

Education material

The Adventures of a Snail / Alexander of Macedon / My Body as It Is



CLASS DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION: 7th grade

TEACHING AREA: Culture and media

TEACHING UNIT: *The Adventures of a Snail / Alexander of Macedon / My Body as It Is*

CLASS TYPE: Analysis of short freestyle films

DURATION OF A TEACHING UNIT: 45 minutes

THE ADVENTURES OF A SNAIL

Stjepan Kefelja Primary School Film Group, Kutina, 2023

MOTIVATION

Conversation with the students

1. Do you live in a house or an apartment? Do you have a garden, a balcony, or a yard? What animals do you notice around your home?
2. What do you know about snails?
3. When can we most often see snails?
4. Who or what can pose a danger to snails?
5. Do you know what the expressions "walk at a snail's pace" or "withdraw into yourself like a snail" mean?

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FILM

You will watch a short freestyle film *The Adventures of a Snail*, produced by Stjepan Kefelja Primary School Film Group from Kutina.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WATCHING

1. What kind of shot is used most to depict the snail?
2. Who is the main character and who are the supporting characters in the film?
3. What is the sound in the film like? What does it consist of? Did you notice anything unusual in the sound?
4. How are the changes in weather conditions indicated?
5. Pay attention to the state of the camera. Is it static or dynamic?

WATCHING THE FILM

EXPRESSION OF STUDENT IMPRESSIONS

Did you like this film? Why?

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FILM

1. How does the film begin?

The film begins with the Stjepan Kefelja Primary School Film Group logo, and then we see the name of the film. When we see the name of the film, the shot is out of focus and the camera is dynamic because there is a downward pan.

2. What do we see in the following shots? What kinds of shots are they?

In the following shots we see a snail, shown in a close-up or a medium close-up (the head, a part of its shell). Although it may seem like an extreme close-up, the snail is a character in the film and the shots are defined according to its body. Also, the motif of the cabbage as the snail's home is also introduced.

3. Who is the main character in the film? How is this indicated at the beginning of the film?

The main character is the snail, and at the beginning of the film this is indicated by the snail appearing in the first shots.

4. Who are the supporting characters in the film?

The supporting characters are a chicken, a human, birds on power lines, a frog and a mosquito. Besides the mosquito, the supporting characters actually pose a danger to the snail.

5. How is the human depicted? What do we call this stylistic device?

The human is depicted through a synecdoche (*pars pro toto*) because we see only a part of the human body (the legs), instead of the whole person.

6. What does sound in film usually consist of?

It consists of speech, music and noises.

7. Are all the elements of sound present in this film?

Yes, we hear music and noise, and there is also speech – the chicken, frog and mosquito are synchronized with human voices that imitate animal sounds.

This should be taken with a grain of salt because this type of animal “speech” can also be interpreted as a noise.

8. Did you notice the change in the music?

The music changes when the supporting characters that pose a threat to the snail are introduced. The music becomes tense and threatening.

9. In which scene do we first see a high angle that poses a threat?

A high angle appears in a scene where the snail is in the grass, and then human legs appear. Here, the high angle means that the snail's life is in danger because a human could step on it, and that it cannot control its own destiny.

10. Do high angles appear in any more shots?

Yes, we see an extreme high angle with a zoom out after the shot of the birds on the power line. This extreme high angle is used to show that the snail is just a small creature in nature, almost invisible, but still in danger.

11. Are there any low angles?

Yes, in two shots, showing birds on power lines. In these shots, the low angle is used to indicate danger and the way the snail perceives this danger.

12. How are the changes in weather conditions indicated?

Changes in weather conditions are indicated by shots of the sky and rain. Also, we hear the sounds of thunder and rain.

13. How long is the time period the film is set in? How do we know this?

The film depicts a single day. This is indicated by a shot of a cabbage in daylight at the beginning of the film, and at the end of the film by a shot of the moon and a shot of the same cabbage at nighttime.

14. Is the camera in the film static or dynamic?

The camera changes states in the film. In some shots the camera is dynamic (e.g. a pan), and in some shots it is static (e.g. a shot of the birds on a power line). In most of the film the shots of the snail appear static, but the entire time the image moves slowly, almost imperceptibly, and the camera is probably handheld.

ALEXANDER OF MACEDON
School of Animated Film Čakovec, Čakovec, 2023

MOTIVATION

Conversation with the students

1. Do you like slower or faster paced films?
2. How important is the sound in a film to you? How much can it contribute to your overall impression of the film?
3. Is drawing perhaps a hobby or an interest of yours? Do you like expressing yourself through art?
4. Do you use any applications or programs on your computer or mobile phone to design images and photos? How do you like them?

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FILM

You will watch a short freestyle film *Alexander of Macedon*, produced by the School of Animated Film Čakovec.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WATCHING

1. Which visual and/or graphic forms appear?
2. How are the images and sound synchronized in the film?
3. Which colours appear? Which are dominant and which are less present? How do colours contribute to the experience of the film?
4. Think about what the film's name might mean.

