

ENGLISH STANDARD

In what ways are people and their experiences brought to life by the distinctively visual?

The distinctively visual is a technique used by composers to bring people and their experiences to life through evocative imagery. Through Peter Goldsworthy's Bildungsroman "Maestro," the adolescent experiences of a young Paul Crabbe are detailed using the distinctively visual, such as those of a growth into adulthood, the suffering from war and a yearning for the truth. Furthermore, these three experiences are echoed in the film "The Freedom Writers," directed by Richard LaGravenese.

Firstly, composers use the distinctively visual to highlight an individual's growth into adulthood. In the Bildungsroman "Maestro," Paul Crabbe is initially presented as a naive teenager who has always remained blissfully unaware of the world around him, though eventually embraces an attraction towards one of the girls in his class. An evocative image of developing sexual desire is used in, "The warm afternoon light streamed through the western windows, diffracting slowly through the edges of that hair," to demonstrate an immature wandering through a series of "haloed visions" which ultimately shows the purely lustful nature of Paul's first mature age attraction. Though, in "The Freedom Writers," a growth into adulthood is seen through the radical changing of an individual's perspective on life. For instance, the distinguishing close up shot of an emotional Marcus combined with the repeated use of the first person pronoun in, "I'd like her to see me graduate... I'd like to reach eighteen" emphasises the otherwise unforeseen belief that the capacity for change... is within anyone's reach, and the infinite nature of the achievement of dreams. This is how composers use the distinctively visual to present peoples' experiences of a growth into adulthood.

Secondly, the distinctively visual is used to bring to life the experiences of suffering from war. Throughout the entirety of "Maestro," Paul remains perplexed as to the stubborn and isolated nature of his so-called "Nazi" piano teacher, until he discovers Keller to be a former prisoner of war. An image of torment remains with Paul after having seen, "tattooed on the pale hairless skin... six faded blue digits," which clearly emphasises the suffering endured by the now-fragile Keller, and further draws sympathy from the character of Paul. In contrast, war is presented in "The Freedom Writers" as something experienced from a very young age. Witnessing a drive-by shooting, the close up shot of Eva's face visually supports her narration: "I was waiting for my father. And I saw the war for the first time," reinforcing the sheer terror of the street war on a young girl and the violent depiction of her father's arrest with chaotic screaming, foregrounds the point that race determines an individual's position of power in conflict. As such, the distinctively visual is used by composers to illustrate the nature of war and its impacts.

Finally, an individual's constant yearning for the truth is brought to life by a composer's use of the distinctively visual. Throughout the Bildungsroman "Maestro," Paul Crabbe holds a never-ending search for uncovering the events of his beloved maestro's life. An imagery of intimacy is used in the arrangement of furniture in Paul's final consultation with Keller before leaving for Melbourne, whereby "He was sitting in an armchair when I entered – facing a second armchair," with this visual display emphasising Keller's final urge to impart his knowledge and wisdom in a way which is mutually recognised by Paul. In contrast, distinctive imagery in "The Freedom Writers" is used to emphasise the strength of character required to right wrongs and be truthful for the better. The long shot displaying images of Eva's family against the innocent accused presents the magnitude of the decision Eva has made by admitting "Paco did it" in ignoring set values of her family in favour of what is morally correct. Thus, peoples' yearnings for the truth are brought to life by a composer's use of the distinctively visual.

In summary, the distinctively visual is used by composers to enliven individuals' experiences of development into adulthood, wartime suffering and the constant search for the truth. This is

evidenced through distinctive representations of Paul Crabbe and Herr Keller in Peter Goldsworthy's "Maestro," in their fragile relationship. Furthermore, Richard LaGravenese's use of the distinctively visual in "The Freedom Writers" emphasises the various ordeals faced by the developing adolescent characters of Eva and Marcus. These ways demonstrate how people and their experiences are detailed through unique images.