

**PLEASANTVILLE: AN EXISTENTIAL COMMUNICATION
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ABSTRACT

In this article the American film Pleasantville, directed by Gary Ross, is analysed from an existential communication perspective. The concepts of authentic and inauthentic modes of existence are highlighted in the critique and the value of dialogue emphasised. The fairy tale film reflects the dual opposites of a Pleasantville ideal where the social ideal is scripted and manipulated and a Pleasantville reality in which individuals communicate authentically out of individual choice. In the end, freedom of choice and authentic communication prevail.

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INTRODUCTION

The film *Pleasantville* is all about existing: people existing in communication. In this vein communication is regarded as a mode of existence, an ontological concept of a person's existence. Communication qualifies our existence, it tells something of our way of being. Hence, when communication is regarded as a mode of existence, it will follow that the way in which a person exists with others will be governed by the nature and quality of his or her communication (cf. De Wet 1987; Van Schoor 1979). From an existential perspective (cf. MacQuarrie 1980) there are two principal modes of communication: a predominantly authentic or a predominantly inauthentic one.

In authentic communication *inter alia*:

- Both communicator and recipient strive towards self-actualisation by actively participating (being involved) in communication on an equal subjective footing.
- There is mutual respect, spontaneity and an awareness of the other as an individual.
- The participants in communication promote each other's existence in the full sense: a person is allowed to stand out as human, in freedom and responsibility. In authentic communication it is implied that there is always the possibility of a person constituting him or herself in more than one way, that he or she is free to choose how to express him or herself and that each one's choice is each one's responsibility.
- Message transmission is ethical in the sense that it is truly expressive of each participant's inwardness.
- Mutual understanding is emphasised, an understanding which does not depend on the exclusion of differences, but on recognition of them.

Inauthentic communication, on the other hand, is characterised by manipulation, by a distorted communicative relationship between the communicator and recipient. The "relationship" is distorted in the following ways, among others:

- The communicator and recipient do not involve their selves in the communication process.

- The communicator plays a dominating and manipulatory role.
- Self-expression is denied to the recipient and hence self-actualisation becomes impossible.
- The communicator attempts to create 'uniformity of thought in recipients by imposing directives that stifle the free expression of ideas and various possibilities of doing.
- The recipient allows him or herself to be experienced and used by the communicator.

Inherent in the brief conceptualisation of communication as a mode of existence is the view that dialogue is the ideal-typical mode of existence. Note that this "dialogue" is an existential dialogue and that it can never be regarded as having been completed. The dialogue is a dynamic event of becoming. By means of a perpetual reconsideration and re-interpretation of circumstances, one continuously renews the meaning one attaches to one's existence.

However in life people are continuously moving to and fro between authentic and inauthentic communication as modes of existence. After all, a person is free; he or she has the freedom and responsibility to choose which mode of existence he or she wants to adopt predominantly at a given time (cf. Oberholzer 1975).

It is within this brief communicological framework, then, that the critique of *Pleasantville* is to unfold.

PLEASANTVILLE: WHERE RIGHT IS BLACK AND WHITE

Pleasantville is a satire, a fantasy, and a visual marvel. It spins a fable of fraternal twins - David and Jennifer - from a dysfunctional 1990s family who are strangers in town after the divorce of their parents. Both are, from all appearances, fairly miserable.

The film title refers to a 1950s television series in black and white, packed with wholesome family values, destined for endless reruns and where "pleasant" is the operative word. *Pleasantville* is a world where father knows best, where mother cooks dinner, and where small missteps by sister and brother are treated with stern-but-kind lectures. It is a realm where everyone is "nice" to one another, where neighbours greet each other with a kind word, and where there is never any sign of lingering ill-will. Obviously, this is not a real place, nor was it ever, but with the help of a TV repairman, David and Jennifer inadvertently cast themselves into this TV show.

The film explores the interplay between the full-colour "real world" that David and Jennifer inhabit and the black-and-white "TV land" of their *Pleasantville* counterparts: Bud and Mary-Sue. Through intelligent exploration of the reverse, i.e. depicting the unpleasant, poignant and inevitable consequences of David and Jennifer's interactions with the good folk of *Pleasantville*, the film comments incisively on the different modes of existence that people may follow. To drive the point a bit deeper, the film uses its bubble-gum guise of popular entertainment to make its point intelligently and aesthetically, with enough subtlety and complexity to keep the elitists chewing for a while...

