

Paul's case



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Paul's case by Willa Cather is a highly interesting and philosophical work of the The story revolves around the protagonist who finds it difficult to adjust within the defined social norms. He only feels comfortable amongst the surreal work of art and artists' domain like theatre and art galleries. The violence and angst within the protagonist is perplexing because their does not seem to be any lucid reason or cause. Thus, the inevitability of suicide does not come as a surprise. Through the character of Paul, Cather skillfully shows the dual nature of human beings. Indeed, many a times, the cheerful exterior hides the treacherous thoughts and conflicts that could lead to dangerous outcome.

Cather's characterization of Paul as a deviant personality is highly intriguing. It raises pertinent questions of adjustment of the same within the parameters of social controls like family institution and educational institutes. Paul's disdain towards these social institutions is serious in its content. The main reason being the authorities fail to understand the reasons behind his continued misdemeanors. Despite the threats of expulsion from the school, Paul exhibits a careful indifference for the rules. When he is called to the Principal's office for explanation, all the teachers come together against him. Indeed, Cather's observation that the stoic demeanor of Paul forces the teachers to be 'humiliated to have felt so vindictive toward a mere boy'.

The author's portrayal of Paul encompasses diverse human emotions that are difficult to understand by the people, especially by his teachers. Indeed, the inability to reform a 'mere boy' is not only frustrating for the teachers but it also shows a decisive lack of will to understand the complex nature of Paul. Paul's relationship with his father and sister is also not very cordial. The

confined environment of his home and conservative attitude of his father are shown as major issues. Through Paul's story, the author is probably trying to show how the society tries to manipulate the characters of the young people and suppress their natural inclinations.

Paul is hugely attracted to the imagery lives of artists. he portrays the surrealist of the character through his role of 'usher of the theatre' where he imagines himself in the company of the artists and celebrities. Interestingly his make believe world becomes his only medium of being happy. When Paul's lies and deceit are revealed, he is taken out of the school. But Paul, as the protagonist steals the money from the bank and lives his dream life in New York, before committing suicide. His fear that he would be dragged back to the dreary environment of home, gives him courage to jump in front of the running train. Indeed, the poignancy of his feelings, make him vulnerable which the author has articulated with empathy and understanding.

All through the short story, Cather has shown that the illusions of Paul are important factors that help him to hide his failures. His surreal world of artists' lives becomes his sole source of happiness. Paul's character reflects the myriad human nature which is often observed to clash with the transforming values of the times. It is easy to see that the novel, though short, is written with the set intention to keep the readers' interest intact till the sordid end. But at the same time, the story has highlighted the plight of youth who are burdened with the expectations of the society.

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Cather, Willa. (1906). Paul's Case. Retrieved from