

Movie-the third man essay

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For a long time, the individual's relationship with the past has been preserved in their memories as a natural process. The film industry and other media have likewise allowed memories to be preserved through considerable archives to help us intervene with past memories and shape new ideas for the future. Most films even with its entertaining purpose have the initial aim to educate through audiovisual segments. Other films seek to absorb the dignity of historical documents and tend to suppress political perspectives at the time of recording. Nonetheless, politics play an important role in film-making as historical events are utilized and enhanced to reflect a prevalent impression rather than stark realities.

In some films, crime dramas present moral ambiguities and sexual motivation presented in cinematic terms as the film noir with its classic era of the 1940's to the 1950's. Many of the prototypical stories and attitudes are derived from the hardboiled crime fiction that emerged in the United States during the Depression (Hillier, 1985: 191). An important film is a 1949 British thriller, *The Third Man* which is conferred as a visually-stylish thriller with a paranoid story of social, economic, and moral corruption in a depressed, rotting and crumbling, 20th century Vienna following World War II (Hillier, 1985: 191). Even if there was simultaneous development in industrialized countries after the war, a disparity seems to exist in this film as it continues to depict a shattered and poisoned city.

It was however considered one of the greatest British thrillers of the post-war era with sullen views that portray pessimistic undertones used for geo-political lines apparently against the cold war sentiment of the period. With a story set in post-war Vienna just after the Second World War, various

documentary-style shots were presented of post-war Vienna which was a frontier city dividing the East and West- between the Allied powers of Great Brittan, France, USSR and USA; nothing would be remiss on this idea. The Film and InterpretationIn its brilliant effects and remarkable musical score, the view of Vienna despite its dilapidation is not lost to the viewer. By day, the city portrayed a lovely character but at night, an emphasis showed its sinister side reminiscent of a cynical post-war and the start of the Cold war. It is likewise a symbolism of the past glory of a great city which is currently filled with corruption following the WWII and a combined occupation of alien forces (Ferro 1988, p. 125).

The use of black and white in the film is a classic example on the perfect use of the film industry to evoke and showcase mood and emotion with shadow casting. On another level, this visual technique is used to set the scene and create an atmosphere which draws out the viewer's participation while holding connotative meaning in scene structure that tells the whole story. The replacement of a busted light bulb that the German caretaker/porter was doing in Harry Lime's apartment is an example that signifies the gesture of repairs presently going around Europe or could mean that repairs were done after Harry's body is taken to the cemetery. From the initial scenes, one can already anticipate and unhappy journey especially for it lead character who wanted to start a new life according to Moss (1987: 179). The central character in the film is a western novelist Holly Martins, who arrived at the Vienna railway station in search for an old friend, Harry Lime, who has offered him an opportunity to work and write propaganda for a volunteer medical unit he runs. As childhood friends, Martins presented and innocent

and youthful counterpart to the worldly Harry Lime. Yet upon arrival at the station, Holly Martins was wondering why his friend did not meet him which gave him a chance to go directly to Stiftgasse 15, the location of Harry's second floor apartment.

Martins soon discover from a German caretaker/porter in the apartment where Harry lives that his old friend Harry Lime had been killed in a vehicular accident on Thursday and that his coffin was taken to the cemetery. The sense of mystery is then emphasized as a large proportion of the shots here are done in a heavy angle tilt creating a sense of disorientation for the viewer (Hillier, 1985: 192). This feeling of disorientation is worked to match Holly Martins arrival into the dilapidated city ignorant of Vienna's black market and other amoral attitudes. The viewer then gets a hint of Holly's displacement in one of the earliest shots of the film when he confidently walks under a ladder to get inside Harry's apartment which arguably warns the viewer and Harry to tread lightly against the systems at work in post-war Vienna which could lead him into so much trouble. Under a contrasting conflict of right and wrong, the film then portrays a stance of tension and confusion as Holly rushes to the gravesite to attend Harry's funeral. There were only a few attendees to the ceremony as the priests said prayers in German. One grieving dark-haired girl was later identified as Anna Schmidt, Harry's mistress who is a Russian exile and refugee.

