

A road not taken and two weeks with the queen essay - journey

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

" Literature is the plane, and train, and the road. It is the destination and the journey. " Discuss this statement, focusing on how composers of texts represent the concept of the inner or physical or imaginative journey.

Prescribed text: ' Two Weeks with the Queen' A plane, a train and the road: a poem, a play and a short story. The above quotation is telling us that literature is the vehicle which takes us on the journey in a similar way to a plane, train or road, but it can also be the end point of the journey i. e. the destination. Morris/Gleitzman's " Two Weeks with the Queen", Frost's " The Road Not Taken" and Weller's " Dead Dingo" use a variety of techniques to convey different aspects of three physical journeys as well of addressing a whole number of issues which comprise the thematic underpinning of the inner journeys embarked upon by the protagonists. " Two Weeks with the Queen" composed by Morris/Gleitzman demonstrates the aspects of a physical journey which mainly involves flying from Australia to England. The play conveys a valuable message about the need to face the issue of death and the importance of a family's love and support for the person dying and for the wider family. Other issues encountered include Colin's growth to maturity and the acceptance of homosexual love. The issues are conveyed by the skilful use of a number of techniques including the dialogue and settings which are appropriate to the play format; the exchanges between the characters and especially the use of humour. Colin's journey begins in Australia when Luke is diagnosed with incurable cancer. Colin's mum and dad decide it is best for Colin to stay with his aunty and uncle in England. Initially Colin refuses to leave and insists upon staying and helping. This was indicated through the dialogue, " No! I can be a help to you!...You don't have

to send me away! " But Colin soon realises that since the doctors in Sydney can do nothing for his brother, he will enlist the Queen of England's help to find the world's best doctor. Colin becomes fixated on this idea and his determination to cure Luke is revealed through the following dialogue, " Mum are you listening? I said, Luke isn't going to die" and " Don't worry, I won't say anything about him dying, ' cos he's not going to. " During his stay in England and attempt to find the ' world's best doctor', Colin encounters a number of obstacles and rejections. Colin is introduced to Dr Graham who explains that Luke's illness is incurable and Colin then comes to terms with reality. Realising the importance of family to the sick patients in hospital, he returns to Australia to spend time with Luke. The emotional maturity of Colin has been a journey in itself. The development of the characters relies largely on the dialogue and events. At the beginning of the play Colin was quite self-centred, annoying and childish. His selfishness is revealed when Luke is given more servings of Christmas pudding than Colin, " Four? I only got three! " " Nobody ever...Pays any attention to me. " This statement expresses Colin's envy for Luke as he is given all the attention. This dialogue reflects Colin's emotional immaturity and inability to face the prospect of Luke's death. Throughout the play we watch Colin develop into a more mature, accepting and compassionate character. This newfound maturity owes much to the influence of Ted, particularly in terms of Colin's compassion which assists him in the acceptance of a number of adult issues such as dying, AIDS and a growing understanding of homosexuality. Certainly one of the major issues raised by the play is one of mortality. It is of central importance to Colin's character development that he faces up to

the fact that Luke is not going to be cured, he is going to die. Colin learnt that Luke could not be cured when he was introduced to Dr Graham, who explains to Colin, " His prognosis is correct. Luke can't be cured...He's going to die, Colin. " This is the first time Colin is confronted with the reality of the situation, and also the first time he cries and expresses his anger. Early in the play Colin was in angry denial as this following exchange indicates: Mum: " Don't you understand? Luke's got cancer! He's going to die! Colin: " Bull! I don't believe you! They're bein' slack!... " The importance of a family's love and support for the person dying is also emphasised. Once Colin comes to terms with the inevitability of Luke's death, he realises that the best way to help and comfort Luke is to be there for him as part of the family, Colin: " I mean they look real crook and everything, but they don't look...miserable. " Nurse: " Some cope better than others, I think it's the families that make all the difference. If they all rally round, I don't know, it seems to help. " He now understands that there is nothing more important for his dying brother than the love and companionship of his family. These adult issues are conveyed to the audience by a number of techniques. The most obvious of the means used by the composers is the typical Aussie humour. The author incorporates humour in the script to entertain the audience and to relieve tension from the confronting topic of death. When he is first told how sick Luke is, Colin responds in a way which brings a smile to our faces despite the grim topic. Colin: " If they can sew a bloke's foot on and put a new heart in somebody surely they can cure a bit of cancer! " The play format is used in a particularly engaging way as it allows interplay between the characters to come through so naturally to the responder. Colin: " Is that why they bashed

