

Date 2/22 PV Log: (circle one) Poem / Movie / Picture / LyricTitle Pay it ForwardAuthor / Director / Mimi Leder

Context (Where Found / Viewed / Read?)

I watched *Pay It Forward* on Amazon Prime videos on my computer one Saturday morning when I had nothing better to do because I was sick and tired.

Content / CD / Summary / Precis (Say? "Plot? Setting/Situation? Key lines/phrases scenes, etc? )

*Pay It Forward* follows the project of an eleven year old seventh grader named Trevor McKinney who is given an assignment by his social studies teacher, Eugene Simonet, which asks the children to design and enact a plan that will change the world for the better. Trevor comes up with a plan that he calls "Pay it Forward," which involves a faith in the goodness of humanity. As a part of this plan, when someone does something good for someone, rather than paying him back, that person is supposed to do large and significant favors for three other people, giving rise to an exponential increase of good deeds that is intended to sweep across the globe. Trevor personally starts the "Pay It Forward" movement by providing a homeless man shelter, finding love for his scarred and burnt teacher Mr. Simonet, helping his mother with her problems and love life, and trying to stop his friend Adam from being beaten and bullied. All of his efforts towards the project seem to fail, as the homeless man named Jerry resorts back to his self-centered drug addiction and his mother, Arlene, fights with him about her alcoholism and doesn't fully welcome Mr. Simonet romantically. Nevertheless, Jerry eventually begins to do work on Arlene's car and even attempts to save a suicidal woman from jumping off a bridge, and Arlene eventually pursues Mr. Simonet sexually. All the while Trevor is trying to initiate his seemingly too optimistic of a plan, a Los Angeles reporter named Chris Chandler is trying to discover the source of the concept of "Pay it Forward" after being given a car by a random stranger. The chronology goes like this: after her date with Eugene (Mr. Simonet), Arlene paid it forward to her mother, Grace, by forgiving her mother for raising her so poorly, and Grace pays it forward to a gang member by helping him escape from the police. The gang member then saves a girl's life in a hospital, and the girl's father gave Chandler the car. Trevor is interview about the "Pay it Forward" movement which has supposedly reached great lengths of the country, but he is then accidentally killed by a switchblade when he tries to save his friend Adam from being bullied. Eugene and Arlene get back together and many who have heard of "Pay it Forward" join together with them in a vigil for Trevor.

Content / CM / Meaning? / Theme(s)?

The movie *Pay it Forward* reflects the themes of goodness, generosity, and the intrinsic decency of mankind. The movie truly tries to show how one person can really change the future by taking the first step. Moreover, it is a film pushing for a better tomorrow, showing that even in the toughest of times, whether in times of poverty, struggles with addiction, homelessness, or more, people can unite and make the world a better place. Because of the concept of pay it forward, an idea that one should do good deeds for others and that those people should in turn do good deeds for even more others, that the movie entirely revolves around, the movie presents an optimistic outlook and view of mankind, as if they are actually capable of directing their efforts mainly towards others rather than towards themselves. Even more, the feelings of warmth, gratitude, and compassion must be present in all human beings if Trevor's movement were to ever make it anywhere with its existence, and that is a huge demand to ask of humans, who are inherently directed towards evil, selfishness, and indecency. Thus, Trevor's concept seems a little bit too far-fetched and dependent on the actions of humans themselves, who are the most unreliable creatures on the planet, making *Pay It Forward* seem to venture almost too far off the course of reality. Trevor's death in the end also appears to hint at the fact of the imperfection of the pay it forward movement.

Form (Diction? Construction Terms? Symbolism?)

There aren't too many symbols in *Pay It Forward* as the movie possesses a rather simple plot that essentially only follows the happenings of a young boy named Trevor McKinney. The literalness and straightforwardness of the movie adds to its ability to capture the minds of people all of ages and to make them truly believe in the goodness of mankind and their pursuits. The only thing in the movie that may have been even slightly symbolic was the pay it forward concept itself, which represents not only the innocence and hopefulness of childhood but also the inherent speck of decency that is present within each human being. Trevor's death may symbolize the imperfection of mankind.

Commentary (What do you want to say? Why like? Questions? Synthesis / Allusions-Connections / Relevance to personal experience, to literature, 20Q's? etc.)? "Poetic" Traits?

Although seemingly unrealistic and too impractical for mankind to accomplish, *Pay It Forward* is still a great movie that offers hope for beneficial progression and change in society. The movie argues for a better world and brings a glimmer of optimism and compassion for humans and their endeavors, making the movie so attractive and appealing to its viewers. For me at least, this movie has brought me the closest to tears out of all of the movies I have ever because of the corruption and devastation of innocence and perfection that it implies in the end. Everything about the movie started to seemingly work out in the end, as everyone was rightfully paying it forward and everything seemed to come to peaceful terms; nevertheless, suddenly Trevor, the ever so innocent and optimistic child who essentially beneficially changed human society for good by teaching them a lesson about compassion and goodness, is devastatingly and traumatically killed. It was not only Trevor's physical death that was so emotionally afflicting, but it was also the fact that his death symbolized so much about the human race. Without Trevor, there would be no one with enough confidence and faith in humanity as a whole in order to institute and implement the pay it forward plan of action, for he was the icon that ultimately made the process worth carrying out. Moreover, his death symbolizes a return to decency and corruption in mankind as well as the impossibility of achieving perfection in human society, and that is why the movie was so sad and heartbreaking towards the end. In terms of literary relevance, Master Hally in Athol Fugard's play *Master Hally...and the boys* references an enlightened truth about humanity when he discusses the fact that every time something good happens, someone or something always ends up ruining it in some way or another. This clearly relates to Trevor's tragic death at the end of the movie, as he himself was destroyed despite his best efforts to enact change for the better in the world. This movie also relates to the Golden Rule, which states that a person should do to others as he would treat himself, essentially referring to the fact that he should be compassionate and generous towards other human beings. Overall, I think that this movie is sincerely poetic because it presents a faith in the goodness of mankind and because it proves that one person can really change the future no matter how largely or tiny, as long as he sets his mind to it and takes the first step. The movie forces the viewer to contemplate what he or she can do to help society, and that is why it is so inspiring and poetic.

over (do not mix logs; e.g., no poem log in front, and movie log on back)