

Django unchained hero's journey essay



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The Hero with a Thousand Faces, by Joseph Campbell, explains the characteristics of the hero's journey. This journey consists of a hero leaving his or her ordinary world on an adventure to later return as a changed person. The movie Django Unchained tells the story of a newly freed slave, Django, in the world of racism at its most treacherous time. Django learns how to survive in this world and sets out to rescue and free his wife. By analyzing this movie, Campbell's theory about the hero's journey can be better understood. Django takes the path of a hero and goes on a journey that will lead him to his ultimate freedom.

Campbell states that the first process in a hero's journey is separation from the ordinary world and call to adventure. In this story Django is just another slave living in 1860's United States. One evening in the woods, while traveling miles on foot while his owners rode horses, a man named Dr. King Shultz comes forth and seeks out Django specifically. Shultz offers to buy Django but his owners refuse which results in Shultz killing them. Shultz states that he is a bounty hunter in search of the three Brittle Brothers and he knows Django has seen them.

He offers him a deal, in which he helps him find and kill the Brittle Brothers in exchange for his freedom. Django agrees and is then separated from his ordinary world by being released from his chains and getting up on a horse to pursue this new adventure. Campbell's theory says once the hero is separated from his ordinary world, his life will forever be changed. The next stop in a hero's journey is crossing the threshold. This is where the hero is in a completely new world that comes with new rules and facing the unknown.

Django and Dr. Shultz arrive in a town where Django is given deathly stares by the citizens because they have never seen a black man on a horse. The town sheriff confronts them and Shultz shoots him dead because he had a bounty on his head. The town Marshall then comes with a small armada of citizens ready to shoot Shultz and Django down. Shultz explains his reason for killing the sheriff and the Marshall has no choice but to let them go by law. They are then free to go and continue their main mission in finding the Brittle Brothers.

Campbell now says that the hero must undergo some test and challenges followed by a transformation of himself. In the movie, Django's test is the killing off the Brittle Brothers. He and Shultz arrive at the plantation where the Brothers live. Django remembers how the brothers once tortured his wife and he goes and kills all three of them. By law the plantation owner could not do anything about this so he had to let them go. However, later that night a swarm of KKK members go to kill Django and Shultz, but they were two steps ahead of them. He and Shultz ambush the KKK members and kill them all.

Shultz then decides to take Django under his wing as his apprentice bounty hunter. Together they continued to collect bounties until Django says he wants to go free his wife Broomhilda. Django, now being an expert in gun handling, sets off with Shultz to one of the biggest plantations in the US called Candyland to save his wife. These scenes from the movie represented the Road of Trails in a hero's journey. The hero must then enter the Belly of the Whale. This is where the hero is completely separated from his ordinary world, whereas in this movie he is in enemy territory.

Shultz and Django meet Mr. Calvin Candy, owner of Candyland. They tell him that they are experts in Mandingo fighting, the organized fighting of slaves, and would like to purchase his strongest fighter for \$12, 000. This offer quickly catches Mr. Candy's attention and he invites them to his plantation to negotiate a deal. While on the way to the plantation, Django and Shultz witness what Campbell would call a crucifixion. Mr. Candy finds a runaway slave fighter of his that no longer wants to fight. To intimidate Django, he sets a pack off dogs on the slave that results in his death.

This truly upsets Shultz but Django, as a result of his transformation, sees to it that they continue with business. Django begins to treat slaves as if he himself were a white man. This gives him courage and power. Once they arrive to Mr. Candy's plantation, Django quickly spots Broomhilda. They then try to convince Mr. Candy if they can purchase his strongest fighter along with Broomhilda for \$12, 000. Mr. Candy gladly agrees to the offer, but his slave and personal assistant Steven secretly tells him that Django and Shultz are only there for Broomhilda.

They are both revealed as bounty hunters and Mr. Candy forces them to buy only Broomhilda for \$12, 000. With no hesitation Shultz purchases her but the thought of the " crucifixion" from earlier in the day forces him to kill Mr. Candy. Shultz is then shot dead by one of Candy's comrades. Django kills many men but is forced to surrender for the sake of Broomhilda's life. This clearly shows an example of Campbell's theory of being within the Belly of the Whale. Afterwards, Campbell states that the hero must go through some sort of Atonement or redemption.

Django is turned back into a slave and taken away by new slave owners. However, Django uses everything he learned from Shultz to convince the new slave owners that he is a free man and will help them collect a \$12, 000 bounty from Candyland. While their backs are turned Django kills them and takes what Campbells calls a " magic flight" on a horse back to Candyland. This shows how Django has completely transformed and is no longer a slave. According to Campbell, one of the last parts of a hero's journey is the Return. Django must return to Candyland to save his wife.

On the way Django kills many men and is finally reunited with Broomhilda. He then returns to Mr. Candy's plantation and kills Steven for causing more trouble when they were already in enough trouble. After that Django blows up the plantation with dynamite. He and Broomhilda are last seen riding away as free African-Americans. The Return consists of the hero's unfinished business and conclusion of his journey. A hero then becomes the Master of Two Worlds. Django becomes a free man and is known as the fastest gun in the South.

White men fear him but black slaves look up to him. Being a free black man in the 1860's doesn't guarantee complete freedom, but Django will die trying as long as he lives. Django Unchained is a clear example of how Joseph Campbell's hero journey is interrelated to many stories we hear of today. A hero must be someone who goes on a journey for the greater good of him or her. They must portray someone people can look up to. A hero may bring something forth that many people would disregard but in the end its all for a worthy purpose.