

Travels, Journeys, and Voyages in Literature

Summer Reading, 2021—Dr. Marotta

Texts:

“Children of the Sea,” 1995, Edwidge Danticat (<http://mrscastor.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Children-of-the-Sea-1.pdf>)

“Chance Traveler,” 2005, Haruki Murakami (<https://beret.livejournal.com/8784.html>)

Please bookmark or print the works, so they’re easily accessible for your reading, your writing, and our class work. [Content Warning: Murakami—illness, Danticat—rape, death, violence]

In short stories, a hero often goes off on a journey to faraway lands—give or take a few monsters to conquer or royalty to romance—and the act of moving through the world exposes the hero to both danger and the ability to grow and change. These two stories contain characters who move through their worlds in different ways and who go on different journeys. That being said, these stories complicate both what is meant by the term “movement” and the term “journey.” Additionally, the stories’ structures and narrators call attention to movement and journeys. Who is speaking? When? From what vantage point? What moves these characters physically and/or emotionally? How do these stories show the journey from childhood to adulthood? How might we think of the idea of “moving on” from something or “moving past” something? What about the movement towards or away from danger? Who has the power to enter or leave a space? What blurs the line between a movement from one location to another and a journey?

Assignment: After reading both works—preferably more than once!—you will compose a brief essay (250 words).

Due Date: First Day of Class!

Summer Reading Expectations:

All students who enroll on or before August 20, 2021 must read the book(s) assigned for their course and complete this summer reading assignment.

All students who enroll on or after August 21, 2021 should begin reading the summer reading book(s) upon enrollment and email the teacher for details about assignment expectations.

All new and returning students should bring a copy of the assigned novel(s) with them on the first day of class.

Essay Instructions:

1. Choose a theme: travel, movement, identity, family, etc. and one of the two short stories.
2. Choose a quote from the text that you believe best exemplifies this theme.
3. Defend your position in 250 words. This is your chance to show me your close reading skills. Tell me why this quote is significant in the context of the work in terms of plot, theme, and character development. What is Danticat’s or Murakami’s “point” in each of their works, according to your theme/quote? Why might this work be meaningful to a larger audience? I’ve included these questions to help prompt your thinking, not limit it. As long as you address your quote, your theme, and their importance to the overall work, that’s what I want to read!
4. This essay should be in MLA formatting, Times New Roman font, size 12, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. You should cite the work you choose according to MLA conventions on a Works Cited page at the end of your essay. Please include your theme and chosen quote at the top of the page. The quote is not included in your overall word count.