

Colossal Notes

THE FILM

- Interesting that it starts in South Korea. SK has made a surprising number of kaiju films. It subverts expectations that it'd be Japan.
- We see the monster very quickly; within a few minutes.
- We get a bit of a reversal with our heroine: she's an alcoholic who gets kicked out by her boyfriend, so she moves back to her smalltown hometown to start over. It's usually the other way around. This boyfriend isn't abusive: he has legit gripes and is rightfully angry. Gloria says she'll get better, but she doesn't.
- You think this is gonna be a "fell good" Hallmark-style movie where Gloria reconnects with a nice old friend and gets over her alcoholism. Again, subverts expectations.
- There's a lot of subtlety to Sudekis's performance. He seems charming at first, but slowly the veil is pulled back on how awful he is.
- Nice foreshadowing with the playground. It establishes its rules organically. The kaiju rules are setup by Tim telling Gloria it appears nine hours ago.
- Interestingly, people watch the extraordinary events on TV and say the world will change, but then they go about their business like normal. Gloria even says if the creature only attacks Seoul, people will stop caring.
- Ironically, Gloria has great memory about the bar layout but forgets conversations she has.
- Gloria has the Japanese waves painting on her laptop. Nice touch.
- Gloria is a smart woman. Despite how absurd it seems, she figures out that the creature is connected to her.
- The shot composition where the monster raises its arms on the TV with Gloria standing in front of it is great.
- As time goes on, Oscar makes greater gestures (gifts of a TV and sofa, gives Gloria a job, etc.) to ingratiate himself to her. He feels entitled to her.
- The fire trick is impressive.
- The special effects in this are used sparingly. They do look pretty good.
- The live feed wouldn't be that in sync.
- Things get complicated when Gloria accidentally kills some people as the monster.
- Writing in the ground was a clever gesture.
- This was made at a time when YouTube and other video platforms were becoming major sources for news; the beginning of viral videos.
- "Get it backwards." "Why are you asking yourself for forgiveness?"
- Gloria "cheats" on Tim?
- "Thug life." Ha!
- This is a film about inner demons:
 - Gloria: alcoholism.
 - Oscar: narcissism
 - Joel: cowardice

- Garth: drug addiction.
- We do get a kaiju fight, but it's one of the most unusual ones I've seen. It isn't a brawl.
- Sudekis is scary in the "most irresponsible thing" scene. Tension is thick.
- The fantasy elements aren't fully explained, but they're connected to childhood trauma, a lightning strike, and inner demons. Oscar was a bad seed even as a kid. Toys they had are what they become. Oscar destroyed a diorama Gloria made of Seoul as a kid (why?).
- Juxtaposing the destruction sound effects over Oscar stomping the playground is horrifyingly effective. That was his moment of no return. Parallels him destroying the diorama.
- Unfortunately, these establishing shots for Seoul don't communicate the destruction.
- The robot does look a bit like a PacRim Jaeger. It even cracks its knuckles like Gipsy Danger.
- When Gloria grabs Oscar at the end, he truly sees how small he really is. Gloria gets to be Seoul's secret hero. Gloria still feels some remorse over killing Oscar.
- The ending works on an emotional level, but I have questions:
 - How did Gloria know the park in Seoul would work in reverse?
 - Why does it work in reverse?
 - How could she have been sure she'd catch Oscar? Even gauging by the robot was a stretch.
 - Why are the monsters still present even when held above ground?
 - How was Gloria able to hear Oscar yell at her?
- Other sources:
 - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colossal_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colossal_(film))
 - <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4680182/>
 - <https://www.vox.com/culture/2017/4/6/15167690/colossal-review-kaiju-anne-hathaway>
 - <https://www.vulture.com/2017/04/review-like-its-hero-colossal-is-a-charming-mess.html>
- Hathaway was the first actor to sign up when the film had no financial backing. It was described as "Godzilla meets *Lost in Translation*" and was compared to 2013 British thriller *A Field of in England* and *Being John Malkovich* (one of Hathaway's favorite films).
- Toho tried to sue Voltage Pictures for using Godzilla's image in e-mails and press documents sent to potential investors. That was settled in Oct. 2015.
 - "As the movie's director claimed the film was "The Cheapest Godzilla movie ever made," and showed photos of the character in its showing at the Cannes Film Festival, Godzilla's copyright owner, Toho, was not pleased. As a result of a settlement of the lawsuit which took place before the film was even released, the movie's location was moved from Tokyo to Seoul, South Korea, and that the movie would not use a derivative of Godzilla."
- No mo-cap was used. The CGI team used footage of the actors as reference.
- It played at film festivals and had a limited theatrical run in the U.S. in April 2017.

