Unit-I POETRY (Detailed)

Among Crumbling People – E E Cummings

Introduction

E E CUMMINGS, as he sometimes signed his name, was an American poet, painter, essayist, author, and playwright. He wrote approximately 2900 poems, two autobiographical novels, four plays, and several essays.

Cummings is associated with modernist free-form poetry. Much of his work has original syntax and uses lower case spellings for poetic expression. His use of lower case extended to rendering even the personal pronoun "I" as "i. Cummings was politically neutral much of his life until the rise of the Cold War when he became a Republican and a supporter of Joseph McCarthy. He taught briefly at Harvard University in the 1950s, before his death in 1962 at the age of 68

He became a trade mark for his use of syntactic and stylistic tampering of words and phrases in poetry.

Many of Cummings' poems are satirical and address social issues[31] but have an equal or even stronger bias toward romanticism: Cummings' first published work was a collection of poems titled *Tulips and Chimneys* (1923) This work was the public's first encounter with his characteristic eccentric use of grammar and punctuation. Some of Cummings' most famous poems do not involve much, if any, odd typography or punctuation, but still carry his unmistakable style, particularly in unusual and impressionistic word order.

Cummings' work often does not proceed in accordance with the conventional combinatorial rules that generate typical English sentences (for example, "they sowed their isn't"). In addition, a number of Cummings' poems feature, in part or in whole, intentional misspellings, and several incorporate phonetic spellings intended to represent particular dialects.

Essay:Critically analyse how Cummings elegantly portray the impact of world war upon the working class?

The Pitiable Crumbling People

When the poem begins,the poet is strolling in the streets of America witnessing the sufferings of crumbling people due to the second world war. The fall of American Economy and the great depression had ruined the day to day life. While strolling towards a hotelin the harbour of a sea, the scenes on the way disturbs him. The war had not only caused the loss of their possessions but also the loss of their physique and peace of mind. As the result of the devastating war, they were drawn to streets and lead their life without any shelter.The war victims had incited the poet's human concern.The milieu of the victimised were in a pathetic condition as they were left homeless. The roof of their houses were hanging in the air and they symbolised the hanging lives of the poor. It seemed as though the houses whined and cried towards the rich and the powerful people for their apathetic attitude4 to the poor. It also denoted apparently that the poor who lived in the house made loud cries due to distress, pain and anguish.

Passing through the crooked town, he neared the sea shore and found people at some distance in the harbour. The harbour a symbolic representation of the sheltered place of the rich who seemed to be ignorant of the conditions of the poor.

Unconcern of the Rich

The rich people fooled the sea and continued to make money . They used the lower class to work for them and as they were sheltered and fortunate never listened to the painful voices of the poor. While the lowere class people were in agony for livelihood, the upper class

entertained themselves in a triple star hotel of the harbour which Symbolized the luxurious and l;avish lives of the rich.

Social Inequality

The different attitude of the rich displayed the Social Inequalitry of America. The country of Spain colonised the native Americans who were victimized during the war. They were unemployed and found no means to elevate their lives. But the rich extracted work from them, squandered energy for their own well being due to which prevailed social disharmony.The lower class were not cared. They were untouchable.

The sterilized rich

The poet feels that the sympathy of the rich was sterilized. Their unconcern was a sterilized contour turning inhumane to the poor who sought aids and shelter. Their unconcern pains the poet. It raises his ego and emerges as the lower class was brutally victimized.

When they were in such a miserable condition, the rich consumed alcohol and stayed safe in a wealthy hotel. They were amusing themselves perching under a glass house which enabled everyone to witness the happenings of the outside world. Though they could notice the woes of the poor, they just ignored them. They engaged themselves in amorous talks. They asked each other rubber questions/ unworthy questions.

Conclusion

Thus the poet emotionally describes the ill effects of the war and the indifferent attitude of the rich towards the poor crumbling people. The upper class just exploited the poor and the labour cl;ass did not meet the basic requirements of their survival.
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Anecdote of the Jar - Wallace Stevens

A first-person narrator with a very particular sense of how things are describes an exercise or experiment. He views the wilderness in Tennessee as "slovenly" and watches the effects of the jar he has placed on the hill adjacent to the wilderness. Immediately he sees a difference: The wilderness, while still "sprawling," is "no longer wild." In what can only be an exaggeration or the will of a stubborn imagination, the jar is "tall and of a port in air." This very plain jar, "gray and bare" rules the scene. It is neither wild nor slovenly, unlike anything else in Tennessee.

This poem can be read as a sort of mocking exercise in which the pressure of an actively meticulous imagination affects the pressure of reality, a "slovenly" wilderness. Odd diction organizes this odd little poem. "Slovenly" usually describes a messy or dirty person. Using it to describe wilderness is definitely an odd personification, which tells the reader something about the imagination of the speaker. Is this an elitist New Englander looking at Tennessee? Is this a poem about an elitist or overly judgmental imagination, an imagination from someplace like the houses haunted by white night gowns of "Disillusionment of Ten O'Clock"?

This poem is often read as one about the strength of the imagination to organize a disorder it perceives. Maybe so, but like the use of "slovenly," there are other things in the poem that lead the reader to question the speaker. Take the nursery-level rhyme: "the Jar was round upon the ground"—not exactly a trope worthy of a great poet. And yet this homely jar is also described as "tall and of a port in air." The "port in air" suggests a familiar Stevens trope: something that cannot be seen but that opens a window, a portal or gateway, in this case to a vision and an idea: "It took dominion everywhere."

The jar that orders the wilderness in Tennessee is homely, "gray and bare." It is also hard to imagine, except that the impression it leaves is not so attractive. This man-made thing organizes the natural world only in the imagination, it would seem, of someone who has a negative version of Tennessee in need of a grooming. Certainly that jar is a futile attempt, overblown by the speaker, an unsuccessful poet.

Mirror by Sylvia Plath

Mirror is one of the fluent works of poet Sylvia Plath. This poem describes a mirror and its owner who grows older as the mirror observes. The mirror forms no judgments and merely swallows what it sees, thus reflecting the image back without any alteration. It is only honest and assumes itself a four-cornered eye of a God that sees everything exactly as it is. The mirror looks across the empty room and the pink speckled wall for so long that it becomes the part of the mirror's heart. The mirror imagines itself as a lake where a woman tries to discern itself by gazing at her reflection. Nevertheless, she cannot stop herself from visiting the mirror every morning. Over the years, the woman sees in her reflection growing older by the day. The woman struggles with the loss of her beauty.

