reviewed in Section 2.3.4. Smith (1995) identifies the resources of action, iconography (e.g. physical attributes), music and linguistic techniques developed in literature (e.g. sociolects, epithets with a moral dimension, and symbolically charged proper names). In line with this agenda, a more systematic theorization of the resources based on the metafunctional model of social semiotics (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006) is provided in this section. Meanwhile, Martin and White's (2005) also point to the evaluative meaning of ideational content in Appraisal theory. Along this line, more detailed explanation of process types in the construction of Appraisal is provided. The framework is presented as Figure 5.4.

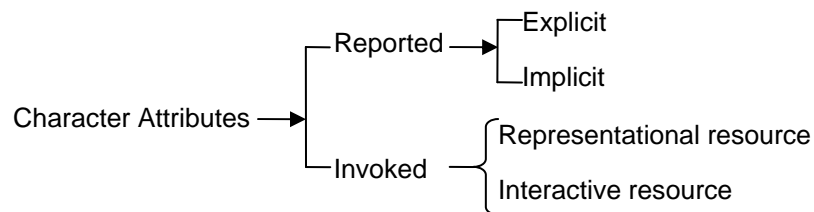


Figure 5.4 The representation of Character Attributes

The primary distinction is between those Attributes which are *reported* by film participants' Judgments and those which are *invoked* through representational and interactive resources<sup>14</sup>. Reported Judgments are discussed in Section 5.3. In this section, the representational resource of action and analytical features and the interactive resource of camera positioning are investigated.

In what follows, the potential of Appraisal meaning in these resources and the choices that are made in specific instances are examined. The significance of this step is noted by Lim (2011: 25), who points out that “an understanding of how each semiotic resource in itself makes meaning is necessary for examining the total meaning made in multimodal texts”. However, as ‘invocations’, their ‘commitment’ (Martin, 2008) to Appraisal meaning is lower than ‘inscriptions’, and the interpretation of the resources for Character Attributes is dependent on context. Therefore, the aim of this section is not to assign Appraisal meanings to the representational and interactive resources, but rather to explain the grounding upon which they are able to encode certain Character Attributes. In this way, the contextual interpretation of these resources is given a solid analytical basis. This position reclaims the argument made in Section 3.4 that the study does not aim to develop a ‘grammar’ for the multimodal construction of Appraisal meaning, but to systemize the resources and to explain their meaning making mechanisms.

#### **5.4.1 Invoking Judgment through Social Action**

Film theorists have long recognized the role of ideational meaning, especially actions, in the representation of character. As Branigan (1992: 100) points out, “our knowledge is

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<sup>14</sup> The third metafunctional dimension of compositional meaning deals with the information values (e.g. importance) of different visual entities and has little to do with inner human attributes.



limited to what is explicitly enacted by the characters, what they do and say. In this limited context, a character is essentially an agent who is defined by actions". Smith (1995: 121) similarly notes that actions are an essential source of the traits which we assign to characters. However, it is almost impossible to formulate an action or speech system denoting inner attributes simply because there are so many things we do and say. Given the complexity of material actions, most studies only exemplify how actions construct inner attributes with typical examples. Carroll (1996: 105) picks out the democratic courtesy to one's inferiors as well as protectiveness of the weak as key virtues in many films. The contribution of the current study lies in the addressing of four fundamental questions regarding characters' actions and their inner attributes. First, how can certain Attributes be recognized from an action with a fair degree of agreement from different people? Second, given its complexity, how can action be analyzed in relation to Character Attribute? Third, how are the actions represented in film? Fourth, seen as semiotic choice, what actions are chosen for the representation of particular attributes? These four questions lead to a comprehensive theorization of character action at the levels of discourse semantics (first and fourth question), semiotic structure (second questions), and realization (third question).

With respect to the first question, the answer is that evaluative meaning of character actions are shared among social members. On the one hand, most actions are recognized as culturally meaningful activities (Levinson, 1992: 69); on the other, the social standards according to which the actions are evaluated are shared. According to social psychology, events and human actions are represented as schemata (Bartlett, 1932), the central features of which are shared by many or most members of a culture. Therefore, as with

the elicitation of emotions, character actions automatically invoke Judgments from viewers if certain social standards are activated and the Judgments are similar because their social standards are shared. That is why individual behavior is interpreted as ‘social action’ (van Leeuwen, 2008) or ‘social practice’ (Scollon, 1998). Aside from invoking different categories of Judgment, actions are also judged in terms of the *intensity* of the attributes they construct. For example, the character who murders his own father is judged as higher up in the scale of immorality than who spits on the floor.

For further understanding of meaning potential of actions, the structure of action is considered with respect to the second question. Three types of actions are distinguished based on the process types of Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006): material, behavioral and verbal, which are processes of doing, reacting and saying respectively. Nonverbal action is discussed first and then the structure of verbal action is examined briefly.

In terms of action structure, this study is not concerned with the grammatical level construction of the transitivity systems (see Tseng, 2009 for discussion), rather, the focus is on the ‘field’ of discourse, which is on a higher level of abstraction. *Field* refers to “what is going on, and it is interpreted in terms of a set of activity sequences oriented to some global institutional purpose” (Martin, 1996: 128). Following Martin’s (1996) framework for field and evaluation, the term in this study does not refer to the general level field of the discourse as a whole, but the particular fields, that is, the specific activities and purposes within the discourse. Along this line of analysis, a key component of action is ‘goal orientation’ (Butt, 2003; Hasan, 1999). According to van Dijk (1976: 291), action involves a conscious being bringing about some change (in his/her body, in

an object, in a situation) with a given purpose, under certain circumstances. That is, actions cannot be defined in pure behavioristic terms, but should include the actor's *intention*. It is only in this way that the actor is held *responsible* for the action and it is exactly the intention that is subjected to value judgment. As a mental state itself, the intention is motivated by more abstract and more complex mental states, or subjectivity (van Dijk, 1976: 305). This intention or subjectivity may or may not be verbally inscribed, but it can normally be recognized as part of the 'action schema'. For example, in *Gladiator*, Commodus presses his father Marcus' head against his chest very hard while his father struggles painfully. We recognize easily that Commodus' intention is to smother his father to death. Then this intention is automatically judged as immoral according to shared social standards. Meanwhile, the performance of an action also has an *outcome* or consequence that may be judged. Finally, to complicate the structure of action, there are *complex actions* which are composed of many *basic actions*, which may be material, behavioral, verbal or a combination of them all (van Dijk, 1976: 296). Examples include building a house, going for a trip, having a party, and so on. These complex actions are called *activity types* and is a main level of analysis in Gu (2006) and Levinson (1992).

To summarize, the Judgment of character action simultaneously involves the perception of the action and its outcome, and the recognition of the intention/subjectivity. These elements of the action schema invoke Judgment according to relevant social standards and result in Judgments of normality, capacity, tenacity and morality, as shown in Figure 5.5. The intention/subjectivity is most often judged in terms of morality (e.g. intention to sacrifice for others or intention to hurt others) or tenacity (e.g. intention to

keep promise or to cheat); the bodily behavior of action may be judged in terms of tenacity (e.g. bravery); the outcome may be judged in terms of capacity (e.g. defeating the enemy).

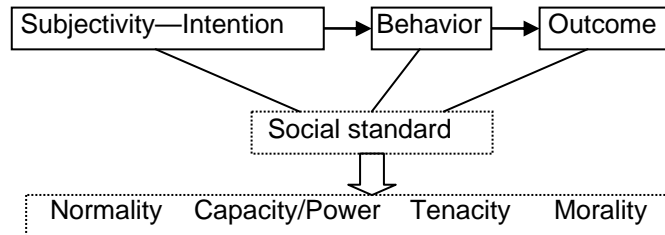


Figure 5.5 Action schema and the invocation of Judgment

Verbal actions have a similar structure as material/behavioral actions. The structure is captured nicely in the well-known *speech act theory* proposed by Austin (1962). It distinguishes between locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act, referring to the actual utterance of the speech, the intended meaning and the effect of the utterance respectively. First and foremost, all speech acts (verbal action) are performed with an intention, or the so-called ‘illocutionary point’. This intention, or the speaker’s subjectivity *symbolized* by the utterance invokes Judgment if the schema of a social cultural standard is activated (e.g. whether it is right or wrong). Searle (1975) categorizes illocutionary acts into five types, namely, assertives/representatives (e.g. facts, opinions), directives (e.g. orders, requests), commissives (e.g. promise, threatening), expressives (e.g. apologizing, congratulating) and declarations (e.g. announcements), each of which may be subjected to Judgment. A good case in point is the verbal interaction between Vivian and Stuckey in *Pretty Woman*, in which Vivian is insulted by Stuckey (see Table 4.11). Stuckey’s verbal behavior (expressive) is negatively judged because it reveals his despicable subjectivity according to social standards. Second, the verbal action itself may

be judged. Speech acts are normally performed under ‘felicitous conditions’ (Searle, 1975), and the felicitous condition may invoke Judgments. For example, giving orders may only be successful if the speaker is in the right position (e.g. higher status). Rather than symbolizing subjectivity, this type of invocation *indexes* Character Attributes through causal-continuity relations. Third, the effect of the utterance may also index character attributes, similar to the outcome of actions. These three components of verbal action (speech act) correspond to the structure of nonverbal action in Figure 5.5 and will be analyzed in the same way as nonverbal action.

In answering the third question concerning the representation of actions, the grammar of representational meaning is drawn upon (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006) to describe the choices made in the filmic representation of basic action to highlight the evaluative meaning. The structure is composed of Actor, Process (transitive and non-transitive), Goal (for transitive process) and sometimes Medium of action. Similar to linguistic sentences which can be agentized or de-agentized to emphasize or understate the responsibility of the agent for certain actions (e.g. the police shot dead the refugees vs. the refugees were shot dead), the visual Actor can also be included or excluded in representation (cf. van Leeuwen, 2008). In *inclusion*, the Actor can be foregrounded or backgrounded, mainly through shot distance. The close shot brings the agent to sharp focus and highlights his/her responsibility for the action, an effect similar to cleft sentence in verbal expression. The Patient and Medium may also be included or excluded, and if it is included, it may also be foregrounded or backgrounded. The case of exclusion is not discussed because the character cannot be Judged if he/she is unknown.

The second dimension of representation is the textual packaging of the participant-process-circumstance structure. Unlike the linear linguistic structure, the visual mode is able to represent the configuration in a single shot, or even in a single frame, as in still images (Thibault, 2000). However, films sometimes break down the structure and represent them in a combination of shots, for example, alternating shots which feature the Actor, Patient and Medium in turn. Such fragmented framing makes it possible to highlight different aspects of the action. The choice for representing action is presented in Figure 5.6.

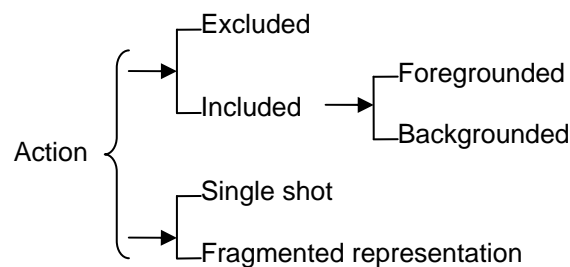


Figure 5.6 The representation of action

To answer the fourth question concerning the choice of actions, the evaluative meaning potential of action allows filmmakers to assign particular attributes to a character by choosing particular actions. To construct a character as ultimate villain, for example, actions with immoral intentions are selected. This aspect of discursive choice will be theorized and analyzed with film data in Section 5.5.

In what follows, I shall illustrate the analysis of character action at the levels of action structure, choice of representation and choice of action with an example from *Gladiator* (35.5 to 35.8 minutes in the film). The action is the character Commodus' smothering of his father to death. The intention of killing and how it invokes negative Judgment has been pointed out earlier in this section. The choice of the action is

motivated by the choice of representing him as the ultimate villain. In terms of representation, the action is featured in five alternating close up shots of Commodus' face and his father Marcus' hand and hair, shown in Table 5.7. The close shot brings the action into sharp focus and magnifies its impact on the viewer. On the one hand, Marcus' struggling hand clearly indicates that the action is changed from hugging to an attempt of murder and invokes negative Judgment; on the other, aside from highlighting Commodus' responsibility, the close shot features his anguished face three times, which indicates that he is in pain too and somewhat humanizes him. In the previous context, when he says painfully that he felt not loved by his father, we sympathize with him. His intense emotion indicates that he is not a cold-blooded murderer. In legal terms, this action borders on 'killing in the heat of passion' since he is in an intense emotional state. However, the action of patricide is still judged as extremely immoral, although the humanizing effort through focusing on Commodus' emotional state cannot be neglected (see Cyrino, 2004 for a similar interpretation).






		
1	2	3
		
4	5	

Table 5.7 The representation of character action

#### 5.4.2 Character Attribute in Analytical Process

Analytical process relates participants in terms of part-whole relations. They involve two kinds of participants: the Carrier (the whole) and any number of Possessive Attributes (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 87). Analytical process represents the outer attributes of a person which *indexes* inner attributes based on the shared cultural knowledge or folk psychology. In this section, I shall examine the meanings of the visual attributes of physical appearance, clothing, etc., and vocal features such as accent and voice quality. As is pointed out at the beginning of Section 5.4, the aim is not to assign meanings to the attributive features, but rather to explain the Appraisal meaning potential in them based on the studies of nonverbal communication, so that the contextual interpretation of their meanings has a more solid basis.

The relation between physical appearance and people's perceived quality is extensively studied in nonverbal communication theories (e.g. Andersen, 2008; Knapp and Hall, 2006; Richmond et al., 2008). Right or wrong, receivers of this physical information make attributions about our attractiveness, competence, moral character, social status and friendliness (Andersen, 2008: 32). The transference of a person's appearance to aspects of his/her personality is called 'halo effect' by Andersen (2008: 34). Such halo effect of facial features, physique and clothing is examined one by one below.

First, good-looking people are perceived as more talented (capacity), kind (morality), more credible (tenacity) and more honest (veracity) (Dion et al., 1972; Knapp and Hall, 2006; Richmond et al., 2008). Physique also has a lot to say about a person's quality. Height, especially for men, is perceived as a positive quality. Taller people are perceived as more capable (capacity), more confident, more powerful (the metaphor POWER IS UP at



play, see Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), and are more likely to succeed (Henley, 1977). Similarly, the shape of one's body also sends message about his/her character. As early as seven decades ago, Sheldon (1940) classified people into three general body types, namely, endomorphs (rounded, fat), mesomorphs (angular, athletic) and ectomorphs (linear, skinny), and many researchers have proposed the association between body type and stereotyped personality (e.g. Cortes and Gatti, 1965; Spiegel and Machotka, 1974). Clothing is an important indicator of identity and status (capacity) and also contributes to a person's taste (normality) and credibility (tenacity) (Richmond et al., 2008: 43). Aside from identity, clothing can reveal our wealth, personality and credibility level during the early stage of interaction (Richmond et al., 2008: 43). A formal solemn dress may increase the credibility level of his/her words.

In terms of auditory features, while the dynamic features of voice, such as tempo and pitch level, indicate the emotive state of the speaker, the more permanent features of accent and voice quality indicate more stable inner attributes, for example, in Labov's (1966) classic study of social stratification through the pronunciation of /r/. Numerous studies have tried to determine whether certain vocal features consistently create stereotypical Judgments of personality in others. Addington (1968) identifies nine qualities presented in voice, including breathiness, thinness, flatness, nasality, tenseness, throatiness, increased rate, and increased pitch variety. He then relates these semiotic resources to stereotyped perceptions such as masculinity, immaturity, humbleness and so on. Mulac (1976) uses experiments to investigate the relation between speech features and three dimensions of personal traits, namely, socio-intellectual status, aesthetic quality (i.e. nice/awful, beautiful/ugly), and dynamism (i.e. active/ passive, strong/weak).

Aside from possessive attributes, *associative attributes* of the characters are also included. That is, an entity does not have to be *part* of another entity to be an attribute, rather; it can also be an attribute as long as these two entities are closely related. These should be more properly categorized under ‘circumstantial element’ in the representational structure since they are not foregrounded as ‘participants’. Nevertheless, the line between them is not always clear and they are classified as analytical attributes for convenience. Typical examples include the features of the office they work in or the restaurant they go to, the extravagance of which may suggest the wealth and status of the participant.

A scene from *Gladiator* (12.8 to 13.5 minutes in the film), shown in Table 5.8 below, illustrates the analytical construction of Character Attributes. The first shot is extremely long, in which a team of soldiers are marching, guarding an armored wagon with flags on it. Then the film cuts to the second shot, which is a frontal view of the armed soldiers. The shot draws closer and brings the wagon into sight. The third shot cuts to the interior of the wagon which is luxuriously decorated. The shot pans and brings two persons into focus in a medium long shot, a woman and a man, both dressed in extravagant clothes. Then they start talking, and two medium shots are cut to the woman (shot 4) and the man (shot 5) in turn. By now, some Judgments about the status (capacity) of the two characters are invoked quite unambiguously. The analytical features of the armed soldiers and the armored wagon index the importance of the two characters; the luxurious interior of the wagon and the dress of the two characters, especially the fur coat of the woman and the rings on her fingers, are suggestive of their wealth. Viewers can be fairly sure that they are aristocratic or even royal people. As a matter of fact, such attributes may be

inferred even before the two characters appear. Viewers may assume that whoever is in that wagon is very important when they see the soldiers and the wagon.






		
1	2	3
		
4	5	

Table 5.8 Judgment through attributive process

However, the relation between analytical features and inner attributes cannot be taken as rigid rules. A good looking well dressed person may be wicked and poor. Established social culturally, these default associations can be overridden by other factors. The key point, however, is that it doesn't matter much if the Judgment based on analytical features is right or wrong according to later knowledge, but the fact that such Judgment is made and it is intended by filmmakers. For example, it is possible that in the end a shabby dressed person turns out to be a millionaire or a police officer turns out to be a serial killer, but before these later traits surface, the shabby dressed person is assumed to be poor and police officer is assumed to be moral. It is exactly because the analytical features are understood in these commonsensical ways that they are exploited for the representation of Character Attributes.

### **5.4.3 Invoking Judgment through Cinematography**

In this section, I move from representational resources to interactive resources. Specifically, the role of ‘camera’ in the construction of Character Attribute is investigated. As an interactive resource, the main function of camera is to construct the symbolic relations between image and viewer (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006; Messaris, 1997; O’Toole, 1994). It is generally agreed among scholars that the high/low angles construct symbolic power relation between the viewer and the image, close/long shots indicate social distance, and the front/oblique angles express the image participant’s involvement with the viewer (Dyer, 1989; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006; Messaris, 1994; Zettl, 1990).

The meaning of camera positioning, however, is not fixed, as with other choices of invocation. For example, Dick (2005: 53) points out that sometimes film scripts require a high or low angle shot for the sake of consistency rather than for symbolism or imagery. For this reason, the social semiotic interpretation is often criticized for making these associations rules, while in reality the connection is fluid and subject to change. Referring to spatial orientations, Kress and van Leeuwen (1998: 218) also admit that “the major challenge to our approach is the epistemological status of our claim. For instance, how can we know that in western semiosis, left and right, top and bottom have the values we attribute to them, or more fundamentally, have any value at all?”

As with Section 5.4.2, the solution to this problem is again to move from interpreting the meaning of the choices to explaining the semiotic grounding of the choices. For example, instead of assigning a meaning to low camera angle, we ask from the other way what cinematographic choices are available for the representation of character power and why low angle is chosen. To explain these two questions, the conceptual metaphor theory

proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) is employed. The theory states that most abstract concepts (target domain) are partially understood in terms of other (concrete) concepts (source domain). The mapping between the target ‘A’ and the source ‘B’ then forms the metaphor A IS B. I propose to view the relation between camera positioning and its meaning as metaphorical mapping between the source domain and the target domain (cf. Feng, 2011). In this way, instead of assigning ‘value’ to the ‘token’ of camera positioning, we understand Character Attribute in terms of the concrete camera positioning and their association becomes the mapping between the *source* and the *target* domain, as illustrated in Figure 5.7. This mapping can be seen as the master metaphor which entails all sub-mappings between options of camera positioning and semiotic meaning.

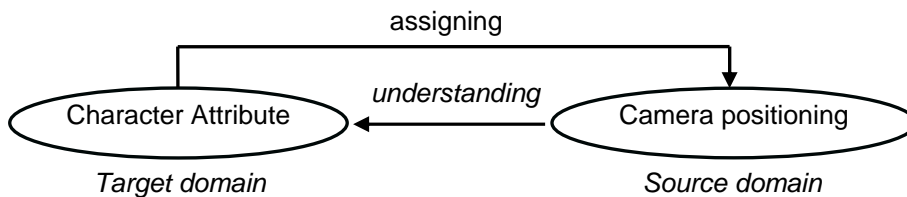


Figure 5.7 The meaning of camera positioning as metaphor

The ‘why’ question is answered by the notion of experiential basis in conceptual metaphor theory, which states that the association between camera positioning and its meaning is not arbitrary; rather, it is based on our physical and cultural experience (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 14). Therefore, seen as a metaphor, the validity of the association between camera positioning and Character Attribute becomes the existence and functioning of the experiential basis. In terms of distance, the mapping between physical distance (hence shot distance) and social distance is well established in the study of proxemics (Hall, 1966). Hall (1966) proposes that physical distance is systematically

related to social distance and he proposes the scales of intimate distance (6 to 18 inches), personal distance (1.5 to 4 feet), social distance (4 to 12 feet) and public distance (12 to 25 feet). In visual representation, these scales are reproduced as close-up shot, close medium shot, medium long shot and long shot respectively. The mapping between image-viewer power relation and vertical camera angle is based on the structural features of real life situations in which we look up to powerful people and look down upon weak people (Messaris, 1994: 9). The mapping between involvement and horizontal camera angle is based on real life situations where we face the person we want to interact with and gaze at him/her, and we turn our face (gaze) away if we don't want to interact.

Such symbolic relations can also be interpreted from the perspective of Appraisal, that is, viewers judge the image participants as powerful/powerless, close/distant, and involved/detached in relation to themselves. In other words, camera positioning is able to invoke our Judgment about the represented participant, as summarized in Table 5.9. However, in narrative films where the characters do not address the viewers directly, the function of shot distance and camera angle in terms of image-viewer relation is limited.

