

The life and crimes of harry lavender and the hard way essay



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Distinctive voices are created in texts through the use of the protagonists, antagonists and setting. Contemporary composers manipulate characteristics of texts to portray its distinctive voice. This is evident in Marele Day's novel the Life and Crimes of Harry Lavender, by the giving the protagonist Claudia Valentine - a hard boiled detective, the antagonist Harry Lavender - A major crime boss and Sydney each a distinctive voice. John Badham also incorporates this into the film The Hard way with the use of the protagonist John Moss - a hardboiled NYC Cop, the antagonist The Party Crasher - a serial killer and NYC.

Emphasis on their voices increases readers' identification with the text. The protagonists' distinctive voice expresses their particular purpose. Day constructed the protagonist in the LCHL, Claudia Valentine's voice as tough talking; this is shown by her stating " No one gets in my room... Let alone my bed. " And cynical " Well heeled, well coiffed. " Her dialogue is mainly noir, and classic private eye detective style. This simile and paradox " I woke up feeling like death..." tells the reader she lives life on the edge. " One step closer to heaven was the crematorium. " This metaphor shows the reader Claudia's witty side.

Badham moulds the protagonist in The Hard Way, John Moss, to have dialogue of a typical 90's hard boiled New York City cop. When John Moss states " At least they didn't steal your rubber gun. " This informs the viewers of his sarcastic nature and some what wittiness. John Moss also has a typical, NYPD short temper when he states " OK. Knock that off alright? " John Moss is also intelligent as he comprehends the Party Crasher's leads quickly. The antagonists' distinctive voice expresses their particular purpose. Day

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constructed the antagonist in the LCHL, Harry Lavender's voice as manipulative and patient.

This is established early on when Lavender displays his knife "So close to their eyes they cannot even blink." This gives the reader an insight on his psychopathic nature and cunningness. He describes his crimes although they "Helped many ways, social contribution" depicting his arrogance.

Lavender's constant repetition of I shows the readers his egotistical voice. "I wake up from this dream with the same coffin smile" this metaphor and personification portrays his devilish personality. Lavender is revealed through his own thoughts and is somewhat resembled as a sinister force rather than a visible character.

Lavender's dying of cancer is symbolic as it parallels his presence in the 'body' of the city. Badham manipulates the Party crasher to portray a voice that is proud, sinister, ambitious and psychotic. He is proud of killing whom he has killed, and justifies it in the climax of the film "I killed a pimp. I killed a drug dealer. I kill the people that make your life difficult." His voice is arrogant and comes off as 'unstoppable' and 'untouchable'. He is quite overconfident as he telephones police right before he's about to kill somebody "Hello there. It's me... again.

Well, what can I say? I'm about to crash another party." The settings voice can compliment the characters established voices. Day sets the LCHL in 1980's Sydney, which is shaped in large part by corruption and criminal overlords. There is a contextual atmosphere developed by iconic references such as Bondi Beach and Darlinghurst. Claudia Valentine's authoritative

commentary brings Sydney to life. This is evident when she states comments such as “ Up there was the Strand Arcade ... Down this end it was hamburger and chips. ” Which increases readers identification with the setting.

By comparing Sydney to an “ Exotic mushroom on a dung heap” whose centre smelt “ exactly like human excrement” is confronting appraisal to achieve the novel’s distinctive voice. The city adopts the hard boiled femme fatale nature, beautiful and dangerous but not to be trusted. Badham uses the same techniques in the film *The Hard Way*, by setting it in the 1990’s New York City, and displays both the City and the ghettos. It shows the viewers that it has been shaped through fame, corruption and money, by the large head of the movie star Nick Lang on top of a building.

One of the contextual references in the film is how Nick Lang the actor in the film, is wealthy enough to afford a cell phone in the 1990’s and has it stolen off of him in the ghetto. Nick Lang describes the city as “ It’s, like, the grit, the dirt, the crime, the human drama – it’s all around you. You can feel it in the air. ” *The Life and Crimes of Harry Lavender* and *The Hard Way* effectively use distinctive voices to convey a distinctive setting, therefore changing the way we perceive the world. Distinctive voices and the distinctive setting shape our perception on issues of injustice, corruption and determination.