

Reality bites an the english patient essay sample



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In this Coursework I will be comparing and contrasting the ways in which narrative is developed, I will refer to how specific media devices are used to help build narrative in Reality Bites and The English Patient. The two films are constructed very differently from each other. In reality Bites, the main narrative is based on the cinematography which evolves around the home video camera and the cinematic camera. The effects of these cameras is that the home video camera helps us to see what the characters intimate feelings are, this helps us to get a better understanding of the characters.

While the cinematic camera helps to show the split of the two worlds, reality and superficiality, through this camera we start to see two different types of world developing in the narrative. Unlike Reality Bites, The English Patient is filmed using the flashback, flashforward technique. This technique can be confusing at times, but when the narrative is about to change to a flashback or flashforward, it is helped using dissolve mix shots and digetic music. From Mise en scene where we learn if the colour and music combined together is dark, then most likely the next scene will be a bad.

Although Reality Bites and The English Patient takes place in different times in history and geographically, the way narrative is developed and constructed we see that these two films have similar themes and similar media devices are used. An example of the themes being similar in The English Patient and Reality Bites is the love triangle. In The English Patient the Count likes Katherine she likes him, Katherine is married and has a loving husband. In Reality Bites Troy likes Lelaina she likes him, Lelaina has a boyfriend Michael.

Once the two films are played from the beginning we get a quick indication as to where the plot of the two films are set in History and geographically. When ' Reality Bites' plays we quickly understand what the plot is. Which is, American graduates entering the real world. Whereas The English Patient is set in wartime, in the Arabian Desert. Mise en scene in Reality Bites shows us that the characters live in America. The colours used trough out the film are grey and dull again adding to the realism of the film.

The contrast used at the beginning, and the omniscient narrator in the restaurant scene (Vicky, Lelaina) allows us to see the characters from different perspective and gives us, the audience background information to their lives hence developing narrative. Mise en scene in Reality Bites is used greatly in showing the contrast between the characters, we see this when Michael comes into the narrative. The scene where Lelaina and Vicky are in one car and Michael is in the other.

While digetic music is coming from both cars, Lelaina's car has music which comes from within the story, while Michael's cars music is over the top for the film. So this makes us aware that two types of different character are in the story. Lelaina and Michael meet when Lelaina throws a cigarette into the back of Michael's car making him crash into Lelaina's car. Mise en scene plays a role in this scene because music is combining with the dark, dull colour of Lelaina's car and clothes and Vicky's clothes, with Michael's bright fancy clothes and car makes Michael stand out from the other characters of the story.

A perfect example of showing this, is the scene where Lelaina dresses in white to go out with Michael and Troy says, “ What’s happened to your usual dress” this quote is simply trying to state that Lelaina was not in the ‘ real world’ but in the ‘ superficial’ one. Where Michael and the presenter of ‘ Good morning Grant’ were in. Lelaina was not wearing her normal clothes but wearing all white, making her stand out. When Lelaina goes out, dressed in white with Michael to see how the home video documentaries have been made.

Lelaina seems to stand out, this because she is in the dream world and not in reality. A scene where you can see over the top acting is the show Lelaina worked for ‘ Good morning Grant’ where you can easily see where the cinematic and real world is developing in the narrative. Mise en scene arrives within The English Patient through flashback and flashforward to change narrative. This is done using a combination of digetic and non digetic sounds, and particular camera shots to show what might happen when the narrative changes to a flashback, flashforward.

For example if the non digetic Hungarian music came on and the scene was set in a bright light then the next scene would be something happy, exciting, or it could even mean the start of a flashback or even a flashforward. If the scene was dull and dark then the next scene was most likely to be dramatic in some sort of way. All through out The English Patient you see this technique of different lighting, giving us the audience some sort of indication as to what will happen in the next scene.

Even though it is not very noticeable to us, lighting in this film is very important in helping to develop narrative. Mise en scene in *The English Patient*, an example of this is when the shot is in the present. This shot is when Kip's friend has died and Kip is sitting down in some sort of building, sitting still in the dark alone, while Hana is on the outside shouting for Kip. The Mise en scene in this shot is that Kip is inside in the dark room showing a sense of shadows he is sitting silently, and revealing nothing.

Whereas Hana is on the outside in the bright light revealing her feelings, questioning Kip asking what is wrong and hasn't any idea as to why Kip is acting this way. The dark and bright colours help to show Kip's hidden feelings the through darkness and brightness in light helps to show Hana's openness. This drama builds the genre while making the audience feel for Kip, and makes the audience think as to what we would do if a close friend of ours died. It makes us think of how we might have dealt with that kind of situation.

For this scene you could say some dramatic irony was used, since we knew why Kip was sad and quiet and Hana did not. An example of dramatic irony similar to *The English Patient* in *Reality Bites* is, when Lelaina overhears Grant the presenter in this explicit scene, it makes us laugh because yet again we know what is going to happen later on in the film, hence building narrative. Dramatic irony makes us laugh because we would deal with their problems differently and better than the characters. Sound plays a very important part in *The English Patient* and *Reality Bites*, this helping to build continuity editing in the narrative.

