

Mise-en-scene

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Mise-en-scene denotes the varying elements that are placed in a scene. This includes the camera needed components that are used to generate meaning -costume/lighting/acting and the types of shots used and camera techniques/movements. Thus the main function of Mise-en-scene is to add to the narrative by creating meaning, allowing creative expression through the physical manipulation of each scene. The chosen film is Bram Stokers Dracula, 1992. The establishing shot begins with Vladimir turning against God. From the onset strong religious symbolisms such as an Islamic crescent as a shadow on a map and a crucifix falling to the ground are present.

The non-diegetic sound that is heard creates a dramatic tone with a building crescendo when the battle commences with Vladimir kissing the Cross. The battle is portrayed similar to a marionette show surrounded by blazing fire, creating a mystical atmosphere. The use of subtitles when Vladimir is informed of his wife's suicide again supports a mythical ambience and shifts Vladimir's belief in God, by throwing down his sword blood pours from the freshly pierced cross. Binary opposition is present with Good vs. Evil with the blood covering the ground. This represents the smother effect of evil. The responder is then presented with a shift from the current scene to the bitter sites of London a desolate contrast to the just occurred.

We are informed of the date and situation emphasising that we are now viewing the present opposed to the past. Meaning is primarily shaped by mise-en-scene in the opening sequence due to very thin dialogue. The narration by Anthony Hopkins helps the responder link meaning to the mise-en-scene. The elements such as the Crescent's shadow or the falling cross allow us to realise who is fighting and the location. Due to the fact that the

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meaning is created through both a mixture of mise-en-scene and dialogue through comparative analysis we are able to assume what the true meaning is. However in this scene the mise-en-scene is more effective element than dialogue due to the minimal discourse present. The main genre of Bram Stokers Dracula is Horror and uses the typical mise-en-scene associated with this genre.

Blood, fire, demonic creates, ominous lighting (red/black), quick camera movement and death all reflect that of a horror film. We can conclude from this that much of the mise-en-scene is determined by the genre. Also the narrative of the film is in contrast to what the mise-en-scene indicates.

Dracula goes to England to seduce Jonathan Harker's fiance and inflict havoc. With analysais of the mise-en-scene we assume that Dracula yearns to inflict havoc, due to the evil looking eye in the sky, the dark ominous lighting. However with support from the dialogue it informs the responder that Dracula feels for his lost wife. Overall the mise-en-scene supports particular aspects of the narrative whilst conveying a gothic and evil atmosphere.

Bibliography : Bordwell D. and Thompson K. , 2003. Film Art: An Introduction. 7th ed. Mcgraw-Hill Gibbs, J. , 2002.

Mise-En-Scene: Film style and interpretation. 1st ed. Wallflower press