

Stranger than paradise essay sample



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“ Stranger Than Paradise” is a low-budget black and white film created by the independent film maker Jim Jarmusch which served as the kick off of his breakthrough in the American film industry. The film is a three act story about the interaction of Willie (John Lurie), who lives in New York City, with the other two main characters in the film namely Eva (ESzter Balint) and Eddie (Richard Edson). The first act shows the interaction between Willie, the main character, and his cousin Eva.

The second, on the other hand, features Willie and his friend Eddie winning a big sum of money by cheating in a poker game. The last act, moreover, shows the funny experience of Willie and Eddie as they try to rescue Eva and bring her together with them back to New York (The Internet Movie Database, 2010: n. p.). “ Stranger Than Paradise”, although it is an independent and has only limited production budget, has received numerous recognitions from different award-giving bodies because of its successful use of fade to black video editing effect to depict one of its central theme.

Fade to black effect is a video editing technique that shows disappearance of picture into black mode which is commonly used to depict transition of time, scene and characters (Goodman & McGrath, 2003: 194). The film, which is divided into seventeen chapters, uses several layers of fade to black video editing technique from the start until the end of the movie. Each scene in the film starts and ends with a fade or jump to black technique in movie editing which gives the audience the state of like watching a series of snap shops.

One of the common uses of the fade to black technique is to show beginning and ending of a scene in a movie (Goodman & McGrath, 2003: 194).

Jarmusch's film uses this technique to show the beginning and ending of each chapter of the movie. Although the technique somehow makes the movie to become boring, the idea makes the movie clear and easy to understand because of the pauses and signs created by the fade to black technique.

For instance, the first scene which shows the conversation of Willie and his auntie over a telephone is started and ended by a fade to black technique. The next scene which shows the travelling of Eva from her place to the house of Willie is also started and ended by the same technique. In this sense, it is clear that the movie is widely using the fade to black technique in order to show the beginnings and ending of each chapter of the film.

Apart from the traditional use of the fade to black technique in video editing, this technique is also used by the film in order to successfully and concretely characterise the main protagonists in the story. The use of long takes and slow black to fade technique can be considered to exemplify the boredom and frustration of Willie as the main character of the story. Aside from separating every chapter or scene in the film, the use of fade to black technique is also associated to the effort of the movie to portray the boredom and frustration of Willie about his life.

For instance, the first encounter of Willie and Eva is started and ended by a fade to black video editing technique which shows the boredom on the part of Willie. It can be recalled that Willie does not like his cousin to stay with him at first. Another is when Willie went to the place of Eva. Although Willie

and Eddie had already in the other place, they found people and activities in that place to be similar just like in New York, their own place.

This sense makes them to become bored and frustrated. The feeling of boredom is indeed exemplified through the incorporation of the fade to black video editing technique. In total, the movie, with its limited production budget and simple story plot, is considered to be one of the best independent films of America because of its successful use and incorporation of the fade to black video editing technique to one of the main themes of the story.

Bibliography

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0088184/>