**Symbolic Imagery in “A Quiet Place”**

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Visuals are an important part of storytelling; they are used hand in hand with dialogue to give the viewer a complete understanding of the story. Before Movies were using dialogue to tell their stories, a style of film called the “Silent Film” was popular. Silent films weren’t exactly quiet, as the name suggests, they still used music and other sounds to tell the story. When people think of silent films, they typically think about movies made by Charlie Chaplin and others back in the early 1900s, but there are still silent films being made today, one example being *A Quiet Place*. This film was released back in 2018 and has since had two more installments, *A Quiet Place Part II,* and *A* *Quiet Place: Day One*. *A Quiet Place* was directed by John Krasinski and received high critical acclaim.

The movie begins on day 89, and we are immediately introduced to this dystopian world, we are given b-roll footage showing the town in its current state, and then one by one we are introduced to the family that this film follows. We are first introduced to the circumstances that they must live by when Evelyn, the mother, is opening a bottle of pills for her son Marcus. She must gingerly pick up the bottle and open it, grab a pill, and give it to her son without making a noise. We then are introduced to the youngest son, Beau, and the daughter, Regan. Beau is sitting on the floor, and we can see that he has drawn a rocket ship, which he signs in ASL to his sister that they are going to escape on a rocket ship. He then proceeds to reach with his tiptoes on a stool for a toy space shuttle sitting a few shelves out of his reach. He brushes the toy with his fingertips, and then it falls, Regan slides into the frame, narrowly catching the toy before it hits the ground. The entire family meets up with their father, Lee, at the front of the store, and as they get ready to leave, Beau comes to the front. We can’t see what he is holding but based on the facial expressions of the entire family, it’s obvious it isn’t good. Lee grabs the object from Beaus

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hand and it’s revealed to be the space shuttle. Lee carefully removes the batteries and sets them down on the counter along with the toy, signing to Beau that it’s too loud. The Abbotts exit the store on a path of sand that they made to help dampen the sound, Beau and Reagan are the last to leave, and Reagan gives Beau the toy back and leaves, Beau then proceeds to grab the batteries and follow suit. The family reaches a bridge, and the camera is cutting between the characters. When the camera is on Reagan, her movements reveal what Beau is doing in the background, and the rest happens in slow motion. We hear beeps and other noises coming from the rocket ship, immediately, we cut to Lee, whose eyes widen, he turns his head around and begins to run toward his son. Cutting to the woods, we can see the creature running, the creature runs out of the woods and grabs Beau from right in front of his family, instantly cutting to the title card.

What a way to start a movie, visually, we were fed so much information regarding the plot and background of the world we are in, without any dialogue. The way the camera angles were done, the facial expressions, especially on the bridge. Evelyn has the most insane amount of emotion displayed at once, fear, panic, distress, sadness, and horror, as she watches her son’s life end right before her very eyes. The rest of the movie followed suit with the way it portrayed elements through camera work and angles. Music is also used a lot to show us what is happening. Marco Beltrami did an excellent job with the score for this film, it subtly foreshadows when something bad is going to happen, leaving the audience with the perfect blend of suspense and fear. The most consistent thing throughout this entire movie was the acting, whether it be from the Parents, portrayed by John Krasinski and Emily Blunt, or the three (primarily two) kids. Since there was no dialogue, their acting had to be able to stand alone in telling the story, and it did. The horror and joy that were shown on their faces throughout this

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film conveyed a lot, getting the message across very successfully. The use of dialogue, and there is some, is done sparingly and meaningfully. It doesn’t replace the visual elements but rather enhances them.

After watching this film, I have taken a few key concepts that I will include in my short film. One of these concepts is using dialogue to enhance the story, not tell it. When I’m making my short film, I don’t want there to be dialogue every two seconds; I want the visuals to do the back-breaking work of telling the story, so to speak. Another concept that I enjoyed from the movie is how they left the audience in the dark; they didn’t flat-out tell us the who, what, where, when, why, and how. They gave us clues to them throughout the visuals and the plot points, but we had to infer what it all meant. That is genius because it keeps the audience fully engaged the entire time and doesn’t tempt them to become distracted. One last concept I intend to use in my short is keeping it small. I mean that in the sense that I don’t want to have a large story that becomes large in scale, I want to have a small story, whether it be self-contained or, like the movie, a small part of a much larger story. I just really want to flesh out my characters and give them the time they deserve.

*A Quiet Place* is one of my favorite movies now, largely due to the way they tell the story. Horror that treats itself seriously are some of the best movies, such as this one, as well as *Sinister*, with Ethan Hawke. I love how they tell a genuine story, and include the horror to enhance it, not rely on it. This reflection was a blast to write, and I learned a lot.

**References**

Krasinski, J. (Director). (2018). *A Quiet Place* [Film]. Paramount Pictures; Platinum Dunes; Sunday Night Productions