

The power of journeys



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Can a journey be seen as just a distance traveled Or is there a greater meaning beyond each step that is taken We are so caught up with the destination that we neglect to appreciate the process that gets us there, the excitement and exhilaration of an unpredictable journey and the things we learn from both the negatives and the positives that we are faced with. Journeys take us to many different places, but more important are the people we encounter along the way, and the experiences we possess. Journeys have the ultimate power to change our thinking, our ideas and concepts, inevitably changing us individually. We look into two selected poems by Robert Gray ??? Journey: The North Coast??™ and ??? The Estates??™, a recount written by Amanda Jones ??? One Night in the Sahara??™ and lastly a ??? The Everyday Man??™, a cartoon by Michael Leunig, to discover what each has to say, and the effect it has over us.

Journey: The North Coast is a poem based on going from an alienated world and returning back to the familiar, where the persona feels he belongs. The composer, Robert Gray, throws the audience straight into a vivid sense of immediacy, ??? Next thing??™ implies that there has been a previous journey, one that us, as the audience hasn??™t experienced with him. The strong verbs throughout the poem, ??? booms??™, ??? cracks??™, ??? swing??™, all show the constant sense of the present. As the persona takes the audience further into the story, we read about his views towards the train, that has become his home for quite some time, and the way he contrasts it with the natural beauty of outside the train. It mentions the sunlight rotating, giving a feel of warmth and being comfortable, but connects it to the ??? drab carpet??™, as it the sunlight reflects it.

Gray effectively uses visual imagery all throughout his poem to help us be involved in the journey. "It tears the wind apart", conveys movement, speed and that the physical journey is going somewhere, the traveling, and the idea of a destination. Each stage in life is a journey. We have to change and evolve, to cope, when we find ourselves at different stages in life. While at the beginning of the poem, it mainly focuses on auditory and tactile, it soon turns into a strikingly visual poem, contrasting the dark and coldness of the inside of the train, and describing the brightness of the day. The poem advances, and the water, "sways, solidly in its silver basin, so cold", as if it were a single item, and the visual effect, of "silver", has connotations of brightness, comparing it to "bright crockery days that belong to so much I remember", the past is lifted into the movement of the present, as if "crockery", indicates an idealized past, with its implications of freshness, domesticity and intimacy. A sense of security, warmth and nostalgia are shown.

Journey: North Coast is discussing the appreciation for the natural environment outside the train, we will reminisce appreciation for nature in The Estates. The persona, now "rested" by sleep and his vivid sensual perceptions, orders his belongings, implicating the departure from the train. He "leaves his hair/ruffled that way", as he abandons the neatness of city life once arriving in the country.

An immediate sense of relief is shown when the persona realizes of his new-found sense of release and freedom. With satisfaction and fulfillment, he presses down the latches on his suitcase, as if it is an event he has wanted to fulfill for some time. A journey us from the unfamiliarity of city life, the

alienated back to the familiar, the secure It is evident that he is glad and relieved to have arrived to the familiar, to return to his life, to home. The estates, a physical journey, yet essences of an ethical and emotional journey are apparent.

It causes you to reassess your values and see that we are ultimately powerless. The Estates focuses on the process of urban sprawl, a phenomenon, which we as Australians can identify with, and pushes us to question ourselves, are material possessions really important in life The vanishing landscape, looking across the paddocks only a ??? few??? trees remain, due to mankind destroying the natural vegetation. Images from the nature are juxtaposed with those from the built environment, ??? clouds bloom??? amongst ??? ledger rulings???, we see a clear sense of loss here and we reassess the importance of these estates. The bold metaphor, ??? Billboards grow wild??? suggests to us the only things which flourish are man made. The homes with the estates are sterile and lack individuality, conveyed through the adjectives, ??? blank???, ??? cleared??? and ??? dry???.

We consider, forcefully, the changing values of our society. When discussing the built environment, Gray uses a cold tone, to show his dislike for it. Further on in the journey, the persona travels through identical streets, and we see how much the persona dislikes the place, ??? Ostentation is the estates ugliness???, conveys the awful truth about these overly perfected houses.

The changes introduced are clearly not welcomed, and Gray positions us to view them negatively. Change is cyclical, the suburban estates have altered the natural landscape, yet nature's forces cannot be tamed. You may ask how this is a journey, the journey past these houses is something that we have all undertaken and that these places are everywhere. The Estates reflects a change in our views, conveying the importance of preserving the natural landscape and provokes our thinking towards the consequences of our effect on the environment.

What we learn on a journey might not be immediately evident, but become clear later on, and we may continue to learn from this journey after it is complete. Everyday we overcome minor life experiences, we wake up, we eat breakfast, and we go to work. Does this seem like an average day in your life It may, but it's because we fail to see the unobvious beauty of the little journeys. If time is passing and we're undertaking activities, no matter how straight forward, it must be a journey rightThe Everyday man follows the life of an ordinary man, and explores the various journeys that comprise our normal day, no matter how mundane. The persona seems somewhat sarcastic, the first cup of tea is precarious and immensely sad, it requires courage, the composer conveys this through a mock tone and strong use of hyperbole. The text elevates the character, Mr. Curly and his journey to heroic proportions, as the mock heroic tone of the journey that requires courage is seen as a glorious, triumphant journey, can be viewed by some as an attempt to ridicule and undermine the simplicity and foreseen ways that journeys can have on the individual.

