



TWENTIETH CENTURY FICTION

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SYLLABUS

Twentieth Century Fiction

Objectives:

- To trace the evolution of prose fiction.
- To discuss the major elements of prose fiction.
- To explain the major thematic thrusts of the selected texts.
- To develop the ability of the learners to think and write critically about fiction.

Sr. No.	Topics
1.	Aldous Huxley-Brave New World: Introduction to the Author and to the text, Detailed study of text, Themes and Characterization
2.	D.H. Lawrence—Sons And Lovers: Introduction to the Author and to the text, Detailed study of text, Themes and Characterization, Style and Plot
3.	William Golding—Lord Of The Flies: Introduction to the Author and to the text, Detailed study of text, Themes and Characterization,
4.	Virginia Woolf—Mrs. Dalloway: Introduction to the Author and to the text, Detailed study of text, Themes and Characterization, Style
5.	Joseph Conrad-Heart Of Darkness: Introduction to the Author and to the text, Detailed study of the text, Themes

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Unit 1: Aldous Huxley—Brave New World

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Objectives

Introduction

1.1 Aldous Huxley-Brave New World: Introduction to the Author and to the Text

1.1.1 Introduction to the Author

1.1.2 Introduction to the Brave New World

1.2 Summary

1.3 Keywords

1.4 Review Questions

1.5 Further Readings

Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain introduction to the author of Brave new world
- Explain about the book, Brave new world.

Introduction

Brave New World is Aldous Huxley's fifth novel, written in 1931 and published in 1932. Set in London of AD 2540 (632 A.F. in the book), the novel anticipates developments in reproductive technology and sleep-learning that combine to change society. The future society is an embodiment of the ideals that form the basis of futurology. Huxley answered this book with a reassessment in an essay, Brave New World Revisited (1958), summarised below, and with his final work, a novel titled Island (1962). In 1999, the Modern Library ranked Brave New World fifth on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century.

1.1 Aldous Huxley-Brave New World: Introduction to the Author and to the Text

1.1.1 Introduction to the Author

Aldous Leonard Huxley was born on July 26, 1894 in Surrey, England, as the third son of Dr. Leonard Huxley and Julia Arnold. Huxley was born into a long line of scientists and intellectuals. His grandfather Thomas Henry Huxley had the nickname "Darwin's Bulldog" for his fierce defense of evolutionary science and for his passion for teaching Victorian scientific advancements to Britain's working classes. Aldous Huxley was also related to the poet Matthew Arnold on his mother's side of the family. These two disciplines, literature and science, converged at the end of the Victorian era and characterize Huxley's own career and ambitions as an author, journalist, and humanist.

Educated at Eton, Aldous Huxley was forced to leave the school at the age of seventeen due to an affliction of the eyes. He was partially blind for two or three years and therefore was

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unable to complete the rigorous scientific training he had undertaken. Though problems with his eyes would remain with him for the rest of his life, Huxley was able to attend Oxford where he received a degree in English literature.

Huxley's career began in journalism and included music and artistic criticism as well as book reviews. He also began writing poems, essays, and historical pieces. Huxley's first introduction to British intellectual society occurred while working as a farm laborer at Garsington Manor, the site of the "Bloomsbury Society," a group of public intellectuals that included Bertrand Russell. There he would marry Maria Nys and they would have one child, Matthew Huxley. He also wrote his first book, a volume of poetry called *The Burning Wheel*. While working as an editor for "House and Garden" during the 1920s, Huxley wrote many novels including *Brave New World*.



Task Write down the family background of Huxley.

Huxley spent several years in Italy where he formed a friendship with D.H. Lawrence. They would remain close friends and Huxley would later edit Lawrence's collected letters after his death. In 1937, Huxley moved back to the United States to live in Hollywood, California, where he helped write scripts for several Hollywood movies of the time, although he never had a lasting career in movies. After World War II, he famously became involved with the early psychedelic drug movement. Huxley was an early proponent of the use of LSD, mescaline, and peyote for their mind-altering effects. His 1954 book *The Doors of Perception* argued that through the use of psychedelic drugs, people would be able to "cleanse" the doors of perception in order to embrace the infinite reality of the world.

A controversial figure for most of his life, Huxley died from cancer on November 22, 1963, only hours after President John F. Kennedy's assassination in Dallas, Texas. By the time of his death, he was embraced in some circles as an intellectual and writer of the highest class, especially for his creation of the dystopian fantasy in his novel *Brave New World* and his engagement of the theme of commercialization in modern society. Others, however, saw him as a pseudo-scientist for his work in mystical traditions and his insistence on experiencing alternate realities through meditation, Eastern religions, and drug use.



Did u know? For Huxley accomplishments, Huxley received the Award of Merit for the Novel from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1959.

17.1.2 Introduction to the *Brave New World*

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, published in 1932, is a dystopian novel set six hundred years in the future. The novel envisions a world that, in its quest for social stability and peace, has created a society devoid of emotion, love, beauty, and true relationships.

Huxley's novel is chiefly a critique of the socialist policies that states had begun to advocate in the early twentieth century. Huxley, by 1932, had observed the increasing tendency of Western government to intrude upon people's lives. This intrusion, he believed, limited the expression of freedom and beauty that is integral to the human character. Through *Brave New World* and his other writings, he suggested that beauty is a result of pain and that society's desire to eliminate pain limits society's ability to thrive culturally and emotionally. Many readers initially found this difficult to accept, living as they did in the aftermath of World War

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I, when a lack of societal control had caused a war that inflicted great pain and death on an entire continent.

The novel also comments on humanity's indiscriminate belief in progress and science. Huxley had himself desired a scientific career before the near blindness that he suffered during childhood kept him from such pursuits. The Western world, Huxley believed, placed too much emphasis on scientific progress at the expense of a love for beauty and art. His novel attempts to show how such science, when taken too far, can limit the flourishing of human thought. In World War I, humanity had seen the great destruction that technology such as bombs, planes, and machine guns could cause.



Notes Huxley believed that the possibility for such destruction did not only belong to weapons of war but to other scientific advancements as well.

Self Assessment

Multiple Choice Questions:

- Who was the author of *Brave new world*?
 (a) Jane Austen (b) Aldous Huxley
 (c) Joseph Andrews (d) None of these
- Huxley fifth novel *Brave new world* was written in
 (a) 1932 (b) 1930
 (c) 1931 (d) 1933
- In which year, Morden Library ranked *Brave new world*?
 (a) 1899 (b) 1999
 (c) 1795 (d) 1995
- Aldous Huxley was the son of Dr. Leonard Huxley and Julia Arnold.
 (a) third (b) second
 (c) first (d) none of these.
- In which year *Brave new world* was published?
 (a) 1931 (b) 1929
 (c) 1930 (d) 1932
- Huxley died from on November 22, 1963.
 (a) Cancer (b) Asthma
 (c) Brain hemorrhage (d) Tumor

The reaction of society to the book ranged from acclaim to outrage. H.G. Wells, a famous writer of science fiction and dystopian literature, panned the book as alarmist. Other critics challenged Huxley's depictions of religion and ritual as well as his views of sexuality and drug use. The novel's stark depictions of sexuality and cruelty meant that it continues to incite controversy over whether or not it is an appropriate book for all ages and audiences. Nevertheless, as a social critique, *Brave New World* takes credit with Orwell's 1984 for advancing a new genre of literature that fuses science fiction, political allegory, and literary ambition.

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1.2 Summary

- Brave New World is Aldous Huxley's fifth novel, written in 1931 and published in 1932.
- Aldous Leonard Huxley was born on July 26, 1894 in Surrey, England, as the third son of Dr. Leonard Huxley and Julia Arnold.
- Huxley's career began in journalism and included music and artistic criticism as well as book reviews.
- Huxley's novel is chiefly a critique of the socialist policies that states had begun to advocate in the early twentieth century.

1.3 Keywords

<i>Embodiment</i>	:	a tangible or visible form of an idea or quality.
<i>Dystopian</i>	:	an imaginary place or society in which everything is bad.
<i>Assassinate</i>	:	murder.
<i>Meditation</i>	:	a discourse expression considered thoughts on a subject.

1.4 Review Questions

1. Write the biography of Aldous Leonard Huxley.
2. Write a short note on the literary career of Huxley.
3. Write brief note on Brave new world.

Answers: Self Assessment

- | | |
|--------|--------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (c) |
| 3. (b) | 4. (a) |
| 5. (d) | 6. (a) |

1.5 Further Readings



Books	Brave New World (E Text)	— Aldous Huxley
	Aldous Huxley: a biography	— Nicholas Murray
	Aldous Huxley	— Harold Bloom



Online links <http://www.pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/barrons/bravenw01.asp>
<http://www.huxley.net/studyaids/index.html>

Unit 2: Aldous Huxley—Brave New World:

Detailed Study of Text-I

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Objectives

Introduction

2.1 Detailed Study of Chapters 1–9

2.1.1 Chapters 1–3

2.1.2 Chapters 4–6

2.1.3 Chapters 7–9

2.2 Summary

2.3 Keywords

2.4 Review Questions

2.5 Further Readings

Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the detailed study of text of chapter 1–9 of brave new world
- Discuss summary and analysis all chapters.

Introduction

Huxley's Brave New World is a remarkable piece of writing which prophesies the futuristic world. The concept of nature through the character of John the Savage depicts volumes about the totalitarian state which the author portrays beautifully. The irony and satire with which he whips 1931 London society is worth reading.

Dr. Leon Kass, a prominent public intellectual said in a speech to the Manhattan Institute that the "train to Huxley's dehumanized Brave New World has already left the station".

Huxley's work is a brilliant masterpiece which is extraordinarily prophetic, challenging developments in science and technology. Genetic Engineering, mutations, and Bio-technological advancements will take man away from nature. Though these are advantageous, slowly and steadily the natural instincts in man are being 'civilized'.

2.1 Detailed Study of Chapters 1–9

2.1.1 Chapters 1–3

Chapter 1

Summary

Brave New World occurs six hundred years in the future. The world has submitted to domination by World Controllers, whose primary goal is to ensure the stability and happiness of society.

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The underlying principle of the regime is utilitarianism, or maximizing the overall happiness of the society. The novel begins at the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Center, a production factory for human beings. A group of students receives a tour of the facilities by the Director.

The students view various machines and techniques used to promote the production and conditioning of embryos. The scientists take an ovary, remove and fertilize the eggs, force the eggs to bud up to ninety-six times, and subsequently grow the embryos in bottles. Predestinators then decide the future function of each embryo within the society, essentially assigning a future job to each human.

The society contains a five-tiered caste system that ranks Alphas and Betas on top. Only the Alphas and Betas come from single eggs that are not budded and hence have no twins. The Centre conditions all the non-Alpha and Beta embryos for their future status in society by dividing them into Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons. Thus, the Alphas represent the intellectually superior group, followed by the Betas, and continuing down to the Epsilons, who have little to no intelligence.

Analysis

The idea of totalitarian social stability occurs first in this chapter. While few critics have called the governmental regime "totalitarian" in nature, Huxley explicitly describes it as such. Huxley stated in *Brave New World Revisited* that the only way to create a permanently stable society is for a totalitarian regime to have absolute power. The regime must then ensure that people are happy all the time, be able to control the behavior of each individual, and ensure that independent thinkers are forbidden from disturbing the social fabric.

Huxley creates a society that frowns on individual creativity and that only welcomes those who conform. The social motto "Community, Identity, Stability" frames this social structure. Huxley generates "community" by dividing the population into segments, where the Alphas serve as intellectual superiors and Epsilons function as pure menial labor. Huxley shows how "identity" comes from the Conditioning Centre through the selection of the embryos into each of five groups. "Stability" occurs through the limitations placed on the intelligence of each group.

The fundamental tenet behind the society is utilitarianism, which describes a society that seeks to create the maximum happiness. Limiting the intelligence of each person to fit their future job is one way this society makes them happy. Thus, Alphas receive challenging jobs and Epsilons receive grunt work that would be boring for higher caste members. Social conditioning and stunted development maximizes each person's happiness. The goal of utilitarianism is to make the society "happier" and thus more efficient. The society described by Huxley is therefore a "utilitarian totalitarianism."

Chapter 2

Summary

The students continue their tour of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre. They watch "Neo-Pavlovian Conditioning," a technique that trains infants. Here, the use of electric shocks and sirens in response to touching roses or books modifies the behavior of Deltas. This discourages behavior that might destabilize society, such as allowing Deltas to read books and acquire knowledge. The students also view a group of sleeping infants who receive moral instruction through hypnopaedic learning as they sleep. Sleeping babies listen to repeated catchphrases, and in this chapter, infant Betas listen to a tape played hundreds of

times which indoctrinates them to believe they are superior to Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons, but not as clever as Alphas.

Analysis

Huxley reveals some of the main sources of social stability. Science creates and conditions people to become happy members of society. The comment by the Director, "What man has joined, nature is powerless to put asunder," reveals the extent that the conditioning can alter behavior.

Pavlovian conditioning comes from Pavlov's research, which showed that animals could learn to do an action through punishment and reward. Huxley expands this concept to humans, who use it to condition the babies of the lower classes. In his example, Deltas learn to avoid roses and books by giving them electric shocks when they touch those items. Psychologically, this conditioning also lowers these classes to the status of animals.

The use of hypnopaedia strengthens the conditioning and indicates the subversive nature of the state. Huxley is showing the readers that propaganda starts at birth and can occur even when we are unaware of it, as when sleeping. He reinforces the point that people are unaware of how influential the propaganda is by constantly having his characters quote "hypnopaedic phrases."

The goal of the state is to ensure social stability, and the conditioning creates the "community" by segregating each infant into separate classes. This promotes stability by creating a group of workers with state-controlled preferences. Thus, economic stability comes from creating preferences that promote spending. This is touched on more in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

Summary

The student tour goes outside where they watch some children playing a game of Centrifugal Bumble-puppy. The game is elaborate and requires complex machinery. They learn that the heavy reliance on machinery increases consumption of material goods and thus boost the economy. Young children are also encouraged to play erotic, sexual games. A boy who refuses to play with a young girl must go to a psychologist.

The Director begins to talk about the past when parents rather than the state raised children. Mustapha Mond, the Controller of Western Europe, interrupts him and tells the students that the "home" consisted of a mother, father, and children and, along with being diseased and smelly, contained overbearing intimacies and emotions.

Freud receives credit for showing that the "appalling dangers of family life" lead to individual instability. The Controller indicates that this in turn leads to social instability. Society has therefore coined the phrase "everyone belongs to everyone else" in an effort to eradicate individualism.

The Controller also gives a history lesson, and describes how the old governments banned the first reformers. After the Nine Years' War destroyed most of the old world and brought the World Controllers to power, they struggled to defeat embedded culture by initiating a campaign against the past, destroying monuments and books, and banning sexual reproduction. Religion, and in particular Christianity, was reduced to a form of worship of Ford. To emphasize Ford's great contribution, mass production, they cut all the crosses to make a T in honor of the Model T car. Additionally, a new drug called soma was invented which acted like cocaine or heroin but which had no ill side effects.

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Notes The drug ensured that people would spend their time hallucinating rather than thinking. The government continues to distribute soma to its citizens every week.

Meanwhile, Lenina Crowne, a Beta Plus, discusses her four-month relationship with Alpha Henry Foster with her friend Fanny Crowne, a Beta. Fanny is upset that Lenina is having such a long relationship with only one man. She quotes the phrase “everyone belongs to everyone” and tells Lenina to have sex with other men. Lenina agrees with Fanny and tells her that she likes Bernard Marx, an Alpha Plus, and has decided to join him on a trip to the Savage Reservations. Fanny is skeptical and says that she thinks Marx is a loner and an introvert.

Bernard Marx is a specialist on hypnopaedia. The reader first meets him while he eavesdrops on a conversation between Henry Foster and another worker. Foster and the other man are discussing Lenina and Foster tells the man he should “have” her, implying sexual relations. Marx gets upset when he hears this, indicating that he is in love with Lenina.

Analysis

Chapter 3 introduces many of the main philosophical issues within the novel. Huxley presents the social necessities for perfect stability within his society. These include the role of consumption, the interplay between sexuality and emotions, the role of history, and the redefinition of religion.

Society views consumption as beneficial. The society believes that more consumption means more production of good, which will increase the number of jobs and keep the society fully employed. Examples of how consumption is increased include hypnopaedic phrases that tell people to throw away old clothes and buy new, indoctrinating Deltas to enjoy country sports so they will use the state transportation system to exit the city, and complex machinery being required for any sort of sport or game.

The interplay between sexuality and emotions is complex. Huxley realized that monogamy, sex, and family ties generate most human emotions. Thus, the society rests on promiscuity and baby factories. The goal is to eradicate emotions by replacing them with pure sexual desire and nothing else. This, combined with the baby factories, destroys family life and monogamous relationships. The state directs most emotions, which is necessary for social control and stability. Interestingly, George Orwell used the opposite technique in 1984. Orwell banned sexual relationships in order to eliminate dangerous emotions that might go against the state. However, since both authors realized that sexual emotions destabilize society, each technique achieves the identical goal of elimination of sexual emotions.



Task What work does the conditioning do? Who gets conditioned? How does hypnopaedia work?

Society views history and religion as dangerous and potentially corrupting. Having a history gives people a sense of time outside of their own lifetimes. This in turn makes people think about progression through time, which is something the society cannot permit without causing social upheaval. Thus Huxley uses the quote from Ford, “History is bunk,” to indicate that history is worthless and should not be studied. The Controller describes history in a way that further emphasizes its negative aspects. He also blames Christianity for the inability of past societies to achieve ectogenesis (in this context Huxley means growing babies outside of the human body).

The new “religion” in the society has close ties with consumption. There is not really religion to speak of, but rather a system of ideologies that acknowledges Ford as its leader. Thus, the society replaces the Christian “Our Lord” with “Ford” and uses the T instead of the cross. Consumption is as extremely positive due to the introduction of mass production. Huxley plays with the fact that Henry Ford introduced mass production with the Model T car. Huxley then bases the society’s “religion” around that fact. However, strong elements of Christianity remain. Chapter 3 ends with a scene taken from the New Testament where Jesus tells his disciples to let the children stay with him. Two noisy children harass His Fordship Mustapha Mond.



Did u know? The Director of the Centre orders them to leave, but Mustapha replies as Jesus did, saying, “Suffer little children.”

2.1.2 Chapters 4–6

Chapter 4

Summary

After work, Lenina and Bernard Marx share a crowded elevator heading to the roof. In front of everyone, she tells Bernard that she will go on a date with him. She offers to take a weeklong trip to New Mexico if Bernard still wants to have her. The public display embarrasses Marx, who would prefer to talk it over in private. Lenina laughs at his awkwardness and then takes off with Henry Foster in a helicopter. They leave London for a round of Obstacle Golf, a game for adults. Benito Hoover, an Alpha, approaches Bernard as he watches her leave, tells Bernard not to look so glum, and offers him the narcotic soma to make him feel better. Bernard rushes off before even talking to Benito, another sign of his strange behavior.

Bernard feels both ashamed and uncomfortable by his exchange with Benito Hoover, yet he also realizes that Benito cannot help but act the way that he does any more than the rest of society. Bernard notes, “Those who meant well behaved in the same way as those who meant badly.” He gets his own flying machine and bosses around several Delta-Minus attendants who give him funny looks because he is no bigger than they are. Because physique is an important indicator of caste, it is a sore spot for Bernard and he takes his frustration and insecurities out on those that are inferior to him.



Task How do the other Alphas relate to Bernard?

Bernard enters his private vehicle and flies over to visit Helmholtz Watson. Watson is a lecturer at the College of Emotional Engineering. His specialty is in writing hypnopaedic lines that “pierce” into people’s subconscious minds to make them behave in certain ways. Both men are individual thinkers who have become friends because they cannot fit well into the society. Bernard is different because he is physically smaller than the average Alpha, whereas Watson is more intelligent than other men. Watson is the antithesis of Bernard; he is handsome and sporty and has women fawning over him. However, he prefers intellectual conversations and likes to talk to Bernard Marx.

They go to Bernard’s apartment and Helmholtz talks about wanting to be able to create something out of words. He knows that he writes slogans well, but he feels that his words are not

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important. Helmholtz tells Bernard that he has “a feeling that I’ve got something important to say and the power to say it - only I don’t know what it is, and I can’t make any use of the power.” While he is talking, Bernard becomes afraid that someone is listening to them at the door. He goes to check but finds no one there. Having betrayed his nervousness, Bernard breaks down and tells Helmholtz, “When people are suspicious with you, you start being suspicious with them.”

Analysis

Chapter 4 marks a departure from the first three chapters by introducing rational humans. Both Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson have deep-seated suspicions of the society that they live in, though they do not know how to put such suspicions into thought or words. This impulse towards the rational comes from differences—physical for Bernard, mental for Helmholtz—that disrupt their ability to accept the ordered world around them. Thus, Huxley makes a statement about creativity, progress, and the ability of powerful authorities to stifle such things.

Huxley shows society’s abhorrence of rational, independent thought in the mockery of Bernard Marx by his coworkers. Helmholtz Watson also faces the same predicament in the sense that his superiors think he is too good at what he does. This fear of individuality ensures the stability of the society because its absence prevents creativity. Since creativity would lead to attempts to reform the society, the World Controllers root out individual creativity whenever possible.

A conflict emerges between the rational thinkers and the majority who merely follow orders. By identifying in Bernard Marx many of the normal feelings and emotions people normally have, the reader comes to support him as an underdog. Because of his deep emotions and passions, Bernard often induces empathy from the reader. However, Marx is also insecure and emotional, and he therefore has difficulty understanding his society. In this way, his pathos is a flaw.

Helmholtz, on the other hand, embodies pure reason and intelligence devoid of emotional complications. Huxley does not contrast reason against creativity in Helmholtz’s character in the same way that he does with a character such as Mustapha Mond. Mond represents a political system that uses only cold rationalism to order society, whereas Helmholtz’s reasoning has a creative spark. Huxley thus suggests that society requires a balance between emotion and reason to maximize human potential. Helmholtz provides a philosophical understanding of society. He understands Bernard’s emotional conflicts rationally and without personal involvement.

Chapter 5

Summary

Lenina and Henry Foster finish their game and go to his apartment building. On the way, they see a cremation factory, which leads them to discuss the physico-chemical equality of all caste members, from Alpha to Epsilon. Lenina comments that all members of society are happy, regardless of their caste. According to Foster, this happiness derives from their conditioning, and “even Epsilons perform indispensable services.” This leads Lenina to recall a time in her childhood in which she woke from sleep and become aware, for the first time, of the conditioning and “the whispering that had haunted all her sleeps.”

At Foster’s apartment building, they eat before heading to the Westminster Abbey Cabaret. After taking several doses of soma, an experience described as “the warm, the richly coloured, the infinitely friendly world of soma-holiday,” they dance to the synthetic music of “Calvin

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Stopes and His Sixteen Sexophonists” until the show ends. They return to Foster’s apartment and prepare to sleep together. Even though the soma has put Lenina in a hypnotic state, she remembers to take her contraceptive drugs because years of hypnopaedic drills have “made the taking of these precautions almost as automatic and inevitable as blinking.”

Meanwhile, Bernard attends a Solidarity meeting, a community gathering where the people worship Ford for his ideas and try to merge themselves into a unified group. Bernard is almost late and feels embarrassed when a woman asks him which sport he played that afternoon, since Bernard has to admit that he does not usually play any games.

The twelve people in his group take a seating arrangement around a circular table that alternates sexes. The service resembles the Eucharist in Christianity, but they consume soma rather than bread and wine. The goal is to unify the twelve people present into one person. The people sing until they feel Ford’s presence, and then they dance to the hymn “Orgy-porgy.” Bernard fixates on Morgana, a woman whose unibrow distracts him so much that he cannot feel the same ecstasy as the other people and must pretend to be as caught up in the ceremony as the others. The service ends, and Bernard emerges feeling more self-conscious than ever before.

Analysis

Foster and Lenina represent the majority of society, who have a limited range of actions and do not do anything extraordinary. Their conversation consists of repeating phrases learned during hypnopaedia and therefore contains no new intellectual ideas. When they go dancing at the Cabaret, they join 400 other people, indicating that they adhere to state doctrine.

Their conversation about the crematorium also signifies the social control that the state has created. They do not fear death or analyze any philosophical conundrums about life and death. They cannot even fully comprehend what it would mean to be a member of a different caste. Lenina and Henry both agree that it would be worse to be an Epsilon or a Gamma than it would be to die. Death, as Henry puts it, is simply another way to benefit society.

The twisting of religion also occurs in this chapter. Henry and Lenina attend a dance club at the “Westminster Abbey Cabaret.” Westminster Abbey is one of the most famous Churches in Western Religion and an important symbol in the Protestant religious tradition. Huxley again shows how the state can appropriate religious symbols for social control. Westminster Abbey, a symbol of strict religious authority, is now a club that encourages dancing, sex, and other kinds of activity that might today be immoral. The name of the band alludes to John Calvin, a prominent figure in Protestantism and a major theologian of predestination, the doctrine that God has already determined the fates of everyone in the universe. These symbols show how rewriting history can suppress original thought.

The religious service attended by Bernard also uses Christian icons and concepts. The circle consists of twelve people, which parallels the twelve disciples of Jesus. The drinking and consuming of soma reflects the Eucharist, or Holy Communion, where Christians consume the metaphorical blood and body of Christ. Each service tries to bring wholeness to the individual participating in them. However, the similarity ends here, and the sexual dancing which follows rejects Christianity in favor of a primal sexual dance. The worship of Ford reinforces this society’s sexual norms.

Bernard’s inability to join the group as it merges spiritually and sexually further emphasizes his distinctness. Because they already lack any individuality, the other group members easily unite, but spiritual merger is impossible for Bernard. He has achieved a sense of self-awareness that is merely nascent in the other characters of the novel. Lenina, for instance, has a brief flashback in which she remembers the hypnopaedic therapy of her childhood. She instinctively senses that the process is unnatural, but she disregards those notions for the implanted feelings and phrases of her conditioning.

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Chapter 6

Summary

Lenina dates Bernard twice before their trip to the Savage Reservations, and each time she finds Bernard to be extremely odd. Bernard prefers to walk with her in a park so that they can spend time talking. However, Lenina cannot comprehend the idea of intellectual conversation and convinces him instead watch a wrestling match. Bernard refuses to take any soma and is unhappy in the middle of a large crowd. That same night, Lenina expects Bernard to stay over and sleep with her, but he has to take a lot of soma before he can do so because he feels embarrassment over entering into sexual relations so early in their relationship.

At the end of their second date, while flying over the British Channel, Bernard stops his helicopter over the rough, tossing sea. Lenina cannot understand why he does this. She calls the scene "horrible," but Bernard insists instead that it is beautiful. Such terrible beauty in the natural world causes Bernard to think of his own life's turmoil and to appreciate his intellectual nonconformity.

Bernard confides that he wishes they had waited to have sex. He comments to Lenina that while people are adults intellectually, they are children as far as their emotions are concerned. He tires of being a cell in the body of society and would prefer to be an individual. Such conformity, he says, keeps him from truly being happy. Lenina responds to his heresy by quoting her hypnopaedic learning. She claims that all people are happy because they can do whatever they want. Bernard tries to force her to contemplate and critique the structure of society, but to no avail. Lenina says that she likes him but wishes he were not so odd.

Later, Bernard visits the Director and receives permission to take Lenina to the Savage Reservations. The Director relates a story of how, 25 years prior, he had taken a blond Beta Minus woman to the reservation. While on an excursion, they ended up in a storm, and she disappeared. The Director shows a great deal of remorse and claims that he still dreams of the incident. At the end of the story, he realizes that he has revealed emotions that he has never forgotten. This upsets him because society forbids such displays of emotion over past events, and strong emotions are supposed to be impossible because of genetic engineering.

The Director yells at Bernard for failing to conform to societal standards. He threatens to send Bernard to Iceland if the latter does not begin to conform his personal life to the demands of society. Bernard returns home and brags to Helmholtz about his encounter with the Director by embellishing the details. He tells Helmholtz that he confronted the Director and told him to go to the "Bottomless Pit," even though this account is false. Helmholtz is unimpressed, and hates the way Bernard goes from self-pity to arrogant boasting.

Bernard and Lenina cross the Atlantic and go to a hotel near the reservation. Bernard warns her that the reservation lacks any sort of games or amusements, and that she might be bored. She quotes her hypnopaedic learning: "progress is lovely." Bernard tells her that there is no progress on the reservation. She insists on coming with him. They both go to the warden of the reservation where they receive an introduction to the "savages" that live there. They learn how the savages remain in an older way of life where they bear children naturally, speak various languages, and obey religious principles.

Bernard remembers at that moment that he left a perfume tap running in his home, and that it will be quite expensive. He calls Helmholtz to get it turned off and learns that the Director has decided to transfer him to Iceland as soon as a replacement is found. Iceland is a place devoid of progress and the creature comforts of life in England. Previously, Bernard yearned to feel what it might be like to encounter disappointment or struggles in life. He realizes that such emotions are not what he thought they would be. Lenina makes him take several soma to quell the emotions. Bernard and Lenina proceed into the reservation where they receive a tour, but both have taken soma and cannot fully comprehend what they are seeing.

Analysis**Notes**

Much of this chapter deals with emotional suppression. Bernard experiences emotions such as longing, embarrassment, tension, and disappointment while Lenina suppresses all emotions before they can surface. She uses soma to avoid situations that would normally incur anger or boredom. Interestingly, Bernard continually becomes angry with Lenina in spite of his love for her. He appears to treat her very badly, almost condescendingly, but this behavior only demonstrates his frustration with an emotionless society. Huxley demonstrates the complexity of a society that attempts to manipulate the emotions of its citizens. On the one hand, Bernard's range of emotions causes him disappointment and anger, but on the other hand, his emotions of love and longing for a better life suggest his future enlightenment.

Bernard's behavior only makes sense if the reader understands that Bernard is in love with Lenina. However, his love comes from who he perceives her to be, not on who she really is. Bernard therefore tries to force Lenina to conform to his perception of her. In addition, he is desperate to have her return his love. In a society devoid of commitment and monogamy, the only way for Bernard to get her to fall in love with him is to force her to experience emotions. As a result, his anger and behavior derives from his attempts to have Lenina to overcome her conditioning and become emotional.

Each character's use of soma revolves around inhibiting their emotions. Bernard takes soma when he sleeps with Lenina on the first date, to smother his emotional revulsion and embarrassment at having sex so soon, and when he finds out he must move to Iceland. Lenina uses soma much more frequently than Bernard but for the same reason: she wishes to suppress her emotions. Soma therefore acts not only as a narcotic to control the masses, but also as a means for individuals to avoid emotional conflict.

The Director's story expresses emotions of fear and love. Since society expressly forbids this, he realizes that he should not have told Bernard about his experience. Thus, the Director's anger towards Bernard arises from his fear that Bernard might use that information against him. The Director arranges to transfer Bernard to Iceland out of fear that Bernard might tell someone else the story. Huxley characterizes emotions as a force for both social control and social freedom. Society represses emotions to discourage rebellion against authority and threats against the world order. Bernard's emotional rebellion adds to the rising tension of the storyline.

2.1.3 Chapters 7–9**Chapter 7***Summary*

The Indian guide leads Bernard and Lenina into the reservation, where the smells and the sight of poverty, disease, and old age immediately assault them. Since there is no live birth in the outside society, Lenina finds the scene of a woman nursing a child to be disgusting. She then discovers that both she and Bernard forgot their soma, so she has to see the village consciously rather than through the veil of the narcotic. However, Bernard feels a strange fascination with the scene. Bernard and Lenina watch a ritual dance of sacrifice to the gods Pookong and Jesus, where a young man slowly proceeds around a pile of snakes in the center of the Pueblo square. While walking, the young man receives a whipping until he falls and dies. The other Indians worship a statue of a man on a cross and an eagle.

After the ritual, they meet a blond-haired man with blue eyes. The Savage, whose name is John, tells them that he is upset that the other Indians will not let him participate in the ritual because of his skin color. He explains that his mother was like Lenina, a woman from civilized

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society, who some hunters had saved. Bernard concludes that John's mother was the woman the Director had taken to the reservation twenty-five years ago.

Bernard and Lenina meet Linda, John's mother, who rejoices at seeing civilized people again. She complains that there is too much dirt and that she has to drink mescal (alcohol) and use peyote, a hallucinatory drug, in place of soma. She describes how she ended up on the reservation and pregnant with John even though she took all precautions with the Director. Although Lenina feels disgusted by Linda, she feels forced to listen. Linda explains that she used to let all the men come to her for sex, as civilized people should, but that all the other women got mad. She also struggled to condition John to the ways of civilized society but apparently failed. She concludes that John spends too much time with the Indians to become truly civilized. She describes the Indian way of life as madness and longs for the comforts and cleanliness of civilization.

Analysis

This scene challenges Bernard and Lenina to release their emotions. Since both of them forget to bring any soma, they cannot hide behind the narcotic's pleasures. For the first time, Lenina cannot completely hold back her emotions. The way the Indians live induces an intense amount of revulsion in her. Bernard tells Lenina that men have lived this way for thousands of years, but she simply cannot believe it.

The tribal dance shows that although their culture differs entirely from Bernard and Lenina's, it is also imperfect because it too enforces the suppression of emotion. The tribe worships a hybrid of Pookong and Jesus as their deity, which shows how the Indian culture fuses religion and superstition. Whereas the Indians unemotionally take part in the ritual dance, Lenina begins crying when she sees the blood of the sacrificed young man. Huxley has characters view the madness of Indian ritual directly, without the veil of soma, but the tribal ritual successfully eradicates emotions and sentiment from the Indians even without soma. Huxley juxtaposes Lenina's uncharacteristic tears with the uncaring of the very people that supposedly suffer from unwanted emotions.

The chapter also highlights the natural desire to sequester those who are different as human nature rather than only as a function of governmental power. Society has outcast the Indians for their differences, yet the Indians also make outcasts of others, as exemplified by John the Savage. He is a hybrid, a man who has partial conditioning but who has also learned Indian ways. He does not belong to either culture and can thus evaluate the relative merits of both. He is an entirely sane individual caught in an insane environment with a half-insane mother. Interestingly, although he is of the sanest characters, his mother describes him as being mad. John also alludes to Shakespeare, whose literature will play a role in later chapters. In Chapter 7, John laments "that damned spot" on the ground, which is the blood of the sacrificed Indian but which refers to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. This reference may symbolize the complicity of "civilized" society in the destruction of Indian culture.

Notably, the reservation is not just a symbol of human nature or of societal differences, but also of a representation of events that have occurred in the past. Huxley lived in New Mexico for part of his life and saw firsthand how others sequestered and maligned Native Americans and indigenous populations. Huxley saw the tragedy in such situations, and *Brave New World* meditates extensively on humanity's propensity to separate those that are different.

Chapter 8

Summary

Bernard asks John to tell him about growing up in the Indian village. John recalls how his mother Linda used to have sex with many men. Pope became her steady lover because he

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Chapter 8

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brought her mescal (alcohol). At one point, the women of the village beat Linda because they did not want her to continue sleeping with their husbands. Following the beating, Linda slapped John because she blamed him for her predicament.

Linda taught John to read while he was a child, and reading allowed him to be superior to the other boys who beat and taunted him for being different. On his twelfth birthday, John received a volume of *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. He learned to read the entire volume and received an odd sort of inspiration from many of the passages. Once, he found his mother in bed with Pope and fell into a rage. Remembering a particular verse from Shakespeare ("When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage / Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed..."), he attempted to kill Pope with a knife, though he failed and suffered a beating.

At fifteen, John learned how to make clay pots from one of the older Indians. Later the same man taught him how to construct bows and arrows. However, John did not receive permission to enter the kiva, a ritual initiation to turn the young boys into men. Instead, the other village boys drove him away into the desert with a barrage of stones. This incident highlighted his status as an outsider and made him lonely.

John and Bernard share a sense of alienation from their respective cultures. John tells Bernard that he once sneaked off to have the sacred animal dreams that the Indian boys must have, even though the tribe had not let him go with the other boys. John clearly experiences everything emotionally even though neither society considers deep emotions to be "normal" behavior.

Bernard invites John to return to England with him, realizing that John could be useful in ensuring that Bernard does not go to Iceland. He plans to use John to blackmail the Director. John in turn delights in the chance to go to England and exclaims, "Oh brave new world," when he hears that Linda will also come.

Analysis

Because the Indian world does not accept him, John agrees to leave in the hopes that the Utopian world can accept him. John represents the opposing values of native civilizations and civilized society. Although Huxley uses the future dystopian society as a point of contrast, the novel makes a larger point about the way all societies treat unfamiliar cultures. John symbolizes this difference, as he is too civilized and emotional for the savage lands but too savage for the civilized world.

John also parallels Bernard in that he has struggled to join society but has received only rejection. He now has only two choices, the insanity of Bernard's world or the lunacy of the Indian village. This dilemma will remain a central conflict for John, who cannot fit into either society because of his hybrid nature. However, by agreeing to Bernard's invitation to go to England, John offers the other world a chance to accept him.

John's history conveys further information about the life of the Indians and about his own isolation. He affirms his individuality through the retelling of his unique life story. John is a passionate human who uses Shakespeare as his emotional guide. Unfortunately, John's taste for Shakespeare suggests that John will not fit into normal society either. His emotional nature will forever alienate him from all existing cultures.

The narrative continues to allude to Shakespeare, especially *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*, from which the title "*Brave New World*" comes. Shakespeare's plays represent all of the originality that this dystopian world has lost. His works signify both the height of civilized culture and the vast array of human emotions. Shakespeare's oeuvre is the pinnacle of human achievement, something that the savage world cannot achieve because of oppression and something that the civilized world no longer has.

Notes

Self Assessment

Fill in the blanks:

1. Brave new world occurs years in the future.
2. Huxley reveals some of the main sources of..... .
3. Bernard enters his private vehicle and flies over to visit
4. cross the Atlantic and go to a hotel near the reservation.
5. The leads Bernard and Lenina into the reservation.
6. Bernard asks John to tell him about growing up in the

The allusions to Macbeth also deal with the tension between knowledge and power. Just as Macbeth received enough foresight to lead him to destruction, so too has Huxley's civilized world suffered because it strove for knowledge and the power that comes with it. Just as in Macbeth, this quest for power must ultimately lead to a downfall.

Chapter 9

Summary

The strange events have overwhelmed Lenina, so she consumes a large amount of soma and falls asleep for nearly eighteen hours. Bernard waits until she is asleep and sneaks off to call His Fordship Mustapha Mond in London to arrange to bring John and Linda back to London. He receives permission and returns to the Reservation to pick them up. When he meets the Warden of the Reservation, Bernard acts boastful and self-confident, as if he "was in the habit of talking to his fordship every day of the week."



Task What happens when John watches Lenina sleep? What does he think or feel?

John goes to the house where Bernard and Lenina are staying on the Reservation. Since it is silent, he fears that they have already left. He peeks in the window, sees Lenina's suitcase, and realizes they are still home, so he breaks a window and enters the house. He looks around, opens Lenina's suitcase, plays with her perfume powder and clothing, and finally finds Lenina lying asleep on her bed. He breathes in her scent and feels stunned by her beauty. Lines from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, extolling Juliet's beauty, enter his head, but he refrains from his urge to unzip her jacket and see her naked body. When he hears Bernard's helicopter, he leaps out of the window just in time to meet Bernard returning from his visit with the warden.

Analysis

The reader sees several new aspects of John's personality. John convinces himself that he loves Lenina, and the chapter expresses his love by the way he looks at her and inhales her perfume. John retains extreme modesty, for when he imagines undressing Lenina, he immediately feels ashamed for his impure thoughts.

John's modesty towards Lenina represents a central conflict between the Indian society and the civilized world. John relates all of his emotions to Shakespeare's depiction of love, as Romeo and Juliet is his only point of reference. He identifies Lenina in the role of Juliet, indicating his reliance on Shakespeare for his emotional education since Linda was unable to provide him with emotional lessons.

The play also parallels John and Lenina's romantic situation, since the two are from different worlds. Lenina inhabits the civilized world, a world that looks down upon reservation people who live savage and incomprehensible lives. The reservation people, on the other hand, cannot understand the scientific society that now lacks emotion, religion, and natural life. The passion that John feels for Lenina mirrors the love that Romeo and Juliet, two lovers from feuding families, have for each other.

2.2 Summary

- Brave New World occurs six hundred years in the future.
- Huxley shows society's abhorrence of rational, independent thought in the mockery of Bernard Marx by his coworkers.
- Lenina and Henry Foster finish their game and go to his apartment building.
- Bernard's inability to join the group as it merges spiritually and sexually further emphasizes his distinctness.
- Linda taught John to read while he was a child, and reading allowed him to superior to the other boys who beat and taunted him for being different.
- John's modesty towards Lenina represents a central conflict between the Indian society and the civilized world.

2.3 Keywords

<i>Abhorrence</i>	:	inspiring disgust and loathing.
<i>Awkward:</i>	:	causing or feeling uneasy embarrassment.
<i>Doctrine</i>	:	a set of beliefs or principles held and taught by a church, political party, or other group.
<i>Metaphorical</i>	:	a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable.

2.4 Review Questions

1. What is the meaning of the World state's motto "COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY"?
2. Why don't the Epsilons "need human intelligence"?
3. How does time work in this book? Why does Ford say "History is Bunk"?
4. Why must games be so complex in this society?
5. Why doesn't Lenina like their Indian guide?
6. What was John's upbringing like? Explain his relationship with Linda.

Answers: Self Assessment

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Six hundred | 2. Social stability |
| 3. Helmholtz Waston | 4. Bernard and Lenina |
| 5. Indian guide | 6. Indian village |

Notes

2.5 Further Readings



Books

Brave New World (E Text)

— Aldous Huxley

Aldous Huxley: a biography

— Nicholas Murray

Aldous Huxley

— Harold Bloom



Online links <http://www.huxley.net/bnw/>

<http://www.pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/barrons/bravenw01.asp>

Unit 3: Aldous Huxley—Brave New World:

Detailed Study of Text-II

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the detailed study of text of chapters 10-18 of Brave new world.
- Discuss summary and analysis of all chapters.

Introduction

The book Brave new world is a masterpiece of genius. There are uncivilized people living on reservations and a women named Linda and her son John get to leave the reservation. Linda is happy to be back in the civilized world. While John is having fun he is also very disgusted about soma, because he found out that when his mother was still in the Brave New World she had to take some. I can tell you why Linda and John are on the reservation—the director of the conditioning centre got Linda pregnant and he left her there, because he didn't want anybody to find out what he did to poor Linda. And when Linda gave birth to John she didn't care about him at first, but she learned that John is her son and she has to take care of him. As I was saying they go into the civilized world and John finds out that the brave new world isn't what he thought it was. After a while John finds out that his mother died while she was on a soma vacation. It says in the book that soma is a drug that keeps everybody happy, but John doesn't like the way it is used and what effects it has on people. And I forgot to mention that I saw the movie and it wasn't very interesting as I thought it would be. But I thought that the movie should have been ranked a three star ranking. As I was saying while Bernard and his friend are waiting for John, John is at the hospital throwing soma out the window, because he wants everybody to know what the world is like that there in at that point in time. The so called utopia is actually a world that everybody has no freedom, everybody in the Brave New World have to obey all of the laws and if there is anybody that is different they will get into really big trouble. I have read the book and it is a lot longer than the movie so I suggest that anybody that reads this should read the book The Brave New World.

Notes

3.1 Detailed Study of Chapters 10–18

3.1.1 Chapters 10–12

Chapter 10

Summary

The Director passes through the Centre's Fertilizing room, admiring the fertilizing and decanting technologies. He and Henry Foster plan to meet Bernard in the Fertilizing Room. The Director tells Henry that Bernard must receive punishment because no one should lead the general population astray with strange behavior or notions of individuality. With all the workers present, the Director publicly reproaches Bernard for his social misconduct and tells him that he must go to Iceland where he will not be able to influence others.

Bernard laughs and introduces Linda. Linda quickly recognizes the Director, calls him by his name, Tomakin, and rushes up to give him a hug. When he pulls away out of disgust, Linda angrily screams at him for leaving her on the Reservation while pregnant with John. The Director becomes even more mortified when John walks in, falls to his knees, and calls him "father," a word filled with embarrassing meaning. All the workers begin laughing until the Director finally runs out of the room.

Analysis

This chapter uses contrast to emphasize the rising tension of the novel. Bernard and the Director represent two sides of the novel's main conflict, and this chapter describes their confrontation. The chapter opens with descriptions of the scientific mechanisms used to create humans. The Director states that no one, including Bernard, can express individuality in any way. The Centre can simply make a new individual if anyone gets out of line, which indicates the society's reliance on science rather than human life.

The Director's predicament in the chapter is an example of irony. The Director enters the room with a high regard for social programming and belief in the good of science, state regulation, and conformity in all social practices. However, the Director becomes the chief example of non-conformity when the others learn that he himself exhibited the most embarrassing behavior in society by fathering a child. The Director, who is normally responsible for the creation of life and ordering of class, is also responsible for a sexual act that goes against this dystopian society.

Chapter 11

Summary

The Director decides to resign his position because the shame of being a "father" is too great. All of "upper-caste" London clamors to see the savage, and John becomes the center of attention. However, they consider Linda repulsive because of her age, her bad teeth, and her weight. She takes soma in excess, both to enjoy the feeling of "eternity" that she used to feel as a member of civilized society, and so that she can remove herself from the judgment and looks of repugnance of the other members of society. John worries about her but receives assurance that she feels happier with soma even though she will not live much longer if she keeps taking so much. For the first time, John encounters the civilized society's attitude towards death.

Bernard immediately becomes famous because he controls the Savage's social schedule. Bernard takes advantage of his fame to get as many women as he can. He holds parties for the social

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elites to visit and meet the Savage. However, he foolishly criticizes society and even goes so far as to lecture Mustapha Mond in a letter on ways that society could improve. The letter amuses and angers Mond, who nevertheless chooses not to punish Bernard for his hubris.

Helmholtz Watson tells Bernard that he disapproves of Bernard's boastfulness and pride. Watson and the other social elites agree that Bernard's behavior will one day lead "to a bad end." After a brief disagreement with Helmholtz in which the latter expresses his disappointment, Bernard becomes angry and vows never to talk to him again.

John the Savage, meanwhile, receives a tour of a local radio tower and of an elementary school, Eton, while Bernard acts arrogant and important the entire time. At the school, John watches a video of Indian savages performing ritual worship while all the school children laugh at them. John asks why everyone laughs and learns that the children laugh because the scene is ridiculous and funny. John's sense of displacement grows.

Lenina convinces John to go on a date with her. She takes him to a feelie show about a black man who falls in love with a blonde-haired woman. In the movie, he abducts her, and after three weeks, three strong Alpha Plus males finally rescue her. She then becomes the lover to all three of them, and the black man must go to reconditioning. John finds the movie's morals offensive. He takes Lenina back to her place but leaves her before having sex. She becomes upset because she had hoped to sleep with him and only recovers by taking soma. John goes home and starts reading Shakespeare's *Othello* because he recalls the presence of a black man in the play.

Analysis

This chapter focuses on Bernard and John's shifting behavior and attitudes. When Bernard becomes important, he begins to like the society more, a change that reveals his baser side. Pride and arrogance are Bernard's tragic flaw, the personality trait that causes his downfall. As long as Bernard felt inferior and out of place, he hated his society and explored the meaning of human emotion and individuality. Because he did not accept societal norms, he acted in an individual capacity and could identify with John's plight back in the village, a characteristic that John and Helmholtz Watson.

However, as soon as he becomes popular, Bernard rejects his previous hatred and starts to like what society has to offer. Thus, he tells Helmholtz that he had six different women in one week. Bernard emerges as a shallow and self-absorbed character who fails to realize that selfishness is merely a different form of individuality and that he still has no place in a society where individual lives are subordinate to social stability.

John's attitude towards this "brave new world" changes as well. By visiting work sites and participating in the world's social elements, John becomes increasingly disillusioned with his surroundings. Bernard notes that John often does not feel awe the technology around him, which he considers strange for someone from the reservation, which has no technology or science. John, however, holds onto something else: myth and story.

In the novel, myth is an attractive element in the human character. When Bernard attempts to point out the advancement of his society, John remarks that the gods of his world also accomplished such feats. Huxley thus suggests that the power of myth is as important to human character as is the power of science. While the savages have no science, they survive and thrive on the power of myth.

Throughout the chapter, John reads Shakespeare whenever he feels upset or confused. Shakespeare's literature and Linda's previous life in civilized society have always been John's only sources of information about the other world. Since Linda is permanently under the influence of soma,

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John can only turn to Shakespeare to explain his surroundings. Ironically, Shakespeare was a genius at invoking passion and emotion, whereas society has virtually destroyed these feelings. This disconnect creates a series of serious misunderstandings between John and the rest of society, since John struggles to develop his emotions while everyone else struggles to stifle their feelings.

Chapter 12

Summary

Bernard holds a party with many of society's most important people in attendance. He goes to get John and introduce him, but John will not leave his room. Furious, the guests immediately begin disparaging Bernard, who feels humiliated. The Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury leaves, taking Lenina with him. Meanwhile, John sits in his room and continues reading *Romeo and Juliet* while the party falls apart, unaware that Lenina was even at the party. When Lenina hears that John will not attend the party, she feels a new emotion: "a sense of dreadful emptiness, a breathless apprehension, nausea."



Task Why does John decide not to come to Bernard's party?

Meanwhile, Mustapha Mond reads scientific reports and evaluates them for publication based on the social impact of each report. Mustapha expresses regret that he cannot always publish brilliant science because it might harm society. One particular report, "A New Theory of Biology," particularly disappoints him. It suggests that the purpose of life might not be "the maintenance of well-being, but some intensification and refining of consciousness, some enlargement of knowledge." Though this might be true, Mond knows that such ideas would destabilize society.

Bernard takes a large dose of soma to escape the shame of the disastrous party. When he recovers, John acts more sympathetically because Bernard is once again humble and reflective. John explains that Bernard now acts more as he did when they first met. Bernard also returns to Helmholtz who agrees to take him back as a friend. The sympathy and friendship of the two men only serves to make Bernard want revenge on them for having caused his fame to disappear.

Helmholtz has gotten into trouble while Bernard entertained. He wrote a poem about being alone, and he had foolishly decided to read it to his students during a lecture. They complained to higher authorities, who told Helmholtz that if anything else happened, he would no longer have his position.

When Helmholtz meets John the Savage, they quickly befriend each other. Bernard feels displaced while with them, and he continually does things to annoy them. After Helmholtz reads his poetry to the Savage, John pulls out his volume of Shakespeare and reads passages.



Notes The beauty of the writing stuns Helmholtz, but Bernard makes stupid jokes in order to disrupt the reading.

Everything goes well until John reads *Romeo and Juliet*. Since John still loves Lenina, he identifies with Romeo and puts a great deal of passion into the story. However, the idea of forbidden love is so alien to society that Helmholtz finally bursts out laughing. At this point, John angrily locks away his book. Helmholtz recognizes Shakespeare's genius, but admits that such foreign notions of romantic love could never cause his desire disruption of society.

Analysis**Notes**

Both Bernard and Helmholtz receive warnings about their behavior in this chapter. Bernard feels inferior to other men, and when he returns to reconcile with Helmholtz, he dislikes that Helmholtz generously still wants to be friends. The friendship between Helmholtz and the Savage also makes Bernard feel displaced. The contrasting emotions of generosity and selfishness depict the differences between these characters.

Bernard's character may also be Huxley's critique of the hubris of socialist government. Bernard's last name Marx alludes to Karl Marx, whose economic theories later contributed to the communist revolution and whose ideas underlie much socialist thought. Like socialist theory, Bernard longs for deeper meaning in human experience. However, Bernard's taste of power corrupts him, much as power corrupted many socialist governments in the twentieth century.

Bernard's constant and petty interruption of John and Helmholtz's conversations reflects his inferiority complex. Like a child, he will do anything to be the center of attention. He thus shows that he cannot extricate himself from the ideals of the society. In addition, where he used to refuse soma, he now uses it whenever he feels depressed. Consequently, the state has the power to corrupt completely. By contrast, Helmholtz transitions from being a robotic, emotionless member of society to being a thinking, emotional individual, as he writes poems about being alone and allows Shakespeare to stir his emotions.

Unlike the other characters, Mustapha Mond has dedicated himself to maximizing societal happiness despite his awareness of other possibilities for life. Mond reflects the inability of attempts at utopian society to resolve all problems, as conflicting ideas of human behavior and purpose will always remain. He immediately condemns any report that might hurt society's goals, but Mustapha unwillingly censors many of the reports. He proclaims, "What fun it would be if one didn't have to think about happiness!"

By this chapter, Lenina has begun acting in ways that belie her previous behavior. Her inability to get John Savage to spend the night with her causes her to think about him constantly and to fall into a state of depression that she cannot cure with soma. For the first time, Lenina experiences love, with both the euphoria of wanting to be with a particular person and the unhappiness of not having him, as opposed to pleasure or lust. As a result, when the Songster leads her away from the party, she does not want to go, and when he wants to sleep with her, she requests more soma than usual.

3.1.2 Chapters 13–15**Chapter 13***Summary*

Lenina's crush on John the Savage becomes increasingly uncontrollable for her. At one point Henry Foster tells Lenina that she appears sick and asks what is the matter. While he talks, Lenina becomes irritated and finally tells him to shut up. Later, Lenina discusses her sole desire for John and no other man with Fanny. Fanny, ever practical, tells Lenina she must either forget about John and sleep with other men or take the initiative and go directly to John's room.

Lenina agrees with Fanny, so she takes some soma to bolster her courage and goes to visit John. After she arrives, she tells him that she likes him. John, with images from Shakespeare in his head, tells her that he feels unworthy of her and begs her to make him worthy of her.

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Did u know? John's constant discussion of his feelings and quoting of Shakespeare confuses Lenina, and she only understands him after he tells her that he loves her.

Lenina responds by stripping off her clothes and trying to kiss him, a natural reaction given her cultural upbringing. John, however, reacts first with shock and then with rage. He screams, "Whore, impudent strumpet," and he flings her away. While John tries to slap her, Lenina runs into the bathroom and shuts the door. She begs him to return her clothes and belongings. The phone rings and John answers. Learning that Linda is sick, John rushes out of the room, leaving the terrified Lenina in his room.

Analysis

Lenina's desire for John shows that she has fallen in love with him. Her new emotional monogamy goes against her conditioning. The fact that she experiences new emotions throughout this experience makes her actions and thoughts more like those of an individual, creating a sense of inner conflict. Thus, she constantly requires soma in order to interact with John, taking it during their first date and again before going to his house.

Since Lenina has no conception of other cultures and traditions, let alone the Indian traditions, having sex is her conception of love. When John tells her he loves her, she logically assumes that he must want to have sex with her. The entire scene of Lenina going to John is an assertion of individuality, but after her stripping naked causes John to erupt in violence, she immediately reverts to the security of her sociological ideals. Consequently, Lenina quotes her hypnopaedic learning to John while she is in the bathroom. His reaction and their subsequent struggle destroy Lenina's move towards individuality.

John's actions are enigmatic at first but logical in light of his past. John tells how he used to become furious at his mother because she would have sex with so many men. Since he shares monogamous ideals with the Indian tribe, John has a great deal of suppressed anger towards his mother. Thus, when Lenina strips for him, she becomes everything he hates about Linda. At that moment, she loses the power of being desirable to him. In the baseness of nudity, Lenina becomes an object that embodies his mother's base attributes. As a result, John takes all of his rage out on Lenina and drives her away from him.

Lenina's nakedness may also reflect the unveiling of her society's true nature. Like Lenina, the society seemingly promotes beauty, happiness, and perfection. However, when stripped of its garments, the society appears just as base and human as the Indian society that John left. Lenina's nakedness causes John to realize the gross imperfections of the dystopian society. He realizes that he cannot survive in this society any more than he could survive in the Indian village. Ironically, whereas John struggled to belong to the Indian social structure, he now struggles to avoid his new society.

Chapter 14

Summary

John goes to the Park Lane Hospital for the Dying to see Linda. He encounters the head nurse, who seems astonished that anyone would want to see the dying or dead. Since society has abandoned individuality, they consider dying as beneficial to the population.

John finds Linda in an unconscious state and tries to rouse her. Meanwhile, the head nurse leads an entire Bokanovsky group (a large group of identical twins) into the room for their death conditioning. The boys act as if they are in a game room, and the head nurse encourages them to have fun. The idea is that if death and fun intermingle, then people will lose their

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natural fear of dying. When the boys notice Linda, they make fun of her ugliness and fatness. John angrily picks one of the boys up and tosses him away from her. The head nurse is upset that John interfered in the death conditioning and warns him to behave.

When Linda returns to a state of semi-consciousness, she asks for Pope. Until this point, John had been remembering the positive memories with her at the Indian village Malpais. Her mention of Pope, though, converts his memories to bad ones. Out of frustration, he shakes her in an effort to get her to recognize him.

Linda suddenly notices John's presence, but before she can speak, she begins choking and soon stops breathing. John realizes that he shook her too hard, and he runs to get the head nurse. When she arrives, they see that Linda has already passed away in her bed. The head nurse, more concerned about the death conditioning of the young boys, returns to them with an offer of chocolate éclairs. John sits by the bed and cries over Linda's death until the boys again interrupt him. He silently strides from the room, knocking down one of the boys.

Analysis

The two concepts of individual death presented in these chapters are starkly different. In John's idea of death, each individual represents a whole unto itself and deserves to be mourned upon death. On the other hand, the bokanovskified children learn to view death in a societal context, where the individual has no meaning. Because death does not harm society, the people do not need to fear it.

The transition between John's good and bad memories foreshadows upcoming events. John initially remembers the good times he had with Linda, but when she mentions Pope's name, he can only recall the bad memories, as when he tried to kill Pope. This parallels John's vision of English society, which had seemed unsullied until he actually experiences London, after which he can only see its negatives.

With Linda's death, John realizes that he is now alone. All of society's supposed benefits have turned out to be things that morally repulse John. Because of his quest to maintain his individuality, John soon realizes that he cannot live as a sane member of this society.

Chapter 15

Summary

After stepping out of the elevator on the hospital's ground floor, John confronts one hundred and sixty-two Deltas divided into two Bokanovsky groups, who comprise the menial staff of the hospital and are waiting to receive their daily soma. The Savage watches them line up to receive their ration and starts repeating the phrase "Oh brave new world" to himself. He decides that the phrase is a call to arms and a challenge to make the world a new place.

John pushes his way to the front of the group and preaches to the Deltas, saying that the soma is poison and that he has come to bring them freedom. The Deltas are by definition mentally stunted and begin to get upset at not receiving their soma. They press closer to John, who manages to seize the box filled with soma rations.

Bernard and Helmholtz get a call from the hospital telling them the Savage is there. They rush over to find John dumping the soma out the window with one hand while using the other to punch the attacking Deltas. Helmholtz laughs at this and joins in, yelling, "Men at last!" Bernard hesitates about joining in the fray, becomes scared, and decides to wait. The police arrive and spray the air with soma to subdue the mob. Bernard tries to sneak out but the police catch him and place him in a car with John and Helmholtz so that they can see Mustapha Mond.

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Analysis

Society has compromised John's struggle to maintain his individuality and destroy society's "sameness." For John, "sameness" becomes visually embodied in the bakanovskified twins. The physical appearance of multitudes of twins, all replicated and doing the same job, represents the total eradication of individual personality.

John logically blames soma for this elimination of individuality. Soma suppresses emotions, which are the defining characteristics of individuals. By trying to force the Deltas to act as individuals, John attacks society's roots. He sees the difference between the social order and individuality as one of freedom. Helmholtz realizes this and joins the Savage with the significant cry, "Men at last!"

John the Savage develops more clearly as a Christ figure. Like the character of Christ in the New Testament, Christ figures come to teach some great truth or revelation to an ignorant or unenlightened people. The Christ figure speaks truth, but the people often do not hear the message. The Christ figure thus becomes a sacrifice for his ideals.

Ironically, although John and Helmholtz seek to force the Deltas to act as individuals, they obtain the opposite result. The Deltas instead act as a unified mob, a classic example of people who have lost their ability to make personal choices. Huxley shows that not only does a mob rob its members of their individuality, but that the society in *Brave New World* is in reality a carefully orchestrated mob.

Bernard is a pathetic individual for whom the reader can only feel sympathy. Bernard so fears acting as an individual that he still seeks societal acceptance. Thus, he does not join his friends because he fears permanent rejection. However, he does not realize that he already faces it, as shown when he fails to sneak out of the hospital with the multitude. The police usher him into the car with the Savage and Helmholtz, firmly implicating him as an individual.

3.1.3. Chapters 16–18

Chapter 16

Summary

The three men enter Mustapha Mond's office. Helmholtz chooses the best chair in the room while Bernard seeks out the worst, hoping that this self-inflicted punishment will make things easier for him. Mustapha arrives and asks the Savage if he likes their civilization. John does not, but he adds that it does have some nice things like the floating music. Mustapha quotes Shakespeare to him: "Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments will hum about my ears and sometimes voices." The Savage is thrilled that someone else knows Shakespeare. Mustapha indicates that although he forbids reading things such as Shakespeare, he can break the rules since they are his rules.

When asked why he censors old things like Shakespeare, Mustapha replies that society no longer needs them. People are happy now and would not even understand the old things. When Helmholtz argues that something like *Othello* is what he has always wanted to write, Mustapha says that he will never write it because tragedy and raw emotions lead to social instability. At the same time, creating works of art is not possible without tragic elements within society. The challenge in their civilization is to write works of art inspired by nothing so that they inspire nothing. Mustapha admits that happiness is never quite as great as tragedy.

They then discuss the Bokanovsky groups. Mustapha points out that an entire society of Alpha Pluses would create social chaos. No one wants to waste time doing the menial chores performed

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by Epsilons and Deltas. He mentions an old experiment on Cyprus that had attempted a society of Alphas. That society soon disintegrated into a civil war, and in the end, they asked the World Controllers to take over.

