

Film Analysis 1

Symbolic interactionism is an ongoing use of language and gestures in the anticipation of how the other will react (Lefever, 2016). The idea of Symbolic interactionism came from George Herbert Mead, but wasn't identified as symbolic interactionism until one of his disciples, Herbert Blumer, coined the term. Symbolic interactionism have three core principles; meaning, language, and thought. In the film *The Trip to Bountiful* symbolic interactionism occurs in multiple occasions. Two of the main characters, Jessie Mae and Mrs. Watts, are constantly in conflict with one another because of verbal and nonverbal misinterpretations.

In *The Trip to Bountiful* Jessie Mae comes off as egotistical self centered daughter-in-law while Mrs. Watts comes off as a sweet fragile lady that is confined to a small two bedroom apartment. Mrs. Watts loves singing hymns; it seems to bring her back to the most beautiful memories of when she lived in Bountiful. However, Jessie Mae sees it as a way for Mrs. Watts to get under her skin and tells her that she can't sing them. This is a good example of construction of social reality. Jessie Mae is acting out towards Mrs. Watts because she has assigned a negative meaning to her hymn singing. Another pet peeve of Jessie Mae's was when Mrs. Watts would stare out of the window. Jessie Mae interpreted this nonverbal communication as pouting, but in reality Mrs. Watts looking out the window meant she was reminiscing about Bountiful. Again, Jessie Mae found it to have a negative meaning while Mrs. Watts had a positive one.

They both seemed to have opposite meanings on almost everything except for the monthly check. Jessie Mae and Mrs. Watts both seemed to have a positive outlook for when the check came in, but their interpretation of the check was different. Jessie Mae seen it as way to go get her hair done and Mrs. Watts seen it as way back to Bountiful. The check may have had

different meanings or uses for each, but they both symbolized the same thing and that was freedom. They both wanted freedom from the little two bedroom apartment and this check represented that.

On a brighter note Mrs. Watts and Thelma's relationship was the total opposite. She enjoyed the hymns and the stories about Bountiful. Thelma came off as young kind women that wanted to help out Mrs. Watt. The hymns had different meanings to each other, but they both symbolized the hymn as happiness and peacefulness. This is the second time within the film that something had total different meanings to the characters, but symbolized the same thing.

The last scene I would like to discuss is when Mrs. Watt's and Ludie are at their old house in Bountiful. Mrs. Watt's keeps asking Ludie to come in and look at the house, but Ludie refuses. He states that he wants to remember it like it was and not what it is. Ludie thinks by looking inside the house that it will corrupt the memories he had as a child. To Mrs. Watts the condition of the house now does not affect her memories of the past. Mrs. Watts views memories as something that can't be taking away and Ludie thinks otherwise.

The Trip to Bountiful had several more symbolic interactionism meanings, but I thought these stood out the most. Symbolic interactionism is interpreted by each individual different. As we learned in *The Trip to Bountiful* something so similar can be so different. Most of us may have the same end result when it comes to the symbolism of something, but more than likely we all had a different path in getting it. The interpretation of symbolic interactionism depends on a lot variables; culture, age, and experiences in life. We take these variables, define meanings, and get to our symbolic points.

Film Analysis 2

Social Penetration theory, as described in our text, is the process of developing deeper intimacy with another person through mutual self-disclosure and other forms of vulnerability (Lefever, PLE, 2016). For two people to develop a deeper connection with someone they have to peel away the layers of something called the multilayered onion. The multilayered onion represents multiple layers; outer layer, inner layer, and inner core. Throughout the movie *Planes, Trains, & Automobiles* shows these layers being constantly peeled away until the inner core is finally reached.

In *Planes, Trains, & Automobiles* Neil Page is desperately trying to making it home in time for Thanksgiving however, Del Griffith, keeps getting in the way. Neil and Del have totally opposite personalities and lives. Neil is extremely serious and goal oriented, while Del seems to be a happy go lucky guy who flies by the seat of his pants. To penetrate to the inner core of the multilayered onion one must be able to feel closeness to one another. In this film there were three main scenes that seemed to relate more to the social penetration theory than others. These three scenes show how the inner core is reached through the highest degree of intimacy known as depenetration.

