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## Unit 1

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### Study Questions of "To Build a Fire"



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#### Author

#### Message

**a12**  
Site Admin

Posted: Fri Mar 17, 2006 9:59 am    Post subject: Study Questions of "To Build a Fire"

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

1. Find three places where the narrator talks about the dog. Using these three references discuss the importance of the dog to understanding the story.
2. A possible theme for this story is the "unforgiving conditions of nature." Support this idea using specific references to the story.
3. In survival, what counts for more: instinct, luck, or determination?
4. Why do you think we are not told the man's or the dog's name?
5. Find all the references to the "old timer" and explain how the man's reaction to what the "old timer" said changes as the story progresses.

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## The Blue Hotel Study Questions



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### Author

### Message

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Posted: Fri Mar 17, 2006 9:55 am    Post subject: The Blue Hotel Study Questions

1. Analyze the character of the professional gambler. How do the other citizens regard him and why?
  
2. Describing the gambler's stabbing of the Swede, Crane writes: "There was a great tumult, and then was seen a long blade in the hand of the gambler. It shot forward, and a human body, this citadel of virtue, wisdom, power, was pierced as easily as if it had been a melon." What does Crane mean?
  
3. Interpret the story's conclusion. Why does the Easterner say that the gambler was "a kind of adverb"? Why does he say that he and the other bystanders collaborated in the murder of the Swede?
  
4. Identify some features of Crane's style. What do they contribute to the story's meaning or effect?
  
5. Consider the blue hotel as a symbol. What might it represent? Cite details from the story to support your interpretation. nWhat is naturalistic about this story? (Source)

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### Study Questions on "The Yellow Wallpaper"



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#### Author

#### Message

**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Sat Mar 11, 2006 4:48 pm Post subject: Study Questions on "The Yellow Wallpaper"



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

1. Why doesn't the main character/narrator have a name? Describe the narrator of "The Yellow Wall-paper" as precisely as you can. Why does she spend all of her time in the nursery? What is "wrong" with her? To what extent does she change over the course of the story? When does she first start giving evidence of losing her mind? What evidence? Why is she losing it?
2. Describe the Wall-paper. Why is the narrator both fascinated and repulsed by it? Why is the story named for the wall-paper? Why does it matter that it's yellow? What room is the main character given? Why is that significant?
3. By the end of the story, the narrator seems to believe she has achieved a victory: " 'I've got out at last,' said I, 'in spite of you and Jane! And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!' " Do you agree that she has emerged victorious? If so, in what sense?
4. How does the narrator's husband, John, treat her? She notes, "He says that with my imaginative power and habit of story-making, a nervous weakness like mine is sure to lead to all manner of excited fancies, and that I ought to use my will and good sense to check the tendency."
5. If her husband were called upon to explain his actions, what would he say? Why does he emphasize her "imaginative power," and to what extent do you think Gilman wants us to agree with John's opinion? Think about this in terms of both nineteenth-century anxieties about the supposed promises of science and the ideals of the cult of true womanhood.
6. How does Gilman's realism differ from the realism of Freeman? Does the narrator of "The Yellow Wall-paper" recognize any correspondence between her own perception and external reality?
7. Consider "The Yellow Wallpaper" as Gilman's portrait of the American woman as writer. What does the story suggest about the literary authority of the woman writer? What obstacles stand in the way of her creation? What is her ultimate work of art?

**Further study question:** 8. Compare and contrast Gilman's narrator of "The Yellow Wall-paper" with James' governess in "The Turn of the Screw." Are both women mad? If you argue that they are, evaluate James's and Gilman's differing perspectives on women's madness.



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### Study Questions on "The Blue Hotel"



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#### Author

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

#### Message

Posted: Sat Mar 11, 2006 4:42 pm    Post subject: Study Questions on "The Blue Hotel"

1. Analyze the character of the professional gambler. How do the other citizens regard him and why?
2. Describing the gambler's stabbing of the Swede, Crane writes: "There was a great tumult, and then was seen a long blade in the hand of the gambler. It shot forward, and a human body, this citadel of virtue, wisdom, power, was pierced as easily as if it had been a melon." What does Crane mean?
3. Interpret the story's conclusion. Why does the Easterner say that the gambler was "a kind of adverb"? Why does he say that he and the other bystanders collaborated in the murder of the Swede?
4. Identify some features of Crane's style. What do they contribute to the story's meaning or effect? Consider the blue hotel as a symbol. What might it represent? Cite details from the story to support your interpretation.
5. What is naturalistic about this story?

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### The White Heron



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#### Author

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

#### Message

Posted: Sat Mar 04, 2006 10:06 pm    Post subject: The White Heron



1. "A New England Nun" portrays a woman who triumphs over the material conditions of her existence. Describe the nature of that triumph and the process by which she achieves it.
2. Setting is a key element in local color stories. What role does the setting play in these stories? Is it key in these? Where? Why?
3. The tree, the hunter, the cow, and the heron all seem to possess mythical significance in "A White Heron." Choose to discuss one of them in relationship to Sylvia, and explore the way Jewett combines elements of folk or fairy tale and literary realism.
4. Sylvia is interested in the "young sportsman": he appeals to "the woman's heart, asleep in the child." How does this attraction complicate and enrich the story?
5. The pine tree, heron, and other living things in "A White Heron" seem to have symbolic or even mystical importance. How can such elements be understood and valued in the context of a "realistic" tale? Who attributes symbolic power to these natural presences? What do those values tell us about Sylvia's consciousness?
6. Following Sylvia's lead as an interpreter of worldly experience, can we speculate about symbolic or even allegorical echoes in Jewett's tale? Does it make sense to read this story as "about" innocence, awakening sexuality, or the joys and sacrifices that come with interacting with the human world?
7. Imagine "A White Heron" told from the point of view of the young ornithologist.

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## A New England Nun



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### Author

### Message

**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Sat Mar 04, 2006 10:03 pm    Post subject: A New England Nun



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

1. Various critics have characterized Louisa Ellis as “the definitive New England spinster” who has “no purpose worthy of commitment.” David Hirsch claims that Louisa suppresses the “Dionysian” in herself and lives a sterile, passionless existence. If you tend to agree with this characterization of Louisa, find passages in the text to support your conclusions.

2. Other critics are more sympathetic toward Louisa and view her as a woman living an intensely aesthetic life, with her art the center of her domestic world. Defend this position by citing passages in the text. (Source)

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### Discussion Questions on Daisy Miller



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#### Author

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

#### Message

Posted: Tue Feb 28, 2006 8:26 am    Post subject: Discussion Questions on Daisy Miller

1. What kind of character is Winterbourne? How might James have presented him differently if he had intended him to be a romantic hero?
2. How do you think James wants us to view the Millers' relationship with servants?
3. Why do you think James chose to call his heroine "Daisy Miller"? Do the names "Winterbourne," "Mrs. Walker," and "Giovanelli" seem significant or perhaps ironic in any way?
4. Discuss the importance of setting in Daisy Miller.
5. How does health function differently for different characters in the novel? In the case of Daisy's illness, might any symbolism be at work?
6. Daisy makes two trips to architectural sites—the castle at Chillon and the Coliseum. How are they different? What, if anything, do they reveal about her character?
7. Discuss Daisy's relationship with Mr. Giovanelli. How does it differ from her relationship with Winterbourne?
8. Is Daisy Miller more about our discovering what kind of person Daisy is or what kind of person Winterbourne is? Defend your answer.
9. Some of James's contemporaries thought his portrait of Daisy insulting to Americans. Can you suggest why?

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## Discussion Questions on Huckleberry Finn



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### Author

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

### Message

Posted: Mon Feb 20, 2006 10:00 pm   Post subject: Discussion Questions on Huckleberry Finn



1. Analyze evidence of dialect in Huck Finn's speech and compare it with dialects spoken by several other characters in the novel. Compare Clemens's depiction of dialect in general with that of Bret Harte, Joel Chandler Harris, or Sarah Orne Jewett.
  
  2. Identify and discuss features of the picaresque novel that Clemens uses in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.
  
  3. Analyze Clemens's portrait of Tom Sawyer. Is he model, rival, alter ego, or mirror for Huck? Does he develop in the novel? "
  
  4. Analyze Clemens's portrait of Jim. Does he have an independent existence in the novel or does he merely reflect the way others see him?
  
  5. Death is a frequent motif in the novel. Comment on its various thematic and symbolic uses, and analyze in particular Huck's symbolic death in Chapter VI.
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### The husband in The Yellow Wallpaper



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#### Author

**Leslie Yu**  
Moderator

Joined: 26 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

#### Message

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 3:37 pm   Post subject: The husband in The Yellow Wallpaper  

To me, I see John, the narrator's husband in the Yellow Wallpaper, as a chauvinist. He restricts any activities that his wife wants to have. He thinks that "rest cure" is good for her illness. However, we can see that the situation of this woman is worse than before. In addition, under the huge power from men (including some women, like Jane and her family), she has to bear the stress from them. In this story, she mentions that her husband is a professional and reputable doctor who everyone will listen to what he suggests. Therefore, nothing changes even if she tells everyone this treatment is unsuitable for her. She is a victim under the chauvinism.

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**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 7:28 pm   Post subject: Re: The husband in The Yellow Wallpaper  

You are indeed right, the woman is certainly under serious suppression and oppression from chauvinism in the short story here. The title of the story is "The Yellow Wallpaper," symbolizes her agony and sadness from the oppression from male dominance.

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## a kind of adverb in The Blue Hotel



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### Author

**Leslie Yu**  
Moderator

Joined: 26 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

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### Message

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 4:31 pm    Post subject: a kind of adverb in The Blue Hotel



In the end of this story, the Easterner says that the poor gambler is "a kind of adverb" and thinks that the cowboy and he have to take the responsibility for the Swede's death and the poor gambler's situation. The Easterner thinks that the people who do not do anything for the Swede and stop this tragedy occurring are "the noun" what is the real cause to impel the Swede's death. The poor gambler is just a "adverb" what emphasize the action of "kill." Although they does not really kill the Swede, they uses their cold and careless to cause the Swede's death.



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### Naturalism in "The Blue Hotel" & "To Buil



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#### Author

#### Message

**keeffie**  
Moderator

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 1:58 am    Post subject: Naturalism in "The Blue Hotel" & "To Buil"

Joined: 20 Feb 2006  
Posts: 7

Both Crane's "The Blue Hotel" and London's "To Build a Fire" are talking about human limitation in face to external forces. Nevertheless, they are somewhat different. Firstly, different from the Swede, the survivor in "The Blue Hotel" is the weak who chooses to do nothing when finding Johnnie's cheating, while the survivor in "To Build a Fire" is the dog who follows simply instinct. Secondly, in addition to the Swede himself, everyone in the Blue Hotel takes part in the Swede's death by doing nothing; they should have done something. However, in "To Build a Fire" the man's will and decision to do something causes his own tragedy. Thirdly, the Swede in "The Blue Hotel" predicts his own death at the beginning but dies surprisingly. By contrast, the man in "To Build a Fire" is very naïve initially, but when he is dying, he begins to regret not listening to the old-timer's advice. In short, almost dying, the man knows exactly what his fault is, compared with the Swede.

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**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 5:18 am    Post subject: Naturalism in "The Blue Hotel" & "To Buil"

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

That is an interesting viewpoint you have brought up there, and you are indeed right. Although I would not say that the man in "To Build a Fire" is completely naive, but that he just cannot beat against nature.

I agree with the fact of the differences between these two short stories, but I would suggest that this is what the story intends to portray. Indeed, these two help to portray the fact that people may not understand what others are thinking, that people is somewhat uncontrollable, but when it comes to nature, it is even more difficult to handle--not to mention having the ability to "prevent" it.

