

The challenges faced on journeys cause travellers to learn more about themselves and the world around them.

The challenges faced on journeys cause travellers to learn more about themselves and the world around them. The truth of this concept is shown through the effective use of language, structure and theme in Gow's play Away, Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken", Robert's film Shackleton, and Winter's feature article "Survival of the Fittest."

The structure of Away is critical to the meaning conveyed to the responder in two ways. The first way is the central storm that brings all the three families together and is a catalyst for change. The challenge Gwen faces is that all of her possessions have been literally and symbolically washed away by the storm. This is a challenge for her as she has had the view that possessions are everything, and that without them you have nothing. From the driving force of the storm Gwen has learnt that possessions are not everything. She loses all her possessions, but she still has her family. She realises that that is more important after speaking with Vic. So from the challenge of the storm, Gwen has learnt more about herself.

The second aspect of the structure of Away is the cyclic nature paradox. All three families start off at the school. They then travel to different locations for their holiday. These different locations, the hotel, Caravan Park and tent, represent their social class. They are then brought together by the storm, and the play ends with them all back at the school, the same school that they started off at. Upon first investigation you could say that they have started and ended their journey at the same place, and so nothing has changed. However upon closer investigation, you can see that although they are back to where they started, they have moved forward, much like a wheel that has turned one revolution. Although the wheel appears not to have changed, it has in fact moved forward.

Gow's context when composing Away is critical and has affected what and how he writes, in particular reference to the character Coral. Gow set Away in Australia in the late 60's. At this time the Vietnam War was ending, and many families back home were aware that their loved ones were not returning. This is the challenge that Coral faces. She, and her husband Roy, find out that their son has died in the war. Coral in particular cannot accept this. She becomes detached from society and from Roy. From meeting and talking with new people on her holiday such as Leonie and Rick, and then later by the storm catalyst, Coral learns to symbolically walk again. She accepts that there is life in death and recovers. This is shown to the other characters through the play-within-a-play technique used by Gow of "Stranger on the Shore." So the challenges that Coral faces such as her son's death and the process of the journey of healing has allowed her to learn much more about herself and the world around her.

Furthermore, Gow uses Shakespearian allusions to "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Tom is compared with the Shakespearean character of Puck. One particular quote from "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is "I'll be an auditor, an actor too perhaps if I see chance". This is exactly what Tom does, he is the audience, he stands back and watches the people around him and how they are dealing with his death, but also when he gets the chance he will act to help the people around him. This is a great example of how this concept of a journey is represented in Away. Tom faces the challenge of his imminent death and how he should deal with it. He also faces the challenge of dealing with others around him before he dies.

Two further points of how Gow represents the concept of a journey and how he shapes meaning is the register used and the form chosen. The language is quite simplistic which suits the average audience and colloquial language is used to mimic the nature of the characters. This coincides with the form of drama. Drama has several elements, all of which

are needed to effectively communicate meaning to the responder. You need a composer, a script, actors, a theatre and an audience. If you change any of these elements, the meaning conveyed changes.

Frost's "The Road Not Taken" also explores the concept that the challenges faced on journeys cause travellers to learn more about themselves and the world around them. Naturally you would assume this as Frost is a philosopher poet. As such he presents a simple but highly philosophical idea about journeys, an idea that has many links to the concept that is being explored in this essay. This simple, yet adaptable idea leads to the responder thinking very much about it. The form of poetry assists this as due to the short nature of poetry, every word is critical and as such it conveys a large amount of meaning in such a short piece of work. Because the responder has thought about this idea that Frost presents, they learn more about themselves and the world around them.

The two main techniques that Frost uses to convey this meaning are sound and imagery. The sound techniques of rhyme and rhythm are used extensively which help the poem to flow and make it sound much better. As such, responders are able to interpret the meaning in the poem easier and clearer. The rhyme and rhythm express the meaning in a highly effective way. Examples of rhyme include, "wood/stood" and "both/growth". Also the consistent beat of the rhythm allows the poem to be read much easier. In addition onomatopoeia is used, for example "sigh". Imagery is also used to stimulate images in the responders mind. Such words as "yellow wood", "grassy" and "undergrowth" are all associated with outdoors and forests. Their use helps to create images of the "two diverging roads", even though these two roads are an extended metaphor.