Camera positioning	Possible invoked Judgment
Low angle	powerful
High angle	powerless
Close shot	familiar, intimate
Long shot	unfamiliar, distant
Front angle	direct, frank
Oblique/back angle	detached, concealing

Table 5.9 Camera positioning and possible invoked Judgment

The experiential bases *only* guarantee that it is possible for camera positionings to represent certain abstract attributes (i.e. necessary but not sufficient condition) and different camera positionings are conventionalized to different degrees for representing Character Attributes. The high/low angle is mainly motivated by the power relations between image and viewer and is therefore systematically exploited to represent character capacity in both static images and different genres of moving images. In the two images in Table 5.10 from *Gladiator* (6.6 and 126 minutes into the film respectively), the character Maximus is a general talking to his soldiers in the first one and he becomes a prisoner in the second one. Aside from the narrative context, Maximus' power condition is represented by the low and high camera angles. The choice is certainly not arbitrary, but based on our embodied experience as previously noted. In *Gladiator*, the high and low angles are largely consistent with the character's power condition, and together they form the Appraisal Prosody which will be elaborated in Chapter 6.



Table 5.10 Low and high angles and Character Attributes

The choice of shot distance, on the contrary, is usually motivated by focusing viewers' attention to relevant aspects of characters' bodies and behavior (e.g., close-ups emphasize emotional expressions) (Carroll, 1996). Therefore, the primary role of close shot in relation to Character Attribute is to highlight, or to magnify the attribute

constructed by representational resources. A typical example is the close shots of monsters in horror movies which make them more threatening. However, shot distance may also invoke viewers' Judgment of their symbolic social distance with the character. As Eder (2006: 72) notes, different shot distances may suggest different para-proxemic relationships to characters: a close-up brings us very near to a character, while a panoramic view has a distancing effect. Therefore, when a character is represented in close shot, he/she may be judged as familiar or intimate to viewers. As movie characters do not interact with viewers directly, the effect of such symbolic relation is not so obvious. But in television advertisements, image-viewer relation is carefully designed to maximize their persuasive effect. Generally, medium or close medium shot (i.e. personal distance in proxemics) is used so that image-viewer relation is constructed as socially close. However, the distance is dependent on the identity of the character and the intended image-viewer relation. A brief analysis of shot distance is provided at the end of Section 5.4.4. Horizontal camera angle is also only relevant when the visual participants directly address the viewer, as in TV advertisements. When the character addresses the viewer, he/she is represented by frontal angle, with direct gaze at the viewer, so that he/she may be perceived as honest and trustworthy.

To summarize, the purpose of this section is to explicate the Appraisal resources in camera positioning. This is done by conceptualizing the association between camera positioning and Character Attribute as metaphorical mapping based on experiential basis. The notion of experiential basis is also able to explain the underlying mechanisms which result in the uncertainty of the meaning of camera positioning. That is, the default experiential basis may be overridden by other more salient factors, thus explaining the



situation where the default interpretation does not hold. For example, the use of low angle may be motivated by other salient factors and thus give it new meaning other than character power.

#### 5.4.4 Invoking Character Attributes through Identity

It is pointed out in Section 5.3.1 that although in most cases identity is recognized through the aggregation of Attributes, it may be represented before Character Attributes and invokes Judgment based on our stereotyped knowledge of that identity or profession (e.g. doctors, statesman, etc.). These two types of identity representation are termed ‘prior to attribute’ and ‘posterior to attribute’ respectively in Figure 5.8. Following the framework of attribute construction in Figure 5.4, the construction of the first type is categorized into cues from Appraiser (inscription) and cues exhibited by the Appraised (invocation). The first category mainly includes the identifying process and terms of address from characters, represented as linguistic utterance, as explained in section 5.3.1. Films can also use verbal captions to label the identity of characters, although this strategy is more rarely used in narrative films than in other genres such as documentaries and news interviews. Invocation is mainly constructed by the resources of character action and the analytical features discussed in Sections 4.1 to 4.3.

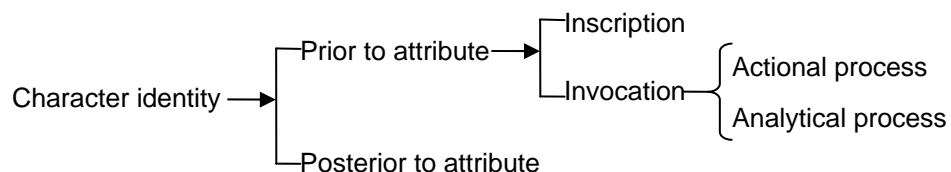


Figure 5.8 The representation of character identity

In fictional films, character identity is often presented after attributes and the attributes may allude to the identity (e.g. status). But there are also examples of ‘prior to attribute’ identities. At the beginning of *Pretty Woman*, for example, we see two girls wearing clothes which expose their bodies, coquetting at passers-by and one girl says “hi, honey, want to have some fun” to a passing driver. These cues of what they wear, what they do and also the location of Hollywood boulevard unambiguously suggest their identity as prostitutes. Negative Judgments of them naturally follow from our cultural knowledge of this profession. Immediately after this street scene, the film cuts to a close-up of a woman in bed with black lace underwear. The woman gets up and slips on her pulling-up stockings and zips-up boots and slides into her trademark ‘hooker’ outfit: a pink halter that is attached to a black mini skirt by way of a big, silver ring. Then she is dressed up and going to work. This visual information, also with the hint of the previous prostitutes, suggests that she is a prostitute and thus invokes our negative Judgment. Of course, the negative Judgment may be mitigated by the fact that the prostitute is played by Julia Roberts.

The attributes invoked through identity, however, are limited to the stereotypical cultural knowledge of a certain profession. For example, the identification of a character as a teacher or a doctor doesn’t tell us much about their inner attributes. In the example of *Pretty Woman*, the identity of prostitute may suggest moral depravation, but the later plot shows that Vivian is a morally strong person, as the analysis in Section 5.6.2 shows.

Character identity is exploited to invoke Judgment in a special type of moving image, namely, television advertisements, which sometimes rely on character identity to enhance the persuasive power of the advertised message. Because television advertisements are

short and the space for the representation of Character Attributes is limited, they only choose the attributes that contribute to persuasion. One of the most desirable attributes is the *trustworthiness* of the characters so that their endorsement of the product is perceived to be true. For example, a doctor is perceived to be an expert (capacity) and honest (morality) and his/her comment about a health product is more reliable (tenacity). Therefore, health products are often presented by doctors (or actor/actress as doctor) in advertising.

The most convenient way is to use a person with recognized credibility, for example, a renowned scientist or movie star, to endorse the product. In this case, the identity is usually represented by verbal labeling. Aside from using real identity characters, advertisements may also assign characters fictional identities through representational resources, in particular, actional and analytical processes. In the following, the multimodal construction of identity is analyzed with one television advertisement for Colgate toothpaste, transcribed in Table 5.11.

The advertisement represents four main characters, the reporter, the dentist, the patient and the Colgate stomatologist. Their identities are constructed with audio-visual resources elaborated below using the framework of Figure 5.8. The identity of the reporter is represented by his action of reporting and the microphone he is using. The identity of the doctor is visually represented by the actional process of checking up the patient and the analytical feature of his uniform. The identity of the patient is visually represented as the ‘goal’ of the check-up in shot 2 and shot 4 refers back to it through visual anaphora (Tseng, 2009). The identity of Colgate stomatologist is explicitly represented through verbal labeling in the caption (inscription) and is co-articulated by

the analytical feature of the uniform. Different from the first three characters, the identity of the stomatologist is real. It can be seen that while real identity is inscribed, fictional identities are invoked, for the obvious reason that the inscription of fictional characters' identities would count as false claims.






	Visual image	Image description	Soundtrack
1		Reporter speaking with smiling face.	We are back to sports centre. Everyone here uses Colgate toothpaste.
2		The doctor is re-checking a patient who has been using Colgate.	Last time you had three buccal problems. Let's see how it looks now.
3		The doctor smiles, with the screen displaying the problems Colgate solves.	Great! It is been significantly improved.
4		The patient smiling, displaying white, beautiful teeth.	No utterance
5		Colgate stomatologist speaking.	Clinic experiments proved that Colgate can improve dental health.

Table 5.11 Colgate advertisement—doctor and patient

The characters' identities activate our stereotypical knowledge and attitude toward the group they belong to. In this example, the identities of the reporter, dentist and stomatologist invoke viewers' positive Judgment about their tenacity and hence the reliability of their utterance. The reliability comes from the 'fact' that everyone is doing his own job, instead of directly claiming the effect of the product. That is, the effect of the product is not represented as direct propaganda, but *recontextualized* as the social practices of different professions (Feng and Wignell, 2011). The advertised information then invokes our knowledge and attitude towards the social practice. Specifically, the popularity of the product is recontextualized as the news report of 'everyone here uses Colgate toothpaste' with a tonal stress on the word 'everyone' in shot 1. Viewers' stereotypical Judgment about the objectivity of reporter and news report lends credibility to this claim. Next, the effect of the product is recontextualized as the dentist's diagnosis. The dentist recounts that the patient has three buccal problems last time, then after using Colgate, now 'it is significantly improved'. This conclusion is represented as professional opinion after medical checkup. The reliability of the dentist and his report makes the effect of the product trustworthy. It can be seen that both the reporter and the dentist are just 'doing their jobs', instead of promoting the product and it is this illusion that makes the positive attributes of their identities effective. Different from them, the identity of the stomatologist is real and his job is to provide scientific evidence for the effectiveness of the product. Therefore, he is in the position to talk about the effect of the product. But as a scientist, he is not offering subjective opinion, but reporting the objective result of 'clinical experiment'. The role of the female patient, however, is different in that she elicits viewers' Emotion instead of rational Judgment. Her pretty

face with the happy smile invokes positive Emotion (liking) and the desire to identify with her. The shot distance is also suggestive of their different roles. The reporter, dentist and stomatologist are all represented by medium shot (including medium long and medium close) and are perceived as ‘socially close’ to viewers, while the patient is represented by close up shot which is perceived as ‘intimate’ to viewers.

To summarize, advertisers attribute their claims to characters with different identities whose stereotypical attributes lends credibility to the advertised information. The fictional identities are invoked through actional and analytical process while the real identities are typically inscribed through verbal labeling. The identities of the characters are carefully designed to elicit desirable rational Judgment and affective orientation from viewers within the short duration of the advertisement. Such culturally derived attributes associated with certain identities, however, are not so prevalent in films where Character Attributes tend to be more complex and more elaborately designed throughout the text, as analyzed in Section 5.6.

## **5.5 Discursive Choices of Character Attributes**

### **5.5.1 Character Attribute and Film Genre**

Sections 5.3 and 5.4 focus on the semiotic construction of Character Judgment and Character Attributes. In this section, I investigate the choices of the attributes at the level of discourse semantics. Discursive choices are investigated with respect to the dimensions of attribute category, valence and intensity, as shown in Figure 5.9. The discursive choice of Character Attributes constitutes an important semantic feature of film genre and the role of the attribute dimension of ‘valence’ in shaping film genre is

investigated from a topological perspective. Drawing upon Smith (1995), I shall focus on the semiotic discursive construction of the generic features of Manichean and Graduated moral structures.

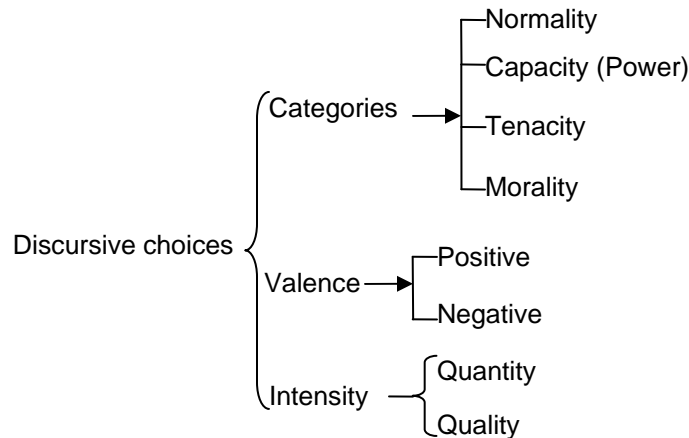


Figure 5.9 Discursive choices of Character Attributes

Filmmakers first have the choice of the *category* of Judgment, including normality, capacity (power), tenacity and morality. Different films endow the characters with different attributes (e.g. courage, loyalty, kindness, etc.). In action movies, for example *Gladiator*, the hero Maximus is charismatic (normality), courageous and good at fighting (capacity), and morally upright (morality). In other genres, the attributes of physical strength and morality may be less relevant and there is no opposition of values. For example, in the biographical drama *A Beautiful Mind* (Howard, 2001), John Nash (also played by Russell Crowe) is brilliant (capacity), but is socially inept (negative capacity) and has severe mental disease (negative capacity). In many romance films, for example, *Notting Hill* (Michell, 1999) and *Sleepless in Seattle* (Ephron, 1993), morality is also not relevant and there is no moral opposition.

The second dimension is *valence*, which refers to whether the attribute is positive or negative. Filmmakers may choose to endow a character with only positive attributes and another only negative attributes, or else, characters can have both positive and negative attributes. These two cases constitute what Smith (1995) terms Manichean moral structure and Graduated moral structure respectively. In the present analysis of these two types of structures, other attributes aside from morality are included as well. In Manichean structure, the characters are sorted into two clear-cut categories, the good and the bad, while in the latter, the characters occupy a range of positions between the two poles. In Graduated structure, characters may possess both positive and negative attributes throughout the film, or they may change from negative to positive or positive to negative. The realization of these two attribute structures is illustrated as Figure 5.10.

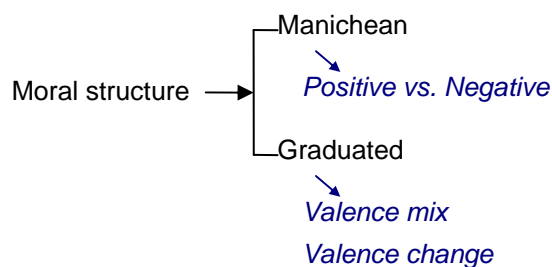


Figure 5.10 The realization of Manichean and Graduated structures

The third dimension is *intensity*, which refers to the degree to which a character is positively or negatively judged. Intensity can be constructed by the *quantity* or the *quality* of attributes. There are two ways in which quantity is represented: the number of attributes (e.g. a character can possess all the positive attributes of being handsome, powerful, dependable, loyal, etc.) and the number of tokens of a particular attribute (e.g. to construct extreme cruelty, the film represents the character in maltreating animals, torturing and killing people, and doing other cruel actions). In terms of the number of



attributes, as mentioned above, in action films, the hero typically possesses many positive attributes such as physical strength, courage, tenacity, kindness to the weak and so on. A good case in point is the *Wu Xia* movie (a type of *Kung Fu* movie) in China. The word ‘Wu’ means ‘martial art’ or ‘kung fu’ and the word ‘Xia’ is similar to the western ‘errantry’ or ‘chivalry’. The protagonists are usually charismatic Kung Fu masters who fight against the evil power and protect the weak. In terms of quality, intensity is constructed by the inherent attitudinal connotation of tokens, especially actions. Different tokens form an ‘intensity scale’ for a particular attribute. For example, assisting an old man to cross the road is less intense in terms of morality than saving him by endangering one’s own life.

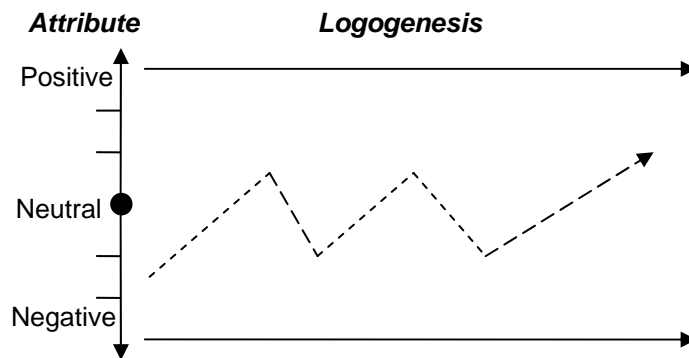


Figure 5.11 The topology of attribute structure in the logogenesis of film

Combining valence and intensity, patterns of Character Attributes in the logogenetic development of film is illustrated schematically as Figure 5.11. It constitutes a topological representation with the two dimensions of valence and time. The vertical bidirectional arrow represents the scale of attribute from positive to negative and the horizontal axis is the time. Time is essential here because it is discursive development of Character Attributes that really tells us something about genre. The inclusion of time

makes the approach dynamic, rather than static as the discussion of Character Emotion in Section 4.5. The approach is topological in the sense that it is based on the *valence*, rather than *types* of Character Attributes. As a result, genre is only characterized in terms of Manichean or Graduated structures, which are patterns of the valence of Character Attributes. Different *types* of genres (e.g. action, melodrama) are then situated on different spots in the topological space.

Taking the attribute of morality as an example, Manichean structure is represented by the two arrows at the top and bottom, in which the protagonist(s) and antagonist(s) occupy the positive and negative poles respectively. The choice of such extreme opposition (thus conflict) is common in action films. In Graduated structure, on the other hand, there is normally no opposition and moral conflict. Characters may have both positive and negative attributes, and in the logogenesis it is manifested as the alternation of them, as shown by the curved arrow in broken line in Figure 5.12. Alternatively, the character may change from negative to positive or change from positive to negative. A good example of mixed attributes is the character of Lieutenant Colonel Frank Slade in *Scent of a Woman* (Brest, 1992). Our encounter with him gives us the impression of a loud-mouthed, crude, old man whose only form of entertainment is to brutally insult strangers and talk about women in a politically-incorrect fashion. He's definitely not likable because he is angry, often unkind, and even more often self-destructive. But gradually, we find more positive attributes in him and in the end when he makes the speech to defend Charlie, a student who refuses to reveal his classmates who offended the principal, we are convinced that he is a deeply moral man. These two types of Manichean and Graduated attribute structures are analyzed in Section 5.6.

### 5.5.2 Character Attribute, Viewer Engagement and Ideology

The pattern of Character Attributes is also essential to viewer engagement. The choice of Character Attributes at the initial stage of the film is worth special attention because it is crucial for the formation of viewer allegiance. Allegiance, which is mainly based on the Judgment of the character's morality, is key to the engagement of viewer emotion in film narrative (Carroll, 2003; Smith, 1995). It is normally constructed at the beginning of a film so that the 'concern' with the protagonist is established as early as possible. When viewers identify with the protagonist, the film then manipulates the fate of the character, including the fluctuation of his/her power, to keep the viewer's interest. The construction of allegiance is analyzed in Section 5.6.

The discursive patterns of Character Attributes also reflect the filmmaker's ideological position. This study focuses on one specific value, that is, the 'moral' of the film, which is the value the film promotes or the 'point' the film intends for (van Dijk, 1980: 116). To model the choices available, a framework which simultaneously involves the character and the narrative design is proposed: the value can be explicitly *articulated* as Character Judgment or implicitly *embodied* as Character Attributes, and in both cases it only becomes the 'moral' if it is *endorsed* by the narrative. Two types of narrative endorsement can be distinguished: outcome of value conflict and outcome of character change. The former typically occurs in Manichean structures where two value systems are in conflict, and the ideological position of the film is constructed by the positive values defeating the negative ones. For example, filmmakers may promote such traits as courage, generosity, kindness, loyalty, and so forth by assigning them to the protagonist and letting him/her defeat the villain which embodies traits such as cowardice, cruelty

and greediness. Positive values can also be defeated of course, although less often in Hollywood genre films. In that case, the ‘moral’ conveyed may be, for example, a pessimistic or sadistic viewer of reality. In the latter case of narrative endorsement, the ‘moral’ is revealed by rewarding the bad-to-good change, or more rarely, the good-to-bad change. However, it should be noted that although conflict is more typical in Manichean structure, it may also appear in Graduated structures (e.g. *Scent of a Woman*). The choices are represented as Figure 5.12.

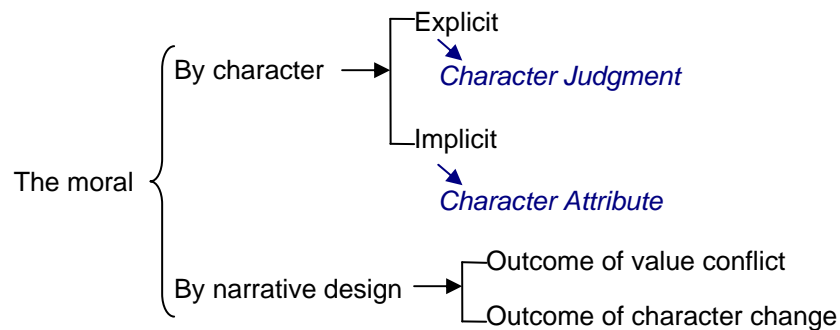


Figure 5.12 The construction of the ‘moral’ in film

The framework reflects the stratified model of realization, in which social values are considered in relation to the generic features of Manichean and Graduated attribute structures which are in turn realized through patterns of Character Judgment and Character Attribute at the level of discourse semantics. An example is provided to illustrate how the moral is co-articulated by Character Judgment and outcome of value conflict. In *Scent of a Woman* (Brest, 1992), when the Baird school student Charlie is in danger of being punished for not revealing the students who committed the prank against the school principal, Colonel Slade makes a speech to support him, part of which is “he won’t sell anybody out to buy his future! And that, my friends, is called integrity. That’s called courage. Now that’s the stuff leaders should be made of”. Slade’s value position is

clear from his inscribed positive Judgment of Charlie's behavior (cf. Section 5.3). However, this position is not made the 'moral' of the film, unless it is endorsed by the narrative. This is realized as the outcome of the conflict between Slade who supports Charlie and the principal who intends to punish Charlie: the school committee voted unanimously to spare Charlie. It is the victory of the articulated value that makes it the 'moral' of the film. The 'moral' embodied as Character Attributes in both Manichean and Graduated structures are analyzed in more detail in Sections 5.6.1 and 5.6.2 respectively.

## **5.6 Applying the Model: Character Attributes in *Gladiator* and *Pretty Woman***

In this section, the viability of the theoretical models is demonstrated through detailed analysis of Character Attributes in *Gladiator* and *Pretty Woman*. The construction of Manichean and Graduated attribute structures is discussed in Sections 5.6.1 and 5.6.2 respectively. Based on the system in Figure 5.4, two broad resources are distinguished: Judgment by other characters and Judgment invoked by the representational and interactive resources. In terms of the latter, a considerable part of the analysis is devoted to the Character Attributes presented at the initial stage of the films, drawing upon Tseng's (2009) framework of presenting characters.

### **5.6.1 The Construction of Manichean Moral Structure: *Gladiator***

In order for a Manichean moral structure to be sustained, the dualistic system of values has to be *redundantly* established (Smith, 1995: 346). Smith (1995) provides a detailed analysis of the Manichean moral structure in *Strike* (Eisenstein, 1925). He points out a number of ways in which the opposition in moral structure is constructed, such as

iconography and linguistic labeling. However, the devices in his analysis are not systemized and different analysts may provide quite different analysis. In contrast, the analysis presented here is more tightly tied to specifiable aspects of the filmic material than is usual in film analysis (Bateman and Schmidt, 2011: 2). The significance of such systematic analysis is pointed out by Bateman and Schmidt (2011: 2):

One important consequence of, and motivation for, such an approach is that it also becomes possible to rule out bad, or mistaken analyses more easily—that is, our method will constrain analysis so that the analysis is more reliable and trustworthy, giving us better criteria for the evaluation of proposals and competing hypotheses.