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## Daisy Miller



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### Author

### Message

**Leslie Yu**  
Moderator

Posted: Sun Jun 11, 2006 11:52 pm    Post subject: Daisy Miller



Joined: 26 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

I feel sorry for Daisy's situation actually after reading this story. She is so pure and naive. However, she is pushed aside because of her personalities. I think if Winterbourne stays in America as long as he can, he will not think that Daisy is that kind of girl. However, I think Winterbourne does not love Daisy at all. He just crashes on her. If he loves her, he will not give her up and let her bear those bad gossips. In the end, all he cares for is his reputation. He is like a bystander watching Daisy facing those lions alone. Well, I think this story is not fair to Daisy. the whole story is from man's prespective. The readers can not know what Daisy thinks about her circumstance.

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**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Tue Jun 13, 2006 10:38 am    Post subject: Re: Daisy Miller



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

That is an interesting point you brought up, Leslie. Indeed, it is true that Daisy Miller throughout the story has revealed herself as a very naive character, that somehow had led to her own destruction. Yet, speaking of Winterbourne, it is vital to take note that his name is "Winterbourne," compared with the attitude of Daisy Miller, so lively and full of exhilaration in what she does. However, the man we see here is a cold figured portrayed by Henry James, one with a winter character who does not involve himself with other's business.

As for the point you brought up about the story, it is absolutely right to say it is written from a male's perspective, and it would be certainly interesting to think what the story would turn out to be if it were written by a female.

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**Casper**  
Moderator

Posted: Sat Jun 17, 2006 2:38 am    Post subject:



Joined: 13 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10

i guess if the writer is a female, the story will definitely ended with the death of Winterbourne, and the reason is related to the affection of Winterbourne toward Daisy. This will shows the ironic situation, because it is impossible for the man in that period of time to do, and yet it is the result that comes from the correct attitude toward woman.

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**tomzhi**  
Moderator

Posted: Sat Jun 17, 2006 5:49 pm    Post subject:



Joined: 21 Feb 2006  
Posts: 11  
Location: Taipei

I think in Daisy Miller, it is not only about man and woman but, in a larger scale, american innocence and european sophistication. I do not see James have the intention to correct woman's attitude. Rather, I found James indirectly criticize both culture: on one side americans are too innocent and on the other europeans are too strict. The double-edged irony is the main technique that bites both side. I think the reason Daisy die is because she is too headstrong and she was fighting alone against the european folks in europe. What is more, I do not think Winterbourne will die in the viewpoint of a female writer. No one has to die including Daisy.


---

Tom

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**al2**  
Site Admin

 Posted: Sat Jun 17, 2006 7:13 pm Post subject: Re: Daisy Miller

 [quote](#)

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

That is an interesting viewpoint, Tom. However, I have to mention that Henry James does show a bit more criticism towards the American culture due to his favor of European societies. The death of Daisy in the novel, suggests the irony of the relationship between the American and the European, that the American culture gets to "die" in the end.

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**tomzhi**  
Moderator

 Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 12:06 am Post subject:

 [quote](#)

Joined: 21 Feb 2006  
Posts: 11  
Location: Taipei

Yeah, I still remember it. But I think Henry James's suggestion is not completely right. There are still a lot of advantages that Americans have. In a way, I think James degrades the American culture into American innocence is not right. No wonder, there were critics attacking his implication in Daisy Miller.


---

Tom

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**keeffie**  
Moderator

 Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 2:07 am Post subject: Poor Daisy

 [quote](#)

Joined: 20 Feb 2006  
Posts: 7

In the late nineteenth century, men hope women could be of fidelity and devotion according to decorum.  
In terms of males' point of view, Daisy Miller, created by male writer Henry James in Daisy Miller, is very, if not too, liberal. The township judges her harshly by saying "She has been going far."  
Due to her "improper" conduct, Daisy ends up dying young and unhappily with her lover Winterbourne's misunderstanding. Although Giovanelli assumes Daisy to be "the most innocent," in consideration of morality Daisy is reckless and ignorant in people's eyes at that time.


---

Effie Ke

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**al2**  
Site Admin

 Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 5:11 am Post subject: Re: Poor Daisy

 [quote](#)

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

That is an interesting point you brought up, but I would like to bring up one question: What is the definition of a bad conduct? In case the definition of a bad conduct is something that is universal, than today the story would not be so problematic with its variety of interpretations and criticism on the author himself. Yet, today is not the case. I would say that it is the problem with misunderstandings of culture relativity that is causing all the problems within the story. Is Daisy really misbehaving, I suppose that remains a question, until we understand the differences of culture and communication.





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## "To Build a Fire"



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### Author

### Message

**tomzhi**  
Moderator

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 12:34 am Post subject:



Joined: 21 Feb 2006  
Posts: 11  
Location: Taipei

I think the man and the dog in To Build a Fire do not have names because they are represented as any human and any dog. They are not special and they are normal man and normal dog. The man died is not because he is inferior or the dog can survive is not because he is stronger and smart. London in this way suggests that the rules and the lessons in the story can be adapted to the real world and to anyone else.

I think in the story, London implies that instinct is rather important. But I do not think so. I think in that kind of situation. Each factor is important. Luck, instinct and determination are all important. Without any of them, anyone could die under 70 degrees. If we have to decide which is more important, I would vote for luck. Indeed, determination is diminished and somehow impractical in that circumstance. And, instinct is not really useful. However, luck is rather external variable. Although it is not reliable but it is a factor that influence a lot in that situation.

Tom

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**keeffie**  
Moderator

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 1:53 am Post subject: In survival, what counts for more: instinct, luck, or determ



Joined: 20 Feb 2006  
Posts: 7

In "To Build a Fire," humanity's will and choices are against destiny and death. In confrontation to fate, human beings' determination and free will are defeated. The man who always follows his own will dies with dignity and regret. The dog follows instinct, survives, and keeps going in search for food. In naturalism, it is instinct (heredity) and luck (fate) that counts more.

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### Why Doesn't the Narrator Has a Name?



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#### Author

**tomzhi**  
Moderator

Joined: 21 Feb 2006  
Posts: 11  
Location: Taipei

#### Message

Posted: Tue Mar 21, 2006 11:52 pm    Post subject: Replying 1st Q from the viewpoint of abnormal psychology



I think the narrator doesnt have a name shows how insignificant she is to others. And, it shows that even she herself cannot find her own identity. She cannot recognize herself because she does not allow to feel and have opinon on her own. It is true that her speech includes a lot of "but" and in which it shows she kept on denying herself. She does not have a clear slef-conception because she was deeply influenced by her husband. I even want to say that she was controlled by her husband. However, her husband is always reasonable and persuasive and his reasons sound intact and correct. Therefore, she believes in everything he said and take it as a guideline. Yet, one thing she and her husband did not notice is her "feelings" and "emotions". Everyone has his or her own feelings and emotions. And, when one tries to repress it, it will disappear for a moment. However, later on, it will comes out again from our unconcions in disguised form. And, that could be one possible answer for why did the narrator went mad. I think that is because her recurring of the repressed desires distorted her mind. And, of course, she starts to have interpersonal disorder and which finally leads to insanity.

Tom



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**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Posted: Wed Mar 22, 2006 9:48 pm    Post subject: Replying 1st Q from the viewpoint of abnormal psychology



That is an interesting point you have brought up, Tom. However, one suggestion towards this brought up issue could mean that this narrator could refer to anyone--even us today in the 21st century. Of course, from the perspective presented by Gilman, it is obvious that the insanity of her results from the repression and "unconsciousness" of her husband towards her. However, the point you brought out on the conclusion part of the story, her eventually "callings" to her husband and her leaving the room with the yellow

wallpaper, signifies the empowerment of the "new feminist" thought she has in mind; therefore, she walks out of the repression in the end instead of becoming insane.

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**Casper**  
Moderator

Posted: Thu Jun 15, 2006 1:09 am Post subject:

[quote](#)

Joined: 13 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10

I think the the reason that the woman does not have a name is because she could be any woman in the world. Sometimes a nameless person can refer to many things, and have a lot of associations. I had a really strange feeling after I finished the story, and I felt that feeling before. I had those feelings when I was in high school, and I felt after I saw the animation "福音战士". It is an animation that based on the human mental suffering and all the emotions of human. It is a great animation, and so as the story. They both present the human suffering, in one way or another.

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**Charlotte Su**  
Moderator

Posted: Thu Jun 15, 2006 5:57 pm Post subject:

[quote](#)

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

I completely agree with what two gentlemen said. But I want to add more. I think the reason for the anonymous protagonist is one way to show that her existence as a human being is not recognized. Every person has a name. Name is a way to identify a person. So the anonymous protagonist basically is not considered as a complete human by her husband. She is more like a possession belongs to him. He owns her instead of loves or respects her. That is why he never listens to what the wife is trying to say. Women without a name is only an object owned by men.

And a person who is not approved as a complete individual would go insane for sure. She cannot find herself – identity at all.

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**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Fri Jun 16, 2006 9:21 am Post subject: Re: Narrator and the Name

[quote](#)

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Yeah, I suppose you are right. When a narrator does not have a name, it means that he or she does not claim him or herself as an individual of existence.

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## Study Questions on Harlem Renaissance Poetry



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### Author

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

### Message

Posted: Sun May 07, 2006 5:26 pm    Post subject: Study Questions on Harlem Renaissance Poetry



1. What effect does the image of rivers create in the Black's history for Langston Hughes? Why are the rivers ancient and dusky?
2. Traditional critics have not called Hughes's poetry modernist, and yet his poetry reflects modernism both in his themes, his use of the image, and in terms of style. Locate specific points where you can see Hughes's modernism.
3. How do Hurston's stories demonstrate the complexity of the lives of common folks and the richness of their folk culture?
4. One of the commonplaces about American slavery is that slaveholders often separated members of slave families from each other. Analyze the excerpt from Their Eyes Were Watching God as Hurston's attempt to heal the lingering impact of separation imposed by slavery and sexism.
5. What is the nature of the richness as well as pain in the culture represented in Cane?
6. What qualities do women have that are similar to those of the entire group of African-Americans - at least as Toomer saw them? What are the symbolic aspects of the northern and southern black experience?

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### Discussion Questions on Cummings, Stevens and Williams



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#### Author

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

#### Message

Posted: Sat Apr 29, 2006 6:21 pm    Post subject: Discussion Questions on Cummings, Stevens and Williams



1. In "anyone lived in a pretty how town" name some the differences between anyone and the someones, and between noone and the everyones. How do you think the children fit into this poem?
2. Why do you think the "balloonman" in "in Just-" is "goat-footed"? "who sharpens every dull" is a portrait of a knife-grinder or sharpener. In what ways could this poem also be seen as a portrait of a poet?
3. Discuss the particular kind of technical experiment Stevens uses in Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird. How does this poem convey meaning?
4. Compare and contrast the poems of Robert Frost and Wallace Stevens, focusing on the following pair: Frost's Desert Places and Stevens's The Snow Man. In what ways do Frost and Stevens each contribute to the modernist's ways of knowing the world?
5. What feelings/emotions is the narrator of "This is just to say" experiencing? What in the poem suggests this?
6. Compare the two Williams poems that derive from paintings by Brueghel: "The Dance " and "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus." Study these paintings. What relationship does Williams achieve between the visual and the verbal experience? Is it necessary to see the paintings to "see" the poems?

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### Study Questions on "The Snows of Kilimanjaro"



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#### Author

#### Message

**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Fri Apr 21, 2006 8:39 am    Post subject: Study Questions on "The Snows of Kilimanjaro"

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

1. Where is Mount Kilimanjaro? What country is it in and what peoples live there? What kind of wildlife has its habitat near there?
2. Do research on this part of the world, focusing on the twentieth century and the interactions between native peoples, colonizers, and the wildlife. What does the mountain Kilimanjaro represent to Harry in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro"?
3. In "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," what is Harry's profession? Is he a success in his profession? uWhat is Helen's attitude toward her husband?
4. Are Harry's indictments of his selling his writing talent for his wife's money, and the kind of life it will secure, a projection of Hemingway's guilt?
5. The story's structure can be studied in terms of the relationship of the italicized past—the stories Harry has saved to write—with the present when Harry tries to come to terms with his impending death. Can this process be seen as a ritual of avoidance or as a means of self-knowledge? How do you see Harry's struggle?
6. Describe the plane ride toward the square top of Kilimanjaro.

