

# Omon ra analysis essay



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“ Omon Ra”, a novel written by the Russian author, Victor Pelevin, is definitely an interesting and enjoyable story. The story deals with the central character, Omon Krizomazov, who lives up to his dream in becoming an astronaut and flying into space. Omon’s family is broken and absent which leads him in becoming a child of the state, and is adopted later by “ father figures” in the Soviet bureaucracy. Such things like films about flying and a wooden airplane deeply influenced his dream. Along the way of capturing his dreams, he meets a young boy named Mitiok, who shares many of the same interests as him.

The two young boys’ then stick together to make their dreams come true and are eventually accepted in both flight school and the Soviet Space program. Omon is obliged to kill himself after fulfilling his duty on the moon only to find out that the entire “ flight” was staged somewhere in the underground corridors of the Moscow metro system. However, he is not disappointed; he feels that he has found the truth he was searching for his entire life, a truth he has paid for with a lot of pain and suffering and the death of his friends.

He believes his suffering, his belief, his devotion made a difference. The primary idea of the story is Pelevin’s point of view that what may look like reality in the Soviet Union can in fact be the basis of fictitious events. Through manipulation and deceit, our protagonist was forced into an imaginary situation. We see that in life there are always things that are much deeper than what they might seem to be on the outside. A person may always believe they recognize what is going on, however there is always a deeper truth which that particular person doesn’t see.

Pelevin uses the technique of foreshadowing numerous times in the novel in order to give us, and Omon as well, unconscious warnings about the true nature of reality related to the fictitious events taking place. “ In the twenties they had one kind of spaceship (...) In the thirties they were different, in the fifties they were different again, and so on...” (12). We clearly see that Omon and Mitiok are discussing about the various kinds of spaceships that were created in some of the past years.

Although there were many spaceships created in the passed years, they have never actually flown into space, which is the initial job of the spaceship. These spaceships were real in size but were non-functioning models, similar to the spaceship Omon had been working with. ““ Neither do these,” he answered, pointing to the model we were discussing as it swayed gently in the draught”” (12). There are several cardboard model spaceships that are placed around the space camp.

These models obviously are fake and do not move by themselves, nor can they fly into space. Both the cardboard model spaceships and the real sized model spaceships foreshadow the true nature of reality which Omon faces towards the end of the novel. In a later part of the novel, when Omon begins to understand the mission of the space experiment, Flight Leader shows a demonstration of the mission using a toy: A small red toy appeared in his hand. He wound it up and set it at the beginning of the red line on the map.

The toy began to buzz and edged forward—its fuselage was like a tin can set on eight small black wheels, with the letters USSR on its side and two eye-like bulges at the front. (42) This small red toy represents the self-propelled

vehicle, called the moonwalker that is going to be sent into space. When you think of a toy, you usually picture a plastic made object which can easily be broken into pieces if you were to throw it on the floor. This toy foreshadows the true nature of reality because in the end, Omon did not fly into space after all and the spaceship is similar to the toy since it wasn't really functional.

The description of the toy as " a tin can set on eight small black wheels, with letters USSR on its side and two eye-like bulges at the front" (42) foreshadows a similar structure of the real spaceship that was used for the experiment. The whole space experiment was like a virtual game; in order to win, Omon had to complete the mission by placing the radio buoy that repeats " Lenin", " USSR", and " Peace" on the invisible surface of the " moon". This " game" had to end in Omon committing suicide.

A little bit after the middle of the novel, we are introduced with Omon beginning to feel as if he were in a train before he realizes that is exactly where he is. " The roaring became a steady, powerful rumbling, while the shuddering became the kind of vibration you feel in a train when it's already picked up speed" (104). We begin to have a sense of foreshadowing as soon as the author begins describing the " powerful rumbling (...) the kind of vibration you feel in a train..." (104). This reveals the true nature of reality that Omon is in fact inside a metro/non-functioning spaceship.

The only problem is that he has no idea of this at that moment. Omon is trapped in the Soviet Union's little game of fiction at this part of the story, however in the end; the story unravels by Omon beginning to understand the

true nature of realism which has been revolving around him for quite some time. Pelevin also uses the technique of setting which serves as a metaphor for the absurd state of things in the Soviet Union, its overly-glorified space program, and the damage done to entire generations of people who found that their country could send people and objects into outer space.

The setting is empty of any contents or objects aside from those the bureaucrats invest it with; nothing exists, in this story, except for state symbols upon a landscape; no setting is pure in any way. Many of the people living in this motherland believe that their country has evolved since people and objects have been sent by their motherland into outer space. However, what they don't know is that one of their brave astronauts, Omon, is "being bolted to the floor in the centre of the room" (45) with his "arms clamped to the armrests, and legs clamped to the chair's legs" (45).

The reason why they do this to Omon is simply to brainwash him, motivate him, and make him (and the other space cadet's) believe that there is a good reason as to why they are doing this for the mother country. The Soviet Space Association only cares about how the motherland is perceived and they will do anything to meet their goals. Even if it means that they'll have to lie to the whole country about sending their people to the "moon". At another point in the story, after the space team (including Flight Leader and Colonel Urchagin), have taken a group photo, they are brought to a place:

With stone walls festooned with wires of various colours...In one place I noticed faded flowers lying in a shallow niche, and on the wall beside it was a small memorial plaque with the word: "On this spot in 1932 Comrade Serob

Nalbandian was villainously slain with a spade. ” (97) They spend some time wandering around an underground maze of tombs and mausoleums; they do not spend much time outdoors and we don't, as readers get a strong sense of what the city looks like. Readers only get a visual sense of what the bureaucrats want them to see and leave out the true and pure nature of the society beyond the Soviet Space Association.

Thus we come to a conclusion that the setting is empty of any contents or objects aside from those the bureaucrats invest it with, which constantly revolves around the Soviet Space Program. Pelevin is basically trying to show and simply say that “ Omon Ra” is a satirical portrait of the Soviet reality. The novel's strength is in the power of author imagination; its crisp voice, very dark humor, very strong and absurd surrealistic story line with unexpected twists and shocking turns.

This story makes us realize how some people have the sudden urge to become selfish and continuously think about nothing other than themselves. As a human being in this complex world that we live in, we shouldn't always take things for granted, and we should definitely always keep in mind that there may always be a deeper truth to what things may seem. Many people may be afraid of life and reality, but we must live life to the fullest and exceed the things that frighten us. As the saying goes in the movie called 10th & Wolf, “ Whatever doesn't kill you can only make you stronger. ”