TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE-II

M.A. ENGLISH

First Year, Semester: 2

Lesson Writers:

Dr. Ande Bala Sowri
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English
Department of English
Hindu College, Guntur.

E. Sudershan
M.A., M.Phil.
Lecturer of English
Department of English
Hindu College, Guntur.

Editor & Lesson Writer

Dr. Ch. Naveen Kumar
M.A., M.A., M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English
Department of English
Hindu College, Guntur.

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Director:

Dr. Battu Nagaraju
MBA, MHRM, LLM, M.Sc. (Psy.), MA (Soc.), M.Ed., M.Phil. , Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Centre for Distance Education
Achaarya Nagarjuna University
Nagarjuna Nagar 522 510
Ph : 0863-2293299, 2293356, 08645-211023
0865 – 211024, 0863- 2346259 (Study Material)
Website: www.anucde.ac.in or www.anucde.info
e-mail : info@anucde.ac.in

M.A. (English)

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FOREWORD

Since its establishment in 1976, Acharya Nagarjuna University has been forging ahead in the path of progress and dynamism, offering a variety of courses and research contributions. I am extremely happy that by gaining 'A' grade from the NAAC in the year 2016, Acharya Nagarjuna University is offering educational opportunities at the UG, PG levels apart from research degrees to students from over 443 affiliated colleges spread over the two districts of Guntur and Prakasam.

The University has also started the Centre for Distance Education in 2003-04 with the aim of taking higher education to the door step of all the sectors of the society. The centre will be a great help to those who cannot join in colleges, those who cannot afford the exorbitant fees as regular students, and even to housewives desirous of pursuing higher studies. Acharya Nagarjuna University has started offering B.A., and B.Com courses at the Degree level and M.A., M.Com., M.Sc., M.B.A., and L.L.M., courses at the PG level from the academic year 2003-2004 onwards.

To facilitate easier understanding by students studying through the distance mode, these self-instruction materials have been prepared by eminent and experienced teachers. The lessons have been drafted with great care and expertise in the stipulated time by these teachers. Constructive ideas and scholarly suggestions are welcome from students and teachers involved respectively. Such ideas will be incorporated for the greater efficacy of this distance mode of education. For clarification of doubts and feedback, weekly classes and contact classes will be arranged at the UG and PG levels respectively.

It is my aim that students getting higher education through the Centre for Distance Education should improve their qualification, have better employment opportunities and in turn be part of country's progress. It is my fond desire that in the years to come, the Centre for Distance Education will go from strength to strength in the form of new courses and by catering to larger number of people. My congratulations to all the Directors, Academic Coordinators, Editors and Lesson-writers of the Centre who have helped in these endeavours.

Prof. P. Raja Sekhar
Vice-Chancellor
Acharya Nagarjuna University

TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE-II

SYLLABUS

UNIT – I

Imagism, Modernism, Symbolism, Theatre of the Absurd, War Poetry, Post-War British Drama, Naturalistic drama, the Angry Young Man Movement in Drama, the Problem Play, Satire, Post-War fiction, Neo-romantic Poetry.

UNIT – II

Philip Larkin : "Whitsun Weddings", "Ambulance", "Please", "Church Going"

UNIT – III

Tom Stoppard : Rosencratz and Guildenstern are Dead
John Osborne : Look Back In Anger

UNIT – IV

Graham Greene : The Power and the Glory (1940)
Kingsley Amis : Lucky Jim (1954)

UNIT – V

William Golding : Lord of Flies (1954)
Evelyn Waugh : A Handful of Dust.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

1. Lewis, Bary, "Post Modernism and Literature" 2002
2. Marian Banny Davis, "The Blooms bury guide to English Literature" Prentis Hall, New York, 1990
3. Margaret Drabble, "The Oxford Companion to English Literature"

MODEL QUESTION PAPER

M.A DEGREE EXAMIANTIONS

Second Semester

English

TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE -II

Time : Three hours Maximum : 70 marks

Answer ALL questions.

All questions carry equal marks.

UNIT I

1. (a) (i) Modernism and First World War
(ii) Implications of Absurd Theatre
(iii) War Poetry
(iv) Changes in the 20th Century Drama
(viii) Angry Youngman Movement
(ix) Religio and Drama

Or

(b) Drama in 20th Century turns more pessimistic, satirical and realistic. Substantiate with reference to the prescribed plays.

UNIT II

2. (a) Identify the major themes of "Whitsun Weddings" and "Next, Please" and their reflection of social and racial relationships.

Or

(b) Comment on Philip Larkin's poetic technique and his use of irony as the main means of discourse.

UNIT III

3. (a) Establish "Rosencratz And Guildenstern Are Dead" as a tragic-comedy.

Or

(b) Portary the character of the protagonist, Jimmy Porter as the young angry man in the play, "Look Back in Anger".

UNIT IV

4. (a) Identify the Biblical allusion the title, “The Power and the Flory,” and find the reason for the Vatican condemning the book.

Or

(b) While portraying Jim Dixon’s character, find out whether the character grows out of the initial cynicism and sarcasm.

UNIT V

5. (a) “Ralph, Jack and Piggy are archetypes of human fallibility”. Substantiate with reference to the major thematic concerns of “Lord of the Flies”.

Or

(b) Identify the autobiographical elements of Evelyn Waugh in the novel, “A Handful of Dust”.

TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE-II

CONTENT

LESSON-1

DIFFERENT LITERARY TERMS

1.1 OBJECTIVES

1. Students will practice close reading of different literary terms used in poems and Fictions for both literal and figurative meaning.
2. Students will think and write analytically about literature, using examples from the text and appropriate literary terminology to support arguments about the way a text functions.
3. Students will become familiar with greater impact on British society.
4. Students will become familiar with mid 20th century Literature.

1.2 STRUCTURE

- Identification of Different literary terms
- Its historical background
- A description of the works written by using literary terms.

1.3 IMAGISM

Imagism was a movement in early-20th-century Anglo-American poetry that favored precision of imagery and clear, sharp language. It is considered to be the first organized modernist literary movement in the English language. Imagism is sometimes viewed as "a succession of creative moments" rather than a continuous or sustained period of development. The French academic René Taupin remarked that "it is more accurate to consider Imagism not as a doctrine, nor even as a poetic school, but as the association of a few poets who were for a certain time in agreement on a small number of important principles".

The Imagists rejected the sentiment and discursiveness typical of Romantic and Victorian poetry. In contrast to the contemporary Georgian poets, who were generally content to work within that tradition, Imagists called for a return to more Classical values, such as directness of presentation, economy of language, and a

willingness to experiment with non-traditional verse forms; Imagists used free verse. A characteristic feature of the form is its attempt to isolate a single image to reveal its essence. This mirrors contemporary developments in *avant-garde* art, especially Cubism. Although these poets isolate objects through the use of what the American poet Ezra Pound called "luminous details", Pound's ideogrammic method of juxtaposing concrete instances to express an abstraction is similar to Cubism's manner of synthesizing multiple perspectives into a single image.

Imagist publications appearing between 1914 and 1917 featured works by many of the most prominent modernist figures in poetry and other fields, including Pound, H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), Amy Lowell, Ford Madox Ford, William Carlos Williams, F. S. Flint, and T. E. Hulme. The Imagists were centered in London, with members from Great Britain, Ireland and the United States. Somewhat unusually for the time, a number of women writers were major Imagist figures.

Early publications and statements of intent

In 1911, Pound introduced two other poets to the Eiffel Tower group: his former fiancée Hilda Doolittle (by then signing her work H.D.) and her future husband Richard Aldington. These two were interested in exploring Greek poetic models, especially Sappho, an interest that Pound shared. The compression of expression that they achieved by following the Greek example complemented the proto-Imagist interest in Japanese poetry, and, in 1912, during a meeting with them in the British Museum tea room, Pound told H.D. and Aldington that they were *Imagistes* and even appended the signature *H.D. Imagiste* to some poems they were discussing.

When Harriet Monroe started her *Poetry* magazine in 1911, she had asked Pound to act as foreign editor. In October 1912, he submitted thereto three poems each by H.D. and Aldington under the *Imagiste* rubric, with a note describing Aldington as "one of the 'Imagistes'". This note, along with the appendix note ("The Complete Works of T. S. Hulme") in Pound's book *Ripostes* (1912), are considered to be the first appearances of the word "Imagiste" (later anglicised to "Imagist") in print.

Aldington's poems, *Choricos*, *To a Greek Marble*, and *Au Vieux Jardin*, were in the November issue of *Poetry*, and H.D.'s, *Hermes of the Ways*, *Priapus*, and *Epigram*, appeared in the January 1913 issue, marking the beginning of the Imagism movement. *Poetry*'s April issue published Pound's haiku-like "In a Station of the Metro":

The apparition of these faces in the crowd :
Petals on a wet, black bough.

The March 1913 issue of *Poetry* contained *A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste* and the essay entitled *Imagisme* both written by Pound, with the latter attributed to Flint. The latter contained this succinct statement of the group's position, which he had agreed with H.D. and Aldington:

1. Direct treatment of the "thing", whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of the metronome.

Pound's note opened with a definition of an image as "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time". Pound goes on to state,"It is better to present one Image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous works". His list of "don'ts"

reinforced his three statements in "Imagism", while warning that they should not be considered as dogma but as the "result of long contemplation". Taken together, these two texts comprised the Imagist programme for a return to what they saw as the best poetic practice of the past. F. S. Flint commented "we have never claimed to have invented the moon. We do not pretend that our ideas are original."

The 1916 preface to *Some Imagist Poets* comments "*Imagism* does not merely mean the presentation of pictures. *Imagism* refers to the manner of presentation, not to the subject."

An article on the history of Imagism was written by Flint and published in *The Egoist* in May 1915. Pound disagreed with Flint's interpretation of events and the goals of the group, causing the two to cease contact with each other. Flint emphasised the contribution of the Eiffel Tower poets, especially Edward Storer. Pound, who believed that the "Hellenic hardness" that he saw as the distinguishing quality of the poems of H.D. and Aldington was likely to be diluted by the "custard" of Storer, was to play no further direct role in the history of the Imagists. He went on to co-found the Vorticists with his friend, the painter and writer Wyndham Lewis.

Around this time, the American Imagist Amy Lowell moved to London, determined to promote her own work and that of the other Imagist poets. Lowell was a wealthy heiress from Boston whose brother Abbott Lawrence Lowell was President of Harvard University from 1909 to 1933. She was an enthusiastic champion of literary experiment who was willing to use her money to publish the group. Lowell was determined to change the method of selection from Pound's autocratic editorial attitude to a more democratic manner. The outcome was a series of Imagist anthologies under the title *Some Imagist Poets*. The first of these appeared in 1915, planned and assembled mainly by H.D. and Aldington. Two further issues, both edited by Lowell, were published in 1916 and 1917. These three volumes featured most of the original poets, plus the American John Gould Fletcher, but not Pound, who had tried to persuade Lowell to drop the Imagist name from her publications and who sardonically dubbed this phase of Imagism "Amygism".

Lowell persuaded D. H. Lawrence to contribute poems to the 1915 and 1916 volumes, making him the only writer to publish as both a Georgian poet and an Imagist. Marianne Moore also became associated with the group during this period. With World War I as a backdrop, the times were not easy for *avant-garde* literary movements (Aldington, for example, spent much of the war at the front), and the 1917 anthology effectively marked the end of the Imagists as a movement.

1.4 MODERNISM

Literary modernism, or modernist literature, originated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, mainly in Europe and North America, and is characterized by a self-conscious break with traditional ways of writing, in both poetry and prose fiction writing. Modernism experimented with literary form and expression, as exemplified by Ezra Pound's maxim to "Make it new." This literary movement was driven by a conscious desire to overturn traditional modes of representation and express the new sensibilities of their time. The horrors of the First World War saw the prevailing assumptions about society reassessed, and much modernist writing engages with the technological advances and societal changes of modernity moving into the 20th century.

Origins and Precursors

In the 1880s, increased attention was given to the idea that it was necessary to push aside previous norms entirely, instead of merely revising past knowledge in light of contemporary techniques. The theories of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), and Ernst Mach (1838–1916) influenced early Modernist literature. Ernst Mach argued that the mind had a fundamental structure, and that subjective experience was based on the interplay of parts of the mind in *The Science of Mechanics* (1883). Freud's first major work was *Studies on Hysteria* (with Josef Breuer) (1895). According to Freud, all subjective reality was based on the play of basic drives and instincts, through which the outside world was perceived. As a philosopher of science, Ernst Mach was a major influence on logical positivism, and through his criticism of Isaac Newton, a forerunner of Albert Einstein's theory of relativity.

Many prior theories about epistemology argued that external and absolute reality could impress itself, as it were, on an individual, as, for example, John Locke's (1632–1704) empiricism, which saw the mind beginning as a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate (*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1690). Freud's description of subjective states, involving an unconscious mind full of primal impulses and counterbalancing self-imposed restrictions, was combined by Carl Jung (1875–1961) with the idea of the collective unconscious, which the conscious mind either fought or embraced. While Charles Darwin's work remade the Aristotelian concept of "man, the animal" in the public mind, Jung suggested that human impulses toward breaking social norms were not the product of childishness or ignorance, but rather derived from the essential nature of the human animal.

Another major precursor of modernism was Friedrich Nietzsche, especially his idea that psychological drives, specifically the "will to power", were more important than facts, or things. Henri Bergson (1859–1941), on the other hand, emphasized the difference between scientific clock time and the direct, subjective, human experience of time. His work on time and consciousness "had a great influence on twentieth-century novelists," especially those modernists who used the stream of consciousness technique, such as Dorothy Richardson for the book *Pointed Roofs* (1915), James Joyce for *Ulysses* (1922) and Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) for *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927). Also important in Bergson's philosophy was the idea of *élan vital*, the life force, which "brings about the creative evolution of everything." His philosophy also placed a high value on intuition, though without rejecting the importance of the intellect. These various thinkers were united by a distrust of Victorian positivism and certainty Modernism as a literary movement can also be seen as a reaction to industrialization, urbanization and new technologies.

Important literary precursors of modernism were Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821–81) (*Crime and Punishment* (1866), *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880)); Walt Whitman (1819–92) (*Leaves of Grass*) (1855–91); Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880) (*Madame Bovary* (1856-57), *Sentimental Education* (1869), *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* (1874), *Three Tales* (1877), *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (1881)); Charles Baudelaire (1821–67) (*Les Fleurs du mal*), Rimbaud (1854–91) (*Illuminations*, 1874); Knut Hamsun (1859–1952) (*Hunger*, 1890); August Strindberg (1849–1912), especially his later plays, including the trilogy *To Damascus* 1898–1901, *A Dream Play* (1902), *The Ghost Sonata* (1907).

Initially, some modernists fostered a utopian spirit, stimulated by innovationsinanthropology, psychology, philosophy, politicaltheory, physics and psychoanalysis. The poets of the Imagist movement, founded by Ezra Pound in 1912 as a new poetic style, gave modernism its early start in the 20th century, and were characterized by a poetry that favoured a precision of imagery, brevity and free verse. This idealism, however, ended with the outbreak of World War I, and writers created more cynical works that reflected a

prevailing sense of disillusionment. Many modernist writers also shared a mistrust of institutions of power such as government and religion, and rejected the notion of absolute truths.

Modernist works such as T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) were increasingly self-aware, introspective, and explored the darker aspects of human nature. The term modernism covers a number of related, and overlapping, artistic and literaryovements, including Imagism, Symbolism, Futurism, Vorticism, Cubism, Surrealism, Expressionism, and Dada.

Early Modernist writers

Early modernist writers, especially those writing after World War I and the disillusionment that followed, broke the implicit contract with the general public that artists were the reliable interpreters and representatives of mainstream ("bourgeois") culture and ideas, and, instead, developed unreliable narrators, exposing the irrationality at the roots of a supposedly rational world.

They also attempted to address the changing ideas about reality developed by Charles Darwin, Ernst Mach, Freud, Albert Einstein, Nietzsche, Bergson and others. From this developed innovative literary techniques such as stream-of-consciousness, interior monologue, as well as the use of multiple points-of-view. This can reflect doubts about the philosophical basis of realism, or alternatively an expansion of our understanding of what is meant by realism. For example, the use of stream-of-consciousness or interior monologue reflects the need for greater psychological realism.

It is debatable when the modernist literary movement began, though some have chosen 1910 as roughly marking the beginning and quote novelist Virginia Woolf, who declared that human nature underwent a fundamental change "on or about December 1910". But modernism was already stirring by 1902, with works such as Joseph Conrad's (1857–1924) *Heart of Darkness*, while Alfred Jarry's (1873–1907) absurdist play, *Ubu Roi* appeared even earlier, in 1896.

Among early modernist non-literary landmarks is the atonal ending of Arnold Schoenberg's Second String Quartet in 1908, the Expressionist paintings of Wassily Kandinsky starting in 1903 and culminating with his first abstract painting and the founding of the Expressionist Blue Rider group in Munich in 1911, the rise of fauvism, and the introduction of cubism from the studios of Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque and others between 1900 and 1910.

Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) is known as an early work of modernism for its plain-spoken prose style and emphasis on psychological insight into characters.

James Joyce was a major modernist writer whose strategies employed in his novel *Ulysses* (1922) for depicting the events during a twenty-four-hour period in the life of his protagonist, Leopold Bloom, have come to epitomize modernism's approach to fiction. The poet T.S. Eliot described these qualities in 1923, noting that Joyce's technique is "a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.... Instead of narrative method, we may now use the mythical method. It is, I seriously believe, a step toward making the modern world possible for art." Eliot's own modernist poem *The Waste Land* (1922) mirrors "the futility and anarchy" in its own way, in its fragmented structure, and the absence of an obvious central, unifying narrative. This is in fact a rhetorical technique to convey the poem's theme: "The decay and fragmentation of Western Culture". The poem, despite the absence of

a linear narrative, does have a structure: this is provided by both fertility symbolism derived from anthropology, and other elements such as the use of quotations and juxtaposition.

In Italian literature, the generation of poets represented by Eugenio Montale (with his Ossi di seppia), Giuseppe Ungaretti (with his Allegria di naufragi), and Umberto Saba (with his Canzoniere) embodies modernism. This new generation broke with the tradition of Giosuè Carducci, Giovanni Pascoli, and Gabriele D'Annunzio in terms of style, language and tone. They were aware of the crisis deriving from the decline of the traditional role of the poet as foreseer, teacher, prophet. In a world that has absorbed Friedrich Nietzsche's lesson, these poets want to renew literature according to the new cultural world of the 20th century. For example, Montale uses epiphany to reconstruct meaning, while Saba incorporates Freudian concepts of psychoanalysis.

Modernist literature addressed similar aesthetic problems as contemporary modernist art. Gertrude Stein's abstract writings, such as *Tender Buttons* (1914), for example, have been compared to the fragmentary and multi-perspective Cubist paintings of her friend Pablo Picasso. The questioning spirit of modernism, as part of a necessary search for ways to make sense of a broken world, can also be seen in a different form in the Scottish poet Hugh MacDiarmid's *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (1928). In this poem, MacDiarmid applies Eliot's techniques to respond to the question of nationalism, using comedic parody, in an optimistic (though no less hopeless) form of modernism in which the artist as "hero" seeks to embrace complexity and locate new meanings.

Regarding technique, modernist works sought to obfuscate the boundaries between genres. Thus prose works tended to be poetical and poetry prose-like. T. S. Eliot's poetry sacrified lyrical grace for the sake of fragmented narrative while Virginia Woolf's novels (such as Mrs Dalloway and The Waves) have been described as poetical.

Continuation 1920 and 1930s

Significant modernist works continued to be created in the 1920s and 1930s, including further novels by Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, Robert Musil (*The Man Without Qualities*), and Dorothy Richardson. The American modernist dramatist Eugene O'Neill's career began in 1914, but his major works appeared in the 1920s and 1930s and early 1940s. Two other significant modernist dramatists writing in the 1920s and 1930s were Bertolt Brecht and Federico García Lorca. D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was published in 1928, while another important landmark for the history of the modern novel came with the publication of William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* in 1929. The 1920s would prove to be watershed years in modernist poetry. In this period, T. S. Eliot published some of his most notable poetic works, including *The Waste Land*, *The Hollow Men*, and *Ash Wednesday*.

In the 1930s, in addition to further major works by William Faulkner (*As I Lay Dying*, *Light in August*), Samuel Beckett published his first major work, the novel *Murphy* (1938), while in 1932 John Cowper Powys published *A Glastonbury Romance*, the same year as Hermann Broch's *The Sleepwalkers*. Djuna Barnes published her famous lesbian novel *Nightwood* in 1936. One of the greatest achievements in modernist poetry is then followed by Miroslav Krleža's *Ballads of Petrica Kerempuh* in 1936. Then in 1939 James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* appeared. It was in this year that another Irish modernist, W. B. Yeats, died. In poetry, E. E. Cummings, and Wallace Stevens continued writing into the 1950s. It was in this period when T. S. Eliot began writing what would become his final major poetic work, Four Quartets. Eliot shifted focus in this period, writing several plays, including *Murder in the Cathedral*.

While modernist poetry in English is often viewed as an American phenomenon, with leading exponents including Ezra Pound, Hart Crane, Marianne Moore, William Carlos Williams, H.D., and Louis Zukofsky, there were important British modernist poets, including T. S. Eliot, David Jones, Hugh MacDiarmid, Basil Bunting, and W. H. Auden. European modernist poets include Federico García Lorca, Fernando Pessoa, Anna Akhmatova, Constantine Cavafy, and Paul Valéry.

Modernist Literature after 1939

Though *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature* sees Modernism ending by c.1939, with regard to British and American literature, "When (if) Modernism petered out and postmodernism began has been contested almost as hotly as when the transition from Victorianism to Modernism occurred". Clement Greenberg sees Modernism ending in the 1930s, with the exception of the visual and performing arts. In fact, many literary modernists lived into the 1950s and 1960s, though generally speaking they were no longer producing major works.

Late modernism

The term late modernism is sometimes applied to modernist works published after 1930. Among modernists (or late modernists) still publishing after 1945 were Wallace Stevens, Gottfried Benn, T. S. Eliot, Anna Akhmatova, William Faulkner, Dorothy Richardson, John Cowper Powys, and Ezra Pound. Basil Bunting, born in 1901, published his most important modernist poem *Briggflatts* in 1965. In addition Hermann Broch's *The Death of Virgil* was published in 1945 and Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* in 1947 (early works by Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain* (1924), and *Death in Venice* (1912) are sometimes considered modernist). Samuel Beckett, who died in 1989, has been described as a "later modernist".[21] Beckett is a writer with roots in the expressionist tradition of modernism, who produced works from the 1930s until the 1980s, including *Molloy* (1951), *En attendant Godot* (1953), *Happy Days* (1961) and *Rockaby* (1981). The terms minimalist and post-modernist have also been applied to his later works. The poets Charles Olson (1910–1970) and J. H. Prynne (b. 1936) have been described as late modernists.

More recently the term late modernism has been redefined by at least one critic and used to refer to works written after 1945, rather than 1930. With this usage goes the idea that the ideology of modernism was significantly re-shaped by the events of World War II, especially the Holocaust and the dropping of the atom bomb.

The first modernist work of Reunionnais literature was *Sortilèges créoles: Eudora ou l'île enchantée* (fr), published first in 1952, by Marguerite-Hélène Mahé.

1.5 SYMBOLISM

A symbol is a mark, sign, or word that indicates, signifies, or is understood as representing an idea, object, or relationship. Symbols allow people to go beyond what is known or seen by creating linkages between otherwise very different concepts and experiences. All communication (and data processing) is achieved through the use of symbols. Symbols take the form of words, sounds, gestures, ideas, or visual images and are used to convey other ideas and beliefs. For example, a red octagon is a common symbol for "STOP"; on maps, blue lines often represent rivers; and a red rose often symbolizes love and compassion. Numerals are symbols for numbers; letters of an alphabet may be symbols for certain phonemes; and personal names are symbols

representing individuals. The variable 'x', in a mathematical equation, may symbolize the position of a particle in space.[

Etymology

The word *symbol* derives from the late Middle French masculine noun *symbole*, which appeared around 1380 in a theological sense signifying a formula used in the Roman Catholic Church as a sort of synonym for 'the credo'; by extension in the early Renaissance it came to mean 'a maxim' or 'the external sign of a sacrament'; these meanings were lost in secular contexts. It was during the Renaissance in the mid-16th century that the word took on the meaning that is dominant today, that of 'a natural fact or object evoking by its form or its nature an association of ideas with something abstract or absent'; this appears, for example, in François Rabelais, *Le Quart Livre*, in 1552. This French word derives from Latin, where both the masculine noun *symbolus* and the neuter noun *symbolum* refer to "a mark or sign as a means of recognition." The Latin word derives from the Greek σύμβολον *symbolon*, from a verb meaning 'throw together, put together, compare,' alluding to the Classical practice of breaking a piece of ceramic in two and giving one half to the person who would receive a future message, and one half to the person who would send it: when the two fit perfectly together, the receiver could be sure that the messenger bearing it did indeed also carry a genuine message from the intended person. A literary or artistic symbol as an "outward sign" of something else is a metaphorical extension of this notion of a message from a sender to a recipient. In English, the meaning "something which stands for something else" was first recorded in 1590, in Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.

Concepts and Definitions

Symbols are a means of complex communication that often can have multiple levels of meaning. Symbols are the basis of all human understanding and serve as vehicles of conception for all human knowledge. Symbols facilitate understanding of the world in which we live, thus serving as the grounds upon which we make judgments. In this way, people use symbols not only to make sense of the world around them, but also to identify and cooperate in society through constitutive rhetoric.

Human cultures use symbols to express specific ideologies and social structures and to represent aspects of their specific culture. Thus, symbols carry meanings that depend upon one's cultural background. As a result, the meaning of a symbol is not inherent in the symbol itself but is culturally learned.

Heinrich Zimmer gives a concise overview of the nature, and perennial relevance, of symbols.Concepts and words are symbols, just as visions, rituals, and images are; so too are the manners and customs of daily life. Through all of these a transcendent reality is mirrored. There are so many metaphors reflecting and implying something which, though thus variously expressed, is ineffable, though thus rendered multiform, remains inscrutable. Symbols hold the mind to truth but are not themselves the truth, hence it is delusory to borrow them. Each civilisation, every age, must bring forth its own."

Symbols and Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of signs, symbols, and signification as communicative behavior. Semiotics studies focus on the relationship of the signifier and the signified, also taking into account the interpretation of visual cues, body language, sound, and other contextual clues. Semiotics is linked with linguistics and psychology. Semioticians not only study what a symbol implies but also how it got its meaning and how it functions to make

meaning in society. Symbols allow the human brain continuously to create meaning using sensory input and decode symbols through both denotation and connotation.

Psychoanalysis, rhetoric, and archetypes

An alternative definition of *symbol*, distinguishing it from the term *sign* was proposed by Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung. In his studies on what is now called Jungian archetypes, a sign stands for something known, as a word stands for its referent. He contrasted a sign with a *symbol*: something that is unknown and that cannot be made clear or precise. An example of a symbol in this sense is Christ as a symbol of the archetype called *self*.

Kenneth Burke described *Homo sapiens* as a "symbol-using, symbol making, and symbol misusing animal" to suggest that a person creates symbols as well as misuses them. One example he uses to indicate what he means by the misuse of symbol is the story of a man who, when told that a particular food item was whale blubber, could barely keep from throwing it up. Later, his friend discovered it was actually just a dumpling. But the man's reaction was a direct consequence of the symbol of "blubber" representing something inedible in his mind. In addition, the symbol of "blubber" was created by the man through various kinds of learning.

Burke goes on to describe symbols as also being derived from Sigmund Freud's work on condensation and displacement, further stating that symbols are not just relevant to the theory of dreams but also to "normal symbol systems". He says they are related through "substitution", where one word, phrase, or symbol is substituted for another in order to change the meaning. In other words, if one person does not understand a certain word or phrase, another person may substitute a synonym or symbol in order to get the meaning across. However, upon learning the new way of interpreting a specific symbol, the person may change his or her already-formed ideas to incorporate the new information.

Jean Dalby Clift says that people not only add their own interpretations to symbols, they also create personal symbols that represent their own understanding of their lives: what she calls "core images" of the person. Clift argues that symbolic work with these personal symbols or core images can be as useful as working with dream symbols in psychoanalysis or counseling.

William Indick suggests that the symbols that are commonly found in myth, legend, and fantasy fulfill psychological functions and hence are why archetypes such as "the hero," "the princess" and "the witch" have remained popular for centuries.

1.6 THEATRE OF THE ABSURD

The term Theatre of the Absurd is applied to plays written by primarily European playwrights, that express the belief that human existence has no meaning or purpose and therefore all communication breaks down. Logical construction and argument gives way to irrational and illogical speech and to its ultimate conclusion, silence.[26] While there are significant precursors, including Alfred Jarry (1873–1907), the Theatre of the Absurd is generally seen as beginning in the 1950s with the plays of Samuel Beckett.

Critic Martin Esslin coined the term in his 1960 essay, "Theatre of the Absurd." He related these plays based on a broad theme of the Absurd, similar to the way Albert Camus uses the term in his 1942 essay, "The Myth of Sisyphus".[27] The Absurd in these plays takes the form of man's reaction to a world apparently without meaning, and/or man as a puppet controlled or menaced by invisible outside forces. Though the term is applied to a wide range of plays, some characteristics coincide in many of the plays: broad comedy, often similar to Vaudeville, mixed with horrific or tragic images; characters caught in hopeless

situations forced to do repetitive or meaningless actions; dialogue full of clichés, wordplay, and nonsense; plots that are cyclical or absurdly expansive; either a parody or dismissal of realism and the concept of the "well-made play".

Theatre of the Absurd, dramatic works of certain European and American dramatists of the 1950s and early ’60s who agreed with the Existentialist philosopher Albert Camus’s assessment, in his essay “The Myth of Sisyphus” (1942), that the human situation is essentially absurd, devoid of purpose. The term is also loosely applied to those dramatists and the production of those works. Though no formal Absurdist movement existed as such, dramatists as diverse as Samuel Beckett, Eugène Ionesco, Jean Genet, Arthur Adamov, Harold Pinter, and a few others shared a pessimistic vision of humanity struggling vainly to find a purpose and to control its fate. Humankind in this view is left feeling hopeless, bewildered, and anxious.

The ideas that inform the plays also dictate their structure. Absurdist playwrights, therefore, did away with most of the logical structures of traditional theatre. There is little dramatic action as conventionally understood; however frantically the characters perform, their busyness serves to underscore the fact that nothing happens to change their existence. In Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* (1952), plot is eliminated, and a timeless, circular quality emerges as two lost creatures, usually played as tramps, spend their days waiting—but without any certainty of whom they are waiting for or of whether he, or it, will ever come.

Language in an Absurdist play is often dislocated, full of cliches, puns, repetitions, and non sequiturs. The characters in Ionesco’s *The Bald Soprano* (1950) sit and talk, repeating the obvious until it sounds like nonsense, thus revealing the inadequacies of verbal communication. The ridiculous, purposeless behaviour and talk give the plays a sometimes dazzling comic surface, but there is an underlying serious message of metaphysical distress. This reflects the influence of comic tradition drawn from such sources as commedia dell’arte, vaudeville, and music hall combined with such theatre arts as mime and acrobatics. At the same time, the impact of ideas as expressed by the Surrealist, Existentialist, and Expressionist schools and the writings of Franz Kafka is evident.

Originally shocking in its flouting of theatrical convention while popular for its apt expression of the preoccupations of the mid-20th century, the Theatre of the Absurd declined somewhat by the mid-1960s; some of its innovations had been absorbed into the mainstream of theatre even while serving to inspire further experiments. Some of the chief authors of the Absurd have sought new directions in their art, while others continue to work in the same vein.

Playwrights commonly associated with the Theatre of the Absurd include Samuel Beckett (1906–1989), Eugène Ionesco (1909–1994), Jean Genet (1910–1986), Harold Pinter (1930–2008), Tom Stoppard (b. 1937), Alexander Vvedensky (1904–1941), Daniil Kharms (1905–1942), Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921–1990), Alejandro Jodorowsky (b. 1929), Fernando Arrabal (b. 1932), Václav Havel (1936–2011) and Edward Albee (1928–2016).

1.7 WAR POETRY

Poets have written about the experience of war since the Greeks, but the young soldier poets of the First World War established war poetry as a literary genre. Their combined voice has become one of the defining texts of Twentieth Century Europe. In 1914 hundreds of young men in uniform took to writing poetry as a way of striving to express extreme emotion

at the very edge of experience. The work of a handful of these, such as Owen, Rosenberg and Sassoon, has endured to become what Andrew Motion has called ‘a sacred national text’.

Although ‘war poet’ tends traditionally to refer to active combatants, war poetry has been written by many ‘civilians’ caught up in conflict in other ways: Cesar Vallejo and WH Auden in the Spanish Civil War, Margaret Postgate Cole and Rose Macaulay in the First World War, James Fenton in Cambodia.

In the global, ‘total war’ of 1939-45, that saw the holocaust, the blitz and Hiroshima, virtually no poet was untouched by the experience of war. The same was true for the civil conflicts and revolutions in Spain and Eastern Europe. That does not mean, however, that every poet responded to war by writing directly about it. For some, the proper response of a poet was one of consciously (conscientiously) keeping silent. War poetry is not necessarily ‘anti-war’. It is, however, about the very large questions of life: identity, innocence, guilt, loyalty, courage, compassion, humanity, duty, desire, death. Its response to these questions, and its relation of immediate personal experience to moments of national and international crisis, gives war poetry an extra-literary importance. Owen wrote that even Shakespeare seems ‘vapid’ after Sassoon: ‘not of course because Sassoon is a greater artist, but because of the subjects’.

War poetry is currently studied in every school in Britain. It has become part of the mythology of nationhood, and an expression of both historical consciousness and political conscience. The way we read – and perhaps revere – war poetry, says something about what we are, and what we want to be, as a nation.

1.8 POST-WAR BRITISH DRAMA

Drama was introduced to Britain from Europe by the Romans, and auditoriums were constructed across the country for this purpose.But England didn't exist until hundreds of years after the Romans left. By the medieval period, the mummers' plays had developed, a form of early street theatre associated with the Morris dance, concentrating on themes such as Saint George and the Dragon and Robin Hood. These were folk tales re-telling old stories, and the actors travelled from town to town performing these for their audiences in return for money and hospitality.

English mystery plays

Mystery plays and miracle plays (sometimes distinguished as two different forms, although the terms are often used interchangeably) are among the earliest formally developed plays in medieval Europe. Medieval mystery plays focused on the representation of Bible stories in churches as tableaux with accompanying antiphonal song. They developed from the 10th to the 16th century, reaching the height of their popularity in the 15th century before being rendered obsolete by the rise of professional theatre. The name derives from *mystery* used in its sense of *miracle*, but an occasionally quoted derivation is from *misterium*, meaning *craft*, a play performed by the craft guilds.

There are four complete or nearly complete extant English biblical collections of plays from the late medieval period; although these collections are sometimes referred to as "cycles," it is now believed that this term may attribute to these collections more coherence than they in fact possess. The most complete is the *York cycle* of forty-eight pageants. They were performed in the city of York, from the middle of the fourteenth century until 1569.

There are also the *Towneley plays* of thirty-two pageants, once thought to have been a true 'cycle' of plays and most likely performed around the Feast of Corpus Christi probably in the town of Wakefield, England during the late Middle Ages until 1576. The *Ludus Coventriae* (also called the N Town plays" or *Hegge cycle*), now generally agreed to be a redacted compilation of at least three older, unrelated plays, and the *Chester cycle* of twenty-four pageants, now generally agreed to be an Elizabethan reconstruction of older medieval traditions. Also extant are two pageants from a New Testament cycle acted at Coventry and one pageant each from Norwich and Newcastle upon Tyne. Additionally, a fifteenth-century play of the life of Mary Magdalene, *The Brome Abraham and Isaac* and a sixteenth-century play of the *Conversion of Saint Paul* exist, all hailing from East Anglia. Besides the Middle English drama, there are three surviving plays in Cornish known as the Ordinalia.

These biblical plays differ widely in content. Most contain episodes such as the *Fall of Lucifer*, the *Creation and Fall of Man*, *Cain and Abel*, *Noah and the Flood*, *Abraham and Isaac*, the *Nativity*, the *Raising of Lazarus*, the *Passion*, and the *Resurrection*. Other pageants included the story of *Moses*, the *Procession of the Prophets*, *Christ's Baptism*, the *Temptation in the Wilderness*, and the *Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin*. In given cycles, the plays came to be sponsored by the newly emerging Medieval craft guilds. The York mercers, for example, sponsored the *Doomsday* pageant. Other guilds presented scenes appropriate to their trade: the building of the Ark from the carpenters' guild; the five loaves and fishes miracle from the bakers; and the visit of the Magi, with their offerings of gold, frankincense and myrrh, from the goldsmiths. The guild associations are not, however, to be understood as the method of production for all towns. While the Chester pageants are associated with guilds, there is no indication that the N-Town plays are either associated with guilds or performed on pageant wagons. Perhaps the most famous of the mystery plays, at least to modern readers and audiences, are those of Wakefield. Unfortunately, we cannot know whether the plays of the Towneley manuscript are actually the plays performed at Wakefield but a reference in the *Second Shepherds' Play* to Horbery Shrogys (line 454) is strongly suggestive

Morality plays

The morality play is a genre of Medieval and early Tudor theatrical entertainment. In their own time, these plays were known as "interludes", a broader term given to dramas with or without a moral theme.[6] Morality plays are a type of allegory in which the protagonist is met by personifications of various moral attributes who try to prompt him to choose a Godly life over one of evil. The plays were most popular in Europe during the 15th and 16th centuries. Having grown out of the religiously based mystery plays of the Middle Ages, they represented a shift towards a more secular base for European theatre.

The Somonyng of Everyman (*The Summoning of Everyman*), usually referred to simply as *Everyman*, is a late 15th-century English morality play. Like John Bunyan's 1678 Christian novel *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Everyman* examines the question of Christian salvation by use of allegorical characters, and what Man must do to attain it. The premise is that the good and evil deeds of one's life will be tallied by God after death, as in a ledger book. The play is the allegorical accounting of the life of Everyman, who represents all mankind. In the course of the action, Everyman tries to convince other characters to accompany him in the hope of improving his account. All the characters are also allegorical, each personifying an abstract idea such as Fellowship, [material] Goods, and Knowledge. The conflict between good and evil is dramatized by the interactions between characters.

1.9 NATURALISTIC DRAMA

Naturalism is a literary movement beginning in the late nineteenth century, similar to literary realism in its rejection of Romanticism, but distinct in its embrace of determinism, detachment, scientific objectivism, and social commentary. Literary naturalism emphasizes observation and the scientific method in the fictional portrayal of reality. Naturalism includes detachment, in which the author maintains an impersonal tone and disinterested point of view; determinism, which is defined as the opposite of free will, in which a character's fate has been decided, even predetermined, by impersonal forces of nature beyond human control; and a sense that the universe itself is indifferent to human life. The novel would be an experiment where the author could discover and analyze the forces, or scientific laws, that influenced behavior, and these included emotion, heredity, and environment. The movement largely traces to the theories of French author Émile Zola.

Naturalistic drama is a type of drama that seeks to mirror life with the utmost fidelity. It became established and popular late in the 19th c., stemming from the naturalism of Emile Zola and his followers, and going beyond the realism of Henrik Ibsen.

The main French dramatist was Henri Becque. In the late 1880s, Antoine established naturalistic drama in his Theatre Libre. There Becque and other playwrights, including August Strindberg, had their work performed. The movement of naturalism in the theatre spread to Germany, England, Russia, and America.

A famous instance of naturalism is Maxim Gorki's Lower Depths (1902). Gradually, the leading dramatists, like Strindberg and Hauptmann, forsook this kind of play for a more symbolic form. However, naturalism persisted and in its decadence considerably influenced drawing-room comedy and much light theatrical entertainment in the 1920s and 1930s. There was a sustained effort to reproduce everyday speech as exactly as possible, and more and more emphasis was placed on surface verisimilitude – especially in decor and setting where no effort was spared to persuade the audience that it was, in fact, looking at a 'real' set, such an exact representation of a room that they might well use it themselves. Here art was attempting to deceive nature, not reflect it. Thus the theatre was defeating its own ends and, in the abandonment of traditional dramatic conventions, becoming more and more restrictive. Nevertheless, many dramatists exploited the limitations very skillfully. Galsworthy was an outstanding example, and, later, N. C. Hunter and Terence Rattigan.

