

Inner journey essay essay sample

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



Inner journeys involve the exploration of the self, as individuals review their growth and development in the light of experiences which challenge and inspire them. The inner journey has the power to challenge an individual's thinking. They provide new insights and understanding of the world and themselves.

Margaret Atwood's poem "Journey to the Interior" explores the dangers of an inner journey/ the individual becomes enlightened as to her own psyche/ compares the obstacles that face the traveller by relating the inner psyche with a physical map. Atwood charts her journey using a running metaphor of "a dotted line on a map", which establishes the comparison of a physical landscape with the metaphysical mindscape. In Stanza 1 we realise that inner travel can be dangerous, illustrated by imagery of the "cliff", while the "net of air" image hints at the uncertainty of travel into the psyche.

Furthermore, this journey is difficult and uncharted shown by the metaphor indicating a "lack of reliable charts". The listing of the debris of daily existences such as shoes and "a paring knife" symbolise the obstacles in the voyage of day to day life which confuse Atwood's line of thought. This confusion is also reflected by the non linear layout of the poem. Atwood has travelled into her psyche, causing her to realise the darkness in her own mind. This proves too dangerous and she retreats from further exploration with the pun "I must keep my head" and not go so far as to become insane like others.

Vittorio Sereni's "A Dream" is another poetic journey where one encounters inner obstacles, in the form of guilt, but in this case the traveller is unable to prevail/ is unable to progress /develop. Sereni takes an emotional journey

into his past memory, but his guilt over his apathy to the dictatorship of Mussolini bars his progression. Sereni establishes the dream-like disjointed nature of the journey through the use of free verse and irregular rhythm. He begins his travels by trying to cross the universal metaphor of the “ bridge”, symbolic of his life in fascist Italy. In the middle of the bridge he encounters an internal obstacle in the surreal imagery of a guard with “ a leaden body without a face”. This hints at the facelessness of being part of a regime and indicates a ‘ ghost’ from the past blocking his progress.

The guard poses a philosophical question “ have you made...your ideological choice?”, the rhetorical nature of the query indicating the persona is unable to reach a satisfying conclusion and achieve inner peace. He begins to fight the guard, the “ grappling” on the bridge paralleling Sereni’s internal struggle for an answer he is unable to find. The sudden shift to the present tense “ the fight still goes on” illustrates that the author is still attempting to cross his inner barrier, with no hope of ever finishing his journey for emotional harmony.

The poem “ Fax X” by Gwyneth Lewis illustrates that although the inner journey is filled with hardship, overcoming these obstacles leads to new and exciting discoveries/ provides the opportunity for new insights. Like Atwood, Lewis establishes an inner journey using an extended physical metaphor, in this case a “ cruising ship” to illustrate the progression of day-to-day life. The fast moving impression of this journey is indicated by the form of the poem, written in only two sentences which create a continuous and high-speed

rhythm. Obstacles are introduced through the imagery of “ the breeze grew stiff” which intimates danger.

However, unlike the previous texts, it is possible to persevere as shown in the metaphor where the persona must grab “ at the railings”. Overcoming these obstacles leads to new and exciting inner experiences illustrated through geographic terminology of exotic locations like the “ equator” and the “ tropics”. The possibility of new understandings is also shown through imagery evoking the senses such as “ tasted the surf” and “ the flames of day”, indicating the inner journey also affects us physically. The final line, the simile “ tomorrow called out like a ringing buoy”, once more indicates that there are more encounters ahead as a result of crossing obstacles.