After the ceremony, a British military officer, Major Calloway offered Holly a lift and a drink in town. In the bar, Holly soon reminisced about their friendship suggesting a latent homosexual attraction to a friend he last saw in 1939. Through Calloway, Holly found out stunned to learn that Harry had

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been accused of shady deals as an exploitative, morally corrupt, black market racketeer and dealer engaged in trafficking activities of adulterated and diluted penicillin which was highly in demand during the period and was wanted by the police.

In his drive to learn the truth, he soon found out that Harry had been accused of shady deals as an exploitative, morally corrupt, black market racketeer and dealer engaged in trafficking activities of adulterated and diluted penicillin which was highly in demand during the period. Believing in Harry's innocence, Holly is angered by the accusation and was convinced that Calloway as an authority figure had a hand in victimizing his friend. Having had too much to drink, Holly tried to slug Calloway but was stopped by Sgt. Paine, Calloway's aide who took him to a military hotel. At the Sacher's Hotel, Holly Martins is introduced to Mr. Cribbin of the propagandistic Cultural Re-Education Section who runs weekly shows like the Hamlet and a striptease with Hindu dancers. Martins is then invited as a famous American author to give a lecture on the "contemporary novel" which was timely for Holly to remain in Vienna and conduct his own investigation into the truth of Harry Lime's death. After accepting the invitation to the lecture, Lime describes the beginning of his quest for truth about the maligned Harry Lime.

Holly decides to dig deeper into his friend's mysterious death despite being told that Lime was struck by a truck while crossing the street, most of the witnesses were friends and associates of Lime; this included the truck driver whose stories did not coincide. He also found out that Harry's last words before he died were to the effect that Harry's friend Kurtz should be look <https://assignbuster.com/movie-the-third-man-essay/>

after. In his investigation, only one eye witness who was not associated with Lime himself claimed that a third man helped carry Lime's body for which the movie derived its title. The third man was in fact Lime who helped carry the corpse of his murdered co-racketeer. Holly's second meeting with Anna Schmidt, the dark-haired woman in the cemetery was at the Josefstadt theater where Anna worked as an actress.

Anna related additional information regarding the tragic accident which added to Holly's suspicions that Harry was killed by his own driver, witnessed by two of his closest friends and his own physician who pronounced him dead. Additionally the presence of a Third man who helped carry Harry's body across the street despite the two other witnesses claims led Holly to decide that Harry was not accidentally killed but could have been murdered. While everyone tried to get Holly to stop his amateur investigation including Major Callaway, the Baron Kurtz and even Anna, Harry's girlfriend, Holly pursued his questions to the porter about Lime's death. Suddenly a rubber ball bounces which is a reminder of Holly's dangerous world he is unnecessarily mixed in. Finally, Calloway showed Holly all the evidence against Harry Lime which disillusioned Holly who agreed to leave Vienna. Calloway's character and in a person of authority aims to portray that the law is protective of innocent beings like Holly.

After his hasty goodbye to Anna, Holly encountered in the shadows, Harry who disappeared before he could catch him and Holly believed that Holly was chasing his shadow or Lime's ghost for answers instead of Lime himself. When he recounts this story to Callahan and admits its incredulity the audience is apparently moved because they have seen Lime as well which

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will provide an impact that the viewer at this point sides with a drunken man over a figure of authority and therefore associates himself with the central character. This realism in visual language is often dramatized to create a poignant link to the central character and the audience which will be remembered as an important factor in getting beliefs and issues across. This is likewise one method of conveying meaning visually is through the use of props particularly employed in this movie to associate with characters in Ferro (1988, 126) . In a series of images as Holly stood in Anna's apartment to say goodbye, the camera moves through the window sill and out into the darkened wet street where a man looks up at the window and hides through the night. Lime is then identified here through the cat as it ran from the apartment to the wet street and snuggles to the person's shoe.