- Hathaway was pregnant while filming this.
- “The film is an international co-production between producers in Canada, Spain, the United States and South Korea.”
- “When the monster writes, ‘I’m sorry. It was a mistake. It won’t happen again,’ in Korean, it’s a verbatim quote from the comment King Juan Carlos de Borbón made after being injured while taking part in an elephant hunt in Botswana.”
- “This movie depicts a phenomenon called gaslighting, a form of psychological abuse on which events are distorted, omitted and often faked to compromise the victim’s perception of self and credibility to society, facilitating the abuser’s control over said victim. Oscar takes advantage of Gloria by depicting her as a monster, and presents different versions of events getting her to believe she’s done something wrong and he was helping her; Gloria believes Oscar and slowly gives him control over where she lives, what she has, how she earns a living, who she meets and other things. That dynamic is reflected on the creatures they manifest and how people perceive them. Gloria shows up in Korea as a monster, and people are afraid of her. Oscar shows up as a robot, and people believe him to be the hero. Only when Oscar is desperate for total control over Gloria, and shows his true face in order to blackmail her to stay, the extent of the abuse is seen and the viewer can quickly muse its consequences - gaslighting is a common factor in domestic violence cases and it’s a major tool for abusers to force victims to stay on.”
- Vigalondo previously directed *Timecrimes* (2007).
- Like kaiju throughout the genre, this isn’t a clean, clearcut film. It borrows the imagery of kaiju films. Oscar could be the villain or a force of nature.
- I hate this line: “Vigalondo demonstrates that even the dumbest genres can be used to profound ends — not cheapening serious things but kicking them to the next metaphoric level. A woman finding her inner strength is inspiring. But a woman finding her inner giant monster who kicks butt — that’s just so cool.”

TOKU TOPIC: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INNER DEMONS

- Sources:
 - <https://tobyingham.com/inner-demons/>
 - <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/evolution-the-self/201506/enough-about-inner-demons-already>
 - <https://time.com/6105717/on-loving-someone-who-battles-inner-demons/>
 - <https://markmanson.net/how-to-overcome-your-demons#our-demons>
- Ingham:
 - Definition: “You can think of an inner demon as that private voice that whispers in your ear reminding you of things that have gone wrong. The inner demon is a kind of uncertainty and anxiety point. It’s a voice that suddenly gets activated and sees problems everywhere.”
 - “In Freudian psychoanalysis and object relations theories, healthy positive development sees us acquire a critical agency referred to as the superego.

Optimally our superegos moderate us. They keep us in check without exerting undue aggression on us.”

- “In suboptimal conditions, we may inadvertently internalize a critical superego:
 - “If you grew up with a parent who could suddenly be very changeable or suspicious. A person who would profoundly alter the environment you were in, then that is likely to have had a dysregulating effect upon you.
 - “The inner demon is like your personal dysregulation point becoming activated.”
- “In Jungian psychotherapy we have a model of psyche which emphasizes the fact that at different points our consciousness becomes located and fixed upon a particular sense of identity. A complex in this model is a kind of autonomous area of mind that has certain independent characteristics. When we’re in the grip of that complex we can lose track of what we are like when we feel more stable settled and balanced.”
- “It’s a particular area of our minds, less socialized. We don’t have control over it and we don’t have control over when we become driven by it.”
- “Left unchecked this kind of destructive complex can have a very negative effect. It will see suspicion and doubt where none may be intended, and make it very hard for us to value the work we do.”
- “In psychotherapy it becomes possible to recognize the characteristics of this inner demon complex.”
- “Positive psychology takes the view that we can talk to our inner demons, that we can reprogram them. So, when we recognize the negative critical inner demon voice, we develop a positive mantra to say over the top of the negative voice.”
- Seltzer
 - He takes the term too literally, insisting that’s it’s equivalent to “the devil made me do it.” Once he gets past that, he gets more reasonable.
 - “Ultimately, the consensus of mental health professionals today is that the source of most—though certainly not all—so-called ‘evil’ thoughts and behaviors is linked to growing up in a seriously dysfunctional family. This is characteristically a family where parents are highly critical and can love their children only conditionally (if at all), based on performance—and sometimes only superlative performance at that. The result is that the child comes to feel that they’re not good enough, and all-too-frequently that, whatever they do, they can’t be good enough. Having so many of their wants and needs ignored or denied, they may, self-disparagingly, also perceive themselves as undeserving.”
 - “Laden with such negative parental messages throughout their crucial formative years, they’re typically either saddled with depressive, self-defeatist thoughts about themselves and/or the futility of their efforts. Or they’re full of anger and resentment, and so harbor hostile feelings not only toward their caretakers but toward people generally.” They also have trust issues.
 - “It might also be added that in their desperate need to get as much acceptance and approval (if not love) from their parents as possible, children growing up in such