In this short poem, the narrator is a wall mirror that is personified and enriched with human aspects. The mirror imagines working precisely and reflecting everything that appears in front of it. It is silver in colour and does not have any feelings either hatred or love. The mirror clarifies this fact that if a person dislikes his reflection, this does not mean that the mirror is cruel. It just reflects the image and shows their true appearance. The mirror keeps on looking at the wall in front of it and can find out the minutest flaws in anything.

When a person stands in front of the mirror the opposite wall does not remain a part of the mirror. The mirror relates itself to a lake, which is not only quiet but has depth also. The woman looks at herself in a lake to convince her physical appearance and charm. The mirror says that the moon and the candle are liars who falsely praise the woman's beauty. They praise her physical appearance because of their dim light overlooks any spots, marks or signs of ageing. The mirror shows her the reality which is bitter for her. It gets tears and hatred in return for its truthfulness. The mirror is very important for a woman whose face is the first thing that comes in front of the Mirror after the dark night.

The mirror has seen the transformation in the face of a young, pretty girl that does not exist now. The signs of ageing are becoming prominent and her future appearance of an old, ugly woman is getting closer. The mirror compares her face with a fish as both are ugly and both dislike while looking at themselves. The subject of the poem is time and appearance, although the speaker is a mirror. The woman feels sad for the loss of her beauty, deluding herself with the flattering candlelight and moonlight. Even though this is discomforting, she needs the mirror to provide

her with an unadulterated reflection of self. Some critics have speculated that she might be observing her mind, her soul, and her psyche to become aware of the disparity between her exterior and interior lives.

The mirror is a melancholy that exemplifies the tensions between inner and outer selves with respect to a woman's sadness of losing her beauty.

Unit- II POETRY (Non-Detailed)

The Yachts by William Carlos William

"Hear me out, for I too am concerned," wrote William Carlos Williams in one of his poems. "The Yachts" is well worth the concentrated and extended concern it asks of the reader. The poem begins in the literal and ends in the symbolic. It starts with an unusual device: the title is part of the first line. The first long sentence (lines 1-5), one of twelve sentences which make up the poem, sets up the contest between "an ungoverned ocean" delivering "too heavy blows" and "the best man knows to pit against its beating." This is unrhymed free verse, but there are interesting little assonances (half- or one-third rhymes), here and there, such as encloses, blows, chooses.

The second, even longer, sentence (lines 6-12) integrates a series of concise and precise images with Williams' skillful word music: "Mothlike in mists"; "minute / brilliance of cloudless days"; "tossing green water / from their sharp prows"; "the crew crawls / ant-like, solicitously grooming them"… Note, for example (in lines 6 and 7), the sound effects of "Mothlike in mists," "scintillant in the minute / brilliance of cloudless days, with broad bellying sails"…and how the repeated m's and s's and b's enable the reader to experience the very sound and feel of this day of the yacht race as well as to see it.

The third sentence (lines 13-18) introduces a contrast between the "youthful, rare" racing yachts and the "lesser and greater craft which, sycophant, lumbering and flittering follow them." The yachts "live with the grace / of all that in the mind is feckless, free and / naturally to be desired." Here the symbol of the yachts begins to be delineated and we see that the yachts represent youth, freedom and skill. Now the poem loses the comber like sweep of the long sentences. The next seven sentences, crowded into eight and a half lines, become as choppy as the moody sea has become. The wind comes, the waves strike, the yachts take in canvas, the sea gets so rough it

seems that “Arms with hands grasping seek to clutch at the prows” and “Bodies thrown recklessly in the way are cut aside” by the yachts.

Then, resuming the long sweep, the final two sentences (lines 27-33) reveal about the yachts a sea of faces in agony. Instead of there being a race among the yachts, what now happens is a confused and tangled competition between the waves, representing the little people (the inadequate losers), and the yachts, representing the people of power (the skillful winners). Here is tribute to the competitive spirit. There is admiration and approval for the winners, the “free and / naturally to be desired,” but no gloating. The competition is a horror for the little people, and the poet has deep compassion for the defeated, the failures, and above all a sense of the tragedy of the losers--without whining, or sentimentality, or bitterness.

To Brooklyn Bridge by Hart Crane

Hart Crane (1899–1932) straddles two poetic genres. His work bears many of the hallmarks of Romanticism and shows deep influence from figures such as English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) and American Romantic poet Walt Whitman (1819–92). Crane viewed Whitman in particular as an inspiration, both as a poet and as another gay man, and "To Brooklyn Bridge" contains allusions to Whitman's 1856 poem "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry."

Constructed between 1869 and 1883, the Brooklyn Bridge was the world's first steel-cable suspension bridge. At the time of its construction, it was the tallest modern structure in the Western Hemisphere and the longest bridge in the world. Its 1,595-foot length connects the New York City boroughs of Brooklyn and Manhattan across the tidal strait of the East River. The construction of the Brooklyn Bridge was not without tragedy. For its grace and beauty as a structure, the Brooklyn Bridge has inspired numerous poets and painters in addition to Hart Crane. One of Crane's poetic heroes, Walt Whitman, visited the nearly completed bridge on a trip to New York that he called "the best, most effective medicine my soul has yet partaken—the grandest physical habitat and surroundings of land and water the globe affords." Walt Whitman Park, near the base of the bridge, is dedicated to him.

One of the fundamental tensions of "To Brooklyn Bridge" is between the elevated, archaic language of the poem and the intensely modern imagery. The poem references skyscrapers,

elevators, and automobiles, which would be as novel in literary language to readers in the 1930s as poetic references to email and Wi-Fi would have been in the 1990s.

Crane's book-length poem *The Bridge* was composed principally in the late 1920s. The decade is often called "the Roaring Twenties" for its optimism, economic growth, social change, and indulgent consumerism. On the whole, *The Bridge* reflects a positive view very much in keeping with the times. The poem, however, had the misfortune of first being published in 1930, very shortly after the stock market crash of 1929, which signaled the beginning of the Great Depression (1929–39). This period was a catastrophic economic failure that began in the United States and affected most of the world. In the United States it halted much of the construction and expansion shown in *The Bridge*. The dissonance between the poem's optimistic tone and the dismal economic reality may have contributed to its mixed reviews at the time it was published.

The poem opens with the image of a seagull. In the morning, as it often does, the seagull, who has been resting on the rippling water, dips his wings in the water to pivot himself, then lifts off and flies "over the chained bay waters" toward the Statue of Liberty. Or, the seagull flies upward and appears to be in front of the Statue of Liberty. The seagull disappears along an "inviolate," or pure, and perfect curve, "apparitional" like a phantom. Engaging in wordplay, the speaker compares the seagull to "sails that cross / Some page of figures to be filed away," with *sails* being a homophone (word that sounds the same) for *sales*. This office work continues "till elevators drop us from our day." The speaker thinks of movies and crowds of people bent forward to watch "panoramic sleights." These people do not talk about what they have seen. The movies play again, to other people, their images "foretold to other eyes on the same screen."

