
UNIVERSITY OF THE PEOPLE

ENGL 1405-01 World Literature - AY2024-T2

Written assignment unit 1

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I chose to read the story “The Use of Force” by William Carlos Williams. If I had to live in the world depicted in this dramatic story, my typical day would be significantly altered. As a doctor, I would constantly grapple with the harsh realities of this society and the challenges of providing compassionate care.

I imagine beginning each day steeling myself emotionally before making house calls to patients. I know that many will be mistrustful and uncooperative, like the little girl Mathilda, who has learned to be defensive and secretive out of fear. While I understand this reaction, it would require tremendous patience and moral resolve to weather her attacks and still express care for her wellbeing. I would have to work hard to break through her resistance, using persistence and perhaps unconventional means tailored to earn her trust.

My days would be filled with more frustration than my current experience. I would grow weary of cajoling patients and contending with their stubbornness or hysterics. Their lack of understanding and defensiveness would test my compassion. I would be dismayed and demoralized by parents' callousness toward their children. Yet I could not give in to fury as the doctor in the story does. I would need to actively resist those impulses and remain level-headed.

Finding like-minded colleagues would provide vital support. I would seek out others who share my goals of bringing more empathy and humanity into these interactions. My peers would offer understanding and advice for avoiding burnout, as well as collaboration in advocating for broader societal changes. Together we might establish new norms and protocols for patient care that better account for people's fears and honor their dignity.

Outside of work, I would find solace in simple joys and in my community. Music, nature walks, or sharing meals with neighbors who have retained their warmth would counterbalance

the difficulties of my profession. I would strive to model more enlightened relationships beyond the walls of my practice.

Though exhausting and demoralizing at times, this work would also have a profound purpose. The opportunity to forge deeper human connections with those in need would make the most difficult days worthwhile. My vision would be to shift the paradigm through incremental daily acts of empathy. Living in this world would push me to my limits, yet also sharpen my principles and my skill for small acts of radical compassion.

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Reference:

The Use of Force--William Carlos Williams (1883-1963). (2023). Classicshorts.com.

<https://www.classicshorts.com/stories/force.html>

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