Discuss the effective symbolic use of light in two films.

(small groups writing each section -introduction, Star Wars, Clocktower, conclusion- to create a whole class piece in one session)

Have you ever wanted to understand the use of symbolism in a film? Symbolism is when objects, colours and characters have layers of meaning woven into them, bringing films and books alive with greater depth. Below we will discuss how light and dark is represented in two films: Star Wars and the Clocktower. Star Wars is an action packed film with adventure put firmly in the palm of your hand. The Clocktower is a great animation, but the world drains of colour when a girl, who is part of the clock’s mechanism, wants to step out to explore the world. These films use light and dark for different effects. Read on to find out more.

It must not be forgotten that, first and foremost, the Clocktower is a children’s animation: a tale where, unbeknownst to a dancer, she has to work in a clocktower in order to create light. A key moment in the story is when the dancer steps out of the clocktower to see the world outside. However, the world stops and colour drains away. Only when she returns to the tower and begins dancing does the world re-colour. This can be interpreted as the dancer being like God, she is the creator of light, of movement, or life. What will happen when she leaves? Light drains away and the world becomes fixed, leaving it in suspension.

On the other hand, the block buster film Star Wars is one for all the family and juxtaposes light and dark to great effect. For example, the name Luke Skaywalker was chosen for a purpose. It represents the clear sky and how this heroic figure is angel like; bringing light to the darkness. In contrast to this Darth Vader (the archetypal villain) stands for death and destruction. A key moment in this film is when Skywalker and Vader fight with their light sabers – symbolic in themselves. Luke’s blue sword represents heavenly light, bringing victory against the Dark Side and Darth Vaders red saber; representing death, danger and darkness.

In this discussion we have shown that light and darkness in the Clocktower and Star Wars has symbolic meaning which is used effectively. When all of the evidence has been considered we believe that the use of this symbolism increases the depth of understanding for a wider audience.