In *Gladiator*, Maximus is the hero and Commodus is the villain. In the semiotic model, the hero and the villain are realized by a number of attributes, which are in turn realized by multimodal resources. In this section a systematic semiotic discussion is provided in terms of how Character Attributes are constructed in different layers of film semiosis, that is, how the ‘redundancy’ in Smith’s (1995) term is achieved. By paying special attention to Character Attributes at the initial stage, the analysis also explains how viewer allegiance with the protagonist is constructed.

### **5.6.1.1 The Construction of Hero**

#### **5.6.1.1.1 Judgment from Characters**

Character Judgment is essential for the construction of Character Attributes, but it is not considered in Smith (1995). It provides a direct way for viewers to access Character

Attributes, although sometimes Characters Judgment may be different from the viewers'. Therefore, only a systematic account of the film participants' Judgment of the target character can fully reveal the Character's Attributes. The Judgments of Maximus by the characters from the whole film are annotated in Table 5.12, based on the framework in Section 5.3.1. To reintroduce the abbreviations, '+/-' refers to 'positive/negative', 'cap' stands for 'capacity', 'mor' stands for 'morality', 'ten' stands for 'tenacity', 't1' refers to the invocation by Eliciting Condition of the Judgment, and 't2' refers to the Resultant Action.

<b>Appraiser</b>	<b>Appraisal resource</b>	<b>Judgment</b>
Soldiers	General/sire	+cap, t1
Maximus	What we do in life echoes in eternity	+cap, t1
Marcus	You have proved your valor, yet again, Maximus.	+cap
Marcus	Rome's greatest general	+cap
Commodus	Rome salutes you	+cap, t2
Soldier	Magnificent battle, sir	+cap, t1
Commodus	I am going to need good man like you.	+cap
Commodus	You are a man who knows what it is to command. You give your orders, the orders are obeyed and the battle is won.	+cap, t1
Commodus	Now you are the great man.	+cap
Marcus	I want you to become the protector of Rome after I die.	+cap, t2, +ten, t2, +mor, t2

	I will empower you to one end alone-- to give power back to the people of Rome... and end the corruption that has crippled it.	
Marcus	You have not been corrupted by her politics.	+mor, t1
Spectators	The crowd shouting "Spaniard"	+cap, t2
Proximo	You are good	+cap
Proximo	But not that good	-cap
Proximo	You could be magnificent	+cap
Commodus	I don't think there has ever been a gladiator to match you.	+cap, t1
Spectators	Crowd shouting Maximus, Maximus	+cap, t2
Lucilla	A slave more powerful than the emperor	+cap
Maximus	I am a slave. What possible difference can I make?	-cap, t1
Lucilla	Noble	+mor
Lucilla	That man served Rome well	+cap, t1
Spectators	Crowd shout "Maximus the merciful"	+mor
Unknown spectator	Praise the victor	+cap, t2
Proximo	Marcus Aurelius trusted you. His daughter	+ten, t2



	trusted you. I will trust you.	
Proximo	I know that you are a man of your word, General. I know that you would die for honor. You would die for Rome.	+ten, t1, +mor, t1
Lucius	(pretending to be Maximus) I am Maximus, the savior of Rome	+cap, t1
Lucilla	Soldier of Rome	+cap, t2, +mor, t2
Lucilla	Honor him	+cap, t2, +mor, t2

Table 5.12 Annotation of the Judgment of Maximus

Valence	Attribute type	Construction
Positive: 31	Tenacity: 3 (all positive)	Inscription: 10
Negative: 2	Capacity: 23 (2 negative)	Invocation t1: 11
	Morality: 7 (all positive)	Invocation t2: 12

Table 5.13 Summary of the Judgment of Maximus

Table 5.13 shows a brief summary of the tokens according to valence, attribute type and construction, addressing the issue of discursive choice in Section 5.5.1. It is clear that most Judgments of Maximus are positive. Among the two negative Judgments of his capacity, one is from himself, the other is from Proximo whose Judgment of ‘not that good’ follows from the positive Judgment ‘you are good’ and precedes another positive Judgment ‘you could be magnificent’. Aside from that, all Judgments of his morality and tenacity, including those from his opponent Commodus, are positive. In terms of construction, invocation is dominant and there is an even distribution between invocation

through the verbal representation of Eliciting Condition (ideational content) and Resultant Action. The even distribution between the representation of facts and opinions makes his virtues more convincing (cf. Judgment of Commodus in Section 5.6.2.2.1).

#### **5.6.1.1.2 Invoked Judgment through Eliciting Conditions**

Maximus embodies a lot of positive attributes, such as skills of fighting, leadership, love of his family, and religious spirituality, as pointed out by Cyrino (2004, 2009), Pomeroy (2004), Rose (2004) and others. In what follows, I shall explain how the attributes are constructed based on the framework in Section 5.4, with a focus on how the character is presented. However, because attributes are normally stable (i.e. not changing shot by shot like emotion expressions), the analysis is not carried out in a shot-by-shot manner. Instead, analysis is performed in the unit of *scene* and Character Attributes in the first five scenes are systematically analyzed.

A number of positive attributes are assigned to Maximus at the beginning stage to establish viewers' allegiance with him. In the first scene, the first appearance of Maximus is represented by a close shot, featuring his grim face (Image 1 in Table 5.14, 2 minutes into the film). In terms of Tseng (2009), the choice of presenting is monomodal and immediate (cf. Figure 5.1). In the present framework, it is argued that Character Attributes are presented at the same time. The armor he is wearing indicates that he is a soldier, most likely an officer, judging from the fur tippet (analytical feature). The close shot makes Maximus the exclusive focus of attention and also draws closer viewers' para-proxemic relation with him, which may contribute to viewers' allegiance with him (cinematography). However, no value Judgment can be made yet. Then when he walks

through the soldiers, the soldiers call him ‘general’ and greet him with great respect. The attribute invoked by his identity and the soldiers’ response is positive capacity (through identity). Before the battle, Maximus’ speech (6.5 minutes into the film) (verbal action) to the soldiers, transcribed as follows, also invokes his attributes:

Fratres, three weeks from now I will be harvesting my crops, imagine where you will be and it will be so. Hold the lines, stay with me. If you find yourself alone riding in green fields with the sun on your face, do not be troubled, for you are in Elysium and you're already dead! [The men laugh.] Brothers, what we do in life echoes in eternity.

This verbal action invokes a number of positive attributes of Maximus. The first one is his humor [+capacity], supported by the soldiers’ laughter (‘outcome of action’ in Figure 5.5). Second, a deeper subjectivity revealed is his calm attitude towards the upcoming battle and possible death, which may be judged as brave [+tenacity]. Meanwhile, this is also an effort to lighten up the nerve of the soldiers, which is suggestive of his capacity of leadership. In terms of visual representation, low camera angle is used to highlight his power, as shown in Image 2 in Table 5.14 (6.6 minutes).

The second scene mainly includes the complex action of fighting at the battle. Following the framework in Section 5.4.1, it is a social activity consisting of a clear intention, a series of individual behavior and an outcome. Relevant social standards are activated and Judgments are invoked. Maximus’ intention of fighting the battle is well justified in the context. As he puts it later, “the rest of the world is brutal and cruel and

dark; Rome is the light”, so he fights the war out of righteous purpose as a ‘liberator’ of the barbarians and as a patriot of Rome. Next, his action of killing the enemies demonstrates his fighting skills [+capacity] and bravery [+tenacity]. His action at the battle is represented with low camera angle to highlight his capacity, as shown in Images 3 and 4 in Table 5.14 (10 minutes into the film). Finally, the outcome of the social activity, that is, the victory, suggests his capacity as a general, as is commended by the emperor and other officers.





		
1	2	3
		
4	5	

Table 5.14 The visual representation of Maximus

In the third scene after the battle (17.6 minutes into the film), Maximus visits the wounded soldiers (Image 5 in Table 5.14). He sighs, and his facial expression shows closed eyes and frown, which clearly indicates his sadness over his dead and wounded soldiers. This compassion for his soldiers is positively judged in terms of morality. This compassion is further expressed in his conversation with the emperor: “five thousand of my men are out there in the freezing mud, three thousand are bloodied and cleaved... I will not believe that they fought and died for nothing”.

In the fourth scene, his verbal interaction with the emperor Marcus invokes more positive attributes. First, his decline of the throne indicates his disinterest in power, which is positively judged in contemporary society (Cyrino, 2009: 179). The positive value is more evident if we compare him with Commodus whose desire for power is bordering on paranoia. Then at Marcus' request, he delivers a sentimental speech about the simple beauty and tranquility of his home in Hispania, which reflects his attribute as an old-fashioned man yearning for simple life. Such mentality may be positively or negatively judged according to different social standards, but for some modern people living hard lives in busy crowded cities, it is probably desirable and regarded as positive. Moreover, as Smith (1995) points out, characters are not only judged according to social standards, but also the moral system established in the text. In the ideological opposition between the desire for political power and the desire for simple family life, it is clear that the latter is at the positive side of the morality scale.

The last attribute embodied at this stage is the activity of praying in the scene after Maximus' meeting with Marcus. This practice indicates that he is a man of deep personal spirituality. After the prayer, he kisses the statue of his wife, which shows his deep affection and invokes the image of a good husband.

To summarize the discursive choices, Maximus is assigned a wide range of positive attributes and no negative ones in the five scenes at the beginning of the film. Such dense packaging of positive attributes at the initial stage serves to elicit viewers' positive Attitude, and hence allegiance with him, which guarantees viewers' future concern and interest. The construction of the attributes involves language, action, analytical feature and camera positioning, as is summarized as Table 5.15. It is demonstrated that the

frameworks in Sections 5.4 and 5.5 can provide a thorough explanation of the discursive choices of Character Attributes and their semiotic construction. In the rest of the film, many of his virtues reappear. Although there is a major setback when he is persecuted by Commodus and becomes a slave, he remains morally right throughout the film.

Scene	Semiotic resource	Attribute
1	Analytical features, camera positioning	identity, closeness
	Character Judgment	identity, high status
	Verbal action, camera positioning	humor, bravery, capacity as leader
2	Complex activity of battle (intention, action and outcome)	patriotism, bravery, capacity
3	Facial expression (sadness over wounded soldiers)	value soldiers
4	Verbal action (conversation with Marcus)	disinterest in power, love of simple life
5	complex activity of praying	spirituality
	Material action of kissing his wife's statue, verbal interaction with Marcus	family-loving

Table 5.15 Summary of Maximus' invoked attributes

### 5.6.1.2 The Construction of the Ultimate Villain

#### 5.6.1.2.1 Judgment from Characters

Character's Judgments of Commodus are presented as Table 5.16, following the same convention with Table 5.12.

<b>Appraiser</b>	<b>Appraisal resource</b>	<b>Judgment</b>
Lucilla	Your incessant scheming is hurting my head	-mor <sup>15</sup>
Maximus	Your highness, bowing	+cap, t2
Marcus	Commodus is not a moral man.	-mor
Marcus	Commodus cannot rule.	-cap, t1
Marcus	He must not rule	-cap, t2, -mor, t2
Roman citizens	Usurper	-mor, t1
Roman citizens	Go away; you will never rule us, Commodus!	-cap, t2, -mor, t2
Gracchus	He enters Rome like a conquering hero. But what has he conquered?	-cap, t1
Falco	He's young. I think he could do very well.	+cap, t1
Falco	Rome greets her new emperor. Your loyal subjects bid you welcome, highness.	+ cap, t2
Gaius	Games. 150 days of games.	-cap, t1
Gaius	The whole of Rome would be laughing at him if they weren't so afraid of his praetorian.	-cap, t1
Gracchus	I think he knows what Rome is.	+cap, t1
Lucilla	They are arresting scholars now, anyone who dare speak out. Even satirists and	-mor, t1

<sup>15</sup> As is pointed out in Section 5.3.3, the negative Judgment is weakened by other semiotic resources. However, the inscribed negative Judgment still exists.

	chroniclers.	
Gaius	And mathematicians. All to feed the arena.	-mor, t1
Gaius	Reign of terror	-mor, t1
Gaius	I am afraid to go out after dark.	-mor, t2
Gaius	You should be more afraid of your activities during the day.	-mor, t2
Gracchus	He spends all his days singularly obsessed, planning the festival to honor your father. He neglects even the fundamental task of government.	-cap, t1
Lucilla	He started selling the grain reserves.	-cap, t1, -ten, t1
Lucilla	The people will be starving in two years.	-cap, t1, -ten, t1
Lucilla	He is going to dissolve the Senate.	-ten, t1, -mor, t1
Lucilla	He must die.	-mor, t2
Lucilla	I have been living in a prison of fear since that day. To be unable to mourn your father for fear of your brother.	-mor, t1
Maximus	I think you have been afraid all your life.	-cap

Table 5.16 Annotation of the Judgment of Commodus

Summarized in Table 5.17, the Judgments can be broadly divided into two categories: about his power (status) and about his morality. It is clear that his status is acknowledged by Maximus, the soldiers and the Senators. Other than this inborn status, Judgments from all characters, including his own father and sister, are negative, both about his capacity



and morality. Only one character, Senator Falco, Commodus' ally, judges his capacity positively by saying 'I think he could do very well'. It is remarkable that all but one character judge Commodus negatively and that there is no single positive Judgment of his morality throughout the film. This pattern clearly positions Commodus at the negative end of the attribute scale in Figure 5.11. In terms of construction, there are direct Judgments (e.g. 'Commodus is not a moral man' from Marcus), but most are indirect, either about the Eliciting Condition (t1) (e.g. 'He neglects even the fundamental task of government' from Senator Gracchus) or about the Appraisers' resultant action (t2) (e.g. 'I am afraid to go out after dark' from Senator Gaius). The invocation of Judgment through Eliciting Condition (t1) is even more powerful in the encoding of his immorality and incapacity in that the characters are presenting facts instead of opinions. As a result, the negative Judgment is inferred from the facts by viewers themselves. The three inscriptions are also powerful because two come from Commodus' own father and sister and one comes from the protagonist Maximus. The sharp contrast of Character Judgments of Maximus and Commodus constitutes an important dimension of the Manichean structure.

<b>Valence</b>	<b>Attribute type</b>	<b>Construction</b>
Positive: 26	Tenacity: 3 (all negative)	Inscription: 3
Negative: 4	Capacity: 14 (4 positive)	Invocation t1: 18
	Morality: 13 (all negative)	Invocation t2: 9

Table 5.17 Summary of the Judgment of Commodus

#### **5.6.1.2.2 Invoked Judgment by Eliciting Conditions**

Aside from the negative Judgments from film characters, the embodied processes of Commodus, his actions in particular, mostly invoke negative Judgments. The film selects prototypical evil actions to construct him as the ‘ultimate villain’. In this section, I shall examine what actions are selected, how they are represented in film and what negative attributes are constructed. The discursive choice of attribute is analyzed at three stages: the first appearance, the formation of the villain, and the development of more evil attributes.

##### **(1) The First Appearance—High Status and the Budding Immorality**

The first scene in which Commodus appears is analyzed in this section. He is presented in a wagon with his sister on the way to the battlefield. He is brought into focus from panoramic view to medium shot gradually and in Tseng’s (2009) terms, the choices of presentation is monomodal and gradual dynamic (cf. Figure 5.1). While Tseng’s (2009) analysis would stop here, the attributes presented need to be further analyzed. As explained in Section 5.4.2, the analytical features of the armed soldiers and the armored wagon index the importance of the two characters; the luxurious interior of the wagon and the dress of the two characters, especially the fur coat of the woman and the rings on her fingers, are suggestive of their wealth and high status (see Table 5.8).

Conversation continues in the scene, represented by alternating shots of the man and the woman. The exchange below is significant for the construction of their identity and attributes (13.1 to 13.9 minutes in the film).

Man: Do you think he's really dying?

Woman: He's been dying for ten years.

Man: If he weren't really dying, he wouldn't have sent for us.

Woman: Maybe he just misses us.

Man: And the Senators. He wouldn't have summoned them if...

Woman: Commodus. After two weeks on the road your incessant scheming is hurting my head.

Commodus: He's made his decision. He's going to announce it! He will name me. The first thing I shall do...when...is honor him with games worthy of his majesty.

From the first two exchanges, we don't know who the pronoun 'he' refers to, but it can be inferred that they are closely related to 'him'. The man's utterance that 'he' summoned the senators may indicate that 'he' is the king or somebody of that status. Given the context of ancient Rome that is shown previously in the film, we can be fairly certain that 'he' is the king. The man's last utterance makes the identity of 'him' clear by calling him 'his majesty'. His own identity that he may be the successor to the throne is also revealed through 'he will name me', although not definitely. The identifying information so far secures the Judgment that they are extremely powerful people.

The conversation also includes an explicit Judgment. The woman makes a comment "Your incessant scheming is hurting my head". As is pointed out in section 5.3.3, the comment is not a serious negative Judgment because of the positive Emotion accompanying the Judgment. So far, no clear moral Judgment can be made on

Commodus. However, his obsession with the ‘position’, hence with power, may be negatively judged. This Judgment is invoked through the *verbal action* which reflects his subjectivity (i.e. desire for power). He uses three declarative sentences ‘he has made his decision, he’s going to announce it, he will name me’, of which the first one uses no modality and the last two use high modality of probability. The seeming certainty indicates his avidity and anxiety. His excessive care about the position, although cannot be considered immoral yet, is certainly at the negative end for most viewers. Together with the woman’s Judgment of ‘incessant scheming’, it can be seen as the ‘bud’ of his immoral personality, which lays ground for the forthcoming development of the story and all his evil doings. The multimodal construction of Commodus’ attributes is summarized in Table 5.18.

Appraiser	Semiotic resource	Attributes
Viewer (invoked)	Visual analytical features of the soldiers, the armored wagon and its interior and clothing  Verbal action (linguistic information of identity)	+cap, t1
Lucilla	Attitudinal lexis	-mor
Viewer (invoked)	Verbal action (linguistic information of avid desire)	-mor, t1

Table 5.18 Summary of Commodus’ attributes at the initial stage

## (2) The Formation of the Villain

The major event that establishes Commodus as a villain is the scene in which he kills his father after he is denied the throne. He then gets the throne, asks for Maximus’ loyalty

and when he is denied, he orders the death of Maximus and his family. The filmmakers' choice of such events positions Commodus at the extreme end (high intensity) of immorality as there is nothing more condemned than the intentional homicide of family in almost all cultures (quality of action). In *Fall of the Roman Empire* (Mann, 1964), which *Gladiator* is indebted to, Commodus is represented as much less evil because he neither murdered his father nor persecuted the general Levis (equivalent of Maximus).

The choice of actions being clarified, I now examine how the actions are represented. Commodus' killing of his father is represented by several pairs of reverse shots which feature Commodus' anguished face and Marcus' struggling hand in close-up (cf. analysis in Section 5.4.1). As has been pointed out in Section 5.4.1, while the action is undoubtedly evil, the context of the murder humanizes Commodus to some extent. After being denied of throne, Commodus is in extreme anguish. He talks about how he is not loved by his father. His emotion indicates that he is not a cold-blooded murderer, but rather a man thirsty for paternal love. Therefore, although the action is extremely immoral, the humanizing effort cannot be neglected. As the film analyst Cyrino (2004: 134) points out, "even the wicked tyrant is not totally unsympathetic—his main defect is that he lacks his family's love".

Commodus' order of the death of Maximus and his family is represented in a different way, through the utterance of Quintus. With the order from Commodus, Quintus comes to Maximus' place and says: "Caesar has spoken, ride until dawn, and then execute him". When Maximus asks Quintus to protect his family, he says: "Your family will join you in the afterlife". The order of Maximus' death is represented as reported directive speech act and the order of his family's death is indirectly represented

by Quintus' recount of his family's fate. In both cases, the directive speech act is not represented as Commodus utters it. The absence of the sayers, however, does not weaken the negative Judgment. Instead, it suggests that the murdering of Maximus and his family is planned, unlike the murdering of Marcus. If we can say the murdering of Marcus is out of 'heat of passion', the killing of Maximus is certainly premeditated murder, which deprives him of the last bit of humanity. Moreover, ordering the death of Maximus' wife and son who are completely innocent further defines Commodus as the ultimate evil. His cruelty towards Maximus' family is later represented as one of the most disturbing lines of the film, when Commodus says to Maximus: "they told me your son squealed like a girl when they nailed him to the cross and your wife, moaned like a whore when they ravaged her again, and again, and again". So far, Commodus is constructed as the villain, at the bottom of the Judgment scale in Figure 5.11. In the Manichean moral structure, more negative attributes are added and more evil actions are performed.

### **(3) The Development of Evil Attributes**

As the story develops, Commodus is assigned more negative attributes through various actions. The main actions include his debate with the Senators, sexual desire for his sister, the stabbing of Maximus before the duel and so on. The two main attributes of his desire for dictatorship and sexual desire for his sister, which are invoked many times in the film, provide the focus of the following discussion.

A special type of negative attribute assigned to Commodus is his political position. His negative Attitude towards the Senate and his desire to be a dictator is the target of Judgment. As Suleiman (1983) points out, a character's culturally negative attributes may

redound with negative attributes that are political ideological. For example, in the communist film *Strike* (Eisenstein, 1925), the culturally negative qualities of greed, decadence and brutality towards children are amalgamated with the ideology of capitalism (Smith, 1995: 203). In contrast, in anti-communist films, communists are represented as ugly, envious, promiscuous, and so on (Suleiman, 1983: 190). In *Gladiator* too, the non-political negative attributes (e.g. cruelty, sexual aberrance) are ‘amalgamated’ with the politically negative attribute of dictatorship (as opposed to democracy).

Commodus’ desire for dictatorship is represented on several occasions in the film. Before he is identified as the ultimate villain, his Attitude towards the Senate is manifested in his conversation with Maximus at the battlefield when he says: “Beware of Gaius. He’ll pour a honeyed potion in your ear and you’ll wake up one day and all you’ll say is, republic, republic...But these senators scheme and squabble and flatter and deceive. Maximus, we must save Rome from the politicians, my friend” (18.5 minutes into the film). The verbal action clearly reveals Commodus’ negative Judgment of Senator Gaius, the Senators and Republic. According to contemporary political standards, this anti-Republic attitude is on the negative side of the attribute scale. But the intensity is still low, as it is just a political opinion without any bad actions.