Mustapha also argues that he cannot allow science to make progress without strict controls, since science can lead to social instability. When the others protest that science is everything, Mustapha agrees with them. He distinguishes between the science that ensures the social stability and the science that would create social unrest. His world comes from the type of science that helps ensure social stability.



Task Why doesn't John like civilization?

Mustapha then tells Helmholtz and Bernard that he will send them to an island where social misfits go. Usually they are people who have acquired individualistic traits and might destabilize society. Bernard protests and prostrates himself on the floor, and Mustapha has him removed from the room.

Mustapha admits himself would have gone to an island but received the choice of becoming the next Controller. He explains that his job is to promote the maximum happiness of society but not his own. Ironically, he must act as an individual in order to decide what is best for the society. Helmholtz chooses to go to the Falkland Islands in order to write. His reasoning for the choice is that bad weather promotes better writing. He then leaves to make sure Bernard is safe.

Analysis

As the first chapter in the declining action of the novel, Chapter 16 essentially provides a logical defense of totalitarian utilitarianism. It compares the ideals of individuality and those of the new social order, beginning with the concept of old versus new.

Mustapha argues that the old is unnecessary because it contains destabilizing passion and emotions. Stability is the highest virtue because it leads to happiness, and old things like Shakespeare cannot exist since they do not lead to happiness. Mond also insists that the old things cannot be created in the new world because tragedies like Othello or Romeo and Juliet are the products of tension in society. If tension does not exist, neither can tragedy. Instead, all the new feelings and shows must be about nothing, since happiness occurs most easily when one experiences pure sensation rather than emotion.

They then debate about Bokanovsky groups, which are necessary to society because only a caste system can make every person in the society happy. Each group has an intelligence modified and conditioned to make people happy with their jobs, and as Mustapha points out, a society of pure Alphas leads to chaos because everyone fights for the best jobs.

Mond defines art and science as the two primary sacrifices of the old world in order to obtain the ultimate utilitarian goal, that of maximum happiness. Art can only exist when it has no meaning, and whereas science is praised for improving society, it is also restricted because it may destabilize society.

This chapter draws even starker differences between Helmholtz and Bernard. Helmholtz chooses the best chair, Bernard the worst. Helmholtz no longer feels himself subordinate to society or any individual. Bernard on the other hand still bears a strong attachment to his society. He chooses the poor chair in the hope that by showing contrition he will receive a milder punishment, indicating that a certain degree of self-loathing is important to the enforcement of social control.

Notes

Chapter 17

Summary

Religion is the last sacrifice made by the old world to ensure happiness. Mustapha understands religion as something men turn to late in life when they become afraid of death. Religion substitutes for the loss of youth. Mond explains that since society eradicated the fear of death and since science keeps everyone youthful until death, religion is unnecessary. He reads to John passages from *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis and from a work by Cardinal John H. Newman in order to demonstrate this previous society dependence on God, which he claims is no longer necessary.

Mond also points out people only believe in God when their conditioning suggests it. The Savage argues instead that solitude would lead people to visualize a god instinctively, but since society has removed solitude, people cannot contemplate the world on their own terms. John complains that society prevents people from discovering truth for themselves.

Mustapha and John then argue over the meaning of life and the pursuit of happiness. John asserts that happiness is a punishment for men because they have overindulged in their pleasant vices. Mustapha argues that, by their society's standards, each man is happy and perfect as he is. The discussion continues, as Mustapha condemns self-denial as bad for the economy and opposed to happiness, chastity as leading to passion, and passion as causing instability. Mustapha understands nobility and heroics as only existing where political instability reigns, which is unnecessary.



Did u know? The climax of the argument comes when Mustapha says, "in fact, you're claiming the right to be unhappy." The Savage demands the right to poetry, real danger, freedom, goodness, and sin by making the powerful statement, "I claim them all." Mustapha merely shrugs and says, "You're welcome."

Analysis

This chapter makes clear that Mond considers religion to be the most destabilizing force in society. Mond does not deny the power that religion had in the past world and even claims that he believes in a god. However, he also claims that God has become irrelevant in modern society and now only manifests himself through absence. Huxley presents a strand of existential philosophy that maintains that God's non-existence created a world in which humanity could only find meaning through its own existence. Mond's society has strictly controlled the parameters of this existence, leaving no room for a God.

John Savage attempts to counter this argument with the example of the Indian civilization from which he came. Religion, Savage argues, comes naturally to man and will never entirely disappear. The religion of the Indians gives great meaning to their lives and provides the ability to endure turmoil and unhappiness.

The climax of the novel's action occurs in chapter fifteen, but the climax of the novel's thought and ideas happens here when Mond tells John Savage that, "In fact, you're claiming the right to be unhappy." In the extremism of the Utopian utilitarianism, the right to be unhappy no longer exists. This is what the Savage realizes when he starts claiming all the ills of humanity. He argues that being unhappy is a natural right that every man should have. Mustapha clearly disagrees with him.

The whole premise of this form of utilitarianism is that people should be happy and live in a stable society. Therefore, one must ban anything that would interfere with happiness. However, in dividing the happy from the unhappy, the meaning of individuality ceases to exist in any meaningful sense, a fact that the Savage cannot accept. He desires to be an individual, which entails the right to unhappiness as well as to happiness.

Huxley names the banishment of art, science, and religion as the three major criteria that must occur to create stability. All of these lead to emotional, physical, or spiritual unrest and would thus threaten society. As a result, one must either eliminate them or use them only when they promote stability and consequently happiness, as in the case of science.

Chapter 18

Summary

Helmholtz and Bernard go to visit John, who is vomiting in his room. When they ask him what is wrong, he replies, "I ate civilization... It poisoned me." John tells the two men that he visited Mustapha Mond that morning and asked if he could join them on the island. Mustapha refused his request, indicating that he wanted to continue the experiment of reconciling John to civilization.

Seeking solitude, John runs away and finds an abandoned lighthouse, which he makes his home. He spends the first night on his knees in contrition and repentance to his gods so that he will be worthy to enter the lighthouse and inhabit it. John makes a bow and arrows in order to shoot game for food. He also sets up a small garden to provide food for the next year. John starts singing while making the bow, but he recalls his vows to remember Linda and make amends to her soul. Out of anger at his forgetfulness, John starts to beat himself with a knotted cord.

Three Delta Minus landworkers happen to see John beating himself. Amazed by this incredible display, they return to town where they tell everyone about it. Three days later reporters begin to arrive, trying to get an interview. John kicks the first man to approach him so hard that the man cannot sit comfortably afterward. The other reporters get the same treatment and begin to leave him alone. A few hover in helicopters, but when he shoots an arrow through the floor of the nearest one they too back off.

A few days later, while digging in his garden, John starts to think about Lenina. He immediately tries to get her out of his mind by masochistically running into some thorn bushes, but he still remembers the smell of her perfume. He then grabs his whip and begins to lash himself on the back ferociously.

Unluckily, a reporter named Darwin Bonaparte is hiding in the woods and records the entire scene. The movie is made into a film and within a day of its release, several hundred helicopters arrive at the lighthouse with spectators. A huge crowd forms and they all start shouting for him to use the whip. While they chant the phrase, "We - want - the whip," a helicopter arrives with Henry Foster and Lenina.

Lenina steps out of the helicopter to talk to John, but he cannot hear her over the roar of the crowd. His confusion turns to rage, and he rushes at her with the whip, beating her repeatedly to kill the flesh. In this state of hysteria, the crowd starts to chant "Orgy-porgy." They dance and sing until John loses himself in the hysteria.

Several hours later, John lies on the heather in a soma-induced sleep after an evening of sensual frenzy. When he wakes up and remembers what occurred, he cries, "Oh, my God, my God!" That night, the spectators that arrive cannot find him. They enter the lighthouse and see feet dangling from the archway. John has committed suicide.

Notes

Self Assessment

State the following sentences are True or False:

1. Bernard immediately becomes famous because he controls the Savage's social schedule.
2. Bernard holds a party with many of society's most important people in attendance.
3. Linda goes to the Park Lane Hospital for the dying to see John.
4. Fanny the Savage develops more clearly as a Christ figure.
5. The two men enter Mustapha Mond's office.
6. Lenina steps out of the helicopter to talk to John.

Analysis

This chapter forms something of an anticlimax after the previous chapter where John cries, "I claim them all," thus demanding the right to anything that would make him unhappy. Chapter 18 deals more with the interplay of solitude and society as well as sensuality and religion. John leaves to recapture everything that civilization no longer has, including religion, love, remembrance, pain, and abstinence.

One can interpret the lighthouse as a reflection of the Garden of Eden, a utopian creation from which God had banished humanity for their sin. John hopes that this secluded space will provide a respite from the dystopia of the modern world. He attempts to repent for his own sins to reenter the Garden but soon finds that even this space is corrupt.

The deluge of people who come to watch John beat himself with the whip marks the last chance John has to rejoin society. Lenina's arrival spurs him into a rage because in his mind she epitomizes everything evil about her world. She is a sensual being who comes between John and his mother, she defiles his abstinence, and she makes him forget religion. Thus, when John sees Lenina, he attacks her.

The ending differs from what the reader would expect. The crowd transforms from demanding pain to demanding sexual gratification through dance and the cry of "Orgy-porgy." Huxley likens the cry to the beat of the Indian music and implies that the power of the crowd eventually overcomes John, who joins in. Though he could not participate at all in the ritual ceremonies of the Indian people, he becomes the central sacrifice of this ceremony. Huxley again blurs the distinctions between the savage society with no technology and the advanced modern society, leaving open the question of which society is superior. Joining the crowd marks the sacrifice of John's individualism. He goes from being one man standing alone against a mob to becoming a member of that crowd. This sacrifice turns out to be too much for John, and he hangs himself.

Huxley does not reveal why Mustapha decides to keep John as part of an ongoing experiment, even though he willingly sends other misfits within the society like Helmholtz and Bernard to an island. One possibility is that Mustapha views John as a kindred spirit via the Shakespeare that they have both read. He keeps John because he wants to convert John into rejecting Shakespeare and into accepting civilized dogma. However, as the ending shows, accepting society implies giving up John's individuality, and Mustapha's experiment fails.

3.2 Summary

- The Director passes through the Centre's Fertilizing room, admiring the fertilizing and decanting technologies.

Notes

- Mustapha expresses regret that he cannot always publish brilliant science because it might harm society.
- Society has compromised John's struggle to maintain his individuality and destroy society's "sameness."
- In the extremism of the Utopian utilitarianism, the right to be unhappy no longer exists.

3.3 Keywords

Decanting : gradually pour from one container into another.

Predicament : a difficult situation.

Turmoil : a state of great disturbance.

3.4 Review Questions

1. Why does John becomes popular, but not Linda?
2. What does John think about the feelies? Why?
3. What does Helmholtz think of Shakespeare? Romeo and Juliet?
4. What are the consequences of Lenina's emotion?
5. How does the soma riot end? What does it mean to be happy and good?

Answers: Self Assessment

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. True | 2. True |
| 3. False | 4. False |
| 5. False | 6. True |

3.5 Further Readings



Books	Brave New World (E Text)	— Aldous Huxley
	Aldous Huxley: a biography	— Nicholas Murray
	Aldous Huxley	— Harold Bloom



Online links <http://www.huxley.net/bnw/>

<http://www.pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/barrons/bravenw01.asp>

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Unit 4: Aldous Huxley—Brave New World: Themes and Characterization

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the character list of Brave new world
- Explain the major themes of Brave new world.

Introduction

Huxley isn't one for subtlety. It isn't enough to show Bernard's insecurity around the lower castes; instead, we get this: The mockery made him feel an outsider; and feeling an outsider he behaved like one, which increased the prejudice against him and intensified the contempt and hostility aroused by his physical defects. Which in turn increased his sense of being alien and alone. A chronic fear of being slighted made him avoid his equals, made him stand, where his inferiors were concerned, self-consciously on his dignity.

Then we get to Helmholtz, whose physical appearance clues us in to his self-confidence. But then Huxley goes into telling mode again: A mental excess had produced in Helmholtz Watson effects very similar to those which, in Bernard Marx, were the result of a physical defect. A mental excess became in its turn a cause of wider separation. That which had made Helmholtz so uncomfortably aware of being himself and all alone was too much ability. What the two men shared was the knowledge that they were individuals. It was only quite recently that, grown aware of his mental excess, Helmholtz Watson had also become aware of his difference from the people who surrounded him.

This goes on and on, for much of the novel, again leading people to believe that Brave New World was more of a forum for Huxley's ideas than a true novel.

4.1 Character List

Notes

Lenina Crowne

Lenina is a beautiful woman who meets the group of students while inoculating the infants against yellow fever. She dates Henry Foster in the beginning but agrees to go out with Bernard Marx to the Savage Reservations. After visiting the Reservations, Lenina becomes popular by her association with the Savage. She continually tries to sleep with the Savage but becomes frustrated by his unwillingness. After she strips in front of John, he tries to beat her. Lenina visits John at his lighthouse at the end of the novel, and he starts to whip her. It is unclear whether she dies or not.

The Director

The Director of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, also called Tomakin, leads a group of students on a tour. He introduces them to the techniques of fertilization and segregation into classes. The arrival of Linda and John the Savage later humiliates him and causes him to resign in disgrace.

Henry Foster

Foster is an expert on statistics within the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre. He joins the student tour at the Director's behest and quotes facts about the processes of the hatchery. He is also in charge of maximizing the number of embryos each ovary can produce. Foster is one of Lenina's most frequent dates.

Bernard Marx

Bernard Marx loves Lenina Crowne, despite all of his social conditioning. He is short and physically inadequate for the status of Alpha-Plus, and therefore has an inferiority complex. Other characters believe that he may have accidentally received a dose of alcohol while in the fetal stages. He is more independent thinking because of feeling separate from society. Bernard Marx is close friends with Helmholtz Watson.

Mustapha Mond

Mustapha Mond is the Resident Controller for Western Europe and one of the Ten World Controllers. He alone makes the rules for society and decides what works to publish. Mustapha has read Shakespeare and other forbidden books, making him one of the most independent thinkers within the society. He is the man who gives Bernard permission to bring the Savage and his mother back to London.

Benito Hoover

Hoover is a former lover of Lenina, who describes him as too hairy. He is stereotypical of the Alpha caste in obeying all the social norms and in quoting his hypnopaedic learning.

Helmholtz Watson

Watson is an Alpha-Plus with too much intelligence. He is friends with Bernard Marx because both he and Marx are outsiders within the society. Watson eventually writes a poem that gets

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him in trouble. He quickly falls in love with John's Shakespearean verses before leaving to live in the Falkland Islands.

Morgana Rothschild

The member of Bernard's Solidarity group with a distracting unified eyebrow.

Linda

Linda is the mother of the Savage and the woman whom the Director brought to the reservation. She is an alcoholic and rather obese. After her return to society, she consumes too much soma and dies soon thereafter.

Pope

Pope is Linda's alcoholic lover and the man that John tries to kill after he discovers Pope sleeping with his mother one night.

John Savage

The Savage, also known as John, is the son of the Director and Linda. He was born on the reservation in a city called Malpais. He grew up as a hybrid of the Indian and Utopian cultures, with a volume of Shakespeare as his guide to life. As a result, the Indians often excluded him from their rituals. He and his mother Linda accompany Bernard Marx back to London where he soon becomes a celebrity. John falls in love with Lenina and imagines his love for her as that of Romeo and Juliet. He soon has trouble conforming to the ideals of the Utopian world and strikes out in an effort to assert his individuality. John finally runs away from the society but cannot avoid a mob of sightseers. In the end, he commits suicide.

Mitsima

One of the older Indians, who teaches John to make clay pots

Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury

The Songster is a powerful man who first meets with Lenina. At her request, Bernard invites him to a party to meet John. When John refuses to come, the Songster gets upset and leaves. He drags Lenina with him, although she appears to be unhappy and slightly unwilling.

Dr. Shaw

Shaw is the doctor who looks after Linda and gives her soma so that she can be happy.

4.2 Analysis of Major Characters

John

Although Bernard Marx is the primary character in *Brave New World* up until his visit with Lenina to the Reservation, after that point he fades into the background and John becomes the central protagonist. John first enters the story as he expresses an interest in participating in the Indian religious ritual from which Bernard and Lenina recoil. John's desire first marks him as

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an outsider among the Indians, since he is not allowed to participate in their ritual. It also demonstrates the huge cultural divide between him and World State society, since Bernard and Lenina see the tribal ritual as disgusting.



Notes John becomes the central character of the novel because, rejected both by the “savage” Indian culture and the “civilized” World State culture, he is the ultimate outsider.

As an outsider, John takes his values from a more than 900-year-old author, William Shakespeare. John’s extensive knowledge of Shakespeare’s works serves him in several important ways: it enables him to verbalize his own complex emotions and reactions, it provides him with a framework from which to criticize World State values, and it provides him with language that allows him to hold his own against the formidable rhetorical skill of Mustapha Mond during their confrontation. (On the other hand, John’s insistence on viewing the world through Shakespearean eyes sometimes blinds him to the reality of other characters, notably Lenina, who, in his mind, is alternately a heroine and a “strumpet,” neither of which label is quite appropriate to her.) Shakespeare embodies all of the human and humanitarian values that have been abandoned in the World State. John’s rejection of the shallow happiness of the World State, his inability to reconcile his love and lust for Lenina, and even his eventual suicide all reflect themes from Shakespeare. He is himself a Shakespearean character in a world where any poetry that does not sell a product is prohibited.

John’s naïve optimism about the World State, expressed in the words from *The Tempest* that constitute the novel’s title, is crushed when he comes into direct contact with the State. The phrase “brave new world” takes on an increasingly bitter, ironic, and pessimistic tone as he becomes more knowledgeable about the State. John’s participation in the final orgy and his suicide at the end of the novel can be seen as the result of an insanity created by the fundamental conflict between his values and the reality of the world around him.

Bernard Marx

Up until his visit to the Reservation and the introduction of John, Bernard Marx is the central figure of the novel. Bernard’s first appearance in the novel is highly ironic. Just as the Director finishes his explanation of how the World State has successfully eliminated lovesickness and everything that goes along with frustrated desire, Huxley gives us our first glimpse into a character’s private thoughts, and that character is lovesick, jealous, and fiercely angry at his sexual rivals. Thus, while Bernard is not exactly heroic (and he becomes even less so as the novel progresses), he is still interesting to the reader because he is human. He wants things that he can’t have.

The major movement in Bernard’s character is his rise in popularity after the trip to the Reservation and his discovery of John, followed by his disastrous fall. Before and during his trip to the Reservation, Bernard is lonely, insecure, and isolated. When he returns with John, he uses his newfound popularity to participate in all of the aspects of World State society that he had previously criticized, such as promiscuous sex. This about-face proves Bernard to be a critic whose deepest desire is to become what he criticizes. When John refuses to become a tool in Bernard’s hand Bernard’s success collapses instantaneously. By continuing to criticize the World State while reveling in its “pleasant vices,” Bernard reveals himself to be a hypocrite. John and Helmholtz are sympathetic to him because they agree that the World State needs criticizing and because they recognize that Bernard is trapped in a body to which his conditioning

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has not suited him, but they have no respect for him. Lenina's relationship to Bernard is different: she sees him merely as a strange, interesting fellow with whom she can take a break from her relationship with Henry Foster. She is happy to use him for her own social gain, but she doesn't have the emotional investment in him that she does in John.

Helmholtz Watson

Helmholtz Watson is not as fully developed as some of the other characters, acting instead as a foil for Bernard and John. For Bernard, Helmholtz is everything Bernard wishes he could be: strong, intelligent, and attractive. As such a figure of strength, Helmholtz is very comfortable in his caste. Unlike Bernard, he is well liked and respected. Though he and Bernard share a dislike of the World State, Helmholtz condemns it for radically different reasons. Bernard dislikes the State because he is too weak to fit the social position he has been assigned; Helmholtz because he is too strong. Helmholtz can see and feel how the shallow culture in which he lives is stifling him.

Helmholtz is also a foil for John, but in a different way. Helmholtz and John are very similar in spirit; both love poetry, and both are intelligent and critical of the World State. But there is an enormous cultural gap between them. Even when Helmholtz sees the genius in Shakespeare's poetry, he cannot help but laugh at the mention of mothers, fathers, and marriage—concepts that are vulgar and ridiculous in the World State. The conversations between Helmholtz and John illustrate that even the most reflective and intelligent World State member is defined by the culture in which he has been raised.

Mustapha Mond

Mustapha Mond is the most powerful and intelligent proponent of the World State. Early in the novel, it is his voice that explains the history of the World State and the philosophy upon which it is based. Later in the novel it is his debate with John that lays out the fundamental difference in values between World State society and the kind of society represented in Shakespeare's plays.

Mustapha Mond is a paradoxical figure. He reads Shakespeare and the Bible and he used to be an independent-minded scientist, but he also censors new ideas and controls a totalitarian state. For Mond, humankind's ultimate goals are stability and happiness, as opposed to emotions, human relations, and individual expression. By combining a firm commitment to the values of the World State with a nuanced understanding of its history and function, Mustapha Mond presents a formidable opponent for John, Bernard, and Helmholtz.

4.3 Major Themes

Commodification

Huxley views commodified society as a detriment to human creativity. In the novel, society modifies human behavior so that people will seek to consume goods and services as much as possible. This modification in turn means that everyone who makes such goods or provides such services will be able to stay employed. Thus, the society's economy will remain stable.

However, such reliance upon commodification also blunts any attempt at original thought. Consumption becomes so important to the society that all of a person's energy and reason is put into activities of work and play that consume goods that in turn keep the economy running.

This is, of course, important for maintaining the structured and controlled environment of Huxley's dystopia, but it also produces human beings who simply do what they have been taught and have no reason to think on their own.

Dystopia

A dystopia is a kind of science fiction, or fantasy, world that predicts the future in a negative light. Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *1984* were two of the first modern dystopian novels. Both told of a future society in which governments had complete dictatorial control over people, while state control and conformity replaced the freedoms of modern life and a person's right to the pursuit of happiness.

Dystopian novels such as *Brave New World* are critiques of modern institutions. Such works take an instance of injustice or perceived ill in a society and take those situations to what would be their logical ends. In *Brave New World*, Huxley critiques modern governmental institutions whose power has slowly crept into the lives of ordinary people. This process often occurs in the name of security or peace, yet such actions inevitably lead to the destruction of everything that is good in a society such as freedom or creativity.



Task In your opinion, is this brave new world a utopia or a dystopia.

Freedom

Brave New World largely defines freedom through the structures that prevent freedom. Bernard feels these constraints most acutely, as in a scene from chapter 6, when Bernard and Lenina have a conversation about freedom. Lenina insists that everyone has a great deal of freedom - the freedom "to have the most wonderful time." Soma represents this kind of freedom, as it puts people in a hypnotic state in which they no longer feel as though they should ask questions or defy the structures of society. Bernard insists that this is no freedom at all.

Bernard claims that his ideal of freedom is the freedom to be an individual apart from the rest of society. Bernard strives to be free in his "own way...not in everybody else's way." Huxley argues here that certain structures in our own modern society work in the same way that drugs like soma work in this fantastical dystopia. Huxley often argues against the use of advertising specifically for the way that it hypnotized people into wanting and buying the same products. Such things keep people within predefined structures, and it quashes free thought, which ultimately restricts freedom.

Human Impulse

Human impulses play a complicated role in the novel. First, Huxley suggests that they can both stabilize and destabilize society, as in the case of sexual activity. In *Brave New World*, the authorities encourage all humans to sleep with as many other people as often as they can. In previous generations, institutions such as marriage controlled these impulses. People tried to confine their impulses, but when they no longer could, such institutions unraveled.

By abolishing institutions such as marriage and encouraging behavior that society once considered immoral, the leaders of the new world have gotten rid of the inherent dangers of these sexual impulses. However, Huxley also suggests that the freedom of these impulses undermines

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humanity's creativity. Complete freedom to have pleasure has made each person like an infant, incapable of adult thought and creativity.



Did u know? Bernard longs to have more control over his impulses, but the display of such control unnerves others who have learned to be free with their impulses.

The Power of Knowledge

Huxley's civilized world is a society of ultimate knowledge. Humans have conquered almost all areas of scientific inquiry; they control life, death, aging, pleasure, and pain. This mastery of knowledge has given human beings great control over their world, and this control in turn has given great power to those, who first envisioned such a society, and those who continue to maintain its existence.

However, such knowledge and the abuse of power that it inspires often lead to downfall, as symbolized by Huxley's frequent allusions to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. In Shakespeare's play, Macbeth gains small pieces of knowledge of present and future events that leads him to seek more power and control over his kingdom. However, this knowledge leads to abuse of power and is the cause of his ultimate demise. In the same way, characters in Huxley's novel must stay in the dark about the true workings of society because knowledge will lead to their ultimate demise.

Utilitarian Happiness

A utilitarian society aims to produce the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people. In Huxley's society, this particular good is happiness, and government, industry, and all other social apparatuses exist in order to maximize the happiness of all members of society.

John the Savage rebels against this notion of utilitarian happiness. He argues that humanity must also know how to be unhappy in order to create and appreciate beauty. The use of soma is an example of the opposite. People take the drug in order to go on a "holiday" from any kind of unhappiness. Because they refuse to experience unhappiness, the drug keeps them from wonder and the appreciation of beauty, as in the scene when Lenina and Bernard fly over the tossing English Channel. He sees a beautiful display of nature's power; she sees a horribly frightening scene that she wants to avoid.

The Transformation of Human Relationships

The society in *Brave New World* can only survive because it has destroyed any remnants of human relationships and bonds. The relationships of father and mother no longer exist because all human beings are born in a scientific lab. The relationship between husband and wife is no longer necessary because society shuns monogamy, and all men and women learn to share each other equally.

The cost of such actions is that human beings cannot truly experience the emotions of love. Both John and Lenina begin to feel these strong emotions over the course of the novel, but they cannot act on these emotions in a constructive way because neither can comprehend how to have such a relationship in their society.

Self Assessment

Fill in the blanks:

1. Huxley views commodified society as a detriment to

2. A is a kind of science fiction.
3. Barnard Marx loves
4. The Director of the Central Condon Hatchery and Conditioning centre is called
5. Lenina visits John at his

The Limits of Science

While society has mainly banned art and religion rather than science, Mustapha Mond also claims that too much scientific progress can also reduce the ultimate happiness of each individual. Science, he tells the reader, is responsible for a great many of the achievements of their society and for the levels of happiness that each individual achieves. Nevertheless, if scientific progress occurs without restraint, it will lead to less happiness.

For instance, the government does not engineer food in a scientific laboratory, even though it would be faster and would feed more people. By farming food naturally, the government gives more work for the lower caste people to do and thus keeps them occupied and happy. This example shows that progress does not always maximize happiness, a fact that John the Savage clearly sees in his new society.

4.4 Summary

- John first enters the story as he expresses an interest in participating in the Indian religious ritual from which Bernard and Lenina recoil.
- The major movement in Bernard's character is his rise in popularity after the trip to the Reservation and his discovery of John, followed by his disastrous fall.
- Mustapha Mond is the most powerful and intelligent proponent of the World State.
- A dystopia is a kind of science fiction, or fantasy, world that predicts the future in a negative light.
- Huxley's civilized world is a society of ultimate knowledge. Humans have conquered almost all areas of scientific inquiry; they control life, death, aging, pleasure, and pain.
- The society in Brave New World can only survive because it has destroyed any remnants of human relationships and bonds.

4.5 Keywords

<i>Disgusting</i>	:	arousing revulsion or strong indignation.
<i>Foil</i>	:	prevent the success.
<i>Orgy</i>	:	a wild party characterized by excessive drinking and indiscriminate sexual activity.

4.6 Review Questions

1. Examine the themes of Brave New World.
2. Enumerate the characterization of the text, Brave new world.
3. Discuss Huxley's vision of a utilitarian society.

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Answers: Self Assessment

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| 1. Human creativity | 2. Dystopia |
| 3. Lenina crowne | 4. Tomakin |
| 5. Light house | |

4.7 Further Readings



Books

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Brave New World (E Text) | — Aldous Huxley |
| Aldous Huxley: a biography | — Nicholas Murray |
| Aldous Huxley | — Harold Bloom |



Online links

- <http://www.pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/barrons/bravenw07.asp>
<http://www.pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/barrons/bravenw10.asp>

Unit 5: D.H. Lawrence – Sons and Lovers

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Know about the author of Sons and Lovers
- Know about the text of Sons and Lovers
- Know the introduction to the work Sons and Lovers.

Introduction

David Herbert Richards Lawrence (11 September 1885 – 2 March 1930) was an English novelist, poet, playwright, essayist and literary critic. His collected works represent an extended reflection upon the dehumanizing effects of modernity and industrialization. In them, Lawrence confronts issues relating to emotional health and vitality, spontaneity, and instinct.

Lawrence's opinions earned him many enemies and he endured official persecution, censorship, and misrepresentation of his creative work throughout the second half of his life, much of which he spent in a voluntary exile he called his "savage pilgrimage." At the time of his death, his public reputation was that of a pornographer who had wasted his considerable talents. E. M. Forster, in an obituary notice, challenged this widely held view, describing him as, "The greatest imaginative novelist of our generation." Later, the influential Cambridge critic F. R. Leavis championed both his artistic integrity and his moral seriousness, placing much of Lawrence's fiction within the canonical "great tradition" of the English novel. Lawrence is now valued by many as a visionary thinker and significant representative of modernism in English literature.

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5.1 D.H. Lawrence—Sons and Lovers: Introduction to the Author

5.1.1 Life and Career

Early life

The fourth child of Arthur John Lawrence, a barely literate miner, and Lydia, a former schoolmistress, Lawrence spent his formative years in the coal mining town of Eastwood, Nottinghamshire. The house, in which he was born, in Eastwood, 8a Victoria Street, is now the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum. His working class background and the tensions between his parents provided the raw material for a number of his early works.



Did u know? Lawrence would return to this locality and often wrote about nearby Underwood, calling it; “the country of my heart,” as a setting for much of his fiction.

The young Lawrence attended Beauvale Board School from 1891 until 1898, becoming the first local pupil to win a County Council scholarship to Nottingham High School in nearby Nottingham. He left in 1901, working for three months as a junior clerk at Haywood’s surgical appliances factory, but a severe bout of pneumonia, the result of being accosted by a group of factory girls, ended this career. He often visited Hagg’s Farm, the home of the Chambers family, and began a friendship with Jessie Chambers. An important aspect of this relationship with Jessie and other adolescent acquaintances was a shared love of books, an interest that lasted throughout Lawrence’s life. In the years 1902 to 1906 Lawrence served as a pupil teacher at the British School, Eastwood. He went on to become a full-time student and received a teaching certificate from University College Nottingham in 1908. During these early years he was working on his first poems, some short stories, and a draft of a novel, *Laetitia*, that was eventually to become *The White Peacock*. At the end of 1907 he won a short story competition in the *Nottingham Guardian*, the first time that he had gained any wider recognition for his literary talents.

Early career

In the autumn of 1908 the newly qualified Lawrence left his childhood home for London. While teaching in Davidson Road School, Croydon, he continued writing. Some of the early poetry, submitted by Jessie Chambers, came to the attention of Ford Madox Ford, then known as Ford Hermann Hueffer and editor of the influential *The English Review*. Hueffer then commissioned the story *Odour of Chrysanthemums* which, when published in that magazine, encouraged Heinemann, a London publisher, to ask Lawrence for more work. His career as a professional author now began in earnest, although he taught for a further year. Shortly after the final proofs of his first published novel *The White Peacock* appeared in 1910, Lawrence’s mother died. She had been ill with cancer. The young man was devastated and he was to describe the next few months as his “sick year.” It is clear that Lawrence had an extremely close relationship with his mother and his grief following her death became a major turning point in his life, just as the death of Mrs. Morel forms a major turning point in his autobiographical novel *Sons and Lovers*, a work that draws upon much of the writer’s provincial upbringing.

In 1911 Lawrence was introduced to Edward Garnett, a publisher’s reader, who acted as a mentor, provided further encouragement, and became a valued friend, as Garnett’s son David was also. Throughout these months the young author revised *Paul Morel*, the first draft of

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what became *Sons and Lovers*. In addition, a teaching colleague, Helen Corke, gave him access to her intimate diaries about an unhappy love affair, which formed the basis of *The Trespasser*, his second novel. In November 1911, pneumonia struck once again. After recovering his health Lawrence decided to abandon teaching in order to become a full time author. He also broke off an engagement to Louie Burrows, an old friend from his days in Nottingham and Eastwood.

In March 1912 Lawrence met Frieda Weekley, with whom he was to share the rest of his life. She was six years older than her new lover, married to Lawrence's former modern languages professor from Nottingham University, Ernest Weekley, and with three young children. She eloped with Lawrence to her parents' home in Metz, a garrison town then in Germany near the disputed border with France. Their stay here included Lawrence's first brush with militarism, when he was arrested and accused of being a British spy, before being released following an intervention from Frieda Weekley's father. After this encounter Lawrence left for a small hamlet to the south of Munich, where he was joined by Weekley for their "honeymoon", later memorialised in the series of love poems titled *Look! We Have Come Through* (1917).

From Germany they walked southwards across the Alps to Italy, a journey that was recorded in the first of his travel books, a collection of linked essays titled *Twilight in Italy* and the unfinished novel, *Mr Noon*. During his stay in Italy, Lawrence completed the final version of *Sons and Lovers* that, when published in 1913, was acknowledged to represent a vivid portrait of the realities of working class provincial life. Lawrence though, had become so tired of the work that he allowed Edward Garnett to cut about a hundred pages from the text.

Lawrence and Frieda returned to England in 1913 for a short visit. At this time, he now encountered and befriended critic John Middleton Murry and New Zealand-born short story writer Katherine Mansfield. Lawrence and Weekley soon went back to Italy, staying in a cottage in Fiascherino on the Gulf of Spezia. Here he started writing the first draft of a work of fiction that was to be transformed into two of his better-known novels, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. While writing *Women in Love* in Cornwall during 1916–17, Lawrence developed a strong and possibly romantic relationship with a Cornish farmer named William Henry Hocking. Although it is not absolutely clear if their relationship was sexual, Lawrence's wife, Frieda Weekley, said she believed it was. Lawrence's fascination with themes of homosexuality could also be related to his own sexual orientation. This theme is also overtly manifested in *Women in Love*. Indeed, in a letter written during 1913, he writes, "I should like to know why nearly every man that approaches greatness tends to homosexuality, whether he admits it or not..." He is also quoted as saying, "I believe the nearest I've come to perfect love was with a young coal-miner when I was about 16."

Eventually, Weekley obtained her divorce. The couples returned to England shortly before the outbreak of World War I and were married on 13 July 1914. In this time, Lawrence worked with London intellectuals and writers such as Dora Marsden and the people involved with *The Egoist* (T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and others). *The Egoist*, an important Modernist literary magazine, published some of his work. He was also reading and adapting Marinetti's Futurist Manifesto. He also met at this time the young Jewish artist Mark Gertler, and they became for a time good friends; Lawrence would describe Gertler's 1916 anti-war painting, 'The Merry-Go-Round' as 'the best modern picture I have seen: I think it is great and true.' Gertler would inspire the character Loerke (a sculptor) in *Women in Love*. Weekley's German parentage and Lawrence's open contempt for militarism meant, that they were viewed with suspicion in wartime England and lived in near destitution. *The Rainbow* (1915) was suppressed after an investigation into its alleged obscenity in 1915. Later, they were accused of spying and signalling to German submarines off the coast of Cornwall where they lived at Zennor. During this period he finished *Women in Love*. In it Lawrence explores the destructive features of contemporary civilization through the evolving relationships of four major characters as they reflect upon the value of the arts, politics, economics, sexual experience, friendship and marriage. This book is a bleak, bitter vision of humanity and proved impossible to publish in wartime conditions.

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Not published until 1920, it is now widely recognised as an English novel of great dramatic force and intellectual subtlety.

In late 1917, after constant harassment by the armed forces authorities, Lawrence was forced to leave Cornwall at three days' notice under the terms of the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA). This persecution was later described in an autobiographical chapter of his Australian novel *Kangaroo*, published in 1923. He spent some months in early 1918 in the small, rural village of Hermitage near Newbury, Berkshire. He then lived for just under a year (mid-1918 to early 1919) at Mountain Cottage, Middleton-by-Wirksworth, Derbyshire, where he wrote one of his most poetic short stories, *The Wintry Peacock*. Until 1919 he was compelled by poverty to shift from address to address and barely survived a severe attack of influenza.

5.1.2 Later Life and Career

In late February 1922 the Lawrences left Europe behind with the intention of migrating to the United States. They sailed in an easterly direction, first to Ceylon and then on to Australia. A short residence in Darlington, Western Australia, which included an encounter with local writer Mollie Skinner, was followed by a brief stop in the small coastal town of Thirroul, New South Wales, during which Lawrence completed *Kangaroo*, a novel about local fringe politics that also revealed a lot about his wartime experiences in Cornwall.

The Lawrence finally arrived in the US in September 1922. Here they encountered Mabel Dodge Luhan, a prominent socialite, and considered establishing a utopian community on what was then known as the 160-acre (0.65 km²) Kiowa Ranch near Taos, New Mexico. They acquired the property, now called the D. H. Lawrence Ranch, in 1924 in exchange for the manuscript of *Sons and Lovers*. He stayed in New Mexico for two years, with extended visits to Lake Chapala and Oaxaca in Mexico. While Lawrence was in New Mexico, he was visited by Aldous Huxley.

While in the U.S., Lawrence rewrote and published *Studies in Classic American Literature*, a set of critical essays begun in 1917, and later described by Edmund Wilson as "one of the few first-rate books that have ever been written on the subject." These interpretations, with their insights into symbolism, New England Transcendentalism and the puritan sensibility, were a significant factor in the revival of the reputation of Herman Melville during the early 1920s. In addition, Lawrence completed a number of new fictional works, including *The Boy in the Bush*, *The Plumed Serpent*, *St Mawr*, *The Woman who Rode Away*, *The Princess* and assorted short stories. He also found time to produce some more travel writing, such as the collection of linked excursions that became *Mornings in Mexico*.



Task Explain the Biography of D.H. Lawrence.

A brief voyage to England at the end of 1923 was a failure and he soon returned to Taos, convinced that his life as an author now lay in America. However, in March 1925 he suffered a near fatal attack of malaria and tuberculosis while on a third visit to Mexico. Although he eventually recovered, the diagnosis of his condition obliged him to return once again to Europe. He was dangerously ill and poor health limited his ability to travel for the remainder of his life. The Lawrence made their home in a villa in Northern Italy, living near to Florence while he wrote *The Virgin and the Gipsy* and the various versions of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928). The latter book, his last major novel, was initially published in private editions in Florence and Paris and reinforced his notoriety. Lawrence responded robustly to those who claimed to

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be offended, penning a large number of satirical poems, published under the title of “Pansies” and “Nettles”, as well as a tract on Pornography and Obscenity.

The return to Italy allowed Lawrence to renew old friendships; during these years he was particularly close to Aldous Huxley, who was to edit the first collection of Lawrence’s letters after his death, along with a memoir. With artist Earl Brewster, Lawrence visited a number of local archaeological sites in April 1927. The resulting essays describing these visits to old tombs were written up and collected together as *Sketches of Etruscan Places*, a book that contrasts the lively past with Benito Mussolini’s fascism. Lawrence continued to produce fiction, including short stories and *The Escaped Cock* (also published as *The Man Who Died*), an unorthodox reworking of the story of Jesus Christ’s Resurrection. During these final years Lawrence renewed a serious interest in oil painting. Official harassment persisted and an exhibition of some of these pictures at the Warren Gallery in London was raided by the police in mid 1929 and a number of works were confiscated. Nine of the Lawrence oils have been on permanent display in the La Fonda Hotel in Taos since shortly after Frieda’s death. They hang in a small gallery just off the main lobby and are available for viewing.

Death

Lawrence continued to write despite his failing health. In his last months he wrote numerous poems, reviews and essays, as well as a robust defence of his last novel against those who sought to suppress it. His last significant work was a reflection on the Book of Revelation, *Apocalypse*. After being discharged from a sanatorium, he died at the Villa Robermond in Vence, France from complications of tuberculosis. Frieda Weekly commissioned an elaborate headstone for his grave bearing a mosaic of his adopted emblem of the phoenix.^[12] After Lawrence’s death, Frieda married Angelo Ravagli. She returned to live on the ranch in Taos and later her third husband brought Lawrence’s ashes to rest there in a small chapel set amid the mountains of New Mexico.



Notes The headstone has recently been donated to D.H. Lawrence Heritage and is now on display in the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum in his home town of Eastwood, Nottinghamshire.

5.2 D.H. Lawrence – Sons and Lovers: Introduction to the Text

5.2.1 Written Works

Novels

Lawrence is perhaps best known for his novels *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*. Within these Lawrence explores the possibilities for life and living within an industrial setting. In particular Lawrence is concerned with the nature of relationships that can be had within such settings. Though often classed as a realist, Lawrence’s use of his characters can be better understood with reference to his philosophy. His use of sexual activity, though shocking at the time, has its roots in this highly personal way of thinking and being. It is worth noting that Lawrence was very interested in human touch behaviour and that his interest in physical intimacy has its roots in a desire to restore our emphasis on the body, and re-balance it with what he perceived to be western civilisation’s

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slow process of over-emphasis on the mind. In his later years Lawrence developed the potentialities of the short novel form in *St Mawr*, *The Virgin and the Gypsy* and *The Escaped Cock*.

Short stories

Lawrence's best-known short stories include *The Captain's Doll*, *The Fox*, *The Ladybird*, *Odour of Chrysanthemums*, *The Princess*, *The Rocking-Horse Winner*, *St Mawr*, *The Virgin and the Gypsy* and *The Woman who Rode Away*. (*The Virgin and the Gypsy* was published as a novella after he died.) Among his most praised collections is *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*, published in 1914. His collection *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*, published in 1928, develops his themes of leadership that he also explored in novels such as *Kangaroo*, *The Plumed Serpent* and *Fanny and Annie*.

Poetry

Although best known for his novels, Lawrence wrote almost 800 poems, most of them relatively short. His first poems were written in 1904 and two of his poems, *Dreams Old and Dreams Nascent*, were among his earliest published works in *The English Review*. His early works clearly place him in the school of Georgian poets, a group not only named after the reigning monarch but also to the romantic poets of the previous Georgian period whose work they were trying to emulate. What typified the entire movement, and Lawrence's poems of the time, were well-worn poetic tropes and deliberately archaic language. Many of these poems displayed what John Ruskin referred to as the "pathetic fallacy", which is the tendency to ascribe human emotions to animals and even inanimate objects.

Lawrence rewrote many of his novels several times to perfect them and similarly he returned to some of his early poems when they were collected in 1928. This was in part to fictionalise them, but also to remove some of the artifice of his first works. As he put in himself: "A young man is afraid of his demon and puts his hand over the demon's mouth sometimes and speaks for him." His best known poems are probably those dealing with nature such as those in *Birds Beasts and Flowers* and *Tortoises*. *Snake* is one of his most frequently anthologized, displays some of his most frequent concerns; those of man's modern distance from nature and subtle hints at religious themes.

Literary criticism

Lawrence's criticism of other authors often provides great insight into his own thinking and writing. Of particular note is his *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays and Studies in Classic American Literature*. In the latter, Lawrence's responses to Whitman, Melville and Edgar Allan Poe shed particular light on the nature of Lawrence's craft.

5.2.2 Introduction to *Sons and Lovers*

Though D. H. Lawrence's third published novel, *Sons and Lovers* (1913) is largely autobiographical. The novel, which began as "Paul Morel," was sparked by the death of Lawrence's mother, Lydia. Lawrence reexamined his childhood, his relationship with his mother, and her psychological effect on his sexuality.

The roots of *Sons and Lovers* are clearly located in Lawrence's life. His childhood coal-mining town of Eastwood was changed, with a sardonic twist, to Bestwood. Walter Morel was modeled on Lawrence's hard-drinking, irresponsible collier father, Arthur. Lydia became Gertrude Morel, the intellectually stifled, unhappy mother who lives through her sons. The death by erysipelas of one of Lawrence's elder brothers, Ernest, and Lydia's grief and eventual obsession with

Lawrence, seems hardly changed in the novel. (Both Ernest and his fictional counterpart, William, were engaged to London stenographers named Louisa “Gipsy” Denys.)

Notes

Self Assessment

Multiple Choice Questions:

- Full name of D.H. Lawrence is
 (a) David Herbert Richards Lawrence (b) Dan Hu Richards Lawrence
 (c) Dawes Heaton Radford Lawrence (d) Denys Hmelton Richards Lawrence
- D.H. Lawrence was the child of Arthur John Lawrence.
 (a) Second (b) Third
 (c) Fourth (d) First
- Lawrence wrote almost poems.
 (a) 900 (b) 600
 (c) 200 (d) 800
- Lawrence first poem were written in the year
 (a) 1804 (b) 1904
 (c) 1817 (d) 1790
- In 1911 Lawrence was introduced to
 (a) A publisher (b) A author
 (c) Edward Garnett (d) None of these

Filling out the cast of important characters was Jessie Chambers, a neighbor with whom Lawrence developed an intense friendship, and who would become Miriam Leiver in the novel. His mother and family disapproved of their relationship, which always seemed on the brink of romance. Nevertheless, Chambers was Lawrence’s greatest literary supporter in his early years, and he frequently showed her drafts of what he was working on, including *Sons and Lovers* (she disliked her depiction, and it led to the dissolution of their relationship). Lawrence’s future wife, Frieda von Richthofen Weekly, partially inspired the portrait of Clara Dawes, the older, sensual woman with whom Paul has an affair. To be fair, Lawrence met Frieda only in 1912 at Nottingham University College, and he started “Paul Morel” in 1910.

Considered Lawrence’s first masterpiece, most critics of the day praised *Sons and Lovers* for its authentic treatment of industrial life and sexuality. There is evidence that Lawrence was aware of Sigmund Freud’s early theories on sexuality, and *Sons and Lovers* deeply explores and revises of one of Freud’s major theories, the Oedipus complex. (Lawrence would go on to write more works on psychoanalysis in the 1920s.) Still, the book received some criticism from those who felt the author had gone too far in his description of Paul’s confused sexuality. Compared to his later works, however, such as *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love*, and *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, *Sons and Lovers* seems quite modest.

5.3 Summary

- David Herbert Richards Lawrence (11 September 1885 – 2 March 1930) was an English novelist, poet, playwright, essayist and literary critic.
- The young Lawrence attended Beauvale Board School from 1891 until 1898.

Notes

- In the autumn of 1908 the newly qualified Lawrence left his childhood home for London.
- In March 1912 Lawrence met Frieda Weekley, with whom he was to share the rest of his life.
- Lawrence rewrote many of his novels several times to perfect them and similarly he returned to some of his early poems when they were collected in 1928.

5.4 Keywords

<i>Archaeological</i>	: the study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and the analysis of physical remains.
<i>Monarch</i>	: sovereign head of state.
<i>Voluntary</i>	: done, given or acting of one's own free will.
<i>Voyage</i>	: a long journey involving travel by sea or in space.

5.5 Review Questions

1. What are the characteristics of Lawrence novels?
2. List out some important short stories of Lawrence.
3. Write short note on Sons and Lovers.

Answers: Self Assessment

1. (a) David Herbert Richards Lawrence
2. (c) Fourth
3. (d) 800
4. (b) 1904
5. (c) Edward Garnett

5.6 Further Readings



<i>Books</i>	Sons and Lovers (E Text)	— D.H. Lawrence
	D.H. Lawrence: a Personal record	— Jessie Chambers
	D.H. Lawrence	— Ronald P. Draper



Online links <http://www.humanities-ebooks.co.uk/pdf/16.pdf>
http://www.online-literature.com/dh_lawrence/

Unit 6: D.H. Lawrence – Sons and Lovers:

Detailed Study of Text

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe detailed study of text of all chapters
- Explain summary and analysis of all chapters.

Introduction

This first part of the novel focuses on Mrs. Morel and her unhappy marriage to a drinking miner. She has many arguments with her husband, some of which have painful results : on separate occasions, she is locked out of the house and hit in the head with a drawer. Estranged from her husband, Mrs. Morel takes comfort in her four children, especially her sons. Her oldest son, William, is her favorite, and she is very upset when he takes a job in London and moves away from the family. When William sickens and dies a few years later, she is crushed, not even noticing the rest of her children until she almost loses Paul, her second son, as well. From that point on, Paul becomes the focus of her life, and the two seem to live for each other.

Paul falls in love with Miriam Leivers, who lives on a farm not too far from the Morel family. They carry on a very intimate, but purely platonic, relationship for many years. Mrs. Morel does not approve of Miriam, and this may be the main reason that Paul does not marry her. He constantly wavers in his feelings toward her. Paul meets Clara Dawes, a suffragette who is separated from her husband, through Miriam. As he becomes closer with Clara and they begin to discuss his relationship with Miriam, she tells him that he should consider consummating their love and he returns to Miriam to see how she feels.

Paul and Miriam sleep together and are briefly happy, but shortly afterward Paul decides that he does not want to marry Miriam, and so he breaks off with her. She still feels that his soul belongs to her, and, in part agrees reluctantly. He realizes that he loves his mother most, however. After breaking off his relationship with Miriam, Paul begins to spend more time with Clara and they begin an extremely passionate affair. However, she does not want to divorce her husband and Baxter, and so they can never be married. Paul's mother falls ill and he devotes much of his time to caring for her. When she finally dies, he is broken-hearted and, after a final plea from Miriam, goes off alone at the end of the novel.

6.1 Detailed Study of Text

Chapter 1: The Early Married Life of the Morels

Summary

The first chapter begins with a description of the neighborhood of “The Bottoms,” the miners’ dwellings in which the Morels live. We get a small amount of description of Mrs. Morel and learn that her husband is a miner. At this point in the story, the Morel family consists of Mr. Morel and Mrs. Morel (expecting her third child), William (age seven), and Annie (age five). The first action of the novel begins three weeks after the Morels have moved into their new home, on the day of the wakes (a kind of fair). William goes off to the wakes in the morning and comes back at mid-day for dinner, telling his mother to hurry so that he can return by the time the wakes begin again. He runs off quickly when he hears the music of the merry-go-round, and Mrs. Morel takes Annie later in the afternoon. They run into William and he shows his mother two egg-cups he has won as a present for her. The three of them spend some time together at the fair, and William decides to stay after his mother and sister leave. However, we learn later that he does not enjoy himself after his mother has gone.

After the children go to bed, Mrs. Morel waits for her husband to return from the bar where he is working and reflects on her situation. She cannot afford and does not want her coming child, and she “despises” her husband because of his drinking. Her only solace is in her two children. She wonders if her life will ever change, and reflects that the events in her life seem to take place without her approval. She cleans the house and sits down to sew, and her husband finally comes home. They argue about whether or not he is drunk, he shows her that he has brought gingerbread and a coconut for the children, and she goes to bed.

The next part of the chapter fills in the background to the Morels’ marriage. It begins by describing Mrs. Morel, previously Gertrude Coppard, her upbringing in a poor family, and her friendship with a man named John Field, who gave her a Bible when she was nineteen, which she still keeps. The flashback shows her encouraging John Field to stand up for himself and go into the ministry, even though his father wants him to continue the family business. She claims that if she were a man, she would do as she liked. He tells her that being a man isn’t everything, and she has finally learned that lesson.

The next part of the flashback describes the meeting between Gertrude Coppard and Walter Morel at a Christmas party when she was twenty-three and he was twenty-seven. It seems the main attraction he holds for her is that he is different from her father. At the party he asks her to dance, she refuses, and he sits down and talks with her instead. The next Christmas they marry, and their early married life seems very happy.

However, after they have been married for seven months, Gertrude finds the unpaid bills for the household furniture in her husband’s coat pocket. She confronts him to ask about the bills and he brushes her off, so the next day she goes to see his mother. She tells Gertrude that her husband still owes a good deal of money, and that the house they live in belongs to her. This information changes the way Gertrude feels toward her husband: she becomes colder and more condescending toward him. She begins to feel isolated from her husband, and this causes her to turn toward her child instead.

A key incident happens when Morel cuts William’s hair while Mrs. Morel is sleeping. This is one of the major factors in her estrangement from her husband, as the betrayal she feels when she discovers William’s haircut remains with her throughout the coming years.

Notes

The next important incident, at which the narrative appears to have caught up to the present, occurs on another wakes holiday when Morel goes out with his friend, Jerry Purdy. Jerry is Morel's good friend, but Mrs. Morel does not like him. Jerry and Morel walk to Nottingham, which is ten miles away, and stop at all the pubs along the way. After a nap in a field, Morel does not feel so well. When he finally returns home, he has become irritable and has a fight with his wife, each calling the other a liar. He locks her outside in his anger and then falls asleep at the kitchen table. Mrs. Morel wanders in the yard for a while and eventually, after an hour of knocking at the door, succeeds in waking up her husband.

Analysis

The novel thus far is told from a third person perspective, but the narrator is closest to Mrs. Morel. The narrator is partially omniscient; he can narrate the thoughts of Mrs. Morel, but not of the other characters. Throughout the novel the perspective of the narrator changes, so the best description of the narrative mode of the novel is probably third person omniscient.

This chapter sets up the importance of the relationship between William and his mother. Through the present of the egg-cups and the way that William acts when his mother is with him, we can see that he is proud of and loves his mother very much. We also see that she contributes to his enjoyment of the fair, as he is miserable after she leaves.

The hair-cutting incident also illustrates the way that William is the most important person to Mrs. Morel, since she is willing to throw over her husband in favor of her son.

When the narrator describes why Gertrude likes Morel, we see the importance of Morel's difference from her father. This theme will come up again later when we see that William's fiancée is very different from his mother.

In the flashback section of this chapter we see the first hint of the declining happiness of the Morels' marriage: "for three months she was perfectly happy: for six months she was very happy." This suggests that Mrs. Morel's level of happiness declines steadily over the course of their marriage.

This chapter contains many elements of foreshadowing. For example, we are told that Mrs. Morel thinks she lives in a house owned by her husband. The ambiguity provides a clue that her suspicion is incorrect and that the house they live in does not actually belong to Mr. Morel.

This chapter's temporal organization is quite noteworthy. The flashback in the middle of the present-time narration confuses the time reference; past and present blend since it becomes difficult to tell when the flashback ends, or when the present resumes.

Chapter 2: The Birth of Paul, and another Battle**Summary**

Morel feels ashamed for bullying his wife. He also realizes her difficulties and begins to be somewhat more helpful. One morning Mrs. Morel summons her neighbor, Mrs. Kirk, by banging on the back of the fireplace with the poker, and tells her to fetch Mrs. Bower, the midwife. She gives birth to a boy and is very ill. Her husband comes home and is told by Mrs. Bower that he has a son. He asks her for a drink and then, after he has had his dinner, goes up to see his wife and son.

We are then introduced to Mr. Heaton, the Congregational clergyman, who comes to visit Mrs. Morel every day. One day Morel comes home while he is still visiting and begins to make

Notes

a scene by enumerating the difficulties of working in the mine. Mrs. Morel feels disgusted by her husband's tendency to play for sympathy with those around him.

One evening after a quarrel with her husband, Mrs. Morel takes Annie and the baby and goes for a walk near the cricket fields. She seems at peace and feels strongly for her baby son; she has a sudden instinct to call him Paul.

The next major battle between the Morels begins when Walter comes home late and drunk again and accidentally pulls out a kitchen drawer in his haste to get something to eat. When his wife tells him she will not wait on him, he becomes enraged and flings the drawer at her, cutting her forehead on the corner of the drawer. For the few days after this incident, Morel refuses to get out of bed. When he finally gets up, he immediately goes to the Palmerston, one of his favorite bars, and this is where he spends the next several nights.

One night, however, he finds himself out of money, and therefore takes a sixpence from his wife's purse. She notices that it is missing and confronts him, upon which he becomes very indignant. He then goes upstairs and returns with a bundle and says he is leaving. Mrs. Morel feels sure that he will return that night, but she begins to get worried when he has not returned by dark. However, she finds his bundle hidden behind the door of the coal-shed and begins to laugh.



Did u know? Morel sulkily returns later that evening and his wife tells him to fetch his bundle before going to bed.

Analysis

This chapter mainly serves the purpose of providing more examples of the battles between Mr. and Mrs. Morel. It also contains a few examples of the themes that have already been noted.

In this chapter, the way the narrative perspective shifts between characters is illustrated by a brief shift to Morel's perspective: he insists to himself that the quarrel is Mrs. Morel's fault.

Morel also reflects that having his family around him at meals makes the meals less pleasant. This suggests that Morel prefers to be separated from his family, in contrast to his wife, who lives for her children.

Chapter 3: The Casting off of Morel – The taking on of William

Summary

Morel begins to fall ill, despite all of his requests for medicine. His illness is attributed to the time he fell asleep on the ground when he went with Jerry to Nottingham. He falls seriously ill and his wife has to nurse him. She gets some help from the neighbors, but not every day. Eventually, Morel grows better, but he has been spoiled during his illness and at first wants more attention from his wife. However, she has begun to cast him off and to turn completely to her children to find a sense of meaning in her life.

During the period of peace following Morel's illness, another baby is conceived, and this child, Arthur, is born when Paul is seventeen months old. Arthur is very fond of his father, and this makes Mrs. Morel happy.

Meanwhile, time is passing, William is growing bigger, and Paul begins to have fits of depression in which he cries for no reason. One day, one of the other women of the neighborhood,

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Mrs. Anthony, confronts Mrs. Morel because William has ripped her son Alfred's collar. Mrs. Morel asks William about it, he gives her his side of the story, and she reprimands him. However, Mrs. Anthony also tells Morel about the incident and he comes home very angry with William. This provokes yet another battle between Mr. and Mrs. Morel, as it is only her intervention that prevents him from beating William.

Mrs. Morel joins the Women's Guild, a club of women attached to the Cooperative Wholesale Society, who meet and discuss social questions. When William is thirteen, she gets him a job at the Co-op office. This provokes another argument with her husband, who would have preferred his son to become a miner like himself. However, William does well in his job as he does well in everything. He wins a running race and brings his mother home the prize, an inkstand shaped like an anvil.

However, William clashes with his mother when he begins to dance. Mrs. Morel turns away girls who come to call, much to William's dismay.

At nineteen, William gets a new job in Nottingham and also begins to study very hard. Then he is offered a job in London at a hundred and twenty pounds a year and is ecstatic, failing to see his mother's dismay at his departure. William and his mother have one final shared moment as they burn his love letters, and then he goes to London to start his new life.

Analysis

This chapter continues the theme of the constant lessening of Mrs. Morel's love for her husband; Lawrence writes that her love for him ebbed in stages, but ebbed constantly.

We can see that Mrs. Morel does actually desire to have her whole family together as one. She thinks that her happiest moments come when her children seem to love their father.

More evidence of William's devotion to his mother is introduced here in the form of his presentation of the anvil. His breathless eagerness and her solemn pride underscore the intimacy and intensity of their relationship.

They quarrel, however, over William's dancing. This may be the beginning of a change in the relationship between William and Mrs. Morel, as his acceptance of the dancing corresponds to his rejection of his mother. This is especially evident when William goes to a fancy-dress ball; after an initial hesitation, he seems to forget about his mother completely.

William's acceptance of the job in London seems the final step in his distancing from his mother. According to Lawrence, William never considers that his mother might be sorry to see him go, only that she must be happy for his success.

Mrs. Morel does not want her eldest son to become like his father—she refuses to let him enter the mines, and she disapproves of his dancing because his father danced.

This chapter also provides the first textual clue that Paul is viewed differently by Mrs. Morel. Paul's fits of depression come only rarely, but when they manifest themselves, Mrs. Morel begins to treat Paul differently from the other children.

One narrative technique that is presented in this chapter and throughout the novel is the use of the iterative mode to suggest events happening the same way a number of times. Frequently-employed iterative words and phrases such as 'would' and 'used to' suggest repeated events, and this suggestion contributes to the novel's confusion of time periods by making it unclear how many times an event happened.

Notes

Chapter 4: The Young life of Paul

Summary

This chapter begins by describing the way that Paul, in the absence of William, bonded most closely with his sister Annie. She was a tomboy, who played games with the other neighborhood children, and Paul would quietly tag along behind her. One day, while Annie's favorite doll is lying covered up on the sofa, Paul jumps off the sofa arm and lands on the doll. Annie is very upset, but her brother is perhaps more upset at her grief. A few days later, Paul suggests that they make a sacrifice of the doll, and they burn and smash its remains.

One evening when Paul comes home, he finds his father and older brother in the midst of an argument, which only fails to come to blows because of Mrs. Morel's intervention.

The family moves out of the Bottoms into a house with an ash-tree, which makes noise when the wind blows through it. Morel likes it, but the children hate it.

Morel still comes home late and drunk most nights, and Paul begins to worry because his mother is worrying about his father. One night he goes out to play, then at night anxiously runs into the kitchen to check on his mother. When he finds that his father has not come, he goes to visit Mrs. Inger, who lives two doors down and has no children of her own. He talks to her for a while, then goes home.

When Morel finally does come home, he is usually rude and irritable. During this time period he becomes more and more shut out from the family affairs, as the children begin to tell their mother everything and their father nothing. This is illustrated by the example of Paul's prize, which his mother convinces him to tell his father about. During their conversation, it becomes apparent that Morel is an outsider in his own family.

The next part of the narration, however, describes the times of happiness between Morel and his children. When he is happily engrossed in his work, he gets along well with his children. He tells stories, like the ones about Taffy the horse. On these nights, when Morel has some job to do, he goes to bed early and the children feel secure when he is in bed.

One day Paul comes home at dinnertime feeling ill and does not go back to school. It turns out that he has bronchitis. His father visits him while he is ill, but he asks for his mother, and sleeping with his mother comforts him.

