

The Road Less Traveled

It was Ralph Waldo Emerson that said “*Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.*” Traveling involves far more than planes and cars, much more than hiking mountains and crossing oceans. Travel is much more the journey than it is the destination. The role of traveler takes on many forms from tourist to conqueror to educator to explorer. Major writers from the 20th century have covered tales of exploration of the unknown, through the depths of the jungle to the darkness that is the human mind. By investigating every aspect of the journey from the departure to the return, or lack thereof, we gain a better understanding of the elements of the journey. Travel opens up the senses on many levels both literally and fugitively. We will analyze claims of how travel effects the course of the story by dissecting eight 20th century literarily classics by examining the use of travel throughout each piece.

Upton Sinclair gave the term muckraking its definition. He not only defined the idiom, he placed it on the map of investigative journalism. *Oil!* situates its plot in the wake of the Teapot Dome oil scandal in Southern California in the 1920’s. Bribed politicians, greedy oil barons and shifty religious preachers are peppered throughout this novel. This thought provoking story plunges into the oil drilling business through the eyes of Bunny and his father. Sinclair does a wonderful job of depicting the social and political foibles of all his characters. Much like our modern day culture is fascinated by celebrity figures and motivated by wealth – this was no different in California then as it is today. In addition to showcasing greed saturated in satire, Sinclair illustrates the use of travel on several occasions. The beginning of the story opens with the sweet tales of father and son and their journeys together up and down the California coast. Here the reader begins to grasp the relationship between parent and child and how travel weaves its way into the story:

The concrete ribbon had come to an end; there was now a dirt road, wide and level, winding in slow curves through a country of gentle hills, planted in wheat. The road was rolled hard, but there were little bumps, and the car leaped from one to another; it was invented device for easy riding. Out in front were clouds of dust, which the wind seized and swept over the hills; you would have thought that an army was marching there. (*Oil!* Page 13 of 548)

Sinclair wrote how a young Bunny began to explore the outside world. The importance of expanding one’s horizons began to take effect. Several pages later, Bunny again reiterates the optimism in traveling:

Wonderful, endlessly wonderful, were these scenes; new faces, new kinds of life revealed. There came towns and villages – extraordinary town and villages, full of people and houses and cars and houses and signs. There were signs

along the road; guideposts at every crossing, giving you a geography lesson—a list of the places, intersections, railroad crossings. There were big banners across the highway, or signs with letters made of electric lights: “Loma Vista: Welcome to Our City.” Then, a little father on: “Loma Vista, City Limits: Good-bye: Come Again.” (*Oil!* Page 16 of 548)

When war came calling, Bunny insisted he must fulfill his civil duties much against the reluctance of his father. Again, we witness the use of travel to develop the plot. Bunny is about to depart on his impending service and so one final road trip with his father in farewell is in order:

They drove up to Paradise, to give Bunny a farewell look at things, and there they found that Paul was expected home for a furlough, preliminary to a journey across the Pacific Ocean. This was, Dad said, was life a fire in a “tank-farm,” you could never tell which was things would explode, or what would go next. (*Oil!* Page 226-227 of 548)

The fear of war expressed in the above passage pays homage to the times. Bunny’s sheer candor begins to surface in the below passage. After Bunny returns from war, he realizes the struggle was closer to home and involves much less of a physical fight and more of an embodiment of politics. In every corner of the world he begins to notice that political parties are dividing – socialists are splitting into those who want to follow Russia and those who do not; anarchists split the same way and the ‘Wobblies’, the old line labor leaders, divide as well; some lean towards Russian influence and others towards helping the Capitalists to put it down. To escape the political web that has spun over his community and at large, Bunny diplomatically invites one old and four young Jewish Socialists to have dinner before a town hall meeting with him. Bunny’s liberalism shines through in the below passage:

Verily, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the feelings of the disinherited. Bunny found Rachel quite altered from the drab, hard-working girl he had known. She belonged to that oriental type which can pick fruit in the sun for several weeks without worrying about complexions; she had sunset in her cheeks and sunrise in her spirit, and for the first time it occurred to Bunny that she was a quite interesting girl. She told about their adventures, which seemed to him extraordinarily romantic. Most people, when they indulged in day-dreaming, would picture themselves as the son and heir of a great oil-magnate, with millions of dollars pouring in upon them, and a sport car to drive, and steel widows and other sirens to make love to them. But Bunny’s idea of a fair-story was to go off with a bunch of youngsters in a

rattle-trap old Ford that broke down every now and then, and camp out in a tent that the wind blew away, and get a job picking fruit along side of Mexicans and Japanese and Hindoos, and send home a post-office order for ten or twelve dollars every week! (*Oil!* Page 318 of 548)

This passage exemplifies both Bunny's yearning for normalcy as well as his fondness for adventure. Through imaginative travel the reader is able to better grasp Bunny's character. Despite the wealth that later surrounds him in the book, he longs for things that exceed monetary value—friendship, companionship and appreciation. The irony in this passage speaks volumes rhetorically as Bunny could afford an expensive car yet longs for one that may break down in substitution for an escapade. This 'call to adventure' as Campbell would describe it in the twelve Phases of The Journey, is represented in this passage as well as when he is called to war. Both instances entertain the notion that Bunny is ready to explore life outside of his comfort zone.

