

Le Graal

Montage is one of the essential parts of a film's making, if not the making itself. Linking and assembling together different kinds of moving images is what brings to life a narrative and what creates meaning and style in a film. It majorly aims to have an impact on the audience and sometimes even to surprise the viewer by connecting unexpected visuals or sounds together.

In that spirit, this essay will focus on "Le Graal", a short film made to deliver a thought on how success is perceived nowadays, and how it tries to convey a message through the manipulation of different Editing techniques.

To answer this question, this essay will be focusing first on how the concept of success is defined in this short film, and then it will explore how "Le Graal" generates the idea that a success defined as such can be considered as ephemeral.

Le Graal means the grail in french and it refers to the famous story of the Holy Grail.

"Le Graal" is a short film reflecting society's definition of success and its roots in the collective unconscious. It also suggests the ephemeral nature of such a quest.

It opens up with a voice stating that: " A lot of people have success based on money, or based on position or title (...)", which gives us from the start a clue on what it is to be successful nowadays: majorly based on appearance and materials.

Moreover, several real testimonials are used throughout the video to emphasize the fact that, the idea of success has become a common concept.

This short cut is also entirely made in black and white with during the whole clip a black background. This choice was made to eliminate the notion of space and depth of field, to

accentuate the fact that success is now a universal value and that its quest is a myopic research as it is an egocentric pursuit. The most poignant example of that is the scene where the main character looks at herself in the mirror just like a modern Narcissus falling in love with himself and his appearing success.

Besides, by using these echoes, the perception of success, given by our society and by the medias, is also ironized. As a matter of fact, one of the voices vividly declares that his success can be measured by the number of likes he has on *instagram*. This depiction of success is very new and proper to our age, where online fame has become an objet of success and desire. To show the viewer how this version of success is unfounded a second voice is added, claiming angrily: "I think that is very very successful! ".

The soundtrack used is connected to images that reaffirm the vision given by the voices but weren't taken at the same time. This gap between the sound track and the visual content is called vertical montage.

As a matter of fact, the short film is full of metonymies evoking success: Money with the pieces of ancient money, Power which is represented by a crown, the jewelleries referring to richness and the grail illustrating youth and beauty. Metonymy only implies time, which once again enables the film to get rid of the notion of space.



Metonymies used in the short film

This video is also an attempt to deconstruct the idea spread by the medias and maintained by society. It intends to show that this vision of achievement and success is a complete fleeting concept.

The money sequence for instance, is the most obvious part delivering that message. It uses shots of money being dropped at a normal speed and then at a reverse speed, giving the viewer the impression that money can disappear at any time. This entire sequence also uses a game soundtrack of money being won and lost.

Moreover, As Ken Dancyger stated in his book: “When the film has an appropriate rhythm, the editing appears to be seamless, and we become totally involved with the characters and the story.” (Dancyger, 2011). In that spirit, this sequence is accelerated through time and rhythmmed by a counter, which follows the pace of the pieces being thrown, to emphasize the idea that a change can occur at any time and involve the audience.

In the same spirit, the sound of a turning wheel is audible when the main character opens up her eye in the end of the short film.

Besides, the same technique is used with the crown sequence to engender the idea that power is not inviolable and its supremacy can be questioned..

To put it in a nutshell, only three natural elements out of four are present in this montage: Water, Fire and Air (there is a sound of the wind at the end of the video). Earth, which refers to a certain balance and metaphorically to humility, is absent. This is a way to highlight the vain and ephemeral aspect of success, as there is no longevity without balance.

Last but not least, the final part of “Le Graal” utilises Cinematic Ampliation.

Ampliation is, as Noel Carroll quotes Michotte in his book, “the creating or establishing of a movement onto the second object of the already existing movement of the first object.”

(Michotte, M, cited in Carroll, N; 1996; p170). In that spirit, a pearl falling down in one shot leads to a white liquid being poured onto water. Therefore, a solid object becomes liquid and generates the idea of loss once again.



Pearl falling down

Milk being poured

To conclude, montage can definitely change the meaning of moving images thanks to different editing techniques, which has been demonstrating in “Le Graal” throughout the essay.

Bibliography:

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