This political opinion is enacted when Commodus returns to Rome, resulting in many actions which reveal not only his desire for dictatorship, but also his incapability of governing [-capacity]. However, it should be noted that his desire for dictatorship is accompanied by his idealistic and ambitious vision of politics. In a sense, he wants to be a dictator because he thinks that is the way to build a great Rome. The coupling of his

desire for dictatorship (i.e. negative Attitude towards Senate) with his well-wishing ambition for a great Rome dilutes the negative Judgment of his political position. This is another effort that humanizes Commodus. In terms of construction, Commodus' political position is mainly revealed through spoken language, although material action also plays a role in some cases. When Senator Gracchus reads the list of protocols, Commodus is not paying attention (60.5 minutes into the film). He is spinning his sword, making harsh noise and he glimpses at Gracchus with contempt. This actional process shows his disrespect of the Senator and is criticized according to our social standard. Then he interrupts Gracchus and the following conversation ensues (61 to 62 minutes in the film):

Commodus: Shhh. Don't you see Gracchus? That's the very problem, isn't it? My father spent all his time at study, at books, learning and philosophy. He spent his twilight hours reading scrolls from the Senate. All the while, the people were forgotten.

Gracchus: But the Senate is the people, Sire, chosen from among the people, to speak for the people.

Commodus: I doubt if many people eat so well as you do Gracchus, or have such splendid mistresses, Gaius. I think I understand my own people.

Gracchus: Then perhaps Caesar would be so kind as to teach us, out of his own extensive experience.

Commodus: I call it love. The people are my children and I their father. I shall hold them to my bosom and embrace them tightly.



In this debate, Commodus expresses his political opinion. He says he would love his people and embrace them. From the previous conversation before he kills his father, we know that he is desperate for paternal love. So his intention of governing the people with love is justified and should be considered as positive attribute. For a moment, viewers may even believe that he will make a good emperor.

In the scene after Commodus leaves the Senate, he is talking to Lucilla (62 minutes into the film). He first expresses his negative Judgment of the Senate and the desire to get rid of it: “All they do is talk. It should be just you and me...it takes an emperor to rule an empire”. Then he expresses his political ambition: “I will give the people a vision of Rome and they will love me for it. And they’ll soon forget the tedious sermonizing of a few dry old men. I will give the people the greatest vision of their lives”. Again, the desire for dictatorship is accompanied by his good intention for Rome. This commissive speech act may invoke positive Judgment in viewers. Then he alleges: “I will make Rome the wonder of the ages”.

To summarize Commodus’ political position, in the three scenes where Commodus expresses his position, mostly represented through his verbal action, the desire for dictatorship is accompanied by his intention of being a great emperor. Although his intentions are good, his desire to be a dictator invokes negative Judgment in contemporary culture. Meanwhile, his ‘love’ for his people and his ambition to give the people the greatest vision are manifested in his decision of holding 150 days of gladiatorial games but nothing more. Such a solution to his ambition cannot make him a great emperor, on the contrary, his sheer obsession with games and neglect of

fundamental political task make him an incapable emperor, which is another negative attribute assigned to him.

Another major negative attribute is Commodus' aberrant sexual desire for his sister, which is expressed through material and verbal actions. On one occasion, he pushes her to bed, lies on top of her and touches her lips with his fingers (Image 1 in Table 5.19, 121.9 minutes into the film). Then in the next scene, after Maximus' coup fails, Commodus tells his sister "you will love me as I loved you. You will provide me with an heir of pure blood" and then tries to kiss her (Image 2 in Table 5.19, 134.8 minutes into the film). These two material actions are both featured with close shot, thus amplifying the impact on viewers' emotion (i.e. disgust) and their negative Judgment. The perverse sexuality is not only negatively judged according to social standards, but also forms a sharp contrast with Maximus' orthodox sexuality.



Table 5.19 Commodus' sexual desire for his sister

In sum, Commodus' attributes, aside from the inborn status, both his capacity and morality, as is reported by other characters and embodied in his actions, are negative. The choice of the attributes includes cruelty, perverse sexuality, cowardice, desire for dictatorship, and so on. Despite the fact that his wrong doings are largely due to his lack

of parental love which humanizes the character to some extent, the quantity of these negative attributes and their intensity of wrongness position him at the extreme end of immorality. These attributes are then realized as verbal and material actions, as well as cinematographic choices.

To summarize the analysis of *Gladiator*, a theory-guided analysis of the discursive choices of the attributes of Maximus and Commodus and their multi-semiotic construction is provided, based on the frameworks in Sections 5.4 and 5.5. The approach offers several improvements to Smith's (1995) study of character engagement. First, compared to his insightful generalizations, a systematic analysis of the construction of allegiance is provided. Second, the semiotic discursive construction of the Manichean moral structure (i.e. the dualistic value system) is also thoroughly examined by analyzing the contrastive Character Attributes reported by other characters, embodied by character actions, and evoked by cinematographic choices. The *contrast* between Maximus and Commodus represents the ideological opposition between democracy, traditional family value, courage and so forth on the one hand, and dictatorship, aberrant sexuality, cowardice and so forth on the other. The fact that positive values are represented by the protagonist who finally defeats the antagonist reflects the film's ideological position. The value contrast is further realized as *conflict* between them, whose construction and development are discussed in Section 6.4.1.

### **5.6.2 The Construction of Graduated Moral Structure: *Pretty Woman***

The film analyzed in this section is *Pretty Woman*, one generic feature of which is the mixture of positive and negative in terms of Character Attributes. This section first

analyzes the different ways the hero and the heroine, Edward and Vivian, are introduced and the different Character Attributes presented. Then how the attributes are changed in the unfolding of the film is investigated.

#### **5.6.2.1 The Presentation of Character Attributes**

The film starts at a party at the character Stuckey's house. Edward is verbally presented before the visual identification. At the party, a guest says "I understand Edward's taking over Morse Industries". Then Stuckey says to another guest "I'm Philip Stuckey, Edward Lewis' lawyer" and the guest asks him "Where's the guest of honor"? The ideational content of the dialogue invokes Judgment about Edward's wealth (taking over Morse Industries) and status (guest of honor) and it can be inferred that he is a very successful businessman. Then the image cuts to a well dressed handsome man talking on telephone (Image 1 in Table 5.20, 1 minute into the film). From the conversation, we learn that this man is Edward and his girlfriend is breaking up with him because he has no time for her. We further learn from his conversation with one of his ex-girlfriends that the reason she broke up with him is also because he is too busy. Then he walks out of the room and while giving orders to a young man (Image 2 in Table 5.20). He is featured in low camera angle which highlights his status. Meanwhile, the speech act of giving orders is also suggestive of his status. Up till now, Edward is presented in the sense of Tseng (2009) (multimodal, immediate) and the attributes presented is that he is a very successful businessman who is a workaholic with failed relationships.



	
1	2

Table 5.20 The presentation of Edward



		
1	2	3
		
4	5	6

Table 5.21 The presentation of Vivian

Vivian is introduced in a very different way, with completely different attributes assigned to her (4.5 to 5.4 minutes in the film). Immediately after the street scene where prostitutes are soliciting customers, the film cuts to close-up of a woman in bed with black lace underwear (Image 1 in Table 5.21). Then the shot pans to three pictures of a girl with men and the heads of the men are torn out, which suggest her previous failed relationships. The woman gets up and puts on her trademark ‘hooker’ outfit (Images 3). She then puts on gaudy jewelries and does her eyelashes (Images 4 and 5). Then we see she is dressed up and going to work (Image 6). This visual information, also with the hint

of the previous prostitutes, suggests that she is a prostitute and thus invokes our negative Judgment of her social status and morality (cf. Section 5.4.4). In terms of the way of representation, she is introduced in visual fragments, in which her body parts are featured in close ups, even before the person as a whole is presented. In Tseng's (2009) terms, the visual choice is gradual static. In this way, she is objectified as a sex object, that is, according to Mulvey's (1975) feminist psychoanalysis, she is the object of male gaze and male desire, which is also suggestive of her social status.

In sum, Edward is presented as a wealthy businessman, belonging to the upper class, while Vivian is at the bottom of the society, doing a despised job. If the story lets them remain at these two poles by assigning Edward more positive attributes and Vivian more negative attributes, it would be Manichean, or oppositional attribute structure. However, our Judgment orientation is revised in the two ways proposed in Section 5.5.1. First, attributes of different valence are revealed as the story unfolds; second, the characters change as the story develops. These revisions of Judgment are examined in Section 5.6.2.2.

#### **5.6.2.2 The Construction of Mixed Attributes**

It soon becomes clear that Vivian is not a prototypical prostitute like her roommate Kate. In the words of McNair (1991), she is a "hooker with a heart of gold", as is evident from her material and verbal actions on several occasions. She is new to the business and she certainly doesn't like it. Her rhetoric question to Kate 'don't you want to get out of here' clearly indicates her attitude. On the way to Edward's hotel, Vivian talks about cars to him, instead of seducing him. This discursive choice distinguishes her from ordinary

prostitutes. Moreover, our default Judgment about the moral deprivation of prostitutes is not supported (i.e. she is not libertine within the boundary of the film) because the film never shows her with any customer other than Edward.

Meanwhile, the positively judged character Edward has some negative attributes. He is a ruthless corporate raider who buys companies in trouble, breaks them into little pieces, and sells those pieces for profit. His current project is to buy a company from Mr. Morse who doesn't want to sell his company. Edward's Attitude towards the purchase is negatively judged by Mr. Morse and invokes negative Judgment from viewers about his morality (53 minutes into the film). Below is a dialogue between Mr. Morse and Edward:

Mr. Morse: I know all about you, Mr. Lewis. When you buy companies, they have a way of disappearing. Even the pension funds are stripped clean. The last three companies you took over were cut up in so many pieces, widows were left without their retirement checks.

Edward: What I did with those companies was perfectly legal.

Mr. Morse: I don't question the legality of what you do. It's your morality that makes me sick. I will not allow my company to be raped by a man like you.

Mr. Morse first makes his Judgment by recounting what Edward does (t1), then when Edward rebuts, he directly questions Edward's morality and also uses a commissive speech act to express his negative Judgment (t2). Mr. Morse's recount that Edward's

sheer concern is profit, disregarding the employee's basic interest, also invokes negative Judgment about Edward's business from the viewer.

Therefore, overturning the attribute structure established at the beginning, Vivian is actually the morally strong one and Edward is the weak one, and it is in this sense that each character has mixed attributes and that the attribute structure is Graduated. Aside from the mixed attributes, another key dimension of the Graduated structure is the character development from negative to positive. As previously mentioned, when love stories involve moral issues, a typical style of development is that the hero and the heroine make each other better persons during their emotional relationship, compared to the moral conflict in Manichean structure stories. This is exactly the case with *Pretty Woman*. As the analysis above indicates, Vivian is a prostitute who needs to be rescued. As she describes it, she is a princess locked up in the attic waiting for the prince to save her. Meanwhile, Edward is a businessman who values money and success above all else, including ethics, and needs to be redeemed. At the end of the story, Vivian is rescued by Edward and Edward is redeemed by Vivian. The realization of such character development by character actions and other semiotic resources is elaborated below.

Edward's change is mainly indicated through his business with Mr. Morse. The following is the dialogue between Edward and Mr. Morse near the end of the film (100 minutes into the film):

Edward:       Well, I no longer wish to buy your company and take it apart. But  
                  I don't want anyone else to, either. And it is still extremely  
                  vulnerable. So I find myself... in unfamiliar territory. I want to



help you.

Mr. Morse: I find this hard to say without sounding condescending, but...I'm proud of you.

The conversation forms a sharp contrast with that of their first meeting. First, Edward's speech reflects his new intention of helping Mr. Morse, which invokes positive Judgment from the viewer. Then Mr. Morse's Judgment is also changed to positive, represented as an expressive speech act (t2).

Vivian is also changed from a prostitute to a lady because of Edward. The discursive choice involves three aspects: external change, change of her mental state, and final rescue. First, she dresses differently and is perceived as a member of the upper class when she is with Edward. A very straightforward exemplification is the change of Vivian's status at clothes shops. When Vivian goes there herself, the saleswoman refuses to serve her, but with Edward, the salespersons treat her with respect. Second, a more important change is in her mental state, that is, her perception of herself. This change is explicitly represented in her words when Edward asks her to be his mistress: "look, you made me a really nice offer, and a few months ago, no problem. But now everything is different, and you've changed that". Her plan to 'get a job, finish high school' after leaving Edward is also suggestive of the change. Third, the most decisive change of her fate is the final rescue when Edward decides to come back for her. It can be inferred that she will become a member of the upper class.

In all, Vivian is rescued from prostitution by Edward and Vivian also helps Edward give up his old working philosophy and become more moral and less workaholic. This

mutual redemption is nicely summarized by the last conversation between Edward and Vivian. When Edward asks “so what happened after he climbed up the tower and rescued her?”, Vivian answers “she rescues him right back”.

To summarize the analysis of *Pretty Woman*, a systematic explanation of the construction of the generic feature of Graduated attribute structure is provided. The analysis compares the ways the hero and the heroine, Edward and Vivian, are introduced and the attributes assigned to them through Character Judgment, embodied actions and cinematography. As the key feature of Graduated structure is the mixture of positive and negative attributes, two ways of ‘mixing’ the attributes are examined. First, attributes of different valence are revealed as the story develops; second, characters change in the course of the narrative. Finally, Edward and Vivian rescue each other and turn their negative attributes to positive. To represent the graduated structure visually, we get the rough pattern displayed in Figure 5.13, as compared to the parallel lines at the top and bottom in Manichean attribute structure in Figure 5.11.

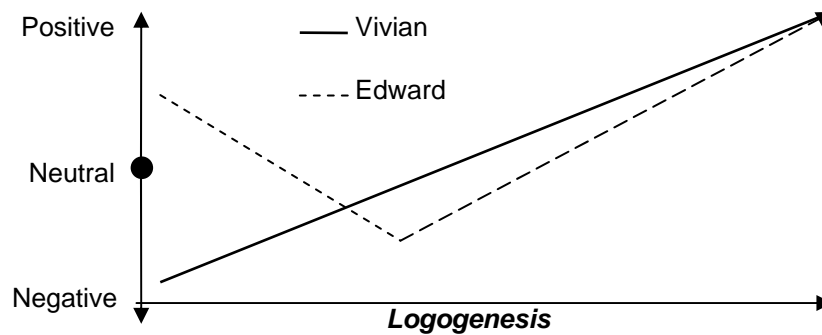


Figure 5.13 Graphic representation of character development in *Pretty Woman*

Compared to *Gladiator* in which the ideological position is realized as the protagonist defeating the antagonist, the ‘moral’ of *Pretty Woman* relies more on

rewarding the characters' change in the narrative. I shall focus on the attribute change of Edward. Edward's change from only caring about work and money is rewarded because he has become a much happier man, for example, when he spends a pleasant day with Vivian. The reward is also explicitly expressed when he says to Vivian "it felt good" after deciding to help Mr. Morse's company. Finally, the ultimate reward of the change is the happy ending of the film, which is similar to the protagonist's victory in Manichean structures. The character change and its narrative reward thus indicate the film's value position that it is morality, true love and leisure time, rather than money, that make a person happy.

### **5.6.3 Summary**

In this section, the theoretical frameworks developed in Sections 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 have been applied to the analysis of Character Attributes in *Gladiator* and *Pretty Woman*. A systematic account of the semiotic discursive construction of the Manichean and Graduated attribute structures are provided by analyzing the Character Attributes as reported by other characters, embodied by character actions and analytical features, and evoked by cinematographic choices. The analysis complements Tseng's (2009) system of presenting characters by attending to the Character Attributes that are presented. By examining the multi-semiotic construction of positive attributes at the initial stage, a systematic way of analyzing viewer allegiance in the sense of Smith (1995) is provided. The analysis also demonstrates how the 'moral' of the film is constructed through the combination of Character Attributes and narrative design in both Manichean and Graduated attribute structures.

## 5.7 Summary of Chapter 5

This chapter provides a systematic account of the multi-semiotic construction of Character Judgment, Character Attributes and the discursive choices available in film narrative. The main theoretical contributions are summarized as follows. First, in terms of Character Judgment, two types of implicit Judgment are distinguished based on a similar model in Chapter 4, namely, the Eliciting Condition of the Judgment and the Resultant material/verbal Action. Moreover, the role of metaphor in the linguistic construction of Judgment is elucidated, and the relation between Emotion and Judgment is also explained drawing upon cognitive appraisal theory. Second, the meaning potentials for constructing Character Attributes in representational and interactive resources are theorized based on social theory, cognitive theory, studies in nonverbal behavior and so on. This endeavor makes it possible to explain the grounding of the choices made in film and their meanings. Third, a framework to systematically map out the discursive choices of Character Attributes is developed, which makes it possible to model the generic features in terms of Manichean and Graduated attribute structures. Filmic realization of social values is also investigated in the stratified model. Together, this chapter provides a comprehensive framework which addresses the issue of Character Attributes in film at the levels of lexicogrammar, discourse semantics, and genre and ideology.

The working and viability of the frameworks is demonstrated through the analysis of *Gladiator* and *Pretty Woman*. Rather than making generalizations as Smith (1995) does, a systematic account of the semiotic discursive construction of the Manichean and Graduated Attribute Structures is provided. Systematic analyses of viewer allegiance in the sense of Smith (1995) is also provided, which also complements Tseng's (2009)

system of presenting characters by attending to the dimension of Character Attributes. It is demonstrated that the theorization of the semiotic resources and discursive choices in this chapter is able to model the construction and patterns of Character Attributes in film, which complements cognitive theories which attribute the construction of character to viewers' cognitive capacity.

## Chapter 6 Appraisal Prosody and Viewer Engagement

### 6.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is the logogenetic development of Appraisal meaning at the level of discourse semantics. This pattern is investigated under the term *Appraisal Prosody* (Hood, 2004). As introduced in Section 3.3.3, in Appraisal theory, researchers are exploring the way in which evaluative meaning spreads or diffuses across clauses and across longer phases in different types of discourse (e.g. Hood, 2004, 2006; Lemke, 1998b; Martin and Rose, 2008). The investigation of Appraisal Prosody in multimodal film discourse represents an important complement to the existing work on linguistic texts. In film narrative, Appraisal Prosody is crucial in the effective management of viewer emotion and interest, and is therefore essential in the explication of interpersonal meaning and viewer engagement (cf. Martin and Rose, 2008). Therefore, the aim of this chapter is twofold: to model Appraisal Prosody in film narrative and to investigate its role in engaging viewer's emotions.

The framework is based on two traditions, namely, cognitive theories of how film narrative engages viewer's emotion (e.g. Carroll, 2003; Smith, 2003; Tan, 1996) and the SF theory of discourse semantics (e.g. Martin, 1992; Martin and Rose, 2008), which were reviewed in Section 2.3 and Section 3.3 respectively. The former focuses on the viewer's cognitive representation of narrative structure, rather than the 'text' itself, but it provides us with useful tools for examining the discursive structure of narrative. The latter is more closely related to the present study, which focuses on how the discursive design of Appraisal Prosody manipulates viewer's expectancy and emotions. The relevance of

these theories to the current study is briefly explained in Section 6.2. Drawing upon these studies, a metafunctional framework is developed in Section 6.3 to model the Appraisal Prosody in film and to explain their role in engaging viewer's emotion. In Section 6.4, the model is applied to the analysis of different genres of moving images, including action film, romantic comedy, situation comedy and television advertisements.

## **6.2 Narrative Structure, Appraisal Prosody, and Viewer Engagement**

As noted in Section 3.3.1, the discussion of engagement in this thesis is slightly different from the notion of Engagement in Appraisal Theory which refers to the way in which the author *positions* the reader in terms of expanding or constraining the dialogic space. In the present study, the focus is on the film's engagement of viewer's emotion and interest, which is related to cognitive film theorists' keen interest in viewer emotion, and in this way, the significance of the semiotic discursive theory in explaining this complex phenomenon is demonstrated.

The engagement of viewers' emotion cannot be studied without considering the structure of narrative (Hogan, 2003: 5). As Pence (2004: 273) notes, "emotions are a primary feature of our reactions to, or interactions with, narrative". Referring to film in particular, Tan (1996: 250) also points out that "narrative can be seen as the systematic evocation of emotion in the audience, according to a preconceived plan". Various theories are proposed to explain narrative structure and the emotional response of the viewer, for example, the *structural affect theory* (Brewer and Lichtenstein, 1982), which examines the fundamental structural properties that lead to enjoyment. The theory states that different affective responses can be evoked by manipulating the discourse structure,

that is, the order in which a story's events are narrated. For example, in a 'surprise' discourse organization, the critical information from the beginning of the event structure is omitted from the discourse and then inserted later in the discourse. Suspense is evoked by postponing the story's outcome; curiosity is evoked by presenting the outcome before the preceding events.

However, purely structurally (textually) invoked emotions are quite limited. For example, the most common emotions like sadness and anger do not arise from the structural arrangement of elements. The focus of this study, then, is on the role of Appraisal Prosody in the invocation of viewer emotions and interest. I shall draw upon Martin and Rose (2008) to examine patterns of Appraisal in relation to *story phases* (see Section 3.3.4). In film, the pattern is much more complex than short linguistic texts and thus the aim of this chapter is to provide a systematic modeling of Appraisal Prosody and its functions of viewer engagement. The construction of *tension* through the prosody of Attitude relations is also modeled and its engagement functions are explained.

As reviewed in Section 2.3, how films invoke emotional responses from the viewers is the focus of most theorists' discussion of filmic emotion and many of them also attend to the structure of film narrative (e.g. Carroll, 2003; Grodal, 1999; Plantinga, 1999; Smith, 2003; Tan, 1996). The current approach differs from them in that it is based on the filmic representation of Emotion and Judgment where the focus is on viewer engagement in relation to the Appraisal Prosody in the logogenetic development of film narrative. The application of the frameworks developed in Chapters 4 and 5 reflects the position that a thorough understanding of how films construct Emotion and Judgment is fundamental for the investigation of viewer engagement. Nevertheless, the cognitive theories of filmic



emotion, especially those of Tan (1996) and Zillmann (1994), are significant in this context. Building on their theories, this chapter models character development and the patterns of compassion and admiration in film narrative.

### **6.3 A Metafunctional Model of Appraisal Prosody and Viewer Engagement**

With the theoretical tools mentioned above, the complex relation between the textual aspect of film and viewer engagement is disentangled. In the social semiotic approach, Appraisal is not examined in isolation, but rather as one dimension of the metafunctional construct, and viewer engagement is considered as a result of the collaboration of ideational, interpersonal and textual aspects of film discourse. In terms of the textual aspect, the focus is the macrostructure of the narrative, which includes not only the static components, but also the dynamics of its logogenetic development. In this respect, the problem with many theories is that they focus exclusively on the narrative dimension, for example, the *structural affect theory* (Brewer and Lichtenstein, 1982) mentioned in Section 6.2. In the current approach, in contrast, textual meaning is seen as enabling ideational and interpersonal meanings (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Martin, 1992) and narrative structure is considered in relation to other metafunctions. Therefore, the primary task of this approach is to map Appraisal meaning onto the textural structure of narrative, through which the Appraisal dimension of the narrative genre is also explained. Two levels of structure are considered: narrative *stages* following Labov and Walestky (1967) and *phase* following Martin and Rose (2008), which are reviewed in Section 3.3.