1.10 THE ANGRY YOUNG MAN MOVEMENT IN DRAMA

Angry Young Men**,** various British novelists and playwrights who emerged in the 1950s and expressed scorn and disaffection with the established sociopolitical order of their country. Their impatience and resentment were especially aroused by what they perceived as the hypocrisy and mediocrity of the upper and middle classes.

The Angry Young Men were a new breed of intellectuals who were mostly of working class or of lower middle-class origin. Some had been educated at the postwar red-brick universities at the state's expense, though a few were from Oxford. They shared an outspoken irreverence for the British class system, its traditional network of pedigreed families, and the elitist Oxford and Cambridge universities. They showed an equally

uninhibited disdain for the drabness of the postwar welfare state, and their writings frequently expressed raw anger and frustration as the postwar reforms failed to meet exalted aspirations for genuine change.

The trend that was evident in John Wain's novel *Hurry on Down* (1953) and in *Lucky Jim* (1954) by Kingsley Amis was crystallized in 1956 in the play *Look Back in Anger*, which became the representative work of the movement. When the Royal Court Theatre's press agent described the play's 26-year-old author John Osborne as an "angry young man," the name was extended to all his contemporaries who expressed rage at the persistence of class distinctions, pride in their lower-class mannerisms, and dislike for anything highbrow or "phoney." When Sir Laurence Olivier played the leading role in Osborne's second play, *The Entertainer* (1957), the Angry Young Men were acknowledged as the dominant literary force of the decade.

Their novels and plays typically feature a rootless, lower-middle or working-class male protagonist who views society with scorn and sardonic humour and may have conflicts with authority but who is nevertheless preoccupied with the quest for upward mobility.

Room at the Top

Among the other writers embraced in the term are the novelists John Braine (*Room at the Top*, 1957) and Alan Sillitoe (*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 1958) and the playwrights Bernard Kops (*The Hamlet of Stepney Green*, 1956) and Arnold Wesker (*Chicken Soup with Barley*, 1958). Like that of the Beat movement in the United States, the impetus of the Angry Young Men was exhausted in the early 1960s.

Look Back in Anger, play in three acts by John Osborne, performed in 1956 and published in 1957. A published description of Osborne as an "angry young man" was extended to apply to an entire generation of disaffected young British writers who identified with the lower classes and viewed the upper classes and the established political institutions with disdain.

Although the form of the play was not revolutionary, its content was unexpected. Onstage for the first time were the 20- to 30-year-olds of Great Britain who had not participated in World War II and who found its aftermath lacking in promise. The hero, Jimmy Porter, is the son of a worker. Through the state educational system, he has reached an uncomfortably marginal position on the border of the middle class, from which he can see the traditional possessors of privilege holding the better jobs and threatening his upward climb.

1.11 THE PROBLEM PLAY

Problem play is a type of drama that developed in the 19th century to deal with controversial social issues in a realistic manner, to expose social ills, and to stimulate thought and discussion on the part of the audience. The genre had its beginnings in the work of the French dramatists Alexandre Dumas *fils* and Émile Augier, who adapted the then-popular formula of Eugène Scribe's "well-made play" (*q.v.*) to serious subjects, creating somewhat simplistic, didactic thesis plays on subjects such as prostitution, business ethics, illegitimacy, and female emancipation. The problem play reached its maturity in the works of the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, whose works had artistic merit as well as topical

relevance. His first experiment in the genre was *Love's Comedy* (published 1862), a critical study of contemporary marriage. He went on to expose the hypocrisy, greed, and hidden corruption of his society in a number of masterly plays: *A Doll's House* portrays a woman's escape from her childish, subservient role as a bourgeois wife; *Ghosts* attacks the convention that even loveless and unhappy marriages are sacred; *The Wild Duck* shows the consequences of an egotistical idealism; *An Enemy of the People* reveals the expedient morality of respectable provincial townspeople.

Ibsen's influence helped encourage the writing of problem plays throughout Europe. Other Scandinavian playwrights, among them August Strindberg, discussed sexual roles and the emancipation of women from both liberal and conservative viewpoints. Eugène Brieux attacked the French judicial system in *The Red Robe.* In England, George Bernard Shaw brought the problem play to its intellectual peak, both with his plays and with their long and witty prefaces.

1.12 SATIRE

Satire is a genre of the visual, literary, and performing arts, usually in the form of fiction and less frequently non-fiction, in which vices, follies, abuses, and shortcomings are held up to ridicule, often with the intent of shaming or exposing the perceived flaws of individuals, corporations, government, or society itself into improvement. Although satire is usually meant to be humorous, its greater purpose is often constructive social criticism, using wit to draw attention to both particular and wider issues in society.

A feature of satire is strong irony or sarcasm —"in satire, irony is militant", according to literary critic Northrop Frye— but parody, burlesque, exaggeration,[juxtaposition, comparison, analogy, and double entendre are all frequently used in satirical speech and writing. This "militant" irony or sarcasm often professes to approve of (or at least accept as natural) the very things the satirist wishes to question. Satire is found in many artistic forms of expression, including internet memes, literature, plays, commentary, music, film and television shows, and media such as lyrics.

The word *satire* comes from the Latin word *satur* and the subsequent phrase *lanx satura. Satur* meant "full" but the juxtaposition with *lanx* shifted the meaning to "miscellany or medley": the expression *lanx satura* literally means "a full dish of various kinds of fruits".

The word *satura* as used by Quintilian, however, was used to denote only Roman verse satire, a strict genre that imposed hexameter form, a narrower genre than what would be later intended as *satire*. Quintilian famously said that *satura,* that is a satire in hexameter verses, was a literary genre of wholly Roman origin (*satura tota nostra est*). He was aware of and commented on Greek satire, but at the time did not label it as such, although today the origin of satire is considered to be Aristophanes' Old Comedy. The first critic to use the term "satire" in the modern broader sense was Apuleius.

1.13 POST-WAR FICTION

The 20th century literature is dominated by war with common themes of alienation, isolation and fragmentation. The century opened with the Boer War and continued through World War I, World War II, The Balkans, Korea, and Vietnam, The First Gulf, Granada and many others. The impact of World War I was, "The war to end all wars" (until of course

World War II!). The destruction was accomplished by bombing cities and towns without ever facing the foe as in previous wars. Whole towns were destroyed, families were uprooted. As a result, when talking about British Literature, most of the 20th century fiction, poetry and short stories especially that are produced have the common theme of loneliness. Much of the writing is marked by deep psychological trauma. Twentieth century British literature is highly influenced by Victorian literature in the nineteenth century. Victorian literature brought gothic elements, romance, social justice and supernatural themes. Contemporaries want to expand on or move beyond those elements. Another historical or social influence on the themes in English literature is the change in England's role in the world. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, England was the dominating world power with its strong sense of imperialism and its establishment of colonies and political influence all across the world. After the First and even more-so after the Second World War, England's global reach is weakened. This change in world view changes the literature. There are labour organizations rising in power. Women are asserting their equal rights. There is much more attention to social legislation and welfare concerns. The country moves towards its more modern socialist state. These concerns become the themes of the literature.

After the war most English writers chose to focus on aesthetic or social rather than political problems; C. P. Snow was perhaps the notable exception. The novelists Henry Green, Ivy Compton-Burnett, Joyce Cary, and Lawrence Durrell, and the poets Robert Graves, Edwin Muir, Louis MacNeice, and Edith Sitwell tended to cultivate their own distinctive voices. Other novelists and playwrights of the 1950s, often called the angry young men, expressed a deep dissatisfaction with British society, combined with despair that anything could be done about it.

While the postwar era was not a great period of English literature, it produced a variety of excellent critics, including William Empson, Frank Kermode, and F. R. Leavis. The period was also marked by a number of highly individual novelists, including Kingsley Amis, Anthony Burgess, William Golding, Doris Lessing, Iris Murdoch, and Muriel Spark. Anthony Powell and Richard Hughes continued to work in the expansive 19th-century tradition, producing a series of realistic novels chronicling life in England during the 20th cent.

Some of the most exciting work of the period came in the theater, notably the plays of John Osborne, Harold Pinter, Tom Stoppard, David Storey, and Arnold Wesker. Among the best postwar British authors were the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas and the Irish expatriate novelist and playwright Samuel Beckett. Thomas's lyricism and rich imagery reaffirmed the romantic spirit, and he was eventually appreciated for his technical mastery as well. Beckett, who wrote many of his works in French and translated them into English, is considered the greatest exponent of the theater of the absurd. His uncompromisingly bleak, difficult plays (and novels) depict the lonely, alienated human condition with compassion and humor.

Other outstanding contemporary poets include Hugh MacDiarmid, the leading figure of the Scottish literary renaissance; Ted Hughes, whose harsh, postapocalyptic poetry celebrates simple survival, and Seamus Heaney, an Irish poet who is hailed for his exquisite style. Novelists generally have found as little in the Thatcher and Major eras as in the previous period to inspire them, but the work of Margaret Drabble, John Fowles, David Lodge stands out, and the Scottish writer James Kelman stands out.

1.14 NEO-ROMANTIC POETY

The term **neo-romanticism** is used to cover a variety of movements in philosophy, literature, music, painting, and architecture, as well as social movements, that exist after and incorporate elements from the era of Romanticism.

It has been used with reference to late-19th-century composers such as Richard Wagner particularly by Carl Dahlhaus who describes his music as "a late flowering of romanticism in a positivist age". He regards it as synonymous with "the age of Wagner", from about 1850 until 1890—the start of the era of modernism, whose leading early representatives were Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler (Dahlhaus 1979, 98–99, 102, 105). It has been applied to writers, painters, and composers who rejected, abandoned, or opposed realism, naturalism, or avant-garde modernism at various points in time from about 1840 down to the present.

Late 19th century and early 20th century

Neo-romanticism as well as Romanticism is considered in opposition to naturalism—indeed, so far as music is concerned, naturalism is regarded as alien and even hostile (Dahlhaus 1979, 100). In the period following German unification in 1871, naturalism rejected Romantic literature as a misleading, idealistic distortion of reality. Naturalism in turn came to be regarded as incapable of filling the "void" of modern existence. Critics such as Hermann Bahr, Heinrich Mann, and Eugen Diederichs came to oppose naturalism and materialism under the banner of "neo-romanticism", demanding a cultural reorientation responding to "the soul's longing for a meaning and content in life" that might replace the fragmentations of modern knowledge with a holistic world view (Kohlenbach 2009, 261).

Late 20th century

"Neo-romanticism" was proposed as an alternative label for the group of German composers identified with the short-lived *Neue Einfachheit* movement in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Along with other phrases such as "new tonality", this term has been criticised for lack of precision because of the diversity among these composers, whose leading member is Wolfgang Rihm (Hentschel 2006, 111).

1930–1955

In British art history, the term "neo-romanticism" is applied to a loosely affiliated school of landscape painting that emerged around 1930 and continued until the early 1950s. It was first labeled in March 1942 by the critic Raymond Mortimer in the *New Statesman*. These painters looked back to 19th-century artists such as William Blake and Samuel Palmer, but were also influenced by French cubist and post-cubist artists such as Pablo Picasso, André Masson, and Pavel Tchelitchew (Clark and Clarke 2001; Hopkins 2001). This movement was motivated in part as a response to the threat of invasion during World War II. Artists particularly associated with the initiation of this movement included Paul Nash, John Piper, Henry Moore, Ivon Hitchens, and especially Graham Sutherland. A younger generation included John Minton, Michael Ayrton, John Craxton, Keith Vaughan, Robert Colquhoun, and Robert MacBryde (Button 1996).

LESSON-2
AMBULANCE

Contents

2.1 OBJECTIVES

1. Students will practice close reading poems for both literal and figurative meaning.
2. Students will think and write analytically about literature, using examples from the text and appropriate literary terminology to support arguments about the way a text functions.
3. Students will become familiar with Philip Larkin's work and its greater impact on British society.
4. Students will become familiar with mid 20th century British poetry.

2.2 BACKGROUND-THE WRITER AND THE PERIOD

Whitsun Day is the one day of the year in which the marriage tax is declared null by the British government, thus affording 24 hours of relief to those couples unable to get hitched due to dire economic circumstances. It is on that day that the speaker of "The Whitsun Weddings" has been forced to take a later train than the usual one he rides. It is almost 1:30 on an unpleasantly hot Saturday afternoon when the quarter-full train pulls from the station. As the train takes off, a panorama of the backside of homes, a fishing dock and a river are can be seen through the open windows.

As the afternoon wears on and the train speeds through the countryside, these sites are replaced by stretches of farmland, industrial canals and another town that looks like the last one. What the speaker doesn’t take much notice of as the train is moving are the weddings that are taking place as a result of the holiday. The bright afternoon sun throws its light on certain scenes, while others remain hidden in the shade. Only when the movement comes to a stop at each station is the speaker given enough time to pay attention to the weddings.

The first thing that strikes him is the loudness that these weddings produce. The second thing he notices is how the brides and their maids try to copy the latest fashions, but succeed only in becoming parodies of style. His next thought is how all the mothers of the brides share the common physical trait of being overweight; how yellow, purple and green are the hot colors of the moment; and how every single wedding party seems to include a

dirty-minded uncle somewhere. Cafes, banquet halls and yards all serve well for stringing the bunting and hosting the party. And then, amid a hail of confetti and last minute advice, the bride and groom were waved goodbye on the train platform.

As the train makes its way closer to London, the landscape grows more urban in atmosphere and a dozen more marriages will take place before the speaker arrives. As the train begins to move well past being only a quarter full, the speaker ponders how none of the grooms and their brides ever stop to contemplate how they will share something with each of the other newly wedding couples for as long as their marriage lasts.

The light, but unavoidably apparent sense of scorn toward the bridal parties that the speaker has expressed in his thoughts undergoes an ironic shift as the train pulls into the station. London's industrial dark suddenly takes on a sense of magic as he realizes that the collection of so many newly married couples has given a meaning to the coincidence that has brought them all together in the same. Amid imagery of arrows, showers and rain, the full significance of the massive potential for all the fertility to come together and change the world overwhelms his previous cynical attitude.

2.3 THE WRITER- HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Philip Larkin was born on 9 August 1922 at 2, Poultney Road, Radford, Coventry,[15] the only son and younger child of Sydney Larkin (1884–1948) and his wife Eva Emily (1886–1977), daughter of first-class excise officer William James Day. Sydney Larkin's family originated in Kent, but had lived since at least the eighteenth century at Lichfield, Staffordshire, where they were in trade first as tailors, then also as coach-builders and shoe-makers. The Day family were of Epping, Essex, but moved to Leigh in Lancashire in 1914 where William Day took a post administering pensions and other dependent allowances.

The Larkin family lived in the district of Radford, Coventry, until Larkin was five years old, before moving to a large three-storey middle-class house complete with servants' quarters near Coventry railway station and King Henry VIII School, in Manor Road. Having survived the bombings of the Second World War, their former house in Manor Road was demolished in the 1960s to make way for a road modernisation programme, the construction of an inner ring road. His sister Catherine, known as Kitty, was 10 years older than he was. His father, a self-made man who had risen to be Coventry City Treasurer, was a singular individual, 'nihilistically disillusioned in middle age' who combined a love of literature with an enthusiasm for Nazism, and had attended two Nuremberg rallies during the mid-1930s. He introduced his son to the works of Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, James Joyce and above all D. H. Lawrence. His mother was a nervous and passive woman, "a kind of defective mechanism...Her ideal is 'to collapse' and to be taken care of", dominated by her husband.

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2.4 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

Stanza One

Closed like confessionals, they thread
Loud noons of cities, giving back
(…)
They come to rest at any kerb:
All streets in time are visited.

From the opening stanza of the poem, which can be read in full here, Larkin makes a point of showing how elite, almost, ambulances are – they are ‘closed like confessionals’, implying privacy and divinity to an ambulance, and indeed, to death itself; as vehicles, they are hardly considered sacred, but for Larkin, at this moment, they are. There is something mysterious and pervasive about an ambulance, and the way Larkin writes about it puts it apart from everything else – it ‘threads / loud noons of cities, giving back / none of the glances they absorb’, and seems to be almost floating along the road, never quite touching the living

population. It brings to mind a kelpie or a siren, a wailing woman who is only seen upon the moment of death.

However, Larkin points out that 'all streets in time are visited', thereby proving that there is no real triumph over death. Everyone is going the same way, regardless of whether or not they want to go there.

Stanza Two

Then children strewn on steps or road,
(…)
As it is carried in and stowed,

The moment of death is captured outside of the viewer; it is transformed through the eyes of 'children strewn on steps or road, / Or women coming from the shops', and because it has suddenly become a sideshow, it contrasts and conflicts with the previous stanza, where the ambulance was written about as a 'confessional'. Although death is, itself, a very private moment, there are always those on the fringe edges that catch sight of it, and stand, and gawk.

Notice the dehumanization of the word 'it', and how Larkin focuses not on the actual corpse, but on the stretcher, always skirting around the issue of death, never quite approaching it head-on.

Stanza Three

And sense the solving emptiness
(…)
They whisper at their own distress;

The 'solving emptiness / That lies just under all we do', writes Larkin. For Larkin, at least in this stanza, he questions why we bother doing the things we do; there is no point to life, as we will all wind up dead and in the ground at the end of it, sooner or later. However, Larkin's point is that this is not something known to people, and it is only when we are a witness or around death that it occurs to us that there is an end to life, an end to existence, there is a blank nothingness to follow (something that Larkin was particularly afraid of) our lives.

Stanza Four

For borne away in deadened air
(…)
Of families and fashions, there

However, Larkin does not merely write that life ends, and there is nothing after; he first points out what the end of life means – 'the unique random blend / of families and fashions'. At the end of life, that is all that is left of a person: their family, and their habits, their memories are strewn across a generation or two. It could be argued that there is not, in fact, any sort of emptiness, however, this is not a point that Larkin explores – it is not something that the dead person understands, or knows after they are gone, and this is specifically about death in all its self-centered application; death as an experience only for the deceased, and not for the people who struggle on afterward.

Stanza Five

At last begin to loosen. Far
(…)
And dulls to distance all we are.

In the final stanza, Larkin finally explains what death is: 'the exchange of love to lie / unreachable inside a room'; even the power of love, and life, and family, cannot push death aside, and it is the ultimate fate of man to die. Here, the ambulance is referenced again, in 'the traffic parks to let go by'; it is the room that puts the people who have died 'unreachable' to all the things that they lived for; however, this is not the only point that the ambulance makes. Larkin references it as a kind of omen, stating that it 'brings closer what is left to come, / And dulls to distance all we are.' As a reminder of death, the ambulance reminds us all that we are not immortal, and we will not survive forever.

The final stanza also points out that every brush with death we experience – however indistinct – further isolates us, makes us introspective, and forces us to ruminate on our own experiences, our own lives, our own fragile existence.

2.5 A BRIEF CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE TEXT

Poem starts with clear imagery of ambulance. It is taking a patient to hospital. It seeks attention of everyone. People starts gazing it. Starting lines of poem illustrates vivid imagery of ambulance and people who see it. They become afraid. After seeing critical sickness of a person in the ambulances, they do analysis of his dreadful condition. Every person, especially children and women stop doing their works and divert their attentions towards ambulance. It is not the ambulance which increases their fear but the concept of illness. People don'e think about better health instead they imagine the worst possible condition. They step into the shoes of patient and imagine his pain. Philip Larkin, in first two stanzas of the poem, illustrates realistic imagery of the ambulance. He also describes the condition of people when they see ambulance.

Psychological condition of people has been presented by the poet in next stanza. Concept of death shows people that nothing in this world is permanent. It does not matter, whether a person is rich or poor, death is certain for him. It is the worst pain in this world. No pain of the world can be compared to death. Furthermore, it cannot be defeated. It is a sad

fate for everyone. It is painful simultaneously dreadful. People show their sympathies while saying the word "Poor soul" for the person, who is being transferred to the hospital but this sympathy actually is the result of selfishness as they are imagining themselves in the ambulance.

Philip Larkin says that ill person might live a good life. His life might be full of happiness. He might have many relatives and family members. He might live a fashionable life but with the arrival of death, his life has no meaning at all. The life, whether it was good or bad, has come to an end. His success has no value. However, loss to his near and dear ones values the most. The poet himself imagines death. Indeed, it is fearful. Philip Larkin has sketched a contrast between life and death. Life does not stop with death of a person. It goes on. It continues. It is also admitted that importance of egos, desires and values ends with death.

Last stanza of the poem is depressing. People give way to ambulances. They pass through the streets; they alarm death. The poet says that patient is going to die. Every single second is taking him close to death. It is certain for him. No one can stop it. Instead of worldly desires, patient's mind is full of feelings and emotions. He fears but nothing can be done to save him from death. It is powerful. It takes every person with him whom it likes. It decreases distance between ill person and afterlife; the same distance, which is still maintained by the healthy ones.

In a nutshell, the poem "Ambulances" illustrates fear. It is among those finest poems which insist on fear. It also shows horror on the face of children and woman when they see death. Death itself is scary but its concept is frightful. In modern days, we witness death every day. Larkin has not presented any utopian world. He has created routine life imagery through which he demonstrates notion of death. It is more effective in this way. Examples from everyday life are more impressive as compared to instances from stories. Philip Larkin is known as the poet of realism. Undoubtedly, in this poem, imagery is realistic. Horror of death can be imagined. Feelings of death on faces of spectators can be felt

2.6 A SUMMARY

Ambulances poem is very much symbolic poem, very first lines of the poem describe that these ambulances are symbolized by confessional box, when a man having done sin he confess before to God like that a man come into an ambulance he comes in confessional box. He remember his sins book and in himself confesses all his sin before to God. He forgets to world in a just minute. And in this very Ambulance the attendants actually symbolized by accountable angels of God. who are doing their duty and asking him questions like the attendants asks what is wrong with you, what happened, what are you feeling now etc.

Ambulances Critical Analysis may be examined in this way Ambulances are symbols of death, when they pass through some mob, they create anxiety, depression, problems etc. Eventually, they are sign or symbol of illness, misery and remember about death, road accidents, they do not bring solace and comfort rather they causes of disappointments, disillusion, frustration etc, and symbols all of them. In this sense this Ambulances Summary, Critical Analysis, Critical appreciation wear the clothes of symbolic or we may say that it is a confirmed symbolic poem at all.

The Ambulances poem critical analysis narrates that there are all the human being are busy in their daily routine of work and they have forgotten to death, they have forgotten about death and considered that the life will going on same as it is going on**. "Then children strewn on steps or road, Or women coming from the shops Past smells of different dinners, see A wild white face that overtops Red stretcher-blankets momently As it is carried in and stowed,"** however it is their misconception and it breaks out when they see ambulance, all of them for moment stunted what is going on who is going to die, who is poor soul, for this very moment they feel that actually one day they also will be die like that but this contemplations are not for that person who is in ambulance rather they are themselves.

The third stanza of "Ambulances" can be analyzed that the women feel sorry for they think that life is too short and it has no permanent heeling for man. They realize that he is poor man and have a soft heart and feelings for him but indeed they are worried a out themselves. If we do critical analysis or appreciation of this stanza then we find out that Philip Larkin here describes that life is nothing and we are finding meaning by it in this sense this poem become an existentialism in some extent.

In the fourth stanza the poet writes about the impression of the people have ended when ambulance goes away all the men and women forget now this very man who is in ambulance is alone an is experiencing his life last moment, the poet says that in his life he has relationship , he has wisdom about fashion and life style but no this is going to an end for him. If we will take out critical analysis or appreciation then we get that in this stanza Larkin elaborates here life is nothing, man come and one day he dies same as in the poem **"All the world a Stage"** Shakespeare a man comes in this world like an actor he plays his roles and at he end he leaves this stage for others so that others may preform here. So same as Larkin's point of view here that having been lived a gentle life he has to die now because it is reality of the life, life has no meaning, it is riddle no one can solve it .

In the last stanza of the poem becomes clear that man is alone he comes alone and he dies alone it is another matter he develops very much relationships in this world and for him this relationships is to break is a hard task for him that is why God does do so. In the case this ambulances once again proves to be symbolic poem. In this stanza the poet says that he is now in ambulance cabin, he is alone no one can feel his feelings now what he is realizing. He is breaking his worldly relationships, now he has no feelings perhaps feelings and emotions have been died for him. On the road in some extent there are people that are with him but actually they are not they are allowing the path so that he may reach on his goal. In this way this stanza of the Ambulances suggests Critical commentary on life and death the people are helping him towards death they are giving path indeed they are giving path to death so that it may come close to sufferer man and take away from there.

In short, it becomes clear that Ambulances poem Critical Analysis or critical appreciation and summary symbolic tone reveal that about temporariness of the life. Man is puppet in the hand of death and fate. Janice Rossen rightly said that **"Larkin wrote a group of poems which insist harshly on fear in the face of death,, and which are**

therefore bleak and sinister. In some of these poems, Larkin's view of death is chilling and effective because of the very ordinariness and everyday settings he writes about. For instance,, in the poem Ambulances, he emphasizes the omnipresence of death in the line: 'All streets in time are visited.' His poem 'Aubade' proves that nothing can defeat or mitigate the horror and permanence of death. "

2.7 KEY WORDS AND TECHNICAL TERMS

1. Widdowson (1975) defines stylistics as, "The study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation".

2. Adejare (1992) makes this clear when he said that, "Style is an ambiguous term".

3. Lawal (1997) also added that, "It may be reckoned in terms of the sociolinguistic contexts and it may also be reckoned or analyzed on linguistic, semantic and even semiotic terms".

4. Leech and Short (1981) is of the view that, "The word style has an uncontroversial meaning. Style depends on the context for a given purpose for which the language is being used".

5. Leech and Short (1981) also said that, "It is the selection of the words from a grand linguistic vocabulary".
   Short and Candlin (1989) said that, "Stylistics is a linguistic approach to texts".

6. According to Freeman (1971), "Stylistics is a sub-discipline which started in the second half of the 20th century".

2.8 SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. What is the central theme of the poem ambulances?
2. What does a patient signify in the poem ambulances?
3. What is the plot of the poem ambulances?

2.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. The Philip Larkin Society. Retrieved 13 November 2009.
2. *"Philip Larkin (1922–1985)". The Poetry Archive. Archived from the original on 27 September 2007.*
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4. "Philip Larkin", Channel 4 television. Retrieved 13 November 2009.
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7. Brown, Mark (2008). "Photographer's papers reveal image-conscious Larkin", *The Guardian*, 7 May 2008.
8. Fletcher, Christopher (2008). "Revealingly yours, Philip Larkin", *The Sunday Times*, 11 May 2008.

LESSON-3
CHURCH GOING

Contents

3.1 OBJECTIVES

1. Students will practice close reading poems for both literal and figurative meaning.
2. Students will think and write analytically about literature, using examples from the text and appropriate literary terminology to support arguments about the way a text functions.
3. Students will become familiar with Philip Larkin's work and its greater impact on British society.
4. Students will become familiar with mid 20th century British poetry.

3.2 BACKGROUND-THE WRITER AND THE PERIOD

Philip Larkin was born on 9 August 1922 at 2, Poultney Road, Radford, Coventry,[15] the only son and younger child of Sydney Larkin (1884–1948) and his wife Eva Emily (1886–1977), daughter of first-class excise officer William James Day. Sydney Larkin's family originated in Kent, but had lived since at least the eighteenth century at Lichfield, Staffordshire, where they were in trade first as tailors, then also as coach-builders and shoe-makers. The Day family were of Epping, Essex, but moved to Leigh in Lancashire in 1914 where William Day took a post administering pensions and other dependent allowances.

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3.4 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

The poem ‘Church Going’ represents the thoughts of the poet as he enters a church. He is an agnostic but accepts the importance of religion in human culture. In the poem, the speaker questions the utility of churches and hence religion in our life and also seems to make an attempt to understand their attraction. Failing to realize their allure, he wonders to himself

that what will happen to the churches, once they go out of fashion and fall to disuse. The poem that seems to be an inquiry into the role of religion in our lives today, describes the curiosity of the speaker on the same subject. However, in the end the narrator comes to the conclusion that churches will never go out of style, not only because of the integral role of religion in our society, but also because mankind has an innate need to believe in something greater then themselves.

This poem was written in 1954, and published in 1955. The rhythm of the poem is iambic tetrameter, and it has a strict rhyme of ababcadcd. The language of the poem is conversational, and the narrator poses many interrogatives (asks questions). Larkin uses a lot of religious imagery and words, some are used as they are intended, but others are used in a somewhat blasphemous way. The title can be interpreted in a few different ways: the act of going to church, the customs that keep the church alive, visiting the church as one would a theatre, and the disappearance of the church.

Once I am sure there's nothing going on
I step inside, letting the door thud shut.
Another church: matting, seats, and stone,
And little books; sprawlings of flowers, cut
For Sunday, brownish now; some brass and stuff
Up at the holy end; the small neat organ;
And a tense, musty unignorable silence,
Brewed God knows how long. Hatless, I take off
My cycle-clips in awkward reverence, (lines 1-9)

The narrator of this stanza is both clumsy (not tactful or subtle) and ignorant. In this stanza, the narrator talks about the present state of the church. Given that the narrator is an atheist, he makes sure that no one is around before he enters the church; he wants to be able to explore the mysticism of the church by himself. He lets the "door thud shut," which is a bit disrespectful. The church is considered to be a holy place and holy places are to be highly cherished and treated with respect by all who enter them. Perhaps, letting the "door thud shut" was his way of seeing if the church was truly empty, because if it wasn't empty then someone would appear when they heard the noise. The narrator sounds bored when he utters: "another church;" he seems to be uninterested in the church. The word 'Another' signifies that the poet had visited a number of churches and had a habit of doing so, with the same matting, seats and Bibles, in his search for some difference of one of them from others.

The narrator begins to describe the church from his clumsy and ignorant perspective. "Little books" refer to bibles or hymn books. In this context, sprawling is referring to the flowers that have been picked for Sunday service and are spread out in all different directions. The flowers are now brown, which we can infer to mean that Sunday was at least a few days ago, and that no one has come by since then to throw them out. "Brass" could be referring to the monumental brass that is commonly found in English churches. He continues by saying "and stuff up at the holy end," which shows how truly unimpressed and ignorant he really is about the church. "The holy end" refers to the pulpit and the surrounding area. The organ is small and neat, which we can then interpret to mean that the church is small or that the church is poor; neat probably refers to it not being dusty, so there must be someone who comes there and looks after the church. The air is described as being tense (anxious), musty (moldy; stale; tasting or smelling of damp or decay), and silence so great that it cannot be ignored; probably he is referring to the church itself, religion, or both. That "tense, musty" air

brewed (to prepare by steeping, boiling, or fermenting) for "God knows how long." In a Christian's opinion, the narrator uses "God" in a disrespectful and blasphemous way. In respect for the church, the narrator removes his cycle-clips (devices worn below the knee to keep trouser legs from getting caught in a bicycle chain), in awkward reverence (a gesture of respect) since he has not hat. It seems like the narrator is a bit dubious about his feeling towards the church; one minute he is uninterested and rude, and the next he is showing respect.

Move forward, run my hand around the front.
From where I stand, the roof looks almost new—
Cleaned, or restored? Someone would know: I don't.
Mounting the lectern, I peruse a few
Hectoring large-scale verses, and pronounce
"Here endeth" much more loudly than I'd meant.
The echoes snigger briefly. Back at the door
I sign the book, donate an Irish sixpence,
Reflect the place was not worth stopping for. (10-18)

The narrator commands himself to "move forward;" he touches something, but still appears to feel nothing. He is still describing the church in general physical terms rather than the metaphysical ones that church is founded upon. He notices that the roof is semi-new; has it been restored or just cleaned? If it was just cleaned then it means that there is probably a caretaker hired to look after the church, but if it was restored that means that people actually care about this place and it isn't as abandoned as the narrator perceives. The clumsy narrator doesn't care enough to know whether it was cleaned or restored, because it is of no consequence to him; he doesn't believe in God or church. He steps up to the lectern (a stand to support a book for a standing reader) as if he is the priest about to give a sermon. He peruses (to read over attentively or leisurely) the "hectoring [to intimate or dominate in a blustering way] large-scale verse" (biblical verses printed in large type for reading aloud). He ends his sermon with "here endeth," which is the traditional way to wrap-up a Bible reading in church. "Echoes" are personified, echoes cannot snigger (a sly or disrespectful laugh, especially one partly stifled). The echoes snigger at his mistake of saying "here endeth" too loudly and at the irony of what he says. In the narrator's opinion, religion is on a decline; so when he says "here endeth" he is not only talking about his sermon ending, he is also talking about religion ending; he is also saying that he will be the last person to recite those words in that church. He goes to the rear of the church and signs the guestbook; thus, taking part in religion. He "donates an Irish sixpence," which has no value in England. Donating valueless coinage to a church can be interpreted in two ways: first, he donates to show his disrespect for religion; or second, that donating to the church has no value. An argument could be made for both positions. He shows disrespect for the church when he mounts the pulpit and proceeds to mock church ceremony. On the other hand, why donate to the church if you don't believe in God? Even if what he donates has no value, the mere fact that he donated something could mean that he has, at least, a small amount of fear of God. He leaves the church and reflects that stopping was a waste of time.

Yet stop I did: in fact I often do,
And always end much at a loss like this,
Wondering what to look for; wondering, too,
When churches fall completely out of use
What we shall turn them into, if we shall keep
A few cathedrals chronically on show,

Their parchment, plate and pyx in locked cases,
And let the rest rent-free to rain and sheep.
Shall we avoid them as unlucky places? (19-27)

In stanza three, the narrator starts to imagine what the churches will be turned into once their original purpose is gone. He stops at that church often, trying to figure out what the allure of that place is. Religion confuses him, and he wonders what he is missing. He envisions the churches becoming a sort of museum frequently on exhibit for those who have never been to church or those who want to relive some childhood memory. The museums would display the church artifacts: parchments, plate, and pyx, in locked glass cases, so that they can't be stolen; treating the church's belongings in this way gives them value, which in the narrator's opinion is something that the church lacks. A parchment is the skin of an animal prepared for writing on. The plate is probably referring to one of two things: first, a collections plate where people donate money or other valuable things to the church, or second, it holds the bread and wine that are brought to the altar during Sunday service. The rest of the church should be used by the "rain and sheep," because other than the artifacts the church is pretty useless. Or, instead of turning them into museums, should be regard them as unlucky places and avoid them altogether? Overall, the narrator is saying that churches are useless, but not forgotten.

Or, after dark, will dubious women come
To make their children touch a particular stone;
Pick simples for a cancer; or on some
Advised night see walking a dead one?
Power of some sort or other will go on
In games, in riddles, seemingly at random;
But superstition, like belief, must die,
And what remains when disbelief has gone?
Grass, weedy pavement, brambles, buttress, sky, (28-36)

Stanza four imagines the churches becoming places of superstition. Dubious (uncertain, feeling doubt, or undecided) women will come after dark to perform various superstitious rituals like "touching a particular stone," picking "simples [medicinal herbs] for a cancer," or "walking a dead one." The power of that holy ground will remain in one form or another. Believing in superstition will end just like belief in God ended. The only things that will be left are the "grass, weedy pavement, brambles [rough prickly shrubs or vines], buttress" (a projecting structure to supports a wall), and the "sky." The church will be overgrown with nature; what was once built from the earth will return to the earth, leaving only a few superficial remnants.

A shape less recognisable each week,
A purpose more obscure. I wonder who
Will be the last, the very last, to seek
This place for what it was; one of the crew
That tap and jot and know what rood-lofts were?
Some ruin-bibber, randy for antique,
Or Christmas-addict, counting on a whiff
Of gown-and-bands and organ-pipes and myrrh?
Or will he be my representative, (37-45)

Stanza five is a continuation of the stanza four's thought. The narrator of this stanza is isolated and meditative, and appears to be less deceived by religion. The church becomes more and more unrecognizable each week as the trees and plants overtake the structure. The buildings original purpose has become more and more obscure as well. He ponders who will be the very last person to seek out the church for its original purpose. Will it be one of the maintenance men, who look after the church? "Rood-lofts" are galleries, in churches, on top of carves screens separating the naves, or main halls, from the choirs, or areas where services are performed. Rood also means cross or crucifix. Or, will it be some "ruin-bibber," who is "randy for antique"? Ruin-bibber stems from the biblical term wine-bibber, which is a person who regularly drinks alcoholic beverages. Using the definition of wine-bibber we can infer that a ruin-bibber is someone who regularly visits old ruins or churches; the ruins act like alcohol and make him drunk excited. Or, will it be someone who misses the smell of Christmas, no churches/religion essentially means that there is no Christmas. The term "gown-and-bands" refers to the gown and decorative collar worn by the clergymen. This visitor wants to hear the organ play Christmas music again like it did when he was a child. He also wants to smell the scent of myrrh (gum resin, from trees of eastern Africa and Arabia, used to make incense; one of the three presents given to the infant Jesus (Mathew 2 and Luke 2) again. Or, will the last the last visitor be someone like the narrator; someone who doesn't believe in God, but still wonders what all of the fuss is about.

Bored, uniformed, knowing the ghostly silt
Dispersed, yet tending to this cross of ground
Through suburb scrub because it held unspilt
So long and equably what since is found
Only in separation—marriage, and birth,
And death, and thought of these—for which was built
This special shell? For, though I've no idea
What this accoutered frowsty barn is worth,
It pleases me to stand in silence here; (46-54)

In stanza six, the clumsy and ignorant narrator returns, but this time he appears to have been touched by religion and found some new sort of respect for it. He knows that the "Ghostly [means both spiritual and saint] silt" (fine earth; especially particles of such soil floating in rivers, ponds, or lakes) was said to be spread over this "cross of ground" (most churches were built in the shape of a cross); nonetheless, he tends (to show an inclination or tendency) to travel there through the scrub (a thick growth of stunted trees or shrubs) of suburbia to try and experience the power of the church himself. The Church has stood for so long without being destroyed, so there must be something there, right? This "special shell" (i.e. churches) was built to celebrate marriages, births, and the lives of those who have died; so can religion be all that bad? The narrator shows respect for the church and religion by saying that even though he doesn't know what this "frowsty [musty, uncared-for appearance] barn is worth," it still "pleases him to stand in silence here." Silence connotes comfort; he doesn't feel the need to disrespect the church by making noise any longer, he simply enjoys his surroundings.

A serious house on serious earth it is,
In whose blent air all our compulsions meet,
Are recognized, and robed as destinies.
And that much never can be obsolete,
Since someone will forever be surprising

A hunger in himself to be more serious,
And gravitating with it to this ground,
Which, he once heard, was proper to grow wise in,
If only that so many dead lie round. (55-64)

Stanza seven shows the narrator as being an independent thinker; he realizes religion will always have a place in the hearts of man, because they need to believe in something that is greater than themselves. Churches will never fall out of use. Until about the nineteenth century, the word "serious" meant religious; so saying "a serious house on serious earth" means a religious house on holy ground. The church is where all of our compulsions (an irresistible persistent impulse to perform an act) are realized. The word "destiny" is given to major life events in order to explain them. Destiny is said to be God's will; the cliché "everything happens for a reason" comes to mind here. The fear of God's wrath holds people accountable for their actions. God gives humans guidelines to live their lives, which is something that a lot of people need. Religion teaches you "right" from "wrong;" thus, religion becomes a necessary entity to keep society running smoothly. People inherently want answers: why was I born? Why did such and such have to happen to me? Religion is able to answer these questions, which gives us a purpose. Only those who are dead know the truth about whether there is a heaven or not.

3.5 A BRIEF CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE TEXT

The seven stanzas of "Church Going" follow a similar rhythm and meter. Larkin uses iambic pentameter for many of the lines. Iambic pentameter is one of English literature's most common meters and has been used in everything from plays to poetry. The lines contain ten syllables divided into five pairs. The first syllable of each pair is unstressed and the second is stressed. This creates a steady, pounding rhythm to the words. Larkin's use of iambic pentameter is appropriate thematically. He writes about the beauty of old British churches using one of British literature's most revered literary devices. The subject matter matches the poetic style.