In the fourth stanza the speaker addresses the Brooklyn Bridge across the harbor with an archaic and capitalized "Thee." He describes the bridge as "silver-paced." The silver of the bridge looks like the sun walked across it and its leftover motion transferred to the structure. However, though standing free, the bridge is not actually in motion. The bridge's freedom to move holds it still.

In the fifth Stanza a "bedlamite," or mentally ill person, "speeds" up the bridge towers and then "tilt[s] ... momently" on the edge, with their shirt "ballooning" in the wind. The term *bedlamite* is a reference to Bedlam, or Bethlem Royal Hospital, England's first mental

asylum, which opened around 1330. The speaker then says obliquely, "A jest falls from the speechless caravan." The "speechless caravan" is most likely a reference the traffic on the bridge. The person jumps to their death; their shirt is like a balloon, and their suicide is compared to a jest.

The noon sun moves down Wall Street, which the speaker merely calls "Wall." The light "leaks" from girders, construction beams for skyscrapers, into the street. The speaker calls the sunlight "a rip-tooth of the sky's acetylene," further illustrating the construction of the giant structures. *Rip-tooth* refers to a kind of saw called a ripsaw, and acetylene is a chemical used in torch welding. The "cloud-flown," or tall, derricks—latticed cranes for lifting construction materials or cargo—turn "all afternoon," and the cables of the bridge are described as alive and "breath[ing] the North Atlantic still."

The speaker says the enormous bridge is "obscure as that heaven of the Jews." The bridge bestows the gift ("guerdon") of anonymity, which time cannot bestow, and grants a "reprieve and pardon" from being known.

Continuing the religious tone, the speaker calls the bridge "O harp and altar, of the fury fused." He asks how something as artful as the bridge could be built, or "align[ed]," by "mere toil," implying that it is more than a physical work of engineering. It is a divine thing. He calls the bridge the "terrific threshold of the prophet's pledge," which might mean either the entrance into the prophet's pledge or the absolute limit of what the prophet's pledge entails. He calls the bridge a "prayer of pariah." *Pariah* is a word for "social outcast" that carries a religious connotation. In the same breath, he also calls it "the lover's cry." The lights of the traffic, like "immaculate ... stars," "condense eternity" across the "unfractioned idiom"—the single, complete oneness—of the bridge. To the speaker, the bridge looks like it has arms that are holding up the night.

The speaker stands by the piers under the shadow of the bridge, looking up. The speaker says the bridge's shadow can only really be seen when it is dark. The lights of the city have gone out under the snow. The speaker refers to the lights as "fiery parcels" and says that the snow "already" covers another "iron year."

The imagery of the bridge as a living, conscious thing continues in the final stanza, as the speaker says that the bridge is "Sleepless as the river under thee." He imagines the bridge as spanning and connecting the oceans and prairies. The speaker prays to the bridge to descend to the "lowliest" of the city "and of the curveship lend a myth to God." Here he describes the shape of the bridge, with the sweeping curve of its suspension cables. The poem has made the bridge into more than a thing of bricks and steel. It is something huge and mythic, beyond the normal scale of human understanding and approaching something of the divine.

Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter by John Crowe Ransom

John Crowe Ransom (1888-1974) was an American who lived in Tennessee, belonged to the English Faculty of Vanderbilt University, and was always a "Southern poet". He sought to counter the sentimentality of much of the poetry of his time, but also regarded the rapid pace of change in the South in the years before the Great Depression with something approaching horror. For him, an ideal society would be based on an agrarian economy, managed by small subsistence farmers, that was not divorced from the forces of nature and allowed for the arts to flourish. Although attached in an emotional sense to the values of the South prior to the Civil War, Ransom, in his poems, retained a degree of detachment as he tried to keep sentiment at arm's reach. For some readers, his efforts to keep his own feelings out of his poems resulted in coldness and over-control.

"Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter", which was published in Ransom's 1924 collection "Chills and Fever", is a good example of a poem that deals with a tragic situation in an unsentimental way. Whether or not it lapses into lack of feeling is another matter. This reviewer is not of that opinion.

The poem comprises five four-line stanzas with an ABAB rhyme-schemes, although the "B" rhymes are half-rhymes, or possibly "three-quarter rhymes" (body/study, window/shadow, grass/Alas, little/scuttle, ready/study). The subject matter is the death of a young girl whose age is not revealed but who appears to be younger than ten years old. The reader is not told her name, although the title makes clear who her father is. It is possible from the context that John Whiteside could have been an academic colleague of the poet, and could easily have also been a close neighbour. The cause of the girl's death is also not revealed, but this is not important to the sense of the poem.

The poem opens with amazement at the fact of her death, given the energy she displayed when alive:

There was such speed in her little body,
And such lightness in her footfall,
It is no wonder her brown study
Astonishes us all

Ransom is here referring to the cliché that is sometimes expressed as: "Won't that child ever stay still?" and creating a savage irony by contrasting her constant movement in life with her stillness in death, which he terms "her brown study". This is an interesting form of words, which is not often used in current times, that refers to somebody being engrossed in their work (such as reading) to the extent that they are motionless. The girl's body is still, but the observers want to believe that the lack of movement is only temporary and that she will spring to life again when she has finished her book. The dull colour of "brown", which is symbolic of bare earth and dead leaves, also offers a contrast to the brighter colours mentioned later in the poem.

However, the poem does not seek to point to the irony as much as to move towards an appropriate attitude towards that irony, which is not dwelt on or exploited.

Her wars were bruited in our high window.
We looked among orchard trees and beyond
Where she took arms against her shadow,
Or harried unto the pond

The lazy geese, like a snow cloud
Dripping their snow on the green grass,
Tricking and stopping, sleepy and proud,
Who cried in goose, Alas,

For the tireless heart within the little
Lady with rod that made them rise

From their noon apple-dreams and scuttle
Goose-fashion under the skies!

The middle three stanzas of the poem are all about the playfulness and high spirits of the girl, whom the poet could apparently see and hear from his window while he was trying to work ("Her wars were bruited against our high window"). She is pictured in a world of make-believe, "where she took arms against her shadow" and chased ("harried") the geese as though they were an army to be conquered. The implication seems to be that she was an only child who used her vivid imagination to invent games of her own.