Meanwhile, Appraisal meaning and textual structure cannot be separated from the ideational meaning. However, for the current purpose of modeling Appraisal Prosody, I

am not concerned with the specific process types that constitute the ideational meaning, but the ‘field’ of discourse which is a higher level of abstraction (cf. the theorization of social action in Section 5.4.1). Similar to the analysis of social action, the use of the term here is not about the general level field of the discourse as a whole, but the particular fields, that is, the specific activities and purposes within the discourse. The major components of field are *goal* and *action* (Butt, 2003; Hasan, 1996). First, I assume that most actions/activities involve intentions, or goals, and the disruption of an activity normally is the disruption of the goal to continue the action (van Dijk, 1976). Second, if the goal has not been, or is not being enacted, it *motivates* actions. Seen from the perspective of field, narrative involves one or more structures in which a goal is disrupted, actions are carried out and finally the goal is fulfilled. As Martin (1996) observes, the disruption of field is the main device for the manipulation of readers’ expectancy in narratives.

A simple example from *Gladiator* suffices to explain the process. For the character Commodus, first his goal or desire to be an emperor is recognized (see Section 4.3 for the representation of goal). Then his goal is disrupted as his father decides to pass the throne to Maximus. He then takes action and kills his father and finally his goal is fulfilled. The process is illustrated in Figure 6.1. It is important to stress here that the character’s goals, whether fulfilled or disrupted, as well as his/her actions, are all discursive choices made by the filmmaker. For example, the alternative choices are shown in the boxes in Figure 6.1. Regarding character goal and action as discursive choice allows us to examine exactly how the character and the narrative are designed.

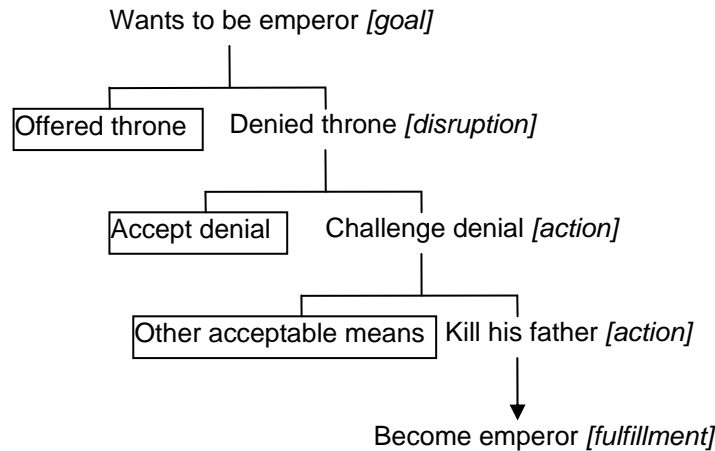


Figure 6.1 Goal development as discursive choice

In terms of Appraisal Prosody, the role of goal in eliciting emotion is discussed in Section 4.2.2. It is explained that goal fulfillment gives rise to positive emotions and goal disruption produces negative emotions. Situated in the structure of film, Appraisal Prosody is mainly constructed by the alternation of goal fulfillment and goal disruption.

Both goal status (ideational) and Appraisal Prosody (interpersonal) are then mapped onto the two levels of narrative structure (textual): stage and phase. The stages considered are Orientation, Complication and Resolution. Although the focus is on emotion, the Character Attribute of ‘power’ is also considered and it is largely consistent with Character Emotion<sup>16</sup>. In the Orientation, the characters are assigned various social roles, which are sabotaged in the Complication stage and then restored in Resolution. The metafunctional patterns which constitute different stages are analyzed in Section 6.4.1.

At the level of phase, the interaction between metafunctions is also straightforward because the very notion of phase is defined by the metafunctional consistency of a discourse segment (Gregory, 1995; Thibault, 2000). I shall adopt the model of Martin and

<sup>16</sup> The pattern of intrinsic attributes (esp. morality) is examined in Section 5. 5 and is not discussed here.

Rose (2008) which goes beyond just delineating phases by identifying the specific types of phases characteristic of narrative. Based on their model reviewed in Section 3.3.4, a metafunctional framework is proposed in Figure 6.2, in which *goal fulfillment and disruption determine Appraisal Prosody (shown as vertical arrows) and correspond to discursive phases (shown as vertical lines).*

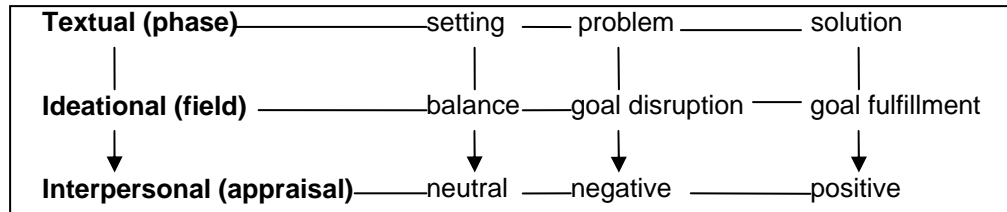


Figure 6.2 The metafunctional model of appraisal prosody

This model contains the three most important phases in Martin and Rose (2008), namely, setting phase, problem phase and solution phase. In the setting phase, the field is in balance and the Character Emotion is neutral or slightly positive; in the problem phase, the field (goal) is disrupted and the Emotion is negative; in the solution phase, the goal is fulfilled and the Emotion is positive. However, goals are not necessarily fulfilled in the solution phase, depending on the narrator's choice. The Character Attribute of power normally develops in the same way as Emotions. A key point is that these phase types are *recursive* during the narrative, thus forming a fluctuating prosody throughout the narrative. In this way, the focus on the intermediate-level unit of phase allows us to model the exact development of Appraisal in the unfolding of film narrative.

With the metafunctional model, the role of Appraisal Prosody in engaging viewers can be explained. Three mechanisms are proposed to examine the character-based viewer engagement: allegiance, empathy and expectancy. By bringing these three related mechanisms into a coherent framework, the metafunctional model provides an effective

tool for investigating the semiotic discursive resources of viewer engagement, that is, how films strategically design the *field* in different *phases* and *stages* to construct ideal *Appraisal Prosody*. The first notion is viewers' *allegiance* with the protagonist (the opposite of allegiance is the *alienation* of the antagonist). Allegiance is the result of pro attitude which in the framework includes positive Emotion and positive Judgment. This is consistent with Smith's (1995) proposal that allegiance involves both emotional and cognitive responses and is also similar to Zillmann's (1994) two steps of moral judgment and disposition formation (cf. Section 2.3). Pro attitude is constructed by multimodal redundant positive attributes and con attitude is constructed by negative attributes (see Section 5.6 for analysis). The premise is that the film gives viewers access to the attributes by focusing on him/her, which is what Smith (1995) calls 'alignment'. With the stratified model adopted here, alignment can be viewed as choices at the level of discourse semantics which is realized by the semiotic resources such as spatial temporal focus on a certain character on the one hand and realizes allegiance on the other. The construction of allegiance/alienation is represented as Figure 6.3.

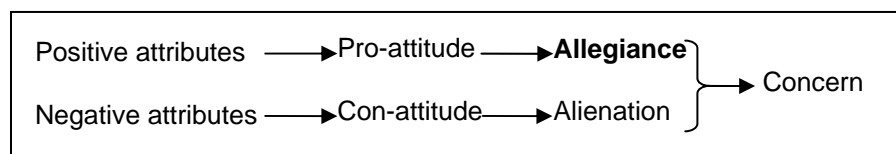


Figure 6.3 The construction of allegiance/alienation

Allegiance is normally constructed at the Orientation stage or the setting phase of the film and is fundamental to viewers' emotional investment in the film (cf. Section 5.6.1 for the analysis of the construction of allegiance in *Gladiator*). As Zillmann (1994: 48) points out, "characters in drama must be *introduced* such that respondents react to

protagonists as if they were friends and to antagonists as if they were enemies...the more strongly respondents react to protagonists as friends and to antagonists as enemies, the more strongly they will be emotionally engaged” (emphasis added). Viewers then share the protagonist’s goals and emotions and are *concerned* about what happens to him/her throughout the film (see Figure 6.3) (Carroll, 2003; Zillmann, 1994). This ‘concern’ makes it possible for films to manipulate viewer’s emotion, both in terms of *empathy* and *expectancy*, as elaborated below. Of course, viewers’ allegiance towards a character may change during the narrative, but as long as they ally with a certain character, concern remains. Also, for the clarity of discussion the focus will be on ‘transparent’ moral structure in which viewers’ allegiance is generally consistent.

Once viewers ally with the protagonist, they feel with him/her and the prosody of protagonist’s emotion invokes *congruent* emotions in the viewer. This type of engagement is termed *empathetic engagement* (which would be *counter-empathy* towards the antagonist). It is essential because empathy with the protagonist is the dominant emotion in its absolute sense from the beginning to the end of the movie (Carroll, 2008: 79; Tan, 1996: 176). Various theories of empathy/sympathy are proposed (see Section 2.3 for review). The definition of Tan (1996: 174) which characterizes empathetic emotion by the fact that “the situational meaning structure of the event for a character is part of the meaning for the viewer” is adopted here. For example, misfortune for the protagonist produces negative emotions in the viewer and good fortune produces positive emotions.

Drawing upon the model in Chapter 4, I propose that empathetic emotions are invoked in two ways: by Eliciting Condition and by the character’s emotion Expression. In this way, studies focusing on the former (i.e. criterial prefocusing or situational

meaning structure) (e.g. Carroll, 2003; Tan, 1996) and studies focusing on the latter (i.e. the contagious response to the protagonist's emotion expression) (e.g. Coplan, 2006; Plantinga, 1999; Smith, 1995) are integrated in a single framework. In terms of the former, as viewers subscribe to the protagonist's goals, they *feel with* the protagonist, that is, the disruption and fulfillment of the goals evoke negative and positive emotions in viewers respectively. This also explains the case in which viewer's emotion is not synchronized with the protagonist's: sometimes viewers perceive an event before the protagonist (e.g. an unrealized danger) and then *feel for* him/her. In terms of the latter, films use various techniques to highlight the protagonist's (facial) expressions, such as shot distance and duration (cf. Plantinga, 1999), and therefore to invite viewers to *feel with* the protagonist. Meanwhile, the emotions and attributes of protagonist (as well as the antagonist) may become the Eliciting Condition for viewers' emotions, that is, we *feel toward* the protagonist/antagonist. This kind of empathetic emotion is referred to as *sympathy* by Tan (1996). For example, when the protagonist's goal is disrupted, aside from the sadness, we also have a warm feeling of compassion for him/her which may be characterized by the tendency to console him/her. In this case, the viewer does not feel on behalf of the protagonist, but it is still empathetic because it is based on their allegiance with him/her. This type of emotion is also applicable to the antagonist, which becomes *antipathy*. For example, the actions of the antagonist may provoke viewers' anger or contempt towards him/her.

It is clear from the mechanisms of empathetic engagement that viewer emotion develops in a similar way with the protagonist's emotion and forms a similar prosody throughout the discursive phases and stages. In Section 6.4, the protagonist's emotion

development is modeled and viewers' empathetic emotion in specific film texts is analyzed. The development of character's power which invokes viewers' Judgment is also discussed.

The third device of viewer engagement in this model is *expectancy*. So far, the emotion *after* the goal status is revealed has been examined. But *before* the goal is fulfilled/disrupted, viewers *anticipate* the result, which for Tan (1996) is another major source of interest. In the current framework, then, expectancy is constructed by this *uncertainty* of goal fulfillment. Generally, viewers expect the protagonist's goal to be fulfilled and the antagonist's goal to be disrupted. Through empathy and expectancy, viewers are engaged both before and after the goal fulfillment/disruption which recurs many times during the narrative. In this way, the relation between field (goal fulfillment and disruption), discourse structure and viewer engagement is clarified, as is shown in Figure 6.4 ('N' stands for negative and 'P' for positive). The alternation of expectancy and empathy (both positive and negative emotions) recurs many times together with the development of the protagonist's goals and sustains viewer's interest throughout the narrative. This model explicitly relates viewer engagement to the discursive patterns of meaning, which counts as an effort to bridge systematic text analysis and cognitive theories of film interpretation.

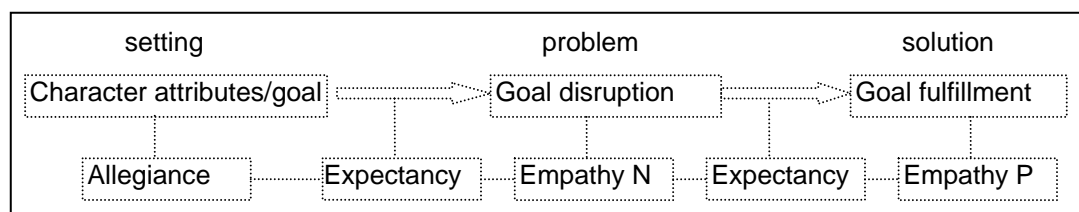


Figure 6.4 The protagonist's engagement of viewer emotion



The working of this model is briefly illustrated with a plot from *Gladiator*. In the battle scene at the beginning, viewers ally with the general Maximus based on the positive Judgment and positive Emotion invoked by his positive attributes (e.g. capacity, charisma, etc.), as analyzed in Section 5.6.1. This is enabled by the film’s aligning viewers with Maximus by almost exclusively centering on him. Maximus’ goal is to negotiate with the ‘barbarians’. As viewers ally with him, they expect this goal to be fulfilled and they are concerned with the result. The goal is disrupted when the barbarians kill Maximus’ messenger. The emotion of Maximus and viewers is negative. The goal disruption then motivates the action of fighting and in this process viewers’ second expectancy about the result of the battle is invoked. Finally, the battle is won and Maximus’ goal is fulfilled. Maximus’ emotion is as a result positive, so is the viewers’. The viewers’ positive emotion doesn’t only come from sharing the Eliciting Condition (goal fulfillment), but also from Maximus’ expressions (e.g. smiles in conversation with his subordinate Quintus). The pattern is illustrated in Figure 6.5.

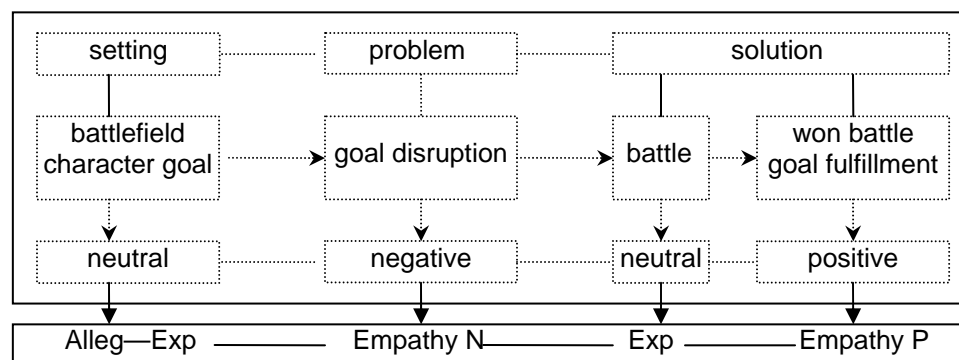


Figure 6.5 The metafunctional model and viewer engagement (“Alleg” stands for allegiance, “Exp” stands for expectancy, “N” stands for negative, “P” stands for positive)

So far, the discussion focuses on the individual character’s (the protagonist’s) Emotion. Another important aspect of Appraisal Prosody is the development of *Attitude*

*relations* between the main characters, for example, the relation between the protagonist and antagonist in action films and the relation between the hero and the heroine in love stories. In the stratified model, Attitude relation is situated at the contextual level of ‘*tenor*’ and is realized by the characters’ *Attitude* to each other. Two types of character relations are discussed, namely, antagonistic relation and romantic relation, typical in action films and romantic comedies respectively. Ideationally, in the former, the protagonist’s goal is to defeat his/her opponent while in the latter the protagonist’s goal is to be together with the one he/she loves. Therefore, in the former the Attitude relation gets worse and worse and the tension is built up during the conflict, while in the latter the relation gets deeper and deeper and typically goes through fluctuations before the final unit. These goals and Attitudes are further realized as *actions* toward each other. For antagonist relations, the actions get more and more hostile and for romantic relations the actions get more and more intimate. In terms of viewer engagement, the allegiance with protagonist’s goal still applies: viewers expect the hero to defeat the villain and expect the hero and heroine to be together. Before they do, viewers are concerned and they share the protagonist’s feelings in the ups and downs of the relation. A detailed film analysis of Attitude relations is provided in Section 6.4.

To sum up, the consideration of all the three metafunctional dimensions of ideational (goal and action), interpersonal (Appraisal Prosody) and textual (stage and phase) meanings provides us not only with an effective tool to examine their interaction in the narrative genre but also their integrated effect in viewer engagement. It should be noted that films also elicit other types of emotions, for example, the reflexive response of startle and the excitement at spectacles (for a comprehensive discussion, see Carroll, 2008).

However, the three elements of allegiance, empathy and expectancy in the framework are certainly dominant and are closely related to the logogenetic development of film narrative. Guided by the proposed framework, a systematic analysis of film discourse and viewer engagement is provided in Section 6.4.

## **6.4 Appraisal Prosody and Viewer Engagement: Data Analysis**

In this section, the dynamics of Appraisal and its role in engaging viewer's emotion are modeled through detailed text analysis, based on the framework proposed in Section 6.3. Examples from four film genres are selected: action film, romance film, situation comedy and television advertisement. On the one hand, how the patterns of Appraisal interact with other metafunctional meanings to shape the narrative genres is investigated, and on the other, how viewers are engaged by the Appraisal patterns is explained. For the genre of action and romance, the films of *Gladiator* and *Pretty Woman* are analyzed. For situation comedy, Season 4, Episode 12 of *Friends* is analyzed. Lastly, a different genre, television advertisement, is considered because it allows us to examine the role of Appraisal in the process of persuasion, which is an important dimension of engagement.

### **6.4.1 Appraisal Prosody in Film: *Gladiator* and *Pretty Woman***

#### **6.4.1.1 Appraisal Prosody of the Protagonist in *Gladiator***

In this section, the development of emotions and attributes of the protagonist, Maximus in *Gladiator* is examined. The film strategically designs situations for Maximus so that his emotions change constantly throughout the film. As explained in Section 4.3, filmic events elicit emotion from characters mainly based on their goals (as well as standard and

belief). It follows that a fundamental way to manipulate Character Emotion is through the fulfillment and disruption of his/her goals. The main task of this section is, therefore, to map out the goal status of the protagonist in relation to the narrative structure of the film. Parallel to goal status, the change of Maximus' attribute of power is also analyzed. These changes directly elicit viewers' emotional response as they ally with Maximus.

Following the metafunctional framework, the stages/phases, field and Appraisal of the film are presented in Table 6.1. As the focus is on the protagonist Maximus, the phases only include the plot relevant to him. Five types of phases are identified: setting, problem, event, opportunity, and solution. Problem and opportunity phases are special types of events, which have clear negative and positive valences respectively for the protagonist. The Appraisal includes the two dimensions of Character Emotion and the Character Attribute of power, discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 respectively.

The emotion is judged on the ground of both the Eliciting Condition and Expression, and the status of goal/standard is included in the column of 'field'. For mathematical coding, it should be acknowledged that these numbers are not exact quantitative coding because emotions and attributes cannot be readily quantified. In social psychology, attitudinal meaning is generally measured according to semantic scales (Osgood et al., 1957). This method is employed by many authors to measure emotion (e.g. Uldall, 1960). There may be different scales, for example, five or seven, which are labeled by numbers (e.g. -2—2 or -3—3).

Stage/phase	Field	Appraisal		Time
		Emotion	Power	
Orientation				

(1) setting	Battlefield	0	1	4.3
(2) problem	Germans refuse to negotiate [GD]	-1 [-hap]	1	5.2
(3) solution	Fight and won [GF]	1 [+hap]	2	12.8
(4) event	Celebration [GF]	1 [+hap]	2	21
<b>Complication</b>				
(5) Problem	Asked by Marcus to be his successor, but he intends to go home [GD]	-1 [-inc]	3	29.2
(6) Problem	Commodus killed Marcus and asks for Maximus' loyalty [SD and GD]	-2 [-sat (anger), - inc]	-1	39
(7) problem	Commodus orders the death of Maximus and his family and his wife and son are killed [GD]	-3 [-hap (grief)]	-2	47
(8) opportunity	Saved by Juba [GD for viewer]	0	0	49.5
(9) problem	He becomes a slave, then a gladiator but he refuses to fight [GD]	-1 [-inc]	-1	59.1
(10) event	Win the first fight	0	1	62.4
(11) event	Win the second fight	0	1	72.3
(12) opportunity	Come to Rome and fight as gladiator [GD]	1 [+sat]	2	96.5
(13) problem	Asked by Commodus to reveal identity and confronted Commodus [SD]	-1 [-sat (anger)]	-1	100

(14) opportunity	Visited by Lucilla who asks for cooperation [SD]	-2 [-sat (anger), -inc]	-1	108
(15) event	Interaction with other gladiators	1 [+hap]	-1	113.5
(16) event	Second fight [GD]	-1 [-sat]	-1	122
(17) opportunity	Maximus agrees to talk to Senator and they plan coup	0	1	131
(18) event	Action of coup (romance with Lucilla)	1 [+aff]	1	148.6
(19) problem	Plot fails, Maximus is sent to prison [GD]	-1 [-hap]	-1	151.5
<b>Resolution</b>				
(20) problem	Commodus proposes dual and stabs him	-1	-2	154
(21) solution	Maximus kills Commodus [GF]	1 [+sat]	1	158.5
<b>Coda</b>				
(22) solution	Maximus dies [GD for viewer]	1	1	162.5

Table 6.1 Transcription and coding of *Gladiator* ('GD' stands for goal disruption, GF for goal fulfillment, SD for standard disruption)

For the purpose of the present study, three scales are distinguished: positive, neutral and negative, which are coded '-1', '0', '1' respectively. This treatment avoids the problem of the subjective judgment of the degree/intensity of the Appraisal meanings, which are nonetheless discussed in qualitative analysis. However, if two instances of

negative emotions/attributes happen successively and the latter is obviously more intense than the previous one, the first one is coded ‘-1’ and the second one ‘-2’ to indicate the trend of escalation. This solution is crucial for revealing the development of Appraisal meaning, which is the primary purpose of the analysis. However, as the focus is the pattern of development, the exact quantitative feature is not relevant. For example, in phase (5), Maximus’ emotion is assigned ‘-1’ because Marcus’ request disrupts his goal of going home. The emotion in phase (6) is clearly more intense than the previous one because it includes stronger disinclination (the action of rejection and walking away), anger towards Commodus, as well as sadness over Marcus’ death. It is therefore assigned ‘-2’ to indicate the development of emotion. Then in phase (7), the emotion is further intensified when Maximus’ wife and son are murdered, so it is scored ‘-3’. Other instances of emotion are mostly straightforward in Table 6.1 and will not be elaborated.