Furthermore, much like Sinclair's characterization of Bunny in *Oil*, the desire to broaden one's horizons is also depicted in Leslie Marmon Silko's, *Garden in the Dunes*. Bunny's family was not a fan of his departure for war and much to their dismay he preceded regardless of their feelings. A farewell party, well wishes and salutations of goodbye bid him adieu. In Silko's, *Garden's in the Dunes*, Indigo, a Native American from the Sand Lizard people, is captured and separated from her family. This involuntary deportation to a boarding school in California is an example of how being ripped from your home increases the desire to return and inevitably forces Indigo on that quest. And so, Indigo one night decides to escape.

Get away, get away; the words sang inside her head. She ran until her lungs and legs were burning and the sweat ran into her eyes so she caught only glimpses of the grove of tall trees up ahead. She felt the ground change under her feet. Smooth dirt, a road, then suddenly she stumbled and fell hard; the breath was knocked out of her, but she wasn't on dirt anymore. The surface was absolutely hard and flat, scorching hot; she jumped up breathlessly and she saw the white stone tile that tripped her was apart of a walkway into the grove of tall trees. She could hear the wagon and the voices of the searchers. The stone tiles were not quite as hot as the ground. She ran down the stone path until she reached the bushes that enclosed the grove of tall trees. She could hear the wagon and the hooves of the searchers. The stone tiles were not quite as hot as the ground. She ran down the stone path until she reached the bushes that enclosed the grove of tall trees if they were so smart; let them try to find her tracks on the stone walk. She glanced over her shoulder and saw no one; then with both arms in front of her face she dove under the thick green bushes the way Grandma Fleet

taught her and Sister. (*Gardens in the Dunes* Page 70 of 477)

Indigo's pure determination and spirit are her utmost potent qualities. She never loses sight of her morals and values. Her tribal customs are ever present and she never allows outside influences to distract her from her goals of returning to her village and reuniting with her family. Hattie and her worldly husband, Edward, rescue Indigo. Instinctively, the urge to wander tempted Indigo one afternoon as she was admiring the shoreline. During her exploration, Indigo felt hungry and scaled a wall in search for food. As she finished her corn she felt a hand on her shoulder. She was taken back to an Indian village where she was fed. Before long Hattie and her father, Mr. Abbott, came to her rescue.

“Good-bye,” Indigo called out to the woman, who waved at her until the wagon turned on to the road. Her eyes filled with tears.

“I hate that English word!” Indigo said, fiercely wiping her eyes on the sleeve of her dress.

“Don’t you have a word in your language that means ‘good-bye’? Mr. Abbott inquired gently.

“No! ‘Good-bye’ means ‘gone, never seen again’! The Sand Lizard people don’t have any words that mean that!”

“What do people say to one another when someone leaves on a journey?”

“They say, ‘We’ll see you soon,’ or ‘We’ll see you later.’” Indigo replied so vehemently Mr. Abbott was taken aback.
(*Gardens in the Dunes* Page 171 of 477)

The way in which the greetings are exchanged in the passage above is an example of how travel is uniquely woven into ones culture. While *Oil!* and *Gardens in the Dunes* appear to be polar literary opposites as one tries to diminish earth’s natural resources in pursuit of greed and the other worships mother nature, they are similar in the sense that both rely heavily on the earth. *Oil!* shaves away at just how far people would go to obtain oil from the ground and in *Gardens in the Dunes* the importance of earth is laced in just about every paragraph. The connection with earth and the desire to explore its boundaries and resources are similar themes within these two novels. In fact, mother earth plays a central character in both stories. The use of kinesthetic imagery is represented in the passage below as it demonstrates the close body contact the Indians have with nature.

She tilted back her head and opened her mouth wide the way Sister Salt did. The rain she swallowed tasted like the wind. She ran, leaped in the air, and rolled on the warm sand over

and over, it was so wonderful. She took handfuls of sand and poured them over her legs and over her stomach and shoulders—the raindrops were cold now and the warmth of the same felt delicious. Sister Salt laughed wildly as she came rolling down from the highest point of the dune, so Indigo ran after her and leaped and rolled too, her eyes closed tight against the sand. Over and over down-down-down effortlessly, the ease of the motion and the sensation of the warm sand and the cool rain were intoxicating. Indigo squealed with laughter, as she rolled into Sister Salt, who was helpless with laughter, and they laughed and laughed and rolled around, one girl on top of the other. (*Garden in the Dunes* Page 13 of 477)

The journey to far way lands is always quite ironic as despite the physical distance, the desire to establish connections from home are always present. Buried in the traveler's suitcase alongside binoculars and travel maps is a small item on anyone's packing list—home: symbolized as a blanket, a picture or simply a memory. The desire to bridge the connection to home never gets left behind. When Indigo and crew depart on a steamship for Europe, she establishes the connection of home during her travels.

