

A racial cultural critique

Business



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“ The day a boy becomes a man, is the day he shoots his first buck” (Scrap). Boys believe the day they shoot a gun they become a man. Richard Wright was an African American writer who wrote the short story *The Man Who Was Almost a Man*. Most of his literature concerns racial themes during the 19th century (English). In *The Man Who Was Almost a Man*, Dave the main character tries to grow up way to fast.

Using racial/cultural criticism, the reader can analyze Richard Wright’s *The Man Who Was Almost a Man* through dialogue, setting, and symbols. To begin with, the dialogue in this story helps us to understand when, where, and who we are dealing with. Dave said “ Whut’s the use talkin wide em niggers in the field?” (Wright). By the grammar of this sentence we can tell that the story most likely takes place in the south and is an African American talking. Also, since they are working in a field and it is still acceptable to call each other “ niggers” we can guess that this took place a long time ago.

Another thing he said is “ Mebbe ma will lemme buy one when she gits mah pay from ol man Hawkins” (Wright). We can tell that Dave is uneducated and still a boy from the way he states this sentence. He is trying to fit in with all the men he works with by not only talking like them but trying to do the same things they do. Furthermore, the setting focuses more towards their social statuses. Dave’s mom said “ Waal, thas good.

We kin use it in the outhouse” (Wright). By that statement we can assume that she wants to use the magazine as toilet paper which leads us to believe that they are part of the lower social class. If they are using magazines as toilet paper it means they don’t have a lot of money. “ His mother held a

steaming dish of black-eyed peas” (Wright). For dinner they just ate beans instead of a full three course meal. They were most likely short on money and couldn’t afford a lot of things.

Dave and his family were clearly short on money in this time period so they used as little as possible with everything. Moreover, there were many symbols throughout this story as well. “ But he had not fired it; he had been afraid that his father might hear” (Wright). This symbolizes that he was trying so hard to be a man by having a gun but he was just a boy because he was scared of his father still. If someone is still concerned about getting a beaten from their father then they are still a boy.

Dave had said “ They treat me like a mule, n they beat me” (Wright). Dave was sick of being told what to do so by buying a gun he thought he was a man. When he shoots the mule it symbolizes that he became a man because after explaining himself he decides not to go home but instead to start life on his own. In the end, racial/cultural criticism helps analyze the short story. People can learn from this story that they should not grow up before it is time to.

Also, that treating someone badly will end up in a bad situation because eventually they will want out of it. After being talked down to so much people will eventually try to defend themselves, they just need to make sure they do it the right way. The significance of this story is that there are other options if people feel like they are being belittled they can always talk it out instead of doing something they will regret. Work Cited “ Boys Quotes”.
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