The challenge of the "two diverging roads" and not knowing which path to take, and facing this challenge and acting on it, and seeing the result ("and that has made all the difference") has allowed the traveller, that is, the persona to learn more about themselves and the world around them.

Furthermore, Robert's film Shackleton explores this concept of a journey particularly well. In Shackleton a crew of men face a physical journey of determination and survival as they face harsh weather and no ship on their journey to the South Pole. They face many challenges, such as the physical challenges of no food, harsh weather and freezing cold conditions. They also face emotional challenges of being away from their families for so long, not knowing if they will return to see them ever again. This concept has been represented in the text through narrative techniques and cinematography. Though their determination, they make it back to safety. Having faced these challenges and having to make the life changing decisions along the way, they have learnt more about themselves, their lives and have learnt to value it much more. They have also learnt more about the world and people around them.

Winter's feature article "Survival of the Fittest" from Time Magazine again explores this concept of a journey, which has been represented in the text by recounting the events of a real situation. The feature article detail of how the challenge of a huge rock falling on the arm of a mountaineer prevented him from continuing, trapping him in that location. He had to amputate his own arm to survive. This challenge has, as detailed in the feature article, though the use of questioning the mountaineer about the ordeal, resulted in him valuing life much more and appreciating the natural environment. The challenge of the amputation has led him to learning more about himself and the world around him.

From the detailed analysis of these texts I have shown, though the texts the truth of the concept of a journey that the challenges faced on journeys cause travellers to learn more about themselves and the world around them.

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(address question)

The challenges faced on journeys cause travellers to learn more about themselves and the world around them. This concept is shown through the effective use of language, structure and theme in Gow's play Away, Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken", Robert's film Shackleton, and Winter's feature article "Survival of the Fittest."

AWAY:

- Gwen → challenge of the storm destroying her possessions → learns possessions are not the be all and end all
- Context → Vietnam War → Coral → challenge of the loss of her son → learns to symbolically reconnect with Roy
- Allusions to "A Midsummer Night's Dream" → Tom/Puck

- Structure → cyclic nature paradox & central storm
- Register is colloquial
- Form → Drama → many critical elements involved → fits audience of normal people

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN:

- Structure → Form → Poem
- Sound → Rhyme → Rhythm → makes it better. Expresses the meaning in a more effective way.
"Sigh" → Onomatopoeia
"wood/stood", "both/growth"
- Imagery
"Yellow wood" → give Frost's American context, related to time of year. Sets scene of forest. / "grassy", "undergrowth"
- Frost → Philosopher poet → presents a highly philosopher concept which lead the responder thinking and has learnt more about themselves and the world around them from that challenge faced.

SHAKELETON:

- Challenges of experiencing frostbite, no food, away from loved ones, cannot get home. All these challenges lead these travellers to learn more about the world around them and themselves and the world. They have learnt to value life and friends.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST:

- Physical and mental challenge of rock falling on his arm during a mountaineering trip.

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AWAY

Structure

Storm

- Gwen → Possessions

Cyclic nature paradox

- school >> hotel/caravan/tent >> school

Context

- Set in Aust, late 60's. >> Vietnam war >> Coral
- Leonie/Rick/Strom >> coral recovers >> shown by Play-within-a-play

Shakespearian Allusions

- Tom/Puck
- "I'll be an auditor, an actor too perhaps if I see chance".

Register/Form

- Several elements to drama. You need them all to convey the meaning.

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Philosopher poet / poetry form

Sound / Imagery

- rhyme >> wood/stood & both/growth
 - onomatopoeia >> sigh

"yellow wood"
"grassy"
"undergrowth"
creates images of "two diverging roads",
even though it's an extended metaphor.

SHAKLETON / SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Physical challenges >> lead to self growth >> learn more about yourself >> become more aware of the world.