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The Bigger Picture in *LoveField*:

Use of *Mise-en-Scene* and Sound as Tools of Theme

When a viewer is watching a movie without knowing what it is about the non-diegetic sound is normally a dead give away on what the genre of the movie is. The combination of sound and *mise-en-scene* can tell the viewer more about a character than the dialogue, but the viewer's perspective can change based on what appears on screen and what is left out. What we see and hear at first glance often forms our opinion of characters and what a film is about. This is exactly what happens in Mathieu Rotthe's *LoveField*. Through *mise-en-scene*, diegetic sound, and non-diegetic sound Rotthe creates a short film that asks viewers to question their own biases and stereotypes.

The non-diegetic music at the beginning of the film is fast paced, allowing the viewer to conclude that this is an action or horror film. That, paired with the diegetic sound of a cell phone searching for signal and a woman screaming, leads the viewer to infer that this is a horror film. When the screaming stops and the viewer can then hear a crow it ties into a horror film since crows are normally associated with death. Rotthe is playing off of the viewer's preconceived notions of what a horror film is and what elements make a horror film.

The *mise-en-scene* leading to the introduction of the first character leads the viewer to see him as the antagonist of the film. The audience sees a woman's bloody clothes and her foot painfully pushing the dirt then stopping without sound; this shows the end of a struggle the man

appears to of had won. By not showing the woman, a subtle technique of *mise-en-scene*, Rathe is allowing the viewer to infer she is now dead. Each of these details are common elements of horror films and as viewers we make assumptions about the characters and the situation because of our past experience.

Rathe then jolts us out of our stereotypical thinking through the use of the same cinematic elements. On screen, we are next shown the man rummaging through the car trunk and finding a blanket; all the while the crow is cawing and coming closer to the man, signaling his role as the antagonist. When the man returns with the blanket the viewer assumes the man is going to cover the body. but at that moment the diegetic sound of a baby crying quickly changes the viewer's previous notions. The non-diegetic sound changes from the fast paced horror music to a peaceful melody. This completely throws out the idea that the man was a killer; he is now seen as the hero who helped this young girl.

In the last scene, when the camera zooms out and the viewer can see the tractor and the police car pull up, everything can now be put together, showing the truth of the situation instead of the stereotypes we've relied on to build our ideas about the characters and situation. It had seemed strange that this man would find this woman in the middle of nowhere, but in the end with the long shot the viewer can now see what was a chance encounter that had a positive outcome for the women. Rathe is able to take a situation and twist it to give the viewers a whole other idea of what is going on to then bring them back to show that there is more than what meets the eye and our perspective can change drastically when we are shown a different angle. Rathe's film is a perfect example of the way in which we stereotype people and situations. The final long shot is a metaphor that encourages us to look at the bigger picture in all situations before we make judgments about them and the people involved in them.

Work Cited

Ratthe, Mathieu. *Lovefield*. *YouTube*. 25 April 2008, <https://youtu.be/4meeZifCVro>.