

Arthur Stein ← Your name
10/18/2002 ← Date paper is due
Showcase #1 ← Which number is this?
English 5-6 ← Class name
Mr. Coia ← Include my name

Suffering and Evil Surrounding a Plague ← Use a creative title

The Plague is a novel about evil. The pages are filled with accounts of suffering and pain that the people of Oran experience. Camus portrays a situation in which the people of the town must overcome great circumstances and rise above the present darkness that surrounds them. Evil becomes almost personified in the way it makes its presence known. The plague is responsible for causing suffering to those who live in the town. There is no method or reason for the administration of the pain. The plague is irrational. There are several accounts in which suffering arises from external forces outside that of human control. In other words, the pain in this book is not caused by any human error or sin. Rather, the evil is the great Cause.

One of the ways in which suffering is felt in this novel is the great numbers of the dying. The plague begins its attack with a few dead every several days. As the book progresses, hundreds die each day. The newspaper lists the daily death toll as if it was counting shopping days until Christmas. The plague does not silently attack. Pictures of death and dying exist all around Oran. Since there is no scientific reason why some are struck by the plague, there is no security that others will not soon be dead. As in warfare, the most dangerous and effective enemy is the one that cannot be seen or predicted. The citizens live in constant fear for their own lives, and mourning for those whom they have already lost.

Another way in which suffering is portrayed in this novel is the separations that occur. Dr. Rieux is forced to be apart from his wife due to her sickness (different from the current plague in Oran). He is lonely without her, and fills his time trying to save others. One can almost feel his frustration as he cannot be near his wife during his own uncertainty of death. There is no happy ending for Rieux, however. He survives the plague, but his wife dies before she returns to Oran. This is either ironic or irrational. The doctor's wife dies away from Oran, while many others live within its gates.

A discussion of the suffering in Oran would not be complete without the telling of the suffering of M. Othon's son. This child was afflicted with the plague, and suffered for days. Rieux and Tarrou watched and suffered with him. "They had already seen children die-for many months now death had shown no favoritism-but they had never yet watched a child's agony minute by minute, as they had now been doing since daybreak" (214). The plague now appears to commit its greatest crime- torturing a child. This seems to affect Rieux greater than any other of the hundreds of dead he has already been in contact with. It is an innocent victim that does not deserve torture. Irrational death is evil in itself. Torture, however, is a different strain. Cruelty to the innocent appears to be more rational than killing by random selection. If this plague is an actual entity, whether an assassin, a dictator, or even God, it must be cruel if it allows the torture of innocent children.

Showcase Paper

English

Mr. Coia

Throughout the year, you will demonstrate your understanding of a novel and your interaction in class discussions by writing showcase papers. Each semester, you will write at least two major essays, along with a minimum of four showcase papers. These six papers will be the major work to determine your grade. Since we will not have daily book questions for each story, you will put your time and effort into writing a thoughtful, intelligent response to the work in question. I have constructed some guidelines for you to follow for these assignments.

Purpose for showcase papers:

- Demonstrate your reading and understanding of a work
- Show that you were active in class discussions
- Provide further writing opportunities
- Offer you a choice in writing topic

Content:

Showcase writing asks that you *show* your *Creativity, Ability, Synthesis, and Evaluation* in written form. After a selection, you will choose *one* specific area to focus on.

Creativity: Write a new ending. Give a different point-of-view. Explore a what-if possibility.

Ability: Is this your best work? Does it show your time and effort?

Synthesis: Compare the story to another novel you have read. How does it differ from another?

Evaluation: Judge the work in light of logic, consistency, cultural norms, religion, etc. Discuss symbols or themes. (This is not a place for you say how bored your were).

Format:

- 450-550 words
- Single-spaced
- 12-point font
- Standard font (Times, Arial, or Helvetica)
- No more than 1-inch margins all-around
- Must be your best work
- Includes a creative title

Papers that do not follow this format, or ones that lack the necessary content, will not be graded.

