**Symbolic Imagery in Silent Films**

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In *A Quiet Place*, visuals are crucial to telling the story of the Abbott family, as they rely on silence while hiding from alien creatures who hunt by sound. Since this movie is unique in the horror and thriller genre of film, its ability to create a compelling story without relying on dialogue makes it more impactful and memorable to the viewer. Many symbolic visuals communicate a deeper meaning that sets this film apart in furthering character development and building tension.

**Sand Paths and Bare Feet**

A recurring prop in *A Quiet Place* is the sand paths that lead through the town, forest, and farmland. In each scene where a character leaves the safety of their home, they walk along the sand paths to quiet their footsteps. Besides muffling the sound while walking barefoot, the sand serves another purpose. As a visual, it represents Lee Abbott’s intelligence and fierce desire to protect his family and help them survive. Walking on the sand paths and the risks of making sound show the fine line they walk barefoot between life and death. Throughout the film, the sand paths and bare feet become the symbol of caution and the peculiarity of their new existence, guiding the Abbott family only to places they have been in straight lines and sharp corners.

Walking everywhere barefoot in *A Quiet Place* is also a constant reminder of what dangers await should they make noise. Their previous life before, where they wore shoes outside the house and in town, is gone, and the Abbott family’s feet have adapted to their new reality. The danger of sound is symbolized by the life-leading sand paths and memories of where their bare feet have walked, emphasizing how the visuals of *A Quiet Place* have a greater impact as a near-silent film.

**Symbolism of Sound**

During *A Quiet Place*, the sound is the main theme, but the sound the audience can hear, such as music and even silence, plays an important role in aligning with the symbolic visuals of the film. Near the end of the opening scene, Beau Abbott, the youngest son of the family, takes two batteries as well as a toy spaceship that has the possibility of making loud noises. As the family walks the straight sand paths, the music grows intense and noisy, signaling that the scene has become ominous as in the background Beau is playing with the spaceship now lit with color. Before the scene concludes, the film switches to the point of view of the daughter, Regan Abbott, who is deaf, and from her perspective, the audience can hear nothing. In the opening scene, the film portrays intense music and silence, further developing the symbolism of sound and how it relates to what is shown through the cinematography and character positioning.

Additionally, in another part of the film, the audience gets a glimpse of a hopeful scene; perhaps one of the most memorable ones, where Lee and Evelyn dance with one another in silence. After they sway a few times, Evelyn takes one of the earbuds out of her ear and places it in his, with somber music playing louder as the camera slowly zooms out. The audience can see Lee rub his hand along his wife’s stomach, both happy for the arrival of their child and in fear that dangers will arrive with the new birth. The visual of the couple dancing pulls at the heartstrings of the audience and ends with a hopeful tone that they are prepared and set on their survival, and the survival of their child. Lastly, the conclusion of *A Quiet Place* centers around the cochlear implants Regan wears and that the high-pitch whine affects the alien creatures devastatingly. Using this visual in the film communicates the beacon of their survival and the way they can now fight back and take control of their lives. The sounds of music, intensity, hope, and even silence tie together the visual storytelling of *A Quiet Place* and are used to add depth alongside cinematographic techniques.

**Father and Daughter**

Since the opening scene of *A Quiet Place*, there has been a heavy blanket of guilt thrown over each member of the Abbott family. With the death of Beau, Regan blames herself for giving him the spaceship, though she is unaware he had grabbed the batteries. Likewise, Lee blames himself for being unable to save his son and that he had not placed the toy out of reach. Though each member of the family feels guilt, the strain is evident between the father, Lee, and his daughter, Regan. In a previous scene, the camera follows Lee as he repairs a new cochlear implant for his daughter and then gives it to her to aid her hearing. In frustration, Regan does not allow him to put it on her; upset and without hope that it will ever work. Throughout many scenes, Regan is repeatedly turned down by her father, growing upset and believing that he no longer loves her, which the audience knows to be false.

The symbolism of the father and daughter bond is that communication is key. Although they cannot speak for fear of sound, they can use ASL, sign language, to communicate and yet they are never able to clear the misunderstandings between them. The lack of communication between them reflects the overarching theme of silence and isolation, as Regan is often seen alone. Lee’s research on the cochlear implants for Regan is his way of showing his desire to protect Regan and his love for her though he is not able to say it to her directly. Lee’s final words to his daughter, “I have always loved you,” symbolize his unconditional love and desire to save her (Krasinski, 2018). The bond between father and daughter is illustrated through the cochlear implant, the film's central theme of communication. Lee’s constant work proves his dedication and embodies not only Regan’s impaired hearing; but the key to fighting back against the alien creatures. Lee’s legacy and sacrifice are symbolized through the cochlear implant and his enduring sacrificial love for his family.

**Reflective Discussion**

The visuals in *A Quiet Place* range from symbolic objects to storytelling devices that carry thematic weight. Imbuing everyday items into a story can create symbolic meaning that contributes to the narrative and the film’s visual techniques. The use of sound in *A Quiet Place* could inspire the exploration of greater soundtracks and sound design to create tension, develop scenes, and enhance visual storytelling. This approach to visual symbolism would enhance scenes of silence, leaving room for the visuals to take their place and express the cinematography and production. Visual storytelling in *A Quiet Place* uses small details to carry significant weight in conveying the narrative and diving deeper into symbolism and the emotional journey of a film.

**References**

Krasinski, J. (Director). (2018). *A quiet place* [Film]. Paramount Pictures.