

The wind that shakes the barley assignment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Texts are never viewed in isolation as we always view it through the prism of our previous encounters. Producers of visual texts rely on the viewer's experiences to consume themselves in the text.

The famous writer Michel Foucault once said that " a text is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network" The concept of intertextuality has definitely been taken into account in the production of the films " the Wind that Shakes the Barley". In order to understand how the producer conveys his meaning and themes you must first fully understand the methods of construction and how these convey attitudes and values. In film a producer may use technical, symbolic, audio or written codes to convey his meaning of the text.

Lighting plays a major part in the film " The Wind... " The Irish weather has a slight affect as it is very soft, humid and cloudy. In various scenes in the film very foggy and rainy weather was evident. A very natural and soft light was seen throughout the movie as much of it was filmed outside where high tech lightening is not nessecerly a true representation of the films setting. The natural lighting was used to great effect using the particular instance of the scene where five or six members of the IRA are pictured walking slowly toward the camera out of the mist.

The midst creates an eerie feeling in the air and this technique is used to great effect. Shot types play an essential role in constructing the text. The techniques used stayed pretty much the same even on a large and more action driven story. It seems that there is a simple positioning of the camera that just seems to flow from scene to scene. Most of the shots are long shots.

What I found particularly affective in the film was the odd shot on the spectacular landscape. These shots are very intertextual as the beauty of the landscape tells a story in itself.

Costume can be used as a powerful symbolic tool. Clothing can represent the time in which the film was set and therefore the characters can be shaped by the clothes they wear. The costumes in the film featured natural colors such as greens, browns and blues. These colors are dull and seemed to match the surrounding environment and represent the native Irish community in a time of struggle and low prosperity. One clever technique used in the film was the placement of distinguishable features on the main characters and let the lesser characters blend in with each other with similar clothes.

For example Damien was distinguishable by his waistcoat and his hat and it was quite easy to make an association between the two. The setting in the film is one that is remembered by everyone who views it. The Irish landscape is well known around the world for its rugged and mysterious beauty. There is a particular scene in the film which outlines this point very well. It is the scene where Damien and another five or six other local IRA members leading the traitors Chris and Sir John Hamilton to their execution.

The magnificent backdrop of the rugged mountain landscape with the glassy flowing rivers in the valley really typifies the beauty of the Irish country. This conflict between the splendor of the backdrop and the cruel execution of the young boy creates almost an atmosphere in itself and results in the scene being one of the most defining in the film. It must be understood that all filming was done in a small town by the name of West Cork in Ireland.

Producers chose this town because it contained many historic architectural features of the 1920's.

Most of the houses are stone and are of muted and soft color. This seemed to compliment the environment of the setting but in no way stand out or create a distraction. Almost all of the music in the film is of Irish heritage and this illustrates Ken Loach ambition to promote the Irish culture. Irish Songs such as " Oro Se do Bheatha ' Bhaile" typify the Irish spirit within the film as it was written by nationalist leader Padraig Pearse and focuses upon republican themes.

The majority of the characters in the film were of Irish background. This meant they spoke with the profound Irish accent and added to the sense of realism in the film. Many of the extras were also Irish and displayed the dominant features of the culture. One of the most important aspects in a feature film is the role of the characters. Characters in any text convey their personal qualities through dialogue and action by which the reader or audience understands their thoughts, feelings, intentions and motives.

Characters either remain stable in their attitudes throughout the film or undergo personal development and change, whether through a gradual process or a crisis but in any case they usually remain consistent in their basic nature. The main characters of the film are Damien and Teddy. Damien is a medical student at University College Cork who has just qualified. He has won a place in London to train as a doctor and the idea of going to London, to be away from all of the fighting, is hugely attractive to him.

After the influence of this brother Teddy and other dramatic events he decides to join the IRA in a dangerous and violent fight for freedom. Teddy is the experienced fighter who is headstrong and a leader of the group. Damien looks up to Teddy and gives him the upmost respect. These two characters share a unique brotherly bond and it is when the Free State Agreement is put forward that changes things forever. Members of the IRA suddenly looked to Teddy for political leadership and he struggled to cope with this. Teddy was a man of action and looks at things in a simple and pragmatic way.

Damien is more of a thinker and one more suited for philosophical debate. The roles of these two characters seem to be reversed by the end of the film. Damien is the one who becomes firm and headstrong and teddy becomes muddled up tin the politics of it all and in the end becomes a strong believer in nothing. The way in which these two characters have been transformed over the duration of the film catches the attention of the viewer. The brotherly relationship and the split in opinions is something in which many brothers can relate to.

In conclusion, " The wind that shakes the barley" directed by Ken Loach is a highly intertextual film. It contains technical, symbolic, audio and written codes which all work together to convey the message the producer is trying to get through to the viewer. The message of the infact is simple. It is a story driven by as deep sense of duty and love for ones country. It is a story of a fight against the odds with the message that there is always compromise in victory or defeat. news. bbc. co. uk/1/hi/entertainment/5026620. stm www. opendemocracy. net/arts-Film/loach