The steamship departed in the early evening with the tide; despite the rain, the sea was calm. A day way from the Canary Island they woke to a bright sunlight and blue sky. The warm temperatures reminded Indigo of the desert, the peaks and troughs of the ocean waves made her think of odd barren mountains and hills of salt water. As they neared land the seagulls floated on the ocean's surface and caused Indigo to mistake them for big sea flowers. (*Gardens in the Dunes* Page 271 of 477)

Travel is one of the central themes in Joseph Conrad's, *Heart of Darkness*. In fact, curiosity is the main character, Marlow's, defining characteristics. It is his desire to explore, to fill in the empty spaces on maps that brought him to the interiors of the African Congo. In this particular book, travel has two distinctive definitions: literally, travel involves the exploration of the unknown and figuratively, travel means exploring far across moral boundaries to ascertain personal right from wrong. Marlow's journey up the Congo River parallels his exploration of the human psyche. By plunging deeper into the African interior, he digs deeper into himself. *The Heart of Darkness* not only refers to physical locations, as it travels and explores Africa, but even more so the mentality and the grim consequences of Imperialism.

Contrary to common belief, Conrad did not view seamen as explorers, and described their lifestyle as sedentary. He believed they simply sat aboard their ships and allowed the wind to blow them in the right direction. He believed they became jaded to the constant changes of life and often took it for granted. Marlow respectively was the truest definition of explorer. He was always setting sail to find meaning and truth.

He was a seaman, but he was a wanderer, too, while most seamen lead, if one may so express it, a sedentary life. Their minds are of the stay-at-home order, and their home is always with them – the ship; and so is their country – the sea. One ship is very much like another, and the sea is always the same. In the immutability of their surroundings the foreign shores, the foreign faces, the changing immensity of life, glide past, veiled not by a sense of mystery but by a slightly disdainful ignorance; for there is nothing mysterious to a seaman unless it be the sea itself, which is the mistress of his existence and as inscrutable as Destiny. For the rest, after his hours of work, a casual stroll or a casual spree on shore suffices to unfold for him the secret of a whole continent, and generally he finds the secret not worth knowing. The yarns of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut. But Marlow was not typical (if his propensity to spin yarns be excepted), and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine. (*Heart of Darkness* Page 67 of 168)

To further broaden the claim of Marlow's true desire to explore, the passage below details his passion for travel, which is fueled by his obsession to fill blank spaces on maps. He longs to fill them in with his own discoveries.

Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say, 'When I grow up I will go there.' [...] But there was one yet – the biggest, the most blank, so to speak – that I had a hankering after." (*Heart of Darkness* Page 70 of 158)

Much like Indigo from *Garden in the Dunes*, Marlow's story in *Heart of Darkness* showcases the division between the races and its complexity involving travel. Deciphering the use of exploration in good versus bad becomes increasingly challenging when viewed through the lens of race. When the whites took over and destroyed Indigo's village the reader can question whether they were simply trying to spread their influence or demonstrate hateful prejudice. When the white men brutally subjected and forced the black Africans into hard labor

in *Heart of Darkness* were they ‘spreading civilization’ as they proclaimed or helping Africans become ‘enlightened’? That, in and of itself, has a certain level of prejudice as it denies Africans and the Indians their traditional lifestyles and cultures. This is a negative result of travel. While travel can be positive, for example, finding new land, discovering new resources or immersing in new culture, it can always bring about the clashing of cultural disobedience. The seemingly sophisticated can become savage and the assumed barbaric can become the humane. Travel is a representation of exploratory development.

The passage below from *Heart of Darkness* details how race can simply be ignored when love and attraction enter the picture. Travel is reflected in this particular piece as well as glimmers of the African jungle burst through the seams in lines such as; “...*She was savage and superb, wild-eye and magnificent...*” The auditory and kinesthetic imagery that Conrad uses to describe Kurtz’s mistress is enchanting:

She walked with measured steps, draped in striped and fringed cloths, treading the earth proudly, with a slight jingle and flash of barbarous ornaments. She carried her head high; her hair was done in a shape of a helmet; she had brass leggings to the knee, brass wire gauntlets to the elbow, a crimson spot on her tawny cheek, innumerable necklaces of glass beads on her neck; bizarre things, charms, gifts of witch-men, that hung about her, glittered and trembled at every step. She must have had the value of several elephant tusks upon her. She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there was something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress. And in the hush that had fallen suddenly upon the whole sorrowful land, the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the image of its own tenebrous and passionate soul. She cam abreast of the steamer, stood still, and faced us. Her long shadow fell to the water’s edge. Her face had tragic and fierce aspect of wild sorrow and of dumb pain mingled with the fear of some struggling, half-shaped resolve. She stood looking at us without a stir, and like the wilderness itself, with an air brooding over an inscrutable purpose. (*Heart of Darkness* page 136 of 178)

