

Anglo-Chinese School

22/8/14

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(Independent)

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Subject English Lang Lit

Class 6.01 P2 Practice



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2011 Eng A Lang-Lit Sd P2 - Spec Paper

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What impact does setting have on your understanding of the central ideas or themes presented in the two works studied?

The use of setting is indeed essential for the understanding of a literary work, and the two novels, The Great Gatsby (1925) ¹⁹²⁵ and by F. S. Fitzgerald, and The Outsider by Albert Camus, are no exception. In the Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald's ^{effective} use of setting accentuates social divisions and underscores the moral corruption in the characters of the novel, both of these are critical themes in the novel. In The Outsider, Camus uses the settings of Meursault's Mother's funeral and of the beach confrontation to ~~show~~ display Meursault's great sensitivity and vulnerability to heat and light. This echoes the theme of the Absurd in the novel, where man struggles against ~~indifferent~~ the indifference of nature to find meaning, but ultimately fails. Moreover, in the courtroom scene Camus again uses the setting to highlight Meursault's vulnerability to heat, ~~this time~~ demonstrating how Meursault is an outsider in his own society.

good pr

In The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald addresses the social divisions present in 1920s America by reflecting these divisions in his novel. There are clear distinctions between the "new money" nouveau riche, the "old money" with their inherited wealth, and the poor working class citizens. These distinctions are accentuated by the use of

different geographical locations in the novel to represent each of these social classes.

^{introduced in} West Egg is the first main geographical location in the novel, and is characterized as the home of the newly-rich "nouveau riche" young Americans. One such young man is Gatsby, the novel's titular character. He is a "self-made man", having come by his wealth through his own (illegitimate) work by buying "a lot of side-street drug stores (in New York) and in Chicago" and selling "gram alcohol over the counter."

shown by?
provide
with
in context

West Egg is considered the "less fashionable" of the two Eggs, the other "Egg" being East Egg. East Egg represents the "old money" rich, and hence West Egg is portrayed as a mere imitation of East Egg.

Gatsby's mansion is described as being a "factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy". Gatsby, who represents the West-Eggers, ^{thus} tries to flaunt his wealth by imitating the "incumbent" ~~rich~~ old-money rich. However, imitation does not necessarily equate to denote equality, as there still exists a wide social ~~div~~ divide between West Egg and its nouveau riche, and East Egg and the old-money rich.

East Egg is the counterpart to West Egg, and represents the "old money" aristocratic rich who inherited ~~their~~ their wealth. Tom Buchanan, a west West-Egger, exemplifies this social class. Having come from an "enormously wealthy" family, he settled down in East Egg with a "string of polo ponies". His own home is described in direct contrast to Gatsby's: it is a "cheerful red and white Georgian Colonial mansion," with ~~for~~ "bright vines" "drifting up the side [of the mansion]". "The colours of red and white esumate of

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sense of royalty, and in combination with the "Georgia" colonial decor of the house, Tom's house seems to exude elegance and tasteful style. This represents a stark contrast to Gatsby's mere "fastidious imitation" with a grotesque "thin beard of raw iron". Hence, the use of geographical locations accentuates the social division between the nouveau rich and the old-money rich.

Another social division exists between the rich of East and West Egg, and the poor working class of the Valley of Ashes. In another stark contrast, the glowing imagery of both Eggs is contrasted against the desolation and decay of the Valley of Ashes. Here, the ashes grow into "grotesque gardens", "houses, chimneys and rising smoke." There is an overabundant color imagery of gray-colored objects and people — from the "grey cars" to the "ash-grey men [—] with leader (lead is a dull grey metal) spades." These things The characters residing in the Valley of Ashes belong to the working class — Wilson, a car mechanic, lives in the Valley with his unfaithful wife. Their living conditions epitomizing downright poverty and despair are in stark contrast to the wealthy, "glittering palaces" of the two Eggs. Here, yet another social division is seen through the the to addressed Here, Fitzgerald addresses yet another social division, this time between the rich and poor of 1920s America, through his effective use of setting.

Finally, Fitzgerald addresses the moral corruption of 1920s America through ~~the~~ ^{the} setting of New York City. ~~1920s American~~ Crime and corruption were prevalent in the 1920s in America, and Fitzgerald addresses this as he portrays New York as the place where "anything could happen", even Gatsby. Gatsby, as the reader later discovers, is in fact a bootlegger and came by his wealth illegitimately. By associating the city with Gatsby, Fitzgerald highlights the innate moral corruption of the city and by ~~extension~~ ^{extension}, 1920s America.

