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## **Screening Response 2**

*Cabiria* has a sequence which uses editing and camera techniques as well as set design to heighten the already provocative and spectacular subject matter of human sacrifice. The scene is by itself very shocking as hundreds of people gather in a scary temple to engage in the sacrifice of children. The sacrifice is done by placing the children in a large fire breathing statue's belly which closes, presumably the children, who are naked, are then burned alive.

Large wide shots introduce us to a large area filled with people. Instead of presenting this scene straight on, as though it was a theatre play, the camera is shooting it from a side angle, which gives the feeling that we are a member of this large crowd, rather than an omniscient viewer. This manipulation of the "proscenium arch" of cinema was historically groundbreaking and embraced by future film makers.

The large set pieces are terrifying. They transport the viewer to another place, a scary place. We truly believe we are witnessing a historical event and the effect these large grotesque statues have is still effective, even today. The spectacle enhances the story rather than replace it. In previous films the thing was the subject, but in *Cabiria* the set and the number of extras is used to enhance the story. This technique is seen by successful film makers frequently throughout history. D.W. Griffith even learned from the film and *Cabiria* had an effect on how he made his films.

By using close ups of the action and then wide shots of the larger set, filled with extras, the audience travels through the space and feels like a viewer or participant in the sacrifice. This editing technique places us in the action. *Cabiria* has a quickened frequency of edits when it wants to increase excitement and tension. This manipulation of the audience's emotions was revolutionary and an advancement in film language.

*Cabiria* broke a lot of ground. It used editing and camera techniques along with elaborate set pieces to deliver emotion to the audience. This broadened the spectrum of uses film had and helped increase its placement as legitimate art.