The poet's imagination joins that of the girl, so that the geese are "like a snow cloud" (in contrast to the "brown study") and they "cried in goose, Alas". By observing the girl at play he has become part of the game and given it an extra meaning, especially in hindsight. A magical element is added by making the geese speak and this is perhaps also suggested in the phrase "the little / Lady with rod that made them rise", in that she is not using a mere stick but something more like a magic wand.

In these stanzas, Ransom is refusing to be sentimental over either the girl's life or her death. Taken alone, there is little here to suggest that the girl is dead, merely that she is a happy, ebullient child who is lost in play in a world of her own. For a bereaved parent, it is by remembering moments such as these that the grief becomes bearable. The title of the poem is significant here, because bells can be for either mourning or celebration, and in these stanzas Ransom is offering his friend some bells that can help him to remember his daughter with joy.

However, the poet cannot forget that there are darker elements in this situation. The girl has been at war with her shadow, but the shadow has won. The geese cried alas "For the tireless heart within the little lady", but the heart has now tired and stopped. The irony mentioned above has been masked but not ignored, and this is perfectly right and proper. However, by referring to the world of fairy-tale and imagination Ransom offers a way (a "bell") of coping with the darkness of the fact of the girl's death. If the bereaved can enter that world themselves, they can share the mind of the dead daughter and, in that respect, she will still be with them.

But now go the bells, and we are ready,
In one house we are sternly stopped
To say we are vexed at her brown study,
Lying so primly propped.

In the final stanza, “now go the bells, and we are ready”. Reference is made again to the “brown study” of the girl “so primly propped” in her coffin. It is also interesting that Ransom uses the word “vexed” to describe the attitude of the adults to seeing her body. It is an affront that a young life, so full of promise, should have ended so soon, and sorrow will indeed be mixed with anger that this has happened.

Such an occasion will always excite mixed emotions, but Ransom has, in this poem that was presumably intended for the girl’s parents to read, offered a balanced view of life and death that may well have helped them to grieve in a more positive way. By avoiding sentimentality, but in no way making light of their loss, Ransom has displayed a responsible and mature attitude to the death of a child that could be a help to many others who find themselves in the same unfortunate situation.

Unit- III PROSE

The Figure a Poem Makes by Robert Frost

Robert Frost’s essay “The Figure a Poem Makes” talks about his own perception of how poem should be and how people should view poem. He mentions that all poems should be distinct from one another and should have wisdom that the readers can benefit from, not only to entertain them. The poem should also evoke its readers to discover something they previously do not know, but they actually know from the start. Frost also noted the relationship of the writer’s emotions while writing the poem and the reader’s emotion while reading the poem. At the end of his essay, Frost asserted that poems are eternal—that they will forever bear their wisdom and truth.

The author’s main argument in this essay is that each poem should be unique enough to be distinguished from one another, and that they should not only be made in order to entertain

the readers but to give them wisdom—that poems should "begin in delight and end in wisdom" (Frost, par. 4). The author also argued that sounds are not just the only basis that makes a poem "sound"—that is, according to the rules of logic. However, Frost also made clear the distinction of the logic of scholars and artists—with the artist's (such as poets) logic is backward (par. 6), thus utterly suggesting that scholars and other masters of philosophy have totally different views of life, much less than art and poetry as he noted that "Scholars and artists thrown together are often annoyed at the puzzle of where they differ" (par. 7). He also added that "scholars get theirs with conscientious thoroughness along projected lines of logic; poets theirs [knowledge] cavalierly and as it happens in and out of books," which suggests that poetry cannot be measured by logic or evaluated through the means of scholars (ibid.). Perhaps, the author is suggesting that poems are best evaluated through emotion. This assertion can be seen with the author's words when he stated "no tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise for the writer, no surprise for the reader" (par. 5). This line also suggests the link between the poet's feelings when he writes the poem and the feelings that the readers get when they read the poem—this is one of the greatest achievement that a poet can have, to be able to convey his feelings through his writings.

Many people, though, might question Frost's authority for his assertion. Note that this essay was written in 1939. By that time, Robert Frost has achieved the status as a known and much-acclaimed poet of his era. His being this well-known and well-respected poet of this time gave him the needed authority to talk about the figures that poems make or how poems should be treated and taken by people. Most of the things that he argued in his essays are the things that he had already achieved by then especially the being the poem's originality and flow "from delight to wisdom" as observed from his poems such as "The Road Not Taken," "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening," "Mending Wall," and "Fire and Ice" among others.

Unit- IV DRAMA

The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS WAS BORN in Columbus, Mississippi, in 1911. The name given to him at birth was Thomas Lanier Williams III. He did not acquire the nickname Tennessee until college, when classmates began calling him that in honor of his Southern accent and his father's home state. The Williams family had produced several illustrious politicians in the state of Tennessee, but Williams' grandfather had squandered the family fortune. Williams' father, C.C. Williams, was a traveling salesman and a heavy drinker. Williams' mother, Edwina, was a Mississippi clergyman's daughter and prone to hysterical attacks. Until Williams was seven, he, his parents, his older sister, Rose, and his younger brother, Dakin, lived with Edwina's parents in Mississippi. After that, the family moved to St. Louis. Once there, the family's situation deteriorated. C.C.'s drinking increased, the family moved sixteen times in ten years, and the young Williams, always shy and fragile, was ostracized and taunted at school. During these years, he and Rose became extremely close. Rose, the model for Laura in *The Glass Menagerie,* suffered from mental illness later in life and eventually underwent a prefrontal lobotomy (an intensive brain surgery), an event that was extremely upsetting for Williams.

An average student and social outcast in high school, Williams turned to the movies and writing for solace. At sixteen, Williams won five dollars in a national competition for his answer to the question "Can a good wife be a good sport?"; his answer was published in *Smart Set* magazine. The next year, he published a horror story in a magazine called *Weird Tales,* and the year after that he entered the University of Missouri as a journalism major. While there, he wrote his first plays. Before Williams could receive his degree, however, his father, outraged because Williams had failed a required ROTC program course, forced him to withdraw from school and go to work at the same shoe company where he himself worked. Williams worked at the shoe factory for three years, a job that culminated in a minor nervous breakdown. After that, he returned to college, this time at Washington University in St. Louis. While he was studying there, a St. Louis theater group produced his plays *The Fugitive Kind* and *Candles to the Sun.*Personal problems led Williams to drop out of Washington University and enroll in the University of Iowa. While he was in Iowa, his sister, Rose, underwent a lobotomy, which left her institutionalized for the rest of her life. Despite this trauma, Williams finally graduated in 1938. In the years that followed, he lived a bohemian life, working menial jobs and wandering from city to city. He continued to work on drama,

however, receiving a Rockefeller grant and studying playwriting at the New School in New York. During the early years of World War II, Williams worked in Hollywood as a scriptwriter.

