

Educational material

A Romantic Fraud



CLASS DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION: 4th grade

TEACHING AREA: Culture and media

TEACHING UNIT: *A Romantic Fraud*

CLASS TYPE: Analysis of a short documentary film

DURATION OF A TEACHING UNIT: 45 minutes

A ROMANTIC FRAUD

DOKUart Bjelovar Documentary workshop, Bjelovar, 2025

MOTIVATION

Conversation with the students

1. What dangers do young people face on social media?
2. What dangers might older people encounter when using social media?
3. What types of scams exist on social media?

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FILM

You will watch a short film *A Romantic Fraud* produced by DOKUart Bjelovar Documentary workshop from Bjelovar.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WATCHING

1. Pay attention to the beginning and the end of the film.
2. How is the film's topic introduced?
3. Pay attention to the sound in the film. How does it reinforce the film's topic?
4. Who is the protagonist? What makes her stand out? What's her life like?

WATCHING THE FILM

STUDENTS' IMPRESSIONS

What do you think of this film? Be sure to provide arguments for your impressions.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FILM

1. How does the film start?

The film starts with a shot of a parking lot outside a shop. After a cut, we see a low angle medium close-up of the protagonist inside the car. There's another cut and then a medium close-up of the protagonist in profile.

2. What is the sound like in these opening shots? When does it change?

At first, the sound consists solely of noises (e.g. unlocking the car, placing items in the trunk, closing the car door). When the protagonist starts the car, music starts playing (the song *Lijepe žene prolaze kroz grad* by Azra).

3. How is the film's topic introduced?

The topic is introduced through a radio reportage playing in the car, reporting on an older woman who lost money after falling for a romantic scam on social media.

4. In what kinds of shots do we see the protagonist during the radio reportage?

She's in a close-up, with an extreme close-up of her eyes visible in the rear-view mirror, which emphasises her focus both on driving and on what she's hearing.

5. When does the name of the film appear?

The name appears as the protagonist enters her home.

6. What is the purpose of these opening shots?

They introduce the protagonist and set up the film's topic. Such sequences that appear before the name of the film are known as a "cold open".

7. Who is the protagonist? What is her life like? What makes her stand out?

The protagonist is an elderly retired woman.

The film follows her daily routine; shopping, cooking lunch, ironing, occasionally meeting friends, walking through the centre of Bjelovar, watching the evening news, getting ready (applying cream and lipstick).

She stands out because she actively uses social media and encounters various scammers almost every day.

However, she is perceptive, intelligent, and sharp, and recognises that these supposed romantic interests are frauds and attempts at financial exploitation.

Her life is fulfilled because she has a family (she mentions grandchildren) and friends she spends time with, and she even finds these scam attempts amusing.

She is also very realistic and understands that genuine relationships are built on understanding and respect, not only on words.

8. When does the motif of the radio appear, and why is it significant?

The radio appears in the car at the beginning of the film when she hears the story about the old lady.

It also appears later in her home, which is typical for older people that listen to the radio on old transmitters.

The motif of the radio introduces the film's topic early and helps characterise the protagonist.

9. What are the speech and music we hear from the radio like?

They're diegetic, indicated by the protagonist listening attentively in the car, turning the transmitter on and adjusting the station.

10. Which sounds interrupt her daily routine?

The sounds of message notifications on her phone.

11. How is humour achieved in this film?

Through the very interesting protagonist, her witty personality and her humorous handling of fake suitors.

12. What type of voice do we hear when she watches the evening news?

The diegetic voice of the news presenter.

13. In what kinds of shots does the protagonist appear most often?

Mostly in medium shots, medium close-ups and close-ups, in order to provide insight into her thoughts and emotions.

14. What do we call the shot where the protagonist reads a message on social media and both a part of her face and the message are visible?

A semi-subjective shot, because it shows both her face and what she is looking at (the message).

15. How does she explain her motivation near the end of the film?

She says she lures in fake suitors who spend months trying to win her over in hopes of receiving money from her, only to reject them, as a form of revenge on behalf of other women who were deceived in this way. It's actually a kind of female solidarity.

16. What kind of shot is she filmed in while she's explaining this?

In a medium close-up, emphasising her determination to get revenge.

17. Is the protagonist's voice always diegetic?

In many scenes it's non-diegetic, especially during routine activities; it becomes diegetic when she sits in her armchair.

18. How does the film end?

The ending begins with non-diegetic music (the song *Totalno drukčiji od drugih* by the band Vještice) as the protagonist leaves her house and gets into her car.

19. Which shots follow after her car exits the garage?

A wide shot of her street from an extreme high angle, followed by an extreme wide aerial shot of Bjelovar. The camera follows her car.

Then there are shots from the inside of the car (an extreme close-up of her hand adjusting the radio station, an extreme close-up of her eyes in the mirror) and a few shots of her car driving through Bjelovar.

20. In what kind of shot is she shown while walking through the centre of Bjelovar?

She moves from a full shot into a medium close-up as she approaches the static camera.

21. What is the final shot before the end credits?

A shot of the protagonist on a promenade next to a heart-shaped installation for tourist photos.

This shot is symbolic because it's tied to the film's topic: the heart represents love, while the fact that she's alone suggests self-love and her resistance to false romantic offers.

22. What information is given in the end credits, and how are they designed?

The credits list the names of the film crew and workshop leaders.

Their photos appear on fake American ID cards, reinforcing the topic of fraudulent profiles, which often pose as men from the United States.

Also, the protagonist reappears with a comment about her latest suitor.

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.