The scoring of some attributes also requires some explanation. First, Maximus’ ‘power’ scores ‘1’ in phases (1) and (2) because he is a general who is well respected by his soldiers (see Section 5.6.1 for analysis). The score changes to ‘2’ because viewers’ Judgment of this valor becomes stronger after the magnificent battle. His capacity is also commended by both Marcus and Commodus. Then in phase (5) viewers’ Judgment moves further towards the positive end when the emperor Marcus elaborates his virtues and offers him the throne and his power is therefore scored ‘3’. However, his ‘power’ is then jeopardized and the score falls accordingly in phase (6) when Commodus makes himself the emperor and tries to subjugate him. It falls further to ‘-1’ when he is controlled by Commodus in phase (7) and to ‘-2’ when he is dying at the graves of his wife and son. In phase (10) and (11), Maximus wins two gladiatorial fights and is judged

as ‘powerful’ as a gladiator. Then his power increases in phase (12) because he comes to Rome and wins the crowd of Romans. As the heroine Lucilla comments, “I saw a slave become more powerful than the Emperor of Rome”. However, his power is threatened and is reduced to ‘-1’ when Commodus orders him to reveal his identity, although he still enjoys the popularity among the Roman spectators. In phases (14) to (16) his power remains negative as he is under the control of Commodus’ praetorian guards, despite his victory in gladiatorial fights. Then in phase (17), the situation is changed because Maximus has contacted his army and he is planning a coup with Senator Gracchus, but it obviously becomes negative when the coup fails. Finally, the attribute is assigned ‘1’ at Coda because although he is dead, he defeats Commodus and is honored by Lucilla as “soldier of Rome”. Meanwhile, the film ends in a fairytale way in which Maximus reunites with his wife and son in the afterlife.

The development of emotion and power is visualized as Figure 6.6. The fluctuations across stages and phases are clear. It also shows that the valence of emotion and power is largely consistent and makes character development more dramatic. This consistency is significant for viewer engagement, as is elaborated below. Viewers are engaged across the phases through the mechanisms proposed in Section 6.3. First, allegiance is constructed by endowing positive attributes to Maximus in the Orientation stage (see Section 5.6.1). Then the fluctuations of Maximus’ emotions and power invoke *empathetic reactions* in viewers. Specifically, the fulfillment of his goals results in positive emotions and the disruption results in negative emotions. Meanwhile, before his goals are fulfilled or disrupted in the solution phase, the uncertainty in the problem, opportunity and event phases evokes viewers’ concern and *expectancy*. As these phase types alternate



throughout the text as “pulses of expectancy” (Martin and Rose, 2008: 85), viewers’ interest is sustained, until the release of tension in the final solution. Such engagement function will be further discussed in Section 6.4.1.2 in relation to the Attitude relations between the protagonist and the antagonist.

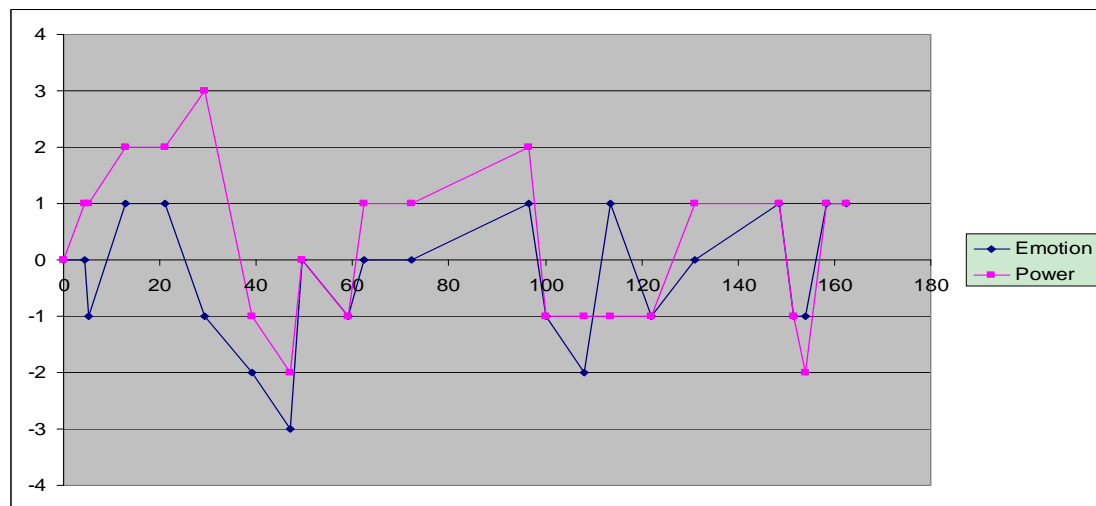


Figure 6.6 Appraisal prosody across phases for Maximus in *Gladiator*

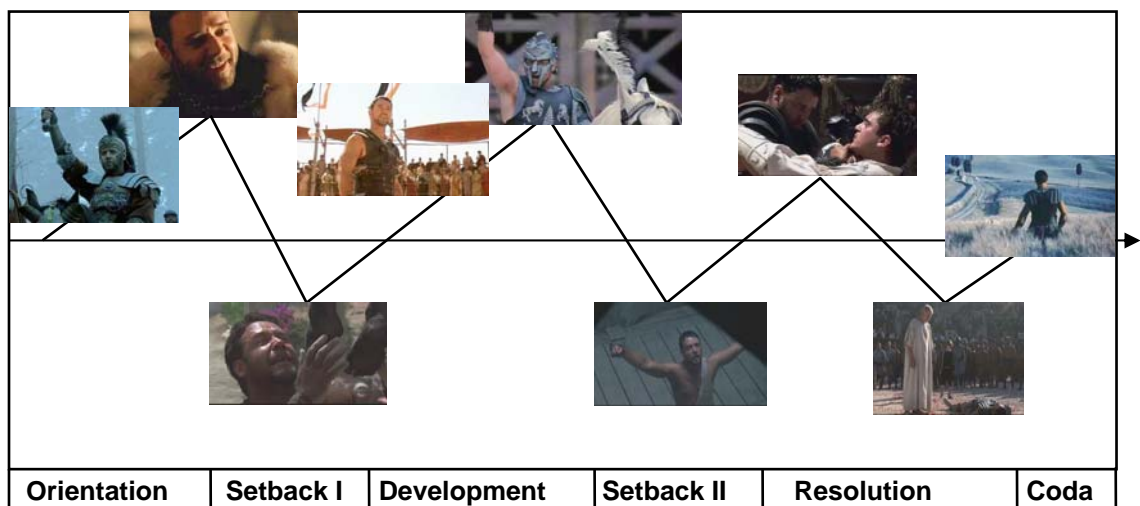


Figure 6.7 Appraisal prosody and camera angle across stages

The analysis indicates the congruence between emotion and power, as well as the congruence among the three metafunctional dimensions. The overall pattern at the level

of stage is also analyzed. The interactive semiotic resource, in particular, camera angle is also taken into consideration. To be more accurate, the Complication stage is further divided into Setback I (the persecution by Commodus), Development (Maximus is saved by Juba, becomes a great gladiator and plots against Commodus) and Setback II (the coup fails and he is sent to prison). The representative images of these stages are reproduced in Figure 6.7. It is clear that setbacks are represented with high camera angle and opportunities with low angle (see Section 5.4.3 for the discussion of camera angle).

In this way, a model which captures the congruence among metafunctional dimensions and strata in the construction of prosody is developed, as is shown in Figure 6.8 (cf. Martin, 1996). Such congruence functions to guarantee the maximal engagement of viewer's interest in every stage, that is, strong allegiance with the protagonist so that they keep concerned throughout the film and react with intense empathetic emotions before the final satisfaction at Resolution.

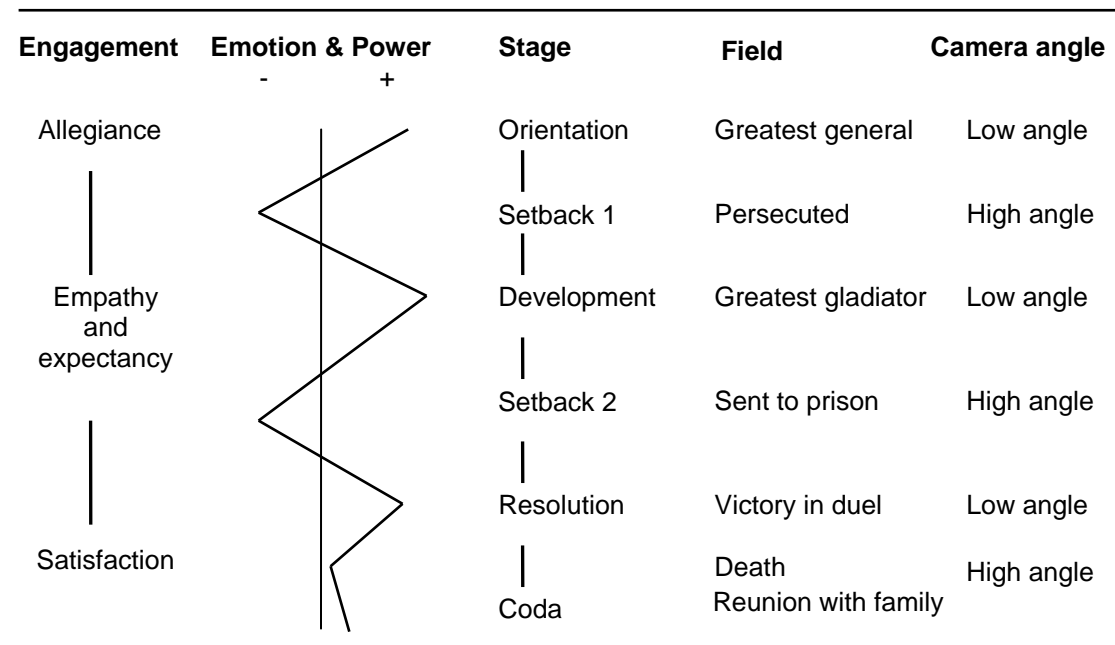


Figure 6.8 Metafunctional and cross-strata congruence for viewer engagement

The configuration of emotion, power and camera angle and the prosody thus formed are further modeled with the visualization software *Visual Sense*<sup>17</sup>. Emotion, power and camera angle are seen as equal variables with positive and negative values (low and high for camera angle), coded as “1” and “-1” respectively (neutral is “0”). Therefore, the overlap of positive emotion, positive attribute and low camera angle result in the score “3”, the overlap of all negative variables scores “-3”, and other types of configurations scatter in between. In this way, the overall pattern of character development is captured, as shown in Figure 6.9. These variables are congruent at highest and the lowest points and mark transitions of phases. In other phases, they are configured differently so that the narrative differs in its Appraisal intensity, and the impact on viewer changes accordingly throughout the film. The variations of their configurations make the prosody more dramatic and engage the viewers more effectively.



Figure 6.9 Prosody and the configuration of emotion, power and camera angle

#### 6.4.1.2 Protagonist-Antagonist Relations in *Gladiator*

<sup>17</sup> The software was developed as part of the *Mapping Asian Cultures: From Data to Knowledge* (HSS-0901-P02) project funded by the National University of Singapore (Principal Investigator: Kay O'Halloran, National University of Singapore and External Collaborator: Lev Manovich, University of California at San Diego, USA)

The relation between Maximus and Commodus is antagonistic throughout most of the film and their conflict is essential to the film narrative. To many writers, conflict is the essence of drama and this argument is also echoed by many researchers (e.g. Tan, 1996). Applying the metafunctional framework in Section 6. 3, in this section, a systematic analysis of the Attitude relations (interpersonal), the situations underlying the conflict (ideational) and the patterns of conflict in the unfolding of the narrative in stages and phases (textual) is provided.

### **(1) Orientation Stage**

At this stage, the conflict has not started yet and the Attitude relation is still positive. Maximus and Commodus interact on two occasions at this stage. On the first occasion which happens at the battlefield right after the battle in phase (3), the Attitude is positive, as is shown in the transcription in Table 6.2 (16.7 to 16.8 minutes in the film).

However, their conflict of interest seems to be budding. As Marcus leaves, it is made obvious that he likes Maximus more than Commodus. Then the film uses three shots to feature Commodus' jealousy, as is shown in Table 6.3 (17.4 minutes into the film). This detail is significant because Marcus' favor of Maximus and Commodus' jealousy is the root of the conflict between Maximus and Commodus. When Marcus's favor results in his choice of Maximus as his successor, Commodus' jealousy changes to hatred.

In their second interaction (Table 6.4, 19.2 to 19.7 minutes in the film), Commodus' Attitude towards Maximus is still positive while Maximus' reaction to Commodus' request is negative, although still courteous. Maximus' disinclination to serve Commodus foreshadows his rejection of Commodus which formally establishes their conflict.





Visual image	Dialogue	Attitude
	Commodus: General.  Maximus: Your highness.	+cap, t1; +aff  (Mutual)
	Commodus: Rome salutes you and I embrace you as a brother. It has been too long my old friend.	+cap, t2; +aff, t2
	Maximus: Your highness.	+cap, t1

Table 6.2 First interaction between Maximus and Commodus at Orientation


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Table 6.3 Commodus' jealousy

Visual image	Dialogue	Attitude
	Commodus: I'm going to need good men like you.	+cap




	Maximus: How may I be of service, Highness?  (skeptical facial expression)	+cap,  -sec, t2
	Commodus: You are a man who knows what it is to command.  You give your orders, the orders are obeyed and the battle is won.	+cap, t1
	Maximus: Highness, when your father releases me I intend to return home.	+cap, t1, t2  -inc, t2

Table 6.4 Second interaction between Maximus and Commodus at Orientation

In summary, at the Orientation stage the Attitudinal relation is mainly positive, but at the same time, there are negative emotions that may potentially lead to conflict. This potential is co-articulated by the ideational *contrast* of their goals, which is getting the throne for Commodus and going home for Maximus. However, there is no conflict yet because the two characters have not disrupted each other's goals.

## (2) Complication Stage

The relation between Maximus and Commodus reaches a turning point at the beginning of the Complication stage. The emotions of this scene are analyzed in detail in Section 4.6.1 and a brief recount is provided here. Maximus is angry at Commodus because he suspects Commodus murdered the emperor Marcus to attain the throne. Maximus then rejects Commodus' request to serve him. The rejection disrupts Commodus' goal and

results his order to kill Maximus and his family. The killing clearly disrupts Maximus's goal and produces hatred towards Commodus. The emotion, however, is not manifested immediately, but in later confrontations. Now their conflict is established and they become each other's *goal disrupter*. The conflict does not simply *happen* at the Complication, but *constitutes* the stage. As such, the metafunctional elements of field (goal disruption), Attitude (hatred) and narrative structure (Complication) co-construct each other, echoing the metafunctional model in Section 6.3.

This Attitude relation then stays antagonistic throughout the narrative and is enacted in three confrontations between Maximus and Commodus before the final resolution. The first confrontation happens when Commodus orders Maximus to reveal his identity. The interaction is transcribed in Table 6.5 (91.2 to 91.4 minutes in the film). Maximus explicitly states that he will have his vengeance, which is an expression of hatred through commissive speech act. Commodus is clearly shocked by the fact that Maximus is still alive and is 'terribly vexed' as he comments himself. He is speechless and this shock and vexation is registered on his face.



Visual image	Dialogue	Attitude
	Maximus: My name is Maximus Decimus Meridius...father to a murdered son, husband to a murdered wife, and I will have my vengeance in this life or the next.	-aff (hatred), t2
	Commodus: (facial expression)	-sec (surprise, vexation)

Table 6.5 Maximus's first confrontation with Commodus at Complication



The second confrontation happens after the second gladiatorial fight in which Maximus defies Commodus' order to kill his opponent. Transcribed in Table 6.6 (108.8 to 110.1 minutes in the film), the first exchange expresses their wishes of each other's death. In Commodus' second move, he tries to provoke Maximus by recounting his family's tragic death. Although Maximus does not take any action, because of the disadvantageous situation, it can be inferred from his remarks that he is planning to act against Commodus. The tension in this confrontation is higher than the previous one as they are now both explicit about the intention to kill each other. This high tension also invokes viewers' expectancy about how they will carry out their plans against each other.





Visual image	Dialogue	Attitude
	Commodus: What am I going to do with you? You simply won't die. Are we so different, you and I? You take life when you have to, as do I.	-aff (hatred) t2
	Maximus: I have only one more life to take and then it is done.	-aff (hatred) t2
	Commodus: Then take it now. They told me your son squealed like a girl when they nailed him to the cross and your wife, moaned like a whore when they ravaged her again, and again, and again.	Provoking Maximus'
	Maximus: The time for honoring yourself will soon be at an end. Highness.	Refraining anger

Table 6.6 Maximus's second confrontation with Commodus at Complication



The third confrontation happens after the failure of the coup. Commodus proposes a duel to solve their conflict. The tension has increased because the intention to kill is now realized as a concrete plan. Then Commodus stabs Maximus, which makes the result of the duel more uncertain. As a result, the stake is made extremely high (life and death situation) to maximize viewers' concern over the final resolution.

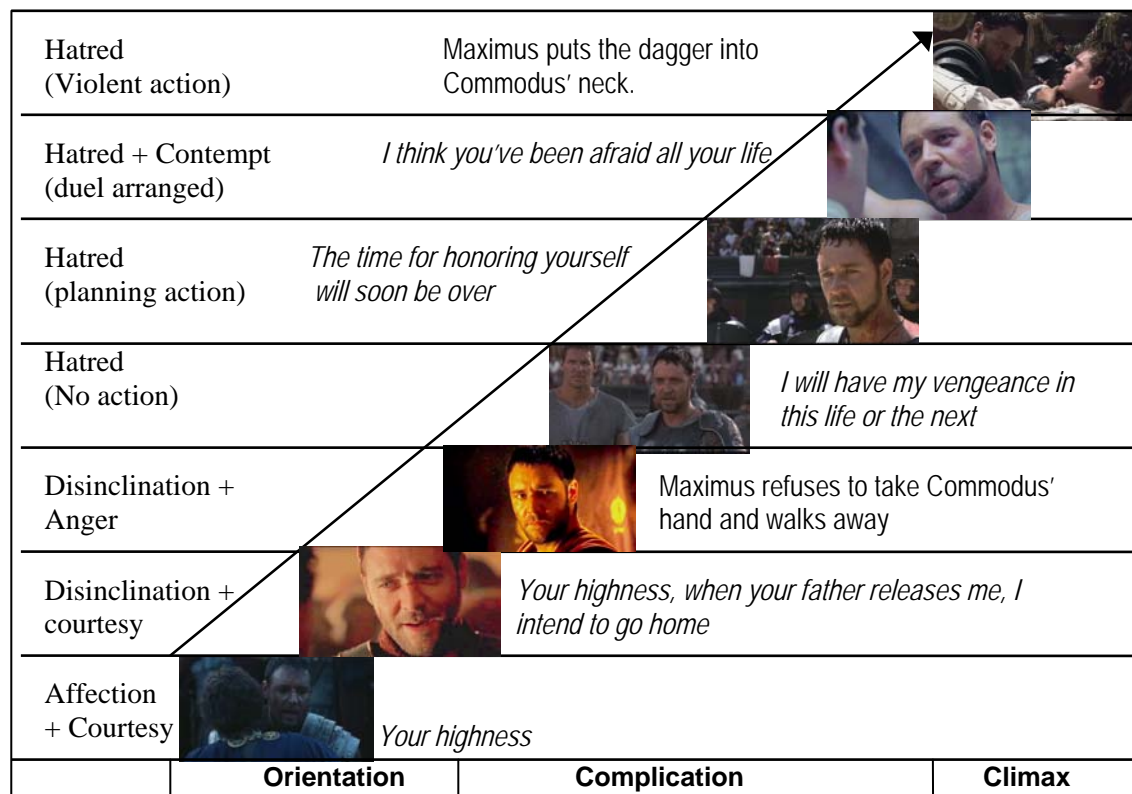


Figure 6.10 The development of attitude relations and tension (spoken dialogue is italicized)

### (3) Resolution

The Resolution of the tension is the duel between Maximus and Commodus in their fourth confrontation. The tension between them reaches climax and their conflict is materialized as physical combat. Viewers' emotional investment is also maximized because this is of utmost importance for the character they allied with and because the

result is made uncertain. The tension is finally released after Maximus kills Commodus and viewers' emotional investment is returned (cf. Tan, 1996). The unidirectional development of the Attitude relations between Maximus and Commodus, as well as how the tension is built up, is illustrated in Figure 6.10.

The ideational aspect of the relation is mapped onto the narrative stages in Figure 6.11, based on the metafunctional framework in Section 6.3. In Orientation, the goals of Maximus and Commodus are contrastive but there is no conflict of interest yet (shown as broken lines).