Around 1941, Williams began the work that would become *The Glass Menagerie*. The play evolved from a short story entitled "Portrait of a Girl in Glass," which focused more completely on Laura than the play does. In December of 1944, *The Glass Menagerie* was staged in Chicago, with the collaboration of a number of well-known theatrical figures. When the play first opened, the audience was sparse, but the Chicago critics raved about it, and eventually it was playing to full houses. In March of 1945, the play moved to Broadway, where it won the prestigious New York Drama Critics' Circle Award. This highly personal, explicitly autobiographical play earned Williams fame, fortune, and critical respect, and it marked the beginning of a successful run that would last for another ten years. Two years after *The Glass Menagerie,* Williams won another Drama Critics' Circle Award and a Pulitzer Prize for *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Williams won the same two prizes again in 1955, for *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.*

The impact of success on Williams's life was colossal and, in his estimation, far from positive. In an essay entitled "The Catastrophe of Success," he outlines, with both light humor and a heavy sense of loss, the dangers that fame poses for an artist. For years after he became a household name, Williams continued to mine his own experiences to create pathos-laden works. Alcoholism, depression, thwarted desire, loneliness in search of purpose, and insanity were all part of Williams's world. Since the early1940s, he had been a known homosexual, and his experiences in an era and culture unfriendly to homosexuality certainly affected his work. After1955, Williams began using drugs, and he would later refer to the 1960s as his "stoned age." He suffered a period of intense depression after the death of his longtime partner in 1961 and, six years later, entered a psychiatric hospital in St. Louis. He continued to write nonetheless, though most critics agree that the quality of his work diminished in his later life. His life's work adds up to twenty-five full-length plays, five screenplays, over seventy one-act plays, hundreds of short stories, two novels, poetry, and a memoir; five of his plays were also made into movies. Williams died from choking in a drug-related incident in 1983.

Plot Overview

T HE GLASS MENAGERIE is a *memory play,* and its action is drawn from the memories of the narrator, Tom Wingfield. Tom is a character in the play, which is set in St. Louis in 1937. He

is an aspiring poet who toils in a shoe warehouse to support his mother, Amanda, and sister, Laura. Mr. Wingfield, Tom and Laura's father, ran off years ago and, except for one postcard, has not been heard from since.

Amanda, originally from a genteel Southern family, regales her children frequently with tales of her idyllic youth and the scores of suitors who once pursued her. She is disappointed that Laura, who wears a brace on her leg and is painfully shy, does not attract any gentlemen callers. She enrolls Laura in a business college, hoping that she will make her own and the family's fortune through a business career. Weeks later, however, Amanda discovers that Laura's crippling shyness has led her to drop out of the class secretly and spend her days wandering the city alone. Amanda then decides that Laura's last hope must lie in marriage and begins selling magazine subscriptions to earn the extra money she believes will help to attract suitors for Laura. Meanwhile, Tom, who loathes his warehouse job, finds escape in liquor, movies, and literature, much to his mother's chagrin. During one of the frequent arguments between mother and son, Tom accidentally breaks several of the glass animal figurines that are Laura's most prized possessions.

Amanda and Tom discuss Laura's prospects, and Amanda asks Tom to keep an eye out for potential suitors at the warehouse. Tom selects Jim O'Connor, a casual friend, and invites him to dinner. Amanda quizzes Tom about Jim and is delighted to learn that he is a driven young man with his mind set on career advancement. She prepares an elaborate dinner and insists that Laura wear a new dress. At the last minute, Laura learns the name of her caller; as it turns out, she had a devastating crush on Jim in high school. When Jim arrives, Laura answers the door, on Amanda's orders, and then quickly disappears, leaving Tom and Jim alone. Tom confides to Jim that he has used the money for his family's electric bill to join the merchant marine and plans to leave his job and family in search of adventure. Laura refuses to eat dinner with the others, feigning illness. Amanda, wearing an ostentatious dress from her glamorous youth, talks vivaciously with Jim throughout the meal.

As dinner is ending, the lights go out as a consequence of the unpaid electric bill. The characters light candles, and Amanda encourages Jim to entertain Laura in the living room while she and Tom clean up. Laura is at first paralyzed by Jim's presence, but his warm and open behavior soon draws her out of her shell. She confesses that she knew and liked him in high school but was too shy to approach him. They continue talking, and Laura reminds him of the nickname he had given her: "Blue Roses," an accidental corruption of pleurosis, an

illness Laura had in high school. He reproaches her for her shyness and low self-esteem but praises her uniqueness. Laura then ventures to show him her favorite glass animal, a unicorn. Jim dances with her, but in the process, he accidentally knocks over the unicorn, breaking off its horn. Laura is forgiving, noting that now the unicorn is a normal horse. Jim then kisses her, but he quickly draws back and apologizes, explaining that he was carried away by the moment and that he actually has a serious girlfriend. Resigned, Laura offers him the broken unicorn as a souvenir.

Amanda enters the living room, full of good cheer. Jim hastily explains that he must leave because of an appointment with his fiancée. Amanda sees him off warmly but, after he is gone, turns on Tom, who had not known that Jim was engaged. Amanda accuses Tom of being an inattentive, selfish dreamer and then throws herself into comforting Laura. From the fire escape outside of their apartment, Tom watches the two women and explains that, not long after Jim's visit, he gets fired from his job and leaves Amanda and Laura behind. Years later, though he travels far, he finds that he is unable to leave behind guilty memories of Laura.

Analysis of Major Characters

Tom Wingfield

Tom's double role in *The Glass Menagerie*—as a character whose recollections the play documents and as a character who acts within those recollections—underlines the play's tension between objectively presented dramatic truth and memory's distortion of truth. Unlike the other characters, Tom sometimes addresses the audience directly, seeking to provide a more detached explanation and assessment of what has been happening onstage. But at the same time, he demonstrates real and sometimes juvenile emotions as he takes part in the play's action. This duality can frustrate our understanding of Tom, as it is hard to decide whether he is a character whose assessments should be trusted or one who allows his emotions to affect his judgment. It also shows how the nature of recollection is itself problematic: memory often involves confronting a past in which one was less virtuous than one is now. Because *The Glass Menagerie* is partly autobiographical, and because Tom is a stand-in for the playwright himself (Williams's given name was Thomas, and he, like Tom, spent part of his youth in St. Louis with an unstable mother and sister, his father absent much of the time), we can apply this comment on the nature of memory to Williams's memories of his own youth.