WATCHING THE FILM

EXPRESSION OF STUDENT IMPRESSIONS

Did you like this film? Why?

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FILM

1. How does the film start?

The film begins with a black shot, and we can hear the noise of the wind.

2. Which graphic forms appear?

We can see letters, circles, lines, dots, waves, a flower, punctuation marks (question mark, exclamation mark and ellipsis), different types of emoticons, crosses, arrows, an umbrella, squares.

3. How are the images and sound synchronized in the film?

The image and sound are synchronized through editing. When the music is more intense, editing achieves rhythm, speed, and dynamics.

4. Which colours appear?

Black, white, blue, green, yellow and red appear, and in a few brief shots we see pink and purple.

5. Which colours are dominant and which are less present?

Black and white are dominant and the others are less present.

6. How do colours contribute to the experience of a film?

They contribute to the rhythm and playfulness of the film.

7. What could the name of the film mean?

Although this film can be classified as an animated film, it's an animated music video for the song *Alexander of Macedon* by the band Jembrela.

8. How would we interpret this film, does it have a "plot"?

Since this is a music video that is primarily based on visual and musical correlations and on the atmosphere, the film is open to interpretation. Certain elements are clearer and suggest certain meanings (a sad face, a game of tic-tac-toe, the umbrellas, the letter A, a growing flower, "shooting" arrows...), while others are more abstract.

MY BODY AS IT IS

House of Art Arsen, Liberated film: film adventures for children and the youth, Šibenik, 2023

MOTIVATION

Conversation with the students

1. Why are people obsessed with their physical appearance nowadays? What influences our perception of our own appearance?
2. What problems can a false sense of self-worth based on physical appearance cause?
3. Do you think that young people and children are under more pressure to be beautiful and successful than adults? How do you deal with this pressure?
4. How does social media contribute to our views of our own bodies?

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FILM

You will watch a short freestyle film *My Body as It Is*, made as part of the Liberated film: film adventures for children and the youth program, produced by House of Art Arsen from Šibenik and co-produced by Blank_film incubator from Zagreb. The author of the film is Ava Klisović.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WATCHING

1. What two kinds of shots does the film begin with?
2. What colour predominates in the film? What is it symbolic of?
3. Through which cinematic means of expression do we find out the problems that the protagonists deal with?
4. How are the image and the narrator's voice synchronized?
5. Where was the film shot? What is the lighting like? What can such lighting and location suggest?
6. The film is a so-called freestyle film, created at a documentary and experimental film workshop. What type of film would you say this is?

WATCHING THE FILM

EXPRESSION OF STUDENT IMPRESSIONS

Did you like this film? Why?

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FILM

1. **What two kinds of shots does the film begin with?**
The film begins with a close-up of the narrator's face, followed by a full shot of her.
2. **What colour predominates in the film?**
Black predominates, because the girls use black paint to cover their bodies, but it is also dominant in the production design and cinematography, i.e. lighting.
3. **What is the colour black symbolic of?**
In this film, the colour black symbolizes the labyrinth of the girls' dark thoughts. Also, since they cover their bodies in black while talking about their perception of certain body parts, it is implied that they would rather "erase" those parts of their bodies. Ultimately, by covering their bodies in black, they want to fit into beauty standards because their body contours are lost, making them "fit in."
4. **Through which cinematic means of expression do we find out the problems that the protagonists deal with?**
Through narration.
5. **What do we call the narrator's voice that is added to a scene by editing, i.e. a voice that does not originate from the scene itself?**
A *voice-over*.
6. **How are the image and the narrator's voice synchronized?**

While the voice-over of one of the protagonists talks about her problems or her physical "flaws", at the same time the image shows the protagonist covering that part of her body with black paint.

7. Where was the film shot?

In a theatre, on the stage.

8. What is the lighting like? What does such lighting suggest?

The lighting in this film is extremely dark. This further emphasizes the girls being stuck with these dark thoughts and perceptions of their bodies.

9. What is the main topic of this film?

The main topics are beauty, the perception of one's own body, and the body itself.

10. What is the main thing we see in different shots?

Also the body, either the entire body or certain parts of it.

11. What kind of performance do the location where the film was shot and the body as the main topic suggest?

They suggest this is a performance piece in which the protagonist's body becomes an art object.

12. How would you determine what type of film this is? Elaborate.

This film can be defined as a documentary because the protagonists are real people who honestly express their problems, which more and more young people face nowadays. This film can also be defined as an experimental film because it constantly plays with its form, introduces performativity and there's an absence of a story due to the fact we see only the fragments that the protagonists want to share with us.

EVALUATION

- monitoring student activities while watching a film
- checking the understanding of the film by asking questions
- teaching sheet (quiz)

THE TEACHING SHEET (QUIZ) is available on the Film Education website.