The first scene came when they were sitting beside each other on the airplane. Del tries to become close with Neil by self disclosing information. Del goes on and on volunteering information about his personal life without ever being asked to. It seems like he's talking to his self more so than to Neil. You can see that Neil doesn't want to become close to Del and tries to cut the conversation short multiple times. Del tries to break common ground with Neil, which is

part of the outer layer on the multilayered onion, but Neil seems to have a permanent guard that limits the closeness that Del is trying to get to.

The second scene was at the second hotel room. Neil gets a room and decides not to share it with Del. With all the trouble that Del has put him through Neil has a change of heart and cautiously invites him to stay the night. Throughout the night they have drinks and start to bond. Del finally penetrated in to the inner layer. Neil brings up Del's wife and you can see the hesitation in his next words. It seemed that Del was kind of hiding something and not letting Neil into his inner core where the deepest emotions are kept.

The last scene was when Neil hopped on the train to go home while Del stayed at the station. On that train Neil had an epiphany. Neil realized that Del's wife had actually passed away. Using his instincts he went back to confront Del about this. Del finally opened his inner core and told Neil about his late wife. Neil's inner core was reached when he invited Del to eat with his family.

Planes, Trains, and Automobiles was a perfect example of Altman and Taylor's view of the multilayered onion. It showed the range of self disclosure needed to reach a person's deep emotions and unresolved conflicts. Altman and Taylor's observation of depenetration was used to observe and analyze the relationship between Neil and Del. Even though *Planes, Trains, and Automobiles* is a film this type of self disclosure happens in real life too. To get to the heart of a problem one must slowly peel away the outer layers to get to the core/problem.

Film Analysis 3

The narrative paradigm theory was created by Walter Fisher's and its definition seems to be very broad. Narrative paradigm basically means words that have meaning in a pattern for those who live, create, or interpret. Coherence, meaning consistent, and fidelity, meaning relatable, are really important when it comes to the narrative paradigm because it helps persuade that individual in believing the story. In the film *Avalon* there were several occasions where the narrative paradigm theory was used.

Avalon starts off with Sam Krichinsky telling the children about when he migrated to the states. He describes Baltimore as the most beautiful place on the earth. He goes into detail about the fancy lights and fireworks. The opening story seems to be consistent through its entirety. The excitement in his voice and the way he was describing each part of the memory showed that it was an authentic story. He was able to relate to the children during this story because they are all from Baltimore and have seen the fireworks many of times.

During the first Thanksgiving dinner Sam starts to tell a story of how his father came to Avalon. At the beginning it starts off during the winter time until his wife corrects him and states that it actually happened in May. He then goes on stating that his father never drank water because he didn't trust how the water was coming from the ground. The coherence of the story was compromised when his wife interrupted him and made the correction. So when he stated that his father never drank water, which is highly unlikely, you could see the families' facial expressions disagreeing with his story. In fact one of the cousins, Izzy Kirk, kind of made fun of it and everyone started to laugh. This is a prime example that if the story doesn't stay consistent the narrator may lose credibility.

Another example of narrative paradigm occurred when Sam took the children to the park to watch the fireworks. While lying on the blanket staring at the stars Sam decided to tell them a story of how he once owned a club. The story was entertaining, but when it flashback to the park it showed the children sleeping. While Sam's coherence wasn't compromised he failed to relate to the children. Young children tend to be unamused about adult life. They prefer to talk about model airplanes or television shows not about business. Unable to relate to the children his story became meaningless. This helps prove that Fisher was right when he stated fidelity and coherence were extremely important when storytelling.

Avalon showed how one can live the American dream. Many Americans and Immigrants can relate to being close to their family and starting a business from scratch. It showed that nothing is given and with hard work and support from family anything is possible. *Avalon* used just the right amount of consistency and reliability to help the viewer understand what story was actually about. Many viewers could relate to this story and that is why it was a good example of how to use narrative paradigm.

Works Cited

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