

Class 7 : Stories

B. Stories on Screen

1. Main title 3 (*The One that Got Away*)

I know I included films in last week's class, but then I was looking at the performances of specific actors and in short clips. This time, I want to look the the work of the director in telling a story, and everything I show will be under five minutes, and therefore complete. Though I admit I don't quite understand the ending of the first one, a music video directed by **Floria Sigismondi** and featuring **Katy Perry** (in *both* female roles), entitled *The One That Got Away*. Having now looked at a lot of other VEMO videos, I see that the preview panels that come on just before the end are a feature of the channel. But most end the music with an obvious cadence, so I suppose the abrupt cut-off here is fully intentional.

I gave you the lyrics as a handout; I don't want to confuse the video by adding subtitles. It strikes me, though, that two things are going on in music videos like this. One is illustrating the situation described in the song itself. The other is an often-separate drama that has a separate life around it, enclosing it, but not a literal representation of what is sung. In both the music videos I shall show today, this enclosing drama is remarkably coherent, a story on its own with a beginning, middle, and end (though not necessarily in that order). Both, though, involve **double time-frames**: present and distant past. As we watch them, I'd like you to think about that story: what is going on in each time-frame, what is the director's intent, and how well does it marry with the song?

2. *Katy Perry: The One That Got Away* (Floria Sigismondi, 2011)

3. — still from the above

So what was that about? This kind of thing is pretty new to me; my knowledge does not extend much beyond classical music. So I'm happy to explore—but don't look to me for definitive answers.

4. *The Killers*

Here is another, *Dustland Fairytale*, by a band called **The Killers**. It also has two time-frames, intercut with shots of the band performing, or its lead singer **Brandon Flowers**, who also wrote the song. The director is **Bruce Mandler**.

5. *The Killers: Dustland Fairytale* (Bruce Mandler, 2009)

6. — still from the above

How does that compare with *The One that Got Away*? Brandon Flowers said that he wrote the song in order to better understand his father; I have no idea whether the killing and so forth are true. It strikes me that this kind of storytelling is pretty sophisticated, but I suspect that the target audience can handle it easily, because many music videos are just montages of images, so a loose structure is the norm.

7. Questions on short films 1

I have two more short films to show, if there is time. Both are much simpler in structure; both have only two main characters; neither involves the performance of a song. I can probably show them back to back, so that we can compare them. Similar questions: What is the time-frame of each? What kinds of communication do we get between the two characters? What are the events and/or twist in each story? How does each director handle the camera? And how would you summarize his or her intent? The first is called *Standby*, made in 2017 by British director **Charlotte Regan** while still in film school. The actors are **Andrew Paul** and **Alexa Morden**.

8. Charlotte Regan: *Standby* (2017)

9. Questions on short films 2

The second film, *Impasse* (2009), is by a Dutch director **Bram Schouw**, and seems to be taking place in Holland. His actors are **Mutalini Nademi** and **Sieger Sloot**. Same questions: time-frame, communication, camera, events/twist, and intent?

10. Bram Schouw: *Impasse* (2009)

11. Questions on short films 3