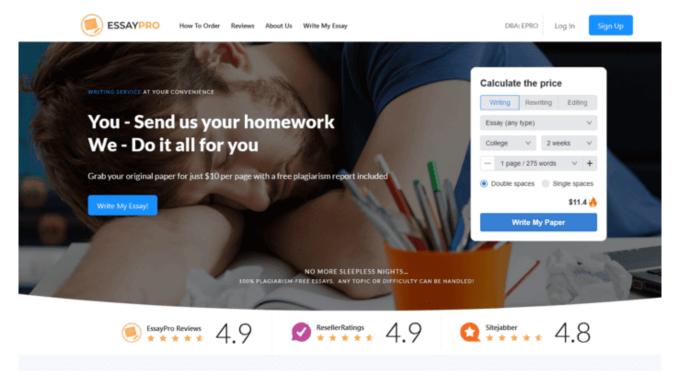
Significance of the Earth and Sky in the Film Yellow Earth



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Yellow Earth is a foreign film that takes place in China. Although the film was made in the 80's there is a timeless feeling to the movie, as if the events could be happening at any time. The movie follows a soldier, referred to as Brother Gu as he travels China's poorer regions recording folk songs. During his travels he stays with a family. While witnessing the poverty of their daily lives, Gu begins to speak about the benefits of the army he is with, the Communists, for the commoners. In the movie we see two arranged marriages contrasted against the Communist city where a woman could marry who she wished or join the army. In the end we are lead to believe Cuiquao, the daughter of the family Gu stayed with, has died trying to reach the Communist army who she believes will save her from the marriage she was forced into. We also see Cuiquao's younger brother Hanhan running to Gu when he returns. Hanhan was in a prayer meeting where all the villagers where praying for water. When we see him running to Gu we get the impression that Gu, or rather the Communists, will save the villagers. These two events affirm that this is a political film trying to portray the Communist party as the <u>savior</u> of the people of China.

There is a particularly poignant shot where the Father, Gu, Cuiquao, and Hanhan are eating outside after Gu has helped the Father plowing. During this shot we see the four characters sitting on the ground eating. We then see the Father stand and talk about life and the harvest. While he is talking we see mostly sky in the background, but the sky is all white giving a very closed in impression. The father then sits back down and we then see an aerial shot with them eating and the majority of the <u>frame</u> is taken up by earth. The earth in this frame <u>looks</u> like a mountain or cliff so that it appears that the earth has been cut open and we are seeing a slice of the inside of it. We then see two more frames of the family and Gu eating.

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