The title of the poem refers to the people who attend church. These churchgoers are turned into a verb. Churchgoing becomes an active motion that imbues such people with an agency. Larkin wants to explore why these people return to churches. He begins with his own experience of visiting a church. The church is deemed not worthy of his time and he notes that he visited anyway. Larkin's "awkward reverence" is evident but it is not limited to one man. People have been attending these churches for many hundreds of years so there is a quality that attracts them to the buildings.

Faith, solace, doubt, and other emotions and needs provide a religious explanation but Larkin searches for a more physical reason. The buildings fascinate him. The poet is cynical, scathing, and acerbic in his description of the church. He speaks slightly too loud in the church and attracts attention. This moment creates a parallel for Larkin himself. The overly cynical irreligiosity of Larkin's approach means that he is fascinated by the bricks and the mortar rather than anything abstract. The "serious house on a serious earth" is not to be explained away with fairy tales or the supernatural. Larkin wants to find a material explanation for people's fascination with churches but eventually admits that this is impossible.

The intangible need to be in a holy or contemplative space is buoyed by the history of people who stood in the church in the past. Their presence is felt by the churchgoers. People attend church because people attended church before them and Larkin realizes that he does the same. His visit to the church was not worth his time but he keeps visiting because it is what he has always done. This is how churchgoing functions. It is a repeated act made more significant by the repetition.

3.6 A SUMMARY

The speaker of the poem sneaks into a church after making sure it's empty. He lets the door thud shut behind him and glances around at all the fancy decorations, showing his ignorance of (or indifference to) how sacred all this stuff is supposed to be. After a short pause, he walks up to the altar and reads a few lines from the notes that are sitting on a lectern. After this, he walks back out of the church and slides an Irish sixpence into the collection box, which is basically like donating an old shirt button.

The speaker thinks that the place wasn't worth stopping to check out. But he also admits that he *did* stop, and that this isn't the first time he's done so. He can't help but wonder what he's looking for when he keeps coming back to this place, and also asks himself about what will happen to churches when there are no more believers left in the world. He wonders if they'll make museums out of the churches, or if they'll just leave the buildings' doors open so that sheep can hang out inside them.

Nearing the end of the poem, the speaker asks what will happen to the world when religion is gone altogether. Then he wonders what the very last religious person will be like. Will they be an obsessive compulsive, who just can't stop wanting to smell incense? Or will they be more like the speaker, someone who's bored and ignorant about the church, and just passing by without knowing what they're looking for?

Finally, the speaker just comes out and admits that he's pleased by the church because it's a serious place for serious questions. Humanity, he concludes, will always have a hunger to ask those big questions like "Why are we here?" and "Where do we go when we die?" And for this reason, the kind of urge that created religion in the first place will never go away, even if organized churches do. Sorry, atheists. If you were looking for a poem that just trashes religion and calls spiritual people stupid, you'll have to look someplace else.

3.7 KEY WORDS AND TECHNICAL TERMS

This poem is packed with a rich mixture of common and rare vocabulary. It can be read out loud, whispered quietly, or even read in silence; it seems to satisfy all criteria for poetry performance.

- door thud shut/some brass and stuff . . . assonance and vowel variety.
- Hectoring/Here endeth . . . hectoring means bullying in an intimidating way . . . Here endeth is the classic King James bible wrap-up phrase for the end of a sermon.
- parchment,plate and pyx . . . church artifacts (old paper/text, silver or metal trays and plates, a round container containing the consecrated host).
- pick simples for a cancer . . . to use medicinal herbs to cure a cancer.
- rood-lofts/ruin-bibber . . . a display gallery above the rood screen/someone addicted to ruins (rood- crucifix) (bibber-person who imbibes specified drink).

- accoutred frowsty barn . . . impressive stuffy barn (a disparaging phrase).
- blent air all our compulsions meet . . . a poetic use of blended, so a mix of air, where people are urged or forced to do certain things (note the change from the singular I to our).

3.8 SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Write a critical appreciation of the poem church going?
2. Where does the poet signs when he returns from the church? ...
3. Analyze the title of poem church going.
4. what does title instantly suggest us?

3.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

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For most readers of this poem, our supposed rewards are depicted as a line of approaching ships that will unload their precious cargoes into our lives.

In this nihilistic poem, Larkin describes vividly the void and nothingness that comes after death. Interestingly, one student summed the poem up as being not about hopelessness but hopefulness. He was delighted to see how we "consider that happiness is just around the corner despite its repeated failure to appear." How do you react to this personal response to the piece? Do you agree? Or disagree?

The clear references to death are startling in the final section. If the first five verses have been about life, then this final stanza is about death. It is the only thing that we can be certain of in life.

He seizes the naval image of a ship and sets out a morbid message. The sails are "black". The connotations are clear. The ship itself is eerily called an "unfamiliar" and astern, we witness a "huge and birdless silence". This is a very emotive line. The simple and moving alliterative last line rams home the point with "w" and "b" to pound out the beat. We have a nihilistic, cheerless end to life. No celebration; it is just silent and motionless.

Enjambments creates the sensation that at the end of each line something will follow it; this builds up the expectation of the final stanza where there can be nothing to follow, and therefore gives heaviest emphasis to the final lines. Caesura prevents the reader from wishing to linger over any one idea; in a way the reader skims over the ideas that are presented as if they are light and of little consequence. The universality created by the rhyme scheme, the sense of impatience to get on to the next point caused by enjambment, and the lack of serious weight given to ideas due to caesura all contribute to the final effect of the poem; the one thing not looked for is the one thing that must be found.

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LESSON-4
THE WHITSUN WEDDINGS

Contents

4.1 OBJECTIVES

1. Students will practice close reading poems for both literal and figurative meaning.
2. Students will think and write analytically about literature, using examples from the text and appropriate literary terminology to support arguments about the way a text functions.
3. Students will become familiar with Philip Larkin's work and its greater impact on British society.
4. Students will become familiar with mid 20th century British poetry.

4.2 BACKGROUND-THE WRITER AND THE PERIOD

Whitsun Day is the one day of the year in which the marriage tax is declared null by the British government, thus affording 24 hours of relief to those couples unable to get hitched due to dire economic circumstances. It is on that day that the speaker of "The Whitsun Weddings" has been forced to take a later train than the usual one he rides. It is almost 1:30 on an unpleasantly hot Saturday afternoon when the quarter-full train pulls from the station. As the train takes off, a panorama of the backside of homes, a fishing dock and a river are can be seen through the open windows.

As the afternoon wears on and the train speeds through the countryside, these sites are replaced by stretches of farmland, industrial canals and another town that looks like the last one. What the speaker doesn't take much notice of as the train is moving are the weddings that are taking place as a result of the holiday. The bright afternoon sun throws its light on certain scenes, while others remain hidden in the shade. Only when the movement comes to a stop at each station is the speaker given enough time to pay attention to the weddings.

The first thing that strikes him is the loudness that these weddings produce. The second thing he notices is how the brides and their maids try to copy the latest fashions, but succeed only in becoming parodies of style. His next thought is how all the mothers of the brides share the common physical trait of being overweight; how yellow, purple and green are the hot colors of the moment; and how every single wedding party seems to include a dirty-minded uncle somewhere. Cafes, banquet halls and yards all serve well for stringing the

bunting and hosting the party. And then, amid a hail of confetti and last minute advice, the bride and groom were waved goodbye on the train platform.

As the train makes its way closer to London, the landscape grows more urban in atmosphere and a dozen more marriages will take place before the speaker arrives. As the train begins to move well past being only a quarter full, the speaker ponders how none of the grooms and their brides ever stop to contemplate how they will share something with each of the other newly wedding couples for as long as their marriage lasts.

The light, but unavoidably apparent sense of scorn toward the bridal parties that the speaker has expressed in his thoughts undergoes an ironic shift as the train pulls into the station. London's industrial dark suddenly takes on a sense of magic as he realizes that the collection of so many newly married couples has given a meaning to the coincidence that has brought them all together in the same. Amid imagery of arrows, showers and rain, the full significance of the massive potential for all the fertility to come together and change the world overwhelms his previous cynical attitude.

4.3 THE WRITER- HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Philip Larkin was born on 9 August 1922 at 2, Poultney Road, Radford, Coventry,[15] the only son and younger child of Sydney Larkin (1884–1948) and his wife Eva Emily (1886–1977), daughter of first-class excise officer William James Day. Sydney Larkin's family originated in Kent, but had lived since at least the eighteenth century at Lichfield, Staffordshire, where they were in trade first as tailors, then also as coach-builders and shoe-makers. The Day family were of Epping, Essex, but moved to Leigh in Lancashire in 1914 where William Day took a post administering pensions and other dependent allowances.

The Larkin family lived in the district of Radford, Coventry, until Larkin was five years old, before moving to a large three-storey middle-class house complete with servants' quarters near Coventry railway station and King Henry VIII School, in Manor Road. Having survived the bombings of the Second World War, their former house in Manor Road was demolished in the 1960s to make way for a road modernisation programme, the construction of an inner ring road. His sister Catherine, known as Kitty, was 10 years older than he was. His father, a self-made man who had risen to be Coventry City Treasurer, was a singular individual, 'nihilistically disillusioned in middle age' who combined a love of literature with an enthusiasm for Nazism, and had attended two Nuremberg rallies during the mid-1930s. He introduced his son to the works of Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, James Joyce and above all D. H. Lawrence. His mother was a nervous and passive woman, "a kind of defective mechanism...Her ideal is 'to collapse' and to be taken care of", dominated by her husband.

Larkin's early childhood was in some respects unusual: he was educated at home until the age of eight by his mother and sister, neither friends nor relatives ever visited the family home, and he developed a stammer. Nonetheless, when he joined Coventry's King Henry VIII Junior School he fitted in immediately and made close, long-standing friendships, such as those with James "Jim" Sutton, Colin Gunner and Noel "Josh" Hughes. Although home life was relatively cold, Larkin enjoyed support from his parents. For example, his deep passion for jazz was supported by the purchase of a drum kit and a saxophone, supplemented by a subscription to *Down Beat*. From the junior school he progressed to King Henry VIII Senior School. He fared quite poorly when he sat his School Certificate exam at the age of 16. Despite his results, he was allowed to stay on at school; two years later he earned

distinctions in English and History, and passed the entrance exams for St John's College, Oxford, to read English.

Larkin began at Oxford University in October 1940, a year after the outbreak of the Second World War. The old upper-class traditions of university life had, at least for the time being, faded, and most of the male students were studying for highly truncated degrees. Due to his poor eyesight, Larkin failed his military medical examination and was able to study for the usual three years. Through his tutorial partner, Norman Iles, he met Kingsley Amis, who encouraged his taste for ridicule and irreverence and who remained a close friend throughout Larkin's life.] Amis, Larkin and other university friends formed a group they dubbed "The Seven", meeting to discuss each other's poetry, listen to jazz, and drink enthusiastically. During this time he had his first real social interaction with the opposite sex, but made no romantic headway. In 1943 he sat his finals, and, having dedicated much of his time to his own writing, was greatly surprised at being awarded a first-class honours degree.

From his mid-teens, Larkin "wrote ceaselessly", producing both poetry, initially modelled on Eliot and W. H. Auden, and fiction: he wrote five full-length novels, each of which he destroyed shortly after their completion] While he was at Oxford University, his first published poem, "Ultimatum", appeared in *The Listener*. He developed a pseudonymous alter ego in this period for his prose: Brunette Coleman. Under this name he wrote two novellas, *Trouble at Willow Gables* and *Michaelmas Term at St Brides* (2002), as well as a supposed autobiography and an equally fictitious creative manifesto called "What we are writing for". Richard Bradford has written that these curious works show "three registers: cautious indifference, archly overwritten symbolism with a hint of Lawrence and prose that appears to disclose its writer's involuntary feelings of sexual excitement".

After these works, Larkin began to write his first published novel *Jill* (1946). This was published by Reginald A. Caton, a publisher of barely legal pornography, who also issued serious fiction as a cover for his core activities Around the time that *Jill* was being prepared for publication, Caton inquired of Larkin if he also wrote poetry. This resulted in the publication, three months before *Jill*, of *The North Ship* (1945), a collection of poems written between 1942 and 1944 which showed the increasing influence of Yeats. Immediately after completing *Jill*, Larkin started work on the novel *A Girl in Winter* (1947), completing it in 1945. This was published by Faber and Faber and was well received, *The Sunday Times* calling it "an exquisite performance and nearly faultless".Subsequently, he made at least three concerted attempts at writing a third novel, but none developed beyond a solid start.

It was during Larkin's five years in Belfast that he reached maturity as a poet The bulk of his next published collection of poems, *The Less Deceived* (1955), was written there, though eight of the twenty-nine poems included were from the late 1940s. This period also saw Larkin make his final attempts at writing prose fiction, and he gave extensive help to Kingsley Amis with *Lucky Jim*, which was Amis's first published novel. In October 1954 an article in *The Spectator* made the first use of the title The Movement to describe the dominant trend in British post-war literature. Poems by Larkin were included in a 1953 PEN Anthology that also featured poems by Amis and Robert Conquest, and Larkin was seen to be a part of this grouping In 1951, Larkin compiled a collection called *XX Poems* which he had privately printed in a run of just 100 copies. Many of the poems in it subsequently appeared in his next published volume.

In November 1955, *The Less Deceived*, was published by the Marvell Press, an independent company in Hessle near Hull (dated October). At first the volume attracted little attention, but in December it was included in *The Times*' list of *Books of the Year*. From this

point, the book's reputation spread and sales blossomed throughout 1956 and 1957. During his first five years in Hull, the pressures of work slowed Larkin's output to an average of just two-and-a-half poems a year, but this period saw the writing of some of his best-known poems, such as "An Arundel Tomb", "The Whitsun Weddings" and "Here".

In 1963, Faber and Faber reissued *Jill*, with the addition of a long introduction by Larkin that included much information about his time at Oxford University and his friendship with Kingsley Amis. This acted as a prelude to the publication the following year of *The Whitsun Weddings*, the volume which cemented his reputation; a Fellowship of the Royal Society of Literature was granted to Larkin almost immediately. In the years that followed, Larkin wrote several of his most best-known poems, followed in the 1970s by a series of longer and more sober poems, including "The Building" and "The Old Fools". All of these appeared in Larkin's final collection, *High Windows*, which was published in June 1974. Its more direct use of language meant that it did not meet with uniform praise; nonetheless it sold over twenty thousand copies in its first year alone. For some critics it represents a falling-off from his previous two books, yet it contains a number of his much-loved pieces, including "This Be The Verse" and "The Explosion", as well as the title poem. "Annus Mirabilis" (Year of Wonder), also from that volume, contains the frequently quoted observation that sexual intercourse began in 1963, which the narrator claims was "rather late for me". Bradford, prompted by comments in Maeve Brennan's memoir, suggests that the poem commemorates Larkin's relationship with Brennan moving from the romantic to the sexual.

Later in 1974 he started work on his final major published poem, "Aubade". It was completed in 1977 and published in 23 December issue of *The Times Literary Supplement*. After "Aubade" Larkin wrote only one poem that has attracted close critical attention, the posthumously published and intensely personal "Love Again".

4.4 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

Stanza One

That Whitsun, I was late getting away:
Not till about
One-twenty on the sunlit Saturday
(…)
Of blinding windscreens, smelt the fish-dock; thence
The river’s level drifting breadth began,
Where sky and Lincolnshire and water meet.

Larkinian poems focus on microcosm worlds, full of the daily hustle and bustle of people getting about their business. In the opening, the narrator’s life is measured in numbers: one-twenty, for time, three-quarters-empty for the train; he creates, in the space of a few lines, this world that, at once, seems both important and hurried, as well as empty and slightly sad.

Larkin also had a tendency to write on trains for quite a few of his poems, as he found that this gave him the opportunity to observe life without participating in it. Larkin has always been, first and foremost, an observer and a note-taker of life; a librarian of the moments, but not really taking part in it.

Stanza Two

All afternoon, through the tall heat that slept
For miles inland,
(…)
Until the next town, new and nondescript,
Approached with acres of dismantled cars.

English countryside was considered – both in poetry and beyond – to be some of the most beautiful that the world has seen. England poetry, in particular nature poetry, had been built on this idea of the English countryside. As Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote in The Herefordshire Landscape:

A ripple of land; such little hills, the sky
Can stoop to tenderly and the wheatfields climb;
Such nooks of valleys, lined with orchises,
Fed full of noises by invisible streams;
And open pastures, where you scarcely tell
White daisies from white dew, – at intervals
The mythic oaks and elm-trees standing out
Self-poised upon their prodigy of shade, –

The notion of the Romantic countryside, according to Larkin, has been sullied by the presence of modernization: the canals 'with floating of industrial froth' with towns 'new and nondescript, / approached with acres of dismantled cars'. Ironically, although Larkin abhorred the Romantic ideal of nature and the countryside, Robert Rehder believed that Larkin had more in common with the Romantics than he wanted there to be. His focus on the individual consciousness – as seen in *'The Whitsun Weddings'* – and on isolation is a very Romantic notion.

Note also the misery in those lines, the despair of a defaced countryside. At the time, England's landscape was gently changing from mostly-rural to mostly-urban: a huge influx of people had moved out of London during World War II, afraid of being bombed, but after the war, they moved back in droves. The increasing joblessness made further droves of people move after them, thus leaving England in a patchwork state of being, one that Larkin echoes in his poem. There is something miserable and scrabbled about the English countryside that Larkin is writing about now.

Stanza Three

At first, I didn't notice what a noise
The weddings made
Each station that we stopped at: sun destroys
(…)
We passed them, grinning and pomaded, girls
In parodies of fashion, heels and veils,
All posed irresolutely, watching us go,

Larkin believed that he needed to be aloof in order to write poetry, which was chiefly concerned with man – however, Larkin had a general distaste for the people he saw, labeling,

for example, people as ‘sullen flesh inarticulate’ and ‘ageing and bitter’. He is too aloof from the audience he wants to communicate with. Note the way that he refers to the girls ‘in parodies of fashion, heels and veils / all posed irresolutely’, making them into waxwork people, making them frozen in place, and more like mannequins than human beings.

Stanza Four

As if out on the end of an event
Waving goodbye
To something that survived it. Struck, I leant
(…)
An uncle shouting smut; and then the perms,
The nylon gloves and jewellery-substitutes,
The lemons, mauves, and olive-ochres that

Here again, Larkin attempts to individualize them, however the use of plurals – ‘fathers’, ‘mothers’ – suggests sameness. The speaker seems to be describing them from an omniscient standpoint, however the attempt to describe them in broad terms, and the use of the plural form, is reductive in its capacity. Andrew Crozier wrote, about this poem, “the people are generalized through grotesque detail which is away on the verge of registering distaste.”

Larkin once famously wrote that he wanted to write poetry that “offered something nothing else could, something more than reading, watching television or going out with some girl … compulsive contact between reader and writer.” However, this very distance that he laboured under leads the people he writes about to become parodies. By leaning on stereotypes, he reduces them to nothing more than cardboard place settings.

As Foucault wrote, Larkin’s writing “functions as a procedure of objectification and subjection” where he turns the individual into something he can describe and analyze, whilst trying to maintain individuality. In Larkin’s poems, however, whole sections of people blend together.

Stanza Five

Marked off the girls unreally from the rest.
Yes, from cafés
And banquet-halls up yards, and bunting-dressed
(…)
And, as we moved, each face seemed to define
Just what it saw departing: children frowned
At something dull; fathers had never known

Larkin’s description of the wedding and the chaos surrounding the event is as minimizing as his description of people. By painting the wedding party with a broad brush, he makes the event itself seem ordinary. Although there is chaos and movement in this stanza, Larkin’s writing makes it seem as though it is playing in stop-motion, moving so slowly and so painfully that it has no hope of changing. Despite the fact that Larkin is writing about life, his poems have a distinct lack of living creatures in them.

Furthermore, the wedding is placed as something ordinary. Colin Falck, a Larkinian critic, called this the "ever-deepening acceptance of the ordinariness of things as they are", and it is the aptest description for the way that Larkin writes. His poetry takes things and makes them ordinary and commonplace, and it is partially due to the fact that Larkin strove to write simple poetry. By writing his simple poetry, he makes everything as ordinary as possible.

Stanza Six

Success so huge and wholly farcical;
The women shared
(…)
Long shadows over major roads, and for
Some fifty minutes, that in time would seem

The movement from detachment to involvement is documented particularly in this stanza. Larkin goes into more detail here, though again reducing the people that he's describing by painting them with a broad brush. The train finally starts to move again, pulling Larkin away from his introspection about the ladies and the wedding party, but for a brief few stanzas, Larkin's involvement in their lives led the reader to also become involved in their lives, thus opening up *'The Whitsun Weddings'* on a secondary level. It is also worth pointing out the innate misery of the words – notice, for example, the way the landscape is described here:

'Now fields were building-plots, and poplars cast / Long shadows over major roads, and for / some fifty minutes, that in time would seem'. The countryside is dying, pockmarked by modernity.

Stanza Seven

Just long enough to settle hats and say
I nearly died,
(…)
I thought of London spread out in the sun,
Its postal districts packed like squares of wheat:

It is worth noting that more personality is given to the inanimate British countryside – of which we get the only description – than is giving to the people that Larkin strove to describe. This is a particularly Larkinian trait – objects have a far more involving personality than people, for Larkin. In *'The Whitsun Weddings'*, almost every line goes on about the British countryside, its ruination, and the buildings that are causing said ruination, whereas the people are painted with one big brush, marking them out as materialistic, wedding-mad, and loud, with a distinctly classist way of writing about them that makes them seem as though they're lower-class. The countryside, on the other hand, is lovingly described, and its presence in the poem can be felt far more acutely than the people whom Larkin tried to describe earlier.

Stanza Eight

There we were aimed. And as we raced across
Bright knots of rail
(…)
A sense of falling, like an arrow-shower
Sent out of sight, somewhere becoming rain.

For Larkin, the poet depended on his readers, and when a poet is abandoned, it is not entirely the readers' fault. Modernism gets the blame for making poetry too obscure for the average reader, thus lessening the poet's range. Larkin attempts to reach what he calls the 'cut-price crowd' in his poems, i.e. those who might not have an interest in poetry as such but lean towards materiality. His reader is the reader who has 'no room for books' and who prefers the 'jabbering set'. He asserted that 'the public for poetry is larger than we think, and waiting to be found if we look in the right places'.

His poems are like dialogues – there is someone talking and the assumption of someone listening and understanding. For Larkin, poetry was business, and rock and roll and sex moved the younger generation, not poetry, which he could not compete with. He also believed that his readers refused to meet him halfway and wouldn't give the poem a chance.

In all his poems, therefore, there is this attempt to reach out to people. It is usually in the final stanza, such as in *'The Whitsun Weddings'*, that this attempt to reach out dwindles down to nothing: to a hopeless, melancholy, fleeting presence of emotion.

4.5 A BRIEF CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE TEXT

"The Whitsun Weddings" continues Larkin's examination of young couples and his consideration of youth and what it means to be in love. The poem has a satirical angle. The middle-aged man on the train views the weddings as a bothersome interruption of his peaceful journey. He references the tax reasons why a couple might get married on this particular weekend and views the entire enterprise as more an exercise in practicality than romance. The weddings are an annoyance and the loud, intrusive sounds in the carriage are a metaphor for the spectacle of the wedding itself. The dull, mundane lives of the people are represented by the quiet carriage. The rise in noise and the shattering of the peaceful quiet represents the spectacle and the clamor of the wedding ceremony. A wedding is a noisy, annoying intrusion on a peaceful life. This cynicism is undermined by the opening stanzas of the poem. Larkin does not mention the weddings at first. The poem begins with descriptions of the peaceful, quiet English countryside. The views from the train appear peaceful and idyllic but they are far away and distant. Larkin is separated from the idyllic peace by the glass of the window and the clattering sound of the train. He is not actually in the peaceful fields but he is a part of the loud, polluting train that shatters the silence of the countryside. There is an inherent irony in Larkin being bothered by the wedding parties breaking the silence of the train when the train is breaking the silence of the countryside. Larkin's irritation turns to speculation. The noise begins to fade as he examines the guests' clothing. He finds their outfits to be shabby and worn down. The clothes are not fashionable but are parodies of fashionable clothes. The jewelry pieces are "jewelry substitutes" and the people themselves are out of shape and odd. Larkin posits that weddings are farcical, absurd ceremonies that contain a layer of deceit and theater but they are interesting nevertheless. His pretentious, judgmental attitude is evident from the way in which he criticizes the guests. The end of the

poem reaches the conclusion that the weddings can be practical and romantic as well as meaningful and meaningless. This is the "frail traveling coincidence" that suggests the ceremonies have meaning and no meaning at the same time. The meaning derives from the emotion and substance that the guests invest in the ceremony rather than the ceremony itself. The delighted, noisy guests are both vapid, hollow participants in a farcical ceremony and happy, proud guests at an important ceremony. Larkin realizes that both can be true. The train comes to a stop as he reaches his realization. The carriages will empty out and the people will disappear but the memory of the wedding will remain and thus imbue the ceremony and the partnership with meaning.

4.6 A SUMMARY

It was Whitsun Saturday and I left late. It was a sunny day and my train departed around 1:20, almost completely empty. The windows were open due to the stifling heat, even the seat cushions were hot, and everything felt very slow. Out of the window I saw the backs of houses, the glare of windshields, and I could smell the fish-dock. We rode beside the wide, flat, slow river, zooming through the Lincolnshire countryside.

The train kept its steady course all through the hot afternoon, as we traveled south and inland. We passed big farms with cows whose shadows were small under the high sun, and canals full of industrial waste. I saw a greenhouse, and hedges rising and falling. The carriage had a pretty bad smell from the cloth, but sometimes the smell of grass overpowered it. Towns seemed to repeat themselves as we went past, each one signaled by a scrapyard.

At the beginning of the journey, I didn't notice the weddings whose noise could be heard from each station. The sun was too bright for me to see what was happening in the shade of the platform, and though I could hear a commotion I thought it was porters mucking around with the mail. I kept reading, but as the train pulled away I noticed a large group of young female wedding guests. They were smiling, had elaborate hair, and were dressed as if in a caricature of contemporary styles, with heels and veils. They were poised uncertainly on the platform watching us leave.

It was as though they were witnessing the end of something that we on the train had survived. Now I was intrigued, so I took greater notice at the next station and comprehended the scene more clearly. I saw fat fathers with sweaty heads, loud overweight mothers, and uncles being rude. Then I noticed the girls again, with their perms, nylon gloves, and fake jewelry, and the yellows, pinks, and brown-greens.

These fashion elements separated the girls visually from the other guests, almost as if they were an illusion. These numerous weddings—which took place in small halls and cafes near the train yards, with rooms covered in streamers and full of coach-loads of guests—were nearly over. At every station, newlyweds boarded the train while the guests gave last bits of advice and threw confetti. When we left each station, I read the faces of those still on the platform, each of which seemed to say something about the wedding. The children seemed bored.

For the fathers, this was the biggest success of their lives, though something about it felt like a joke. The older women looked like they knew a terrible secret, while the girls seemed perplexed, holding their purses tighter—perhaps even intimated by what they saw, as though they'd witnessed something of fearful religious importance. Pretty soon we left the guests behind—though we had internalized all their perspectives—and raced towards London, the train blowing fits of steam. The environment grew more urbanized, fields giving

way to plots of land being developed, and I noticed poplar trees casting shadows over the roads.

In that fifty minutes or so, which was just long enough to get comfortable and reflect on the wedding, all of these new marriages got started. The newlyweds gazed out of the window, crammed into the carriage. A cinema, a cooling tower, and a cricket game were all visible from the window. I don't think any of the different couples thought about the people they would never meet now that they were married, or how they all were sharing this first hour of their respective marriages together. As we approached sunny London, our final destination, I thought of the different areas packed together like squares of wheat.

We were headed straight for the capital, racing past glinting rail and stationary train carriages. The sooty, mossy walls of the city started to surround us and the shared experience was nearly over. The collective power of these newly-weds was ready to be unleashed. We slowed and braked, feeling the gravity as though we were falling like a shower of arrows sent beyond view, raining down somewhere else.

4.7 KEY WORDS AND TECHNICAL TERMS

Cushion
A stuffed cloth bag for comfortable seating.
Windscreen
The glass in front of a motorized vehicle allowing the driver to see through while protecting him or her from air and dust; a British term for windshield.
Thence
From the place. Archaic or poetic usage.
Lincolnshire
A county in the East Midlands region of the United Kingdom. The city of Lincoln is its administrative headquarters.
Froth
A mass of small bubbles in a liquid. The ‘industrial froth’ that the poet talks about refers to the fermented bubbles of chemical waste in industrial sewage drains.
Hothouse
A greenhouse with a heating system to produce plants and crops that need warm weather, and protect them from cold.

Hedge
A boundary formed by bushes or shrubs that is both pretty, and useful to fence off cattle and intruders from the garden or farm.
Reek
Stinking smell or odor.
Dismantled
Taken apart, fragmented.
Whoops
Sounds expressing dismay.
Skirls
Shrill sounds.
Larking
Fooling around, enjoying in a playful and mischievous way.

Grinning
Smiling broadly, smirking, being all smiles.
Pomaded
Perfumed. Pomade is a waxy, scented substance for styling hair.
Smut
Filth or dirt. In urban colloquial usage, smut refers to obscene and often sexually explicit language.
Perms
Styling hair in a long-lasting curled, wavy fashion. The word is a colloquial abbreviation of "permanent."
Confetti
Streamers of paper thrown at the bride and her groom by the guests after a wedding.
Odeon
A leading cinema in the UK and Ireland. During Larkin's time, there were already over 250 Odeon cinemas across the country, thus making the brand name almost synonymous with a cinema house.
Cooling Tower
A tall, cylindrical concrete tower, mainly seen in industrial zones, used for condensing steam from a factory or cooling water.
Pullman
A particular railway carriage, or a train consisting of such coaches. Founded by George Pullman, the Pullman Palace Car Company was popular in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century America and Europe.
Moss
A small, flowerless, rootless, dark green plant that sprouts in damp areas, like damp walls.

4.8 SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- Discuss about the Presence of Failure and Disappointment in The Whitsun Weddings?
- How does the speaker characterize weddings and marriages in the poem?
- Explore the presentation of music in On the Road and The Whitsun Weddings?
- Does the poem follow the Romantic tradition, oppose it, or both? How?

4.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

1 James Booth. Philip Larkin: The Poet's Plight. Basingstoke, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2005.
2 Richard Bradford. First Boredom, Then Fear: The Life of Philip Larkin. London: Peter Owen, 2009.
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7 Mackinnon, Lachlan. "Larkin: Always an Agnostic - but an Anglican Agnostic." *The Independent*, Independent Digital News and Media, 24 Feb. 2014, www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/news/larkin-always-an-agnostic-but-an-anglican-agnostic-9148449.html.

LESSON-5
NEXT, PLEASE

Contents

5.1 OBJECTIVES

1. Students will practice close reading poems for both literal and figurative meaning.
2. Students will think and write analytically about literature, using examples from the text and appropriate literary terminology to support arguments about the way a text functions.
3. Students will become familiar with Philip Larkin's work and its greater impact on British society.
4. Students will become familiar with mid 20th century British poetry.

5.2 BACKGROUND-THE WRITER AND THE PERIOD

Philip Larkin was born on 9 August 1922 at 2, Poultney Road, Radford, Coventry, the only son and younger child of Sydney Larkin (1884–1948) and his wife Eva Emily (1886–1977), daughter of first-class excise officer William James Day. Sydney Larkin's family originated in Kent, but had lived since at least the eighteenth century at Lichfield, Staffordshire, where they were in trade first as tailors, then also as coach-builders and shoe-makers. The Day family were of Epping, Essex, but moved to Leigh in Lancashire in 1914 where William Day took a post administering pensions and other dependent allowances.

The Larkin family lived in the district of Radford, Coventry, until Larkin was five years old, before moving to a large three-storey middle-class house complete with servants' quarters near Coventry railway station and King Henry VIII School, in Manor Road. Having survived the bombings of the Second World War, their former house in Manor Road was demolished in the 1960s to make way for a road modernisation programme, the construction of an inner ring road. His sister Catherine, known as Kitty, was 10 years older than he was. His father, a self-made man who had risen to be Coventry City Treasurer, was a singular individual, 'nihilistically disillusioned in middle age' who combined a love of literature with an enthusiasm for Nazism, and had attended two Nuremberg rallies during the mid-1930s. He introduced his son to the works of Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, James Joyce and above all D. H. Lawrence. His mother was a nervous and passive woman, "a kind of defective mechanism...Her ideal is 'to collapse' and to be taken care of", dominated by her husband.

Larkin's early childhood was in some respects unusual: he was educated at home until the age of eight by his mother and sister, neither friends nor relatives ever visited the family home, and he developed a stammer. Nonetheless, when he joined Coventry's King Henry VIII Junior School he fitted in immediately and made close, long-standing friendships, such as those with James "Jim" Sutton, Colin Gunner and Noel "Josh" Hughes. Although home life was relatively cold, Larkin enjoyed support from his parents. For example, his deep passion for jazz was supported by the purchase of a drum kit and a saxophone, supplemented by a subscription to *Down Beat*. From the junior school he progressed to King Henry VIII Senior School. He fared quite poorly when he sat his School Certificate exam at the age of 16. Despite his results, he was allowed to stay on at school; two years later he earned distinctions in English and History, and passed the entrance exams for St John's College, Oxford, to read English.

Larkin began at Oxford University in October 1940, a year after the outbreak of the Second World War. The old upper-class traditions of university life had, at least for the time being, faded, and most of the male students were studying for highly truncated degrees. Due to his poor eyesight, Larkin failed his military medical examination and was able to study for the usual three years. Through his tutorial partner, Norman Iles, he met Kingsley Amis, who encouraged his taste for ridicule and irreverence and who remained a close friend throughout Larkin's life.] Amis, Larkin and other university friends formed a group they dubbed "The Seven", meeting to discuss each other's poetry, listen to jazz, and drink enthusiastically. During this time he had his first real social interaction with the opposite sex, but made no romantic headway. In 1943 he sat his finals, and, having dedicated much of his time to his own writing, was greatly surprised at being awarded a first-class honours degree.

5.3 THE WRITER- HIS LIFE AND WORKS

From his mid-teens, Larkin "wrote ceaselessly", producing both poetry, initially modelled on Eliot and W. H. Auden, and fiction: he wrote five full-length novels, each of which he destroyed shortly after their completion] While he was at Oxford University, his first published poem, "Ultimatum", appeared in *The Listener*. He developed a pseudonymous alter ego in this period for his prose: Brunette Coleman. Under this name he wrote two novellas, *Trouble at Willow Gables* and *Michaelmas Term at St Brides* (2002), as well as a supposed autobiography and an equally fictitious creative manifesto called "What we are writing for". Richard Bradford has written that these curious works show "three registers: cautious indifference, archly overwritten symbolism with a hint of Lawrence and prose that appears to disclose its writer's involuntary feelings of sexual excitement".

After these works, Larkin began to write his first published novel *Jill* (1946). This was published by Reginald A. Caton, a publisher of barely legal pornography, who also issued serious fiction as a cover for his core activities Around the time that *Jill* was being prepared for publication, Caton inquired of Larkin if he also wrote poetry. This resulted in the publication, three months before *Jill*, of *The North Ship* (1945), a collection of poems written between 1942 and 1944 which showed the increasing influence of Yeats. Immediately after completing *Jill*, Larkin started work on the novel *A Girl in Winter* (1947), completing it in 1945. This was published by Faber and Faber and was well received, *The Sunday Times* calling it "an exquisite performance and nearly faultless".Subsequently, he made at least three concerted attempts at writing a third novel, but none developed beyond a solid start.

It was during Larkin's five years in Belfast that he reached maturity as a poet The bulk of his next published collection of poems, *The Less Deceived* (1955), was written there, though eight of the twenty-nine poems included were from the late 1940s. This period also

saw Larkin make his final attempts at writing prose fiction, and he gave extensive help to Kingsley Amis with *Lucky Jim*, which was Amis's first published novel. In October 1954 an article in *The Spectator* made the first use of the title The Movement to describe the dominant trend in British post-war literature. Poems by Larkin were included in a 1953 PEN Anthology that also featured poems by Amis and Robert Conquest, and Larkin was seen to be a part of this grouping In 1951, Larkin compiled a collection called *XX Poems* which he had privately printed in a run of just 100 copies. Many of the poems in it subsequently appeared in his next published volume.

In November 1955, *The Less Deceived*, was published by the Marvell Press, an independent company in Hessle near Hull (dated October). At first the volume attracted little attention, but in December it was included in *The Times*' list of *Books of the Year*. From this point, the book's reputation spread and sales blossomed throughout 1956 and 1957. During his first five years in Hull, the pressures of work slowed Larkin's output to an average of just two-and-a-half poems a year, but this period saw the writing of some of his best-known poems, such as "An Arundel Tomb", "The Whitsun Weddings" and "Here".

In 1963, Faber and Faber reissued *Jill*, with the addition of a long introduction by Larkin that included much information about his time at Oxford University and his friendship with Kingsley Amis. This acted as a prelude to the publication the following year of *The Whitsun Weddings*, the volume which cemented his reputation; a Fellowship of the Royal Society of Literature was granted to Larkin almost immediately. In the years that followed, Larkin wrote several of his most best-known poems, followed in the 1970s by a series of longer and more sober poems, including "The Building" and "The Old Fools". All of these appeared in Larkin's final collection, *High Windows*, which was published in June 1974. Its more direct use of language meant that it did not meet with uniform praise; nonetheless it sold over twenty thousand copies in its first year alone. For some critics it represents a falling-off from his previous two books, yet it contains a number of his much-loved pieces, including "This Be The Verse" and "The Explosion", as well as the title poem. "Annus Mirabilis" (Year of Wonder), also from that volume, contains the frequently quoted observation that sexual intercourse began in 1963, which the narrator claims was "rather late for me". Bradford, prompted by comments in Maeve Brennan's memoir, suggests that the poem commemorates Larkin's relationship with Brennan moving from the romantic to the sexual.

Later in 1974 he started work on his final major published poem, "Aubade". It was completed in 1977 and published in 23 December issue of *The Times Literary Supplement*. After "Aubade" Larkin wrote only one poem that has attracted close critical attention, the posthumously published and intensely personal "Love Again".

5.4 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

The title, ‘Next, Please’, effectively summarises the sense of urgency the people feel within the poem. Larkin categorizes the characters of the poem, indeed ‘we’, as impatiently waiting for the future to arrive. The use of the imperative ‘next’ suggests a tone of impatience, with the title demanding the arrival of the future, similar to how the people within the poem are also eagerly waiting. In this poem, ‘Next’ symbolizes the future, with the demand for its arrival suggesting a dangerous disregard of the present. At the core, this poem is Larkin pointing out the stupidity of asking for the future instead of enjoying the present. While the future does indeed draw closer, so does the inevitability of death.

Stanza One
Always too eager for the future, we
(…)
Till then we say,

A tone of impatience, first suggested within the title, is instantly communicated through the word 'eager' within the first line. This tone of impatience is continued throughout *'Next, Please'*, characterizing the poem.
Within the first line, Larkin uses the pronoun 'we' to group the reader within those about which he is talking. Larkin believes that all people, the reader included, have this obsession with what the future will bring. We can see that he frowns on this 'habit of expectancy' through the preceding adjective, 'bad'. This poem acts as a warning, he wants the reader to focus on the present instead of the future.

The ever-nearing future is Larkin's key focus in *'Next, Please'*. The 'always approaching' future draws nearer 'every day'. Yet, 'we' are impatient of this slow daily progress. The use of enjambment, 'every day/ Till then', suggests closeness between the present and future. Yet, the line break actually serves to drive apart from the two concepts. 'Till', on a new line, is emphasized. The far off impossibility of the future is described through the ambiguous word. It is within this line, 'Till then we say', that a glimpse of Larkin's depressing view is revealed. Larkin suggests that the future is not close at all, time waiting for its arrival is time wasted.

