

The constant gardener film



Fernando Meirelles' "The Constant Gardener" is a complex thriller/love story, based on the novel of John le Carre, containing a heavy use of non-linear story weaving, flashbacks and flash forwards. The main character, Justin Quale, is shown as an unassuming, almost passive person, while his wife, Tessa, is shown as assertive, and almost aggressive.

Justin and Tessa are important to the film, because the contrast between their characters helps develop the theme of the never-ending work of gardening. Gardening itself is a past-time not for people who quickly become bored with the tasks. Weeding, trimming, and planting are such tasks which require a lot of effort, time, and constancy. Therefore, Justin Quayle's gardening is likened to his wife's never-ending effort to stop the injustices of the pharmaceutical company "Three Bees".

As the movie progresses, and after Justin's faith and love for his dead wife are rediscovered, he feels that he has completed the mission that she herself was not able to finish, and as he has finished "uprooting the last of the weeds", he can now rest, and join his wife in death. During one of the scenes in the film, Justin says that he can not return back home, because "Tessa was my home", and yet while he no longer has the will to live, he takes up her unfinished quest and pursues her leads in a way unlike Tessa ever did.

Tessa was passionate and confrontational in her exposure of the Three Bee's plot, but Justin, being the gardener that he was, used different methods to his wife. Knowing from gardening that patience and careful actions are the key, he slowly and politely works through Tessa's leads, finding out more

and more clues about the pharmaceutical company. So even though Tessa is gone, Justin may have found a new home, in this constant struggle for truth.

After coming across Ham, one of Tessa's cousins, Justin finds out that the company KDH are actually the creators of the Dypraxa drug which is supposed to treat tuberculosis, (what Tessa was researching), and that they are partners with Three Bees, who test the drug itself. Justin then meets with Brigit (a woman who had been keeping in touch with Tessa) in Germany, where she tells him that KDH, knowing that the drug could cause deaths, still decided to test the drugs on people and bribed the Kenyan government so that they would allow the testing.

This links with the theme as the drug, which has not been correctly developed, is very much like a weed killer, which is capable of killing the weeds (ridding people of TB), but can also kill the plants (can kill people).

The Constant Gardener is a successful, well-crafted film, that tries to deliver through itself, a message to human kind about what the world could be like, and that corruption and greed are possible even in humanitarian organizations.

It also tries to remind us, that we as humankind are responsible for our governments' actions and that even a man like Justin Quale, a diplomat and "servant" of the government, who likes to keep his hands clean, doesn't mind getting them dirty, when it comes to "gardening". Therefore, just like a garden that needs to be well looked after and constantly maintained, this world and the people "controlling" it, also need to be constantly looked after to make sure that it stays clean of weeds and keeps blossoming.