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## Study Questions on "The Winter Dreams"



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**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Fri Apr 21, 2006 8:35 am    Post subject: Study Questions on "The Winter Dreams"

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

1. What does the title "Winter Dreams" suggest? What is Dexter's vision of success?
2. Why does the story begin with "some of the caddies were poor as sin ..."? Which part of Judy Jones is the pure unadulterated self, which is an artificial product of society, and why.
3. How did Judy become commodified? How do the men in the story react to Judy Jones' passionate vitality?
4. Comment on the character of Dexter and the loss of his idealized view of Judy. What exactly has Dexter lost and does its loss justify the prostration of so strong and hard-minded a man?

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## Study Questions on Marianne Moore's Poems



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### Author

### Message

**a12**  
Site Admin

Posted: Tue Apr 04, 2006 3:18 pm    Post subject: Study Questions on Marianne Moore's Poems



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

1. Moore states in her poem "Poetry," that poems are important, "not because a / high sounding interpretation can be put upon them but because / they are / useful." How can a poem be "useful"? How can poetry be appreciated if not through "high sounding interpretations"?

2. Study Moore's work for explicit statements about what poetry is and does. Analyze these statements in light of class discussion, and construct a prose version of her poetic theory.

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### Study Questions on T.S. Eliot's Poem



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#### Author

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

#### Message

Posted: Tue Apr 04, 2006 3:17 pm    Post subject: Study Questions on T.S. Eliot's Poem  [quote](#)

1. In "The Love Song ...," how does Prufrock deal with the world around him? What does he mean when he asks, "Do I dare / Disturb the universe?" and "How should I begin?" Discuss the recurrent phrase, "decisions and revisions", in relation to Prufrock's nature?
2. How is the city portrayed in "The Love Song ...,"? Does this sense of the city bear any relation to Prufrock's character and his dilemma? What is the picture of modern life given in the poem?
3. What distinctions between tradition and individuality does Eliot make in the opening paragraphs of "Tradition and the Individual Talent"? Discuss Eliot's comments on the relation of the past to the present. What does he mean by conformity? What does he mean when he says that a really new work of art changes all the works that have preceded it? What does he mean by saying that tradition "cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour"?
4. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is an interior, dramatic monologue. Is it a love song in any traditional sense? In any modern sense? Also comment on the use of "we" in the last three lines. Do they suggest an attempt by Eliot to demonstrate the universal quality of Prufrock's existence, to suggest that all live lives without meaning and confront death without dignity?
5. Eliot writes, in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," that the individual personality and emotions of the poet recede in importance and his meaning emerges from his place in cultural tradition. He writes that "no poet . . . has his complete meaning alone." Examine his use of classical allusions in "Sweeney among the Nightingales." What does a modern reader need to know to understand the allusions and how does that understanding enhance our meaning of the poem?



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### Willa Cather's "Neighbour Rosicky" Study Questions



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#### Author

#### Message

**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Sat Mar 25, 2006 9:40 am    Post subject: Willa Cather's "Neighbour Rosicky" Study Questions



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

1. Reread the first sentence of "Neighbour Rosicky" and test the remainder of the story to see in which way the first sentence could possibly be true or untrue.
2. Examine the different occurrences of the Fourth of July in "Neighbour Rosicky" and show how they give structure to the story.
3. Find examples to compare/contrast the life in the country and the city to Rosicky.
4. Examine Rosicky's relationship with the other characters in the story and show how Cather successfully presents a character portrayal.
5. Find at least six adjectives that seem to you to accurately describe Anton Rosicky.

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### Robert Frost Discussion Questions



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#### Author

#### Message

**a12**  
Site Admin

Posted: Sat Mar 25, 2006 9:38 am    Post subject: Robert Frost Discussion Questions



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

1. Why does the choice of roads in "The Road Not Taken" make so much difference to the speaker years later? What might the two roads represent?
2. What types of sleep and dreams are suggested in "After Apple-Picking"? What does apple-picking symbolize?
3. Why does the speaker in "Birches" prefer to see branches bent by boys rather than by ice? Compare the ice images in this poem and other poems.
4. In "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," what might the woods, snow and dark symbolize?
5. What are the views of ordinary people in Frost's poems? How does he capture the rhythms of ordinary speech through traditional verse forms?
6. What attitudes toward the passage of time are expressed in Frost's poems? What American ideals are examined in the poems of Frost?
7. What are the relationships between humanity and nature explored in Frost's poems?
8. Examine carefully the ways in which many of Frost's poems move from a concrete image or experience to an exploration of transcendent meanings.

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## Ezra Pound's "In a Station of the Metro"



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### Author

### Message

**keeffie**  
Moderator

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 12:50 am Post subject: Ezra Pound's "In a Station of the Metro"



Joined: 20 Feb 2006  
Posts: 7

I like this poem for it's like a painting of impressionism and surrealism with stream of consciousness. What pops up in my mind is a vague photograph of the subway flowing like water next to people dressed in different colors. It's especially beautiful since the metropolitan Paris is "pictured" by the image of nature.

-----  
Effie

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**a12**  
Site Admin

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 5:21 am Post subject: Ezra Pound's "In a Station of the Metro"



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

That is an interesting point, but the poem itself intends to reveal the irony of human nature--so cold, and so distant. Could you please explain the images a little more?

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**Leslie Yu**  
Moderator

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 4:45 pm Post subject:



Joined: 26 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

I agree with your opinion about the cold, carelessness and distance in this poem. Pound depicts the people in the metro as "the apparitions" which have no vivid facial expression. The distance among the people is very far even though they are in the crowd. However, I do not quite understand the meaning of "petal on the wet, black bough." I know that Pound uses imagination and impressionism to link some relationship between the people in the metro and the nature (petal and bough.) However, it is really hard to say what the relationship is.

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**a12**  
Site Admin

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 7:34 pm Post subject: Ezra Pound's "In a Station of the Metro"



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

That's a good question, and the answer I would suggest would be that Ezra Pound puts the poem more in a symbolic and metaphorical sense through images rather than the philosophical. Therefore, there is no direct relationship, but the sense of the coldness between these two remain there.

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## This just to say by Williams



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### Author

### Message

**Charlotte Su**  
Moderator

Posted: Thu Jun 15, 2006 2:10 pm    Post subject: This just to say by Williams



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

"What a short and weird poem!" This is what first came into my mind when I first read this poem. There is absolutely no punctuation in the poem and the whole poem seems too easy and relaxing. However, after I have read about triadic or stepped line then I realize the poem. It is simply a note poem which Williams left on the refrigerator for his wife. And poem with simple intention to apologize for eating all the plums. I like this kind of free verse poem. It is not difficult but full of internets. A poem does not have to be well-calculated can also be appreciated! A tiny, light poem can also be a lovely work!

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**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Fri Jun 16, 2006 10:35 am    Post subject: RE: This just to say by Williams



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

I also agree that the poem is interesting in the sense of the "humor" within the note in a poetic form that brings its effect out. However, you have indicated that the poem is full of "internets"? Are you trying to suggest that the poem is like a postmodern hyper-poem? Or, what are you trying to say?

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**tomzhi**  
Moderator

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 12:22 am    Post subject:



Joined: 21 Feb 2006  
Posts: 11  
Location: Taipei

What is more, Williams was celebrating that moment and the ordinary life. Unlike traditional poems, the forms are strict and the content are hard to understand, Williams emphasize the imprtance of orinary life and the moment we are living and feeling. We should not neglect these kind of stuff. And, for Williams, these things are also valuable thing in life. Somtimes, we ignore our feelings and words we want to say to someone. Nevertheless, Williams suggests that any tiny feelings are important to life and we should value them.

Tom

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**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 5:28 am Post subject: Re: William Carlos Williams

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

That is an interesting point, and it is excellent that you have pointed out the "un-traditional" form of the poem. Yet, I have to say that this is not the most "un-traditional" one. In terms of untraditional poem formats, Ezra Pound has written a great deal more than William Carlos Williams. Some of the poems Pound write even have distinguished figures for each, like the "Bath Tub" and other poems.

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**Leslie Yu**  
Moderator

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 4:57 pm Post subject:

Joined: 26 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

After reading this poem at the very first time, I did not know what Williams wanted to express. This poem is simple and easy. However, I figure out that some poems do not have to have some strong feelings about something or to talk about some serious things. This poem is very cute. It is about the talk between a man and his beloved women in daily life. From this ordinary meno, we can see the relationship between them. simple but sweet. From this poem, I think that any elements in daily life can be seen as the art of life. Eatng the plums can be written a poem! Therefore, what we cannot write in daily life, right?

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**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 7:31 pm Post subject: Re: William Carlos Williams

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Hello, Leslie:

Anything can be written into a poem--as long as you wanted to, just like William Carlos Williams.

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# The Dance & Landscape with the Fall of Icarus



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### Author

**Leslie Yu**  
Moderator

Joined: 26 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

### Message

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 5:15 pm    Post subject: The Dance & Landscape with the Fall of Icarus   

These two poems transform the impressionism in paintings into literary works. In *The Dance*, the whole poem is full of audio-visual acts. The readers can "see" what the original painting is like via this poem. Williams depicts the dance, the music and the atmosphere very vivid. The poet of this poem is like the painter of this painting who draws what he sees faithfully. Like *The Dance*, *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* is also about the painting. Williams depicts the whole painting in details such as the farmer, the sun and the ocean. With the words, the readers can feel more about how Icarus is overlooked by other people.

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**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 7:30 pm    Post subject: Re: The Dance & Landscape with the Fall of Icarus   

That is an interesting viewpoint you brought here, but are you sure? I would suggest that the figure, Icarus dies from the pride, and not because he is overlooked by others.

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## Dexter's Winter Dreams: What Is He Looking For?

### Author

### Message

**sugarsheep**  
Moderator

Joined: 28 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

Posted: Sun Jun 18, 2006 12:39 pm    Post subject: Dexter's Winter Dreams: What Is He Looking For? [quote](#)

The title: "Winter Dreams" itself carries a cold and hopeless suggestion. "Winter Dreams" tells the story of Dexter, how he blindly pursues the superficial satisfaction of materialism, and how he is finally awakened from his shallow dreams. Dexter's dream is not only about wealth, but Judy Jones, who is all beautiful and rich as well. "He wanted not association with glittering things and glittering people—he wanted the glittering things themselves." Dexter is convinced that as long as he owns those things, he can become one of those glittering people, which is the way to win Judy Jones's heart. However, along with the fading of her youth and beauty, Dexter realizes his own vanity and loss. "Now that thing is gone, that thing is gone. I cannot cry. I cannot care. That thing will come back no more." Personally, I think the "thing" that Dexter loses may be his dream which is proved to be shallow, or his blind passion which has driven him to put all his time and effort in.

I shop, therefore I am. Who am I? I am Rebecca

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**keeffie**  
Moderator

Joined: 20 Feb 2006  
Posts: 7

Posted: Mon Jun 19, 2006 11:15 pm    Post subject: "Winter Dreams" [quote](#)

First of all, I have a question: Why is this short story entitled "Winter Dreams"? Why winter? Isn't summer more passionate, fall and spring more temperate and lovely? I think it's because Fitzgerald tries to imply the dismay and despair Dexter has while he realizes his past dreams toward wealth and Judy are nothing but illusions.

As Rebecca mentioned above that Dexter is shallow in his materialism. This materialism is represented by Judy Jones, whose essence is shallow. "There was very little mental quality in any of her affairs. She simply made men conscious to the highest degree of her physical loveliness." Doubless, Judy is a heart-breaker. Dexter regards her as "toxic" as opiate. "She had brought him ecstatic happiness and intolerable agony of spirit." In all, the irresistable charm of Judy on Dexter ultimately brings him the sense of hallucination.

