

Author's Notes

My entire paper, I believe, was mentally mapped out in my brain before I even wrote it. I knew what points I wanted to hit and the order in which I wanted to discuss them. When they actually were produced onto a blank word document and edited over and over again, I sort of rearranged that mental image and put together an entirely new piece.

I chose LOST as my topic because I knew I could talk a lot about it, not because I'm a huge fanatic of the show. I really do enjoy the series, however, and that made writing this paper way easier.

This draft I present to you is a final draft, but not a perfect draft. It's impossible to write a perfect draft, but this is the closest I could get. I polished all the grammatical errors, adjusted the paragraphs and sentences, and even added some new points that my fellow peers suggest I include.

My audience for the piece is the viewers of LOST, especially those who are extremely familiar with the show. I know that you have seen it, and I hope that you too are well-versed in the show's many plots and subplots because I think a firm understanding of the show makes my paper's message more reflectively enhanced.

RATIONALE: I believe I deserve an A, not because I put together a final draft, but because of the effort that I chose to use. I spent a lot of time actually researching information to make my piece as close to the truth as possible and I was an active participant in peer editing.

great!

which number?

perhaps

It's
been a
little
while, but
I think
I'll
remember

We've all been there: the plane crash on the remote Pacific island, the incomprehensible Black Smoke Monster, the eerie French distress calls, the underground bunker where a mad experiment is taking place... right? Okay, not literally there, but we've seen it. We've watched the show LOST, a masterpiece television series from the incredibly disturbing mind of J.J. Abrams. The show is well-known for its unanswered mysteries and unending plot twists, but the true heart of LOST is found within one of its many central themes: science versus faith.

Too casual
mississippi

Yeah, it's easy to see that LOST is about a bunch of castaways trying to survive on an island, but take a closer look and you can uncover some incredibly deep interpretations. For example, the title of the show may point to the fact that people are LOST physically after crashing their plane in the middle of the Pacific, but it can also mean LOST from their true purpose in life, stranded spiritually in a sort of purgative state trying to set things right. From this idea springs the ever-recurring battle between faith and reason. We must choose between the two: is this island a tangible location, trusting our empirical beliefs, or is it some haven existing in the afterlife?

Chase
this

Can you
remember
this better
super it
needs a
bit more it

The show sets the table for us. The island becomes the stage, the battleground, for an epic duel between the empiricists and believers, a sort of twisted experiment for the entertainment of others. The earliest manifestations of reason and faith come in the personifications of John Locke and Jack Shepherd, two resolutely opposite characters on the show. Shepherd is the de facto leader of the castaways, a former surgeon who refuses to believe Locke's prophet-like words describing the island as a place of destiny and miracles because he begins spotting his dead father on the island and needs a vehicle for his denial. However, Locke himself has enough evidence to believe in the island's mystical powers: he was healed of his leg paralysis after the crash.

their through

switch

respectful

Good
dread

The island also manifested science and faith in two violently opposing clans: the Department of Heuristics and Research on Material Applications (DHARMA) and the Hostiles. The DHARMA has come to the island to study and experiment with the high electromagnetic pulses the island gives off. The Hostiles, on the other hand, are aborigines of the island, who live in and around an ancient Egyptian temple built a long time ago. The two sides have often clashed in the show; one of the Hostiles, Benjamin

Typically you would
not expect to
find the
DHARMA

to look at
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the world
by a
the

Linus, actually gases the entire DHARMA team to death in a later episode. Whether this central conflict is meant to enhance the show with action and suspense, or rather implore the audience to dig deeper for meaningful symbolism, is a question that is constantly asked throughout the show's history. If the island truly has miraculous powers and mystifying properties, why is a science team experimenting with it on terms of reason? The only answer lies in the depth of its symbolic nature: faith and science are symbiotic and cooperative, working together as one. However, only the viewer can truly decide if this theory is valid.

Tom Sison That's one of the main staples of LOST: it constantly asks us to pick one or the other. Often times, the characters themselves have to make this decision too. When Jack refuses to believe that his dead father's coffin is empty following the crash, he spots his father walking around the island's jungle. Or when John doesn't heed the advice of an Australian travel agent who advises him not to venture into the Outback because of his leg condition, he crashes on the island and is healed. There also comes a time when the entire group of castaways from the plane crash must pick between following John or Jack.

Transition Jack eventually learns to accept the island's destiny, becoming ^{a sort of} in turn, somewhat of a Christ-figure ~~on the island~~ by saving the island from destruction in the final season. As Benjamin says to Jack, "Sooner or later, everyone is convinced." So has the island played the part of Purgatory, ripping open Jack's soul and cleansing it of all disbelief? That's just another mystery left to be answered. One of the show's main writers and producers, Carlton Cuse, said this of the two competing entities: "Jack represents the empiricist camp, and Locke represents the faith camp, and, you know, who is right? Well, the show hasn't fully answered that question yet. But we're always trying to skirt that line between the two possible explanations, the scientific one or a mythical and magical one, and we are purposefully ambiguous about which one might be correct." (McCarthy).

The idea that faith and reason can work together effectively is a philosophical concept that has been hotly debated for centuries, from the early philosopher Saint Thomas Aquinas to more modern thinkers like Sigmund Freud. However, LOST has taken the issue upfront, transforming it into a tangible scenario. But it seems that the two cannot coincide. In Season 6 of the show, two specifically important

characters are revealed: Jacob and the Man in Black. They were the first inhabitants of the island and have become immortal by harnessing the island's internal "power". From that day on, the two have set up an experiment on morality, in which Jacob attempts to show his brother, mystically called the Man in Black, that humanity is good. But that experiment didn't really work out. The catastrophic collision of science and faith resulting from this botched experiment led to the inevitable fall of man on the island; from a peaceful group of inhabitants starting with Jacob and the Man in Black to the vengeful Hostiles and DHARMA. So, naturally, Jacob and the Man in Black can be seen as God versus Satan, faith versus its counterpart, science.

Some point to the fact that the unanswered mysteries in the show created by Abrams points to the fact that faith is dominant over reason, because those who choose faith will believe in their own self-created endings for each of the mysteries, while the scientific logical thinkers will still seek a plausible solution in the show itself. LOST also pushes the envelope of our self-security, asking us whether or not we can truly trust the characters we have learned to love. In the very last episode, it is undecided whether John Locke or Jack Shepherd was victorious. Which side was the "good" side? In asking this question, we find an answer: it's what we choose to believe, strictly a matter of faith. LOST's missing link had been faith the entire time.

An ironic truth of the series

Works Cited page

McCarthy, Erin. "15 Questions for Lost Bosses Damon Lindelof and Carlton Cuse."
Popular Mechanics. 24 Apr 2008. Web. 1 Oct 2013.

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