The next episode is that of Paul going to collect the money for his father's pay on Fridays. When his name is called, he is at the back of the room behind all the men and almost misses his turn. He is saved by Mr. Winter bottom, the clerk, who pauses and asks the men to step aside so that Paul can get through. Paul is embarrassed and flustered by the experience, and he is relieved when it is over, and he is outside. He then goes to the New Inn to meet his father and has to wait a long time before he comes. When he gets home, Paul tells his mother he doesn't want to go collect the money any more. His mother soothes him "in her own way."

On Friday night, Paul stays home and bakes while his mother goes to the market. He likes to draw or read while the baking is being done. His mother gets home, shows her purchases to Paul, and they discuss the bargains she has gotten.

The rest of the family's life in the Scargill Street house is rather happy. The children love playing outside on winter evenings with the other neighborhood children.

The final part of the chapter concerns the preparations made for William's visit at Christmas. The three other children go to the station to meet him and get very discouraged when the train is more than two hours late. At last, however, the train arrives with William. At home the parents are also anxious and begin to quarrel slightly, but finally the children arrive. William has brought presents for everyone, and everyone feels happy. After he returns to London,

William is offered a trip to the Mediterranean over the midsummer holiday. However, he declines in favor of returning home, much to the delight of his mother.

Notes

Analysis

This chapter focuses on Paul so that each event is narrated in its relation to him. We are told, for instance, that all the children feel “peculiarly” ill at ease with their father, but particularly Paul. The use of ‘peculiarly’ in this sentence suggests that it is somehow unusual for the children to be against their father. Another example of the focus on Paul is the family’s divergent opinions about the ash-tree: Paul finds it an almost unbearable presence. The disagreement about the ash-tree is representative of the conflict between father and children.

There is a sense that Paul represents all of the children; that narrating what happens to Paul suffices for describing the experiences of all of them. This is created partly by the way that all of the events in this chapter are told in relation to Paul, and partly by passages like the following in which the subjects ‘Paul’ and ‘the children’ are used seemingly interchangeably. Paul wakes; hearing thuds downstairs, and wonders nervously what his father is doing. It seems that events like this begin from Paul’s perspective and continue to include the perspective of all the children.

However, we also see further evidence of the way that Paul is treated differently from the other children; he is more delicate, and Mrs. Morel realizes it. Physically, Paul resembles his mother, and like each of the children, he picks up on and shares her anxieties about her husband.

Even though Paul is treated differently, William is still Mrs. Morel’s favorite. She thinks of him as a successful young man in London, and imagines him as her knight in shining armor.

After he breaks Annie’s doll, Paul feels resentful toward the doll. This is reminiscent of the statement about Mr. Morel in Chapter 2: “He dreaded his wife. Having hurt her, he hated her.”

Chapter 5: Paul Launches into Life

Summary

Morel is injured at work when a piece of rock falls on his leg. When Mrs. Morel gets the news, she is very flustered while she is preparing to go to the hospital to see him. Paul calms her down and gives her some tea, and she leaves for the hospital. When she returns, she tells the children that their father’s leg is injured rather badly. They all feel anxious, but are comforted by the fact that her father is a strong healer. Mrs. Morel feels somewhat guilty because she no longer loves her husband; while she is sorry for his pain and his injury, she still feels an emotional emptiness. She is somewhat comforted by talking to Paul, who is able to share her troubles. True to his nature, Morel does recover, and the family is very happy and peaceful while he is still in the hospital, almost to the point of regretting that he will soon return.

Paul is now fourteen, and it is time for him to find a job. Everyday, his mother sends him to the Co-op reading room to read the job advertisements in the paper. This makes him miserable, but he dutifully writes down a few offers and brings them home. He makes applications for several jobs using a variation on a letter that William had written. He is summoned to call on Thomas Jordan, a manufacturer of surgical appliances, and his mother is overjoyed.

Paul and Mrs. Morel travel to Nottingham one Tuesday morning to respond to the invitation. Paul suffers the whole way there, dreading the interview and the necessity of being scrutinized by strangers. During the actual interview, Mr. Jordan asks Paul to read a letter in French and he has trouble reading the handwriting, becomes flustered, and continually insists that *doigts* means fingers, although in this case it refers to the toes of a pair of stockings. Nevertheless, he is hired as junior spiral clerk.

Notes

After the interview, Paul and his mother have dinner in an eating-house, where it turns out that the food is more expensive than they realized; they order the cheapest dish possible. After dinner they wander around the town, look at some shops, and buy a few things. Paul is happy with his mother.



Task What will life be like at the Morel's now that William is in London ?

The next day he applies for a season ticket for the train. When he returns and tells his mother how much it will cost, she says that she wishes William would send them some money to help pay for things like the ticket.

Meanwhile, William is becoming a gentleman in London and is beginning to see a girl, Louisa Lily Denys Western, whom he calls Gipsy. He asks her for a photograph to send to his mother, and when the photo comes it shows her with bare shoulders. Mrs. Morel comments to William that she does not think the photo is appropriate, and the girl sends another one in which she is wearing an evening gown. Mrs. Morel is still not impressed.

The next Monday morning, Paul goes off to work on the train. He arrives at the factory and is introduced to his boss, Pappleworth. Pappleworth shows him how to fetch and copy letters, to write out orders and invoices, and to make up parcels for shipping. He also introduces him to some of the other people who work in the factory, and Paul gets along best with the women, like Polly, the overseer of the sewing crew, and the hunchback Fanny, who works in the finishing-off room. He becomes friends with many of the women and grows to like his job at Jordan's.

Analysis

We can see the way the narrative perspective has shifted from that of Mrs. Morel to that of Paul through the way Mrs. Morel's trip to the hospital is narrated. The narrator describes Mrs. Morel leaving for the hospital, and then he describes her returning; the events that happen outside of the house seem to be outside the narrative field of vision. However, this is not the case later in this chapter, when Paul goes to Nottingham to work. This suggests that Paul has become the primary focus of the narration.

This chapter contains further examples of the identification between Paul and Mrs. Morel: Paul comforts her, and talks to her every day. It seems as if their identification is extended to the point that they are sharing the same life, and this is a motif that will continue through the rest of the novel.

We also see further evidence of Mrs. Morel's disappointment in William, her favorite, in this chapter. She has been previously disappointed in William when he takes up dancing, and here she is disappointed that he does not send them money. She also disapproves of the girl he is seeing and the pictures that she sends.

Chapter 6: Death in the Family

Summary

This chapter begins with a description of Arthur, and tells how, as he grows older, he comes to detest his father. All of the children follow this same trend until they all loathe him. Arthur wins a scholarship to the school in Nottingham, and his mother decides to let him live in town with one of her sisters because of his adversarial relationship with his father. Annie is a teacher in the Board-school, and Mrs. Morel clings to Paul.

Notes

William becomes engaged to the girl he has been seeing, and decides to bring her home at Christmas. She comes home with him and puts on airs of high station, treating Annie like a servant. William begins to be annoyed with the way that she acts much grander than his family, and he tells his mother that he only feels fond of the girl when he is around her in the evenings; otherwise, he has no feelings for her.

Paul has Monday afternoons off from work, and one Monday his mother tells him that they have been invited to see Mr. Leivers on his new farm. They decide to go that afternoon. They have a nice walk through the countryside on the way there, and then are welcomed and given a tour of the farm when they arrive. The Leivers boys show Paul how to make the chicken eat out of his hand, and they tease their sister Miriam because she is afraid to try. Paul later finds her shyly reaching her hand toward the chicken and helps her to let it eat out of her hand.

The next time William brings his fiancée home, she once again annoys him and the rest of his family with her attitude toward his sister. He begins to ridicule her in front of others, and discusses with his mother that he no longer really wants to marry her, but feels that he has gone on too long to break it off now. He comes home again, alone, the first weekend in October, and his mother notices that he has not been well. The Tuesday morning after his return, Mrs. Morel gets a telegram saying that he is ill. She takes the train to London, arrives at William's lodging, and stays with him until he dies late that night. She sends a telegram for Morel to come to London, and when it arrives Paul has to go to the mine to fetch his father. Morel goes to London, and Mr. and Mrs. Morel return on Saturday night. After William's death, Mrs. Morel becomes shut off until one day Paul falls ill with pneumonia. She almost loses him as well, but he somehow pulls through and "Mrs. Morel's life now rooted itself in Paul."

Self Assessment

State the following sentences are True or False:

1. After the children go to bed, Mrs. Morel waits for William to return from the bar.
2. Morel begins to fall ill, despite all of his requests for medicine.
3. Mrs. Morel want her eldest son to become like his father.
4. Morel is injured at work when he falls on stairs.
5. Miriam and Paul make their connections through nature.

Analysis

The title of the chapter foreshadows what will happen in the end of the chapter; however, the reader wonders throughout the chapter which member of the family will die. Since the first sentence of the chapter begins with Arthur, the reader might begin by suspecting that Arthur will die. It isn't until William alludes to his death by saying that his fiancée would forget about him three months after he died that we begin to suspect that William will die. He makes many allusions to his death so that, by the time his mother gets the telegram from London that he is ill, the reader is hardly surprised.

After William dies, Mrs. Morel remains closed off from the world until Paul also falls ill. Lawrence uses an image of tulips to illustrate the bond forged between Paul and his mother as a result of his illness. Mr. Morel buys Paul a pot of tulips, and they flame in the window where Paul and his mother sit closely and contentedly.

Notes

In this chapter William follows in his mother's footsteps of choosing a spouse who is very different from his corresponding parent. He tells his mother that his fiancée is neither serious nor thoughtful—the exact opposite of Mrs. Morel.

Chapter 7: Lad-and-Girl Love

Summary

This chapter describes the growing intimacy between Paul and Miriam. It begins from Miriam's perspective and describes the way that she aspires to learning, since she cannot have pride in her social status. She is interested in Paul, but scorns him because he only sees the swine-girl side of her and not the princess she believes she is inside. When he falls ill, she feels like he would be weaker than she and that if she could take care of him, she would love him deeply.

Paul enjoys visiting the Leivers' farm because it is so different from his own home. Miriam and her mother both have very strong religious and spiritual convictions, and this strikes Paul as enormously different from his own mother's logical manner.

One evening when he is there for dinner, the boys all become very upset with Miriam because the potatoes are burned. Her mother reprimands her for answering them instead of turning the other cheek, and Paul is puzzled why an insignificant matter like potatoes would cause such conflict.

Miriam and Paul make their connection through nature, as they share the experience of looking at a birds' nest. The narrator tells us, though, that it is a long time before Paul really notices Miriam. He first becomes friends with the boys, most of all Edgar. Then one day Miriam shows him the swing they have in the cowshed, and they slowly grow closer. Paul is troubled by her "intensity, which would leave no emotion on a normal plane". She tells him of her desire to learn, and he agrees to teach her algebra. They are both frustrated by the effort, and Paul finds her simultaneously infuriating and attractive.

One evening when Paul and Miriam are walking home, she brings him into the woods to see a particular bush because she wants to share it with him. This excursion causes him to be late coming home, and his mother is unhappy with him, partly because she is not fond of Miriam. They argue about his relationship with the girl and he insists that they are not courting.

Paul organizes a walk to the Hemlock Stone on Good Friday. During this walk, Miriam notices that Paul is different when she is alone with him. On the way back, she comes upon him alone in the road, trying to fix his umbrella so his mother will not be upset, and she realizes that she loves him.

Miriam and Paul get along well during another excursion to Wingfield Manor on Easter Monday. However, after this she begins to feel tormented about whether she should be ashamed of loving him, and she decides she will no longer call at his house on Thursday nights. One evening she does call, and Paul picks some flowers to pin on her dress. Paul still refuses to define his and Miriam's relationship as that of lovers, and he forces his family to accept her as his friend.

When Paul is twenty, he has saved enough money to take his family away for a holiday for two weeks at a cottage called Mablethorpe. The night before they leave, Miriam stays at the house so she doesn't have to walk in the morning. One evening, she and Paul are walking on the beach and see a beautiful view of the moon, and Paul is confused by his instincts: he feels powerful feelings toward Miriam, but does not know how to interpret them. So they return to the cottage, Mrs. Morel admonishes him once more for being late, and the chapter ends with Paul feeling irritated at Miriam because she has made him feel unnatural.

Analysis**Notes**

This chapter presents the conflict between logic, represented by Mrs. Morel, and religion, represented by the Leivers. Paul feels simultaneously attracted and repelled by the fascinating and different tone of life at the Leivers' farm,

Miriam's unpleasant relationship with her brothers causes her to speculate on the fundamental differences between women and men. This may be an indication of the cruelty of her brothers or of Miriam's sensitivity, rather than of some actual difference between all men and women.

This chapter begins to suggest that Paul needs some connection beyond what he shares with his mother. In his free time, Paul is a painter, and he still needs his mother to do his best work, as he tells her. But Miriam allows him to take his work to another level; she makes him feel an intensity he has never before experienced.

Miriam also seems to have some sense of this connection. She feels that, until she shows him the rose bush, she will not fully have experienced it herself. The connection between Paul and Miriam may be one reason that Mrs. Morel dislikes Miriam. "She could feel Paul being drawn away by the girl." She seems to view Miriam as direct competition for her son's love and attention.

Chapter 8: Strife in Love**Summary**

Arthur enlists in the army on a whim, and then writes a letter to his mother to try to get out of it. She is very upset and goes to the sergeant, but is not able to get him out of it. He does not like the discipline of the army, but he has no choice.

Paul wins two first-prize awards in an exhibition for students' work in the Castle, which makes his mother very proud of him, and she goes to the Castle to see his work on display.

One day Paul meets Miriam in town with Clara Dawes, the daughter of an old friend of Mrs. Leivers. The next time Paul sees Miriam, she asks him what he thinks of Clara. He tells her that he likes her somewhat, and she sulks. He tells her that she is always too intense, and he longs to kiss her but cannot. When he leaves, he invites her and Edgar to tea the next day and she is happy. However, when he gets home and tells his mother, she is not pleased, and they argue.

Paul feels torn between Miriam and his mother, and resents Miriam because she makes his mother suffer. She feels hurt one day when he tells her he will not meet her before a party at his house because "you know it's only friendship."

One Friday night while Paul is doing the baking, Miriam comes to call and, when she hangs up her coat, he feels as though they live in the house together. He shows her a curtain he has made for his mother, and gives her a cushion-cover in the same design that he has made for her. They begin to talk about his work, and this is the time that Paul is happiest with Miriam.

They are then interrupted by Beatrice, a friend of the family, who makes fun of Miriam and flirts with Paul until Miriam reminds him that he is supposed to be watching the bread. He has burned one of the loaves, and then begins to feel somewhat guilty for ignoring Miriam. On some level, though, he feels that she deserves it. They go over her French notebook, they read a little bit, and he walks her home. When he returns, his mother and sister are waiting for him and they have found the burnt loaf of bread. They are angry that he has been with Miriam and his mother is ill. He reconciles with his mother and realizes that he loves her more.

Notes



Did u know? Paul's father comes home, and they fight, stopping only after Mrs. Morel faints, and Paul takes care of her.

Analysis

Paul continues to be Mrs. Morel's favorite son, and he is the one she believes will be successful. We see finally in this chapter the way that this close relationship finally leads Paul to abandon Miriam because he loves his mother best: "She was the chief thing to him, the only supreme being."

Paul suggests that perhaps Miriam likes Clara because of her apparent grudge against men. The narrator writes that Clara's grudge might be one of the reasons Paul himself likes her; this seems to suggest that Paul would appreciate a grudge against men, which is a somewhat puzzling idea.

Paul begins to echo the actions of his father, after he argues with his mother. He flings off his boots before going to bed, just as Mr. Morel had done several chapters earlier. In addition, Paul is happiest with Miriam while they are discussing his work, just as Morel is happiest with his children while he is engaged with some work.

In this chapter we see Miriam's objectification of Paul. She thinks of him as an object weaker than herself, and never considers him as an individual or as a man.

Chapter 9: Defeat of Miriam

Summary

Paul realizes that he loves his mother more than Miriam, and Miriam seems also to realize that their relationship will never deepen. One day Paul comes to call and is unusually irritable. When Miriam begs him to tell her what is the matter, he tells her that they had better break off. She does not understand why, and he tries to tell her that, even though they have agreed that they are to be friends, "it neither stops there, nor gets anywhere else." She finally understands that he is telling her that he does not love her and wants to leave her free for another man.

Miriam feels that he is mistaken and that deep in his soul he loves her, and she is angry with him for listening to his mother, who has told him that he cannot go on in the same way unless he means to become engaged. She is angry that he lets his mother and his family tell him what he should do, thinking that she wishes the outside world would let the two of them alone.

Paul misses Willey Farm when he does not go there to call on Miriam, so he continues to go there to be with Edgar and the rest of the family. He no longer spends much time alone with Miriam, but one night he ends up alone with her when Edgar stays for Communion with Mrs. Morel. They are discussing the sermon and he reads to her from the Bible, and they almost attain their previous level of harmony—until Paul begins to feel uncomfortable.

Miriam invites Paul to come to the farm one day to meet Clara Dawes. He accepts and is excited to meet her. He arrives, meets her in the parlor, talks to her and Miriam for a short time, and quickly decides that he does not like her. He goes to meet Edgar on his way back from getting coal. He tells Edgar that Clara should be called 'Nevermore' because she is so disagreeable.

Notes

Later, Miriam asks Paul to accompany the two women on a walk. They meet Miss Limb and her horse, and Clara especially is very fond of the horse. After they leave, Paul and Miriam mention that they both feel there is something strange about Miss Limb, and Clara suggests that she wants a man.

Clara walks a little ahead, and Miriam asks Paul if he still finds her disagreeable. He replies that something is the matter with her, and she agrees. They arrive at a field of wildflowers, and enjoy it together. Paul and Miriam pick flowers, and Clara says she doesn't like to pick them because she doesn't want the corpses around her. Paul argues that it is sufficient reason that he likes and wants the flowers and that there are plenty of them, and Miriam says that the spirit in which the flowers are picked is what matters. When Clara bends forward to smell the flowers, Paul scatters cowslips over her hair and neck.

Paul takes his mother to Lincoln to see the cathedral, and he becomes worried about her when she cannot climb the hill because of her heart. He laments the fact that his mother is old and ill and that he was not the eldest son, and his mother tells him that she is only a bit old and not really ill.

At this time Annie is engaged to Leonard, who has a talk with Mrs. Morel because he wants to get married right away. She cautions him that neither he nor Annie has much money, and he tells her that he realizes that, but he still wants to marry Annie right away. She trusts him, as she tells Paul, and so the wedding takes place immediately.

Mrs. Morel decides to buy Arthur out of the army, at which he is overjoyed. He comes home and takes up with Beatrice Wyld.



Notes Paul writes Miriam a letter attempting to explain what has happened in their love, and we are told that this is the end of the first phase of Paul's romantic endeavors.

Analysis

The main significant event in this chapter is that Paul returns to his mother's love, re-asserting her place as his closest loved one. He decides to abandon his affair with Miriam because his mother is more important, and he also strongly insists that he will not marry and leave his mother.

It is also significant because it contains the first real meeting between Paul and Clara. Although their friendship does not really begin until later, this is their first important point of contact.

Clara, who is portrayed as a feminist and a man-hater, makes a surprising remark that Miss Limb wants a man. This suggests that she might not be as feminist as she thinks she is, something that Paul also observes.

Chapter 10: Clara

Summary

Paul sends a painting to an exhibition at Nottingham Castle, and one morning Mrs. Morel gets very excited upon reading a letter. It turns out that he has won first prize and that the painting has been sold for twenty guineas to Major Moreton. Paul and his mother rejoice at his success, and he tells her that she can use the money to buy Arthur out of the army. Paul is invited to

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some dinner parties and tells his mother he needs an evening suit. She gives him a suit that was William's.

Paul's newfound success prompts discussions with his mother about class and happiness. She wants her son to ascend into the middle class, but he says that he feels closest to the common people. Mrs. Morel wants her son to be happy, which seems mostly to mean finding a good woman and beginning to settle down. Paul argues that he worries a normal life might bore him.

Paul maintains his connection with Miriam, able neither to break it off entirely nor to go the full way to engagement. He feels that he owes himself to her, but he begins to drift slightly away from her.



Notes Arthur is married to Beatrice, and she has a child. At first he is irritable and unhappy, but eventually he begins to accept his responsibilities and care for his wife and child.

One day a mutual friend asks Paul to take a message to Clara Dawes. He goes to her house, meets her mother, and observes them working on making lace. He delivers his message, has a pleasant conversation with Clara and her mother, and leaves, having gotten a humbling view of Clara, whom he had previously believed to be so high and mighty. Paul finds out that Susan, one of the girls at Jordan's, is leaving to get married, and so he gets Clara her job. The other girls do not like Clara because she acts like she is above them; they call her the Queen of Sheba.

One day Paul is rude to Clara; later, he regrets his rudeness and brings her chocolates as an apology. On his birthday Fanny surprises him with a gift of paints that all the girls except Clara, who they do not include in their planning, have chipped in to buy him. Paul goes out walking at dinnertime with Clara, and she complains that the girls have some secret from her. Paul tells her that the secret was the planning for his birthday present, and, that evening, she sends him a book of verse and a note. This incident brings Paul and Clara closer together.

They discuss what happened between Clara and her husband, and somehow the subject of Miriam comes up. Paul says that Miriam wants his soul, which he cannot give her. Clara, however, informs him that Miriam does not want his soul, only Paul himself.

Analysis

Paul maintains his close relationship with his mother, allowing her to live vicariously through his experiences. He tells her everything that happens in his life, and she feels as though she is a participant.

William is mentioned and reflected on several times in this chapter. First of all, when they are discussing Paul's success, Morel says that William might have been as successful as Paul, had he only lived. This statement affects Mrs. Morel deeply, and makes her feel strangely tired. When Paul tries on William's suit, she thinks again of William but is comforted by the thought of Paul. The notion that Mrs. Morel possesses Paul is particularly strong here, and this concept, which is constant throughout the novel, may account for Paul's failure to develop a strong relationship with another woman.

In the very end of this chapter, Clara provides the motivation for Paul to go back to Miriam. It is interesting that this motivation comes from Clara, since Miriam is her chief rival (besides Mrs. Morel) for Paul's affection.

Chapter 11: The Test on Miriam

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Summary

Inspired by Clara's advice, Paul realizes that he must go back to Miriam. He reflects that the problems between the two of them may have been caused by the lack of sexuality in their relationship. He feels no aversion to her; rather, he feels that his desire for her has been overwhelmed by his stronger shyness and virginity.

He begins to spend more time with Miriam again, much to the dismay of his mother. One day he begins a serious discussion with her about marriage, and asks her if she thinks they have been "too fierce" in their purity toward each other. He tells her that he loves her, that he has been obstinate, and he kisses her. On their way home, he asks her (not in so many words) if she will sleep with him, and she tells him that she will, but not now.

Miriam feels that her submission to Paul will be a sacrifice, and it is a sacrifice she is willing to make for him. He begins to treat his relationship with her as a romantic relationship. One evening they go into the woods and "she relinquished herself to him," but with some horror and with her soul somewhat apart.

Miriam goes to stay at her grandmother's cottage, and Paul visits her often. One holiday he goes to spend the whole day with her. She prepares dinner, for that day they feel as though they live together in that cottage. They take a walk outside after dinner, and then come back inside and make love. Paul feels that he is sacrificing Miriam and that she is allowing herself to be sacrificed because she loves him so much.

During the next week, he asks her why she is so hesitant toward him, and she replies that she feels it is not quite right because they are not married. He tells her that he would like to marry her, but she feels they are too young. He begins to feel a sense of failure and to draw somewhat away from Miriam again. He begins to spend more time with his men friends and also once again with Clara.

Paul tells his mother that he will break off with Miriam, because he does not love her and does not want to marry her. She is somewhat surprised, and encourages him to do whatever he thinks is best. He goes to Miriam and tells her they should break off because he does not want to marry. She is upset, tells him he is a child of four, and tells him that she knew all along that it would not work out between them. This upsets Paul and he begins to feel that she has deceived him; she had only pretended to love him. They part, each full of bitterness.



Task What can Miriam do to get Paul back ?

Analysis

Partly because of Paul's more frequent visits to Miriam, Mrs. Morel begins to give up on him. She feels that his mind is made up, and that nothing would persuade him to change his mind and restore his loyalties to her.

Lawrence's language seems to be deliberately vague on the subject of sex; it seems that Paul and Miriam sleep together in the woods when the narrator says "she relinquished herself to him." However, when they are in her grandmother's cottage, it seems that he makes love to her for the first time. Paul feels as he rides home that night that he had finally moved past his youth. This vagueness of language is largely due to the strict public morality that characterized

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society when the novel was written. Lawrence's books, despite his efforts at vagueness, often produced horror—many of them were even banned because of their sexual content.

Chapter 12: Passion

Summary

Paul begins to spend much of his time with his mother again. They go to the Isle of Wight for a holiday, and Mrs. Morel has a bad fainting fit caused by too much walking. She recovers, but Paul still feels anxious about her condition.

Paul also returns to spending a great deal of time with Clara. He tells her that he has broken off with Miriam. One Saturday evening Paul and Clara go for a walk and he kisses her, then, upon leaving, he is suddenly consumed by passion for her and cannot wait for Monday to come so that he can see her again. On Monday they go walking in the afternoon and take a tram out to the country. They walk near a river and decide to go down to the bank, but because of the rain, the path is gone. They encounter two fishermen while walking along the riverbank and keep walking until they find a secluded clearing slightly above the river level. After they leave, they climb up to the top again and they stop while Paul cleans off Clara's boots. She distracts him with kisses, but he finally finishes. They stop for tea at the house of an old woman, who gives Clara some flowers.

Paul returns home and tells his mother that he has been with Clara. She cautions him because Clara is a married woman, and he tells her not to worry. He asks if she would like to meet Clara, and decides to invite her to tea at their house one Sunday afternoon.

He still sees Miriam occasionally, and they talk about Clara and why she left her husband. Miriam tries to compare them to Mr. and Mrs. Morel, but Paul disagrees; he says that his mother felt passionately toward his father and that's why she stayed with him. He feels that Clara never had this type of passion for Baxter. Miriam understands that he is trying to initiate himself into passion. He tells her that Clara is coming to tea at his house on Sunday to meet his mother, and she understands that this is an indication of his seriousness.

When Clara comes to tea, she gets along well with his mother. Morel also meets her and impresses her with his politeness. Clara and Paul are in the garden looking at the flowers when Miriam arrives to say hello to Clara. She sees them together, and feels as though they are married. Mrs. Morel is not pleased to see Miriam, whom she still dislikes. All three go to chapel and, afterward, when Paul and Clara are walking home, she asks him if he will give Miriam up. He tells her that he thinks he will always be friends with Miriam, and she draws away from him slightly and mocks him, telling him to run after Miriam. He gets angry with her and kisses her in rage. They go off into the fields, where they look at the lights of the town until Clara realizes she must go to make her train. They run and she just makes the train.

The next week Paul takes Clara to the theatre. She tells him to wear his evening suit, and she arrives dressed in a green evening dress. After the play, Paul realizes that he has missed his train, and Clara tells him to come home with her instead of walking. They arrive, and Clara's mother, Mrs. Radford, makes fun of their fancy clothes. Paul and Clara sit up playing cribbage, and Mrs. Radford waits up for them. Finally Paul goes to bed, but he cannot sleep for want of Clara. After he hears Mrs. Radford go to sleep and realizes that Clara is waiting downstairs, he goes down to her and asks her to come to his bed instead of going to sleep with her mother. She refuses, and he goes back to bed.

Mrs. Radford wakes him up in the morning, and he realizes that she is fond of him. He asks if she and Clara would like to go to the seaside with him and is amazed when she accepts.

Analysis**Notes**

Paul continues to exhibit physical similarities to his mother. At one point in this chapter he clicks his tongue, and the narrator comments that Mrs. Morel shares the same habit.

Paul's relationship with his mother also continues to be central. Miriam knows Paul well enough to understand that whether he has told his mother about Clara is an indication of the seriousness of his feelings for her. This illustrates the way that his mother is still the most important woman to him, and the degree to which other events in his life can be understood by the way that they relate to her. It is also very important that Clara gets along well with his mother, as Clara understands, dreading the meeting because she realized Paul's intense love for Mrs. Morel.

Again, there is no direct mention of sex in this chapter, but it is alluded to in Clara and Paul's discussion of whether they are criminals, and in Paul's mention of Eve after they have been walking by the riverbank.

Chapter 13: Baxter Dawes**Summary**

Paul is in a bar with some friends when Baxter Dawes enters, Clara's husband from whom she has been separated for years. Paul offers him a drink, since he is the superior at Jordan's, but Dawes refuses. Dawes begins to talk about Paul being at the theatre with a 'tart,' and Paul is about to leave when Dawes says something that causes Paul to throw a glass of beer in his face. Dawes rushes at Paul but is held back, and he is thrown out of the bar. Paul's friends at the bar tell him that he should learn to box, so that he can take care of Dawes. When he leaves, one of the men walks with him.

He tells Clara what has happened, and she does not seem surprised, saying that Baxter is a low sort of person. She wants Paul to carry a gun or a knife for protection and is angry when he refuses.

One day at the factory, Paul runs into Dawes. Dawes threatens him while he carries on with his work. Finally Dawes grabs Paul's arm, and Thomas Jordan comes out of his office to see what is happening. He tells Dawes to leave and, when he does not, grabs his arm. Dawes jerks his elbow and sends Jordan flying backward through a spring-door and down half a flight of steps. Jordan is not hurt, but he dismisses Dawes.

Paul discusses love with his mother and says that perhaps something is the matter with him and that he can't love. She says that he has not met the right woman, and he replies that he will never meet the right woman while she is alive. Clara asks him about the future, and he tells her he will go abroad and then come back to be with his mother. He tells her not to ask about the future but just to be with him now, and they surrender to their passion. She does not want a divorce from Baxter and therefore cannot belong to him completely. They both realize that they will go separate ways.

One evening they pass Dawes as they are walking, and Paul does not realize who it is until after they have passed him, and Clara says it was Baxter. Another night some time later, Paul is walking alone and encounters Dawes waiting for him. They fight and Paul is hurt. He struggles to get himself home and goes to sleep, and his mother is there to take care of him when he awakes. While he is ill, Clara and then Miriam come to visit him, and he tells his mother that he doesn't care about them.

After he is better, he goes on a holiday with his friend Newton and arranges to meet his mother at Annie's house in Sheffield. When he arrives there, Annie opens the door and he

Notes

realizes that his mother is ill. They discover that she has a tumor, and Paul goes to see her doctor in Nottingham. He agrees to come to Sheffield, looks at the tumor, and says that he may be able to cure it. Mrs. Morel stays in Sheffield for two months, and then the family hires a motor-car to drive her home, at which she is very glad.

Analysis

In this chapter Paul admits that his mother does not share in all aspects of his life: his sex life is separate from her. He evidently feels that the incident with Dawes in the bar belongs to this life, because he feels mortified at the thought of telling her about it. However, he does not like having to conceal anything from his mother.

We can see, however, that his mother is still the most important to him through his thoughts as he tries to make his way home after his fight with Dawes: he thinks over and over again that he must make it home to his mother.

Paul's reflections on love recall his older brother William's complaints when he was engaged. Paul thinks that he loves Clara when he is with her, is indifferent toward her when not with her, and often tunes her out when she talks to him.

Chapter 14: The Release

Summary

Dr. Ansell tells Paul that Baxter Dawes is in the fever hospital in Sheffield, and Paul decides to visit him. Paul tells Dawes that he can recommend him a convalescent home in Seathorpe. He tells Clara that he has been to visit Dawes in the hospital, and she becomes upset and realizes that she has treated her husband badly. She goes to see him to try to make amends, but at first they do not get on well. Paul also visits Dawes a few times, and the two men begin to develop a sort of friendship.

Paul does not spend much time with Clara now, because he is occupied with his mother's illness. Mrs. Morel gets gradually worse, and Paul spends much time caring for her. When Clara reminds him that it is her birthday, he takes her to the seashore, but spends most of the time talking about his mother and how he wishes that she would die.

The next time he sees Dawes, Paul mentions that he has been with Clara, and this is the first mention the two men make of Clara. He tells Dawes that he will go abroad after his mother dies.

Time passes, and Mrs. Morel stays the same. Miriam writes to Paul and he visits her. She kisses him, believing he will be comforted, but he does not want that kind of comfort from her and finally manages to get away. Paul and Annie share the nursing of their mother. They begin to feel as if they can no longer go on, and Paul decides to give her an overdose of morphia to put an end to all their suffering. He crushes all the pills they have into his mother's milk and she drinks it obediently, believing it to be a new sleeping draught. She lasts through the night and finally dies the next morning.

Dawes is now in a convalescent home, and Paul goes to see him again and suggests that he has plenty of life left in him and that he should try to get Clara back so that he can regain something of his former life. The next day, he and Clara bring Dawes to his lodging and Paul leaves them together.

Self Assessment

Notes

Fill in the blanks:

6. Paul maintains his close relationship with his
7. Miriam goes to stay at her cottage, and Paul visits her often.
8. continues to exhibit physical similarities to his mother.
9. Arthur is born when Paul is old.
10. Morel is injured at work when a piece of falls on his leg.

Analysis

This chapter is an excellent example of the way that the novel is not always narrated in chronological order, since the first episode in which Paul visits Baxter Dawes in the hospital actually occurs before Mrs. Morel is taken home, an episode which is included in the previous chapter.

Mrs. Morel's desire to be with Paul is so strong that he tells Clara he believes she refuses to die so that she can stay with him. "And she looks at me, and she wants to stay with me. She's got such a will, it seems as if she would never go - never!"

Even though he says he wishes she would die, Paul's strong bond to his mother remains. He feels as though a part of him were dying also. After she dies, Paul still feels this connection: "Looking at her, he felt he could never, never let her go."

Morel shows his vulnerability after his wife dies, when he waits up for Paul to return home, so that he is not alone in the house with the dead body. Paul, who had considered Morel to be fearless, is taken by surprise.



Task How do you feel about the death of Mrs. Morel? Can you explain your feelings?

Chapter 15: Derelict

Summary

Clara goes back to Sheffield with her husband, and Paul is left alone with his father. There is no point in keeping their house any longer, so they each take lodgings nearby. Paul is lost without his mother. He can no longer paint, and he puts all of his energy into his work at the factory. He has debates within himself, telling himself that he must stay alive for his mother's sake. However, he wants to give up.

One Sunday evening, however, he sees Miriam at the Unitarian Church. He asks her to have supper with him quickly and she agrees. She tells him that she has been going to a farming college and will probably be kept on as a teacher there. She says that she thinks they should be married, and he says he's not sure that would be much good. He says he does not want it very much, and so she gives up. That is the end between them. She leaves him, realizing that "his soul could not leave her, wherever she was."

Paul, alone, yearns for his mother and considers following her into death. However, he decides to leave off thinking about suicide, and instead walks toward the town.

Notes

Analysis

This chapter is Miriam's last attempt finally to possess Paul, now that the obstacle of his mother is out of the way. However, by the end she sees the futility of her efforts and realizes that, even in death, Mrs. Morel still owns Paul and he can never be hers.

Paul says of his mother that, "She was the only thing that held him up, himself, amid all this. And she was gone, intermingled herself. He wanted her to touch him, have him alongside with her." This completes the book's treatment of the relationship between Paul and Mrs. Morel and illustrates the way that his love for her has remained constant throughout.

Explanation of the novel's title

Lawrence rewrote the work four times until he was happy with it. Although before publication the work was usually called Paul Morel, Lawrence finally settled on Sons and Lovers. Just as the new title makes the work less focused on a central character, many of the later additions broadened the scope of the work, thereby making the work less autobiographical. While some of the edits by Garnett were on the grounds of propriety or style, others would once more narrow the emphasis back upon Paul.

6.2 Summary

- This first part of the novel focuses on Mrs. Morel and her unhappy marriage to a drinking miner.
- Morel feels ashamed for bullying his wife. He also realizes her difficulties and begins to be somewhat more helpful.
- Morel is injured at work when a piece of rock falls on his leg.
- Paul and Mrs. Morel travel to Nottingham one Tuesday morning to respond to the invitation.
- Miriam and Paul get along well during another excursion to Wingfield Manor on Easter Monday.
- Paul discusses love with his mother and says that perhaps something is the matter with him and that he can't love.

6.3 Keywords

<i>Fiancee</i>	: a person to whom another is engaged to be married.
<i>Intimacy</i>	: close familiarity or friendship.
<i>Seashore</i>	: an area of sandy, stony or rocky land bordering and level with the sea.
<i>Vicariously</i>	: acting or done for another person.

6.4 Review Questions

1. Why do you think Morel cuts off William's hair? And why is his wife so upset?
2. In what ways does Morel become an 'outsider' to his family? How does this make him feel?

3. Why does Paul find Clara so attractive at the theater?
4. Why does Paul leave Miriam?
5. How do you feel about Paul helping his mother to die? Do you think it was right?

Notes

Answers: Self Assessment

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| 1. False | 2. True |
| 3. False | 4. False |
| 5. True | 6. Mother |
| 7. Grandmother's | 8. Paul |
| 9. Seveenteen months | 10. Rock |

6.5 Further Readings



Books	Sons and Lovers (E Text)	— D.H. Lawrence
	D.H. Lawrence: a Personal record	— Jessie Chambers
	D.H. Lawrence	— Ronald P. Draper



Online links <http://pinkmonkey.com/dl/library1/digi207.pdf>

http://www.planetpdf.com/planetpdf/pdfs/free_ebooks/Sons_and_Lovers_NT.pdf

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Unit 7: D.H. Lawrence – Sons and Lovers: Themes and Characterization

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Know about the characters of Sons and Lovers
- Know about the major themes
- Explain style and plot construction.

Introduction

Sons and Lovers is a 'bildungsroman' (A novel whose principal subject is the moral, psychological, and intellectual development of a usually youthful main character.) Some novels which fall in this category are autobiographical like Dickens' 'David Copperfield' or Joyce's 'Portrait of the Artist ...'. Likewise Lawrence's Sons and Lovers, roughly deals with the childhood, adolescence and early adulthood of the author. It is a frank portrayal of the relationship between a domineering mother and the son, a relationship that influences every aspect of the protagonist's life. From his relationship with his father to his romantic affairs with two very different women.

D.H. Lawrence was a rebel. He felt that society made people lifeless and unreal, and that the class system was pernicious. Lawrence believed in the 'life force', in Nature, its beauty and its power. He also believed passionately in man's natural instincts; he believed that sexual feeling between a man and woman was natural and should be celebrated. He was the first novelist in western culture to attempt to explore sexuality seriously and frankly. Because of this, several of his novels were refused publication and declared obscene. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, completed in 1928, was only published in its complete form in 1960.

Lawrence's writing was also revolutionary in that it stressed the importance of feelings. The plot was important for the light that it threw on the inner events in a character. Lawrence's novel style is often highly poetic. In a sense, Lawrence was a kind of mystic; he worshipped 'life itself' and attempted to convey his feelings and pass on his beliefs in his novels. To some extent he succeeded; in the west, the twentieth century has been an era of greater openness, particularly in the area of feelings.

7.1 Character Lists

Paul Morel

Paul is the protagonist of the novel, and we follow his life from infancy to his early twenties. He is sensitive, temperamental, artistic (a painter), and unceasingly devoted to his mother. They are inseparable; he confides everything in her, works and paints to please her, and nurses her as she dies. Paul has ultimately unsuccessful romances with Miriam Leiver and Clara Dawes, always alternating between great love and hatred for each of them. His relationship fails with Miriam because she is too sacrificial and virginal to claim him as hers, whereas it fails with Clara because, it seems, she has never given up on her estranged husband. However, the major reason behind Paul's break-ups is the long shadow of his mother; no woman can ever equal her in his eyes, and he can never free himself from her possession.

Gertrude Morel

Mrs. Morel is unhappily married to Walter Morel, and she redirects her attention to her children, her only passion in life. She is first obsessed with William, but his death leaves her empty and redirects her energies toward Paul. She bitterly disapproves of all the women these two sons encounter, masking her jealousy with other excuses. A natural intellectual, she also feels society has limited her opportunities as a woman, another reason she lives through Paul.

Miriam Leiver

Miriam is a virginal, religious girl who lives on a farm near the Morels, and she is Paul's first love. However, their relationship takes ages to move beyond the Platonic and into the romantic. She loves Paul deeply, but he never wants to marry her and "belong" to her, in his words. Rather, he sees her more as a sacrificial, spiritual soul mate and less as a sensual, romantic lover. Mrs. Morel, who feels threatened by Miriam's intellectuality, always reinforces his disdain for Miriam.

Clara Dawes

Clara is an older woman estranged from her husband, Baxter Dawes. Unlike the intellectual Miriam, Clara seems to represent the body. Her sensuality attracts Paul, as does her elusiveness and mysteriousness. However, she loses this elusiveness as their affair continues, and Paul feels she has always "belonged" to her husband.

Walter Morel

Morel, the coal-mining head of the family, was once a humorous, lively man, but over time he has become a cruel, selfish alcoholic. His family, especially Mrs. Morel, despises him, and Paul frequently entertains fantasies of his father's dying.

Notes

William Morel

William, Mrs. Morel's "knight," is her favorite son. But when he moves away, she disapproves of his new lifestyle and new girlfriends, especially Lily. His death plunges Mrs. Morel into grief.

Baxter Dawes

Dawes, a burly, handsome man, is estranged from his wife, Clara Dawes, because of his infidelity. He resents Paul for taking Clara, but over time the men become friends.

Annie Morel

Annie is the Morel's only daughter. She is a schoolteacher who leaves home fairly early.

Arthur Morel

Arthur, the youngest Morel son, is exceptionally handsome, but also immature. He rashly enters the military, and it takes a while until he gets out. He marries Beatrice.

Louisa Lily Denys Western

Lily, William's girlfriend, is materialistic and vain. Her condescending behavior around the Morels irritates William, and she soon forgets about him after his death.

The Leivers

The Leivers own a nearby farm that Paul and Mrs. Morel visit. They have three sons Edgar being the eldest and two daughters, including Miriam.

Edgar Leivers

Edgar Leivers is the eldest Leiver son, Edgar and Paul become friends.

Agatha Leivers

Agatha Leivers is the elder sister of Miriam; Agatha is a school-teacher who fights with Miriam for Paul's attention.

Beatrice

Beatrice is a friend of the Morel's who stops by and insults Miriam and flirts with Paul. She eventually marries Arthur.

Mrs. Radford

Mrs. Radford is Clara's mother, with whom she lives. Clara is embarrassed by her.

Thomas Jordan

Thomas Jordan is a curt, old man; Jordan employs Paul at his warehouse of surgical appliances.

Pappleworth

Notes

Pappleworth is Paul's supervisor at Jordan's.

Fanny

Fanny is a lively hunchback who works at Jordan's.

Polly

Polly is a worker at Jordan's whom Paul regularly has dinner with.

Connie

Connie is an attractive, redheaded worker at Jordan's.

Louie

Louie is a facetious worker at Jordan's.

Emma

Emma is an old, condescending worker at Jordan's.

Mr. Heaton

Mr. Heaton is the clergyman who visits Mrs. Morel and becomes Paul's godfather.

Dr. Ansel

Mrs. Morel's doctor.

Jerry Purdy

Jerry Purdy is the friend of Morel's.

John Field

John Field is childhood friend of Mrs. Morel's.

7.2 Major Themes

Oedipus complex

Perhaps Sigmund Freud's most celebrated theory of sexuality, the Oedipus complex takes its name from the title character of the Greek play Oedipus Rex. In the story, Oedipus is prophesied to murder his father and have sex with his mother (and he does, though unwittingly). Freud argued that these repressed desires are present in most young boys. (The female version is called the Electra complex.)

Notes

D.H. Lawrence was aware of Freud's theory, and *Sons and Lovers* famously uses the Oedipus complex as its base for exploring Paul's relationship with his mother. Paul is hopelessly devoted to his mother, and that love often borders on romantic desire. Lawrence writes many scenes between the two that go beyond the bounds of conventional mother-son love. Completing the Oedipal equation, Paul murderously hates his father and often fantasizes about his death.

Paul assuages his guilty, incestuous feelings by transferring them elsewhere, and the greatest receivers are Miriam and Clara (note that transference is another Freudian term). However, Paul cannot love either woman nearly as much as he does his mother, though he does not always realize that this is an impediment to his romantic life. The older, independent Clara, especially, is a failed maternal substitute for Paul. In this setup, Baxter Dawes can be seen as an imposing father figure; his savage beating of Paul, then, can be viewed as Paul's unconsciously desired punishment for his guilt. Paul's eagerness to befriend Dawes once he is ill (which makes him something like the murdered father) further reveals his guilt over the situation.

But Lawrence adds a twist to the Oedipus complex: Mrs. Morel is saddled with it as well. She desires both William and Paul in near-romantic ways, and she despises all their girlfriends. She, too, engages in transference, projecting her dissatisfaction with her marriage onto her smothering love for her sons. At the end of the novel, Paul takes a major step in releasing himself from his Oedipus complex. He intentionally overdoses his dying mother with morphia, an act that reduces her suffering but also subverts his Oedipal fate, since he does not kill his father, but his mother.



Task Define Oedipus complex.

Bondage

Lawrence discusses bondage, or servitude, in two major ways: social and romantic. Socially, Mrs. Morel feels bound by her status as a woman and by industrialism. She complains of feeling "buried alive," a logical lament for someone married to a miner, and even the children feel they are in a "tight place of anxiety." Though she joins a women's group, she must remain a housewife for life, and thus is jealous of Miriam, who is able to utilize her intellect in more opportunities. Ironically, Paul feels free in his job at the factory, enjoying the work and the company of the working-class women, though one gets the sense that he would still rather be painting.

Romantic bondage is given far more emphasis in the novel. Paul (and William, to a somewhat lesser extent) feels bound to his mother, and cannot imagine ever abandoning her or even marrying anyone else. He is preoccupied with the notion of lovers "belonging" to each other, and his true desire, revealed at the end, is for a woman to claim him forcefully as her own. He feels the sacrificial Miriam fails in this regard and that Clara always belonged to Baxter Dawes. It is clear that no woman could ever match the intensity and steadfastness of his mother's claim.

Complementing the theme of bondage is the novel's treatment of jealousy. Mrs. Morel is constantly jealous of her sons' lovers, and she masks this jealousy very thinly. Morel, too, is jealous over his wife's closer relationships with his sons and over their successes. Paul frequently rouses jealousy in Miriam with his flirtations with Agatha Leiver and Beatrice, and Dawes is violently jealous of Paul's romance with Clara.

Contradictions and oppositions

Notes

Lawrence demonstrates how contradictions emerge so easily in human nature, especially with love and hate. Paul vacillates between hatred and love for all the women in his life, including his mother at times. Often he loves and hates at the same time, especially with Miriam. Mrs. Morel, too, has some reserve of love for her husband even when she hates him, although this love dissipates over time.

Lawrence also uses the opposition of the body and mind to expose the contradictory nature of desire; frequently, characters pair up with someone who is quite unlike them. Mrs. Morel initially likes the hearty, vigorous Morel because he is so far removed from her dainty, refined, intellectual nature.



Notes Paul's attraction to Miriam, his spiritual soul mate, is less intense than his desire for the sensual, physical Clara.

The decay of the body also influences the spiritual relationships. When Mrs. Morel dies, Morel grows more sensitive, though he still refuses to look at her body. Dawes's illness, too, removes his threat to Paul, who befriends his ailing rival.

Nature and flowers

Sons and Lovers has a great deal of description of the natural environment. Often, the weather and environment reflect the characters' emotions through the literary technique of pathetic fallacy. The description is frequently eroticized; both to indicate sexual energy and to slip past the censors in Lawrence's repressive time.

Lawrence's characters also experience moments of transcendence while alone in nature, much as the Romantics did. More frequently, characters bond deeply while in nature. Lawrence uses flowers throughout the novel to symbolize these deep connections. However, flowers are sometimes agents of division, as when Paul is repulsed by Miriam's fawning behavior towards the daffodil.

7.3 D.H. Lawrence — *Sons and Lovers: Style and Plot*

7.3.1 Plot

Gertrude Morel has an unhappy marriage to coal-miner William Morel in the English town of Bestwood. She is most devoted to her eldest son, William. Her second, sensitive son, Paul, grows up and works in a factory while painting on the side. William dies of a skin disease, and Mrs. Morel plunges into grief. Rededicating her life to Paul revives her, and the two become inseparable.

Self Assessment

Fill in the blanks:

1. *Sons and Lovers* is a
2. Lawrence believed in the in nature, its beauty and its power.
3. Paul is the of the novel.

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4. is a facetious worker at Jordan's.
5. Sons and Lovers is structured
6. Sons and Lovers has a great deal of description of the

Paul, now a young man, spends a great deal of time with Miriam Leiver, a chaste, religious girl who lives on a nearby farm. Their Platonic relationship is intense and romantic, but they never approach physical intimacy. Mrs. Morel bitterly dislikes Miriam, feeling she is trying to take her son away from her. Paul grows attracted to Clara Dawes, an older, sensual woman separated from her husband.



Did u know? Finally, Paul and Miriam have sex, but he soon loses interest in her, unwilling to be bound to her in marriage or love.

Paul and Clara have sex and a romance blossoms, but her estranged husband, Baxter Dawes, savagely beats Paul one night. Mrs. Morel develops a tumor and, after a long struggle, dies. Paul arranges the reunion of Clara and Dawes, whom he has befriended since their fight. Paul and Morel move out of the house to separate locations. Paul feels lost, unable to paint any more. Miriam makes a last appeal to him for romance, but he rejects her. He feels suicidal one night, but changes his mind and resolves not to "give into the darkness."

7.3.2 Plot Summary

Chapter 1: The Early Married Life of the Morels

The first chapter of Sons and Lovers introduces the Morel family and describes the story's setting, a neighborhood called "The Bottoms," where the miners live. Mrs. Morel is pregnant with her third child, which she does not want because she has fallen out of love with her husband and because the family is poor. When her husband comes home from working at a bar, the two argue over his drinking.

This chapter also contains a flashback to the time when Mrs. Morel met Walter at a Christmas party. She was twenty-three, reserved, and thoughtful; he was twenty-seven, good-looking, and outgoing, and very different from Mrs. Morel's father. They are married by the following Christmas. Less than a year into their marriage, however, Mrs. Morel discovers that Walter is not the man she thought he was. He does not own his house as he said he did, and he is in considerable debt.

Two key events occur in this chapter. The first is when Walter cuts his son's hair while his wife is sleeping. Mrs. Morel views this as a betrayal, and the image of William, her favorite child, standing in front of his father with shorn locks on the floor, stays with her. The second event occurs when Walter come home drunk late one night and fights with his wife. Walter locks his pregnant wife out of the house, letting her in later, after he has slept off part of his alcohol.

Chapter 2: The Birth of Paul, and another Battle

With the help of Mrs. Bower, a midwife, Mrs. Morel gives birth to a son. Walter arrives home, immediately asks Mrs. Bower for a drink, has his dinner, and then goes upstairs to see his wife. The arrival of Paul increases the tension in the house, as the couple continues to bicker and fight. Walter does not like to be around his family, and the estrangement between the two

adults grows. In one scene, Walter drunkenly pulls out a drawer and throws it at his wife, hitting her and cutting her above the eye. He is ashamed of his actions, but tells himself it is her fault. He spends the next few days drinking at a bar. Toward the end of the chapter, Walter steals money from his wife's purse, and then denies it when she confronts him. He stalks out of the house with a bundle of his belongings saying that he is leaving, but he returns home that night.

Chapter 3: The Casting off of Morel—the Taking on of William

In this chapter, Walter falls ill, but his wife nurses him back to health. Mrs. Morel, however, is devoting more and more of her attention to the children. She tolerates her husband, but does not love him. In the period after Walter's illness, the couple conceives another child, Arthur, who is born when Paul is one and a half years old. Arthur becomes Walter's favorite child and is like him both physically and temperamentally.

Walter and his wife fight over how to discipline their children and plan for their future. Mrs. Morel vetoes her husband's suggestion that William work in the mines; she finds him a job at the Cooperative Wholesale Society instead. At nineteen, William takes a job in London, much to his devoted mother's chagrin.

Chapter 4: The Young Life of Paul

This chapter focuses on Paul's childhood, and all of the events narrated are in relation to his character. Mrs. Morel and her husband still fight, and Walter drifts further away from the family, even though they have moved from "The Bottoms" and into a new house. There are also moments when the family bonds, and Mrs. Morel encourages the children to share the events of the day with their father. But overall, Walter is more alienated than ever from his wife and children, especially Paul. A significant event occurs when Paul breaks his sister's doll and then experiences hatred for the doll. This echoes his father's own behavior toward his mother.

Chapter 5: Paul Launches into Life

In this chapter, Walter injures his leg, causing anxiety in his family and guilt in Mrs. Morel, who is concerned for her husband's health but guilt ridden because she no longer loves him. Paul, now fourteen, hunts for work and lands a position with Thomas Jordan, a manufacturer of surgical appliances, as a junior clerk. William, still in London, is now dating, and sends his mother a photograph of his girlfriend, Lily Weston. His mother is not impressed.

Media Adaptations

- The most acclaimed film adaptation of Lawrence's novel is the 1960 film *Sons and Lovers*, directed by Jack Cardiff and starring Trevor Howard, Dean Stockwell, and Wendy Hiller. The film was nominated for seven Academy Awards. Many libraries and video stores carry the video.
- In 1995, Penguin Audiobooks released an audiocassette of Lawrence's novel with Paul Copley narrating.

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Chapter 6: Death in the Family

In this chapter, Arthur leaves home to attend school in Nottingham, where he lives with his sister, Annie. Paul visits the Leivers's farm where he meets Miriam Leivers. The "Death" in the chapter title refers to William's death. He dies after a short illness, and his mother is devastated. Paul falls ill with pneumonia, but his mother nurses him back to health, and the two develop an intense emotional bond.

Chapter 7: Lad-and-Girl Love

Paul develops a close relationship with Miriam, who aspires to transcend her working-class roots through education. She takes care of Paul when he is sick and falls in love with him. Paul, however, remains ambivalent about the relationship and struggles to define what he feels toward her. Mrs. Morel does not like Miriam, because she believes that Miriam is taking Paul away from her.

Chapter 8: Strife in Love

The key events in this chapter include Arthur's enlistment in the army and events illustrating Paul's struggle to define his feelings for Miriam while at the same time remaining emotionally faithful to his mother. Paul also sees Clara Dawes, whom he tells Miriam he likes.

Chapter 9: Defeat of Miriam

This chapter details Paul's recognition that he loves his mother more than Miriam and would never marry and leave her. Compounding his love for his mother is his awareness that she is old now and not well. He breaks off his relationship with Miriam, who remains angry with him for being so influenced by his mother. However, Paul continues to visit the Leivers's farm, where he later meets Clara again, but he tells Edgar, Miriam's brother, that he does not like Clara because she is so abrasive. He is both attracted to and repelled by Clara's dislike of men.

Annie marries Leonard, even though neither of them have much money, and Mrs. Morel buys Arthur out of the army. Arthur returns home and promptly marries Beatrice Wyld.

Chapter 10: Clara

One of Paul's paintings is sold for twenty guineas to Major Moreton. Paul discusses his success with his mother, who expresses her desire that he settle down with a woman and make a better life for himself. Paul visits Clara and meets her mother. He revises his opinion of Clara and secures a job for her. The two grow closer, and Clara discusses her failed marriage with him.

Chapter 11: The Test on Miriam

Paul returns to Miriam, convinced that the "problem" between them stems from the lack of sexuality in their relationship. He tells her that he loves her, and the two sleep together. However, the relationship deteriorates when Miriam tells him that she feels they are too young to marry. Once again, Paul breaks off the relationship, and the two become bitter toward each other.

Chapter 12: Passion

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Paul spends more time with Clara, telling her that he has split up with Miriam. The two are extremely passionate with each other, and Paul invites her to meet his mother. Paul later invites Clara and her mother on a trip to the seaside.

Chapter 13: Baxter Dawes

In this chapter, Paul encounters Clara's husband, Baxter Dawes, numerous times, and the two fight once, with Dawes injuring Paul. Paul remains torn between his love for his mother and his desire to bond with other women. He realizes that he will not be able to marry while his mother is still alive. At the end of the chapter, Paul discovers that his mother is ill with a tumor.

Chapter 14: The Release

In this chapter, Gertrude Morel dies, after Paul—who cannot bear to see her suffer—and his sister give her an overdose of morphine in her milk. Paul befriends Baxter Dawes, who is ill with fever, and eventually facilitates his reconciliation with Clara.

Chapter 15: Derelict

Paul is despondent after his mother's death and contemplates suicide. Miriam meets him for dinner and proposes that they marry, but Paul turns her down. Clara returns to Sheffield with her husband, so she is also now out of Paul's life. Walter Morel sells the house, and he and Paul take rooms in town. The novel ends with Paul's recognition that he will always love his mother, and he decides to stay alive for her sake.

7.4 Style

Sons and Lovers is structured episodically. This means that the novel consists of a series of episodes tied together thematically and by subject matter. Structuring the novel in this manner allows Lawrence to let meaning accumulate by showing how certain actions and images repeat themselves and become patterns. This repetition of actions and images is part of the iterative mode. By using this mode, Lawrence can blend time periods, making it sometimes difficult to know whether an event happened once or many times. Lawrence is using the iterative mode when he uses words such as "would" and "used to."

Sons and Lovers was the first modern portrayal of a phenomenon that later, thanks to Freud, became easily recognizable as the Oedipus complex. Never was a son more indented to his mother's love and full of hatred for his father than Paul Morel, D.H. Lawrence's young protagonist. Never, that is, except perhaps Lawrence himself. In his 1913 novel he grappled with the discordant loves that haunted him all his life—for his spiritual childhood sweetheart, here called Miriam, and for his mother, whom he transformed into Mrs. Morel. It is, by Lawrence's own account, a book aimed at depicting this woman's grasp: "as her sons grow up she selects them as lovers—first the eldest, then the second. These sons are urged into life by their reciprocal love of their mother—urged on and on. But when they come to manhood, they can't love, because their mother is the strongest power in their lives."

Of course, Mrs. Morel takes neither of her two elder sons (the first of whom dies early, which further intensifies her grip on Paul) as a literal lover, but nonetheless her psychological snare is immense. She loathes Paul's Miriam from the start, understanding that the girl's deep love

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of her son will oust her: "She's not like an ordinary woman, who can leave me my share in him. She wants to absorb him." Meanwhile, Paul plays his part with equal fervor, incapable of committing himself in either direction: "Why did his mother sit at home and suffer?... And why did he hate Miriam, and feel so cruel towards her, at the thought of his mother. If Miriam caused his mother suffering, then he hated her—and he easily hated her." Soon thereafter he even confesses to his mother: "I really don't love her. I talk to her, but I want to come home to you."

The result of all this is that Paul throws Miriam over for a married suffragette, Clara Dawes, who fulfills the sexual component of his ascent to manhood but leaves him, as ever, without a complete relationship to challenge his love for his mother. As Paul voyages from the working-class mining world to the spheres of commerce and art (he has fair success as a painter), he accepts that his own achievements must be equally his mother's. "There was so much to come out of him. Life for her was rich with promise. She was to see herself fulfilled... All his work was hers."

The cycles of Paul's relationships with these three women are terrifying at times, and Lawrence does nothing to dim their intensity. Nor does he shirk in his vivid, sensuous descriptions of the landscape that offers up its blossoms and beasts and "shimmeriness" to Paul's sensitive spirit. *Sons and Lovers* lays fully bare the souls of men and earth. Few books tell such whole, complicated truths about the permutations of love as resolutely without resolution. It's nothing short of searing to be brushed by humanity in this manner.

7.5 Summary

- Lawrence believed in the 'life force', in Nature, its beauty and its power.
- The Oedipus complex takes its name from the title character of the Greek play *Oedipus Rex*.
- D.H. Lawrence was aware of Freud's theory, and *Sons and Lovers* famously uses the Oedipus complex as its base for exploring Paul's relationship with his mother.
- *Sons and Lovers* has a great deal of description of the natural environment.

7.6 Keywords

Bound : going towards some where.

Eroticized : give erotic qualities to.

Transcendence : not realizable in experience.

7.7 Review Questions

1. Write about the features of Lawrence's characters.
2. Discuss the themes of "*Sons and Lovers*".
3. Enumerate the plot construction of "*Sons and Lovers*".

Answers: Self Assessment

1. Bildungsroman
2. Life force

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|-------|
| 3. Protagonist | 4. Louie | Notes |
| 5. Episodically | 6. Natural environment | |

7.8 Further Readings



Books

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|------------------|
| Sons and Lovers (E Text) | — | D.H. Lawrence |
| D.H. Lawrence: a Personal record | — | Jessie Chambers |
| D.H. Lawrence | — | Ronald P. Draper |



Online links <http://pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/barrons/sonlvrs2.asp>

http://www.jiffynotes.com/a_study_guides/book_notes/nfs_18/nfs_18_00018.html

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Unit 8: William Golding — Lord of the Flies

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Know the biography of William Golding
- Know about the novel “Lord of the Flies”.

Introduction

Lord of the Flies is a novel by Nobel Prize-winning author William Golding about a group of British boys stuck on a deserted island who try to govern themselves, with disastrous results. Its stances on the already-controversial subjects of human nature and individual welfare versus the common good earned it position 68 on the American Library Association’s list of the 100 most frequently challenged books of 1990–1999. In 2005 the novel was chosen by TIME magazine as one of the 100 best English-language novels from 1923 to 2005. It was awarded a place on both lists of Modern Library 100 Best Novels, reaching #41 on the editor’s list, and #25 on the reader’s list.

Published in 1954, Lord of the Flies was Golding’s first novel. Although it was not a great success at the time—selling fewer than 3,000 copies in the United States during 1955 before going out of print—it soon went on to become a best-seller, and by the early 1960s was required reading in many schools and colleges; the novel is currently renowned for being a popular choice of study for GCSE English Literature courses in the United Kingdom. It was adapted to film in 1963 by Peter Brook, and again in 1990 by Harry Hook.