Pleasantville is also about the importance of individual freedom - a contemporary version of "Alice in Wonderland". David and Jennifer represent diametrical opposites on the scale of moral and ethical values.

David Wagner is a 1990s kid with a 1950s addiction. Immersed in an era characterised by a breakdown in traditional family values, he longs for the pleasant ideal depicted in black and white on his favourite TV series. He is hooked on reruns of the classic television show (*Pleasantville*) set in a simple place where everyone is swell and perky, "confrontation" is a dirty word and life is pleasingly pleasant. Addicted to this utopian world, David immerses himself in *Pleasantville* as an innocent escape from the trouble-plagued real world he must share with his ultra-hip, totally popular twin sister: Jennifer. Jennifer, on the other hand, has no such aspirations, and her teenage actions are consistent with the contemporary "breakdown" in moral and ethical values. She represents what we accept as "reality".

When David and Jennifer enter this rarefied, scripted world of their 1950s alter egos, they find themselves in the perfect nuclear family, destined to follow their scripts to adulthood in *Pleasantville* - where they will be replicas of their parents and raise children that are replicas of them. Trapped in a radically different dimension of sight and sound, David and Jennifer find themselves cast as members of the TV family, the Parkers. David has become "Bud", Jennifer has been transformed into "Mary-Sue", and they are surrounded by the black and white suburbia that once kept David glued to the television for hours.

It does not take long to discover that in the black-and-white world of 1950s television it never rains, profanity is never spoken, sex is taboo,

there are no toilets, and words like "swell", "gee- whiz", and "keen" are part of the regular vocabulary. There are also no debt, no mechanical flaws, no change and no-diversity when you're living in a black and white paradise where everything is always pleasant. David knows the importance of following the script, and tries to coach Jennifer in the *Pleasantville* values so that her behaviour does not have any impact on the town's script, which unfolds with predictable clockwork perfection.

However, Jennifer's deliberate departure from the script – when Mary-Sue takes Skip to Lover's Lane – and David's accidental departures, set in motion a process of change that escalates inexorably with dramatic consequences. Jennifer's actions represent *Pleasantville's* initiation into carnal knowledge and a departure from a state of sexual innocence for young and old alike. The consequences are ultimately liberating, with the men and women of *Pleasantville* going on to make sexual choices based on a mature assessment of their own sexuality. They step out of their scripted roles to explore possibilities for the first time. All the repressed desires of life in the 1950s begin to boil up through the people of *Pleasantville*, changing their lives in strange and wonderful ways that none of them had even dared to dream of, until two kids visited them from the real world.

From an existential philosophical point of view, this is the mark of a predominant authentic mode of existence: one based on choice and an appreciation of the consequences of actions. However, conflict does follow, as an externally imposed and rigidly adhered to value system of black and white is increasingly challenged by an internally explored and constructed set of values that take into account the full colour spectrum of choices. David's accidental departures from the script add other dimensions of knowledge to the issue of choice and responsibility, complementing the induction into carnal knowledge by Jennifer. Knowledge is both the curse and blessing of humankind, and represents a baptism that marks the end of ignorance and innocence.

The changes are also marked by confusion, turmoil, and unhappiness and proceed until no one knows "what happens next". Roads lead out of *Pleasantville* to places that never existed before. Blank books are filled with stories of other times and places. There are choices, options and possibilities. As painful as this may be, it is the ultimate human condition to embrace and rise above the contradictions of *Pleasantville* and *Unpleasantville*. Living only in *Pleasantville* adds up to not living at all.

It is not only the townsfolk of "TV land" who experience change: David's shunning of the "real" world values for the ideal ones of *Pleasantville* undergoes a transformation through his experience of the ideal. His "Bud" character at the end of the film has bloomed to incorporate both in a balance that allows him, as David, to continue living the complexity of an internalised value system. Jennifer opts to stay in *Pleasantville*, where her communicative values, once based on "real" social decay, have been tempered by the ideal ones of *Pleasantville* to create a dual (and whole) character incorporating both the slut Jennifer and the goody-two-shoes Mary-Sue.

The end result for all characters involved is that they have been liberated from behaviours driven by externally imposed communicative actions and value systems that may deny individual choice. Once the characters move from a state of ignorance or innocence to knowledge, they experience an expansion of possibilities, options, roads and variables. While this increases the measure of uncertainty – "what happens now?" – and therefore pain or confusion, the characters can exercise their choices out of free will, and author their own scripts according to their own value systems and mode of existence.