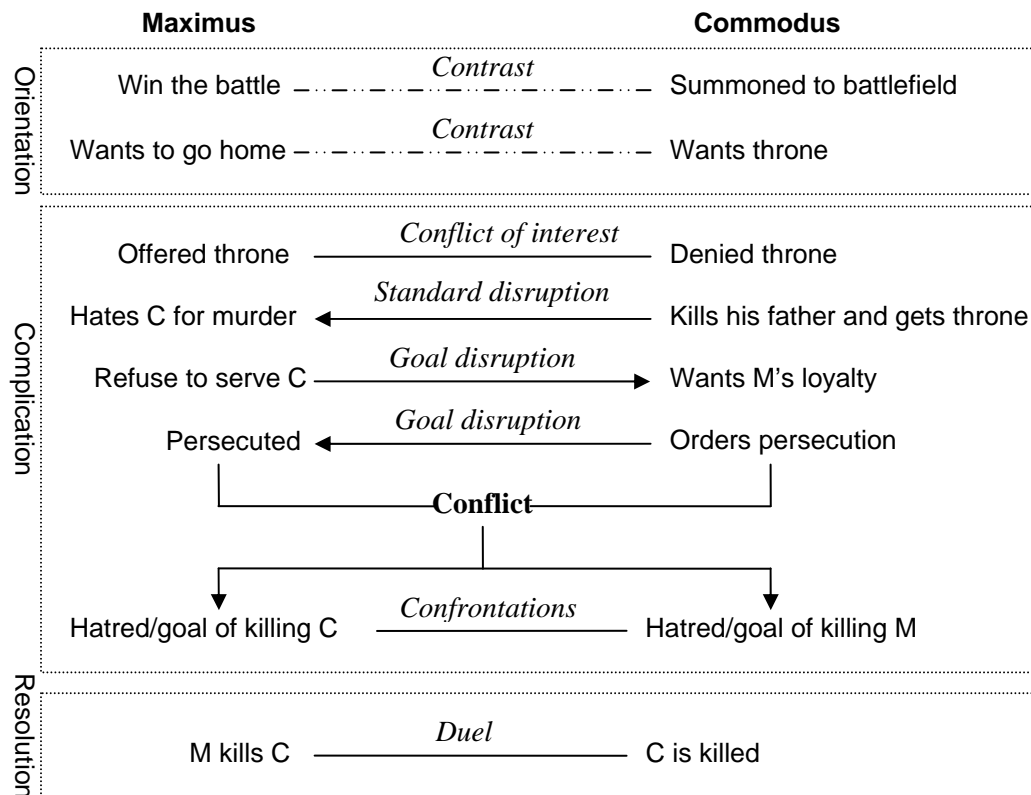


Figure 6.11 The ideational construction of attitudinal relation ('M' for Maximus; 'C' for Commodus)

At the beginning of Complication stage, their interest clashes when Maximus is offered throne and Commodus is denied throne (shown as solid line). Next, their actions

disrupt each other's goals and result in conflict (shown as arrows). The conflict then motivates their goals of killing each other, which is expressed in their confrontations. Their hatred toward each other and the urge to fulfill their goals make their confrontation more and more intense. Finally, their hatred and goal of killing each other result in the duel which resolves their conflict. In brief, their disruption of each other's goals (ideational) in the Complication stage (textual) result in their hatred (interpersonal), which in turn motivates their goal of killing each other in the rest of the Complication stage and finally the dual in Resolution.

Relating the conflict to the higher ideological level in the stratified model, the specific personal conflict reflects more abstract and general ideological conflict between the values they embody, that is, between democracy, traditional family value, courage and so forth on the one hand and dictatorship, aberrant sexuality, cowardice and so forth on the other (Cyrino, 2009: 177). The fact that positive values are represented by the protagonist who finally defeats the antagonist reflects the film's ideological position, as is suggested in the analysis of Character Attributes in Section 5.6.1.

To summarize the analysis of *Gladiator*, the prosody of the protagonist Maximus' emotion across phases and stages as well as the development of the relation between Maximus and the antagonist Commodus are modeled. A fundamental principle of the analysis is the metafunctional perspective which considers Appraisal Prosody in relation to ideational and textual aspects of meaning. The prosody co-constructed by these metafunctional elements then functions to engage viewer's emotions through the mechanisms of allegiance, empathy and expectancy.

#### 6.4.1.3 Hero-Heroine Relations in *Pretty Woman*

In *Gladiator*, Maximus' emotions fluctuate but his relation with Commodus is always negative; in love stories, in contrast, the valence of the protagonists' emotions are consistent with the valence of their relations because the relation between the hero and the heroine is the major Eliciting Condition of most of each other's emotions. So in the analysis of *Pretty Woman*, I shall focus on the development of the relationship between the heroine Vivian and the hero Edward, the pattern of which is also applicable to other romantic comedies. The main phases of their interaction are transcribed in Table 6.7. As with the coding of *Gladiator*, the quantitative increase and decrease of value indicate the qualitative improvement and deterioration of the emotional relation between Vivian and Edward. The patterns of change, hence the numbers assigned to each phase, are generally quite clear. The relationship between Vivian and Edward changes from strangers (coded '0'), to business ('1') and friends ('2'), then to pseudo-lover ('3'), and lover ('4'). Their relationship further develops as they kiss on mouth ('5') and finally get together ('6'). Similarly, the setbacks are assigned '-1' and '-2' to indicate the change. The coding and the patterns of change are explained further below.

Stage/phase	Field	Relation	Time
Orientation			
(1) setting	Vivian is a hooker trying to get a customer	0	0
(2) opportunity	Vivian drives Edward to the hotel and gets paid	1	15.9
Complication			
(3) opportunity	Edward and Vivian spend the night together. Edward asks Vivian to stay for the week	1	36

(4) event	Vivian goes to dinner as Edward's date and she then consoles him about his trouble at work	2	60.2
(5) event	Bath together and talking about personal things	3	68.5
(6) problem	Vivian is angry with Edward	-1	77
(7) solution	Edward apologizes and they reconcile	3	80.5
(8) event	They go to opera	4	87
(9) event	Edward and Vivian spend a day happily	4	89
(10) event	They kiss on the mouth	5	92.1
(11) problem	Edward is leaving and wants Vivian to be his mistress	-1	95.5
(12) solution	Vivian refuses and they part	-2	108.5
Resolution			
(13) solution	Edward comes back	6	116

Table 6.7 Transcription and coding of *Pretty Woman*

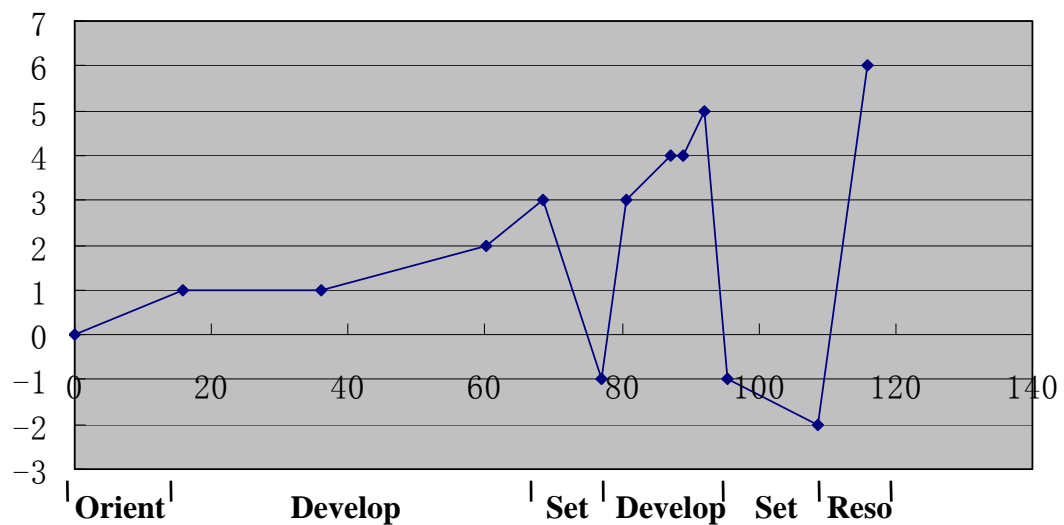


Figure 6.12 The development of emotion relations in *Pretty Woman* ('Orient' for Orientation, 'Develop' for Development, 'Set' for Setup, 'Reso' for resolution)

The development of their relation is visualized as Figure 6.12. The features of this graph are analyzed to reveal how their relation is manipulated to engage viewers. As with the modeling of *Gladiator*, the Complication stage is divided into Development and Setback as well.

First, the relation between Vivian and Edward stays positive and their intimacy keeps growing during the first half of the story. This pattern functions to construct viewers' *allegiance* to their relationship, similar to the construction of allegiance to a particular character. However, it takes much longer for the story to change the characters' relationship from stranger to romantic partner, that is, to make viewers believe that they are perfect for each other and thus invest concern in the relationship. In *Pretty Woman*, intimacy is built up through phases (2) to (5). In phase (2), when Vivian drives Edward to his hotel, they have a pleasant conversation and in phase (3) they spend the night together. However, their relation remains business, as prostitute and customer, so the score remains '1'. In phase (4), there is a significant improvement in their relation when Edward brings Vivian to dinner as his date. After the dinner, they talk about Edward's business like friends and later Edward shows a love interest in Vivian for the first time. In this phase, the relation between them changes from business to romantic, as pseudo lovers, and the score increases to '2'. This relation further develops in phase (5) when they are bathing together and talking about Edward's problematic relation with his father (scoring '3'). The change of their conversation topic from Edward's work to his personal issues indexes their growing intimacy. Romantic relation is established so far and viewers are now concerned about how it develops. Applying the model in Section 6.3, after allegiance is in place, viewers' goal is that they will be together and be happy ever after.

Then the narrative is able to manipulate viewers' emotion by fulfilling and disrupting their goals and also by maintaining their expectancy before goal fulfillment/disruption. At this point, Vivian's identity is still Edward's employee and they are not real lovers. Therefore, there is uncertainty about how the relation develops: going forward to be real lovers or going backward to be prostitute and customer. This combination of uncertainty and expectancy pushes viewers' concern and interest to a very high level.

Then the first setback of their relationship is timely introduced, in which Vivian expresses her violent anger at Edward (see Section 4.6.2 for a detailed analysis of this phase). Their relation is changed back to just business. The tension is then released in phase (7) in which Edward apologizes and they reconcile. Their relation returns to the previous level when Vivian shares with Edward her personal story (scoring '3'). Then in the next two phases they become more lover-like when they go to the opera together and spend the next day together, and is thus assigned '4'. At this point, Edward's perception of his relation with Vivian is changed, as is evident in his reply to his lawyer before going to the opera, which is 'I have a date'. Then in phase (10), a quantum leap occurs in their relationship: they kiss on the mouth. In phase (3) and phase (4), Vivian refuses to kiss on the mouth, because it is 'too personal', so now her initiation of the kiss on the mouth suggests that her idea of Edward has completely changed from customer to lover (scoring '5').

After this formal transition of their relation to lover, the time is now ripe for a second setback. In phase (11), Edward is leaving and wants Vivian to be his mistress, but this proposal is rejected by Vivian and they part in phase (12). In this major setback, the stake is made high, which is the 'life and death' of the relationship, so that viewers' concern

over the relationship is maximized. Finally, the story resolves in phase (13) in which Edward comes back to ‘rescue’ Vivian and they live (presumably) happily ever after. Their relation improves from phase (10) and scores ‘6’. Viewers’ goal is fulfilled and their emotion satisfied.

To summarize the analysis of *Pretty Woman*, the relation between the hero and the heroine is positive during the first half of the movie which serves to build viewers’ allegiance to their relation. Then the film introduces setbacks and further developments to engage viewers’ empathy and expectancy. Before the resolution, a major setback occurs which serves to maximize viewers’ concern over the final Resolution and hence to intensify their satisfaction after the Resolution. This pattern is common to romantic comedies, for example, the highly regarded films like *Sleepless in Seattle* (Ephron, 1993), *Notting Hill* (Michell, 1999), *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003), to name just a few, although the time and nature of the setbacks vary. The metafunctional unit of phase enables us to model the exact development of attitudinal relations and their construction in the logogenesis of film narrative.

#### **6.4.2 Appraisal Prosody in Situation Comedy: *Friends***

In this section, the genre of situation comedy is analyzed. It is demonstrated that Appraisal Prosody in situation comedies and movies are similar, but the differences between them are also revealed. An episode from one of the best known situation comedies *Friends* is analyzed for this purpose. Although as a television series, there may be unsolved issues in an episode that intrigue viewers’ interest in the next episode, each episode can normally stand independently as a narrative and can be analyzed alone.



The data analyzed is Episode 12 of Season 4 and the focus is the emotion of the characters. The Emotion Prosody of the main character Rachel throughout the episode is modeled. The main plot is transcribed in Table 6.8. Her goal of asking her superior Joanna to support her in the job interview is fulfilled in the solution phase in the Orientation stage and her emotion is therefore positive. In the problem phase in the Complication stage her goal of getting the job is disrupted and she expresses her sadness and anger at Joanna in the reaction phase. Then in Resolution, her problem is solved when Joanna offers her an equivalent job, and she then expresses her joy in another reaction phase. However, the problem in Coda is that Joanna passes away without leaving any paper work of her promotion and it results in Rachel's negative emotion.

Stage	Phase	Plot
Orientation	setting	Rachel intends to apply for the job as assistant buyer.
	problem	She needs Joanna's support.
	solution	Joanna promises to support her.
Complication	problem	However her superior Joanna doesn't want to let her go.  In the interview, Joanna, as an interviewer, says something bad about Rachel. Rachel doesn't get the job.
	reaction	She is very sad and angry with Joana and wants to resign.
Resolution	solution	Joanna wants to offer her the job at her own department.
	reaction	Then comes Rachel's expression of joy.
Coda	problem	She hears the news that Joanna is dead without leaving any paper work of her promotion.

Table 6.8 Transcription of *Friends 4-12*

The fulfillment and disruption of Rachel's goal (ideational) elicits the alternation of positive and negative emotions (Appraisal) which correspond to solution and problem phases and are expressed in reaction phase (textual), as is shown in Figure 6.13.

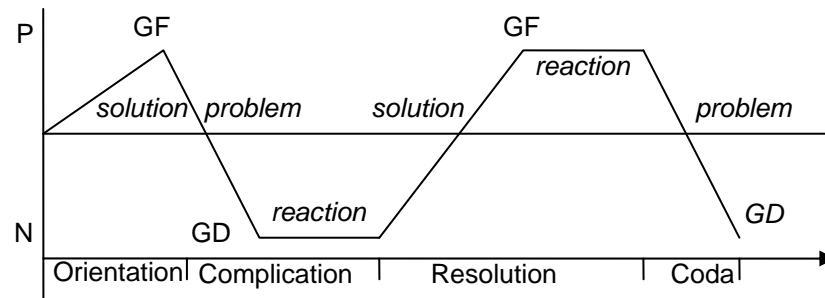





Figure 6.13 Appraisal prosody in *Friends* (a) ('P' for positive, 'N' for negative, 'GF' for goal fulfillment, 'GD' for goal disruption)

Because situation comedies are much shorter than movies, the Appraisal Prosody is less complex. However, to make a situation comedy interesting, aside from the constant 'gags', the characters' emotions have to change more often. That is, characters stay in a mood for a shorter while. In what follows, the emotions of all the three characters in a two-minute scene from Episode 12, Season 4 in *Friends* are analyzed (13.2 to 15.1 minutes in the episode). The scene is transcribed in Table 6.9, with the Character Emotions annotated.

Visual image	Dialogue	Emotion
	Rachel: Hey, Mon, quick question for you! How do you think the suit would look on an assistant buyer at Bloomingdales?	+hap
	Monica: The owner of Alexandra came here to yell at me, but instead I made him some sauce and he offered me the job as head chef.	+hap

	Rachel: Oh, my god. You just ruined everything I practiced the whole way. But I am so happy	surprise -sat, +hap
	Rachel: How do you think this suit would look on an assistant buyer at Bloomingdale's?	+hap
	Phoebe: I don't know, it would totally depend on her coloring and... (realizes) You got the job!!	+hap
	Rachel: Yeah!!! (Smiling and jumping) Monica: You got the job? Why didn't you tell me? Rachel: Oh, it's gonna be so great! ... I'm gonna have walls!	+hap, Surprise
	Phoebe: I got us a job! The wedding reception. Monica: Oh! Umm, Phoebe, I kinda need to talk to you about that. Umm, well I-I-I think it might be time for me to take a step back from catering. Phoebe: But we've only had one job.	+hap
	Monica: I know, but now we have this second one and it just, it feels like it's snowballing, you know? Phoebe: Yeah! What are you saying? Monica: I got offered the head chef at Allesandro's.	
	Phoebe: What? Monica: It's okay, because you know what? You don't really need me for the business.	surprise





	Phoebe: You're the cook! Without you it's just me driving up to people's houses with empty trays and asking for money!	-sat
	Monica: All right. But umm, I-I-I'll pay you back all the money you invested, and you can keep the van.	
	Phoebe: For what? I can't believe this! I gotta get out of here	-sat
	Rachel: I am an assistant buyer. High pitch	+hap

Table 6.9 Transcription and annotation of a scene in *Friends*

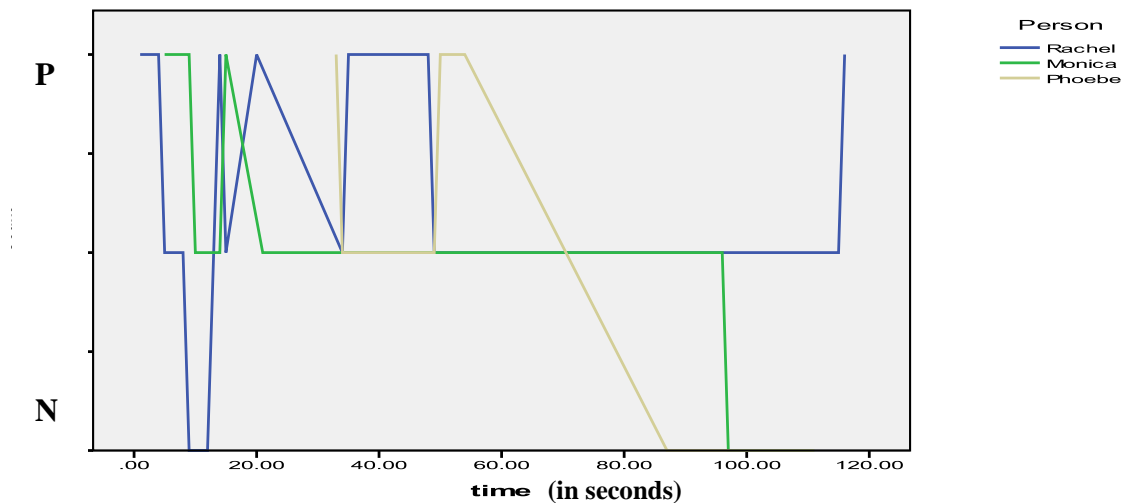


Figure 6.14 Appraisal Prosody in *Friends* (b) ("P" for positive, "N" for negative)

The emotions of the three characters Rachel, Monica and Phoebe are represented in Figure 6.14, coded with the three variables of positive, neutral and negative. It is clear

that Rachel's emotion remains positive, except for a slight dissatisfaction with Monica's interruption, Monica's emotion changes from positive to negative as her happiness is empathized by Rachel but challenged by Phoebe, and Phoebe's emotion is mainly negative after a brief positive expression, because her happiness is destroyed by Monica. To sum up, in this two-minute scene, the characters' emotions form different prosodies that make it interesting. It can also be seen the Eliciting Conditions of emotion are 'lighter' and the characters' expressions of negative emotions are often not sad but amusing for viewers.

It can be concluded that Appraisal Prosody is a key mechanism for situation comedies to engage viewers. However, as they are relatively short, the pattern is simpler and it functions on a shorter time scale. As a result, the Characters Emotions are not as deeply felt as in movies. Meanwhile, as their purpose is to amuse rather than to invoke a variety of emotions, the Eliciting Conditions for emotions are relatively 'light' and even negative emotions are sometimes made amusing.

#### **6.4.3 Appraisal Prosody and Persuasion in Television Advertisement**

In this section, another genre of moving images, namely, television advertisement is examined, with a focus on another dimension of viewer engagement, namely, persuasion. It is acknowledged that direct propaganda is less and less used in advertisements nowadays and advertisers resort to various strategies to enhance their persuasive power while trying to reduce their commercial nature. As a result, advertisements become a parasite discourse (Cook, 1992), or a hybridized discourse (Rahm, 2006), drawing on styles from all kinds of discourse types (e.g. science, education, fine art) and the voices

from all walks of life (e.g. experts, celebrities, children). The reason why television advertisements are included in the discussion of Appraisal Prosody is precisely that the external discourse types usually involve a narrative structure in which Appraisal plays an important role in both the shaping of the narrative and the persuasion of viewers. The focus of the present analysis is the narrative part of the advertisement and other parts are not considered. In what follows, a framework based on the model in Section 6.3 is developed to explain the working of narrative structure and Appraisal Prosody in engaging (persuading) viewers in the particular genre of television advertisement.

Normally, the product is contextualized by the narrative which includes the phases of setting, problem, solution, and effect. Through contextualization, the effect of the product is re-constructed as its role in the narrative (Feng and Wignell, 2011). The narrative structure is similar to that of film, although much simpler. Based on the 21 TV advertisements analyzed in Feng and Wignell (2011), the following pattern is identified. In the *setting* phase, some social activity is going on, which cannot be related to the product yet. This step is something like the pre-sequence in conversation (Sacks, 1974), or what Thibault (2000: 329) calls ‘introductory shots’. It is usually represented by a long or medium long shot (establishing shot) and there is no direct interaction between the characters and the viewer (i.e. the characters are not gazing at the viewer). This phase functions to construct the objectivity of the situation. For the characters, this is the ‘ordinary world’ and the valence of the situation is neutral or mildly positive. Then in the next phase, a *problem* occurs. Ideationally, the situation is disturbed and becomes negative for the character (i.e. goal disruption). This phase is typically represented by a close shot depicting the facial expression of the characters, through which emotions of

sadness, dissatisfaction or insecurity can be recognized. The phase of *reaction* (to the problem) can also be added, but in the twenty-second advertisements, reaction is usually represented simultaneously with problem, with the visual track showing the former and the audio track narrating the latter. In the third phase, the product is presented as a *solution*. The valence of the situation is now changed to positive (goal fulfillment) and the product is usually introduced with the character smiling. The fourth phase of *effect* returns to the ‘ordinary world’. The situation now is completely positive, represented by smiling characters. Simply put, the narrative designs a problem^solution pattern in which the goal is disrupted and then fulfilled (by the product) and the Appraisal Prosody changes from negative to positive, as is illustrated in Figure 6.15. However, it should be noted that this is the prototypical structure of television advertisements which have a narrative component. Other types of structures are also common. On the one hand, some advertisements may only have one or two phases or may not have a narrative component at all, on the other, some advertisements may have more than one problem and solution.

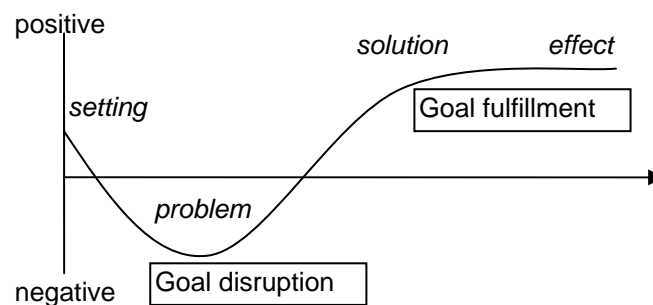


Figure 6.15 Appraisal prosody in the narrative of television advertisement

Such narrative structure and Appraisal Prosody in TV advertisement perform persuasive function in two ways: by constructing product effect through narrative structure and by engaging viewer emotion through the change of Character Emotions.