Even taken as a single character, Tom is full of contradiction. On the one hand, he reads literature, writes poetry, and dreams of escape, adventure, and higher things. On the other hand, he seems inextricably bound to the squalid, petty world of the Wingfield household. We know that he reads D. H. Lawrence and follows political developments in Europe, but the content of his intellectual life is otherwise hard to discern. We have no idea of Tom's opinion on Lawrence, nor do we have any indication of what Tom's poetry is about. All we learn is what he thinks about his mother, his sister, and his warehouse job—precisely the things from which he claims he wants to escape.

Tom's attitude toward Amanda and Laura has puzzled critics. Even though he clearly cares for them, he is frequently indifferent and even cruel toward them. His speech at the close of the play demonstrates his strong feelings for Laura. But he cruelly deserts her and Amanda, and not once in the course of the play does he behave kindly or lovingly toward Laura—not even when he knocks down her glass menagerie. Critics have suggested that Tom's confusing behavior indicates an incestuous attraction toward his sister and his shame over that attraction. This theory casts an interesting light on certain moments of the play—for example, when Amanda and Tom discuss Laura at the end of Scene Five. Tom's insistence that Laura is hopelessly peculiar and cannot survive in the outside world, while Amanda (and later Jim) claims that Laura's oddness is a positive thing, could have as much to do with his jealous desire to keep his sister to himself as with Laura's own quirks.

Amanda Wingfield

If there is a signature character type that marks Tennessee Williams's dramatic work, it is undeniably that of the faded Southern belle. Amanda is a clear representative of this type. In general, a Tennessee Williams faded belle is from a prominent Southern family, has received a traditional upbringing, and has suffered a reversal of economic and social fortune at some point in her life. Like Amanda, these women all have a hard time coming to terms with their new status in society—and indeed, with modern society in general, which disregards the social distinctions that they were taught to value. Their relationships with men and their families are turbulent, and they staunchly defend the values of their past. As with Amanda, their maintenance of genteel manners in very ungenteel surroundings can appear tragic, comic, or downright grotesque. Amanda is the play's most extroverted and theatrical character, and one of modern American drama's most coveted female roles (the acclaimed stage actress Laurette Taylor came out of semi-retirement to play the role in the original

production, and a number of legendary actresses, including Jessica Tandy, have since taken on the role).

Amanda's constant nagging of Tom and her refusal to see Laura for who she really is are certainly reprehensible, but Amanda also reveals a willingness to sacrifice for her loved ones that is in many ways unparalleled in the play. She subjects herself to the humiliating drudgery of subscription sales in order to enhance Laura's marriage prospects, without ever uttering so much as a word of complaint. The safest conclusion to draw is that Amanda is not evil but is deeply flawed. In fact, her flaws are centrally responsible for the tragedy, comedy, and theatrical flair of her character. Like her children, Amanda withdraws from reality into fantasy. Unlike them, she is convinced that she is not doing so and, consequently, is constantly making efforts to engage with people and the world outside her family. Amanda's monologues to her children, on the phone, and to Jim all reflect quite clearly her moral and psychological failings, but they are also some of the most colorful and unforgettable words in the play.

Laura Wingfield

The physically and emotionally crippled Laura is the only character in the play who never does anything to hurt anyone else. Despite the weight of her own problems, she displays a pure compassion—as with the tears she sheds over Tom's unhappiness, described by Amanda in Scene Four—that stands in stark contrast to the selfishness and grudging sacrifices that characterize the Wingfield household. Laura also has the fewest lines in the play, which contributes to her aura of selflessness. Yet she is the axis around which the plot turns, and the most prominent symbols—blue roses, the glass unicorn, the entire glass menagerie—all in some sense represent her. Laura is as rare and peculiar as a blue rose or a unicorn, and she is as delicate as a glass figurine.

Other characters seem to assume that, like a piece of transparent glass, which is colorless until light shines upon it, Laura can take on whatever color they wish. Thus, Amanda both uses the contrast between herself and Laura to emphasize the glamour of her own youth and to fuel her hope of re-creating that youth through Laura. Tom and Jim both see Laura as an exotic creature, completely and rather quaintly foreign to the rest of the world. Yet Laura's crush on the high school hero, Jim, is a rather ordinary schoolgirl sentiment, and a girl as supposedly fragile as Laura could hardly handle the days she spends walking the streets in the cold to avoid going to typing class. Through actions like these, Laura repeatedly displays a

will of her own that defies others' perceptions of her, and this will repeatedly goes unacknowledged.

Themes, Motifs & Symbols

Themes

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work.

The Difficulty of Accepting Reality

Among the most prominent and urgent themes of *The Glass Menagerie* is the difficulty the characters have in accepting and relating to reality. Each member of the Wingfield family is unable to overcome this difficulty, and each, as a result, withdraws into a private world of illusion where he or she finds the comfort and meaning that the real world does not seem to offer. Of the three Wingfields, reality has by far the weakest grasp on Laura. The private world in which she lives is populated by glass animals—objects that, like Laura's inner life, are incredibly fanciful and dangerously delicate. Unlike his sister, Tom is capable of functioning in the real world, as we see in his holding down a job and talking to strangers. But, in the end, he has no more motivation than Laura does to pursue professional success, romantic relationships, or even ordinary friendships, and he prefers to retreat into the fantasies provided by literature and movies and the stupor provided by drunkenness. Amanda's relationship to reality is the most complicated in the play. Unlike her children, she is partial to real-world values and longs for social and financial success. Yet her attachment to these values is exactly what prevents her from perceiving a number of truths about her life. She cannot accept that she is or should be anything other than the pampered belle she was brought up to be, that Laura is peculiar, that Tom is not a budding businessman, and that she herself might be in some ways responsible for the sorrows and flaws of her children. Amanda's retreat into illusion is in many ways more pathetic than her children's, because it is not a willful imaginative construction but a wistful distortion of reality.

Although the Wingfields are distinguished and bound together by the weak relationships they maintain with reality, the illusions to which they succumb are not merely familial quirks. The outside world is just as susceptible to illusion as the Wingfields. The young people at the Paradise Dance Hall waltz under the short-lived illusion created by a glass ball—another version of Laura's glass animals. Tom opines to Jim that the other viewers at the movies he attends are substituting on-screen adventure for real-life adventure, finding fulfillment in

illusion rather than real life. Even Jim, who represents the "world of reality," is banking his future on public speaking and the television and radio industries—all of which are means for the creation of illusions and the persuasion of others that these illusions are true. *The Glass Menagerie* identifies the conquest of reality by illusion as a huge and growing aspect of the human condition in its time.

