

## Year 11 Advanced

### ***Class Dismissed: Malala's Story***

Adam B. Ellick

- The establishing shots show the remoteness of the area, and the Pakistani flag to establish the setting – Swat Valley, Pakistan.
- The documentary begins with a voice-over narration, establishing a sense of violence which is further supported by newsreel footage of violence on the streets.
- “In Swat, Pakistan, schools for girls are under assault by the Taliban.”
- Malala is introduced as she sits with her father, she is especially child-like and shy, and has big dreams for her future.
- There are many close up shots of Malala's face which provide a highly emotional portrait of a young girl in a world beyond her control.
- Scenes of Taliban violence on the Pakistani population are overtly graphic and disturbing. There is no sugar-coating, and it is very confronting imagery.
- Factual information is presented about the shutting down of girls' schools.
- Contrasting images of the natural beauty of the Swat Valley and the violence that is taking over the country.
- “Today this idyllic valley of peace is burning.” Followed by several rhetorical questions from the girls to ascertain blame and reach out for help.
- “Schools are not places of learning, but places of fear and violence.”
- There is a high emotional appeal in the words, “our dreams are shattered. And let me say that we are destroyed.”
- Contrast is shown through the emptiness of the streets and businesses, and the descriptions of what they once were.
- The absence of women is highlighted as a problem for business in Pakistan.
- “Citizens are voracious for news.” Highlights not only the Pakistani yearning for information, but also indicates bias in the composer's own purpose as a documentary maker.
- Factual information: “50,000 girls will lose their education.”
- Zia Yousafzai is shown equally as a man who runs a private school (business) and a loving father to Malala.
- As Zia speaks of his refusal to leave Swat Valley, there are repeated close up shots of Malala's face. This is a direct appeal to the sympathies of the audience.
- There is a distinct lack of communication with the outside world.
- Images of male and female children playing together is in such contrast to the sights and sounds of the world around them.
- The importance of education is highlighted throughout the documentary by Zia Yousafzai.
- Malala is shown as being highly emotional, switching between smiling and crying. Her face is the centre of many shots, the audience is drawn to her and are supposed to be following her story.
- An element of fear and anxiety is established as the filmmakers are forced to hide their cameras.

- Malala gives an explanation in her own words about the differences between Western school girls and school girls in Pakistan. She seeks the same rights as her Western counterparts.
- The audience is shown the trauma that is associated with bearing witness to the crimes and violence of the Taliban, specifically public executions and torture.
- The background noise of the footage in the school office has not been filtered out, and this adds emphasis to the fact that the setting is in the middle of a war zone.
- There is a certain sense of irony in the fact that Malala's father wants her to be a politician, so that she can be part of the change needed in Pakistan, but it is also a very dangerous ambition.
- As repeated shots of extremism and violence in the streets of Swat Valley are shown, the audience must question whether the big issue is really about an eleven year old girl's right to education.
- Factual information: More than 1 million people flee from Swat Valley. There is a tone of fear / chaos / anarchy.
- The separation of father figures and teachers from their families is highlighted as important for the men to be able to pursue more radical means of action. This is summed up by Zia's use of the "mother's milk" analogy.
- There is a definite contrast between Zia's story of isolation and the abject poverty of the refugee camps.
- Malala misses her schooling more than anything, her brothers yearn for their pet chickens, both of these actions highlight their childhood naivety.
- There are several identifying images of Taliban members. This adds to the feelings of guilt that Ellick expresses in the second documentary.
- The desperation of the situation is met with hopefulness and enthusiasm from Zia on their return to Swat, this is contrasted with Malala's uncertainty for her future safety.
- As direct threats are made to Zia, his fundamentalism is met with disappointment from his daughter. Despite this, Malala alters her future plans to be more in line with her father's wishes for her to be a politician.
- After three months of separation, the moment of return to "precious days" is a direct appeal to pathos.
- Malala meets with the U.S Ambassador to request help for her country, specifically in regards to education.
- While the military is still completing operations, and the Taliban still loose, Zia responds to their return to Swat as a victory, and something worth celebrating.
- This is contrasted by what they find when they return – The city is ruined and ghostlike – "without human beings. With no life."
- Malala becomes overwhelmed with emotion at returning home to find all of her books safe. Later, as she investigates the ruins of the school building, she expresses shame for her army as they are responsible for the destruction. This is quite naïve, and she is almost patronising in her expressions.
- "This is Pakistan. Taliban destroyed us."
- The closing shot of the documentary is Malala's face. She is identifiable, and recognisable, as she looks on at the continuing war in her country.
- Factual footnoting informs the viewer of the "paradise lost" that is Swat Valley.

## ***The Making of Malala Yousafzai: Story of a Girl Shot in Taliban Attack***

- This documentary was filmed after Malala had been shot, and in turn become famous as a spokesperson for the rights of girls in Pakistan, and other Taliban controlled nations.
- It opens with a visually older Malala, who is addressing the United Nations Assembly after she had recovered from being shot in the head by the Taliban.
- Headline newsreel footage is used to show how widespread her story had become, and how recognisable she is to the Western world.
- This documentary acts as Adam B. Ellick accepting some of the responsibility for his part in what happened to her.
- There is a repeat of the footage from the first documentary that shows her “ambitious” father stating his love for his daughter.
- Zia is described to be the most influential person in Malala’s life. Ellick emphasises the man of contrast that he was.
- Ellick explains his concerns about the dangers of filming the family in his initial documentary, and the repercussions that they may have faced.
- It becomes clear in this documentary, that Malala was used, to play a specific role in Zia’s revolutionary zeal, he is almost a puppet master in this regard.
- There is an explanation of the element of trust and respect that was established between filmmaker and subject – is this another case of the manipulations of Zia?
- The documentary serves as the capturing of the manipulation of a little girls ambitions in order to seek out approval from her father.
- Factual information: 50,000 Pakistani civilians killed in terrorist attacks since September 2001.
- The town centre of Swat Valley was known as “slaughter-square”, this highlights the danger of making the first documentary, although the fear was for Zia’s safety, not Malala’s.
- The established trust is further highlighted through Ellick’s introduction to Zia’s wife.
- After the initial documentary was filmed, the Pakistani media highlighted Malala as the “de-facto voice of Swat.” As her confidence grew, she began speaking out more in attack of the Taliban. Two years after the first documentary was made, she was shot in the head on her way home from school.
- The Taliban reasoned that the attack was due to Malala’s close links with Obama and the western world’s media. The Taliban insisted that they supported girls in education, so long as it was Islamic education.
- Factual information provided tells the audience that there are only 9 countries in the world that spend less on education than Pakistan.
- The second documentary finishes with footage of Malala’s impassioned speech to the U.N about the power of education to change the world.