

Shoe horn sonata



**ASSIGN
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Through the use of projected images, music and dialogue, distinctively visual texts represent challenging aspects of life effectively. This is portrayed through texts such as John Misto's play *The Shoe Horn Sonata*, Kevin McDonalds docu-drama *Touching the Void* and Roberto Innocenti's picture book *Rose Blanche*. The shoe horn sonata by John Misto is a play that deals with the brutality of World War 2 by looking at the stories of two financial characters, Bridie and Sheila.

When he wrote the play, Misto was concerned that the pain and suffering that many women endured at the hands of their Japanese captors after the fall of Singapore had been forgotten. Both army nurses and civilians were the victims of terrible mistreatment and cruelty during the war, yet their stories were not widely known, nor had successive Australian governments acknowledged them. The play serves as a tribute to those victims of the atrocities of war, and looks at the effects such horrendous experiences can have on those who experience them.

By the use of distinctively visual elements, Misto has created a compelling play. Whilst projected images of the celebrations at Martin Place are projected behind the actors, the women struggling to live at Belalau are still fighting through the war. During this scene, the women struggle to ascend up a hill thinking it will be the last moment of their lives. Dialogue used to reveal the weakness is quoted "The sick and the dying were left behind" and "the old and frail began to die". As the lucky women succeeded to ascend the hill, an orchestra performing the beautiful piece "The Blue Danube" is set out for the prisoners.

The music creates the effect of the audience realising that the women are going to survive creating and symbolising triumph and life. This image of the realisation that the women will live is seen when Joe Simpon in *Touching the Void* comes out of the crevasse into the world of light, although he was weak and at the brink of dying. A sense of joy and relief is felt. Another example of the use of music in the *Shoe Horn Sonata* where challenges are explored is encountered whilst the song “*Jerusalem Hymn*” is played on stage.

Sheila is clutching onto wood floating in the water as the lights gradually darken. The darkness and stirring chorus together convey the desperate situation of the young women as they almost drown. The hymn effectively represent the challenging aspects of life that the women endured whilst living through the war. Dialogue when used with music can create a great scene and emphasise the audiences understanding of the play. The audience is confronted with the disturbing details of the horror these women had to endure as captives which is projected through images on stage.

It is followed with “*hundred of women who could barely stand up, dragging their children behind them*”. We are positioned to empathise with the women’s trauma and hopeless situation. This image of desperation is created with the use of poignant and evocative dialogue, stirring music and disturbing images. Distinctively visual elements are used in the docu-drama *Touching the Void* to relive the event that took place on the South American Andes and to convey challenging aspects of life effectively through the use of dialogue, music/sounds and projected images.

Touching the Void chronicles the events of two young men Joe Simpson and Simon Yates as the triumph to climb a mountain in the South American Andes which no human has ever achieved. Following a successful three and a half day ascent, disaster struck. Simpson fell a short distance and broke several bones in his leg. With no hope of rescue, the men decided to attempt descent together with Simon trying his best to keep his friend in a positive mood. Another mistake which caused a life threatening situation was that Joe had fallen into a deep crevasse.

How Simpson survived the fall, and made it back to base camp is a story that will astound and inspire. With the help of distinctively visual elements, the scenes in this docu-drama were successful and realistic. The text begins with a beautiful panoramic moving camera shooting above the mountain which is used to establish the scene. We see great enormous mountains as loud and foreboding orchestral music is played. The voice over's begin of Simon and Joe beginning their recount of the story and Joe quotes " If you get badly hurt, you die". This represents the challenges these men were about to face.

The same consequences are faced in Shoe Horn Sonata where if a girl would get sick, she would die. 3 and a half days later the men reach the amazing summit and the use of the camera as it moves around the men also showing the height they are positioned in shows the exhilaration and the achievement these men went through as heavenly chorus music in a major key is played. The excitement stops as Joe quotes " 80% of accidents happen on the descent", which is followed by monstrous images of the mountain and dark horrific music in a minor key.

The transition of music from the major to minor creates the sudden devastation and we realize it isn't going to be a safe descent. The challenging aspects of life these men face begin to show and is emphasized with dialogue. On the 4th day a bad storm changes the life of these men dramatically and what they are about to experience. Simon tries to lower Joe down a cliff face not knowing if the length of the rope will last as the men didn't know the depth of the cliff.

The next morning Joe quotes " I knew when I saw it, it had been cut" which meant Joe had purposely cut the rope that he was lowered in. This creates a slight relief as it gave Simon the feeling that Joe could still be alive but not long after, he realizes the depth he must've fallen creating the sense that he must be dead so therefore Simon continued to descend the hill and get himself back to safety. The next scene shows Joe laying in a dark, cold and monstrous crevasse. " It was not the place for the living".

This quote shows the fear and thought of death Joe goes through. He then builds up in frustration as he yells " Stupid" and other obscenities. Towards the end of the docu-drama as Joe is near the camp sight we see the delirium scene where we hear a Boney M song which creates a death like feeling with images of death and decay as we see animal bones and carcasses, together with close-up shots of his battered, dehydrated body and use of fish-eye lenses used in circular motion demonstrate the distorted thoughts and sensations Joe was experiencing at this moment.

All of these elements creates a distinctively visual dream like delirium scene and effectively demonstrates how challenging the aspects of life are. Finally,

dialogue reveals his relief that he was not going to die alone “ I remember that feeling of being held”. Distinctively visual elements are used to convey images of misery and despair replaced by the possibility of regeneration in the picture book *Rose Blanche*, illustrated by Roberto Innocenti with text by Ian McEwan.

This text follows the experience of the young girl Rose Blanche during the second world war as she discovers the Jewish children condemned to death in a concentration camp. Although the book ends with her death there is hope for new life at the end. The seventh opening through the book presents the devastating image of children in the camp. A single illustration spreads across both pages. The colours used are dark and dismal reflecting the misery of the scene and helping to create the image of despair.

A line of children face the responder demanding our attention. Their faces are blank but their eyes ask for help, which we cannot give. A barbed wire fence between the responder and the children adds the image of hopelessness. The text which accompanies the illustration also helps convey the image of misery and despair and also the challenging aspects of life. Ian McEwan uses poetic images to capture the scene and make it distinctively visual.

His use of the simile “ they stood like ghost” and the use of the personification “ the chilly wind made the barbed wire moan” conjure the image of death faced by these children emphasizing the challenging aspects of life the Jewish children are going through in this book. Therefore, distinctively visual element including projected images, dialogue and music

represent the challenging aspects of life effectively which is seen through the texts *The Shoe Horn Sonata* by John Misto, *Touching the Void* a docu-drama by Kevin McDonald and also Roberto Innocenti's picture book *Rose Blanche*.