

The Sixth Sense Scene Analysis Task



This climatic scene where Cole reveals to Malcom that he sees dead people, is a pivotal one, placed in the development of the story. Not only does it tie together the events prior to his confession, but it also reveals the twist ending. The ending is revealed through several techniques purposely and thoughtfully included by the director, M. Night Shyamalan. It is designed so that the audience will reflect on the scene after the cinematic reveal, and not know how they did not realise how obvious it was.

There is a close up shot on Cole when he reveals to Malcom his secret. The camera then proceeds to immediately cut to Malcom. The fact that it cuts back to Malcom immediately after Cole confesses, is deliberate decision by the Shyamalan. It's done to give an audience a clue of what Malcom's fate was. Or if they don't realise it in the moment, they will kick themselves later for seeing how evident it was. The camera continues to zoom in on Malcom every time it cuts back to him, until eventually it is an extreme close up shot. As Cole is describing how he sees dead people, walking around like regular people and that they don't know they're dead, the camera is on Malcom, if the audience is observant enough, they could realise that Cole is describing Malcom. The camera angle is a considerable clue to the fact that Malcom is in fact, dead.

The scene begins silently as Cole admits that he is ready to tell Malcom his secret. This momentary silence inflicts tension and anticipation in the viewer. When Cole avows his secret, nondiegetic, *piano*, menacing strings start to play. The volume of the music increases and decreases throughout the scene. It *crescendos* after Coles reveal, this puts more emphasis on it. The volume also increases when Cole says he sees them walking around like regular people and that they only see what they want to. Also, in this same scene, the minacious music is substituted for a more peaceful, calm option. This is a film making technique called Soundtrack Dissonance. Soundtrack dissonance is utilized in this scene to pose the two things placed together – the peacefulness of the music and the tension of the scene- with a contrasting affect. This juxtaposition is placed with the purpose of making a statement.

The lighting in this a scene is dark and lowkey throughout. This adds to the macabre atmosphere and darkness of the scene, working in unison with the intense music. Coles face is shadowed on one side, this adds to the ominous feeling within this scene. I assume that the director implemented this low intensity, soft lighting to a certain eeriness to the scene.

As both actors are not mobile in this scene, facial expression in a big indicator to the audience as to what the characters are feeling. Malcolm (Bruce Willis) remains calm as Cole (Haley Joel Osment) reveals to him his secret, inquiring further- professional. Despite this, you can still tell that he is scared behind his mock psychologist tranquility. Scared that what Cole is telling him, is not a mental illness, but in

fact, true. Or he could be fearful for the severity of Coles mental health. Coles eyes shine with watery nightmares, he is kind of shaky and timid – petrified. His voice is quavering and breathy as he confesses his secret. All things purposely included by the director or the actor himself to indicate Coles fear and the trauma he’s been exposed to.

There were minimal props in the scene, the backdrop just being a hospital room. The plainness of the unadorned background puts more emphasis on the severity of what Cole is saying and perhaps making it easier for the audience to spot the other clues. In terms of space selection, both Cole and Malcolm fill the entire shot, again indicating the importance of this scene. The fact that it was set in a hospital room, with no other distractions (people) present, also makes the gravity of this scene evident to the audience.

This scene is revealing something consequential to the audience, but at this point in the narrative, little do they know that there is a much more sizeable secret to be disclosed.