Travel moved via a different vehicle through Joyce Carol Oates’ *Black Water* and *The Patience Stone* by Atiq Rahimi. *Black Water* tells the repetitive tale of a shocking and tragic love affair between an idealistic, young, Kelly Kelleher, and the fatally attracted Senator. The story weaves together the past and present from her mind to her body. Kelly’s vulnerability and romantic rendezvous are similar to the Afghan woman in *The Patience Stone*. Both women desperately cried to God: Kelly pleaded for help when the drunken Senator recklessly drove off the road, plunging into a murky New England lake and the Afghan women wept over her dying

husband and prayed for his improvement for the sake of their children – despite her anger and aggression towards her husband.

Oates backpedals through Kelly's childhood, adolescence and young adulthood into the hours leading up to her tragic death. Detailed in every chapter, Oates' repetitive narration races in such a speedy fashion it eerily mirrors the accelerating car. Kelly's fatal adventure in the car ride mimics the erratic speed of her rambling, her constant questions and prolepsis narration. Her travels are dark whether they are her memories or that of the night of her impending death. Oates' strength as a writer propels the story to life in sharp sentences that leave the reader feeling just as disheveled as Kelly was in the out of control Toyota.

Like a mirror broken and scattered about them, the marshes stretching for miles. Kelly supposed they were lost but hesitated to utter the word for fear of annoying The Senator.

Am I ready? --it's an adventure.

(*Black Water* Page 60 of 154)

Imaginative travel emerges in *Black Water* as the story is submerged in Kelly's constant questioning. Her stanch daydreaming is a central character in this book. The passage below supports this claim:

Kelly Kelleher envisioned herself working for The Senator's presidential campaign. First, thought, she would work for his nomination at the Democratic national convention. In the intimacy of the bouncing Toyota, her sense glazed by the day's excitement, it was possible for Kelly Kelleher, who rarely indulged in fantasies, to give herself up to this one.

(*Black Water* Page 26 of 154)

Kelly's denial was fully enflamed as this love affair she was partaking in was beyond her comprehension. She ignored the fact that he was married. She disregarded the fact that he had a family. She simply overlooked that he was a politician in the public eye. She was blinded by love. Her insistent imaginative travels once again claim significance in the tale thusly:

So, she would not try to comprehend it. She would embark upon a new life a new adventure a wildly romantic adventure, reckless Scorpio. (*Black Water* Page 14 of 154)

Throughout Kelly's travel, be it on her fatal drive or through her fantasies, the story holds the reader captive with its manipulation of time. We are constantly transported back into stories of her youth or repeatedly reliving the horrific accident. Akin to *Black Water*, *The Patience Stone*, dealt with time, as it was not measured by the hours or by the days, yet by the cycles of prayers that were anxiously counted by the Afghan woman. Real life and illusion were questioned as the Afghan woman desperately cried to God and asked that her husband regain his health. The story centers itself in a world saturated with war, oppression and a comatose husband. The absence of travel is just as compelling as the Afghan woman was stuck in space

and time, which was symbolic of her subjugation. Yet despite the lack of physical movement, the Afghan woman's vivid dreams retell such haunting imagery. The passage below thickens the claim of how imaginative travel can deepen character development:

Before embarking on a fourth cycle, she suddenly starts talking. "This morning, my father came to see me again...but this time to accuse me of having stolen the peacock feather he unused as a bookmark in this Koran. I was horrified. He was furious. I was scared." The fear is still visible in her gaze as it seeks shelter in the corners of the room. "But that was a long time ago..." Her body sways. Her voice becomes definite: "It was a long time ago that I stole it." She stands calmly at first, then fast, nervously. "I'm raving. I've got to calm down. Got to stop talking." She can't stay in one place. Keeps moving around, chewing on her thumb. Her eyes dart around frenetically. "Yes, that fucking business with the feather...that's what it is. That's what is driving me crazy. That bloody peacock feather! It was only a dream, to start with. Yes, a dream, but such a strange one. That dream haunted me every night when I was pregnant with my first child...I had the same nightmare every night. (*The Patience Stone* Pages 121-122)

This passage gives the reader a better sense as to where her aggression stems from. The travel through the woman's feelings is intense. She is happy, she is sad. She is angry and emotionally exhausted. The exploration of her psyche is strong and detailed in the passage below:

