

Get Out Themes: Racism and Horror Analysis

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Media Analysis Paper

“Get Out”, without exaggeration, can be called a sensational film, which won both critics and spectators and at the same time collected more than two hundred million with a modest budget of \$ 4 million. On the review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes, the tape has 99% positive reviews, but the main proof of popular love is four nominations for the Oscar. The fact that the “Get Out” is so popular with the Film Academy is a real achievement. First, Jordan Peel is just the fifth African American in history to receive the nomination for Best Director. Secondly, the horror movies at the Oscars are a little disliked – the title of “Best Film” went to the Strength of Half a Dozen Horrors for the entire existence of the award.

In the center of the plot, prospective photographer Chris Washington (known for the “Black Mirror” Daniel Kalui), is going on a weekend to the parents of the girl Rose (Ellison Williams). The person is predictably nervous: wealthy Armenids do not suspect that their daughter meets with an African American. The reception is rather awkward than unfriendly: Rose’s parents praise Obama, show off liberal views and sing praises to African-American athletes. Meanwhile, the presence of black maidens in the mansion causes genuine embarrassment, and the domestic workers themselves behave suspiciously: the gardener shows frank, causeless aggression while the house cleaner, for some reason, disconnects the boy’s phone.

“Get Out” is a full-length directorial debut by comedian-actor Jordan Peel, a mixture of black comedy, horror, and social drama. Peel himself wrote the script, and he calls inspiration “Shine” and “Jaws.” The influence of classical horror is felt already from the first minutes of the film, when the nameless character walks along the deserted street, straining to look back and pursued by someone’s car. Peel immediately deconstructs the classic plot move: contrary to our expectations, the alarming district is a prosperous white-populated suburb, and the victim of persecution is black.

Racism as Social Commentary

This is formally a horror film; it is rather an acutely social statement on the topic of racism that is relevant to the United States. No wonder, when “Get Out” was nominated for the Golden Globe as a comedy, Peel said that it would be more accurate to call it a documentary tape. In this case, you cannot perceive the picture as a banal manifesto that racism is bad. Here, we are talking more about why, allegedly reaching equality on paper, humanity repeatedly shows its lowest instincts. Western critics even noticed that the film explains how, after Obama’s presidency, the frank racist Trump could have come to the White House (Dines & Humez, 2014).

Conclusion

“Get Out” is a film that returns faith in horror as a tool of social criticism and reminds viewers that African-American films are not only comedies about rappers and ghettos.

Symbolism and Horror Conventions

In fact, the director’s manifesto is read on two levels: in the plot and in almost imperceptible but symbolically important details. Take at least the opening credits, in which the song “Sikiliza Kwa Wahenga” plays – in Swahili, it translates as “listen to your ancestors”. The song “Redbone” by Childish Gambino is no less indicative because the words say that you need to remain “woke” – sensitive to discrimination around. An accidentally knocked animal is another metaphor. The fact is that in post-slavery America, “black deers” were called unruly black men. It is no wonder that later, Father Rose reads out a monologue about the harmfulness of deer and stuffed around the house. By the way, the beast shot down on the road is voiced by Jordan Peel himself. The most obvious symbol – the cotton with which Chris tries to escape – is an ironic and sad allusion to America’s slavery past.

Not all this interferes with perceiving the film as a straightforward horror. The director works according to all the rules of the genre: he is not in a hurry with the culmination, slowly and unconstrained, forcing a suffocating atmosphere, and from time to time, dilutes the alarm with a pair of jokey jokes. Somewhere up to the middle of the tape, I want to ignore the red flags and hope that, in the end, everything will be fine. When Rose says that her parents are not racists, we want her to believe: Armitji do not look like Rednecks in tramp caps. This, perhaps, is the main lesson of the film. Despite the fact that society over the past few decades has got rid of some racial prejudices (many even complain about the ubiquitous political correctness), the changes are much more superficial than one wants to think. Xenophobia has not gone away, and even the most pleasant and progressive people can conceal dangerous beliefs in their souls.

Stereotypes and Characterization

Naturally, in this scenario, the characters cannot be completely devoid of stereotyping. Each of the guests in the country mansion is supposedly benevolent but an inexplicably ominous character, which causes the viewer anxiety. Brother Rose (Caleb Landry Jones) grimaces as if preparing to play in the theatrical production of “Clockwork Orange.” In a film based on a slow injection of the atmosphere, so blatant hints of character antagonism seem too straightforward. Fortunately, not the whole cast makes a claim. Daniel Kalui, for example, works with feelings of confusion and fear without falling into the characteristic melodramatic character of horror protagonists. Perhaps the nomination for an Oscar for the best male role is not entirely justified, but Chris is one of the few horror heroes with whom, paradoxically, it is easy to identify yourself. Alison Williams is also good in the role of an outwardly sweet and decent girl, capable of surprising cruelty.

“Get Out” is a film that returns faith in horror as a tool of social criticism and reminds viewers that African-American films are not only comedies about rappers and ghettos. One of the main advantages of Saw’s director is that he is not engaged in moralizing but offers the viewer the opportunity to decide how to interpret the picture. Do you want an adrenaline rush from a quality horror film? You are welcome.

In short, for many, it is not a secret that the turmoil with racial background is still relevant, at least in the West. That is why, in most cases, this topic is tried to be bypassed, adding to the movie at least one black man. However, to make this topic the main idea in the cinema, and to do it well, not many directors can. The film [Off] is an indicator of how you can make it interesting. The debut works of the young African-American director Jordan Peel concern, oddly enough, the problems of the blacks. Through the painting, called in the original “Get Out,” Peel tried to grope for the painful points of modern society and how to press them. As practice shows, in this, he succeeded. The choice of such a topical topic as social inequality and racism in the era of the general, already taking the features of the unhealthy “tolerance”, provided and guaranteed the film wild popularity and attention (Róisín, 2017).

References

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