

The day after tomorrow by roland emmerich as the disaster film

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The Day After Tomorrow, directed by Roland Emmerich, is an old-fashioned disaster film that uses modern-day special effects to illustrate an apocalyptic end of the world due to global warming. The film details the unforeseen disasters that arise from global warming and the detrimental effects it can have on the lives of many around the world. Unlike other disaster films, The Day After Tomorrow does not have the motif of man attempting to overcome nature's wrath. Instead, the film presents the situation in which there is nothing we can do to stop nature, thus emphasis is placed on survival in the movie. Despite the over-the-top drama and "bad science", the pro-environment message shines through the plot. As the main point of the movie is to entertain the masses, the film comes across as over-the-top and cheesy. However, the disaster scenes are well crafted, generating ample amounts of tension throughout the film. Emmerich utilizes many dramatic and excessive special effects to relate the film to the real-life political climate and figuratively portray the death of a country's identity.

The film begins with a dramatic opening scene where the main character, Jack Hall, and two other scientists are in Antarctica on the Larsen B ice shelf. This shelf has begun to break up and fall into the sea as a result of the increasing temperature of the globe. Later at the UN Conference on Global Warming in New Delhi, Jack Hall warns government officials from countries around the world that steps must be taken now to lessen fossil fuel use. Otherwise, the world would experience extreme temperature drops that would lead to the loss of countless lives. Interestingly, the vice president of the United States and other world leaders stated that any attempts to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels would wreak havoc on the world's economy.

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The weather pattern around the world begins to change; at this point, it is too late and mankind is at the mercy of the forces of nature.

The scene at 00: 06: 21, Jack giving a speech at the UN Conference on Global Warming, is one of the many times Emmerich links the events in the film to real-life events. There he warns the world leaders present at the conference that global warming is causing a shift in the world climate which could lead to another ice age. Jack then predicts the drastic change in the climate could happen in a 100 or maybe in 1000 years, so if they do not react soon enough their children and grandchildren will have to pay the price for their negligence. The Vice President of the United States then states that agreeing to the Kyoto Accord would cost the world's economy hundreds of billions of dollars. This scene is very important as it links the film to the political climate of the Bush administration. In 2002, the US pulled out of the Kyoto Agreement. The Kyoto Agreement is an international agreement that was created to help reduce carbon dioxide emissions and the presence of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This agreement recognized that developed countries are primarily responsible for the current high levels of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere as a result of more than 100 years of industrial activity. As a result, the agreement proposed to place a heavier burden on developed nations than less-developed nations. In 2001, the U. S. decided to drop out of the Kyoto Agreement. U. S. officials stated that participating in the agreement was unfair because it mandated that industrialized nations limit emissions and felt that doing so would hurt the U. S. economy. According to the BBC, former President George Bush has never

made it a secret that he disliked the Kyoto agreement. Emmerich included this scene in the film to parallel the Vice President in the movie and the Bush Administration. They both stated that they couldn't agree to the Kyoto Agreement due to the potential harm to the United States' economy. As a result, the film's Vice President is portrayed as naive and inexorable.

Furthermore, the character of the vice president can also be extended to be a representation of the administrations that have followed since President Bush. Just a few years ago, the United States decided to pull out of the Paris Climate Agreement. Akin to the film, the reason for pulling out of the Paris Agreement was for the feared negative impact it could have on the United States' economy. Moreover, the character of the Vice President can also be extended to leaders of other countries, since there are still leaders around the world who believe climate change is a myth.

The camera then cuts to outside the palace where the conference is being held, where protestors are chanting to stop global warming. From the movement of the camera across the set, the audience gets to see that it is snowing outside the building. The film then cuts to a news reporter who says, " it is snowing and it is the coldest weather on record which has thrown the city into chaos with numbers of homeless people freezing to death".

Emmerich's choice of snow outside the conference is a clever decision and not one for theatrics. It shows the audience that the world leaders are naive and oblivious to the consequences of climate change, like the lethal weather outside. The impact of global warming is emphasized by the location of the conference, in India. The idea that it is cold and snowing in India—one of the

hottest countries in the world- would be a clear sign that the effects of climate change are real. Nonetheless, the leaders still decide to reject the Kyoto agreement. This is a stark contrast to the protestors outside chanting, who represent the masses that believe global warming is an issue that should be taken very seriously by public officials. They believe that considerable steps must be taken to rectify the problem, akin to people today that organize protests and demonstrations to bring more awareness to the issue of global warming. The number of climate protests and demonstrations every year is rising; however, government officials are still reluctant to take substantial steps to help save the planet. This scene is important as it does a great job of showing the audience the negligence of government officials and the resulting consequences of nature.