8.1 William Golding—Lord of the Flies: Introduction to the Author

8.1.1 Introduction to the Author

Sir William Gerald Golding was born in 1911 in Saint Columb Minor in Cornwall, England, to Alec Golding, a socialist teacher who supported scientific rationalism, and Mildred Golding,

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a supporter of female suffrage. As a child, William Golding was educated at the Marlborough Grammar School, where his father worked, and later at Brasenose College, Oxford. Although educated to be a scientist at the request of his father, the young Golding developed an interest in literature, becoming devoted first to Anglo-Saxon texts and then to poetry, which he wrote avidly. At Oxford he studied natural science for two years and then transferred to a program for English literature and philosophy. Following a short period of time in which he worked in various positions at a settlement house and in small theater companies as both an actor and a writer, Golding became a schoolmaster at Bishop Wordsworth's School in Salisbury. During the Second World War he joined the Royal Navy and was involved in the sinking of the German battleship Bismarck, after which he returned to Bishop Wordsworth's School, where he taught until the early 1960s.

In 1954, Golding published his first novel, *Lord of the Flies*, which details the adventures of British schoolboys stranded on an island in the Pacific who descend into barbaric behavior. Although at first rejected by twenty-one different publishing houses, Golding's first novel became a surprise success. E.M. Forster declared *Lord of the Flies* the outstanding novel of its year, while *Time* and *Tide* called it "not only a first-rate adventure story but a parable of our times." Golding continued to develop similar themes concerning the inherent violence in human nature in his next novel, *The Inheritors*, published the following year. This novel deals with the last days of Neanderthal man. *The Inheritors* posits that the Cro-Magnon "fire-builders" triumphed over Neanderthal man as much by violence and deceit as by any natural superiority. His subsequent works include *Pincher Martin* (1956), the story of a guilt-ridden naval officer who faces an agonizing death, *Free Fall* (1959), and *The Spire* (1964), each of which deals with the depravity of human nature. *The Spire* is an allegory concerning the protagonist's obsessive determination to build a cathedral spire regardless of the consequences.



Did u know? In addition to Golding's novels and his early collection of poems, Golding published a play entitled *The Brass Butterfly* in 1958 and two collections of essays, *The Hot Gates* (1965) and *A Moving Target* (1982).

Golding's final works include *Darkness Visible* (1979), the story of a boy horribly injured during the London blitz of World War II, and *Rites of Passage* (1980). This novel won the Booker McConnell Prize, the most prestigious award for English literature, and inspired two sequels, *Close Quarters* (1987) and *Fire down below* (1989). These three novels portray life aboard a ship during the Napoleonic Wars.



Task Write biography of William Golding.

In 1983, Golding received the Nobel Prize for literature for his novels which, according to the Nobel committee, "with the perspicuity of realistic narrative art and the diversity and universality of myth, illuminate the human condition in the world of today." In 1988 he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II. Sir William died in 1993 in Perranarworthal, Cornwall. At the time of his death he was working on an unfinished manuscript entitled "The Double Tongue," which focused on the fall of Hellenic culture and the rise of Roman civilization. This work was published posthumously in 1995.

8.2 William Golding — Lord of the Flies: Introduction to the Text

8.2.1 Introduction to the Lord of the Flies

Sir William Golding composed *Lord of the Flies* shortly after the end of WWII. At the time of the novel's composition, Golding, who had published an anthology of poetry nearly two decades earlier, had been working for a number of years as a teacher and training as a scientist. Golding drew extensively on his scientific background for his first narrative work. The novel's plot, in which a group of English boys stranded on a deserted island struggle to develop their own society, is a social and political thought-experiment using fiction. The story of their attempts at civilization and devolution into savagery and violence puts the relationship between human nature and society under a literary microscope. Golding's allusions to human evolution also reflect his scientific training. The characters discover fire, craft tools, and form political and social systems in a process that recalls theories of the development of early man, a topic of much interest among many peoples including the mid-century Western public. The culmination of the plot in war and murder suggests that Golding's overarching hypothesis about humanity is pessimistic, that is, there are anarchic and brutal instincts in human nature. Ordered democracy or some other regime is necessary to contain these instincts.

As an allegory about human nature and society, *Lord of the Flies* draws upon Judeo-Christian mythology to elaborate on the novel's sociological and political hypothesis. The title has two meanings, both charged with religious significance. The first is a reference to a line from King Lear, "As flies to wanton boys, are we to gods." The second is a reference to the Hebrew name Ba'alzevuv, or in its Greek form Beelzebub, which translates to "God of the Flies" and is synonymous with Satan. For Golding however, the satanic forces that compel the shocking events on the island come from within the human psyche rather than from an external, supernatural realm as they do in Judeo-Christian mythology. Golding thus employs a religious reference to illustrate a Freudian concept: the Id, the amoral instinct that governs the individual's sense of sheer survival, is by nature evil in its amoral pursuit of its own goals. The *Lord of the Flies*, that is, the pig's head on a stick, directly challenges the most spiritually motivated character on the island, Simon, who functions as a prophet-martyr for the other boys.

Published in 1954 early in the Cold War, *Lord of the Flies* is firmly rooted in the sociopolitical concerns of its era. The novel alludes to the Cold War conflict between liberal democracy and totalitarian communism. Ralph represents the liberal tradition, while Jack, before he succumbs to total anarchy, represents the kind of military dictatorship that, for mid-century America and Great Britain, characterized the communist system. It is also notable that Golding sets the novel in what appears to be a future human reality, one that is in crisis after atomic war. Golding's novel capitalizes on public paranoia surrounding the atom bomb which, due to the arms race of the Cold War, was at a high. Golding's negative depiction of Jack, who represents an anti-democratic political system, and his suggestion of the reality of atomic war, present the novel as a gesture of support for the Western position in the Cold War.

In addition to science, mythology, and the sociopolitical context of the Cold War, *Lord of the Flies* was heavily influenced by previous works of speculative fiction. In particular, Golding's novel alludes to R. M. Ballantyne's 1857 *The Coral Island*, which tells the story of three boys stranded on a desert island. Golding, who found Ballantyne's interpretation of the situation naive and improbable, likely intended *Lord of the Flies* to be an indirect critique of *The Coral Island*. Golding preserves the names of two of Ballantyne's characters, Ralph and Jack, to force the two texts into deeper comparison. While the boys of *Coral Island* spend their time having pleasant adventures, Golding's characters battle hunger, loneliness, and the deadly consequences of political conflict after they are deserted. The pessimistic character of Golding's story reflects

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the author's emphasis on the necessity of democratic civilization. Critics also have noted the relationship between *Lord of the Flies* and Joseph Conrad's canonical 1902 *Heart of Darkness*, which follows a soldier's excursion into marginal African civilizations. Reflecting some biases, *Heart of Darkness* depicts these parts of Africa as places where social order is absent and anarchy rules, breeding death and disorder; the novel sees the same problem as an issue within the individual human soul. Like Conrad's work, Golding's novel emphasizes the brutal and violent human impulses that arise in the absence of political order.

Lord of the Flies, with its dystopian and speculative characteristics, established Golding as a solid author with an interest in the science-fiction literary genre that was popular in the 1950s. The novel depicts ostensibly realistic characters, but the plot, which follows a small group of humans isolated within an alien landscape, employs or alludes to the conventions of popular science fiction novels of the time. Golding's subsequent works saw him moving even further into the science fiction genre. *The Inheritors*, heavily influenced by H. G. Wells's *Outline of History*, imagines life during the dawn of man and is considered a modern classic of speculative fiction.

Self Assessment

Multiple Choice Questions:

1. *Lord of the Flies* is a novel by Nobel prize winning author
 (a) Joseph Andrews (b) Jane Austen
 (c) William Golding (d) Aldous Huxley
2. In which year, the novel was chosen by TIME magazine?
 (a) 1990 (b) 2005
 (c) 1999 (d) 2004
3. In which year, Golding published his first novel?
 (a) 1923 (b) 1954
 (c) 1962 (d) None of these
4. In which year, William Golding was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II?
 (a) 1988 (b) 1987
 (c) 1990 (d) 1972
5. Sir William Golding composed *Lord of the Flies* shortly after the end of
 (a) Cold war (b) World war I
 (c) Napoleonic war (d) World war II

Lord of the Flies was not an instant success, selling fewer than 3,000 copies before going out of print in 1955. Shortly thereafter, however, the novel became a bestseller among American and British readers who, as the arms race intensified, likely saw in Golding's wartime dystopia a grim prediction of their own future. By the 1960s the novel was required reading for many high school and college courses, where it has remained to the present day. The enduring popularity of the novel inspired two film adaptations, one by Peter Brook in 1963, and the second by Harry Hook in 1990. Golding's original novel, however, remains the best-known version of the tale.

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Notes In 2005, Time Magazine named the novel one of the 100 best English-language novels since 1923.

A continuing controversy surrounding the political message of the novel and its view of human nature has led some readers to challenge its status as a book suitable for children. The American Library Association thus positioned *Lord of the Flies* at number 70 on its list of the 100 most challenged books of 1990–2000. Among literary critics of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, however, *Lord of the Flies* has been revisited less as an allegory of human evil than as a literary expression of Cold War ideology. This historicizing does not do justice to the novel. But in terms of reception history, contemporary critics are right to note that the novel's position at the center of many English curricula across America and Great Britain during the Cold War illustrates how the pedagogy of literature has been used to bolster national identity and ideology.

8.3 Summary

- *Lord of the Flies* is a novel by Nobel Prize-winning author William Golding about a group of British boys stuck on a deserted island who try to govern themselves, with disastrous results.
- In 1954, Golding published his first novel, *Lord of the Flies*, which details the adventures of British schoolboys stranded on an island in the Pacific who descend into barbaric behavior.
- Golding's final works include *Darkness Visible* (1979), the story of a boy horribly injured during the London blitz of World War II, and *Rites of Passage* (1980).
- Golding's allusions to human evolution also reflect his scientific training.
- *Lord of the Flies* was not an instant success, selling fewer than 3,000 copies before going out of print in 1955.

8.4 Keywords

- Disastrous* : causing great damage
- Spire* : the upper tapering part of the spiral shell of a gastropod mollusc.
- Pessimistic* : lack of hope or confidence in the future.

8.5 Review Questions

1. Which is called the Golding's first novel in his literary career?
2. What are the collections of essays of Golding?
3. Bring out the title reference for "*Lord of the flies*".

Answers: Self Assessment

1. (c) William Golding
2. (b) 2005

3. (b) 1954

4. (a) 1988

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5. (d) World War II

8.6 Further Readings



Books

Lord Of The Flies (E Text) — William Golding

William Golding's Lord of Flies — Walter A. Freeman

The Novels of William Golding — Indu Kulkarni



Online links <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/flies/context.html>

<http://www.pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/monkeynotes/pmLordFlies04.asp>

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Unit 9: William Golding—Lord of the Flies: Detailed Study of Text-I

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain detailed study of text Lord of the Flies chapters one to six
- Discuss summary and analysis of chapters one to six.

Introduction

Lord of the Flies takes place on an island, which Golding never gives an exact location. Although he does not tell us where the island is, he describes it in detail. He says that it has a jungle at one end, with a rocky mountain above it. At the opposite side is the lagoon where the boys go to bathe and where they first met after the crash. Near there, up the mountain, is a platform where it was decided a fire would stay lit in hope of rescue. This was in the ideal position, having a view of the ocean, therefore allowing any passing planes or boats to spot them and rescue them. It was on this mountain that the parachutist was also spotted by the boys, and mistaken for a beast. Inland, the jungle served many purposes. In the dense jungle, food was plentiful, and the plants served as a means of escape for Ralph during his run from Jack. Simon stayed there during his stage of insanity, and he used the plants to build shelter.

The boys' plane was shot down during an atomic war. This set the stage for the problems that would arise on the island among the boys. Their behavior reflects their surroundings, as they acted just like they were participating in the war. The island is a very isolated place with absolutely no contact with the outside world. The only way that they could contact an outsider was by chance, if a plane or boat happened to spot them. These boys from boarding school were in some respect lucky to land on this island, for it did have its advantages. There was food, wildlife, and fresh water. It was not their surroundings, but themselves that led to the downfall of their civilization.

9.1 Detailed Study of Text

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Chapter One: The Sound of the Shell

On a tropical island, a twelve-year-old boy with fair hair is climbing out of plane wreckage (referred to as “the scar”) on a beach and towards a lagoon. He faces another child around his age, a fat boy with glasses. The two, who have not previously met, begin a conversation. The fair-haired boy introduces himself as Ralph, while the heavy boy accidentally reveals his nickname at school: “Piggy.” Against the other child’s protestations, Ralph insists on calling him Piggy. Through their conversation, it is revealed that the boys have survived a plane crash in the Pacific Ocean, and no adults are present among the survivors. They confirm that both the pilot and “the man with the megaphone”—perhaps some sort of rescue worker—both died in the crash. The boys appear to have been escaping from an atomic war in their country, a place referred to only as the Home Counties (signaling England). When Ralph insists that his father, a Commander in the Navy, will rescue the stranded boys, Piggy reminds him that “they”—perhaps the military, perhaps the adult population—were all killed “by the atom bomb.”

Ralph, excited by the idea of living without adult supervision, immediately takes advantage of the freedom on the island. He disrobes and invites Piggy to join him in a swim. Piggy nervously declines, explaining that his asthma prevents him from swimming or running, but eventually—and with much self-consciousness—removes his windbreaker. While Ralph is enjoying the new sights and pleasures of the tropical water, Piggy reveals that his parents are both dead and that he lives with his aunt, who operates a candy store. While Ralph is playing on the shore, Piggy spots a conch shell in the lagoon. He explains to an ignorant Ralph that a conch is valuable, and the two retrieve it from the water. Piggy, who cannot breathe well due to his asthma, instructs Ralph about how to blow into the shell so as to produce a loud whistle. After a few failed attempts, Ralph sounds the shell successfully. The two boys are surprised to see that the sound has attracted other survivors from the crash, among them Sam and Eric, two young identical twins, and abrupt, red-headed Jack Merridew, who is accompanied by a party of boys wearing strange black cloaks and caps, marching in two organized lines. Jack reveals that the group is a boys’ choir and that he is the leader.

Once a large group is present, Piggy suggests that everyone state their names. Jack insists on being called Merridew, for Jack is a kid’s name, and demands that he be established the leader of the survivors, for he is the head boy of his choir. The group decides to settle the question of leadership by vote. While Jack has natural leadership qualities and Piggy rational intelligence, Ralph has a calm personality that invites the others’ trust, so he is elected chief. Once appointed, however, Ralph concedes that Jack may still lead his choir, who will become hunters. He further insists that the group stay assembled near the lagoon while three of the boys explore the territory to determine whether or not it is an island. For this task, Ralph chooses himself, a mild-tempered boy named Simon, and, at his own insistence, Jack.



Notes When Piggy requests to join the explorers, Jack dismisses the idea, humiliating Piggy, who is still ashamed that Ralph revealed his hated nickname.

Ralph, Simon and Jack search the island, climbing up the mountain to survey it. On the way up, they push down the mountain a large rock that blocks their way. When they finally reach the top, they determine that they are indeed on an island. The island is described as “boat-shaped,” bordered by rocks and containing both lagoon and forest areas. Ralph, looking at the

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landscape, says assertively, "this belongs to us." The three decide that they need food to eat, and continue to explore the island, this time in search of food.

The boys descend the mountain into brush area, where they consider and then decide against eating some foliage they call "candle-buds." Shortly thereafter, they discover a piglet caught in a curtain of creepers. Jack draws his knife but pauses before he has a chance to stab the pig, which frees itself and runs away. Jack insists that he was merely looking for the right spot on the pig on which to stab it, but his white face suggests that he is unaccustomed to such violence. But he vows that next time, he will show no mercy toward his prey.

Analysis

The opening chapter of *Lord of the Flies* establishes the novel as a political allegory. As a whole, the novel explores the need for political organization and dramatizes the clash in human nature between instinctual and learned behavior. In Chapter One, Golding depicts the deserted island as a place where the abandoned boys have a choice between returning to a pre-civilized state of humanity and re-imposing social order upon the group. Thus, the situation tests a Hobbesian hypothesis by throwing the children almost fully into a state of nature. The first chapter of the novel confirms that the boys have no society, no rules, and no concerns beyond personal survival. All they have is a set of histories. The narrative thrust of the novel traces how the boys develop their own miniature society and the difficulties that inevitably arise from this development. Chapter One foreshadows these events by depicting the boys as alternately frightened, ignorant, and exhilarated in the face of their newfound freedom.

Accordingly, Chapter One immediately establishes the tension between the impulse towards savagery and the need for civilization that exists within the human spirit. Freed from adult authority and the mores of society, Ralph plays in the beach naked, a practice that at the time of Golding's writing was commonly associated with pre-industrial cultures believed to be "uncivilized" or "savage." Yet if Ralph's nudity is an uncivilized practice, it is also a reference to another popular conception of pre-civilized life, that of the Garden of Eden. Ralph does not panic over the children's abandonment on the island, but he approaches it as a paradise in which he can play happily. The reader, aware of the outcome of the Biblical Eden, should treat the boys' "paradise" with similar skepticism. Like Eden, the island paradise will collapse; the questions are how and why.

Characterization emphasizes the tension Golding establishes between anarchy and political organization. The first sign of disturbance on the seemingly tranquil island is the appearance of Jack and his choir. Golding describes Jack and his compatriots as militaristic and aggressive, with Jack's bold manner and the choir marching in step. They are the first concrete example of civilization on the island, with a decidedly negative feel. Jack seems a physical manifestation of evil; with his dark cloak and wild red hair, his appearance is ominous, even Satanic. Accordingly, Jack is militaristic and authoritarian. He gives orders to his choir as if they were troops, allowing room for neither discussion nor dissent. Significantly, the role that he first chooses for his choir is that of hunters—he selects that task which is most violent and most related to military values. Yet, as his inability to kill the pig demonstrates, Jack is not yet accustomed to violence. Golding indicates that Jack must prepare himself to commit a violent act, for he is still constrained by his own youthful cowardice or by societal rules that oppose violent behavior. While his authoritarian attitude indicates a predisposition to violence, Jack must shed the lessons of society and conscience before he can kill.

In both temperament and physical appearance, Ralph is the antithesis of Jack. Golding idealizes Ralph from the beginning, lavishing praise on his physical beauty. In the island sun he immediately achieves a golden hue, a physical manifestation of his winning charisma. Ralph's value is not

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intellectual; importantly, he behaves somewhat childishly in his first encounter with Piggy. Still, Golding suggests that Ralph has a gravity and maturity beyond his years. He is a natural leader, a quality that the other boys immediately recognize when they vote him leader. The vote for chief establishes a conflict between the different values espoused by Jack and Ralph. Jack assumes that he should assume the role automatically, while Ralph, who is reluctant to accept leadership, achieves it by vote. Ralph therefore comes to represent a democratic ethos.

In contrast to the violent Jack and charismatic Ralph, Piggy is immediately established as the intellectual of the group. Although he is physically inept, clumsy, and asthmatic, he has a rational mind and the best grasp of their situation. It is his knowledge of the conch shell that allows Ralph to summon the rest of the boys together and he who shows the most concern for some sort of established order in meetings and in day-to-day life. He has a particular interest in names, immediately asking Ralph for his and wishing that Ralph would reciprocate the question, as well as insisting that a list of names be taken when the boys assemble. This emphasis on naming is one of the first indications of the imposition of an ordered society on the island (it also recalls the naming of the animals in *Genesis*). For Piggy, names not only facilitate organization and communication but also mark one's position within a social hierarchy. It is significant that Piggy is forced by the others to keep his despised nickname from home, which re-inscribes his inferior social status from the Home Counties in the new dynamic of the island. We may also note that Piggy's name symbolically connects him to the pigs on the island, which in subsequent chapters become the targets of many of the boys' unrestrained violent impulses. As the boys turn their rage against the pigs, Golding foreshadows Piggy's own murder at the close of the novel.

The reinforcement of Piggy's nickname, which clearly humiliates him, also indicates that the boys have imported to the island the cruelty of human social life. Ralph's mockery of Piggy is the first instance of inequality on the island, and it foreshadows the gross inequities and injustices to come. We may also note here Piggy's background (as an orphan who lives with an aunt) and his poor diction details that indicate that, unlike Ralph and Jack, Piggy is a child from a working-class background. His immediate ostracizing on the island suggests another way in which the social hierarchies of the boys' home lives are reproduced in island life. Golding suggests that Piggy's marginalization is due not only to his unfortunate appearance and poor health but also because he is of a lower class status than the other boys, who have brought with them to the island the class prejudices of the Home Counties.

It is also significant here that Golding emphasizes the establishment of property and subtly critiques the concept of ownership by discovery. Ralph gains status from his possession of the conch shell, which gives him the authority to speak when the boys come together. Also, when he surveys the island from the summit of the mountain he states that it "belongs" to them, almost as an act of colonization or conquering. The invocation of colonial rhetoric suggests the struggles to come over ownership of the key resources on the island (such as the conch and Piggy's glasses) and over the power to rule one another.

The novel's first chapter establishes another theme that recurs throughout the novel: the corruption of innocence. Golding emphasizes the childish nature of the boys from the outset of the narrative, and he suggests that many of the struggles that mark their time on the island have less to do with either the natural brutality of the human spirit or the corruption of political society than with the boys' young age and incapacity for responsibility. Ralph's first reaction to the abandonment is to play in the water, and Jack's impulse to "kill" falls flat when he is confronted with an opportunity to do so. The chatter of the younger boys—who fear a "beastie" and a "snake thing," as well as Piggy's constant mention of his "auntie" at home who gave him candy, are narrative details that underscore the boys' youth and their essential innocence. As the brutality and violence among the boys increase in later chapters, Golding suggests that

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childhood is a neutral, formative state in which children can either be guided towards morality or corrupted by savagery when they are unguided by conscience or society. The emphasis on the boys' childishness in Chapter One establishes important questions that the subsequent action seeks to answer: is human nature essentially good, bad, or neutral, and how do early childhood experiences inform individual character?

Chapter Two: Fire on the Mountain

Back with the group the same evening, Ralph blows the conch shell to call another meeting. The effects of abandonment are visible in the boys' attire: the sunburned children have put on clothing once more, while the choir is more disheveled, having abandoned their cloaks. When the group of boys gives Ralph full attention, Ralph suffers a brief lapse in confidence and is unsure whether to stand or sit while conducting a meeting. He looks to Piggy for affirmation of his authority. Ralph announces to the boys the results of the morning's explorations. He explains that they are on an uninhabited island. At this point, Jack interjects and insists that they need an army to hunt the pigs. Ralph, Jack, and Simon excitedly describe to the others their encounter with the piglet, Jack insisting defensively that it "got away" before he had the chance to stab and kill it, and vowing again to kill it "next time." To demonstrate his sincerity, Jack dramatically plunges his knife into a tree trunk, and the children, made uneasy by Jack's boldness, fall into silence.



Task Explain the plan the boys have to be rescued.

Recognizing that the meeting has devolved into disorder, Ralph announces that they will have to establish rules, not only in meetings, but also to organize day-to-day life. He states that, in meetings, the boys will have to raise their hands, like in school, so as to ensure that they speak one at a time. The boy whose turn it is to speak will receive the conch shell, which he will hold while talking, and then will pass it along to the next speaker. Jack interrupts to approve of the imposition of rules, and he begins excitedly explaining the punishment that will result from breaking them. Piggy, grabbing the conch from Ralph, reprimands Jack for "hindering Ralph." He says that the most important thing is that nobody knows where they are and that they may be there a long time. The boys fall into an anxious silence.

Ralph, taking the conch again from Piggy, reassures the other boys, explaining that the island is theirs-and until the grown-ups come they will have fun. He says that it will be like a novel, and the others, excited once more, begin shouting the names of their favorite island adventure novels: Treasure Island, Swallows and Amazons, and The Coral Island. Ralph quiets the assembly by waving the conch. A small six-year-old boy whose face is half-covered by a red birthmark stands hesitantly to request the conch. He appears as if he is about to cry; once he has possession of the conch, he asks Ralph what the group will do about a snake-thing, which he describes as a "beastie" that appeared to him in the forest. Ralph assures the group that such animals only live in large countries, like those in Africa, so the boy must have dreamt the beastie in the aftermath of the crash. The boys seem largely reassured, though Ralph notices some signs of doubt on the faces of the younger children.

Ralph tells the boys that their goal while stranded shall be twofold: one, they should try to ensure their rescue, and two, they should try to have fun. He assures them that, as his Naval Commander father told him, there are no unknown islands on the planet, and thus they will be rescued. The others break into spontaneous applause at Ralph's confidence in their rescue. He then explains to the group the details of his rescue plan. Ralph suggests that they build

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a fire on the top of the mountain, for the smoke will signal their presence to passing ships. Jack summons the boys to come build a fire on the mountaintop, and they immediately follow, leaving Piggy and Ralph behind to discuss the outcome of the meeting.

Piggy expresses disgust at the childish behavior of the boys as Ralph catches up to the group and helps them carry piles of wood to the mountaintop. Eventually, the task proves too difficult for some of the smaller boys, who lose interest and search for fruit to eat. When they have gathered enough wood, Ralph and Jack wonder how to start a fire. Piggy arrives, and Jack suggests that they use his glasses. Jack snatches the glasses from Piggy, who can barely see without them. A boy named Maurice suggests that they use green branches to ignite the fire. After a few attempts, the glasses concentrate the rays of the sun and start a fire. Though the boys are mesmerized by the fire, it soon burns out. Piggy, disheartened by the waste of their only firewood, chastises Jack, and the two argue bitterly.

Ralph grabs the conch from Piggy and again reminds the group of the importance of rules. Jack agrees, explaining that they are not savages, they are English, and the English are the best at everything, so they must follow the right rules. Ralph concedes they might never be saved, and Piggy claims that he has been saying that, but nobody has listened. They get the fire going once more. While Piggy has the conch, he loses his temper again, telling the other boys they should have listened to his earlier orders to build shelters first while a fire is of secondary importance. Piggy worries that they still do not know exactly how many boys there are, and he mentions the snakes. Suddenly, one of the trees catches on fire, and one of the boys screams about snakes. Piggy thinks that one of the boys is missing.

Analysis

In the novel's second chapter, Golding uses the progress of the boys on the island as a metaphor for early human development. The boys' first achievement on the island is to build a fire, which like the conch shell brings the entire group of boys together in awe and wonder. According to Piggy, the next step should be for the boys to build some sort of shelter, again a mirror of the historical development of early human society. The "government" established by Ralph also develops during this chapter. Golding uses these developments to signal that the island is becoming a society with rules that mirror Western democratic culture. The conch shell, which authorizes its holder to speak and is available to all, is a particular symbol of the ideal of democratic freedom and equality. But, since Ralph decides who gets possession of the conch, the freedoms of the island are decided by authority. Though Ralph is a benevolent leader, the implication here is that democracy still depends on its leaders for justice.

Also like a democratic system, the makeshift government on the island sparks debate and dissent. Jack and Piggy have differing perspectives on what particular end Ralph's rules will serve. Ralph takes a rational perspective based on ideas of justice: the rules will allow the boys to live fairly with one another, a belief that fits well with his democratic sensibility. Jack relishes the idea of rules as a means for control and for punishment, a reflection of his dictatorial ethos and tendency toward violence. Piggy, as the most intelligent of the three central characters, views the rules as useful tools for survival. He views all aspects of the boys' behavior on the island in terms of whether they will contribute to their eventual rescue.

Golding continues to present Ralph as a calming, authoritative presence among the boys. When fear sets in among some of the younger boys, only Ralph has the presence to restore order and hope. Despite Piggy's clear thinking and appraisal of their situation, his contentious manner and rude dismissal of the younger boys unfortunately causes his ideas to be dismissed. Even more importantly, he is a cynic who can do nothing to comfort the others, instead instilling in them a sense of fatalism. Piggy, whose pessimism and sadness make him a likely

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martyr, is established in this chapter as a prophet whose words are not heeded until it is too late. Golding uses Piggy's advice as foreshadowing: failure to heed Piggy, however absurd he may sound, leads to dire consequences. Chapter Two contains the first example of Piggy's prophecy: after the trip to the mountain, one of the boys seems to be missing. The implication is that if the others had heeded Piggy's advice and allowed him to keep track of the number of boys and their names, there would be no confusion over whether one is missing.

Despite the boys' dislike for Piggy, they appear to recognize that he is an important presence on the island. His glasses enable them to start a fire on the mountain. In particular, Piggy is useful for Jack, who remains more interested in hunting and causing pain and disorder than in contributing or constructing anything of use. It is significant that the development he is most supportive of is building a fire, which is by nature destructive even though it can be used for good. In this chapter, Golding also establishes Jack as a boy who tends to dominate. Jack's statement about the English being the "best at everything" also suggests his nationalistic impulses. Jack adheres to the colonial English position that depended on the perceived superiority of the British to justify the colonization and forced development of other peoples, foreshadowing his brutal behavior in subsequent chapters. His statement that they are "not savages" will, by the end of the novel, appear deeply ironic as Jack and his tribe devolve into unthinkable depths of brutality and self-destruction.

The boys' childishness is again highlighted as the boys face the challenge of meeting their basic needs for survival. The immediate dangers that the boys face are few, for on the island there is fruit, plus the pigs, to eat, yet as children they are overcome with irrational and diffuse terror. Golding suggests that their own sense of fear is the greatest danger to these boys. It is fear over a snake that causes the younger boys to panic and to exaggerate the dangers on the island, causing disorder and commotion. Both Jack and Piggy contribute to this sense of dread. Jack does so through his aggressive stance, which contains the implicit notion that they are in danger and must defend themselves from some unknown force. Piggy does so through his constant fatalism. It is here that Ralph best demonstrates his superiority for leadership, displaying the most calm of any of the characters and encouraging the others to be confident in their rescue.



Did u know? Ralph is established here not only as a political leader but also as a parental figure whose job is to reassure the scared boys and protect them from their own fears and doubts.

As the narrative moves closer to dramatic conflict and tragedy, Golding distinguishes *Lord of the Flies* from the romantic adventure stories that were popular among boys of the mid-twentieth century. In the second meeting, Ralph encourages the boys to have fun on the island and to think of the experience as one that would happen "in a novel." Immediately, the boys begin shouting out the names of their favorite island adventures, including *The Coral Island*. *The Coral Island* (1857), written by R.M. Ballantyne, was a popular nineteenth-century novel that followed the happy adventures of three unsupervised boys on a tropical island. Golding, who found the narrative of *The Coral Island* naive and unlikely, wrote *Lord of the Flies* partly as a response to this novel. The mention of these idealized island narratives at the outset of Golding's dystopian tale is thus ironic because the events to follow are nothing like the entertaining experiences of the boys on *The Coral Island*. Through the explicit comparison, the reader is encouraged to recognize Golding's work as a critical commentary on popular adventure fiction on the basis of its optimistic unreality.

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Also in Chapter Two, Golding introduces more symbols that will recur throughout the novel and which highlight important developments in the dramatic action. The fire that the boys build signifies the group's hope for their rescue and return to the Home Counties. A powerful symbol of human civilization, the fire is a marker of the imposition of human industry on wild, untamed nature; the boys' inability to maintain the fire indicates the waning possibility of both rescue and maintaining civilized order on the island. We may also note the introduction in this chapter of the "beastie," or as it is later known, the "beast." The idea of the beast is first mentioned by one of the younger boys though it is dismissed by most of the older children. As Ralph reassures them, he sees a glimmer of doubt in many of their expressions, an observation that mirrors the group's eventual acceptance of the beast as a legitimate if improbable reality. The beast becomes an important motif that establishes the power and danger of group-think among the boys.

Chapter Three: Huts on the Beach

Jack scans the oppressively silent forest, looking for pigs to hunt. A bird startles him as he progresses along the trail. He examines the texture of vines ("creepers") to determine whether or not pigs have run through that section of the brush. Finally, Jack spots a path cleared by pigs (a "pig run") and hears the pattering of hooves. He raises his spear and hurls it at a group of pigs, driving them away and thus feeling a profound sense of impotence and frustration. The length of Jack's hair, the mass of freckles on his tanned back, and the tattered condition of his shorts indicate that weeks have passed since the boys were abandoned on the island. Jack appears to have taken up his role as group hunter with zeal, and he at least has become talented at tracking pigs in the dense brush.

Having frightened off the pigs without a kill, Jack abandons the hunt and returns to a clearing in the forest, where the boys are constructing crude shelters out of tree trunks and palm leaves. He comes upon Ralph, who is working on a shelter facing the lagoon. Jack asks Ralph for water, who directs him to a tree where coconut shells full of water are arranged. After Jack quenches his thirst, Ralph complains to Jack that the boys are not working hard to build the shelters. The little ones-referred to now as "littluns," are hopeless, spending most of their time bathing or eating. Jack reminds Ralph that he and his hunters are working hard to ensure that the group is always fed.

Jack then tells Ralph that as chief he should just order them to work harder. Ralph admits that even if he called a meeting, the group would agree to five minutes of work and then "wander off to go hunting." Recognizing this as a slight against himself and his hunters, Jack blushes, and he explains that the group is hungry. Ralph points out that Jack's group has yet to bring any meat back from the forest-the hunters would rather swim than hunt. Jack explains that he has little control over his hunters, but he has been working hard himself to "kill." A "madness" flashes in his eyes when he vows to kill a pig, but Ralph again reminds him that he has not yet captured any prey.

The two argue about Jack's contributions to the society on the island, Jack vowing to kill prey and Ralph insisting that they need shelters more than anything. Ralph mentions that the other boys, especially the littluns, are frightened and scream in the middle of the night. The two are interrupted by Simon, who reminds Ralph and Jack about the littluns' fear of the "beastie." The three reminisce about their first day on the island, when they explored the unknown territory together. They laugh that the littluns are "crackers." Jack says that when he is hunting he often feels as if he is being hunted, but he admits that this is irrational. Nevertheless, he says, he knows "how they feel."

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Ralph ignores this confession and reminds Jack to remember the fire when he is out hunting. Ralph and Jack make their way to the mountain to inspect the fire, leaving Simon behind. The two speculate as to whether or not the fire is strong enough to signal a passing ship, but Jack is distracted again by thoughts of killing a pig. Ralph, indignant at Jack's preoccupation with hunting, accuses him again of not contributing to the project of building shelters. Not wanting to start a fruitless argument, however, Ralph points out the other boys near the bathing pool and explains that Simon has worked as hard as he has at building shelters. The two make their way back to the huts in search of Simon, but he is nowhere to be found. Ralph, disappointed and confused, pronounces Simon "queer" and "funny." The two boys decide to go swimming together in the island bathing pool and soon find that the tension between them has dissolved.

In the forest, Simon is wandering alone. Simon followed Jack and Ralph halfway up the beach toward the mountain, then turned into the forest with a sense of purpose. He is a tall, skinny boy with a coarse mop of black hair, brilliant eyes, and bare feet. He walks through the acres of fruit trees and finds fruit that the smallest boys cannot reach. He gives the boys fruit, then proceeds along the path into the jungle. He finds an open space and looks to see whether he is alone. This open space contains great aromatic bushes, a bowl of heat and light. Simon eagerly takes in the complex sensations of the forest, and he stays peacefully enclosed in a "cabin" of leaves until long after day has faded into night.

Analysis

The main focus of this short chapter is the developing conflict between Ralph and Jack. The two engage in a verbal argument that indicates that each character is clinging dogmatically to his own perspective. What is more, they represent opposing ideologies. While Ralph is dedicated to building shelters for the group, Jack is determined to become a successful hunter and establish himself as a lone hero among the group. Ralph's orientation is towards the group, while Jack is concerned with his own glory, which hinges again on militaristic values. Jack seeks to dominate and conquer nature through hunting and killing pigs, a goal that foreshadows the intensification of his violent impulses throughout the novel and further identifies him as a symbol for totalitarian, as opposed to democratic, political organization.

The chapter's beginning follows Jack on a solitary hunt through the forest, which underscores Jack's importance to the novel and explains his preoccupation with hunting. For Jack, hunting is not an instinctive talent but a skill that he continues to develop as the story unfolds. His motives for hunting are disturbing. He hunts not for the ostensible purpose of gaining food to eat but for his personal enjoyment. Golding indicates that there is something tremendously dangerous in Jack's obsession; his expression is one of "madness" when he speaks about his desire to kill. At this point in the story Jack is not sufficiently prepared to kill, but he is approaching the point at which he can inflict mortal violence upon another, whether a pig or a person. Ralph cannily realizes this trait when he reminds Jack that the most important thing that the boys must do is to build a shelter. He implicitly tells Jack that his obsession with hunting does not help the boys' chances of survival.

Golding also elaborates on Ralph's character, which is presented as sympathetic, rational, and focused on the group's welfare. Still, he is not a perfect leader. He expresses regret and frustration that he cannot control the behavior of the other boys. The major burden that Ralph faces is that he must deal with young children unprepared to care for themselves or fulfill responsibility. As he explains, Ralph cannot simply give them orders and expect them to be completed, as Jack automatically assumes he can. Ralph alerts the reader to one of the major obstacles that the boys must overcome: they must behave beyond their years in order to survive and flourish long enough to be saved.

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We may also note in Chapter Three the changes in the characters' appearances and in the language they use. There is a significant gap of time between this chapter and the last, and the boys have grown farther from the conventions and values of the Home Counties. Jack hunts in the forest half-naked, and many of the boys wear "tattered shorts" or have bare feet, details that indicate that they have abandoned the ways of home in favor of comfort and ease. Moreover, the younger boys, referred to as "little ones" in the previous chapters, are now called "littluns," and Sam and Eric, the twins, have become "Samneric," a compound that suggests that, in the eyes of the group, the two characters are considered one. In the absence of external authority, the boys have developed their own dress code and are beginning to establish their own language. It is becoming an independent culture. Golding reinforces the latter detail by reproducing the boys' own invented words—"littluns" and "Samneric"—in his own third-person prose. The implication is that the boys' civilization is less a mirror of their upbringing than it is a reflection of the unique concerns and dynamics of life on the island.

Chapter Three provides the reader with more insight into Simon's character. Simon was introduced in Chapter One but is not important until he interrupts Ralph's and Jack's argument. Described as barefoot, long-haired, and alternately "queer" and "funny," Simon is revealed as socially outcast from the other boys. Yet, unlike Piggy, Simon seems content with his difference and even cultivates it. When he, Ralph, and Jack decide to go look at the signal fire, Simon abruptly abandons the mission without word in order to wander off into the forest with a sense of "purpose." Ignoring the usual rules of social interaction, which would require him to tell the others of his plans out of politeness, Simon distinguishes himself as ruled not by society but by an intense and even spiritual inner force. His long hair and bare feet connect him not only to nature but to the stereotypical wandering prophet or even Jesus Christ, a link that the novel will enforce further with his murder.

Simon's experience in the jungle, which we read in detail, emphasizes his spiritual and peaceful character. The open space that he settles into in the jungle is an indication that, for Simon, the island is indeed Edenic. Unlike Ralph, who seeks to protect the group from nature, and Jack, who seeks to conquer and control it, Simon views the natural landscape as a place of beauty and tranquility. His excursion shows that he is the one character having an affinity with the natural world. There are strong religious overtones in Golding's description of the area that Simon finds. With its candle-buds, serene stillness, and leafy walls, it recalls a place of worship.

Self Assessment

Fill in the blanks:

1. Ralph, a year old boy with fair hair is climbing out of plane wreckage on a beach and towards a lagoon.
2. A plane crashed in the
3. Golding indicates that Jack must prepare himself to commit a
4. Jack scans the oppressively Silent forest, looking for to hunt.
5. The littluns have their own and separate themselves from the older boys.

While the dialogue in Chapter Three highlights the ideological contrast between Jack and Ralph, on a structural level, Golding also forces Jack and Simon into comparison. The chapter begins and concludes in the forest, linking both characters to the area (in contrast to Ralph, who is associated with the beach and mountain areas that he has marked with symbols of civilization—the fire and shelters). Jack and Simon are both anti-civilizing characters, attracted to the wild, untamed environment of nature, which they prefer to experience in solitude and

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silence. Nevertheless, their experiences of the forest are markedly distinct. While Jack disturbs and disrupts his surroundings, causing both birds and pigs to flee, Simon feels in complete harmony with the natural world. He submerges himself in the rhythms of the forest not to disturb it, but to appreciate its unique sounds, scents, and images. Jack and Simon thus represent two different human approaches to the natural world: the desire to subjugate nature and the desire to coexist in harmony with it. Within this schema, Ralph and Piggy represent a third position, that which seeks to retreat from but make use of nature with a distant but tangible respect.

Chapter Four: Painted Faces and Long Hair

The boys become accustomed to the pattern of their days on the island although it is impossible to adjust to the new rhythms of tropical life, which include the strange point at midday when the sea rises and appears to contain flickering images. Piggy discounts the midday illusions as mere mirages. While mornings are cool and comfortable, the afternoon sun is oppressively hot and bright, which incites fatigue among many of the boys.



Notes The northern European tradition of work, play, and food right through the day is not forgotten, making the transition difficult.

As the boys settle into life on the island, factions develop. The smaller boys are now known by the generic title of “littluns,” including Percival, the smallest boy on the island, who had previously stayed in a small shelter for two days and had only recently emerged, red-eyed and miserable. The littluns spend most of the day searching for fruit to eat, and since they choose it indiscriminately they suffer from chronic diarrhea. They cry for their mothers less often than expected, and they spend time with the older boys only during Ralph’s assemblies. The littluns occupy themselves by building castles in the sand, complex structures whose fine details are only noticeable from close range. The littluns remain collectively troubled by nightmares and visions of the “beastie” described at the first meeting. They fear that the creature hunts the boys after nightfall.



Task Why is the fire allowed to go out?

Two older boys, Roger and Maurice, come out of the forest for a swim and, expressing their superiority over the littluns, begin to kick down the sand castles on the shore. Maurice, remembering that his mother chastised him for such behavior, feels guilty when he gets sand in Percival’s eye. While this conflict unfolds, Henry—a littlun who is related to the boy who disappeared—is preoccupied by some small creatures on the beach, which he finds fascinating. Roger picks up a stone to throw at Henry but deliberately misses him when he throws it, recalling the taboos of earlier life.

Jack thinks about why he is still unsuccessful as a hunter. He believes that the animals see him, so he wants to find some way to camouflage himself. Jack rubs his face with charcoal and laughs with a bloodthirsty snarl when he sees his reflection in a pool of water. From behind the mask, Jack appears liberated from shame and self-consciousness.

Piggy thinks about making a sundial so that they can tell time and better organize their days, but Ralph dismisses the idea. The idea that Piggy is an outsider is tacitly accepted. Ralph

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believes that he sees smoke along the horizon coming from a ship, but there is not enough smoke from the mountain to signal it. Ralph starts to run to the up the mountain, but he is too late. Their signal fire is dead. Ralph screams for the ship to come back, but it passes without seeing them. Frustrated and sad, Ralph places the blame on the hunters, whose job it was to tend the fire.

From the forest, Jack and the hunters return covered in paint and humming a bizarre war chant. Ralph sees that the hunt has finally been successful: they are carrying a dead pig on a stick. Nevertheless, Ralph admonishes them for letting the fire go out. Jack, however, is overjoyed by the kill and ignores Ralph. Piggy begins to cry at their lost opportunity, and he also blames Jack. The two argue, and finally Jack punches Piggy in the stomach. Piggy's glasses fly off, and one of the lenses breaks on the rocks. Jack eventually does apologize about the fire, but Ralph resents Jack's misbehavior. Jack considers not letting Piggy have any meat, but he orders everyone to eat. Maurice pretends to be a pig, and the hunters circle around him, dancing and singing, "Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Bash her in." Ralph vows to call an assembly.

Analysis

Golding begins the chapter by describing a sense of order among the boys on the island, and he concludes it by describing the order's disintegration. Even the smallest boys appear to have accepted their fate on the island, and they have developed strategies, such as the building of sand castles, to minimize and contain their anguish. The key to the initial tranquility on the island is the maintenance of customs from the society in which the boys were raised. Yet, as the chapter's opening passages imply, these customs are threatened by the natural forces at work on the island. The regular schedule of work, play time, and meal time is impossible in the volatile tropical atmosphere. That the boys do not know whether the movement of the mid-afternoon sea is real or a "mirage" indicates how ill-adjusted to the island they still are.

We begin to focus on the boys'-particularly Jack's-transgression of the ordered rules of their invented society. Golding highlights how life on the island has begun to mirror human society, with the boys organizing themselves into cliques according to age and placing these cliques in a social hierarchy. The littluns have their own routines and separate themselves from the older boys. The intricate sandcastles the littluns build on the shore represent their continued respect for-even idealization of-human civilization, and their continuing presence at Ralph's meetings signals the littluns' investment in ordered island life, even though they do not contribute directly to the group's survival.



Notes Golding employs the littluns as symbols for the weak members of society that a successful democracy strives to protect.

The episode with Roger and Maurice kicking down the sandcastles thus signals the disintegration of ordered life on the island, and it foreshadows the end of Ralph's democratic plans. The sandcastles are a miniature civilization on the shore. By destroying the sandcastles, Roger and Maurice not only express an abusive power over the younger boys but indicate their increasing disrespect for civilized order and human institutions. Still, Golding suggests, they have not yet devolved into complete savagery. Maurice, remembering his mother's discipline, feels guilty about kicking sand into Percival's eye, and Roger refrains from throwing a stone at Henry. The implication is that the influences of human society are difficult to erase from the human psyche; they remain internalized even in the absence of rules, and conscience retains its hold. Whatever lessons the boys' past had instilled in them prove critical to maintaining

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some semblance of peace on the island. Despite the stirrings of anarchy, the boys obey notions of appropriate behavior without any real external authority to determine what they can and cannot do. It is only when the boys completely transgress these civilized norms that they suffer.

Jack is the first to seriously overstep the boundaries of civilized society. His attempts to become a successful hunter are in effect attempts to succumb entirely to his animalistic nature. His painted face, reminiscent of some less developed societies, supposedly makes him indistinguishable from the animals of the forest. When Jack finally does kill a pig, as he has intended to do since the beginning of the novel, he fulfills a violent blood-lust that, until then, had remained frustrated. The other hunters share this quality; when they dance and sing about killing the pig, they show that they have succumbed to the thrill of violence. They relish the slaughter, an enjoyment that transcends pride and signifies pure lust. As they cheer on the means by which they mutilate the pig, their painted skin, chanting, and frenzy suggest they have developed their own sub-society, one based on rituals and an almost spiritual worship of blood, violence, and slaughter.

Maurice's impression of the pig during the dance calls attention to the increasingly indistinct line between violence against animals on the island and violence among the boys. Significantly, this chapter contains the first instance of explicit aggression between two boys. Jack, now accustomed to harming others with his recent kill, punches Piggy, who, as Golding reminds us, remains an outsider. The chapter further sets up Piggy as a martyr. He has the most grounded concerns of all the boys, and he offers the reasonable proposal that they construct a sundial, but he is also loathed by the others. Only Ralph, the most mature and grounded of the characters, sympathizes with Piggy and agrees with him that Jack made an egregious error by letting the fire go out. Piggy stands apart from the other boys, for he retains the goal of living in an increasingly civilized society. His hair does not even seem to grow, helping him retain the appearance of a normal English schoolboy while the others grow more disheveled and unkempt.

Jack also clashes with Ralph in this chapter, and the tension between their perspectives furthers the novel's concern with the two opposing political ideologies the boys represent, namely, totalitarianism and democracy. Ralph, whose overarching concern is the maintenance of the signal fire, is dedicated to the welfare of the entire group. He uses his power for the good of all. Jack, however, is concerned with becoming a successful hunter, less for the good it will bring to the other boys than for the thrill of the hunt and the increased social status he will have on the island. He seeks power because it will allow him to gratify his impulses and abuse others without punishment. The two boys' treatment of the littluns-Ralph is assuring, while Jack mocks and yells at them-demonstrates their different approaches to power.

The concurrent sighting of the ship and killing of the pig contribute to the disintegration of the relative calm on the island. These two events represent the different strands of human behavior inherent on the island. The ship is a reminder of the civilized society to which the boys belong, renewing the possibility that they may eventually escape the island. The killing of the pig is an example of their descent from civilized behavior into animalistic activity. This makes clear the dichotomy dividing Ralph and Piggy from Jack and the hunters. The former have a greater concern for returning to society while the latter enjoy their freedom from civilization (a group that, again, imposes its own totalitarian order under Jack). This conflict between the two forces at work among the boys on the island will guide much of the following conflict in the novel.

Chapter Five: Beast from Water**Notes**

Ralph goes to the beach because he needs a place to think and feels overcome with frustration and impotence. He is saddened by his own physical appearance, which has grown shabby with neglect. In particular, his hair has grown uncomfortably long. He understands the weariness of life, where everything requires improvisation. Ralph decides to call a meeting near the bathing pool, realizing that he must think and must make a decision but that he lacks all intellectual ability.

That afternoon, Ralph blows the conch shell and the assembly gathers. He begins the assembly seriously, telling them that they are there not for making jokes or for cleverness. He reminds them that everyone built the first shelter, which is the most sturdy, while the third one, built only by Simon and Ralph, is unstable. He admonishes them for not using the appropriate areas for the lavatory. He also reminds them that the fire is the most important thing on the island, for it is their means of escape. He claims that they ought to die before they let the fire out. He directs this at the hunters in particular. He repeats the rule that the only place where they will have a fire is on the mountain. Addressing the spreading fear among the littluns, Ralph then attempts to demystify the question of the “beastie” or monster. He admits that he is frightened himself, but their fear is unfounded. Ralph again assures the group that there are no monsters on the island.

With his customary abruptness, Jack stands up, takes the conch from Ralph, and begins to yell at the littluns for screaming like babies and not hunting or building or helping. Jack tells them that there is no beast on the island. Piggy does agree with Jack on that point, telling the kids that there are no beasts and there is no real reason for fear-unless it is of other people. A littlun, Phil, tells that he had a nightmare and, when he awoke, saw something big and horrid moving among the trees. Ralph dismisses it as nothing. Simon admits that he was walking in the jungle at night.

Percival speaks next, and as he gives his name he recites his address and telephone number. This reminder of home, however, causes him to break out into tears. All of the littluns join him in crying. Percival claims that the beast comes out of the sea, and he tells them about frightening squids. Simon says that maybe there is a beast, and the boys speak about ghosts. Piggy claims he does not believe in ghosts, but Jack attempts to start a fight again by taunting Piggy and calling him “Fatty.”



Did u know? Ralph stops the fight and asks the boys how many of them believe in ghosts. Piggy begins yelling, asking whether the boys are humans, animals, or savages.

Jack threatens Piggy again, and Ralph intercedes once more, complaining that they are breaking the rules. When Jack asks, “who cares?” Ralph says that the rules are the only thing that they have. Jack says that he and his hunters will kill the beast. The assembly breaks up as Jack leads them on a hunt. Only Ralph, Piggy, and Simon remain. Ralph says that if he blows the conch to summon them back and they refuse, then they will become like animals and will never be rescued. He asks Piggy whether there are ghosts or beasts on the island, but Piggy reassures him. Piggy warns Ralph that if he steps down as chief Jack will do nothing but hunt, and they will never be rescued. The three imagine the majesty of adult life. They also hear Percival still sobbing his address.

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Analysis

The weight of leadership becomes oppressive for Ralph as the story continues; he is dutiful and dedicated, but his attempts to instill order and calm among the boys are decreasingly successful. Golding develops Ralph's particular concerns and insecurities in this chapter. By showing him brooding over his perceived failures, Golding highlights Ralph's essentially responsible, adult nature. Ralph's concern about his appearance, and particularly his grown-out hair, indicate his natural inclination towards the conventions of civilization. Although Ralph demonstrates a more than sufficient intellect, he also worries that he lacks Piggy's genius. His one consolation is that he realizes that his abilities as a thinker allow him to recognize the same in Piggy, again a rational observation that draws the reader's attention to his potential as a leader. The implication is that deviations from Ralph's plans will be illogical, ill-informed, and dangerous.

Ralph still has a strong sense of self-doubt. He is not immune to fear, which he admits to the boys, and he even feels it necessary to ask Piggy whether there might actually be a ghost on the island. Thus, Golding presents Ralph as a reluctant leader. His elected position of chief has been thrust upon him, and he assumes it only because he is the most natural and qualified leader. He has no real ambition or drive, such as the rapacious energy that motivates Jack, but he knows that the boys will be best provided for under his care. It is Ralph who is most concerned with the rules of order on the island. He accurately tells the boys that without the rules, the boys have nothing. Ralph's rules keep the boys tethered to some semblance of society, but without these rules there will be disastrous consequences.

Piggy remains the only fully rational character during the assembly and afterward. Piggy is the only boy who categorically dismisses the idea of a beast on the island, and he even reassures the generally unwavering Ralph on this point. It is Piggy who realizes that the boys' fear is the only danger that they truly face so long as they have enough food to survive, and even this fear proves no actual threat to them. Still, the outcast Piggy once again is ignored in favor of lurid tales of beasts and ghosts; although he is consistently correct in his judgments, Piggy is continually ignored. He raises the important question of whether the boys wish to act like humans, savages, or animals. Once again, Ralph and Piggy exemplify civilized human order, while Jack represents a brutal anarchy that may devolve into animal behavior.

The conflict between Jack and Ralph, with Piggy as his ally, reaches a breaking point in this chapter. Although Jack initially dismisses the idea of a beast on the island, he comes to accept the idea when they conceive of the beast as an enemy that his hunters may kill. Jack continues to be an aggressive and destructive force. He again physically threatens Piggy, foreshadowing the eventual violent conflict between the two boys, and he even manipulates the young boys' fear of monsters and ghosts. During the assembly Jack fully abandons the rules and codes of society. He promotes anarchy among the boys, leading them on a disorganized hunt for an imaginary beast. While Ralph is appointed leader for his calm demeanor and rationality, Jack gains his authority from irrationality and instinctual fear, manipulating the boys into thinking that there may be a dangerous creature that they should hunt. This behavior is dangerous; Ralph concludes that a focus on hunting will prevent them from ever leaving the island and seal their fate as no more than animals.

The assembly highlights how fear ferments and spreads in a group. The littluns begin with a concrete example of a frightening incident that is easily explained and is understandable, but the idea of something more sinister on the island provokes mass hysteria. The terrors that the boys imagine become progressively more abstract and threatening. Percival uses concrete facts about squids to arrive at an illogical conclusion that a squid may emerge from the sea to harm them. This then provokes the unfounded rumors that there may be supernatural beings, ghosts, on the island.

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Monsters, violent squid, and ghosts: all three creatures represent different instantiations of the “beast” or “beastie” that has been the subject of the boys’ mounting fear. As the title suggests, the beast is of crucial importance to this chapter and will figure largely in the tragic events to come. On a symbolic level, the beast has several meanings. First, it invokes the devil, the Satan of Judeo-Christian mythology, which foreshadows the “lord of the flies” object that will become the mascot of Jack’s tribe later. The fear of the beast among the boys may symbolize their fear of evil from an external, supernatural source. Second, it symbolizes the unknown, amoral, dark forces of nature, which remain beyond the boys’ control. Finally, the beast may allude to the Freudian concept of the Id, the instinctual, primordial drive that is present in the human psyche and which, unfettered by social mores, tends towards savagery and destruction. In this framework, the boys’ fear of the beast is a displacement of a fear of themselves, of their capacity for violence and evil which is unleashed in the absence of adult authority and ordered social life.

With the anarchy incited by Jack and the panic among the littluns, only the illusion of civilization is left on the island. Percival’s tearful repetition of his home address is a stark reminder that the boys no longer reside in civilized culture and that the Home Counties remain little more than a pleasant memory. As Ralph, Piggy, and Simon muse on adulthood, we recall that adult society should be sufficiently rational and organized to solve the problems that the children face on the island, though we wonder how well a similar group of adults would do.

Chapter Six: Beast from Air

Later that night, Ralph and Simon pick up Percival and carry him into a shelter. Overhead, beyond the horizon, there is an aerial battle while the boys sleep. They do not hear the explosions in the sky, nor do they see a pilot drop from a parachute, sweeping across the reef toward the mountain. Unbeknownst to the boys, the dead pilot lands on the mountaintop, his flapping chute throwing strange shadows across the ground, with his head appearing to float in the wind.

Early the next morning, there are noises from a rock falling down the side of the mountain. The twins Samneric, the two boys on duty at the fire, awake and add kindling to the fire. Just then they spot the dead pilot at the top of the mountain and are immobilized by fear. Eventually, they scramble down the mountain to wake Ralph. Samneric claim that they saw the beast. Ralph calls a meeting, and the group assembles again at the beach. Eric announces to the other boys that he and Sam saw the beast. He describes it as having teeth and claws and states that it followed them as they ran away.

Jack calls for a hunt, but Piggy says that they should stay there, for the beast may not want to approach them on the beach. In response to Jack’s belligerence, Piggy points out that only he has the right to speak because he is holding the conch. Jack responds that they no longer need the conch. Ralph becomes exasperated at Jack, accusing him of not wanting to be rescued, and Jack takes a swing at him. Despite Jack’s hostility towards Ralph and the rules of the island, Ralph not only allows Jack to lead the hunt but also decides that he will accompany the hunters to search for the beast.

Self Assessment

Fill in the blanks:

6. Ralph decides to call a meeting near the
7. Ralph goes to the beach because he needs a place to think and feel overcome with
8. highlights Ralph’s essentially responsible, adult nature.

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9. The landing of the on the mountain is a pivotal event in *Lord of the Flies*.
10. The dead appears to the boys as a supernatural creature.

Simon, wanting to prove that he is accepted, travels with Ralph, who wishes only for solitude. Soon, they reach a part of the island that they had not yet discovered. It is a thin path that leads to a series of caves inside a mountain face. While the other boys are afraid to traverse the walkway and explore the caves, Ralph accomplishes the feat and is encouraged by his own bravery. He enters one of the caves and is soon joined by Jack. The two experience a brief reconciliation as they have fun together exploring the new mountain territory.

They continue along a narrow wall of rocks that forms a bridge between parts of the island, reaching the open sea. At this point, however, some of the boys get distracted and spend time rolling rocks around the bridge. Ralph again gets frustrated and then asserts that it would be better to climb the mountain and rekindle the fire. He accuses the boys of losing sight of their original goal, finding and killing the beast. Contradicting Ralph, Jack states that he wishes to stay where they are because they can build a fort.

Analysis

The landing of the dead pilot on the mountain is a pivotal event in *Lord of the Flies*. The pilot represents an actual manifestation of the beast whose existence the boys had feared but never confirmed. None of the boys is immune to the implications of the dead pilot's presence on the island. Even Piggy, faced with some evidence that a beast actually exists, begins considering measures the boys should take to protect themselves. In contrast to the "beast from water" of the previous chapter (alternately figured as a monster, squid, and ghost), the beast from air is a concrete object toward which the boys can direct their fear. Significantly, however, the beast from air proves no threat to the boys. The dead body is nothing more than a harmless object left to be interpreted in vastly different ways by the various boys.



Task Why does Piggy only have "one" eye?

Given his increasingly violent behavior, intensified further by his successful slaughter of a forest pig, Jack unsurprisingly interprets the appearance of the beast from air as a cause for war. The possibility of a dangerous presence on the island is key to Jack's gaining authority over the other boys, for he affirms their fear and gives them a focus for their violence and anger. Jack thus continues his authoritarian behavior with a strong emphasis on demagoguery. Jack requires a concrete enemy in order to assume dictatorial authority, and he finds one in the dead pilot despite its obvious inability to harm them. This foreshadows later developments in which Jack will focus his vitriol against other possible enemies. Like many tyrants, Jack assumes power by directing public fear towards scapegoats, in this case, the body of the dead pilot.

Chapter Six also confirms the increasing tension between Jack and Ralph, whose opposing ideas of social organization resurface. While he despises Piggy, Jack's most threatening enemy is Ralph, who insists on rules and self-discipline over wild adventures and hunting. Ralph remains focused on the clear objective of keeping the fire burning to alert possible passing ships, while Jack is committed to only those pursuits that allow him to behave in a destructive manner. Previously, Jack was committed to the rules of order that would allow him to punish others; in this chapter, however, Golding presents Jack as accepting anarchy when it serves his purposes. His assertion that the boys no longer need the conch shell in meetings signifies

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Jack's explicit rejection of the democratic rules established in the boys' first meeting. Jack emerges in Chapter Six as driven less by totalitarian or anarchist ideology than by self-interest, although the anarchy makes room for a new order led totally by Jack.

Jack's increasing credibility among the group isolates Ralph from the other boys, who find Jack's focus on the games of hunting and building forts more appealing than Ralph's commitment to keeping the fire burning and remaining safe. After all, what is so bad about a life on the beach with plenty of fruit and fun? Throughout the chapter, Golding develops this rift between the more mature Ralph and the other boys. Ralph finds he must ally himself with the intellectual Piggy and the introspective Simon. As the other boys narrow their focus to pure self-interest, with a limited focus on survival (killing the beast) and a greater goal of satisfying their boyish desires (playing as hunters), the three boys represent three facets of distinctly human thought. Ralph, who strives to balance priorities successfully, represents practical reason and democratic ethics. Piggy the problem-solver represents pure intellect. Simon, in contrast, is a spiritual thinker who demonstrates the ability to transcend individual interests in order to achieve not just peace but harmony with others and with the natural environment.

Significantly, Golding begins Chapter Six with a description of an aerial battle that, unlike most of the narrative, is not filtered through one of the boys' perspectives. The reader learns of the events of the battle while the boys remain sleeping and unaware. This special knowledge calls our attention to the dramatic irony here, the gap between reality and the boys' interpretation of that reality. The group's hysterical reaction to the "beast from air," which the reader knows is a dead parachutist, underscores how distorted, irrational, and fear-driven the boys' reasoning is. Rather than leaving readers with the boys' perspective, which would require readers to figure out the reality of the situation on their own, Golding briefly gives the reader an objective viewpoint in order to help readers perceive the danger of the children's mounting irrationality.