Stanza Two
Watching from a bluff the tiny, clear
(…)
Refusing to make haste!

Stanza two is where the concept of Larkin's extended metaphor begins to take shape. The 'sparkling armada' of boats is an idolization of the future, with the ships representing possible futures. Larkin still talks through the perspective of 'we', and the reader is drawn into the fascination of the beautiful future. Indeed, the imagery of 'sparkling' and the grandeur or 'armada' elevate the beauty of these future 'promises', romanticizing the future. The impatience of 'we' is again shown in this paragraph, with the two exclamations (L7+8) reflecting the eagerness.

Larkin creates a certain divide between 'We' and 'Them' within this Stanza. 'We', those who passively wait for the future, and the future actively drawing nearer. This seeming reversal, with the future being the thing moving towards us allows 'we' to take on a passive role. We believe that it is not our duty to chase down the future, expecting and waiting for it to arrive. This is the core of Larkin's argument, and where he finds frustration. 'How slow they are!', 'how much time they waste' – is a picture of humanity denying that it is actually us wasting our own time. Instead of taking responsibility, we blame something else, taking a back-seat in our own lives.

Stanzas Three and Four
Yet still they leave us holding wretched stalks
Of disappointment, for, though nothing balks
(…)
No sooner present than it turns to past.
Right to the last

These two stanzas hold the majority of the romanticization of the future. Yet, it is also here that Larkin describes the harsh reality and punctures this idolization. Larkin paints a beautiful picture of the nearing ships, representing the glorious future. 'Golden tits' suggests wealth but is also sexualization of the future – romanticized right up until the end of its approach.

Yet the ship never docks, the future never arrives as wanted. Although the future 'arch[es]' towards 'we', it 'never anchors' – the disappointment palpable. Larkin uses negative semantics, 'wretched', 'disappointment', 'never' to describe the bitter realization of 'we' that what they have been waiting for has eluded them. We have realized, all too late, that the present has turned to the past. Larkin suggests that time slips through your fingers if you are constantly fixated on the future. The romanticization of the unknown future is toxic, as it draws focus away from the present.

Stanza Five
We think each one will heave to and unload
(…)
But we are wrong:

This paragraph is introspective, again relying on the 'we' pronoun. He talks about how we expect the future to arrive and bring us what we desire. But this is not the case, 'we are wrong'. The grammatical isolation of this line, 'But we are wrong:' is a moment of clarity within *'Next, Please'*. Whereas 'we' are those who romanticized the future, this is a flash of reality. Preceded by an end stop and coming at the end of the stanza, this line is given a solemn emphasis. The short, monosyllabic sentence is cripplingly depressing after the beautiful imagery of the last few paragraphs.

The double use of so: 'so devoutly', 'so long' summarises the problem in focusing on the future. The 'we' in the poem spends 'so' much time idolizing the future they forgot to think about the present. A whole lifetime wasted by waiting and waiting for something that never came.

Stanza Six
Only one ship is seeking us, a black-
(…)
No waters breed or break.

After the somber tone of Stanza 5, this stanza reflects the harsh reality of life – the inevitability of death. Bleak, right? At this point in the poem, the illusion of the future has been shattered. Instead, the extended metaphor of ships is subverted into one describing death. While 'we' have been waiting for the 'sparkling armada' of the future, the only thing that has been getting closer is 'one ship' – the 'black-sailed' figure of death.

This stanza is bitterly depressing. The sheer still force of death is characterized by a 'huge and bridless silence'. Larkin employs a daunting, and terribly quiet, image of death drawing nearer and nearer. The final line compounds this horrible stillness, with the lack of movement, 'no waters breed or break', attributing to the complete nothingness of death. Death arrives where the future did not.

In conclusion, the romanticization of the future is a dangerous game. Larkin urges the reader to break out of the 'we', to grip the present, and not let go. Depressing or enlightening? I'm not so sure.

5.5 A BRIEF CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE TEXT

Philip Larkin was born in Coventry in 1922. His first volume of poetry, *The North Ship* appeared in 1945, and thereafter in 1955 appeared in his second book of poems *The Less Deceived*. In 1946 Larkin published *Jill*, his first novel. Larkin's poems could be mostly seen as a reaction to the romanticism of his age especially in poet like Dylan Thomas. An important theme that could be found in the poems of Larkin is the difference between illusion and reality. The language of Larkin's poems is mostly simple and direct. Philip Larkin's *Next, Please* is all about false expectations in the uncertain human life.

In the first line Larkin says that we imagine that in the future all our hopes would be fulfilled, and we adopt the habit of expectation as we await gratification, "Till then we say". The poem portrays to us how we expect life to send our way boats of success and fulfillment, through the image of keeping watch from a cliff and see the boat approaching as he say "watching from a bluff". Perched on the cliff we expect others to fulfill our desires. The lines "How slow they are! And how much time they waste, / Refusing to make haste!" shows the human impatience while waiting for life to fulfill their desires. But all that arrives is disappointment as the ship approaching doesn't stop at the destined harbour. All the human dreams go by like the ship that doesn't stop at the harbour. The only ship that approaches appears unreal and empty for us, the humans. There is no grand future waiting to be unloaded from its decks. And what moves closer is only death, which can be anticipated with certainty.

The poem *Next, Please* is made up of 06 four lined stanzas. The rhyme scheme of each stanza is *aabb*. The first three lines are written in iambic pentameter with some exception. The image of the ship approaching and waiting at the cliff is through which the poet explains his entire philosophy of the poem. The poet warns his readers that we wait for the future leaving our present, but all that will arrive is disappointment and death. The present turns to past and there we are waiting for our desires to get fulfilled. But life doesn't turn out as we imagine it. The poem has a tone of pessimism and also darkness. At the end as the poet says that all arrive at death we feel the fear of death. Death could arrive anytime at the near future, however we plan everything for future ignoring that next moment might not be there for us. Through the poem we could also sense a tone of *carpe diem* that the poet is trying to convey. Instead of waiting for the future to fulfill our wishes we could start acting in the present so that our wishes actually come true.

5.6 A SUMMARY

In this poem, Larkin emphasizes our collective penchant for anticipating the future and all it brings. It seems our fondest hopes are centered on what the future entails. However, the actual events often fail to match our greatest expectations.

In the first stanza, the speaker contends that we're too eager for the future and we spend too much time agonizing over what it will bring. He calls this habit a bad one. All in all, he maintains that we make too much of events that have yet to occur. Long before we see any sign of them, our imaginations take over. We begin to harbor expectations about the "sparkling armada of promises" heading our way.

In the second stanza, the speaker contends that our anticipatory spirit often leads to pointless complaining. We want the future to arrive, to hurry its approach. However, it's like a ship that's traveling too slowly for our liking.

In the third and fourth stanzas, the speaker maintains that the ship will arrive in due time. However, when it does, we will ultimately be disappointed. It seems that reality never quite lives up to all of our fondest hopes and ambitions.

The speaker also likens the future to an approaching ship. As the ship glides towards the harbor, we see more clearly its form. The "big approach" eventually reveals the ship's brasswork, ropes, and even the figurehead. The latter is an ornamental wooden figure mounted onto the bow of a ship. However, the ship itself never anchors. No sooner does it approach, then it passes by completely.

In the fifth stanza, the speaker laments the destruction of our hopes. It seems that each ship in the "armada" of fate always disappoints. Instead of "unloading" good things into our lives, each "ship" leaves us embittered. We wait long and "devoutly" for good things, believing that we are deserving of them. However, our hopes often clash with reality. The speaker contends that we have no right to such vain hopes.

In the last stanza, he explains why this is so. The speaker maintains that there is only one ship heading for us, and it is black in color. As it approaches, we can see it towing a huge, "birdless" silence. Ominously, no waters break in the ship's wake. This macabre imagery leads us to think of death, the kind Larkin feared: one where an oppressive pall grips the soul for eternity.

During his life, Larkin scoffed at the idea of God and religion. He maintained that there was no happy afterlife to look forward to. This grim poem emphasizes Larkin's core beliefs about life and death.

5.7 KEY WORDS AND TECHNICAL TERMS

1. Larkin's poetry has been characterized as being "ordinary, colloquial, clear, reflective, ironic and direct with commonplace experiences".

2. Larkin's style is bound up with his recurring themes and subjects, which include death and fatalism, as in his final major poem "Aubade".

3. Larkin does not use free verse. He writes in traditional rhythms, meters, and rhymes and syntax because his concern is to celebrate traditional feelings.

5.8 SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Explore Philip Larkin’s portrayal of time in ‘Next Please’
2. Give a critical analysis of the poem “Next Please’’ by Philip Larkin

3. Describe Philip Larkin's views in "Next Please'
4. Comment on Philip Larkin's views in "Next Please'
5. Comment on the use of irony in Philip Larkin's poetry.
6. Philip Larkin's poems have a style which is "Piquant mixture of lyricism and discontent". Explain.

5.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

1 The Philip Larkin Society. Retrieved 13 November 2009.
2 *"Philip Larkin (1922–1985)". The Poetry Archive. Archived from the original on 27 September 2007.*
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4 "Philip Larkin", Channel 4 television. Retrieved 13 November 2009.
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LESSON-6

LOOK BACK IN ANGER

Contents

6.1 OBJECTIVES

1. Students will practice close reading play for both literal and figurative meaning.
2. Students will think and write analytically about literature, using examples from the text and appropriate literary terminology to support arguments about the way a text functions.
3. Students will become familiar with JohnOsborne's work and its greater impact on British society.
4. Students will become familiar with mid 20th century British play.

6.2 BACKGROUND-THE WRITER AND THE PERIOD

John James Osborne (12 December 1929 – 24 December 1994) was an English playwright, screenwriter and actor, known for his prose that criticized established social and political norms. The success of his 1956 play *Look Back in Anger* transformed English theatre.

Osborne was notorious for his violent language, not only on behalf of the political causes he supported but also against his own family, including his wives and children. Osborne was one of the first writers to address Britain's purpose in the post-imperial age.

6.3 THE WRITER- HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Osborne was born on 12 December 1929 in London, the son of Thomas Godfrey Osborne, a commercial artist and advertising copywriter of South Welsh ancestry, and Nellie Beatrice Grove, a Cockney barmaid.

In 1935 the family moved to the north Surrey suburb of Stoneleigh, near Ewell, in search of a better life, though Osborne would regard it as a cultural desert – a school friend declared subsequently that "he thought [we] were a lot of dull, uninteresting people." He adored his father and hated his mother, who he described as "hypocritical, self-absorbed, calculating and indifferent."

Thomas Osborne died in 1941, leaving the young boy an insurance settlement which he used to pay for a private education at Belmont College, a minor public school in Barnstaple that closed in the 1960s. He entered the school in 1943, but was expelled in the summer term of 1945. Osborne claimed this was for hitting the headmaster, who had struck him for listening to a broadcast by Frank Sinatra, but another former pupil asserted that Osborne was caught fighting other pupils and did not assault the headmaster. A School Certificate was the only formal qualification he acquired.

After school, Osborne went home to his mother in London and briefly tried trade journalism. A job tutoring a touring company of junior actors introduced him to the theatre. He soon became involved as a stage manager and acting, joining Anthony Creighton's provincial touring company. Osborne tried his hand at writing plays, co-writing his first, *The Devil Inside Him*, with his mentor Stella Linden, who then directed it at the Theatre Royal in Huddersfield in 1950. In June 1951 Osborne married Pamela Lane. His second play *Personal Enemy* was written with Anthony Creighton (with whom he later wrote *Epitaph for George Dillon* staged at the Royal Court in 1958). *Personal Enemy* was staged in regional theatres before he submitted *Look Back in Anger*.

When he first saw *Look Back in Anger*, Laurence Olivier, a well-known actor and director, had a poor opinion of the play.[13] At the time, Olivier was making a film of Rattigan's *The Prince and the Showgirl* co-starring Marilyn Monroe, and she was accompanied to London by her husband Arthur Miller. Olivier asked the American dramatist what plays he might want to see in London. Based on its title, Miller suggested Osborne's work; Olivier tried to dissuade him, but the playwright was insistent and the two of them saw it together.

Miller found the play revelatory, and they went backstage to meet Osborne. Olivier was impressed by the American's reaction and asked Osborne for a part in his next play. George Devine, artistic director of the Royal Court, sent Olivier the incomplete script of *The Entertainer*. Olivier eventually took the central role as failing music-hall performer Archie Rice, playing successfully both at the Royal Court and in the West End.

The Entertainer uses the metaphor of the dying music hall tradition and its eclipse by early rock and roll to comment on the declining influence of the British Empire and its eclipse by the increasing influence of the United States, as illustrated during the Suez Crisis of November 1956 that forms the backdrop to the play. *The Entertainer* found critical acclaim.

Osborne followed *The Entertainer* with *The World of Paul Slickey* (1959) a musical that satirizes the tabloid press; the televised documentary play *A Subject of Scandal and Concern* (1960); and the double bill *Plays for England*, comprising *The Blood of the Bambergs* and *Under Plain Cover* (1962).

Luther, depicting the life of Martin Luther, was first performed in 1961; it transferred to Broadway and won Osborne a Tony Award. *Inadmissible Evidence* was first performed in 1964. In between these plays, Osborne won an Oscar for his 1963 screenplay adaptation of *Tom Jones*. His 1965 play, *A Patriot for Me*, draws on the Austrian Redl case, involving themes of homosexuality and espionage, and helped to end the system of theatrical censorship under the Lord Chamberlain.

Both *A Patriot For Me* and *The Hotel in Amsterdam* (1968) won *Evening Standard* Best Play of the Year awards. *The Hotel in Amsterdam* features three showbiz couples in a hotel suite, having fled a tyrannical and unpleasant movie producer, referred to as "K.L." John Heilpern asserts that "K.L." was meant to represent director and producer Tony Richardson.

John Osborne's plays in the 1970s included *West of Suez*, starring Ralph Richardson; 1972's *A Sense of Detachment;* and the play *Watch It Come Down*, starring Frank Finlay.

During that decade Osborne played the role of gangster Cyril Kinnear in *Get Carter* (1971). Later, he appeared in *Tomorrow Never Comes* (1978) and *Flash Gordon* (1980).

Throughout the 1980s Osborne took the real-life role of a Shropshire squire. He wrote a diary for *The Spectator*. He opened his garden to raise money for the church roof, from which he threatened to withdraw covenant-funding unless the vicar restored the Book of Common Prayer (he had returned to the Church of England in about 1974).

In the last two decades of his life, Osborne published two volumes of autobiography, *A Better Class of Person* (1981) and *Almost a Gentleman* (1991). *A Better Class of Person* was filmed by Thames Television in 1985, featuring Eileen Atkins and Alan Howard as his parents, and Gary Capelin and Neil McPherson as Osborne. It was nominated for the Prix Italia.

Osborne's last play was *Déjàvu* (1991), a sequel to *Look Back in Anger*. Various of his newspaper and magazine writings appeared in a collection entitled *Damn You, England* (1994), while his two autobiographical volumes were reissued as *Looking Back – Never Explain, Never Apologise* (1999).

Osborne was a great fan of Max Miller and saw parallels between them. 'I love him (Max Miller), because he embodied a kind of theatre I admire most. 'Mary from the Dairy' was an overture to the danger that (Max) might go too far. Whenever anyone tells me that a scene or a line in a play of mine goes too far in some way then I know my instinct has been functioning as it should. When such people tell you that a particular passage makes the audience uneasy or restless, then they seem (to me) as cautious and absurd as landladies and girls-who-won't.'

Osborne's work transformed British theatre. He helped to make it artistically respected again, throwing off the formal constraints of the former generation, and turning our attention once more to language, theatrical rhetoric, and emotional intensity. He saw theatre as a weapon with which ordinary people could break down the class barriers and that he had a 'beholden duty to kick against the pricks'. He wanted his plays to be a reminder of real pleasures and real pains. David Hare said in his memorial address:

John Osborne devoted his life to trying to forge some sort of connection between the acuteness of his mind and the extraordinary power of his heart.

Osborne did change the world of theatre, influencing playwrights such as Edward Albee and Mike Leigh. However, work of his kind of authenticity and originality would remain the exception rather than the rule. This did not surprise Osborne; nobody understood the tackiness of the theatre better than the man who had played Hamlet on Hayling Island.[23] He was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Writer's Guild of Great Britain.

Osborne joined the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in 1959. Later he drifted to the libertarian, unorganized right, considering himself "a radical who hates change".

6.4 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

Act I- Analysis

Act 1 opens on a dismal April Sunday afternoon in Jimmy and Alison's cramped attic in the Midlands. Jimmy and Cliff are reading the Sunday papers, plus the radical weekly, "price ninepence, obtainable at any bookstall" as Jimmy snaps, claiming it from Cliff. This is a reference to the *New Statesman*, and in the context of the period would have instantly signalled the pair's political preference to the audience. Alison is attempting to do the week's ironing and is only half listening as Jimmy and Cliff engage in the expository dialogue.

It becomes apparent that there is a huge social gulf between Jimmy and Alison. Her family is upper-middle-class military, while Jimmy belongs to working class. He had to fight

hard against her family's disapproval to win her. "Alison's mummy and I took one look at each other, and from then on the age of chivalry was dead," he explains. We also learn that the sole family income is derived from a sweets confectionary stall in the local market—an enterprise that is surely well beneath Jimmy's education, let alone Alison's "station in life".

As Act 1 progresses, Jimmy becomes more and more vituperative, transferring his contempt for Alison's family onto her personally, calling her "pusillanimous" and generally belittling her to Cliff. (Some actors play this scene as though Jimmy thinks everything is just a joke, while others play it as though he really is excoriating her.) The tirade ends with physical horseplay, resulting in the ironing board overturning and Alison's arm getting burned. Jimmy exits to play his trumpet off stage.

Alison, alone with Cliff, confides that she's accidentally pregnant and can't quite bring herself to tell Jimmy. Cliff urges her to tell him. When Jimmy returns, Alison announces that her actress friend Helena Charles is coming to stay, and Jimmy despises Helena even more than Alison. He flies into a rage.

Act 2

Act 2 opens on another Sunday afternoon, with Helena and Alison making lunch. In a two-handed scene, Alison says that she decided to marry Jimmy because of her own minor rebellion against her upbringing and her admiration for Jimmy's campaigns against the dereliction of life in postwar England. She describes Jimmy to Helena as a "knight in shining armour". Helena says, firmly, "You've got to fight him".

Jimmy enters, and the tirade continues. If his Act 1 material could be played as a joke, there's no doubt about the intentional viciousness of his attacks on Helena. When the women put on hats and declare that they are going to church, Jimmy's sense of betrayal peaks. When he leaves to take an urgent phone call, Helena announces that she has forced the issue. She has sent a telegram to Alison's parents asking them to come and "rescue" her. Alison is stunned but agrees that she will go.

The next evening, Alison's father, Colonel Redfern, comes to collect her to take her back to her family home. The playwright allows the Colonel to come across as quite a sympathetic character, albeit totally out of touch with the modern world, as he himself admits. "You're hurt because everything's changed", Alison tells him, "and Jimmy's hurt because everything's stayed the same". Helena arrives to say goodbye, intending to leave very soon herself. Alison is surprised that Helena is staying on for another day, but she leaves, giving Cliff a note for Jimmy. Cliff in turn hands it to Helena and leaves, saying "I hope he rams it up your nostrils".

Almost immediately, Jimmy bursts in. His contempt at finding a "goodbye" note makes him turn on Helena again, warning her to keep out of his way until she leaves. Helena tells him that Alison is expecting a baby, and Jimmy admits grudgingly that he's taken aback. However, his tirade continues. They first come to physical blows, and then as the Act 2 curtain falls, Jimmy and Helena are kissing passionately and falling on the bed.

Act 3

Act 3 opens as a deliberate replay of Act 1, but this time with Helena at the ironing-board wearing Jimmy's Act 1 red shirt. Months have passed. Jimmy is notably more pleasant to Helena than he was to Alison in Act 1. She actually laughs at his jokes, and the three of them (Jimmy, Cliff, and Helena) get into a music hall comedy routine that obviously is not

improvised. Cliff announces that he's decided to strike out on his own. As Jimmy leaves the room to get ready for a final night out for the three of them, he opens the door to find Alison, looking like death. He snaps over his shoulder "Friend of yours to see you" and abruptly leaves.

Alison explains to Helena that she lost the baby (one of Jimmy's cruellest speeches in Act 1 expressed the wish that Alison would conceive a child and lose it). The two women reconcile, but Helena realises that what she's done is immoral and she in turn decides to leave. She summons Jimmy to hear her decision and he lets her go with a sarcastic farewell.

The play ends with a sentimental reconciliation between Jimmy and Alison. They revive an old game they used to play, pretending to be bears and squirrels, and seem to be in a state of truce.

6.5 A BRIEF CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE TEXT

At the time of production reviews of *Look Back in Anger* were deeply negative. Kenneth Tynan and Harold Hobson were among the few critics to praise it, and are now regarded among the most influential critics of the time. For example, on BBC Radio's *The Critics*, Ivor Brown began his review by describing the play's setting—a one-room flat in the Midlands—as "unspeakably dirty and squalid" such that it was difficult for him to "believe that a colonel's daughter, brought up with some standards", would have lived in it. He expressed anger at having watched something that "wasted [his] time". The *Daily Mail*'s Cecil Wilson wrote that the beauty of Mary Ure was "frittered away" on a pathetic wife, who, "judging by the time she spends ironing, seems to have taken on the nation's laundry". Indeed, Alison, Ure's character, irons during Act One, makes lunch in Act Two, and leaves the ironing to her rival in Act Three.

On the other hand, Kenneth Tynan wrote that he "could not love anyone who did not wish to see *Look Back in Anger*", describing the play as a "minor miracle" containing "all the qualities...one had despaired of ever seeing on the stage—the drift towards anarchy, the instinctive leftishness, the automatic rejection of "official" attitudes, the surrealist sense of humour (e.g., Jimmy describes an effeminate male friend as a 'female Emily Brontë'), the casual promiscuity, the sense of lacking a crusade worth fighting for and, underlying all these, the determination that no one who dies shall go unmourned." Harold Hobson was also quick to recognize the importance of the play "as a landmark of British theatre". He praised Osborne for the play, despite the fact that "blinkers still obscure his vision". Alan Sillitoe, author of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (both of which are also part of the "angry young men" movement), wrote that Osborne "didn't contribute to British theatre, he set off a landmine and blew most of it up".

6.6 A SUMMARY

“Look Back in Anger” is a play about alienation and identity in 1950s England. The play was considered modern for its time, and upended the theater world with its bleak portrayal of Jimmy Porter as an everyman with nothing going for him but his ideals, ideals packaged in rage and anger. Audiences were devastated by the play, but this devastation and an intimate glimpse of real struggle in the face of a changing world, a world where one had no agency, garnered praise from critics and viewers alike. The role of Jimmy Porter has been noted as the archetype for many modern-day characters. These male characters often operate with dubious methods despite having supposed hearts of gold, or at least intentionally bury

their feelings. Marlon Brando's Stanley in "A Streetcar Named Desire" is one example of this troubled character type making inroads into theater and literature.

"Look Back in Anger" is divided into three acts and, in its structure, mirrors earlier works by playwrights like Ibsen. The beginning of the first and third act mirror each other, indicating to the reader or viewer that things might seem to stay the same but ultimately change. The play's characters include Jimmy Parsons, a washed-up jazz trumpet player who hates the middle class and the idea of conformity in "modern" England; Alison Porter, Jimmy's wife, who comes from the middle class and is despised by Jimmy for her timidity and passiveness; Cliff Lewis, Jimmy's friend and roommate, who is uneducated and works with Jimmy in a sweet stall; Colonel Redfern, Alison's old-guard father who yearns for the Edwardian days, and for his heyday in India from 1913 to 1947; and Helena Charles, an actress friend of Alison's who despises Jimmy yet ends up having an affair with him.

The bulk of the play involves Jimmy verbally abusing Alison, Cliff, and Helena for their complacency in an England without beliefs or convictions. Jimmy yearns for someone to believe in him, and for someone to understand why living without conviction is like not being human. Jimmy likens the apathy in England to the disgust he sees in 1950s America, and jokes that the English will all become American because of their lack of morals and conviction. This lack of morals, or lack of beliefs, underscores the theme of alienation and identity found throughout the play. The play takes place after WWII, and England is still reeling from the effects of that war, in addition to changing social beliefs. The social microcosm of the Porter's attic flat in the Midlands is symbolic of a larger English struggle at the time in the face of helplessness, loneliness, general apathy, and death.

Jimmy wants Alison to "wake up" to how the world really works. He wishes this at any cost, even going so far as to wish that Alison might have a child and lose it. Alison is in fact pregnant, but too afraid to tell Jimmy, lest he think she planned it just to make him love her more. This mention of loss and the revelation that Alison is pregnant early in the play set up a tragic loss at the end, one that makes the characters question who they are in the face of a seemingly uncaring world. Before the dramatic end, Alison struggles with identity as she hits back at Jimmy in whatever way she can, then ultimately leaves with her father to find peace and quiet. In a shocking turn of events, Helena has an affair with Jimmy. By Act III, she has replaced Alison. The parallels between the women and their roles seems disheartening. The ending leaves each woman exploring who she is and who she wants to be in relation to Jimmy and the larger world.

"Look Back in Anger" will challenge readers to explore preconceived notions of heroes, heroines, good, and evil. The play's class struggles and personal struggles allow readers or viewers to ponder who really wins and who loses by the end of the play. The play is set in the present, yet the undeniable past informs each character. The past highlights each character's dreams and desires, yet hides any readily available notions of what the future might hold for them.

6.7 KEY WORDS AND TECHNICAL TERMS

Anglican

The Anglican Church is the largest Protestant denomination in Britain.

Angry Young Man
An Angry Young Man was a term given to a group of mid-twentieth century British writers who exhibited anger and frustration with modern British culture. Jimmy Porter is the model Angry Young Man.

chivalry
Chivalry is the medieval term related to the institution of knighthood. It is often related to virtues such as bravery and self-sacrifice.

Cockerel
A cockerel is a young rooster.

Dark Ages
The "Dark Ages" is a term for medieval European society.

Edwardian Age
The Edwardian Age corresponds to the height of the British empire and colonial expansion at the beginning of the twentieth century.

flat
A flat is a British term for a small apartment.

genuflect
A term to denote one that bends or bows at the knees.

H-bom
H-bomb is a short hand term for hydrogen bomb.

half crown
A half crown is a denomination of British currency.

indiarubber
This term alludes to one of Britain's most important exports from their Indian colonies - rubber.

Liberal
A Liberal is a member of the Liberal British political party. This party is in opposition to the more conservative Tory party.

misogynist
A misogynist is a person who shows a hatred towards women. Jimmy Porter's character has been criticized for his misogynistic attitudes.

Parliament
Parliament is the democratic governing body of the United Kingdom.

Port Said
Port Said is an Egyptian shipping port on the Suez Canal. The Canal was an integral British shipping territory in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

posh
Posh is a British term for "trendy," or "popular."

pusillanimous
Pusillanimous is a negative connotation for a mean spirited or cowardly person.

Sweet Stall
A sweet stall is a small shop that sells candy and other confectionaries.

sycophantic
To be sycophantic is to be a servile self-seeker who attempts to gain advantage by flattering important people.

Victorian
The Victorian Age was a period in British history in the late nineteenth century of great British expansion and cultural influence.

Welsh
A Welsh person is a person from the country of Wales. It often denotes a working class background.

6.8 SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Compare Jimmy Porter and Cliff Lewis. How are the friends similar? How are they different? Do they change over the course of the play? Provide examples.
2. Compare Alison Porter and Helena Charles. How are the friends similar? How are they different? Do they change over the course of the play? Provide examples.
3. Jimmy Porter hates what he calls the Establishment. Describe with examples what the Establishment is and how it functions. What is Jimmy's argument, and why does his hatred of the Establishment extend to Alison?
4. Who is called pusillanimous in Look Back in Anger and why?
5. Discuss look back in Anger as a play protest against the contemporary English society.
6. Social Criticism in A Doll's House and Look Back in Anger
7. Jimmy Porter as the Figure of Post-War Alienated Youth
8. What is the main theme of look back in Anger?
9. What is the relationship of look back in anger?
10. What is the climax of the play in look back in anger?

6.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

- Osborne, John (1982). *A Better Class of Person: An Autobiography, 1929–56* (paperback ed.). Penguin Books Ltd. ISBN 978-0-14-006288-5.

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LESSON-7

ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD

Contents

7.1 OBJECTIVES

Students will practice close reading play for both literal and figurative meaning.

- Students will think and write analytically about literature, using examples from the text and appropriate literary terminology to support arguments about the way a text functions.
- Students will become familiar with Tom Stoppard's work and its greater impact on British society.
- Students will become familiar with mid 20th century British play.

7.2 BACKGROUND-THE WRITER AND THE PERIOD

Sir Tom Stoppard OM CBE FRSL HonFBA (born Tomáš Sträussler, 3 July 1937) is a Czech-born British playwright and screenwriter. He has written for film, radio, stage, and television, finding prominence with plays. His work covers the themes of human rights, censorship, and political freedom, often delving into the deeper philosophical thematics of society. Stoppard has been a playwright of the National Theatre and is one of the most internationally performed dramatists of his generation. Stoppard was knighted for his contribution to theatre by Queen Elizabeth II in 1997.

Born in Czechoslovakia, Stoppard left as a child refugee, fleeing imminent Nazi occupation. He settled with his family in Britain after the war, in 1946, having spent the previous three years (1943–1946) in a boarding school in Darjeeling in the Indian Himalayas. After being educated at schools in Nottingham and Yorkshire, Stoppard became a journalist, a drama critic and then, in 1960, a playwright.

Stoppard's most prominent plays include Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, Jumpers, Travesties, Night and Day, The Real Thing, Arcadia, The Invention of Love, The Coast of Utopia, Rock 'n' Roll and Leopoldstadt. Stoppard is also known for his screenplays including Brazil (1985), Empire of the Sun (1987), The Russia House (1990), Billy Bathgate (1991), Shakespeare in Love (1998), Enigma (2001), and Anna Karenina (2012). His work on television includes various plays for ITV Play of the Week and the HBO limited series Parade's End (2013).

He has received numerous awards and honours including Academy Award, an Laurence Olivier Award, and four Tony Awards. In 2008, The Daily Telegraph ranked him number 11 in their list of the "100 most powerful people in British culture". It was announced in June 2019 that Stoppard had written a new play, Leopoldstadt, set in

the Jewish community of early 20th-century Vienna. The play premiered in January 2020 at Wyndham's Theatre. The play went on to win the Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Play.

7.3 THE WRITER- HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Stoppard was born Tomáš Sträussler, in Zlín, a city dominated by the shoe manufacturing industry, in the Moravia region of Czechoslovakia. He is the son of Martha Becková and Eugen Sträussler, a doctor employed by the Bata shoe company. His parents were non-observant Jews. Just before the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, the town's patron, Jan Antonín Baťa, transferred his Jewish employees, mostly physicians, to branches of his firm outside Europe. On 15 March 1939, the day the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia, the Sträussler family fled to Singapore, where Baťa had a factory.

Before the Japanese occupation of Singapore, Stoppard, his brother, and their mother fled to India. Stoppard's father remained in Singapore as a British army volunteer, knowing that as a doctor, he would be needed in its defense. When Stoppard was four years old, his father died. The writer long understood that Sträussler had perished in Japanese captivity, as a prisoner of war.The book *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* describes this, but the author later revealed the subsequent discovery that his father had been reported drowned on board a ship, bombed by Japanese forces, as he tried to flee Singapore in 1942.

In 1941, when Tomáš was five, he, his brother, and their mother had been evacuated to Darjeeling, India. The boys attended Mount Hermon School, an American multi-racial school, where Tomáš became Tom and his brother Petr became Peter.

In 1945, his mother, Martha, married British army major Kenneth Stoppard, who gave the boys his English surname and moved the family to England in 1946. Stoppard's stepfather believed strongly that "to be born an Englishman was to have drawn first prize in the lottery of life"—a quote from Cecil Rhodes—telling his 9-year-old stepson: "Don't you realize that I made you British?" setting up Stoppard's desire as a child to become "an honorary Englishman." He has said, "I fairly often find I'm with people who forget I don't quite belong in the world we're in. I find I put a foot wrong—it could be pronunciation, an arcane bit of English history—and suddenly I'm there naked, as someone with a pass, a press ticket." This is reflected in his characters, he observes, who are "constantly being addressed by the wrong name, with jokes and false trails to do with the confusion of having two names." Stoppard attended the Dolphin School in Nottinghamshire, and later completed his education at Pocklington School in East Riding, Yorkshire, which he hated.

Stoppard left school at 17 and began work as a journalist for the Western Daily Press in Bristol, without attending university. Years later, he came to regret the decision to forego a university education, but at the time, he loved his work as a journalist and was passionate about his career. He worked at the paper from 1954 until 1958, when the Bristol Evening World offered Stoppard the position of feature writer, humor columnist, and secondary drama critic, which took him into the world of theater. At the Bristol Old Vic, at the time a well-regarded regional repertory company, Stoppard formed friendships with director John Boorman and actor Peter O'Toole early in their careers. In Bristol, he became known more for his strained attempts at humor and unstylish clothes than for his writing.

Stoppard wrote short radio plays in 1953–54 and by 1960 he had completed his first stage play, *A Walk on the Water*, which was later re-titled *Enter a Free Man* (1968). He has said the work owed much to Robert Bolt's *Flowering Cherry* and Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman. Within a week after sending *A Walk on the Water* to an agent, Stoppard received his version of the "Hollywood-style telegrams that change struggling young artists' lives." His

first play was optioned, staged in Hamburg, then broadcast on British Independent Television in 1963. From September 1962 until April 1963, Stoppard worked in London as a drama critic for *Scene* magazine, writing reviews and interviews both under his name and the pseudonym William Boot (taken from Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop*). In 1964, a Ford Foundation grant enabled Stoppard to spend 5 months writing in a Berlin mansion, emerging with a one-act play titled *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Meet King Lear*, which later evolved into his Tony-winning play Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead.

In the following years, Stoppard produced several works for radio, television and the theatre, including *"M" is for Moon Among Other Things* (1964), *A Separate Peace* (1966) and *If You're Glad I'll Be Frank* (1966). On 11 April 1967 – following acclaim at the 1966 Edinburgh Festival – the opening of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead in a National Theatre production at the Old Vic made Stoppard an overnight success. Jumpers (1972) places a professor of moral philosophy in a murder mystery thriller alongside a slew of radical gymnasts. Travesties (1974) explored the 'Wildean' possibilities arising from the fact that Vladimir Lenin, James Joyce, and Tristan Tzara had all been in Zürich during the First World War.[2] Stoppard has written one novel, *Lord Malquist and Mr Moon* (1966), set in contemporary London. Its cast includes the 18th-century figure of the dandified Malquist and his ineffectual Boswell, Moon, and also cowboys, a lion (banned from the Ritz) and a donkey-borne Irishman claiming to be the Risen Christ.

In the 1980s, in addition to writing his own works, Stoppard translated many plays into English, including works by Sławomir Mrożek, Johann Nestroy, Arthur Schnitzler, and Václav Havel. It was at this time that Stoppard became influenced by the works of Polish and Czech absurdists. He has been co-opted into the Outrapo group, a far-from-serious French movement to improve actors' stage technique through science.

In 1982 Stoppard premiered his play The Real Thing. The story revolves around a male-female relationship and the struggle between the actress and the member of a group fighting to free a Scottish soldier imprisoned for burning a memorial wreath during a protest. The leading roles were originated by Roger Rees, and Felicity Kendal. The story examines various constructs of honesty including a play within a play, to explore the theme of reality versus appearance. It has been described as one of Stoppard's "most popular, enduring and autobiographical plays."

The play made its Broadway transfer in 1984 which was directed by Mike Nichols starring Jeremy Irons and Glenn Close in the leading roles with a supporting role by Christine Baranski. The transfer was a critical success with The New York Times theatre critic Frank Rich declaring, "The Broadway version of *The Real Thing* - a substantial revision of the original London production - is not only Mr. Stoppard's most moving play, but also the most bracing play that anyone has written about love and marriage in years. The production went on to earn a seven Tony Award nominations winning five awards for Best Play as well for Nichols, Irons, Close, and Baranski. This would be Stoppard's third Tony Award for Best Play following, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead in 1968, and Travesties in 1976.

In 1985, Stoppard co-wrote with Terry Gilliam and Charles McKeown a feature film, the satirical science-fiction dark comedy Brazill (1985). The film received near universal acclaim. Pauline Kael critic for The New Yorker declared, "Visually, it’s an original, bravura piece of moviemaking...Gilliam’s vision is an organic thing on the screen—and that’s a

considerable achievement". Stoppard along with Gilliam and McKeown were nominated for the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay losing to Witness. He went on to write the scripts for Steven Spielberg, Empire of the Sun (1987), and Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (1989). Spielberg later stated that though Stoppard was uncredited for the later of the two, "he was responsible for almost every line of dialogue in the film".

In 1993, Stoppard wrote Arcadia, a play in which he explores the interaction between two modern academics and the residents of a Derbyshire country house in the early 19th century, including aristocrats, tutors and the fleeting presence, unseen on stage, of Lord Byron. The themes of the play include the philosophical implications of the second law of thermodynamics, Romantic literature, and the English picturesque style of garden design.

The first production premiered at the Royal National Theatre directed by Trevor Nunn starring Rufus Sewell, Felicity Kendal, Bill Nighy, and Harriet Walter. It won the 1993 Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Play. A year later the play made its transfer on Broadway starring Billy Crudup, Blair Brown, Victor Garber and Robert Sean Leonard. The production was well received with Vincent Canby of The New York Times writing, that while "There are real difficulties with this production...[there are] also great pleasures, not the least of which are Mark Thompson's sets and costumes. Mostly, though, there are Mr. Stoppard's grandly eclectic obsessions and his singular gifts as a playwright. Attend to them." The production received three Tony Award nominations including Best Play losing to Terrence McNally's Love! Valour! Compassion!.

Stoppard gained acclaim with the feature film Shakespeare in Love (1998) which he wrote. The film, a romantic comedy, focuses on the fictional life of William Shakespeare and his romance with a young woman who is an inspiration for the play, Romeo and Juliet. The film starred an ensemble cast including Joseph Fiennes, Gwyneth Paltrow, Geoffrey Rush, Colin Firth, and Dame Judi Dench. The film was a critical and financial success and went on to earn seven Academy Awards including Best Picture. Stoppard received his second career Oscar nomination and first win for Best Original Screenplay. He also received the BAFTA Award, and Golden Globe Award for his screenplay.

The Coast of Utopia (2002) was a trilogy of plays Stoppard wrote about the philosophical arguments among Russian revolutionary figures in the late 19th century. The trilogy comprises *Voyage*, *Shipwreck*, and *Salvage*. Major figures in the play include Michael Bakunin, Ivan Turgenev, and Alexander Herzen. The title comes from a chapter in Avrahm Yarmolinsky's book *Road to Revolution: A Century of Russian Radicalism* (1959). The play premiered in 2002 at the National Theatre directed by Trevor Nunn in total spanning nine hours. The play received three Laurence Olivier Award nominations including Best New Play, ultimately losing in all its categories. In 2006 it made its Broadway premiere in a production starring Billy Crudup, Jennifer Ehle, and Ethan Hawke. The play received 10 nominations winning seven awards including for Best Play, Stoppard's fourth win in the category.

Rock 'n' Roll (2006) was set in both Cambridge, England, and Prague. The play explored the culture of 1960s rock music, especially the persona of Syd Barrett and the political challenge of the Czech band The Plastic People of the Universe, mirroring the contrast between liberal society in England and the repressive Czech state after the Warsaw Pact intervention in the Prague Spring.

Stoppard served on the advisory board of the magazine *Standpoint*, and was instrumental in its foundation, giving the opening speech at its launch. He is also a patron of the Shakespeare Schools Festival, a charity that enables school children across the UK to

perform Shakespeare in professional theatres. Stoppard was appointed president of the London Library in 2002 and vice-president in 2017 following the election of Sir Tim Rice as president.

