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English 016

Two Journeys

At first, “Educating Rita” and “The Allegory of the Cave” may seem very different, these two pieces are more similar than you think. Each goes through a journey. “the ascent to see the things in the upper world you may take as standing for the upward journey of the soul into the region of the intelligible;” (page 531, “The Dimensions Reader”). Some similarities between the two pieces are the chains or struggles, and their journeys toward education or knowledge. Some examples of differences between the two pieces would be the voluntary Rita verses the forced prisoner. As well as, the prisoner being on his own, while Rita had a tutor to guide her. These similarities and differences are important.

For example, the cave in “The Allegory of the Cave”, where the prisoners are and the pub where Rita’s family goes in “Educating Rita” represent being trapped in an environment ; whether it was all they knew or what they wanted out of. “There’s got to be better songs to sing than this.” Another great comparison between the two pieces is the journey each of them travels. In “Educating Rita”, Rita is going through a journey for education, instead of just being a hairdresser. Rita wanted to better her education so she was not stuck where she was. In “The Allegory of the Cave”, the freed prisoner is on a journey for knowledge, because once you know both sides you can be more powerful. “You will then see a thousand times better than those who live there always; you will recognize every image for what it is and know what it represents;” (page 534, “The Dimensions Reader”). In both pieces there is a similar struggle that holds them back slightly. In “The Allegory of the Cave”, the struggle for the prisoners were the chains. The

chains were wrapped around their legs and necks not allowing them to move. While in “Educating Rita”, her struggle was her husband. He tried to hold her back from going to school and stay home to start a family. Even though there were struggles in each of the pieces; the central characters were able to get out. There was the prisoner that was freed and able to see the upper world; while Rita left her husband, went to summer school, and changed her appearance.

There are also plenty of differences between “The Allegory of the Cave” and “Educating Rita”. One of the biggest differences was Frank, Rita’s tutor. While the freed prisoner had to face and figure everything out on his own, Rita was able to have Frank guide her way towards a better education. If the freed prisoner was able to have a tutor he may have been able to learn more, faster, or if Rita did not have a tutor, she may not have gone anywhere with her education. Another contrast between the two pieces is voluntary. Rita voluntarily went back to school and the prisoner was forced to be free and sent into another world. Since Rita was voluntary to go back to school, she had been exposed to education, when she was younger, so she somewhat knew what education and school consisted of, while the prisoner had no idea what to expect; the only thing he had experienced was the shadows from the fire-light inside the cave.

The quote, “the ascent to see the things in the upper world you may take as standing for the upward journey of the soul into the region of the intelligible;” (page 531, “The Dimensions Reader”), is represented by both pieces as Rita and the freed prisoner go through their journeys to better education and knowledge. Education and knowledge are considered the upper (better) world. Again, even though they had similar journeys, their stories were different. Rita was a much more outgoing, pushy, and voluntary, and the prisoner was forced, more quiet, and

unknown. In the end, both “Educating Rita” and “The Allegory of the Cave” are powerful and meaningful journeys for a better life.