

Explore the concept of the Existential Hero

An Existential Hero is a person or character who lives by the tenets of Existentialism

Explain how the character of Daru in the story “The Guest” demonstrates the qualities below and provide a quote, or specific reference to the source, as evidence.

| Quality of an Existential Hero | Daru in “The Guest” |
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| <p>Authentic</p> <p>Living by what one holds true. Self definition through individual moral code and values.</p> | <p>“...every bit of this disgusts me, and first of all your fellow here. But I won’t hand him over...”</p> <p>“The man’s stupid crime revolted him, but to hand him over was contrary to honor... And he cursed at one and the same time his own people who had sent him this Arab and the Arab too who had dared to kill and not managed to get away.”</p> <p>Evidence of Daru rejecting values of both sides in favor of what he deems to be right.</p> |
| <p>Self-Determining</p> <p>Acting upon one’s authenticity. Making choices based on one’s morals/values</p> <p>Man-ness</p> <p>Being the subject of one’s own life. Existence is NOT defined based on external factors.</p> | <p>Giving the Arab the choice to make <i>his</i> own choice. Daru is enabling the Arab to determine his own meaning, and act upon what the Arab feels is right.</p> <p>Daru is a part of both worlds, colonial French and Indigenous, yet he sides with neither, by refusing to either take the Arab to jail or to completely free him. He rejects both sides and acts upon what he alone feels is right or meaningful.</p> |
| <p>The Absurd</p> <p>The outside world lacks purpose, meaning, guidance or validation.</p> | <p>“You handed over our brother. You will pay for this.”</p> <p>There is no reassurance from the world that what Daru did was ultimately correct, because the world is devoid of meaning, purpose, justice, etc.</p> |
| <p>“The Hard Road”</p> <p>Being prepared to live with the consequences to the choices that define one’s essence.</p> | <p>“I’ll not deny that you left him with me.”</p> <p>Daru is prepared to accept any consequences from French authorities that may result from Daru refusing to transport the prisoner. The reader is left to wonder whether or not he is prepared to accept consequences from the Arab’s family.</p> |
| <p>Dreadful Freedom</p> <p>Emotions associated with the realization make choices within one’s life is necessary, even though these choices may have undesirable consequences.</p> | <p>“In the vast landscape he had loved so much, he was alone.”</p> <p>Description of setting reinforces Daru’s “aloneness” in this world. He may not be explicitly <i>lonely</i>, or filled with <i>dread</i> or <i>anxiety</i> but by the end of the story, it can be argued that he recognizes how his choices make him “alone” in the world. This is close to the feeling of “dreadful freedom” as described to the left.</p> |

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