The Impossibility of True Escape

At the beginning of Scene Four, Tom regales Laura with an account of a magic show in which the magician managed to escape from a nailed-up coffin. Clearly, Tom views his life with his family and at the warehouse as a kind of coffin—cramped, suffocating, and morbid—in which he is unfairly confined. The promise of escape, represented by Tom's missing father, the Merchant Marine Service, and the fire escape outside the apartment, haunts Tom from the beginning of the play, and in the end, he does choose to free himself from the confinement of his life.

The play takes an ambiguous attitude toward the moral implications and even the effectiveness of Tom's escape. As an able-bodied young man, he is locked into his life not by exterior factors but by emotional ones—by his loyalty to and possibly even love for Laura and Amanda. Escape for Tom means the suppression and denial of these emotions in himself, and it means doing great harm to his mother and sister. The magician is able to emerge from his coffin without upsetting a single nail, but the human nails that bind Tom to his home will certainly be upset by his departure. One cannot say for certain that leaving home even means true escape for Tom. As far as he might wander from home, something still "pursue[s]" him. Like a jailbreak, Tom's escape leads him not to freedom but to the life of a fugitive.

The Unrelenting Power of Memory

According to Tom, *The Glass Menagerie* is a memory play—both its style and its content are shaped and inspired by memory. As Tom himself states clearly, the play's lack of realism, its high drama, its overblown and too-perfect symbolism, and even its frequent use of music are all due to its origins in memory. Most fictional works are products of the imagination that must convince their audience that they are something else by being realistic. A play drawn from memory, however, is a product of real experience and hence does not need to drape itself in the conventions of realism in order to seem real. The creator can cloak his or her true story in unlimited layers of melodrama and unlikely metaphor while still remaining confident

of its substance and reality. Tom—and Tennessee Williams—take full advantage of this privilege.

The story that the play tells is told because of the inflexible grip it has on the narrator's memory. Thus, the fact that the play exists at all is a testament to the power that memory can exert on people's lives and consciousness. Indeed, Williams writes in the Production Notes that "nostalgia . . . is the first condition of the play." The narrator, Tom, is not the only character haunted by his memories. Amanda too lives in constant pursuit of her bygone youth, and old records from her childhood are almost as important to Laura as her glass animals. For these characters, memory is a crippling force that prevents them from finding happiness in the present or the offerings of the future. But it is also the vital force for Tom, prompting him to the act of creation that culminates in the achievement of the play.

Motifs

Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, and literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.

Abandonment

The plot of *The Glass Menagerie* is structured around a series of abandonments. Mr. Wingfield's desertion of his family determines their life situation; Jim's desertion of Laura is the center of the play's dramatic action; Tom's abandonment of his family gives him the distance that allows him to shape their story into a narrative. Each of these acts of desertion proves devastating for those left behind. At the same time, each of them is portrayed as the necessary condition for, and a natural result of, inevitable progress. In particular, each is strongly associated with the march of technological progress and the achievements of the modern world. Mr. Wingfield, who works for the telephone company, leaves his family because he "fell in love with [the] long distances" that the telephone brings into people's consciousness. It is impossible to imagine that Jim, who puts his faith in the future of radio and television, would tie himself to the sealed, static world of Laura. Tom sees his departure as essential to the pursuit of "adventure," his taste for which is whetted by the movies he attends nightly. Only Amanda and Laura, who are devoted to archaic values and old memories, will presumably never assume the role of abandoner and are doomed to be repeatedly abandoned.

The Words and Images on the Screen

One of the play's most unique stylistic features is the use of an onstage screen on which words and images relevant to the action are projected. Sometimes the screen is used to emphasize the importance of something referred to by the characters, as when an image of blue roses appears in Scene Two; sometimes it refers to something from a character's past or fantasy, as when the image of Amanda as a young girl appears in Scene Six. At other times, it seems to function as a slate for impersonal commentary on the events and characters of the play, as when "Ou sont les neiges" (words from a fifteenth-century French poem praising beautiful women) appear in Scene One as Amanda's voice is heard offstage.

What appears on the screen generally emphasizes themes or symbols that are already established quite obviously by the action of the play. The device thus seems at best ironic, and at worst somewhat pretentious or condescending. Directors who have staged the play have been, for the most part, very ambivalent about the effectiveness and value of the screen, and virtually all have chosen to eliminate it from the performance. The screen is, however, an interesting epitome of Tennessee Williams's expressionist theatrical style, which downplays realistic portrayals of life in favor of stylized presentations of inner experience.

Music

Music is used often in *The Glass Menagerie,* both to emphasize themes and to enhance the drama. Sometimes the music is extra-diegetic—coming from outside the play, not from within it—and though the audience can hear it the characters cannot. For example, a musical piece entitled "The Glass Menagerie," written specifically for the play by the composer Paul Bowles, plays when Laura's character or her glass collection comes to the forefront of the action. This piece makes its first appearance at the end of Scene One, when Laura notes that Amanda is afraid that her daughter will end up an old maid. Other times, the music comes from inside the diegetic space of the play—that is, it is a part of the action, and the characters can hear it. Examples of this are the music that wafts up from the Paradise Dance Hall and the music Laura plays on her record player. Both the extra-diegetic and the diegetic music often provide commentary on what is going on in the play. For example, the Paradise Dance Hall plays a piece entitled "The World Is Waiting for the Sunrise" while Tom is talking about the approach of World War II.

Symbols

Symbols are objects, characters, figures, and colors used to represent abstract ideas or concepts.

Laura's Glass Menagerie

As the title of the play informs us, the glass menagerie, or collection of animals, is the play's central symbol. Laura's collection of glass animal figurines represents a number of facets of her personality. Like the figurines, Laura is delicate, fanciful, and somehow old-fashioned. Glass is transparent, but, when light is shined upon it correctly, it refracts an entire rainbow of colors. Similarly, Laura, though quiet and bland around strangers, is a source of strange, multifaceted delight to those who choose to look at her in the right light. The menagerie also represents the imaginative world to which Laura devotes herself—a world that is colorful and enticing but based on fragile illusions.

The Glass Unicorn

The glass unicorn in Laura's collection—significantly, her favorite figure—represents her peculiarity. As Jim points out, unicorns are "extinct" in modern times and are lonesome as a result of being different from other horses. Laura too is unusual, lonely, and ill-adapted to existence in the world in which she lives. The fate of the unicorn is also a smaller-scale version of Laura's fate in Scene Seven. When Jim dances with and then kisses Laura, the unicorn's horn breaks off, and it becomes just another horse. Jim's advances endow Laura with a new normalcy, making her seem more like just another girl, but the violence with which this normalcy is thrust upon her means that Laura cannot become normal without somehow shattering. Eventually, Laura gives Jim the unicorn as a "souvenir." Without its horn, the unicorn is more appropriate for him than for her, and the broken figurine represents all that he has taken from her and destroyed in her.