Those who follow the black and white value system that has been scripted for them will necessarily rally against those who are exploring the full spectrum of options that will lead them to a full-colour view of life scripted according to their own existential choices. Harmony is achieved only once this transition is over, and everyone can have a "good day" that is based, once again, on an appreciation of an existential good that has been cultivated from the inside rather than imposed from without.

The *Pleasantville* of the TV series, after the visit by David and Jennifer, represents authentic existence. The move from an externally sanctioned idea of communal good is marked by battle and conflict when individuals incorporate previously hidden knowledge into choices for their own good. The individual good locks horns with the communal good and acts in solitary isolation against the norm. If one accepts that every individual has within them an *a priori* knowledge of "good" then, as shown by the film *Pleasantville*, the final result is a new communal good that exists by virtue of every individual's struggle with their own idea of good. The two inevitably fall in step with one another to reflect a mature society where the communal good is the individual good writ large.

David's character shows the journey from one predominant mode of existence to the other. His "real world" character lives in a society involved in a mid-*Pleasantville* transitional struggle between values, in which he sides with the ideal, scripted values of black and white. For him, the apparent breakdown in communicative values is unpleasant. When he finds himself in the ideal, pre-change *Pleasantville*, his role as an agent of change is reluctant, yet "Bud" sees the entire process through until it bears fruit, and the previously scripted ideal of good is now an authentic one in which everyone participates on an equal subjective footing. His return, as David, to the "real world" reflects this transformation and his adherence to an external ideal is now an internal one that allows him to appreciate the "good" in the "real world" he returns to. He now inhabits *Pleasantville* in the "real world".

Jennifer's journey reflects a similar transformation, in the opposite direction. Her "real world" communicative values reflect an adolescent out of control, and these are tempered by exposure to the soda pop and apple-pie ideals and behaviours of Mary-Sue. The meeting place represents a more thoughtful and mature passage to womanhood. As Mary-Sue starts to make choices that deviate from the norm, for example taking Skip to Lovers' Lane, it also represents the start of the town's initiation into a more carnal and dangerous exploration of teenage sexuality. The new choices grow out of Jennifer's "slutty" inclinations, which smoulder just beneath the surface. The two extremes of chaste denial and wholesale self indulgence meet to create a more rounded character with a healthier sexuality that is incorporated into the whole, and no longer acted out by their previously deterministic "chaste" or "slut" cardboard personae. Mary-Sue reading a book by D. H. Lawrence represents this tempering process: too wild for the one and too intellectual and tame for the other; yet a new and appropriate choice for the combination character.

Reflecting the mirror opposite of David's choice to go back to the real world, Jennifer chooses to stay in TV town. Both worlds represent a freely chosen and more realistic *Pleasantville* to each of the transformed characters. And in so doing, both have made a choice that contradicts their pre-transformation characters, revealing the unexpected yet life-changing power of choices that are freely exercised in accordance with a knowledge of both sides of the value coin.

CONCLUSION

Pleasantville is a thought-provoking and thoroughly entertaining tour de force. It is a magical, modern-day fairy tale that suggests that life in an alternate reality is not necessarily better, just different. It invites us to explore who we are in communication, and it trumpets the view that individuals can make a difference.

Pleasantville is also about the often falseness of family values and the need of the individual to break through society's shield of conformity and to exist with others in dialogue.

The film addresses the limits of conservatism, the hypocrisy of hiding your head, the fascism of fear. It conjures up the most intense action that we can be involved in, namely change, because as things change they can never be repeated in exactly the same circumstance – whether in time or place.

The film world and the TV series world have the same name to reflect the dual opposites of a *Pleasantville* ideal where the social ideal is scripted and manipulated and a *Pleasantville* reality in which individuals communicate authentically out of individual choice. In the end, freedom of choice and authentic communication prevail.

STORY LINE

The story starts in present time with David and Jennifer at school. A collage of different classroom situations are introduced to the viewers through the use of edited lectures on history, geography, economics and health issues, all depicting the negative state of current affairs. The film cuts to the black and white *Pleasantville* series focusing on only positive aspects of life.

Jennifer plays the role of the school slut: chewing gum, smoking and talking about sex. David is a *Pleasantville* expert, knowing the words of all the episodes by heart and secretly longing for the pleasant lifestyle. His whole world revolves around the marathon that takes place that weekend, with the prize to be won as a bonus. Jennifer's interest lies in the concert on M-TV, Malls, and the possibility of sex with the school hunk.

