Crispin Thys (Essay 1 draft)

Intro

I chose to write about the story which depicts a man having a friend fix the button on his coat after a fight ensues on a bus. In Queneau's stories he uses great detail to explain the story from that specific perspective. Oftentimes his depiction relies on a lot of sensory detail. Each of the perspectives that I wrote about, come from a place of vulnerability, a place of helplessness. The first perspective is that of the bus itself. I chose to write about this point of view because I felt that the interpretation from the point of view of the bus itself would be an interesting viewpoint, which would emphasize the damage done to our surroundings that might occur when a fight ensues. This damage is often done with little regard to the property itself. The bus could not do anything other than accept the beating it was taking, and was forced to watch from a submissive position. The second interpretation of the story that I wrote about was that of the bus driver. I also interpreted his viewpoint to be from a position of desperation because he normally has control of his bus, and takes great pride in its efficient functionality, but during this scenario he lost control and could not calm the raucous on the back of the bus. The third interpretation of the story that I wrote about was that of a fellow passenger. I chose to use a passenger who does not normally take the bus, but was forced to do so today to ensure that all three perspectives shared similarities in that they came from a helpless, desperate point of view, but the details were unique to their situation. In writing using these three perspectives, with three different tones, that all come from places of desperation and submissiveness, I hope to convey the less often considered notion that we, as human beings, are subject to the conditions instilled upon us by our surroundings. Under normal circumstances humans are used to being at the top of the food chain, altering the environment around us, but in many cases, nature is too powerful, and we, just as the bus, the bus driver, and the passenger, must adapt to the conditions.

The Bus

They fill me up as they always have. I sit in the hot sun as they load more and more bodies onto me. They cram more and more people into my seats, without regard for the work I do to transport them. Expressing little appreciation for my hard work, they focus more on each other and how they are inconvenienced. Each person is different, one in particular with a long neck, more into himself than the rest. Another one of them, less appreciative of me, but more angry at his situation. Their pain felt by all, they break out into arguments against each other. Me, and all of my parts, the last thing on their mind. After the fight, they look disheveled with their clothing all misaligned. They express no sympathy for the damage they have done to me. Seats torn. Window scratched. Focused on himself, the man has a friend fixing the button on his coat. Nobody fixes the damage, which has been handed to me.

The Bus Driver

You usually have the regulars, but today was different. Strangers alike, they each get on my bus giving me a nod as they walk up the steps. I take good care of my bus. It serves the community well, and it provides me a lifestyle. Hot from the body heat of everyone on board, I do my best to open the windows to provide a little bit of comfort to my passengers. A tall man with his chin pointed towards the clouds enters the bus. He doesn't seem like my normal passengers. He has a bow on his hat. The bodies and the heat inconvenienced another passenger, an older fellow. Neither recognizes that we all share the same conditions. The older gentleman explodes in anger, only to be met with disdain from the fancy fellow in the back. A fight ensues. I try my best to reintroduce peace into the situation, but like the little regard they have for my bus, little regard they have for my voice. I no longer have control. The damage is unavoidable, but it is fixable, just as the button was fixable on the one man's coat.

 The Passenger

I never take the bus. I hate the crowds. I hate the smell. I hate the traffic. I hate the jerky movements. But my car broke down, and I had to take the bus today. I went in with an open mind, hoping to be pleasantly surprised, but I quickly recalled exactly how much I hate the bus. The bus was hot and humid. The sun shined down on the bus, and bodies seemed to radiate steam. Everyone was frustrated as more bodies crowded on the bus, but most people managed to keep calm enough. One crotchety old man caused a raucous expressing his dissatisfaction only to be met with the force of another passenger. What was already an uncomfortable situation for me, quickly escalated into my worst nightmare. More heat. More energy. More noise. More being pushed around. More arguing. The bus ride from hell continued, but I couldn't get off. I had to take the bus today, and I had no other option. After the fight I noticed a man out the window having the button on his shirt fixed. This is the last time that I will ever take the bus.

 Conclusion

This assignment required a great deal of creative writing. I think what I struggled with most was thinking of different perspectives from which to write. It initially seemed that Queneau used every possible style and interpretation imaginable. After I thought about all of the players involved, however, I realized that there was great potential to write with a unique style, taking the perspective of innocent, passive, members of the story. This allowed me to see that there are always multiple sides to a story. A story is told by one individual, but the story might come across entirely different from the perspective of someone, or in the case of the bus above, something, else. This assignment allowed me to realize that an interpretation can really be very diverse. It can focus on sensory details like Queneau's examples writing from an olfactory or visual sense. An interpretation can also focus on other physical details or even mental details, as can be done by approaching the scenario considering the unique situation of everyone involved. I think that this assignment translates quite nicely to the outside world where it is important to consider that every situation has multiple interpretations. It is important for us to consider each interpretation of events, and not focus solely on a single interpretation or a single report of the events. One could argue that examples of the different sides to a story are more evident in the current news cycle than ever before. In the recent weeks you have had a great deal of civil unrest, and everyone seems to have a different opinion or perspective. You have the voice of the peaceful protestors, and the angry rioters. You have the voice of the police who are protective of their profession, and the police who recognize a need for change. You have the voice of the news anchors, and those they bring on their show. Everyone seems to have a voice, but each voice is different, and all parties must be heard. Queneau does a great job providing a voice to each sense, and each perspective. I hope that through this assignment I was able to provide a voice to the other people involved in the scene, and to an even greater degree, I hope that you listened.