

Film analysis on the 2005 film King Kong

Out of the hundreds of films I have watched over the year, King Kong is easily in my top 5. Released on December 14, 2005, King Kong was produced and directed by Peter Jackson. Unlike the previous King Kong films, this remake almost humanizes King Kong and shows his emotion, making the audience like him more than hate him. Through the use of immaculate editing, story structure, framing, mise en scene, camera movement, pacing, and lighting, Peter Jackson forms a fantastic film that keeps the viewer on the edge of their seats. Its use of sounds constantly keeps you guessing what could happen next. Also, Peter Jackson, the director of the film, does a great job using visual effects creating a high dynamic range.

To give an overview of the movie, King Kong is set in 1933 where a group of filmmakers make the expedition to skull island to film a movie. After an encounter with the natives of the island, Ann, the main actress, is taken and given to Kong. The rest of the crew venture through the island, encountering many struggles, attempting to “save” her thinking she will be killed by Kong. Throughout the film, it is shown how Kong himself has emotions and creates a relationship with Ann where he protects her. In the end, after he is taken to New York City and escapes, he finds Ann who calms him down and they end up on the top of the empire state building where Kong is killed. My favorite quote from this movie stems from this scene, where Carl, the film director, states, “It wasn’t the airplanes. It was Beauty killed the Beast.”

During the early part of the film when the crew is arriving at Skull Island, and soon after they arrive, low key lighting is used where the only light source is the ship, and later on torches. This adds a mystery and eeriness to the scenes where we the viewer do not know what is out there. Most of the colors in the intro to the island scenes are concealed, giving it a dark and gloomy appearance. Later, when Ann is being “sacrificed” to Kong, Peter uses an establishing shot to

really show the extent at which the natives of the island are afraid of Kong. This makes the viewer, who has yet to see Kong, visualize how scary and menacing Kong really is. The natives have a ginormous wall as well as a gap between them and the mysterious forest revealing the fear.

I personally really enjoyed the structure of this film. The setup involved almost an hour of backstory telling and building up to arriving at Skull Island, all without showing King Kong. The first turning point comes when Ann is taken by the natives of the island and the crew is now forced to return to land and try to find her. After King Kong takes her and the crew start the adventure to find her, the point of no return is reached. This is where complications arise and the crew encounters near death experiences at every corner, most ending with at least a few deaths. The major setback occurs followed by a final push to rescue Ann and eventually capturing King Kong and bringing him back to New York City. This is where the climax of the film occurs, King Kong escapes and ventures out to find Ann. When he does, they end up at the end on top of the empire state building where King Kong is eventually killed. The aftermath of this is where the most famous quote of the film comes, where Carl the filmmaker says “It was Beauty who killed the Beast.” Overall, the story structure played out perfectly enhancing the story as the film went on.

One of the best scenes from the movie in my opinion is when Ann entertains King Kong. Unlike the previous films, Kong is supposed to be vicious and seen as a bad character. However, in this scene, the audience comes to like Kong for his human qualities and his playful tendencies. Throughout the film and in this scene, Kong’s emotions are clearly represented in his eyes, which are zoomed in on or clearly shown most of the time. In this scene in particular, the

audience can see when he is confused, intrigued, mad, and even happy when Ann does a certain action. The scene really sets the pace for how we as an audience feel about Kong.

Peter Jackson also used great framing techniques throughout the film. For instance, when King Kong was approaching Ann at the sacrifice scene, Peter did a certain zoom in where the viewer could see her eyes gazing up towards the beast coming towards her as well as the fear she presented in her eyes and body movement. He also used rule of thirds to perfection throughout the film. Something I found interesting is that even when they were filming the movie scenes on the boat, they also used rule of thirds in their movie as well. Along with these framing techniques, the camera movements used throughout the movie really showcase scenes well. There are a lot of scenes that capture the size or the future of where the characters are approaching. Peter does this by doing a pan starting right behind the crew or person and moving upwards in a diagonal direction. This can be seen when the crew first steps afoot the island, or when Ann is making her way to the crew stuck on the log, also showing previous built structures leading the audience to understand that it had been abandoned.