

The Dark Horse

The film 'Dark Horse' was directed by James Napier Robertson about a man named Genesis. Genesis is known as the legendary 'Dark Horse' for he was the champion in the world of chess but his downfall was his mental illness but that didn't stop him from playing. Once he left the mental asylum, he led a group of kids, later called the 'Eastern Knights' to victory in a chess tournament.

In the film, one technique that was used to show the concept of power was the *voice-over* that played in the background. One of the scenes that used this technique was when Genesis and the 'Eastern Knights' were fundraising so that they would be able to go to Auckland and compete in the tournament. While the little boy stood in front of the crowd to read out his story for them the camera would zoom to Genesis then it would change to Mana but the little boy's voice was still being heard in the background which made it seem like the story he was telling was happening in reality, like as if what he was saying was applying to Genesis and Mana. In the story he talked about how there was a little boy who was so afraid to stand his ground but he had finally found the courage to do so. Mana was too afraid to stand up to his father and say that he doesn't want to be patched into the life of gang-hood or that all he wanted to do was join Genesis and the Eastern knights. Genesis wanted to stand up to his older brother, Ariki who is also the father of Mana but he didn't have the guts to do so. The story that the little boy was telling made the audience feel like he was encouraging Genesis to stand up to Ariki so that Mana doesn't have to suffer in the life of gang-hood doing things he never wanted to do and so that he wouldn't have to live with the guilt of being a bystander, watching Mana fall into the life of ruins more and more, it was as if the story itself had the power to make it happen. The voice-over also gave the audience a feeling of hope, hoping that after hearing the story that had been told, Genesis would finally come to his senses and stand up to his brother but it also gave us, the audience a sense of uneasiness, unsure of whether Genesis would ever be able to get Mana to go with them or if he will even be able to stand up to his brother and defend Mana.

When you relate this technique to reality, the 'Voice-over' like in the film could be in reality, a voice that is really within us, helping us make the right decisions, making sure that we are doing things that are right or doing things that will benefit us. We call that 'voice-over' our 'Conscious'. Everyone has a conscious. Usually our conscious has the power to stop us from committing wrong-doings or it helps us with life. We usually do things to impress others to make ourselves look cool or strong, sometimes those 'things' we do can be horrible to ourselves or to others but after doing those things, we have a conscious in our minds that make us feel the guilt of what we had just finished doing but when all we've done are good things, our conscious will be free, nothing weighing over it that keeps us feeling guilty, it doesn't nag us constantly with that feeling of guilt or sadness.

Another technique that was used to show the concept of power was the *focus shot*. One of the scenes that used this technique was when Mana was robbing the house with the person that was to be assigned to teach him the ways of gang-hood. The camera is shown zooming into his face and focuses there while he was rummaging through the dressing table searching for something valuable that he could probably sell for cash but then the camera zooms out and then focuses on a child that is hiding and cowering away on corner side of the bed, scared and helpless, which made Mana stop rummaging through and just stare at the little boy. Mana was still

staring at the young frightened child when his leader pulled his collar and dragged him out of the bedroom bringing Mana back to reality. This technique, when it was focused on the little boy and then Mana realising he was there made it seem like the little boy had power over Mana, for once Mana had noticed that he was there, he stopped what he was doing straight away and just stared, like the little boy had the power to stop him from robbing the remainder of what was left in the bedroom. This technique made the audience feel pity upon Mana because he didn't mean to rob the house or to scare the child who was cowering away. He was just doing what he had to. The audience also felt a sense of relief when Mana has stopped everything that he was doing, it was as if he could see a part of him inside the boy, for maybe he was scared inside too, like he was still a child that was waiting to be rescued by another.

When you link it this technique to reality, it's like sometimes we focus so hard on trying to accomplish things that along the way we unintentionally hurt those around us. Like for example, sometimes we focus so much on trying to succeed in life that we often forget about our families. We work so hard that we hardly spend time with them and for them, that can be terrifying because they too are growing older and older everyday and sometimes we just need to focus on them more then when we focus on trying to succeed for maybe once we succeed they might not be here anymore and we may realise that we lost the one thing that no one can replace or get back. Focusing in life has a power over us and that can be very exciting but also scary, and going into the real world will be even more terrifying but having our families there will help us because sometimes there is a 'mini-me' inside us scared to be alone.

One other technique that was used to show the concept of power was the *change of colour*. One of the scenes that used this technique was after Mana had finished speaking with his father he left to his bedroom and sat down on the floor beside his bed. While he sat there, he was almost covered in complete darkness like he was about to change over to the darkside of depression, the change of colour had the power to change how the audience felt about Mana, it made us feel like Mana was depressed because of how gloomy not only by how he looked but how his room also looked but then he grabbed something out from the pocket of his hoodie and held it in front of him, then the sun shone upon him showing the chess piece he was holding and showing his face.

When the colour changed it showed that it had the power to change the audiences points of views on how a character can look, especially when they went from looking so gloomy and depressing to looking like he had a glimmer of hope and a positive outlook on life after he held his chess piece and the sun shining in. The change in colour made the audience feel like there was still some hope for Mana, like someone was going to come and rescue him out of the dungeon. It also made us feel happy that a glimmer of hope was shown in his eyes.

When you relate this to reality, sometimes the 'change of colour' relating to reality can be related to the changes that happen in our lives, changes that happen in our lives have the power to change our outlook of life or how we feel about life or certain things. Sometimes those changes can make us have a positive or negative outlook or feeling and sometimes it can bring us down to the deepest parts of sorrow and misery but sometimes during those times of trouble when we can't adapt to the new way of 'life' sometimes we just need a friend or someone we can talk to or even something that we can write in or something that we can keep with us to help us to cope. A friend can help us bring back the laughs and smiles we once had in our faces or even just a song or anything that will give us maybe just a little glimpse of what life was really like for us before we had a 'change of colour'.

One last technique that was used to show the concept of power was the *over the shoulder shot*. One of the scenes that used this technique was after Mana had robbed the house, the camera then showed Mana and his father. The camera was positioned behind Ariki, while he placed his hand on top of Mana's shoulder. That technique had the power to show the audience that Ariki, was proud of what his son did, but it also had the power to show us, the audience that Mana had the look of disappointment written all over his face. The look of shame for what he had just finished doing and that fact that his father was giving him a pat on the shoulder made him look even more disappointed in himself and his father. This made the audience feel disappointed in Ariki for giving his son a pat on the shoulder when the look of disappointment and shame was written all over his face. It made us the audience, wish that Genesis was there to take Mana away from the wretched life his father was willing to give him.

Relating this technique to reality, the 'over the shoulder' technique is always being used in our everyday lives. It has a lot of power over most of us. In reality, everything we do is seen by everyone, beside us, in front of us, and even behind us. Everything we do in public is being watched by those around us and some of those people never forget. Sometimes we just need to be careful with what we do and what we say because everyone has eyes and everyone has ears and mouths, and things that come out of people's mouths can spread like fire and some of what they say can be very harmful to ourselves and to other. Every little thing we do, people see, even God himself. There is nothing we hide without God seeing or hearing. He knows and he never forgets and that's just like those around us, 'They never forget'.