

Journey is the reward  
essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

There is an Ancient Chinese Proverb that states, “ The Journey is the reward”, meaning that no matter how long it takes you to reach your destination, it is not where you end up, but the journey that will have shaped you. As we journey in life, we are challenged by obstacles that we must overcome to be rewarded. In the play *Away* by Michael Gow, our preconceptions of characters are challenged and our opinions on journeys and how they have the ability to extend us are developed. This idea of journeys challenging us is further explored in the poem *The Road not Taken* by Robert Frost, where the persona was presented with a choice in paths which would have significant repercussions on his life. The concept of journey is also exemplified in Peter Skrzynecki’s poem, *Crossing the Red Sea*, where the aspect of physical journeys and their emotional development and strain is explored through the journey of immigrants. Through these texts we can see that some journeys can be chosen and paths can be alternated, however in other journeys there aren’t any decisions to be made, and you must simply follow the course which life has prescribed to you. In the play *Away* by Michael Gow (1968), the protagonists undertake long journeys and are faced with many obstacles which they must overcome to develop as characters and be rewarded.

In this play, three families undergo a strenuous physical journey, a holiday, which acts as a stimulus for change. Even though the three families attend different holiday destinations, their final destination is the same. Their stories all start with light being shone on their dysfunctions and ambitions and the tempest, which acts as a catalyst for change, drives them together which provides them with a chance for self-discovery, self- recognition,

acceptance and opportunity. Throughout the play, the characters evolve and adapt themselves so that they can overcome their obstacles. Coral undertook her journey alone, and chooses a path of her own. When she says “ I promise I’ll get better, watch me, I will,” it is evident that she is trying to change her course. At the start of the play, Coral is in a state of mental fragility and deterioration, where she is still hanging onto her son even though he has passed away. The play however is one of reconciliation and transformation and this becomes evident through the Shakespearean overlay. When Roy proclaims, “ I’m not wasting time and money on airfare on room service if you’re going to spend all your time staring at people,” it is Corals turning point in the play. From here, Coral hitchhikes to the isolation of the beach, in hope that it will act as a healing agent.

This is her reward on her journey. After the storm and her decision to abandon Roy at the hotel, Coral uses the beach and the water to heal herself and reconcile. The use of intertextuality throughout the play, reinforces the concept that a journeys reward may be reconciliation after the protagonist has suffered. Each of the characters experiences a new understanding of themselves and of those around them, and they learn, especially Coral, that taking risks and new paths, may have positive outcomes and may lead to different perspectives. Similarly in Peter Skrzynecki’s poem Crossing the Red Sea, the protagonist speaks of experiences such as hope and pain, and that on a physical journey, sometimes you have to overcome obstacles to get to your final destination and be rewarded. The poem is a recount of a tedious physical journey which was undertaken to be rewarded with the “ Promised Land”. It speaks of the obstacles encountered when the persona voyaged

over the seas as an immigrant; much like Moses lead God's people across the Red Sea to the Promised Land and away from danger. Skrzynecki talks about how the sea is a healing agent, carrying immigrants to safety, much like Coral used the water at the beach as a healing agent to reconcile and re-evaluate her life.

The protagonist talks of how people are given a chance in life and how journeys have life changing possibilities which are rewarding. It traces a physical journey as well as a shared emotional journey with the fellow migrants. This contrasts with Coral and Gwen's journeys in *Away*, as they chose to undergo their journeys in solitude and without assistance. Crossing the Red Sea, highlights the dynamic nature of a physical journey and gradually evolves from a tone of exhaustion, tedium and dismal at the beginning of the poem to a tone of hope and relief as the poem concludes. This gradual shift in tone is shown through the use of irony where the poem begins with the sun setting and ends with the sun rising again.

This orchestrates the advancing journey and the transition from despair in the migrants old lives, to the hope in the coming life. In this sense, both the sea and the sun are agents of healing, reward and reconciliation in the way that the migrants turn their backs and close the doors to their old lives, choosing to take a new path in their life. The use of personification in the lines, " That Time was hoisting/In mock salute," indicates that nature determines and controls their destiny and their journey now. The words, " mock salute" intensify the feelings of worthlessness and lack of control over their fate, as they are relying on nature to give them their reward after their journey. The sunrise acts as an allusion to the dynamic nature of journeys

and from this we recognize that we can never really understand how difficult or rewarding ones journey has been, until we have undertaken their journey ourselves. in the poem, The Road not