

Reviewing the Distinct Elements of the Donnie Darko Film

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Brief Summary

Donnie Darko is a contemporary film that can be regarded as a psychological thriller that was released in 2011. Richard Kelly is known as the writer and director of the movie (British Film Institute [BFI], n.d.; Kelly, 2001). The story circles around a mysterious teenager who has a troubled life. The teenager is visited by a mysteriously dressed man wearing a rabbit costume. The mystery man informs the teenager that the world will end soon at dawn in a mere time span of 28 days, 6 hours, and 12 seconds. As soon as the teenager receives this news, he witnesses several disturbing events that initiate the rest of the story of the entire movie.

Lighting

As far as the movie's lighting is concerned, since the overall genre of the movie is horror/sci-fi, the lighting is kept dark with a lot of shadows, whereas a dim light can be seen at a distance. The shadows in the background of the movie give viewers a hint as to the gloomy and depressed character of the man hidden in the darkness. The dim light at the end of the horizon shows that happiness in life is very confined and appears for a small amount of time. Since most of the film's characters are dramatic and unsavory, their character is highlighted by the eerie darkness devouring the entire scenery. A little faded lighting helps the onlookers think of the plot as troublesome and uneven, which gets clearer as the movie progresses.

Costume

As far as the costumes are concerned, the story's main character is seen wearing pajamas. The incongruous costume is synchronous with the entire film's overall theme, which is enlightened as a psychological thriller. The character is seen out of the house in his pajamas, which shows a state of trouble and highlights his vulnerability. The state of his costume also implies that the character is at a place where he considers himself out of place in society and where he resides. The disconcerting thoughts etched all over his face go well with his costume, suggesting something bigger is at play and that some mysterious event might have occurred that he might have no knowledge about.

The Actor

The main actor in this film is a teenage boy. The character perfectly portrays the widely held connotations for all adolescents worldwide. Teenagers are generally thought to be irrational, hormonal, and filled with emotional turmoil and angst, perfectly portrayed in the film's main actor. The expression of these emotions is very important since their portrayal attributes the film as an actual psychological thriller where many facts are presented as a part of problems faced by the hero's mind. A troubled mind also suggests that the character is inexperienced and distressed. The storyline revolves around his discovery of himself and others as well since he is young and has a lot of new experiences, mysteries and opportunities to explore, decipher, and unravel, which are perfectly portrayed by the instability and uncertainty of his character.

Scenery

Next comes the scenery of the movie. The landscape, the fire of mountains, and a vivid horizon suggest that the film was shot in a remote area. The choice of a far-off location with a dark background ascertains the film's existence as a psychological thriller because the dilemma occurs in a distant locality where no one can help anyone, establishing the movie's theme as scary and presenting the actor's isolated state of mind.

The far-off setting also represents the state of mind of the main character who might be physically and mentally lost. The extension of the landscape over the entire frame of the movie suggests that the character is very small and wonderful in front of the scheme of plans of the entire universe which is still a mystery to him and he continually fails to understand the mysterious way things are unraveling in front of him. The director and the story writer of the film want to ensure that the effect of the film's events has a wide-ranging impact on the mind of the audience; hence, he makes sure to portray the vastness of nature in the entire frame of the movie.

The Props

The only prop that appears in the entire film is a bicycle, shown at the very start of the film. The male actor of the story is seen riding a bike, which may be synonymous with the cyclic nature of his mind, and the constant rotation of the bike wheel might represent his confused state of thoughts and how they are intermingling together to make some sense of the events that are about to happen. The representation of the bicycle as a prop might seem insignificant to the viewers. Still, its presence in the picture is a beautiful portrayal of the film as a psychological thriller where the main character is a victim of his confused mind and intercepting thoughts. However, the character seems to find independence and freedom as he is able to explore the area freely on his bike. The imposition of the bike also presents an important and significant question to the entire range of audiences, forcing them to ask, "How did he get here? And more importantly, where is he going now?"

The film's very start shows a compelling and hypnotic scene (Kelly, 2001). The main character of the film, Donnie Darko, is shown instantly wrapped up by the vision of a large bunny rabbit who forces him to get involved in several crimes. The film also involves many religious references, which are used throughout the film. The references are crucial since they hold the metaphorical importance of absolving someone from their sins or guilt.

The overall cinematography of the film shows some contrasts in sound and vision to give the audience an eerie feeling of something scary and mysterious going on (Kelly, 2001). The character is widely misunderstood by all of the members of the film, helping him gain sympathy from the audience who strive to understand him and his position. The fact that this world is unnatural and does not seem as if it is going to be resolved until the final scene of the film, where the viewer's feeling that the cause of death is resolved in the simplest terms, a jet engine falls on Donnie, but the viewer is left with the feeling that it is a totally random event that happened to an unfortunate boy who was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

I personally believe that the film was an attempt at a perfect picturization of the confused state of mind of a young teenager and the mysterious way in which the world moves around. We as humans often fail to understand that there may be other things at play which cannot be seen or deciphered by an ordinary human mind, which is portrayed beautifully by the director's efforts (Kelly, 2001).

References

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