

# One foot in the grave essay sample

[Media](#), [Television](#)



Victor Meldrew is the main character in a TV programme named 'One Foot in the Grave' which is a BBC made sitcom. The word sitcom is short for situation comedy. Sitcoms were founded in America, with the first one 'I Love Lucy' being a great success all over the world. It was shown on I. T. V, with almost every one enthralled week in and week out. This meant the BBC needed to create a sitcom of their own to try and justify the television licence, and 'One Foot in the Grave' was one of those sitcoms. Sitcoms are a very popular genre of TV because they contain many subliminal messages.

Sitcom productions such as 'One Foot in the Grave' have many conventions which are there are few main characters, the episodes are episodic (each episode is separate) so you don't have to follow the story lines, most sitcoms have inexpensive sets, props and costumes or anything that can easily be carried on or off stage. Most sitcoms last for about 30 minutes and are based on everyday experiences so the audience can relate to them.

All of these conventions are there to attract attention to Meldrew. For example having few main characters focus's all our attention on Meldrew and what he is doing. Having inexpensive props (properties), sets and costumes again draws our attention to Meldrew because our attention isn't focused on props or the surroundings and so that the audience can relate to it because stereotypical old men don't tend to wear brand names so Meldrew is merely following trend.

The majority of the time main characters in sitcoms are stereotypes for example Kevin and Perry are stereotypical teenagers and Victor Meldrew is a great example of a stereotypical old man. Stereo types are used in sitcoms

because there is not enough time to develop complex characters so when using a stereo type they are instantly recognised. With Meldrew being stereotyped as an old man we recognise him as being grumpy and stubborn constantly. This is always amusing to watch because we can all relate to it. At the start of the programme we hear the theme tune to ‘ One Foot in the Grave’ which shows a tortoise walking painfully slow which indicates a old person because people think of tortoises as old and slow. There are many quotes in the theme tune which are meant to explain old men, such as “ Wrinkly, Crinkly” and “ Past my sell by date”

‘ One Foot in the Grave’ is made up of many different types of humour as are many sitcoms. Meldrews humour tends to be visual, sarcastic and slapstick. In sitcoms the contrast between normal everyday experiences and ridiculous situations can differ in sitcoms. For example during the episode ‘ In Luton Airport No-One Can Hear You Scream’ Meldrew came home to find his house to be nothing more than rubble. This is not really an everyday experience which the audience can relate to its more of a ridiculous situation which makes the audience laugh. During sitcoms the audience may wonder whether the programme they are watching is realistic in any way. They may think this when for example when Meldrew is in his back garden sun bathing with his buttocks showing. This is not normal behaviour for an elderly man to do in his back garden. Another example of unrealistic behaviour is when Meldrew turns up at Luton Airport dressed like the “ Cisco kid”. This is not realistic because this is not an outfit you would wear on your way back to Britain.

The Still images show us how much effort has been put into making the episode because it shows us a great deal about the body language, the lighting and the types of camera angles used. The first still shot is when Meldrew is in the airport cafe and he has just been told about his house being burnt down, the still for this scene shows us there are lots of cheap props such as plastic plants, sombrero and an orange and pink shirt. The lighting is very bright and the camera angle is a medium shot. The body language of Meldrew after throwing the beer in his face shows him with a semi-open mouth to symbolise disbelief.

Still 2 is the still from outside Meldrew's house where he is arguing with a neighbour who is leaning out of his window from across the street. The props are again inexpensive because they are only stones and bricks. The camera angle is a high shot facing down on Meldrew to show us the power which his neighbour has over him because he is in a warm house and is above Meldrew.

Still 3 is of Meldrew unpacking in a forensic suit, holding only a sock which was the only item found from his suitcase which was lost on his way back to Britain. The props used are packing cases and boxes. The lighting is very bright to show us that Meldrew is agitated. The camera shot is a medium shot, and his body language tells us that he is disgusted.

Still 4 is of Meldrew sunbathing in his back garden in his trunks with his buttocks showing. The props used are a towel and some sunglasses. The sun provides all the sun for this shot, the camera angle used is a low shot to

show us that Meldrew is helpless. His body language used shows us that he is shocked as his neighbour stumbles across him sun bathing.

The conclusion to this is that Meldrew is not a realistic character he is merely a stereotype designed to make us laugh. If Meldrew was realistic most people would not find it funny and therefore not watch the programme. The idea of a sitcom is to make us laugh so if they had masses of characters or a complex setting it would take all the fun out of the programme and defy the whole point of a sitcom.