you up, ' cos you and Griff are in love? [TED nods] I don't mind going to the hospital for you, honest. " Ted: " That's very good of you, but..." Colin: " No worries. " Frost's ' The Road Not Taken' addresses the issue of making a life decision and the consequences of that decision — the destination. Frost is able to convey the symbolic significance of the " road" by skilfully employing a number of techniques including the sustained metaphor of the road. Almost as important is the use of simple, straightforward language, which is so appropriate to the setting. Complementing the simplicity of his poetic language there is the format which comprises four, five line stanzas. Finally the poet's use of repetition and poetic inversion add to its distinctive character. Frost uses a physical road in the wood to represent the journey through life. " Two roads diverged in a yellow wood" symbolises two life choices which he is faced with on his journey. " And looked down one as far as I could..." He tries to anticipate the possibilities for his life of choosing one road over the other but realises that he can't see that far ahead and so will have to commit to one or the other. Realising that one path in life can open up unexpected opportunities, he doubts that he will ever come back. " Oh, I kept the first for another day/Yet knowing how way leads on to way". Finally, Frost underlines the significance of the choice in the last stanza. He is saying to the reader that his life since making that choice between the two forks in the road has been a significant decision in his life. Rather than taking the easier or more obvious path, he opted for the road which " wanted wear". " I took the one less travelled by, And that has made all the difference. " Frost uses a simple vocabulary and format which both add enormously to the metaphorical nature of the poem. Both make the text more accessible to the

responder. "To where it bent in the undergrowth" illustrates the literal and metaphorical levels of the meaning in the poem. The words 'bent' and 'undergrowth' are aptly chosen for the setting and take on a metaphorical meaning. Frost uses authentic language suitable to the setting "grassy and wanted wear" to make the reader believe in the poet's experience. Frost uses a traditional form of poetry to complement his use of simple, literal language. The four stanzas each deal with one of the four main stages within the poem. Initially the general situation is outlined. This leads to an examination of the available alternatives and then to a decision being made. The regular stanza form of 'abaab' is sustained throughout the poem. This reassures the reader that the poet's experience has a predictable rhythm in tune with the everyday experience of life. An unusual but effective technique is Frost's use of repetition and poetic inversion. Inversion in the phrase "long I stood" emphasises the poet's thought on which road he will choose and the length of deliberation he makes. The image is further accentuated with the long vowels in both "long" and "stood". The word "And" is repeated at the beginning of three of the lines in the first stanza. This adds to the sense of hesitation and contemplation that takes place before the decision is made. Unlike the physical journey undertaken by Colin, Charlie Boomer the protagonist in the short story "Dead Dingo" by Archie Weller does not show aspirations or proactive efforts to achieve a positive goal. The main obstacle facing Boomer is the inability to establish his identity with the black race of his father and the white race of his mother. We often see life as a metaphor but he sees no metaphorical road at all. Weller's short story is successful in delivering this confronting message of despair because

Charlie's future appears to hold no prospects or hope. The author's use of language techniques, print form, symbolism and a carefully crafted graphic all contribute to effectively convey the message. The use of the vernacular such as " G'day, mate, " and " ow's it goin' sport, " make the story very accessible to a wide range of responders. It also has a distinctly Australian flavour. The opening lines also have a very effective impact on the responder. We know at once that the composer is being highly ironic in his use of ' free'... ' The gates close behind him and he's free.' He underlines the irony by the one word, second line, " Free? " This irony is emphasised by the bitterness of the third line, " Ha, that's a laugh. " Another feature which makes Weller's story effective is the use of a powerful central image. The graphic which illustrates this short story is a black and white shaded sketch of a caged dingo and an Aboriginal man. The image is looking for the dingo's perspective as if it is the man who is actually behind bars. This symbolises the shared understanding developed through the wild spirit of the dingo and the wild spirit of the young man. The two creatures both understand that they are trapped. The tone of " Dead Dingo" is suitable for the dead end road that Boomer feels he is travelling along. It is one of bitterness and frustration. Such a state of despair is indicated by the following quotation, ' drunken boongs or poor homeless Aborigines. But either way, who really cares?' Even the print form reinforces the theme of journey. The printing physically starts out narrow and becomes wider as it goes further down the page. This indicates moving out into the world from the confinement of prison. This moving out proves to be a false dawn as Boomer's life outside of jail offers no real hope or true freedom. This is shown in many ways such as

the fact that he refers to his friends as 'cobweb friends'. This is reinforced to the responder by Boomer's remark "But this'll be me last job." As responders, we are aware of the heavy irony being used by Weller. In conclusion, it is clear that we have travelled by plane and train and road to reach our destination both physically and metaphorically. These planes and trains and roads have come in the form of a play, a poem and a short story. All have used a number of means to convey both aspects of the story. Whether the composer is travelling to England, or walking along a country road or leaving prison for the false freedom of life outside, it is clear that we as responders have embarked upon the physical as well as the symbolic journey.