

In praise of margins

Literature, Russian Literature



In the essay “ In Praise of Margins” Ian Fraizer upholds the importance of margins as “ a higher sort of unpurpose” (Fraizer 45) defined by his time in “ the woods” (44). Fraizer and his friends spent most of their time in their margins also known as stomping ice in “ the woods”. Fraizer says that marginal place and activities are “ the most important kind” (46) because they are “ where you can try out odd ideas”. Margins could be visiting a park, a friend’s house, a dance studio or even a football field, also doing things such as swinging on a tire, reading, watching movies, dancing or playing a sport.

He argues that margins- whether places or activities- are valuable because they allow a person to be themselves, have fun and use their imagination without worrying about impressing anyone. I agree with Fraizer that margins play an important role in people’s lives because although they have no purpose they can have positive results. Fraizer and his friends spent most of their childhood in the woods because that was where they felt comfortable and had fun with each other.

This type of margins reminds me of the book “ Bridge to Terabithia” a story that embraces margins in every page. In the novel two kids ironically meet in the woods. There the kids used their imaginations extensively by creating their own kingdom Terabithia, where they reigned over everything and were loved by all the creatures who roamed their land. The woods acted as the two kid’s marginal place because it allowed them to be creative. Marginal places such as these are important because they show a person what they are cable of accomplishing.

These kids built a world with waterfalls, mountains and its own civilization. Margins are valuable to have because they let people acquire skills to expand their creativity. According to Fraizer “ a book without margins is impossible to read”. This statement enforces Frazier’s belief about the necessity of margins and that attempting to live life without them makes everything unnecessarily more complicated. Fraizer and his friends did anything and everything in the woods.

As they told themselves a frequent activity was exploring and the reader understand this was marginal when he mentions they were all easily distracted from their exploration with the sight of the perfect ice to stomp on. Fraizer explains these distractions to extend the understanding of margins and that they don’t require uninterrupted focus because a person doesn’t have something to accomplish, a marginal activity could result in another marginal activity that could have an outcome. I consider watching movies a marginal activity for many, people go to the theater to simply relax and get their mind off of other things.

Movies let a person engulf themselves in the lives of others, fall in love all over again with a romance, laugh away all problems with a comedy, or feel a rush of adrenaline with an action movie. Films similar to these can create inspiration in people to find love, to become a director, even to become a writer to create a script that will affect people as the film affected them. Margins being without any purpose unintentionally result with a person having a purpose “ every purpose-filled activity we pursue in the woods began as just fooling around”.

Through observing his kids actions when they encountered a ditch Fraizer remembers his personal experiences with margins. To Fraizer and his friends “ the woods” played an important role in their childhoods, it acted as a place where they could let their imaginations run wild and pursue what their minds came up with. Fraizer says margins are places or activities that don’t “ account for themselves economically”; however, they are valuable because they can result in a new kingdom, a life changing film or a better understanding of life.