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illustrating this, cather
brings out



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Willa Cather's story, Paul's Case, revolves around the life of a young man named Paul. This story brings out the life of this young boy as one that is full of desires and dreams but he cannot work to fulfill them.

The author has employed the use of character, action and imagery to bring out the three themes, viz. harm of relentlessness to achieving ones dreams, the danger of misunderstanding money and wealth, and the effect of materialism in one's life. The main character in the story is Paul. He comes from a poor background which moves him to have a desire for a more luxurious and wealthy living. In order for someone to acquire such a lifestyle, he/she should be industrious just as the saying goes, " nothing comes on a silver plate.

" Paul only admires other peoples' work but he does not want to do much to achieve the life he desires. He is obsessed with art, music and theatre; the main factors that enhance his passion as an usher in the Carnegie Hall in Pittsburgh. At one point he decides to forego supper in order to arrive at the hall in time. When he finds that the hall is not opened he decides to go to the picture gallery where he spends a lot of time admiring the great works holed there. Despite his passion for arts, Paul does not do anything in the field of arts to improve his standards of living; on the contrary, he keeps admiring other people's work.

Cather states that, " He had no desire to become an actor, any more than he had to become a musician. He felt no necessity to do any of these things; what he wanted was to see, to be in the atmosphere, float on the wave of it, to be carried out, blue league after blue league, away from everything" (32).

This is evident that Paul did not want to work despite his desire to live a good life. Misunderstanding money and wealth as the necessities to living a good life is an issue that the writer explores deeply.

She brings out Paul as a character who holds that, in order to have a luxurious life one needs to have money. However, Paul violates the very basic principle that, in order to get money one needs to work and work hard. In illustrating this, Cather brings out the life of a certain young man who has climbed up the ladder by embracing his work as a clerk. Lack of understanding makes Paul to live a miserable life since he cannot do anything substantial to enhance income generation.

For instance, Cather notes, “ Paul bounded upstairs, scrubbed the greasy odor of the dishwater from his hands with the ill-smelling soap he hated” (27). What a disgusting situation! Paul looks down upon the people in his neighborhood including his own teachers. This is because he feels that he is the only one with the knowledge on how to build wealth. All along Paul knows that he needs money but he does not work at getting it. The writer says, “ He had not a hundred dollars left; and he knew now, more than ever, that money was everything, the wall that stood between all he loathed and all he wanted” (16). It is thus evident that one has to put efforts to better his/her life rather than fantasizing about good lives that he/she might never achieve; if anything, Cather insinuates that, fantasy never mimic the reality.

Cather employs imagery to underscore the harm of relentlessness towards achieving one’s dream in what many would call the pursuit of the American dream. For instance, he uses Paul’s addiction to art as a form of hindrance to

hard work. His obsession occupy much of his time that he does not even realize that it has become as a form of an addictive drug to him. He cannot see and exploit other ways, which he can utilize to yield a lot other than pleasure. The author explores food as an imagery to bring out the distinctive gap between the rich and the poor.

When Paul follows the soprano to the hotel, he begins to ponder about the good food that the soprano will enjoy. " He reflected upon the mysterious dishes brought into the dining room, the green bottles in buckets of ice, as he had seen them in the supper party pictures of the Sunday World supplement "(Cather 17). This is the type of food that Paul desires but he cannot afford due to his poor standards of living. Just as a poor man's food that is not appetizing to many, the Cather likens Paul's life to such food referring to it as a flavorless, colorless mass of everyday existence (19). The terms that the writer uses to describe the food represents Paul's tasteless and meaningless life. Paul is poor thus his constant desire for wealth. The red carnations that Paul wears in his buttonhole represent Paul's continued defiance to his teachers. Paul constantly goes against the teachers' expectations.

Later on in his life, Paul brings red carnations that are wilted as he walks to the train tracks. The wilting of the red carnations helps him to realize that, it takes only a short time for the beauty of life to disappear. Paul buries one of the red carnations in the ice before leaping in front of a train. In this act, the writer brings out the eventual death and disappearance of Paul. The writer's use of action also helps in bringing out the theme of laziness in the story. In

the beginning of the story, the writer tells us that the boy had gone to sleep on a certain warm afternoon.

This shows that Paul is a lazy boy. His laziness is evident in the story because despite his ambition to obtain wealth, he is not involved in any activity to generate money. Paul goes to New York in search of a better way of living. In conclusion, the writer employed character, imagery and action to pass her message to the readers. She puts it clear that people need to work towards their dreams instead of constantly fantasizing about them. It is also important to note that, ' Paul's Case' warn that people should have a clear understanding of the difference between money and wealth/ work. One has to work in order to get money hence wealth. The writer insinuates that materialism should not be our drive towards good life.

This is because it can lead one to do things he/she did not intend to do.

Works Cited

Willa, Cather. Paul's Case: A Study in Temperament, 1906. Web. 8th Mar. 2011.