

4.3.2.1.

Study Notes



Directed by: Noel Clarke
Certificate: 15
Running time: 117 mins
Release date: 2 June 2010

Synopsis

While Jo (Roberts) is chained down in a dead end supermarket job, her friends are all out on their own separate adventures: Cassandra (Egerton) is jetting off to New York to meet her Internet boyfriend; Kerrys (Warren-Markland) is on a one woman crusade fighting for female liberation and Shannon (Lovibond) is on a one way trip to meet her maker. But a chance encounter with some diamond thieves sends their separate worlds on a collision course with not only each other, but fate itself. These 4 girls are about to have 3 days they will never forget, spanning to 2 cities. That is....if they survive. (<http://4321movie.com/>)

Before Viewing: Marketing and Audience

Clarke's three major films to date share a similar poster style. *Kidulthood* and *Adulthood* are clearly linked as they are of a series, but *4.3.2.1.* has both similarities and differences to the others.

- Find poster images for *Kidulthood*, *Adulthood* and *4.3.2.1.* Make a close comparison of the three, and list the similarities and differences between them.
- How do the poster and trailer try to satisfy fans of *Kidulthood* and *Adulthood* whilst appealing to new viewers?
- Comment on how females and different ethnicities and classes are represented on all three posters.
- Visit <http://4321movie.com/>. Construct a target audience profile based on the film's website. Think about the site's imagery, colour, interactive features and use of music. Sketch a picture of a person who would like this movie then write their profile beside it. What will this person wear? How old will they be? What things would they have in their pockets and bag?
- Design a teaser trailer for a film aimed at a young audience. Create three separate edits: one aimed at a male target audience, one at females and one at both.

After Viewing: Narrative

4.3.2.1. adopts a '*Rashomon*'- style narrative: an event is shown from different character's viewpoints and the details change each time. Films such as *The Usual Suspects*, *Basic*, *Go*, TV series *Boom Town* and, of course, *Rashomon* all use this unique storytelling device.

- Did you find the story easy or difficult to follow?
- How is each girl's story differentiated to make the narrative clearer? Consider lighting, use of humour, editing etc.
- Clarke has said that he wanted to make a British '*Go*'. Watch the trailer for *Go* (directed by Doug Liman – *The Bourne Identity*, *Mr and Mrs Smith*). To what extent has Clarke been influenced by this film?

Director's Intentions: Noel Clarke

Clarke has said that making *4.3.2.1.* was his chance to do something different so as not to be 'put in a box' and known only for his urban dramas. Yet the marketing of the film exploits Clarke's reputation and previous successes as unique selling points (USP).

- Having viewed the film, to what extent has Clarke differentiated his style and his themes from the gritty urban drama of *Kidulthood* and *Adulthood*?
- If you have seen the other two films as well, how did *4.3.2.1.* exceed or fall below your expectations?
- Noel Clarke's acting role in *4.3.2.1.* is relatively minor compared to the others, yet he is prominent on the poster. Do you feel, perhaps, that Clarke is being promoted like a 'brand' because he is recognisable from popular TV series and as a director?

Influence of Co-Director Mark Davis

4.3.2.1.'s co-director Mark Davis has edited a range of TV series including *Outnumbered* and *Mistresses* as well as a number of projects that Clarke has acted in, such as the TV series' *Metrosexual* (1999) and *Robin Hood* (2007) and some short films.

- How does Davis' input affect the film, particularly its editing and narrative style?
- Look at Davis' IMDB page. What has he done that might indicate his input on the look of *4.3.2.1.*?
- What elements of the film might have been different had Clarke directed on his own? (Remember, also, that Clarke directed *Adulthood* but not *Kidulthood* – how were they different stylistically?)

Controversy

Clarke has been criticised for having his strong quartet of resourceful heroines frequently displayed in their underwear and for inclusion of a 'gratuitous' lesbian sex scene. The titillating poster has also caused controversy. In an interview, Clarke defended the film's sexiness: 'The balance we were trying to create was not disregarding or disrespecting the audience that we have brought along with us from the previous films which is a very 'laddy' audience, but at the same time trying to do something that brings more girls into the film'.*

- Female students, do you feel this film is empowering for young women?
- Male students, did you feel the nudity and sex scenes were gratuitous?
- Would the film still have appealed to you without the sexiness? May older viewers have been more interested too?

Teachers' Notes

- A useful interview with Noel Clarke is available at:
http://www.denofgeek.com/movies/493281/noel_clarke_interview_4321_filming_sex_scenes_kevin_smith_and_film_students.html
- *Clarke is interviewed on a Mark Kermode and Simon Mayo Film Review podcast (29/v/2010) available at the BBC website.

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