David and Jennifer are the twin children of a broken marriage. They live with a mother who is never around. At 18h30 on the Friday evening in the film, the TV-remote is a reason for an argument. During an argument over control of the remote, it breaks and enters the peculiar TV-repairman. The use of lighting effects underlines that the

situation is about to change. The TV-repairman makes statements such as "The TV out is almost like losing a friend". He tests David's knowledge of *Pleasantville* and is very pleased with the results. The mysterious television repairman gives David a "special" remote control (with "more oomph") for the set. The repairman exists and as David is settling down to watch a 24-hour marathon of his favourite show, *Pleasantville*, he and his sister struggle over the remote. In the background, the activity is duplicated in the *Pleasantville* setting, currently on TV.

The next moment life takes a bizarre twist when David and Jennifer are no longer in their home. In fact, they are no longer in colour, but in *Pleasantville* in the roles of Bud and Mary-Sue Parker. They have entered the black-and-white world of television in the 1950s and the only link with their other life is the TV-repairman, now on TV. The gateway the two teens entered appears to be one-way. The film makes use of music to indicate the new setting.

David is thrilled with the change in events. After all, *Pleasantville* is his favourite program. Jennifer, on the other hand, is horrified ("I'm pasty!" she screams upon seeing her grey complexion). She wants to go back immediately. She does not like the idea of having a perfect Dad in George and a perfect Mom in Betty.

The next scene is breakfast and (the two new) Bud and Mary-Sue are supposed to be on their way to school. Breakfast is a new experience. Jennifer (now Mary-Sue) has no knowledge of *Pleasantville* and has to follow David (now Bud), the *Pleasantville* expert. Jennifer wants no part of this world, until she gets an eyeful of basketball team captain Skip Martin, who is interested in Mary-Sue.

It does not take long to discover that there is no news, weather or sports when you are living in a black and white paradise where everything is always pleasant. At school the difference between the two worlds is emphasised by again making use of classroom situations. Trapped in a grey-scale Universe, David realises that all the episodes he has memorised are this place's true life. He is also sharp enough to realise that his and Jennifer's presence in *Pleasantville* can forever alter reality and keep them from getting home.

To Mary-Sue's surprise, in *Pleasantville* all lessons revolve around the town. Bud learns other facts: the high school basketball team always wins, everyone is full of smiles and every ball goes through the hoop (the filmmakers use music to make a statement about the feeling

of well-being). Nobody ever questions why things are so perfect. Initially, David revels in the Prozac-like haze that has gripped *Pleasantville*, but soon realises the implications of changing the history of the TV-series, when for the first time after a different response to a scene he knows well, the basketball does not go through the hoop.

Bud and Mary-Sue discovers that all the books have no words. Bud warns Mary-Sue to play along with the story, since any changes would alter the *Pleasantville* inhabitants' existence.

When Mary-Sue dresses to go on a date with Skip that evening, Bud informs her and the viewer that the *Pleasantville* people have no knowledge of sex. Bud arrives late at work. This unfamiliar action explains to the viewer that everything has a specific order in *Pleasantville*. The diner's owner, Bill Johnston, is unaccustomed to Bud not being there and cannot carry on with his duties, as he needs Bud to act before he can react.

At this stage of the film, *Pleasantville*, an unreal place where nothing "real" in the sense of bodily function happens. Mary-Sue discovers that there are for example no toilets as nobody on the show ever goes to the toilet. To Bud's horror, Mary-Sue breaks from the order of the show ("*Pleasantville*") by taking Skip to Lover's Lane. Up to now, good girls did not hold hands with their steady until they were properly "pinned". Guys never experienced the standard biological reaction triggered by a pony-tailed blonde in a poodle skirt and a too tight sweater. Moreover, Mary Sue, unlike the sitcom script, is no longer a good girl. The word "pin" gets a new meaning when Jennifer, with her 1990s-like attitude in this unsuspecting era of blandness, introduces sex to *Pleasantville*.

Bill Johnston arrives at the Parker's house informing Bud that as he (Bud) left the shop early, he (Bill) had to do everything by himself. In addition, he did not do it in the same order as usual.

The film cuts back to Skip, totally flustered, noticing colour – a red rose - for the first time. This introduction of colour to the black and white setting forces the viewer to think: when does colour occur?

