

PAN'S LABYRINTH (2006)

COMPONENT 2
SECTION A: GLOBAL FILM (GROUP 1 and 2))



Key questions

- ◆ Why are you studying two films from Global Film?
- ◆ What are the different social and cultural contexts of both? (in depth on this later)
- ◆ What do you think the exam questions will be on?
- ◆ Will you compare both films, or simply write about both one after the other?

Answers

- ◆ To help you understand non English language film, one from Europe and one from outside of Europe
- ◆ **Spanish Civil War** with Fantasy conventions – realist and non realist representations (many themes/issues)
- ◆ **Brazilian film** about notions of inevitability of living in The Favelas – power, poverty and conflict
- ◆ Micro analysis of film form (you can compare or do both) **maybe** linked to representation, impact (spectatorship) or issues.
IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LOOK/AESTHETICS OF BOTH

What is Pan's Labyrinth about? Imagine you have 30 sec max to explain this.....



What is Pan's Labyrinth about?

Set 5 years after the Spanish Civil War in 1944, Pan's Labyrinth is about a girl who searches for her true identity by following the faun Pan's instructions. Intertwining the real world with the mythical world, Ofelia's step-father Vidal 'in the real world' is a villain who hunts down rebels who threaten the totalitarian Falangist regime he supports (Franco). In the fantasy world, the Pan informs Ofelia that her real father wants her to return to her kingdom but she needs to prove herself worthy e.g. kill her innocent half brother (Vidal's son). She refuses, Vidal kills her. Ofelia has sacrificed herself while Vidal is killed himself. Her spirit returns to the kingdom in the end sequence, taking her place on the throne as a Princess.

AREAS FOR STUDY

- ◆ **FILM FORM** – questions require micro analysis (need to know key scenes in detail) but can be linked to macro issues e.g. representation, messages, themes and values, auteur or even spectatorship – see question next slide)
- ◆ **MEANING AND RESPONSE**
- ◆ **CONTEXTS**

Working towards a **60 minute, 40 mark question** analysing the **two films**

(again, you have a choice of two)

- ◆ With close reference to the **two films** you have studied, explore how **either** performance **or** mise-en-scene create meaning
- ◆ With close reference to the **two films** you have studied, explore how **either** editing **or** sound create meaning
- ◆ Discuss some of the ways in which the **mise-en-scene and editing** are used in each of your chosen film to present a key issue. Refer in detail to specific sequences.
- ◆ To what extent do **aesthetic qualities contribute to the impact** of your two chosen films. Refer in detail to specific sequences.

Pan's Labyrinth – background first

PAN'S LABYRINTH



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Spectatorship – what are your thoughts on the following statements?

1. “I found Pan’s Labyrinth to be a dark, tragic, sorrowful film”.
2. “It’s a fairy tale for older audiences”.
3. “Guillermo Del Toro explores similar themes in Devil’s Backbone, Hellboy and Cronos”.
4. “I didn’t think the sexual imagery in the film was appropriate to the genre” (*BBFC 15)
5. “All of the monsters in the film are evil”.

CONTEXT 1

- ◆ Clear links to Franco's Spain – Vidal and his avatars are symbols of Fascism and oppression
- ◆ Ofelia and the rebels in the hills exist to resist/fight back
- ◆ Spanish co-production – loose sequel to Devil's Backbone exploring similar political themes
- ◆ Critically acclaimed, commercially successful
- ◆ **Del Toro is anti fascism, militarism & anti patriarchy**

SET IN 1944 – VIDAL THE EVIL STEP-FATHER



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CONTEXT 2

- ◆ Patriarchy a significant social context – 1940s macho in Northern Spain
- ◆ Social class and the ruling elite an important frame of reference e.g. the banquet scene
- ◆ Spanish Civil War finished in 1939 – Pan's Labyrinth is set 5 years after
- ◆ Production budget: \$19m
- ◆ **Del Toro is a fantasy/horror auteur**

A FANTASY FILM FOR ADULTS

Analyse Film Form in The Pale Man sequence. Wherever possible, link to macro aspects. You should be able to do this in your sleep



Pale Man – Film Form micro and macro analysis 1

- ◆ **Transition to illustration symbolises next task**
- ◆ **Blue/Grey room is minimalist** but a safe environment
- ◆ Ofelia's **non diegetic voice** reading the book is a common Del Toro stylistic device
- ◆ **Colour palette change into blood red room symbolises danger** anchored by the more sinister non diegetic music (the **blue/grey room symbolises safety**). Camera zoom out with dissolve establish scales of red room
- ◆ **CU of hourglass signifies tension**

Pale Man – Film Form micro and macro analysis 2

- Close up of chair and tilt up symbolises Ofelia's resourcefulness and control but, long shot of corridor in deep focus, plus facial expressions anchors her vulnerability
- This is linked to a zoom in to the hour glass symbolising the time she has to return to the room
- The Pale Man is seated at the head of the table **symbolising control/authority (shot in high angle when Ofelia sees him)**
- Panning shot reveals greed/opulence (food) in gothic room**
- A 'curious' Ofelia studies his eyes in CU – her and The Pale Man are filmed using shot/reverse shot**

Pale Man – Film Form micro and macro analysis 3

- ◆ **Low angle shot** of the ceiling reveals the grotesque killings cut against shots of shoes symbolising death
- ◆ **Fairies as Proppian helpers** guide Ofelia (noises reflecting their innocence). A large key in CU retrieved from the Toad symbolises the next stage of the task – non diegetic music builds tension as the dagger is retrieved
- ◆ Eating of the forbidden fruit (lots of blood red colours) wakes up The Pale Man (**metaphor for consequences - themes**)
- ◆ Distorted non diegetic music heralds **ocular stigmata** – Del Toro ‘playing’ with religious symbolism

