

How journeys  
challenge and  
broaden  
understanding of the  
world: "father and  
child,....



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Through the overcoming of past obstacles, a journey may be a catalyst towards the broadening of one's understanding of the world. Gwen Harwood's poem *Father and Child* explore new understandings of mortality engendered by a transformed perspective, whilst Les Murray's *Spring Hail* delves into a broadened understanding of life provoked by an abandonment of the past. Frank Darabont's film *The Shawshank Redemption* ultimately encompasses both of these notions, thus allowing for a greater understanding of the world.

A journey of maturation requires a change in perspectives, which inevitably leads to a broadened understanding of life. In 'Father and Child', Gwen Harwood illustrates this shift in attitude through the characterisation of a female persona at two stages in her life. The metaphor in 'Barn Owl', "Master of life and death" illustrates the incongruous power the child possesses, but the oxymoron 'wisp-haired judge' alludes to the immaturity and ignorance of the young girl. Furthermore, the symbolism in 'I saw those eyes that did not see mirror my cruelty' reflects a change in perspective from an ignorant child not understanding the significance of shooting an owl to conceding the severity of her act. Thus, the persona undergoes an eventual change of perception which arises from a more holistic understanding of mortality, signifying a turning point in her journey to maturity. In the second section, *Nightfall*, Harwood utilises a Biblical allusion, "time's long-promised land" to represent the impending death of the girl's father, which juxtaposes the positive connotations of the Biblical allusion itself. As the second section progresses, it is evident that the persona's life journey has led to a heightened understanding of life and death, with a

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sense of fulfillment evoked through the extended metaphor “ Since there’s no more to taste ripeness is plainly all. Father, we pick our last fruits of the temporal”. Towards the end of the poem, Harwood adopts a melancholy tone, with the Shakespearean allusion, “ Be your tears wet?” conveying the persona’s reconciliation and mutual respect for her father as he approaches the closing stages of his journey. Therefore, through an exploration of Gwen Harwood’s ‘ Father and Child’, one can perceive that a change in perspectives may be a catalyst for a broadened understanding of life.

Drawing parallels to Father and Child, Darabont in The Shawshank Redemption (1994), explores how a change in perspectives during a journey may consequently lead to a more optimistic outlook of the world. This is depicted through the protagonist Andy Dufresne, who embarks on an inner journey in prison in hope of redemption for a crime he was wrongly convicted of. The notion of a shift in perceptions is significant in the film, with the tagline, “ Fear can hold you prisoner. Hope can set you free” highlighting the need for a changed mindset, especially on unfavourable journeys. In an opening sequence, Darabont successfully conveys the protagonist’s bleak thoughts through the dark lighting and mis-en-scene of the prison guards and cells. Yet Dufresne reveals an emotional shift from depressed to optimistic, evoked through the imperative tone, “ Get busy living or get busy dying”, thus signifying hope in the world outside his prison confines. This notion of hope is reinstated through the dialogue, “ Hope is a good thing...no good thing ever dies”, representing the protagonist’s shifted perspective of the world from embarking on an inner journey. Furthermore, the final scene on a sunlit beach reveals the positive outcome of Dufresne’s journey through <https://assignbuster.com/how-journeys-challenge-and-broaden-understanding-of-the-world-father-and-child-spring-hall-and-the-shawshank-redemption/>

the use of bright lighting and warm non-diegetic music, juxtaposing previous dark scenes in the prison. Therefore, both *Father and Child* and *The Shawshank Redemption* demonstrate that a comprehensive outlook on the world arises from an individual's shift in perceptions.

A journey of maturation requires an individual to relinquish their past to embrace the future, leading to a broadened understanding of the world. In the poem 'Spring Hail' Les Murray demonstrates this notion through the characterisation of a young boy as he embarks on an inner journey into adulthood. Murray utilises the visual imagery of a shed, "in the scent of vanished corn and wild bush birds", as a metaphor for the boy's own childhood, conveying feelings of safety and comfort within the building. Upon emerging, the boy feels apprehensive about the near future, with the phrase "we came uneasy at the silence that grew about us, and came out" highlighting his reluctance to leave the protection and familiarity of his childhood behind. As the boy approaches the end of his journey out of childhood, he is fearful of the unknown, emphasised through the repetition in the lines, "we started to trespass" and "while I ate ice, and wandered, and ate ice". However, once the young boy tests the inroads into his 'new life', he realises that he is keen to experience and embrace the future, demonstrated through the rapid pace and verb choices in "time to shatter peace... battering wind, and be rapidly gone". Thus, it is evident that a greater knowledge and confidence stems from an abandonment of one's past during a journey.

In the same way, in *The Shawshank Redemption*, Darabont encourages an individual to abandon one's past in order for a successful inner journey to occur. During this journey, protagonist Andy Dufresne seeks a new life, connoted through the positive emotive language, " They say it has no memory. That's where I want to live the rest of my life. A warm place with no memory", thus emphasising the need to surrender past traumas for a broadened perspective of the world. A sense of rejuvenation is exemplified through the characterisation of Dufresne, with a *mis-en-scene* depicting his hunched shoulders and minimal speech in early scenes juxtaposing his confidence and defiance as the film progresses. Dufresne's abandonment of his past ' guilt' allows him to embark on an inner journey, with the cathartic effects evident in the final scene, symbolised by a high-angle shot coupled with a bright white backlight demonstrating a renewed sense of self. In this scene, is depicted arms outstretched in a crucifixion pose with grand non-diegetic music crescendoing.

Employing unique strategies that nonetheless recall the themes of Harwood and Murray, Darabont utilises a visual Biblical allusion to establish a connection between a broadened understanding of the world and an inner journey. Therefore, both *Spring Hail* and *The Shawshank Redemption* reveal that an individual gains maturity and a broader perspective of the world as a result of their overcoming of past obstacles during a journey. Ultimately, an individual's broadened understanding of the world is a result of transformed perspectives or the relinquishment of the past.