Moreover, the chapter's opening description of the aerial battle highlights one of the novel's missions, that is, as a political allegory rooted in the Cold War. The war described here is fictional and accords with no real historical events; nevertheless, the rhetoric Golding uses in this section evokes the conflict of the Cold War. The battle is between England and "the Reds," and an atom bomb-the main weapon at issue in the arms race-is responsible for evacuating the children from the Home Counties. Golding plays on the fears of Cold War America and Great Britain to reinforce his cautionary tale about the superiority of democracy. That the war again threatens the boys, through the misinterpreted figure of the dead parachutist, also draws the reader's attention to the fact that the children are primarily victims of war. From this perspective, the tragic events to follow are consequences of a global crisis rooted as much in war as in human nature.

Again in Chapter Six, Golding uses religious symbolism to express the underlying themes of the novel. The dead parachutist appears to the boys as a supernatural creature; Golding enforces the twins' interpretation by describing the dead body with mystical imagery and language. The body appears to lift and drop its own head, and the flapping parachute opens and closes in the wind. Samneric describe it as a "beast," but Golding's opening description, which follows the parachutist as he drifts across the island-as well as the wing-like quality of his torn parachute-implies that he is more akin to a fallen angel. In Judeo-Christian mythology the first fallen angel was Lucifer, who later became Satan, the incarnation of evil. The parachutist thus serves as a symbol of, and motivation for, the evil that is now manifesting on the island. The Satanic function of the dead body is compounded by the violent, tragic action that results from the confusion surrounding its identity.

Notes

9.2 Summary

- Ralph, excited by the idea of living without adult supervision, immediately takes advantage of the freedom on the island.
- In contrast to the violent Jack and charismatic Ralph, Piggy is immediately established as the intellectual of the group.
- Golding uses the progress of the boys on the island as a metaphor for early human development.
- Golding introduces more symbols that will recur throughout the novel and which highlight important developments in the dramatic action.
- Piggy thinks about making a sundial so that they can tell time and better organize their days, but Ralph dismisses the idea.
- Simon, wanting to prove that he is accepted, travels with Ralph, who wishes only for solitude.
- The battle is between England and “the Reds,” and an atom bomb-the main weapon at issue in the arms race-is responsible for evacuating the children from the Home Counties.

9.3 Keywords

<i>Chant</i>	: repeated rhythmic phrase.
<i>Anarchy</i>	: a State of disorder due to absence or non-recognition of government.
<i>Ferment</i>	: undergo or cause to undergo fermentation.
<i>Succumb</i>	: die from the effect of an injury.

9.4 Review Questions

1. What Circumstances have brought the boys to the Island?
2. Why does Jack feel, he should be elected chief?
3. Describe Simon. Why does he go off alone up the mountain?
4. who are the littluns? What did they do with their time?
5. Why do the littluns cry in their sleep?
6. Do any of the boys really believe in the beast?

Answers: Self Assessment

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Twelve | 2. Pasific ocean |
| 3. violent act | 4. Pigs |
| 5. Routines | 6. Bathing pool |
| 7. Frustration and impotence | 8. Golding |
| 9. Dead pilot | 10. Parachutist |

9.5 Further Readings

Notes



Books

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Lord Of The Flies (E Text) | — | William Golding |
| William Golding's Lord of Flies | — | Walter A. Freeman |
| The Novels of William Golding | — | Indu Kulkarni |



Online links

http://gv.pl/pdf/lord_of_the_flies.pdf

<http://www.pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/monkeynotes/pmLordFlies02.asp>

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Unit 10: William Golding—Lord of the Flies: Detailed Study of Text-II

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain detailed study of text Lord of the flies chapters seven to twelve
- Discuss summary and analysis of chapters seven to twelve.

Introduction

Golding write the novel in the third person perspective. there is one omniscient narrator. Although the book generally follows Ralph, it occasionally breaks off and follows another character for a time. This entire book is autobiographical in that it tells us something the author wants to show us. Golding tries to teach us and warn us of the evil nature of mankind. He says through the book that we are evil and that it is only society that keeps us from committing crimes.

Golding frequently uses imagery to describe the scenery and the setting. A good example occurs in the first passage where Golding's writes, "there was a strip of weed-strewn beach that was almost as firm as a road. A Kind of glamour was spread over them and the scene and they were conscious of the glamour and made happy by it."

Golding uses a lot of symbolism in The Lord of the Flies. The entire book is symbolic of the nature of man and society in general as the island becomes a society metaphorical to society as a whole and the hunt at the end of the book symbolic of the war. A symbol Golding uses throughout the book is the conch. It represents authority and order. The person holding the conch had the power, and it created order and rules since when it was called, everyone had to listen. Another symbol is Piggy's glasses. It symbolized knowledge and insight. While Piggy had them, he was able to give advice to the group, such as that of the signal fire. It was the glasses that created the fire. However, after the glasses are broken, the group loses what insight they had. The war paint is also a symbol. It symbolized the rejection of society. In a way, when they put on the mask of war paint, they took off the mask of society and revealed their true inner selves which were savage.

10.1 Detailed Study of Text

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Chapter Seven: Shadows and Tall Trees

The boys continue to travel across the island to the mountain, and they stop to eat. Ralph notices how long his hair is and how dirty and unclean he has become. He has been following the hunters, and he observes that on this side of the island, which is opposite to the one on which the boys have settled, the view is utterly different. The horizon is a hard, clipped blue, and the ocean crashes against the rocks. He compares the ocean to a thick wall, an impermeable barrier preventing the boys' escape. As Ralph appears to lose hope, Simon reassures him that they will leave the island eventually. Ralph is somewhat doubtful, but Simon replies that his thoughts are simply opinions. Roger calls for Ralph, telling him that they need to continue hunting.

That afternoon, the boys discover pig droppings. Jack suggests that they hunt the pig in addition to continuing their search for the beast. A boar appears, and the boys set out in pursuit of it. Ralph, who has never hunted before, is excited by the chase and quickly gets caught up in the adventure. He throws his spear at a boar. While it only nicks his snout, Ralph is encouraged by what he considers his good marksmanship.

Jack is wounded on his left forearm, apparently by the boar's tusks. He proudly presents his wound to the crowd, and Simon tells him he should suck the wound to prevent infection. The hunters go into a frenzy once more, repeatedly chanting "kill the pig." Caught up in the momentum of their chanting and dancing, they jab at Robert with their spears, at first in jest, and then with more dangerous intent. Frightened and hurt, Robert drags himself away from the crowd, now aware that they are carried away with their game. Roger and Jack talk about the chanting, and Jack says that someone should dress up as a pig and pretend to knock him over. When Robert says that Jack should get a real pig that he can actually kill, Jack replies that they could just use a littlun. The boys, enamored by Jack's bold statement, laugh and cheer him on. Ralph tries to remind the boys that they were only playing a game. He is concerned about the increasingly violent, impulsive behavior of the hunters.

As evening falls, the boys start climbing up the mountain once more, and Ralph realizes that they won't be able to return to the beach until morning. He does not want to leave the littluns alone with Piggy all night. Jack mocks Ralph for his concern for Piggy. Simon says that he can go back to the beach and inform the group of the hunters' whereabouts. Ralph tells Jack that there is not enough light to go hunting for pigs, so they should wait until morning. Sensing hostility from Jack, Ralph asks him why he hates him. Jack has no answer.

Though the hunters are tired and afraid, Jack vows that he will go up the mountain to look for the beast. Jack mocks Ralph for not wanting to go up the mountain, accusing him of being afraid. Jack claims he saw something bulge on the mountain. Since Jack seems for the first time somewhat afraid, Ralph agrees that they will look for it immediately. The boys see a rock-like hump and something like a great ape sitting asleep with its head between its knees. As soon as they see it, the boys run off, terrified.

Analysis

In this chapter, Golding further develops the themes he introduced in "Beast From Air." The rift between Jack and Ralph becomes more intense as Ralph continues to remind Jack of his misguided priorities. The struggle in this chapter between the two characters again assumes political overtones, as the two engage in a power struggle for authority over the other boys.

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The concerns of Ralph and Jack were established in previous chapters: the former focuses on survival and escape while the latter focuses on hunting and self-gratification. In this chapter Golding examines the tactics that each uses to assert his authority. Jack uses his bravado to signify his strength and dominance, and he attempts to diminish Ralph in the eyes of the other boys by ridiculing him for his supposed cowardice. Ralph, on the other hand, is straightforward and direct. He challenges Jack's overblown self-confidence by honestly noting that Jack is wrongly motivated by hatred.

Golding continues to use imagery and symbolism to trace the boys' descent into disorder, violence, and amorality. In particular, Golding suggests in this chapter that the line between the boys and animals is becoming increasingly blurred. The hunters chant and dance, and one of the boys again pretend to be a pig while the other boys pretend to kill him. The parallel between boy and pig in the ritual is a powerful dramatization of the implications of the boys' giving in to their violent impulses, indicating that the children are no better than animals and that, like the pig, they too will be sacrificed to fulfill the brutal desires of Jack and his hunters.

Characterization in Chapter Seven also foreshadows the tragic events to come. In particular, Jack, who is increasingly confident as a hunter and leader, suggests that his violent impulses are now directed at the other children as well as at the pigs on the island. Jack's joke that the group should kill a littluns in place of a pig demonstrates a blatant disregard for human life and explicitly acknowledges that he appreciates violence for its own sake. His joke also signals the waning of his conscience as the boys continue to exist in the absence of adult society and its rules. Jack, who previously needed to prepare himself to kill a pig, indicates that he is now probably capable of killing people without remorse.

As Ralph faces the challenge of tracking and hunting the beast, physical tasks that are unfamiliar to him as the political leader of the boys, he demonstrates the dangerous appeal of aggressive and impulsive behavior such as Jack's. Golding tracks Ralph's brief sympathy with Jack's mindset to suggest that even the most civilized humans are susceptible to groupthink and the pressures of the Id, which is inclined towards destruction and self-gratification. The chapter begins with Ralph expressing disgust over his appearance, which again indicates his natural disinclination towards savagery. Yet, like Jack, Ralph feels exhilarated during the hunt and begins to understand the primal appeal of killing pigs. It is Jack's decision to continue the hunt in darkness, which Ralph rightly recognizes as ill-informed, that finally reminds Ralph of the essential foolishness of Jack's mindset. By showing Ralph's character as threatened but not subsumed by Jack's will, Golding suggests that the human impulse towards savagery, which is both strong and natural, can nevertheless be overcome by reason and intelligence.

While Golding's characterization of Jack and his hunters intends to caution the reader about the destructive impulses that reside inside all humans, it is important to note the historical biases at work in this depiction of the boys' hunting rituals. The boys chant and dance around in circles, whipping themselves up into a "frenzy" that pushes them to the brink of actual murder. They represent or are becoming "savages," which in Golding's time reminded readers of the native peoples of the Americas and Africa. This stereotype tended to associate these peoples with a very limited and barbaric culture, failing to appreciate the complex culture that events such as ritual dances expressed. A more charitable view of Jack's new warrior culture, say from an anthropologist's perspective, would not stress the dehumanization of the war-dance so much as their natural human reaction to the difficult conditions on the island, a reaction that after all can produce the meat that the children need.

Nature is also of crucial significance in this chapter. As the boys move farther from the camp into the unexplored recesses of the forest and mountain areas, they contend with the powerful forces of the natural world, which is untamed and indifferent to the boys' concerns. The emphasis on the indifference of nature in this chapter is significant in several ways. First, it

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suggests the continuing dehumanization of the boys as they remain cut-off from the larger world and without successful social organization. Their progress from the semi-humanized beach, with its shelters and sandcastles, to the wild forest and mountain areas, mirrors their descent into complete savagery. The chapter's beginning, in which Ralph compares the ocean to an impenetrable wall, also suggests the extent to which nature remains the boys' most powerful antagonist. Ralph's pessimistic observations foreshadow the following chapters, in which Simon discovers that the "beast" is actually a dead body, whose presence on the island can be explained rationally. It was the darkness of the night that prevented the boys from recognizing the true nature of the creature of the mountaintop. Throughout the novel, the natural world frustrates and threatens the boys' understanding of their situation and their relationships with one another. Ralph's sense of defeat in the face of the ocean in this chapter thus indicates that he is beginning to register the power of nature and the part it plays in their struggle for rescue and self-government.

The conclusion of the chapter, with the boys' collective misrecognition of the dead parachutist as a malevolent beast, highlights the power of human nature to fear the unknown and magnify its importance. The boys compare the figure on the mountaintop to a great ape. The primate is a common symbol for early man and man's origins as an animal species. The boys recognize the ape-like creature as a monster, a moment that underscores the monstrous potential of humanity at its most primitive and base. The parachutist, whose arrival on the island inaugurates a series of events that lead to complete anarchy and bloodshed, thus links together evil, nature, and humanity in a single symbol. The haste with which the boys decide the dead body is a "monster" indicates not only the infectiousness of hysterical thinking among the boys, but also the extent to which the beast is a projection of their fear of their own savagery and violence.

Chapter Eight: Gift for the Darkness

The next morning, the boys gather on the beach to discuss what the hunters saw. Ralph tells Piggy about the creature on the mountain, which he describes as a beast with teeth and big black eyes. Piggy is skeptical. Jack assures the group that his hunters can defeat the beast, but Ralph dismisses Jack's group as no more than boys with sticks. Jack tells the other boys that the beast is a hunter, and he informs them that Ralph thinks that the boys are cowards. He continues his attack on Ralph, claiming that Ralph is no proper chief, for he is a coward himself. Jack asks the boys if they want Ralph to be fired as chief. When nobody agrees with him, Jack runs off in tears. He asserts that he is no longer going to be part of Ralph's lot. Jack leaves the group on the beach.

After Jack runs off, Piggy tells the group they can do without him, but they should stay close to the platform. Simon suggests that they climb the mountain. Piggy says that if they climb the mountain they can start the fire again, but he then suggests that they start a fire down by the beach. Piggy organizes the new fire area by the beach. Ralph notices that several of the boys are missing. Piggy is confident that they all will do well enough if they behave with common sense, and he proposes a feast. They wonder where Simon has gone and surmise that he might be climbing the mountain. In fact, Simon left to sit in the open space he had found earlier.

Far off along the beach, Jack proclaims that he will be chief of the hunters and that they must forget about the beast. He says that they might go later to the castle rock, but now they will kill a pig and have a feast to celebrate their independence. They find a group of pigs, and Jack kills a large sow by forcing his spear up her anus. Jack rubs the blood over Maurice's cheeks while Roger laughs about how the fatal blow against the sow was delivered up her ass. They

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cut-off the pig's head and leave it on a stick as a gift for the beast at the mountaintop. When they place the offering upright, blood drips down the sow's teeth, and they run away. Simon, from his private space, sees the head, which has flies buzzing around it.



Notes Back on the beach, Ralph worries that the boys will die if they are not rescued soon. Ralph and Piggy realize that it is Jack who makes everything break apart.

Ralph's group is startled as the forest suddenly bursts into uproar. The littluns run-off while Jack approaches, naked except for paint and a belt, his hunters taking burning branches from the fire. Jack tells Ralph and his group that he and his hunters are living along the beach by a flat rock, where they hunt and feast and have fun. He invites the boys to join his tribe. When Jack leaves, Ralph says that he thought Jack was going to take the conch, which Ralph still considers a symbol of ritual and order. They reassure each other again that the fire is the most important task at hand. But a boy among them named Bill appears skeptical. He suggests that they go to the hunters' feast and tell them that the fire is hard on them. At the top of the mountain remains the pig's head, which Simon has dubbed the Lord of the Flies.

Simon believes that the pig's head speaks to him. He thinks that it is calling him a silly little boy. The Lord of the Flies tells Simon to run off and play with the others, who think that he is crazy. Lord of the Flies claims that he is the Beast, and the Beast laughs at the idea that the Beast is something that could be hunted and killed, for he is within every human being and thus can never be defeated or escaped from. Terrified and disoriented by this disturbing vision, Simon falls down and loses consciousness.

Analysis

In this chapter, Golding continues to use his main characters as personifications of various facets of the human spirit. Piggy remains the lone skeptic among the boys and still unsure of the presence of the beast, which continues to be the focus of island life for Jack and his hunters. Even Ralph, succumbing to fear and suspicion, now believes that there is a beast on the island. Although Ralph is the clear protagonist of the story and the character to whom Golding affixes the reader's perspective, he is still susceptible to the childish passions and irrationality that are, to varying extents, present in the other children. Ralph's weakness is not insignificant. While Ralph may be more mature and rational than Jack and his hunters, given the right circumstances he can submit to the same passions as the other boys, a tendency that foreshadows the tragic events that unfold in subsequent chapters.



Task How does Ralph describe the beast?

The political subtext of previous chapters becomes more overt in this chapter as Jack explicitly attempts to overthrow Ralph as chief. Although Ralph successfully defends himself against Jack's attack by calling the other boys' attention to Jack's shortsightedness and cowardice, Jack is resolved that he will take control. Jack's refusal to accept the other boys' decision serves as a reminder that Jack is still a child who considers life on the island as a game; he assumes the position that, if he cannot set the rules of the game, he refuses to play at all. This decision provokes the subsequent events of the chapter, which focus on Jack's rejection not only of Ralph's authority but of the entire pseudo-democracy on the island that had conferred authority on Ralph. Jack, realizing that he cannot take authority directly away from Ralph, appoints

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himself as the authority and begins his own “tribe.” Two “governments” thus exist on the island in this chapter. Ralph presides over what resembles a liberal democracy, while Jack forms a type of military dictatorship. The two systems remain ideologically opposed, an opposition that Golding highlights by placing the camps on different sides of the island. The structure of the chapter also evokes the creation of two different governments on the island and foreshadows the dominance of Jack’s system over Ralph’s. If there is a belligerent culture nearby, a peaceful culture must militarize in order to survive. The chapter begins with Jack rejecting Ralph’s conch shell as a symbol of authority conferred by democratic consensus, and it ends with the creation of the Lord of the Flies, a symbol of the lawlessness and violence that motivates Jack’s desire for power.

Golding also continues to represent Piggy as the sensible and in some respects the most essential character for the boys’ survival. The abrasive edge that Piggy demonstrated upon their arrival now becomes secondary to his practical wisdom, his ability to quickly understand and adapt to new situations. Among the major characters, Piggy is the only one who does not have predictable emotions. While Jack and Simon descend into their respective forms of madness and Ralph remains sensible but increasingly cynical and vulnerable, Piggy confounds the reader’s expectations by assuming authority over the boys despite his sickly appearance and aversion to physical labor. In this chapter, even Ralph defers to Piggy’s sound judgment and resolve. But any hints of Piggy’s heroism in this chapter are undermined by the increasing subjugation of the island’s pigs to Jack and his hunters. Piggy is linked to the pigs by his name; as Jack’s group become more focused on and adept at hunting them, Piggy’s own victimization by the group becomes more likely.



Did u know? In part, the killing of the sow foreshadows Piggy’s tragic fate.

As was foreshadowed in the previous chapter, Jack and his hunters continue to devolve into savagery in Chapter Eight. They indulge more and more in stereotypical “native” behavior that emphasizes the use of violence and rituals of song and dance. For these boys the actions are initially little more than a game; when Jack invites the other boys to join his tribe, he explains that the point of this new tribe is solely to have fun. The boys continue to see their behavior as savages as part of an elaborate game, even as the “game” takes on increasingly dangerous and violent undertones. The mounting brutality and impulsiveness of Jack’s group in this chapter foreshadows the events of Chapter Nine, in which the boys’ behavior moves from mere pretending at violence to actual murder.

The scene where Simon confronts the pig’s head, which he calls the Lord of the Flies, remains the most debated episode among critics of the novel. Many critics have noted that the scene resembles the New Testament’s telling of Jesus’ confrontation with Satan during his forty days in the wilderness. Simon, a naturally moral, selfless character, does seem to be a Christ-figure who, in his knowledge of the true nature of the beast, is the sole bearer of truth at this point in the novel. In this scene with the pig’s head, represented as evil, he meets and struggles against his antithesis. His eventual sacrifice, again an allusion to the crucifixion of Jesus, will mark the triumph of evil over good on the island.

A close reading of Simon’s interaction with the pig’s head can yield additional interpretations. In ways that complicate the biblical allegory in this scene, Golding also represents the Lord of the Flies in this chapter as the symbol of the boys’ descent from civilized behavior to inhuman savagery. In this framework, the pig’s head serves as a corrective for Simon’s naive view of nature as a peaceful force. For Simon, the pig’s head is a revelation (his final one) that alerts him to the fact that while nature is beautiful and fascinating, it is also brutal and

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indifferent. In previous chapters, Golding linked Simon to a vision of nature that was abundant, beautiful, and Edenic. The Lord of the Flies represents a different kind of nature, a hellish one, not one of paradise. Seen through Simon's perspective, the Lord of the Flies is a Hobbesian reminder that human life in the most basic state of nature is in fact nasty, brutish, short, and worse. In keeping with Golding's characterization of Simon as spiritual, the pig's head has deep religious connotations: the phrase "lord of the flies" is a translation of the Hebrew word Ba'alzevuv, or its Greek equivalent Beelzebub. The pig's head is thus a symbol of Satan, but, as it reminds Simon, this devil is not an external force. Rather, it is a more nefarious evil, one created by, and remaining within, the boys themselves.

Another interesting facet of Golding's representation of nature in this chapter is evident in the pig hunt. Historically, artists and novelists have associated the natural world with women, in contrast to the civilized world, which they linked to men. Nature is often gendered in literature as female and in this sense a threat to the civilized forces of masculinity. Accordingly, Golding represents this pig hunt in gendered terms and with violent sexual imagery in that the boys kill a female pig with a spear thrust into her anus, which evokes rape. In a novel that has no female human characters appearing in any scene, and in which women are barely even mentioned, this sow and what happens to her carries additional weight. The brutal murder of the sow represents the boys' attempts to subjugate and impose their will on the natural world, coded here as feminine. We may again note the metaphoric link between Piggy and the sow, which calls attention to the ways in which Piggy is himself coded as "feminine": hairless, softly rounded, and with several stereotypically girlish qualities, such as disliking physical labor. In this way, too, the sow's subjugation anticipates his own.

Chapter Nine: A View to a Death

On the humid, dark mountaintop, Simon's fit passes into the weariness of sleep. Waking up, Simon speaks aloud to himself, questioning what he will do next. His nose bleeding, he climbs farther up the mountain, and in the dim light, catches sight of the Beast. This time, however, he recognizes it as the body of the man who parachuted onto the island. Overwhelmed with disgust and dread, Simon vomits. He realizes that he must inform the other boys of their mistake, and he staggers down the mountain toward Jack's camp to tell them what he has found.

Ralph notices the clouds overhead and estimates that it will rain again. Ralph and Piggy play in the lagoon, and Piggy gets mad when Ralph squirts water on him, getting his glasses wet. They wonder where most of the other boys have gone, and they realize that they must have gone to Jack's feast for the childish fun of pretending to be a tribe and putting on war paint. They decide to find them to ensure that the events do not spiral out of control.

Self Assessment

State the following sentences are True or False:

1. Ralph is selected leader because he had been the boys leader back at school.
2. The Choir is given the responsibility of hunting.
3. The Lord of the flies is nothing more than a pig's head on a stick.
4. Simon talks with the Lord of the flies in a dreamlike state.
5. Ralph comes to respect Piggy's intelligence.

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When Ralph and Piggy arrive at Jack's camp, they find the other boys sitting in a group together, laughing and eating the roasted sow. Jack, now a leader, sits on a great log, painted and garlanded as an idol. When he sees Ralph and Piggy, he orders the other boys to give them something to eat, then orders another boy to bring him a drink. Jack asks all of the boys who among them will join his tribe, for he gave them food and demonstrated that his hunters will protect them. Ralph is distressed to see most of them agree to join Jack's tribe. Attempting to convince his boys otherwise, Ralph provokes yet another argument with Jack, and the two yell at each other about who deserves to be chief. Feeling that he is losing ground, Ralph appeals to his symbol of authority, the conch shell. Jack, however, does not acknowledge the conch's significance and tells Ralph that it does not count on his side of the island.

Disturbed by the hostile turn of events, Piggy urges Ralph to leave Jack's camp before there is serious trouble. It starts to rain. Ralph warns the group that a storm is coming and points out that Jack's tribe is unprepared for such disasters, since they do not even have any shelters. The littluns become frightened, and Jack tries to reassure them by ordering his group to perform its ritual pig hunting dance. The boys begin dancing and chanting wildly, and they are soon consumed by frenzy. The storm begins, and a figure emerges suddenly from the forest. It is Simon, running to tell the others about the dead parachutist. Caught up in the madness of the dance, however, they do not recognize him. As Simon cries out about the dead body on the mountain, the boys rush after him with violent malice. They fall on Simon, striking him repeatedly until he is dead.



Task What are the reasons the other boys go to Jack's party?

Meanwhile, on the mountain, the storm intensifies and spreads across the island. The boys run to the shelters, seeking safety from the increasingly violent wind and rain. The strong winds lift the parachute and the body attached to it and blows it across the island and into the sea, a sight which again terrifies the boys, who still mistake the body for a beast. At the same time, the strong tide, propelled by wind, washes over Simon's body and carries it out to sea, where a school of glowing fish surrounds it.

Analysis

In this particularly significant chapter, Ralph finally loses his leadership over the other boys, who succumb to Jack's increasing charisma and the opportunity he gives them to indulge their violent and childish interests. Golding underscores the tragedy of this shift in power with the violent storm that ravages the island, a storm for which the shortsighted Jack was not prepared. Just when Ralph's calm judgment and practicality is most needed, he lacks the authority to bring the boys to safety. The storm on the island serves as a reminder of the perils they face; while Ralph has built shelters for the boys and is prepared for this situation, Jack has focused simply on hunting and entertaining the boys, to their detriment. Golding again directs the reader's sympathy towards Ralph, whose concern remains for the good of the group.

Jack's authority over the other boys becomes increasingly disturbing and dangerous in this chapter. When Ralph finds Jack, he is painted and garlanded, sitting on a log like an idol. This distinctly pagan image is at odds with the ordered society from which Jack came and is the final manifestation of his rejection of civilization. We may note again the presence of chanting and dancing among the boys in his group and recall that, prior to their arrival on the island, Jack and his boys were members of a choir. Traditionally, boys' choirs sang Christian religious songs and hymns. Jack and his tribesmen still sing, but they sing chants that strongly evoke

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the animistic religious traditions of native cultures. Their choice of ritual and song, coupled with Jack's appearance as an "idol," indicates the boys' complete and final rejection of the civilization of the Home Counties.

In this chapter, Golding also emphasizes Jack's rise to power and foreshadows the brutal consequences of his authority. Again, Jack rejects the rules established for the island, telling Ralph that the conch yields no authority when Ralph attempts to cite precedent. He signifies his power over his tribe with his painted body and garlands, an image that alludes to Joseph Conrad's 1902 novella, *Heart of Darkness*, in which a boat captain, Marlow, accepts an assignment to find a defecting government agent, Kurtz, in Africa. In Conrad's story, Marlow discovers Kurtz in a remote area of the continent, living with a group of natives who worship him as their leader and god. In this chapter of *Lord of the Flies*, Golding draws a deliberate parallel between Jack and Kurtz in order to emphasize the extent of Jack's power over the other boys and to call the reader's attention to the severity of the tension between Ralph and Jack which, like the tension between Marlow and Kurtz, is strongly ideological (Marlow and Ralph representing civilization, and Jack and Kurtz representing savagery). This tension eventually leads to violent conflict.

Note the increasing importance of the beast to the boys in this chapter, and its centrality to Jack's usurping of leadership from Ralph. As Ralph and Piggy discover, Jack and his tribe have constructed an elaborate mythology around the beast, to which they now attribute many qualities that were not present in earlier descriptions. They believe that the beast is immortal and can change shape as it wishes, and they claim that it must be both worshiped and feared. Around this mythology Jack has established the rules of his society. His boys are united by their belief in the beast and, above this, their belief in Jack as the one person who can protect them from the beast. Their ritual dances and chants, as well as Jack's makeup and adornments, express their commitment to this mythology, within which the *Lord of the Flies* functions totemically.

The *Lord of the Flies* embodies and expresses the mythology of the beast that unites Jack's tribe and is significant in many ways. As an offering to the body of the parachutist on the mountain, which the boys (excluding Piggy) regard as the beast, it symbolizes Jack's acknowledgment of, and deferral to, the evil impulses that reside inside the individual psyche. In previous chapters, he had vowed to kill the beast; here, Jack attempts to appease it, to gain its favor. As a totem, an artifact that unites Jack's tribe (much like the conch served as a totem for Ralph's group), the *Lord of the Flies* symbolizes the solidification of Jack's group around a shared set of values and interests which, as we have noted, are self-interested and indulgent. Finally, as a memento of the hunting of the sow, the *Lord of the Flies* represents the imposition of human will over nature, another of Jack's goals for island life.



Notes The pig's head reminds the boys of the essential opposition between man and nature, an opposition Jack views as essentially hostile and one that the boys can win.

The most important event of the chapter, however, is the murder of Simon by Jack's tribe. They are in a trance-like state from their ritual dancing, although this does not excuse them. The murder continues the parallel between Simon and Jesus established in the previous chapter by depicting the murder as a sacrifice, akin to Christ's murder on the cross. Like Jesus, who was the sole bearer of knowledge of God's will, it is Simon who alone possesses the truth about the beast. Also like Christ's, Simon's tragedy is governed by the fact that he is misunderstood or disbelieved by those around him. For example, the other boys believe Simon is crazy, yet

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he is the only boy to discover the truth about the supposed beast. This irony is compounded when Jack's hunters mistake Simon for the beast himself. His murder represents the culmination of the violent tendencies prevalent among Jack's band of hunters, who finally move from brutality against animals to brutality against each other. The change is subtle: they murder Simon out of instinct, descending on him before they realize that he proves no danger to them. Nevertheless, this is yet another line that the boys cross on their devolution into inhuman savagery and another step toward engaging in complete and premeditated violence against one another. Simon's murder reveals the essential brutality of the human spirit. On both metaphoric and structural levels, Golding casts Simon as a martyr, a figure whose death is instructive at least to the reader.

The parallels between Simon and Christ continue even after Simon is dead. We may note not only the religious subtext of the chapter's final image, but the distinctly pessimistic tone of this subtext. The storm simultaneously removes the parachutist's and Simon's bodies from the island. Yet, while the parachutist appears to ascend on the winds, Simon is dragged under the tide. The parachutist, who represents both the war that caused the events that brought the children to the island (he is a soldier) and, in a more general sense, the evil that is present in the human psyche (he resembles a fallen angel, a common figure for Satan), is lifted into the sky, while Simon, a Christ-like figure, appears to descend beneath the surface of the earth. The image, therefore, reverses the traditional story, with Satan rising to the heavens and Christ descending to the underworld. The implication is that the ideal order of good and evil has been reversed on the island. Evil has triumphed, a suggestion that mirrors Jack's rise to power and foreshadows the even more tragic events to come. Still, a vestige of optimism remains: Simon's body, as it is carried out to sea, is surrounded by some small glowing fish, who function as a kind of living halo. They do not necessarily want to eat the body; perhaps they are figuratively honoring it. The implication is that the truth of Simon's message, and the injustice of his death, will be recognized in time, as is the case with martyred prophets and saints.

Chapter Ten: The Shell and the Glasses

Back on the other side of the island, Ralph and Piggy meet on the beach. Tired, injured, and disturbed by the previous night's action, they discuss Simon. Piggy reminds Ralph that he is still chief or at least chief over those who are still with them. Piggy tries to stop Ralph from dwelling on Simon's murder by appealing to Ralph's reason. Piggy says that he participated in the murder because he was scared, to which Ralph replies that he was not scared. He does not know what came over him. Piggy tries to justify the death as an accident provoked by Simon's "crazy" behavior, but Ralph, clutching the conch defensively, is consumed with guilt and regret and insists that they took part in a murder.

Piggy asks Ralph not to reveal to Samneric that they were involved in Simon's death. Ralph and Piggy reveal that almost all the other boys have abandoned them for Jack's tribe save Samneric and some other littluns. Samneric return to the beach, where they present Ralph and Piggy with a log they have dragged out of the forest. They immediately take off to go swimming. Ralph stops the twins with the intention of informing them that he and Piggy did not participate in Simon's murder. All four appear nervous as they discuss where they were the previous night, trying to avoid the subject of Simon's murder. All insist that they left early, right after the feast.

At Castle Rock, Roger is attempting to gain entry to Jack's camp. Robert, already inside, makes Roger announce himself before he can enter-one of Jack's new rules. When Roger enters, Robert shows him a new feature of Jack's camp: the boys have rigged a log so that they can easily trigger a rock to tumble down and crush whatever is below it. Roger appears disturbed

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by this, and Robert changes the subject, telling him that Jack had a boy named Wilfred tied up for no apparent reason. Roger considers the implications of Jack's "irresponsible authority" and makes his way back down to the caves and the other boys in Jack's tribe. He finds Jack sitting on a log, nearly naked with a painted face. Jack declares to the group that tomorrow they will hunt again. He warns them about the beast and about intruders. He promises them another feast. Reluctantly, Bill asks Jack what they will use to light the fire. Jack blushes. He finally answers that they shall take fire from the others.

In Ralph's camp on the beach, Piggy gives Ralph his glasses to start the fire. They wish that they could make a radio or a boat, but Ralph says that if they do so, they risk being captured by the Reds. Eric stops himself before he can admit that it would be better than being captured by Jack's hunters. Ralph wonders what Simon had been saying about a dead man. The boys become tired from pulling wood for the fire, but Ralph insists that they must keep it going. Ralph nearly forgets what their objective is for the fire, and they then realize that two people are needed to keep the fire burning at all times. Given their small numbers, each member of Ralph's group would have to spend twelve hours a day devoted to tending the fire. Exhausted and discouraged, they give up the fire for the night and return to the shelters, where they drift off to sleep.

Ralph and Piggy sleep fitfully. They are wakened by sounds within the shelter: Samneric play-fighting. Aware of his increasing fear, Ralph reminisces about the safety of home, and he and Piggy conclude that they will go insane. Suddenly, they hear the leaves rustling outside their shelter and a boy's voice whispering Piggy's name. It is Jack with his hunters, who are attacking the shelter. Ralph's boys fight them off but suffer considerable injuries. Piggy tells Ralph that they wanted the conch, but he then realizes that they came for something else: Piggy's broken glasses.

Analysis

As the chaos surrounding Simon's death calms down, Golding focuses on the horror Piggy and Ralph feel about their involvement in the murder. The two boys attempt to justify their role in Simon's death with the ideas that they did not know that it was Simon until it was too late, they were not among the inner circle of boys beating him to death, and they operated on instinct rather than on malice. Still, the involvement of Piggy and Ralph makes clear that even these two, the paragons of rationality and maturity among the children on the island, are susceptible to the same forces that motivate Jack and his hunters. Golding obscures the once-clear dichotomy between the "good" Ralph and the "evil" Jack, demonstrating that the compulsion towards violence and destruction is present inside all individuals. The reverse, a "good" Jack, is rarely in evidence. The implication of Ralph's and Piggy's brief but tragic participation in the brutal activities of Jack's tribe is that the natural state of humanity is neither good nor evil but mixed. Social order and rules, with conscience and reason helping out only on occasion, are what constrain and limit the "evil" impulses that exist inside us all.

Indeed, Golding does present one major qualification that distinguishes Ralph and Piggy from Jack. Ralph and Piggy still possess a moral sensibility. They realize that their actions are wrong and accordingly struggle to find some justification for their parts in the murder. They are ashamed of the murder, unlike the other boys, who show no qualms about what they have done. Even if Ralph and Piggy present unsuccessful rationalizations, the fact that they need to find some reason for their behavior shows that they have an understanding of moral principles and retain an appreciation for them. Golding thus suggests that while evil may be present inside all of us, the strength of conscience and reason can positively move one's morals, for some more than for others.

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As the new leader of the boys, Jack maintains his authority by capitalizing on the fears and suspicions of the others. Even when presented with information that the figure on the mountain is not harmful, Jack continues to promote fear of the dreaded beast. Like many tyrants, his rules are based on a strict distinction between insiders and outsiders: the insiders are his tribe, and the outsiders are their common enemies: the beast and the boys on the island who reject Jack's authority. His methods of rule are entirely exclusionary, and they fail to provide that first role of government, the security and the safety of the group, even while Jack purports to be able to provide protection from the beast and other enemies. The formal declaration by the guard that visitors must announce their presence does nothing to improve the boys' safety.

Even as Golding continues to emphasize the successful rise of Jack as a leader, he suggests that this rule may be short-lived. The shortsightedness Jack displays as a ruler is clear even to Jack himself. Intent on pleasing the boys with games and hunting, he does nothing to address more practical concerns. Faced with the dilemma of providing a feast without a fire, his solution is to steal from the boys who have maintained a sense of responsibility. Ralph, Piggy, Sam and Eric are therefore considerably burdened. Without help from the other boys who are content to play as savages, these four must devote all their energy to maintaining the signal fire, an almost impossible task. The strain Jack has left the boys with is considerable, but this does not matter to Jack if he can only secure the glasses for fire for the feasts. Ralph and Piggy muse, for their part, that they may go insane if they are not rescued soon.

A more immediate danger to Ralph and Piggy comes when Jack and his followers charge the camp on the beach. The attack on Ralph and Piggy signals yet another stage in the boys' descent from civilized behavior into pure savagery. The murder of Simon was motivated by mass hysteria, instinctual fear, and panic. Here the violence used to gain Piggy's glasses, even though it is not fatal, is intentional, an act that anticipates the murder of Piggy in the following chapter. Piggy's premeditated murder is also foreshadowed by the description of the rock perched near the fortress. Jack and his soldiers have placed the rock so that it may be tipped over on another boy. The question remains regarding which boy will suffer this fate.

As in previous chapters, Golding uses symbolism and imagery to call the reader's attention to the novel's tragic arc, which follows the boys as they devolve from civilized, moral human beings to animal-like savages, motivated only by self-interest and given over to violent impulse. Piggy's glasses, throughout the novel a symbol of intellectual reason and pragmatism—they are used to start the signal fire—come into the hands of the irrational and brutal Jack. Jack, of course, wants the glasses to start not a signal fire, but a bonfire for a pig roast, a decision that reflects his shortsightedness and hedonism. We may also notice that Ralph and Piggy are surprised by the theft of the glasses, since they thought Jack's intent was to steal the conch shell. Jack's disinterest in the conch, a symbol in the novel for democratic authority, reflects his rejection not only of Ralph's authority, but also of the entire system of liberal democracy. The conch is useless if one does not believe in its power. Ralph apparently still thinks that the conch matters or should matter. The image of Ralph clutching the conch is a powerful reminder that he is one of only a few boys who still believe in civilized life on the island.

As the conch shell is divested of meaning and Piggy's glasses fall into the hands of Jack's tribe, Ralph and Piggy become desolate and depressed, hopeless that they will ever be rescued. Golding emphasizes the despair of Ralph's group to provoke pessimism in the reader. That is, when Ralph and Piggy no longer have faith in their rescue, we lose hope for them as well. Rather, it appears that the boys' future will forever be on and of the island, guided by the demented but flourishing tribal system of Jack and his hunters. The scene on Ralph's beach, with its declining and injured population, dwindling fire, and meaningless cultural symbols (in particular the conch) stands in sharp contrast to the scene in Jack's forest, with its army, enforced borders, and even weaponry (the defense contraption). The implication is less that

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Ralph's civilization has been destroyed than that it has been replaced by another, more primitive but more warlike society. As the boys' early days on the island mirrored the evolutionary progress of early man, the boys' final days mirror some aspects of the development of human civilizations, which clash violently over religious and political differences.

Chapter Eleven: Castle Rock

On the beach Ralph, Piggy, and Samneric gather around the remains of the signal fire, bloody and wounded. They attempt to rekindle the fire, but it is impossible without Piggy's glasses. Ralph, blowing the conch, calls an assembly of the boys who remain with them. Piggy, squinting and unable to see, asks Ralph to instruct them about what can be done. Ralph responds that what they most need is a fire, and he reminds them that if they had kept the fire burning they might have been rescued already. Realizing the importance of Piggy's glasses, Ralph, Sam, and Eric think that they should go to the Castle Rock with spears, but Piggy refuses to arm him. Piggy says that he is going to go find Jack himself and appeal to his sense of justice. A tear falls down his cheek as he speaks. Ralph says that they should make themselves look presentable, with clothes, to resemble boys and not savages.

Ralph and his boys set off along the beach, limping. When they approach the Castle Rock, Ralph blows the conch, which he has brought with him, believing it will remind Jack and his hunters of his rightful authority. He spots Jack's boys guarding their camp, and he approaches them tentatively. Samneric rush to Ralph's side, leaving Piggy alone. Jack's hunters, unimpressed by the conch shell, throw rocks at Ralph and his companions and shout for them to leave. Suddenly, Jack emerges from the forest, accompanied by a group of hunters who are dragging a dead pig. He warns Ralph to leave them alone. Ralph demands the return of Piggy's glasses, and the two argue. Ralph finally calls Jack a thief, and Jack responds by trying to stab Ralph with his spear, which Ralph deflects.

As Ralph and Jack fight, Piggy reminds Ralph what they came to do. Ralph breaks away from the fight and tells Jack's tribe that they have to give back Piggy's glasses, because they are necessary to maintain the signal fire on the beach. He reminds them that the fire is their only hope for rescue. Frustrated by their indifference to his pleas, Ralph breaks down and calls them painted fools. Jack orders the boys to grab Samneric. The hunters wrestle Samneric's spears from their hands and Jack orders them to tie up the twins. Ralph again screams at Jack, calling him a beast and a swine and a thief. As they fight again, Piggy, yelling over the boys' jeers, demands that he address the group.

Struggling to be heard over the commotion, Piggy asks the other boys whether it is better to be a pack of painted Indians or to be sensible like Ralph. He asks if they would rather have rules and peaceful agreement or be able only to hunt and kill. He reminds them of the importance of Ralph's rules, which are there to ensure their rescue. Above on the mountain, a frenzied Roger deliberately leans his weight on the log that Robert showed him earlier, dislodging a great rock, which begins to roll down the mountainside. Ralph hears the rock falling and manages to dodge it, but Piggy can neither see nor hear its tumble. The rock crashes down on Piggy, crushing the conch shell, which he was holding, on the way. The rock pushes Piggy down a cliff, where he lands on the beach, dead.

The group falls into a sudden and deep silence. Just as suddenly, however, Jack leaps out of the group, screaming deliriously. He shouts at Ralph that "that's what you'll get" for challenging his authority and he expresses happiness that the conch is gone. Declaring himself as chief, Jack deliberately hurls his spear at Ralph. The spear tears the skin and flesh over Ralph's ribs, then shears off and falls into the water. A terrified Ralph turns and runs, spears now coming at him from different directions. He is propelled by an instinct he never knew he possessed.

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In his flight, he catches sight of the headless sow from the earlier hunt. After Ralph departs, Jack casts his gaze on the bound Samneric. He orders them to join the tribe, but when they request only to be released, he bullies them, poking the twins in the ribs with a spear. The other boys cheer him on but fall silent when they notice Roger edging past Jack to confront the twins.

Analysis

As the tension between Ralph and Jack comes to a violent head, Golding again establishes the conflict between the two boys as an explicit struggle between savagery and civilization. The two continue to clash over previously developed points of conflict: Ralph criticizes Jack for his lack of responsibility and his ambivalence toward rules of order and justice, and Jack continues to blame Ralph for his lack of direct action against the beast. Their accusations express and emphasize their respective visions of human society on the island: while Ralph is oriented towards a cooperative community organized around the common goal of getting rescued, Jack adheres to a militaristic ideal and unites his tribe around a shared interest in hunting, self-gratification, and fear of the mythical island beast.

Unfortunately, Ralph's criticisms fall on deaf ears, for they are based on the assumption that Jack and his hunters are members of a society with moral codes and regulations. Ralph is appealing to standards Jack no longer believes in, as is symbolized by his glee when the conch shell is crushed. The shift in the struggle between Ralph and Jack is subtle but significant. Previously Jack and Ralph debated over the type of civilization that should predominate on the island: the former advocated a militaristic culture and the latter a liberal community. Now, with Jack's repudiation of any rational system, the two now argue over whether there should be any ordered society at all on the island. One might think of Jack as Plato's Callicles from the *Gorgias* or Plato's Thrasymachus from the *Republic*.

The political subtext of the chapter is most evident, however, in the final confrontation between Ralph, Piggy, and Jack. As Ralph and Piggy face Jack and the other boys, Golding clearly delineates the tension between civilization and animalistic savagery. Before they face Jack, Ralph and Piggy deliberately readopt the manners and customs of English society, grooming themselves and dressing themselves as proper English boys. They do so to exaggerate their differences from the hunters, who wear little if any clothing and who adorn themselves with "native" makeup. When Piggy speaks to the boys, he explicitly expresses the major question the novel explores, asking whether it is better to live sensibly according to rules and standards of behavior or to live in a state of anarchy (again, one might turn to Plato's *Republic* for guidance on this question and others raised by Piggy and the events of the novel). It is significant that the most insightful, reasoned statement in the novel is the one that provokes the most horrific tragedy on the island: the murder of the rational Piggy by the brutal and amoral Roger.

With his death, Piggy joins Simon as the second martyr among the boys. There are several parallels between their respective murders. The two outcasts both die when they shatter the illusions held by the other boys. Simon dies when he exposes the truth about the nonexistent beast, while the hunters kill Piggy when he forces them to see their behavior as barbaric and irresponsible. The murder of Piggy, however, is a more chilling event, for the boys killed Simon out of an instinctual panic. In contrast to the frenzied hunters, Roger has a clear understanding of his actions when he tips the rock that kills Piggy. This event thus completes the progression of behavior that Golding developed in the previous two chapters: the boys have moved from unintentional violence to completely premeditated murder. The chapter's final image, in which Piggy's murderer, Roger, edges past Jack to approach the bound twins, implies that Roger's

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brutality surpasses even Jack's. While Jack condones and participates in violence against animals and humans alike, it is Roger who orchestrates and carries out the murder of Piggy. Significantly, he does not seek authorization from Jack for the murder or for the implied torture of Samneric. Rather, his sadism appears to be entirely self-interested, and it suggests that he is a potential threat to Jack's authority.



Task How was Piggy Killed?

The novel's major symbol of civilization, the conch shell, appears in this chapter only to be destroyed after Roger pushes the boulder onto Piggy. This crucial act provokes and foreshadows Ralph's destruction of the Lord of the Flies, the primary cultural symbol of Jack's tribe, in the next and final chapter of the novel. The gesture will suggest Ralph's own descent into savagery and violence. The conch, an established marker of Ralph's authority and a consistent symbol for liberal democracy throughout the novel, has lost power; Jack and his hunters long ago refused to recognize it as a symbol of authority. In this chapter, the conch is finally destroyed in a demonstration of the triumph of Jack's will over Ralph's.

As Ralph flees from the spears of Jack's hunters, Golding again draws the reader's attention to the lower, immoral, animalistic humanity that lurks inside every individual. Ralph is literally being hunted like the pigs on the island, a moment that was foreshadowed in previous chapters when Roger pretended to be a pig in the hunting dance, and when Jack suggested to the group that they should hunt a littluns. Boy and animal become indistinct, and as Ralph flees he is propelled by a primitive subhuman instinct. His terror is that of a hunted animal: instinctual, unthinking, and primal. Ralph, the character who throughout the novel stood for pragmatism and civilization, has been reduced to an animal of prey, just as Jack and his hunters have reduced themselves to predatory beasts.

Note also the presence of animals in this penultimate chapter. Throughout the novel, Golding has used animal imagery and metaphors to call the reader's attention to the delicate line between human and animal nature, as well as to highlight the hostile relationship between civilization and the natural world that civilization subdues in order to ensure human survival. As Ralph flees the spears of Jack and his hunters, the last thing he registers is the headless body of the sow that Jack's tribe had just slaughtered. The image of the sow's body evokes both the Lord of the Flies, a pig's head on a stick that has signified evil, and Piggy, whose brutal murder marks the final destruction of civilization on the island.

Chapter Twelve: Cry of the Hunters

Ralph hides in the jungle, worrying about his wounds and the inhuman violence into which the boys on the island have devolved. He thinks about Simon and Piggy and realizes that civilization is now impossible among the boys. Ralph, who is not far from the Castle Rock, thinks he sees Bill in the distance. He concludes that the boy is not Bill—at least not any more. This boy is a savage, entirely different from the boy in shorts and shirt he once knew. Ralph is certain that Jack will never leave him alone. Noticing the Lord of the Flies, now just a skull with the skin and meat eaten away, Ralph decides to fight back. He knocks the skull from the stick, which he takes, intending to use it as a spear. From a distance, Ralph can still make out the boys' chant: "Kill the beast. Cut his throat. Spill his blood."

That night, armed with his makeshift spear, Ralph crawls undetected to the lookout near Castle Rock. He calls to Sam and Eric, who are now guarding the entrance. Sam gives Ralph

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a chunk of meat but does not agree to join him again. Sam tells Ralph to leave. The twins tell Ralph that Roger has sharpened a stick at both ends, and they warn him that Jack will be sending the entire tribe after Ralph the following day. Dejected, Ralph crawls away to a thicket where he can safely sleep. When he awakes in the morning, he can hear Jack torturing one of the twins and talking to Roger outside the thicket where he hides. They are trying to find out where Ralph is hiding. Several other boys are rolling rocks down the mountain, trying to break into the thicket. More boys are trying to climb in.

Just as Ralph decides to find a new hiding place, he smells smoke. He realizes with horror that Jack has set the forest on fire in an attempt to smoke Ralph out of hiding. He also recognizes that the fire will destroy all the fruit on the island, again endangering the boys' basic survival. Terrified, Ralph bolts from his hiding place, fighting his way past several of Jack's hunters, who are painted in wild colors and carrying sharpened wooden spears. Wielding their spears menacingly, they chase Ralph through the forest. Weaving through the dense underbrush, Ralph finally escapes to the beach, where he collapses in exhaustion and terror. He is aware that Jack's hunters are close behind.

When Ralph looks up, he is surprised to see a figure looming over him. He realizes that the figure is a man—a naval officer! The officer tells Ralph that his ship saw the smoke and decided to investigate the island. Ralph realizes that the officer is under the impression that the boys have been only playing games. The other boys begin to appear from the forest, and the officer begins to realize the chaos and violence among the stranded boys. Percival tries to tell him his name and address but finds he can no longer remember it. Ralph, informing him that he is boss, is sad to find he cannot answer the officer when asked how many boys are on the island. The officer, aware that they have not been behaving according to the rules of civilization, scolds the boys for not knowing exactly how many they are and for not being organized, as the British are supposed to be.

Ralph insists to the officer that they were organized and good at first. The officer says he imagines it was like the "show" in *The Coral Island*. Ralph, not understanding his reference, begins to weep for the early days on the island, which now seem impossibly remote. He weeps for the end of innocence and the darkness of man's heart, and he weeps for the deaths of Simon and Piggy. All of the other boys begin to cry as well.



Did u know? The officer turns away, embarrassed, while the other boys attempt to regain their composure. The officer keeps his eye on the cruiser in the distance.

Analysis

The dynamic of interaction between Ralph and the other boys changes dramatically in the opening scenes of the final chapter. Ralph is now an object to the other boys as he flees Jack's hunters, who seem unable to make the distinction between hunting pigs and hunting each other. As Ralph observes, the other boys on the island bear no resemblance to the English schoolboys first stranded there; they are complete savages without either moral or rational sensibilities. As they cease to exhibit the qualities that define them as civilized human beings, they no longer qualify as boys. This shift from human to animal identity is noticeable now in Ralph. No longer considered human by the other boys, he must rely on his primitive senses to escape the hunters. Because Ralph can no longer defend himself through any sense of justice or morality, he must use his animal instinct and cunning to survive.

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The final chapter emphasizes the self-destructive quality of the boys' actions. Throughout the novel, Golding has indicated that the boys are destructive not only to their enemies, but to themselves, a theme that culminates dramatically in this chapter. Images of decay permeate the final scenes, particularly in the Lord of the Flies, which decayed until it became only a hollow skull. Significantly, Ralph dismantles the Lord of the Flies by pushing the pig's skull off of the stick it was impaled on, an act that mirrors and completes Roger's destruction of the conch in the previous chapter. The destruction of both objects signals to the reader that the boys have been plunged into a brutal civil war. Ralph takes apart the Lord of the Flies—a totem for Jack's tribe—to use the stick it is impaled on as a spear with which to attack Jack. Ralph's action thus indicates that he has accepted Jack's savage terms of war, a conflict he had previously approached with reason and nonviolence, but it is too late for that. Ralph's decision to attack Jack or at least to defend himself with a weapon indicates that he too has devolved into savagery. All vestiges of democratic civilization on the island are gone, and it is unclear if Jack's monarchy retains any civilization at all.

Another ominous image in this chapter is Roger's spear. As Samneric inform Ralph, Roger has sharpened a spear at both ends, a tool that symbolizes the danger the boys have created for themselves. The spear simultaneously points at the one who wields it and the one at whom it is directed; it is capable of harming both equally. The significance of the double-edged spear is demonstrated in the boys' hunt for Ralph. That is, in order to find Ralph, the boys start a fire that might overwhelm them and destroy the fruit that is essential for their survival. Golding thus alerts the reader to the counterproductive consequences of vengeance: in the world of the novel, the ultimate price of harming another is harming oneself.

Despite the seemingly hopeless situation on the island, however, the boys are finally rescued by a naval officer whose ship noticed the fire on the island. This ending is not only unexpected but deeply ironic. It was not the signal fire that attracted the navy cruiser. Instead it was the forest fire that Jack's tribe set in an extreme gesture of irresponsibility and self-destruction. Ironically and even tragically, it is Jack and not Ralph who is ultimately responsible for the boys' rescue. The implications are grim: it was not careful planning and foresight that brought the boys to safety, but a coincidence. The consequences of savagery, not civilization, are what saved the children. With this abrupt narrative gesture, Golding overturns the logic he had established throughout the novel. Of course, poetic justice is not required, but the issue is vexing. Perhaps, he suggests, savagery and civilization are less unlike than we believe. By casting Jack as the boys' unintentional savior, Golding ends the novel before the action can properly climax. The reader is denied a chance to see a final battle between Ralph and Jack, although we can easily imagine that Ralph is doomed. Since the dehumanization is complete, there is almost nothing more to be said.

The sudden appearance of the naval officer at the beach mitigates the effects of the boys' aggression. The officer is a *deus ex machina* (an unexpected figure who shows up almost out of nowhere and who appears only to wrap up the plot and bring it to a speedy conclusion). His arrival on the island frees Golding from having to explore the final implications of the hunters' suicidal attack on Ralph and Ralph's own descent into violent brutality.

In another unlikely gesture, the naval officer repeats to the boys the lessons that, throughout the novel, Ralph and Piggy had attempted to impart to the other boys. He emphasizes the importance of order just as Ralph and Piggy had, thus retroactively calling attention to the maturity and sensibility of Ralph's advice to the other boys. Nevertheless, the naval officer cannot comprehend the full reach of the boys' experience on the island. He interprets the hunting and painted faces as a childish game, unaware that their dress carries more than symbolic meaning. The boys have not been playing as savages; they have become them. The officer's mention of the nineteenth-century adventure novel *The Coral Island* underscores his

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ignorance of the brutality that is dominating the island. While the boys in *The Coral Island* had carefree, childish adventures, the boys in Golding's narrative actually descended into unthinkable depths of violence and cruelty. Through the officer's naivete as informed by *The Coral Island*, Golding again implicitly critiques the idealistic portrayals of children in popular literature. Still, these unlikely concluding events feel abrupt and unsatisfying after so much richness in the narrative.

Self Assessment

Multiple Choice Questions:

6. The boys who climb the mountain with Jack to view the beast are
 - (a) Ralph and Simon
 - (b) Ralph and Roger
 - (c) Piggy and Ralph
 - (d) Simon and Piggy
7. Jack gets fire for his group by
 - (a) Stealing it from Ralph
 - (b) Using Piggy's glasses lens
 - (c) Rubbing two sticks together
 - (d) None of these
8. The boy whom Jack ties up and beats for an unrevealed crime is
 - (a) Maurice
 - (b) Robert
 - (c) Wilfred
 - (d) Ralph
9. In the eyes of the pig's head Simon sees
 - (a) Victory
 - (b) Cynicism of adult life
 - (c) Desire for revenge
 - (d) None of these
10. The naval officer sees Jack as a
 - (a) Little red-headed boy
 - (b) Painted savage
 - (c) Natural leader
 - (d) None of these

Another significant aspect of the naval officer's character is his admonition to the boys that they are not behaving like proper "British boys," which recalls Jack's patriotic claims in Chapter Two that the British are the best at everything. The officer's statement symbolically links him to Jack and underscores the hypocrisy of such a military character. While the officer condemns the violent play of the boys on the island, he is himself a military figure, engaged in an ongoing war that itself necessitated the boys' evacuation from their homeland and (unintentionally) led to the events on the island. Again, the issue is ambiguous: perhaps the violence among the boys was not an expression of an unrestrained inner instinct but a reflection of the seemingly "civilized" culture they were raised in, a culture engaged in an ugly and fatal war. In any case, the officer echoes Ralph rather than Jack, repeating many of the warnings about rules and order that Ralph had expressed to the boys throughout the novel. By associating the officer with both Ralph and Jack, in different ways, Golding calls into question the distinction between civilization and savagery that he traced with increasing emphasis in the novel's earlier chapters and then erased in later chapters.

If the naval officer saves the boys from their self-destruction, he may have come too late. The final scenes of the novel emphasize the permanent emotional damage that the boys have inflicted on themselves. With the possible exception of Ralph, the boys are no longer accustomed to the society from which they came. Golding underscores this fact by presenting Percival as

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unable to state his name and address as he could when the boys first arrived on the island. More importantly, Ralph perceives their experiences on the island as the end of their innocence. He has witnessed the overthrow of rational society as represented by Piggy in favor of the barbarism and tyranny of Jack. His final thoughts: "Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy." These thoughts indicate a play of the Eden myth with which Golding began. If there was an Eden on the island, it was the special place found by Simon that none of the other boys wanted to experience. They began out of Eden rather than inside it. Any paradise they hoped for on the island came to an end when the boys chose nature and instinct over rationality and awareness—compare, however, the rise of rationality and awareness in Genesis, which seems to occur most of all after the fall. Ralph loses his innocence when he realizes that the violence inherent in humanity is always under the surface of the order and morality that civilization imposes on individuals.

10.2 Summary

- Golding further develops the themes he introduced in "Beast From Air".
- Golding continues to use imagery and symbolism to trace the boys' descent into disorder, violence, and amorality.
- Simon believes that the pig's head speaks to him. He thinks that it is calling him a silly little boy.
- The political subtext of previous chapters becomes more overt in this chapter as Jack explicitly attempts to overthrow Ralph as chief.
- The political subtext of the chapter is most evident, however, in the final confrontation between Ralph, Piggy, and Jack.
- The murder of Piggy, however, is a more chilling event, for the boys killed Simon out of an instinctual panic.

10.3 Keywords

<i>Ritual</i>	:	a prescribed order of performing such a ceremony.
<i>Garland</i>	:	a wreath of flowers leaves
<i>Ominous</i>	:	giving the worrying impression that something bad is going to happen.
<i>Figurative</i>	:	departing from a literal use of words.

10.4 Review Questions

1. What does Ralph day dream about his home?
2. Describe the Killing of the sow. What do the hunters do with the blood?
3. Why did the hunters raid Ralph's group?
4. What will happen to Piggy without his glasses?
5. Why and how are the boys rescued?
6. Why does Ralph break down? What does he realize about mankind in general?

Answers: Self Assessment

Notes

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. False | 2. True |
| 3. False | 4. True |
| 5. False | 6. (b) Ralph and Roger |
| 7. (a) Stealing it from Ralph | 8. (c) Wilfred |
| 9. (b) Cynicism of adult life | 10. (a) Little red-headed boy |

10.5 Further Readings



Books

Lord Of The Flies (E Text)	—	William Golding
William Golding's Lord of Flies	—	Walter A. Freeman
The Novels of William Golding	—	Indu Kulkarni



Online links

http://gv.pl/pdf/lord_of_the_flies.pdf

<http://www.pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/monkeynotes/pmLordFlies02.asp>

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Unit 11: William Golding—Lord of the Flies: Themes and Characterization

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Know about the characters of Lord of the Flies
- Discuss the nature of evil and man Vs. Nature
- Know about the major themes.

Introduction

William Golding presented numerous themes and basic ideas that give the reader something to think about. One of the most basic and obvious themes is that society holds everyone together, and without these conditions, our ideals, values, and the basics of right and wrong are lost. Without society's rigid rules, anarchy and savagery can come to light. Golding is also showing that morals come directly from our surroundings, and if there is no civilization around us, we will lose these values.

Other secondary themes include the following:

- People will abuse power when it's not earned.

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- When given a chance, people often single out another to degrade to improve their own security.
- You can only cover up inner savagery so long before it breaks out, given the right situation.
- It's better to examine the consequences of a decision before you make it than to discover them afterward.
- The fear of the unknown can be a powerful force, which can turn you to either insight or hysteria.

11.1 Major Themes

11.1.1 Civilization vs. Savagery

The overarching theme of *Lord of the Flies* is the conflict between the human impulse towards savagery and the rules of civilization which are designed to contain and minimize it. Throughout the novel, the conflict is dramatized by the clash between Ralph and Jack, who respectively represent civilization and savagery. The differing ideologies are expressed by each boy's distinct attitudes towards authority. While Ralph uses his authority to establish rules, protect the good of the group, and enforce the moral and ethical codes of the English society the boys were raised in, Jack is interested in gaining power over the other boys to gratify his most primal impulses. When Jack assumes leadership of his own tribe, he demands the complete subservience of the other boys, who not only serve him but worship him as an idol. Jack's hunger for power suggests that savagery does not resemble anarchy so much as a totalitarian system of exploitation and illicit power.