Ocular stigmata



Pale Man – Film Form micro and macro analysis 4

- ◆ **Shot/reverse/shot** reveals fear (Ofelia) and the Fairies are graphically consumed
- ◆ The Pale Man is centre stage – his hideous representation in binary opposition to Ofelia
- ◆ **Parallel editing** of feet in shot/reverse/shot as the pace of the editing quickens symbolising impending danger ≥ The Pale Man walks from blurred focus into deep focus creating tension
- ◆ Ofelia's return to the blue/grey room (her escape) is **symbolised by the same wide shot** at the start of the scene

Macro elements in The Pale Man

scene – see later slide for Del Toro as auteur

- ◆ The Pale Man is a metaphor for for the grotesque realism of Captain Vidal (**Spanish fascism and the Catholic church**)
- ◆ The juxtaposition of a fantasy world and a ‘real’ world allows Del Toro to examine **society and political context**
- ◆ The Pale Man, like Vidal ‘cannot see’ he is a cruel murderer (even the geometry of Vidal’s table is similar with a chimney at the back) – Del Toro is saying **Fascist society breeds people like Vidal and that the Catholic church feeds off the innocent**
- ◆ Dining on the blood of innocents (shoes) reflect Vidal’s harsh food rationing. Intertextual links also to Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf

FILM FORM, NARRATIVE AND GENRE 1

- ◆ Fantasy codes and conventions including mythical creatures and settings
- ◆ Classic binary opposition of good v evil but arguably hybridised with horror
- ◆ Using **Steve Neale** – repetition and difference (genre conventions) e.g. real world intertwined with mythical world

A MYTHICAL KINGDOM



FILM FORM, NARRATIVE AND GENRE 2

- ◆ Significant use of complex make up and animatronics with limited CGI
- ◆ Colour palette – black, blue and red
- ◆ Daytime – saturated primary colours (fantasy genre), nighttime – moonlight and blue (gothic tones)
- ◆ Expressionistic lighting – moon as source lighting, shadow creating tone

The Pale Man



FILM FORM, NARRATIVE AND GENRE 3

- ◆ **Todorovian** narrative structure and 3 act structure applies – Ofelia dies but lives on in her kingdom
- ◆ **Proppian** roles e.g. the Faun as dispatcher/donor, Vidal as villain, Ofelia as princess, Fairies as helpers, Pan as ‘her father’ (like a nanny takes care of the children from that kingdom)
- ◆ Simplistic Proppian analysis a convention of the fantasy genre

OPULENCE, GREED, POWER AND FASCISM



FILM FORM, GENRE AND NARRATIVE 4

- ◆ Symbolism – tree entrance as vaginal opening, curved branches as fallopian tubes
- ◆ Tree and Ofelia's mother symbolise sexual union between Ofelia's mother and Vidal
- ◆ Gothic production design

SELF EVIDENT



MEANING AND RESPONSE – REPRESENTATION KEY AREA 1

- ◆ Vidal as real life villain and wicked step-father (fairy tale gender reversal twinned with ontology of Franco's Spain as political context)
- ◆ Monstrous Toad and Pale Man 'express' Vidal's monstrosity
- ◆ Vidal patriarchal symbol – authority, machismo, violence, obsession with father and unborn son

MEANING AND RESPONSE – REPRESENTATION KEY AREA 2

- ◆ Vidal's patriarchy is hyper real (immediate decision to save the child, walking into a hail of bullets.....)
- ◆ Eating/'devouring' symbolises power (frog consuming tree, Pale Man dining on the blood of innocents)
- ◆ Biblical connotations – Ofelia eating 'forbidden fruit' (2 grapes) wakes the Pale Man with ocular stigmata

MEANING AND RESPONSE – REPRESENTATION KEY AREA 3

- ◆ Binary oppositions of good v evil – Vidal as handsome (internal monstrosity), the Pale Man as deeply ugly
- ◆ Traditional ‘fairy tale’ outcomes – Vidal and his avatars are obliterated
- ◆ Curiosity with nature and the nature of life – innocence despite trauma

OFELIA RETAINS HER CHILDHOOD INNOCENCE



OFELIA 1

- ◆ Rebellious spirit but so much more – risks her life to kidnap infant brother & ultimate self sacrifice
- ◆ Her disobedience is seen as a virtue – resistance dares her to do anything to complete her quest/journey
- ◆ Intertextual linking with The Wizard of Oz (journey, innocence, creatures)

A MATERNAL QUEST/DISCOVERY



OFELIA 2

- ◆ Conduit for representing man's cruelty compared to fantasy cruelty
- ◆ Angelic non-diegetic sound during death scene anchors Ofelia's representation (see also lullaby songs at times of difficulty)
- ◆ Tragic death but new beginning (see Todorov)

FOR HER BROTHER.
SEQUEL IMPOSSIBLE.....



Auteur Del Toro

- ◆ Representation of the gothic and religious imagery (raised by Catholic grandmother)
- ◆ The ghost/elaborate creature (make up) as metaphor
- ◆ Imaginative storytelling – detailed narratives
- ◆ Impressionistic colour palette – red, blue, green e.g. night scenes, cool blues and greys in *The Shape of Water*
- ◆ Representation of insects and small moving parts (machinery)
- ◆ Sensuous aesthetics – you can ‘touch and feel’ his films