Sound plays a very considerable part alone in *The English Patient* as digetic and non digetic sound helps make narrative develop further. You can see straight in *The English Patient* how sound is necessary, to develop the narrative and the story successfully. Sound makes certain scenes more dramatic and is used to show suspense, making the story much more exciting. Digetic sounds are important especially, for they are used when with dissolve mix shots. For example Kip would be riding his motorbike away and the shot dissolves it self away.

Where then the next shot would somehow relate to the new narrative in the flashback. Another example of this is when Katherine and the count are making love to each other and the Count then goes and puts the Hungarian music on, which then manipulates us to think that their relationship is dark and not right. In *The English Patient* it is made quite clear as to when a dramatic scene is about to take place. Since at some points, the music can be over the top and predictable, that the scene will be dramatic, but can be best suited to build the genre.

Sound and music in *Reality Bites* also is important in establishing whether the story is in reality, for example the home video camera helps to show the characters intimate feelings. Music also helps to show whether it is in the cinematic world. For example Michael, or the presenter from 'Good morning Grant'. An example of showing this is when Michael and Lelaina first meet in the car crash, Lelaina's music is pumping from her car stereo it is non digetic and goes within the story.

Whereas when Michael is coming along in his car, the music is over the top and shows us the cinematic character straight away in Michael. This scene helps to establish that these two characters very different from each other, and ironic because we learn later that they were not meant for each other one bit as you would expect. Although Lelaina is living in the real world, she tries to leave it by going into the dream one. From this we get a link to why the story is called ' Reality Bites' because it is just literally saying that the real world sucks and the dream world is much better.

An example of digetic music in Reality Bites is when Michael and Lelaina go to see how the home video tapes have been developed. When the music to the newly produced home video starts we sense straight away that she has entered a world she did not belong in at all. The music used to develop the home videos is loud and does not go within the story, since the music is over the top, the scene involves Lelaina storming off in anger because she is angry at how the films have been made way over the top.

As you can see both films Reality Bites and The English Patient both have use for digetic and non digetic music and sounds. They play a important role in both films, the clips in which these are used manipulates space and time in the narrative by showing us montage sequence of images coupled with music to show characters everyday lives. Cinematography in both films is very important in developing narrative further and helps us to make links through out both films. The English Patients main type of editing is dissolve mixing which is mainly used to switch to a flashback or flashforward.

This is a very effective way to change the narrative in the story. A example of this is when the film first starts. There is digetic music, Hungarian. The music dissolve mixes to the plane crash scene in the desert while the music is still playing it combines with the engine noise of the plane. The plane is shown through long shot then a close shot, and then the plane crashes. Once the planes is about to crash a white screen appears to show that it is the end of the narrative. Shot/reverse shot is also used in both Reality Bites and The English Patient.

This type of media device is used to let us the audience to see how what sort of impression each character has on his or her face. The effect of shot/reverse is simply that its more dramatic to see the shot back and fourth rather then just having to see both of them at the same time. It is used in The English Patient when Katherine is telling a story around a fire and the shot is going back and fourth on Katherine and the Count. The omniscient narrator helps to show us how the Count is falling in love with Katherine.

The shot/reverse shot in Reality Bites also a link to The English Patient, this being the shot in Reality Bites the shot reveals to the audience that how Lelaina has hidden feeling for Troy and how Troy already has feelings for Lelaina. Again dramatic irony is used, as we no more then the characters do. This shot/reverse shot is when Troy has returned back from a disappearing act with another girl, and then Lelaina comes into the shot shouting at Troy and then the camera goes back and fourth on the two characters. This argument is simply over Lelainas new found jealousy of Troy being with another girl.

The links of *The English Patient*, of Katherine and the count revealing their feelings in the implicit scenes, you start see their love for each other is unravelling. This links to *Reality Bites* which has the same sort of scene where Lelaina and Troy are both blurting out their feelings for each other, but yet again it isn't told to us but is implicit as we have to figure out the hidden message. Finally the last type of editing is cross cutting which shows us how the director makes links throughout the story with other characters which helps build narrative by telling the story through the manipulation of space editing.

Cross cutting in the film makes us interpret the events that occur in the narrative as being simultaneous when they are not. This type of editing helps to build narrative in the story without us even knowing it. An example of a cross cut in *Reality Bites* is when Lelaina is in bed smoking a cigarette, with a high angle shot coming close to her. Where then she goes to take a drag from the cigarette and then there is a cut where then Troy appears and is in the hospital, ready to take a pull of his cigarette. This is shot is shown simultaneously but is not.

The way in which crosscutting is done is very cleverly done, and it can have great influence on understanding of this film. One last major type of media device used in *The English Patient* is the voice over technique. This used near the very end of the film. It is used at the end of the film when the Count has his last flashback, Hana is reading a book to the Count and the shot, is shot back and fourth into the past and present making it seem that the Count is hearing Katherine but Hana is reading. This is shot back and fourth to show how each character has passed on.

As you can see both of these films have similar themes, the love triangle, which develops in both films and the different ideas. They both also have similar links with each other. Although the way in which the films have been made are very differently you see the idea of home/video and cinematic camera in Reality Bites is very different to the idea of the flashback and flashforward technique used in The English Patient. You see how see how simple cinematography and media devices effect narrative all throughout Reality Bites and The English Patient.

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