Golding's emphasis on the negative consequences of savagery can be read as a clear endorsement of civilization. In the early chapters of the novel, he suggests that one of the important functions of civilized society is to provide an outlet for the savage impulses that reside inside each individual. Jack's initial desire to kill pigs to demonstrate his bravery, for example, is channeled into the hunt, which provides needed food for the entire group. As long as he lives within the rules of civilization, Jack is not a threat to the other boys; his impulses are being re-directed into a productive task. Rather, it is when Jack refuses to recognize the validity of society and rejects Ralph's authority that the dangerous aspects of his character truly emerge.



Notes Golding suggests that while savagery is perhaps an inescapable fact of human existence, civilization can mitigate its full expression.

The rift between civilization and savagery is also communicated through the novel's major symbols: the conch shell, which is associated with Ralph, and The Lord of the Flies, which is associated with Jack. The conch shell is a powerful marker of democratic order on the island, confirming both Ralph's leadership-determined by election-and the power of assembly among the boys. Yet, as the conflict between Ralph and Jack deepens, the conch shell loses symbolic importance. Jack declares that the conch is meaningless as a symbol of authority and order, and its decline in importance signals the decline of civilization on the island. At the same time, The Lord of the Flies, which is an offering to the mythical "beast" on the island, is increasingly invested with significance as a symbol of the dominance of savagery on the island, and of Jack's authority over the other boys. The Lord of the Flies represents the unification of the

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boys under Jack's rule as motivated by fear of "outsiders": the beast and those who refuse to accept Jack's authority. The destruction of the conch shell at the scene of Piggy's murder signifies the complete eradication of civilization on the island, while Ralph's demolition of The Lord of the Flies—he intends to use the stick as a spear—signals his own descent into savagery and violence. By the final scene, savagery has completely displaced civilization as the prevailing system on the island.

27.1.2 Individualism vs. Community

One of the key concerns of *Lord of the Flies* is the role of the individual in society. Many of the problems on the island—the extinguishing of the signal fire, the lack of shelters, the mass abandonment of Ralph's camp, and the murder of Piggy—stem from the boys' implicit commitment to a principle of self-interest over the principle of community. That is, the boys would rather fulfill their individual desires than cooperate as a coherent society, which would require that each one act for the good of the group. Accordingly, the principles of individualism and community are symbolized by Jack and Ralph, respectively. Jack wants to "have fun" on the island and satisfy his bloodlust, while Ralph wants to secure the group's rescue, a goal they can achieve only by cooperating. Yet, while Ralph's vision is the most reasonable, it requires work and sacrifice on the part of the other boys, so they quickly shirk their societal duties in favor of fulfilling their individual desires. The shelters do not get built because the boys would rather play; the signal fire is extinguished when Jack's hunters fail to tend to it on schedule.

The boys' self-interestedness culminates, of course, when they decide to join Jack's tribe, a society without communal values whose appeal is that Jack will offer them total freedom. The popularity of his tribe reflects the enormous appeal of a society based on individual freedom and self-interest, but as the reader soon learns, the freedom Jack offers his tribe is illusory. Jack implements punitive and irrational rules and restricts his boys' behavior far more than Ralph did. Golding thus suggests not only that some level of communal system is superior to one based on pure self-interest, but also that pure individual freedom is an impossible value to sustain within a group dynamic, which will always tend towards societal organization. The difficult question, of course, is what individuals are willing to give up to gain the benefits of being in the group.

27.1.3 The Nature of Evil

Is evil innate within the human spirit, or is it an influence from an external source? What role do societal rules and institutions play in the existence of human evil? Does the capacity for evil vary from person to person, or does it depend on the circumstances each individual faces? These questions are at the heart of *Lord of the Flies* which, through detailed depictions of the boys' different responses to their situation, presents a complex articulation of humanity's potential for evil.

It is important to note that Golding's novel rejects supernatural or religious accounts of the origin of human evil. While the boys fear the "beast" as an embodiment of evil similar to the Christian concept of Satan, the novel emphasizes that this interpretation is not only mistaken but also, ironically, the motivation for the boys' increasingly cruel and violent behavior. It is their irrational fear of the beast that informs the boys' paranoia and leads to the fatal schism between Jack and Ralph and their respective followers, and this is what prevents them from recognizing and addressing their responsibility for their own impulses. Rather, as *The Lord of the Flies* communicates to Simon in the forest glade, the "beast" is an internal force, present in every individual, and is thus incapable of being truly defeated. That the most ethical

characters on the island-Simon and Ralph-each come to recognize his own capacity for evil indicates the novel's emphasis on evil's universality among humans.



Task Write about the nature of evil.

Even so, the novel is not entirely pessimistic about the human capacity for good. While evil impulses may lurk in every human psyche, the intensity of these impulses-and the ability to control them-appears to vary from individual to individual. Through the different characters, the novel presents a continuum of evil, ranging from Jack and Roger, who are eager to engage in violence and cruelty, to Ralph and Simon, who struggle to contain their brutal instincts. We may note that the characters who struggle most successfully against their evil instincts do so by appealing to ethical or social codes of behavior. For example, Ralph and Piggy demand the return of Piggy's glasses because it is the "right thing to do." Golding suggests that while evil may be present in us all, it can be successfully suppressed by the social norms that are imposed on our behavior from without or by the moral norms we decide are inherently "good," which we can internalize within our wills.

The ambiguous and deeply ironic conclusion of *Lord of the Flies*, however, calls into question society's role in shaping human evil. The naval officer, who repeats Jack's rhetoric of nationalism and militarism, is engaged in a bloody war that is responsible for the boys' aircraft crash on the island and that is mirrored by the civil war among the survivors. In this sense, much of the evil on the island is a result not of the boys' distance from society, but of their internalization of the norms and ideals of that society-norms and ideals that justify and even thrive on war. Are the boys corrupted by the internal pressures of an essentially violent human nature, or have they been corrupted by the environment of war they were raised in?



Did u know? *Lord of the Flies* offers no clear solution to this question, provoking readers to contemplate the complex relationships among society, morality, and human nature.

11.1.4 Man vs. Nature

Lord of the Flies introduces the question of man's ideal relationship with the natural world. Thrust into the completely natural environment of the island, in which no humans exist or have existed, the boys express different attitudes towards nature that reflect their distinct personalities and ideological leanings. The boys' relationships to the natural world generally fall into one of three categories: subjugation of nature, harmony with nature, and subservience to nature. The first category, subjugation of nature, is embodied by Jack, whose first impulse on the island is to track, hunt, and kill pigs. He seeks to impose his human will on the natural world, subjugating it to his desires. Jack's later actions, in particular setting the forest fire, reflect his deepening contempt for nature and demonstrate his militaristic, violent character. The second category, harmony with nature, is embodied by Simon, who finds beauty and peace in the natural environment as exemplified by his initial retreat to the isolated forest glade. For Simon, nature is not man's enemy but is part of the human experience. The third category, subservience to nature, is embodied by Ralph and is the opposite position from Jack's. Unlike Simon, Ralph does not find peaceful harmony with the natural world; like Jack, he understands it as an obstacle to human life on the island. But while Jack responds to this

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perceived conflict by acting destructively towards animals and plant life, Ralph responds by retreating from the natural world. He does not participate in hunting or in Simon's excursions to the deep wilderness of the forest; rather, he stays on the beach, the most humanized part of the island. As Jack's hunting expresses his violent nature to the other boys and to the reader, Ralph's desire to stay separate from the natural world emphasizes both his reluctance to tempt danger and his affinity for civilization.

11.1.5 Dehumanization of Relationships

In *Lord of the Flies*, one of the effects of the boys' descent into savagery is their increasing inability to recognize each other's humanity. Throughout the novel, Golding uses imagery to imply that the boys are no longer able to distinguish between themselves and the pigs they are hunting and killing for food and sport. In Chapter Four, after the first successful pig hunt, the hunters re-enact the hunt in a ritual dance, using Maurice as a stand-in for the doomed pig. This episode is only a dramatization, but as the boys' collective impulse towards complete savagery grows stronger, the parallels between human and animal intensify. In Chapter Seven, as several of the boys are hunting the beast, they repeat the ritual with Robert as a stand-in for the pig; this time, however, they get consumed by a kind of "frenzy" and come close to actually killing him. In the same scene, Jack jokes that if they do not kill a pig next time, they can kill a littlun in its place. The repeated substitution of boy for pig in the childrens' ritual games, and in their conversation, calls attention to the consequences of their self-gratifying behavior: concerned only with their own base desires, the boys have become unable to see each other as anything more than objects subject to their individual wills. The more pigs the boys kill, the easier it becomes for them to harm and kill each other. Mistreating the pigs facilitates this process of dehumanization.

The early episodes in which boys are substituted for pigs, either verbally or in the hunting dance, also foreshadow the tragic events of the novel's later chapters, notably the murders of Simon and Piggy and the attempt on Ralph's life. Simon, a character who from the outset of the novel is associated with the natural landscape he has an affinity for, is murdered when the other children mistake him for "the beast"-a mythical inhuman creature that serves as an outlet for the children's fear and sadness. Piggy's name links him symbolically to the wild pigs on the island, the immediate target for Jack's violent impulses; from the outset, when the other boys refuse to call him anything but "Piggy," Golding establishes the character as one whose humanity is, in the eyes of the other boys, ambiguous. The murders of Simon and Piggy demonstrate the boys' complete descent into savagery. Both literally (Simon) and symbolically (Piggy), the boys have become indistinguishable from the animals that they stalk and kill.

11.1.6 The Loss of Innocence

At the end of *Lord of the Flies*, Ralph weeps "for the end of innocence," a lament that retroactively makes explicit one of the novel's major concerns, namely, the loss of innocence. When the boys are first deserted on the island, they behave like children, alternating between enjoying their freedom and expressing profound homesickness and fear. By the end of the novel, however, they mirror the warlike behavior of the adults of the Home Counties: they attack, torture, and even murder one another without hesitation or regret. The loss of the boys' innocence on the island runs parallel to, and informs their descent into savagery, and it recalls the Bible's narrative of the Fall of Man from paradise.

Accordingly, the island is coded in the early chapters as a kind of paradise, with idyllic scenery, fresh fruit, and glorious weather. Yet, as in the Biblical Eden, the temptation toward corruption is present: the younger boys fear a "snake-thing." The "snake-thing" is the earliest

incarnation of the “beast” that, eventually, will provoke paranoia and division among the group. It also explicitly recalls the snake from the Garden of Eden, the embodiment of Satan who causes Adam and Eve’s fall from grace. The boys’ increasing belief in the beast indicates their gradual loss of innocence, a descent that culminates in tragedy. We may also note that the landscape of the island itself shifts from an Edenic space to a hellish one, as marked by Ralph’s observation of the ocean tide as an impenetrable wall, and by the storm that follows Simon’s murder.

The forest glade that Simon retreats to in Chapter Three is another example of how the boys’ loss of innocence is registered on the natural landscape of the island. Simon first appreciates the clearing as peaceful and beautiful, but when he returns, he finds *The Lord of the Flies* impaled at its center, a powerful symbol of how the innocence of childhood has been corrupted by fear and savagery.

Even the most sympathetic boys develop along a character arc that traces a fall from innocence (or, as we might euphemize, a journey into maturity). When Ralph is first introduced, he is acting like a child, splashing in the water, mocking Piggy, and laughing. He tells Piggy that he is certain that his father, a naval commander, will rescue him, a conviction that the reader understands as the wishful thinking of a little boy. Ralph repeats his belief in their rescue throughout the novel, shifting his hope that his own father will discover them to the far more realistic premise that a passing ship will be attracted by the signal fire on the island. By the end of the novel, he has lost hope in the boys’ rescue altogether. The progression of Ralph’s character from idealism to pessimistic realism expresses the extent to which life on the island has eradicated his childhood.

11.1.7 The Negative Consequences of War

In addition to its other resonances, *Lord of the Flies* is in part an allegory of the Cold War. Thus, it is deeply concerned with the negative effects of war on individuals and for social relationships. Composed during the Cold War, the novel’s action unfolds from a hypothetical atomic war between England and “the Reds,” which was a clear word for communists. Golding thus presents the non-violent tensions that were unfolding during the 1950s as culminating into a fatal conflict—a narrative strategy that establishes the novel as a cautionary tale against the dangers of ideological, or “cold,” warfare, becoming hot. Moreover, we may understand the conflict among the boys on the island as a reflection of the conflict between the democratic powers of the West and the communist presence throughout China, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union. Ralph, an embodiment of democracy, clashes tragically with Jack, a character who represents a style of military dictatorship similar to the West’s perception of communist leaders such as Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong. Dressed in a black cape and cap, with flaming red hair, Jack also visually evokes the “Reds” in the fictional world of the novel and the historical U.S.S.R., whose signature colors were red and black. As the tension between the boys comes to a bloody head, the reader sees the dangerous consequences of ideological conflict.

The arrival of the naval officer at the conclusion of the narrative underscores these allegorical points. The officer embodies war and militaristic thinking, and as such, he is symbolically linked to the brutal Jack. The officer is also English and thus linked to the democratic side of the Cold War, which the novel vehemently defends. The implications of the officer’s presence are provocative: Golding suggests that even a war waged in the name of civilization can reduce humanity to a state of barbarism. The ultimate scene of the novel, in which the boys weep with grief for the loss of their innocence, implicates contemporary readers in the boys’ tragedy. The boys are representatives, however immature and untutored, of the wartime impulses of the period.

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Self Assessment

State the following sentences are True or False:

1. Golding's emphasis on the negative consequences of savagery can be read as a clear endorsement of civilization.
2. The novel "Lord of the Flies" is not entirely pessimistic about the human capacity for good.
3. Lord of the Flies introduces the questions of natural environment.
4. Lord of the Flies is in part an allegory of the World War II.
5. Simon is the athletic, charismatic protagonist of Lord of the Flies.
6. The Beast is a dead pilot whom Simon discovers in the forest.

11.2 Character List

Ralph

The protagonist of the story, Ralph is one of the oldest boys on the island. He quickly becomes the group's leader. Golding describes Ralph as tall for his age and handsome, and he presides over the other boys with a natural sense of authority. Although he lacks Piggy's overt intelligence, Ralph is calm and rational, with sound judgment and a strong moral sensibility. But he is susceptible to the same instinctive influences that affect the other boys, as demonstrated by his contribution to Simon's death. Nevertheless, Ralph remains the most civilized character throughout the novel. With his strong commitment to justice and equality, Ralph represents the political tradition of liberal democracy.

Piggy

Although pudgy, awkward, and averse to physical labor because he suffers from asthma, Piggy—who dislikes his nickname—is the intellectual on the island. Though he is an outsider among the other boys, Piggy is eventually accepted by them, albeit grudgingly, when they discover that his glasses can be used to ignite fires. Piggy's intellectual talent endears him to Ralph in particular, who comes to admire and respect him for his clear focus on securing their rescue from the island. Piggy is dedicated to the ideal of civilization and consistently reprimands the other boys for behaving as savages. His continual clashes with the group culminate when Roger murders Piggy by dropping a rock on him, an act that signals the triumph of brute instinct over civilized order. Intellectual, sensitive, and conscientious, Piggy represents culture within the democratic system embodied by Ralph. Piggy's nickname symbolically connects him to the pigs on the island, who quickly become the targets of Jack's and his hunters' bloodlust—an association that foreshadows his murder.

Jack Merridew

The leader of a boys' choir, Jack exemplifies militarism as it borders on authoritarianism. He is cruel and sadistic, preoccupied with hunting and killing pigs. His sadism intensifies throughout the novel, and he eventually turns cruelly on the other boys. Jack feigns an interest in the rules of order established on the island, but only if they allow him to inflict punishment. Jack represents anarchy. His rejection of Ralph's imposed order—and the bloody results of this act—indicate the danger inherent in an anarchic system based only on self-interest.

Simon

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The most introspective character in the novel, Simon has a deep affinity with nature and often walks alone in the jungle. While Piggy represents the cultural and Ralph the political and moral facets of civilization, Simon represents the spiritual side of human nature. Like Piggy, Simon is an outcast: the other boys think of him as odd and perhaps insane. It is Simon who finds the beast. When he attempts to tell the group that it is only a dead pilot, the boys, under the impression that he is the beast, murder him in a panic. Golding frequently suggests that Simon is a Christ-figure whose death is a kind of martyrdom. His name, which means "he whom God has heard," indicates the depth of his spirituality and centrality to the novel's Judeo-Christian allegory.

Sam and Eric

The twins are the only boys who remain with Ralph and Piggy to tend to the fire after the others abandon Ralph for Jack's tribe. The others consider the two boys as a single individual, and Golding preserves this perception by combining their individual names into one ("Samneric"). Here one might find suggestions about individualism and human uniqueness.

Roger

One of the hunters and the guard at the castle rock fortress, Roger is Jack's equal in cruelty. Even before the hunters devolve into savagery, Roger is boorish and crude, kicking down sand castles and throwing sand at others. After the other boys lose all idea of civilization, it is Roger who murders Piggy.

Maurice

During the hunters' "Kill the pig" chant, Maurice, who is one of Jack's hunters, pretends to be a pig while the others pretend to slaughter him. When the hunters kill a pig, Jack smears blood on Maurice's face. Maurice represents the mindless masses.

Percival

One of the smallest boys on the island, Percival often attempts to comfort himself by repeating his name and address as a memory of home life. He becomes increasingly hysterical over the course of the novel and requires comforting by the older boys. Percival represents the domestic or familial aspects of civilization; his inability to remember his name and address upon the boys' rescue indicates the erosion of domestic impulse with the overturning of democratic order. Note also that in the literary tradition, Percival was one of the Knights of the Round Table who went in search of the Holy Grail.

The Beast

The Beast is a dead pilot whom Simon discovers in the forest. The other boys mistake him as a nefarious supernatural omen, "The Beast." They attempt to appease his spirit with The Lord of the Flies.

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The Lord of the Flies

The Lord of the Flies is the pig's head that Jack impales on a stick as an offering to "The Beast." The boys call the offering "The Lord of the Flies," which in Judeo-Christian mythology refers to Beelzebub, an incarnation of Satan. In the novel, *The Lord of the Flies* functions totemically; it represents the savagery and amorality of Jack's tribe.

Naval Officer

The naval officer appears in the final scene of the novel, when Ralph encounters him on the beach. He tells Ralph that his ship decided to inspect the island upon seeing a lot of smoke (the outcome of the forest fire that Jack and his tribe had set in the hopes of driving Ralph out of hiding). His naivete about the boys' violent conflict—he believes they are playing a game—underscores the tragedy of the situation on the island. His status as a soldier reminds the reader that the boys' behavior is just a more primitive form of the aggressive and frequently fatal conflicts that characterize adult civilization.

11.2.1 Analysis of Major Characters

Ralph

Ralph is the athletic, charismatic protagonist of *Lord of the Flies*. Elected the leader of the boys at the beginning of the novel, Ralph is the primary representative of order, civilization, and productive leadership in the novel. While most of the other boys initially are concerned with playing, having fun, and avoiding work, Ralph sets about building huts and thinking of ways to maximize their chances of being rescued. For this reason, Ralph's power and influence over the other boys are secure at the beginning of the novel. However, as the group gradually succumbs to savage instincts over the course of the novel, Ralph's position declines precipitously while Jack's rises. Eventually, most of the boys except Piggy leave Ralph's group for Jack's, and Ralph is left alone to be hunted by Jack's tribe. Ralph's commitment to civilization and morality is strong, and his main wish is to be rescued and returned to the society of adults. In a sense, this strength gives Ralph a moral victory at the end of the novel, when he casts the Lord of the Flies to the ground and takes up the stake it is impaled on to defend himself against Jack's hunters.

In the earlier parts of the novel, Ralph is unable to understand why the other boys would give in to base instincts of bloodlust and barbarism. The sight of the hunters chanting and dancing is baffling and distasteful to him. As the novel progresses, however, Ralph, like Simon, comes to understand that savagery exists within all the boys. Ralph remains determined not to let this savagery -overwhelm him, and only briefly does he consider joining Jack's tribe in order to save himself. When Ralph hunts a boar for the first time, however, he experiences the exhilaration and thrill of bloodlust and violence. When he attends Jack's feast, he is swept away by the frenzy, dances on the edge of the group, and participates in the killing of Simon. This firsthand knowledge of the evil that exists within him, as within all human beings, is tragic for Ralph, and it plunges him into listless despair for a time. But this knowledge also enables him to cast down the Lord of the Flies at the end of the novel. Ralph's story ends semi-tragically: although he is rescued and returned to civilization, when he sees the naval officer, he weeps with the burden of his new knowledge about the human capacity for evil.

Jack**Notes**

The strong-willed, egomaniacal Jack is the novel's primary representative of the instinct of savagery, violence, and the desire for power—in short, the antithesis of Ralph. From the beginning of the novel, Jack desires power above all other things. He is furious when he loses the election to Ralph and continually pushes the boundaries of his subordinate role in the group. Early on, Jack retains the sense of moral propriety and behavior that society instilled in him—in fact, in school, he was the leader of the choirboys. The first time he encounters a pig, he is unable to kill it. But Jack soon becomes obsessed with hunting and devotes himself to the task, painting his face like a barbarian and giving himself over to bloodlust. The more savage Jack becomes, the more he is able to control the rest of the group. Indeed, apart from Ralph, Simon, and Piggy, the group largely follows Jack in casting off moral restraint and embracing violence and savagery. Jack's love of authority and violence are intimately connected, as both enable him to feel powerful and exalted. By the end of the novel, Jack has learned to use the boys' fear of the beast to control their behavior—a reminder of how religion and superstition can be manipulated as instruments of power.

Simon

Whereas Ralph and Jack stand at opposite ends of the spectrum between civilization and savagery, Simon stands on an entirely different plane from all the other boys. Simon embodies a kind of innate, spiritual human goodness that is deeply connected with nature and, in its own way, as primal as Jack's evil. The other boys abandon moral behavior as soon as civilization is no longer there to impose it upon them. They are not *innately* moral; rather, the adult world—the threat of punishment for misdeeds—has conditioned them to act morally. To an extent, even the seemingly civilized Ralph and Piggy are products of social conditioning, as we see when they participate in the hunt-dance. In Golding's view, the human impulse toward civilization is not as deeply rooted as the human impulse toward savagery. Unlike all the other boys on the island, Simon acts morally not out of guilt or shame but because he believes in the inherent value of morality. He behaves kindly toward the younger children, and he is the first to realize the problem posed by the beast and the Lord of the Flies—that is, that the monster on the island is not a real, physical beast but rather a savagery that lurks within each human being. The sow's head on the stake symbolizes this idea, as we see in Simon's vision of the head speaking to him. Ultimately, this idea of the inherent evil within each human being stands as the moral conclusion and central problem of the novel. Against this idea of evil, Simon represents a contrary idea of essential human goodness. However, his brutal murder at the hands of the other boys indicates the scarcity of that good amid an overwhelming abundance of evil.

11.3 Summary

- Golding's emphasis on the negative consequences of savagery can be read as a clear endorsement of civilization.
- *Lord of the Flies* introduces the question of man's ideal relationship with the natural world.
- In *Lord of the Flies*, one of the effects of the boys' descent into savagery is their increasing inability to recognize each other's humanity.
- The arrival of the naval officer at the conclusion of the narrative underscores these allegorical points.

Notes

11.4 Keywords

<i>Insane</i>	:	in or relating to an unsound state of mind.
<i>Panic</i>	:	a cereal or fodder grass of a group including millet.
<i>Choir</i>	:	a group of instruments of one family playing together.
<i>Scramble</i>	:	move or make one's way quickly and awkwardly.

11.5 Review Questions

1. What are the major aim of Lord of the flies?
2. Who played the role of Beast in the novel?
3. Discuss the themes of Lord of the flies.
4. Examine the characterization of the text "Lord of the flies".

Answers: Self Assessment

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. True | 2. True |
| 3. False | 4. False |
| 5. False | 6. True |

11.6 Further Readings



<i>Books</i>	Lord Of The Flies (E Text)	—	William Golding
	William Golding's Lord of Flies	—	Walter A. Freeman
	The Novels of William Golding	—	Indu Kulkarni



Online links <http://www.pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/monkeynotes/pmLordFlies02.asp>
<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/flies/themes.html>

Unit 12: Virginia Woolf — Mrs. Dalloway

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Know the Biography of Virginia Woolf
- Know the introduction to the work “Mrs. Dalloway”.

Introduction

Mrs. Dalloway is published on 14 May 1925. It is a novel by Virginia Woolf that details a day in the life of Clarissa Dalloway in post-World War I England. It is one of Woolf’s best-known novels. Created from two short stories, “Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street” and the unfinished “The Prime Minister”, the novel’s story is of Clarissa’s preparations for a party of which she is to be hostess. With the interior perspective of the novel, the story travels forwards and back in time and in and out of the characters’ minds to construct an image of Clarissa’s life and of the inter-war social structure. In 2005, the novel was chosen by Time magazine as one of the one hundred best English-language novels from 1923 to present.

12.1 Virginia Woolf—Mrs. Dalloway: Introduction to the Author

12.1.1 Introduction to the Author

In 1878, Leslie Stephen and Julia Jackson Duckworth married a second marriage for both. They gave birth to Adeline Virginia Stephen four years later, on the 25th of January at 22 Hyde Park Gate, London. Virginia was the third of their four children. Leslie Stephen began his career as a clergyman but soon became agnostic and took up journalism. He and Julia provided their children with a home of wealth and comfort.

Though denied the formal education allowed to males, Virginia was able to take advantage of her father’s abundant library and observe his writing talent, and she was surrounded by

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intellectual conversation. The same year Virginia was born, for instance, her father began editing the huge Dictionary of National Biography. Virginia's mother, more delicate than her husband, helped to bring out the more emotional sides of her children. Both parents were very strong personalities; Virginia would feel overshadowed by them for years.

Virginia would suffer through three major mental breakdowns during her lifetime, and she would die during a fourth. In all likelihood, the compulsive drive to work that she acquired from her parents, combined with her naturally fragile state, primarily contributed to these breakdowns. Yet other factors were important as well. Her first breakdown occurred shortly following the death of her mother in 1895, which Virginia later described as "the greatest disaster that could have happened." Some have suggested that Virginia felt guilt over choosing her father as her favorite parent. In any case, her father's excessive mourning period probably affected her adversely.

Two years later, Virginia's stepsister Stella Duckworth died. Stella had assumed charge of the household duties after their mother's death, causing a rift between her and Virginia. Virginia fell sick soon after Stella's death. The same year, Virginia began her first diary.

Over the next seven years, Virginia's decision to write took hold and her admiration for women grew. She educated herself and greatly admired women such as Madge Vaughan, daughter of John Addington Symonds, who wrote novels and would later be illustrated as Sally Seton in Mrs. Dalloway.



Task Write the biography of Virginia Woolf.

Her admiration for strong women was coupled with a growing dislike for male domination in society. Virginia's feelings were likely affected by her relationship to her stepbrother, George Duckworth, who was fourteen when Virginia was born. In the last year of her life, Virginia wrote to a friend regarding the shame she felt when, at the age of six, she was fondled by George. Similar incidents recurred throughout her childhood until Virginia was in her early twenties. In 1904 her father died, shortly after finishing the Dictionary and receiving a knighthood. Though freed from his shadow, Virginia was overcome by the event and suffered her second mental breakdown, combined with scarlet fever and an attempted suicide.

When she recovered, Virginia left Kensington with her three siblings and moved to Bloomsbury, where she began to consider herself a serious artist. She immersed herself in the intellectual company of her brother Thoby and his Cambridge friends. This group, including E.M. Forster and Lytton Strachey, later formed what was known as the Bloomsbury Group, under the Cambridge don G.E. Moore. They were dedicated to the liberal discussion of politics and art. In 1906, Thoby died of typhoid fever and Virginia's sister married one of Thoby's college friends, Clive Bell.

Over the next four years, Virginia would begin work on her first novel, *The Voyage Out* (1915). In 1909, she accepted a marriage proposal from Strachey, who later broke off the engagement. She received a legacy of 2,500 pounds the same year, which would allow her to live independently. In 1911, Leonard Woolf, another of the Bloomsbury Group, returned from Ceylon, and they were married in 1912. Woolf was the stable presence Virginia needed to control her moods and steady her talent. He gave their home a musical atmosphere.



Notes Virginia trusted his literary judgment. Their marriage was a partnership, though some suggest their sexual relationship was nonexistent.

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Virginia fell ill more frequently as she grew older, often taking respite in rest homes and in the care of her husband. In 1917, Leonard founded the Hogarth Press to publish their own books, hoping that Virginia could bestow the care on the press that she would have bestowed on children. (She had been advised by doctors not to become pregnant after her third serious breakdown in 1913. Virginia was fond of children, however, and spent much time with her brother's and sister's children.) Through the press, she had an early look at Joyce's *Ulysses* and aided authors such as Forster, Freud, Isherwood, Mansfield, Tolstoy, and Chekov. She sold her half interest in 1938.

Before her death, Virginia published an extraordinary amount of groundbreaking material. She was a renowned member of the Bloomsbury Group and a leading writer of the modernist movement with her use of innovative literary techniques. In contrast to the majority of literature written before the early 1900s, which emphasized plot and detailed descriptions of characters and settings, Woolf's writing thoroughly explores the concepts of time, memory, and consciousness. The plot is generated by the characters' inner lives, not by the external world.

In March 1941, Woolf left suicide notes for her husband and sister and drowned herself in a nearby river. She feared her madness was returning and that she would not be able to continue writing, and she wished to spare her loved ones.

Over the course of her many illnesses, however, Woolf had remained productive. Her intense powers of concentration had allowed her to work ten to twelve hours writing. Her most notable publications include *Night and Day*, *The Mark on the Wall*, *Jacob's Room*, *Monday or Tuesday*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *Orlando*, *A Room of One's Own*, *The Waves*, *The Years*, and *Between the Acts*. In total, her work comprises five volumes of collected essays and reviews, two biographies (Flush and Roger Fry), two libertarian books, a volume of selections from her diary, nine novels, and a volume of short stories.

12.2 Virginia Woolf — Mrs. Dalloway: Introduction to the Text

12.2.1 Introduction to the Mrs. Dalloway

In *Jacob's Room*, the novel preceding *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf works with many of the same themes she later expands upon in *Mrs. Dalloway*. To *Mrs. Dalloway*, she added the theme of insanity. As Woolf stated, "I adumbrate here a study of insanity and suicide; the world seen by the sane and the insane side by side." However, even the theme that would lead Woolf to create a double for Clarissa Dalloway can be viewed as a progression of other similar ideas cultivated in *Jacob's Room*. Woolf's next novel, then, was a natural development from *Jacob's Room*, as well as an expansion of the short stories she wrote before deciding to make *Mrs. Dalloway* into a full novel.

The Dalloways had been introduced in the novel, *The Voyage Out*, but Woolf presented the couple in a harsher light than she did in later years. Richard is domineering and pompous. Clarissa is dependent and superficial. Some of these qualities remain in the characters of *Mrs. Dalloway* but the two generally appear much more reasonable and likeable. Clarissa was modeled after a friend of Woolf's named Kitty Maxse, whom Woolf thought to be a superficial socialite. Though she wanted to comment upon the displeasing social system, Woolf found it

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difficult at times to respond to a character like Clarissa. She discovered a greater amount of depth to the character of Clarissa Dalloway in a series of short stories, the first of which was titled, "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street," published in 1923. The story would serve as an experimental first chapter to Mrs. Dalloway. A great number of similar short stories followed and soon the novel became inevitable.



Did u know? As critic Hermione Lee details, "On 14 October 1922 Woolf recorded that 'Mrs. Dalloway has branched into a book,' but it was sometime before Woolf could find the necessary balance between 'design and substance.'"

Within the next couple years, Woolf became inspired by a 'tunneling' writing process, allowing her to dig 'caves' behind her characters and explore their souls. As Woolf wrote to painter Jacques Raverat, it is "precisely the task of the writer to go beyond the 'formal railway line of sentence' and to show how people 'feel or think or dream...all over the place.'" In order to give Clarissa more substance, Woolf created Clarissa's memories. Woolf used characters from her own past in addition to Kitty Maxse, such as Madge Symonds, on whom she based Sally Seton. Woolf held a similar type of affectionate devotion for Madge at the age of fifteen as a young Clarissa held for Sally.

The theme of insanity was close to Woolf's past and present. She originally planned to have Clarissa die or commit suicide at the end of the novel but finally decided that she did want this manner of closure for Clarissa. As critic Manly Johnson elaborates, "The original intention to have Clarissa kill herself 'in the pattern of Woolf's own intermittent despair' was rejected in favor of a 'dark double' who would take that act upon himself. Creating Septimus Smith led directly to Clarissa's mystical theory of vicarious death and shared existence, saving the novel from a damaging balance on the side of darkness." Still, the disassociation of crippling insanity from the character of Clarissa Dalloway did not completely save Woolf from the pain of recollection. Woolf's husband and close friends compared her periods of insanity to a manic depression quite similar to the episodes experienced by Septimus. Woolf also included frustratingly impersonal doctor types in Bradshaw and Holmes that reflected doctors she had visited throughout the years.

Self Assessment

Fill in the blanks:

1. Mrs. Dalloway is published on
2. Dictionary of National Biography was edited by
3. Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street was published in the year
4. The theme of insanity was close to past or present.
5. commented, In this book I have almost too many ideas.

As the novel focused mainly on the character of Clarissa Dalloway, Woolf changed the name of the novel to Mrs. Dalloway from its more abstract working title, *The Hours*, before publishing it. Woolf struggled to combine many elements that impinged on her sensibility as she wrote the novel. The title, Mrs. Dalloway, best suited her attempts to join them together. As Woolf commented, "In this book I have almost too many ideas. I want to give life and death, sanity and insanity; I want to criticize the social system, and to show it at work, at its most intense." Furthermore, she hoped to respond to the stagnant state of the novel, with a consciously

‘modern’ novel. Many critics believe she succeeded. The novel was published in 1925, and received much acclaim.

Notes

12.3 Summary

- In 1878, Leslie Stephen and Julia Jackson Duckworth married a second marriage for both.
- Virginia would suffer through three major mental breakdowns during her lifetime, and she would die during a fourth.
- Virginia left Kensington with her three siblings and moved to Bloomsbury, where she began to consider herself a serious artist.
- In March 1941, Woolf left suicide notes for her husband and sister and drowned herself in a nearby river.

12.4 Keywords

<i>Insanity</i>	: extremely foolish.
<i>Impinged</i>	: have an effect.
<i>Pompous</i>	: affectedly grand.
<i>Mourning</i>	: deep sorrow for a person's death.

28.5 Review Questions

1. Write about the parentage of Virginia Woolf.
2. Mention some of the notable publications of Virginia.
3. Which techniques are used in the Woolf's, Mrs. Dalloway?
4. Discuss the introduction to the work "Mrs. Dalloway".

Answers: Self Assessment

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. 14 May 1925 | 2. Leslie Stephen |
| 3. 1923 | 4. Woolf's |
| 5. Woolf | |

12.6 Further Readings



Books	Mrs. Dalloway (E Text)	— Virginia Woolf
	Virginia Woolf	— Hermione Lee
	Virginia Woolf: a biography	— Quentin Bell



Online links http://www.online-literature.com/virginia_woolf/
http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study_guide/literature/Mrs-Dalloway-Book-Summary.id-

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Unit 13: Virginia Woolf – Mrs. Dalloway: Detailed Study of Text

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13.3 Summary

13.4 Keywords

13.5 Review Questions

13.6 Further Readings

Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the detailed study of the text
- Explain summary and analysis of the text.

Introduction

Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* is the story of a day in June 1923, as lived by a few London citizens. There is a calm in the air; people are enjoying a sense of peace and remembering their lives from before the long and bitter World War I.

Mrs. Dalloway is a novel about people's inner lives. It does not possess a vivid plot; the actual events are secondary to what people spend much of their time pondering: memories, regrets, and hopes. Almost all of the main characters wonder about what might have been. The novel is told from the viewpoint of an omniscient and invisible narrator. Most of the characters are well off financially, and have considerable leisure time. Yet they are quite busy with the business of being alive, which includes asking questions of their internal and external worlds. These questions do not always make them happy. On the contrary, most of the characters are unhappy for all or part of their day. In keeping with Woolf's interest in psychology, sexuality is a theme in the novel. Several of the characters are divided in their feelings towards love, and this contributes to their ambivalence.

The actions of the novel are simple: Clarissa Dalloway is hosting a formal party. She sees Peter Walsh, who has returned from India, and drops in for a visit. This meeting, and many other

moments in the day, make Clarissa think about the past and the choices she has made. Clarissa's husband, Richard, has meetings and lunches, and their daughter Elizabeth has similar plans herself. Another Londoner, Septimus Warren Smith, is having a bad day, and so is his wife Lucrezia. Septimus is obsessed with his memories of Evans, a friend who was killed in the war. He is also convinced that unseen forces are sending him messages. Lucrezia is taking Septimus to two doctors, neither of whom can do much to cure him. Septimus kills himself later in the day, to escape his doctors, and because he feels he has no other alternative. Clarissa's party is a success. The Prime Minister arrives, and this is considered a great honor. In the midst of her success as a hostess, she hears of Septimus' suicide. Although she never met him, the news moves her to the core of her being.

13.1 Detailed Study of Text Part I Sections

13.1.1 Part I, Sections 1-3

Clarissa Dalloway took it upon herself to buy the flowers for the party that evening. Lucy had so much other work to do and the morning air was fresh and inviting. Air like this always reminded her of a morning when, at eighteen, she had burst open the French windows to the terrace. Peter Walsh stood within and commented on vegetables. He still wrote to Clarissa, very boring letters, and would be returning from India someday.

Waiting on the curb, Scrope Purvis noticed her, thinking to himself that she was charming. Clarissa thought of the hush that fell over Westminster right before the ring of Big Ben. As the bell rang out, she looked at the people around her, living in the moment, and loved life. It was June and the Great War was over. Life sprang out all around her with a passion, dancing girls and ponies and shopkeepers in their windows. Clarissa was a part of it. Entering the park, she was met with a deeper silence. Hugh Whitbread, an old friend, walked toward her. He assured her that he would attend the party even though his wife, Evelyn, was ill. The Whitbreads always came to London to see doctors. Though she adored him, Hugh had a way of making Clarissa feel underdressed. Richard, her husband, could not stand Hugh and Peter had hated him. But Peter could be like that.

Thinking of Peter again, she looked at the scene around her and knew he would have been lovely to walk with at this moment. She could not stop such thoughts and memories from rushing over her. Peter would not have cared for the sights of the morning. He cared for people's characters and he often scolded her for her superficiality. She would be a perfect hostess. Clarissa found herself arguing again with Peter about why she could not marry him. She knew she was right, he would not have given her any independence, but still it bothered her. Learning that he had married a flimsy Indian woman angered her greatly.

Clarissa knew now not to define or label anyone because she felt at one with the world, both young and old, and omnipresent. Not that she was clever, simply knowing. She knew people very well. Most of all, she loved living in the moment. Yet, she was not irked by the thought of death. Clarissa felt that pieces of herself existed wherever she had ever been. Musing among books, Clarissa could not find a suitable one to bring Evelyn. She wanted Evelyn to look pleased when she walked in. She realized her baseness, always wanting to do things that would make people like her instead of doing them for their own value, as Richard did. If she could do life over again, she would look like Lady Bexborough. She disliked her own little beaked face and stick body. She felt invisible at times.

Bond Street fascinated her. Her daughter Elizabeth was not fascinated by any of the delicate gloves in the shops. Elizabeth was fascinated with Miss. Kilman, a callous Communist who

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made one feel small because she was privately starving and depriving herself for the Russians. The hate that welled up inside of Clarissa scared her. She felt that, since her illness, there was perpetually a monster of hate inside of her waiting to claw or gnaw away at something. She entered Mulberry's florist and was greeted by eager Miss Pym. Miss Pym was happy to help because Clarissa had been very kind. This year, however, she looked older. Clarissa was enraptured by the various smells and colors of the many flowers. She knew Miss Pym liked her and tried to surmount the hatred she had felt when suddenly a pistol shot in the street. Miss Pym looked apologetic, as if the loud motor cars were her fault.

Part One Section One Analysis

Woolf begins the novel in her typical fashion, symbolically and methodically. We meet Clarissa in the first sentence, in a proclamation of independence. She will get the flowers because Lucy has work to do. The proclamation is thus tinged with a sense of irony because though Clarissa has chosen to handle the burden of work herself, the work only consists of buying flowers. The irony inherent in the entire text will be fleshed out as we continue but, the very first sentences hint at the underlying theme of social commentary which Woolf instilled in order to illustrate the superficiality of the members of Mrs. Dalloway's social circle.

However, Clarissa's character is not meant solely to represent the vainness of a certain social group. Much deeper and more intense symbolism exists in the novel and in this central character. The novel is one of moments. Moments of time and life are highlighted and intensely analyzed. The narrative, though in third person, focuses on Clarissa but moves from character to character, and often provides insight into the persona of Clarissa. Clarissa, unlike her double whom we will meet shortly, loves life and embraces the present.

The two exclamations which begin the third paragraph are symbolic of Clarissa's attitude toward life and the moment to moment structure of the book. The ejaculations are short, stark, and positive. They give the language a bursting feeling which will tie into the overarching theme of the sea in the novel. Note how the second exclamatory sentence ends with the word "plunge." Other imagery at the beginning of this section adds to the feeling of jumping into a pool of water. Clarissa thinks of opening French doors and bursting into the fresh, morning air. She is plunging into life, into memory, and into self-evaluation. She is opening the windows of life and plunging into it. The language has a light airy feel supported by the name of Clarissa herself. The name originates from the word clarity and alludes to the "luminous Saint Clara," as described by Nadia Fusini.

The sea imagery arises again when Clarissa nears Big Ben. The bells which Big Ben ring break the hush that Clarissa feels before the bells are to ring. The effect of the bells is described as, "The leaden circles dissolve in the air." This image reminds one of water after a body has plunged into it. Once water is disturbed, a ring of circular ripples emanates outward from the central point. This idea provides an insight into the very writing of Woolf. Mrs. Dalloway's character, as well as the character of Septimus and a few outside occurrences, sends ripples outward into time and life, affecting the being of those around her. Scrope Purvis notices and thinks about Clarissa, and we enter those thoughts. We also enter the thoughts of Miss Pym, allowing the reader the knowledge that Clarissa had been very kind, in the past tense. We wonder what is meant but are told no more. The reader receives glimpses into the ripples which are effected by day to day living.

The writing reflects the sea and rippling wave imagery broadcast through the character's intuitions. Woolf refused to follow the conventional format for writing a novel. A member of the Bloomsbury group and a peer of James Joyce, she did not feel a need to prescribe to traditional organization, thus allowing for a much more loose form in terms of syntax, plot,

and narrative voice. As critic Irene Simon stipulates, “It is just the purpose of Virginia Woolf to abolish the distinction between dream and reality; she effects this by mixing images with gestures, thoughts with impressions, visions with pure sensations, and by presenting them as mirrored on a consciousness.” Thus the language too is moment to moment, short, and dense. She writes in a flow of consciousness, floating from sensation to sensation and from the mind of one character to the next.

Though often descriptive, every thought and phrase in Woolf’s writing has a distinct and analyzable purpose. We learn that Clarissa was sick and now feels a deep, intense anger inside which never seems to completely disappear. The enigmatic character of Miss Kilman brings about the fury inside of Clarissa though Woolf’s description of why is confusing. Again, the text mirrors the feeling within it. The sentences run-on in a rush of anger, sentences begin with lower case letters, and adjectives and nouns are chosen such as encumbered, scraped, brute, and hooves which spark harshness and hurt. Woolf constantly blurs the distinction between dream and reality, both within the plot and the text itself. Clarissa enters the flower shop overcome with embarrassment, trying to hush her anger, but she is soon overcome and distracted by color. She opens up her eyes, an allusion to the first metaphor with the open window, and takes in the flowers. She is transported back to the moment and we are reminded of how transparent the present is within Woolf.



Did u know? The episode also foreshadows the theme of doubling, as Clarissa quickly rushes between hatred and love, which will surface with the introduction of Septimus.

Part I Section Two Summary

The loud noise had come from an important looking motorcar. Passers-by claimed to have seen a distinguished face in the window. Even after the car had moved on, the disturbance it created did not rumors that the face had belonged to the Prince or Queen flew about. The street came to a stop and Septimus Warren Smith, an apprehensive looking man of thirty, could not get by. Septimus, a veteran who had been mentally and emotionally devastated by his experience in World War I, pictured that he was the cause of the stop and anticipated horror. His wife, Lucrezia (Rezia), hurried him, angering Septimus. She could not help but believe that others noticed his strangeness, his abruptness. She was so embarrassed and imagined that they all knew that Septimus had wanted to kill himself. He tried to please her, since she knew no one in England, but his efforts had become half-hearted.

Clarissa hoped that the face belonged to the Queen. The car was delayed until the chauffeur spoke to a policeman, who allowed the car to pass. Clarissa felt touched by magic. She imagined Hugh Whitbread at Buckingham Palace and her own upcoming party. The people on Bond Street took a few moments to return to daily life. The car continued through Piccadilly. Meanwhile, a crowd formed at Buckingham’s gates. Suddenly, Emily Coates, a woman watching the events, noticed an airplane making letters out of smoke. The letters were hard to decipher and everyone guessed at the words. Weaving across London’s sky, the plane’s trail mystified its observers.

In Regent’s Park, Rezia tried to show Septimus the letters since the doctor had suggested distracting him with things outside of himself. Septimus believed the letters were signaling to him. The beauty brought tears to his eyes. The voice of a nursemaid nearby vibrated in his ears and brought the trees gloriously to life for him. Rezia hated when he stared into nothingness. People must notice him, she thought. She wished he were dead. She walked to the fountain and back to distract herself. She could tell no one about his state and felt alone. He was not

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the same man she had married. The doctor, though, said nothing was wrong with him. Septimus sat, hearing the sparrows sing in Greek and babbling aloud. When Rezia returned, he jumped up, moving them away from people and ignoring her.

Maisie Johnson, a girl fresh from Edinburgh, asked the couple directions to the subway. Rezia gestured abruptly, hoping Maisie would not notice Septimus' madness. Maisie was unnerved by both and would remember them for years. She was horrified by the look in Septimus' eyes. Mrs. Carrie Dempster, an older woman in the park, noticed Maisie and was reminded of her younger days. She imagined Maisie getting married, asserting that she, Carrie, would have done things differently if she had a second chance. She looked to Maisie for pity. Meanwhile, Mr. Bentley, a man sweeping around his tree in Greenwich, thought the airplane's effort represented the concentration of a man's soul. In front of St. Paul's Cathedral, a seedy looking man was awed by the thought of the members of society who were invited into its halls. The plane continued aimlessly, letters pouring from its perpetually looping motion.

Part One Section Two Analysis

The explosive situation with the car allows us two specific insights into the text. One, it again highlights the emphasis of the British culture on figure heads and symbols. No one is sure which great figure resides within the important looking car, but each onlooker feels touched "by magic," as Clarissa notes. Traffic slows and onlookers halt and then rush to Buckingham Palace. The car, as with many of the objects with which Clarissa surrounds herself, is an empty symbol. What is inside does not matter. The shell of the car, in a postmodern sense, represents the empty significance that is often placed on social status within the world of Mrs. Dalloway's London.

It is at this moment that we also meet Septimus Smith. At the same time when Clarissa is frozen in delight, imagining the Queen and Prince and parties, Septimus is frozen by apprehension and fear. Many critics describe Septimus as Clarissa's doppelganger, the alternate persona, the darker, more internal personality compared to Clarissa's very social and singular outlook. However, a few critics hint that to characterize Septimus as Clarissa's double is too limiting for both of their characters. Perhaps the best way to describe their relationship is to think of it as a means to flesh out the intensity of the human mind. The novel takes the reader through only one day in Clarissa and Septimus' lives, and yet we learn so much more about their characters and about humanity in general. These two personas allow the reader to discern how two seemingly opposite characters correspond and interrelate. Clarissa and Septimus never meet and yet, their lives are intertwined from the moment in the street to the news of Septimus' death at Clarissa's party.

We also meet Rezia, Septimus' wife, in this section of the book, as she struggles through the embarrassment of having a crazy husband. The way Septimus is told that nothing is wrong with him alludes to circumstances in Woolf's life. With her fragile mental state, she encountered many psychologists, most of whom did not know how to treat mentally ill patients. Often, they did more harm than good. Septimus is the victim of this psychosocial establishment in post-War England. As a representative of the "lost generation," a topic touched on by many of Woolf's contemporaries—most noticeably T.S. Eliot in *The Wasteland*, Septimus suffers from delusions and hallucinations. The husband and wife, as a result, can no longer communicate as they once had.

Another confused symbol of communication exists in the form of the airplane that spreads incomprehensible words across the sky, gaining much of London's attention after the excitement of the important car passes. Letters are strewn about but no character agrees on the message delineated. Ironically, however, many people are connected through the inability to communicate

symbolized by the plane's skywriting. In his sickness, Septimus believes the plane is talking to him. Yet, the other characters who view the plane believe in much the same idea.

Part I Section Three Summary

Clarissa returned home, wondering at what everyone was looking. Stepping into her cool house and hearing the motion of her servants, she felt as a nun returning to her daily habit. She breathed in happily while Lucy stood by, hesitant. Clarissa noticed a note that read that Lady Bruton had requested Richard's company for lunch. Clarissa felt snubbed. Lucy knowingly helped her with her parasol and left her alone. The lunch parties were supposed to be quite amusing. Clarissa felt alone. She withdrew upstairs to the solitary attic room that she had occupied ever since her illness. There, she liked to read Baron Marbot's Memoirs. The room had a very virginal feel, with the stark white sheet stretched tightly across the narrow bed. She wondered if she had failed Richard and thought back to her close connections with women, namely her old best friend, Sally Seton. She had known what men feel toward women with Sally.

She remembered Sally sitting on the floor, smoking, saying she was descended from Marie Antoinette, being so utterly crude that Clarissa's family thought her untidy. Sally taught Clarissa about life, sex, men, and politics, things from which she was shielded at Bourton, her home before marriage. Her feelings for Sally were protective and pure. She remembered the excitement she felt the nights Sally dined with them and the exquisite moment they shared when, as they were walking, Sally stopped to pick a flower and kissed Clarissa on the lips. A moment later, Peter Walsh and Joseph, an old family friend, had intruded, perhaps purposely, since Peter was prone to jealousy. Clarissa was horrified at the intrusion.

Turning her thoughts to Peter, she wondered if he would think her older when he returned from India. Since her sickness, she had become nearly white. She thought her face pointed and her body shaped like a diamond. She was a good woman, she thought, even if Lady Bruton had not invited her. Clarissa found her loveliest green dress and took it downstairs to mend. Lucy asked if she could help mend but Clarissa declined. Suddenly, the doorbell rang and she heard the voice of a man demanding to see her. Abruptly, her door opened and she turned to hide her dress, as if she were protecting her chastity.

Peter Walsh entered, taking her hands and kissing them. They both trembled. Peter noticed that she looked older. Clarissa observed that Peter was very much the same. He played with his pocketknife. Peter asked about her family and imagined that Clarissa had been mending her dress and attending parties continuously during the time he had been gone. Clarissa asked him if he remembered Bourton. He did but it pained him to remember as it reminded him of her refusal to marry him. Clarissa too was caught in the wave of emotion. The memories brought Peter close to tears. Peter realized that his new love, Daisy, would pale next to Clarissa. He did not want to tell her about Daisy because Clarissa would think him a failure. He felt that Clarissa had changed for the worse ever since marrying Richard.

Clarissa asked about his life. There was too much to tell her, but he mentioned that he was in love with a girl in India who was still married to a Major in the Indian Army. He had come to London to see about a divorce. Peter's life had been such a folly, thought Clarissa. Still, she was happy for him. Peter suddenly began to weep. Clarissa comforted him, kissing him, and stroking his hands before she retained control and sat back. She felt very much at ease with Peter now and realized this gaiety would be hers always if she had married him. She wished he would take her with him. The next moment, her passions subsided. Clarissa joined Peter by the window. He seized her by the shoulders and asked if she were happy with Richard.

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Suddenly, Elizabeth entered. Clarissa said, "Here is my Elizabeth." Peter greeted her and rushed out the door. Clarissa ran after him, yelling to not forget her party.

Self Assessment

Multiple Choice Questions:

1. What does Clarissa set out to purchase in the novel's opening scene?
(a) A bag of ice (b) Flowers
(c) Champagne (d) Fairy Lamps
2. What object does Peter Walsh always have with him?
(a) A banjo (b) A flash light
(c) A silver comb (d) A pocketknife
3. What colour is Clarissa Dalloway's party dress?
(a) Lavender (b) Peach
(c) Green (d) Red
4. In which month does the novel take place?
(a) June (b) October
(c) December (d) April

Part One Section Three Analysis

We see many echoes of Woolf within the character of Clarissa during this chapter. The theme of the virgin, symbolizing seclusion, independence, and sexual aridity, takes over as we move from Clarissa, excited with life, to Clarissa, secluded, reflective, and lonely. Her relief at returning home is compared explicitly by Woolf to a nun returning to her habit and yet, ironically, she only ventures to her virginal, narrow attic room when she feels snubbed by society. Because of this snub, we learn further how much Clarissa cares about societal issues as she meditates on her worth as a result of it. Conversely, we learn that she enjoys being alone to the extent that she has slept alone in the attic since her illness. Directly after Woolf describes Clarissa's starch white sheets pulled tightly over her narrow attic bed, an overt metaphor for virginal sexuality, she includes that Clarissa wondered if she had failed Richard. She also states that Clarissa had loved Sally as a man loves a woman, implying that Clarissa had never truly loved Richard in this manner, and perhaps had never loved any man in this manner. The flaws of communication and intimacy between Richard and Clarissa are foreshadowed. In the eyes of some critics, Woolf insinuates that Clarissa was stifled in her homosexual love for Sally by the standards of society and her own conservatism.



Notes Sally was Clarissa's inspiration to think beyond the walls of Bourton, to read, to philosophize, to fantasize. Woolf describes the kiss between Sally and Clarissa as an epiphany of sorts, an ecstasy.

Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world may have turned upside down! The others disappeared; there she was alone with Sally. And she felt that she had been given a present, wrapped up, and told just to keep it, not to look at it - a diamond,

something infinitely precious, wrapped up, which, as they walked (up and down, up and down), she uncovered, or the radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling!

As Clarissa's relative loneliness and lack of intimacy in marriage is symbolized through the metaphor of a virginal nun, the most intense sexual moment in Clarissa's life is symbolized through intense religious feeling. Thus, the kiss represents and understates the sexual attraction and revelation that Sally brought to Clarissa. The present given to Clarissa, the diamond, the flower picked, the "radiance burnt through," all symbolize this sexual experience. It is not surprising, then, that Clarissa feels so violated when men intrude upon her moment. Peter and old Joseph's intrusion symbolizes the dominance of men in society and the conservatism of sexual relations that would not allow for Clarissa's true yearnings. Whether Woolf had sexual feelings toward women or not, biographers describe her relationship with her husband as a strong, caring friendship without much sexual intimacy. This sexual component is similarly lacking in her proponent's life.



Task What is Hugh Whitbread carrying when Clarissa sees him?

Clarissa's continued longing for Peter also illustrates that her relationship is lacking with Richard. At one point in her conversation with Peter, she wishes that he would take her away. The moment subsides, but the intensity between the two remains throughout the novel. Peter's tendency to play with his pocketknife is a phallic metaphor, symbolizing Peter's repressed sexual urges toward Clarissa. He not only invades Clarissa's peace, but her virginal sense of self as well. Woolf describes Clarissa's reaction to the moment of Peter's entrance as, "She made to hide her dress, like a virgin protecting her chastity, respecting privacy." Yet, she does feel passion in Peter's presence, a fleeting gaiety and vivacity for life. Representative of the everyman, Clarissa is prone to wonder what if. These emotions come and go like waves, synecdochal for the theme of the sea. The waves of time are introduced by the bells of Big Ben.

13.1.2 Part I, Sections 4–5

Part I Section Four Summary

Peter mimicked Clarissa as he walked from her house. He had never enjoyed her parties, parties such as hers. He did not blame her, though. He was in love and happy to be so. There was so much he had seen and done of which Clarissa knew nothing. She had grown hard. He thought the way she had introduced Elizabeth was insincere and that Elizabeth had thought so. Clarissa should have plainly said, "Here's Elizabeth." He had been overly emotional when he had visited Clarissa. As always, he had told her everything. Peter felt that Clarissa had refused him.

The bells of St. Margaret's echoed across London, and Peter associated St. Margaret's graceful entrance with Clarissa as the hostess. He imagined her coming in to a room year ago and was swept up in the intimacy of the memory. As the bells died out, they reminded Peter that Clarissa's heart had been ill, and he imagined her falling to the floor, dying. He shook himself from this image and reminded himself that he was not old yet. He had never liked people like the Dalloways and Whitbreads. He had been a rebel, a pioneer, and civilization needed young men like him.

Boys in uniform marched by Peter and, instinctively, he followed them. Soon, he realized he could not maintain their pace and let them pass. He could respect the uniformity in boys, as

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they did not yet know the troubles of the flesh. Alone in Trafalgar Square, he had not felt so young in years. A young woman passed who enchanted Peter. He transformed her into the woman he had always wanted and began following her through the streets. She seemed to speak silently to Peter, to his soul. He kept up with her until she slowed before a building and disappeared inside. He had had his fun.

He was still too early for his appointment with the lawyer and so walked to Regent's Park to sit. The day was beautiful, and he felt a certain pride for the civility and accomplished air of London. His Anglo-Indian family had administered the affairs of India for years and, though he despised the empire and army, he still felt proud. The pomp was absurd, but admirable. Thoughts of his past continued to combat him, likely a result of seeing Clarissa. He thought of a fight he had had with her father at Bourton. Peter looked for a secluded seat in the park but settled for one next to a nurse and sleeping baby. Peter again thought of Elizabeth, thinking she was peculiar looking and probably did not get along with her mother. Smoking a cigar, he curled the smoke from his lips and decided to try to speak with Elizabeth alone that night. He threw away the cigar and fell into a deep sleep.

Part One Section Four Analysis

The theme of the intersection of time and timelessness arises as we watch Peter walk through London and wander through Regent's Park as Clarissa had done only a few hours earlier. Unlike Clarissa, however, he does not notice the beauty of the day or feel the effect of the bells on a cosmic, spiritual level. He does not appreciate the moment as Clarissa often does. Instead, everything for Peter relates to his past, present, or fantasy. His thoughts are always internalized. In this manner, time blurs with timelessness as Peter's memories blur with present images, wishes, and fantasies.

As soon as Peter leaves Clarissa's home, he is overcome with combative thoughts. He believes that Clarissa said the wrong thing to Elizabeth, for example. He hates Clarissa's parties. Clarissa dominates his thoughts to the point where external stimuli simply function to remind him of her in different ways. St. Margaret's bells remind him of Clarissa as the hostess. This reference alludes to Clarissa's thoughts earlier in the day of Peter and his comment to her that she would be the perfect hostess. Thus, the bells symbolize a line of conflict between Peter and Clarissa.

Consequently, Peter is soon reminded of Clarissa's heart condition and he pictures her dying. Clarissa's imaginary death foreshadows the death of her double, Septimus, later in the novel. Peter shakes off the bad image because he does not want to think of himself being old enough to die. He thus uses the next images that come his way, the marching boys and the beautiful young woman, as symbols of his youth and his courage.

He tells himself that he was a rebel when young and that the world needed men like him. Peter is trying to rationalize the dissociation he feels from the humanity surrounding him. The waves of emotion he experiences touch on the theme of the sea. The words that describe him following the young woman allude to the motions of the sea. The phrases are short and choppy, yet rhythmic. The text states, "She moved; she crossed; he followed her...But other people got between them on the street, obstructing him, blotting her out. He pursued; she changed". His mood changes again when he stops to actually look around at the world passing him by. He is impressed by the civility of London as compared to the Indian culture in which he had been living. London is a metonym for Clarissa and the type of society she represents. Though Peter wants to rebel, he cannot help but yearn for inclusion within the society he tries to despise.

Part I Section Five Summary**Notes**

Peter dreamed. The gray nurse knitting beside Peter appeared spectral, blending into images of the sky and the trees. The narrator reminds the reader that an atheist may still experience moments of exultation. As Peter dreams, the narrator reveals the symbolic story of a solitary traveler. The visions that enter the mind of the solitary traveler allow Peter to conceive of him. The traveler sees a figure at the end of the path. She is a giant figure at the end of a great ride. The solitary traveler rides and reaches the mother-like figure. Peter is offered comfort but does not know to whom to reply.

Suddenly Peter awoke, exclaiming, "The death of the soul." In his mind, he had been dreaming of a scene at Bourton, when he had been deeply in love with Clarissa. The scene took place years ago. They had been discussing the housemaid whom had married the neighboring squire. Clarissa criticized the maid's impropriety. Sally mentioned that the maid had given birth before the marriage. Clarissa was abhorred, her manner prudish. The coldness she emanated chilled the whole room and, awkwardly, Clarissa left the table. Clarissa talked to her sheepdog (but spoke to Peter), defending her behavior. Peter remained silent and Clarissa went outside, alone. As the day went on, Peter grew increasingly gloomy. At supper, he arrived late. He did not look at Clarissa at first but when he did, he noticed that she was speaking to a young man. It was Richard Dalloway and suddenly, Peter knew Richard would marry Clarissa.

Clarissa had thought his name was Wickham at first until Dalloway abruptly corrected her. Sally would forever call him, "My name is Dalloway." Peter could not hear of what Clarissa and Richard spoke but he noticed her maternal manner toward him. After dinner, they sat in the drawing room. Clarissa approached Peter to introduce him to Richard. Peter retorted that she was the perfect hostess. She walked away in a huff. Later, the young people decided to go boating in the moonlight and they left Peter standing in the drawing room. Clarissa ran back inside to find Peter. He was suddenly happy. They walked down to the docks talking and, when the boat reached an island, they sat on the grass together. Yet, Peter still somehow knew that Dalloway and Clarissa were falling in love.

