

The others essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The others (2001) has been described as a physiological horror that sustains suspense until the final resolution. Through close observation of Alejandro Amenabar's direction, discuss how cinematography, characterisation, setting and narrative sequence help build suspense throughout. In this movie, the director maintains suspense from the opening sequence to right through to the final resolution, the main reason for this being that it is a physiological horror film. The horror is shown through the movie with supernatural events happening.

Also the environment is covered with mist and is in an isolated area, which makes you think that something out of the ordinary could just appear from the shadows. In addition to this, Grace's children are allergic to the light as they have a special condition. So the curtains are closed most of the time making the scene dark, meaning that the unexpected could happen at any time. He is able to maintain the suspense by using effective methods and devices and the development of the plot which leads to the final climax.

I am going to show how the film creates suspense with the following devices. In the opening sequence of the movie, parts of the book are a little picture of what happens in the parts to follow. Grace is narrating the story of creation from the bible. The narration is of her talking to her children Nicholas and Anne. At first there is a close up of the sun, and then it zooms out (reverse zoom) so that you could see the whole page/ area. The book is lit up by a lamp as the kids are photosensitive.

In addition, because of how it is lit, you think that the movie will be set a long time ago. The non diegetic sound is very calming and slow which makes it

happy. The last picture is of the house, which then dissolves into the real life version of the house. The sound gets muted and then it changes to Grace suddenly screaming and you wonder what she is screaming about. This creates suspense from the very beginning. The varying uses of techniques, such as high angle, low angle, eye level shot, point of view shot and crane shot manage to keep the suspense going.

When Grace goes into the room, while Anne is wearing a white dress, there is a lot of high angle and 'low angle' movements. Grace slowly moves along to Anne when she is singing and playing with a doll. As Anne turns her head, it all goes slowly, keeping the suspense about what is going to happen.

Always alternating the camera to Grace and Anne maintains the suspense and keeping the audience to their feet. Another scene is when the camera is used to zoom in and out through photos with relevance to the film.

Such as the children drawing or reading the bible, it also pans and tilts along the photos slowly. Camera Angles in the film are important to maintain the suspense. The way Amenabar directs the camera angle is very important because that is how he manages to keep the suspense until the final resolution. Lighting is also used to focus on segments of the film and keep others hidden in the shadow; this appears mysterious to us as we want to know what is in the shadow. The transition between the images is a very smooth fade, which allows them to hand in our mind.

The overall effect of this sequence is that the audience is confused by the images which at the time mean nothing to them but as the story unfolds we learn the relevance. We see a lot of diegetic lighting because the children

are photosensitive. Also low key lighting is used when Amenabar wants us to see some part of the frame but not all of it so he uses a lot of dark and light, keeping the suspense. Like when Anne and Nicholas hide into the wardrobe their faces are lit up while everything else is dark.

Props play very small parts in building suspense but are used quite a lot in the film. The rosary is probably the best example and is seen a few times and it helps build suspense because it makes the audience feel that the only reason for it being used is if something unnerving is about to happen, we think this because it is mentioned earlier on in the film that it should be used whenever you feel frightened. Also the statues in the junk room are made quite scary. Curtains are used a lot and create suspense because the children are photosensitive.

When all the curtains disappear after one morning, you know something has gone wrong. Also in that scene Grace can hear the children screaming and then she looks around and sees the curtains have gone missing. Another one is the photos that Grace finds of dead people. She asks Mrs Mills what the photos are and she replies they are dead people. Sound also plays a big part in suspense, both diegetic and non-diegetic. A lot of sounds in the film lead to a climax or look like it is leading to a climax.

There is also the very affective diegetic breathing sound of footsteps as she proceeds towards the door and a diegetic breathing sound once she is in the junk room. There is a moment of silence in the junk room which grabs the audience's attention because there is very suddenly no sound at all and the anticipation which has been building up grows towards its climax. The violin

strings (non - diegetic) get louder as the tilt gets higher and higher creating tension in the scene, when she starts removing the white clothing.

In the movie Amenabar manages to keep suspense by keeping a lot of things unanswered. Some examples are why is there so much fog outside the house, When Anne is dancing while wearing the white dress you don't know is the camera is viewing her from the mirror or not. Some of the big ones would be why grace screamed at the start of the film and why all the curtains disappeared and who the intruders were. A lot of it is answered at the end of movie when it reaches the final resolution.

In the scenes where Grace searches around Mrs Mills and Lydia's room and the children discovering the gravestones interlock and so both the children and grace discover the truth at the same time. As the sequences go on the audience grows more desperate for the resolution. Near to the end of movie, Grace opens the door, there is another POV shot and she is looking at the table full of people. The old lady then asks questions and Anne answers, after a while they start to say we aren't dead. Then Grace comes to the table and starts to shake it.

They have a little change and they show 2 of the same things happening one with Grace shaking the table in the underworld, and then two with table shaking by itself like its supernatural. Grace then starts to tear paper up and it flicks from the real world to underworld signifying that Grace and her children are dead and no longer living. This is where we reach the final resolution and all the answers are answered. To conclude I think that the reason cinematography, characterisation, setting and narrative sequence

help build suspense is because all these techniques have been established as classic elements of horror movies.

These elements build suspense when they are sustained throughout the film, maintaining the audience's interest in the film through use of mystery and subtlety. It also does sustain the suspense till the end by answering the most important question of all, which is who are the intruders, and the camera angles throughout the movie make you agitated. The Others is a psychological horror as it leaves some questions unanswered of why Grace screamed at the beginning, or if Anne was being possessed by Victor or whether she was just tricking her brother.

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