Effie

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**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 5:31 am    Post subject: "Winter Dreams" [quote](#)

I think you have explained the question yourself really well already. Indeed, the name "winter dreams" gives a feeling of distant, and the likeness for the dreams to fail. This explains why, in the end, Dexter found he could not continue the relationship with Judy eventually.

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### Point of View in Gilman's "The Yellow Wall-paper"



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#### Author

**keeffie**  
Moderator

Joined: 20 Feb 2006  
Posts: 7

#### Message

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 1:46 am    Post subject: Point of View in Gilman's "The Yellow Wall-paper"

The narrator's point of view is limited. (Combining her imagination with reality, the narrator is sick from hysteria.) We understand what the narrator sees and feels from her detailed description. At the beginning, she keeps saying, "There is something strange about the house—I can feel it." We also find she has an extremely repulsive feeling toward the yellow wall-paper. In the process, her relationship with John, her husband, is revealed. John controls her life. She is forbidden to write as well. At last, the reader realizes the narrator is a silenced female in marriage, unable to express herself, which is common in the 19th century.

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## Helen and Harry in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro"



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### Author

**keeffie**  
Moderator

Joined: 20 Feb 2006  
Posts: 7

### Message

Posted: Mon Jun 19, 2006 11:47 pm    Post subject: Helen and Harry in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro"



There's a sharp contrast between Helen and Harry. Helen is always gentle, kind, and considerate whereas Harry is irritated and often loses his temper. Helen expresses her love to Harry, who rarely expresses his emotions. I'm curious about why Harry appreciates Helen's goodness while calling her "this rich bitch" at times. Although Harry assumes she's a "fine woman," he at the same time considers the comfort Helen brings has paralyzed him. What's wrong with him? 😞 This love and hatred toward women is hard for me to comprehend. All I want to say is that it's your (Harry's) own problem. Women are innocent.

-----  
Effie

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### Neighbor Rosicky



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#### Author

#### Message

**tomzhi**  
Moderator

Posted: Mon Jun 19, 2006 1:54 pm    Post subject: Neighbor Rosicky



Joined: 21 Feb 2006  
Posts: 11  
Location: Taipei

#### Neighbor Rosicky

I class, I mentioned about sexual desire Polly has toward Rosicky (father). I still think it is quite obvious. In the lines the clue are supportive for my stance to interpret that way. In page 1857, "He knew she liked his father, but he knew, too, that she was afraid of something." And, in page 1861, Polly tok his hand. He was looking at her so intently and affectionately and confidingly; his eye seemed to CARESS her face, regard it with pleasure. In pp. 1862, "she sat holding his warm, broad, flexible brown hand". All in all, I think Polly and Mr. Rosicky they liked each other or they have feelings toward each other. I think it is also logical to infer Polly has affection or love toward older man. It is because she did not have a father since her childhood. Other readers may argue that the affection Polly has toward Mr. Rosicky is parental. But, I think those lines I provided say something. Especially, how Polly describes his hand and how Rosicky looks her. I do not really want to convince anyone. But I think it is a possible interpretation.

Tom

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## The Black ID in "How It Feels to Be Colored Me"



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### Author

**Christina**  
Moderator

Joined: 02 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10  
Location: Taipei, Taiwan

### Message

Posted: Sun Jun 18, 2006 8:54 pm    Post subject: The Black ID in "How It Feels to Be Colored Me"

The new black identity is defined in the era of Harlem Renaissance, and Zora Neale Hurston confirms the blacks' dignity in a new way of looking at them under the suppression of the whites. She says that she does feel inferior to the white when she was little living in a black town. When she grew up and studied in the area where the white people live, she starts to notice that the white people try to crash their self-esteem as the blacks. I like her opinion on looking back the history of slavery as the price she paid for civilization by force. No matter how harsh the white society imposes on the blacks, she still remains herself. There is one example she gives pointing out the biggest difference between the white and the black, and it is not their contrast skin colors, but the degree of their appreciation and reaction to the true art. When both the white and the black are in the bar, and the black react to the Jazz music spontaneously, while the white just gives a very short compliment on the music "drumming the table with his fingertips" as if the music is something to admire in the distance instead of joining it. The white never thinks of the possibility of becoming an artist but the black is actually developing his creativity and passion directly.

Hurston's observation of the discrepancy (gap) between the white and the black is more than the superficial factor, but an interior difference she detects. By realizing this and feeling no sense of inferiority, she can identify herself as a black woman without any shame.

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## To Build a Fire: Why Don't They Have Names?



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### Author

### Message

**sugarsheep**  
Moderator

Posted: Sun Jun 18, 2006 1:10 am    Post subject: To Build a Fire: Why Don't They Have Names?

Joined: 28 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

In London's "To Build a Fire," the readers are not told the names of the man and the dog. I think why London chooses to tell the story this way is because he wants to avoid distractions, and instead focuses on their true identities (as creatures) and "natural qualities." He simply describes his protagonist as "a man," who, to the nature, is nothing but a man, a human. Similarly, a dog is just a dog. If the dog had a name, that would somehow give the readers the impression of humanity, which is against London's motif (since one of the themes discusses animal instinct). Therefore, I much admired London's thoughtful arrangement for not giving the man and his dog a name. This is a very clever thing to do.

I shop, therefore I am. Who am I? I am Rebecca

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**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Sun Jun 18, 2006 2:39 am    Post subject: Re: To Build a Fire

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

That's an interesting point you have there. However, I would say that London's short story here presents the figures without names as a metaphor to suggest that this could apply to anyone--anyone could be suffering and be in the circumstance of facing the reality of some sort like the narrator within the story.

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## "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by Eliot



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### Author

**Charlotte Su**  
Moderator

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

### Message

Posted: Thu Jun 15, 2006 2:21 pm    Post subject: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by Eliot



"Let us go then, you and I," the first line of this poem is quite ambiguous. Who is "you"? I take the side which insists the "you" is not someone else but the inner self in Prufrock heart. The poem is not exactly a love song, for me; it is more like a monologue. Prufrock talks with his inner self in the poem. This can be supported by the last stanza, "WE have lingered in the chambers of the sea/ By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown/ Till human voices wkae us, and we drown." The stanza shows that there is no actual walk in the poem but the walk in his head , his meditation.

Why would someone do this? Talking to himself? Does he have no friend? Yes, indeed, Prufrock is alone and he feels lonely. The poem is about isolation, lonesomeness and the corruption of human. The theme is quite similar to Robert Lowell's Skunk Hour, but Prufrock contains more sorrow. "I have measure out my life with coffee spoons," what a pathetic saying. A man measured out his whole with spoons. And this spoon is not every ordinary spoon but the tiny little one that used to stir the coffee.

Sad and Challenging poem!

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**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Posted: Fri Jun 16, 2006 10:31 am    Post subject: Re: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by Eliot



That is an interesting point you brought up here, Charlotte. However, I would suggest that T.S. Eliot is implying the irony of the narrator in the poem, especially for the fact that he has problems having the courage to face the truth and reality of his love. Could you please explain your interpretation of the "I have measure out my life with coffee spoons," what a pathetic saying." a little more?

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**tomzhi**

Posted: Fri Jun 16, 2006 2:32 pm    Post subject:



Moderator

Joined: 21 Feb 2006  
Posts: 11  
Location: Taipei

First, I think "you" can be interpreted as the inner self of Prufrock and "you" can be interpreted as his lover or the readers (since this is a dramatic monologue). All in all, there are three possible interpretations. If I were you I will not insist on one interpretation because as Frost said "Poetry provides the one permissible way of saying one thing and meaning another." It is not necessary to insist on only one interpretation. According to your support to your argument, you said the later "we" are Prufrock and himself. I can agree with you on this because it is very possible that "we" means he and himself. However, the "we" appears in the end of the poem actually has loose connection with the "you" at the very beginning of the poem. Besides, as the persona moving through the poem, it is very possible that the pronoun can be referred to different persons. But, I do agree the ambiguity in the poem. And, I think that is how it makes poem so interesting and beautiful. And, that is because it can mean not only one thing but several things at one time. The beginning of the poem, the first line, "Let us go then you and I" is a marvelous line. I will not want to limit its variations in meaning into one narrow and only interpretation.

What is more, I would like to suggest it is still a love poem. The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock was written for someone. And, I would like to argue if even he did not present himself it is still a love song. That is because he has a person to write to. The person he love could be an imagery one but it still be counted as one. We cannot deny his love because he backs out.

Prufrock wanted to break through himself but he cannot. I feel sad for him. However, sometimes this happens to us. That is call approach-avoidance conflict. People do conflict themselves. It is no big deal. The pathetic point of Prufrock is that he is a coward and he limits himself in his own world.

I do agree that one said Prufrock is very much alike the persona in The Skunk Hour. I also found similarity between The Man-Moth by Bishop and Prufrock. They all talked about the common theme: the isolation and alienation of modern man in civilized world. I love all of them.

---

Tom

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**al2**  
Site Admin

 Posted: Sat Jun 17, 2006 10:56 am    Post subject: Re: Isolation and Poetry

 [quote](#)

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Yes, you are indeed right, Tom. Within the three poems, isolation and loneliness between the three are all mentioned, loneliness is a common theme shared in modern era. What a pity!

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## Steven's "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"

### Author

### Message

**Charlotte Su**  
Moderator

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

Posted: Thu Jun 15, 2006 5:34 pm Post subject: Steven's "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"

At first when I read this poem, I tried to interpret the blackbird into one sole symbol. I interpret the bird as the symbol of "death" because of its color black and the number of the stanzas: thirteen. However, I found it really difficult to do so (and it turned out that reading this poem is painful). Since the meaning of "death" does not fulfill every stanza, I gave up the interpretation of "death."

And then I paid more attention on the movement of the blackbird, suddenly the whole poem turned alive. Then I realize the poem is telling us not to mix nature with our feelings! So I felt a little embarrassed for what I tried to interpret the bird as death.

Anyway, I still have one question. In the last stanza, "It was evening all afternoon./ It was snowing/ And it was going to snow." This part really confused me. What does it mean evening in the afternoon? And if it was already snowing, why Steven says it was going to snow?

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Posted: Fri Jun 16, 2006 10:26 am Post subject: Steven's "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"

That is an interesting point you pointed out, Charloote. I think you have answered the question yourself already really well. The conception of the snowing, comes from spiritually, rather than the physical coldness. Indeed, there are other interpretations, and you are welcome to try them out yourself.

**tomzhi**  
Moderator

Joined: 21 Feb 2006  
Posts: 11  
Location: Taipei

Posted: Fri Jun 16, 2006 2:55 pm Post subject:

I think it is inevitable to misinterpret the blackbird as death because that is where Stevens wants readers to be misled. And, that is people's stereotype. By using 13 stanzas and "blackbird", Stevens deliberately want readers to connect the blackbird with the connotation of 13. It is a brilliant design. What I found more interesting is that the content can be applied to so many things in life. For example, the first stanza tells us to focus on one thing and the last stanza tells us to be open to ambiguity and conflict. I really like this poem a lot. I think the binary opposite between the nature and the human is obvious. In this way, Stevens teaches us to view a blackbird or anything else in thirteen ways in order not to fall into bias, prejudice, and any stereotype.

Tom

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Posted: Sat Jun 17, 2006 10:53 am Post subject: Re: Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Bird

That is an interesting point you brought up, Tom. Indeed, I also found that in reading the poem, it uses "blackbird" to suggest something more than the physical, that for anything, we should not have bias towards, even for blackbirds.





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### Sylvia Plath and "Daddy"



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#### Author

#### Message

**a12**  
Site Admin

Posted: Mon Jun 05, 2006 7:56 am    Post subject: Sylvia Plath and "Daddy"



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

1. Authors carefully consider their titles, often choosing them to set the tone of the work. Why do you think Plath chose the title "Daddy"? Why didn't she use "Father," or some other epithet, instead? What tone does this create? How does it fit with the content of the poem?