Her hand buries itself in her man's hair. Beseeching words emerge from her dry throat: "Come back, I beg you, before I lose my mind. Come back, for the sake of your children..." She looks up. Gazes through her tears in the same uncertain direction as the man. "Bring him back to life, God!" Her voice drops. "After all, he fought in your name for so long. For jihad!" She stops, then starts again: "An you're leaving him in this state? What about his children? And me? You can't, you can't, you've no right to leave us like this, without a man!" Her left hand, the one holding the prayer beads, pulls the Koran toward her. Her rage seeks expression in her voice. "Prove that you exist, bring him back to life!" She opens the Koran. Her finger moves down the names of the God featured on the flyleaf. "I swear I won't eve let him go off to fight again like a bloody idiot. Not even in your name! He will be mine, here, with me." Her throat, knotted by sobs, lets through only the stifled cry "Al-Qahhar." She starts telling the prayer beads again. "Al-

Qahhar...” Ninety-nine times, “Al-Qahhar.” (*The Patience Stone* Pages 21-22 of 142)

Unlike *The Patience Stone*, *God Dies by the Nile* by Nawal El Saadawi explores the travel that exists in nature. The journey of the sun is expressed multiple times throughout this book. *God Dies by the Nile* tells the story about a poor town in Egypt engulfed with oppressive, inescapable political power. Its deeply corrupt nature exemplified by the Mayor (the God written in the title) gives a petty and vicious tone to the book. It is important to note Campbell’s myth of Ordinary versus Special world. The Ordinary world is Kafir El Teen and the Special world is the world just outside of that. The suns climb each morning and falling each night is beautifully woven throughout the storyline. The beauty in travel allows one to experience something new, to explore a new land; to unravel something unknown about one’s self. The sun was far more than a hot star hanging heavy in the sky each day. In fact, the ever present sun almost served as a witness to the below event as well as other crimes committed in the book.

It was a Friday, the burning disc of the sun like a ball of fire in the centre of the sky, glared down on Kafrawi’s head. His eyes seemed to be bathed in the red colour of the sun’s rays, and the sweat poured out of him from every pore, streaming down his head, his neck, his chest, his belly and his thighs. He could feel it warm and sticky as it slid over his thighs to his legs, down to the cracked, horny skin of his bare feet. He felt wet as though he had urinated on himself. He slipped his hand under his *galabeya* and touched himself. He could not tell the difference between the feel of his sweat and his urine, nor could he sense whether his muscles were relaxed, or contracted, still moving. All he knew was that he seemed to have lost all control over his arms and his legs. His body had become a separate part of him, a huge muscle which contracted or relaxed of its own accord, moved or kept still as he stood there watching it, so that he could hardly believe what was happening under his own eyes to this body of his which had always been a part of him. It was as though his soul had left his body and hovered at a distance, or as though another soul which was not his had slipped into his body. (*God Dies by the Nile* Page 44 of 138)

Kafrawi was actually having a surreal experience, one so great he actually believed that his body had separated from its being. The lines following thicken this argument adding layers of detail allowing the reader to really understand the severity of his condition, particularly in the last two lines: “...*It was as though his soul had left his body and hovered at a distance, or as though another soul which was not his had slipped into his body...*” Again the traveling sun has such a heavy presence:

The two shadows traveled slowly over the dusty track on the river bank. Her shadow was the same: tall, upright with

the head rising straight above the neck. It moved as though advancing to attack. The second shadow too had not changed one bit. It slouched along, completely spent, its step resigned, its head still bent. They advanced over the river bank, two silent shadows in the deepening night. Nothing moved in the whole wide world around, nothing moaned or signed or cried or even spoke. Only silence in the silent night spreading its cloak over the fields stretched out on the other side, over the waters of the Nile, over the sky above their heads, over everything on the ground. (*God Dies by the Nile* Page 4 of 138)

The final claim of how the many types of travel that occur within a story come from Orhan Pamuk's *Snow*. *Snow* centers itself around travel. Raised in Istanbul, Ka knew nothing of poverty as it was far beyond his house, something that existed in another world. However, this other world took shelter in Ka's childhood imagination. Returning to Istanbul after being abroad in Frankfurt for over twelve years, it can be said that Ka was motivated to travel back to Kars by his desire to return to his childhood. Old friends, streets and shops he grew up with were now almost unrecognizable. Kars was now the poorest, most overlooked corner of Turkey and his childhood imaginative travel was now coming to life. This journey can be seen as an attempt to step outside the boundaries of his middle-class childhood, to at last venture into other lands and beyond. Kars was able to bring him that peace of mind he once had known.

Ka's motivation for traveling back to Kars was more than his mother's funeral. He was determined to find a Turkish bride. His secret hope that this woman would be Ipek was a charging force in his travels all the way from Istanbul to Kars. The passage below supports that claim.