deprived, non-nurturing families tend, indiscriminately, to imitate not just the positive but also the negative qualities of their caretakers. (As in, “How could you not care about me? I’m just like you!”) So, for example, if their parents treated them cruelly, they might thereby have learned to behave cruelly toward others (e.g., witness the case of so many bullies).”

- Schrobsdorff
 - She writes candidly about having a younger sister who battled depression and committed suicide at age 22.
- Manson
 - “Demons start out as a self-judgment: you’re lazy, you’re dirty, you’re stupid, you’re unlovable, etc.”
 - “Then we try our hardest to avoid that judgment, to prove it wrong. We clean the garage six times. We work 11-hour days. We win a blue ribbon at the local skating rink. *See! I told you I’m cool and likeable! See! Look at me!*”
 - “In her book, *Feeding Your Demons*, Tsultrim Allione talks about an old Tibetan Buddhist meditation practice where you literally visualize whatever ‘demon’ is haunting you, and then sit down and feed them, the same way you’d feed a guest or a friend at a dinner party. Allione argues that this has a healing effect—that it represents accepting the worst part of ourselves and developing compassion for ourselves.”
 - “I’ve long argued that the best thing about people is often also the worst thing about them—that’s because our extraordinarily positive traits often produce extraordinarily negative side effects. A gift for empathy might make you overly emotional at times. A competitive streak that earns you high achievements might also make you kind of an asshole. A spontaneous creative spirit that gives you artistic talent might make you really, really bad at doing your taxes.”
 - “In this sense, every demon has its associated angel. And our demons are just the other side of our best qualities. To give up one would be to give up both.”
 - “Put another way, whatever you choose to value in your life, you are also choosing to experience *the failure of that value*.”
 - “It’s important to note though: befriending the demon isn’t necessarily agreeing with the demon. And it’s definitely not the same thing as indulging them. An alcoholic isn’t made better by drinking more—that just feeds their addiction. And if you hate yourself in some way, indulging that hate with self-destructive behaviors will only feed into your self-loathing.”
 - “This drive to dissociate from our demons is a subtle form of entitlement—it’s an assumption or belief that we should be able to live without self-doubt or suffering. An off-shoot of that assumption is often the belief that our pain is special and unique to us, that no one understands what it’s like to be us or to have our problems.”
 - “If everyone faces demons at some point, then it means we don’t have to be ashamed of them. It just means we’re human.”

- “None of this is new, of course. Aside from Buddhists encouraging you to be pen pals with the worst parts of your nature, the famous psychoanalyst Carl Jung wrote prolifically about what he called “the shadow.” For Jung, your shadow is all of the parts of yourself that you despise or loathe and therefore hide and avoid. Much like a shadow, it’s this dark image that follows you around, always behind you, always attached to you. It is impossible to run away or lose your shadow because ultimately, your shadow *is* a representation of you.”
- “It is a beautiful metaphor, because no shadow can exist without a source of light. To rid yourself of your shadow would require you to rid yourself of the light in your life and thus, live in utter darkness.”
- “Jung argued that we must integrate our shadow into ourselves by ‘turning toward’ the darkness. That means embracing the dark parts of ourselves—our worst impulses, our worst shame, our worst fears—and owning them. Accept that they are there. But with that acceptance is a respectful disagreement.”