

Final Assignment (1391 Words)

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1. Give reasons how Samuel de Champlain (1574-1635) could play such a critical role in contemporary Quebecois society that a character in the novel, *Bury Your Dead*, could commit murder to conceal historical evidence about Champlain's religion and burial site? Why do you think that some cultures place so much importance on their history? And why don't we as Americans place importance on our history?

Samuel de Champlain is represented as the father of Quebec so the history and culture of Quebec is based off of key figures which happen to include Champlain. It is natural to want to preserve ones culture so one can identify with the reasons of Renauds death in the novel. If it was revealed that Champlain was buried under the Lit and His then the English culture in Quebec would cease to exist because most people would see the English in disgust and try to push them out even though they are part of Quebec, just as the French are. Culture is intertwined with history so it is natural to place history at a high importance. However, American history is not noble and things like slavery and killing of Native Americans make it hard for us to embrace our culture. I think Americans should embrace our culture more, acknowledging the wrong doings but also the ideas and principals that the nation was founded on.

2. What were the qualities that Georges deemed most important in his evolution to manhood? How did these qualities serve him? How did they contribute to where Georges ends up at the conclusion of the novel? Give at least two specific examples.

Georges wanted to be physically and mentally superior to other men. Physically qualities would help him in fights or in situations where great strength was needed. While his mental prowess would make him smarter than his opponents. His physical attributes could be said to why Sara was attracted to him and served him well when fighting the British and in escaping or running away. His mental abilities allowed him to become friends with Lord Murray and also allowed him to think for himself and what he believed in more critically. Georges also developed a sense of persistence that proved useful towards the end of the novel. When at the College of Napoleon, he would pick fights constantly or study very intently to perfect the skill or to accomplish a goal. If it was not for this persistence Georges may have seen the revolt as too hard of a task and backed down. But he did not, instead he doubled down and was intent to put an end to the prejudices on the island even if the task seemed daunting.

3. It is said that character is harder to detect than personality because to evaluate someone's character, we need to observe him or her in a character-challenging situation – one which calls for courage, compassion, sacrifice, honesty, or forgiveness -when there may involve great risk or no payoff for the ethical behavior. Talk about one situation from *Bury Your Dead* and one from *Georges* which was evidence of a strong moral or ethical stance taken by a character

Georges character is exemplified in the novel when instead of accepting Lord Murrays and Malmedie's offer to have Sara, he refused. This is because he wanted to sacrifice himself for the

cause of freedom for all the slaves on Ile de France. The risk of this is seen when he is captured and sentenced to death for his actions. This ethical stance that white men are not superior would not be swayed in Georges heart and he would fight for others peoples rights to be free from prejudice even though he is free and has a life better than most slaves on a plantation.

Gamache's character is shown in the novel towards the end after the priest admits his guilt and that he killed Renaud to protect the Lit and His society. When Tom Hancock thinks about killing himself by jumping off the cliff Gamache talks him out of it. Although, Hancock admits his guilt Gamache does not get aggressive with him. Instead, he has a more thoughtful conversation with him and actually finds something in common with him. Hancock killed to protect the people of the Anglo community just as Gamache killed terrorists or enemies that sought to harm his agents. But, as Gamache says in the novel "You had no right to take Renauds and you have no right to take your own now. Not over this. Too much death. This needs to stop." This shows the true character of Gamache as someone who seeks justice, peace, and forgiveness.

4. In the cultural settings of both *Bury Your Dead* and *Georges*, there is a dominant culture. How does fear of the dominant culture play a role in the actions of the subjugated or less powerful characters in each of the novels? How much does it affect the plot? Give one instance from each book.

Dumas reveals the dominant culture of English white men who believe they are superior to people of color. Fear is brought upon slaves by lashes of the whip or death. This plays a role in the subjugated slaves because this shuts them down and they are kept silent. This affects the plot because Georges sees the racial tension growing up on the island and how in other places it is less common or frowned upon and seeks to change this. The whole plot of the story is surrounded around racial tensions and slaves vs. whites.

Penny reveals a dominant Francophone presence in Quebec that tends to silence the Anglophones because of their past actions toward Quebecers. This is seen in the Lit and His society that is directly blamed for Renauds death even though everyone may be innocent. The English minority is treated with less respect and are not seen as Quebecois when in reality they may have lived in Quebec all their lives. This affects the plot because the reader is convinced that it is an Anglophone that killed Renaud and it does turn out to be one of the Lit and His members, the young priest.

5. There were five videos which could serve as a resource for a greater understanding of *Georges*

History of Ideas – Romanticism
Are You Romantic or Classical

How Romanticism Ruined Love
Evoking the Mulatto
The Haitian Slave Revolt

Pick one and write a paragraph detailing how the video affected your understanding of the novel.

Evoking the Mulatto was a good video to give context to the meaning of the word. Meaning and context is important when trying to understand a book written in the past. While Mulatto was the normal phrase for a mixed individual back then it has a negative connotation in today's society. Today we use the term bi-racial to indicate that someone has more than one race in their DNA. Understanding context is important when trying to use a novel written in the past and applying this to struggles we face in today's society.

6. The following documentary, articles, and Ted Talk, could relate to ***Bury Your Dead***:

Québec, My Country, Mon Pays
A neuroscientist who studies rage says we are all capable of doing something terrible, Here's What Happens in the Brain When People Kill
Law Enforcement Traumatic Stress
Misdirection

Pick one of the above and explain how it provided useful information for understanding the book, *Bury Your Dead*. Be specific and refer to a character, an incident, or an ongoing situation in the novel.

Quebec, My Country, Mon Pays provided invaluable information relevant to the novel. An ongoing situation in the novel was the tension between the Francophones and Anglophones or French and English, respectively. The video provided an account of the history and events that transpired through Canada. Also, perspectives from French and English to give an idea of what people thought of the other group. Tying this to the novel which explores the same idea of tension between the English of the Lit and His and the citizens of Quebec. It would have been much harder to discern this tension without context from the video. The book only mentioned the tension between the two groups directly a handful of times and a reader could easily forget the detail.