

Focus questions on related material



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Focus Questions on Related Material Title of the text: When The Wind Blows

Composer: Raymond Briggs Date: 1982 a) A summary of the text When The

Wind Blows is an anti-nuclear Graphic Novel depicting a retired couple

through the preparations for and the aftermath of a nuclear attack on the

United Kingdom. The couples' mannerisms such as the necessity for a cup of

tea stereotypically reflect their nationality. Their attitude to the war mirrors

their generational experience of being brought up during the air raids of

World War II; as they are unable to comprehend any enemy other than the

'Jerries' (Germans), and have a naive confidence that the leaflets issued by

the local government can protect them from the inevitable. b) Context for

the text (history, feminist movements, time period, culture, literary period

etc) When the Wind Blows reflects the fear of nuclear warfare and the

average persons response to the ' Bomb'. c) Influences upon author

Raymond Briggs was born in London in 1934. His father, was a co-op

milkman and his mother was ' in service' for over twenty years. The two

main characters in the story; James and Hilda Bloggs are closely based on his

parents. This is represented for example by Hilda's clothes representing a

uniform, a link to Briggs's mother being ' in service'. 1. Many texts use the

dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a catalyst for re-

evaluation our dominant ways of thinking. To what extent does the text use

the dropping of the bomb as focal point in the text and how is it portrayed?

What tone is established in the text? Although the text doesn't use the

dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a catalyst for re-

evaluation of our dominant ways of thinking it does use the dropping of

fictitious bomb by the Russians on the United Kingdom as a vehicle to

change the readers perspective on nuclear war. The text revolves around

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preparing for the imminent attack and the effects of the bomb on the average person. An atmosphere of isolation and the significant fear of the unknown is established in the text. 2. Explain how the content and concepts in the text demonstrate the composer's response to the use, or potential use, of the atomic bomb and its effect on the human condition in a post-apocalyptic era. The author has a negative view of the use of nuclear warfare; this notion is depicted in his text through the author educating people on both the effects of the bomb and the effects of being naïve about the damage the bomb can cause. This is reflected in the effects of radiation exposure that the incurred by the Bloggs. 3. Explain how the text has been shaped by the ideas and values underpinning the text. What choices has the composer made? Why? Consider; form, genre, style, setting, plot, characters, point of view, narrative/dramatic/poetic/visual devices and language. The ideas and values underpinning the text explore the horrendously destructive effects of nuclear warfare. The story demonstrates how nuclear warfare can effect anyone. The story highlights to the reader how imperative it is to all civilization that nuclear warfare comes to an end. - Genre: By the story being in the form of a graphic novel, the story is accessible to a broader range of people, therefore allowing numerous people to learn about the effects and dangers of nuclear warfare. - Style/ Setting: The picturesque, storybook setting of the story and sweet language used between James and Hilda such as: ' Ducks' allows the reader to develop a connection to the couple and allows the effects of the bomb to be significant due to disbelief that such disaster could occur in this setting. - Characters: Compassion, sympathy and worry are developed for James and Hilda on account of their characterisation. The simplemindedness of the pair in their

naivety of the effects of the bomb coupled with their old age is endearing to the reader. The characters represent an everyman. Demonstrated by Their surname; ' Bloggs'. Through the use of this technique the realisation that the reader to could be affected by a bomb highlights the significance of both the bomb's effects and the need to end nuclear warfare. - Point of view/narrative: The story is narrated in majority from the perspective of James and Hilda Bloggs. Due to them being ill-informed on the significance of the bombs effects a lot of their dialogue alludes to side-effects of the bomb occurring, without their knowledge. For instance: When blue spots appear on the Bloggs James states: " Various veins- that's what that is. A common complaint amongst the middle-aged segment of the populace. " When evidently it is a side effect of radiation exposure. Again due to the story being from their perspective there reader develops a deeper connection with the character, promoting them to think about nuclear warfare. - Visual devices: The use of colours in the panels of the story act as a visual cue, assisting the reader in depicting the couples moods in reaction to the bomb. For example when the couple is happy this is demonstrated by bright yellows. However when they are unwell and slowly dying; the panels change into darker greens and sickly browns. These additional visual cues allow the reader to further understand the negative effects of the bomb. - Language: The use of Language in the story assists in establishing the characters naivety. Such as through James and Hilda using old-fashioned terms such as 'ducks' and 'dear' their sheltered position in society is demonstrated to the reader. This again encourages the reader to develop sympathy for the couple, therefore when they are suffering the effects of the bomb the reader is promoted to think about nuclear warfare. 4. Paradigms (identify the

particular paradigms which are applicable to the text) a) What philosophical and/or religious ideas underpin the text's approach to the After the Bomb period? The religious idea reflected in the text is that people turn to religion in times of need. For example towards the end of the book when James and Hilda are experiencing the physical effects of the bomb and are going to sleep, resolving that the Emergency services will arrive soon to assist them Hilda suggests to James that they pray. James's lack of knowledge on how to 'address God' and what to say in his prayer demonstrates his out of practice and they don't typically practice religion; this highlights that they are turning to god because they are in an emergency. b) How does the text position the responder politically and/or ideologically? In regards to ideology, the view that nuclear warfare is a negative practice that is unnecessary is presented to the reader. This view is reflected in James's dialogue: "they kill more people than they really need to." c) What view of scientific developments does the text imply/explore? The text implies that Briggs' view is that scientific developments in regards to nuclear weapons is unnecessary, due to the massive amounts of destruction these weapons can impose. d) What economic framework underpins the text? Dialogue in the text infers that at present the world is in a poor state economically. For example: "Its triflically wasteful of energy in the present economic climate." 5. a) How does the text represent politics and power relationships? How does the represent the perpetuation of fear and anxiety? The text represents the notion that common citizens don't have a lot of say in both their future and the future of their country; that the government 'the authorities' make drastically significant decisions, without considering the effects they may have on their people. This notion promotes fear and anxiety as the general population

have no control over their futures. 6. How is this text valued in its own right for the literary and philosophical qualities? The text is valued for its literary and philosophical qualities as it presents the ideas, values and perspectives of Briggs' in a subtle fashion which leaves the reader in deep thought on the concept of nuclear warfare long after completing the story. Bibliography: -

When the Wind Blows, GROVEL. ORG. UK, <http://www.grovel.org.uk/reviews/whenth01/whenth01.htm>, /01/2013. - Lisa Jeffrey, Graphic Novel

Review: ' When the Wind Blows', Suite 101, <http://suite101.com/article/graphic-novel-review-when-the-wind-blows-a210186>, 29/01/2013

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