Leunig conveys strength, stubbornness and courage of Mr. Curly as he encounters struggles and obstacles. The text shows us that even simple journeys require inner strength. The Everyday man contrasts with the kinds of journeys that are usually appreciated, ones with immense proportions and difficult obstacles, and we easily ignore and undermine the simplicity of an everyday journey. There are a range of clear, forceful adjectives used, - ??? precarious, erratic, serious???, conveying the difficulties encountered at the ??? desk???, a symbol of work and responsibility.

It is apparent throughout the cartoon that Mr. Curly is at times experiencing uneasiness and despair, his facial expressions and body language conveys this. We then see visual symbols of flowers, musical notes, hearts and birds, and Mr. Curly??™s reflective and calm posture, strongly contrasts to his previous encounters that were viewed as negative. The six distinct linear cells portray the millstones in the daily journey. The experiences contained in each cell change radically, showing peacefulness and serenity, to then conveying confrontation and despair.

The text being written in an informal font, replicating average handwriting, reflects the ordinary nature of the everyday journey. Here, we see that the hyperbolic language creates a deliberately exaggerated and dramatic tone that contrasts sharply to the simple actions of Mr. Curly and while it provides a humorous tone, it nonetheless conveys the philosophical perspective on his everyday journey. Like Journey: The North Coast, the Everyday man is a physical journey. One that questions our thoughts towards ourselves.

Journey: the North Coast challenges our thinking towards returning to the familiar, while the everyday man is the familiar, and teaches us to appreciate

the simplistic journeys that we encounter. This text challenged my assumptions about journeys and caused me to reflect upon the importance to the everyday, ordinary journey of each individual, suggesting that these journeys deserve recognition, as without these smaller, seen as insignificant journeys, where would the momentum be in life. The cumulative passing of everyday propels us on our journey through the ultimate experience, Life.

Journeys teach us unexpected things about ourselves and others, in this text we are about to explore, the physical journey combined with an emotional and intellectual journey that teaches us about our limitations, strengths and weaknesses. One Night in the Sahara, a recount by Amanda Jones, effectively displays this teaching us that unexpected detours teach us the most. There is an immense use of descriptive language and visual imagery used throughout the poem, to portray the power of journeys. It creates an atmosphere of beauty and romance, appropriate to the exotic location. The personification elevates the scene; the ??? moon??? is ??? hovering???, the ??? milky way??? being described and ??? luminous???. This also highlights the obstacles faced as the landscape was metaphorically ??? brutally rigid??? and ??? blisteringly hot???. The use of these techniques helps us to empathize with the persona.

The strong use of first person strongly evokes the emotions, feelings and experiences that Jones faced and the adjustments made. ??? The desert seemed radiant and beckoning and I was overjoyed???, First person is repeated to ensure that we feel empathy for the dilemma that the journey had lead her into. The conversational tone adds to the authenticity we feel of the experience and is then engaging to us. Contrast is effectively used to

convey the change from comfort to discomfort, ??? flat and stony???, ??? I had left no trail???, these short sentences and harshly emotive words replace the positive connotations of the ??? sky was inky???

Jones uses anecdote to portray her helplessness in the foreign situation, the journey having removed her from her cultural texts, the familiarity. ??? And so I had broken the cardinal rule of the desert???, here we relate to her sense of western superiority. We are wrong however, how can we be seen as superior, opposed to the cultural tribes, the Wodaabe people, who know their land backwards ??? It was his knowledge I now needed, my own modern skills having proved useless???, conveys the balance between the two humans, she is overwhelmed by his knowledge and appreciates the kindness of the man, and we become aware that in the world we often become dependent on the kindness of others. One night in the Sahara connects to the other texts I have discussed as they are all examples of physical journeys, yet contain pieces of major emotional journeys, teaching us essential life lessons. Journey: North Coast and One night in the Sahara both start in an unfamiliar context, and the personas in each text learn to appreciate where they feel secure. One night in the Sahara shows us that we must adapt to the behavior and values of the cultures we visit.

A journey has the ability to be a transformative experience that will alter our perception and illuminate our understanding of the world and our place within it. The power of this journey is immense; it teaches Jones and us, the audience, that we must reassess our views of the world and its values when being faced with such journeys. Impulsive journeys can contain unexpected obstacles which challenge us physically and emotionally. The consequent

adoptions made to unexpected events can be valuable in learning about yourself. Journeys.

Whether they have a significant meaning or not, they have an extraordinary power to alter and motivate us, change our thoughts and feelings, they evoke us to reassess our beliefs and values and they ultimately tell us different things about the world, the people around us, and even more importantly ourselves. Journeys don't have to be major, they don't have to be small; in the end it is up to us; you or I to decide how we will interpret each journey and whether we will appreciate its value.