

The journey, not the arrival matters essay sample



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This very general cliché statement describes a widespread feeling towards the subject of journeys; the journey process is far more valuable than the 'destination' or end results of the journey. Composers commonly reiterate and emphasize this perspective through their texts such as Larry and Andy Wachowski's science fiction film "The Matrix", William Shakespeare's play "The Tempest", Kenneth Grahame's "Wind In The Willows" and Sonya Hartnett's novel "Surrender". They represent the notion of journeys as consisting of some core ideas primarily including continual personal growth and external changes. The texts involve imaginative environments, situations, characters and elements, which cause the responder to suspend disbelief this of course is a major aspect of the imaginative journey concept. Literary techniques like metaphors and symbolism invade our minds subliminally creating the journey imaginatively, whilst character development shows inner changes.

"The Tempest" is a Shakespearean drama that demonstrates how composers can represent the ever-intriguing notion of journeys, especially imaginative journeys. The play revolves around a magical confrontation on a sparsely inhabited tropical island, the isolated environment is a feature of imaginative journey texts. The plot structure, character development, symbolism, imagery, theme of enchantment and metaphors used depict a tale of magical adventure, of revenge and deceit, feasts and comedy, personal growth and reconciliation.

The Tempest basic plot line exemplifies a sub-genre of the imaginative journey named the Shipwrecked Mariner's Tale. This sub-genre is comprised of stories that involve the interruption of a planned journey leading to an

alternative journey. This journey is into an unknown world where through struggle the character adopts changes to accept the different world. Also the change may occur for the character to reluctantly accept the new world as his/her 'home'.

The plot interestingly emphasises the process not unlike the statement 'the journey, not the end matters, the same meaning can therefore be reasoned. The supposed 'end' in the Tempest's case [the characters leaving the island] is rarely touched upon yet it rather necessitates in a formal role in concluding the play and restoring the status quo.

Shakespeare develops the characters' values and maturity to the extent where differences can be quashed in the name of unity therefore the journeys. Character development is one technique employed to represent the growth and positive progress of one's journeying process. The individual progresses constantly to the realisation of a greater set of morals and philosophies. The character Gonzalo, evidences this, as he speaks of a Utopian society:

"I' the commonwealth I would by contraries... To feed my innocent people."(Gonzalo 2. 1 lines 152-160 and 164-169)

Yet the once vengeful and envious Prospero shows how he has grown in sagacity by forgiving his traitorous brother Antonio of treacherous deeds:

"...I do forgive

Thy rankest fault; all of them; and require

My dukedom of thee, which perforce, I know,

Thou must restore.”(Prospero 5. 1 lines 129-133)

The Duke of Milan, Antonio, and King Alonso of Naples realise greater honesty and righteousness by repenting thus allowing Prospero’s return:

“ Thy Dukedom I resign, and do entreat

Thou pardon me my wrongs...”(Alonso 5. 1 lines 18-20)

Prospero also does what is right and relinquishes his magic (the epilogue):

“ Now my charms are all o’erthrown,

And what strength I have’s mine own...”(Prospero 5. 2 lines 1-20)

The character of Caliban can be construed as a representative of native peoples, colonialists saw the natives as inferior, and as result he symbolises the human slavery and abuse exacted on these peoples. Prospero used Caliban as a servant, which is until enlightenment awakens Caliban’s sense of freedom and later his ‘ master’ frees him. It is apparent that Caliban’s plight is a representation of many similarly abused races in history, particularly indigenous races oppressed by Colonialist empires of the play’s context [early 17th century]. The character Ariel is a native and servant to Prospero supporting this point of view [he too is forced to plea for freedom, which is not immediately granted]. The release of oppressed peoples to freedom and the realisation of their human rights are clearly positive. Hence the composer represents the journey as a beneficial tool for societal progress.

“ You taught me language, and my profit on't is, I know how to curse”(Caliban 1. 2 366-367)

“ I say by sorcery he got this isle; / From me he got it.” (Caliban 3. 2)

“. . . this thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine.” (Prospero 5. 1)

The Matrix [1999], directed by Larry and Andy Wachowski, is a polysemic text delving in religious symbolism, and an array of textual allusions. These aspects are supplemented by rich film discourse and character development. All of which the composers have used to create a fantastic journey the journey of a chosen one - Neo.

The setting is a distant future where man survives in two forms. One is as apart of a sustained dreamlike existence where the mind lives in a constructed world, the Matrix, for the sole purpose of powering the dominant A. I machine race. The other is the rebellion of this pretended life through disengagement from the system - freedom to free others. The main characters are a band of these rebels, the protagonist is the character of Neo, whom we follow, in initial disbelief and then in empowerment.

The plot line further focuses on the actual journeying rather than the destination through the prominent theme of choice. The composer tells the responder that choices dictate what path is taken on journeys and thus what trials are met and what consequential growth occurs and eventually the result or destination. However more importantly the gravity of these choices require risks to be taken, and thence the greater the risk the greater the reward as shown by Neo abandoning his life and identity for truth.