On the way to the newspaper office, his heart revealed a thing or two that his mind refused to accept: First, in returning to Istanbul from Frankfurt for the first time in twelve years, Ka's purpose was not simply to attend his mother's funeral but also to find a Turkish wife; second, it was because he secretly hoping that this girl might be Ipek that he had traveled all the way from Istanbul to Kars.
(*Snow* Page 31 of 443)

In the selected passage below Pamuk decided to stage one of his two narrative climaxes as theater. Very much like a Greek tragedy, this passage in *Snow* represents the civil unrest in Turkey and highlights violence. *Snow* is an exploration into the divided, mystifying, desolate yet hopeful soul of Turkey. This scene opens in the theater. In line two, Pamuk metaphorically describes how the silence has taken over the room. He continues to describe the audience sitting 'as still as candles':

Everyone in the hall heard the taunt from the boy two seats away from Necip. Again, a deep silence fell over the crowd;

there was awe mixed with their fear. They all sat still as candles, as if hoping to hear one or two sweet nothings, a few clues to help them make sense of the evening when they went home, with perhaps a story or two. At that moment, a detachment of soldiers appeared on either side of the stage. Three more came in through the main entrance and down the aisle to join them. The people of Kars, unaccustomed to the modern device of sending actors among the audience, were first alarmed and then amused. A bespectacled messenger boy came running onto the stage, and when they saw who it was, they all laughed. It was Glasses, the sweet and clever nephew of the city's principal newspaper distributor; everyone knew him as a constant presence in the shop, which was just across the street from the National Theater. Glasses ran over to Sunay Zaim, who bent down so the boy could whisper into his ear. All of Kars could see that the news made Sunay Zaim very sad. "We have just learned that the director of the Institute of Education has passed away," Sunay Zaim told the audience. "This lowly murder will be the last assault on the Republic and the secular future of Turkey!" Before the audience had had a chance to digest the news, the soldiers onstage cocked their rifles and took aim straight at the audience. They open fire at once; the noise was thunderous. (*Snow* Pages 155-156 of 433)

Lines five and six foreshadow what is about to come. The first use of apposition is used on line seven as it explains an aspect of the audience. The following line is the first of two examples of kinesthetic imagery. Line nine concludes with a different form of imagery – auditory, as the young boy delivers a whisper of bad news into Sunay Zaim's ear. This begins the decay of the very thin line between playful charade and gruesome tragedy. This scene is just as powerful as all the mentions of suicide within the book as it's a sudden outburst of violence, which is captivating.

It appears Ka's personal moments of crisis run parallel to the political unrest in the city of Kars in the midst of a blizzard. The inclement weather is very symbolic in the story. The snow in one aspect highlights the chilly and hostile city in which it encompasses. The snow freezes over the city, despite the layers of the past that are hauntingly still in view, such as the Armenian houses and churches. These scattered reminders are enhanced by the eeriness by the veil of the snow. Ironically, the veils instantly connect with the headscarves worn by the protesting women, who often die in their fight for justice. The snow as a group blankets the city. The snow, as individual snowflakes are microcosmic, as the individual beauty and uniqueness from each flake represents the different types of characters in the book as well as the city. Pamuk's ability to shock the reader during each climactic theater scene is his strongest weapon in storytelling. As cliché as it may sound, these particular instances, like the passage above, almost freeze the action in time.

The genuine and sincere voices of the Schiller brothers, Rachel and Malrich, explore the compelling struggle of uncovering the evidence that evil exists in the world, both past and

present. *The German Mujahid* by Boualem Sansal proves that both “memory and knowledge” are the most powerful weapons against evil as the reader is taken on a journey on many levels. Traveling back through time, via diary entries of Rachel, Malrich navigates through violence and cruelty throughout the decades. The journey begins with the horrific discovery that Islamists later massacred the boys’ parents, who had sent them from Algeria to live in Paris, in their village, Ain Deb. The greatest shock of all is a family suitcase filled with Nazi medals, military records and souvenirs unequivocally reveals that Rachel and Malrich’s German father, Hans, was a decorated SS officer who was personally responsible for the extermination of thousands of Jews at concentration camps.

Malrich reads through his brother’s diary and retraces the steps of his father’s ghastly career and ‘travels back through time’ to Germany, Austria, Poland, Turkey and Egypt. The horror beyond words is exposed as the story shifts back and forth between the two diaries kept by the brothers as well as through different time periods. The most fascinating aspect of the story is how the journey was invasive, so detailed and so explicit, yet at times so mundane. The first passage explores how ordinary and apart from every day life travel can be. In fact the reason I selected the following passages were to show how different travel could be. Travel can represent exploration; desire to see the world, to have new experiences. It can also be simply part of the day, for work, or part of a habit.