The moment Skip starts telling everyone about his experience, Bud notices how things start changing. Mary-Sue keeps on changing the story line by introducing the slang word "cool" to her friends. Bud is unhappy about the situation and realises the implications when a girl

nearby blows a pink chewing gum bubble. Perfection begins slipping away as colours start to dot the black-and-white vistas. Jealousy, anger, and passion appear. The stale utopia of family values begins evolving.

The next instant, everyone is having sex. Bud tries desperately to get hold of the TV-repairman, but to no avail. As an indication of the change from the usual ways, the local basketball team loses a game for the first time ever. Double beds are displayed in shop windows for the first time. A worried mother takes her child to the doctor, as her tongue suddenly has a colour. Then a car has colour and then the jukebox has colour. Behaviour changes occur continually. More colour appears.

In the diner, as in all other places in *Pleasantville*, things use to be in a specific order. Everybody always ordered cheeseburgers and cherry cokes. Bill confesses to Bud that he likes "different". He talks about Christmas and that he looks forward to it the whole year as it is the one time that he gets to paint.

In the barbershop the men discuss the basketball game and the Mayor refers to the fact that "winning them all" use to mean they won all their ball games. Something has changed. The women play a card game and Betty's card hand has real colour in it – red hearts.

Mary-Sue and Betty are washing dishes. The question "what is sex?" is asked to Mary-Sue. She elaborates. The masturbation bath scene takes place. George turning about in bed, and the filmmaker's choice of music, indicate that the event is out of the normal routine. Colour appears in the bathroom as Betty, the blank-faced housewife goes through life-altering change as she quite literally burns up the screen with her self-discovery. A tree starts burning in the garden - the first fire in *Pleasantville*. Bud alerts the fire brigade who has no knowledge of fires; they usually only rescue cats. The fact that Bud demonstrates to the firemen how to distinguish the fire makes him a hero and he receives the "Chamber of Commerce" medallion.

After the ceremony Margaret arrives, offering Bud some cookies. Knowing the story line, Bud insists that the cookies are for Whitey. Margaret refuses point blank – she baked the cookies for Bud. He realises that the *Pleasantville* history is still changing.

Music is again used by the filmmaker, with images of young people kissing – most of them in colour. In the diner Bud is asked how he

knew about fire. He has to explain about a life outside *Pleasantville* where the roads keep on going. As it turns out, the books are no longer blank: pages started to fill in. Bud completes the story of *Huckleberry Finn*, as Mary-Sue only knew part of it and thus the story only appeared partly. The books are in colour. Bud knows many stories and the library becomes very popular. Parents notice more and more colour, as visually black and white simplicity becomes a multicoloured panorama. Elements of the town, flowers, cars and people burst into colour. The music in the jukebox at the soda shop changes to rock and roll. Teens start behaving in other, non-sexual ways.

The mayor, an influential resident who opposes all change, visits George regarding the changes in town. He refers to "Bill Muller (who wants a big bed" and "Bill Anderson's boy (who) quit his job at the supermarket". (Keep in mind that in the television shows, circa 1958, when this story takes place parents slept apart, in twin beds; no one went to the bathroom; dad went to work in a suit and expected supper on the table when he returned at six o'clock; mom wore pearls and high heels while spending her day cooking and cleaning. Even "coloured" did not mean African-Americans, who for all intents and purposes did not exist.)

The mayor asks George, a respected resident, to join the *Pleasantville* "Chamber of Commerce" as they need to stand together. George calls Betty (usually in the kitchen) to get some of her pineapple kebabs, but Betty does not answer and is apparently not in the kitchen.

Bud enters, says he will get Betty. Music is used to create a special vibe as Betty turns to Bud and he realises that her face has colour in it. Betty is frightened and Bud covers the colour with grey make-up. This situation leads the viewer to think that colour has something to do with sexuality?

At work Bud gives Bill an art book – full of colour, sensuality and sexuality. This is one of the subplots in the film when Bill discovers his hidden love for art. Bud asks Margaret out. Now the TV repairman appears, concerned about the change in reruns of the *Pleasantville* episodes. Bud switches the TV off.

Mary-Sue is reading D. H. Lawrence – an action totally out of character for Jennifer, not necessarily for Mary-Sue. She comments to Bud that she has had more sex than anyone else, and still she stays in "pasty" - grey scales.

Bud and Margaret in Lover's Lane. The blossoms are in colour. Again music is used to set the mood. Lover's Lane is now in colour. Betty at the diner notices the painting on the window. She looks through the art book with Bill (enters music) and cries. The tears remove her make-up. They discover each other.

