

INFORMATION FROM MY PERSONAL LIFE

- I spent six months in Holland as an Erasmus student in TU Delft.
- I enjoy traveling very much.
- I am quite unorganized as far as bureaucratic procedures are concerned.
- In England, people are very strict regarding those bureaucratic procedures that I do not really care about.

STORY

During the six months that I stayed in Holland, I tried to travel around Western Europe as much as possible. In one of my trips, I visited London. As a Greek citizen and, therefore, as a European Union citizen, I thought that a valid passport will not be necessary for my trip to England. That is the reason why I did not care to renew my expired passport before my departure.

While I encountered no problems when I arrived in London, the situation became complicated right before the departure of my returning flight: The airline employee refused to let me travel with an expired passport. It was 5.00am on a Sunday and, as the rest of my friends left with that flight, I found myself alone in Stansted Airport, about two hours away from London.

My first reaction was to call the Greek Embassy in London. Unfortunately, they were closed on Sundays. I decided to take the bus back to London in order to get to the train station. However, the bus driver was not helpful at all: the ticket was 7£, I only had a 10£ bill and, as I was her first passenger, she did not have any change. She told me that I had 90 seconds (according to her scheduled departure time) to find change or else I could not take the bus. After a panic run to the nearby café I managed to get the change and catch the bus.

After two hours I reached the train station. To my disappointment I was informed that there was no train going to Holland or Belgium. They told me to go to Dover, a small south-eastern English town, and to catch the ferry to Ostende, Belgium from there. So I did, by paying 18£ of course.

After another two hours, I was in Dover. As soon as I got off the train, I took a bus that brought me to the ferry embarking point. I thought that my adventure was reaching the end. I was wrong. I soon found out that the ferries were only going to Cale, France and not to Belgium. However, I was informed that the high speed ferries, the ones that were actually going to Ostende, were located at the other end of Dover's waterfront. It took me 20 minutes of walking and a lot of sweat, due to my heavy luggage, to get there.

At the ticket desk, I found out that a round trip ticket to Ostende cost 17£ while a one way ticket cost 34£! When they realized that I was not going to come back, they refused to issue me a round trip ticket. At that point, my frustration reached the highest level. Nevertheless, there was more to come.

During check in, and despite my silent prayers, my expired passport did not go unnoticed. At first, I was told that I could not travel. Luckily, after a half hour interview with the immigration officer, I was granted permission to leave the country.

Theory: "The Writer's Journey" by Christopher Vogler (1992)

Artifact: "The Trial" by Orson Welles (1963)

In the next pages we will try to analyze the film "The Trial", written and directed by Orson Welles, using the storytelling patterns that are described in Vogler's book "The Writer's Journey". Although the film is based on the novel with the same title by F.Kafka, we will consider it as an autonomous artifact, free from any association with the original novel.

In a prologue, Welles describes the film as having the logic of a nightmarish world in which nothing can be mastered. Looking back at Welles' career and the struggles he had to keep his work intact, it makes sense that he would identify so strongly with Joseph K's paranoia.

1 CALL TO ADVENTURE

Instead of beginning with the ordinary world, Welles chooses to begin straight away with the call to adventure. The hero, named Joseph K, is woken up by policemen to find out that he is accused for a crime. However, despite his efforts, he is unable to find out what the accusation is.

2 ORDINARY WORLD

After the departure of the policemen, we are introduced to the ordinary world of the hero and we start to identify his character. He is an honest and obedient bank clerk that works for a bureaucratic and totalitarian government of some unnamed country and time.

3 REFUSAL OF THE CALL

In this case, refusal of the call would mean that the hero could quietly accept his fate without fighting. He is accused of an unspecified crime and, although he strongly refuses to admit that he has done anything wrong, we are not certain what his reaction would be.

4 MEETING WITH THE MENTOR

The hero meets with several other characters before he takes his final decision: his landlady, the nightclub dancer that lives next door and for whom he has secret feelings, his boss at the office... None of them seems to believe his innocence. His resultant frustration pushes him to deny the charges and go against the established system. In this story the mentors, instead of helping, are pushing the hero even further, in order to make him react.

5 CROSSING THE FIRST THRESHOLD

The hero finds himself in the courtroom, in front of the judges. He barely lets them speak as he strongly declares his innocence while at the same time he heavily criticizes the established procedures. He commits to the adventure of pursuing the truth.

6 THE SALLIES AND ENEMIES

Joseph K moves from one surrealistic encounter to another, with his uncle, his advocate, the advocate's nurse, the courtroom guard's wife, the courtroom guard himself, his cousin, another defendants - each one of them giving him some piece of advice but ignoring his frantic efforts to prove his innocence and assert his dignity as a human being.

7 APPROACH TO THE INMOST CAVE

In this case, the approach to the inmost cave is not spatial but physiological. The hero is gradually transformed from an obedient clerk into a raged and angry rebel. He refuses to be seduced by the attractive women as his paranoia renders him incapable of responding. He approaches the point of rejecting all the other characters, as they are all part of the repressing established system.

8 THE SUPREME ORDEAL

Joseph K decides to dismiss his lawyer as the ultimate expression of rejection of the system. However, the advocate, in an attempt to alter the hero's decision, demonstrates the helpless situation of over another accused person that "his case has gone bad". If the hero does not want to end up like him, he should accept the advocate's help. It is the moment that Joseph K should confront his fears and takes his decision. He finally stays with his initial choice of dismissing the advocate.

9 REWARD

His reward for surviving the advocate's psychological pressure is the hint from the advocate's nurse that the artist can help him. However, this reward is only temporary. He soon realizes that the uncomfortable and constantly under surveillance room of the artist cannot offer him any answers.

10 THE ROAD BACK

After the meeting with the artist, Joseph K is engaged in a surrealistic chase by lunatic agents of the state. Nevertheless, unlike Vogler's analysis, he is not heading towards his ordinary world. He is still trying to cope psychologically with the paranoia that surrounds him.

11 RESURRECTION

The hero meets the priest and the advocate for one last time. They are both trying to persuade him to go along with the system. The God and the Law want to tame this unconventional member of the society and bring back the bureaucratic totalitarian order. Joseph K escapes mentally as well as physically from their trap.

12 RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR

In our case, the elixir is death. The physical death of the hero leads to his mental and psychological liberation from the power of the government and all its agents. He knows that this is his choice and that he fought hard in order to acquire this freedom. This is his final reward. It may look sad in comparison with other stories but after watching the hero being the only sane in an insane world for the entire movie, it is really a liberating and cathartic ending.