

'sleepy hollow' and 'batman' essay



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When analysing a film, it is always necessary to consider genre. Genre is how we describe a film category or type. Some different types of genre are Gothic Horror, thriller, sci-fi, comedy, romance, westerns, period drama, adventure and fantasy.

A hybrid genre is a film that has conventions from two or more genres. Other hybrid genres are romantic comedy, and comedy fantasy. Genres are useful for both film makers and audiences because it allows them to know what the film is about or what to base the film around. 'Sleepy Hollow' and 'Batman' are films both based within 'Gothic Horror'.

The key iconographic features you would expect to see within this genre are dark backgrounds and atmospheric weather. We would also hear sinister music and sounds. Gothic Horror is a genre that is dark and often has sinister storylines to scare the audience. Mise-en-scene is a shot showing everything. Mise-en-scene is used in Sleepy Hollow when a long shot is used to illustrate the city of New York in the 18th century after a horrific introduction. Both 'Sleepy Hollow' and 'Batman' are films of two mixed genres, Gothic Horror.

Tim Burton is a director of Gothic Horror and directed both 'Batman' and 'Sleepy Hollow'. He utilises the conventions of this genre in many of his films. Burton has directed films such as 'Corpse Bride' and 'Edward Scissor Hands'. Burton frequently uses atmospheric weather in his films.

The effect of smog is used in 'Sleepy Hollow' and during the opening scenes of 'Batman'. A similar effective smog scene is used to depict a battle in 'Planet Of The Apes'. The two films I will be analysing are 'Sleepy Hollow' and 'Batman'. I will be looking for similarities and differences in both films and

how they portray Gothic Horror. The cities of Gotham and New York meet the conventions of the genre with long shots. The buildings are silhouetted by the moonlight.

This occurs in both films. This meets the conventions of the genre as the moonlight makes the city look bleak and vulnerable. When the film later reveals closer shots of the cities exposing the streets and buildings we can observe the differences between the rich and the poor. In Gotham City a prostitute seductively talks to the boy of the family as they walk through the crowds. In New York we see a vast number of residents dirty, grimy and shabbily dressed.

An uneasy feeling is created by the gloomy Gothic architecture. The name Gotham is fabricated for 'Batman' and is significant as it suits the genre of Gothic Horror. Burton uses mise-en-scene to present an urban landscape in 'Batman'. The city is made to appear massive and the people look insignificant and helpless.

The camera keeps its distance as if stalking the family as they look for an available taxi amongst the busy, heaving traffic. The film portrays the family as weak and vulnerable within their loud and hectic surroundings. In 'Sleepy Hollow' Burton carries out quite similar actions following the opening scene. Burton shows a long shot of New York in the 18th century.

Gotham City is being used to present the metaphor that it is a decaying society with corrupt morals by the red attire of a prostitute. In addition the red gives the impression of danger closing in on the family and grasps the attention of the audience. Burton uses both low and high angle shots to

confirm how Batman dominates when he is present. A low shot looking up at Batman makes him seem bigger and taller than everyone else. His eyes are sunken and give an unfriendly impression which makes him look more bad than good.

A high shot from above shows the audience Batman's soaring speed and how far above the ground he leaps. This is shown during the opening scene of 'Batman' following Batman's scaring away of two tramps. He drops off the building and when one of the tramps looks down at Batman, Batman is no longer there! Batman's identity is concealed and only light sources draw attention to his outline. His massive profile makes the other individuals look feeble and easy to harass. When Batman displays his wings, he appears more magnificent making the inhabitants of Gotham seem even more insignificant. A bat-like mask conceals Batman's face.

He is mysterious character and no one knows who is hiding behind the mask. The padding on his costume makes him look really strong and muscular. It is meant to put off the advances of any challenger. The first sight of the Batman character makes the importance of the logo shown in the opening credits become clearer to the audience. After this, the audience is able to make more sense of the film and now understand who the main character is.

Diegetic sounds are the sounds from characters or objects in the film such as speech or a crash if something falls down. Non-diegetic means when sound come from music or a narrator's commentary. Diegetic sounds and non-diegetic sounds improve the quality of the film as well as bring the sense of fear and anticipation to the audience. The orchestra play to the action of the

film. If there is an action packed scene then the music will play faster however, if there is an eerie scene and scary surroundings the music might be more slow and spooky. A happy scene might be accompanied by light and jolly music.

Batman is used and set up as a conventional Gothic Villain despite him being a hero. It is the conventions of the mixed genre that keep the audience entertained. There are similarities and differences between 'Batman' and 'Sleepy Hollow'. The similarities are the genre and how the opening scene shows this and what the film is about. Also, most of the opening scenes are dark or based at night.

This makes the picture spookier for the audience to watch. The conventions in 'Sleepy Hollow' that match the genre of Gothic Horror are a pumpkin looking down on van Garrett as he is being chased by the swordsman. The rain and the stormy weather in 'Sleepy Hollow' also match the Gothic Horror genre. The opening sequence of credits presents the director's name over the establishing long shot of Batman and 'Gotham City'. The following sequence of filming has a huge impact on the audience. Gotham's tall, dark buildings are silhouetted against the night sky.

Back alleys are filled with smog seeming to be rising from the drains. The camera follows a family as they walk along on the pavement opposite. The orchestra plays slow and eerie music to create tension and to disturb the audience. Instantly we are led to think that something threatening awaits the family.

At this stage the audience is not aware that the section of film being watched is following a path. Eventually it is revealed, by a long shot, that the section of film being watched is within the Batman logo. The menacing bat logo initially creates the impression that Batman is evil. The opening credits of 'Sleepy Hollow' and 'Batman' create suspense and tension. The dark and black colours are used to great effect as it suits Gothic Horror and scare the audience. Non-diegetic sounds create great results as well and generate tension.

The audience is made to feel isolated and the poor weather in both films makes them feel cold and unsafe. The daunting impression given makes the audience sense danger. The opening credits on 'Sleepy Hollow' are shorter than the credits shown on 'Batman' and commence before the opening scenes. Batman's opening credits are different as we don't know where we are until we are shown the Batman logo and realize we were following a path of scenes within it. The pumpkin in 'Sleepy Hollow' has connotations with 'Batman'.

The pumpkin is meant to represent bad and evil and this is shown when van Garrett runs into it when he is being chased through the cornfield. The camera looks upwards at the pumpkin's evil facial expression. A pathetic light shines up towards the pumpkin during a long shot. The colour red on the death warrant shown at the start of 'Sleepy Hollow' signifies pending peril. The red wax gives the impression of blood.

This reaction is also created in 'Batman' as a prostitute is wearing red clothes. The colour of red is brilliant and really stands out from its gloomy

surroundings. The opening scenes of ' Batman' and ' Sleepy Hollow' really demonstrate how the films are Gothic Horror. These immense effects leave the audience nervously anticipating more of the same. I feel that ' Sleepy Hollow' contains more of the classic Gothic Horror ingredients and this, in my opinion, is spookier.