Presentation Three Outline

Hiding but Shining in the comparison of Drive and Taxi Driver

Scene: (0:27-1:10) Description of the terms of the agreement with the dark room and shining silver jacket. This is the first introduction to his contradiction of hiding but shining.

Thesis: The concept of hiding but shining is represented in the intersection of light and shadow and unsolved antagonisms in the films Taxi Driver and Drive, creating inconsistencies and contradictions within the main characters’ lives.

In the films Taxi Driver and Drive, the concept of hiding but shining is well established. Hiding but shining is the desire for anonymity, to be completely private, but also to have a certain amount of notoriety and fame about them, whether that be their impacts on the world around them or their danger. This is a major inconsistency in their characters since they desire opposites. To start, Drive’s hiding but shining occurs in the representation of the white scorpion jacket. The scorpion is a symbol of danger and defense and is used to symbolize the danger that the Driver represents. In the first scene of the movie, this is presented. The scene starts out with a voiceover, and slowly pans to the Driver, who is completely encased in darkness except for his white scorpion jacket. He is explaining the terms of the agreement he has as a getaway driver. With this jacket, but with him in darkness, proves that he is a figure that desires the anonymity of getaway driving but the danger represented by having him in charge. When he ends the call and walks over to his bag, he grabs the bag and moves it from a patch of light into the darkness. This represents him collecting his tools of the trade and recruiting what he needs to be able to achieve this danger. The end of this scene is equally fascinating. As the car chase ends, the Driver exits the car and quickly changes jackets, putting on a hat as he does. He removes the flashy jacket with the scorpion, proving the danger is over and representing his return to darkness, to just be one with the crowd. Lastly, the inconsistency is represented later in the movie when he shares a kiss with Irene in the elevator. The Driver moves Irene into the light, but leaves himself in the darkness. Even during the kiss, he returns to the darkness. This is an inconsistency since he desires love and companionship in Irene, but he also wants to be dark, dangerous, and anonymous. This also proves that you cannot change the person you love – they will always be the same person deep down, no matter what. His character in itself is contradictory – he wants to be loved and be in the spotlight, to have certain benefits to his character, but he also wants to blend in, be anonymous, and not let anyone in.

Travis has similar inconsistencies and contradictions in his own character. For example, he hides his guns in his jacket and practicing how he will reveal the gun at the correct moment. This is proof of him hiding but shining, as he wants to appear nonthreatening, but will shoot and therefore “shine” if the situation calls for it. Also, Travis also wants to be the savior of New York City, by removing all the “scum”, or those he disapproves of, from the streets, as he states in the beginning scene of the movie as he drives through the streets, but he also only desires to be the anonymous, nonthreatening taxi driver. This example of shining is, however, a contradiction because he maintains several of the characteristics that he considers to be scummy and wrong in the citizens of New York City. Additionally, Travis is a war veteran. Veterans are often downplayed and become a number, or therefore, become anonymous. However, he shines in the way that he feels about and interacts with women and citizens in general, such as Betsy, through his obsession over her, and his subconscious desire to be the man and the woman, and therefore be “normal” and “hidden”. These examples of hiding but shining are huge inconsistencies in his character and represent his separate desires.

Both of these films have separate antagonisms. For Drive, the antagonism centers around working to survive (the Driver works four jobs) and the desire for companionship in a world where it simply isn’t possible. For Taxi Driver, the antagonisms are the military, PTSD, and mental illness in general combining to give Travis a hero complex.