The directors raise a significant notion that is the question of what levels of consciousness does one's journey operate, the responder can pick up on the textual references to biblical myths though their subtlety and apparent indifferent effect on the plot. The responder autonomously makes subconscious assumptions of Neo's journey that probably being the connection between him, his quest for truth and belief and religion. As a chosen one and a saviour of great power his figure resembles Christ. His name Thomas 'Neo' Anderson translates into 'New son of man'. 'Son of man' is literally a reference to Christ. As Neo or the 'new son of man' realises an alternative faith where does the responder stand on the issue of faith?

Neo subconsciously deduced there was surreality to the world in which he lived this was not due to an obvious reason rather that it was the invasion of inexplicable peculiarities via subliminal means. Neo's sensitivity and reception to these oddities is what accumulate into a general sense of suspicion. From this suspicion and yearning for truth [shown by Neo's first scene where he sleeps by the computer as it scours the Internet for information on Morpheus] he progresses to much greater truth. The journey is hence represented as way of ascertaining truths and exploring all the aspects of reality, questioning nature.

Wind In The Willows written by Kenneth Grahame is a novel that represents the notion of the journey through the juxtaposition of two characters and their differing actions and choices, and the journey as an enchanting experience in an imaginative realm. My analysis is of an extract from this novel.

These two characters are the adventurous Toad and the nostalgic Rat. The contrasting attitudes of Toad and Rat represent the two differing attitudes on journeys to a starkly polar extent. These attitudes are Toad's enthusiasm for exploration into the unknown and Rat's longing for home and reluctance to travel. These views display a prominent binary opposition in journey texts: the world versus home binary. People more inclined to the World aspect have more active and explorative qualities where travelling is greatly desired and endured. Whereas those that favour the Home aspect are nostalgic people whom live peacefully and contently at their home and are mostly unwilling to disturb this through travel. Whilst Toad deals in possibilities Rat considers certainties.

This binary is consistent in journey texts, a character's reluctance or willingness to venture down uncertain paths controls what personal growth may occur. The less a character is likely to extend themselves beyond their existing comfort levels the less change that will result, as it is fairly understood that broadening one's experiences leads to greater knowledge and open-mindedness. The journey's capability of being enriching to the journeyer is therefore stunted, of course that is unless they are like Toad.

Evidence to support the reasoning of these two characters belonging to their respective extreme of the binary can be found in their choice of language. Toad has an enthusiastic and imploring tone [with high modality]. 'Don't argue', 'come inside' and 'you've got to come' demonstrate this. He lists the highlights of the travel proposition, 'travel, interest, change, excitement!'. He speaks in short, sharp statements often using exclamation marks to show his positive yet persuasive attitude. Now contrast that with <https://assignbuster.com/the-journey-not-the-arrival-matters-essay-sample/>

Rat who speaks slowly and is conservative in his preference for what has been tested and proved certain, that is shown by dogmatic phrases: ' I am going to stick to my old river' and ' as I've always done'. Italics emphasise his dogmatism.

Surrender is a novel by author Sonya Hartnett, it details a psychologically thrilling tale of a boy's struggle as an adolescent in a rural country town with oppressing and constricting parents. This boy, Anwell, meets another of the same age whom differs distinctly in lifestyle and selfishness, he is a recluse and homeless that goes by the name of Gabriel. Gabriel exerts an evil influence over Anwell, they form a pact of friendship and accountability, and their relationship is documented in alternating first person accounts. Anwell eventually deliberately gives up on existing that is after a long list of dubious events that are at times ambiguously his fault yet mainly Gabriel's wrong doing.

The tense is mainly past tense, so the responder is practically a silent listener who journeys with the protagonists' back to a suspenseful series of flashbacks. Interspersed are present tense reflections, as accounts of the aftermath, which are depressing and provide the ominous undertones to the recounts. The responder senses the gradually degrading optimism to a bitter pessimism as Anwell's situation worsens and Gabriel's criminality increases until nearing the conclusion there is a dramatic climax in the form of Anwell murdering his parents. These murders are confusing at first in their extremeness the responder is lead to believe they are yet another of Anwell's unspoken hollow threats.

The visual and olfactory imagery is vivid and naturalistic, putting the responder firmly in the imaginative journey of Anwell and Gabriel, with the drastic nature of their actions justified by the falseness of memory yet particularly their immaturity and loneliness. An example of Hartnett's imagery is when Gabriel's mother ages, he says her world 'contracted like a dying spider'.

'The journey, not the arrival matters', an analogy can be employed to best explain the meaning of this statement: if life is a 'journey' then clearly death is the 'end'.

Imaginative journeys broaden the mind to allow the understanding of the world, therefore to have the greatest understanding and hence maximise the benefits of a journey one must embrace the world: travel, explore and envisage. This is the premise of imaginative journeys, it is precisely what composers of texts generally promote through the journey motifs.

Composers such as William Shakespeare, Larry and Andy Wachowski, Kenneth Grahame and Sonya Hartnett.

"Imaginative journeys are journeys, which take the responder into worlds of imagination, speculation and inspiration..." (syllabus) The texts that have been discussed reflect this; *The Tempest* stirs imaginative thought processes with magic and music whilst the matrix causes contemplation of mankind's journey into the future and Toad's venerable attitude for the open road is inspirational.