The previous scene had explained how the cat likes to nuzzle against his shiny black shoes of his master Harry Lime. While this scene lets the viewer realize that it was Lime after being told in a previous scene that the cat only likes Lime, it also says another aspect of his character in Moss (1987, 189). A contradictory attitude of a man who casually causes death and madness among children though adulterated medicines while having affection with an animal is presented. In the meantime, Lime's coffin is disinterred and findings revealed that the dead body belonged to a police informant Joseph Harbin, a medical orderly who had acted as a police informer against Lime (Moss, 1987: 190). Anna is then summoned to the International Police Headquarters and Holly shouts to her that he has seen Lime. In Calloway's office, Anna is visibly stunned and seeks confirmation that Harry is still alive but when asked to reveal information in exchange for her own freedom from

deportation to the Russians, she voiced out her worries for Harry therefore depicting how Holly failed in his love-struck advances to Anna. The gripping confrontation between Holly and Harry in the amusement park reveals Harry Lime's unrepentant side and symbolic of Holly losing his innocence forever (Moss, 1987: 191). A fairground park which was the choice of a meeting place for Holly and Lime remind us on the beginnings of friendship forged during childhood that Holly decides to end by a disloyalty to his friend.

Likewise this reminds us on another tone, the children of Vienna and their absence as we see an empty carousel. In a visual metaphor innocence is betrayed or lost innocence in Lime as a child and of Holly upon the discovery of his friend's dark side. Holly lost his oldest friendship and Anna loses the only man she ever loves and his blind morals and innocence. Lime does not retain any amount of goodness marked by greed in the character he represents and provided his explanation in a famous looking down upon the people beneath the large Ferris wheel at the Prater Amusement Park and compares them to dots.

On the ground, he finally said, " In Italy, for thirty years under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder, bloodshed — they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance. In Switzerland, they had brotherly love, five hundred years of democracy and peace, and what did that produce? The cuckoo clock"...

This scene wishes to impart an association that the amoral Harry prefers chaos compared to peace because chaos has produced the century greats in art and architecture and in other aspects while peace, which portrays the

good aspect presenting nothing but a clock. This is then an example where meaning can be derived from what is felt as much as what is not seen. The rest of the movie then deals with Holly's battle with his conscience where he finally turned against his best friend much to Harry and Anna's disappointment. A partnership with Lime in his illicit business was offered to Holly. Although reluctant at first to nail Lime, Holly then decided to set up Lime in exchange for Anna's freedom from deportation to the Russians on the ground of a forged passport. Anna soon learned of Holly's betrayal yet remains faithful to Harry. Calloway, sensing Holly's reluctance to turn over Harry took the writer to a children's hospital where he sees the victims of Lime's penicillin racket. A discarded teddy bear is used as props to signify the destruction Lime caused and Holly soon agreed to take put Lime.

At a café where Holly was supposed to meet Harry, the police presence was revealed after an old balloon seller cast shadows that almost seemed like Harry's presence. A magnificent chase sequence ensued after Harry appeared and was scared by a sergeant at the café where Holly was waiting (Ferro, 1988: 130). The sequence showed bomb sites and open manhole and dark tunnels into the Vienna sewer systems which symbolize the cavernous Hades itself where evil resides. Harry killed a sergeant while he is shot by Calloway as he scrambled away. Finally he is cornered and forced to climb up to the street level. Holly saw his old friend at the top of the iron stairway beneath the grating in pain and fear. Harry looks down and sees Holly looking up at him making a winking gesture or nod, to shoot.

In the end Holly pulled the trigger and murdered his closest and trusted friend. Significantly in the end, it is implied that Anna and Holly could have
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begun a new life together as Holly waits along the tree-lined cemetery for Anna. In a defiant gesture that simply conveys dismissal against a traitor, Anna ignored Holly and walked out of his life. Works Cited Moss, Robert.

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