

MOVIE Discussion GROUP – May 2019

Dark City – Play Sheet

1. What does the symbol of the city always being dark, and that no one can remember the light or daytime symbolize in your view ?
2. What in your view, overall, what do the 'Strangers in trench coats' symbolize – and their mission and need - to understand what make people "human" ?
3. What in your view, does the central character of John Murdoch represent ?
4. The stranger's main method of experimentation was manipulating and implanting memories, and changing physical buildings and structures (Tuning). What was the changing of memories intended to produce, and what does the 'tuning' symbolize ?
5. Train theme – it seems like a catch 22. You have to take the 'express train' to get to the end of the line, to find 'Shell Beach' - but the problem is that the express train doesn't stop at any station, so there doesn't seem any way to 'get on' the train. Does a spiritual parallel come to mind?
6. What does 'Shell Beach', the place no one can either remember about or know how to get to, symbolize ?
7. The policeman character 'John Bumstead' played by William Hurt – (who doesn't know the truth about the city) is the point person to solve the mysterious serial murder case. What in your view does his character, and the case represent ?
8. The doctor character, Dr. Daniel Schreiber - played by Kiefer Sutherland – given his role and eventual betrayal of the strangers, symbolize ?

9. John Murdoch gained incredible powers and eventually led to a showdown with Mr. Book, the head Stranger. What do these various main symbols represent in your view ?
- In the scene of the showdown, the large face that opens with a clock behind it
 - The fact that the head stranger was named Mr. Book (Ian Richardson actor)
 - In this scene Mr. Book says 'shut it down, shut it down forever' – what in your view does this symbolize ?
 - The exploding of the water tank, and the releasing of the ocean waters
 - The parasite creature that came out of Mr. Book's head - that seemed to writhe and disintegrate immediately upon the host body dying.

Other symbols that stuck out to you ?

10. Repeatedly the movie mentions that John Murdoch has 'survived the fire' in his implanted memories. Does this have a symbolic meaning in your view ?
11. In the end, John Murdoch had to 'create' shell beach because it was a lie, because it didn't really exist. He had to create the oceans and the daytime, because they didn't exist either. What does this symbolize to you ? Does the reference to 'shell' in the name mean anything ?
12. Mr. Hand says a parting comment to John Murdoch, "I am dying, John. It seems that your imprint is not compatible with my kind"John also says you went looking in the wrong place. What does that interchange with Mr. Hand symbolize in your view ?
13. At the very end, John Murdoch seemed to restore the entire city to normal and then walk in the daylight to find his true love. What does this symbolize to you ?
- Observation: The female character's name 'Anna' is pronounced and spelled the same when read both forward and backward. Does this have any symbolic meaning ?
 - There was a lighthouse on the new shell beach that John created, what does this symbolize ?