2. Do you think Plath was mentally ill? What is it about her poetry that prompts this question?

3. Which poems can be read as metapoetical, that is, about the art of poetry itself? How did Plath experience the fact of her own creativity, its rewards, its costs?

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## Everyday Use



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### Author

### Message

**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Tue May 30, 2006 1:06 pm    Post subject: Everyday Use



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

1. What are the different meanings of "everyday use" to Mama and to Dee/Wangero in Alice Walker's story "Everyday Use"? What do you think Walker means when she says that Maggie, Dee, and Mama are "herself split into three parts, each woman representing a different aspect of herself as artist"?

2. What is the main conflict?

3. What is revealed by Dee's attitude toward the quilts and the butter churn? What does that say about her sense of her family and her roots? What is the significance of the title?

4. What is the significance of the dedication?

5. What is Maggie like? How does she feel in the presence of her sister Dee?

5. What is the significance/effect of telling the story from Mama's perspective? What kind of narrator is she? What would the story be like told from other perspectives?

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### "The Recitatif"



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#### Author

#### Message

**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Tue May 30, 2006 1:02 pm    Post subject: "The Recitatif"



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

1. What parts of Twyla's description of Maggie in the beginning of the story are direct characterization, and what parts are indirect characterization?
2. How did eight-year-old Twyla feel about Maggie? Do you think Twyla and Roberta were afraid of Maggie? Why do you think they called her names?
3. When meeting in Newburgh, Twyla repeats the memory about Maggie word for word. "Remember Maggie? The day she fell down and those gar girls laughed at her?" (p 2427) Why do you think the author used almost exactly the same sentence in both places?
4. How does Roberta react to Twyla's memory of Maggie? How does Roberta's reaction make Twyla feel?
5. When she thinks about Maggie, Twyla says to herself, "I wouldn't forget a thing like that. Would I?" (p 2428). Why might Twyla not remember Maggie the same way Roberta does? Is it possible for a memory to change over time?
6. How do you think Twyla feels at the end of this part? How do you think Roberta feels? What information leads you to this conclusion?
7. At the end of their meeting in Newburgh, Roberta asks Twyla, "Did your mother ever stop dancing?" Twyla answers, "No. Never. Did yours ever get well?" How is this exchange different from the one at the end of their Howard Johnson's meeting when Twyla asks Roberta, "How's your mother?" (p 2424). What does this dialogue tell us about the relationship between these characters now, as opposed to their relationship in the previous meeting?

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### Study Questions on "Separating"



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#### Author

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

#### Message

Posted: Sun May 21, 2006 2:16 pm    Post subject: Study Questions on "Separating"



1. What is children's reaction toward their parents, Richard and Joan's separation?
2. From Separating's opening pages, choose two passages, one of descriptive narrative, one of human speech. What kinds of details does Updike pack into his opening paragraph, and why?
3. Why is the couple separating? What is the effect of making this reason so difficult to discover?
4. What kinds of language, what vocabularies, are Joan and Richard using when they speak to each other? What are the effects of those word choices? If this is a couple encumbered, and perhaps undone, by the bric-a-brac of ordinary routine, acquisitions, and professional aspirations, are they encumbered also by a baggage of English words?
5. Why does Richard cry? Interpret the ending of the story.
6. What risks are inherent in closing a story like Separating with a question such as "Why?" Can a story about a middle-class suburban family bear the weight of a question like that? What does the young boy mean by that question--and what does his father hear in it?
7. Take John Cheever's "The Swimmer" and John Updike's "Separating" for examples and compare their various visions of family life outside the city.

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## Study Questions on "For the Union Dead"



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### Author

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

### Message

Posted: Sun May 21, 2006 2:18 pm    Post subject: Study Questions on "For the Union Dead"

1. Robert Lowell in For the Union Dead changed the Latin inscription on the Robert Gould Shaw monument from the singular ("He leaves everything behind to serve the Republic") to the plural ("They leave everything behind to serve the Republic"). Why might Lowell have done this? And why didn't he tell us what he did?
  
2. Why didn't Shaw's father want any monument to his son "except the ditch" (50)?
  
3. What view of Boston in 1960 does For the Union Dead take? oWhat view of Robert Lowell himself does the poem take?

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### The Swimmer Study Questions



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#### Author

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

#### Message

Posted: Sun May 14, 2006 9:25 am    Post subject: The Swimmer Study Questions



1. How would you characterize the social world that Neddy Merrill lives in?
2. What is Neddy's mood at the beginning of the story?
3. What possible reasons can you think of for the journey that Neddy proposes to undertake? Are there any suggestions that this journey does not take place in reality?
4. Consider some of the many signs of trouble that Neddy encounters during the course of his journey. What are the troubles he encounters?
5. What role does drinking alcohol play in the story?
6. What do you think is the overall meaning of the story?
7. Having had several drinks in the Westerhazys' backyard, Merrill decides to go home by swimming through every swimming pool in the county. As he does so, does the story show itself to be a realistic narrative? Surrealistic? Is there something surreal about these suburbs, as Cheever describes them, which would allow The Swimmer to be both realistic and surrealistic?
8. How would you describe the way that the tone of the story evolves, as we move from the opening scene to the closing one, in which Merrill comes "home"?
9. You have read other American short stories which comment on a modern, materialistic culture: stories by Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Salinger, Bellow, Updike, and many others. In fact, materialism and the superficial, show-off suburbs are commonplace targets. How does Cheever achieve a measure of originality in working with this material?



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## Study Questions on "One Art"



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### Author

### Message

**a12**  
Site Admin

Posted: Sun May 14, 2006 9:29 am    Post subject: Study Questions on "One Art"

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Analyze the use of poetic forms by modernist poets. Examine the following: Frost's sonnets, Mowing, The Oven Bird, Once by the Pacific, Design, or The Gift Outright; Stevens's use of the ballad stanza in Anecdote of the Jar or his use of tercet stanza form in The Snow Man and A Quiet Normal Life; Williams's near-sonnet The Dance; Pound's sonnet, A Virginal, or the poem he calls a villanelle although it is not, Villanelle: The Psychological Hour; or Bishop's nearly perfect villanelle, One Art. [/list]

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### Study Questions on "Looking for Mr. Green"



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#### Author

#### Message

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Posted: Sun May 14, 2006 9:22 am Post subject: Study Questions on "Looking for Mr. Green"

1. What is the purpose in the story of Grebe's supervisor Raynor? What is Bellow's attitude toward Raynor's cynical "wisdom"? Is concern for the individual anachronistic? For philosophical studies?
2. What is the purpose of the encounter with the Italian grocer who presents a hellish vision of the city with its chaotic masses of suffering humanity?
3. The old man Field offers this view of money--"Nothing is black where it shines and the only place you see black is where it ain't shining." Discuss. What do you think of the scheme for creating black millionaires? Why does Bellow include this scheme in the story?
4. What is the purpose of the Staika incident in the story? Raynor sees her as embodying "the destructive force" that will "submerge everybody in time," including "nations and governments." In contrast, Grebe sees her as "the life force." Who is closer to the truth?
5. The word "sun" and sun imagery are repeated throughout the story. Discuss.
6. Discuss the theme of appearance versus reality.
7. Bellow ends the story with Grebe's encounter with the drunken, naked black woman, who may be another embodiment of the spirit of Staika. Why does Bellow conclude the story this way? Has Grebe failed or succeeded? Is he deceiving himself?
8. David Demarest comments: "Grebe's stubborn idealism is nothing less than the basic human need to construct the world according to intelligent, moral principles." Discuss.
9. Believing that "Looking for Mr. Green" needs to be seen "as one of the great short stories of our time," Eusebio Rodrigues argues that the Old Testament flavors it. This story is "a modern dramatization of Ecclesiastes." Discuss.

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## Robert Lowell Study Questions



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### Author

**a12**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

### Message

Posted: Sun May 14, 2006 9:19 am    Post subject: Robert Lowell Study Questions



1. Robert Lowell in "For the Union Dead" changed the Latin inscription on the Robert Gould Shaw monument from the singular ("He leaves everything behind to serve the Republic") to the plural ("They leave everything behind to serve the Republic"). Why might Lowell have done this? And why didn't he tell us what he did?

2. Why didn't Shaw's father want any monument to his son "except the ditch" (50)?

3. What view of Boston in 1960 does "For the Union Dead" take?

4. What view of Robert Lowell himself does the poem take?

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## Question on "Diving into the Wreck" by Rich

### Author

### Message

**Charlotte Su**  
Moderator

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

Posted: Thu Jun 15, 2006 2:48 pm Post subject: Question on "Diving into the Wreck" by Rich [quote](#)

The symbol of the ocean is the masculine power or the origin of life: amniotic fluid? Since the two meanings re contradictory to each other, which meaning you'd prefer to adopt?

**Casper**  
Moderator

Joined: 13 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10

Posted: Sat Jun 17, 2006 2:25 am Post subject: [quote](#)

The symbol of the ocean can be masculine power and the origin of life, also the history of human. You see, i think they really dont contradictory to each other, because the ocean actually contains the major features of them. Ocean is the water of life so it is related to amniotic fluid. However, the deeper one dive, the greater the presure of water. Also, the ocean matches to the meaning history. Because they deeper one dive (back to the history), greater the oppression toward women.

**Christina**  
Moderator

Joined: 02 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10  
Location: Taipei, Taiwan

Posted: Sun Jun 18, 2006 5:34 pm Post subject: [quote](#)

I see the image of the sea as a trial in the process of diving deeper. Just like what Casper said, "the deeper one dive, the greater the presure of water." so I think the speaker learns to be more mature and self-awared under the sea. From the feminist's point of view, the difficulties would be the masculine dominion over women, so the trail in life is incarnated as the image of the sea in the poem here.

**sugarsheep**  
Moderator

Joined: 28 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

Posted: Mon Jun 19, 2006 12:18 am Post subject: [quote](#)

I think Casper has a good point. However, on the other hand, I think the two meanings can also be contradictory to each other, in a way that the sea is where life and death (represented by the wreck) coexist.

I like the idea of "the deeper one dives, the greater the presure of water." What a nice explanation!

I shop, therefore I am. Who am I? I am Rebecca

**Leslie Yu**  
Moderator

Joined: 26 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 4:13 pm Post subject: [quote](#)

I agree that the symbol of the ocean can be the masculine power. In Diving into the Wreck, Rich more focuses on self-exploration with self-discovery. In this poem, the speaker dives into the sea to explore the wreck which it means the fragments of the whole social structure. In fact, the wreck is caused by the sea which it means the social system what centers on males.



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### Everyday Use: Dee's attitude

#### Author

#### Message

**sugarsheep**  
Moderator

Joined: 28 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

Posted: Tue Jun 06, 2006 10:54 pm Post subject: Everyday Use: Dee's attitude



Dee's attitude toward the quilts and the butter chum reveals her superficial regard of her own family and roots. Instead of putting the quilts into practical "everyday use," she intends to hang them on the wall as decorations. Dee tends to use her ethnicity as a way to feel special; however, it is easy to see that she doesn't really "live" in it. The quilts and the butter churn are ordinary house necessities which represent the sense of living. Like tradition, ethnic characteristics are supposed to be natural and without affectation. The way Dee plans to do with those things shows her insincerity in preserving her own culture. After all, the best way to maintain a culture's prosperity is to become a part of it, not just pretend to appreciate it.

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Posted: Wed Jun 07, 2006 5:58 am Post subject: Re: Dee's Attitude



That's an interesting point you brought up there. True, putting the family traditions, in Dee's sense, "hanging them up," displays the fact that it is something "distant" from her. Or, it also suggests that she is "forsaking" the traditions of the house when she should put them to everyday use.

