

Lost In Translation: Distortion of the Romantic Comedy

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The Romantic Comedy

- “The romantic comedy is a genre of movie, usually mainstream, that follows a fairly consistent formula: boy meets girl, silly stuff happens, low-intensity comedy ensues, mild disasters averted, boy and girl get married and live happily ever after, the end.”
 - Urban Dictionary

Vital Elements in Rom Coms

- Moments of comedic relief
- Predictable plot: man and woman meet, conflicts arise, problems are resolved
- Happy ending: man and woman get together in the end



Implications of Romantic Comedies

- Rom Coms portray identity as fixed
- Characters are static
 - Typical man
 - Typical woman
- Endings provide cohesion



Elements of the Rom Com in *Lost In Translation*

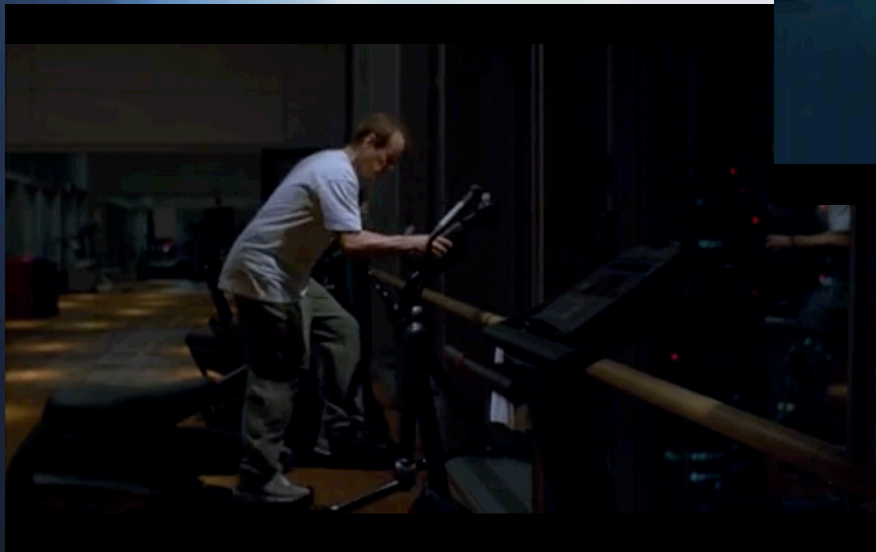
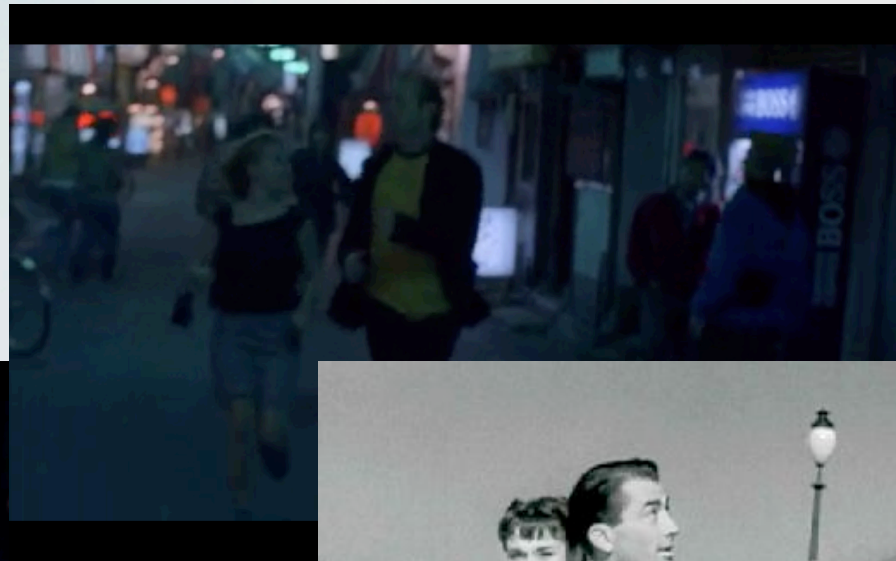
Narrative:

- Bob and Charlotte forge a bond
- Bob sleeps with the lounge singer
- The final “chase after the girl” scene
- The final kiss



Elements of Rom Com in *Lost In Translation*

- Light comedy
- Interaction with the city



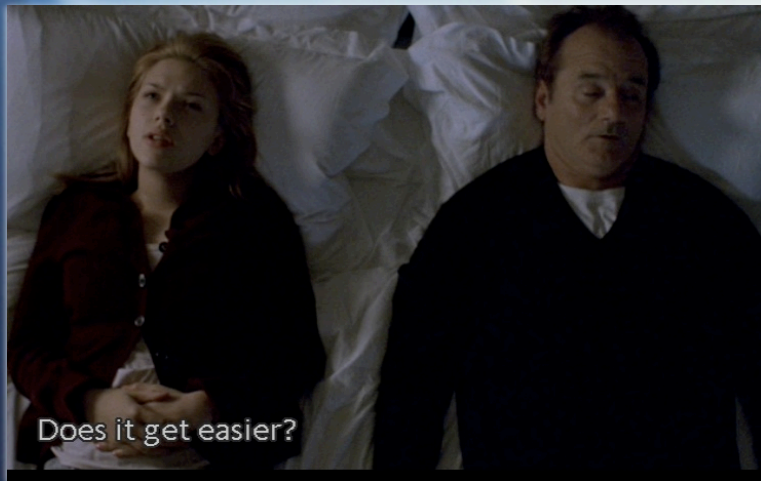
Main Claim

- Romantic comedies typically feed us cut-and-dry storylines with static characters that imply fixed identities. *Lost In Translation*, while adopting aspects of the romantic comedy, simultaneously contradicts the standardization of the narrative and characters. *Lost In Translation* adopts postmodernity in the romantic comedy setting, contributing to our perception of the characters' identities as dynamic and well-rounded.

Bedroom Scene Renewed

- Conventionally intimate setting: bedroom, alone, late at night, laying on the bed, but the frame undermines the setting by creating a space between the two with Charlotte on the left and Bob on the right
- Bob and Charlotte are parallels of one another both lost, both searching for something to fulfill a void in their lives.
- Emotional intimacy favored over sexual intimacy
- Deeper personal questions raised in the dialogue—Lost in Translation asks the characters Bob and Charlotte to examine their own lives. Charlotte asks “Does it get any easier?”

Physical Separation



The Touch



Charlotte and Bob meet in the middle with her foot and his hand—symbolically consummating their desire for an emotional bond

Touch

- Symbolizes unity; a reassurance not alone in this identity crisis
- Eroticism “substitute for the individual isolated discontinuity [with] a feeling of continuity”—*Wendy Haslem*
- Audience’s previous knowledge of romantic comedies is challenged. They’re asked to look at another type of intimacy that usually isn’t favored in romantic comedies



Script Elements

Typically there is a clear resolution of conflict ending in the affirmation of love between the two main characters.

Lost in Translation offers a final conversation that is inaudible to the audience, preventing clear resolution of the relationship.

Original Screenplay

BOB

Why are you crying?

CHARLOTTE

(sincere)

I'll miss you.

He kisses her, hugs her good-bye.

BOB

I know, I'm going to miss you, too.

He holds her close.

Screenplay Cont.

CUT TO:

Charlotte walks with the crowd as they go on their way.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

Back in the Presidential, alone, Bob leans against the little doily. They drive off.

He looks out the window, Bob's happy he's going home, he's happy he came to Tokyo.

Bob's P.O.V.- Tokyo goes past his window.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END

Clarity versus Ambiguity

Why make the change from hearing the conversation to muting it?

What postmodern elements does this decision incorporate?





Conclusion

Whether it is using a subtle touch in a normally sexually charged bedroom scene or employing ambiguous dialogue for the final meeting of the couple, *Lost in Translation* incorporates postmodern elements in order to create more well-rounded characters in a narrative no longer focused solely on a romantic relationship and consequently alters the typical genre of romantic comedy.

The background of the slide is an abstract composition of soft, flowing blue and white tones. Several bright, diagonal light streaks or lens flare effects cut across the frame, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and professional.

Questions?