Face pressed to the window, I stare out at the carpet of clouds. Everything is white, the clouds and the sky, motionless, flickering fit to blow a fuse. I close my eyes. My thoughts are waiting for me, dark and murky, ready to drag me under. I feel exhausted. I open my eyes and look around. The plane drones gently, it is packed with passengers flowing with health, the light is mild, the temperature milder still. The passengers busy themselves in their newspapers, whisper to each other or doze. They are Germans, for the most part. This is their regular commute. When I was checking in at Roissy, I noticed most of them didn’t have any luggage, just a roll-on Samsonite, a briefcase, a couple of magazine tucked under their arm. This is routine to them, they could do the trip blindfolded. They’re freshly scrubbed, well-groomed, long-suffering as Buddhist monks. They’re tired, but they never let it show. It’s a matter of habit and considerable self-discipline (Page 47 of 241 *The German Mujahid*)

Passage one detailed how common travel can be. The first line captures a metaphor with the explanation of the clouds. The passage is peppered with different forms of imagery from kinesthetic on line four and auditory on line six. Travel in this particular instance seems normal, routine. However, in the following selected passage on page 177, the reader gains a different perspective on travel, as this journey spans several countries and many years:

From my hotel window, I sat staring out on this mystifying world, nodding as I watched. At one point, I'm not sure why, I watched a young European guy discreetly following an old Turk wearing a frayed *saroual* but solid as an ox, as they disappeared into a dark ally. In that moment, I slipped into my father's skin. This is the way I've learned to understand him better, I steal into his thoughts, walk in his footsteps, following the terrible road he travelled. I am Jekyll and Hyde. I can picture myself as my father-- after a hard ride across Poland, Slovakia, Hungry, Romania, with the Balkans in flames all around me traveling by night, sleeping by day, cutting though field and forest, careful to avoid the towns--finally arriving in Bulgaria to find myself surround by Bolsheviks. From here, I steal into Istanbul where Turkish traffickers are waiting to help me (Page 177 of 241 *The German Mujahid*)

This travel is not routine, it's exploratory. This involved travel back in time, via diary entries. Kinesthetic imagery is dotted throughout this passage as well, on lines one, two and seven. Line three explores a simile, as Rachel peered at a European man following a Turk, he noticed how they were 'solid as an ox' as they drifted into the ally. Rachel brilliantly channels a hyperbole on line four with the line "...I slipped into my father's skin..."

The following line: "...this is the way I've learned to understand him better, I steal into his thoughts, walk in his footsteps, following the terrible road he traveled..." captures this story in a nutshell. This is exactly what this novel is about and exactly what Rachel's journey is about. More importantly, this is exactly what Malrich's quest is all about-- unlocking the past. Travel has many definitions. It can take one to uncharted territories and unexplored galaxies, but most remarkably, travel can take you to places where a plane cannot fly or a boat cannot sail-- travel can take one back into time to explore the depths of a masked past.

Travel is complex, intricate and deep in Gao Xingjian's *Soul Mountain*. The journey moves throughout the remote mountains of China and explores the ups and downs of life. His meandering along the Yangzi and mountains above is more of an exploration of inner life and the search for meaning and purpose. Initially, the text begins in the second person using 'You' but later switches to being told in the first person, 'I.' Later in the book it switches over to both 'She' and 'He.' Through each voice there is a clear connection as each has his own story to tell, their own feelings and their own reason for being on this trip. Although at times their issues cross over and their narratives correlate, the reader cannot help but expect different outcomes for each character.

Gao beautifully contrasts the beauty and ugliness that exists in the world. Similar to *The German Mujahid*, both sides are exposed. The geography of the text grabs the story by the neck and navigates it on a wild ride. Gao gives us the dark forests and the mist and crags of the Western region. This exploration really unlocks the key to the journey--the trip inside one's self.

The physical explorations garner speed to open introspection on a whole new level. Throughout the trip the book analyzes one's place in the world, self-doubt and one's value. This type of analysis is a fundamental process in self-discovery. *Soul Mountain* was an autobiographical framework for Gao.

I am on a journey- life. Life, good or bad, is a journey and wallowing in my imagination I travel into my inner mind with you who are my reflection. The perennial and perplexing questions of what is most important can be changed to a discussion of what is most authentic and at times can constitute what is known as debate. But let others discuss or debate such matters, they are of no consequences for I who am engrossed in my journey or you who are on your spiritual journey. Like me, you wander wherever you like. As the distance increases there is a converging of the two until unavoidably you and I merge and are inseparable. At this point there is a need to step back and to create space. That space is he. He is the back of you after you have turned around and left me (*Page 312 of 506 Soul Mountain*)

Comparatively, this story slightly mirrors *The Heart of Darkness*. It explores the unknown but the outcome is not the conquering of a land, but the discovery and greatest acquisition of the inner-self. The passage illustrates the meaning of the main characters journey as he describes it on a deeper level. Line one opens with a short utterance followed by a metaphor. Lines two and three follow with a hyperbole as Gao describes his embankment into his soul searching. The remaining body of the passage identifies the importance of inner soul searching and shutting out the noise of others, of opposition, of all else but the mind. 'He' essentially becomes 'You', and the 'characters', which are essentially alter egos of one another, merge. It was interesting to read throughout the novel how these characters collectively are woven together. Fittingly, on page 478 Gao proclaims: "...The road is not wrong, it is the traveler who is wrong..."