For Joe Wright, Stoppard adapted Leo Tolstoy's Anna Karenina into the 2012 film adaptation starring Keira Knightley. Film critic Lisa Schwarzbaum for Entertainment Weekly praised the film and Stoppard writing, "Stoppard — himself a master of puzzle-like construction in fine plays including Arcadia — supplies an excellently clean, delicately balanced script."

In 2013, Stoppard wrote a five part limited series Parade's End which revolves around a love triangle between a conservative English aristocrat, his mean socialite wife and a young suffragette. The series stars Benedict Cumberbatch and Rebecca Hall. The series has received widespread acclaim from critics with The Independent's Grace Dent proclaiming it "one of the finest things the BBC has ever made". IndieWire declared, "*Parade's End* is wonderful accomplishment, smart, adult television". Stoppard received a British Academy Television Award and Primetime Emmy Award nomination for the series.

It was announced in June 2019 that Stoppard had written a new play, Leopoldstadt, set in the Jewish community of early 20th-century Vienna. The play premiered in January 2020 at Wyndham's Theatre. The play went on to win the Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Play. The play then transferred to Broadway with an opening set for 2 October 2022.

7.4 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

Act I: Beginning of Play to Entrance of Tragedians

Stoppard does not give much information about the location of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern or about the characters themselves. Instead, he expects the readers of his play to be familiar with *Hamlet*, on which so much of the plot of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is based. Readers who know *Hamlet* will also know that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are traveling to Elsinore, having been sent for by Claudius, king of Denmark, to watch over Hamlet, the prince of Denmark. The nondescript road on which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern travel is actually the path to the royal castle. Neither Rosencrantz nor Guildenstern remembers the events of the morning very clearly, although they vaguely recall being woken by someone and asked to go somewhere. But now they seem to have no idea what they are doing or where they are. This inability to recall significant events, to understand their circumstances, or to exert any kind of meaningful control over their environment (noticeably they make no real effort to figure out where they are or what they are doing) continues throughout the play, as do Stoppard's references to *Hamlet*. The first scene sets the conceptual framework for the remainder of Stoppard's play.

Their different responses to the coin tosses reflect the different personalities of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Rosencrantz blithely flips a coin, notes it as heads, and pockets it, over and over again, never questioning why the coins keep coming up heads. Guildenstern, in contrast, worries that the two have entered an alternate universe, since standard laws of probability dictate that a coin has an equal chance of coming up heads or tails. The more coins Rosencrantz wins, the more frightened Guildenstern gets. When Rosencrantz tires of the coin flipping, he begins cutting his fingernails and imagining what happens to the nails after death, foreshadowing the deaths in Act III. His actions demonstrate

a relaxed attitude toward the world: he generally believes that everything is and will be okay, and he has no interest in worrying about unknowns. Guildenstern, however, shows a more complicated range of emotions and thought patterns. While Rosencrantz passively accepts the results of the coin flipping, Guildenstern actively struggles to figure out what the results might mean. Unlike Rosencrantz, Guildenstern demonstrates a willingness to interpret and engage with the world around him.

Act I: Entrance of Tragedians to First Change of Light

The interaction among the Tragedians, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern introduces elements of homoeroticism into the play. The Player explains the very special brand of drama performed by the actors, one that lets the audience watch or, for more money, participate in sexual scenes. The Tragedians' unique brand of performance confuses the two men, even though the group clearly fulfills an unacknowledged social need.

Both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern feel alternately attracted to and repulsed by the Player's offers. Guildenstern gets particularly angry about the exploitation of the young Alfred. He tells Alfred to take off his clothes, but whether Guildenstern means just the skirt Alfred has put on to perform in or everything he has on is not clear. The inability of readers to understand what Guildenstern actually means is important, as it points to the fact that he himself might be confused about his feelings: would he like to have a homosexual experience, or not? Is he sensitively protecting Alfred, or is he about to exploit the boy even further by forcing him to stand naked? Both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern seem unable to decide whether to pursue the sexual favors being offered to them, another instance in which they refuse to make an active choice or decision.

Act I: Change of Lights to End of Act

Whereas Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is a tragedy with occasional moments of comedy, Stoppard's play is a comedy with occasional moments of tragedy. But both plays attempt to portray the complexities of life. According to the plots of both plays, Claudius has summoned Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to help with Hamlet. But, as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern lucidly realize, Hamlet has many reasons to be upset: he has just lost his father, the crown (Claudius has become king of Denmark, even though Hamlet is of age and capable of governing), and his mother (she remarried very quickly after the death of Hamlet's father). The interweaving of happy and sad things occurs in the riddles Hamlet speaks to Polonius: these might be a tragic result of his madness, they might simply be his childish attempt to make his friends laugh by making fun of an old man, or they might be a little of both. Similarly, the verbal sparring between Rosencrantz and Guildenstern resembles a comedy routine, with non sequitur following non sequitur, even as they try to figure out whether their friend, tragically, has gone insane. They even highlight the nonsensical nature of their dialogue by keeping score as if the questions and answers were a game of tennis. Nobody, including the men themselves, seems able to tell Rosencrantz from Guildenstern, which is funny but also sad, as it comments on the difficulties of establishing a firm identity in a chaotic world. Like life, the two plays have moments of joy and sadness, and neither is wholly funny nor entirely tragic.

Stoppard takes lines directly from *Hamlet* as a way of emphasizing the relationship between his play and Shakespeare's play. On the one hand, without *Hamlet,Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* would not exist. Stoppard borrows heavily from Shakespeare's text, including the characters of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and he incorporates lines verbatim from Shakespeare into his own work. Whenever Rosencrantz and Guildenstern speak to a

character from *Hamlet*, they switch from modern English to Shakespearean English. Although they do not notice the difference, we as readers are meant to pick up on the change in language. On the other hand, Stoppard's versions of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are very different from the two men found in *Hamlet*. Whereas Shakespeare's portrays the two men as goons with little personality, Stoppard gives the men individual characteristics and far more lines than in the original play. They think, feel, joke, gamble, and reason. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern clearly want to help Hamlet, and they attempt to ascertain whether Hamlet has, in fact, gone insane through the game of question-and-answer. In this sense, Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern do not simply act as agents of Claudius, as Shakespeare's versions do. Instead, Stoppard lets Rosencrantz and Guildenstern try to function independently from both Claudius, their king, and Shakespeare, their original creator. Stoppard wants to emphasize *Hamlet* as not solely the greatest work of drama in the English language but as a play capable of speaking to us on a human, visceral level.

Act II: Beginning of Act to Entrance of Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius, and Ophelia

Stoppard uses the characters of and interaction between Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to make judgments about the figures of "male buddies" so present in popular culture. While Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are not necessarily homosexual, their playful interaction points to an ongoing flirtation between the two friends. Rosencrantz, in particular, seems to enjoy baiting and teasing Guildenstern, playfully luring his friend into verbal traps. For his part, Guildenstern willingly starts conversations, although he knows that the answers Rosencrantz gives to his questions will probably frustrate him. Their interaction follows a familiar pattern of male duos in popular culture: one partner has a somewhat wild and crazy personality, while the other tends to have a more staid, stable demeanor, as in the *Lethal Weapon* and *Rush Hour* movies, for example, or in the routines performed by Laurel and Hardy. The non-jokey partner is often referred to as the "straight man." Whereas Rosencrantz and Guildenstern both express an interest in the Player's sexual propositions, here Rosencrantz makes a direct sexual overture to Guildenstern when he offers to lick his friend's finger to determine the direction of the wind. Guildenstern usually plays the "straight man" to the dreamier, sillier Rosencrantz. Through this interaction, Stoppard forces his readers to closely examine the push-pull undertones that might be at work between "male buddies."

As characters, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and the Player illustrate the slippery nature of identity. The Player appears to be the only person capable of differentiating Rosencrantz from Guildenstern, even though he never addresses either man by name. Nevertheless, more than any other character, the Player understands that identity can be manipulated and altered. As he explained in Act I, the Player always stays in character, never taking off his costume. Still, as an actor, he needs an audience to fully assume his identity, a reminder that people distinctly influence the identity of other people. Without an audience, an actor cannot be an actor. Without someone to interrogate, Rosencrantz cannot remain assertive and angry, as he has been since Hamlet left the scene. Hamlet might truly be insane, or he might enjoy confusing his two friends, since they are so easily confused. The Player tells Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to "act natural," an attempt to reassure the confused men that nobody really knows who he or she is, precisely because identity is so flexible and so dependent on other forces. Depending on the circumstances and company, people act differently and thereby assume different identities.

Act II: Entrance of Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius, and Ophelia to Change of Lights

Like Guildenstern, Rosencrantz spends most of the play in a state of total bafflement, which he occasionally tries to overcome through action. In Act I, while Guildenstern tries to figure out why the coins kept coming up heads, Rosencrantz contents himself with his increasing wealth and does not think too much about the situation. In Act II, however, Rosencrantz becomes more and more upset with their circumstances, and his anger clouds his judgment. He cannot understand why people keep entering and exiting, and he despairs over trying to help Hamlet, who walks by muttering the "To be or not to be" soliloquy from the play *Hamlet*. Rather than trusting his instincts and going to his troubled friend, Rosencrantz merely equivocates back and forth, hashing out the pros and cons of helping Hamlet. His anger and confusion prevent him from doing anything meaningful or significant, and he misses an easy opportunity to cheer up his friend. A few minutes later, after Guildenstern tells him to be quiet, Rosencrantz attempts to actually do something: he grabs a person whom he believes to be Gertrude and tries to make a joke. He wants to ease the tension and inject some levity into the situation with Hamlet. But, as it turns out, he has grabbed Alfred, dressed to look like the queen. Rosencrantz has waited too long to act, and now the moment has passed. Hamlet has left the stage.

Act II: Change of Lights to End of Act

The action in this section of the play emphasizes the Player's earlier comment about death within plays: characters who are written to die must die. Readers familiar with the play *Hamlet* know that Hamlet kills Polonius, because Shakespeare, the author of the play, wrote the plot that way. As a character, Hamlet may or may not have killed Polonius as a result of his madness. But, ultimately, his motivations do not matter in Stoppard's work. Hamlet must kill Polonius, because that is what Shakespeare's stage direction says he must do. In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead,* the characters do not speculate about what may have prompted Hamlet to kill Polonius. Instead, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern merely accept that he has done so and proceed from there. Stoppard kills off the character of Polonius because Shakespeare wrote it as such, and Stoppard's work largely mirrors the plot of Shakespeare's work.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern get excited about the murder of Polonius because it gives them a chance to actually attempt to do something. Guildenstern does not contemplate the reasons for the murder or try to use logic, perhaps because he has taken the Player's earlier call to action to heart. First, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern literally march around the stage. Then, they decide to set a trap for Hamlet using their belts. But their plan leads only to slapstick: Hamlet enters with the body, then exits quickly. Rosencrantz loses his pants. Then, tricked by Hamlet, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern bow to emptiness when Claudius enters from another side of the stage. By the end of the act, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern cannot do anything, for Hamlet has been captured by guards. As usual, their misunderstanding of the situation causes them to miss their opportunity to make a choice that might cause an impact or affect some kind of change.

7.5 A BRIEF CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE TEXT

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead was Tom Stoppard's breakthrough play. It was a huge critical and commercial success, making him famous practically overnight. Though written in 1964, the play was published in 1967, and it played on Broadway in 1968, where it won the Tony for best play.The play cleverly re-interprets Shakespeare's *Hamlet* from the point of view of two minor characters: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. The Laurel-and-Hardy-like pair are totally incidental to the action of *Hamlet*, subject to the whims of the King Claudius – who gets them to betray Hamlet –

and then tricked by Hamlet into delivering a letter that condemns them to death (check out the Shmoop's guide to *Hamlet*; it's useful to know the basic plot). Stoppard's play turns *Hamlet* on its head by giving these two the main roles and reducing all of Shakespeare's major characters (including Hamlet) to minor roles. Written around and in-between the lines of Shakespeare's play, Stoppard brilliantly takes the main concerns of contemporary theater – absurdism, the inevitability of death, breakdown in communication and feeling – and inserts them into the text of a much earlier play.

The absurdist tradition that Stoppard is writing in suggests another enormous influence: Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1952). Beckett's play is just as important to *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* as *Hamlet* is. *Waiting for Godot* consists of two tramps sitting on-stage bantering back and forth and waiting for someone named Godot, who never comes (check out Shmoop's guide to *Waiting for Godot* for more detail).*Waiting for Godot* changed theater by undermining many of its traditional values: plot, characterization, and dialogue that move the action of the play forward. By portraying the act of "waiting" on stage, Beckett's play also opened up new ideas about meta-theatrics (plays that are about plays – how they're made, how they're seen, and/or how they interact with society). Since the characters in *Godot* are in the same position as the audience – waiting for something to happen – much of their dialogue works on multiple levels and seems to hint at awareness on the part of the tramps that they're actually two characters in a play. Stoppard wrote *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* in this absurdist and meta-theatrical tradition. It is very much influenced by Beckett, and much of the silly dialogue between Rosencrantz and Guildenstern simply would not have been seen in the theater before *Waiting for Godot*. It's as if Stoppard uses the innovations that Beckett brought to contemporary theater in order to pry open the minor Shakespearean characters of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Some critics think that Stoppard was too much under the influence of Beckett at this point in his career, but we think that *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* is something unique and independent of both *Waiting for Godot* and *Hamlet*. It is an almost universally acknowledged masterpiece of contemporary theater.

7.6 A SUMMARY

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern wander through a featureless wilderness, flipping coins, which keep coming up heads. Each time a coin lands on heads, Rosencrantz wins it. While Guildenstern worries about the improbability of a coin landing on heads so many times in a row, Rosencrantz happily continues flipping. Guildenstern wonders if they have entered a world where the laws of chance and time are absent. The pair struggles to recall why they are traveling and remember only that a messenger called them.

They encounter a troupe of actors, known as the Tragedians. The leader of the group, called the Player, indicates that the Tragedians specialize in sexual performances and gives Rosencrantz and Guildenstern the chance to participate for a fee. Guildenstern turns the improbable coin-flipping episode to their advantage by offering the Player a bet. The Player loses but claims he cannot pay. Guildenstern asks for a play instead. Guildenstern starts to leave as the Tragedians prepare, and Rosencrantz reveals that the most recently flipped coin landed tails-up.

The scene changes suddenly. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are now inside Elsinore, the royal castle of Denmark, watching as Hamlet and Ophelia burst onstage and leave in

opposite directions. Mistaking Rosencrantz for Guildenstern, Claudius explains that he sent for the pair so that they could ascertain what is bothering Hamlet, their childhood friend.

Bewildered, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern discuss how they might probe Hamlet for the cause of his supposed madness. They play a game of question-and-answer, further confusing themselves about their purpose and even their identities. Guildenstern suggests that he pretend to be Hamlet while Rosencrantz questions him. They realize that Hamlet's disturbed state is due to the fact that his father, the former king of Denmark, has recently died, and the throne has been usurped by Hamlet's uncle, Claudius, who also has married Hamlet's mother, Gertrude. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern overhear Hamlet speaking riddles to Polonius.

Hamlet confuses Rosencrantz and Guildenstern with an enigmatic speech. Polonius comes in to tell Hamlet that the Tragedians have arrived. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern despair about how little they learned of Hamlet's feelings. They cannot decide whether he is insane.

Polonius, Hamlet, and the Tragedians enter, and Hamlet announces that there will be a play the next day. Hamlet leaves, and Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and the Player discuss the possible causes of Hamlet's strange behavior. The Player departs while Rosencrantz and Guildenstern discuss what happens after death.

As Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius, and Ophelia enter, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern explain that Hamlet wants them all to attend the play. The group leaves, but Hamlet enters. Not noticing Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet wonders whether he should commit suicide. Ophelia enters, praying. After a short conversation, she and Hamlet exit.

Alfred, one of the Tragedians, arrives dressed as Gertrude. The other Tragedians enter to rehearse their play, which parallels Claudius's rise to power and marriage to Gertrude. Ophelia enters, crying, followed by an angry Hamlet, who tells her to become a nun, then quickly departs. Claudius and Polonius enter and leave with Ophelia. The Player explains the tragic aspects of the Tragedians' play, which metaphorically retells the recent events at Elsinore and foreshadows the deaths of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. They discuss whether death can be adequately represented on stage. The scene goes black.

In darkness, voices indicate that the play has disturbed Claudius. The next day, Claudius and Gertrude ask Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to find Hamlet, who has killed Polonius. Alone again, the pair concocts a plan to trap Hamlet with their belts, but they fail as Hamlet enters from an unexpected direction and immediately leaves, carrying the dead Polonius. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern call Hamlet back, but he refuses to say what he has done with Polonius's body. Hamlet accuses Rosencrantz and Guildenstern of being Claudius's tools. Hamlet escapes as Claudius enters, only to be brought back onstage under guard. The scene shifts outdoors, where Guildenstern tells Rosencrantz that they have to escort Hamlet to England. Hamlet arrives in conversation with a soldier. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern reluctantly depart.

On the boat to England, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern wonder where they are and whether they might be dead. They notice Hamlet sleeping nearby, remember their mission,

and consider what to do when they arrive. Guildenstern has a letter from Claudius, which reveals that Hamlet is to be executed in England. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern cannot decide what to do.

As the pair sleeps, Hamlet switches the letter they were carrying with one he has written. The next morning, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern awake and hear music coming from barrels onboard the ship. To their surprise, the Tragedians emerge from the barrels just before pirates charge the ship. Hamlet, the Player, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern jump into the barrels, and the lights go down.

When the lights come back up, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and the Player come out of the barrels. Hamlet is gone. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern tell the Player about the letter and rehearse what they will say to the English king. Guildenstern discovers that the letter now states that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are to be executed. The Tragedians encircle the pair. Despairing about his fate, Guildenstern takes a knife from the Player and stabs him. The Player cries out and falls, apparently dead. The Tragedians clap as the Player jumps up. He says that his death was a mediocre performance while showing Guildenstern that the knife was actually a stage prop.

The Player describes the different deaths that his troupe can perform while the Tragedians act out those deaths onstage. Rosencrantz applauds, and the light shifts, leaving Rosencrantz and Guildenstern alone. Rosencrantz breaks down and leaves as he realizes his death is near. Guildenstern wonders how they were caught in this situation, lamenting that they failed to seize an opportunity to avert their fate. Guildenstern exits.The light changes, revealing the dead bodies of Claudius, Gertrude, Hamlet, and Laertes. Horatio arrives and delivers the final speech of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* as the music rises and lights fall.

7.7 KEY WORDS AND TECHNICAL TERMS

ToneWitty; playful; sly; sarcastic; bleak; angst-ridden
Setting (Time) Late 1500s (Elizabethan era)
Setting (Place) Middle of nowhere; Hamlet's court; a boat
Protagonist(S) Rosencrantz and Guildenstern
Major Conflict Rosencrantz and Guildenstern attempt to discover the cause of Hamlet's apparent madness and their own purpose in the world.
Rising Action Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are sent for by Claudius to ascertain the cause of Hamlet's strange behavior. Along the way, they encounter a bizarre troupe of traveling actors and become involved in a series of inexplicable occurrences and confusing situations.
ClimaxWhile escorting Hamlet to England, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern discover that he is to be killed upon arrival. At long last faced with an opportunity to make a meaningful choice, they fail to act and discover that their own lives will be sacrificed.
Falling Action Rosencrantz and Guildenstern despair upon realizing that they are to be put to death and confusedly lament their failure to avoid their situation.
ThemesThe incomprehensibility of the world; the difficulty of making meaningful choices; the relationship between life and the stage
MotifsShakespeare's *Hamlet*; the Lord's Prayer; gambling
SymbolsThe coins; the boat

ForeshadowingThe coin tossing foreshadows the randomness of the play's action. The Player's offer to let Rosencrantz and Guildenstern participate in the Tragedians' performance foreshadows the close parallel relationship between the events at Elsinore and *The Murder of Gonzago*. The many references to death foreshadow the deaths at the end of Act III.

7.8 SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Shakespeare scholars have long debated whether the Hamlet of Shakespeare's play is truly mad. How does *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*

2. Deal with the question of Hamlet's madness? Does Stoppard present Hamlet as sane or insane? Why?

3. Does the play ultimately suggest that we can overcome the randomness of the world? Or does it advocate accepting chance into our lives?

4. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are not heroes in any traditional sense, but do they do anything that the play presents as heroic? If so, what?

5. What is the significance of the Player in the play? Why does Stoppard present him as such an enigmatic figure?

6. The play depicts Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as making a mistake when they do nothing about the letter regarding Hamlet's death. Within the world of the play, what other options do they have? What opportunities does Stoppard give them for altering the outcomes of their lives?

7.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

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6. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead. DVD. Directed by Tom Stoppard. Chatsworth, CA: Image Entertainment, 2005.

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LESSON-8

THE POWER AND THE GLORY

Contents

8.1 OBJECTIVES

1. Students will practice close reading play for both literal and figurative meaning.
2. Students will think and write analytically about literature, using examples from the text and appropriate literary terminology to support arguments about the way a text functions.
3. Students will become familiar with Graham Greene's work and its greater impact on British society.
4. Students will become familiar with mid 20th century British play.

8.2 BACKGROUND-THE WRITER AND THE PERIOD

The Power and the Glory is a 1940 novel by British author Graham Greene. The title is an allusion to the doxology often recited at the end of the Lord's Prayer: "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever, amen." It was initially published in the United States under the title *The Labyrinthine Ways*.

Greene's novel tells the story of a renegade Catholic 'whisky priest' (a term coined by Greene) living in the Mexican state of Tabasco in the 1930s, a time when the Mexican government was attempting to suppress the Catholic Church. That suppression had resulted in the Cristero War (1927–1929), so named for its Catholic combatants' slogan "*Viva Cristo Rey*" ("Long live Christ the King").

In 1941, the novel received the Hawthornden Prize British literary award. In 2005, it was chosen by *TIME* magazine as one of the hundred best English-language novels since 1923.[1]

Greene visited Mexico from January to May 1938 to research and write a nonfiction account of the persecution of the Catholic Church in Mexico, that he had been planning since 1936.The persecution of the Catholic Church was especially severe in the province of Tabasco, under anti-clerical governor Tomás Garrido Canabal. His campaign succeeded in closing all the churches in the state. It forced the priests to marry and give up their soutanes. Greene called it the "fiercest persecution of religion anywhere since the reign of Elizabeth." He chronicled his travels in Tabasco in *The Lawless Roads*, published in 1939. In that generally hostile account of his visit he wrote "That, I think, was the day I began to hate the Mexicans" and at another point described his "growing depression, almost

pathological hatred ... for Mexico." Pico Iyer has marveled at how Greene's responses to what he saw could be "so dyspeptic, so loveless, so savagely self-enclosed and blind" in his nonfiction treatment of his journey,[16] though, as another critic has noted, "nowhere in *The Power and the Glory* is there any indication of the testiness and revulsion" in Greene's nonfiction report.[17] Many details reported in Greene's nonfiction treatment of his Tabasco trip appeared in the novel, from the sound of a revolver in the police chief's holster to the vultures in the sky. The principal characters of *The Power and the Glory* all have antecedents in *The Lawless Roads*, mostly as people Greene encountered directly or, in the most important instance, a legendary character that people told him about, a certain "whisky priest", a fugitive who, as Greene writes in *The Lawless Roads*, "existed for ten years in the forest and swamps, venturing out only at night".

Another of Greene's inspirations for his main character was the Jesuit priest Miguel Pro, who performed his priestly functions as an underground priest in Tabasco and was executed without trial in 1927 on false charges.

In 1983, Greene said that he first started to become a Christian in Tabasco, where the fidelity of the peasants "assumed such proportions that I couldn't help being profoundly moved."

Despite having visited Mexico and published an account of his travels, in the novel Greene was not meticulous about Tabasco's geography. In *The Power and the Glory*, he identified the region's northern border as another Mexican state and its southern border as the sea, when Tabasco's northern border is actually the Bay of Campeche and its southern border is Chiapas to the south.

8.3 THE WRITER- HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Henry Graham Greene was born in 1904 in St John's House, a boarding house of Berkhamsted School, Hertfordshire, where his father was house master. He was the fourth of six children; his younger brother, Hugh, became Director-General of the BBC, and his elder brother, Raymond, an eminent physician and mountaineer.

His parents, Charles Henry Greene and Marion Raymond Greene, were first cousins, both members of a large, influential family that included the owners of Greene King Brewery, bankers, and statesmen; his mother was cousin to Robert Louis Stevenson. Charles Greene was second master at Berkhamsted School, where the headmaster was Dr Thomas Fry, who was married to Charles' cousin. Another cousin was the right-wing pacifist Ben Greene, whose politics led to his internment during World War II.

In his childhood, Greene spent his summers with his uncle, Sir Graham Greene, at Harston House in Cambridgeshire. In Greene's description of his childhood, he describes his learning to read there: "It was at Harston I found quite suddenly I could read—the book was *Dixon Brett, Detective*. I didn't want anyone to know of my discovery, so I read only in secret, in a remote attic, but my mother must have spotted what I was at all the same, for she gave me Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* for the train journey home—always an interminable journey with the long wait between trains at Bletchley…"

In 1910, Charles Greene succeeded Dr Fry as headmaster of Berkhamsted. Graham also attended the school as a boarder. Bullied and profoundly depressed, he made several suicide attempts, including, as he wrote in his autobiography, by Russian roulette and by taking aspirin before going swimming in the school pool. In 1920, aged 16, in what was a radical step for the time, he was sent for psychoanalysis for six months in London, afterwards returning to school as a day student. School friends included Claud Cockburn the journalist, and Peter Quennell the historian.

Greene contributed several stories to the school magazine, one of which was published by a London evening newspaper in January 1921.

Oxford University

He attended Balliol College, Oxford, to study history. During 1922 Greene was for a short time a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and sought an invitation to the new Soviet Union, of which nothing came. In 1925, while he was an undergraduate at Balliol, his first work, a poorly received volume of poetry titled *Babbling April*, was published.

Greene suffered from periodic bouts of depression while at Oxford, and largely kept to himself. Of Greene's time at Oxford, his contemporary Evelyn Waugh noted that: "Graham Greene looked down on us (and perhaps all undergraduates) as childish and ostentatious. He certainly shared in none of our revelry." He graduated in 1925 with a second-class degree in history.

Greene originally divided his fiction into two genres: thrillers (mystery and suspense books), such as *The Ministry of Fear*, which he described as entertainments, often with notable philosophic edges; and literary works, such as *The Power and the Glory*, which he described as novels, on which he thought his literary reputation was to be based.

As his career lengthened, both Greene and his readers found the distinction between "entertainments" and "novels" to be less evident. The last book Greene termed an entertainment was *Our Man in Havana* in 1958. When *Travels with My Aunt* was published eleven years later, many reviewers noted that Greene had designated it a novel, even though, as a work decidedly comic in tone, it appeared closer to his last two entertainments, *Loser Takes All* and *Our Man in Havana*, than to any of the novels. Greene, they speculated, seemed to have dropped the category of entertainment. This was soon confirmed. In the *Collected Edition* of Greene's works published in 22 volumes between 1970 and 1982, the distinction between novels and entertainments is no longer maintained. All are novels.

Greene was one of the more "cinematic" of twentieth-century writers; most of his novels and many of his plays and short stories have been adapted for film or television. The Internet Movie Database lists 66 titles between 1934 and 2010 based on Greene material. Some novels were filmed more than once, such as *Brighton Rock* in 1947 and 2011, *The End of the Affair* in 1955 and 1999, and *The Quiet American* in 1958 and 2002. The 1936 thriller *A Gun for Sale* was filmed at least five times under different titles, notably *This Gun for Hire* in 1942. Greene received an Academy Award nomination for the screenplay for the 1948 Carol Reed film *The Fallen Idol*, adapted from his own short story *The Basement Room*. He also wrote several original screenplays. In 1949, after writing the novella as "raw material", he wrote the screenplay for a classic *film noir*, *The Third Man*, also directed by Carol Reed, and featuring Orson Welles. In 1983, *The*

Honorary Consul, published ten years earlier, was released as a film under its original title, starring Michael Caine and Richard Gere. Author and screenwriter Michael Korda contributed a foreword and introduction to this novel in a commemorative edition.

In 2009, *The Strand Magazine* began to publish in serial form a newly discovered Greene novel titled *The Empty Chair*. The manuscript was written in longhand when Greene was 22 and newly converted to Catholicism.

Greene's literary style was described by Evelyn Waugh in *Commonweal* as "not a specifically literary style at all. The words are functional, devoid of sensuous attraction, of ancestry, and of independent life". Commenting on the lean prose and its readability, Richard Jones wrote in the *Virginia Quarterly Review* that "nothing deflects Greene from the main business of holding the reader's attention". Greene's novels often have religious themes at their centre. In his literary criticism he attacked the modernist writers Virginia Woolf and E. M. Forster for having lost the religious sense which, he argued, resulted in dull, superficial characters, who "wandered about like cardboard symbols through a world that is paper-thin". Only in recovering the religious element, the awareness of the drama of the struggle in the soul that carries the permanent consequence of salvation or damnation, and of the ultimate metaphysical realities of good and evil, sin and divine grace, could the novel recover its dramatic power. Suffering and unhappiness are omnipresent in the world Greene depicts; and Catholicism is presented against a background of unvarying human evil, sin, and doubt. V. S. Pritchett praised Greene as the first English novelist since Henry James to present, and grapple with, the reality of evil. Greene concentrated on portraying the characters' internal lives—their mental, emotional, and spiritual depths. His stories are often set in poor, hot and dusty tropical places such as Mexico, West Africa, Vietnam, Cuba, Haiti, and Argentina, which led to the coining of the expression "Greeneland" to describe such settings.

The novels often portray the dramatic struggles of the individual soul from a Catholic perspective. Greene was criticised for certain tendencies in an unorthodox direction—in the world, sin is omnipresent to the degree that the vigilant struggle to avoid sinful conduct is doomed to failure, hence not central to holiness. His friend and fellow Catholic Evelyn Waugh attacked that as a revival of the Quietist heresy. This aspect of his work also was criticised by the theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar, as giving sin a mystique. Greene responded that constructing a vision of pure faith and goodness in the novel was beyond his talents. Praise of Greene from an orthodox Catholic point of view by Edward Short is in *Crisis Magazine*, and a mainstream Catholic critique is presented by Joseph Pearce.

Catholicism's prominence decreased in his later writings. The supernatural realities that haunted the earlier work declined and were replaced by a humanistic perspective, a change reflected in his public criticism of orthodox Catholic teaching.

In his later years, Greene was a strong critic of American imperialism and sympathised with the Cuban leader Fidel Castro, whom he had met. Years before the Vietnam War, he prophetically attacked the idealistic but arrogant beliefs of *The Quiet American*, whose certainty in his own virtue kept him from seeing the disaster he inflicted on the Vietnamese.[ ] In *Ways of Escape*, reflecting on his Mexican trip, he complained that

Mexico's government was insufficiently left-wing compared with Cuba's. In Greene's opinion, "Conservatism and Catholicism should be ... impossible bedfellows".

8.4 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

Part I: Chapter One

The stranger is a priest, the unnamed protagonist of the novel, and Greene introduces him to us in a strange way: although he employs a third-person narrator to tell his story, he refrains from having this narrator directly tell us who this character is at first. Like Tench, we are left to observe this mysterious figure and make inferences about him based on his strange manners, his awkward behavior, his secretive ways. As a result, we initially meet this character feeling puzzled by him, perhaps even suspicious of him, and for good reason. The novel, in many ways, is very much about the question of how people come to terms with this character, how people evaluate his choices and his attitudes. For example, what do we make of the fact that he agrees to act honorably and help the boy but only does so grudgingly once he learns that it has inconvenienced him?

Meanwhile, Mr. Tench is a portrait of mental and spiritual numbness. It is fitting, therefore, that his errand is to pick up a canister of anesthetic. Indifferent, detached, absent-minded, almost vacant, Tench is a kind of spiritual thermometer for the novel, an indicator of the general atmosphere of quietude and apathy. Tench also serves here as something of a contrast to the priest, arguing that it is useless for him to journey with the boy to visit his dying mother. She is going to die anyway, he reasons, so what would be the point? Mired in a feeling of utter futility, Tench attaches little importance to action of any kind, indicated by his inability to complete a simple errand, as well as his curious refusal to leave Mexico, a place he dislikes. Although he accompanies the boy reluctantly, the priest still feels a sense of duty and retains a feeling that his actions are of some importance and consequence.

We should not, however, make too much of the contrast between the two men: it is also important to note that, after he picks up the religious book, Tench grows "thoughtful" for a moment. Tench may be frozen, but he is not dead, and the hope that even the most callous and indifferent people are still capable of spiritual regeneration is an important idea in this novel. It is a theme that will receive much fuller treatment as the story progresses. Although Tench is not incredibly important to the plot itself, Greene occasionally returns to him briefly over the course of the novel.

Part I: Chapter Two

Chapter Two introduces us to three key figures: the lieutenant, the young boy, and Padre Jose. The lieutenant is a ruthless and perhaps even hypocritical figure. He despises priests for exploiting the people, yet he lets this feeling so overwhelm him that he declares himself prepared to execute those very people in order to rid the state of priests for good. The lieutenant, however, is far from being a simple character, and it would be a mistake to view him purely in negative terms. While he avows his opposition to the priest and to the priesthood, Greene's description of him often emphasizes the subtle similarities that exist between the lieutenant and his prey. He lives an austere, almost monastic life in his bare room, and he pursues his mission with a single-minded zeal based on principles and a concern for the poor. That his zeal often leads him to commit horrific acts is undeniable but,

then again, many people in the novel would argue that the problem with the clergy is that, somewhere along the line, they too lost sight of their ideals.

The lieutenant's ideals concerning order and law can be seen even in his dress. While the lieutenant professes his belief that the universe is fundamentally chaotic, his lifestyle and his meticulous concern for his appearance indicate a desire for order and structure. Greene describes the lieutenant's dress as "dapper", while the other policemen are disheveled. Indeed, he is set apart from his surroundings as well: buildings are dilapidated, the landscape is marshy, overgrown and humid.

Perhaps, then, the figure who is meant to serve as a contrast to the lieutenant is not the priest, but the hapless, incompetent and numb Mr. Tench. Unlike Mr. Tench, the lieutenant has passion and motivation. For Greene, the opposite of love is not hate, but apathy. Both love and hate signify emotional investment, a connection to and a concern about the world, even if hate is an ultimately negative concern. Apathy indicates a lack of commitment and an unconcern for life itself. Connections between the priest and the lieutenant will become clearer as the book progresses, but even in these early chapters Greene is preparing us to question the stereotypical contrasts we may be tempted to draw.

The boy and his family, whose house the priest visited after leaving Tench, serve throughout the novel as a way for Greene to explore the effects of the state's religious intolerance on a pious family. Left with only bad examples of priests for her children, the mother struggles to impart her faith to her offspring. Already it is evident that she can no longer hold her son's attention, as he expresses a lack of interest in the story of the martyred boy, Juan. Children are extremely important in this novel, and one reason is that the future of faith in the state and the response to this wave of religious persecution is uncertain.

Padre Jose represents a foil for the protagonist, the nameless priest. While both begin the novel full of shame about themselves, Padre Jose's choice to live an easeful, sedentary life contrasts sharply with the arduous, wandering life chosen by the priest.

Part I: Chapter Three

As Americans living abroad, Captain and Mrs. Fellows remain isolated, estranged from the country in which they are residing and the people among whom they live. Their detached ineffectuality is perhaps best symbolized by Mrs. Fellows' illness, which leaves her bedridden, full of neurotic anxiety and the fear of death. Lacking any sense of meaning, both are living lives of denial. Captain Fellows refuses to think about anything negative, carefully maintaining a façade of cheerful ignorance. Needing reassurance, he asks his wife, "It's not such a bad life, Trixy? Is it now? Not a bad life?" His wife, on the other hand, sees nothing but death and disease crowding around her and, in response, she retreats further into her bed and behind her mosquito netting, in a futile attempt to hide and protect herself from the dangers that are a part of life. In a darkly comic line about Mrs. Fellows, Greene emphasizes just how warped her fears have made her: "the word 'life' was taboo: it reminded you of death." Along with Mr. Tench, Captain and Mrs. Fellows are not necessarily bad, but simply people living deadened existences.

Unlike her parents, Coral is full of compassion for others and enlivened with the desire to become involved, to engage with the world around her. A professed nonbeliever who lost her faith at the age of ten, Coral instinctively practices the Christian virtues of charity, tolerance and compassion, further emphasizing Greene's point that true Christianity exists in unexpected places, within people who may not even realize how holy they are. By contrast, for the priest, holiness and virtue are qualities that require effort, sacrifice and willpower. Coral Fellows becomes a touchstone of sorts for the priest, a figure to whom his thoughts return at intermittent points throughout the novel.

The encounter with the villagers shows that religion is still very much a part of the lives of the people. However, instead of being a joyous event, the priest's arrival in the town stirs anxiety and haste. The old man wants him to perform the necessary rituals as quickly as possible before the soldiers arrive. The priest, on the other hand, far from being happy to be able to perform his duties among willing and suppliant believers, is too overwhelmed by fatigue to be anything but irritated. Greene refuses to romanticize religious practices, showing how imperfect people are always involved in any human endeavor, even those considered to be the most sacred. This is not an argument for skepticism; on the contrary, Greene is trying to point out that, in order to believe, one must be able to see and accept things as they are. The shortsighted Mrs. Fellows cannot accept that death is a part of life and so does not really live; in the same way, those in this novel who do not see that the wicked is part of the sacred lack true wisdom. Complete purity exists only in myths and stories, as evidenced by the old man's telling his fellow villagers that the priest is inside weeping for their sins, when, in fact, he is crying only for himself.

Part I: Chapter Four

This chapter, ranging through five different scenes, observes the townspeople responding to the presence (or absence) of priests in their lives. Mr. Tench is moved—although he doesn't know why—to write to his estranged wife after so many years of silence. Although Greene does not come right out and say it, one inference to be drawn is that Mr. Tench's brief encounter with the priest has somehow awakened in him a desire to set things right with his family. That he fails to write the letter here perhaps indicates that this desire has not yet taken root in him, that it is only the faint beginnings of what will undoubtedly be a long process of change his life.

The presence of Padre Jose, meanwhile, awakens hope in the funeral goers, but his refusal to get involved or take a risk makes the ceremony more traumatic than it would have been without him. It is hard to know quite what to make of this scene: on the one hand, Padre Jose does no one a service by being so cowardly, and his frightened, mousy character stands in direct opposition to the stories of brave martyrs (such as the one about the boy, Juan, a story to which the novel continually returns). At the same time, however, his chance encounter with the family at the funeral awakens in them emotions that are perhaps better and more human than the numbness they had been experiencing before his arrival.

The next two scenes involve parents instructing—or trying to instruct—children, and in both cases, the parents prove ineffectual or uninspiring. Mrs. Fellows becomes characteristically nervous when Coral questions her directly about God, and Mr. Fellows is nowhere to be found. Again, the brief, chance encounter with the priest has stirred important questions in someone. The mother reading to her children about the martyr Juan is clearly a

much more admirable figure than Mrs. Fellows, and yet she also seems to be failing to engage her son. His father, not a very religious man, makes an important point about the church's role as a key component in the fabric of the community: whether you believe in what it preaches or not, he seems to argue, it was an organization that brought people together. Many people are isolated in this novel, even people who are living in a large town, in the midst of many others. Camaraderie, fellowship, a sense of social togetherness remain largely absent from this novel, and the father, here, seems to argue for the church as a possible source of community feeling.

The lieutenant's conversation with the young boy shows him, once again, to have good intentions, motivated by the desire to rid the world of corruption and deceit. The lieutenant yearns for purity, he wishes, "to begin the world again with them, in a desert." Greene's point, however, is that purity is not a condition of this world, simply not something available to flawed human beings. As is the case so often, and as Greene emphasizes in this

chapter especially, the lieutenant's obsessive pursuit of his impossible end can lead him to resort to horrific and self-defeating means. Impurity is a part of life, Greene suggests, and to attempt to rid the world of it entirely is, therefore, to become a killer.