The sequence of scenes that contain the beginning of the climate shit Jack Hall predicted begins at 00: 26: 00. Yet, instead of 100 years or 1000 years, it is happening at an expedited rate. The sequence begins with a wide shot of the city; the setting is gloomy, dark, and is accompanied by some sinister music. Shortly after, a tornado instantaneously forms in the hills of Los Angeles, which begins destroying the homes. On the weather channel, we get to see a shot where the Hollywood sign gets obliterated. At this point in the scene, about 6 tornadoes are ripping through Los Angeles, and the damage to the property and identity of the city keeps increasing. The scene reaches its climax when the skyscrapers in downtown Los Angeles are obliterated. The main characters watch the destruction on TV in awe. This devastation then gains the attention of the U. S. President and Vice

President, and this is where they begin to change their attitude regarding the issue of climate change.

The cinematography and directing in this sequence is superb and adds to the excitement of the film. The specific movement of the camera, setting, and editing make the scene great. Most noticeably, the scene uses many different types of editing cuts to improve the narrative. The use of L and J cuts in this film are subtle and almost unnoticeable. Yet, the usage of L and J cuts in the film improves the quality as it gives the audience some understanding of the environment the characters exist in. The dramatic nature of the scene entertains the masses and captures the audience's attention. Emmerich is well known for doing this, as the special effects in his movies draw the audience in. So, it is no surprise that in this film the disaster sequences are well-crafted and some of the action sequences generate tension. However, in this film, the special effects serve a higher purpose than to just create tension. These special effects are present to portray the unforgiving characteristics of nature. Moreover, as the scenes in this sequence progress, we now get to see nature eradicating the inhabitants of Los Angeles. With this destruction, Los Angeles loses its identity, and a part of the identity of the United States is also lost. This gradual loss of the United States' identity continues through the film until the climax.

Another pivotal scene to *The Day After Tomorrow's* plot begins at 00: 43: 00 accompanied by the same sinister music from the Los Angeles scene. In addition, the same dark special effects are borrowed from the Los Angeles scene, giving both scenes a similar *mise en scène*. The sequence begins with

a long shot of a street in New York City where the audience sees people frantically running around looking for shelter against the heavy rain. The film then cuts to a manhole cover which is bringing sewage up as a result of the flooding from the rain. As a result, there are traffic jams, and the Grand Central station along with all other subway stations are flooded. Meaning, the residents of New York are trapped in the city with no access to public transportation, making parts of the city inaccessible. Emmerich uses lots of cutaway shots to give the audience some background as to the reason for the flooding in the city. As the sequence progresses, the level of flooding in the city keeps rising at an expedited rate. Emmerich uses more cutaways to give the audience more context as to how the city got flooded and bombarded by a massive tidal wave. While the tidal wave bombards the city, cutaways are continually used to show the audience the gruesome deaths of millions in the city. At 00: 48: 07, the film cuts again to the Statue of Liberty. As the camera pans in a circular motion around the monument, the audience sees the tidal wave rising until the monument is completely engulfed. The city then gets submerged in massive amounts of seawater, and everything and almost everyone drowns. Akin to the Los Angeles scene, the editing and special effects are excellent. They all combine to give the audience an immersive experience of the flooding. This sequence is important because it relates to the scene where Jack Hall tells the world leaders at the UN Global Warming Conference that their children and grandchildren's futures can be harmed if they don't react early enough. His predictions for the far-away future come true in just 6 weeks. Even though the timeline is unrealistic, Emmerich chooses to have the film progress in this fashion to make the point

that climate change can happen in a more expedited fashion than we all predicted, and with that comes the unimaginable forces of nature that could cause a lot of destruction and devastation. Similarly to the Los Angeles scene, the audience gets to witness the death of New York City and part of the United States' national identity. As the film progresses, Emmerich keeps tearing down the identity of the United States to prove that global climate change will not only kill citizens, but also the identities of many nations around the world.

Later, meltwater inflow from the north brings the North Atlantic Current to a halt, causing severe cooling. This happens in a matter of days. Consequently, most of the northern hemisphere is covered by giant cyclones. These cyclones caused the tornadoes in Los Angeles, the flooding in New York, and the several days of severe snowstorm covering the entire northern hemisphere. In the eye of these super-cyclones, extremely cold air is sucked down from the upper troposphere to the surface of the earth and shock freezes everything. At 01: 40: 26 when the shock freezing occurs, Emmerich decides to include a shot of the American flag freezing. Even though Emmerich only spends a few seconds on the shot, I believe this is the most important part of the film. The American flag represents the nation, is the most important symbol for the country, and it is what unites the people. Emmerich deciding to include the frozen flag symbolizes how the identity of the United States came to the same fate as New York and others in the Northern Hemisphere: frozen to death, with nature triumphant. The “ death” of the flag not only represents the death of the United States, but all the

countries in the world. This shot represents Emmerich's true reason for making this movie: to warn all nations around the world to pay attention to climate change and the unprecedented devastation it could bring.

In conclusion, *The Day After Tomorrow* by Roland Emmerich is a great addition to the disaster film genre. The special effects are great and the film does a wonderful job of immersing the audience into the plot. Moreover, *The Day After Tomorrow* has the good sense of not having man attempt to overcome nature's wrath, and this makes for a more compelling story that grabs the audience's attention. Even though the film can come across as over-the-top and cheesy, the underlying message shines through. Overall, this makes *The Day After Tomorrow* a great cautionary tale.