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Course

Date

Three Film Elements in The Lovely Bones

**Introduction:**

[Content]

**Thesis Statement:** Peter Jackson, the director of *The Lovely Bones* film, capitalized on cinematic elements such as cinematography, mis-en-scene, and sound to immerse the audience into the movie and communicate the core themes such as life and death.

**Film Element 1: Cinematography**

[Content]

**Film Element 2:** Mis-en-scene

Mis-en-scene is French terminology that refers to all the visual elements on the space available on stage. It includes the setting, framing, and movement of the characters which makes the film more engaging and thrilling to the audience (Lathrop and Sutton 1). The setting in the film shows that although the film was released in 2009, it captures ancient times probably the 1990s because the old model cars and tractors are frequently used in *The* *Lovely Bones* film (1:11:30-1:12:30). **Framing** is also used in the first scene where Suzie is busy playing then, all over sudden, she moves swiftly towards the penguin in the globe. The photographer captures this scene through a long shot, medium shot, medium close-up, close-up shot, and then close-up shot. In the beginning, the Camera captures Suzie, her toys, father, and other elements in the room. In a medium shot and medium close-up, the photographer zooms closer to reveal the full body and then upper body of Suzie before she moves towards the penguin. A close-up shot is taken when the camera focuses on the shoulders of Suzie whereas an extreme close-up is shot when the photographer zooms the penguin after it has been shaken by her dad (1:20-2:20). Different types of framing in the introductory scene welcome the audience to the sorrowful mood which foreshadows the incidence where Harvey raped and killed Suzie (36:00-37:00). Framing is crucial in filming because it enables the audience to see the details in the film and emotions in the characters by taking a close look at their facial expressions.

Besides, **lighting and costume** are among the core elements of mis-en-scene which elevates the emotional level in the audience by appealing to their senses. There is a mixture of well-lit and dark scenes in the film which symbolically communicates the prevailing mood. The scene when police are investigating the murder of Suzie has dark scenes which align with the sorrowful mood. Likewise, the characters acting in that section have dull faces which demonstrate the pain associated with Harvey’s evil action (38:15-38-40). However, some incidences are shot with lurid colors to demonstrate happiness and hope. Characters seem happy and actively engaging in their daily activities enthusiastically (1:03:00-1:06:00). Some incidences are shot in dimly lit environments that resemble candle lighting or daylight which denotes nighttime to express different emotions in different incidences whereas moonlight denotes heaven (1:06:00-1:12:00, 1:27:00-1:29:00). Lighting is a crucial element of mis-en-scene which improves the visual quality of images in a film. Costumes such as police clothes, sports clothes, among others have been used widely in the film to determine the roles played by each character or signify the activity they are doing.

**Character movement** on stage also contributes greatly to the dramatic aspects of a movie. Suzie’s dad is lurking in Harvey’s compound at night and pursues him relentlessly to revenge against the death of her daughter. A common emerges when Harvey discovers that Suzie’s father is following him with a club. Suzie’s father chases him and they end up in a huge maize plantation where an imaginary heaven house where Suzie dwells. Suzie is calling out his father loudly who is relentlessly pursuing Harvey in the thick maize plantation and cannot hear her daughter calling. Unfortunately, Suzie's dad is beaten up by another person and is admitted to the hospital. Suzie watches chilling incidences at her imaginary dwelling place. Later, a strange wind blows plucking off tree leaves and causing the ground before her, sinks into a deep hole. (1:28:00-1:33:00). Such movements create the dramatic aspect of the movie because a movie cannot be complete without character movement.

**Film Element 3: Sound**

Research shows that elements of sound such as noise, background sound, music, and silence in a film usually evoke our sensational experiences that make the movie more appealing and pleasant (Peters 9). Such **sound** elements have been used quite widely in the *Lovely Bones* film to improve *narration*. Ruth utters a spine-chilling scream when she discovered that Mr. Harvey had murdered Suzie and her blood was smeared all over in Harvey's house (37:40-38:06). The **background sound** also plays an important role in communicating the feelings and current situation to the audience. After the death of Suzie, the background sound changed to manifest a sorrowful situation which makes some characters shed tears because it reminds them of the painful incident (39:25-39:45). The background sound then changes to demonstrate the accumulating tension following the murder probe. The sound of splashing water is heard when Mr. Harvey is cleaning the blood in his bathroom to hide the evidence regarding the murder. He then rashes inside the house. The sound made when Harvey is running back into the house to hide Suzie's clothes after seeing police heightens the tension and informs the audience that the police are about to storm into the house of the suspect. Knocks on his door make the tension even more and Harvey gets more frightened (40:00-41:11). Film producers use sound to capture the attention of the audience and evoke the necessary emotions.

Moreover, different sounds have also been used interchangeably in some incidences throughout the film. A background sound plays as Suzie, who is heaven, speaks her thoughts loudly as his father is deep in thoughts. When Suzie’s dad is breaking bottles, Suzie is seen running by the shore of a sea where floating bottles are broken by the sea waves after being knocked against the shore. Later, Suzie whispers to his father, who is now shocked and silent. Then the tension is broken by background music plays as Suzie is seen enjoying life in colorful heaven (52:30-58:20). In the introductory scene, another sound is heard when Suzie is thinking loudly when she was very young. Her father interrupts her thoughts and the tension is broken by a **piece of background music**, which then introduces another incidence where Suzie is thinking out loud of the past memories when she was given a camera. Likewise, the cracking sound of camera shots is added to spice up the music (1:20-4:00). Different types of sounds spice up a film, making it appear more real than just a creative art simulating imaginary incidence.

**Conclusion**

In summary, Director used elements such as cinematography, mis-en-scene, and sound perfectly in his film *The Lovely Bones* to make it more appealing to the audience. Cinematography entails color temperature, camera distance, and scale, and camera movement have been used to create different qualities of images throughout the film. Likewise, mis-en-scene elements used in this film include framing, lighting and costume, and character movement which further adds up to cinematography making it easy to communicate the message to the audience through diverse visual techniques. Finally, sound elements such as background sound, background music, screams, and loud calls have also been used in the film to supplement other cinematic elements in communicating the primary message and themes evident in the film to the audience. Such a combination of cinematic elements gives the audience an Earthly and heavenly feel as they watch this movie.

Works Cited

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