

'Discovery' Essay

2016 HSC question

The process of discovery involves **uncovering what is hidden and reconsidering what is known.**

How is this perspective explored in your prescribed text and ONE related text of your own choosing?

The process of a discovery can involve both uncovering what is ignored and hidden or reconsidering what is already known, ultimately leading to a new attitude or enlightenment. This notion is explored throughout the **17th Century Shakespearean play, 'The Tempest'**, which reveals the ideas that discoveries have the power to change an individual's attitudes and expose them to new worlds. This concept can be further explored through the analysis of **Genevieve Clay-Smith's 2009 award winning short film, 'Be My Brother'**, which presents similar ideas of discovery, ultimately being able to uplift an individual's curtains of ignorance.

Discoveries can be transform/open/enlighten/uncover

Shakespeare's tragicomedy, 'The Tempest' reveals that discovering something for the first time can transform an individual intellectually, as they uncover life changing situations that were previously hidden from them. This is demonstrated through the **characterisation of 'Miranda'**, a curious and open hearted young woman with a growing mindset. Her very first discovery is provoked by **curiosity**, as she finally gets her father to admit the **concealed story** about his exile onto their home island. This allows Miranda to uncover a key aspect of her own identity, evident through the **idiom and personification in, "O! My heart bleeds!"** which emphasises her strong reaction to her confronting past. Miranda is thus opened up intellectually and emotionally, now having acknowledged that there is a world beyond what she knows. Miranda intellectual growth further sprouts in the final scene, where she unexpectedly and suddenly discovers that there are other people besides herself and father. The **emotive exclamation in, "O brave new world that has such people in it!"** is ironical as Miranda looks optimistically upon her discovery of people who are realistically murderers and traitors. Her reaction is thus **contrasted and juxtaposed to the reaction of her father** who replies, **"Tis new to thee"**, as he is more aware of the realities of the situation. This presents Shakespeare's preferred approach to discovery, where Miranda uncovers harsh truths that were hidden from her with optimistic attitudes, allowing her to intellectually grow and remain open to the exploration of new things.

Similar ideas are showcased within the **21st Century short film, 'Be My Brother' by Genevieve Clay-Smith**, which reveals intellectual discoveries are able to enlighten people on situations they were ignorant or prejudice to. This notion is revealed through the **characterisation of 'Amanda'**, who like Miranda, also has her **ignorance transformed when her eyes are opened to the unknown**. Amanda encounters a man who defies social normalities, as he has a clear mental and physical disability. Amanda's immediate negative reaction to this man is portrayed through the use of **cut off camera angles and shots**, which present her as physically disconnected, sitting and turning away from him. However, after acting hesitantly and with disinterest, she finally allows herself to open herself up to a conversation with the man, soon morphing to see past his disability. This is further demonstrated with **camera angles**, as both characters are shown together in a **close up shot, directly** facing each other. This symbolises her **changing mindset and attitude** towards the man, as she overcomes her own barriers of fear, discovering that people are more than what they appear, and transforming her to become friendlier to a man she originally felt uncomfortable about. Ultimately, both texts present that by discovering something new, people can be revealed to the truth behind unknown situations, transforming them to **become more enlightened individuals.**

Rediscovery (reconsideration, changing attitude/perspective, rethink)

Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' also reveals that discoveries can occur from the reconsideration of a person or place, allowing the individual to build new attitudes towards them. This is showcased through the **characterisation of 'Prospero'**, a man who in the attempt to fulfil his desire for vengeance, metamorphoses this revenge into forgiveness, as he discovers that *"The rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance"*. This renewed attitude allows him to 'let go' of his past, evident in, *"Now my charms are overthrown, and what strength I have's mine own."* The **rhyming couplet** suggests a balance or restoration of order, where *"charms" symbolise* Prospero not only giving up his evil uses of magic, but also his desire for revenge. Thus, Prospero's rediscovery of himself and his intentions allows him to reconsider his spite, removing his malicious attitudes. However, Shakespeare's play further reveals that rediscovering something can also end negatively. This is showcased through the **characterisation of 'Gonzalo'**, a noble man who admires the island upon finding, thinking of it as beautiful and wondrous, emphasized through the **alliteration and visual imagery** in *"How lush and lusty the grass looks! How green!"* This first perspective of the island is **juxtaposed** with the **highly emotive** cry for help he makes in, *"All torment, trouble, wonder and amazement inhabits here. Some heavenly power guide us out of this country!"* as a result of the strange and uncomfortable situations he encountered. Gonzalo's attitudes towards the island thus shift, suggesting that he has been through an **emotional rediscovery** of the island which had the power to enlighten him of its confronting truths.

The ability of a reconsideration to transform attitudes is further demonstrated within Clay-Smith's short film, 'Be My Brother', which similarly to 'The Tempest', presents **negative bonds** being **patched**. This is showcased through the **characterisation of 'Damien'**, who has a weak bond with his disabled brother, 'Richard', evident through Richard's emotional recording, *"I am what I am, I can't change it. My brother doesn't understand; he doesn't like to be near me. I always seem to embarrass him..."* When the audience first meets Damien, he attempts to ignore Richard, replying with **closed, truncated sentences**, in *"No thanks."* However, Damien begins to reconsider his attitudes towards his brother as he observes him communicating with other people, and then metamorphoses completely as Richard helps him out of a difficult situation. The **silent disconnection** between the brothers in the beginning of the film is **juxtaposed** to the end, where **soft, calming music** begins to play to present the feelings of peace and acceptance being created. This developed connection thus emphasises Damien's **renewed perceptions** of Richard, as due to supportive experiences, he has become more enlightened to his friendly and kind personality. Ultimately, both Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' and Clay-Smith's 'Be My Brother' demonstrate how discoveries can spark from a reconsideration of somebody or something, thus creating renewed attitudes towards them.

Through the close analysis of 17th Century Shakespearean play, 'The Tempest', and 21st Century short film 'By My Brother' by Genevieve Clay Smith, different concepts of discovery can be revealed. The different characters and scenarios within each text reveal that the process of a discovery can involve either exposing the unknown, or reconsidering what was already known. Whether they are first occurring, or a rediscovery of something, these discoveries ultimately allow individuals to become intellectually enlightened or emotionally transformed individuals.