**Casper**  
Moderator

Joined: 13 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10

Posted: Tue Jun 13, 2006 11:52 pm Post subject:



Dee's attitude toward her culture is surely passionate; however, i think she does not know the true meaning of her culture. The culture is multi-layer of time and experience, and knowing the history of the culture and the best usages for the heritage is even more important than preserve the heritage. Because only by this way, the true meaning and story of the heritage can lives on.

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Posted: Wed Jun 14, 2006 1:54 pm Post subject: Re: Dee's Attitude



For your viewpoint on Dee and her relationship and viewpoint on heritage and culture, I would consider that it is one of the most ironic things in the story, which also applies to the generation in the 21st century. While the elders intends to keep the traditon, the heritage and culture, the youngsters chase after fashion and ignore whatever the significance of heritage could be in use.

That is the most ironic thing about the story, that those who seem to have intention to be interested in the tradition forget its importance, and only treat it as a form of appreciation, while they do not know the main concern of the heritage, but merely treats it as something for only everyday use, as the title suggests.

**Leslie Yu**  
Moderator

Joined: 26 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 4:01 pm Post subject:



I think that Dee is a woman who knows what she wants very well. She changes her name and want the quilt. Changing her name means that she knows how she is and has confidence to herself. In contrast to Dee, Maggie does not fight for herself for anything even if the guilt what Dee wants is hers. Because of her disability, she is not confident to herself. In the end of fighting for the quilt, Dee tells Maggie that she hopes Maggie can be more confident. Therefore I think that Dee can be seen as a modren woman.



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### Q in "This Room and Everything in It"



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#### Author

**Christina**  
Moderator

Joined: 02 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10  
Location: Taipei, Taiwan

#### Message

Posted: Sun Jun 18, 2006 7:24 pm    Post subject: Q in "This Room and Everything in It" [quote](#)



Question #1 - about the theme: I've read Li-Young Lee's "This Room and Everything in It," and at first I thought it's about a young man and his ideal about love, but later I found several sexual connotations in this poem, such as "love-cries," "Your scent," "Your sunken belly/ is the daily cup I drank," "your body is milk," "your thighs are song." Is this poem about the disappearance of the the ideal about love because of his physical desire?

Question #2: What does "Your sunken belly/ is the daily cup I drank/ as a boy before morning prayer" mean? The speaker seems to use some image related to milk, and does the milky image suggest the smooth quality of the girl he mentions?

Question # 3: Why are ther even-numbered pages the past, and the odd-numbered pages the future? If it were so, the past and the future would be intertwined while the book is riffled by the wind as if the speaker spends his present on the past and the future back and forth: his past experience of love and his ideal of love are kept flipping over, but later it's "useless" for his ideal to be persistent. This is my interpretation of these lines, but I am still not so sure what so significant arranging the past on the even-numbered pages and the future the odd-numbered pages?

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**tomzhi**  
Moderator

Joined: 21 Feb 2006  
Posts: 11  
Location: Taipei

Posted: Mon Jun 19, 2006 1:23 pm    Post subject: [quote](#)

"This Room and Everything in It"

I love this poem.

I think the poem is about love and also about sexual desires. We cannot deny that sex is part of love especially concerning love between lovers. For

me, the poem laments the loss of love. Wherein, the persona cannot adapt himself or herself to the life without his or her lover. Everything in the room they used to share together but now the lover had left. And, all the emotionless objects can trigger the love and the memory in the past. The love in this poem is profound and that is why the persona suffers. The most impressive image is how he project the look of the lover to any object which also means they were imitate and closely related to each other. I would like to draw attention to the objects the persona compared to. Objects are daily necessities like sun, cup, milk and book and wall. The persona did not know how to quit him or her. And, it is painful to see all those old stuffs in the room they used to share. That is why the persona said "even-numbered pages the past, and the odd-numbered pages the future" in which, means whenever the persona was triggered, he or she was indulged in the memory and the future plan they used to had. The persona cannot withdraw himself or herself from the memory like a book cannot be torn into odd-numbered pages and even-numbered pages. Then, it is not a book anymore and the persona is not him/herself anymore.

Tom

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**Leslie Yu**  
Moderator

Joined: 26 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 3:15 pm Post subject:

[quote](#)

I think that this poem is very interesting. Like Portrait of Lady by William Carlos Williams, there are many depiction about body parts to respond the "art of memory" in this poem. However, there are more natural depiction in Portrait of Lady. In this poem, the woman transforms in to different images which surround him in daily life. It gives a feeling: even tough she is not in your sight, she is still everywhere.

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## Daddy and Sylvia Plath

### Author

### Message

**Christina**  
Moderator

Posted: Mon Jun 05, 2006 1:03 pm Post subject: Answering Q No. 1 & 2



Joined: 02 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10  
Location: Taipei, Taiwan

1. "Daddy" is a poem about Plath's love and hatred toward her father. She once wished to kill him but she used to pray to have him back after his death. By calling her father "Daddy," Plath reveals both her complex feelings of intimacy and alienation toward her father. The title "Daddy" gives readers the impression of harmonious father-and-daughter relationship, but the poem begins with the speaker's exclamation of emancipating from her father's restraint and suppression. Later the complicated emotions are intertwined: she detests his paternal authority, but in the meanwhile she still admires his power. Plath puts more percentages on her resistance toward her father in the poem, so it develops a sharp contrast between the title, the intimate calling "Daddy," and the content of it. She is like a little girl calling her father "Daddy," but when she grows up, she realizes the great image of her father is not as magnificent as she used to respect. And it is this disillusion that awakes Plath from her blind reverence to lucid rebellion against her father. The title "Daddy" can best convey a little girl's nursing tone and also imply a woman's apprehension over male's dominance and how much she depends upon it. "Daddy" is a haunting image in her childhood to adulthood that she finally will get through at her death.

2. I do not think Plath can be detected the mental illness in her poetry, because she is just trying to be very honest about her complicated feelings and emotions. If someone called her "mentally ill," I'd say it is some ideas in the poem "Daddy" that brings about this assumption. Perhaps it is too radical to describe the father-and-daughter relationship as Nazi-and-Jew. And the intention of murdering her father terrifies some readers as well. But these are all Plath's techniques to express her intense abomination and admiration toward her father. Otherwise, I do not see anything that I could call her mad.

**Christina**  
Moderator

Posted: Mon Jun 05, 2006 9:32 pm Post subject:



About question no. 3, I don't understand the exact meaning of it. How can I tell Plath's experiencing the fact of her own creativity, its rewards, its costs from her poetry?

**Charlotte Su**  
Moderator

Posted: Tue Jun 13, 2006 3:27 am Post subject:



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

Love this poem so much! The emotion inside it is so strong that allows no neglect. The way Sylvia describes the relation between her father and herself is German Nazi and Jewish is brilliant! The strong comparison shows how much pain Sylvia endures to live under the shadow of her father's death.

The first line in the second stanza, "Daddy, I have to kill you." Af first, I was confused. If Sylvia loved her daddy so much, why would she want to kill him? Then I realize because the loss of her father is so great that Plath would rather kill her father or to erase the image of her father as to stop the pain. And the last line: "Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through." is so strong! She calls her father bastard to show how painful Sylvia is. Wow, this is really something!

**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Tue Jun 13, 2006 10:42 am Post subject: Re: Sylvia Plath "Daddy"



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

I am very happy that you enjoyed the poem, and the point you brought up was certainly an one, Charlotte. Indeed, the images revealed within this piece of poem is a sensation of her fear and hatred for her husband, Ted Hughes, one who continually abuses her and give her suffering,



another symbol to represent the "Daddy" within the poem, and not completely merely her physical father.

**tomzhi**  
Moderator

Posted: Fri Jun 16, 2006 2:04 pm Post subject:



Joined: 21 Feb 2006  
Posts: 11  
Location: Taipei

After I read your replies, I disagree with some of your ideas to the poem. First, I disagree that one said expressing her idea of killing her father is only a technique for writing poem. I really think she wanted her father die and she really wanted to kill him. But I cannot tell exactly why she hated her father so much. I will come back to this later. Second, I appreciate Plath compare she and her father to Nazi and Jew because the image is so impulsive and contradictory. However, I do not find the comparison proper for what happened to Jew at that period of time is inhumane and terribly cruel. Only did her father do the same kind of things to her, I will say the comparison is proper and apt. Nevertheless, I think it is impossible that her father was that cruel to her. Except that, I really want to know what her father had done to her. I found some clues that Plath always relates her painful experience to oral parts of her father or the language of her father. (In The Colossu, it is rather obvious.) Does that because her father abuse her linguistically?

Third, I think she was painful not only because her father's death but something else. I would like to suggest that her painfulness can correlates to (1) her loss of her father, (2) intertwined image between her father and her husband, and (3) her father's abuse to her.

Fourth, I like the frequent use of /u/ sound along the poem which makes the persona sound like moaning or crying.

I found hard to interpret her painfulness and her love. The feelings are complicated and contradictory. Sometimes, I do hate someone I love but the feelings are never so extreme like Plath's. I still want to know what happened to her. What did her father do to her? Plus, if she loved her father so much, why did not she mention a word of his good? The poem portrays her father as an authority or portrays the advantages of her father. Why did she love her father? In what way? The readers do not really know. I am puzzled as well.

**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Sat Jun 17, 2006 7:15 pm Post subject: Re: Daddy and Sylvia Plath



That is an interesting question you have there, Tom. Yet, quite a few analysis do show that the Daddy she portrays in the novel is not her physical father, but her husband, due to his continuous control.

**tomzhi**  
Moderator

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 12:58 am Post subject:



Joined: 21 Feb 2006  
Posts: 11

Rather, I would like to suggest the poem is more about her father. First, Ted Hughes's image does not fit the image the poem depicted: with neat mustache and so on. And, Plath tried to commit suicide by the age of nine when her father died. "I was ten when they buried you." These evidence shows that the poem is more about her father. And, through the image of her father, she expressed the same kind of feelings toward her husband Ted Hughes.

**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Tue Jun 20, 2006 5:34 am Post subject: Re: Daddy and Sylvia Plath



Yes, you are absolutely right. Only, I would say that the poem uses a "symbolical" or "metaphorical" images of a little girl angry with her father to represent her hatred to her husband.





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## Reflection on Bishop's One Art



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### Author

### Message

**Charlotte Su**  
Moderator

Posted: Thu Jun 15, 2006 1:45 pm    Post subject: Reflection on Bishop's One Art



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

"The art of losing isn't hard to master", I think this line will follow me for the rest of my life 😊

This poem is an art itself, I have to say. The perfect use of Villanelle, simplicity of language and the strong emotion behind the lines make this poem absolutely great!

Bishop uses many other losses to outstand how unendurable the loss of "you" is. The loss of time, places and names can be viewed as the loss of youth and the memories and dreams. The loss of Bishop's mother watch can be seen as losing something that is precious. Since Bishop's mother left her early, the watch must be meaningful to Bishop. And finally Bishop loses realms, rivers and one continent. The continent here refers to that after Bishop's loved one committed suicide, Bishop returns to United States from Brazil, a land she adores so much.

But none of these losses are disasters! Bishop manages to master the art of losing them. However, when it comes to the loss of "you", her loved one, Bishop cannot overcome the loss, master it and even finish the sentence. "It's evident/ the art of losing 's not too hard to master/ though it may look like (Write it!) like disaster." Forcing herself to complete the line somehow shows that Bishop knows she cannot overcome the loss, but still she is trying to get over it and master the art of losing "you".

I also love that Bishop does not use any words that contain sorrow meaning in the whole poem but still affect people with her true emotion and fill the readers with great woe. What a poem!

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**sugarsheep**  
Moderator

Posted: Mon Jun 19, 2006 12:59 am    Post subject:



Joined: 28 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

Actually, I first heard about this poem in the movie "In Her Shoes (偷穿高跟鞋)," and it impressed me so much that I immediately posted it on my personal blog 😊 I remember when the characters in the movie discuss this poem, they say the "lost" here is referring to a friend. But I don't think it is necessary to specify what exactly is lost. Because a good poem can mean so many things and touch people in different ways. By the way, I recommand that you see "In Her Sheos" if you have chance. Diaz also reads another love poem by e. e. Cummings in that movie.

