

The lives of others and rudds sorry speech



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Lives of Others and the Sorry Speech When one is exposed to a new world, it is inevitable that their values, ideals and morals are challenged. It can change their perspectives and their outlook upon the world around them, where the fight for political change can come at great personal cost. This is explored through Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's ??? The Lives of Others???, where a man is faced with opposing worlds and the struggle to follow the right path. We see a similar struggle for vast reaching changes in Kevin Rudd's ??? Sorry Speech??? to the Aboriginals and particularly to the stolen generation. The world in which an individual lives shapes their perspectives, ideals and values.

Through the evolution of thoughts and emotion, we see an unemotional, idealistic, intimidating, and ignorant Stasi commissar change into a compassionate, self-less and open-minded man after a series of catalysts in ??? The Lives of Others???. We first meet Wiesler giving a lecture on methods of interrogation. It is established here how he feels about the rules of the Stasi and how he operates within the system. One of the students remarks that the methods being advocated by Wiesler are ??? inhumane???. Wiesler's response is putting a cross against the man's name on a seating plan.

He is portrayed as professional, intimidating, loyal, and ignorant to the corruption of the German Democratic Republic, where socialist values are highly regarded. We expect that from such a business-like and unemotional man that it is highly unlikely that he will change throughout the film. Von Donnersmarck uses subtle and only slightly low angle shots of Wiesler in this opening sequence, where we already sense his authority, but by using low

angle shots, his superiority is further highlighted. His beliefs and those of the party are reflected in the simple functional nature of his apartment. It has been carefully constructed to communicate the values of the system that he believes in so passionately.

We see the juxtaposition between Wiesler's™s mundane apartment, where all the furniture, including other props, are all sharp edged and straight-lined. Lighting is quite limited, which is reflected in the colour palette, made up of murky browns, greys, beiges, and greens. This is in great contrast to Georg Dreyman and Christa-Maria Sieland's™s apartment, who Wiesler has been instructed to scrutinize the well-known artistic couple. The mise-en-scene sets the mood, as their apartment is filled with warm lighting and a bright array of colours throughout the whole apartment. Majority of the time spent in the apartment, we hear diegetic sounds of them playing music, which furthers the connection the audience can make with the artists. The props used appear very personal and everything in their apartment seems to represent a piece of them and their personality, including a small puppet which we see.

The puppet symbolises the control and power the GDR has over civilians. As the surveillance operation continues we meet another agent, and this interaction again confirms the character information about Wiesler that we have seen in this opening sequence. Again we see the contrast of Wiesler and other people around him, including other Stasi officers.

This agent is not as intimidating, unemotional or professional as Wiesler is, and we see his unprofessional manner when repeatedly he turns up for his

shift late. The surveillance operation he is assigned to creates results that are unexpected; it causes a great shift within Wiesler. We slowly begin to see him change into a self-less, compassionate, unprofessional man, who is now willing to show emotion. He demonstrates very little emotion as a Stasi officer, but after overhearing ??? The Sonata for a Good Man??? the camera pans around him to reveal a tear falling down his cheek.

The previously heartless Wiesler has been affected by the world of the artist. When Dreyman stops playing ??? The Sonata for a Good Man??? he says ??? Can anyone who has heard this music, I mean truly heard it, really be a bad person??? Wiesler is so drastically affected by this and is pulled emotionally towards the artists??™ world, and begins to feel the loneliness of being in the Stasi. When we first meet Dreyman and Wiesler, we can understand them as opposites. Dreyman is a radical playwright and Wiesler is a member of the Party and as such works to police the output of people such as Dreyman.

However by the end of the film we see that these characters have become less polarised, and through Wiesler??™s actions the two men have an important connection of great personal cost, where Dreyman loses Christa-Maria after she has been dragged in by the State and her values change and decides to take her own life, and where Wiesler loses his job, which he was exceptionally passionate about. The Wiesler that we meet during the introductory scenes carries out his belief systems to the letter. In keeping with his ideological beliefs the next obvious step for Wiesler is to bug Dreyman??™s apartment. The beginnings of Operation Lazlo are put in

place. However, we see here circumstances in which demonstrate the power and social control of the Stasi.

Wiesler and his men enter the building and begin setting wires and connecting recording equipment. We see the neighbour watching the events from across the hall, and can sense Wiesler's intimidation in his quick and sharp body movements. You do not tell anyone what you have seen, or Marsha will lose her place at the university. The reputation of the Stasi was such that, by having seen something or at least having thought you did, was enough reason to think that you might also be under surveillance. Unjust political conditions and the restriction of personal freedom were the main characteristics of the repressive and totalitarian regime of the GDR.

There were no democratic free elections, as the power did not emanate from the people, but instead false elections just served to demonstrate the power and dictatorship of the SED party. Democratic and constitutional principles such as the separation of powers, basic rights, the right of free opinion and the freedom of speech and assembly did not exist. During The Lives of Others we are introduced to the power and authority of the Stasi through the characters of Minister Hempf and Grubitz, who is Wiesler's superior.

These characters contrast with Wiesler in the ways that they operate and take advantage of the system. Just as Wiesler's life circumstances evolved from a drab regimented existence to a life of acceptance and empathy for his former enemies; so too does Rudd's Sorry Speech highlights the past plight of the Aboriginals and maps a future of opportunity and freedom. Rudd's speech sets the direction when he says A future

where the parliament resolves that the injustices of the past must never never happen again.??? Rudds stories of peoples personal experience shows how practices of the past which we thought to be acceptable within white society, shows the change of attitude within society.

He describes the past and by apologising he outlines the drastic change from past attitudes and perceptions. By acknowledging the past and highlighting what is now considered wrong against Aboriginals, he creates meaning within the apology, which is strongly reinforced by the emotive language used throughout. We see the real connection between the Aboriginals as Rudd tells the story of a woman who was separated from her mother when she was just four years old. After the trauma of being separated from her mother, her family was split up for a second time when her brother and cousin went to a Catholic Missionary Camp. This story creates real meaning and is very emotional and personal, but similar stories occurred to thousands. There were two ways of looking at the situation depending on each individual??™s perspective.

Some people in the white society thought that by splitting up their families, from a young age the Aboriginals could be integrated into the white society and their race would eventually die out, and have a white Australia. Others thought they were helping the Aboriginals by giving them more opportunities in life and giving them a proper education, but the Aboriginals perceived our government as totalitarian. But we now recognise that we must ??? remove a great stain from the nation??™s soul??? and ??? open a new chapter??? in which Aboriginals have the same rights and freedom as white people.

By furthering the use of emotive language and creating meaning, Rudd is shaping change; ??? The mood of the nation is for reconciliation now, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The mood of the nation on Indigenous policy and politics is now very simple.??? He is strengthening his argument by representing all Australians when saying this. Through Rudd??™s repetition and litany of ??? we say sorry???, he is reinforcing our acknowledgement of how much pain and devastation we have caused, not only through the Stolen Generation, but their race as a whole. He also uses inclusive personal pronouns to demonstrate that he is apologising on behalf of Australia as a whole. In the delivery of Rudd??™s speech, there is variation in his tone and expression, where he pauses in particularly important places to let his words sink in. the continued emotive language used reinforces the meaning behind his speech.

By ??? building a bridge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians ??“ a bridge based on a real respect rather than a thinly veiled contempt???, we are now able to ??? cross that bridge??? and ??? embrace a new partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians???. Through both film and speech, we are able to see the varied perceptions of change and the consequences that can inflict upon us as individuals and as a democracy. We see both positive and negative affects of change through both texts and how it may affect our values, ideals and morals. We observe the great struggle of change and how change is an on-going process.