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Symbolic Imagery in *A Quiet Place*

For this writing assignment, I will be covering the symbolic imagery and visual storytelling that is displayed in *A Quiet Place* (2018), directed by John Krasinski. *A Quiet Place* was a film nothing like anything else that I have seen before. The creative approach paired with little to no sound was incredible and it took me watching this film to fully appreciate the beauty of what a silent production has to offer. Everything from the roles of each character, visualized symbolism, cinematography, and set design had so much to offer and was extremely enjoyable to see. There were a lot of great things done by Krasinski and his crew throughout the process of creating this film.

For starters, *A Quiet Place* is a silent horror film that takes place in what seems to be the 19th century, featuring a farmhouse and country type of setting. Hence the title, the overall environment of the film feels quiet, empty, and dull. The only presence of life seen in the film is the Abbott family (Evelyn, Lee, Regan, Marcus, and Beau). The overall plot of the film consists of the family having to be completely silent to survive because if they break that silence, the Death Angels will come after whoever made a sound. The Death Angels are essentially aliens that can only hear, which therefore relates to the idea of a silent film. Early in the film, Beau, one of the sons of Lee and Evelyn Abbott drops his toy spaceship and is sadly killed by one of the Death Angels. From here out, Lee takes charge and must find a way to keep his family alive and safe throughout this invasion of their home. When it’s all said and done, the key component to survival is Regan, as she has a hearing aid that can deliver harmful frequencies to the Death Angels that impairs them and essentially disables them.

See, what’s so fascinating to me when it comes to silent films is the challenge of removing almost all audio elements from a story, banking purely on visual storytelling to grasp your audience’s attention to tell a more compelling story. Lacking audio elements in a film forces a crew to get more creative and push the envelope with various camera angles, camera movements, lighting techniques, character emotions, and so much more. In *A Quiet Place*, one thing that stood out to me was how everything was cohesive and aligned in the end. Regan, the daughter of Evelyn and Lee Abbott, is a great representation of playing the character to the maximum potential. Regan is deaf in the film and is deaf in real life as well, so this adds a creative element with a sense of realism to the film that will tie things up in the end.

More specifically speaking, there were several scenes in the film that are worth mentioning because they displayed the beauty of what makes a great silent film. Towards the end of the film, there is a scene where Evelyn is in the basement of their home with her newborn baby trying to hide from a blood-seeking Death Angel. A lot of the appreciation for this scene refers to the script, how they lit the scene, the VFX, and the symbolism. To help you visualize, the basement has flooded, and the Death Angel is submerged underneath the water waiting for any crack of sound. The baby adds so much tension to this scene because babies are more prone to crying and making noise. There was a flow of water coming from the ceiling, and Evelyn took the baby behind because it was making so much noise. This was such a cool moment because you had to understand the silent element to get why Evelyn did this to avoid an attack.

The next scene that I have a great appreciation for is also towards the end but features Regan and Marcus stuck in a family car outside of their home. Sadly, Lee sacrificed himself for his children’s safety and was killed before this moment but set the stage for a suspenseful sequence of events. Because Regan is deaf, she must wear a special hearing aid that her father helped design for her. As the film progresses, it seems like she can almost communicate or connect with the Death Angels as they are only able to hear, not see. Right after Lee is killed, Regan’s hearing aid starts to whine and burst with an unpleasant sound, and then everything goes silent. As a viewer, you begin to anticipate something happening shortly after, and that is exactly what happened. The Death Angel came bursting through the car window, breaking the silence. What makes this scene so special is the symbolism of the silence and ring of that hearing aid. The hearing aid itself is such a crucial component throughout the course of the film.

Ultimately, there were some special moments in the film that resonated with me and allowed me to see a different element of creativity in filmmaking. Because of that, I now feel a spark of creativity in areas that I hadn’t before and hope to apply some of the things I gained from this film in a future short film of mine. Different aspects of the film that I feel inspired by are the color pallets, VFX work, cinematography, symbolism, and most importantly – the visual storytelling. As I mentioned earlier in the assignment, this film was cohesive all the way through, and everything was pieced together so perfectly. Seeing how the script was executed, how the sets were designed, how the characters performed, and other different elements opened my eyes to new ways of thinking and execution with film production.

All in all, I enjoyed watching *A Quiet Place* and hope to watch the films that follow it. John Krasinski and his crew did an excellent job with visual storytelling and set the bar high for horror films. The characters, symbolism, cinematography, set design, color, lighting, and VFX all played crucial roles in helping bring this film to life and have the impact that it does. Silent films are sometimes seen as a lost art, and this gave a great perspective on how to execute them properly. *A Quiet Place* is a film that will be studied for many years to come.

Works Cited

Krasinski, John. *A Quiet Place*. Paramount Pictures, 2018.