

The motorcycle diaries essay sample



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“ The Motorcycle Dairies” is a biographical film that tells the tale of a formative journey by motorcycle across South America by Ernesto “ Fueser” Guevara. The film depicts the gradual development of Fuser’s physical journey which plays a major role in the awakening of his political consciousness and the shaping of his beliefs. As Fueser continues his physical journey, issues of oppression and injustice are raised and are used to facilitate the self-realization of the traveller. Director Walter Salles is able to vividly reproduce a continent beleaguered by poverty and disease through the use of motion picture techniques such as black and white film which preserves the film’s authenticity and ambient music which supports the seamless and realistic look of the film.

During the 1950’s Ernesto Guevara, a medical student, and his biochemist friend Alberto Grandado embark on a thrilling motorcycle trip through the coastal countries of South America. One of the opening scenes begins with a point of view shot of a long forever ending road. The camera moves adjacent to the bike giving the realistic effect of the bike moving fast along the empty roads, gaining a sense of freedom and enjoyment for the pair.

In the course of their travel, Ernesto and Alberto discover the reality of their country filled with suffering, injustice and oppression affecting the lower classes of the social hierarchy. The journey allows the two protagonists to face self-discovery and come to terms with the class distinctions which are prevalent in the Latin-American society. Salles explores the concept of self-discoveryThe time spent at San Pablo, a leper colony in Peru served the purpose of further developing the self-discovery within the characters. In the leper colony, a river physically and metaphorically represents the social

inequalities and differences which separate the classes of the social hierarchy that is, the staff living on the north side of the river, separated from the lepers living on the south.

This encounter with injustice changes the way Guevara perceives the world and only strengthens his later political activities. Guevara makes his “ final journey” one night when he chooses to swim across the river that separates the two societies of the leper colony. The journey symbolizes Guevara’s rejection of the wealth and aristocracy into which he was born in Argentina and the path he would take later in his life fighting for what he believed was the dignity every human being deserves.