Very briefly: Mary-Sue keeps on reading, puts on the reading glasses. Bud and Margaret, still in black and white, shares an apple. George arrives home, finds the gate open, a situation that he is unaccustomed with. The house is dark. "Honey I am home". No response. George is lost and frightened. Lightning strikes for the first time in *Pleasantville*. Meanwhile, Bill begins to paint Betty. It starts raining. People are frightened at first and then happy. George cannot find any food at home – keeps on repeating, "where is my dinner". There is no music to soothe the viewer, only the rain.

George arrives at the bowling alley totally distraught. They talk about the "real" rain. The mayor uses the phrase "oh my God" – for the first time in *Pleasantville*. George explains the situation: no wife, no lights, and no dinner. The men feel safe in the bowling alley. They stand together.

Betty stays over with Bill and wakes up in colour. Everything, including themselves, the diner, and the food has turned from black and white to colour. Mary-Sue wakes up – in colour - and finds the entire room in colour. Everyone in Lover's Lane wakes up in colour, including Margaret, but not Bud.

A town meeting is announced as the elders, led by Mayor "Big Bob", fight back against the changes that are corrupting their traditional values. George talks to Betty. She explains that she cannot go to the meeting as she is in colour and he is still black and white. George, a deadpan "Father Knows Best" (frightened by the gradual transformation of his town) says: "It will go away". She responds: "I don't want it to go away". She leaves him.

Bud gives Margaret an umbrella. Black and white boys arrive, referring to Margaret as Bud's "coloured girlfriend". The town meeting takes place. Betty has gone to Bill. There is more room for a parable about racism when the "No coloureds allowed" is displayed. A nude picture of Betty, in full colour, is in the diner's window. Townspeople start to see "red". The TV-repairman confronts Bud about eating the apple with Margaret (this scene reminds the viewer of the Adam and Eve story in the Bible). The TV-repairman wants to put everything back the way it was. Bud refuses.

In the street black and white boys harass Betty. Bud arrives and punches one of the guys. He changes colour. For the first time it is clear that change in behaviour of the specific individual is demonstrated by the change in colour. The mobs stone the diner and the group inside cleans the place up. At a town meeting a new code of conduct is accepted: Lover's Lane and the Public Library are to close, only certain types of music is allowed, no umbrella sales, no double beds, no colour paints, and in the high school curriculum only the non-changing information is to be taught.

The burning of books takes place. Bud and Bill paint a picture on a wall, summarising all the events: it tells the entire story of the change to colour. Music is used to strengthen the moment. Crowds gather. Bud and Bill go to jail. George visits Bud. He is unaccustomed to the new situation – he usually played bridge on Tuesdays, but there was no card game. They eat olives. One minute everything was fine, George asks: "What went wrong". Bud replies: "Nothing – people change". George says: "Can they change back?" Bud says: "It is more difficult".

Bud and Bill are charged in court. To prove his point, Bud addresses George and asks if he doesn't miss his wife? "Doesn't she look pretty? Don't you wish you could tell her that?" The moment George admits to this and thereby changes his attitude and behaviour, he changes colours. Bud confirms that the colour change cannot be stopped as behaviour change cannot be stopped. Bud tests this on the Major. He changes colour. Everyone realises what Bud is talking about and a total change in attitude and behaviour changes the entire town into colour.

There is a scene between Bud and Margaret, and then between Bud and Betty. Bud notices that the TV and Radio shop show visuals of places outside *Pleasantville*. The entire town structures changes.

Mary-Sue / Jennifer decides to stay in *Pleasantville* as she was tired of playing the slut-game and had no chance in her own world to go to college. Bud / David decides to go back to his own world. Bud and Margaret say their goodbyes and Betty arrives for a sad goodbye. Music is used to create the mood. Bud leaves *Pleasantville*. The TV repairman smiles.

David is back at home after only 1 hour of the *Pleasantville* Marathon with his *Pleasantville* sweater to remind him of the experience. Music is used for effect. He finds his own mom at home. The use of language

confirms that there are still value differences between the two worlds. Mom is crying and David says that there is “no right house and no right car”. He gently cleans the make-up off her face, listens to her unhappiness and states: “Life is not suppose to be anything”. She asks how he became so smart. He says: “I had a good day”. Again, reaction is demanded from the viewer.

The movie ends with a collage of Mary-Sue laughing and reading. Over to Betty and George: “What is going to happen now”. Cut to Betty and Bill: “What is going to happen now”. Nobody knows – music over the collage. Roll titles. The End.

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