

# Pans labyrinth analysis



Visual Cues, Harassed Symbolism and the Grim Fantasy Unlike other blissfully enchanted film genres, this evocative fairytale becomes a surreal escape into the work of Guillermo Del Toro. This chilling story confines make believe verses reality through the eyes of a young girl. Two worlds are represented within Pan's Labyrinth, a cold hard fascist regime in Spain, and a captivating fantasyland both conveyed through visual story telling.

The striking surrealism of the fantasy world becomes reflections in reality, providing small visual cues that increase as the story unfolds, unveiling a grim interaction between Ophelia and the new world she has encountered. The style becomes the narrative within the film, and the use of mise-en-scene assists the films explicit meaning, by providing connections between the merging worlds. Del Toro uses standard and non-standard approaches in film, which speaks to the audience either intentionally or through the sub conscious, so the contrast of reality and imagination is rendered.

The style throughout Pan's Labyrinth is essential for creating dramatic dynamic throughout the film; the attention to detail becomes a fierce component to mise-en-scene, and harasses symbolism. In the beginning of the scene, Ofelia walks toward the camera in pursuit of the little creature she seen during her travels. The facial expression is bewildering, however she wants to learn more. The aspiration to study new ideas can be seen physically while she seizes onto her books, meanwhile helpers unload her other items. The grasp on her books becomes the distinguisher between make believe and reality.

As Ofelia moves towards the camera, she drops her stack of books, implying that she has let go of her reality to track the small inquisitive creature.

During this, men are walking around in uniform, emphasizing the strict, bleakness and harsh reality of Ofelia's new circumstance. Men lined in a row suggest that this new place is in order, with routine that shall not be disturbed and certainly no place for a wandering imagination. As Ofelia runs toward the forest, she is running towards her new destiny, juxtaposing her willingness to escape, fleeing her new reality.

Upon her arrival into the forest, the labyrinth is introduced for the first time. Dark shadows are casted among the rocks representing the certain unknown that will be faced. The first pathway leading into the Labyrinth is brightly lit, as to appear welcoming and warming. The dissimilarity between the darkness of the gateway and the lightness of the path can be inferred as a certain warning, some danger will be introduced before the underworld can be reached. As Ofelia walks towards the entrance, taking small, slow steps, the feeling becomes an automatic switch from reality to fantasy, and a sense of falling down the rabbit hole arises.

The entrance into the Labyrinth appears untouched, with moss and shrubs growing over the walls, a clear contrast from the cruel sadistic community ran by the Captain. The walls appear to be weathered and diminishing in time, the time it has taken to find the lost princess. The serenity of the space develops into a piece of tranquility from the outside world paired with an illusion of hope for Ofelia, a new escape she will soon learn of. Throughout Pan's Labyrinth, shallow color is used with a lot of grey and neutral tones casted in the real world, compared to the rich feast of colors in the underworld.

During this sequence however, the two worlds have not yet been distinguished, so the color differentiation is subtle, warm colors are used that provide a sense of comfort. Dark shadows are casted among the walls making the unknown prevalent to the viewer, directing our eye down the dark path that leads further into the Labyrinth. These colors suggest a belonging for Ophelia, a place where she is wanted back. This feeling never goes away for Ofelia, she engages in different levels to get a chance at her new life in the fantasy world.

Becoming homesick for a place she has never been or remembers. The clothing plays a role in sustaining the mise-en-scene in this film. Ofelia is dressed in drab clothing along with her mother. Fabricating the lifestyle from which they came from, and a disparity that is latched onto them when being brought to this new home. They instantly become the outsiders from the beginning, largely recognized during the panning shot of the camp while Ofelia becomes more intrigued by the fairies return. Tight, uniformed men lined up in a row contrasted against a young curious, dowdy girl.

The style of clothing not only distinguishes the relationship between the newcomers, Ofelia and her Mother, to the military camp, but also positions an extra connection between Ofelia and Mercedes. As Mercedes arrives to explain the Labyrinth to Ofelia, her clothes are ordinary and dull much like that of Ofelia. The dissimilar impression that Mercedes has from the camp appeals to Ofelia, and a relationship is bonded. The clothing becomes a staple into the closeness that these two characters will later share.

This relationship is not only choice of style, rather the desire for an escape. When the soldier comes up and asks for Mercedes, despair reaches across

her face as she turns around, placing Ofelia in the background of the shot, but quickly the young girl reaches back up to Mercedes, sustaining their relationship has began. Trust has started to build when Ofelia explains the relationship or lack of one with the Captain, as Mercedes wraps her arm around Ofelia, completing the security of their relationship.

These small visual cues help the viewer establish ideas, which the Story may soon lead into. Becoming aware of these chosen elements can help viewers foresee story components. Mise-en- scene formulates the style as a form of story telling. Guillermo Del Toro approach is surreal and provides a lot of stylistic choice in compelling this masterfully crafted fairytale. Pan's Labyrinth becomes less about the explicit meaning; yet rather the implied visual indicators leads the viewer to reflect more about the significance than the story.