First, in terms of the interaction between the narrative structure and the purpose of advertising, the former provides a context which accommodates the product and *naturalizes* its effect (cf. Feng and Wignell, 2011). That is, the effect of the product is realized as the solution to a problem and the cause of bad to good changes. The ‘change’, congruently realized by cause-effect relation, is usually construed metaphorically through temporal sequence. Compared to direct linguistic claims, the visual narrative construction is not only safer (not making false claims), but also more effective, because the narrative is constructed as a ‘faithful’ representation of reality in which the story speaks for the product. As a result, the meaning (the effectiveness of the product) is not imposed on the viewer, but is constructed, or inferred by them. This is one important aspect of visual persuasion, because people are more easily persuaded by the meaning they construct themselves (Jeong, 2008: 69).

Second, the prosody of Character Emotion engages viewer’s emotions. The persuasive effect of the Appraisal Prosody is premised on the viewers’ identification with the characters. In the setting phase, the characters are assigned various social/family roles in the social practice, such as businessperson and parent, identities which we recognize as one of ‘us’. Viewers therefore share the characters’ concerns throughout the narrative. Then, the Appraisal Prosody involves negative to positive change, determined by the ideational meaning of goal disruption and goal fulfillment, which are then textually rendered as problem and solution phases. Viewers share, or at least understand, the problem and also share or desire the joy over its solution. In this process, viewers, perhaps unconsciously, subscribe to the effect of the product. At the end, the problem is solved and the situational meaning is completely positive. This positive valence is co-



articulated by the positive emotions of the characters. Such happy ending is important for persuasion as we all desire euphorical states where problems can be solved. The narrative of advertisement thus constructs an illusion that the purchase of the product will realize this ‘dream world’. This prosody goes perfectly with the working of advertisements: they function on day-dream level, constructing an imaginary world in which the reader is able to make come true those desires which remain unsatisfied in his/her everyday life (Vestergaard and Schroder, 1985: 117).

	Visual image	Image description	Soundtrack
Setting		The beautician is serving a customer.	The customers don't trust the beautician's technique if she has yellow teeth.
Problem		The customer is dissatisfied and the beautician embarrassed	Once a customer saw my yellow teeth and lost interest. I want to use whitening toothpaste, but I am afraid they are not healthy.
Solution		The beautician presenting Colgate with broad smile, showing white teeth.	With Colgate, the problem is solved. Now I can have healthy and white teeth.
Effect		The beautician hands her product to a customer with smile.	Now I always smile and the effect is totally different.

Table 6.10 Colgate-beautician advertisement (www.youku.com)

The explanatory power of this model is demonstrated through the analysis of three short advertisements. The first one, transcribed in Table 6.10, is an advertisement for Colgate toothpaste. It is a standard setting<sup>^</sup>problem<sup>^</sup>solution<sup>^</sup>effect structure. The first image shows the setting of a beauty saloon in long shot. Then in the story, the customer thinks the beautician's technique and product inferior because even the beautician herself is not 'beautiful' with her yellow teeth (problem). As a result, the beautician is embarrassed and unhappy, which is the reaction to the problem. But the reaction shot occurs during the recount of the problem and is thus categorized under the problem phase. Then she uses Colgate (solution), and now the customer is satisfied and she is happy (effect). In this way the effect of the product is constructed as its function in the narrative, that is, making the change.

The protagonist of the advertisement is a professional woman in service industry, whom women of similar identities may identify with. The prosody of emotion is clear. It changes from neutral to negative to positive and the cause is the product, as is shown in Figure 6.16. The problem is constructed by the verbal recount and the visual reaction of negative emotion. Then in solution, the character presents the product with smile in close shot. The juxtaposition of the charming, smiling face with the product may build in the viewers a subconscious association between the two and encourage buying behavior. For example, when a consumer sees a box of the product among other brands in the supermarket, the image of the smiling woman may, consciously or unconsciously, influence his/her decision. Finally, in the last shot, the beautician is back to her ordinary world, the valence of which is completely positive for her. This is the state that we all desire, and to realize it we need to buy the product. In this way, the Appraisal Prosody

constructs the effect of the product on the one hand and invites our identification with the character and hence our interest in the product on the other.

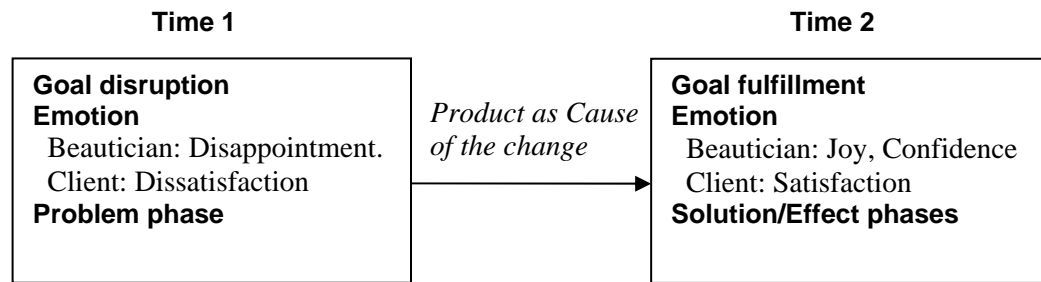


Figure 6.16 Field, Appraisal and phase of Colgate-beautician example

The second example in Table 6.11 is also an advertisement for Colgate. The social practice is different from the previous one, but the narrative structure and Appraisal Prosody are similar. The narrative begins with a POV structure in which a young man finds that he has bad breath when sees a woman approaching. The first shot constitutes the *problem* phase and the second the *event* phase. There is no individual *setting* phase, but instead, the setting of the party is shown as background in the POV structure. The viewers may identify with the man, since approaching a woman in a party is a common everyday situation. The emotion of the man is negative as he is clearly bothered by his bad breath. Then he tries an expedient solution: he grabs a flower from the passing waiter and puts it in his mouth as an attempt to cover the bad breath. This solution is also represented by the voiceover. However, it doesn't work and the woman reacts with a frown. The situational meaning is negative for the man as his goal of approaching the woman is frustrated. This constitutes another *problem* phase, which is the woman's negative reaction. Although the man's expression is not available, we can infer from the Eliciting Condition that his emotion is negative. Then in the next *solution* phase, he tries Colgate toothpaste. His facial expression now shows enjoyment. The last shot goes back

to the ‘ordinary world’ in which the man is together with the woman and they are playing happily in the water. The situational valence is turned completely positive.







	Visual image	Image description	Soundtrack
Problem		The man finds he has bad breath and it bothers him	
Event		A beautiful woman is approaching	
Solution		He grabs a flower, puts it in the mouth and greets the woman.	Voice over: You can cover up bad breath
Problem (reaction)		The woman is showing negative emotion	
Solution		He is using Colgate happily.	or use your colgate fresh confidence and stop bad breath from the source.
Effect		He gets the girl and they are playing in the water.	

Table 6.11 Colgate-Romance advertisement (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v>)

The negative-to-positive change of the Appraisal is obvious and the product is constructed as savior to the man's romance with the woman. The narrative here is more complex than the previous example in that there is a failed solution which leads to a further problem. The two problems are both solved by the product and the comparison of the two solutions reinforces the effect of the product.

In these examples, and in most TV advertisements, the 'solution' (i.e. the product) is presented before the 'effect' is shown. However, in some advertisements, especially those about service instead of product, the solution information may be withheld until after the effect. The purpose of such arrangement is to evoke curiosity from viewers (cf. Brewer and Lichtenstein, 1982). The following example, presented in Table 6.12, is a good case in point. The story is that a blind man is begging on street (setting), but nobody pays attention to him (problem) because he uses the mundane expression ('I am blind, please help) which doesn't attract people's attention (elaboration of problem). Then a woman comes and writes something on the paper board (solution), but what it says is not revealed (suspension). Now every passerby drops him a coin (effect). This narrative design synchronizes the viewers' knowledge status with the beggar's and now we are as curious as him about what the woman has written. Then in shot 6, the woman comes back. The beggar inquires "what did you do to my sign?" and the woman answers "I wrote the same, but in different words". The exact change is then revealed to the viewers in shot 7 ('it is a beautiful day, and I cannot see it'). However, at this stage, we are not sure exactly what the narrative is trying to get at, and so in shot 8, the theme, or the point of the discourse is revealed. But nothing is advertised until shot 9, which is the ultimate point of the whole discourse. In terms of meta-redundancy relations (e.g. Martin, 1996), the

narrative *realizes* the importance of words which in turn *realizes* the necessity of the service. To reiterate, this advertisement deliberately delays the solution to invoke viewer's curiosity and then projects the theme of persuasion through two meta-redundancy relations. The Appraisal Prosody and the narrative phases, however, are the same as the previous two examples and it also shares their mechanisms of persuasion.










		
1. setting	2. problem	3. problem
		
4. solution (suspended)	5. effect	6. talking about solution
		
7. solution revealed	8. theme/point	9. product information

Table 6.12 Purplefeather content service (<http://www.tudou.com/programs/view/>)

## 6.5 Summary of Chapter 6

In this chapter, I move beyond the semiotic construction of Appraisal to investigate Appraisal Prosody in the macrostructure of film narrative. The metafunctional framework is proposed to model the multi-dimensional construction of the logogenetic development of narrative discourse. In the framework, Appraisal Prosody, especially Emotion Prosody

(interpersonal meaning), which is determined by goal disruption and goal fulfillment (ideational meaning), is examined in the units of both stages and phases (textual meaning). The similarity of the Appraisal Prosody (i.e. the alternation of positive and negative meanings in different stages and phases) in different narrative genres suggests that the Appraisal is an important resource for shaping the genre of film narrative. With the metafunctional framework of Appraisal Prosody, the discursive mechanisms of viewer engagement are also elucidated in a coherent framework. Finally, the viability and productivity of the framework is demonstrated in the analysis of Appraisal Prosody and viewer engagement in the narratives genres of action film, romance film, situation comedy and television advertisements. The method of quantifying the change of Character Emotion and Attributes is proved effective in revealing the logogenetic patterns of Appraisal meaning.

## Chapter 7 Conclusion

The overall aim of the thesis has been to provide a social semiotic modeling of Appraisal in film by developing paradigmatic systems to theorize the multimodal resources and discursive patterns of Appraisal meaning. This chapter summarizes the main theoretical frameworks developed in Chapter 4 to Chapter 6 and discusses the contributions of the findings to social semiotic multimodal discourse analysis. The limitations of this study are acknowledged and possible areas for further research are proposed.

### 7.1 The Social Semiotic Approach to Filmic Meaning

The research is a social semiotic analysis of filmic meaning which continues the efforts of Bateman and Schmidt (2011) and Tseng (2009). It is premised on the assumption that meaning creation in film is a semiotic discursive process which involves the complex interaction of multimodal resources. The study is thus designed to systematically model the semiotic resources and the process of meaning making in film. Complementing Bateman and Schmidt's (2011) and Tseng's (2009) focus on textual meaning, this study investigates the semiotic discursive representation of Appraisal meaning, including Character Emotion, Character Judgment and Character Attribute, based on the fundamental principles of the social semiotic theory. First, meaning making is investigated at the levels of lexicogrammar, discourse semantics, genre and ideology. With this stratified model, we are able to see how the semantics of Appraisal is *realized* by semiotic resources at the strata of lexicogrammar on the one hand, and how the discursive patterns of Appraisal meaning *realize* film genre and ideology on the other.



Second, meaning making resources and patterns of Appraisal meaning are seen as paradigmatic systems and this study provides a systematic modeling of the resources and strategies available to filmmakers. Third, the semiotic construction and discursive patterns of Appraisal meaning are investigated in relation to the ideational and textual metafunctions.

Based on these principles, the thesis addresses two general questions: (1) How do the multimodal resources (e.g. language, facial expression, intonation) signify Appraisal meaning and how can the complex resources be brought into a coherent framework? (2) What patterns do Appraisal meaning form in narrative films and what are their roles in constructing film genre and engaging viewers' interest? Sections 7.2 and 7.3 summarize the main theoretical contributions of this study in relation to these two questions.

## **7.2 Modeling the Multimodal Construction of Appraisal**

The primary task of investigating Appraisal in multimodal discourse is to systemize the complex semiotic resources and to explicate the meaning making mechanisms in each of them. The heterogeneity and complexity of multimodal resources pose a greater challenge than theorizing the linguistic resources of Appraisal construction. In what follows, I shall summarize the frameworks developed in this thesis for modeling the construction of Character Emotion, Character Judgment and Character Attributes.

Adopting the cognitive position that the linguistic and filmic representation of emotive meaning exploits the folk psychology of emotion structure (e.g. Kövecses, 2000; Newman, 2005), Chapter 4 models the multi-semiotic construction of emotion drawing upon cognitive appraisal theories of the structure of emotions. According to the cognitive

appraisal theory, each emotion is a scenario which entails Eliciting Condition, Feeling State, and Reaction/Expression. The complex semiotic resources are organized into a coherent framework by construing different stages of the scenario. Paradigmatic systems are then developed to model the choices available for the representation of Eliciting Conditions and Expressions. Choices available for the filmic organization of Eliciting Conditions and Expressions are also examined. In this way, interpersonal semantics is related to the textual logic of film. This relation is further explored in terms of the patterns of Character Emotion (i.e. emotion interaction and emotion chain) in constructing local coherence within film episode in Section 4.6.

The construction of Character Judgment is also theorized with the three-stage scenario in Section 5.3. Complementing the extensive study of the metaphorical expression of emotion, the role of metaphor in the construction of Judgment is elucidated. The relation between Emotion and Judgment is also explained by the underlying process of cognitive appraisal, which is able to clarify the exact mechanism of congruent and incongruent relations. In the context of multimodal discourse, the unveiling of this deeper level mechanism is significant in explicating intersemiotic relations in Attitude expression.

Character Attributes (i.e. the target of Judgment) can be inscribed by attitudinal lexis (e.g. kind, clever, etc.) or invoked by representational and interactive resources. This study systematically investigates the Appraisal meaning potential in different process types and camera positionings in Section 5.4. However, rather than assigning Appraisal meaning to these resources, the current study explains the grounding upon which they are able to encode certain Character Attributes. This approach, that is, to systemize the

resources and to explain their meaning making mechanisms rather than developing a ‘grammar’ for the multimodal constructing of Appraisal meaning, provides a useful method for exploring meaning making in multimodal discourse. It also complements cognitive theories which attribute the construction of character to viewers’ cognitive capacity.

### **7.3 Modeling Patterns of Appraisal Meaning**

This study also investigates patterns of Appraisal meaning at the level of discourse semantics and relates them to film genre, ideology, and viewer engagement. The role of Character Emotion in shaping film genre is investigated from a topological perspective in Section 4.5. In Section 5.5, patterns of Character Attributes are investigated in relation to Manichean and Graduated structures and social values. The contribution of the approach lies in the further development of several existing studies. First, rather than making generalizations, a systematic account of the semiotic discursive construction of the Manichean and Graduated attribute structures is provided by analyzing the Character Attributes as reported by other characters, embodied by the characters’ actions and analytical features, and evoked by cinematographic choices. Second, the analysis complements Tseng’s (2009) system of presenting characters by attending to the Character Attributes that are presented at the same time. Third, by examining the multi-semiotic construction of positive attributes at the initial stage, a systematic way of analyzing viewer allegiance in the sense of Smith (1995) is provided. The analysis also demonstrates how the ‘moral’ of the film is constructed through the combination of

Character Attributes and narrative design in both Manichean and Graduated attribute structures.

Another significant aspect of Appraisal patterns is the logogenetic development of Character Emotion and Character Attributes, which is crucial in engaging viewers' emotions and interest. A metafunctional framework is proposed to model the multi-dimensional construction of the logogenetic development of film narrative in Chapter 6. In the framework, Appraisal Prosody, especially Emotion Prosody (interpersonal meaning), which is determined by goal disruption and goal fulfillment (ideational meaning), is examined in the units of both stages and phases (textual meaning). The metafunctional model of Appraisal Prosody reveals an important mechanism for the construction of film narrative. With the metafunctional framework of Appraisal Prosody, the discursive mechanisms of viewer engagement, including allegiance, empathy and expectancy, are also elucidated in a coherent framework. This is an effort to bridge empirically-grounded film analysis and schema-based film interpretation.

#### **7.4 Contributions to Multimodal Discourse Analysis**

As introduced in Section 1.2.2, this study is situated in the field of multimodal discourse analysis which aims to explore new theoretical and methodological *issues* in the *domain* of film. The contributions of the current study to these two aspects are elucidated in this section.

In terms of domain exploration, by analyzing narrative film, it continues the social semiotic exploration of different types of multimodal discourse, especially the recent interest in film discourse (e.g. Bateman and Schmidt, 2011; O'Halloran, 2004; Tseng,

2009). An important conclusion in terms of exploring a new domain is the necessity of knowledge about that domain (Forceville, 2007). One main reason is that the social semiotic approach has to advance the state of the art of the target domain, for example, by addressing unsolved issues (e.g. Bateman, 2007), so that the significance of the approach can be demonstrated. Meanwhile, as Tseng (2009: 211) suggests, studies should be able to open dialogues between different approaches to film studies so that they can complement each other and result in a “*synthesis* capable of precisely determining the domain of validity of the different approaches and the articulation of different levels” (Metz, 1974: 21, emphasis added). This is exactly what the present study is designed to achieve. First, complementing cognitive film theories which focus on viewers’ cognitive inferencing and emotional response, this thesis develops theoretical frameworks to systematically model the filmic construction of Character Emotion and Character Attributes with the powerful tool of SF theory, thus explicating an important aspect of the complex meaning making process in film. Second, in terms of theory synthesis, based on both cognitive film theories of viewers’ emotion response and the social semiotic model of Appraisal Prosody, this study proposes detailed discursive mechanisms of viewer engagement.

In terms of solving theoretical and methodological issues, this study is characterized by interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks and multiple perspectives of analysis. A main theoretical issue is to model how different semiotic resources construct Appraisal meaning. To bring the multimodal resources into a coherent framework of signification, cognitive psychological theories of emotion structure are drawn upon; to explain the Appraisal resources in social action, analytical features, and camera positioning,

nonverbal communication theories and cognitive metaphor theories are drawn upon. These efforts not only develop the Appraisal theory in the context of multimodal discourse, but also demonstrate the effectiveness of cross-disciplinary theorization of Appraisal meaning. Methodologically, first of all, the relation between Appraisal patterns and film genre is investigated from a topological perspective. Given the complexity of the semantic features contributing to film genre, the method of focusing on several *dimensions*, rather than *types* of Appraisal meaning, is both more practical and more effective in genre description. Second, patterns of Appraisal is also considered in the dynamic unfolding of film narrative, so that the interpersonal dimension of the narrative genre is revealed, complementing the current focus on the particulate components of narrative. Third, the formulation of theoretical frameworks is complemented by detailed text analysis which integrates qualitative and quantitative methods. The sociological method of quantifying the intensity of abstract concepts and visualizing the patterns with statistical software is proved effective in revealing meaning patterns in multimodal discourse.

To summarize, the social semiotic approach and the Appraisal framework provide theoretical and methodological tools for the systematic modeling of the construction of interpersonal meaning in the domain of film. Meanwhile, the cognitive theory of emotion and attitude provides a coherent framework to theorize Appraisal resources in the context of multimodal discourse. The research thus achieves the aim of furthering the semiotic approach to film analysis and enriching the theory of Appraisal, which contributes to the fast growing field of multimodal discourse analysis in terms of domain expansion and theory development respectively.

## **7.5 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

The theoretical focus and research methodology of the current study are necessarily limited, however. The most apparent limitation is that only linguistic and visual resources are systematically investigated. Vocal features, such as intonation and pitch level, are only discussed very briefly, without objective measurement and detailed analysis in relation to Character Emotion. The second limitation arises from the quantitative research methodology, in which only a small set of data is used and analyzed selectively. More convincing conclusions concerning Appraisal patterns and film genre should be based on more rigorous annotation and analysis of a larger corpus.

These limitations point to directions for further research. First, more effective theoretical tools should be developed to model the complex interaction among different semiotic resources, which should include not only formal and semantic relations, but also the functional dimension of how they work together to engage viewers' attention and interest. The metafunctional model of Appraisal Prosody and viewer engagement in Chapter 6, in particular the analysis in Sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.3 are preliminary efforts along this direction. Second, if more semiotic resources and their interactions are considered, and if larger corpus is analyzed, the complexity of meaning patterns would require more efficient means of annotation and more sophisticated tools of visualization, which are being made possible by the development of digital technology (O'Halloran et al. 2011; Smith et al. 2011). Finally, along a different line, empirical studies can be carried out to verify and validate the theoretical frameworks on the relation between the deployment of semiotic resources and viewer engagement. This is made possible by the

modern analytical tools such as eye tracker, ERP, fMRI, and so on, which are now widely used in psychological studies.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

While the limitations indicate much work remains to be done, this study offers several theoretical and methodological contributions to both film studies and multimodal discourse analysis. The social semiotic approach provides a systematic modeling of resources and mechanisms for the representation of Character Emotion, Character Judgment and Character Attribute in the unified framework of Appraisal theory. Meanwhile, the study develops Appraisal theory by theorizing the multimodal Appraisal resources in a coherent framework and by modeling patterns of Appraisal in film narrative.

As a continued effort toward the explication of meaning making in complex multimodal discourse, the value of the theoretical tools of paradigmatic systems, metafunctions and semiotic stratification is demonstrated. The methods of topological and dynamic modeling are also proved effective in explaining patterns of meaning in complex narrative discourse. Meanwhile, the employment of other theoretical approaches, especially cognitive theories, and the application of quantitative methods and visualization techniques have proved useful in both elucidating the process of meaning making and modeling the patterns of Appraisal meaning. Therefore, the thesis concludes with a hope that it has offered an approach for modeling Appraisal meaning in film discourse, and in so doing, inspires the integration of different theoretical approaches and



the application of innovative methodologies in further explorations of multimodal discourse.

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## Filmography

<b>Film title</b>	<b>Director</b>	<b>Time</b>
<i>A beautiful mind</i>	Ron Howard	2000
<i>Chinatown</i>	Roman Polanski	1974
<i>Friends, Season 12</i>	David Crane, Marta Kauffman	1998
<i>Gladiator</i>	Ridley Scott	2000
<i>Noting Hill</i>	Roger Michell	1999
<i>Ocean's Eleven</i>	Steven Soderbergh	2001
<i>Patch Adams</i>	Tom Shadyac	1998
<i>Pretty Woman</i>	Garry Marshall	1990
<i>Raiders of the Lost Ark</i>	Spielberg	1981
<i>Scent of a woman</i>	Martin Brest	1992
<i>Sleepless in Seattle</i>	Nora Ephron	1993
<i>Strike</i>	Sergei Eisenstein	1925
<i>Fall of the Roman Empire</i>	Anthony Mann	1964