Following that night, Peter asked ridiculous things of Clarissa, pushing her away from him. Finally, he sent her a note via Sally to meet him near the fountain. He demanded, repeatedly, that she tell him the truth. She was unyielding. At last, she cried that her and Peter's relationship was over. That night, Peter left Bourton.

Part One Section Five Analysis

Much of this section takes place in Peter's memory, allowing us to relive the past relationship between Clarissa and him. However, the beginning of the section relates the interesting appearance of the solitary traveler. Though Woolf's prose often edges on the poetic, this is one of the only portions of the novel where her writing becomes extremely abstract. Why? What does the solitary traveler add to this section or the novel as a whole? Critics suggest that the traveler is Peter Walsh, as both are male, primarily alone (at least during the day on which the novel takes place), and over fifty years old. He travels through the wood until reaching the giant figure, who ironically is one of the least imposing figures possible, an old matron or nurse. Thus, the archetype of the eternal feminine is evoked. This figure will reappear as we continue through the novel. The section during Peter's dream introduces the idea to the reader abstractly because of the larger symbolism the feminine figure will hold.

Using Peter's recollection as a vehicle, Woolf provides insight into both Clarissa and Peter's characters. Clarissa is often referred to throughout the novel as being cold, as if she was missing something that warmed other humans. The memory that Peter has describes Clarissa

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as a prude because she is utterly disgusted by the thought of a woman becoming pregnant before marriage. This occurrence was not supported by her social circle, but her peers obviously do not react in the same way as she. Ironically, however, Sally Seton, a figure who loved rebelling as a youth, deeply attracted Clarissa. Perhaps Clarissa seeks that warmth that other people offer because of her own lack of warmth.

This absence in Clarissa is also suggested in her manner toward Richard. She is eager to bestow a maternal instinct toward Richard, as she would her sheepdog, to compensate for that flaw. It is possible also that the warmth she lacks could inhabit the sense of awakened sexuality that Sally evidently provokes but whom the men do not. Thus, Clarissa can mother a man or a dog, but not feel impassioned by them. Clarissa quickly dismisses the passion of feeling that Peter does awake in her for more tranquil, controllable emotions.

The recollection also illustrates Peter's overabundance of emotion as he allows himself to be ruled by his feelings. He is able to discern future events through his instincts, such as his feeling that Clarissa and Richard will marry. The memory also presents the separation of Clarissa and Peter as a couple, a moment that haunts both characters during the novel. The theme of water is emphasized as the break up takes place at a fountain. The flow of life is symbolized by the flow of the fountain's stream, creating imagery for a change in life that would cause heartbreak, freedom, and loneliness.

13.2 Detailed Study of Text Part II Sections

13.2.1 Part II, Sections 1–2

Part II, Section One Summary

Peter felt awful; the sun was so hot. Still, when the nurse's little girl ran into a woman's leg, Peter laughed aloud. The leg belonged to Lucrezia Warren Smith, who had left Septimus to talk to himself and was wondering why she should suffer. Why was she no longer in Milan, she asked herself and began to cry. Rezia realized that it was time to take Septimus to see Sir William Bradshaw, who might be able to help him. Septimus would probably be talking to himself, or to his friend Evans, who had died in the War. A friend dying was not rare, however, and Rezia did not understand why Septimus became stranger and stranger. There were times when the couple was happy but then Septimus would mention killing himself, because, he explained, people were wicked. Dr. Holmes said there was nothing the matter with him. Holmes said that one was responsible for one's own health.

Rezia reached out to Septimus but her husband backed away, pointing at her hand. She explained that her finger had grown too thin for her wedding band, but he knew that the ring's absence meant that their marriage was over. Septimus felt relieved, until he thought he saw a dog that was changing into a man. His nerves were stretched thin and he began talking to himself again. Opening his eyes, however, he realized that beauty was everywhere. Rezia told him that it was time to go. The word "time" set off a bundle of emotions, climaxing with Evans' voice telling Septimus that the dead were coming from Thessaly, where Evans had been killed. He saw Evans approaching. Rezia told Septimus that she was unhappy.

Peter Walsh saw the unhappy couple and attributed the awful scene between them to being young. London had never been so enchanting. Peter had always been able to change his mood rapidly. In the five years from 1918 to 1923, London had changed. Respectable newspapers could write about bathrooms. Single women could put on make-up in public. He thought of Sally Seton, and how she had unexpectedly married a rich man and lived in a big house. Still,

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of all of Clarissa's old friends, he had always liked Sally best. She could see through the artificiality of the Whitbreads and Dalloways. The two had bonded over this dislike for artifice, and the fact that Clarissa's father liked neither one of them. And, now Peter would have to ask Hugh Whitbread or Dalloway for a job. Richard was not really so bad, Peter thought. Clarissa had probably fallen in love with him because of his ability to take charge. She thought Richard independent for not liking Shakespeare's sonnets.

Clarissa would have never married Hugh, Peter knew. She knew what she wanted. When she walked into a room, one remembered her. Peter struggled to remind himself that he was no longer in love with her. Even Clarissa would admit that she cared too much for societal rank. She cared about the dukes and duchesses. Peter knew that she threw parties because she felt that Richard should have them. Her opinions, from marriage, had become subdued by Richard. Still, she was one of the largest skeptics Peter knew. She went through a phase of reading Huxley after seeing her sister, Sylvia, killed in an accident. It was Clarissa's nature, however, to enjoy, and she did. She needed people to bring out her sense of humor. She surely adored Elizabeth, who would think her and her friends, like Peter, boring and tiresome. Peter's passions remained strong but, being older; he could analyze them more objectively. He no longer really needed people anymore. Perhaps he truly was in love with Daisy even though he scarcely had thought of her recently. Because Daisy loved him in return, he could relax. Jealousy had caused his rush of emotions at Clarissa's that morning. After all, his coming to London was not so he could marry Daisy, but to finalize her divorce. Clarissa had affected him because she might have spared him from these travails.

A woman's incomprehensible song rose from the subway station that Peter had reached. The song seemed like an ancient song of love. Peter gave the woman a coin. Rezia Smith also saw the old woman and pitied her. For some reason, seeing the woman made Rezia feel that everything was going to be okay. Sir William Bradshaw, she thought, would help Septimus. Looking at Septimus, one likely thought he was a well-educated clerk. Septimus had left home for London at a young age, leaving a note behind him. In London, he had fallen in love with Miss Isabel Pole, a woman who fueled the poet in him by lending him books and speaking of Shakespeare. Mr. Brewer was Septimus' manager at the office of Sibleys and Arrowsmiths. He knew that Septimus would be very successful if he maintained his health. He advised Septimus to play sports to strengthen his health.

Septimus was one of the first volunteers for the army in World War I. He went to protect Shakespeare and Isabel. Septimus gained strength and was promoted. He became friends with his officer, Evans, who died just before the war ended. Septimus was glad that he felt no grief over the death, until he realized that he had lost the ability to feel. In a panic, he married a young Italian girl, Lucrezia. Lucrezia adored his studiousness. The couple moved to London and Septimus returned to his post. He wondered if life lacked meaning. He read Shakespeare again and understood now that Shakespeare had despised love between man and woman. After five years of marriage, Lucrezia wanted to have a baby. Septimus, however, could not fathom bringing a child into the world. Rezia became increasingly unhappy. Septimus unhappily felt nothing when she wept. He wondered if he would go mad and, progressively, he did surrender to madness.

Dr. Holmes could not help. Septimus knew nothing was physically wrong with him, but he figured, his crimes were still great. He felt nothing; he had married without love. The third time Holmes came to see him, Septimus refused him. Holmes pushed in anyway. Even though Septimus had talked of suicide, Holmes told him to shake off his depression. Septimus felt that Holmes, representative of human nature, was after him. He hated Holmes. Rezia could not understand this dislike. Without Rezia's support, Septimus felt deserted. He heard the world telling him to kill himself. One moment, he saw Evans, and cried out to him. Rezia

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entered his room, panicked, and called for Holmes. Upon seeing Holmes, Septimus screamed in horror. The doctor, annoyed, advised that they see Dr. Bradshaw.



Task How was the married house maid who visited Bourton dressed?

Part II Section One Analysis

The archetype of the feminine maternal is represented by the woman seen by the solitary traveler and now, the vagrant woman singing in the subway. She sings of eternal love. The figure serves as a vehicle to transition the reader from Peter to Rezia Smith, two characters lacking companionship. The theme of eternal love is examined within the theories held by the love interests of Peter and Rezia: Clarissa and Septimus, respectively. Clarissa espoused a theory in earlier chapters when she reflected on the idea that a piece of her remained in every place she has been. As Manly Johnson, critic, notes, "...Clarissa's theory is about the affinities between people and how one must seek out those who complete one: the Unseen part of us' might survive, Ebe recovered somehow attached to this person or that."

Septimus' theory of the beauty in the world does not differ greatly, and it is through their similar approaches to the world about them that one begins to see the real similarities between Septimus and Clarissa. He too notices the ever-present beauty of the moment. In fact, Septimus can be said to fill the void of feelings that Clarissa lacks. Septimus first applauds himself for not feeling sadness when his friend, Evans, is killed and then punishes himself for not feeling it afterward. However, as critic, Isabel Gamble, asserts, "The real truth is, of course, that Septimus has felt too deeply, has been shaken and numbed by shell shock and the war, specifically by the death of his friend, Evans; his feelings have flowed through channels deeper than any so far sounded by Clarissa. But he has never gone by the first paralyzing numbness to see, consciously, the reality of his emotion." Septimus believes that his initial emotionless reaction to Evans' death is real and progressively bases his construction of reality on this miscalculation. Instead of facing his grief, he represses it until the remainder of his reality is shattered. He pictures dogs turning into men (an inversion of the image he created to represent himself and Evans, as dogs, playing in front of a fire) because the truth has become demented in his mind to the point of delusion. One must applaud Woolf's coupling of the sane and insane as an advanced social commentary. She illustrates the humanity lacking in a sane person and the depth of feeling possessed by an insane character, reversing the stereotypes that plagued them both.

Septimus represents a 'Lost generation' of men following the end of World War I. As the pomp and circumstance of British upper class society continues, a group of men return from war unutterably changed but without a resource to ease their frustration. The politics of a Britain still trying to dominate world politics cannot peacefully absorb a collection of men so altered from the British civilization that had sent them to the war. The reflection of war and its effect on postwar society, and the British infatuation with the memory of it are inseparable from the main plot of the novel, though many readers try to diminish the postwar circumstances within the book. However, as Lee R. Edwards, critic, mentions, nothing necessitated Woolf's inclusion of characters' comments on the War, characters involved with the military such as Lady Bruton and Miss Parry, Peter's thoughts concerning Empire and the marching boys, or Septimus' mental anguish. The novel takes place five years after the war but exists within its shadow. Simple contemplation transforms into social commentary when one realizes the import of the many references to the post-war environment. For instance, Peter's simple musing of the

marching boys has a malicious subtext because of the mechanical manner in which the boys are described. Young and eager, the boys lose their individuality as we watch.



Notes As Edwards describes, “ They are human beings who have shifted their allegiance to some set of monumental abstractions.”

Septimus, we learn, shifted his allegiance from Shakespeare and Isabel Pole to the British cause. However, his goal in signing up for the army was to protect those very things. He is persuaded to join the army by his boss because he lacked the manliness that only athletics or war could provide. Yet, turning into a man allows Septimus to keep neither Shakespeare nor Isabel Pole. He loses the ability to appreciate either. He is stripped of his passions. His mentality is replaced by a hardened vision that teaches one not to love and not to care. He tries so hard not to feel that the guilt he does feel incapacitates him. As Edwards deftly theorizes, “Surviving, unfortunately, killed him; for Septimus was finally unable to turn himself into a statue by a simple exercise of will...He feels anguish because of the discrepancy between his feeling that the natural world is beautiful, the human world corrupt, and guilt because, despite the discrepancy, the feeling for goodness and the beauty of life persist.”

Self Assessment

Multiple Choice Questions:

5. What is Lucrezia Smith’s profession?

(a) School teacher	(b) Cellist
(c) Hat maker	(d) Florist
6. Septimus goes to the doctor because he is suffering from

(a) Shell Shock	(b) A toothache
(c) The flu	(d) Headache
7. Where does Peter Walsh Live?

(a) Boston	(b) India
(c) London	(d) Sweden
8. Where did Clarissa spend her summers as a girl?

(a) Bourton	(b) Milan
(c) Edinburgh	(d) Calcutta

Part II, Section Two Summary

At noon, Clarissa finished her sewing and the Warren Smiths neared Sir William Bradshaw. Rezia guessed his home because of the prestigious gray motorcar out front. Bradshaw would often have to travel long distances to see rich country patients, while his wife would do worthy work back in London, attending bazaars or taking photographs. Bradshaw earned his prestige through hard work. As Septimus walked in, Bradshaw knew immediately that Septimus had suffered a mental breakdown. He also recognized the great mistakes Dr. Holmes had made. In the short conversation Bradshaw had with Septimus, he learned that Septimus placed

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great importance on symbols. A letter from Mr. Brewer had been sent to Bradshaw about Septimus, detailing his financial security and advanced career post.

It did not detail the crimes to humanity that Septimus pictured he had committed. Bradshaw took Mrs. Smith to a room nearby and asked if Septimus had spoken of killing himself. Embarrassed, she replied that he had. Bradshaw reassured her that Septimus needed a long rest in a country house to regain a sense of proportion. Rezia doubted that Septimus would agree but Bradshaw responded that it was a case of the law. When they returned to Septimus, Rezia burst out that he was ill and needed to go to a home. Septimus asked if it was a home of Dr. Holmes. Though slightly annoyed, Bradshaw assured him that it was a home of his. Septimus equated Bradshaw with Holmes and with the evil of human nature. Septimus wondered if he confessed his crimes, would they let him go. But, he could not remember his crimes. As the couple left, Bradshaw told Rezia he would take care of everything.

Rezia felt angry and deserted. Bradshaw had given them his three-quarters of an hour and he had prescribed proportion to straighten out Septimus' delusions as he would for all cases of the sort. He would make all of London's unfit share his proper sense of proportion. Yet, as the narrator explains, there is another side to proportion, termed conversion. A gray line exists between the two terms. One had to wonder if Bradshaw did not like to impose his will on others weaker than he. Bradshaw showed his patients that he was in control, and they, often, broke down in his presence. He then remade them in his likeness.

The Smiths traveled up Harley Street around the same time that Hugh Whitbread passed a nearby clock. The narrator jumps to Hugh. Hugh was the type to delve into matters superficially. Still, he had been an honorable member of high society for years. He may not have participated in any great movements but he had made an impact on many small, important reforms. He was always impeccably dressed and maintained the best manners. On this day, as with every visit to Lady Bruton, he brought carnations for the luncheon. Lady Bruton preferred Richard Dalloway to Hugh. She had invited both to lunch to ask for their services. However, she thought it best to wait until they had eaten to approach the subject.

The luncheon was elaborate. Richard had a great respect for Lady Bruton, as she was the great (or great-great) granddaughter of a General. As they neared the serving of coffee, Lady Bruton abruptly asked about Clarissa. Clarissa doubted that the Lady liked her, and it may have been true. Lady Bruton cared more for politics than people and thought women caused their husbands to reject military posts. Suddenly, Lady Bruton mentioned that Peter Walsh was back in town. She was interested in seeing Richard's response. Richard thought that, when he returned home, he would tell Clarissa he loved her.

Lady Bruton wished everyone were "broad and simple." She had become very involved with the idea of emigration to Canada, especially for young people. She figured that if Richard advised her and Hugh wrote to the Times for her, as he could do very well, then her plans would be activated. She waited until they were smoking and then asked Millie to bring the papers. When Hugh finished writing, Lady Bruton was so pleased with the letter that she flung her arms around Hugh and graciously thanked them both. As Richard stood to leave, he asked whether he would see Lady Bruton at Clarissa's party. Possibly, she retorted. Lady Bruton did not like parties. After her guests had left, she retired to her room, feeling proud and powerful.

Richard and Hugh stood at a street corner, hoping to part but frozen in place. Finally, they decided to enter a shop. Richard had not cared about Canada and he did not care about the necklaces Hugh saw in the shop. He then remembered Clarissa and Peter and thought of buying Clarissa a gift. Soon, however, he was so disgusted by Hugh's pomposity that he wished to leave. He did want to buy Clarissa something, though. He bought Clarissa roses

and rushed home to tell her that he loved her. He had not said it in years. Truly, he thought, it was a miracle that he had married her. Clarissa had said to him that she was right refusing Peter. She wanted support from him. He rushed through parks and past homeless women. He rushed by Buckingham Palace, full of prestige and tradition. Richard felt very happy, rushing home to profess his love.

Part II Section Two Analysis

The more the reader has learned about Septimus, the more he can see that Septimus is slipping from sanity. He feels so extremely guilty, confused, and powerless that he has lost the power to control his emotions. Woolf brings to the fore the ineptitude of the day's psychiatric help with the characterizations of Holmes and Bradshaw. These characterizations allow her to air her grievances, to some extent, against the evils of the doctors whom she has visited throughout her episodes of mental instability. Bradshaw is capable of noticing the mistakes made by Holmes in not realizing the severity of Septimus's problems, but he too takes a forceful and dominating approach to Septimus.

Woolf imposes an interesting section onto the narrative in which the author appears to speak out. Though Bradshaw has agreed to help and tells Rezia that he will make all the necessary plans, Rezia feels deserted and betrayed. Why? Woolf responds to this question in her discussion of proportion versus conversion. In Bradshaw's attempt to make his patients adhere to his sense of proper proportion, he converts them into new, unoriginal form mirroring the doctor himself. In effect, he takes the life out of them, the agency out of their being. Woolf felt that many of the doctors with whom she came into contact were more trying to convert her than heal her. As Johnson notes, "In his compulsion to put people away, Woolf casts Sir William as an agent of death. For insanity, as she describes it, is isolation from people, from things, from all the stuff of life—death, in short." It is not a coincidence that the other doctor's name is Holmes and that Bradshaw wishes to send Septimus to a home. As Septimus asks when told the plan, "One of Holmes' homes?" After this realization, Septimus equates Bradshaw to Holmes. Symbolically, they both are figures of evil that stifle the life out of an ailing human being. Bradshaw's country home represents the isolation and the conversion, as well as the psychiatric insensitivity, forced on the mentally ill of Woolf's time.

Similarly, the sterile, stolid character of Lady Bruton is developed during this section of the novel. She too has little interest in the personalities behind the people with whom she comes into contact. She is not viewed as malicious by the author or the other characters. Yet, Clarissa senses that Bruton dislikes her, a feeling that is substantiated in the mind of Lady Bruton during the luncheon she holds with Richard and Hugh. She excludes Clarissa from the meal, not because she is mean, but because Clarissa's presence would not have served Lady Bruton's desired purpose. The Lady sought advice, suggestions, and help. She wanted Richard's opinions and Hugh's letter-writing ability. Thus, in a parallel manner to the doctors, Lady Bruton uses her guests as tools to manipulate a conversion. She feels that wives, like Clarissa, distract men from their proper duties in government and public affairs. Like Holmes, her name is also symbolic because it refers to the brute force of title, acquisition, and status quo. In short, Lady Bruton represents England as empire, society as means, and men as dominators. Peter, sensitive to passion and emotion, senses the changes in London much more acutely than Lady Bruton ever will. Richard, though swayed by Lady Bruton's family history, sees beyond the objective world into the happiness of his marriage. Ironically, however, he is not motivated to buy flowers for his wife until he is faced with jealousy, caused by the return of Peter Walsh.

Notes

13.2.2 Part II, Sections 3–4

Part II, Section Three Summary

Clarissa was very annoyed. Mrs. Marsham had written her about inviting Ellie Henderson to her party, but Clarissa had purposely not invited Ellie. She was a bore. She was also annoyed that Elizabeth was praying with Miss Kilman. The clock struck three and Richard walked in, holding flowers. He could not bring himself to say he loved her, but she understood. Clarissa thanked him and filled him in on her list of annoyances. Richard told her about Hugh being at lunch and being an ass, and Clarissa mentioned Peter's visit, and how bizarre it was that she had almost married him. Richard held her hand. He then hurried off to some committee meeting, though he was not sure himself whether it was about the Armenians or Albanians. Before leaving, Richard told Clarissa to rest, as he always did, because a doctor once had suggested that she rest after lunch.

Lying down, Clarissa felt selfish that she cared more about roses than suffering Albanians. She felt uneasy and realized that it was because of the negative reactions both Peter and Richard had toward her parties. Peter thought her a snob; Richard thought her childish. Yet, she loved her parties because she loved sharing in people's lives. Parties were her offering to the world, her gift. Clarissa was amazed by the very essence of life, moment to moment, the simple pleasures of seeing beauty. The door opened and Elizabeth entered. Strangely, Elizabeth did not resemble the rest of the Dalloways, but had an almost Asian look to her. Clarissa was bothered because she had become very serious lately. Miss Kilman stood outside the door, and Elizabeth told her mother that they were going to the Army and Navy surplus stores.

Miss. Kilman despised Clarissa because, in her eyes, Clarissa was mean and superficial. She felt plain next to Clarissa and cheated by the world. She did not mind Mr. Dalloway; he had invited her to teach history to Elizabeth. Miss. Kilman told herself that she pitied women like Mrs. Dalloway. Whenever she was filled with sinister thoughts, she thought of God. When Mrs. Dalloway came out with Elizabeth, Miss. Kilman tried not to hate. She told herself there would be a religious victory in the end, and she would triumph. In return, Clarissa felt victimized. She felt that this woman was stealing her daughter. They stood awkwardly together for a moment as Elizabeth ran for her gloves. Then, Miss. Kilman and Elizabeth left.

Desperate, Clarissa yelled after Elizabeth to remember her party, but Elizabeth did not hear. Clarissa hated how Miss Kilman wanted to convert everyone, and made others feel small. Clarissa simply wanted people to be themselves. Clarissa pondered love and religion, feeling that the combination had the power to destroy. She thought of Peter, who was filled with knowledge of the world, but who loved flimsy women. Big Ben struck three-thirty. Clarissa noticed the old woman whom she could view in the house adjacent through her window. It seemed to Clarissa that the ringing of the bell forced the lady to move away from her window. All was connected. One needed neither religion nor love to make the connections. Another clock, which always rang slightly after Big Ben, reminded Clarissa to prepare for her party.

Miss. Kilman, filled with anger, tried to calm herself by remembering what religion had taught her. However, she resented her ugly body and she resented Mrs. Dalloway. Miss. Kilman lived to eat food and love Elizabeth. Miss. Kilman and Elizabeth reached the stores. Miss. Kilman wished to look at petticoats but was so flushed with anger and frustration that she seemed nearly mad in her selection. Then, Miss. Kilman declared that they must have tea. She ate with intensity, leering at the cakes of others while she demolished the food in front of her. Elizabeth thought of how peculiar Miss. Kilman was, taking her to teas with clergymen, lending her books on different professions, complaining of her unhappiness, and getting along horribly with her mother.

As Elizabeth looked for her gloves, Miss. Kilman desperately hoped the girl would stay with her longer. But, Elizabeth wanted to go. Miss. Kilman detained her by saying that she had not finished eating. She asked Elizabeth if she would go to her mother's party. Elizabeth responded that she would probably have to, though she did not like parties. Miss Kilman replied that she never went to parties because she was never invited. She continued talking, feeling sorry for herself and driving a small wedge between herself and Elizabeth. Elizabeth then paid her bill and left.

Part II Section Three Analysis

The theme of the sea as symbolic of life is invoked as Richard returns from the luncheon with flowers for Clarissa. The suspense is properly built for the moment where Richard will tell Clarissa he loves her. Clarissa has been visited by Peter that morning, and her thoughts continually stray to him. Richard has been provoked to this moment of passion by the very mention of Peter and finally breaks from Hugh so that he can return to Clarissa, the happiness of his life. As he enters their home, the bell signifies the break in time and progression. Woolf writes, "And the sound of the bell flooded the room with its melancholy wave; which receded, and gathered itself together to fall once more, when she heard distractingly, something fumbling, something scratching at the door." The sure-handed prose certainly does not introduce the seeming moment of passion the reader expects. Instead, Woolf's verbiage here reads more like Edgar Allan Poe, foreshadowing a dreaded event through repetition and imagery. The melancholy waves gather their force only to stumble and fumble about. One expects some kind of monster to enter behind this sea rather than a loving husband with flowers. Woolf foreshadows the failure of Richard to say "love you" and to properly communicate with his wife by describing the failed motion of a wave, having to retreat after crashing, only to gather, and crash once more.

Similarly, the reader gets the feeling that Richard has hoped to express his love to Clarissa at other times as well, but has also failed. The failed connection exists between husband and wife, between fellow humans. Clarissa's conversation still returns to Peter. Richard holds her hand, but a gulf exists between husband and wife that allows little verbal connection to take hold. The theme of insanity coupled with sanity appears in this context as Maureen Howard, author of the introduction to the novel, illuminates. She writes, "...Virginia Woolf knew from her own illness how close to endurance and civilization lay insanity and mayhem...It is so difficult to endow our words with meaning. ...Clarity, like simple sentences - 'I love you' - is hard to come by." In a war-torn world, crumbled and disillusioned following World War I, Woolf attempted to illustrate the difficulty of simply living. Howard elaborates, "In Mrs. Dalloway, she began to assemble the bits and pieces, to find the angles, the original voice that would make us feel" and thus, communicate successfully again.

In this sense, Richard is no more connected to the meetings he attends. In fact, he fails to know if he is meeting to discuss the Armenians or Albanians. The importance of his societal duties is undermined by his nonchalance, commenting on Woolf's view of the English upper classes and the state of all-important English duty. The reader is acquainted with Richard's many good qualities, yet his loyalty to the status quo and the establishment is mirrored in his leaving his wife for a meeting that he obviously does not care about and in the awe he feels toward Lady Bruton's family history.

Ironically, Clarissa's parties are developed by Woolf, in contrast to Richard's work, as entities of value and significance. Both Peter and Richard, whose opinions she relies most upon, judge Clarissa's parties harshly. However, in this section of the novel, Clarissa comes to realize why her parties are so important to her and the reader learns that the parties signify Clarissa's gift

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to the world around her. Woolf once described insanity as a form of death because its intense loneliness created a human void for the sufferer. In Clarissa's parties, she fights this emptiness, this void. Clarissa brings people together and thus, creates a human dialogue. She creates life, and thus, sanity. What at first seems quite superficial and vain becomes quite substantial and meaningful upon reflection.

Miss. Kilman, however, is one character that cannot be helped by a social offering of this type. The woman is so embittered by her experiences, beliefs, and station in life, that she refuses to open herself to anything that is offered, especially by one viewed as a socialite, such as Clarissa. Her hold on Elizabeth, though, is quite strong and a sexual relationship between the two women is even hinted at. Yet, their connection breaks down during the trip to the store and café. Miss. Kilman is extremely self-involved and dependent as shown by her attempts to keep Elizabeth with her. The image of Miss. Kilman gobbling down her cake stands as a metaphor for her personality. Though Doris Kilman hungers for companionship and acceptance, she is unable to see beyond the cake in front of her. The text describes the desperation of Miss Kilman when Woolf states, "If Doris Kilman could grasp Elizabeth, if she could clasp her, if she could make her hers absolutely and forever and then die; that was all she wanted." Consumed with jealousy and rage, she loses her grasp on her young friend, becoming nothing more than a ridiculous caricature "fingering the last two inches of a chocolate éclair."

Part II, Section Four Summary

Miss. Kilman sat alone, despondent. She had lost her Elizabeth. Clarissa had won, after all. She wandered off, forgetting her petticoat until someone ran after her. Miss. Kilman headed for a sanctuary of religion. She joined others in the Abbey and knelt in prayer. Elizabeth also wandered. She enjoyed the niceness of the day and decided to take a bus ride. Her life was changing. Already men were falling in love with her. She felt that the attention was silly. Elizabeth wished only to play in the country, with her father. She sat on the bus and enjoyed the fresh air. Meditating on Miss. Kilman, she wondered if Miss Kilman's idea about the poor was correct. She paid another penny so that she could continue riding the bus onto the Strand, a working quarter of London. Miss. Kilman had said that all professions were open to women of Elizabeth's generation and so Elizabeth thought she might become a doctor, politician, or farmer. She was a lazy child, but the ride motivated her. The people in the Strand rushed about with such importance. Nearing St. Paul's cathedral, she knew it was getting late and she turned for home.

The sun was setting in the Strand as Septimus looked out his window. To him, nature danced through the sunlight on the walls. Rezia dreaded seeing Septimus smile as he often did. Sometimes he would demand that she record his thoughts. She would write down his words, logical or not, on Shakespeare, war, and beauty. Lately, he would suddenly cry out about truth and seeing his old friend, Evans. The doctors had said he should not get excited, but he did. He would speak of Holmes in terms of the evil of human nature. To Septimus, all this was true. This day, Rezia sat sewing a hat for Mrs. Peters, a woman she did not like but who had been nice to the Smiths. Septimus watched Rezia's form and found it perfect. He asked her about Mrs. Peters and her family. He opened his eyes to observe how real the objects in his home were. He held a normal conversation with Rezia about the Peters' which made her very happy. They joked about the hat that would be too small for big Mrs. Peters and Septimus designed the pattern to decorate the top of the hat. Rezia happily sewed his pattern on and Septimus was very pleased. Rezia would always love the hat they created.

Septimus made Rezia try the hat on. The girl with the evening paper arrived. Rezia danced around with her, laughing, as Septimus read aloud from the paper. Septimus fell asleep,

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slowly slipping from reality. When he awoke, Rezia had gone to take the girl home. He looked for his visions but they were not there. Rezia burst in, still happy. She felt that things had returned to normal. She thought back to when she had first met him, and how he had understood the things that she said. She asked if he liked the hat, but Septimus just sat, looking at her. He believed that he could feel her mind, but he also remembered that Bradshaw had said that he would need to separate himself. It bothered him that Bradshaw had seemed so demanding. Rezia told him it was because he had wanted to kill himself. He inquired where his writings were and she brought them to him. He wanted them burned but she promised to keep them from the doctors. She also promised that the doctors would not separate her from him.

Septimus imagined his wife as a flowering tree, triumphing over the doctors. Rezia heard the voice of Dr. Holmes and ran to stop him from seeing Septimus. Holmes pushed by her. Rezia, Septimus knew, was on his side. Holmes continued up the stairs toward Septimus. Septimus tried to think of ways to escape. The window was the only option he could fathom. He waited to the last minute, enjoying the sun, and then threw himself onto the fence below. Holmes ran in, shouting that Septimus was a coward. Mrs. Filmer ran to Rezia, making her sit down. Holmes gave Rezia a drink that made her fall asleep. She thought of happy memories. Slowly, she realized that Septimus was dead. People outside carried the body away.

Part II Section Four Analysis

Elizabeth Dalloway is compared often to a blooming flower, the metonym for spring and growth, as she is a young girl coming into womanhood. Against her will, Elizabeth is being drawn into adult life. Woolf writes, "People were beginning to compare her to poplar trees, early dawn, hyacinths, fawns, running water, and garden lilies, and it made her life a burden to her, for she so much preferred being left alone..." This list of images creates in the reader a sense of renewal and vitality that is essential to Elizabeth's character. Miss. Kilman employs Woolf's metonyms for Elizabeth when she substitutes, "Elizabeth had gone. Beauty had gone, youth had gone." As Elizabeth breaks from Miss. Kilman, Elizabeth renews and revitalizes her sense of self. She enjoys the feel of being alone and outdoors and revels in the noise of the crowds and in life rushing around her. As she rides the bus through London, she is inspired to think of future professions and aspirations. Critic, Manly Johnson, relates, "There is a Dickensian delight in movement and sounds in the description of Elizabeth's recommitment to life on her own..." The ride through London symbolizes a rite of passage for Elizabeth who begins exploring the path from adolescence to vital adulthood.

Woolf also frequently compares Rezia Smith to a tree or flower of life. Johnson explains, "Crippled within, [Septimus] seeks out Lucrezia to marry her, with the instinctive knowledge that her health is what his sickness needs. She appears to him as the tree of life..." As Woolf develops the theme of the sane along side the insane, she again describes Rezia, through Septimus, as a flower attempting to protect her battered husband with her maternal petals. Woolf illustrates, "...she did up the papers...as if all her petals were about her. She was a flowering tree..." Rezia too represents vitality and life, and as such, she is incapable of protecting or understanding her husband. Her attention to detail and the love she gives to her hat making depicts the care she gives to the world around her. Rezia's declaration that she and Septimus will not be separated is used to explore the necessity of togetherness in sanity. When she leaves to take the young girl home, Septimus begins to lose his grasp on reality. He falls asleep and when he wakes up, he has clearly returned to the separate world of his own delusions. His desperation is reflected in the text: "That was it: to be alone forever. That was the doom pronounced in Milan..." The devastation caused by the war and his realization that he can no longer feel illustrates the lack of emotional connection Septimus retains to those around him.

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The period that Rezia and Septimus spend together before he falls asleep displays a healthiness and happiness rarely felt in the novel. The hat—that the husband and wife create together stands as a metaphor for life and sanity. The hat allows the two to communicate, playfully and warmly. They discuss people they know and cooperate in the hat's design and construction. The pattern that Septimus pieces together for the hat symbolizes the novel itself. The novel, as a truly modern novel of the post-World War I era, is also constructed of fragments pieced together. How does one learn about Clarissa's character, for instance? We learn from Clarissa herself, but also from comments and thoughts made by others, by memories discovered, and by symbolic reference. The postmodern novel is a pastiche of reflections, alternating narration, poetic allusion, direct prose, metaphor, dialogue, and character development. Like the hat, several layers of emotion, sentiment, logic, character, and motive create the design. The moment of creation is thus a culmination of life and significance in the novel.

Dr. Holmes, seen as the symbol of the evil of human nature by Septimus, drives the life out of man. He and Bradshaw represent the figures of conversion and proportion detailed earlier by Woolf. In their attempts to smooth over Septimus' very real problems and ultimately, to separate him from the life connection he still holds, the physicians force Septimus to his death. Insanity, in Woolf's eyes, was very near to death. Johnson explains, "In his compulsion to put people away, Woolf casts Sir William as an agent of death." As Septimus awakes from his nap, his thoughts flow directly to Bradshaw's words of separation. Rezia tries to alleviate Septimus' fears, but the arrival of a forceful Dr. Holmes makes the fears very real to Septimus. He feels that he must escape the grasp of Holmes and Bradshaw. Yet, Septimus does not want to die. Before jumping, he states, "But he would wait till the very last moment. He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun is hot." As he jumps, he screams that he will "give it to Holmes." Septimus feels pushed into a position where he must save himself from the smothering hold of conversion and proportion. Woolf writes, "Rezia saw the large outline of his body standing dark against the window. So that was Dr. Holmes." Holmes is a figure, a symbol, of darkness and destruction whereas Septimus, last alive in the hot sun, reflects ruined innocence and goodness. His moment in the sun foreshadows Clarissa's later reaction to Septimus' death and the connection that will be solidified between them.

13.2.3 Part II, Sections 5–6

Part II, Section Five Summary

Peter appreciated the ambulance that sped past him as a sign of civility and communal empathy. He was pleased to watch the unselfish cars move over to let the ambulance pass. He was afraid to think too long on the morbid subject, but liked that it was his right to entertain such thoughts when he was alone. His tendency to become emotionally attached to people and events had always been a flaw. He especially enjoyed the company of women. He thought back to a time when he and Clarissa rode on top of a bus, and she came up with a transcendental theory for how she knew people simply by living in a society. Wherever she had been, a piece of her stayed behind. She diminished the finality of death this way. Peter did notice that her theory worked for their relationship. The meetings they had experienced over the years were often painful while happening but later gave Peter food for thought when he least expected it. Memories of Clarissa would pop up anywhere. His memories of her were mostly at Bourton.

At his hotel, Peter was handed his mail, including a letter from Clarissa. She must have written it right after he left her house. Her note stated only that she had loved seeing him, but it annoyed him. He wished she would just leave him alone. He would always feel bitterly that Clarissa had refused him, though he knew that their marriage would have failed. He thought of Daisy and his way of charming women. Daisy was only twenty-four and had two young

children. One woman warned him that Daisy would be wrecked when he died and her reputation was tarnished. But he did not want to think about that. He cared less and less about what others thought. Still, maybe it was best if Daisy forgot about him.

At dinner, though alone, Peter commanded respect. A nearby family, the Morrisises, liked Peter and after leaving the dining room for the smoking room, they engaged him in conversation. Peter liked being liked. He decided that he would attend Clarissa's party, in order to ask Richard what the English government was planning to do in India. Peter moved to the porch and watched the hot day dwindle into night. The prolonged summer evening was new to Peter. He enjoyed watching the young lovers dawdle. Peter looked at the newspaper, as he was quite interested in cricket matches. Finally, he left the hotel and slowly moved toward the Dalloway's home. The symmetry of London's squares and streets struck him as beautiful. It seemed as if everyone was dining out. Bustling, dressed up Londoners scattered to and fro.



Did u know? Reaching Clarissa's home, Peter breathed deeply to prepare himself for the challenge. Instinctively, his hand opened the knife blade in his pocket.

Part II Section Five Analysis

Woolf writes, "It was as if he were sucked up to some very high roof by that rush of emotion and the rest of him, like a white shell-sprinkled beach, left bare. It had been his undoing in Anglo-Indian society - this susceptibility." Expanding on Woolf's theme of life as the sea, Peter Walsh too experiences the waves of emotion that rise and fall in Clarissa's life. He notes that his inability to weep or laugh at the right time has left him as empty and lonely as a beach that is washed clean after the sea pulls back. In this case, the thematic metaphor functions to illustrate Peter's societal isolation when he is stripped of the metaphoric sea that connects him to life. Immediately following Peter's thoughts in the text, Woolf describes Peter's memory of Clarissa's transcendentalist-like theory of living. The theory follows, "...since our apparitions, the part of us which appears, are so momentary compared with the other, the unseen part of us, which spreads wide, the unseen might survive, be recovered somehow attached to this person or that, or even haunting certain places after death..." Clarissa has served this purpose to Peter as thoughts of her frequently, or infrequently, occur to him, causing him to relive their times together at the most unexpected times. In this sense, Clarissa acts as metaphoric sea in Peter's life. Her absence leaves him empty and wondering; whereas her presence provides connections to a life that he desires for years after her presence has ceased.

Peter has trouble facing these reminders of Clarissa, these remnants of her unseen surviving, and thus, becomes embittered when he receives the note from her at his hotel. Unlike her husband, Clarissa has an easier time communicating and has successfully expressed herself in the written form and delivered this expression to Peter before he arrives back at his hotel. Peter feels bombarded by the memories he suffers of Clarissa, and her ghost makes an even greater appearance in the form of the note. The blue (symbolic of the sea) envelope, recognizably addressed in Clarissa's hand, stands as a symbol of Peter's continuing attachment to Clarissa and his proclaimed susceptibility. He looked at a picture he had carried with him of Daisy and felt a different sentiment entirely. With Daisy, "All is plain sailing." This ocean of feeling does not haunt Peter; this relationship he can navigate.

England as society and civilization passes by and impresses Peter. Yet, he still is incapable of escaping the past. His thoughts, and Woolf's prose, merge and blur with the past as the two are expressed interchangeably. They exist as one for Woolf's characters. The intersection of time and timelessness most noticeably occurs directly in front of Peter's gaze as he sits on the

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veranda of the hotel and as he slowly ambles to the party. London had changed since Peter last visited, and the changes that he can perceive pass by him on his journey back to Clarissa's house.

Since time stands as Woolf's greatest marker of life and living, it is not surprising that she signals the changes that have occurred since Peter's last appearance in England with a reference to time. Peter sits on the porch of the hotel and Woolf writes, "For the great revolution of Mr. Willett's summer time had taken place since Peter Walsh's last visit. The prolonged evening was new to him. It was inspiring, rather." Mr. Willett's summer time is an allusion to the adoption of daylight savings time. The lengthened evening allows Peter to observe much of London as he slips in and out of his own memories. In this artificial expansion of day, Peter is transported to a space and time where age and being seem less established and immovable. He remarks that he is "as young as ever." Past and present intersect in Woolf's writing, which lacks transitions and purposely avoids specifying pronouns in order to emphasize the blurred distinction between the two. The immediacy of the moment is blended beautifully and generously with the timeless memories of the past.

Part II, Section Six Summary

Lucy and the other servants ran around in final preparation for the party. They had heard that the Prime Minister was coming. Guests were already arriving and the ladies began to move upstairs, with Mrs. Dalloway last. Mrs. Walker, one servant, worried about the salmon. Lucy reported to the others how lovely Elizabeth looked. A few servants were hired for Clarissa's parties every year. As the guests entered, they were each announced and Clarissa would say to each, "How delightful to see you!" Peter felt that Clarissa was insincere and wished he had gone somewhere else for the evening. Clarissa noticed Peter and felt ashamed. His presence made her judge herself. She wondered why she threw parties and felt instantly that this party would fail. It angered Clarissa that Peter came to criticize. And, yet, she thought her parties did matter.

Ellie Henderson, Clarissa's poor cousin, stood in the corner, not talking to anyone but enjoying a chance to observe. She would tell her friend, Edith, all about it later. She guessed that Clarissa had not meant to invite her. Richard was kind enough to say hello. A moment later, Peter greeted Richard and they walked off. Clarissa continued greeting all who entered. She felt tired and rote. Suddenly, Lady Rosseter was announced. Her voice struck a chord. Clarissa realized the title was Sally Seton's married name! She was passing through London and came to the party, uninvited. Clarissa was overjoyed to see her. She noticed that Sally looked older; Sally told her that she had five boys. The Prime Minister was announced and Clarissa had to attend to him. Surprising to most, he was an ordinary looking man. He walked about with Clarissa, then Richard, acting as a symbol of English society.

Peter thought the English were snobs. Soon, Peter spotted Hugh Whitbread, another reminder of society. To Peter, Hugh appeared bloated and self-important. The student near Hugh seemed much more worthwhile in Peter's eyes. Lady Bruton met privately with the Prime Minister. Then, Clarissa continued to lead the Prime Minister around, making him feel at ease. Though intoxicated with the energy of her party, Clarissa retained a hollow feeling. As she grew older, parties were somewhat less fulfilling. On the other hand, hatred, brought about by a picture that triggered thoughts of Miss. Kilman, managed to fulfill her. Clarissa caught sight of Sir Harry and greeted him with love. As much as he liked Clarissa though, he still found this social circle stale.



Task What is Richard doing about the police?

Notes

Clarissa had to move on to another group of people. She came upon Professor Brierly, an expert on Milton, and Jim Hutton, who shared Clarissa's love for Bach, not getting along. Clarissa wished she could have Hutton play on the piano, but the party was too loud. She, then, greeted Lord Gayton and Miss Blow, who were not speaking much. Clarissa wished she had dancing for the young people, but there was no room. Spotting her aunt, Clarissa went to old Helena Parry. She had gotten along so well with Peter, so Clarissa brought Peter to her. Clarissa promised Peter that they would speak later. Clarissa met with Lady Bruton briefly. They were very different and did not have much to say. Lady Bruton joined Peter near Miss. Parry, and invited him to lunch. Sally noticed Peter with Miss. Parry. She tried to make Clarissa join them, but Clarissa could not be stopped. Clarissa hoped they would wait until she had time. She remembered Sally's vigor from youth, her insatiable vivacity. Sally did not illuminate a room as she once had. Settling down to a normal marriage was not expected of her, Clarissa thought. Sally sat with Peter. Clarissa saw them as the link to her past.

The Bradshaws entered and Clarissa hurried to greet them. Clarissa and Richard had never liked the couple, especially the doctor. They were so late because, as Lady Bradshaw intimated to Clarissa, Sir William had received a call about a young man who had killed himself. Clarissa was appalled that Lady Bradshaw was bringing death into the party. Distraught, Clarissa wandered into a little room but no one was there. The thought of death overwhelmed her. She could feel the man, who had been Septimus, fall and his body hit the metal spikes as if it were she. She thought of her past, Peter, and Sally, and she wondered if the man had been happy. Clarissa realized why she despised Sir Bradshaw; he made the life of his patients intolerable. The death seemed her disgrace, a fate into which she might have slipped if it had not been for Richard. He made her life happy, she thought. Clarissa looked out the window and noticed that the old woman across was looking back toward her. She thought it bizarre to watch the old woman prepare for bed while her party roared in the next room. Clarissa felt revived by the knowledge that Septimus had thrown his life away. She returned to the party, to find Peter and Sally.

Peter was still sitting with Sally but he wondered where Clarissa had gone. Sally figured that the people at the party were all important politicians, like Richard. Richard, however, had never made the Cabinet. Sally had changed, Peter thought. Peter had not, Sally thought. Sally remembered the scene at Bourton the first day Richard had come. It had triggered the three of them parting. They spoke a little of Sally's home near Manchester and Sally invited Peter to visit. Clarissa had never visited. They noticed Elizabeth standing across the room; she seemed so unlike Clarissa. Sally mentioned that she loved Clarissa, but Clarissa lacked something. Sally wondered how Clarissa could have married Richard. As Hugh passed, Peter asked Sally whether Hugh had really kissed her at Bourton. Sally still stuck to the story. After Hugh passed, Sally asked about many people in the room, but Peter only knew about a few. He kept looking for Clarissa. Sally felt that they had grown to the age that one must say what they feel. Peter said he did not know what he felt. He admitted that his relationship with Clarissa had spoilt his life. One could only be in love once, he reasoned. When Sally said Clarissa must have loved him more than she loved Richard, Peter felt she had gone too far. Looking at Elizabeth again, Peter felt that one knew people better as one grew older whereas Sally felt that one never knew anything.

Richard stood talking to the Bradshaws before they left. Elizabeth caught his eye and wandered over to him. Richard was amazed how grown up she looked. Sally could tell that Elizabeth

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and Richard shared a special bond. Almost everyone had left the party now. Sally rose to speak with Richard. Peter waited a minute, soon overcome by great elation. He realized that he was happy because Clarissa had finally come.

Part II Section Six Analysis

Clarissa's role of the hostess is fulfilled with the occurrence of the actual party in the last section of the novel. The final preparations take place as the servants hurry around with last minute additions and gossip. People begin arriving and Clarissa is put into play. For the rest of the novel, she rarely has time to stand with any one guest and speak with him before she must run off to greet another. She is a servant to societal conventions and her offering to society forces her to sacrifice herself to its performance. One can see this best when Clarissa's great old friend, Sally Seton (now Lady Rosseter), is surprisingly introduced. Even though Sally has lost some of her old luster, Clarissa is overjoyed to see her. Yet, a moment later, she is called upon to attend to another guest. She is pulled away before she knows whom the guest is, and after hearing that it is the Prime Minister, she must show him around the party personally.

As the Prime Minister walks around the party, Woolf describes the guests trying not to laugh or notice how common the man looked. She writes, "He tried to look somebody. It was amusing to watch. Nobody looked at him." How one is perceived is examined in this section, as the partygoers clearly notice that the man is trying to look important and yet, they are still impressed. Their perception of the name, the symbol, the status of the Prime Minister overcomes any physical evidence in the contrary. The prestigious car that slowly made its way through London, peaking everyone's curiosity and wonderment, foreshadowed this moment of the Prime Minister's actual appearance. In a similar fashion, the onlookers of the event feel important simply to have been present. Woolf's description of the reaction to the Prime Minister parallels the earlier viewing. She describes the crowd, "...they all knew, felt to the marrow of their bones, this majesty passing; this symbol of what they all stood for, English society." The figure of the Prime Minister symbolizes the hierarchy of English society and the deeply encoded sense of civility and status that still ruled the society even after the devastation of World War I. The society continues to look down upon young men such as Septimus who have suffered in the War while also continuing to glorify men such as Hugh Whitbread who do little else but write pithy articles and attend meetings.

This thread of society, symbolized by the figure of the Prime Minister, carries the reader through the novel, from the car that stirs all of London's citizens to Richard's post in Parliament to Hugh Whitbread's gatherings at Buckingham Palace to Lady Bruton's luncheon to the party where the Prime Minister appears in the flesh. The Prime Minister is a metonym for English society itself. Even Peter Walsh recognizes that England has not changed much in this sense during his absence. He comments, "Lord, lord, the snobbery of the English!" Peter had foreshadowed the role that Clarissa would play in the furtherance of English snobbery in his retort to her that she would someday be the Prime Minister's wife. Standing atop the stairs, greeting the guests of her party, leading around the Prime Minister, she nearly fulfills this prophecy. And, as one critic states, Richard's career is not over, and so she may someday be married to the Prime Minister.

The break in the mood of the party occurs with the arrival of the Bradshaws. After hearing of Septimus' death, Clarissa is no longer worried about making sure everyone is happy or leading around the prestigious members of the crowd. She retires to a small room in order to deal with the feeling of death that has invaded her party and her being. She, of course, does not know the stranger who committed suicide, but the doppelgangers of Woolf's imagination become connected in this moment. They become physically connected as Clarissa reflects the

feelings of pain and death experienced by Septimus through her body. She identifies with the fall he experienced and the rusty spikes piercing his body.

She, then, realizes that his death is a sacrifice for her, and for the others at her party and everywhere, to allow them to continue living. Septimus' role as a Christ figure becomes apparent. Woolf originally planned for Clarissa to commit suicide, or simply die, at the end of the novel. Instead, she decided that a part of Clarissa, constructed in the form of a man destroyed by war and society, would take his own life in order for the rest of Clarissa's being to appreciate the life she had. Clarissa believes, "A thing there was that mattered...This he had preserved. Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate." The 'this' to which Woolf refers is purposely ambiguous. Life could obviously be inserted in its place, but the essence of life, "the thing that mattered," is impossible to define. Yet, the essence is possible to preserve and Septimus' decision to throw it all away has done so. The words of Shakespeare come to Clarissa, linking her undeniably to the young Septimus. The words tell her, "Fear no more the heat of the sun." Septimus, who had gone to war so that he could protect Shakespeare, stands in the heat of the sun immediately before jumping to his death.

Self Assessment

State the following sentences are True or False:

9. The name of Peter's fiancée is Daisy.
10. Clarissa recently recovered from Typhoid.
11. A Calico cat sees Clarissa twice in the window across from her own.
12. The Septimus committed suicide because Lady Bradshaw told Clarissa at the Dalloway's party.

Woolf is borrowing from Shakespeare's play *Cymbeline*, as she had earlier in the novel when Clarissa notices the same words in an open book as she walks through Bond Street. The repetition of the statement emphasizes its significance to the thematic progression of the novel. Critic, Avrom Fleishman, notes that, though the quotation has generally been understood as an illustration of Clarissa's strength in the face of death and disillusionment, "Clarissa's affinity for the refrain may be taken as a mark of her strong propensity for death ..." Clarissa notes, before returning to her party, "She felt somehow very like him - the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away." His sacrifice, his affirmation of life's inconstancy and immediacy, allows Clarissa to face her own fears and desires. His death permits her to "feel the beauty" and "feel the fun." As critic Isabel Gamble concludes, "In comprehending Septimus' death—he has plunged holding his treasure' - Clarissa herself discovers her own identity and becomes whole."

The short time Clarissa spends in the little room is saturated with significant images and allusions. This time is the climax of the novel. The old lady appears in the neighboring house at this moment as well. Because of Septimus' death and the old lady, Clarissa steps out of the social circle of her party and connects to the larger sense of life and death occurring around her. The text states, "It was fascinating, with people still laughing and shouting in the drawing-room, to watch that old woman, quite quietly, going to bed." Just as the woman connected Clarissa to the movements of life after Miss Kilman and Elizabeth depart for the stores, she once again creates in Clarissa wonderment for life and being.

Clarissa returns to the party charged with a sense of life and with a need to "assemble" with the people important to her. She has conquered the sense of isolation and returned to social connection. The novel ends with a scene that can be considered a microcosm of the novel.

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Peter is suddenly filled with a sense of ecstasy. He had been looking for Clarissa for a long time and suddenly she was there. Woolf writes in a simple structure, reminiscent of the short sentences that begin the novel and permeate its body, "It is Clarissa, he said. For there she was." The reader is filled with an "extraordinary excitement" as she becomes increasingly involved in the discovery of Clarissa's being throughout the novel. As critic Lucio P. Ruotolo analyzes, "During her parties it was not what she did or said that one remembered but rather the extraordinary sense of her being there, There she was." The conclusion of the novel is as much an end as a beginning.

13.3 Summary

- The writing reflects the sea and rippling wave imagery broadcast through the character's intuitions.
- Clarissa asked about his life. There was too much to tell her, but he mentioned that he was in love with a girl in India who was still married to a Major in the Indian Army.
- The bells of St. Margaret's echoed across London, and Peter associated St. Margaret's graceful entrance with Clarissa as the hostess.
- Septimus was one of the first volunteers for the army in World War I. He went to protect Shakespeare and Isabel.
- The archetype of the feminine maternal is represented by the woman seen by the solitary traveler and now, the vagrant woman singing in the subway.
- The theme of the sea as symbolic of life is invoked as Richard returns from the luncheon with flowers for Clarissa.

13.4 Keywords

<i>Airy</i>	: spacious and well ventilated.
<i>Ripple</i>	: a small wave or series of waves.
<i>Ecstasy</i>	: an emotional or religious frenzy or trance like state.
<i>Fawn</i>	: a young deer in its first year.

13.5 Review Questions

1. What does Clarissa hand to Lucy?
2. What are the boys in uniform carrying?
3. What does Lucrezia say has grown so thin?
4. Why had septimus left home as a mere boy?
5. What kind of flower in Elizabeth compare to?
6. What was the doom that septimus had sensed in Milan?

Answers: Self Assessment

1. (b) Flowers
2. (d) A pocketknife

- | | | Notes |
|------------------|--------------------|-------|
| 3. (c) Green | 4. (a) June | |
| 5. (c) Hat maker | 6. (a) Shell Shock | |
| 7. (b) India | 8. (a) Bourton | |
| 9. True | 10. False | |
| 11. False | 12. True | |

13.6 Further Readings



Books	Mrs. Dalloway (E Text)	— Virginia Woolf
	Virginia Woolf	— Hermione Lee
	Virginia Woolf: a biography	— Quentin Bell



Online links http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study_guide/literature/Mrs-Dalloway-Summary
<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/dalloway/section1.rhtml>

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Unit 14: Virginia Woolf – Mrs. Dalloway: Themes and Characterization

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Know about the characters and analysis of major characters
- Know about the major themes and style of Mrs. Dalloway.

Introduction

A theme of the novel is the conflict between conventionality and unconventionality. Clarissa chooses conventionality, rather than following her true feelings, and is left empty and unsure of herself. Peter Walsh chooses unconventionality, and is left feeling aimless and unsuccessful. Septimus Warren Smith commits suicide to escape being crushed by the forces of conventionality. The novel is in part a critique of the shallowness and superficial conventionality of upper-class English society.

Another theme of the novel is that the thoughts of individuals are connected in a way that transcends their separation or alienation. Woolf uses a stream-of-consciousness technique to connect the thoughts of her characters.



Notes The novel is a continuous narrative, not divided into chapters or sections, although Woolf noted some of the shifts in time or scene by a short blank space in her manuscript.

The thoughts of characters such as Mrs. Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith are connected by external events in the world, such as the sound of a motorcar, or the sight of an airplane in the sky, or the sound of the Big Ben clock as it strikes the hour. Woolf shows that the thoughts of individuals can be connected in a way that reveals a unity in human existence, an exciting world of possibility.

Although it is difficult to imagine, the novel is a relatively new literary form. Poetry and drama (plays), for example, have a much longer history. The novel, however, did not arise as a unique genre until the late eighteenth century. According to literary historians, it arose along with, or partly because of, the rise of the individual. It is said that Woolf's style, and that of other early-twentieth-century novelists, represents a culmination of this connection between the novel and the individual.

14.1 Major Themes

The sea as symbolic of life

"The ebb and flow of life". When the image is portrayed as being harmonized, the sea represents a great confidence and comfort. Yet, when the image is presented as disjointed or uncomfortable, it symbolizes disassociation, loneliness, and fear.

Doubling

Many critics describe Septimus as Clarissa's doppelganger, the alternate persona, the darker, more internal personality compared to Clarissa's very social and singular outlook. Woolf's use of the doppelganger, Septimus, portrays a side to Clarissa's personality that becomes absorbed by fear and broken down by society and a side of society that has failed to survive the War. The doubling portrays the polarity of the self and exposes the positive-negative relationship inherent in humanity. It also illustrates the opposite phases of the idea of life.

The intersection of time and timelessness

Woolf creates a new novelistic structure in *Mrs. Dalloway* wherein her prose has blurred the distinction between dream and reality, between the past and present. An authentic human being functions in this manner, simultaneously flowing from the conscious to the unconscious, from the fantastic to the real, and from memory to the moment.

Social commentary

Woolf also strived to illustrate the vain artificiality of Clarissa's life and her involvement in it. The detail given and thought provoked in one day of a woman's preparation for a party, a simple social event, exposes the flimsy lifestyle of England's upper classes at the time of the novel. Even though Clarissa is effected by Septimus' death and is bombarded by profound thoughts throughout the novel, she is also a woman for whom a party is her greatest offering to society. The thread of the Prime Minister throughout, the near fulfilling of Peter's prophecy concerning Clarissa's role, and the characters of the doctors, Hugh Whitbread, and Lady Bruton as compared to the tragically mishandled plight of Septimus, throw a critical light upon the social circle examined by Woolf.

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The world of the sane and the insane side by side

Woolf portrays the sane grasping for significant and substantial connections to life, living among those who have been cut off from such connections and who suffer because of the improper treatment they, henceforth, receive. The critic, Ruotolo, excellently develops the idea behind the theme: "Estranged from the sanity of others, rooted to the pavement," the veteran [Septimus] asks for what purpose' he is present. Virginia Woolf's novel honors and extends his question. He perceives a beauty in existence that his age has almost totally disregarded; his vision of new life... is a source of joy as well as madness. Unfortunately, the glimpse of beauty that makes Septimus less forlorn is anathema to an age that worships like Septimus' inhuman doctor, Sir William Bradshaw, the twin goddesses Proportion' and Conversion.'"

14.2 Character List

Clarissa Dalloway

The heroine of the novel, Clarissa is analyzed in terms of her life, personality, and thought process throughout the book by the author and other characters. She is viewed from many angles. Clarissa enjoys the moment-to-moment aspect of life and believes that a piece of her remains in every place she has visited. She lacks a certain warmth, but is a caring woman who is touched by the people around her and their connection to life in general. Clarissa feels that her parties are her gift to the world and is proud to share herself with others. She loves to be accepted but has the acuity of mind to perceive her own flaws, especially since her recent illness. Clarissa is a representative of an uppity English gentry class and yet, defies categorization because of her humanity and her relation to her literary double, Septimus Warren Smith. She is superficially based on Woolf's childhood friend, Kitty Maxse.

Richard Dalloway

Clarissa's husband, Richard is in love with his wife but feels uncomfortable showing his affection. A member of the government, he continually must attend councils, committees, and important meetings. He is called on by Lady Bruton for counsel, but is viewed by Sally Seton as not reaching his potential. She and Peter feel that he would have rather been in the country on a farm. Clarissa was attracted to him for his direct ideas, command of situations, and facility with animals.

Elizabeth Dalloway

Clarissa and Richard's daughter, she is described as strangely dark and exotic looking. She garners much attention from suitors but would rather spend her time in the country with her father and dog than at her mother's party. She is close to Miss Kilman but finds Miss Kilman odd and awkward at times. She sometimes imagines that she may be a veterinarian so that she can care for animals.

Peter Walsh

Clarissa's beau before Richard, Peter does not see Clarissa often after their break up. He had moved to India, married, separated, and then fallen in love again. The day of the novel, he returns to London and visits Clarissa. There is still an intensity between them and Peter reveals later to Sally Seton that Clarissa ruined his life by refusing to marry him. He rethinks

much of their time at Bourton and decides to attend Clarissa's party even though he hates her parties. He waits the entire party just to speak with her or be near her.

Lucy

Clarissa's principal servant, Lucy has the run of the house. She is proud of its ability to effuse beauty and honor.

Mrs. Walker

Another servant, Mrs. Walker is older and has been handling the dinners at the parties for many years.

Sally Seton/Lady Rosseter

As a young woman, she was Clarissa's best friend, staying with Clarissa at Bourton because she was considerably poorer than Clarissa. Sally enjoyed causing a raucous by making outrageous claims and acting on a rebellious instinct that led her to smoke cigars, run naked down the halls, and do other crazy stunts that were not condoned by Clarissa's relatives. She represents Clarissa's true but unfulfilled love. As an older woman, she has surprisingly married a wealthy man and had a family, though she retains many of her spirited qualities.

Hugh Whitbread

A proper English gentleman, Hugh feels that he makes an important contribution to English society by writing letters to the London Times, helping different committees, attending parties at the Palace, and giving to small charities. He has been friends with Clarissa since childhood. Peter and Richard find him stiff and boring.

Miss. Kilman

The woman whom Richard has hired to tutor Elizabeth in history, she is continually at odds with Clarissa. She has communist sympathies and feels bitter and repulsed by those of wealth and privilege such as Clarissa. Clarissa detests the attention she takes from her daughter as well as her self-sacrificing, condescending demeanor.

Miss. Pym

The woman who works at the florist on Bond Street, she notes that Clarissa was once very kind. She is polite and apologetic to an extreme.

Septimus Warren Smith

Often considered Clarissa's doppelganger, Septimus was a successful, intelligent, literary young man before World War I. During the war, he wins many honors and friends. After a good friend, Evans, is killed, he realizes that he can no longer feel. Marrying Rezia in an attempt to move on, Septimus never regains an emotional attachment to the world. The couple moves back to London and Septimus returns to his good job, but he slowly slips into further depths of despair and horror. He hears voices, namely of Evans, and becomes extremely sensitive to color and natural beauty. The doctors compound his problems by ignoring them, and they

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become the embodiment of evil and humanity, in his mind. When Dr. Holmes pushes into his home to see him, Septimus throws himself out the window to his death.