Part II: Chapter One

Chapter One of Part II is the longest chapter in the book, and it introduces the rest of the novel's significant characters. Brigida will be a continual presence in the priest's thoughts, and the mestizo will appear again at crucial points in his journey. This is also our first extended encounter with the priest's broodings about himself—about his unworthiness, his confused sense of purpose, his inability to forgive himself.

An incredibly important theme that arises in this chapter is the interaction of representation and real life. In his hometown, the priest realizes that he, like Padre Jose, bears the burden of representing the priesthood itself to people who will have no other encounter with clergymen in their lives. Maria says to him, "…suppose you die. You'll be a martyr, won't you? What kind of martyr do you think you'll make? It's enough to make people mock.'" Our protagonist is no longer just "a" priest, he is "the" priest in this area and his actions and example have far more significance as a result. He himself becomes acutely aware of his own significance in this chapter, both because he learns that the lieutenant has begun to take hostages based on his movements and because Maria introduces the term "martyr."

The theme of representation in reality thickens with the priest's encounter with the lieutenant. The priest's hands, which should give him away, have become as weather-beaten and calloused as any other person's. This is a very obvious indication that the stereotypical notion of what a priest should be does not always hold true. The priest has been transformed through the persecution he has undergone. Fittingly, another one of the novel's most important themes is the idea that adversity and suffering are necessary to a person's moral and spiritual development.

The contrast between the priest and the lieutenant deepens in this chapter. The priest is unsure of what he is to do next. Unlike the lieutenant, who moves with uncompromising vigor across the landscape, the priest has trouble deciding.

Part II: Chapter Two

The narrative voice has shifted slightly from the previous chapter: where chapter one focused on the priest's thoughts, his assessment of himself and his situation, chapter two is more action-based. For the first half of the chapter, we get almost no descriptions of what the priest is thinking at all: the narrative is almost exclusively focused on dialogue, plot and external description. It is only after the priest leaves the hotel that we return to a perspective that lets us see "inside" his mind. On one level, obviously, Greene refrains from giving us too much of the priest's thoughts during the drinking scene. He does not want to interrupt a tension-filled scene, where action and dialogue are of paramount importance, with too many side-glimpses into the world of thought. Greene is a master of suspense, and this is one of the most edgy scenes in the entire novel. On a thematic level, in the beginning of the chapter the priest finds himself, for the first time in awhile, animated by a sense of immediate purpose: he needs to find a way to procure wine for mass. This part of the chapter is narrated with particular emphasis on the action of the plot because the priest himself is acting and not simply reacting. He has made a bold move into the heart of the state and is driven by a very real goal. The fact that even this relatively modest plan falls through only emphasizes that the priest's destiny is not in his control, that anything he undertakes must be carried out within a matrix of forces that are not subject to his control—in this case, the forces of authority and etiquette.

The narration returns to the priests thoughts after he leaves the hotel. Now completely broke, his mission frustrated, the priest turns inward, unsure of what to do next. The end of the chapter shows him once again forced to react to the actions of others-running, hiding, lying, trying to evade detection and capture for as long as he can. As evidenced by his encounter with Padre Jose, the priest can count on no help from anyone, not even a fellow member of the clergy, and his powers of persuasion do him no good. The only person in town to whom he could look as a friend or ally has denied him, and he can do little else besides wait. Finally, captured and powerless, thinking, repenting, worrying, praying are all that is left to him. The whole chapter is a story of rapid unraveling. As in the previous chapter, the authorities searching for him ironically cannot recognize him as the priest even though they arrest him on another charge.

Part II: Chapter Three

In a cell full of murderers and thieves, it is ironic that it is the pious woman who turns out to be the least admirable figure. Actually, this is a classic Christian story, reminiscent of many stories in the New Testament. Although it is not an exact parallel by any means, this scene resonates thematically with the gospel story in which Christ intervenes between a mob of self-righteous people and a woman whom they are about to stone to death for adultery. Jesus, alarmed at this violent display of self-righteousness, tells the crowd that only those who are without sin are allowed to condemn her. As both the Christian story and this scene in the novel seem to indicate, hypocritical confidence and pride in one's own moral rectitude are in many ways worse than sins of the flesh. As we saw with the lieutenant, this woman's outrage at the sins of others prevents her from seeing the hypocrisy of her own attitude.

In many ways, moreover, the pious woman is the least admirable character in the novel, worse even than the mestizo and the lieutenant. Although at first glance, this may seem ridiculous, given the fact that the lieutenant is, for all intents and purposes, a murderer and the mestizo is a conniving betrayer, Greene asks us to think beyond our customary sense of good and evil.

Indeed, being able to think past our customary, ingrained ideas is the overall theme of this chapter. The lieutenant is sure that he knows exactly what kind of person he is searching for, and he lets the priest slip from his fingers. He is once again face-to-face with his target, and he once again fails to recognize him as the man he has been searching for. In these scenes, Greene seems intent on highlighting the lieutenant's blindness. The lieutenant's attitude towards priests is to hate them all indiscriminately and, as a result, he is unable to think of them as anything other than stereotypes. This priest, however, thanks to his long months on the run, no longer resembles or behaves like a stereotypical priest. The lieutenant's single-minded hatred makes him unable to adjust his expectations and, once again, he misses his prey. And, once again, his intense focus on achieving his goal has made him blind to what should be most important.

Lastly, through the scene in the jail cell, Greene asks us to re-examine our conventional notions about where goodness can be found. The priest, as harried, uncomfortable and seemingly doomed as he is, elatedly feels a sense of solidarity with his fellow prisoners. The jail cell is a metaphor of sorts for human society as a whole. Moreover, the jail cell indicates that suffering must reach a certain peak before positive change seems possible. Only when the state tightens its grip most firmly on the people can they find a certain strength in brotherhood and common suffering that allows them to resist the state's coercion.

Part II: Chapter Four

In this chapter, the priest is in limbo, a word that is as appropriate a description of his spiritual condition as it is of his physical surroundings. The chapter itself is more about the evocation of a certain brooding, silent, forsaken atmosphere than anything else. Just as limbo is a state halfway between heaven and hell, the world the priest stumbles into is a world of half-things: the mongrel and the child are half-dead, the hut he finds only half shelters him from the rain, and it is raining about half of the time, he can only half communicate with the woman. Fighting with a dog over a scrap of meat, he feels only half-human, and by the time he leaves the woman, he is only half-alive. More importantly, perhaps, it is also like limbo in that it is a world of abandonment: the abandoned house and the abandoned village are two very obvious and noteworthy examples. The old dog has been abandoned by the family, the priest finds the child abandoned (albeit temporarily) in the maize, the woman has been abandoned by her family and her fellow villagers and he, in turn, abandons her on the plateau. When he returns, he finds only the child's corpse abandoned at the foot of the cross. Moreover, he abandons the dog and the dead child to the force of hunger when he steals the meat off the bone and the sugar cube, respectively. It is also clear that he has abandoned all hope of escape or survival when he freely confesses to the man with the rifle that he is a priest. All of these details in their consistency and subtly make for a chapter remarkable for its creation of a sense of fading life and desolation.

If the priest were in limbo, then crossing the border into a safe haven would seem to indicate a movement out of limbo and into paradise. We will have to wait until the next chapter to find out if this is the case, but we already know enough about Greene to suspect that he is unlikely to let his protagonist find any kind of true paradise on earth.

The episode with the murdered boy is significant because it allows us to have a glimpse of the real suffering and sorrow the gringo has caused. The lieutenant romanticizes the gringo in the early part of the novel. The gunslinger, the cowboy, the outlaw—he is a type we are all familiar with, the subject of many movies and novels. Greene here shows us the bloody and hateful consequences of such a person's lawlessness. Once again, Greene provokes the reader to think beyond conventional types and to confront the ugly reality beneath. But Greene himself walks something of a fine line. As we have discussed earlier in relation to the pious woman, he seems to argue that sins such as pride and complacency are in some ways worse than sins of passion. And while this still may be Greene's point, he has to be careful not to minimize or trivialize the real suffering inflicted by egregious, violent, extreme actions. Showing the bloody infant and the suffering mother helps to qualify his point somewhat, that negatively motivated passions may indeed be just as reprehensible—if not more so—than apathy and complacency.

Part III: Chapter One

Initially, we may feel surprised at how deep the priest's sense of shame is when, from the very beginning, the priest feels guilty for the complacency that sets in at the Lehr's house. Maybe we feel he is judging himself a little too harshly. After all, he has been through a trying ordeal, and has been resting for only a few short days. Plus, while life in this town is certainly a lot easier than it was in all the other towns he has been in, it is far from luxurious. Does he really need to feel guilty over taking a bath?

Although it is hard to know exactly how harshly Greene means for us to judge the people in this town, it seems that he is less interested in skewering people like the Lehr's than in showing just how much the priest has changed as a result of his months of hardship. Although he is still far from perfect—dipping into his old habits—this priest has become a truly extraordinary man, and the constant lamentations he makes over his own unworthiness are meant to show the mark of true humility. When the mestizo approaches, the choice before him is clear: physical salvation versus spiritual salvation. It takes him some time to decide to turn his mule around, but, in the end, the priest knows what he must do: "The oddest thing of all was that he felt quite cheerful: he had never really believed in this peace."

Throughout the chapter, the issue of money recurs again and again. The priest's changing attitude towards money becomes a barometer of sorts, indicating his changing attitude toward the world itself. He needs money to live, so when he initially sticks firm at one peso fifty, it is understandable, if not particularly admirable. When he suddenly decided to drop his rate to one peso, we can see that it is animated by a true sense of decency and concern for what is fair. But it is still a half-measure, since it indicates that the priest continues to make plans for making a home for himself in this world, charging money for performing what it is his duty to perform. It is only when he gives all the money away that he has given himself over entirely to his faith. After all, Jesus teaches in the New Testament that to be saved one must be prepared to give up all of one's earthly possessions and give them to the poor. Once again, abandonment is the key term. The priest, in abandoning the money,

abandons the world, and, in turn, abandons himself to God. The issue of money and the Catholic Church is obviously an important one for this book and, in this chapter, Greene has his protagonist nearly run the gamut of priestly attitudes towards worldly wealth: from complacency, to qualified generosity, to saintliness. In doing so, he also runs the gamut from the real to the ideal, showing what Christians are called to do, while refraining from too harshly condemning what most of them do instead.

Part III: Chapters Two–Three

This chapter highlights significant differences between the priest and the lieutenant. Although the priest is allowed to visit with the dying man, the gringo refuses to repent and once again, as they have so many times before in this novel, the priest's efforts fail. At the same time, however, the lietenant succeeds in trapping his prey, the priest. But the situation raises an extremely significant point. That is, the priest fails based on one definition of failure, which is to fall short of attaining one's goal. But, in a deeper sense, the priest has succeeded, and succeeded brilliantly. Although he may not have been able to perform the duty he came to perform, he was focused on doing the right thing at all times. Although in their conversation, the priest and the lieutenant find that they in fact have much in common, one incredibly important difference is highlighted here: throughout the novel, the lieutenant single- mindedly pursues his goal, while the priest has difficulty even deciding what his goals should be. While the priest has been obsessed with his own unworthiness, he has, by and large, ended up making the right choices. In contrast, the lieutenant has been incredibly confident in his righteousness and has committed some rather horrific acts.

Here, by the end, it is clear that the priest has learned something that the lieutenant hasn't: one must act always with good intentions, even if one knows that those actions are doomed to failure. The fact that the world is imperfect and almost impossible to change is not a reason to give up. Rather, the world's inherent imperfection is a reason to adjust one's mindset, to turn one's attention to whether one is a good person, not whether one's actions are necessarily the most effective ones. This is what he means when he tells the lieutenant: "That's another difference between us. It's no good your working for your end unless you're a good man yourself. And there won't always be good men in your party."

Moreover, the lieutenant's words give credence to the priest's criticism. When he informs the priest that he will be taken back to the capital city to be tried, he says, "I am not a barbarian. You will be tried…properly." Of course, everyone knows that there will not be a "proper" trial. The lieutenant's own sense of honor prompts him to tell the priest that he will not be treated unfairly, but the pause in his speech, indicated by an ellipse in the text, hints that he recognizes the fallacious nature of what he is saying. The lieutenant himself may be a good man, but the movement he belongs to is one that will not make good on his promises of fairness and justice.

Part III: Chapter Four

The identities of the characters in the novel begin to shift in this chapter. The lawful lieutenant himself breaks the law twice in this chapter, trying to sneak Padre Jose into the jail cell to hear the priest's confession, and then delivering the condemned man a bottle of contraband brandy. Compassion for a human being and a former enemy has led him to violate

the laws he has sworn to uphold. Padre Jose may have renounced the priesthood, but in this chapter it is the lieutenant's decision to betray his own order that is most significant. His actions testify to the effect the priest has had on him, and indicate that even this zealous lieutenant, who was formerly so full of hatred, is capable of change and spiritual regeneration. The hapless Padre Jose is caught between two incompatible identities in this chapter: the priest in him knows it is duty to go to the police station, but his much more forceful wife finally brings her husband to heel, scoffing at the notion that he is still a priest. Although he obviously doesn't admire Padre Jose's spinelessness, Greene depicts him as more of a broken, pathetic person than as an indifferent or cold-hearted one.

The priest's qualms over his impending execution are extremely significant, showing that Greene refuses to turn his protagonist into a simple hero. The priest displayed remarkable courage in returning to the gringo fully aware of what he was facing. Here, however, Greene again depicts the priest's wavering thoughts, his self-doubt and his fear, preferring a flawed, noble hero to an idealized model of perfect courage. The priest continues to berate himself for loving his daughter so much, a response that makes him a much more sympathetic and human character.

Although the priest's waking thoughts are self-critical and mired, as ever, inhis past sinfulness, his dream seems to represent his breaking beyond the conventions of his old life. He awaits the final dish, which presumably symbolizes the reward he will receive in heaven. His ignoring the mass in front of him could suggest that he is moving beyond the church, beyond the ceremonies and rituals to a more direct communion with God. Upon seeing the prison yard again after he awakes, his fear returns and we see that he has not yet broken free of the cares and anxieties and imperfections of this world. But, he is no longer concerned with the state of his soul, however. All he can do is regret the mistakes and missed opportunities of his life, and wish he could go to God a more "successful" human being. This is, of course, true humility, and we sense that he is going to God with quite a lot. Here especially, with the interpolation of the dream, we are aware of the discrepancy between the priest's self-conception and Greene's attitude towards him. This gap has grown wider as the book has progressed and the priest has continued to berate himself while acting nobly and selflessly. He may not consider himself a hero, but he has made the most of the opportunities for heroism that Greene affords him.

Part IV

On some level, this chapter is meant to re-establish a sense of perspective, to emphasize that the story is no longer about one man's struggle with himself and with his enemies, but about his impact on those around him. Fittingly, therefore, having followed the priest for so long, his final day is reported to us only indirectly, as it is registered in the minds of others. We watch the execution of the priest from Mr. Tench's perspective. The priest's life is over, but the struggle against the state, and against the forces of persecution, goes on. He does not die with heroic flourish and defiance, and the novel's distant perspective on the scene only emphasizes this fact. We see him only as a very small figure, dying quickly in a heap against the wall.

On some level, therefore, Greene seems to be arguing that the kind of valiant final gesture we associate with heroes is not what is important, and not what truly defines a hero. One obvious question is why does Greene have the priest's last word be "excuse", or, at least, something that sounds like "excuse." Although it is impossible to say for certain what the

priest was trying to convey, the word is nevertheless full of possible meanings. First, it is significant because excuses are one thing the priest never allowed himself to make. Or is "excuse" a verb? Is the priest asking for God to excuse him and his unworthy soul? Or is he, in a final act of forgiveness, asking for God to excuse those who have persecuted and executed him. Its very ambiguity provokes us to turn over possible meanings and, therefore, think more about the priest and his story.

It is striking that at the end of the novel we find all the expatriates fleeing the state, and that their flight coincides with the execution of the last remaining priest, but compared with the others, only Mr. Tench seems to have made a significant improvement in his outlook. His flight seems to represent a first, tentative step towards giving his life some sense of direction, and Greene makes it clear that his brief encounter with the priest had some kind of lasting impact upon him. Mr. Tench, appalled by the sight of the priest's execution and obviously stirred in some way by his wife's letter, decides that he will leave Mexico for good. In the previous chapter, the priest despaired about having to return to God "empty-handed", but it is evident from this scene that he made more of an impact on people than he realized. The priest's positive influence becomes even more obvious in the book's final episode. The priest's execution has made the priest a martyr in the young boy's eyes and, to his mind, the state has taken away the last hero in the land. The priest and the lieutenant unknowingly vied throughout this novel for the boy's soul, and the boy now makes it clear that he has chosen to emulate the priest not the lieutenant when he spits at the lieutenant in disgust. The spirit of defiance, fueled by the priest's sacrifice, lives on. The boy's dream of the dead priest flickering his eyelids is a kind of mini-resurrection scene. Indeed, the dream itself is an indication that the priest's example and his influence have transcended his death. And in the book's final scene, a man known simply as "the stranger" knocks at the boy's door. The book has come full circle: another unnamed priest has emerged from the shadows to defy the state by remaining among the people. The lieutenant, by attempting to stamp out religion, has only helped it to take root more firmly in the land.

8.5 A BRIEF CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE TEXT

This novel is unified partially by the failing efforts of several characters to communicate significantly with one another, and Greene uses the metaphor of the Communion of the Mass, the Eucharist, to delineate their frustrated attempts. At the beginning of the novel, the dentist Tench pours symbolic wine (brandy) for the priest to drink, as he symbolically usurps the role of celebrant. Later, the crucible, which he uses in his dentistry is used to blend a cheapened quality of gold, just as the priest's chalice is symbolically defective — that is, chipped. The American outlaw, Calver, and the nameless priest exist in a mystical, parallel communion throughout *The Power and the Glory*. Both of their outdated pictures hang in the police station; the photograph of the priest is one taken at a First Communion party long ago.

Throughout the novel, Greene cites the pathos of priestly celibacy in the priest's inability to communicate truly with Maria, the mother of his child. Maria provides all of the ingredients for him to celebrate Mass, but the priest must hurry the Sacrifice because of the arrival of the police. In like manner, he is prohibited from "communicating" fully with Maria in a marriage because he is a priest.

The wine-buying episode in the hotel room exemplifies, symbolically, the priest's inability to carry out his clerical function -that is, to distribute the Eucharist. Here, the Governor's cousin and the jefe drink all of the precious wine, leaving the priest with only brandy, which is unusable in the Consecration. The priest is as ineffectual in this setting as he was years before at Concepción, and his memory constantly returns to his pompous strictures at the First Communion celebration. Later, he associates Coral Fellows' name with the gemstones worn by girls after their First Communion.

On one level, this novel traces the priest's realization that Communion, in the theological sense, is not as important as compassion and human understanding. All of this Communion symbolism is reinforced by the many references to teeth in the novel. The mouths of the characters, except for the pious woman in the jail cell, are unfit for the reception of the Eucharist.

Confession

If, as we have seen, the characters in this novel are unable to symbolically receive Communion, neither can they symbolically "confess" to one another. The Fellowses have long ago lost the ability to communicate; the mestizo threatens to use the guise of Confession to trap the priest into admitting his ministry; and the priest's death is occasioned by his return to a police state to shrive Calver.

Padre Jose steadfastly refuses to hear the condemned fugitive's confession, and the priest worries that hostages might be shot and die without receiving penance. Again, Greene replaces the formality of theology with the human virtue of humility. The priest-protagonist is close to God when he "confesses" that Padre Jose was always the better priest, even though he fails to carry out the formal Church stipulations concerning the Sacrament for the priest who is about to die.

False Fathers

False fathers permeate the novel and help to define the priest's dilemma: the emotion that he feels for Brigitta should, by Catholic precept, be applied to all the "children" of his congregation — in fact, to all the "children" (men, women, and children) in the entire country of Mexico. Other "fathers" in the book serve as foils to the priest. Padre Jose is an obviously ineffectual "father" (or priest); he married after government insistence, and he spends his days living with a nagging, grotesque wife. Luis' father has abdicated his responsibility; he leaves the task of rearing their three children to his wife. In short, his only contribution to the marriage is an occasional, cynical comment about traditional religion.

Coral Fellows' father is serene in his ignorance and inefficiency, and his daughter, therefore, becomes the true head of the family. Captain Fellows' negligence presses her into maturity before her time. And, in almost a parallel situation, the Tenches ceased to exchange letters after the death of their son.

The priest's guilt is heightened by Brigitta's spiritual condition; his daughter seems already condemned to a hell in both this life and in the afterlife. Fatherhood throughout the novel becomes a metaphor for the characters' inability to communicate successfully in the world of emotions and reality. Even the lieutenant is a misguided "father," wanting to spare

the new children of Mexico the privations, which he experienced as a child. His gospel, however, is rejected by Luis, who spits on the lieutenant's pistol at the end of the novel.

Finally, Calver also fits into this false father theme of the book. He addresses the priest as "father' in his note; then, he enrages him by using the term 'bastard" to describe the police, just as the priest is trying to hear his confession.

The Lieutenant and the Priest

In an essay, Greene emphasizes that the lieutenant is not all bad. Both the lieutenant and the priest are leaders of two different types of totalitarian states, and both have the good of the people at heart, although their means are diametrically opposed.

The priest's three meetings with the lieutenant correspond to Christ's three falls on His way to the Cross, and they form a major structuring device in the novel. All of the priest's meanderings seem to gravitate toward these confrontations, and the final meeting ends with a partial reconciliation of opposites. The lieutenant is able to see the worth of his prisoner, and he does all he can to comfort the priest during his last hours. This kindness is foreshadowed in the second meeting, when the lieutenant gives the disguised clergyman a five-peso note, the price of a Mass. He feels that the priest might soon be too old to work.

The Young Juan Story

Almost all of the priest's actions should be viewed against the backdrop of young Juan's holy doings. The priest's Way of the Cross unfolds section by section, counterpointing the mother's reading of young Juan's sentimental saga. At the end, young Juan cries out "Long live Christ the King," but the priest, in contrast, must be led to his execution because his legs are buckling beneath him.

The novel is written, in part, to refute the kind of destructive sentimentality inherent in traditional religion, the type that helped bring about persecution by the police state in the first place. Greene's book is a deliberate and vibrant protest against the tale of young Juan. His rendering of a very human priest gives lie to the plaster saint.

8.6 A SUMMARY

The main character is an unnamed 'whisky priest', who combines a great power for self-destruction with pitiful cravenness, an almost painful penitence, and a desperate quest for dignity.[2] By the end, though, the priest "acquires a real holiness." The other principal character is a police lieutenant tasked with hunting down this priest. This Lieutenant – also unnamed but thought to be based upon Tomás Garrido Canabal – is a committed socialist who despises the Church.

The overall situation is this: Catholicism is outlawed in Mexico. However, while the other states of Mexico seem to follow a Don't-ask-don't-tell policy, the state of Tabasco enforces the ban rigorously. Mexico, or at least Tabasco, is ruled on socialist

grounds, and priests have either been settled by the state with wives (breaking celibacy) and pensions in exchange for their renouncing the faith and being strictly banned from fulfilling priestly functions (such as one Padre José), or else have left the state or are on the run, or have been shot. The story starts with the arrival of the main character in a small country town and then follows him on his trip through Tabasco, where he tries to minister to the people as best he can. In doing so, he is faced by a lot of problems, not least of which is that Tabasco is also prohibitionist, with the unspoken prime objective to hinder celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass, for which actual wine is an essential. It is, therefore, quite easy to get, say, brandy or tequila, despite it being forbidden, but very difficult to get wine. He is also haunted by his personal problems and past and present sins, especially by the fact that he fathered a child in his parish some years before; additionally, his use of spirits may be bordering on addiction and certainly is beyond the limit of good measure in his own view. (In one scene, both of these problems are mixed: the protagonist tries to procure a bottle of wine for Holy Mass, needing to go to very high officials to do so, with an additional bottle of brandy for cover and also for his personal use. Not being able to reveal himself, and eager to appear friendly, he agrees to share his wine with the official, all of which is then consumed while in vain he tries to offer the brandy instead. He eventually leaves with only partial bottle of brandy, and no wine.

As for his daughter, he meets her, but is unable to feel repentant about what happened. Rather, he feels a deep love for the evil-looking and awkward little girl and decides to do everything in his power to save her from damnation. During his journey the priest also encounters a mestizo who later reveals himself to be a Judas figure. The chief antagonist, however, is the lieutenant, who is morally irreproachable, yet cold and inhumane. While he is supposedly "living for the people", he puts into practice a diabolic plan of taking hostages from villages and shooting them, if it proves that the priest has sojourned in a village but is not denounced. The lieutenant has also had bad experiences with the church in his youth, and as a result there is a personal element in his search for the whisky priest. The lieutenant thinks that all members of the clergy are fundamentally evil, and believes that the church is corrupt, and does nothing but provide delusion to the people.

In his flight from the lieutenant and his posse, the priest escapes into a neighbouring province, only to re-connect with the mestizo, who persuades the priest to return to hear the confession of a dying man. Though the priest suspects that it is a trap, he feels compelled to fulfil his priestly duty. Although he finds the dying man, it is a trap and the lieutenant captures the priest. The lieutenant admits he has nothing against the priest as a man, but he must be shot "as a danger". On the eve of the execution, the lieutenant shows mercy and attempts to enlist Padre José to hear the condemned man's confession (which *in extremis* the Church would allow, and which the protagonist has agreed to), but the effort is thwarted by Padre José's wife. The lieutenant is convinced that he has "cleared the province of priests". In the final scene, however, another priest arrives in the town. One faithful Catholic woman we had previously encountered telling lives of the saints in the underground has added the life of the protagonist to her repertoire, while forbidding her son to ever remember that this priest smelled strangely out of his mouth. This, among other possible readings, suggests that the Catholic Church cannot be destroyed. On a lighter level, it also suggests that a certain type of devotee will ever try to smooth down rough-edged saints into Fairchild family-like picture book heroes, even if it stands in the way of properly celebrating their very real faith and heroism.

8.7 KEY WORDS AND TECHNICAL TERMS

Narrator Anonymous
Point Of View The narrator speaks in the third person and reports the characters' thoughts and self-analysis but only rarely offers his own opinions. He primarily gives us an account of the priest's actions and thoughts.
Tone The narrator is earnest and although he usually withholds his explicit opinion about the priest, the arrangement of the plot implies a sense of respect and admiration for him.
Tense Past tense
Setting (Time) Mexico during the 1930's
Setting (Place) Chiapas, Mexico
Protagonist The last priest in the state, on the run from the authorities
Major Conflict The priest is trying to evade capture by the police and struggling internally with his own sense of sinfulness and unworthiness.
Rising Action The priest moves from village to village trying to escape from the lieutenant and his men. An untrustworthy man, known as the mestizo, learns his true identity and begins working with the police to capture him. After a few very close calls with the police including being arrested for smuggling, the priest finally escapes danger and makes his way across the border and out of the reach of the authorities.
Climax The priest, knowing he is walking into a trap set by the mestizo, decides to return to the state to hear the confession of a dying man and is captured by the lieutenant.
Falling Action The priest and the lieutenant finally face one another and discuss their differences; the priest is brought back to the capital city where he is executed;
Themes The dangers of excessive idealism; the disparity between representation and reality; the interrelated nature of so-called opposites; the paradox of Christian humility
Motifs Animals; half-things; abandonment
Symbols Alcohol; Christian symbolism; children
Foreshadowing Almost immediately upon meeting him, the priest calls the mestizo "Judas", anticipating the role he will in fact play in the priest's story; the girl singing on the boat at the conclusion of the first chapter does not know why she is so happy, foreshadowing the uneasy nature of happiness and the fact that most of the characters in the novel will be riddled with troubles

8.8 SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the novel's title. Where are "power" and "glory" found in the book?

2. Discuss the importance of forgiveness and self-forgiveness in the novel with specific reference to the priest and two other characters.

3. The novel opens at a dentist's house. What is significant about Tench's occupation? What role does pain play in the novel?

4. Discuss the importance of dreams in the novel. Why does Greene occasionally choose to represent his characters' thoughts and feelings through depicting their dreams?

5. Escape is a significant issue in this novel. Does Greene seem to make a distinction between escape and escapism, or between physical, geographical escape and mental escape? How are they related? What is the relationship between escape and abandonment?

8.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

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4. Hoskins, Robert. *Graham Greene: An Approach to the Novels.* New York: Garland Publishers, 1999.
5. Lodge, David. *Graham Greene.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1966.
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LESSON-9
LUCKY JIM

Contents

9.1 OBJECTIVES

1. Students will practice close reading play for both literal and figurative meaning.
2. Students will think and write analytically about literature, using examples from the text and appropriate literary terminology to support arguments about the way a text functions.
3. Students will become familiar with Sir Kingsley William Amis ’s work and its greater impact on British society.
4. Students will become familiar with mid 20th century British play.

9.2 BACKGROUND-THE WRITER AND THE PERIOD

Sir Kingsley William Amis CBE (16 April 1922 – 22 October 1995) was an English novelist, poet, critic, and teacher. He wrote more than 20 novels, six volumes of poetry, a memoir, short stories, radio and television scripts, and works of social and literary criticism. He is best known for satirical comedies such as *Lucky Jim* (1954), *One Fat Englishman* (1963), *Ending Up* (1974), *Jake's Thing* (1978) and *The Old Devils* (1986). His biographer Zachary Leader called Amis "the finest English comic novelist of the second half of the twentieth century." He is the father of the novelist Martin Amis. In 2008, *The Times* ranked him ninth on a list of the 50 greatest British writers since 1945.

9.3 THE WRITER- HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Kingsley Amis was born on 16 April 1922 in Clapham, south London, the only child of William Robert Amis (1889–1963), a clerk for the mustard manufacturer Colman's in the City of London, and his wife Rosa Annie (née Lucas). The Amis grandparents were wealthy. William Amis's father, the glass merchant Joseph James Amis, owned a mansion called Barchester at Purley, then part of Surrey. Amis considered J. J. Amis – always called "Pater" or "Dadda" – "a jokey, excitable, silly little man," whom he "disliked and was repelled by". His wife Julia "was a large, dreadful, hairy-faced creature... whom [Amis] loathed and feared. His mother's parents (her father an enthusiastic collector of books employed at a gentleman's outfitters, being "the only grandparent [Amis] cared for") lived at Camberwell. Amis hoped to inherit much of his grandfather's library, but he was only permitted by his grandmother to take five volumes, on condition he wrote "from his grandfather's collection" on the flyleaf of each.

Amis was raised at Norbury – in his later estimation "not really a place, it's an expression on a map [–] really I should say I came from Norbury station." In 1940, the Amises moved to Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. He was educated at the City of London School (as his father had been) on a scholarship, after his first year, and in April 1941 was admitted to St John's College, Oxford, also on a scholarship, where he read English. It was there he met Philip Larkin, with whom he formed the most important friendship of his life. While at Oxford in June 1941, Amis joined the Communist Party of Great Britain, although he broke with communism in 1956, in view of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's denunciation of Joseph Stalin in his speech *On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences*. In July 1942, he was called up for national service and served in the Royal Corps of Signals. He returned to Oxford in October 1945 to complete his degree. Although he worked hard and earned a first in English in 1947, he had decided by then to give much of his time to writing.

In 1946 he met Hilary Bardwell. They married in 1948 after she became pregnant with their first child, Philip. Amis initially arranged for her to have a back-street abortion, but changed his mind, fearing for her safety. He was a lecturer in English at the University College of Swansea from 1949 to 1961. Two other children followed: Martin in August 1949 and Sally in January 1954.

Days after Sally's birth, Amis's first novel, *Lucky Jim*, was published to great acclaim. Critics felt it had caught the flavour of Britain in the 1950s and ushered in a new style of fiction.[12] By 1972, its impressive sales in Britain had been matched by 1.25 million paperback copies sold in the United States. It was translated into 20 languages, including Polish, Hebrew, Korean, and Serbo-Croat. The novel won the Somerset Maugham Award for fiction and Amis became one of the writers known as the Angry Young Men. *Lucky Jim* was among the first British campus novels, setting a precedent for later generations of writers such as Malcolm Bradbury, David Lodge, Tom Sharpe and Howard Jacobson. As a poet, Amis was associated with The Movement.

In 1958–1959 Amis made the first of two visits to the United States, as visiting fellow in creative writing at Princeton University and a visiting lecturer in other north-eastern universities. On returning to Britain, he fell into a rut, and he began looking for another post. After 13 years at Swansea, Amis became a fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge in 1961, but regretted the move within a year, finding Cambridge an academic and social disappointment. He resigned in 1963, intent on moving to Majorca, although he actually moved no further than London.

In 1963, Hilary discovered that Amis was having an affair with the novelist Elizabeth Jane Howard. Hilary and Amis separated in August and he went to live with Howard, divorcing Hilary and marrying Howard in 1965. In 1968 he moved with Howard to Lemmons, a house in Barnet, north London. She and Amis divorced in 1983. In his last years, Amis shared a house with Hilary and her third husband, Alastair Boyd, 7th Baron Kilmarnock. Martin's memoir *Experience* contains much about the life, charm and decline of his father. Amis was knighted in 1990. In August 1995 he fell, suffering a suspected stroke. After apparently recovering, he worsened and died on 22 October 1995 at St Pancras Hospital, London. He was cremated and his ashes laid to rest at Golders Green Crematorium.

Amis is widely known as a comic novelist of life in mid to late 20th-century Britain, but his literary work covered many genres – poetry, essays, criticism, short stories, food and drink, anthologies, and several novels in genres such as science fiction and mystery. His career initially developed in an inverse pattern to that of his close friend Philip Larkin's. Before becoming known as a poet, Larkin had published two novels; Amis originally sought to be a poet and turned to novels only after publishing several volumes of verse. He continued throughout his career to write poetry, in a straightforward, accessible style that often masks a nuance of thought.

Amis's first novel, *Lucky Jim* (1954), satirises the highbrow academic set of an unnamed university, through the eyes of a struggling young lecturer of history. It was widely perceived as part of the Angry Young Men movement of the 1950s, in reacting against stultification of conventional British life, although Amis never encouraged this interpretation. Amis's other novels of the 1950s and early 1960s likewise depict contemporary situations drawn from his own experience. *That Uncertain Feeling* (1955) features a young provincial librarian (perhaps with an eye to Larkin working as a librarian in Hull) and his temptation to adultery. *I Like It Here* (1958) takes a contemptuous view of "abroad", after Amis's own travels on the Continent with a young family. *Take a Girl Like You* (1960) steps away from the immediately autobiographical, but remains grounded in the concerns of sex and love in ordinary modern life, tracing the courtship and ultimate seduction of the heroine by a young schoolmaster.

With *The Anti-Death League* (1966), Amis begins to show some of the experimentation – in content, if not style – that marked much of his work in the 1960s and 1970s. His departure from the strict realism of his early comedic novels is not so abrupt as might first appear. He had been avidly reading science fiction since a boy and developed that interest in the Christian Gauss Lectures of 1958, while visiting Princeton University. These were published that year as *New Maps of Hell: A Survey of Science Fiction*, giving a serious yet light-handed treatment of what the genre had to say about man and society. Amis was especially keen on the dystopian works of Frederik Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth, and in *New Maps of Hell* coined the term "comic inferno" to describe a type of humorous dystopia, exemplified in the works of Robert Sheckley. He further displayed his devotion to the genre in editing, with the Sovietologist Robert Conquest, the science-fiction anthology series *Spectrum* I–V, which drew heavily upon 1950s numbers of the magazine *Astounding Science Fiction*.

Though not explicitly science fiction, *The Anti-Death League* takes liberties with reality not found in Amis's earlier novels. It introduces a speculative bent that continued to develop in others of his genre novels such as *The Green Man* (1969) (mystery/horror) and *The Alteration* (1976) (alternative history). Much of this speculation concerned the improbability of the existence of any benevolent deity involved in human affairs. In *The Anti-Death League*, *The Green Man*, *The Alteration* and elsewhere, including poems such as "The Huge Artifice: an interim assessment" and "New Approach Needed", Amis showed frustration with a God who could lace the world with cruelty and injustice, and championed the preservation of ordinary human happiness – in family, in friendships, in physical pleasure – against the demands of any cosmological scheme. Amis's religious views appear in a response, reported in his *Memoirs*. To the Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko's question, "You atheist?" Amis replied, "It's more that I hate Him."

During this time, Amis had not turned completely away from the comedic realism of *Lucky Jim* and *Take a Girl Like You*. *I Want It Now* (1968) and *Girl, 20* (1971) both depict the "swinging" atmosphere of London in the late 1960s, in which Amis certainly participated, though neither book is strictly autobiographical. *Girl, 20*, for instance, is set in the world of classical (and pop) music, in which Amis had no part. The book's noticeable command of music terminology and opinion shows Amis's amateur devotion to music and almost journalistic capacity to explore a subject that interested him. That intelligence is similarly displayed, for instance, in the ecclesiastical matters in *The Alteration*, for Amis was neither a Roman Catholic nor a devotee of any church.

Throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, Amis regularly produced essays and criticism, principally for periodical publication. Some were collected in 1968 into *What Became of Jane Austen? and Other Essays*, in which Amis's wit and literary and social opinions were displayed on books such as Colin Wilson's *The Outsider* (panned), Iris Murdoch's début novel *Under the Net* (praised), and William Empson's *Milton's God* (inclined to agreement). Amis's opinions on books and people tended to appear, and often were, conservative, and yet, as the title essay of the collection shows, he was not merely reverent of "the classics" and of traditional morals, but more disposed to exercise his own rather independent judgement in all things.

Amis became associated with Ian Fleming's James Bond novels, which he admired, in the late 1960s, when he began composing critical works connected with the fictional spy, either under a pseudonym or uncredited. In 1965, he wrote the popular *James Bond Dossier* under his own name. That same year, he wrote *The Book of Bond, or, Every Man His Own 007*, a tongue-in-cheek how-to manual about being a sophisticated spy, under the pseudonym "Lt Col. William ('Bill') Tanner", Tanner being M's Chief of Staff in many of Fleming's Bond novels. In 1968 Amis wrote *Colonel Sun*, which was published under the pseudonym "Robert Markham".

Amis's literary style and tone changed significantly after 1970, with the possible exception of *The Old Devils*, a Booker Prize winner. Several critics found him old-fashioned and misogynistic. His *Stanley and the Women*, an exploration of social sanity, could be said to instance these traits. Others said that his output lacked the humanity, wit and compassion of earlier work.

This period also saw Amis as an anthologist, displaying a wide knowledge of all kinds of English poetry. *The New Oxford Book of Light Verse* (1978), which he edited, was a revision of an original volume done by W. H. Auden. Amis took it in a markedly new direction: Auden had interpreted light verse to include "low" verse of working-class or lower-class origin, regardless of subject matter, while Amis defined light verse as essentially light in tone, though not necessarily simple in composition. *The Amis Anthology* (1988), a personal selection of his favourite poems, grew out of his work for a London newspaper, in which he selected a poem a day and gave it a brief introduction.[18]

Amis was shortlisted for the Booker Prize three times, for *Ending Up* (1974) and *Jake's Thing* (1978), and finally, as prizewinner, for *The Old Devils* in 1986. In 2008, *The Times* ranked Kingsley Amis 13th on its list of the 50 greatest British writers since 1945.

9.4 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

This novel satirizes elements of academia that are arguably still problems in many institutions, but none come through quite as clearly as the competitive nature of tenure at a university. Dixon is a man with many flaws who makes mistakes constantly, which stands at odds with his desire to have tenure, but as he approaches tenure, he comments more and more on hypocrisy. Is he the only flawed person on the faculty? Hardly. Many of these people struggle with their identity while projecting confidence.

The question on the table is about validation. The university has an official feeling that makes tenure feel like personal accomplishment. But, at the same institution where Dixon writes about the humanities, he attempts to violate the humanity of Margaret by sexually assaulting her in his drunken stupor. His drunkenness is a sign of his frustration and his urgent need to be understood, and the reader should wonder if this is perhaps a sign for a deeper need for approval.

Given that satirical lens, the prospect of academy seems less official than the professors want to admit. They hope for establishment, and the university has that for them, and tenure means stability, typically speaking. But that is most attractive to those people for whom stability and accomplishment mean the most. The joke is that perhaps the most competent people are those who do not compete. The aggressiveness of the whole academic endeavor is brought under an interrogation light of comedy.

