

The overview of "amelie" and "y tu mama tambien"

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The art of filmmaking takes its base from the different ways a filmmaker decides to manipulate images. Be it by camera movements, light use, sound choices or amplification and the editing process. These fundamentals create an effect on the way an audience understands the movie content. By a combination of techniques, filmmakers are capable of exploring their creativity and generate a film structure that composes a film's narrative but equally important is capable of generating an impact on an audience or even a society.

Among the techniques, both films, "Amelie" and "Y Tu Mama Tambien" have taken advantage of voice-over narration, each with its own nature and peculiar purpose. Amelie uses narration in a light and almost whimsical approach. Being a French speaker, I was able to capture this by the use of proverbs and even rhymes at times in order to elaborate on the characters in the story. It felt like a long narration, but so did it feel like a comforting introduction to these new friends I'm about to meet and embark on a journey with. It almost seemed to serve to put me there, with the characters, while learning about their likes and dislikes as if the director wanted me to be intimate with them. Both films take use of an imposing narrator that slices through the scenes in order to explain the people, contexts and even events. But Amelie carries this almost Disney-like story that touches on feelings of nostalgia throughout, but on "Mama," the narrator does provide insights into the main characters, but so does he provide snapshots and another perspective into a different reality in Mexico. Mama's use of narration took a bit to get used to, as it used this "complete second of silence" technique which left the ears thirsty for upcoming words. It seemed to serve as an

announcement that some facts were about to be added to the context. And this worked really well, especially towards the end of "Mama" as it suddenly paints an entire picture of the story when we better understand Luisa's hidden, yet intense suffering and her random decision to embark on a journey with two kids.

The narrations accompanied images and scenes very successfully on these two different genres of film, though Mama has a main story elaborated through the characters, the narration sort of provided a second layer into the story. The abrupt cuts of sound on the main story gave way to backgrounds on the characters, commentaries on their secrets, emotions, motivations, but most prominent was the focus on a not-direct story of a country's socio-economic situation, where the mentioning of corruption, deaths and poverty are shown on the side, while being narrated.

What does set these two films at different poles is their use of sound and visuals. Mama takes a simpler use of camera motions, almost none but some tracking shots, like when they are driving to the, then imaginary, "Boca del Cielo." Visual effects were most likely not even used on this film, but then again, I found that it made sense, since this wasn't its genre. By its simplicity of camera movements and straight-on raw images (meaning, no CGIs), it gave the film its feeling, one of purity and even innocence. It made the story feel more like a reality and it would have lost a connection with the political reality mentioned in the movie had it used too many elaborate visual effects. Instead, Mama uses lots long shots and hand-held camera methods and it gives the sense of watching the story unravel from someone else's eyes.

Amelie on the other hand, doesn't take place in reality, or talk about a real life. The film takes on a surrealist approach, thus its high amount of visual effects and camera movement techniques helped deliver the story. By the varying movements in the camera-to-subject distance, the filmmaker can manipulate the viewer's emotional involvement with the material in complex ways (Prince, 2014. Pg. 11). And for a story that takes on a surrealistic approach, this together with visual effects, was necessary.

Amelie takes great advantage of camera angles and seem to function as a character in itself with its constant and quirky movements which always brings us closer to a different point of view, as if telling us, " look at this! Now, this. And that!" Another prominent effect added to this movie is the heavy use of saturated images. As explained in the textbook " Movies and Meaning," lighting and image manipulating is a very powerful tool that can transport the audience into a setting (Prince, 2014. Pg. 72). Amelie uses a sort of romantic amber lighting throughout many scenes that paints a daydream-like story while generating warmth towards this naïve character. Furthermore, it felt like the manipulation of colors and light, served to complement the characters in the story, which were colorful in their own peculiar ways. At times, the film even felt much like a painting from its cinematography. And this may be mostly credible to the use of CGIs. These visual effects aided to perfectly expressed character's feelings, like when the blind man glows, giving somewhat an indication of him feeling alive after being described his surroundings in a pace he had probably not experienced in a while. Also, when Amelie literally melts after becoming highly intimidated by interacting with her crush.

Furthermore, the use of sound in both films vary. Amelie floods our ears with sound effects and music throughout the entire film. From a “ childish-like, jolly piano melody” to other less joyous tunes, the music was capable of taking me along with the character’s emotional state. The sounds seemed to pile up with the color saturation and the quirkiness of the camera movements to create a flow of rhythms and sound effects that seemed to be there to enhance our perception of the characters and their emotional states. Foley techniques were definitely used when doors were loudly shut and sounds of subway trains passing by helped characterize locations. In Amelie, the environment and every movement made by characters were could not go unnoticed by the ears but also aided in “ alerting the audience to the climaxes and the emotional high points of scenes” (Prince, 2014. Pg. 191).

And as for the music in the movie, it definitely gave it a French feel, generating a convincing atmosphere of the setting and culture of where the story is taking place by the use of typically French melodies and instruments, like the accordion. Moreover, Y Tu Mama Tambien didn’t feature sound effects as much, on the contrary, there were times when my ears craved to hear more ambient and action sounds. The movie did also aid in providing a feel for the setting by adding typical Mexican instruments throughout the story, like at the wedding scene and when they make a stop at a countryside bar for dinner and a few beers. But then again, “ Mama” had more focus on dialog and the voice-over narration, as these would tell the story, a story that acts like a protest in issues like politics and class differences. “ Y Tu Mama” makes you reflect about reality, unlike Amelie which seeks to make you dive

into the unreal. Had there been elaborate sound effects on this Mama, it would most likely lose touch with the message it tries to deliver, thus leaving the ears to focus on the dialog and narration.

I felt like Y Tu Mama Tambien went beyond a road trip, but it took paths into the misery found in Mexico, politics and psychology. As the boys drove deeper into the countryside, the tone of the narration changed and so did the background and their mind states as they learn about their cheatings. The arid fields and poverty on the background suddenly match the frustrated characters the boys adopt. By this shocking imagery, the movie shows us a socio-economic reality of Mexico, while showing the boys (in the movie) a reality about their superficial weed-smoking, partying, horny lifestyles. And sex is everywhere in this film, perhaps because sex is a subject that can be controversial, especially at the end of this film, but I think this was another layer that Cuarón purposely added to the story. The movie turns out to be a controversial story. Amelie does touch on sex as well, but on a comedic way but maybe imposing that this wasn't a children's movie, but an adult movie, a surrealist, adult creation.

Nonetheless, both " Y Tu Mama Tambien" and " Amelie" are love stories and in their own peculiar ways, both films sought ways of depicting innocence. Though Amelie took the path of a happily-ever-after ending, Mama collided at friendship, sexuality and social superficialities. I say this because of how at the end the narrator elaborates on the boy's final encounter, implying homophobia and how that ruined their innocence, friendship but more prominent, sexual purity. Thus, even though " Amelie" seems to fit more of

the contemporary style of filmmaking and audience grabbing techniques. However, in my opinion, " Y Tu Mama Tambien" delivered an equal quality of film but through its raw and subliminally delivered, controversial discourse. " Mama" is a film that is capable of raising issues and opening doors into social, political and psychological discussions. " Amelie" is a film that is capable of transcending us deep into a character's mind space. Amelie has techniques, but it doesn't impact a society.