

12-years a slave

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12 years a slave 12 years a slave Picture coloration and composition can be used to communicate a lot of information to the audience and can generate emotion of a particular situation. In the beginning of the film 12 years as a slave, we are introduced to Northup and his present state of life as a slave (Northup, 2010. Pg. 4). We find him in bed with another woman whom we presume is also a slave. The setting is in a dark room where both Northup and the feminine character are presented as people with troubled lives. At first the camera is concentrated on Northup and he appears as a man who cannot fall asleep. He seems to be thinking hard about his present situation. The lighting of this particular picture is dull and unclear with the contrast being low. The colorization also, black and white, portrays a man who is sad, devastated and stressed because of his present situation.

In the second birds-eye-view shot, a flashback, Northup appears to be contented with his state of being. He seems satisfied sharing bed with his wife and appears to be "at home." The picture colorization is bright and presents a situation where Northup is optimistic about the future. The difference in picture colorization presents different emotions and situations. The black and white picture color portrays a dull, unhappy mood while the colored picture presents a happy mood.

In the first birds-eye-shot, Northup's mood is depressed. Obviously, in his state as a slave, he is feeling lonely because his family is not with him. With his apparent state of being locked up and beaten, he also seems heart broken. In the second birds-eye-shot, Northup being with his family, the mood the pictures presents are warm. He is not only harmonious with his being but also calm and warm having his family around him. In the same

setting, in the bed, Northup is even planning of the future with his wife.

The shots and camera movements used in 12 years a slave are a variety.

Sean Bobbitt the man behind the camera positioning of the film says most shots were taken when camera was handheld especially for the extended shots. With the handheld technique, Bobbitt explains that most people overuse the technique and at times do not bring out the intended results or does not tell the story effectively.

A single camera was used in the shooting of 12 years a slave scenes. This is because, a single camera is more effective as it takes the whole idea unlike many cameras that will consume time during editing and make work difficult at the same time likely to compromise some information. Single camera shooting also provides few images, unlike many cameras that offer very many images and increases the later work of finding the important scenes to make up the final movie.

Both camera angles and movements in 12 years a slave are minimal. They concentrate on the task at hand other than hovering around and collecting unimportant information as other films exhibit. Long shots are also not myriad and we get to witness clearly what is happening in different scenes and which actors are taking part. In most scenes, we get to view the whole body of the actor rather than the medium shots which show only the waist up to the head. Close ups, on the other hand, are not common, but the presence of a few cannot be ignored. They help show the facial expression of the characters in play and this helps us understand the mood the film wants to show to the audience. Apart from the birds-eye-view camera positioned in the first two Northup's intimate shooting and on other few occasions, the

technique is not common as compared to eye level shots. In the latter technique, the camera appears to be in level with the actors.

Reference

Northup, S. (2010). Twelve years a slave: Narrative of Solomon Northup, a citizen of New-York, kidnapped in Washington City in 1841 and rescued in 1853, from a cotton plantation near the Red River, in Louisiana. Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino publishing.