

In the film 'The Dark Knight' the director, Christopher Nolan, uses many significant scenes throughout the film to present certain themes and ideas to the audience. To do this, Nolan skilfully uses a variety of techniques to present these ideas, which help to develop and craft the narrative. One of the most important scenes in 'The Dark Knight' which uses a number of these film techniques is The Party Scene.

An important technique used in The Party Scene is the Camera Work. Half way through The Party Scene, The Joker is seen holding a knife to Rachel's head, as he recounts his terrifying past. The camera in the scene circles around the two, with a slight low angle, and blurs out the rest of the party guests. These three camera techniques create a feeling of sickness, fear and intimidation as the audience can only focus on the Joker, much like Rachel. Rachel is presented as a very strong character throughout the film, yet trembles in the Joker's presence in this scene. These camera techniques show the audience how the Joker can instil fear into even the strongest and most respectable characters. Whilst the camera work in The Party scene helps develop the audience's understanding of the Joker, it also helps the audience understand Batman, and why he is so feared by Gotham's criminal society. Towards the end of The Party scene, Rachel is thrown out of a window in the top floor of one of Gotham's many skyscrapers. Without hesitating the Batman follows Rachel out the window. The camera follows Batman out the window, and shows the full height and size of the drop. This helps show the audience how fearless Batman is, and really demonstrates his selflessness and will to save those he loves (1).

The editing pace during The Party scene plays an important part in conveying themes and ideas. While the Joker is on screen in this scene the pace is very slow, while when Batman is on screen the pace is very fast. This is used to demonstrate the contrast between the Joker and Batman. The present silent stillness whenever the Joker is on screen makes it seem as if he were the only one in the room. This demonstrates the Joker's dominance over the people in the room and the people of Gotham in general. This slow paced, stillness compares the Joker to some kind of predator as the people in the room 'play dead' like helpless victims as the Joker slowly stalks his prey around the room (2). This shows everything the Joker represents, fear, dominance and the "new class of criminal".

One of the most important pieces of dialogue in The Party scene is when the Joker grabs an old man as he says "We aren't intimidated by you thugs". This line is very significant as it presents many themes within 'The Dark Knight'. This man is not backed up by anyone else who is in the room, as they are all far too scared, to say or

do anything. This shows that the people in the room and Gotham in general are intimidated by the Joker, and that he is not simply an everyday "thug". Because the one brave man is not backed up by anyone else, the theme that the people of Gotham would rather protect themselves than anyone else is first introduced. This is significant as it foreshadows the Joker using this concept later on in the film by giving the people on two separate boats the detonators to each other (3).

The symbolism within The Party scene is clearly visible. This scene really conveys the Joker's 'hands on' approach to crime. The Joker intimidates and threatens the people in this scene with a knife, and gets right up in their faces as he does it. This shows how the Joker loves to get as personal as possible when dealing with his enemies. When the Batman makes a surprise entrance into the scene, the Joker punches and kicks him, rather than just shooting him. This demonstrates the Joker's sick, twisted mind as he laughs while stabbing Batman with the knife in his shoe. The main symbolism in this scene is the knife. This is used to compare the Batman to the Joker. The Batman uses the latest technology while fighting crime, as he wears futuristic, expensive armour and uses gadgets such as grappling hooks. The Batman represents everything that is good within Gotham. The Joker represents everything that is evil within Gotham, and is the complete opposite to Batman. The Joker takes a less serious, less technical approach to crime and instead of using fancy gadgets and armour; he uses a simple knife and wears a purple suit. The Joker's presence at the party as he takes over the building symbolises the post 9/11 world we live in today. The Joker is comparable to modern day terrorists, as he has no concern for his, or anyone else's safety or well being. The Batman represents the failing fight against modern day terrorism, as no matter how hard he tries, people are killed and taken hostage. The Batman can be compared to modern day governments, as he has the latest technology, seemingly unlimited funding and advanced intelligence, yet still loses the battle against the Joker who is 'primitive' and greatly disadvantaged in comparison (4).

In conclusion, The Party scene is definitely one of the most important scenes in 'The Dark Knight' as it is one of the only scenes in the film in which the camera work, editing pace, dialogue and symbolism all come together to present ideas and themes from the Joker's primitive, predatory means of crime, to modern day terrorism and the struggle between good and evil.