9.5 A BRIEF CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE TEXT

Jim Dixon, a junior lecturer in history at a provincial English university in the years after World War II, nears the end of his first year at the school. Dixon has not made a good impression upon the faculty and knows that his superior, the absent-minded Professor Welch, could ask him to leave at the end of term next month. Fearful of making further bad impressions or revealing his inner disgust for Welch, Dixon agrees to give the end-of-term lecture on the theme of "Merrie England" and to stay with the Welches the following weekend for a weekend of music and the arts.

At the party, Dixon meets Welch's son Bertrand and his girlfriend Christine, who have come up to the country from London. Bertrand, an artist, seems pretentious, while Christine seems uptight and unattainable. Dixon escapes to the pub and returns to the Welches' later that night, where he makes a drunken pass at Margaret Peel, a friend and colleague. Margaret has been staying with the Welches as she recovers from a recent suicide attempt caused by a recent break-up. Dixon and Margaret's friendship has rapidly been moving toward something more intimate, thanks to Margaret's subtle pressure and Dixon's pity and good-natured concern for Margaret.

Dixon spends the following week planning to write his "Merrie England" lecture in a nostalgic way that will appeal to Professor Welch, but Welch himself keeps Dixon preoccupied with menial fact-checking for Welch's own work. On the day of Dixon's lecture, Bertrand comes to Dixon's room and accuses Dixon of seeing Christine behind his back. Bertrand tells Dixon that Dixon is wasting his time and Dixon, fed up with Bertrand's hypocrisy and condescending bossiness, gets in a fight with Bertrand. Bertrand gives Dixon a black eye and Dixon knocks him down.

Shaken up and nervous, Dixon drinks quite a lot at the reception before his lecture. He is drunk when he gives the lecture, and inadvertently imitates the voices of Professor Welch and the college Principal in the opening segments. Dixon rounds out the lecture by expressing his contempt for the subject before he passes out. The next day, Dixon finds he has been fired, but is offered a well-paying job in London by Gore-Urquhart.

The same day, Dixon meets with Catchpole, the man who supposedly inspired Margaret's suicide attempt. Catchpole reveals that Margaret faked the suicide attempt in order to gain sympathy from Dixon and Catchpole. Dixon arrives home from this meeting to receive a message from Christine, asking him to meet her at the train station before her she returns to London. Dixon arrives at the station late, but so does Christine. Christine tells Dixon that she knows of Bertrand's affair with Carol and has broken off their relationship. Dixon tells Christine that he is through with Margaret. Dixon reveals the news about the job offer from Christine's uncle, Gore-Urquhart, and asks to return to London with Christine. As they walk down the street, they run into the Welch family, whom Dixon salutes with an explosive laugh of contempt.

9.6 A SUMMARY

Jim Dixon the protagonist of the novel, works as a teacher of history at English provincial university. He teaches there the first year and may not be credited to the constant position, and passes at the moment a probationary period. But he makes a bad impression on his colleagues from the very beginning. On the first days of his stay at the faculty, he manages to injure the Professor of English. Coming out of the library, Dixon sees a small round pebble lying on the sidewalk, and he kicks it, and it, of course, meets on its way a knee of a professor. Dixon should apologize, but he instead is watching the flight of the stone, and then slowly walks away. He has no guts to apologize - as always in such cases. It does not take more than two days after the incident, as at the first meeting of the faculty, passing the chair of the archivist, he stumbles and knocks the chair just at the moment when the old man was about to sit on it. Then Dixon criticizes the work of one of the students, and then he finds out that this study was written with the blessing and on the advice of Professor Welch, who determines Dixon’s fate, for it is Welch to decide to remain Dixon to teach at the university or not.

It should be said that colleagues make on Dixon not the best impression as well. But there is nothing to do. Everyone wants to get into the staff. Therefore, mentally drawing caricatures of his colleagues and building funny faces, Dixon gives a considerable tribute to hypocrisy and tries to look like everyone else. And even trying to smooth out the bad impression of his own person, engages in scientific work, and writes an article entitled "The impact of economic factors on the development of shipbuilding handicraft in the period from 1450 to 1485". However, Dixon realizes the senselessness of this scientific study and notes himself that the article does not deserve anything, except a few strong and foul expressions.

Once Welch invites Dixon to join him for the weekend and to help in organizing a musical evening. And he gives him the task to prepare for the end of the semester a lecture on "Good old England". In the Welches’ hous Dixon meets Margaret, who also teaches at the university. Three weeks ago, she tried to commit suicide because of failed love affair. After Margaret left the hospital, she lives in the house of the professor and his wife. Dixon started dating Margaret soon after he began teaching at the University. At first he just out of courtesy accepted Margaret’s invitation to come to her for a cup of coffee, and then he suddenly

became a man thet is seen with Margaret everywhere. However, he is not a lover of Margaret, but just plays a role of a comforter, which he wants to escape as soon as possible.

Dixon visits the musical evening only because he depends on the professor and wants to make a good impression. There also comes professor's son Bertrand, accompanied by Christina Kellegen, a niece of a certain Julius Gore Erkvart, who Bertrand hopes to work with. Dixon takes her for another woman, for the former fiancee of Bertrand. That is again an unpleasant misunderstanding, which caused from the beginning in an awkward relationship with the son of the professor. Enraged and frustrated, Jim quietly leaves the house and goes to the bar. He returns back late at night, pretty drunk. He enters Margaret's room and tries to molest her. Margaret throws Dixon away, and he goes down to the first floor to the bar, where half a bottle of portwein adds more. As a result, he fell asleep with a lit cigarette that burns bedding, carpet and nightstand. In the morning Dixon comes down to the dining room, there meets Christina and tells her about a small fire in his bedroom. Christina rises with Dixon up and helps him to cover up the traces of fire. Then Jim informs the owners that his parents came suddenly, and that he must leave.

The second time Dixon meets Christina is at the summer ball at the university, where he came together with Margaret. And Christina is there in the company of Bertrand and his uncle, Julius Gore Erkvarta. Throughout the evening, Bertrand talks only with the uncle of Christina. Margaret is also trying to attract the attention of Gore-Erkvarta. Dixon sees Christine, as well as him, is bored at this ball, and he asks her to leave with him. On the way to the taxi they have a sincere conversation, and Cristina asks Dixon whether she should marry Bertrand. Dixon gives a negative answer, stating that he likes Christine. When they drove up to the Welch's home, where she is a guest, Jim asks the chauffeur to wait while he goes to see off Christina home. They get into the house through the window. Once inside the room, the young people kiss, then Dixon admits that he is in love with Christina. Before leaving, Jim agrees with Christine about the next meeting.

A few days later professor Welch again invites Dixon to his dinner. However, when Jim comes to the professor, he, apologizing, says that there was a misunderstanding and that he this evening goes to the theater. Jim meets Bertrand. Young people seriously quarrel because Dixon had at that time taken away Christina from the summer ball. Returning home, Dickson reflects on the futility of his meetings with Christine, and even tries to cancel a meeting. They nevertheless meet, and Christina says Jim, that they must not see each other anymore, because she is bound with Bertrand. However, some time later, at the moment when Jim is preparing for a lecture on "good old England" Bertrand enters his room and rudely tells him to keep away from Christina. Then Dixon, who has already decided himself not to meet with the girl, in order to hurt Bertrand, said that he had serious intentions. Bertrand beats Dixon in the face, and a brawl starts in which Jim eventually wins by knocking the opponent down, and then packs him off from the room.

That day, when Dickson had to read his lecture, he drinks in the morning half a dozen of whiskey with his neighbor Bill Atkinson. Then, before the lecture, he drinks several glasses of sherry. And just before the exit to the platform Jim meets Julius Gore Erkvart and the last treats him with neat Scotch whiskey. As a result Jim Dixon tries to read the lecture being completely drunk. But it does not work. He only amuses the audience, exactly repeating intonation of professor Welch and the dean. In the end, drunk alcohol, excitement and heat take their, and he loses consciousness. The next morning he receives a letter from

Professor Welch, where he advises Dixon to leave. And in the afternoon Julius Gore Erkvart calls him and offers a place of his personal secretary, the place Bertrand was after. Jim is happy. The same day, Dixon meets Margaret's exboyfriend, and in conversation with him, it turns out that Margaret just played the scene of a suicide by taking a safe dose of sleeping pills. And then Jim returns, where Bill Atkinson is waiting to tell: he had just had a telephone conversation with Christine, she leaves and she needs to say Dixon something very important. Jim rushes to the train station, where Christine informs him that he broke with Bertrand: it turns out, Bertrand continues to meet with his longtime mistress. Dixon tells her the news, he says, he will now be working for her uncle and is ready to go after Christine to London. Arm in arm, young people proudly pass by dumbfounded family of Welches.

9.7 KEY WORDS AND TECHNICAL TERMS

1. Tolerate
   To barely withstand something
2. Loath
   Unwilling to do something
3. Rhetorical
   Asking a question in order to convey a significant impact rather than to receive a response
4. Oblivious
   Not be aware of
5. Sentience
   Feeling of subjectivity
6. Unfathomable
   Incomprehensible
7. Self-containment
   To keep things to oneself
8. Blackmail
   Hold to ransom on the basis of revealing compromising information about a person
9. Alienate
   Feel isolated
10. Acquainted
    To know someone or have had some sort of a relationship with them

9.8 SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the theme of patriarchy in the novel *Lucky Jim.*
2. Why is Jim passionately against art in particular?
3. How does the author illustrate that it is inappropriate to judge a book by its cover?

9.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Lesson-10

LORD OF THE FLIES

Contents

10.1 OBJECTIVES

1. Students will practice close reading play for both literal and figurative meaning.
2. Students will think and write analytically about literature, using examples from the text and appropriate literary terminology to support arguments about the way a text functions.
3. Students will become familiar with William Golding's work and its greater impact on British society.
4. Students will become familiar with mid 20th century British play.

10.2 BACKGROUND-THE WRITER AND THE PERIOD

Lord of the Flies is a 1954 novel by the Nobel Prize-winning British author William Golding. The plot concerns a group of British boys who are stranded on an uninhabited island and their disastrous attempts to govern themselves. Themes include the tension between groupthink and individuality, between rational and emotional reactions, and between morality and immorality.

The novel, which was Golding's debut, was generally well received. It was named in the Modern Library 100 Best Novels, reaching number 41 on the editor's list, and 25 on the reader's list. In 2003, it was listed at number 70 on the BBC's The Big Read poll, and in 2005 Time magazine named it as one of the 100 best English-language novels published between 1923 and 2005, and included it in its list of the 100 Best Young-Adult Books of All Time. Popular reading in schools, especially in the English-speaking world, Lord of the Flies was ranked third in the nation's favourite books from school in a 2016 UK poll.

10.3 THE WRITER- HIS LIFE AND WORKS

William Golding was born in his maternal grandmother's house, 47 Mount Wise, Newquay, Cornwall. The house was known as Karenza, the Cornish word for love, and he spent many childhood holidays there. He grew up in Marlborough, Wiltshire, where his father, Alec Golding, was a science master at Marlborough Grammar School (1905 to retirement), the school the young Golding and his elder brother Joseph attended. His mother,

Mildred (Curnoe), kept house at 29, The Green, Marlborough, and was a campaigner for female suffrage. Golding's mother, who was Cornish and whom he considered "a superstitious Celt", used to tell him old Cornish ghost stories from her own childhood. In 1930 Golding went to Brasenose College, Oxford, where he read Natural Sciences for two years before transferring to English for his final two years. His original tutor was the chemist Thomas Taylor. In a private journal and in a memoir for his wife he admitted having tried to rape a teenage girl during a vacation.[12]

Golding took his B.A. degree with Second Class Honours in the summer of 1934, and later that year a book of his Poems was published by Macmillan & Co, with the help of his Oxford friend, the anthroposophist Adam Bittleston.

In 1935 he took a job teaching English at Michael Hall School, a Steiner-Waldorf school then in Streatham, South London, staying there two years . After a year in Oxford studying for a Diploma of Education, he was a schoolmaster teaching English and music at Maidstone Grammar School 1938 – 1940, before moving to Bishop Wordsworth's School, Salisbury, in April 1940. There he taught English, Philosophy, Greek, and drama until joining the navy on the 18th December 1940, reporting for duty at HMS Raleigh. He returned in 1945 and taught the same subjects until 1961.

Golding kept a personal journal for over 22 years from 1971 until the night before his death, and which contained approximately 2.4 million words in total. The journal was initially used by Golding in order to record his dreams, but over time it gradually began to function as a record of his life. The journals contained insights including retrospective thoughts about his novels and memories from his past. At one point Golding described setting his students up into two groups to fight each other – an experience he drew on when writing Lord of the Flies. John Carey, the emeritus professor of English literature at Oxford university, was eventually given 'unprecedented access to Golding's unpublished papers and journals by the Golding estate'. Though Golding had not written the journals specifically so that a biography could be written about him, Carey published William Golding: The Man Who Wrote Lord of the Flies in 2009.

Marriage and family

Golding was engaged to Molly Evans, a woman from Marlborough, who was well liked by both of his parents. However, he broke off the engagement and married Ann Brookfield, an analytical chemist, on 30 September 1939. They had two children, David (born September, 1940) and Judith (born July, 1945).

War service

During World War II, Golding joined the Royal Navy in 1940. He served on a destroyer which was briefly involved in the pursuit and sinking of the German battleship Bismarck. Golding participated in the invasion of Normandy on D-Day, commanding a landing craft that fired salvoes of rockets onto the beaches. He was also in action at Walcheren in October and November 1944, during which time 10 out of 27 assault craft that went into the attack were sunk.

"Crisis"

Golding had a troubled relationship with alcohol; Judy Carver notes that her father was "always very open, if rueful, about problems with drink". Golding suggested that his self-described "crisis", of which alcoholism played a major part, had plagued him his entire life. John Carey mentions several instances of binge drinking in his biography, including Golding's experiences in 1963; whilst on holiday in Greece (when he was meant to have been finishing his novel The Spire), after working on his writing in the morning, he would go to his preferred "Kapheneion" to drink at midday. By the evening would move onto ouzo and brandy; he developed a reputation locally for "provoking explosions".

Unfortunately, the eventual publication of The Spire the following year did not help Golding's developing struggle with alcohol; it had precisely the opposite effect, with the novel's scathingly negative reviews in a BBC radio broadcast affecting him severely. Following the publication of The Pyramid in 1967, Golding experienced a severe writer's block: the result of myriad crises (family anxieties, insomnia, and a general sense of dejection). Golding eventually became unable to deal with what he perceived to be the intense reality of his life without first drinking copious amounts of alcohol. Tim Kendall suggests that these experiences manifest in Golding's writing as the character Wilf in The Paper Men; "an ageing novelist whose alcohol-sodden journeys across Europe are bankrolled by the continuing success of his first book".

By the late 1960s, Golding was relying on alcohol – which he referred to as "the old, old anodyne". His first steps towards recovery came from his study of Carl Jung's writings, and in what he called "an admission of discipleship" he travelled to Switzerland in 1971 to see Jung's landscapes for himself. That same year, he started keeping a journal in which he recorded and interpreted his dreams; the last entry is from the day before he died, in 1993, and the volumes-long work came to be thousands of pages long by this time.

The crisis did inevitably affect Golding's output, and his next novel, Darkness Visible, would be published twelve years after The Pyramid; a far cry from the prolific author who had produced six novels in thirteen years since the start of his career. But, despite this, the extent of Golding's recovery is evident from the fact that this was only the first of six further novels that Golding completed before his death.

Death

In 1985, Golding and his wife moved to a house called Tullimaar in Perranarworthal, near Truro, Cornwall. He died of heart failure eight years later on 19 June 1993. His body was buried in the parish churchyard of Bowerchalke near his former home and the Wiltshire county border with Hampshire and Dorset. On his death he left the draft of a novel, The Double Tongue, set in ancient Delphi, which was published posthumously in 1995.

Whilst still a teacher at Bishop Wordsworth's School, in 1951 Golding began writing a manuscript of the novel initially titled Strangers from Within.[33] In September 1953, after rejections from seven other publishers, Golding sent a manuscript to Faber and Faber and was initially rejected by their reader, Jan Perkins, who labelled it as "Rubbish & dull. Pointless". His book, however, was championed by Charles Monteith, a new editor at the firm. Monteith asked for some changes to the text and the novel was published in September 1954 as Lord of the Flies.

After moving in 1958 from Salisbury to nearby Bowerchalke, he met his fellow villager and walking companion James Lovelock. The two discussed Lovelock's hypothesis, that the living matter of the planet Earth functions like a single organism, and Golding

suggested naming this hypothesis after Gaia, the personification of the Earth in Greek mythology, and mother of the Titans. His publishing success made it possible for Golding to resign his teaching post at Bishop Wordsworth's School in 1961, and he spent that academic year in the United States as writer-in-residence at Hollins College (now Hollins University), near Roanoke, Virginia.

Golding won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for Darkness Visible in 1979, and the Booker Prize for Rites of Passage in 1980. In 1983 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, and was according to the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography "an unexpected and even contentious choice".

In 1988 Golding was appointed a Knight Bachelor.[35] In September 1993, only a few months after his unexpected death, the First International William Golding Conference was held in France, where Golding's presence had been promised and was eagerly expected.

Fiction

His first novel, Lord of the Flies (1954; film, 1963 and 1990; play, adapted by Nigel Williams, 1995), describes a group of boys stranded on a tropical island descending into a lawless and increasingly wild existence before being rescued. Arguably his most famous work, the book is read in schools around the world today.[37] The Inheritors (1955) depicts a tribe of gentle Neanderthals encountering modern humans, who by comparison are deceitful and violent. His 1956 novel Pincher Martin records the thoughts of a drowning sailor. Free Fall (1959) explores the issue of freedom of choice. The novel's narrator, a World War Two soldier in a German POW Camp, endures interrogation and solitary confinement. After these events and while recollecting the experiences, he looks back over the choices he has made, trying to trace precisely where he lost the freedom to make his own decisions. The Spire (1964) follows the construction (and near collapse) of an impossibly large spire on the top of a medieval cathedral (generally assumed to be Salisbury Cathedral). The novel explores ideas of sexual lust, religious fervour and delusion, and the power of the Church in Medieval England, with the titular spire symbolizing both spiritual aspiration and worldly vanity.

Golding's 1967 novel The Pyramid consists of three linked stories with a shared setting in a small English town based partly on Marlborough where Golding grew up. The Scorpion God (1971) contains three novellas, the first set in an ancient Egyptian court "The Scorpion God"); the second describing a prehistoric African hunter-gatherer group ("Clonk, Clonk"); and the third in the court of a Roman emperor ("Envoy Extraordinary"). The last of these, originally published in 1956, was reworked by Golding into a play, The Brass Butterfly, in 1958. From 1971 to 1979 Golding published no novels. After this period he published Darkness Visible (1979): a story involving terrorism, paedophilia, and a mysterious figure who survives a fire in the Blitz, and appears to have supernatural powers. In 1980, Golding published Rites of Passage, the first of his novels about a voyage to Australia in the early nineteenth century. The novel won the Booker Prize in 1980 and Golding followed this success with Close Quarters (1987) and Fire Down Below (1989) to complete his 'sea trilogy', later published as one volume entitled To the Ends of the Earth. The three stories were later adapted into a mini-series for the BBC, starring Benedict Cumberbatch. In 1984 he published The Paper Men: an account of the struggles between a novelist and his would-be biographer.

10.4 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

Chapter 1

Lord of the Flies dramatizes the conflict between the civilizing instinct and the barbarizing instinct that exist in all human beings. The artistic choices Golding makes in the novel are designed to emphasize the struggle between the ordering elements of society, which include morality, law, and culture, and the chaotic elements of humanity's savage animal instincts, which include anarchy, bloodlust, the desire for power, amorality, selfishness, and violence. Over the course of the novel, Golding portrays the rise and swift fall of an isolated, makeshift civilization, which is torn to pieces by the savage instincts of those who compose it.

Chapter 2
The conflict between the instincts of civilization and savagery emerges quickly within the group: the boys, especially Piggy, know that they must act with order and forethought if they are to be rescued, but the longer they remain apart from the society of adults, the more difficult it becomes for them to adhere to the disciplined behavior of civilization.

In Chapter 1, the boys seem determined to re-create the society they have lost, but as early as Chapter 2, their instinctive drive to play and gratify their immediate desires undermines their ability to act collectively. As a result, the signal fire nearly fails, and a young boy apparently burns to death when the forest catches fire. The constraints of society still linger around the boys, who are confused and ashamed when they learn the young boy is missing—a sign that a sense of morality still guides their behavior at this point.

Chapter 3
The personal conflict between Ralph and Jack mirrors the overarching thematic conflict of the novel. The conflict between the two boys brews as early as the election in Chapter 1 but remains hidden beneath the surface, masked by the camaraderie the boys feel as they work together to build a community. In this chapter, however, the conflict erupts into verbal argument for the first time, making apparent the divisions undermining the boys' community and setting the stage for further, more violent developments.

As Ralph and Jack argue, each boy tries to give voice to his basic conception of human purpose: Ralph advocates building huts, while Jack champions hunting. Ralph, who thinks about the overall good of the group, deems hunting frivolous. Jack, drawn to the exhilaration of hunting by his bloodlust and desire for power, has no interest in building huts and no concern for what Ralph thinks. But because Ralph and Jack are merely children, they are unable to state their feelings articulately.

Chapter 4
At this point in the novel, the group of boys has lived on the island for some time, and their society increasingly resembles a political state. Although the issue of power and control is central to the boys' lives from the moment they elect a leader in the first chapter, the dynamics of the society they form take time to develop. By this chapter, the boys' community mirrors a political society, with the faceless and frightened littluns resembling the masses of common people and the various older boys filling positions of power and importance with regard to these underlings. Some of the older boys, including Ralph and especially Simon, are kind to the littluns; others, including Roger and Jack, are cruel to them.

Chapter 5
The boys' fear of the beast becomes an increasingly important aspect of their lives, especially at night, from the moment the first littlun claims to have seen a snake-monster in Chapter 2. In this chapter, the fear of the beast finally explodes, ruining Ralph's attempt to restore order to the island and precipitating the final split between Ralph and Jack. At this point, it remains uncertain whether or not the beast actually exists. In any case, the beast serves as one of the most important symbols in the novel, representing both the terror and the allure of the primordial desires for violence, power, and savagery that lurk within every human soul.

Chapter 6
As fear about the beast grips the boys, the balance between civilization and savagery on the island shifts, and Ralph's control over the group diminishes. At the beginning of the novel, Ralph's hold on the other boys is quite secure: they all understand the need for order and purposive action, even if they do not always want to be bothered with rules. By this point, however, as the conventions of civilization begin to erode among the boys, Ralph's hold on them slips, while Jack becomes a more powerful and menacing figure in the camp.

Chapter 7
The boar hunt and the game the boys play afterward provide stark reminders of the power of the human instinct toward savagery. Before this point in the novel, Ralph has been largely baffled about why the other boys were more concerned with hunting, dancing, bullying, and feasting than with building huts, maintaining the signal fire, and trying to be rescued. But when he joins the boar hunt in this chapter, Ralph is unable to avoid the instinctive excitement of the hunt and gets caught up in the other boys' bloodlust. In this scene, Golding implies that every individual, however strong his or her instinct toward civilization and order, has an undeniable, innate drive toward savagery as well.

Chapter 8
The excitement the boys felt when Jack suggests killing a littlun in Chapter 7 comes to grotesque fruition in Chapter 8, during the vicious and bloody hunt following Jack's rise to power and formation of his new tribe. Jack's ascent arises directly from the supposed confirmation of the existence of the beast. Once the boys, having mistaken the dead parachutist for a monster, come to believe fully in the existence of the beast, all the remaining power of civilization and culture on the island diminishes rapidly. In a world where the beast is real, rules and morals become weak and utterly dispensable.

Chapter 9
With the brutal, animalistic murder of Simon, the last vestige of civilized order on the island is stripped away, and brutality and chaos take over. By this point, the boys in Jack's camp are all but inhuman savages, and Ralph's few remaining allies suffer dwindling spirits and consider joining Jack. Even Ralph and Piggy themselves get swept up in the ritual dance around Jack's banquet fire. The storm that batters the island after Simon's death pounds home the catastrophe of the murder and physically embodies the chaos and anarchy that have overtaken the island. Significantly, the storm also washes away the bodies of Simon and the parachutist, eradicating proof that the beast does not exist.

Chapter 10
In the period of relative calm following Simon's murder, we see that the power dynamic on the island has shifted completely to Jack's camp. The situation that has been slowly brewing

now comes to a full boil: Jack's power over the island is complete, and Ralph is left an outcast, subject to Jack's whims. As civilization and order have eroded among the boys, so has Ralph's power and influence, to the extent that none of the boys protests when Jack declares him an enemy of the tribe. As Jack's power reaches its high point, the figures of the beast and the Lord of the Flies attain prominence.

Chapter 11
In the chaos that ensues when Ralph's and Jack's camps come into direct conflict, two important symbols in the novel—the conch shell and the Lord of the Flies—are destroyed. Roger, the character least able to understand the civilizing impulse, crushes the conch shell as he looses the boulder and kills Piggy, the character least able to understand the savage impulse. As we see in the next chapter, Ralph, the boy most closely associated with civilization and order, destroys the Lord of the Flies, the governing totem of the dark impulses within each individual. With Piggy's death and Sam and Eric's forced conversion to Jack's tribe, Ralph is left alone on the island, doomed to defeat by the forces of bloodlust and primal chaos.

Chapter 12
After Ralph's tense, exciting stand against the hunters, the ending of Lord of the Flies is rife with irony. Ralph had thought the signal fire—a symbol of civilization—was the only way to lure rescuers to the island. Ironically, although it is indeed a fire that lures a ship to the island, it is not an ordered, controlled signal fire but rather the haphazard forest fire Jack's hunters set solely for the purpose of killing Ralph. As we have seen, Ralph has worked tirelessly to retain the structure of civilization and maximize the boys' chances of being rescued.

10.5 A BRIEF CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE TEXT

The major conflict in Lord of the Flies is the struggle between Jack and Ralph. The fight for who will lead the island represents the clash between a peaceful democracy, as symbolized by Ralph, and a violent dictatorship, as symbolized by Jack. Both boys are potential leaders of the entire group, and though Jack grudgingly accepts Ralph's leadership at first, as the plot develops their rivalry grows and intensifies until it is a struggle to the death. Ralph and Jack (and the boys who align themselves with each) represent different values and different aspects of human nature. Ralph represents respect for the law, duty, reason, and the protection of the weak, whereas Jack represents violence, cruelty, mob rule, government through fear, and tyranny. As we see Ralph's hold over the other boys weaken and crumble until he is cast out and hunted, the story seems to be showing us that humanity's violent and savage impulses are more powerful than civilization, which is inherently fragile. And while Ralph is rescued at the last minute by a representative of civilization in the person of the naval officer, the fact that a global war is taking place underlines the idea that civilization itself is under serious threat from the forces of violence.

Set against the backdrop of global war, the book serves as a caution against the specific consequences of nuclear armament, as well as a broader examination of human nature and the destabilizing presence of man in the natural world. In telling its story through the experience of young boys isolated from the rest of civilization, and making few references to the world outside the confines of the island, the novel creates a sense of inevitability and universality to the specific tale of a small group battling nature and each other. By making the two main characters emblematic of two approaches to society, Golding creates a conflict that seems to

lead inexorably to the destruction of one of the characters, but is instead resolved by the surprise introduction of the outside, 'adult' reality. In this way the preceding events act as allegory for the more consequential, and far more dangerous, actions of man beyond the island.

The book opens in the immediate aftermath of the plane crash that lands the boys on the island, so the novel's inciting incident happens offstage. The reader first meets Ralph, who is introduced as graceful and physically appealing, and Piggy, who is presented as Ralph's physical opposite. The boys discover a conch and use it to summon the rest of the survivors of the crash, introducing us to Jack, who appears confident and is already leading a group of boys. The boys vote for Ralph to be the group's chief, despite the fact that "the most obvious leader was Jack," partly because Ralph possesses the conch. Jack reluctantly accepts Ralph's leadership, and the two bond in exploring the island together. Jack asserts himself after the humiliation of losing the vote for chief by slamming his knife into a tree and declaring that he will be a hunter, establishing the boys' primary roles: Ralph will be in charge of communication and working to get them rescued, while Jack will be responsible for hunting for meat. Which of these two roles is more important will be the source of escalating conflict between the two for the remainder of the book.

The rising action of the novel takes place over the following chapters, as each boy on the island establishes his role in the order of the newly formed society, and Jack and Ralph find themselves increasingly at odds over what the group's priorities should be and where they should expend energy. Ralph insists that a signal fire must be maintained constantly in case any ships pass the island, and believes the best use of resources is in collaborative work to watch the fire, build shelters, and gather fruit. Jack discovers a passionate enjoyment of hunting, and allows the signal fire to go out while killing a pig, leading to a clash with Ralph, who has seen a ship pass while the fire was out. The younger boys on the island express growing fears about a beast they believe comes out at night to menace them. In a scene the reader sees but none of the boys witnesses, a paratrooper crashes onto the top of the mountain, and the boys subsequently mistake his form for the beast, increasing their fears and making them vulnerable to Jack's equation of killing pigs with vanquishing their fears, as their chants change from "kill the pig" to "kill the beast."

After the boys kill Simon in a frenzy of fear and violent excitement, the rift between Jack and Ralph reaches a crisis point, and the climax of the book occurs when Jack and his tribe steal Piggy's glasses, then kill Piggy when he comes to get them back. When Jack's tribe steals the glasses, Ralph and Piggy think they are coming for the conch, but at this point the conch has lost most of its symbolic power, and Jack understands the glasses, which are necessary to start a fire, are the real item of value. This devaluing of the conch suggests that the agreed-upon symbols of democracy and due process no longer apply, and the fragile civilization the boys have forged is imploding. The next day, Piggy and Ralph go to retrieve Piggy's glasses and a member of Jack's tribe releases a large boulder, smashing the conch and killing Piggy. The democracy is demolished, and Jack's despotic monarchy is cemented. Realizing his life is in imminent danger, Ralph flees Jack and his tribe, who have become bloodthirsty and increasingly sadistic under his violent influence.

Up to this point the boys have maintained a fragile balance, with Jack's willingness to enact violence offset by Ralph's control of the means of lighting the fire and the symbolic power conferred by the conch. Once this balance is destroyed, and Jack controls both the means of

sustaining the fire and keeping the boys obedient to his rule, Ralph is rendered powerless. Unlike Ralph, who expects the boys to be intrinsically motivated to work together, Jack is willing to exert external influence on boys who disobey him, and leads by force, rather than persuasion. Motivated by a fear of Jack's violence as well as a mob mentality, the boys pursue Ralph across the island, even though he poses no actual threat. Even the twins Samneric, initially sympathetic to Ralph, give themselves over to Jack after he tortures them to reveal Ralph's hiding place. The boys set a fire to flush Ralph out of the jungle, which signals a passing ship. The ship's officer comes on shore, reintroducing civilization, and the boys realize the horrors they have endured and perpetuated. The book ends with the island destroyed, and the boys rescued but scarred by their glimpses into "the darkness of man's heart."

10.6 A SUMMARY

In the midst of a raging war, a plane evacuating a group of schoolboys from Britain is shot down over a deserted tropical island. Two of the boys, Ralph and Piggy, discover a conch shell on the beach, and Piggy realizes it could be used as a horn to summon the other boys. Once assembled, the boys set about electing a leader and devising a way to be rescued. They choose Ralph as their leader, and Ralph appoints another boy, Jack, to be in charge of the boys who will hunt food for the entire group.

Ralph, Jack, and another boy, Simon, set off on an expedition to explore the island. When they return, Ralph declares that they must light a signal fire to attract the attention of passing ships. The boys succeed in igniting some dead wood by focusing sunlight through the lenses of Piggy's eyeglasses. However, the boys pay more attention to playing than to monitoring the fire, and the flames quickly engulf the forest. A large swath of dead wood burns out of control, and one of the youngest boys in the group disappears, presumably having burned to death.

At first, the boys enjoy their life without grown-ups and spend much of their time splashing in the water and playing games. Ralph, however, complains that they should be maintaining the signal fire and building huts for shelter. The hunters fail in their attempt to catch a wild pig, but their leader, Jack, becomes increasingly preoccupied with the act of hunting.

When a ship passes by on the horizon one day, Ralph and Piggy notice, to their horror, that the signal fire—which had been the hunters' responsibility to maintain—has burned out. Furious, Ralph accosts Jack, but the hunter has just returned with his first kill, and all the hunters seem gripped with a strange frenzy, reenacting the chase in a kind of wild dance. Piggy criticizes Jack, who hits Piggy across the face. Ralph blows the conch shell and reprimands the boys in a speech intended to restore order. At the meeting, it quickly becomes clear that some of the boys have started to become afraid. The littlest boys, known as "littluns," have been troubled by nightmares from the beginning, and more and more boys now believe that there is some sort of beast or monster lurking on the island. The older boys try to convince the others at the meeting to think rationally, asking where such a monster could possibly hide during the daytime. One of the littluns suggests that it hides in the sea—a proposition that terrifies the entire group.

Not long after the meeting, some military planes engage in a battle high above the island. The boys, asleep below, do not notice the flashing lights and explosions in the clouds. A parachutist drifts to earth on the signal-fire mountain, dead. Sam and Eric, the twins responsible for watching the fire at night, are asleep and do not see the parachutist land. When the twins wake up, they see the enormous silhouette of his parachute and hear the strange flapping noises it makes. Thinking the island beast is at hand, they rush back to the camp in terror and report that the beast has attacked them.

The boys organize a hunting expedition to search for the monster. Jack and Ralph, who are increasingly at odds, travel up the mountain. They see the silhouette of the parachute from a distance and think that it looks like a huge, deformed ape. The group holds a meeting at which Jack and Ralph tell the others of the sighting. Jack says that Ralph is a coward and that he should be removed from office, but the other boys refuse to vote Ralph out of power. Jack angrily runs away down the beach, calling all the hunters to join him. Ralph rallies the remaining boys to build a new signal fire, this time on the beach rather than on the mountain. They obey, but before they have finished the task, most of them have slipped away to join Jack.

Jack declares himself the leader of the new tribe of hunters and organizes a hunt and a violent, ritual slaughter of a sow to solemnize the occasion. The hunters then decapitate the sow and place its head on a sharpened stake in the jungle as an offering to the beast. Later, encountering the bloody, fly-covered head, Simon has a terrible vision, during which it seems to him that the head is speaking. The voice, which he imagines as belonging to the Lord of the Flies, says that Simon will never escape him, for he exists within all men. Simon faints. When he wakes up, he goes to the mountain, where he sees the dead parachutist. Understanding then that the beast does not exist externally but rather within each individual boy, Simon travels to the beach to tell the others what he has seen. But the others are in the midst of a chaotic revelry—even Ralph and Piggy have joined Jack's feast—and when they see Simon's shadowy figure emerge from the jungle, they fall upon him and kill him with their bare hands and teeth.

The following morning, Ralph and Piggy discuss what they have done. Jack's hunters attack them and their few followers and steal Piggy's glasses in the process. Ralph's group travels to Jack's stronghold in an attempt to make Jack see reason, but Jack orders Sam and Eric tied up and fights with Ralph. In the ensuing battle, one boy, Roger, rolls a boulder down the mountain, killing Piggy and shattering the conch shell. Ralph barely manages to escape a torrent of spears.

Ralph hides for the rest of the night and the following day, while the others hunt him like an animal. Jack has the other boys ignite the forest in order to smoke Ralph out of his hiding place. Ralph stays in the forest, where he discovers and destroys the sow's head, but eventually, he is forced out onto the beach, where he knows the other boys will soon arrive to kill him. Ralph collapses in exhaustion, but when he looks up, he sees a British naval officer standing over him. The officer's ship noticed the fire raging in the jungle. The other boys reach the beach and stop in their tracks at the sight of the officer. Amazed at the spectacle of this group of bloodthirsty, savage children, the officer asks Ralph to explain. Ralph is overwhelmed by the knowledge that he is safe but, thinking about what has happened on the island, he begins to weep. The other boys begin to sob as well. The officer turns his back so that the boys may regain their composure.

10.7 KEY WORDS AND TECHNICAL TERMS

accent a distinguishing regional or national manner of pronunciation; here, Piggy's manner of speech, characterized by his use of double negatives and informal contractions.
acrid sharp, bitter, stinging, or irritating to the taste or smell.
altos the boys who sing in the vocal range between tenor and soprano.
antiphonal sung or chanted in alternation.
barmy [Brit. Slang] crazy.
batty [Slang] crazy or eccentric.
bloody [Vulgar Brit. Slang] cursed; damned.
bogie an imaginary evil being or spirit; goblin.
bollocks a vulgar slang exclamation expressing anger, disbelief, etc.
bomb happy [Slang, Chiefly Brit.] crazy; insane.
bowstave here, slightly curved arc like that of a bow.
brine water full of salt.
bum [Brit. Slang] the buttocks.
caps of maintenance caps bearing a school insignia.
Coral Island Robert Ballantyne's 1857 adventure tale about three boys shipwrecked on a Pacific island and their triumph over their circumstances.
cordon a line or circle, as of soldiers or ships, stationed around an area to guard it.
coverts covered or protected places; shelters.
cracked [Informal] mentally unbalanced; crazy.
crackers [Slang, Chiefly Brit.] crazy; insane.
creepers any plants whose stems put out tendrils or rootlets by which the plants can creep along a surface as they grow.
cutter a boat carried, esp. formerly, aboard large ships to transport personnel or supplies.
dazzle paint British term for camouflage; the disguising of troops, ships, guns, etc. to conceal them from the enemy, as by the use of paint, nets, or leaves in patterns merging with the background.
derision contempt or ridicule.
diddle [Informal] to move back and forth jerkily or rapidly; juggle.
diffident lacking self-confidence; timid; shy.
do us here, kill us.
dun dull grayish-brown.
embroil to draw into a conflict or fight; involve in trouble.
epaulette shoulder ornament as for military uniforms.
essay to try; attempt.
funk a cowering or flinching through fear; panic.
garter an elastic band, or a fastener suspended from a band, girdle, etc., for holding a stocking or sock in position.
gesticulate to make or use gestures, esp. with the hands and arms, as in adding nuances or force to one's speech, or as a substitute for speech.
Gib., Addis abbreviations for Gibraltar and Addis Ababa, respectively; refueling stops the evacuation plane made before crashing on the island.
gibber to speak or utter rapidly and incoherently; chatter unintelligibly.
Give him a fourpenny one hit him on the jaw.
half here, considerably; very much.
Ha'porth contraction of "a halfpenny's worth," meaning a very small amount.
head boy an honorary title given to a student who has made the best all-around contribution to student life and maintains exemplary conduct.

