

Margaret atwood
"journey to the
interior" essay
sample



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Margaret Atwood “ Journey to the Interior” Essay Sample

This poem portrays Attwood’s attitude on inner journey to discover oneself. She presents a metaphorical journey to explain a journey into the mind. She examines human behaviour’s reasons, understanding one self’s mystery, lack of knowledge of individual about themselves. Attwood has composed a Metaphysical journey contrasting the similarities and differences. Her fascination with the bizarre fluidity of identity and its mystery is the focus of this poem.

The first paragraph establishes the similarities between the physical and Metaphysical journey. The usage of the personal pronoun I in this introductory paragraph establishes the personal experience of the poet as it is her who undertakes the physical journey, in the poem’s case an awful bushwalk. The poem starts off with a factual matter-of-fact observation There are similarities I notice... The poem is written in the present tense evident in the verbs open, move and grow to indicate that the physical journey is being undertaken at the present time. In this introductory paragraph there is a juxtaposition of the natural world with the man-made world for instance in the simile the hills which the eyes make flat as a wall. The speaker makes the connection with what is ‘ out there’ and the ‘ here’. The sentence open as I move implies how individuals find a way through the mountains by taking one step at a time using clues and how perspectives change. As the hills open up, the speaker implies that she gains more understanding of herself.

This establishes the focus of the poem that this is a journey to self-discovery and a simultaneous physical journey which is the bushwalk itself. This paragraph has a grammatical repetition of the clauses beginning with that the hills, the trees, a cliff and so on to establish an unstructured rhythm emphasizing the object by its placement with the clause. The simile endless as prairies implies the similarity between the physical and the Metaphysical. Poor country emphasizes the pessimism in this journey. Cliff... not known as rough by hands suggests that unless one has experienced themselves they won't know what it feels like and only they can try to experience it.

Travel is a term associated with physical journeys. The phrase travel not... from point to point implies the composer's attitude that physical journeys aren't just about getting to one place from another, that investigation and ultimately the mind is anti-linear. The tangled branches reflects the unpredictability in searching for one's own self and a net of air with its intangibility implies unnatural captivity and entrapment one feels when trying to discover themselves. The alternate light and dark comparison signifies the fact that uncertainty prevails all the time day and night. The last phrase that there are no destinations apart from this implies the composer's frustration that there's no other less confusing and certain way of discovering oneself, only yourself and no choice otherwise.

The second paragraph with the composer's certainty in There are differences of course. The following phrase lack of reliable charts implies the fact that there is no map, no direction or any assurance in this inner journey to self discovery. Distraction of small details suggests that on this journey it is easy to get diverted by trivial things and alter the way. Your shoe...under the
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chair with the second person narrative reflects the inclusive intimacy, getting the responder involved and is an unnatural imagery that implies the leaving behind of something in bush. The pairing knife and the white mushrooms suggest the distraction that little experiences can cause and sidetrack the undertaker from their journey to the interior. The usage of parentheses with the rhetorical question (have I been walking in circles again?) reflects the composer's confusion and feeling of déjà vu and the getting lost easily in this Metaphysical journey.

The usage of the word danger and many and the phrase but only some have returned safely signifies the composer's belief that everyone has been on this journey but some have never returned implying that the psychological state of some people becomes deficient and their normalcy is diminished as they go berserk on this interior journey. The useless compass, erratic sun and pointless words all signify the lack of guidance or directional assistance in this journey as it gets harder and harder, but the composer declares with confidence that she will keep my head low and understands that it's easier... to lose my way on this journey than any other. This poem highlights the negative and positive experiences of an inner journey and its cumulative affect evident in the gloomy tone. It's a completely realistic view on journeys via conversational language and usage of punctuation. There are also long vowel sounds, assonance, and strong language.