

World literature; poetic adaption of the outsider essay sample

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

For my World Literature Assignment 2 I chose to write an assignment under the 2b section; an imaginative or creative assignment. The ensuing piece will be based on *The Outsider* by Albert Camus and will revolve around the last three pages of chapter 6 of part 1; pages 58-60. This is the turning point in the book where the protagonist kills the man referred to as the " Arab." After this episode part 2 of the novel begins and we follow Meursault's court case.

The Outsider was first published in 1942 and is still among the most popular existentialism novels today. Camus creates a character with an extremely subjective mind, almost to the point where the reader is not sure if the protagonist has feelings. Meursault is more interested in his physical surroundings than the social and emotional ones. The book then follows Meursault through his mother's death, his killing of " the Arab" and eventually his own execution.

The creative piece I chose to do was the task of writing a poem. The piece is intended for more mature audiences; due to the language and themes of the poem, as well as the book it is based on, a young audience would have trouble understanding it.

When writing the poem the main objectives were to capture the atmosphere that Camus builds up in the book and somehow entwine the character's feelings towards his own actions. The descriptive writing in the novel uses a lot of pages to build up an atmosphere of frustrating heat and how it affects the protagonist. There are many metaphors and symbols used to express the intensity of the heat; therefore I choose to use the word " fervour" fairly

often in my poem, as well as in the title, to express this feeling of intense heat.

What is also essential to the novel, especially in the court case that follows the episode, is the character's lack of guilt or remorse for what he has done, the simple sense of indifference that he has; " I realized at that point that you could either shoot or not shoot" 1. It is the essence of the outsider that this man didn't commit murder out of passion or with the motivation of profit. It is described more as an act of frustration caused by the heat. Society tries to rationalize actions such as these, and when Mersault does not feel the need to do so, he becomes the outsider.

These are the themes expressed in the final bit of part 1 of *The Outsider*. Essentially, the poem will be an interpretation of the event that is the novel's turning point. The purpose is to, in a poetic manner and in fewer words, to capture the essence of those three pages.

To express them in a poem I will use the first stanzas to build up the atmosphere of the intense heat and the gradual effect it has on the protagonist. Even though I am trying to create the same atmosphere as Camus I have decided only to use one metaphor from the book; the personification of the waves as they " gasp for breath," simply because it is my favourite in this part of the book.

To further develop the intensity of the heat I will have to, as Camus did, use all of Meursault's surroundings, not just the sun. The poem will try to give

credit and express the effects of the different pieces of nature surrounding him; the sand, his own sweat, the spring, etc.

The second half of the poem will be more focused on interpreting the sequence of events that takes place in the novel. The final climax of part 1 in the novel comes as a complete twist, Camus doesn't hint at the fact there will be another confrontation and within only one page he manages to introduce and conclude a murder; this contributes to the theme of absurdity as there is no rationality behind the murder. I will try to retain the suspense and only introduce the approaching murder in the later part of the poem; the intention is to retain, mirror and rephrase the themes presented over the last few pages of part 1.

I decided to write a poem for my World Literature Assignment 2 when I first read the last pages of part 1. I had already decided on doing something within the "Imaginative and Creative" section because it was the task that I felt allowed the most freedom and personal expression, as well as seeming much less of a tedious task than the other options. When I initially read the passage I was very impressed by the powerful descriptions and the atmosphere they gave rise to when reading and I felt that it had the potential for a creative interpretation, hence a poem, one that I hope manages to achieve all the above. Enjoy.

Murder by Fervour

The sun's blazing shimmer,

Reverberating across seas and sands,

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Reflections peering into squinted eyes;

A light that gives warmth,

A glare that takes life.

The fervour heightens,

Flooding me in a red sea,

A sea of salty beads of perspiration,

And of anger and frustration,

The thin line of comfortable warmth over trod.

Same sun, same sand, same light,

Only this time the intensity burns,

As even the waves began to gasp for breath,

And the spring calls me to it,

Whilst the desert beach presses me forward.

My steel manages to retain its cool,

And his follows suit,

We both grip the cool metal,

As I continue to press forth,

Pressured by the beach,

Drawn forth by the spring.

His steel shimmers in the light,

The reflecting ray stabs my eyes,

Blinded by light and sweat,

The sound of gunshot rips the air,

I sink four more in him.

The silence broken,

The peace of the beach gone,

The fervour had committed murder,

But it was the fervour of heat,

Not passion.

The cool of the steel returns,

Annoyed that the day is no longer happy,

I wait for it, but remorse never grips me.

1 Page 57, " The Outsider" by Albert Camus: Meursault's thoughts when Raymond hands him a gun.