

The Film Connection – Chapter Seven

- 1.) What is successful about *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*?

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind took a mundane and ordinary plot, such as a bad breakup, and spun it into something more interesting, which was erasing one's memory. The film was also an example of "genre-mashing", which is putting two genres together. In the case of *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, romantic comedy and science fiction are combined into one, creating a unique film about romance and memory.

- 2.) Name three famous remakes that are not thought of as remakes.

The Maltese Falcon (1941) – Remake of *Maltese Falcon* (1931)

The Thing (1982) – Remake of *The Thing from Another World* (1951)

The Magnificent Seven (1960) – Remake of *Seven Samurai* (1956)

- 3.) What is the key to good genre mashing?

Genre mashing requires not only cohesion and balance between the two or more genres being combined, but at the same time, show expertise in the genres being explored. For example, Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* combines revenge, spaghetti western, samurai, kung-fu, action, and feminism all into one, but Tarantino shows that he is well-versed in all of these genres through his subtle use of metatextuality (commenting on other works). A horrid example of genre mashing is *Moonraker* (1979), in which James Bond fights in space. The film was a sorry attempt to attract the *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* fans and James Bond seemed out of place throughout the entire film. Therefore to genre mash, one must be knowledgeable enough about his or her chosen genres that he or she can represent each of them well in a respectable manner.

- 4.) Come up with your own "genre-mashing" idea, and write a one page synopsis for it.

Two rebellious young people—a runaway boy and a prostitute girl—end up at the same single apartment in a mysterious ghost town. But upon first meeting, they dislike each other and want the apartment for themselves. With both of them being selfish, obnoxious, and immature, they struggle to live together peacefully without biting each other’s heads off every second. At the same time, their rich, psychotic landlady is executing her plan to entrap these two young people in this dark and menacing ghost town she created.

This idea, based on my screenplay in progress, *Pacific Motel*, combines comedy, drama, and thriller together. The characters exchange some comedic dialogue and scenes, such as with the main characters constantly annoying each other like brother and sister. There are also a number of quirky characters, such as a talkative African American female crepe chef, four transvestites who sweet talk the main character while he’s sulking in a bar, and a ruthless gambling king who looks like Jesus. These situations take a seemingly dark situation, which is in this case, two young people who are on their own in a dangerous ghost town, and make it humorous. The drama is based on the backstory of these characters, which is in some ways a little tragic. The two young people both come from difficult family backgrounds, especially the girl, which has caused them to both be unruly, misguided young adults who don’t know how to live in the real world. Lastly, the thriller aspect is associated with the setting—a ghost town. The town itself is creepy because it’s mostly empty and the same people are always at certain locations. The whole town appears to be a setup, almost like a video game where all the surroundings and people are stationary. This ghost town was created a psychotic landlady who intends to trap the main characters in this fake world, as she has done with the few people who are already there. All of the people in this ghost town (except the landlady) have something in common—they’ve all run away from something that they want to avoid. They have gone so far to avoid it that they have agreed to live in this ghost town and be controlled by this landlady. If her victims refuse to cooperate, she has them brutally murdered, and the crepe chef makes meat crepes out of their flesh. Therefore, the thriller aspect of the story unfolds over time, and turns a comedic situation into something much more dark and disturbing.

Pacific Motel is meant to make audiences laugh, empathize with the characters, and make them uncomfortable at the same time. The theme of *Pacific Motel* is that we all have to face

our problems at some point, for running away from them makes us lose ourselves. Therefore the genre mashing of comedy, drama, and thriller all comes together to communicate a message that is relatable for all people who are trying to escape the real world.