

An assumed meaning of the title in “A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night”

By Timo Schmitz, *Philosopher*

After I published two articles about the major key elements “life/ death” and “loneliness”, it is worthy to take a deeper look at the title of the movie. The title of the movie is very interesting since it seems to contain already the major core elements. At first, it talks about “A Girl”. It is very important to point out that the girl is never named in the movie, so she is just referred to as “the Girl” in the credits. The viewer does not get any background information. We do not know where the girl comes from, why she is there, she is just any girl. Though she is just any girl, the title already indicates that she is not a girl like all others, since she “walks home alone at night”. In Iranian society it is very unusual that a girl walks alone at night, so the title already shows that she is a special person. Despite the fact that she walks home, the term “walk home” also might refer to a phase of self-finding, since we do not really know why she has to walk home every night, we do not know what she was doing before. The girl might live in all of us, she represents **justice** as well as our deep abysses. She says of herself that she’s bad, and still the viewer does not get the feeling that the bad things she is doing are bad because they are bad (as morality teaches us not to kill), but rather her bad deeds balance something and the viewer gets the idea that she is good: **a hero in a costume** (since she tells the viewer that she is not religious). There is no police in the movie, no kind of state force that controls justice, so the girl takes that function. Though she talks herself of being bad, the viewer gets splitted. One gets caught in between “the victims got what they deserved” and “killing as a revenge is bad”. However, on the other side one might see a **salvation** in the killings since her victims are soul-dead and not aware of anything in life anymore. Thus, one might either see a revenge (negative connotation) or a salvation (positive connotation) in it, thus we have a split person.

The term “alone” refers to the theme core **loneliness**. The girl feels lonely, such as the whole environment. This theme was already explained in depth in my previous article. The term “night” refers to the other theme core **death**, which is associated with **exploitation**. Even further “alone at night” connects the theme of loneliness and death. It also connects loneliness with exploitation, since we might ask why are people nowadays lonely?

Despite death as salvation, we can see **love** as affirming salvation which spends **life**.

So all in all we already get to know from the title that it is about a girl who is the hero of the movie. She has to go a long walk to finally arrive “home” (in the sense of arriving home, and in the sense of finding herself through justice and love). Home thus refers to a goal, to a higher goal, a way to feel free. She is lonesome as she walks all alone and has no one in her life and she walks at night, which shows the desperate kind of living in Bad City contrasted to daylight and better living (remember that Shaydah’s room with all the wealth is shown at daylight, while the hopeless places are more often vividly depicted at night). Also the industry is focussed at night, as the people have no personal wealth from the natural resources.

Arash and the Girl finally escape at night in hope for ‘daylight’ which can be seen in the final scene when the lights of the car are shown in the dark as contrast to the night.

Film data:

A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night

Written and directed by Ana Lily Amirpour

Produced by Justin Begnaud, Sina Sayyah, Elijah Wood

Logan Pictures/ Spectre Vision/ VICE Films

USA, 2014. Language: Farsi. 101 minutes.

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