

Note 88203rndmd: Critical

I'm all for this, but one of the key problems with the "essay task" is the inherent way it's being structured: incorrectly. When, say, writing a master's thesis paper, nearly all the emphasis is put on developing the literal thesis (i.e. a statement, or a set of ideas, that explores an entirely new angle about something or another). This is a truly intellectual task, developing a (hopefully) unique standing on, in this case, a book and discussing that standing and how it relates to other theories.

What we are doing in class is certainly not this. We are being ushered, without emphasis or guidance, through the stage of developing key arguments to back our thesis statement up, while said statement is just expected to exist. The most educational and representative thing about the assignment is the thesis statement (idea) itself. Currently, we are being persuaded that the most important part is writing the essay. This is absurd.

One cannot write a book without an idea — an interpretation or theory that creates intellectual education and entertainment for the reader — that manages to be legitimately successful and have real *worth*. There are two key things that make novels of all sorts interesting; in fact, I would argue that those two things apply to much more than just novels, but essentially all written English. One of the two things is simply a form of neurotic entertainment: something that causes us to laugh or be excited or sad, et cetera. This is, for example, manifested in comedic plays through slapstick. The second, and in my opinion, less important yet infinitely more interesting point, is the *intellectual value* of the written media. In comedic plays (a type of play I very much enjoy), this is shown in the broader arch of the plot and its suggestions. The story line, the themes explored, the times when the play is punching up, and lastly — and importantly, as no comedy is truly amusing if this is left out — the times when it makes fun of itself.

In this assignment, these two things should be represented by our skill and by our ideas. Instead, we are being forced to ignore both. We are being rushed to a quick and sloppy result and entertains no original thought and simply regurgitates (often) inaccurate, or at the very least, hackneyed, information. But something much worse is happening. Something with potentially irreversible effects on our future lives.

For the past years, we have invariably been forced to read trite. The only exception was the brief time we spent on Macbeth, but unfortunately, the only thing I remember from this time is having to hold a presentation of vocabulary. Yay! That's real, progressive education, folks! In all seriousness, this education seems to be nearly harming us, by systematically introducing mediocre or even bad (in my humble opinion) literature, and strongly discouraging critical thinking and writing through the means of *time pressure*. Something, I'm sure all of you are familiar with. Again, we are being rushed through the most important and influential part of this essay. We are being harmed.

The things you are complaining about are side-effects of the real issue here. If we were reading, say, Kafka's *The Castle*, we would (hopefully) be holding discussions about the deeper meaning of the piece. But crucially, we would be

being encouraged to develop our own hypotheses. We would certainly not be rushed through this step, and certainly not have our response options be as limited as they are now. Further, we would not be reading a bad novel.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that I know how standard this practice is. School has been like this a long time, and likely be like this much longer than I'll get to see. But, especially as a very neurodivergent individual, I feel that it is painstaking to be put through such a process, even more so when taking into account the alacrity we are supposed to adopt. I have a deep yearning, a *Sehnsucht*, for a world, a school, in which we are encouraged to think intellectually *without alacrity* (some might disagree with this specific point). For some absurd and clearly unrealistic reason, I would have hoped, that BMS, as a *private international* school, would have put in some more effort to achieve this goal. For some absurd and clearly unrealistic reason, I have now given up this dream, and have been condemned to a world in which I must suffer my misbegotten fate, and only follow my passions in the sparse free time I am deigned by the overlords we who claim to want to *teach* us.

It is important to note, that this is nearly all the time not the teacher's fault. I in no way want to blame any of my teachers, many of which I respect and like greatly.

It is really time that we confront the bourgeoisie and initiate the proletariat revolution, and that we do *that* with alacrity — not our essays.