

How sound effects
are used in
pleasantville to
complement the
visual image and re...



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The decade is reflected in much of the music that is heard throughout the film. This shows that music and sound choices have an important impact on the audience: enabling them higher understanding of the meanings in a scene.

Diegetic and non-diegetic are two types of sound in one way, for example; during the middle of the film, weather, once warm and clear turned into a soaking storm. Thunder and raindrops were the only vibrations of sound in the scene; this is why this example is diegetic, it is a natural part of a scene, which enhances the meaning that Pleasantville is changing.

Moreover, another example is when Bud manages to convince the judge that Pleasantville had changed for the better and that not all change is bad, shortly after this scenario, rock and roll music was brought back to emphasize the image that the citizens were finally accepting the new Pleasantville. That is why this example is non-diegetic, sound that is not a natural part of a scene.

Diegetic sounds are immensely effective if used correctly. The director, Gary Ross, uses this technique to great advantage when the television repairman appears without request at David and Jennifer's house. When he is first greeted, a flash of lightning arrives with him along with distant rumbles that become heavier and brighter the longer the repairman lingers, allowing the watcher to introspect on the scene and understand what is happening.

This technique is further used when George comes home to his empty home and says, 'Honey, I'm home', this leads to him repeating this sentence which helps the creation of an empty silence that develops the idea that

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coming home to an empty house is unusual for George by adding an unwelcoming atmosphere for the audience, giving the audience a feeling of utmost cold. If the audience can feel, and see what George is experiencing, then taking away the sound from that picture, creates a better atmosphere for the film.;

When George further says ‘Where’s my dinner?’, it concisely displays that George’s character is chauvinistic and selfish, expecting his dinner when it is convenient for him even though his wife and children are not there, being more concerned about his food.

Pathetic Fallacy is giving inanimate objects human qualities.

The weather in the film changes to mirror the actions of the residents of Pleasantville which reflects in conflict with the older residents because they are unwilling for things to change causing their behaviour to be compared to actually events that occurred in America during the 1950s.

Black people were treated horrifically and had very few rights, this happened to the people of colour in Pleasantville. Another comparison was when a shop keeper in Pleasantville put a sign outside the door that read “No colours”, this also happened to black people.

When rain begins to fall, Bud’s friends reacted worried and scared, however, after Bud explains to his friends that rain is not dangerous, the non-diegetic music changes from scary to music that suggests that a miracle has happened.

The music in the film is both diegetic and non-diegetic.

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Another example of a diegetic sound was on the first day of class, sounds such as chairs being pulled out and pen scribbling away silently, simply visioning that the school was well mannered and respectful.

When David and Jennifer fought over the new Television remote, the music added started off averted, gaining loudness combining with fastness as the tension builds up to suggest that something important to the plot is going to happen, therefore this is a further example of non-diegetic sound.

Immediately after the pair found themselves in Pleasantville, the music changes from a dangerous tune to a calm, pleasant sound. The music changed at that point because they entered a different setting and atmosphere.

‘ Rave On’ by Buddy Holly was the song played on the diner jukebox as the people in colour read through the new Pleasantville code of conduct. This particular song helps to display to the audience that the people in colour are not going to follow the new code of conduct and are going to stand up to the residents of Pleasantville.

The lyrics within the song, ‘ Rave On’ suggest that the residents can bring in as many rules as they want but it won’t stop the people in colour fighting back and living how they deserve.

Overall, the complete structure and effects in the film were used vividly making it so even young children can easily grasp meanings which help the audience understand that nothing in reality is perfect and there will always be conflict.

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