

"Blessing"-the video

Media Assignment

Imtiaz Dharker's poem is about a water pipe bursting in the city where she lives in India and how, because the water is so precious, people from all round rush to collect it before it is washed out.

The location of the poem "Blessing" is Dharavi near Bombay, it is the largest slum in Asia. Imtiaz Dharker spent a large part of her life there. Bombay is known as the city of dreams, people and migrants come from all over to live there, but to us who live in a rich country life there would be squalid.

The director of the film "Blessing" shows the difference between our cultures with the vibrant costumes and also how significant water is to survival, a commodity we take for granted.

The director immediately emphasises the sense of drought with the dry baked earth and the empty brittle vessel dropping to the ground, breaking into pieces. This imagery highlights the fragility and dryness. It is the people's desire in Dharavi to "imagine the drip of it, the small splash echo in a tin mug"

At the start of the film there is a visual element of colours. The colours are earthy and lifeless, a persistent attempt by the director to convey a severe lack of moisture. The director uses a medium close up (mcu) shot of a boy falling to the dry fractured land. This represents the feeling of desperation, despair almost giving up life.

A cricket can be heard in the background as the film begins. This conjures a mental picture of a dry, hot desert like environment where such insects are found.

To express the boy's imagination that he is thinking about his thirst the director cuts to dry crumbly earth that suddenly erupts with a jet of water shooting into the air. The shot of the boy letting the earth trickle through his fingers again shows the lack of water. The director substitutes dry earth for the water to suggest a lust of passion. The camera lens pans to the right to capture the moment. "The municipal pipe bursts" showering the town with water, the people's prayers answered and they can't contain themselves to collect the water. The director shows a shot of men, women and naked children using any available means to collect "the sudden rush of fortune". This is helped with a high angle shot, people are introduced.

Here Dharker uses the word congregation meaning people gather near the burst pipe. It is significant here that the colours used by the director are more colourful and vibrant to suggest the life giving qualities of water. Colour is introduced primarily by costume and washing hung out to dry. Throughout the film we realise it is almost a religious experience for the people. We can see this because of the use of religious words and sentences. This is reinforced by the visual effects the director has chosen to use. He films the water using subdued, out of focus lighting that makes it seem magical and mystical. The director ups the pace of the video to show the frenzy of excitement when the water appears. He shows the people of Dharavi dancing under the water that has taken on a magical appearance with the use of the soft focus lighting. The director then zooms onto the boy's face that breaks into a grand smile. This shows how much the water means to everyone. The close ups of the same boy throughout the film gives continuity and focus. Sound effects in the film are often not explicit. For example the sounds of the people talking and the sounds of running water are in the background, but these all help to give a touch of reality. The voiceover, reading the line of the poem in the foreground however helps to reinforce the ideas in the moving images.

In conclusion the director has been successful in creating a short film that seems to have an educational value. This is called Edu -tainment meaning it is educational yet entertaining. By clever use of editing, camera angles, visual and sound techniques the director teaches us how water is a vital part of life.

By Matthew Wilson