Film Analysis Essay

Pure Land of Humanity

“*There are still faint glimmers of civilization left in this barbaric slaughterhouse that was once known as humanity.”*

*---The Grand Budapest Hotel*

“The Grand Budapest hotel” as a representative movie of Wes Anderson shows his unique technique of filming movie. He establishes his own school of saturated colors, symmetric frame, beautiful arrangement, and smooth camera movement that we can easily find in this movie. There is no doubt that “The Grand Budapest Hotel” is a beautiful movie and it provides enjoyable movie experience for audiences. Under the surface of fairytale setting, which contain fantastically romantic and charming scenery, there is darkly humor that the director want to convey to audiences. Monsieur Gustave as the main character of this movie is a refined and courteous upper class figure who treat people politely at any situation. This character as a symbol of remaining civilization at that age shine bright side of humanity. When everyone else was corroded by the fickleness society; when murder and indifference all around the world, Gustave still holds on his personality of goodness and nobility. And the grand Budapest becomes the only pure land during the depression of civilization.

When I watched this movie, I was attracted by many details in this movie like the beautiful color arrangement. Take the pink and gorgeous building of the Grand Budapest as an example, this magnificent hotel just like a colorful castle standing at the hill. Red elevator, purple suits, pink wallpaper, blue bathhouse. Thousands of different bright colors perfectly fusion together and form a harmony beautiful fairytale land that waiting people to investigate the profound meaning in it. Every detail in this movie is worth examine closely, they are symbolizes beautiful trails of civilization that left from past age.

In part 1 of this movie “M. Gustave”, there is a scene happened between the old woman and Gustave that the owner of this hotel didn’t want to go back to Lutz, but Gustave was trying to comfort her and convince her to leave. This scene begins with medium close-up shot of these two characters. The old woman wears bright yellow cloth, jewelry, and with delicate make-up; her facial expression is really nervous. She continues repeating: “I’m not leaving.” The pink color of wallpaper are corresponds with the pink color of the rose on the table. The medium close-up shot reinforce the different facial expression on both of these two characters. Nervous VS. Easiness. The old woman is trying to hold the only person who cares about her. This is her last hope. From the dress, we can see she is upper class people who live abundant material life. From her nervous reaction, we can see that she lives lonely and under no concern. Moreover, The harmony detail of color arrangement shows the director pay much attention on details. This scene set the tone of the whole movie: under the gorgeous surface, something gloomy was raising. “I’m not leaving.” Foreshadows the misfortune she met at following of this movie.

This movie shows Gustave’s characteristics comprehensively from many aspects. There is a scene that Gustave is doing interview to Zero. Once Gustave started to ask the first question, the non-diegetic sound of background music changes to quick rhythm music. The director uses many pan camera movement to establish fast-paced dialogue. Mr. Gustave strides confidently forward, and never looks at Zero, but zero is following Gustave with small steps and fluster words. During the interview, there is two kinds of people interact with Gustave: employees and guests. Gustave’s attitude and tone towards them are completely different. For employee, Gustave’s tone is serious and strait forward. But for guests, he is completely polite and courtesy. Wes Anderson also uses many continue cut to display this scene. The changing of non-diegetic music implied that the tempo of the following dialogue will be fast. Indeed, during following interview, Gustave quickly count all Zero’s experience into zero. This shows that he is an experienced manager who done many interview before. He clearly knows what kind of people he wants. All the employees were coming to him for help also shows Gustave’s significant reputation in this hotel. He is meticulous about his work so he requires employees strictly to keep every detail in this hotel perfectly. Gustave always a figure of “perfect gentlemen”. He earns people’s respect because he treat people with respect. This is the reason why the Grand Budapest hotel can stay in high reputation.

One interesting point about Mr. Gustave is that even he was in the jail; he still holds his professional service spirit. There is a pan camera movement of shooting Mr. Gustave carries a cart to serve mush. His uses “May I”, “Good day”, “gentlemen” these kind of words during the serving process. At this scene, he is the only character who speaks. Refer to the entire movie, it contains many pan camera movements. I think the reason of this is because pan camera movement can makes audience feel natural about narrating story. Gustave’s attitude portrays that he seen jail as a hotel. He is still a hotel manager who was doing room service, but in a different place: jail. Every cell in the jail symbolizes of every room in the hotel. Mr. Gustave seen these criminals as his customers (people are equal); therefor, Gustave’s duty is to serve them well. However, compare to Gustave’s passion, no one in the jail replies him. This implied the stoniness society. This is the time that European civilization became feeble and die due to the war and the raising of Nazi fascist. Great amount of industry came up. People started to become stoniness. Even in the environment of apathy and inhospitality, Gustave still be warm and friendly to people. His reaction shows he applies his noble virtue in all situations.

The relationship between Gustave and Zero is dedicated. In most situation, they like boss and employee. But along with the developing of the movie, it becomes more like friends. There is scene at last part of this movie; a young new lobby boy provides information to Gustave. Then Zero mimic Gustave’s tone to critic this young boy by saying: “You haven’t been trained properly. A lobby boy never provides information like that kind. You’re a stone wall.” This shows that Zero is influenced much from Mr. Gustave. He remembered what Gustave had said to him. He always follows Gustave’s principles. Under Gustave strict command, Zero becomes a perfect lobby boy that fulfills Gustave’s requirements: “completely invisible, yet always in sight, remember what people need, and satisfy their need before they ask for.” Zero also uses what he learned to educate a new lobby boy. Zero draw mustache on his face to show his mature, he wants to use this way to be close to Gustave. Go back to the first part of this movie. When Zero was saying: “Time has changed”, he might recall the memory of Gustave, the thing they went through together, the secret promise they made about the priceless picture, and also how Gustave teaches him to be a good lobby boy. We can not get good service like Gustave provides because their age is already declined. Just like Zero said: “I think his world had vanished long before he even entered it. But I’ll say he certainly sustained the illusion with a marvelous grace”

From the culture perspective, this movie makes effort on detail to imply profound meaning. At the scene when Zero and Gustave were on the train. Wes Anderson uses symmetric structure to display two characters. Zero and Gustave are balanced at two sides of the frame. Soldiers came in, they argued and fight. Gustave shouts out: “You filthy, goddamn, pock-marked, fascist assholes!” Firstly, the soldiers’ coming breaks the balanced circumstance. Those soldiers as symbols of inhumanity fascists show how they treat a cultivated person unjustifiably and cruelty. Gustave’s exclamation implied that his fury about fascist is approaching to the climax. During the process of fighting against fascist, Gustave was still attempt to persuasive them and humanize them. However, facing with Barbour group, it’s useless to use civilized way. This implies Gustave’s dissatisfaction and criticalness about Nazi and fascists.

The picturesque, elaborate, and once widely celebrated establishment----the Grand Budapest has gone along with died decade. “It was off season and, by that time, decidedly out of fashion, and it had already began its descent into shabbiness and eventual demolition.” Mr. Gustave as a symbol of older generation’s gentleman who insists his beautiful virtue that inherited from last generation shines the light of humanity becomes a unique model. This film speaks to our heartbreak at the injustice of the Holocaust and our desire for some glimmer of light. The figure of Gustave provide us hope about humanity, and also makes people obtain beautiful imagination about the past period. This story is filled with alternation between murder and love; humor and grim, to make this film such a unique and classical work.

Work Cited:

Norman L. Eisen, Feb 20, 2015, “The Grand Budapest Hotel is a Thoughtful Comedy about Tragedy”