Lucrezia Warren Smith

Septimus' wife, Lucrezia lived in Italy before marrying and made hats with her sister. She is young and fun loving, but becomes seriously humiliated and sad when Septimus starts slipping into insanity. She wanted a normal marriage with children, not a man who talks to himself. When they first met, he had introduced her to Shakespeare and listened to her. Rezia tries to protect her husband from the doctors, but, in the end, she cannot.

Maisie Johnson

A young woman fresh from Scotland, she is frightened by the Smiths in Regent's Park and wonders if she should have come to London after all.

Carrie Dempster

An older, lower class woman in Regent's Park, who imagines the future life of Maisie Johnson based on Maisie's appearance while evaluating her own life.

Lady Bruton

The daughter of a general, she is an older woman much more concerned with the British Empire than relationships or society. She invited Richard, but not Clarissa, to lunch causing Clarissa to question her own purpose. She and Clarissa have little in common.

Dr. Holmes

The overbearing doctor who first treats Septimus, he insists that nothing is wrong with Septimus and commands that Rezia try to keep his mind on other things. Septimus views him with hatred, feeling that the doctor represents the evils of human kind trying to stifle him. It is Holmes rushing up the stairs past Rezia that persuades Septimus to kill himself.

Sir William Bradshaw

The esteemed psychologist who treats Septimus after Dr. Holmes, Bradshaw recommends rest in the country for Septimus so he can be reoriented to Bradshaw's strict ideal of proportion. He recognizes that Septimus is seriously suffering from post-war anguish. He is hated by Septimus because he represents humanity along with Holmes, by Rezia because he tries to separate the couple, and by Clarissa because he makes the lives of his patients intolerable.

Lady Bradshaw

The doctor's upstanding wife, the Lady tells Clarissa of Septimus' death, bringing unwanted death into Clarissa's party. The Lady is a very good amateur photographer, but, ironically, had a mental breakdown years ago.

Milly Brush

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Lady Bruton's secretary, Milly is also a confidant and good friend. She cannot tolerate the pomposity and extreme politesse exuded by Hugh Whitbread.

The Morrises

A family that is staying at Peter's hotel, they eat dinner at the same time as Peter and befriend him in the smoking room afterwards.

The Prime Minister

The man perceived as close to royalty by English society, the Prime Minister is kind enough to visit the party. The guests are surprised at how ordinary he appears. Many of the other characters reflect on him throughout the novel.

Ellie Henderson

Clarissa's poor, quiet, and less than sociable cousin, Ellie is only invited to the party because another of Clarissa's guests invites her. Clarissa thought her too dull to invite. She speaks only to Richard at the party. The rest of the time, she simply observes the guests and gathers gossip to tell her friend, Edith.

Professor Brierly, Jim Hutton, Lord Gayton, Miss Blow

All guests at Clarissa's party, Clarissa has a few moments to speak to each of them and to try to smooth over any conflicts or boredom.

Miss Helena Parry

Clarissa's old aunt, Miss Parry is part of the memories of Burton, where she chastised Sally and befriended Peter. At the party, she tolerates the crowds and speaks to Peter about Burma. Most are surprised that she is still alive.

The old woman

The neighbor whom Clarissa could view in the house adjacent, the old woman seems a mystery to Clarissa. Though she often appears to be connected to others in her life, Clarissa admires the elder neighbor's privacy. Clarissa watches the woman as Clarissa looks outside after hearing of Septimus' suicide. The old woman's turning off the lights to go to bed triggers Clarissa's realization that she must return to life and her party.

14.2.1 Analysis of Major Characters

Clarissa Dalloway

Clarissa Dalloway, the heroine of the novel, struggles constantly to balance her internal life with the external world. Her world consists of glittering surfaces, such as fine fashion, parties, and high society, but as she moves through that world she probes beneath those surfaces in search of deeper meaning. Yearning for privacy, Clarissa has a tendency toward introspection

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that gives her a profound capacity for emotion, which many other characters lack. However, she is always concerned with appearances and keeps herself tightly composed, seldom sharing her feelings with anyone. She uses a constant stream of convivial chatter and activity to keep her soul locked safely away, which can make her seem shallow even to those who know her well.

Constantly overlaying the past and the present, Clarissa strives to reconcile herself to life despite her potent memories. For most of the novel she considers aging and death with trepidation, even as she performs life-affirming actions, such as buying flowers. Though content, Clarissa never lets go of the doubt she feels about the decisions that have shaped her life, particularly her decision to marry Richard instead of Peter Walsh. She understands that life with Peter would have been difficult, but at the same time she is uneasily aware that she sacrificed passion for the security and tranquility of an upper-class life. At times she wishes for a chance to live life over again. She experiences a moment of clarity and peace when she watches her old neighbor through her window, and by the end of the day she has come to terms with the possibility of death. Like Septimus, Clarissa feels keenly the oppressive forces in life, and she accepts that the life she has is all she'll get. Her will to endure, however, prevails.

Septimus Warren Smith

Septimus, a veteran of World War I, suffers from shell shock and is lost within his own mind. He feels guilty even as he despises himself for being made numb by the war. His doctor has ordered Lucrezia, Septimus's wife, to make Septimus notice things outside himself, but Septimus has removed himself from the physical world. Instead, he lives in an internal world, wherein he sees and hears things that aren't really there and he talks to his dead friend Evans. He is sometimes overcome with the beauty in the world, but he also fears that the people in it have no capacity for honesty or kindness. Woolf intended for Clarissa to speak the sane truth and Septimus the insane truth, and indeed Septimus's detachment enables him to judge other people more harshly than Clarissa is capable of. The world outside of Septimus is threatening, and the way Septimus sees that world offers little hope.

On the surface, Septimus seems quite dissimilar to Clarissa, but he embodies many characteristics that Clarissa shares and thinks in much the same way she does. He could almost be her double in the novel. Septimus and Clarissa both have beak-noses, love Shakespeare, and fear oppression. More important, as Clarissa's double, Septimus offers a contrast between the conscious struggle of a working-class veteran and the blind opulence of the upper class. His troubles call into question the legitimacy of the English society he fought to preserve during the war. Because his thoughts often run parallel to Clarissa's and echo hers in many ways, the thin line between what is considered sanity and insanity gets thinner and thinner.



Did u know? Septimus chooses to escape his problems by killing himself, a dramatic and tragic gesture that ultimately helps Clarissa to accept her own choices, as well as the society in which she lives.

Peter Walsh

Peter Walsh's most consistent character trait is ambivalence: he is middle-aged and fears he has wasted his life, but sometimes he also feels he is not yet old. He cannot commit to an identity, or even to a romantic partner. He cannot decide what he feels and tries often to talk himself into feeling or not feeling certain things. For example, he spends the day telling

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himself that he no longer loves Clarissa, but his grief at losing her rises painfully to the surface when he is in her presence, and his obsession with her suggests that he is still attracted to her and may even long for renewed romance. Even when he gathers his anger toward Clarissa and tells her about his new love, he cannot sustain the anger and ends up weeping. Peter acts as a foil to Richard, who is stable, generous, and rather simple. Unlike calm Richard, Peter is like a storm, thundering and crashing, unpredictable even to himself.

Peter's unhealed hurt and persistent insecurity make him severely critical of other characters, especially the Dalloways. He detests Clarissa's bourgeois lifestyle, though he blames Richard for making her into the kind of woman she is. Clarissa intuitively even his most veiled criticisms, such as when he remarks on her green dress, and his judgments strongly affect her own assessments of her life and choices. Despite his sharp critiques of others, Peter cannot clearly see his own shortcomings. His self-obsession and neediness would have suffocated Clarissa, which is partly why she refused his marriage proposal as a young woman. Peter acquiesces to the very English society he criticizes, enjoying the false sense of order it offers, which he lacks in his life. Despite Peter's ambivalence and tendency toward analysis, he still feels life deeply. While Clarissa comes to terms with her own mortality, Peter becomes frantic at the thought of death. He follows a young woman through the London streets to smother his thoughts of death with a fantasy of life and adventure. His critical nature may distance him from others, but he values his life nonetheless.



Task In what famous London Square does Peter see the attractive young women?

Sally Seton

Sally Seton exists only as a figure in Clarissa's memory for most of the novel, and when she appears at Clarissa's party, she is older but still familiar. Though the women have not seen each other for years, Sally still puts Clarissa first when she counts her blessings, even before her husband or five sons. As a girl, Sally was without inhibitions, and as an adult at the party, she is still effusive and lacks Clarissa's restraint. Long ago, Sally and Clarissa plotted to reform the world together. Now, however, both are married, a fate they once considered a "catastrophe." Sally has changed and calmed down a great deal since the Bourton days, but she is still enough of a loose cannon to make Peter nervous and to kindle Clarissa's old warm feelings. Both Sally and Clarissa have yielded to the forces of English society to some degree, but Sally keeps more distance than Clarissa does. She often takes refuge in her garden, as she despairs over communicating with humans. However, she has not lost all hope of meaningful communication, and she still thinks saying what one feels is the most important contribution one can make to society.

Clarissa considers the moment when Sally kissed her on the lips and offered her a flower at Bourton the "most exquisite moment of her whole life." Society would never have allowed that love to flourish, since women of Clarissa's class were expected to marry and become society wives. Sally has always been more of a free spirit than Clarissa, and when she arrives at Clarissa's party, she feels rather distant from and confused by the life Clarissa has chosen. The women's kiss marked a true moment of passion that could have pushed both women outside of the English society they know, and it stands out in contrast to the confrontation Peter remembers between Sally and Hugh regarding women's rights. One morning at Bourton, Sally angrily told Hugh he represented the worst of the English middle class and that he was to blame for the plight of the young girls in Piccadilly. Later, Hugh supposedly kissed her in

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the smoking room. Hugh's is the forced kiss of traditional English society, while the kiss with Clarissa is a revelation. Ultimately, the society that spurs Hugh's kiss prevails for both women.

Self Assessment

Fill in the blanks:

1. The novel is in part a of the shallowness.
2. Clarissa is a of the novel.
3. The esteemed psychologist who treats after Dr. Holmes.
4. Plot in Mrs. Dalloway is essentially
5. time does not progress steadily forward.

Richard Dalloway

Richard's simplicity and steadfastness have enabled him to build a stable life for Clarissa, but these same qualities represent the compromise that marrying him required. Richard is a simple, hardworking, sensible husband who loves Clarissa and their daughter, Elizabeth. However, he will never share Clarissa's desire to truly and fully communicate, and he cannot appreciate the beauty of life in the same way she can. At one point, Richard tries to overcome his habitual stiffness and shyness by planning to tell Clarissa that he loves her, but he is ultimately too repressed to say the words, in part because it has been so long since he last said them. Just as he does not understand Clarissa's desires, he does not recognize Elizabeth's potential as a woman. If he had had a son, he would have encouraged him to work, but he does not offer the same encouragement to Elizabeth, even as she contemplates job options. His reticence on the matter increases the likelihood that she will eventually be in the same predicament as Clarissa, unable to support herself through a career and thus unable to gain the freedom to follow her passions.

Richard considers tradition of prime importance, rather than passion or open communication. He champions the traditions England went to war to preserve, in contrast to Septimus, and does not recognize their destructive power. Despite his occasional misgivings, Richard has close associations with members of English high society. He is critical of Hugh, but they revere many of the same symbols, including the figure of the grand old lady with money, who is helpless when it comes to surviving in a patriarchal society. Richard likes the fact that women need him, but sometimes he wrongly assumes they do. For example, he does not recognize that a female vagrant may not want his help but may instead enjoy living outside the rules of his society. For Richard, this sort of freedom is unimaginable.

14.3 Virginia Woolf—Mrs. Dalloway: Style

In Mrs. Dalloway, all of the action, except flashbacks, takes place on a day in June. It is an example of free indirect discourse storytelling (not stream of consciousness because this story moves between the consciousnesses of every character in a form of discourse): every scene closely tracks the momentary thoughts of a particular character. Woolf blurs the distinction between direct and indirect speech throughout the novel, alternating her narration with omniscient description, indirect interior monologue, direct interior narration follows at least twenty characters in this way but the bulk of the novel is spent with Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith.

Notes

Because of structural and stylistic similarities, Mrs. Dalloway is commonly thought to be a response to James Joyce's *Ulysses*, a text that is often considered one of the greatest novels of the twentieth century (though Woolf herself, writing in 1928, apparently denied this). In her essay 'Modern Fiction', Woolf praised James Joyce's *Ulysses*, saying of the scene in the cemetery, "on a first reading at any rate, it is difficult not to acclaim a masterpiece". The Hogarth Press, run by her and her husband Leonard, had to turn down the chance to publish the novel in 1919, because of the obscenity law in England, as well as the practical issues regarding publishing such a substantial text.

Woolf laid out some of her literary goals with the characters of Mrs. Dalloway while still working on the novel. A year before its publication, she gave a talk at Cambridge University called "Character in Fiction," revised and retitled later that year as "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown."

14.3.1 Virginia Woolf's Narrative Style in Mrs. Dalloway

Virginia Woolf possesses the ability to create a work of fiction that evokes a pleasant reading experience for the reader without utilizing a central plot. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf chooses to explore the narrative possibilities of bringing several characters through one single day in time. This narrative technique works well in a text that mainly focuses on Mrs. Dalloway's worldview, her inner workings, and her exploration and sensory experience of the world surrounding her.

Mrs. Dalloway does not tell an exciting story; very little happens to the characters. We, as the reader does not suffer an urgent desire to know what happens next. In a sense, Mrs. Dalloway is a novel without a plot. In the conventional novel, a sequence of events leads up to a climax and then a denouement provided a framework within which the whole resolution is contained. Every event in the novel is a logical outcome of the preceeding element. This logically connected pattern is absent in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. For example, the novel does tell us about long-standing problems (should Clarissa have married Peter Walsh? Does Peter Walsh have a flawed character?). But at the end of the novel, these problems are just as unresolved as they were at the beginning. It could be said that the other main story in the novel, that of Septimus Warren Smith's struggle with his madness and with his doctors, does have a culmination; it ends in Septimus's death and defeat. But even this apparently definitive ending, the ending of his life does not have the quality of traditional novel endings with a clear moral attached that we are expected to learn. Many questions remain unanswered at the end of the book and many areas of ambiguity remain unresolved.

Divided into parts, rather than chapters, the novel's structure highlights the finely interwoven texture of the character's thoughts. The interest in Mrs. Dalloway, then, is not so much on the action rather more emphasis is laid on various characters' movements of consciousness (or streams of consciousness). As they move about London, meeting each other and performing their tasks, they are all living very complex subjective lives with streams of memories, fantasies, fears, excitements, fluctuating moods and changeable feelings.



Notes In other words, plot in *Mrs. Dalloway* is essentially internal. Woolf wanted to express a point of view, not a plot. There is not a single story in the novel rather stories of individuals.

Another technique that Virginia Woolf employs to develop the story of the novel is her treatment of time. Apparently the time of action is only a single day in the lives of Clarissa Dalloway

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and Septimus Warren Smith. But in the course of a single day they live their whole lives and the reader gets to know everything about them. In this novel, the past lives of the characters are not narrated in chronological order; rather they emerge gradually, in fragments, as memories. At the very beginning of the book we immediately learn something about Mrs. Dalloway's past life. As soon as she sets off shopping she has flashes of memory of the early morning air at Bourton when she was young and she half remembers something that Pater Walsh had said. So in this novel, the line between past and present is blurred. The transition from present to past and back into present requires but just a single moment. Past, present and future are intermingled in this novel.

In spite of subjective time scheme, clock time has also been emphasized throughout the novel. Mental time does not progress steadily forward, like the clock time we follow. This point is illustrated by Clarissa's arrival at the flower shop in the morning; her senses are effortlessly taken to evening time as she thinks and her thoughts flow easily from her seeing the flowers in the present to being drawn back to memories and sensations from her past. At that moment the bell of Big Ben makes her feel that she is running out of time and reminds her of her middle age and that she has done nothing, which civilization would consider impressive.

Another major narrative technique used great deal in Mrs. Dalloway is a particular method of representing what the characters are saying and thinking, which is called "free indirect speech". In this method the narrator tells us about what a character has said or thought without necessarily reproducing the exact words used. The irony also functions on the narrative level, determining characters in their various relations to one another and to life as a whole. To achieve the continuity of a novel, Virginia Woolf required narrative links between their divided worlds. The external time scheme, underlined by the stroke of Big Ben, places both the inner and outer worlds of various characters in an identical framework. It matches Septimus' sense of an inner truth (the kind of truth for which Marlow searches in Conrad's *Heart of the Darkness*) with the entire social world of the Dalloway's drawing room. Peter Walsh driving to Clarissa's party meets the ambulance carrying Septimus's body. Finally, particular characters, the psychiatrist Sir William Bradshaw most prominently among them communicate between the two worlds. The interesting result is that out of a series of incomplete pieces a complete whole is constructed.

14.4 Summary

- A theme of the novel is the conflict between conventionality and unconventionality.
- Clarissa's principal servant, Lucy has the run of the house. She is proud of its ability to effuse beauty and honor.
- Clarissa Dalloway, the heroine of the novel, struggles constantly to balance her internal life with the external world.
- Septimus, a veteran of World War I, suffers from shell shock and is lost within his own mind.
- Woolf laid out some of her literary goals with the characters of Mrs Dalloway while still working on the novel.
- Virginia Woolf possesses the ability to create a work of fiction that evokes a pleasant reading experience for the reader without utilizing a central plot.

14.5 Keywords

Notes

- Denouement* : the final part of a play.
Legitimacy : the state of being legitimate.
Tranquility : free from disturbance.

14.6 Review Questions

1. Describe the themes and style of Mrs. Dalloway.
2. Examine the characterization of the text.

Answers: Self Assessment

1. Critique
2. Heroine
3. Septimus
4. Internal
5. Mental

14.7 Further Readings



- | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------|---|----------------|
| Books | Mrs. Dalloway (E Text) | — | Virginia Woolf |
| | Virginia Woolf | — | Hermione Lee |
| | Virginia Woolf: a biography | — | Quentin Bell |



- Online links http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study_guide/literature/Mrs-Dalloway-Character
<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/dalloway/themes.html>

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Unit 15: Joseph Conrad—Heart of Darkness

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Know the Biography of Joseph Conrad
- Know the introduction to the work “Heart of Darkness”
- Explain the detailed study of the text
- Discuss the themes of “Heart of Darkness”.

Introduction

Heart of Darkness is a novella written by Joseph Conrad. Before its 1902 publication, it appeared as a three-part series (1899) in Blackwood’s Magazine. It is widely regarded as a significant work of English literature and part of the Western canon.

The story centres on Charles Marlow, who narrates most of the book. He is an Englishman who takes a foreign assignment from a Belgian trading company as a river-boat captain in Africa. Heart of Darkness exposes the dark side of Belgian colonization while exploring the three levels of darkness that the protagonist, Marlow, encounters: the darkness of the Congo wilderness, the darkness of the Belgians’ cruel treatment of the natives, and the unfathomable darkness within every human being for committing heinous acts of evil. Although Conrad does not give the name of the river, at the time of writing the Congo Free State, the location of the large and important Congo River, was a private colony of Belgium’s King Leopold II. In the story, Marlow is employed to transport ivory downriver. However, his more pressing assignment is to return Kurtz, another ivory trader, to civilization, in a cover-up. Kurtz has a reputation throughout the region.

This symbolic story is a story within a story or frame narrative. It follows Marlow as he recounts from dusk through to late night, to a group of men aboard a ship anchored in the Thames Estuary, his Congolese adventure. The passage of time and the darkening sky during the fictitious narrative-within-the-narrative parallel the atmosphere of the story.

15.1 Joseph Conrad—Heart of Darkness: Introduction to the Author and to the Text

31.1.1 Introduction to the Author

Joseph Conrad grew up in the Polish Ukraine, a large, fertile plain between Poland and Russia. It was a divided nation, with four languages, four religions, and a number of different social classes. A fraction of the Polish-speaking inhabitants, including Conrad's family, belonged to the *szlachta*, a hereditary class in the aristocracy on the social hierarchy, combining qualities of gentry and nobility. They had political power, despite their impoverished state. Conrad's father, Apollo Korzeniowski, studied for six years at St. Petersburg University, which he left before earning a degree. Conrad's mother, Eva Bobrowska, was thirteen years younger than Apollo and the only surviving daughter in a family of six sons. After she met him in 1847, Eva was drawn to Apollo's poetic temperament and passionate patriotism, while he admired her lively imagination. Although Eva's family disapproved of the courtship, the two were married in 1856.

Instead of devoting himself to the management of his wife's agricultural estates, Apollo pursued literary and political activities, which brought in little money. He wrote a variety of plays and social satires. Although his works were little known, they would have tremendous influence on his son.

A year into the marriage, Eva became pregnant with Joseph, who was born in 1857. The Crimean War had just ended, and hopes were high for Polish independence. Joseph's family moved quite a bit, and he never formed close friendships in Poland.

After Apollo was arrested on suspicion of involvement in revolutionary activities, the family was thrown into exile. Eva developed tuberculosis, and she gradually declined until she died in 1865. The seven-year-old Conrad, who witnessed her decline, was absolutely devastated. He also developed health problems, migraines and lung inflammation, which persisted throughout his life. Apollo too fell into decline, and he died of tuberculosis in 1869. At age eleven, Joseph became an orphan.

The young boy became the ward of his uncle, who loved him dearly. Thus began Joseph's Krakow years, which ended when he left Poland as a teenager in 1874. This move was a complex decision, resulting from what he saw as the intolerably oppressive atmosphere of the Russian garrison.

He spent the next few years in France, mastering his second language and the fundamentals of seamanship. The author made acquaintances in many circles, but his "bohemian" friends were the ones who introduced him to drama, opera, and theater. In the meantime, he was strengthening his maritime contacts, and he soon became an observer on pilot boats. The workers he met on the ship, together with all the experiences they recounted to him, laid the groundwork for much of the vivid detail in his novels.

By 1878, Joseph had made his way to England with the intention of becoming an officer on a British ship. He ended up spending twenty years at sea. Conrad interspersed long voyages with time spent resting on land.

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When he was not at sea, writing letters or writing in journals, Joseph was exploring other means of making money. Unlike his father, who abhorred money, Conrad was obsessed by it; he was always on the lookout for business opportunities.

Once the author had worked his way up to shipmaster, he made a series of eastern voyages over three years. Conrad remained in the English port of Mauritius for two months, during which time he unsuccessfully courted two women. Frustrated, he left and journeyed to England.

In England in the summer of 1889, Conrad began the crucial transition from sailor to writer by starting his first novel, *Almayer's Folly*. Interestingly, he chose to write in English, his third language.

A journey to the Congo in 1890 was Joseph's inspiration to write *Heart of Darkness*. His condemnation of colonialism is well documented in the journal he kept during his visit. He returned to England and soon faced the death of his beloved guardian and uncle. In the meantime, Conrad became closer to Marguerite, an older family friend who was his closest confidant. For six years he tried to establish intimacy with her, but he was eventually discouraged by the age difference and the disparity between their social positions.

Then, 1894 was a landmark year for Conrad: his first novel was published; he met Edward Garnett, who would become a lifelong friend; and he met Jessie George, his future wife. The two-year courtship between the 37-year-old Conrad and the 21-year-old Jessie was somewhat discontinuous in that Conrad pursued other women during the first year of their relationship, but his attention became strongly focused on Jessie by the autumn of 1895. Garnett disapproved of the match, especially since Jessie was miles behind Joseph in education. Nonetheless, they married in March 1896.

The children who followed the union were not warmly welcomed by their father; an absent-minded sort, he expressed surprise each time Jessie delivered a baby. His days were consumed with writing, a struggle no doubt exacerbated by the gaps in his knowledge of the English language.

The major productive phase of Conrad's career spanned from 1897 to 1911, during which time he composed *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Youth*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim*, *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent*, and *Under Western Eyes*, among other works. During this period, he also experienced serious financial difficulties, often living off of advances and state grants, there being little in the way of royalties. It was not until the publication of *Chance* in 1914 that he experienced some level of commercial success.

As the quality of his work declined, he grew increasingly comfortable in his wealth and status. Conrad had a true genius for companionship, and his circle of friends included talented authors such as Stephen Crane and Henry James.

Still always writing, he eventually returned to Poland, and he then traveled to America, where he died of a heart attack in 1924 at the age of 67. Conrad's literary work would have a profound impact on the Modernist movement, influencing a long list of writers including T.S. Eliot, Graham Greene, Virginia Woolf, Thomas Mann, Andre Gide, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and William Faulkner.

31.1.2 Introduction to the Text

A novella, *Heart of Darkness* is Joseph Conrad's most famous work and a foundational text on the subject of colonialism. *Heart of Darkness* is based in part on a trip that Conrad took through modern-day Congo during his years as a sailor. He captained a ship that sailed down the Congo River. Conrad gave up this mission because an illness forced him to return to England, where he worked on his novella almost a decade later.

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The presence of ill characters in the novella illustrates the fact that *Heart of Darkness* is, at least in part, autobiographical. Many speculations have been made about the identity of various characters, such as the Manager, or Kurtz, most recently and perhaps most accurately in Adam Hochschild's *King Leopold's Ghost*. But the geographical, as well as biographical, vagueness of the novel—which is one of its most artistic, haunting characteristics—make it almost impossible to pin down these details for sure.

Heart of Darkness first appeared in a three-part series in *Blackwood Magazine* in 1899. It was published as a complete novella in 1904. It has since been referred to by many authors and poets. Its most famous lines are both from Kurtz: “exterminate the brutes,” and Kurtz’s deathbed utterance, “the horror! The horror!”



Did u know? Francis Ford Coppola directed the film version, *Apocalypse Now*, in which the action occurs in Vietnam in 1979.

15.2 Joseph Conrad—*Heart of Darkness*: Detailed Study of the Text

Part One

A ship called the *Nellie* is cruising down the Thames—it will rest there as it awaits a change in tide. The narrator is an unidentified guest aboard the ship. He describes at length the appearance of the Thames as an interminable waterway, and then he describes the inhabitants of the ship. The Director of Companies doubles as Captain and host. They all regard him with affection, trust, and respect. The Lawyer is advanced in years and possesses many virtues. The Accountant is toying with dominoes, trying to begin a game. They already share the “bond of the sea.” They are tolerant of one another.

Then there is Marlow. He has an emaciated appearance—sunken cheeks and a yellow complexion. The ship drops anchor, but nobody wants to begin the dominoes game. They sit meditatively at the sun, and the narrator takes great notice of how the water changes as the sun sets. Marlow suddenly speaks, noting that “this also has been one of the dark places of the earth.” He is a man who does not represent his class: he is a seaman but also a wanderer, which is disdainful and odd, since most seamen live sedentary lives aboard the ship that is their home. No one responds to the remark, and Marlow continues to talk of olden times when the Romans arrived and brought light, which even now is constantly flickering. He says those people were not colonists but conquerors, taking everything by brute force. This “taking of the earth is not a pretty thing” when examined too closely; it is the idea behind it which people find redeeming. Then, to the dismay of his bored listeners, he switches into narration of a life experience: how he decided to be a fresh water sailor after coming into contact with colonization.

As a child, Marlow had a passion for maps, and he would lose himself in the blank spaces, which gradually turned into dark ones as they became peopled. He was especially taken with the picture of a long, coiling river. In his tale, after a number of voyages in the Orient and India, Marlow hopes to get charge of the steamboats that must go up and down that river for trade. Marlow looks for a ship, but he has hard luck finding a position. His aunt has connections in the Administration and writes to have him appointed a steamboat skipper. The appointment comes through very quickly, and Marlow is to take the place of Fresleven, a captain who was killed in a scuffle with the natives. He crosses the Channel to sign the contract with his employers.

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Their office appears to him like a white sepulcher; the reception area is dimly lit. Two women sullenly man the area. Marlow notes an unfinished map, and he sees that he is going into the yellow section, the central area that holds the river. He signs but feels very uneasy as the women look at him meaningfully. Then there is a visit to the doctor. Marlow questions why he is not with the Company on its business. The doctor becomes cool and says he is no fool. Changes take place out there. He asks his patient whether there is madness in the family. With a clean bill of health and a long goodbye chat with his aunt, Marlow sets out on a French steamer, feeling like an "impostor."

Watching the coast as it slips by, the new skipper marvels at its enigmatic quality—it tempts and invites the seer to come ashore, but in a grim way. The weather is fierce, for the sun beats down strongly. The ship picks up others along the way, mainly soldiers and clerks. The trade names they pass on ships and on land seem almost farcical. There is a uniformly somber atmosphere. After a month, Marlow arrives at the mouth of the big river and takes his passage on a little steamer. Once aboard he learns that a man picked up the other day hanged himself recently.

He is taken to his Company's station. He walks through pieces of "decaying machinery" and observes a stream of black people walking slowly, very thin and indifferent. One of the "reclaimed" carries a rifle at "its middle." Marlow walks around to avoid this chain gang and finds a shade to rest. He sees more black people working, some who look like they are dying. One young man looks particularly hungry, and Marlow offers him the ship biscuit in his pocket. He notices that the boy is wearing white worsted around his neck, and he wonders what this is for. Marlow hastily makes his way towards the station. He meets a white man dressed elegantly and in perfect fashion. He is "amazing" and a "miracle." After learning that he is the Chief Accountant of the Company, Marlow respects him. The station is a muddle of activity.

The new skipper waits there for ten days, living in a hut. Frequently he visits the accountant, who tells him that he will meet Mr. Kurtz, a remarkable man in charge of the trading post in the ivory country. The Accountant is irritated that a bed station for a dying man has been set up in his office. He remarks that he begins to "hate the savages to death." He asks Marlow to tell Kurtz that everything is satisfactory.

The next day Marlow begins a 200 mile tramp into the interior. He crosses many paths, many deserted dwellings, and mysterious black men. His white companion becomes ill on the journey, which makes Marlow impatient but attentive. Finally they arrive at the Central Station, and Marlow must see the General Manager. The meeting is strange. The Manager has a stealthy smile. He is obeyed, but he does not inspire love or fear. He only inspires uneasiness. The trading had begun without Marlow, who was late. There were rumors that an important station was in jeopardy and that its chief, Kurtz, was ill. A shipwreck on Marlow's boat has set them back.

The manager is anxious and says it will be three months before they can make a full start in the trading. Marlow begins work in the station. Whispers of "ivory" punctuate the air throughout the days. One evening a shed almost burns down. A black man is beaten for this, and Marlow overhears: "Kurtz take advantage of this incident." The manager's main spy, a first-class agent, befriends the new skipper and begins to question him extensively about Europe and the people he knows there.



Notes Marlow is confused about what this man hopes to learn. The agent becomes "furiously annoyed."

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There is a dark sketch on his wall of a woman blindfolded and carrying a lighted torch. The agent says that Kurtz painted it. Upon Marlow's inquiry about who this man is, he says that he is a prodigy, an "emissary of pity and science." They want Europe to entrust the guidance of the cause to them. The agent talks precipitately, wanting Marlow to give Kurtz a favorable report about his disposition because he believes Marlow has more influence in Europe than he actually does.

The narrator breaks off for an instant and returns to his listeners on the ship, saying that they should be able to see more in retrospect than he could in the moment. Back in the story, he is bored by the droning of the agent. Marlow wants rivets to stop the hole and get on with the work on his ship. He clambers aboard. The ship is the one thing that truly excites him. He notes the foreman of the mechanics sitting onboard. They cavort and talk happily of rivets that should arrive in three weeks. Instead of rivets, however, they receive an "invasion" of "sulky" black men with their white expedition leader, who is the Manager's uncle. Marlow meditates for a bit on Kurtz, wondering if he will be promoted to General Manger and how he will set about his work when there.

Analysis

A logical way to begin analyzing the tale is by applying the title to the novel. "Darkness" is a problematic word with several meanings. It is initially mentioned in the context of maps, where places of darkness have been colored in once they have been explored and settled by colonists. The map is an important symbol. It is a guide, a record of exploration. The incomplete map has a dual purpose in that maps unlock mysteries, on the one hand, by laying out the geography of unknown lands for new visitors, and on the other hand, by creating new mystery and inspiring new curiosity about the lands listed as unknown, in addition to new questions about what is only partly known. The river is another important symbol, perhaps our first symbol of the "heart," which is itself a symbol of the human spirit. Always moving, not very predictable, the gateway to a wider world, it is an excellent metaphor for Marlow's trajectory. Marlow says that as a child he had a "passion" for maps, for the "glories of exploration." Although this description seems positive, it also sounds ominous. Marlow's tone is of one who recalls childhood notions with bitterness and regret.

The cause of this regret is evident in the first description of Marlow. His sallow skin and sunken cheeks do not portray him as healthy or happy. He has had the chance to explore, but apparently the experience has ruined him. This is Conrad's way of arranging the overall structure of the novella. The audience understands that this is to be a recollection, a tale that will account for Marlow's presently shaky, impenetrable state. The author is also presupposing knowledge of colonialism. The bitterness of Marlow's recollection suggests Conrad's strong bias against colonialism, which he seems to be imparting to the reader by expressing Marlow's difficulties.

The imagery of light and dark clearly corresponds to the tension already evident between civilization and savagery. The Thames River is called a "gateway to civilization" because it leads to and from the civilized city of London. It is important to note that the city is always described in stark contrast with its dark surroundings, which are so amorphous as to be either water or land.

The vivid language of maps becomes more interesting when we consider that the word "darkness" retains its traditional meaning of evil and dread. The fact that Marlow applies the concept of darkness to conquered territories may indicate Conrad's negative view of colonialism. We read clearly that colonists are only exploiting the weakness of others. Their spreading over the

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world is no nobler than violence and thievery. On the map, places that are blank and devoid of outside interference are apparently the most desirable for certain people.

Darkness has another meaning that retains deep resonance—a color of skin. Much of this chapter describes Marlow's first encounters with and observations of the natives of the African Congo. The darkness of their skin is always mentioned. At first glance, Marlow describes them as "mostly black and naked, moving about like ants." While in the shade, "dark things" seem to stir feebly. There is absolutely no differentiation between dark animals and dark people. Even the rags worn by the native people are described as tails. "Black shapes" crouch on the ground, and "creatures" walk on all fours to get a drink from the river. They are called shadows: reflections of humans, not substantial enough to be real. Marlow observes the piece of white string on a young man, and he is taken aback by how much the whiteness stands out against the darkness, thinking about the string's probable European origin. He cannot seem to conceive of mixing black and white. Conrad portrays Marlow's experience of otherness to such an extreme, and with such literary care, that it is hard to see Conrad simply expressing his own experience through Marlow, although Conrad likely was well aware of his own and others' impressions of such places and did have a choice in how to present them. Writing through Marlow's experience is a choice that leads us to look through Marlow's eyes at the darkness he sees.

It is not accidental that Marlow is the only person on the Thames boat who is named. He is a complex character while, even in England, the others are presented not so much as individuals as with titles that name their occupations. Marlow is distinct from them as well; he belongs to no category. He is a man "who does not represent his class" because he crosses boundaries. His reaction to the African natives may not be sensitive by modern standards, but he is more engaged than the other officers at the stations. The Chief Accountant dismisses the cries of a dying black man as merely irritating. Marlow's gesture of offering a biscuit to the young boy with the white string appears to be somewhat considerate. But it also seems condescending, which seems to be more of a character trait than a racist tendency. Marlow can think of nothing else to do as he looks into the boy's vacant eyes. Marlow means well, and despite his individual character he is partly a product of his society.



Task Why does the narrator note Marlow's resemblance to a Buddha, at the beginning as well as the end of Marlow's story?

Immediately following the encounter with the young boy, he meets the Chief Accountant, who is perfectly attired with collar, cuffs, jacket, and all the rest. He refers to him as "amazing" and a "miracle." We observe at this moment the distinctions between savagery and civilization as perceived by Marlow. The diction demonstrates a type of hero worship for this man. His starched collars and cuffs are achievements of character, and Marlow respects him on this basis. It is far too early for readers to think we understand what Marlow is all about.

Beyond Marlow's distinction of savagery and civilization, we have a window into Conrad's distinction when we consider his presentation of colonialism through Marlow and the colonists. The bitter irony here is that those who look the most civilized are actually the most savage. Indeed, the institution of colonialism is referred to as a "flabby, pretending, weak-eyed devil." Everything it touches turns sour: the station is an administrative nightmare, and decaying machinery lies everywhere. Marlow takes this situation, however, as indicative of a poor work ethic, which he despises. For this reason he is drawn to the blustering accountant, who is a hard worker if nothing else. Marlow, in his own bumbling way, does occasionally try to relate to the natives.

Notes

The sense of time throughout the chapter is highly controlled. Conrad purposely glides over certain events while he examines others in minute detail. He does this in order to build suspicion about the place to which Marlow has committed himself. Notice that he painstakingly describes precursor events such as the doctor's visit and all conversations that involve the unseen character Kurtz. Thus begins Marlow's consuming obsession with this man.

So far, Marlow's interest in Kurtz is more or less inactive and does not inspire fear. Perfectly placed leading questions such as the one about a history of family insanity have the desired effect, however, of alerting readers to a rather fishy situation. That Marlow ignores all of these warnings creates some dramatic irony; it will take him longer to arrive at conclusions that the reader has already reached.

It also is important to recognize that Marlow is telling a story. His recollections have a hazy, dreamy quality. The narrative is thus an examination of human spirit through his perspective, which is quite subjective. Thus, we should question how trustworthy the narrative speakers are. This situation puts even more distance between Conrad's perspective and the perspective taken by characters in the story. The outside narrator only refers to what Marlow says and does; all others are ignored, and we understand their perspective only through Marlow's account of what they say and do. Marlow selects the facts (even though Conrad ultimately selects them). Readers interested in this topic should consider in particular Marlow's perception of the African environment, which develops into the novella's larger themes.

So far as Kurtz is concerned, there has been incomplete communication. Marlow and the reader know him, but not much, yet. He seems sinister; people discuss him in a hushed manner, making sure to praise him. The fact that nobody has anything negative to say about him is suspicious, suggesting that they are all terribly anxious to stay on his good side. The portrait of the blind woman holding a torch, in the first agent's room, suggests the failing of Kurtz: perhaps he has blindly traveled into a situation and has become absorbed in it, much as the woman is absorbed into the darkness of the painting (despite the torch, she is painted in insufficient light). This preemptive warning is useful to keep in mind as we consider subsequent chapters.

Part Two

While lying on the deck of his steamboat one evening, Marlow overhears a conversation between the Manager and his uncle, leader of the Expedition group that has arrived. Snatches of talk indicate that the two are conferring about Kurtz. The Manager says he was "forced to send him there." They say his influence is frightful, and they add that he is alone, having sent away all his assistants. The word "ivory" is also overheard. The two men are wondering how all this ivory has arrived and why Kurtz did not return to the main station as he should have. Marlow believes that this circumstance allows him to see Kurtz for the first time. The Manager and his uncle say that either Kurtz or his assistant must be hanged as an example, so that they can get rid of unfair competition. Realizing that Marlow is nearby, they stop talking.

Over the next few days, the Expedition goes into the wilderness and loses all of their donkeys. As they arrive at the bank below Kurtz's station, Marlow is excited at the prospect of meeting him soon. To Marlow, traveling up the river is like going to the beginning of the world. He sees no joy in the sunshine, however. The past comes back to haunt him on this river.

There is a stillness that does not resemble peace. It is alive and watching Marlow. He is concerned about scraping the bottom of his steamship on the river floor, which is disgraceful for seamen. Twenty "cannibals" are his crew. The Manager and some pilgrims are also on board. Sailing by stations, they hear the word "ivory" resonating everywhere. The massive

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trees make Marlow feel very small. The earth appears “unearthly.” The men are monstrous and not inhuman. This scares Marlow greatly. He believes the mind of man is capable of anything.

They creep on towards Kurtz. The ship comes across a deserted dwelling. Marlow finds a well-kept book about seamanship. It has notes in a language he cannot understand. Back on the boat, he pushes ahead.

Eight miles from Kurtz’s station, the Manager decides they will stay put for the evening. No sounds are heard. As the sun rises, “complaining clamor” with “savage discord” fills the air. Everyone fears an attack. One of the black crew members says that the attackers should be handed over to them and eaten. Marlow wonders why he and the other white crew members have not been eaten, for the cannibals could easily overpower them. The Manager insincerely worries that something might have happened to Kurtz. Marlow does not believe there will be an attack because the jungle and fog seem impenetrable. No one believes him. Some men go to investigate the shore. A pattering sound is audible: flying arrows! The helmsman on the ship panics and does not steer properly. The crew fires rifles into the bushes.

A black man is shot and lies at Marlow’s feet. He tries to talk but dies before he can get any words out. Marlow supposes that Kurtz has perished in this attack. He is exceedingly upset, for talking to the mythical man has become his major point of interest. In a fit of distress, Marlow throws his shoes overboard. He tells the listeners on the Thames ship that the privilege of talking to Kurtz was waiting for him. Marlow relates that Kurtz mentioned a girl and noted that his shanty was busting with ivory. Kurtz now has taken the position of “devil of the land.” Originally he was well-educated, but he has become entirely native to Africa, participating in rituals and rites. Kurtz is anything but common.

Back in the battle, the helmsman is killed. Marlow throws the body overboard. After a simple funeral, the steamer continues moving. Miraculously they see Kurtz’s station, which they had assumed to be lost. They see the figure of a man whom Marlow identifies as a harlequin type. This man says that Kurtz is present, and he assures them that they need not fear the natives, who are simple people. He speaks with Marlow, introducing himself as a Russian. The book Marlow holds is actually his, and he is grateful to have it returned. The Russian says the ship was attacked because the natives do not want Kurtz to leave with the crew, for he has broadened everyone’s mind there.

Analysis

Even in this chaotic jungle, there exists a twisted sense of morality. As the Manager and his uncle discuss Kurtz, they are willing to do anything that will get him or his assistant the Russian hanged, so that the trading field might be leveled to their advantage. They can consider this plan because “anything can be done in this country.” They both still retain a sense of law, but the most base components of their personalities control their intentions. For them, the civilized law of the European continent has been discarded in favor of vigilante justice.

The revealing of these men’s predatory nature points to the theme of inchoate savagery. Conrad suggests that there are integral connections among mind, body, and nature, which underlies the issue here: the lines between the civilized and the savage are blurred. The two men propose a very savage solution to a seemingly civilized problem of economic competition.

The Congo has a metamorphic effect on the Europeans, at least in mind and perhaps also in body. Marlow sees the evil uncle “extend his short flipper of an arm for a gesture ... that seemed to beckon with a dishonouring flourish before the sunlit face of the land a treacherous appeal to the lurking death, to the hidden evil, to the profound darkness of its heart.” This is

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one of the few instances in which a white man is animalized in this novella. The land is a living entity, one which has the potential to create evil, or to merge man back into nature.

The proprieties observed by the Manager are all completely fake. Marlow takes this as an illustration of his hollowness. One of Marlow's more personally distressing thoughts is his realization that the "monstrous" tendencies of the black "cannibals" are not inhuman tendencies, after all; the white men possess them in a different form. The African land serves to equalize persons in that what often matters most are wit and determination (although firearms and safety in numbers are important, too).

While traveling, Marlow becomes somewhat delusional. River travel brings back the past—enlarging and distorting it until it becomes an uncontrollable paranoia that he is being watched. The telling of the tale takes on the tone of an epic quest that is larger than life. There is pregnant silence and a failing of the senses. Marlow appears to be traveling deeply into his own mind. His fanatic interest in the proper working of things is evident when he states that scraping a ship on the river bottom is "sinful." The religious language, which in another context might be humorous, demonstrates Marlow's mounting panic. This paranoia in turn diminishes his sense of reality, leaving him searching for a sense of truth and stability—making him even less reliable and even more distinct from Conrad's own perspective. Marlow's transformation in part helps to explain his obsession with Kurtz. Behind the myth of this mysterious figure there is a real, substantial person. Kurtz is the bogeyman of the area and, most logically, the one on whom it is easy for Marlow to fixate.

The inferiority of the natives is a constant theme. About the fireman on his ship, Marlow remarks "he was there below me ... to look at him was as edifying as seeing a dog in a parody of breeches." The lower physical position of the body corresponds to a mental and social state. The narrator participates in believing what he describes is the inherent inferiority of the blacks. In all possible aspects they appear subservient to the white men, and even seeing them wear pants amounts to no more than a warped joke. The one time that a native actually speaks is when the ship approaches the brush, right before the attack, and all he has to say is that any prisoners should be given to the crew as a meal. The narrator cannot understand why the white men were not eaten. He cannot credit the blacks with intelligence beyond instinct. During the battle, one native is shot, with Marlow and the Manager watching: "I declare it looked as though he would presently put to us some question in an understandable language, but he died without uttering a sound." For him there is no comprehension of the blacks he encounters. They are always evaluated and silenced, it seems, before they can speak. Nevertheless, Marlow does feel a real kinship to his "savage" crew, which places him above other whites in the narrative. Even here, though, he has shortcomings—his appreciation of the helmsman after he has died, for instance, seems more machine-like than humane.

The figure of Kurtz grows more enigmatic in this chapter, and we return to the theme of voices and communication. Communication fails when Marlow cannot decipher the book and when the note has an incomplete warning. Marlow's obsession with Kurtz has reached its height. Talking to him has become the entire reason for Marlow's passage through this jungle. The fact that authoritative, unpleasant figures, such as the Manager, dislike Kurtz makes the reader more receptive to him. Notice that Marlow and Kurtz are the only two characters in the entire story who are named. Everyone else is titled, detached, and therefore dehumanized. This is an effective means of drawing a relationship or some kind of comparison between the two characters before they even meet. As soon as Marlow believes that Kurtz is dead, his presence begins to dominate him more vividly—Marlow hears his voice, sees him in action. Kurtz is even stronger than death. The reason Kurtz affects Marlow so deeply is that he has turned his back on his roots and essentially become native. This demonstrates that there is much more to Marlow's personality than what appears. He is not the average European. The

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reader understands that we will a more accurate portrait of Marlow by examining his interactions with Kurtz.

Part Three

Marlow is astonished at the Russian's words. He is gathering a clearer picture of Kurtz. The Russian says that he has gone so far that he does not know if he will ever get back. Apparently he has been alone with Kurtz for many months. His sense of adventure is pure, and glamour urges him onward. The Russian remembers the first night he spoke to Kurtz: he forgot to sleep, he was so captivated. Kurtz made him "see things." He has nursed this great man through illnesses and has accompanied him on explorations to villages. Kurtz has raided the country by securing the cooperation of the nearby tribe, whose members all adore him. He loses himself in ivory hunts for weeks at a time. The Russian disagrees that Kurtz is mad. Even when this bright-eyed adventurer was dismissed by his mentor, he refused to go. Kurtz went down the river alone to make another ivory raid. His illness acted up, so the Russian joined him in order to take care of him.

Presently, Kurtz lies in a hut surrounded by heads on stakes. Marlow is not very shocked at the sight. He takes this as an indication that Kurtz lacks restraint in the gratification of his lusts, a condition for which the wilderness is culpable. Marlow assumes that Kurtz was hollow inside and needed something to fill that lack. The Russian is perturbed by Marlow's attitude of skepticism. He also has heard enough about the ceremonies surrounding this revered man.



Task Why does Marlow want to travel up the Congo River?

Suddenly a group of men appear around the house. They convene around the stretcher that holds the dying Kurtz. He tells the natives to leave. The pilgrims carry him to another cabin and give him his correspondence. In a raspy voice he says he is glad to meet Marlow. The Manager comes in to talk privately with Kurtz. Waiting on the boat with the Russian, Marlow sees the "apparition" of a gorgeous woman. She glitters with gold and paint, and she looks savage. She steps to the edge of the shore and eyes the steamer. She gestures violently toward the sky, turns, and disappears into the thicket. The harlequin man fears her.

The Manager emerges. Taking Marlow aside, he says they have done all they can for Kurtz. He adds that Kurtz did more harm than good for the Company. His actions were too "vigorous" for the moment. Marlow does not agree that Kurtz's method was unsound. To him, Kurtz is a remarkable man—even somehow a friend. Marlow warns the Russian to escape before he can be hanged; he states that he will keep Kurtz's reputation safe. It was Kurtz who ordered the attack on the steamer because he did not want to be taken away—Kurtz thus thought to fake his death.

Self Assessment

Multiple Choice Questions:

1. *Heart of Darkness* opens in what setting?

(a) A boat on the Congo River	(b) A boat on the Thames River
(c) The Company's offices in Brussels	(d) The Outer Station
2. Where does Kurtz die ?

(a) At the Inner Station	(b) In Brussels
(c) Aboard Marlow's steamer	(d) In the Jungle

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3. What does Marlow discover atop the fence posts at the Inner Station?

(a) Human heads	(b) Monkey skulls
(c) Dead infants	(d) The Company flag
4. The Company trades primarily in

(a) Gold	(b) Slaves
(c) Bananas	(d) Ivory
5. Which of the following receives Kurtz's "Report" after his death?

(a) Marlow's aunt	(b) Kurtz's "Intended"
(c) A representative of the Company	(d) A journalist
6. Most of Marlow's adventures take place in

(a) Kenya	(b) Rhodesia
(c) The Congo	(d) England

While Marlow dozes, drumbeats and incantations fill the air. He looks into the cabin that holds Kurtz and discovers that he is missing. Marlow sees his trail and goes after him. The two men face one another. Kurtz pleads that he has plans. Marlow replies that his fame in Europe is assured; he realizes that this man's soul has gone mad. He is able to bring Kurtz back to the cabin. The ship departs the next day amongst a crowd of natives. Kurtz is brought into the pilot-house of the ship. The "tide of brown" runs swiftly out of the "heart of darkness." That is, the life of Kurtz is ebbing. Marlow is in disfavor, lumped into the same category as Kurtz. The Manager is now content. Marlow listens endlessly to Kurtz's bedside talk. He accepts a packet of papers and a photograph that his friend gives him, in order to keep them out of the Manager's hands. A few evenings later, Kurtz dies, with one phrase on his lips: "The horror! The horror!"

Marlow returns to Europe but is plagued by the memory of his friend. He is disrespectful to everyone he encounters. The Manager demands the papers that Kurtz entrusted to Marlow. Marlow relinquishes the technical papers but not the private letters or the photograph. All that remains of Kurtz is his memory and the photo of his "Intended." Kurtz is very much a living figure to Marlow. He visits the woman in the picture, who embraces and welcomes him. She has silently mourned for the past year, and she needs to profess her love and how she knew Kurtz better than anyone. Marlow perceives that the room darkens when she says this. She speaks of Kurtz's amazing ability to draw people in through his incredibly eloquent speech. The woman says she will be unhappy for life. Marlow states that they can always remember him. She expresses a desperate need to keep his memory alive, as well as guilt that she was not with him when he died. When the woman asks Marlow what Kurtz's final words were, he lies and says that Kurtz spoke her name. The woman weeps in triumph.



Did u know? Marlow states that to tell the truth would have been too dark. Back on the Thames River ship, a tranquil waterway leads into the heart of darkness.

Analysis

The Russian says it best: "I went a little farther ... till I had gone so far that I don't know how I'll ever get back." The Russian and Marlow are similar, both looking for epiphany and enlightenment.

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Kurtz is a possible source of this enlightenment, and he thus is the most powerful figure in the story, even though he does not appear until the end.

The author is setting forth a challenge: rather than directly describing Kurtz, he provides various clues that we must piece together in order to understand who Kurtz is. The first conversation that the Russian has with his mentor, about “everything” in life including love, points to a man who is sensitive and introspective. Kurtz speaks in civil and savage tongues. His eloquence is his forte because it disguises his darkness from people like the Russian. The woman back in Europe who mourns for him speaks of a generous heart, a noble mind, and greatness. The impressions of these two people, however, strongly contrast with the opinion of people such as the Manager, who says that Kurtz was unethically gathering ivory by inciting locals to violence.

Marlow must stand in for the reader’s perspective. From what he sees and reports, the reader can infer that all such accounts are true. Yet Marlow does not see Kurtz as evil for his actions toward the natives because of his intentions. People such as the Manager truly care only about fulfilling an ivory quota and becoming wealthy. While Kurtz is certainly consumed with his search for ivory (his face and body are described in terms of this precious resource), Conrad does not provide any evidence that Kurtz is concerned with the material aspects of ivory: his house and existence are extremely simple, despite all of the ivory he has recovered. If money and fame were the only things important to him, he could have returned to England long ago. The Russian states that Kurtz “would lose himself among the people.” The staked heads around his home demonstrate a lack of restraint “in the gratification of various lusts.” They are necessary for a man with a great appetite. Apparently, the time in the African Congo has been a time of letting go for Kurtz, a time in which passions and appetites become unbridled, and in which the past no longer matters.

This is a type of traveler’s sickness. The image of Kurtz on his deathbed is of his opening his mouth wide, giving him a “voracious aspect” as if he wants to absorb and swallow everything. His need to plan and consume, however, has consumed his mind and spirit. It is a remarkable case of colonialism gone awry: “the wilderness had found him out early, and had taken on him a terrible vengeance for the fantastic invasion.” Curiosity that leads to exploration can also lead, tragically, to a loss of self. Herein lies a sociopolitical message, a caution against trying to control something that is not originally a part of you, lest it control you. Expressing oneself in a new environment can mean the loss of one’s earlier self.

Marlow does not condemn Kurtz because he pities him, sympathizing with his tortured existence. The moment when Marlow stands between Kurtz and the horned, demonic-looking man is critical. This figure symbolizes the death and darkness of Kurtz, and he only turns away from complete desolation because Marlow is there to help him back. Despite the circumstances, however, there is an undercurrent of history that makes Kurtz’s death seem karmic. The devotion shown to him by the natives illustrates an almost reciprocal relationship between them. While it is most likely that they help Kurtz without understanding the material benefits behind the ivory, it is clear that Kurtz enjoys being a part of them as much as they enjoy having him there. He is definitely the least biased character in the whole book, which speaks highly for him in the eyes of a modern reader. Unfortunately, he loses himself and detaches from everything earthly. Kurtz’s soul has broken forbidden boundaries because it only concentrated on itself.

Kurtz dies painfully both because his obsessive tasks were not complete and because his soul has been sold. The “horror” he pronounces on his deathbed is a judgment on how he has lived his life. We can definitely see Kurtz’s demise as a possible end for Marlow if he had not left the Congo. As it was, the wilderness was already creeping and merging into his psyche, and

there was a moment when he could not tell the difference between a drum beat and his own heartbeat. He appears to have escaped in time.

Marlow's lie at the end of the story is both cruel and compassionate. While the woman is comforted, she will have to continue believing in an illusion. She will never know what Kurtz became. Marlow states that the truth is "too dark" to tell. But truly, his terrible decline is in vain if no one learns of it. And is the woman so weak that she cannot really hear the truth? Telling Kurtz's tale is the point of Marlow's telling his story aboard the Thames ship. A river can lead to civilization—but it also leads to darkness.

Self Assessment

Multiple Choice Questions:

7. Which of the following is not something that Marlow gives to the Russian trader?
 - (a) Food
 - (b) Gun cartridges
 - (c) Tobacco
 - (d) Shoes
8. What do the men at the Central Station hear about the fate of the Eldorado Exploring Expedition?
 - (a) That they have been successful and are returning with lots of ivory
 - (b) That the expedition's pack animals are dead
 - (c) That the men have been ambushed and killed by natives
 - (d) That the expedition has found Kurtz
9. At the end of his "Report" on the natives, Kurtz writes :
 - (a) "Exterminate all the brutes!"
 - (b) "God help us!"
 - (c) "No more death!"
 - (d) "God save the King!"
10. What one thing does Marlow need to repair his wrecked steamer?
 - (a) Steel plates
 - (b) A new boiler
 - (c) Tools
 - (d) Rivets
11. Which of the following does not accompany Marlow on his journey up the river from the Central Station?
 - (a) The chief accountant
 - (b) The general manager
 - (c) The cannibals
 - (d) The pilgrims
12. The Company is
 - (a) English
 - (b) French
 - (c) Dutch
 - (d) Belgian

15.3 Joseph Conrad—Heart of Darkness: Themes

Groupthink and Stock Characters

This novella is unusual in that the author does not name most of the characters in his book, other than assigning them titles that describe their larger organizational goals. It is not quite an allegory, while he does allow them some individual characteristics of speech and dress, but they are for the most part stand-ins for larger groups. The obvious exception is Marlow, and

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his reaction against the colonial structures supported by people with names like “the Manager” and “the Lawyer” place him slightly outside this system. Groupthink is evident in named groups like the pilgrims and the natives. These groups have a few outstanding members, such as the native woman of arresting beauty or the red-haired pilgrim drunk with bloodthirstiness, but they mostly move together, make the same decisions, and have the same intentions. Conrad critiques such patterns, in which individual in a society think like other members of their group without stopping to think for themselves. Although Marlow is by no means a heroic character, Conrad does illustrate the need for individual thought by singling him out.

Primitivism

As the crew makes their way up the river, they are traveling into the “heart of darkness.” The contradiction, however, is that Marlow also feels as if he were traveling back in time. When Conrad wrote this story, scientists were learning that Africa is the seat of human civilization, and this knowledge is reflected in the fact that the trees are (almost prehistorically) enormous on the route down the river. The paradox of the novel, however, is that by traveling backwards in time, the crew do not move closer to the innocence and purity of the “noble savage” but farther away from it. Words like “pestilent” and “sordid” are used again and again to describe the natives and their land. Conrad seems to claim that the Christian belief that prehistory was untouched by obscurity or evil is a fallacy. Instead, there is “the horror.” In contrast, it seems, is the more advanced civilization of the colonizers and visitors.

Uncertainty

Nothing in this novella is described in very concrete terms. Shores are hazy. Land looks like a spine sticking out from a man’s back but is not described in topographical terms. Marlow is obsessed with Kurtz before he even meets him, without a clear idea why. A sense of danger pervades the entire trip, and it is mostly dictated by uncertainty. The natives do not seem inherently threatening. On one occasion, they let fly a series of arrows, but these even look ineffectual to Marlow. They are threatening because they might be poisoned. Similarly, Marlow has no clear idea of what the natives might do to him if Kurtz gave them free rein, and it is possible that this uncertainty increases his fear. Kurtz himself is an uncertain figure, ruled as he is by two separate impulses, the noble and the destructive. At the beginning of the novella, the reader perceives that the former is his dominant (or only) characteristic. But with vicious scrawlings on his manuscript and his ruthlessness in extracting ivory from the land, Kurtz proves himself the latter. Marlow’s adherence to Kurtz until the end confuses the matter; one could judge him one way or the other. The idea of “darkness” expresses the theme of uncertainty in the novella.

Imperial Authority

Whatever the conditions in Africa may be, all of the characters agree that they are different from those of Europe. There is a feeling of anything-goes vigilantism that shifts the balance of power from the stewards in a “civilized” state (police, doctors, bureaucrats) to whoever is most threatening. Kurtz is physically quite a weak man, but he maintains enormous sway over the native population through his understanding of their language and his cultural and communication skills. He exploits their appreciation of him as an Other. Marlow’s men use a much more simple means of gaining authority, namely, firearms. This is the tragedy of imperialism in that the arrival of the white man heralds a new order, but in the creation of that order, they retain the tools and the authority. Black men in this book first appear as members of a chain gang, and they gain little power after that scene.

Religion**Notes**

Although there is controversy over whether Conrad is critiquing colonialism or not, it is clear that he is critiquing religion. The two groups in the novel, the pilgrims and the natives, are linked by having religious beliefs, and the pilgrims seem at least as bloodthirsty as the natives. The rite in the woods that Marlow describes seems alien but certainly no more dangerous than the ambush. One of the seemingly admirable characteristics of Kurtz, as presented by Conrad, is that he seems just as compelled by African religion as by Christianity but seems beholden to neither. Marlow genuinely admires his ability to independently critique religions. He may not agree with Kurtz's evaluation, but he respects Kurtz's ability to have his own opinions in the face of the various religious traditions he encounters.

Jewelry

Jewelry is a major presence in *Heart of Darkness*. To begin with, it is the main reason for the presence of the colonists in Africa: they are there to strip the country of its ivory. There is a play on colors between the black people and this white valuable good. The most prestigious member of the African community and one of the only characters to be afforded individual characteristics by Conrad is the woman who is presumably Kurtz's mistress. Her first appearance is impressive; she is covered in bangles and other "barbarous ornaments." Her aspect has both attractiveness and ferocity, and she is the only character in the novella who wears jewelry. Despite it being the *raison d'être* of the novella, the other characters have little interest in jewelry, showing an almost Marxist detachment from the good they harvest.

Illness

Illness is a major factor in this novella. It appears in physical and mental forms. Marlow is hired to replace a man who committed suicide, and another instance of suicide is announced by a somber Swedish man. The first thing that Marlow does upon being hired is go to the doctor, who checks both his mental and physical health and provides a very gloomy prognosis. The specter of ill health, or of one's body not standing up to the conditions, is a constant specter in the novella. The mental health issue is particular to *Heart of Darkness*, while the issue of wider health continues in the tradition of Victorian novels, in which men often travel to Africa only to come down with exotic diseases. In the end, it seems that Marlow is more mentally than physically taxed, while Kurtz is clearly both.

15.4 Summary

- *Heart of Darkness* is a novella written by Joseph Conrad. Before its 1902 publication, it appeared as a three-part series (1899) in *Blackwood's Magazine*.
- Joseph Conrad grew up in the Polish Ukraine, a large, fertile plain between Poland and Russia. It was a divided nation, with four languages, four religions, and a number of different social classes.
- A ship called the *Nellie* is cruising down the Thames—it will rest there as it awaits a change in tide.
- A logical way to begin analyzing the tale is by applying the title to the novel. "Darkness" is a problematic word with several meanings.
- It also is important to recognize that Marlow is telling a story. His recollections have a hazy, dreamy quality.