

# Evaluation of 'criticalon 'theme for english b" assignment



" Evaluation of ' Critical Essay on ' Theme for English B'" " Critical Essay on ' Theme for English B'", written by Chris Semansky, is just that: an analytical essay on Langston Hughes' poem " Theme for English B". The article is a dissection of the author's insight on the subject matter. The paper provides a detailed assessment of the content of Langston Hughes' work by providing the reader with perspective on Hughes' possible thoughts about people and the way they view themselves as well as others and how it affects their own judgments about themselves.

The author strengthens his evaluation with background information about the poet. The writer of the article speculates that the poem is actually self-biographical. Chris Semansky's insight provides a unique perspective on the interpretation of " Theme for English B". His observations are worded appropriately and concisely, and it is easy for one to comprehend how he would arrive at such conclusions. While one point made by the author is contradictory to something read elsewhere during the course of study for Composition 2, most of the content of this particular essay were dead-on.

After reading this analysis, one feels as though they have a deeper understanding of the poem and the thought process Langston Hughes may have applied when writing " Theme for English B". Mr. Semansky highlights several very legitimate, very interesting points in his assessment Hughes' work. He writes, "...Hughes suggests that the self, rather than being coherent and autonomous, is actually the effect of relationships. "

(Semansky, " Critical Essay on " Theme for English B") Upon reading this statement, one realizes that, as people, we do apply others' assessments of ourselves when defining who we really are.

Whether this is something one "should" do is irrelevant; it is a reflexive act ingrained in us from infancy. As a society, one's self-worth is contingent upon others' acceptance of us. Hopefully this "checking in" of sorts diminishes in importance as people learn to filter out what is simply thinly veiled, undue bitterness from influences outside themselves. This influence can manifest itself in the way of race, creed, color, sex, etc. For example, a person who is raised in a Christian family may have very little regard for people of the Muslim faith.

This is not necessarily because of a conflict that an individual within that family has endured with a person of a different faith; it is fair to say that most people are groomed in an egocentric manner in which they believe their beliefs and ideals are the only "right" ones. Therefore, there may be a certain, maybe even unintentional, feeling of separation toward others with different beliefs or lineage, as can be interpreted in Hughes' poem. In "Theme for English B", Hughes writes, "In "Theme for English B", Hughes writes, "I am the only colored student in my class. (Kennedy and Gioia, 980). The implied reason for Hughes to write down what is plainly true is that the fact that the narrator is a man of color is somehow supposed to affect how he thinks, feels, acts, etc. and the absence of others who share his race leaves him a bit alienated and without "backup" in the classroom. Such a feeling may prohibit a person in the poem's narrator's position to hesitate to participate in class discussions for fear of ridicule or drawing even more attention to the solitary brown person in the class.

When Hughes follows up with "Well, I like to eat, sleep, drink, and be in love... I guess being colored doesn't make me not like the same things other  
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folks like who are other races. " (Kennedy and Gioia, 980), it's almost as though Hughes' narrator comes to the realization himself that he is not, in fact, so very alien from his classroom peers, or his neighbors, or his fellow man, whatever ethnicity that man may be. Mr.

Semansky makes the argument that," His black identity rests on the fact that there is also a white identity; his identity as a Southerner rests on the fact that there is a North; his identity as a student rests on the fact that there is a teacher; and his youth rests on the fact that there are those older than him. " (Semanksy, " Critical Essay on ' Theme for English B'. ") This is very intriguing. It certainly can be argued that for every quality there is a sort of opposite, of course in many instances there is an overlap.

Considering tradition black and white culture, it's obvious that some of the things we base these cultural values on are stereotypes at very best. However, the foundation of black culture in America is in slavery, and the opposite in this instance with reference to the white culture is in ownership of the African slaves, a kind of forced inequality. Although the Emancipation Proclamation began a long fight for supposed freedom and equality of all men, there is residual hatred and contempt even now. In the nstance of age being a factor, typically we look at our elders and bestow upon them the wisdom of the experience their years on earth have granted them. Age can also lock in old or obsolete ideals. The youth of a society oftentimes is regarded as more open minded and therefore more willing to " roll with the punches" and adapt to the changing times. With reference to the older professor, Hughes makes a subtle implication that the instructor will view the narrator's assignment as different, as he is the only person of color in the <https://assignbuster.com/evaluation-of-criticalon-theme-for-english-b-assignment/>

entire class, saying, " So will my page be colored that I write? .. Being me, it will not be white. "(Kennedy and Gioia, 1980). In the final segment of Mr. Semansky's article, he describes the narrator of " Theme for English B" completing a poem, rather than the assigned page, as " an act of rebellion- of questioning the instructor's very identity as teacher. " (Semansky, " Critical Essay on ' Theme for English B'. "). This is quite a dramatic accusation, as the instructor's instructions for the assignment are rather vague as described in the original poem by Hughes, the assignment was, " Go home and write a page tonight.

And let that page come out of you-Then it will be true. " (Kennedy and Gioia, 1979). There are no specific guidelines given anywhere else in the work; there are no boundaries set. To gather that the poem's narrator is somehow violating some sacred code of respect to the instructor's authority is absurd. It seems as though the assignment in the poem was to allow ample room for creative interpretation by the student body, therefore sharing some authority with the students in the jurisdiction of their own work. Critical Essay on ' Theme for English B'" raises many valid points on what Langston Hughes intended to say to the reader and why. The breakdown of several parts of the poem and how they may have come to fruition were delightful to read and to interpret along with one's own understanding of Hughes' work. Although when reading another person's interpretation of a creative work there may be a difference of opinion, it is often our own experiences which shape our own understanding, and vice versa.

It is for this reason that poetry from centuries ago is still enjoyed, and quarreled over, now and for all time. Works Cited Semansky, Chris. " Critical <https://assignbuster.com/evaluation-of-critical-on-theme-for-english-b-assignment/>

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