

Motion and the Physics of Change in Neil Gaiman's

Neverwhere

'...there is another reality...'

Henry David Thoreau once said that “*Not until we are lost, do we begin to find ourselves.*” During the next unit leading up to our 2nd Exhibition, I expect us to get lost living in the world of *Neverwhere*... of London Above...and of London Below.

How far from our own 'reality' is it?

As we travel the corridors of this novel we will be looking at the ‘physics’ and forces at play in our own lives and choices by studying those of Richard Mayhew and Door to uncover the metaphor, or The Story *beneath* the story, of *Neverwhere*.

“I’d watch out for doors if I were you... You’ve a good heart... Sometimes that’s enough to see you safe wherever you go... But mostly, it’s not...”

So says ‘the old woman’ to Richard Mayhew, a man dissatisfied with his life. He leaves everything he knows and is familiar with to journey to a new place...a place unknown to him. *How does his external journey reflect the one taken inside of him? What forces act upon him? What choices does he make and why?* By writing a Fantasy novel that presents us with different worlds, different realities, and different truths, what does Neil Gaiman help us to think about? Let us travel together and see how meeting ‘a Door’ changes everything...

There are forces at work in Richard Mayhew’s life, and his Story begins to change. I would like for us to pay close attention to how that happens and why. Our examination of this novel will be through the lens of **Motion and The Physics of Change**. We will be studying the events and characters in *Neverwhere* for evidence of:

- **The POTENTIAL ENERGY** of a choice waiting to be made (*questions, experiences, possibilities...*)
- **The KINETIC ENERGY** of a life lived by those choices (*discoveries made, transformations, etc...*)
- **The VELOCITY** at which a life moves (*Where did it start? Where is it headed? How fast is it going?*)
- **How NEWTON’S 1ST LAW OF MOTION** not only affects us physically, but also emotionally and mentally (*What moves people? What gets in our way? What does it take to change?*)

Now that we know how we will talk about what we find, we also need something to help us find our way as we twist and turn through the corridors and tunnels of *Neverwhere*. We need a map...a guide...a way of chronicling where we have been, and where we are going. To do this you will complete a mini-project with 2 on-going components:

I: CREATE A STORYBOARD¹ OF NEVERWHERE

Filmmakers, as well as animators and illustrators of comic books, use storyboards to sketch out the

¹ See attached example format

organization of a story and its contents. For this project, you will create a Storyboard composed of **at least 16 frames** to organize the story of *Neverwhere*. This will be your chronicle of the forces of motion at work in the novel and will help you to record the significant events, characters, and messages that reveal The Story.

Each week you must collect information from the chapters in the novel that week that show **Motion and the Physics of Change**. Identify a minimum of 4 significant or pivotal ‘scenes’ from those chapters (This means at least one scene for each: *Potential Energy, Kinetic Energy, Velocity, Newton’s Laws*). For each scene you are required to:

1. Identify the chapter the ‘scene’ is from and create a title for it that captures the heart or essence of what happens in it. This could be a word, a name, a phrase, a quote, etc...
2. Use a visual representation (an illustration or found images) that captures this scene (*Think about: Who’s involved? What happened? What does it look like? What does it feel like?*).
3. Identify a quotation that goes with the scene. This could be what a character says, the author’s description what they think and feel, or even a description of the event itself.
4. Provide an explanation that connects the scene to Motion and one of the Physics of Change.
5. Identify any other important factors from this ‘scene’: metaphors, symbolic representations, characters, etc...

II: COMPILE A TRANSACTIONAL READING JOURNAL²

These writing activities are designed to help you to interact more deeply and personally with the text. This journal will help you to engage The Story *beneath* the Story by helping you to make text-to-text, text-to-self, and/or text-to-world connections. This Journal will be comprised of **four** well-crafted and polished entries.

* * *

It is important that you keep up with your Project and meet deadlines. Your work on this project will be used in the writing of your Essay Project and preparation for Exhibition #2 in January.

