

Journey of life by micheal leunig

Literature



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Journeys are everywhere. No one denies that. Journeys can be physical, inner or imaginative and give people the opportunities to extend and challenge themselves, physically, emotionally and intellectually. These ideas can be conveyed through the documentary series, *Through Australian Eyes* by William Fitzwater and the cartoon titled *Journey Of Life* by Micheal Leunig. '*Through Australian Eyes*' is a documentary series presenting the expectation, experiences and reflections of some young Australian girls when they travel to their parents' birthplace for the first time.

The documentary becomes an eye-opening experience which has given them the opportunities to learn more about the world of their heritage and their identities. Ellen Youie from the China episode is "looking for a link which will give [her] a greater sense of security as to where she belongs in this world". Based on that, we can see that Ellen lacks a sense of identity at the beginning so she wants to look for it. She starts her journey at Beijing.

By using the combination of mid and long shots, the director shows Beijing as where she witnesses the raising of the red flag in the early morning, while dozens of locals are out in the wispy sunshine to practice their Tai Chi exercises. These peaceful scenes are quite different from the scenes in Melbourne where Ellen is first introduced in a noisy and crowded parade. Hence the documentary has shown the contrast between two countries. Then Ellen is shown playing her piccolo at the base of the Great Wall of China, where the director uses symbolism to represent her journey which will take time to reach the destination.

Besides, to make the audience focus more on the opinions of Ellen, the director also highlights the emotional struggle she has experienced during <https://assignbuster.com/journey-of-life-by-micheal-leunig/>

the journey. Since she hasn't had a feeling of China as her home due to the language barrier and different culture, therefore she leaves Beijing and visits her mother's hometown to find her complete identity. To show the town is a rural area, in the first scenes about it, the director uses long shot to draw a picture of overall main activities of the village, people fishing, riding bicycles instead of cars, etc.

Here Ellen realises everyone is hard working and her mother used to be too. She notices even though both of two places she visited are in China but they are completely different and she prefers the countryside. As Ellen's journey came to an end, it has given her the opportunity to realise "... all the tangible evidence I need that my roots lie there", meaning that she finally got new insights of the world of her heritage and a better understanding of her identity through her journey to China. At the end of the documentary the montage gives the audience a series of pictures to conclude the main ideas of Ellen's story.

It helps the audience recall all the things that Ellen had seen and experienced on her journey and gives her an incentive to come back and find out more about her history. Another episode that continues to explore the concepts of the physical and inner journeys of the young women can be seen in the Italy episode with Rosemary Agustino. Unlike the China episode, the montage is seen immediately in the beginning of the documentary, showing a series of pictures of Australia, Italian migration and then Rosemary's family.

It is an interesting introduction which summarises the history of Rosemary's family before mentioning why she should take a journey to Italy. First time

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coming to Italy, Rosemary has experienced the different lifestyle of people who live in an urban area and in a rural area. It is much like the same situation where Ellen faced in China. But unlike Ellen's mother's village where people are always hardworking, Rosemary is quite surprised as seeing the way people in her aunt's village live is so simple and relaxing.

By using the camera angle catching some scenes showing people singing, doing stuff without modern technology, etc. They seem taking things slowly, day to day and normally don't worry much thing. With that kind of lifestyle, Rosemary is kind of disliking which means she is seen as a person who has an Italian background but surely Australian thought. Still the journey has given her the opportunities to understand the contrast of different cultures and extend her emotional and intellectual knowledge through experiencing the lifestyle of different countries.

Lastly, " Journey Of Life" by Micheal Leunig can also provide opportunities for people to extend and challenge themselves through journeys. In the cartoon, Leunig uses a bunch of hills standing next to each other creating a wave to represent as a long and arduous journey of life that is needed to overtake. The facial expression of the main character changes every time when he goes up to the top of the hills. It seems showing that whenever he faces a problem too many times, he gets sick of it.

But when he succeeds, he feels happy and proud of the victory and achievement that he challenged. There is no quote or caption in the cartoon but the viewer can clearly see what the main character is trying to do. He doesn't give up on his journey. He keeps going straight even though he knows the destination may be still far, and perhaps obstacles are hiding and

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waiting for him. This shows that the journey has provided opportunities for him to encourage himself and improve and extend his emotion and intellect. Although no one helps him but he still tries his best to finish the journey.

Like Ellen and Rosemary, the main character has gained precious experiences and knowledge for his life. By looking at the following three texts above, we can see the journeys have given us the opportunities to extend and challenge ourselves physically, emotionally and intellectually even in a positive or negative way. No matter how the journey ends, the experiences and memories that one had along the way and the decisions made during the journey are very important because they are the keys to open the new and valuable world of knowledge.