I shop, therefore I am. Who am I? I am Rebecca

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## Grebe in "Looking for Mr. Green."



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### Author

### Message

**Charlotte Su**  
Moderator

Posted: Thu Jun 15, 2006 5:48 pm    Post subject: Grebe in "Looking for Mr. Green."



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

The ending in Bellow's "Looking for Mr. Green" reminds me of the 阿Q spirit. When the naked, drunken black woman stops him from carrying his moral principles, he is not able to fight back or insist on what he is supposed to do. That is to say, his dogma collapse in front of the reality world. Grebe fails. However, he does not admit that he fails to complete his mission. So he says to himself, "He could be found!" He indeed fails but never admits it, and inside his heart he still thinks he has successfully accomplished his duty. So I think he is a classical example of 阿Q spirit!

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**Casper**  
Moderator

Posted: Sat Jun 17, 2006 2:16 am    Post subject:



Joined: 13 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10

I think so too, and i believe that spirit is the so called stubborn idealism. Kind of sad, but necessary for human. Hope is the one thing that should always exist. That is the power to keep human living and progressing. i think it is really interesting that the hope = stubborn idealism. This kind of idea is just like the glass is half-full or falf-empty

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**sugarsheep**  
Moderator

Posted: Mon Jun 19, 2006 12:33 am    Post subject:



Joined: 28 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

Well, is he really deceiving himself? The last paragrah of this short story seems to be the words that Grebe is telling himself. Maybe he is trying to persuade himself that he has found Mr. Green. And through this "accomplishment," Grebe finds the sense of "elation." We don't know whether he finds Mr. Green or not, and nor does Grebe. Nevertheless, he has to believe so, because his idealistic character doesn't allow him to fail.

I shop, therefore I am. Who am I? I am Rebecca

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### The Quilt in Alice' Walker's "Everyday Use"



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#### Author

**Christina**  
Moderator

Joined: 02 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10  
Location: Taipei, Taiwan

#### Message

Posted: Mon May 29, 2006 1:26 pm    Post subject: The Quilt in Alice' Walker's "Everyday Use"

After browsing this short story for the first time, I think the basic plot is about the difference between Maggie and Dee (Wangero) in their mother's point of view. Maggie represents the tradition and the heritage carrying on, while Dee the new changes and the overthrow of the old fashion. And the difference between these two sisters is conspicuously shown when Dee and Maggie (Mother as her spokesperson) have differential opinions on the function of the quilt that their grandma left for them. Dee thinks that the function of this old quilt is not for everyday use, but to hang out as one of the memorabilia. However, Mother thinks it is their tradition to use the quilt, and even if it were worn out by every use, Maggie could still make a new one, to pass this tradition on.

There is nothing wrong in each side of the story, but it is understandable that Mother and Maggie have sense of insecurity toward Dee's alternative way of living with a guy that has an unusual name. To them, it is the unknown world that Dee is living in. I think Dee should give respect to her mother and sister that stick to the tradition, because she has to remember this is her origin as well. After all, the brilliant people are those who know how to adjust to the new systems based on the value of the past. There is nothing wrong to use the quilt in daily life, because this is the original material function of the quilt. Hanging up there as a symbol of worship for the ancient days, the quilt transcends its material usage to the spiritual meaning. But the quilt would become just a sign of the past without any practical functions. Alice Walker delicately presents this conflict between past and present that puts the readers into thoughts.

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**Christina**  
Moderator

Joined: 02 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10  
Location: Taipei, Taiwan

Posted: Mon May 29, 2006 10:25 pm    Post subject: After the Lecture...

After listening to the lecture today, I have clearer picture about the story now. However, I have two questions to ask about the lecture and the introduction part of the author:

1. One of the Power Point slides says that "Asalamalakim" represents certain Muslim thought, but why is it so? Does the name itself suggest something about Muslim? Or does the way this character act that reminds some readers of his Muslim origin? If so, what is the significance emphasizing on Muslim? Is it a way to show how different it is from the black culture?

2. There are two descriptions in the introduction of the author in the textbook that confuse me. First, there is a sentence goes, "..., she tends to be self-critical of her own personality first and extremely sparing in her judgement of others." What does "her judgement of others" mean?

Does it mean her judgements on others or others' judgements on her? I am confused about the literal meaning here.

Second, in the last second paragraph, it says, "... she has examined the atrocity of female genital mutilation in parts of Africa." What does this statement suggest? Does it refer to female's penis envy in terms of Freudian theory?

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**sugarsheep**  
Moderator

Posted: Thu Jun 08, 2006 12:26 am Post subject: Asalamalakim



I think it is the name that suggests his Muslim background.

Joined: 28 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

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**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Thu Jun 08, 2006 11:20 am Post subject: Re: Muslim Thoughts on Everyday Use



That is an interesting question you have brought up, and it is true that this does refer to the Muslim background. As one source online suggests,

Hakim-a-barber is referred to as Asalamalakim. This title gives the reader the sense that he is a generalization representing certain Muslim thought. Walker said of Hakim-a-baber in "Everyday Use" in an interview: "Everyday Use" a story that shows respect for the "militance" and progressive agricultural program of the Muslims, but at the same time shows skepticism about a young man who claims attachment to the Muslims because he admires the rhetoric. It allows him to acknowledge his contempt for whites, which is all he believes the group is about. (Winchell, 227) His personal beliefs about being Muslim are expressed in the quote, "I accept some of their doctrines, but farming and raising cattle is not my style" (2380). He does not practice the actual life of a Muslim, but preaches his fashionable membership. ([Source](#))

I hope this answers your question. You are more than welcome to see the original essay by clicking on the original source link above.

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**Charlotte Su**  
Moderator

Posted: Thu Jun 15, 2006 1:56 pm Post subject:



In "Everyday Use", I was amazed by the Walker putting focus on Maggie's physical disability. The scars come from the fire which burned down the old house. And I think the scar is the most symbolic image in this story. The fire can be referred as the injustice, persecution and ugly slavery history that the African Americans have endured. As time goes by, the scars will not disappear because the fire has wounded Maggie, the symbol stands for all the black people too much and too badly.

Also, the scar on Maggie makes her character more powerfully contrary to her sister Dee. The scar is the key reminder of the history in which the white people treated them so wrong and makes the confrontation between Maggie and Dee stronger.

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**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Fri Jun 16, 2006 10:42 am Post subject: Re: The Scars



Indeed, is it not what is also happening today? The scars that the whites have put upon the blacks can never be shed away, while the terminal pain would only make it more unbearable. Likewise, in Taiwan, don't we have similar experiences?

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64



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## Recitatif: Milk and Chocolate

### Author

### Message

**sugarsheep**  
Moderator

Posted: Thu Jun 08, 2006 12:16 am Post subject: Recitatif: Milk and Chocolate



Joined: 28 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

I remember when we discussed which ethnic groups do the two girls in "Recitatif" belong in class, one of us considered Twyla black. At first I thought the same because her name sounds quite uncommon. However, I changed my mind. Although in "Recitatif" Morrison doesn't point out directly which one of the girls is white and the other black, yet, we can still find some clues. For example: in page 2457, Twyla says: "Mary, that's my mother, she was right. Every now and then she would stop dancing long enough to tell me something important and one of the things she said was that they never washed their hair and they smelled funny. Roberta sure did." Though biased, I think this description fits the general stereotype we often have for African-Americans. Therefore, I think Twyla is the one that's white.

**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Thu Jun 08, 2006 11:27 am Post subject: Re: Recitatif: Milk and Chocolate



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

That's an interesting viewpoint you brought up there.

Indeed, from your descriptions, one could say that Twyla may be a white there. However, in case we look at it from another perspective--the work itself is produced in the United States, which the African Americans have gone through the post-colonization. This notion could as well be applied and discovered in Walker's novel, *The Color Purple*. Therefore, in case Twyla is one who has been seriously influenced by the Post-Colonialism to the state of her disliking her own origins, then it would not be surprising to say that she could be a black. Only, she is not a black who enjoys being one.

**Casper**  
Moderator

Posted: Thu Jun 15, 2006 10:58 am Post subject:



Joined: 13 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10

First thing, Nice Topic! (lol)  
i think if i am the author, it would be better for the wealthy one to be the black, because in this way, the story will surely shows more ironic senses. People generally thinks that black people are poor, and white people are richer. So it would be reflecting the society more if the story turns the images of black and white people. It just like watching the prince being a begger!

**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Fri Jun 16, 2006 10:39 am Post subject: Re: Recitatif: Milk and Chocolate



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

That is an interesting viewpoint you brought up there! Indeed, in case we interpret the story from the white's perspective, the story itself shows more ironic senses in the attitude of the whites' towards the blacks.



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## The Voice of the Minority

### Author

### Message

**sugarsheep**  
Moderator

Joined: 28 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

Posted: Mon Jun 05, 2006 11:52 pm Post subject: The Voice of the Minority



Does it have to be fierce for the voice of the minority to be heard? Do they have to make a scene in order to get attention? Staika in "Looking for Mr. Green" and 小傑 in 侯文詠's "Dangerous Mind (危險心靈)" both choose to use the power of publicity to attain their purposes. Staika exposes her needs so as to force the government to listen, while in "Dangerous Mind," we see how a simple intention being distortedly used by politicians. Another dramatized example is John Q in the movie "John Q." As an unlucky father whose insurance company refuses to cover his son's heart transplant, Q takes the hospital's emergency room hostage until the doctors agree to perform the operation.

If this kind of voices reflects the insufficiency of the society, regardless of their propriety, there must be something to improve. But to be honest, it is impossible to satisfy everybody's needs. It is the government's duty to meet the welfare of the majority, and try their best to be "fair." I am not trying to be cynical or anything, but I think most of the time only the ones that are profiting consider matters "fair." And if so, wouldn't the dramatic actions become annoying for most people? If the minority chooses to express their desperation in so dramatic a way, would the public take them seriously? Say they eventually attain what they fight for, does it mean they are really respected, or only being put off (in order to quiet them down)?

Last edited by sugarsheep on Tue Jun 06, 2006 10:31 pm; edited 2 times in total

**al2**  
Site Admin

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Posted: Tue Jun 06, 2006 5:49 am Post subject: Re: The Sound of the Minority



Indeed, I like especially the point you mentioned about fairness. It is true that there are those out there who consider that they had to use the publicity to get what they want, but, yes, I would consider that it is always ironic that they are not the ones who are most needed to be heard. For those minority groups, particularly the underprivileged or those from another race, it appears that although they need to be heard--they cannot unless there is some violent actions.

This is indeed very sad, but, like you said, is also the most ironic.

**Casper**  
Moderator

Joined: 13 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10

Posted: Thu Jun 15, 2006 1:15 am Post subject:



I think that nothing is fair and equal. That is the quality and nature of life. No one is equal. The best thing we can do is trying to help those needed under the limitation of laws. No one show violates other people's right even though it is out of good and kind purposes. I think the most important and ironic thing is that everyone need to believe something. Grebe thinks he did send the check to Mr. Green, but that is his hope. Ironically, hope is the so called stubborn idealism, and human can not live without it.





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## The Swimmer: Ned's Journey

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### Author

### Message

**sugarsheep**  
Moderator

Posted: Thu Jun 08, 2006 10:33 pm Post subject: The Swimmer: Ned's Journey



Joined: 28 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

I got confused with the mental condition of Ned's when reading Cheever's "The Swimmer." Because when he goes to the Halloran's, he tells them that he doesn't remember having sold his house and says that his daughters are at home. Nevertheless, we know from the ending that he later finds his house deserted and empty. Is he in some kind of denial? Why was he not aware of the reality? Since the story has something to do with drinking alcohol, is alcohol one possible cause for his lacking acknowledgment of his present status?