Home Counties the counties nearest London.
impervious not affected by something or not feeling the effects of something.
inimical hostile; unfriendly.
jolly [Brit. Informal] very; altogether.
lamp standard lamppost.
lavatory [Chiefly Brit.] a flush toilet.

matins orig., the first of the seven canonical hours, recited between midnight and dawn or, often, at daybreak; here, a morning church service at which the choir sang.
mold here, loose, soft, easily worked soil.
mucking about [Slang, Chiefly Brit.] wasting time; puttering around.
myopia nearsightedness.
nuts a slang exclamation of disgust, scorn, disappointment, refusal, etc.
One for his nob a hit on his head.
pax peace, here meant as a call for a truce.
phosphorescence a continuing luminescence without noticeable heat.
pills [Vulgar Brit Slang] the testicles.
pinch [Slang] to steal.
pinnacles pointed formations; peaks, as at the tops of mountains.
plinth a course of brick or stone, often a projecting one, along the base of a wall.
polyp any of various cnidarians, as the sea anemone or hydra, having a mouth fringed with many small, slender tentacles bearing stinging cells at the top of a tubelike body.
precentor a person who directs a church choir or congregation in singing.
prefect in some private schools, esp. in England, an older student with disciplinary authority.
propititate win or regain the good will of; appease or conciliate.
queer differing from what is usual or ordinary; odd; singular; strange.
rating an enlisted man in the Navy.
rebuke to blame or scold in a sharp way; reprimand.
Reds [Slang] Communists.
round the bend [Brit. Informal] crazy; insane.
rugger [Brit. Informal] rugby.
scurfy having a condition, as dandruff, in which the skin sheds little, dry scales.
shop here, conversation about one's work or business, esp. after hours.
smashing [Informal] outstandingly good; extraordinary.
sod you a vulgar British slang phrase showing extreme contempt.
stern sheets the space at the stern of an open boat.
stockings closefitting coverings, usually knitted, for the feet and, usually, much of the legs.
sucks to your auntie a British slang expression of derision or contempt; here, "forget your auntie" or "your auntie be damned."
Swallows and Amazons the first (1930) of a series of adventure books by Arthur Ransome, about a group of children on vacation.
taken short informal phrase for having diarrhea.
talisman anything thought to have magic power; a charm.
toilet the process of dressing or grooming oneself.
torrid so hot as to be parching or oppressive; scorching.
Treasure Island Robert Louis Stevenson's 1883 novel about a heroic boy's search for buried gold and his encounter with pirates.
trebles the boys who sing the highest part in musical harmony.
truculent fierce; cruel; savage; ferocious.
ululate to howl, hoot, or wail.

wacco [Brit. Slang] excellent.
waxy [Brit. Informal] enraged.
white drill a coarse linen or cotton cloth with a diagonal weave, used for work clothes, uniforms, etc.
windy long-winded, pompous, boastful.
wizard [Brit. Informal] excellent.

10.8 SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. What Does the Conch Symbolize in **Lord of the Flies**?

2. Would Piggy make a good island leader if he were given the chance.

3. Of all the characters, it is Piggy who most often has useful ideas and sees the correct way for the boys to organize themselves. Yet the other boys rarely listen to him and frequently abuse him. Why do you think this is the case? In what ways does Golding use Piggy to advance the novel's themes?

4. What, if anything, might the dead parachutist symbolize? Does he symbolize something other than what the beast and the Lord of the Flies symbolize?

5. The sow's head and the conch shell each wield a certain kind of power over the boys. In what ways do these objects' powers differ? In what way is Lord of the Flies a novel about power? About the power of symbols? About the power of a person to use symbols to control a group?

6. What role do the littluns play in the novel? In one respect, they serve as gauges of the older boys' moral positions, for we see whether an older boy is kind or cruel based on how he treats the littluns. But are the littluns important in and of themselves? What might they represent?

10.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Baker, James R. William Golding. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965.
A collection of critical essays on William Golding's work.

2. Bloom, Harold, Ed. Lord Of The Flies: Modern Critical Interpretations. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1998.

3. A collection of critical essays on Lord of the Flies.

4. Golding, William. The Inheritors. New York: Harvest Books, 1988.

5. Golding's second novel, which he wrote after Lord of the Flies. It's about a last tribe of Neanderthals trying to survive at the dawn of humanity, and explores some of the same themes – human nature, the inevitability of war – as Lord of the Flies.
6. Pincher Martin. New York: Harvest Books, 2002.

7. This is Golding's third novel. Like Lord of the Flies, it is about the prospect of survival on a desolate island.

8. Olsen, Kirstin. Understanding Lord Of The Flies: A Student Casebook To Issues, Sources, And Historical Documents. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000.

9. Ralph says in Chapter 12 "there was that indefinable connection between himself and Jack; who therefore would never let him alone; never." What is that connection? How does it develop and what does it signify?

10. When Simon sees the Lord of the Flies, Golding writes that his "gaze was held by that ancient inescapable recognition" (Chapter 8). What recognition is Golding referring to?

11 Why does Simon's role as a visionary make him an outcast in the group? What other visionaries have been outcasts in their societies?

12 How does Golding use color to link Jack with the Lord of the Flies? Are there other instances of Golding using color to link characters or provide symbolism?

13 In Chapter 11, when Ralph announces that he's calling an assembly, he is greeted with silence. How do silence and speech function in this novel, and why is silence so threatening to the boys?

LESSON-11

A HANDFUL OF DUST

11.1 OBJECTIVES

1. Students will practice close reading play for both literal and figurative meaning.
2. Students will think and write analytically about literature, using examples from the text and appropriate literary terminology to support arguments about the way a text functions.
3. Students will become familiar with Evenly Waugh's work and its greater impact on British society.
4. Students will become familiar with mid 20th century British novel.

11.2 BACKGROUND-THE WRITER AND THE PERIOD

Arthur Evelyn St. John Waugh; 28 October 1903 – 10 April 1966) was an English writer of novels, biographies, and travel books; he was also a prolific journalist and book reviewer. His most famous works include the early satires Decline and Fall (1928) and A Handful of Dust (1934), the novel Brideshead Revisited (1945), and the Second World War trilogy Sword of Honour (1952–1961). He is recognised as one of the great prose stylists of the English language in the 20th century. Waugh was the son of a publisher, educated at Lancing College and then at Hertford College, Oxford. He worked briefly as a schoolmaster before he became a full-time writer. As a young man, he acquired many fashionable and aristocratic friends and developed a taste for country house society. He travelled extensively in the 1930s, often as a special newspaper correspondent; he reported from Abyssinia at the time of the 1935 Italian invasion. He served in the British armed forces throughout the Second World War, first in the Royal Marines and then in the Royal Horse Guards. He was a perceptive writer who used the experiences and the wide range of people whom he encountered in his works of fiction, generally to humorous effect. Waugh's detachment was such that he fictionalised his own mental breakdown which occurred in the early 1950s.

Waugh converted to Catholicism in 1930 after his first marriage failed. His traditionalist stance led him to strongly oppose all attempts to reform the Church, and the changes by the Second Vatican Council (1962–65) greatly disturbed his sensibilities, especially the introduction of the vernacular Mass. That blow to his religious traditionalism, his dislike for the welfare state culture of the postwar world, and the decline of his health all darkened his final years, but he continued to write. He displayed to the world a mask of indifference, but he was capable of great kindness to those whom he considered his friends.

After his death in 1966, he acquired a following of new readers through the film and television versions of his works, such as the television serial Brideshead Revisited (1981).

11.3 THE WRITER- HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Arthur Evelyn St. John Waugh was born on 28 October 1903 to Arthur Waugh (1866–1943) and Catherine Charlotte Raban (1870–1954), into a family with English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish and Huguenot origins. Distinguished relatives included Lord Cockburn (1779–1854), a leading Scottish advocate and judge, William Morgan (1750–1833), a pioneer of actuarial science who served the Equitable Life Assurance Society for 56 years, and Philip Henry Gosse (1810–1888), a natural scientist who became notorious through his depiction as a religious fanatic in his son Edmund's memoir Father and Son. Among ancestors bearing the Waugh name, the Rev. Alexander Waugh (1754–1827) was a minister in the Secession Church of Scotland who helped found the London Missionary Society and was one of the leading Nonconformist preachers of his day. His grandson Alexander Waugh (1840–1906) was a country medical practitioner, who bullied his wife and children and became known in the Waugh family as "the Brute". The elder of Alexander's two sons, born in 1866, was Evelyn's father, Arthur Waugh.

After attending Sherborne School and New College, Oxford, Arthur Waugh began a career in publishing and as a literary critic. In 1902 he became managing director of Chapman and Hall, publishers of the works of Charles Dickens.[6] He had married Catherine Raban (1870–1954)[7] in 1893; their first son Alexander Raban Waugh (always known as Alec) was born on 8 July 1898. Alec Waugh later became a novelist of note. At the time of his birth the family were living in North London, at Hillfield Road, West Hampstead where, on 28 October 1903, the couple's second son was born, "in great haste before Dr Andrews could arrive", Catherine recorded. On 7 January 1904 the boy was christened Arthur Evelyn St John Waugh but was known in the family and in the wider world as Evelyn.

In 1907, the Waugh family left Hillfield Road for Underhill, a house which Arthur had built in North End Road, Hampstead, close to Golders Green, then a semi-rural area of dairy farms, market gardens and bluebell woods. Evelyn received his first school lessons at home, from his mother, with whom he formed a particularly close relationship; his father, Arthur Waugh, was a more distant figure, whose close bond with his elder son, Alec, was such that Evelyn often felt excluded. In September 1910, Evelyn began as a day pupil at Heath Mount preparatory school. By then, he was a lively boy of many interests, who already had written and completed "The Curse of the Horse Race", his first story. A positive influence on his writing was a schoolmaster, Aubrey Ensor. Waugh spent six relatively contented years at Heath Mount; on his own assertion he was "quite a clever little boy" who was seldom distressed or overawed by his lessons. Physically pugnacious, Evelyn was inclined to bully weaker boys; among his victims was the future society photographer Cecil Beaton, who never forgot the experience.

Outside school, he and other neighbourhood children performed plays, usually written by Waugh.[18] On the basis of the xenophobia fostered by the genre books of Invasion literature, that the Germans were about to invade Britain, Waugh organised his friends into the "Pistol Troop", who built a fort, went on manœuvres and paraded in makeshift uniforms. In 1914, after the First World War began, Waugh and other boys from the Boy Scout Troop of Heath Mount School were sometimes employed as messengers at the War Office; Evelyn loitered about the War Office in hope of glimpsing Lord Kitchener, but never did.

Family holidays usually were spent with the Waugh aunts at Midsomer Norton in Somerset, in a house lit with oil lamps, a time that Waugh recalled with delight, many years later. At Midsomer Norton, Evelyn became deeply interested in high Anglican church rituals, the initial stirrings of the spiritual dimension that later dominated his perspective of life, and he served as an altar boy at the local Anglican church. During his last year at Heath Mount, Waugh established and edited *The Cynic* school magazine.

Waugh began at Heatherley's in late September 1924, but became bored with the routine and quickly abandoned his course. He spent weeks partying in London and Oxford before the overriding need for money led him to apply through an agency for a teaching job. Almost at once, he secured a post at Arnold House, a boys' preparatory school in North Wales, beginning in January 1925. He took with him the notes for his novel, *The Temple at Thatch*, intending to work on it in his spare time. Despite the gloomy ambience of the school, Waugh did his best to fulfil the requirements of his position, but a brief return to London and Oxford during the Easter holiday only exacerbated his sense of isolation.

In the summer of 1925, Waugh's outlook briefly improved, with the prospect of a job in Pisa, Italy, as secretary to the Scottish writer C. K. Scott Moncrieff, who was engaged on the English translations of Marcel Proust's works. Believing that the job was his, Waugh resigned his position at Arnold House. He had meantime sent the early chapters of his novel to Acton for assessment and criticism. Acton's reply was so coolly dismissive that Waugh immediately burnt his manuscript; shortly afterwards, before he left North Wales, he learned that the Moncrieff job had fallen through. The twin blows were sufficient for him to consider suicide. He records that he went down to a nearby beach and, leaving a note with his clothes, walked out to sea. An attack by jellyfish changed his mind, and he returned quickly to the shore.

During the following two years Waugh taught at schools in Aston Clinton in Buckinghamshire (from which he was dismissed for the attempted drunken seduction of a school matron) and Notting Hill in London. He considered alternative careers in printing or cabinet-making, and attended evening classes in carpentry at Holborn Polytechnic while continuing to write. A short story, "The Balance", written in an experimental modernist style, became his first commercially published fiction, when it was included by Chapman and Hall in a 1926 anthology, *Georgian Stories*. An extended essay on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was printed privately by Alastair Graham, using by agreement the press of the Shakespeare Head Press in Stratford-upon-Avon, where he was undergoing training as a printer. This led to a contract from the publishers Duckworths for a full-length biography of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, which Waugh wrote during 1927. He also began working on a comic novel; after several temporary working titles this became Decline and Fall. Having given up teaching, he had no regular employment except for a short, unsuccessful stint as a reporter on the Daily Express in April–May 1927. That year he met (possibly through his brother Alec) and fell in love with Evelyn Gardner, the daughter of Lord and Lady Burghclere.

On 10 October 1930, Waugh, representing several newspapers, departed for Abyssinia to cover the coronation of Haile Selassie. He reported the event as "an elaborate propaganda effort" to convince the world that Abyssinia was a civilised nation which concealed the fact that the emperor had achieved power through barbarous means. A subsequent journey through the British East Africa colonies and the Belgian Congo formed the basis of two books; the travelogue *Remote People* (1931) and the comic novel Black

Mischief (1932). Waugh's next extended trip, in the winter of 1932–1933, was to British Guiana (now Guyana) in South America, possibly taken to distract him from a long and unrequited passion for the socialite Teresa Jungman. On arrival in Georgetown, Waugh arranged a river trip by steam launch into the interior. He travelled on via several staging-posts to Boa Vista in Brazil, and then took a convoluted overland journey back to Georgetown. His various adventures and encounters found their way into two further books: his travel account *Ninety-two Days*, and the novel A Handful of Dust, both published in 1934.

Back from South America, Waugh faced accusations of obscenity and blasphemy from the Catholic journal The Tablet, which objected to passages in *Black Mischief*. He defended himself in an open letter to the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Francis Bourne, which remained unpublished until 1980. In the summer of 1934, he went on an expedition to Spitsbergen in the Arctic, an experience he did not enjoy and of which he made minimal literary use. On his return, determined to write a major Catholic biography, he selected the Jesuit martyr Edmund Campion as his subject. The book, published in 1935, caused controversy by its forthright pro-Catholic, anti-Protestant stance but brought its writer the Hawthornden Prize. He returned to Abyssinia in August 1935 to report the opening stages of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War for the *Daily Mail*. Waugh, on the basis of his earlier visit, considered Abyssinia "a savage place which Mussolini was doing well to tame" according to his fellow reporter, William Deedes. Waugh saw little action and was not wholly serious in his role as a war correspondent. Deedes remarks on the older writer's snobbery: "None of us quite measured up to the company he liked to keep back at home". However, in the face of imminent Italian air attacks, Deedes found Waugh's courage "deeply reassuring". Waugh wrote up his Abyssinian experiences in a book, *Waugh in Abyssinia* (1936), which Rose Macaulay dismissed as a "fascist tract", on account of its pro-Italian tone. A better-known account is his novel Scoop (1938), in which the protagonist, William Boot, is loosely based on Deedes.

Among Waugh's growing circle of friends were Diana Guinness and Bryan Guinness (dedicatees of Vile Bodies), Lady Diana Cooper and her husband Duff Cooper, Nancy Mitford who was originally a friend of Evelyn Gardner's, and the Lygon sisters. Waugh had known Hugh Patrick Lygon at Oxford; now he was introduced to the girls and their country house, Madresfield Court, which became the closest that he had to a home during his years of wandering. In 1933, on a Greek islands cruise, he was introduced by Father D'Arcy to Gabriel Herbert, eldest daughter of the late explorer Aubrey Herbert. When the cruise ended Waugh was invited to stay at the Herbert family's villa in Portofino, where he first met Gabriel's 17-year-old sister, Laura.

Late works after restored to health, Waugh returned to work and finished *Officers and Gentlemen*. In June 1955 the *Daily Express* journalist and reviewer Nancy Spain, accompanied by her friend Lord Noel-Buxton, arrived uninvited at Piers Court and demanded an interview. Waugh saw the pair off and wrote a wry account for *The Spectator*, but he was troubled by the incident and decided to sell Piers Court: "I felt it was polluted", he told Nancy Mitford. Late in 1956, the family moved to the manor house in the Somerset village of Combe Florey. In January 1957, Waugh avenged the Spain–Noel-Buxton intrusion by winning libel damages from the *Express* and Spain. The paper had printed an article by Spain that suggested that the sales of Waugh's books were much lower than they were and that his worth, as a journalist, was low.

Gilbert Pinfold was published in the summer of 1957, "my barmy book", Waugh called it. The extent to which the story is self-mockery, rather than true autobiography, became a subject of critical debate. Waugh's next major book was a biography of his

longtime friend Ronald Knox, the Catholic writer and theologian who had died in August 1957. Research and writing extended over two years during which Waugh did little other work, delaying the third volume of his war trilogy. In June 1958, his son Auberon was severely wounded in a shooting accident while serving with the army in Cyprus. Waugh remained detached; he neither went to Cyprus nor immediately visited Auberon on the latter's return to Britain. The critic and literary biographer David Wykes called Waugh's sang-froid "astonishing" and the family's apparent acceptance of his behaviour even more so.

Although most of Waugh's books had sold well, and he had been well-rewarded for his journalism, his levels of expenditure meant that money problems and tax bills were a recurrent feature in his life. In 1950, as a means of tax avoidance, he had set up a trust fund for his children (he termed it the "Save the Children Fund", after the well-established charity of that name) into which he placed the initial advance and all future royalties from the Penguin (paperback) editions of his books. He was able to augment his personal finances by charging household items to the trust or selling his own possessions to it. Nonetheless, by 1960, shortage of money led him to agree to an interview on BBC Television, in the *Face to Face* series conducted by John Freeman. The interview was broadcast on 26 June 1960; according to his biographer Selina Hastings, Waugh restrained his instinctive hostility and coolly answered the questions put to him by Freeman, assuming what she describes as a "pose of world-weary boredom".

In 1960, Waugh was offered the honour of a CBE but declined, believing that he should have been given the superior status of a knighthood. In September, he produced his final travel book, *A Tourist in Africa*, based on a visit made in January–March 1959. He enjoyed the trip but "despised" the book. The critic Cyril Connolly called it "the thinnest piece of book-making that Mr Waugh has undertaken". The book done, he worked on the last of the war trilogy, which was published in 1961 as *Unconditional Surrender*.

Wykes observes that Waugh's novels reprise and fictionalise the principal events of his life, although in an early essay Waugh wrote: "Nothing is more insulting to a novelist than to assume that he is incapable of anything but the mere transcription of what he observes". The reader should not assume that the author agreed with the opinions expressed by his fictional characters. Nevertheless, in the Introduction to the *Complete Short Stories*, Ann Pasternak Slater said that the "delineation of social prejudices and the language in which they are expressed is part of Waugh's meticulous observation of his contemporary world".

The critic Clive James said of Waugh: "Nobody ever wrote a more unaffectedly elegant English ... its hundreds of years of steady development culminate in him". As his talent developed and matured, he maintained what literary critic Andrew Michael Roberts called "an exquisite sense of the ludicrous, and a fine aptitude for exposing false attitudes". In the first stages of his 40-year writing career, before his conversion to Catholicism in 1930, Waugh was the novelist of the Bright Young People generation. His first two novels, Decline and Fall (1928) and Vile Bodies (1930), comically reflect a futile society, populated by two-dimensional, basically unbelievable characters in circumstances too fantastic to evoke the reader's emotions. A typical Waugh trademark evident in the early novels is rapid, unattributed dialogue in which the participants can be readily identified. At the same time Waugh was writing serious essays, such as "The War and the Younger Generation", in which he castigates his own generation as "crazy and sterile" people.

Waugh's conversion to Catholicism did not noticeably change the nature of his next two novels, Black Mischief (1934) and A Handful of Dust (1934), but, in the latter novel, the elements of farce are subdued, and the protagonist, Tony Last, is recognisably a person rather than a comic cipher. Waugh's first fiction with a Catholic theme was the short story "Out of

Depth" (1933) about the immutability of the Mass. From the mid-1930s onwards, Catholicism and conservative politics were much featured in his journalistic and non-fiction writing before he reverted to his former manner with *Scoop* (1938), a novel about journalism, journalists, and unsavoury journalistic practices.

In *Work Suspended and Other Stories* Waugh introduced "real" characters and a first-person narrator, signalling the literary style he would adopt in *Brideshead Revisited* a few years later. *Brideshead*, which questions the meaning of human existence without God, is the first novel in which Evelyn Waugh clearly presents his conservative religious and political views. In the *LIFE* magazine article "Fan Fare" (1946), Waugh said that "you can only leave God out [of fiction] by making your characters pure abstractions" and that his future novels shall be "the attempt to represent man more fully which, to me, means only one thing, man in his relation to God. As such, the novel Helena (1950) is Evelyn Waugh's most philosophically Christian book.

In *Brideshead*, the proletarian junior officer Hooper illustrates a theme that persists in Waugh's postwar fiction: the rise of mediocrity in the "Age of the Common Man". In the trilogy Sword of Honour (*Men at Arms*, 1952; *Officers and Gentlemen*, 1955, *Unconditional Surrender*, 1961) the social pervasiveness of mediocrity is personified in the semi-comical character "Trimmer", a sloven and a fraud who triumphs by contrivance. In the novella "Scott-King's Modern Europe" (1947), Waugh's pessimism about the future is in the schoolmaster's admonition: "I think it would be very wicked indeed to do anything to fit a boy for the modern world". Likewise, such cynicism pervades the novel *Love Among the Ruins* (1953), set in a dystopian, welfare-state Britain that is so socially disagreeable that euthanasia is the most sought-after of the government's social services. Of the postwar novels, Patey says that *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957) stands out "a kind of mock-novel, a sly invitation to a game". Waugh's final work of fiction, "Basil Seal Rides Again" (1962), features characters from the prewar novels; Waugh admitted that the work was a "senile attempt to recapture the manner of my youth". Stylistically this final story begins in the same fashion as the first story, "The Balance" of 1926, with a "fusillade of unattributed dialogue".

Decline and death

As he approached his sixties, Waugh was in poor health, prematurely aged, "fat, deaf, short of breath", according to Patey. His biographer Martin Stannard likened his appearance around this time to that of "an exhausted rogue jollied up by drink". In 1962 Waugh began work on his autobiography, and that same year wrote his final fiction, the long short story *Basil Seal Rides Again*. This revival of the protagonist of *Black Mischief* and *Put Out More Flags* was published in 1963; the *Times Literary Supplement* called it a "nasty little book". However, that same year, he was awarded with the title Companion of Literature by the Royal Society of Literature (its highest honour). When the first volume of autobiography, *A Little Learning*, was published in 1964, Waugh's often oblique tone and discreet name changes ensured that friends avoided the embarrassments that some had feared.

Waugh had welcomed the accession in 1958 of Pope John XXIII and wrote an appreciative tribute on the pope's death in 1963. However, he became increasingly concerned by the decisions emerging from the Second Vatican Council, which was convened by Pope John in October 1962 and continued under his successor, Pope Paul VI, until 1965. Waugh, a staunch opponent of Church reform, was particularly distressed by the replacement of the universal Latin Mass with the vernacular. In a *Spectator* article of 23 November 1962, he argued the case against change in a manner described by a later commentator as "sharp-edged

reasonableness". He wrote to Nancy Mitford that "the buggering up of the Church is a deep sorrow to me .... We write letters to the paper. A fat lot of good that does."

In 1965, a new financial crisis arose from an apparent flaw in the terms of the "Save the Children" trust, and a large sum of back tax was being demanded. Waugh's agent, A. D. Peters, negotiated a settlement with the tax authorities for a manageable amount, but in his concern to generate funds, Waugh signed contracts to write several books, including a history of the papacy, an illustrated book on the Crusades and a second volume of autobiography. Waugh's physical and mental deterioration prevented any work on these projects, and the contracts were cancelled. He described himself as "toothless, deaf, melancholic, shaky on my pins, unable to eat, full of dope, quite idle" and expressed the belief that "all fates were worse than death". His only significant literary activity in 1965 was the editing of the three war novels into a single volume, published as *Sword of Honour*.

On Easter Day, 10 April 1966, after attending a Latin Mass in a neighbouring village with members of his family, Waugh died of heart failure at his Combe Florey home, at 62. He was buried, by special arrangement, in a consecrated plot outside the Anglican churchyard of the Church of St Peter & St Paul, Combe Florey. A Requiem Mass, in Latin, was celebrated in Westminster Cathedral on 21 April 1966.

11.4 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

Chapter One — John Beaver lives with his mother in the unfashionable district of Bayswater in reduced circumstances. She has an antiques shop: he is twenty-five, unpopular, and has no occupation.

Chapter Two — Tony Last and his wife Brenda live at Hetton Abbey – a cold Gothic country house. John Beaver arrives for the weekend as their largely uninvited guest. Everyone feels uncomfortable, but Brenda tries to be hospitable to Beaver.

Brenda thinks to have a pied-a-terre for her trips into London, and Mrs Beaver can supply rooms in Belgravia. John Beaver takes Brenda to dinner and they make the opening moves of a flirtation.

Their relationship develops into an adulterous affair, and it becomes the subject of social gossip in London, even though people wonder what she sees in him. Brenda moves into the flat then announces to her husband that she is going to take up some sort of study courses.

Chapter Three — Tony and Jock Grant-Menzies get drunk at their club and threaten to call on Brenda, who is at the flat with Beaver. They go to a nightclub instead. Brenda stays at the flat during the week and only goes home at weekends. She hopes to distract her husband with her pushy neighbour ‘Princess’ Jenny Abdul Akbar, but Tony does not like her. Jock brings to Hetton his ‘shameless blonde’ friend Mrs Rattery, who arrives by aeroplane.
There is a hunt meeting at which young John Last is killed by a frightened horse. Brenda is brought back from London, but she feels it is all over for her with Tony, and she asks him for a divorce.

Chapter Four — Tony arranges to take a prostitute from the nightclub to Brighton for the weekend to provide evidence for a divorce. Milly the prostitute insists on bringing her

awkward young daughter along. Brenda's family reveal that Beaver will not marry her unless she receives a large settlement as alimony. This means Tony would be forced to sell his house, so instead he refuses to proceed with the divorce.

Chapter Five — Tony embarks on an expedition to South America with the very dubious Doctor Messinger in search of a 'lost city'. En route via the West Indies he has a brief on-board flirtation with an eighteen year old girl. When he reaches the jungle he is tormented by insect bites and thinks wistfully of home. Native bearers desert the expedition, so Tony and Messinger are stranded. Messinger is clearly lost and incompetent. Tony catches a fever and becomes delirious. Messinger goes to seek help, but he drowns in river rapids.

Meanwhile back in London John Beaver and Brenda cannot move on because there has been no divorce. His mother, sensing that the marriage might not happen, plans to take him to America. Brenda tries to get money from the family solicitor, but Tony has tied up their finances to restore Hetton – and he has made a new will.

Chapter Six — Tony is rescued and cured by an eccentric settler Mr Todd, who forces him to read aloud the works of Charles Dickens. As the months go by Todd thwarts Tony's attempts to leave the jungle. A previous prisoner tried to escape, but died at the encampment. When a passing traveller calls, Tony secretly gives him a note begging for help. But some time later, when Tony is unconscious for two days from the effects of a local drink, rescuers arrive from Europe. Mr Todd gives them Tony's watch, shows them a cross on a grave, and sends them away.

Chapter Seven — Hetton is inherited and taken over by Tony's cousin Richard Last and his family. Brenda marries Jock Grant-Menzies. A commemorative plaque is unveiled in the Hetton chapel to record Tony's death as an 'explorer'.
The alternative ending — Tony returns from a sea cruise in the West Indies and is met by Brenda, who has been ditched by John Beaver. They re-unite *faux de mieux*, Tony returns to Hetton Abbey, and he secretly takes over Brenda's flat in Belgravia.

A Handful of Dust – principal characters

Mrs Beaver	an aggressively commercial antique shop owner
John Beaver	her lacklustre and talentless son
Tony Last	the owner of Hetton Abbey and estate
Brenda Last	Tony's adulterous wife
John Andrew Last	their young son
Marjorie	Brenda's sister
Jock Grant-Menzies	Tony's friend
'Princess' Jenny Abdul Akbar	Brenda's next door neighbour in Belgravia
Mrs Rafferty	the 'shameless blonde', an aviatrix
The Revered Tendril	the eccentric vicar attached to Hetton
Mr Todd	a mad explorer and settler
Doctor Messinger	an incompetent explorer

11.5 A BRIEF CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE TEXT

Evelyn Waugh's essential subject matter is the study of upper-class decline and its causes. He is powerfully attracted to a nostalgic view of traditional aristocratic life in grand country houses and estates, together with all their culture of inherited wealth and property.

This includes the architecture of previous centuries, and the social life of weekend parties, plentiful servants, and an existence divided between London and a house in the country.

But he knew it was a social system that was coming to an end. It was a privileged economy which could not be sustained. And he knew that the principal characters caught up in this decline were conspiring in their own downfall – by over-indulgence, wilful excess, and moral blindness to the changing world in which they lived.

The middle class characters in his novels are largely endeavouring to claw their way into this decadent echelon, and their tastes and habits are generally presented as inferior, awkward, and doomed to failure. The lower orders hardly feature at all, except as occasional servants. Waugh does not have a simplistic hope that any working class people are going to be the saviours of this decline.

Humour

Waugh's early novels were once regarded as the last thing in barbed humour and rib-tickling satire. They don't seem quite so humorously pointed now, but there remain traces of comic characterisation, and he does have the distinction of introducing an element of black comedy into the modern novel.

Mrs Beaver's greed and relentless opportunism are funny because they are linked to the main theme of downward social mobility. She has come from the upper echelons of society but has fallen on hard times as a widow with a socially useless son. She lives in Sussex Gardens – then a downmarket region of Bayswater- but she misses no opportunity to sell people what we would now call fashionable junk or tat from her shop

She has also devised the entrepreneurial scheme of splitting up houses into smaller flats to rent. Her clients are people who have dubious purposes, as does Brenda, and those who are downwardly socially mobile such as 'Princess' Jenny Abdul Akbar. Mrs Beaver simultaneously promotes her services to these people as a so-called interior designer.

She also embodies all that Waugh finds offensive in modernism and a lack of sensitivity to tradition. In the middle of the novel she is converting one of the rooms in Tony Last's old Tudor home Hetton Abbey by lining the walls with chromium plate.

It is interesting that Waugh sees the issue of social decline in architectural terms – from the draughty grandeur of Hetton Abbey to these 'service flats' carved out of the Victorian splendour of London's Belgravia.

Another marvelously comic character is Mr Tendril the local preacher at Hetton. He is a hopelessly indurate creation who goes on preaching sermons he has written years before for troops in British expeditionary wars in India. His speeches contain references to the pitiless sun, threats from tigers, and loved ones back at home – when he is addressing a congregation in what seems to be rural Warwickshire.

How difficult it is for us to realise that this is indeed Christmas. Instead of the glowing log fire and widows tight shuttered against the drifting snow, we have only the harsh glare of an alien sun; instead of the happy circle of loved faces, of home and family, we have

the uncomprehending stares of the subjugated, though no doubt grateful, heathen. Instead of the placid ox and ass of Bethlehem, we have for companions the ravening tiger and the exotic camel, the furtive jackal and the ponderous elephant and of course the most memorable scene in this novel is the black comedy of Mr Todd forcing Tony to read the works of Charles Dickens. The mad settler Todd cannot read himself, but enjoys their entertainment value, and uses that as an excuse to keep Tony prisoner.

The two endings

There is interpretive difficulty and even a possible dilemma concerning the end to *A Handful of Dust*. This is not surprising, because Waugh wrote the most reprinted version of the conclusion *before* he wrote the novel. On a visit to South America in 1933, whilst he was stranded in Boa Vista ('Good View') in northern Brazil, Waugh spent his time writing a story called *The Man Who Liked Dickens*, based on an eccentric character he had met. The story was published in *Hearst's International* in the United States and reprinted in *Nash's Pall Mall Magazine* in the UK.

It was ten months later before he began work on what was to become *A Handful of Dust* – and he did not have any clear plan for how it was to end. This problem of two endings was created because the novel was issued as a serial in America as well as a stand-alone one-volume publication in England. His story *The Man Who Liked Dickens* had already been published in America, so Waugh produced the alternative ending for serial publication.

The two endings are completely different, and they also create quite different meanings for the novel as a whole. Tony's imprisonment by the quasi-madman Mr Todd is the more dramatic, and the more frequently reprinted. It continues the theme of downward social mobility that Waugh had explored earlier in *Decline and Fall* (1928) and it takes it to a new extreme.

Tony is the upholder of traditional aristocratic values and he cherishes the house and the country estate he has inherited. But he is betrayed by his adulterous wife, and when he seeks solace in foreign travel, he encounters only misery, discomfort, and finally a sort of living death. Mr Todd's final thwarting of Tony's hopes for rescue is truly black humour at its most grim. Tony's relatives inherit Hetton Abbey, his wife marries one of his friends, and his existence is reduced to a memorial plaque in the chapel.

The problem with this ending is that there is an abrupt shift in tone, *mise en scene*, subject matter, and geographic location between the first three-quarters of the novel and its conclusion. The principal events and characters have been established at Hetton Abbey and in fashionable London. The sudden switch to an equatorial jungle and deranged explorers such as Doctor Messinger and Mr Todd is too much. It disrupts the coherence of the narrative. Waugh's friend the novelist Henry Yorke wrote to him: "the end is so fantastic that it throws the rest out of proportion".

The serial version of the ending is far more logical and coherent – but it is much shorter, not so dramatic, and it is not funny. In the alternative ending Tony merely returns from what has been a therapeutic cruise, and he ruefully drifts into a reconciliation with Brenda. It is a downbeat, not a catastrophic ending to events.

The setting, the characters, and the subject matter remain the same, as does the tone of the narrative. But there are important ramifications to this version of the novel's conclusion. Tony returns to his estate as its living inheritor. He has also commissioned renovations to Hetton Abbey during his absence on the Caribbean cruise – and these works *reverse* the absurd 'improvements' Brenda has made at the suggestion of Mrs Beaver (the chromium-plated walls). Moreover, Tony secretly retains ownership of the flat in Belgravia, and he *lies* to Brenda about having got rid of it.

This alternative ending leaves Tony a little bruised, but intact. He has lost nothing – except his son – and Brenda is pregnant again. Hetton Abbey will have its new bathrooms, and he obviously has plans for a little 'private life' in the Belgravia flat. This is altogether a different ending – which in turn creates a different novel. It forces the reader to regard the preceding events in a more light-hearted manner. What was previously a downhill plunge into disaster and destruction suddenly becomes no more than a series of minor comic setbacks from which the protagonist emerges unscathed.

11.6 A SUMMARY

John Beaver is a young man of twenty-five years. He lives in London in a house of his mother, who is engaged in renting apartments. After graduating Oxford, until the crisis began, John worked in an advertising agency. Since then nobody has been able to find him a place. He gets up late almost every day, sits by the phone in anticipation that someone will call him to ask to dinner. Often at the last minute it happens. In the coming weekend he is going to stay in Hetton Abbey with his recent acquaintance Tony Last.

After receiving a telegram from Beaver, Tony, who wanted to spend a quiet holiday with his family, his wife Brenda, and son John Andrew, he does not express special delight on his arrival and entrusts his wife to entertain the guest. Beaver makes a good impression on Brenda and eventually she even begins to like him a lot. Branda wants to find a flat in London and Beaver's mother helps her. Soon Tony's wife begins to realize that she got fascinated by her husband's friend. Arriving to London she and her sister Marjorie go to the restaurant of one of their common friend where she meets Mrs. Beaver and Lady Kokpers; the last invites them all to her party in few days. When the time comes for Brenda to leave London Beaver accompanies her to the station, but at her request to accompany her to Polly Kokpers's party he replies with a clumsy excuse, because, in his mind's calculations, it would cost him a few pounds since before the reception he will have to take Brenda to the restaurant. Brenda is upset.

The next day there comes a telegram from Beaver in which he reports that he was able to settle his business and is willing to accompany her to the party. Branda cheers up. Brenda pays for the lunch in the restaurant, despite Beaver's protests. On the way to Polly, sitting in the backseat of a taxi, Brenda pulls John to herself and kisses him. The next day after the party the entire London talks only about one thing - that Brenda and Beaver begin an affair.

For three days Brenda returns to Hetton, to her husband and son, and then again, under the pretext of the hassle about the apartment, leaves for London. She phones Tony in the morning and evening and spends most of her time with Beaver. Soon she tells her husband that she wants to go to the women's courses in economics at the university so she will have to spend more time in London.

One day Tony without a notice comes to London. Brenda is dissatisfied with his unexpected arrival and, referring to being busy, refused to meet with him. Tony goes to the club where together with his friend Jock Grant-Menzies gets heavily drunk and the whole evening phones Brenda, it makes her very angry. Back in Hetton Tony quarrels with his son who, missing his mother, throws questions to his tired and irritable father.

Following these events two weekends in a row Brenda arrives to Hetton with her friends. Guilt gnaws her and she wants her husband to experience a love affair. She wants him to become interested in her new friend Jenny Abdul Akbar, who once was married to a black man. She is a very eccentric but nice lady. Tony however finds her tedious.

One day, when Brenda as usual is away, hunting collection is arranged in the Hetton forest. John Andrew, who already know how to ride a pony, is allowed to be present. After the start of hunting the boy under the supervision of groom Ben is sent home. On the way back an accident happens with the child: Miss Ripon's wayward horse gets scared, stands on its hind legs and strikes John's with its hoof. The boy falls into a ditch. Death occurs instantly. Mourning envelops the house. Jock Grant-Menzies, who was present at the hunt, goes to London to inform Branda about the incident. Brenda at this time is at a party. Learning of the death of her son she weeps bitterly. After the funeral she quickly leaves Hetton and from London writes Tony a letter in which reports that will not return home, that she is in love with Beaver and wants a divorce.

For registration of divorce it is necessary for Tony to have witnesses who observed his affair with some other woman. For this he findss in a bar some Millie, a girl of easy virtue, and goes with her to Brighton. The detectives follow them. Millie without telling Tony takes with her her daughter, who constantly revolves around adult and pesters Tony with her requests and whims.

On his return to London Tony has a serious conversation with Branda's elder brother Reggie, who requires for Branda alimony amount twice the one that Tony is able to give. In addition there come up some unpleasant facts so in the end Tony refuses to give Brenda a divorce. To require it she cannot, because the testimony of witnesses in Brighton do not cost a penny, because in the room there was a child all the time and the girl both nights slept in the room that was supposed to be taken by Tony. Instead of divorce Tony decides to leave for a while and goes on an expedition to Brazil in search of a Lost Castle.

In the journey Tony is accompanied by Dr. Messinger, an experienced researcher, though still quite a young man. During the voyage to the shores of South America Tony meets a girl named Teresa de Vitre, who after two years of study in Paris is returning home to Trinidad. Between them there appears a fleeting affair, but as soon as she learns that Tony is married she loses any interest in him. After landing in Brazil Tony and Dr. Messinger come into contact with the local Indians, and for some time live near their settlements terribly suffering from bothersome insects, but hoping that Indians will help them to get to the tribes that have some guidelines on how to find the Lost Castle.

The Indians are building boats for travel on the river, deliver them to the land border of payvajs tribes and disappear at night. Further the doctor and Tony are moving downstream on their own. On the way Tony gets ill and has high fever. Many days and nights he spends in an unconscious state. Dr. Messinger starts to move alone to bring someone to help Tony. The doctor drowns in the maelstrom and Tony barely makes his way through the jungle and forest and gets to the Indian village. There he meets with old Mr. Todd, who cannot read but enjoys

listening when someone reads a book, a considerable number of which was left him by his father, who once worked there as a missionary. He cures Tony but does not allow him to leave forcing Tony constantly read and reread all the books aloud. Tony almost a year lives in his hut. Once Mr. Todd makes him sleep for two days, and when Tony wakes up tells him that some Europeans were looking for Tony and he gave them his watch and assured that Tony died. Now no one will ever be looking for him and Tony will have to spend all his life in the Indian village. Brenda learning that she became a widow marries Jock Grant-Menzies, but Hetton Abbey on Tony's bequest is left to some of his relatives.

11.7 KEY WORDS AND TECHNICAL TERMS

Sacrifice
To give something up for the sake of someone else or something else
Reservations
To hold yourself back
Settlement
An agreement made to settle
Swindled
Receiving money through fraudulent means
Ancestor
A descendant from the family bloodline
Struggle
Forcefully trying to break free of constriction
Reflection
Making a serious consideration about something
Etiquette
Proper mannerisms a person should have
Tender
Showing gentleness and affection
Persevere
To keep on going in the face of adversity

11.8 SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. What do we learn from the novel a handful of Dust about the way in marriage and divorce is viewed at the time?

2. It is assumed that Tony has does in the novel a handful of Dust. How is this assumption effectively correct?

3. Are any of the characters in the novel a handful of Dust actually likable?

11.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

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