Mid Stage 5 English student work sample – Grade B

The Shrek film, ‘Shrek’, is a fairytale which defies all fairytales. Despite the numerous conventions it has broken, this film also possesses a very powerful theme: beauty comes from within.

The prelude begins with a shot of serene meadow, accompanied by a page-flipping storybook opening for a bit lengthy to receive. About a beautiful princess trapped in a dragon-guarded castle. Our first impression to this film will most likely be a fairytale, but this perception is muted as the page being read in turn from the book and used as toilet paper. Then the soft, calm instrumental ballad, the pop-rocky music kicks in, and we are given a rather gruesome insight to Shrek – the anti-hero of the film.

Shrek obviously isn’t a bloodthirsty, battle-hungry war ogre like us stereotype. His pleasant brown skin, close physique, humorous personality and growing Scottish accent portray this particular ogre in a non-threatening type of way. But Shrek is not the only one who betrayed his race, his loudmouth sidekick – Donkey – adopts the traits of a dog, which is visible in his personality and the wagging of his tail.

Then there is the usual bad guy, which in this case is the powerful but not quite King of the kingdom, Lord Farquaad. In this new film his intention is quite clear, he wants to be King of Duloc and rule a perfect, unpolluted, unspoiled, ‘creative’ – free kingdom. In order to do this he becomes the captor of many fairytale creatures we know and love, such as the three little pigs, pumochio and many more. He is the evil Lord Farquaad banishes these fairytale creatures into the swamp – which coincidentally happened to be Shrek’s domain.

This results in the outraged Shrek setting out on a journey with his wailing sidekick, Donkey, to pursue Lord Farquaad and regain his beloved swamp.

The costumes in this film indicate “Shrek” is set in the age of kings, kingdoms and castles. Peasants keeping poor, ragged clothes while Knights retain their noble appearance with their shining silver armour. Special effects and sound effects are the whole movie, but it is within the characters’ facial expressions and synchronized voice to mouth movements it truly excels. Music is also wonderfully composed; emphasis in the cast can be felt as it plays while Shrek is leaving dinner alone, and prose can be sensed as Lord Farquaad struts towards the torture room to the chanting of the loyal, proud, noble organ. This film definitely knew what music to play and more importantly, when to play it. Camera angles are exact and just about perfect for every scene, for example, a long shot has been taken in the scene where Shrek comes out of his house to realise it has been dominated by fairytale creatures, a long shot has been taken to show the vastness and diversity of fairytale creatures.

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Jordan has used a thorough knowledge of film techniques to analyse elements of a film. Techniques have been identified but the analysis is simplistic at times. Techniques and plot have been combined and a range of views and generalisations have been presented. A confident personal style is evident with a clear use of language that engages the audience.

Jordan’s response demonstrates characteristics of work typically produced by a student performing at a grade B standard midway through Stage 5.