Moreover, Fitzgerald associates the setting of New York with Wolfshiem, ~~who~~ ^{and} ~~the~~ ^{and} ~~associates~~ ^{admits?} ~~Carraway~~ ^(Buckner) (the narrator) and Gatsby meet him at Wolfshiem is associated with a famous New York landmark, the "old Metropole". Wolfshiem is the personification of corruption, having fixed the ~~World~~ World Series in 1919 with "the single-mindedness of a burglar blowing a safe." Therefore, through associating the setting of ~~the~~ New York with the corruption of Wolfshiem and Gatsby, ~~New~~ New York is ~~itself~~ seen as corrupt and thus reflects the real world corruption of 1920s America. What about the Plaza Hotel incident?

In his novel The Outsider, Camus uses setting to ~~the~~ communicate the theme of the Absurd to the reader. The Absurd is an existential school of thought ~~that~~ that denotes a tragic disharmony in ~~the~~ human existence, where man's ~~confronts~~ desire for order and meaning is contrasted with the meaningless, indifference, and disorder of Nature. Meursault is the main character of the novel, and his struggle

excellent for writing the best. It's best to be read the novel

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with nature is exemplified through his struggle with heat, in the settings of and light. Two side episodes are noted: at ~~the~~ Mersault's mother's funeral, and at his confrontation with the Arab at the beach.

During his mother's funeral, Mersault is "blinded by the sudden blaze of light" when the funeral parlour lights are switched on, and his adverse reaction to light is further demonstrated while ~~to~~ accompanying ~~the~~ his mother's hearse to the village church: all he could feel along the way was the "bleed[ing] panding in [his] temples". This adverse reaction leads to him only remembering "a few other scenes" that ~~become~~ whose descriptions become progressively vague and trivial. The comical tableau of Perez tears "forming a watery glass" over ~~to~~ his face; the "villages in the ~~street~~ street," "Perez fainting", and "more people." Mersault's vulnerability and struggle with heat continues in the ~~beach~~ confrontation with the Arab at the beach: the ~~heat~~ "glare reflected ~~to~~ from the sea was unbearable" ~~and the~~ whilst the ~~heat~~ heat "pressed me ~~to~~ [him] from behind." However, once again Mersault gives in to the power of the heat, and ultimately shoots the Arab on the beach as the glare from the Arab's knife represents too major a ~~the~~ threat to ignore. ~~It~~ Camus consistent inclusion of heat and overwhelming light in these two settings

The Best Is Yet To Be

~~sets~~ ~~series~~ to provides the antagonist for Mersault. Mersault's struggle against ^{the} indifference of nature. Whilst Mersault observes and attempts to find order and meaning in the actions of man, he is completely unable to ~~see~~ reconcile with ~~and~~ the harshness ~~and~~ of Nature and the Universe, as exemplified through the ~~heat~~ heat and light in Camus' ~~setting~~ ~~two~~ settings for the novel.

Mersault's tragic incompatibility with nature and the universe is made more poignant ~~through~~ ~~his~~ his attraction ~~to~~ ~~from~~ the detachment from society. Once again, Camus uses setting to effectively express this detachment. In the courtroom scenes, Mersault is once again overcome by ~~the~~ the heat of the courtroom, as he ^{is} first ~~noted~~ ^{implied by} the heat in the courtroom prior to all other observations of the people there. As the case progressed in ~~court~~ court, Mersault's first complaint was that "it was getting hotter". Later on in the trial, Mersault is asked to explain his own system of defence - however he was "so hot [...] that I [Mersault] felt dizzy, leading him to "[mix] up my [Mersault's] words a bit" and reason that it was "because of the sun" that he shot the Arab. Mersault's constant fixation on the heat of the setting alienates ~~to~~ him from the judges and jury of the court, leading to ~~his~~ ^{the disconnect} echoing his similar incompatibility with nature. Camus's use of setting by emphasising ~~the~~ the heat in the courtroom and Mersault's ~~response~~ response is one of the factors leading to Mersault's alienation from ~~the~~ society.

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In conclusion, this essay demonstrates how Camus' and Fitzgerald's use of setting is critical in communicating key themes to the reader. The use of setting ~~emphasises~~ and accentuates and underscores the portrayal of themes in Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, while the setting in Camus' The Outsider is crucial in portraying man's incompatibility with nature and the ~~or~~ Outsider status of Mersault.

A: 5 excellent references, esp. for the section on heat for The Outsider

B: 4

C: 4

D: 4

E: 4

28 well done!!