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Hoichi is a hero and holds underlying messages

In “The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hōichi” by Lafcadio Hearn, it is clear that the story is written as a myth and can be dissected using theories related to mythical narratives. A theory like Marxist Critical theory (MCT) is applicable but doesn't fit as cleanly unlike Campbell's theory which fits the story cleanly. MCT is a theory all might not see in the same light but it's still applicable to the story, essentially the story is made to benefit the temple Amidaji by making more people want to donate to the temple. Now Campbell's theory fits into the story by Hoichi first leaving the temple from the dead's illusions to meditating through getting his ears cut off by the dead so they will leave him alone and in the end learns a lesson to repeat about not trusting people you don't know. Throughout “The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hōichi” Hoichi can be seen as a hero through applying Campbell's theory and contains underlying messages benefiting the temple mentioned in the story.

Now while the Marxist Critical Theory is a bit general and not everyone will agree on it, it's still a point that impacts the view of the story. Essentially “The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hōichi” seems that it would benefit the temple Amidaji. In the first few paragraphs of the story, it reads,

“The priest of the Amidaji was fond of poetry and music; and he often invited Hôichi to the temple, to play and recite. Afterwards, being much impressed by the wonderful skill of the lad, the priest proposed that Hôichi should make the temple his home; and this offer was gratefully accepted. Hôichi was given a room in the temple-building; and, in return for food and lodging, he was required only to gratify the priest with a musical performance on certain evenings, when otherwise disengaged” (Hearn). Hoichi is a blind and poor man so it's safe to say that he didn't pay the temple at all for living arrangements, the story sets the temple of Amidaji in a very good light essentially letting someone who can reasonably never really pay them back into their temple to live there just because they need a place to live. This can benefit the temple of Amidaji by people reading this story and wanting to donate to the temple from seeing their actions in the story. On top of that, the temple's name is directly mentioned in the text meaning people would know which temple is responsible for all the good deeds done in the story. And the temple's name isn't really important to the story as in if you took the temple's name out of the text the reader would still completely understand the story further proving the underlying motives the story has to benefit the temple of Amidaji. There is also the case of mentioning the name of the temple so that if people who have read the story visit Japan they might visit the temple and donate to the temple. While not the strongest case “The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hôichi” can be dissected using MCT from the fact that a case could be made that this story serves to benefit the temple of Amidaji through the good public relations built within the story and the mention of the temples in the story.

Throughout “The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hôichi” Hoichi goes through every checkbox of Cambell’s theory that being separation, initiation, and return. Hoichi’s separation comes into play when the dead’s illusions trick Hoichi into leaving the temple and going to the cemetery. Hoichi is unknowingly leaving his home and is now caught by the presence of the dead which threatens his life, Hoichi now has to rid himself of the dead's gaze in order to return back home.

Hoichi’s initiation is his meditation through the onslaught of the dead's illusions, “Then, from the roadway, he heard the steps coming. They passed the gate, crossed the garden, approached the verandah, stopped--directly in front of him. "Hôichi!" the deep voice called. But the blind man held his breath, and sat motionless. "Hôichi!" grimly called the voice a second time. Then a third time--savagely: "Hôichi!" Hôichi remained as still as a stone” (Hearn). For Hoichi’s task, he must ignore the dead's illusions and act as if he is not even there. Hoichi’s biggest hurdle for this task was meditating through the dead tearing off his ears, after the loss of his ears the dead left Hoichi alone allowing Hoichi to return back home to the temple.

The return Hoichi had back to the temple gave him an important message to repeat so no one may make the same blunder. Hoichi's message he brought back was to never blindly trust anyone you don't know, to only trust those who you know. Hoichi's mistake started with his trust in the stranger, “ "Hôichi!" Hôichi was too much startled, for the moment, to respond; and the voice called again, in a tone of harsh command:"Hôichi!" "Hai!" answered the blind man, frightened by the menace in the voice--"I am blind!--I cannot know who calls!" In those times, the order of a samurai was not to be lightly disobeyed. Hôichi donned sandals, took his biwa, and

went away with the stranger, who guided him deftly, but obliged him to walk very fast. ”(Hearn). Hoichi didnt even bother to question the stranger, he just went along with him without uttering a single question. Hoichi would come to regret this after hearing the priest words, “Hôichi, my poor friend, you are now in great danger! How unfortunate that you did not tell me all this before! Your wonderful skill in music has indeed brought you into strange trouble. By this time you must be aware that you have not been visiting any house whatever, but have been passing your nights in the cemetery, among the tombs of the Heiké;--and it was before the memorial-tomb of Antoku Tennô that our people to-night found you, sitting in the rain. All that you have been imagining was illusion--except the calling of the dead” (Hearn). The priest tells Hoichi and the audience how terrible of a mistake Hoichi has made, due to Hoichi blindly trusting the stanger asking no questions along the way he has now fallen victim of the callings of the dead. Hoichi is now in mortal danger as we see later on when the dead return to Hoichi at the temple were he would of died if not for the runes placed among his body from the priest, Hoichi does of course lose his ears in the process.

Hoichi blindly trusting in the stranger directly lead him into mortal danger. After this experience Hoichi can take with him the knowledge of never blindly trusting strangers to others as for them to not make the same mistake as him. Hoichi has gone through separation, initiation and return throughout the story meaning through Campbell’s theory Hoichi is a hero.

In all “The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hôichi” is very applicable to Cambell’s theory and can apply to MCT. Hoichi leaves the temple due to being lulled by the deads illusions, meditating

through the deads onslaught and ignoring them so that he may return home, then to Hoichi returns back to the temple free of the deads presence and returns with the message of only trust those who you truly. Now MCT does apply to the story but not as strongly as Cambell, the story serves to benefit the temple of Amidaji from the temple being mentioned and the temple in the story doing good deeds leading to the assumption that the story was created to directly benefit the temple of Amidaji.

Work Cited

Hearn, Lafcadio. "The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hôichi." *The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hoichi*, by Lafcadio Hearn, 1904, 25 Mar. 1904, <http://www.ibiblio.org/eldritch/lh/mimi.html>.

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