

"Saboteur," by \_\_\_\_\_, is a story that deals with several issues ubiquitous in societies today. "Saboteur" confronts questions of basic human rights to freedom to unjustified revenge. Mr. Chiu, the protagonist in the story, is faced with a dilemma during the post-Cultural Revolution in China. These were hard times; especially for scholars like Mr. Chiu. Being a scholar in that era was unbelievably upsetting for any Westerner who saw their basic civil rights shrivel up to the ideals of a saboteur. But Mr. Chiu handled his situation, though morally wrong, gained philosophical knowledge of life.

In order to understand how he gained philosophical knowledge of life, you have to know the setting of the story. You already know that it takes place during the post-Cultural Revolution in China, during the time when Chinese communism was making its rise. The Cultural Revolution was when people tried to rid China of scholars and thinkers on the bases that they were an unnecessary people in a food producing country. They thought that being a farmer was more important than being a scholar, and thus justified their discrimination against people like Mr. Chiu. The story began with Mr. Chiu and his bride at a train stop in the city of Muji. They were eating cucumbers and vegetables when a policeman "spilled" tea on Mr. Chiu's "new sandals". Scholarly in nature, Mr. Chiu spoke with the policeman in a tolerable tone asking why he threw the tea. The policeman answered, "...No I didn't. You did it to yourself," in the most irritating nonchalant manner. Mr. Chiu's voice became louder while trying to get the police man to apologize, all the while, a large crowd of people gathered around them. Then after a little more verbal fighting, the policeman arrested him for the reason of "disturbing the public peace." And so begins his story of philosophical understanding life through the suppression of basic civil rights.

During his arrest, he was put into a cage, forced there for reasons not of his own, interrogated, tortured, but most of all, put on the brink of death because of his un-tended hepatitis disease. Mr. Chiu threatened that station by saying he would report them to the main administration in Beijing, to someone at his university will save him. The ironic thing was that someone from his school did save him, but at the end, it was up to Mr. Chiu to rescue the rescuer. He saved him by signing an agreement stating that he was guilty of disturbing the public peace and left the station with diminished pride.

In just explaining the setting we know that he already faces disturbing difficulties. Mr. Chiu faces the human rights issue the way any man would, fighting for it. Being educated the way he is, Mr. Chiu knows that not fighting for something as basic as this is just like not being educated at all. Morally, Mr. Chiu did the right thing on this issue. By, at first, refusing the sign the agreement, he boldly stated his moral character and revealed his desire for justice. He fought for something that he believed in, and though he did not win, he showed the police that being human is enough for basic rights.

It's interesting, though, why he did not win. When Fenjin, the student rescuer, tried to save Mr. Chiu, Fenjin was then arrested and tortured to get Mr. Chiu to sign the agreement. He looked at his options. By continuing his fight for his rights, Fenjin will continue to be tortured. In fighting for his rights, Mr. Chiu shows that he is worth the rights that all people are born with. On the other hand, the rights he fights for included the freedom to enjoy life. By signing the agreement, Mr. Chiu will have won half the victory in that he has preserved Fenjin's right to enjoy the rest of his life, but at the loss of his own pride. Mr. Chiu signed the agreement. Philosophically he gained understanding of human nature in the sense that we sometimes have to sacrifice our own desires, which includes puncturing our pride, to save another man's life.

The morally incorrect way Mr. Chiu got revenge was from creating a hepatitis epidemic. This was his unique way of dealing with his situation. After being freed from jail, he ate food at several different places leaving hepatitis tracks all of the city of Muji. Why he did this is obvious, but the reason is totally unjustified. By spreading the disease, he did not gain direct revenge on those who tortured him. In fact, "several hundred were infected and 2 children died" because of his irrational logic. Though revenge was completely necessary, the manner in which he did it was wrong for several reasons. One, nobody knew how the epidemic started and thus, no one would know that it was a form of revenge. And the second reason is a paradox in that he saves Fenjin to allow him to live out the rest of his life, but turns around and destroys hundreds of other innocent life making his reason for saving Fenjin invalid.

