Bottom Dwelling in a World of Melancholy

The removal of all belongings, physically halting life's day-to-day actions, there's a sense of disconnected re-establishment in the film *The Lobster*. Director Yorgos Lanthimos presents the audience with a dark romance story via a dystopian matchmaking operation. The main character David, played by Colin Farrell, portrays an individual conditioned with a superficial mentality worthy of a position in the jail-like love hotel. After his 12 year-long marriage, David becomes immersed in an isolated world of finding love based on shared characteristics with a suitor. By failing at this unorthodox orchestration of love, the hotel guests spend the remainder of their lives as animals of their choosing. The individuals checked into the hotel have a mere 45 days to find love. To make their stay far more ruthless, each of them gets sent to mercilessly hunt the escaped loners in the adjacent forest. Each capture allows each person to gain days for their stay. The amalgamation of slow-paced scenes, flavorless dialogue, and survival of the fittest mentality were equivalent to watching paint dry.

A thick leather belt is snaked through the loops of his dress pants by a young maid, accompanied by a singular handcuff. The physical limitation, promptly presented to David in his lonesome room, is just a taste of why two are better than one. The hotel manager is played by actress Olivia Coleman portraying the role of the heartless nark. She wields the power of total control over the guests. Her condescending manner subdues David into purposefully handicapping himself. He loses command of his life within hours.

Breakfast in the dining room reveals the emotionless characters David encounters. The underwhelming cinematography visually introduces the individuals, while a monotonous voice dictates information regarding the subjects. The voice is actress Rachel Weisz who later appears as another protagonist, the "Short-Sighted Woman." Her narrations of the story are simplistic and sound elementary. It was as though I accidentally clicked the real-time scene description button while watching Netflix, consequently subjecting the audience to unwanted dialogue filling the soundscape. Although, in conjunction with David's shallow dialogue, the vocal description provided a taste of third-person self-reflection at times. The second time David rides the bus towards the hunt, the narration felt just like *Shawshank Redemption*. In Shawshank, Ellis Boyd played by Morgan Freeman melodically explains the life of the main protagonist Andy Dufresne (Tim Robbins) before arriving at the prison. In contrast to Boyd, the Short-Sighted Woman states the subjective motives and feelings of David without revealing any context of her character. But what does this convey about him and his ability to convey his emotions?

It is more difficult to pretend that you do have feelings when you don't than to pretend that you don't have feelings when you do. David tends to match his mental state with those around him, disregarding his sense of self. To this effect, the audience doesn't even need to pay attention to the bland storyline. Each encounter with characters, both socially and sensually, is incredibly predictable and simply unenjoyable. David holds his golf clubs after returning from the course playing alone while simultaneously staring at a couple discussing their tennis match. He's yearning for a companion, what a shocker. The recurring display of David's emotionless

face gets old very quickly. Not to mention in each scene, I felt trapped in a constant loop of a dreary pale blue and grey color pallet.

The Lobster is sprinkled with beautiful establishing shots. The infrequent frames paint pictures of cloud-filled skies, and rolling green hills. Ultimately relieving the tension of the many heartless scenes. These quick moments proved to be a positive aspect of the film's sequencing. Lanthimos provides the audience with a feeling of direction and placement in the world, one of the few positives I noticed; conversely, in contrast to the claustrophobic dining room or tight quarters of David's room.

The idea of returning to civilization with your perfectly matched significant other is the ultimate end goal of *The Lobster*. The notion of how you do so, calculated by a hotel that closely resembles an insane asylum, is quite frankly a boring concept. However, as the film came to a close, the nod to such vicious realism proved to be one of the few moments I found myself wanting more.