In order to deepen one's understanding of travel in every possible way, it's important to pay close attention to the affect it has on language, characters, structure and the sequencing of the story. It's also important to note how it brushes different cultures. Joseph Campbell's '*Hero's Journey*' defines a class sequence of actions that can be found in many stories be it fact or fiction. His theory of the journey or travel can be broken down into three general sections: departure, initiation and return. A series of subgroups branch off of these three basic sections. The first section, otherwise known as 'the departure' is simply about the separation of the hero or main character from its natural habitat, or 'normal world.' Branching off of this is 'The Call to Adventure.' This is the point in a characters life when it is first indicated that everything is about to change whether they know it or not. Secondly there is the 'Refusal of the Call.' Despite the call is to give the protagonist a push, they refuse to see it. This could stem from a sense of fear or

insecurity or could root from a duty or obligation. There could be a range of reasons why a person is holding themselves to their current circumstances.

‘Supernatural Aid’ is once the main character has committed to the quest, their ‘magical’ helper appears or makes its presence either consciously or unconsciously. There comes a point when the main character actually leaps into the adventure, leaving limits of their known world and venturing into unknown territory. An example of this was in *Heart of Darkness* when Marlow sets sail for the African Congo, an uncharted territory. The final stage in ‘Departure’ is the separation between the main character’s known world and self. Although these experiences will shape the new world and self it may just be the beginning of something that often is symbolized by something dark, unknown and frightening. This final leg is called, ‘The Belly of the Whale.’

The second section, ‘Initiation’ involves a six-step process. These various trials and rites through daring and battle is when the true character emerges. To begin this transformation of sorts the ‘Road of Trials’ is a series of tasks or tests that the person must undergo to begin such a transformation. Secondly, ‘The Meeting with the Goddess’ typically represents the point in the adventure when a person experiences a love that is so powerful and significant that it is simply encompassing. With this passion, the third step comes into action, ‘Woman as the Temptress.’ This step involves the temptations that may distract the main character to abandon or stray from their current quest. In order to travel forward one must confront whatever holds the ultimate power in his or her life. This step is called the ‘Atonement with the Father.’ Following this step is ‘Apotheosis’ which is to deify. This state is more like a period of rest and peace before the journey begins to return. Lastly, ‘The Ultimate Boon’ is the achievement of the goal of the quest. It is what initiated the journey in the first place.

The last leg of this journey involves the ‘Return.’ This too is a six-part process. After all has been conquered and or achieved why must one return? The ‘Refusal of the Return’ creates the question for the main subject to ask he or she, why they should return to their normal life. The journey ‘home’ or to return may be just as dangerous or adventurous as the road that took them away. This step is called ‘The Magic Flight.’ Just as the main character may need assistance to guide them on their quest, often times the same is needed on the return. The ‘Rescue from Without’ can cause difficulty, especially if the person has been weakened by the experience. There is such a deeper wisdom that is gained on this quest that must be integrated back into human life and then distributed with rest of the world. This is often extremely difficult and called ‘The Crossing of the Return Threshold.’

In a myth, the fifth step in this final process is typically represented by a transcendental hero; like Jesus or Buddha. In a real life story, it may simply mean the ability to achieve a balance between the material and the spiritual. The level of comfort is often achieved when the person is competent in both the inner and outer worlds. The last step is the ‘Freedom to Live.’ To summarize this step one could say its best to ‘live in the moment’ by neither anticipating the future nor regretting one’s past.

Each of these eight writers from the 20th century built stories constructed with characters that represented the traveler in some form, be it tourist, explorer, escapist, educator, etc. By

analyzing the structure in these novels based on travel and the journey each character discovered something new about themselves. Bunny in *Oil!* became so self-aware that there was much more to life than wealth and greed. Indigo embraced a new culture but never lost sight of her roots and kept Mother Nature a vital part of her character in *Gardens in the Dunes*. Kelly in *Black Water* struggled with a timeless defeat of self-destruction, as did the Afghan woman in the starched melodrama in *The Patience Stone*. In *God Dies by the Nile* the women travel from the countryside to the city of Cairo to catastrophic effects. In *Snow*, Ka travels back to his little snow-covered town with certain intentions and leaves with a new found sense of him. *The German Mujahid* explores the journey back into time and uncovering the past. And lastly, *Soul Mountain* depicts the biggest discovery of all, internal investigation.

By investigating the many different elements of travel the reader can be taken on both a physical adventure, exploring the seas of an unknown ocean and the hills of an untouched mountain, yet one can also travel metaphorically by truly exploring the imagination and the mind. By analyzing the effects of character by simply stepping out of ones comfort zone, taking the risk to explore gains the rewards of discovery far surpassing stamps on a passport. The beauty is not at the destination-- it's in the journey that took you there.

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