In conclusion, Mr. Chiu handles his situation to gain the basic civil rights we revel in. The way he goes about it, though is irrational in logic and inconsistent with his desires. He fought for freedom the way others fight for it but avenged his capturers in an undoubtedly unique, however morally wrong way.

**The Task:**

Several of the novels and short stories you have read this year are tales about characters dealing with society. Choose one issue that a character from fiction deals with in his or her own unique way. Write a one-page essay, explaining the issues, both moral and philosophical, and the character’s position regarding the issue(s). Use specific examples from the book or story to support your point of view.

**Circumstances of Performance:**

The student work is produced under the following conditions:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in a group
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in class	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> as homework
<input type="checkbox"/> with teacher feedback	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> with peer feedback
<input type="checkbox"/> Timed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> extended project
<input type="checkbox"/> no opportunity for revision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> opportunity for revision

**What the work shows:**

**Literature**

**E5a.** The student responds to non-fiction, fiction, poetry, and drama using interpretive, critical, and evaluative processes; that is, the student:

**E5a.6** makes inferences and draws conclusions about fictional and non-fictional contexts, events, characters, settings, themes, and styles **(A)**

**E5a.7.** interprets the effect of literary devices, such as figurative language, allusion, diction, dialogue, description, symbolism **(B)**

**E5a.8** identifies the stance of a writer in shaping the presentation of a subject

**E5a.9** identifies ambiguities, subtleties, contradictions, ironies, and nuances. **(C)**

**Writing**

**E2b** The student produces a response to literature that:

**E2b.1** engages the reader through establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest **(D)**

**E2b.2** advances a judgment that is interpretive, analytic, evaluative, or reflective **(E)**

**E2b.3** supports a judgment through references to the text, references to other works, authors, or non-print media, or references to personal knowledge **(F)**

**E2b.4** demonstrates understanding of the literary work through suggesting an interpretation **(G)**

**Eb2.5** recognizes possible ambiguities, nuances, and complexities

**E2b.6** provides a sense of closure to the writing. **(H)**

- A. The student clearly connects the historical events and setting to the development of Mr. Chiu's philosophy. He succinctly summarizes the predominant attitude toward scholars during the Chinese Cultural revolution, and accurately infers that the leaders of the time were able to justify "their discrimination against people like Mr. Chiu."
- B. The student demonstrates an understanding of the importance of the author's word choice, by quoting the scene where the policeman "spilled" tea on Mr. Chiu's "new sandals". He infers that the action was done deliberately out of resentment for Mr. Chiu's social status. He also alludes to the importance of the subsequent dialogue between Mr. Chiu and the policeman which helps shape Chiu's philosophy for the remainder of the story.
- C. The irony of Mr. Chiu having to save his rescuer is noted by the student. He states that this was accomplished by Mr. Chiu's signed agreement, "stating that he was guilty of disturbing the public peace."
- D. Reader interest is developed by the student's discussion of the historical context as well as his introduction of the main character in the opening paragraph. The student recognizes the impact of the Cultural Revolution upon Chinese scholars, and he introduces his readers to his interpretation of Mr. Chiu's dilemma.
- E. The student interprets Mr. Chiu's actions, and analyzes the impact of those in a global context, by stating that, "we sometimes have to sacrifice our own desires, which includes puncturing our pride, to save another man's life". The student also is able to see the flaws in Mr. Chiu's moral reasoning.
- F. The student's position—that Mr. Chiu was persecuted for being a scholar—is supported by a variety of references to the text, such as, the policeman answered, "...No, I didn't. You did it to yourself". The student also included text references in the form of summaries of action to support his judgments of characters' actions.
- G. The student suggests that Mr. Chiu "fought for something that he believed in, and though he did not win, he showed the police that being human is enough for basic human rights". This statement exemplifies the student's ability to interpret the literary work beyond a literal level.
- H. A sense of closure is provided to the writing through a concise, closing paragraph that captures the student's response to the story. He reiterates his main ideas about Mr. Chiu's actions that originated in the opening paragraph and were explained throughout the paper.

**\*Note: Errors in syntax do not significantly impact the message in this piece of work.**