

practice analysis of 'pleasantville' movie

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



' Pleasantville' is an expertly crafted film in which one can appreciate and be exposed to the social issues America faced during the 1950's. The courtroom scene towards the end of the film successfully encapsulates the essence of the film: a characters transformation from repression to enlightenment. While the costumes present a distinction between the ages, the contrasting colours express various emotions of each character. Each character possesses a differing level of awareness about their true roles which become apparent as the film progresses.

The use of colour in ' Pleasantville' signifies both personal and political change. The colours associated with each character are evocative of their personal attributes and self-discovery. Mary Sue is seen wearing blue, a colour which connotes wisdom and understanding. This can be contrasted with how Mary Sue was depicted previously in the film; she embodied all that was ' wrong' during the 1950's, a socially repressed era. The black and white characters reflect a far more conservative and traditional take on the world, in their eyes women's only role is to bear children and to take care of the home.

Despite the discrimination against those who are coloured, one cannot deny upon watching the film that they are clearly more liberated and alive. David's blue shirt mirrors his assertiveness, control, and genuine determination to save all those who had not yet discovered their true selves. Bill's coloured skin contrasted with his white clothing demonstrates an alternate approach to achieving a ' coloured' world to David, for he remains fairly impartial throughout the court case, emphasising his desire for compromise.

The attention to detail of the use of colour throughout the film highlights the racial discrimination and the civil rights movements of the 1950's. It is interesting to remark upon the fact that during the court room scene it is all the coloured characters sitting in the upper gallery, this being where the African-Americans had to sit in US courthouses at that time. With regards to the judge himself, he appears to be a victim of his own mania.

His violent speech regarding the colours which were used by David and Bill merely reveals the richness of his own repressed emotions. His inherent rage is revealed as he turns from black and white to colour; we can appreciate his obstinacy to permit change through this colour transformation. We are positioned with the people of colour in this narrative. The strict regulations of society during the 50's are represented by those painted in black and white, meanwhile those in colour contrast the 50's to depict the liberated 90's.

The birth of popular culture erupted during the 1950's; Teenagers became more independent of their parents, conflict between the desires of the parents and the teenagers increased and this eventually established the term ' generation gap' to appear in American English during the 1960s. As a consequence of living in an era in which presentation and how people conducted themselves was treated with the upmost reverence, it is imperative to remark upon the use of costume design in the film.

Those ' coloured' characters tend to be shown wearing rather more adventurous, provocative outfits, something which would have been frowned upon during this era in which the adaption to the most minor changes such as costume is impossible. The costumes are appropriate to the pseudo-1950s TV-setting. We must remember that the colours and designs are heightened

and exaggerated and are not intended to be naturalistic in order to convey a convincing political argument and emphasise upon the need for change and reform in society.

The camera action throughout the film is of notable importance, especially when considering the court room scene. The high angle shot in which the judge looks down on David and Bill portrays the power and dominance of those who have abided by the rules and stuck to the traditional conventions of society. However, as David gains confidence he is framed in a low-angle shot thereby making him appear to be the authoritative figure in control. Increasingly, David dominates the frame. The inclusion of the extended close-up shot of George enables the audience to engage with his emotional release.

Editing also supports dialogue in this clip, an example being when David is speaking of his mother, the film cuts to a shot of Betty. This heightens the emotional essence of the scene, and encourages the audience to applaud David's courage and essential goodness. Furthermore, editing also confirms the separation of black and white and colour until the end of the scene when all characters unite and emerge into a coloured world, filled with emotion and diversity. The presence of music in this particular scene differs depending on the emotions of the characters.

Music acts as an emotional release; laughter within the courtroom at the end of the scene establishes unity among the people and signifies the end of the crisis. Moreover, the non-diegetic music of the birds tweeting as the characters exit the court room and are exposed to a coloured world is immensely refreshing and promotes the idea of a new beginning. The looks

between George and Betty in this scene cannot be ignored, here the non-diegetic music is romantic and underscores the climactic moment in which George turns from black and white to colour.

Throughout the film music reflects the mood. The scene at Lover's lane is filmed with rather seductive and sensual music in order to encourage the audience to appreciate that the younger generation were undergoing not only a personal transformation but also embarking on a sexual journey. In conclusion, ' Pleasantville' represents a parody of contemporary problems whilst reflecting common fears and fantasies about life, God, and freedom. Essentially sex is equated with freedom.

In addition, we can appreciate that pain brings risk but also liberation; the art of fiction too liberates various characters which we can appreciate is somewhat ironic given the characters themselves are situated in a television programme. Moreover, one cannot deny ' Pleasantville' essentially satisfies all expectations with regards to film watching; it provides entertainment whilst also sending across a political message and portraying a vivid image of life in the 1950's.