If this journey doesn't take place in the reality but the psyche, then I have to say Cheever successfully illustrates the hollowness of materialism. In the reading I learned that Ned was a rich and popular person in his neighborhood. However, during his project of swimming home, I reckon some sense of dramatic irony that maybe he is not what he think he is anymore. I suppose one of meanings behind this story is through revealing the decline of a seemingly fulfilled and wealthy man, the readers may be able to see the shallowness of worshipping materialism.

**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Sat Jun 10, 2006 1:24 pm Post subject: Re: The Swimmer: Ned's Journey



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Thank you for your interesting viewpoint, and as for the answer to your question, you are absolutely right in saying that the story reveals the ambiguities and problems from materialism. Therefore, I would say that the answer to the concept of alcohol and the desertion of the house, you have answered it yourself really well.

**Casper**  
Moderator

Posted: Wed Jun 14, 2006 12:09 am Post subject:



Joined: 13 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10

Personally i think this is a great short story, but it requires readers to read more than one time. When i read the first time, i just felt really confused, but after i read second, and third time, everything became clear to me. The author created a great ironic atmosphere and events in the story. I especially like the scene of the last pool, because that is the moment of truth! Being a WASP is really an ironic thing, because people only recognise the money instead the people.

**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Wed Jun 14, 2006 1:49 pm Post subject: Re: The Swimmer: Ned's Journey



Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

That is an interesting point you brought up there. Being a WASP not only is ironic that they recognize only the money, but in the sense that they would forget the moment of joy and happiness in their own surroundings. When a WASP chases after money for his or her own benefit without concern of others, one would be certainly on the path of losing oneself.



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## About the Ending in Raymond Carver's "Cathedral"



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### Author

### Message

**Christina**  
Moderator

Posted: Mon May 22, 2006 1:11 am    Post subject: About the Ending in Raymond Carver's "Cathedral"

Joined: 02 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10  
Location: Taipei, Taiwan

The narration of this short story is quite colloquial for me to catch the plot. In the beginning, the narrator's wife is quite attached to the blind guest and he feels a bit threatened from their good relationships. But I like the way the narrator finally gets along well with the blind man Robert when he closes his eyes and draws the cathedral together with the blind man despite his previous ignorance of not knowing how to be with blind people and his inability to describe the semblance of the cathedral.

It seems that Robert is teaching the narrator to access to the architecture with his spiritual mind instead of his sensual eyes. However, the last three sentences of this story look quite ambiguous to me: why does the narrator say that he knew he was in the house but he didn't feel like he was inside anything? And what does the narrator mean when he answered "It's really something"?

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**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Mon May 22, 2006 6:13 am    Post subject: Re: About the Ending in Raymond Carver's "Cathedral&quo"

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Thanks for the question you brought up, Christina. The points you brought out are quite clear, and as for your question, I would say that this is the point when the two began to develop some more "better" relationships. Did you not have said that Robert intends to "teach the man to see things with his spiritual eyes and not the physical"?

That also applies when the situation changes to when Robert asks the man to "see" the house with his eyes closed. The man could not see a thing in the house, so that was why he does not feel that he was within one--the borders stretched far before him, because his mind becomes open at that point, which results in his response of "It is really something!" If his eyes were only physically open, he would still feel himself in a "house," but he certainly would not feel his mind as he would be after Robert's "directions."

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**Casper**  
Moderator

Posted: Thu May 25, 2006 1:24 am    Post subject: Learn New Feeling!

Joined: 13 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10

I have to say I was quite confused by the last sentence "This is really something". However, after the lecture in class, I think I kind of understand the meaning of the ending. I think the point of the ending is that to try something that one never try before, and not afraid to do so. At first I thought Robert was just being perfunctory, but later I understood that he was just not familiar



with dealing with blind person. And later, by the guide of the blind man, I think he actually learned something new.

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**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Thu May 25, 2006 8:36 pm Post subject: Re: About the Ending in Raymond Carver's "Cathedral&quo

[quote](#)

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

That is a nice explanation you are providing here, Casper. In terms of the issue of the blind man, Robert and the narrator, one could also say that it is because he is too "ignorant" of what is actually around him. Although he may see things with his eyes, his spiritual eyes are closed of his absent-mindedness.

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**Leslie Yu**  
Moderator

Posted: Sun Jun 11, 2006 11:36 pm Post subject:

[quote](#)

Joined: 26 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

I was pretty touched after reading this story. I think that the husband can really feel what Robert feels when he closes his eyes and draws a cathedral. In this story, we can see the husband has many stereotypes toward blind men. He thinks that blind men must be this and that. However, he just finds out there are something different after he meets Robert. He realizes that having a pair of fine eyes does not mean that people can see the truth and the beauty. Although Robert can not see things, it does not mean that he cannot feel the beauty of cathedral. I think that's why the wife likes Robert so much because Robert can see something behind the surface.

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**Charlotte Su**  
Moderator

Posted: Tue Jun 13, 2006 2:49 am Post subject:

[quote](#)

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 10

I love the ending of Cathedral! I think it does not state out too many deatils is because it left room for the readers to expand their imgination. Just like the blind man asks the husband to close his eyes and draw the cathedral. People always depends on what they see. So the blind man wants the husband to draw with his hears, which amazingly touches the husband's heart. I think that is why Carver leaves the ending in such vague way. The author wants us to think more with heart instead of reading with eyes.

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**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Tue Jun 13, 2006 10:48 am Post subject: Re: About the Ending in Raymond Carver's "Cathedral&quo

[quote](#)

Joined: 16 Feb 2006  
Posts: 64

Hello, Charlotte and Leslie:

To both of your posts, it is absolutely true that the story of "The Cathedral" is meant to tell us to read and listen with our heart and not merely our mind. It is indeed rather ironic that for a man like Robert, who is blind, can actually see things more clearly compared with those who can see physically.

As for the ending of the story, you are absolutely right that it is one way why the story ends so vaguely. Yet, I would suggest that the story was left with such sort of conclusion to provide an extra sense of irony for the readers that those who can see physically, may not psychologically.

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### Multiple personas in "Poem in Which I Refuse Contemplat



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#### Author

**Christina**  
Moderator


Joined: 02 Mar 2006  
Posts: 10  
Location: Taipei, Taiwan


#### Message

Posted: Mon Jun 05, 2006 9:14 pm    Post subject: Multiple personas in "Poem in Which I Refuse Contemplat"


What appeals to me in Rita Dove's poem "Poem in Which I Refuse Contemplation" is its technique of multiple personas. Three personas in the poem are the speaker's mother, the speaker's mother-in-law, and the speaker. It's confusing to see three personas intertwine together as a whole poem. But maybe it is this complication that makes the speaker refuses to contemplate. To me, I think it is hard to tell which line is the saying of speaker's mother-in-law and which line is the postcard from the speaker's mother. Besides, I would suppose that the speaker is a female abandoned by her husband, since "pull on boots and go for a long walk" suggests his running away from the family. By juxtaposing the speaker's reading of the postcard and her response to it, we could see how weary she is toward the news her mother attaches on the postcard. It seems that the speaker's mother's "mispelled words" and "exclamations" are so hackneyed and even the news about her cousin Ronnie strangulating himself and her aunt May going mad are nothing new to the speaker as well. And later "Mom skips to the garden" after bringing up this terrible news. Whom does this "Mom" here refer to, the speaker's mother or the speaker's mother-in-law? Let's supposed it's the speaker's mother-in-law's speaking. Perhaps after the German mother-in-law reminds the speaker of the postcard from her mother in America, she skips to mention the horticulture in which the speaker has no interest, "Haven't I always hated gardening?" Unlike her daughter that has associated herself with German language, the speaker feels no connection with either German or English languages. To the speaker, German is like "patient, grunting building blocks," and English "chewy twang." By calling an American "Americanese," the speaker seems to alienate herself from her maternal

origin. The feeling of isolation comes not only from her foreign origin in Germany, but also from her husband's departure, "I can't feel his hand who knows/ anymore how we'll get them out?" The weariness of the speaker is going on after she listens to two mothers and finds herself still standing with the "Bags to unpack." The poem ends with a formative expression of a letter, "That's all for now. Take care," which suggests that the speaker could not escape from her life even if she wishes to escape just like her husband does. The lives of the speaker's mother and her mother-in-law are indispensable in parts of the speaker's life despite her husband's withdrawal.

 It is a wild guess of mine to interpret the line "pretending to be/ "Papa"—pull on boots and go for a long walk" as the speaker's husband's abandoning her, but in this way it could also be one of the sources of the speaker's exhaustion toward two mothers in addition to her fatigue of the trip.

 A question: after looking up the meaning of "chili-joint" online, I found a source says,  
"During the great depression, the "chili joint" came into existence and made it possible for anyone with a nickel or a dime to have a satisfying meal."

<http://www.texascooking.com/features/oct2000raven.htm>

Does this phrase have something to do with the great depression? If so, the written time of this poem is in 1989, which is far from the great depression period.  What does "chili joint" exactly mean anyway?

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## The Reason of Separation in John Updike's "Separating&q

**Christina**  
Moderator

Posted: Mon May 22, 2006 1:33 am Post subject: The Reason of Separation in John Updike's "Separating&q



Joined: 02  
Mar 2006  
Posts: 10  
Location:  
Taipei,  
Taiwan

After I finished reading Updike's "Separating," I really admire his beautiful writing about the relationship between a father and a son in separation. Updike uses a very artistic way to show 4 children's different reactions toward their parents' separation by comparison and contrast. Unlike Judith's calmness and John and Magaret's dramatic raction toward this sad news, Dickie's one-word question "why," asking the reason of his parents' separation, is resounding in its effect on their separation event. Richard, the father, knows that he could not vaguely explains to Dickie about the reason as he did to his other 3 children, and he himself also forgets the reason why. But earilier the text has mentioned that when Richard drives Dickie home, they pass "the home of the woman Richard hoped to marry across the green." So it's quite possible for their separation to lead toward divorce. The teenagers could not fully understand what's really going on between their parents, but Dickie is the one who senses the subtlety. The story does not reveal the clear reason of their separation, or it's simply like what Richard thought: his wife Joan and he get along well but it's just they don't love each other any more. Love would go away by a third person's ruin or cruelty of reality. In this story, these 2 reasons could be applied.

**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Mon May 22, 2006 6:03 am Post subject: Re: The Reason of Separation in John Updike's "Separati



That is an interesting poing you brought out, Christina. Indeed, the story itself does reveal that the children each have their own struggles during the process. Yet, in the end, it does show that the wife and husband "divorce" in the end. Like you said, it is true that Updike intends to reveal that when there is a third person's intervention of the love relationship, the feeling would be gone.

**Casper**  
Moderator

Posted: Thu May 25, 2006 10:48 pm Post subject: Seperating



Joined: 13  
Mar 2006  
Posts: 10

I think the Separating is one of the most touching short story I ever read before. I love the interactions between the father and the children. The interaction between the boy that acting crazy is the most touching one to me, because I can understand his feeling completedly. Many of my good friends are from single parent family or have step mother or step father, and they told me their feeling. The kid's behavior is simply trying to arouse the attention of the parents and try to make the father stay for him. Also the kid revealed his problem about the school is base on the same reason, and on the other hand afraid that there is no chance for him to tell. I think the inner world of the father is quite touching as well, because he felt responsible, but he knew that he must leave. The ending of the story is common but stunning, because "Why?" is a really common and simple question that other onlooker will asks, and yet the person involved often failed to think about the question in time.

**al2**  
Site Admin

Posted: Fri May 26, 2006 10:37 am Post subject: Re: Seperating



Indeed, I also agree with you that the children within the story is attempting to just arouse some attention from the parents. Yet, I have to admit that as innocent as a child would ask a parent why they would have to separate, draws out the ambiguity of the adults for the separation they desire for at the present, probably without knowing why.