- Each “Transactional Reading Journal” entry will be worth 10 points
- Each set of “Neverwhere Storyboards” will be worth 10 points
- You will receive at least 10 points/week for participation in class activities

All of this work will be assessed on the LEADERSHIP SKILLS of Thinking Critically, Expressing Yourself Creatively, and Managing Projects Effectively.

Use the chart below to help you to MANAGE YOUR PROJECT EFFECTIVELY:

ASSIGNMENT	PORTION OF NOVEL COVERED	DATE DUE	SUBMITTED?
▪ Transactional Reading Journal #1	<i>Roughly Chapters 1-4</i>	Th/F NOV 17/18	
▪ Storyboard #1 (<i>at least 4 frames</i>)	<i>Roughly Chapters 1-4</i>	Th/F NOV 17/18	
▪ Transactional Reading Journal #2	<i>Roughly Chapters 5-9</i>	Th/F DEC 01/02	
▪ Storyboard #2 (<i>at least 4 frames</i>)	<i>Roughly Chapters 5-9</i>	Th/F DEC 01/02	
▪ Transactional Reading Journal #3	<i>Roughly Chapters 10-15</i>	Th/F DEC 08/09	
▪ Storyboard #3 (<i>at least 4 frames</i>)	<i>Roughly Chapters 10-15</i>	Th/F DEC 08/09	
▪ Transactional Reading Journal #4	<i>Roughly Chapters 16-20</i>	Th/F DEC 15/16	
▪ Storyboard #4 (<i>at least 4 frames</i>)	<i>Roughly Chapters 16-20</i>	Th/F DEC 15/16	

² See attached form for complete description of the assignment

TRANSACTIONAL READING JOURNAL³:

Engaging *The Story* beneath the *Story*

Helping you to make *text-to-text*, *text-to-self*, and/or *text-to-world* connections

Directions:

You are to create four well-crafted and polished journal entries in response to this novel selected from the list below. Each journal entry must:

- be a *minimum* of one typed double-spaced page
- be spread evenly in relation to the beginning, middle and end of the novel.
- reflect a variety of the choices listed below (each one must be a different choice), although your final one must be type #7. Use the check-list to monitor your choices.

JOURNAL ENTRY CHOICE	DONE?
1. Write a fictional letter to one or more of the characters or create a letter written from one character in the novel to another that expresses some unspoken feelings or thoughts.	
2. React and respond to a “five star quote” of your choice. A “five star quote” is a quote that “jumps off the page” at you for any number of reasons. It may be profound, humorous, universal, or any reason you choose. You must include the entire quote somewhere in the entry.	
3. Create an original piece of writing that is inspired by the novel; it may be a poem, short story, short drama or section of dialogue, advertisement, review, etc...	
4. Create a collection of artifacts (in a box) for one of the characters in the book; attach a written rationale (<i>the reason</i>) for your choice to each item. (The total of the written rationales should be about equal to the one-page minimum.)	
5. Choose a minimum of four characters from the novel and find fitting song lyrics for each one of them. Scan or type out the song lyrics and annotate (<i>explain and make comments on</i>) the lyrics for an explanation as to why you chose that particular song for the character. Burn a CD of the songs and create a CD cover that illustrates a major motif or theme of the text.	
6. Create a “conversation across time” by having one of the characters in the text dialogue with a fictional or nonfiction persona from another time period/century.	
7. Fully examine and explain a particular piece of Neil Gaiman’s writing craft. Choose a literary device or element and explain how it reveals one of the themes of the book: metaphor, foreshadowing, symbolism, characterization, or imagery)	

³ Writing ideas taken from Louise Rosenblatt

THE NEVERWHERE STORY-BOARD

Chapter # _____ Scene Title: _____

--

Quotation (*include pg#!*):

Connection to Motion and the Physics of Change (*how and why!!*):

Metaphors? Symbolic Representations? Important Characters?:
