

Critical Analysis Thriller- Michael Jackson

In my Expressive Arts Class we are studying the topic dreams and nightmares, so were given the video Thriller to analyse. Thriller was made in 1983, and is one of the best home videos ever made. The video thriller contains a spectacular dance sequence, plenty of drama and story, and most importantly the actual song its self. The dance moves, costumes, music, settings, and lyrics in some way all relate to the theme of dreams and nightmares.

The general synopsis of the video begins with Michael and a young lady in a horror film, walking through the woods. After a conversation he then tells her he is different, then as the moon appears from the clouds he turns into a werewolf. They go into a chasing scene and he finally catches the girl. Then we see Michael and the girl in the cinema as they are watching the horror film. They decide to leave and the song Thriller begins. They walk down the street and past a graveyard; this is when a voiceover comes in as zombies rise from their graves. We then see Michael and the girl surrounded by the zombies. Then Michael suddenly turns into a zombie too. Then there is a dance sequence. The girl runs to a deserted house and the zombies get in. Michael is slowly coming towards her, then it seems she wakes up and finds herself with Michael at home. He then goes to walk her home, he looks away and his eyes shine green.

The music plays a large part in the video, as it changes the whole atmosphere in the video. It adds intensity, like a dream or nightmare. E.g. when they are in the deserted house the zombies are coming closer to the girl as the music becomes louder, then leads up to a scream. We actually don't start off with the thriller music as the horror film plays. When we are in the woods the sounds of screams and horror music, this relates to dreams and nightmares, as the music is very dramatic and scary. Different music is also played when they pass the grave when we flick back to reality; the thriller music begins, as they walk down the street to the beat of the music. This music changes dramatically from scary and surreal to beaty and energetic. This may be used to show the audience that they have come out of a nightmare into reality.

Special effects also help to make the nightmare more terrifying. When Michael turns into a werewolf seems very real and scary. Also a very clever special effect used in this video is that the audience can never tell if what they are watching is a dream, nightmare, or reality. This is a fabulous technique used as it creates the sense of confusion as when you are in a dream or nightmare. And by flicking from one to the other creates the illusion for the audience of a dream/ nightmare too.

The lyrics used in the film are important as they also tell as horror story, which could even be a nightmare. "It's Close To Midnight And Something

Evil's Lurking In The Dark". This is one of the lines from the lyrics. He is singing it to the girl, but in a narrator like story. Michael also used dance moves to correspond with his words, while he is singing thriller to the girl. "Under the moonlight you see a sight that almost stops your heart". Michael would now perform a move like grabbing his heart.

There is also a voiceover when Michael and the girl pass the graveyard. He adds to the effect of a nightmare by reading scary lyrics about the dead and them rising.

The graveyard plays an important role in dreams and nightmares as it shows the audience a typical horror film surrounding. There is loud organ music playing and the graveyard is covered in a layer of mist, then the zombies start to rise from their graves.

They have symbolic costumes as they relate to dreams and nightmares. The zombies look so life like, just like a dream or nightmare. Their costumes look mouldy, ripped and decaying. The colours, which are used, are dark greys, greens and browns. All of the zombies look very similar. This is essential when the dance sequence begins Michael is in a red jock jacket, so he stands out from the zombies. In the film Michael's costumes change as at the beginning they are rather 80's costumes as the girl is wearing girly skirts, and Michael is wearing a jock costume. These are essential as it makes it easier for the audience to see when the video changes from reality from a dream or nightmare.

The movement is one of the most important parts to show that they are zombies. Their moves are almost robotic like at some points. They are jolty, sharp moves. They also use lots of isolation on certain parts of the body. In the dance sequence they use spins and jumps and their shoes tap and scrape against the floor giving sound effects in unison. The dance is also performed in unison, which is very effective. They use lots of horror positions to add the effect of dreams and nightmares. One of the best positions is where they have their hands in claws. This also adds to the horror effect.

All these effects create the setting and surrounding of dreams and nightmares. I believe what relates to dreams and nightmares the most is the chopping and changing from reality, and how you cannot tell if what you see is real or not. But overall I believe this video is very similar to a dream or nightmare.

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