"Blue Roses"

Like the glass unicorn, "Blue Roses," Jim's high school nickname for Laura, symbolizes Laura's unusualness yet allure. The name is also associated with Laura's attraction to Jim and the joy that his kind treatment brings her. Furthermore, it recalls Tennessee Williams's sister, Rose, on whom the character of Laura is based.

The Fire Escape

Leading out of the Wingfields' apartment is a fire escape with a landing. The fire escape represents exactly what its name implies: an escape from the fires of frustration and dysfunction that rage in the Wingfield household. Laura slips on the fire escape in Scene Four, highlighting her inability to escape from her situation. Tom, on the other hand, frequently steps out onto the landing to smoke, anticipating his eventual get away.

Unit- V FICTION

The Snows of Kilimanjaro by Ernest Hemingway

Biography of Ernest Hemingway

In addition to his critically-acclaimed writing, Nobel-prize winning novelist, short story author, and journalist Ernest Hemingway is also famed for his adventurous lifestyle that took him across continents, cultures, and conflicts. He was an ambulance driver in Italy in World War I and a journalist covering the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s. He witnessed the Allies landing on the beaches on D-Day and the liberation of Paris from Nazi occupation during WWII as a foreign correspondent. He moved to Paris in the 1920s with his first of four wives, Hadley Richardson. There he became part of a group dubbed "The Lost Generation," which included the likes of artist Pablo Picasso and writer James Joyce. He divorced Richardson for Pauline Pfeiffer in 1927, whom he later left for Martha Gellhorn in 1940. He met his last wife, Mary Welsh, during WWII in London. Hemingway won the Pulitzer Prize in 1953 for his celebrated novel ***The Old Man and the Sea***. After sustaining various injuries, including from surviving several plane crashes in Africa, Hemingway retired to Ketchum, Idaho, where he shot himself on July 2, 1961.

Historical Context of *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*

At its height in the early 20th century, Literary Modernism was a reaction and response to the traditional viewpoints and aesthetic of the Victorian period. The writers of this era had recently lived through the chaos of World War I, and the horrors and suffering of trench warfare radically changed their perspectives on society, humanity, and artistic expression. Hemingway became a key figure of the movement when he met the expatriate community known as "The Lost Generation" in Paris in the 1920s. Later, the effects of the Great Depression reverberated globally throughout the 1930s after the Wall Street Crash in 1929.

Crippling poverty hit across many levels of society, a stark contrast to the excesses of the Roaring Twenties, exposing the failings of the contemporary social and economic system. The violence of the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s also had a profound ideological impact on many influential artists and writers of the time and their work, including Hemingway and his fellow Lost Generation member, Pablo Picasso.

The Snows of Kilimanjaro- Summary

Stranded on safari in the African plains, **Harry** apologizes to his wife **Helen** for the stench of the gangrene eating its way up his leg. The two of them watch the carrion **birds** that have encircled the camp, waiting for his death. The couple bicker over how to handle his illness, how to pass the time, and whether to get a drink from the servant, **Molo**.

Harry, a writer, begins to ponder his situation, regretting that now he'll never have the time to write everything he had planned to. Helen wishes they had never come on safari, and the two quarrel again over how they ended up in this situation. Frustrated, Harry declares that he's never loved Helen.

In a series of flashbacks, Harry remembers various moments from his past—overhearing diplomat Fridtjof Nansen's fateful underestimation of the Bulgarian mountain snows while traveling on the Orient Express; helping a deserter with bloody feet while living in a woodcutter's house in Austria; Christmas day in Austria, when the snow was so bright it hurt the soldier's eyes; and skiing, drinking, and hunting across European mountains.

Coming back to the present, Harry goads his wife into another argument, taunting her about her money and mocking the life of luxury they lived in Paris. He tells her it's amusing to hurt her this way. Seeing that he's made her cry, he says that he does truly love her, but he thinks to himself that this is the familiar lie by which he makes his bread and butter. He quickly insults her again and falls asleep.

Waking up from his nap, Harry discovers that Helen has gone hunting, so he is left alone with his thoughts. He muses on his life with her and among the rich, and how wasted the time has been. He had come on this safari to try to wean himself off the good life, to get back to the rougher lifestyle he had once pursued. Helen is a good and strong woman, but he does not truly love her. He has distracted himself from the more important task of writing by seducing a series of rich women for their money.

Helen returns with a ram she has shot to make a broth for Harry. Reflecting more about his wife's past, losses, and pursuit of him, Harry makes more of an effort to be civil. Helen repeats her belief a plane will soon arrive to take him to a hospital. Harry seems less sure, asking why she thinks it will. A **hyena** crosses the edges of the firelight as they settle in for the evening, and while he has his first pang of realization that death is coming for him, he hides his dread.

Harry slips into another flashback, this time about the women he has loved and lost: the first woman he loved who had left him, a previous wife, and time he had spent "whoring" and fighting in Constantinople. He then remembers life on the front during WWI, full of military blunders and panic-stricken retreats. Later, he had met irrelevant intellectuals at cafes in Paris and quarreled more with his wife at the time. He had never written about any of it, even though he saw it as his duty to write it all.

Coming back to reality, Helen offers Harry some broth. It's terrible. He looks with admiration at Helen anyway, and he feels death come again. He becomes more desperate to write, but Helen does not know how to take dictation, and he realizes the opportunity to write has passed for good. In another flashback, he recalls scenes from the mountainside, including his Grandfather's log house and a trout stream they rented in a Black Forest valley. He thinks back in detail on his time spent in the slums of Paris and the struggles of the poor there.

Harry has a brief conversation about drinks with Helen, but he falls asleep once more, the flashbacks coming thick and fast as he weakens. He thinks about a ranch where a "half-wit" boy had killed a trespasser, and Harry had taken him to the police. He had never written these stories either. Briefly awake, Harry has a confused conversation with Helen and repeats to himself he would never write of her or her kind of people. He remembers Williamson from the WWI trenches who had died in horrific circumstances, and back in the present he thinks his own death is comparatively easy—he's even bored with how it's dragging on, as he gets bored with everything.

Then, death comes for him a final time. Harry can feel its head on his cot, drawing closer, and he loses the ability to talk. In the morning, a friend called **Compton** comes in a small plane to take Harry to hospital. On the way, they steer off course toward the bright white snows of Mount Kilimanjaro, and Harry realizes he won't make it to the hospital but will instead lie in peace on the mountainside. None of this, however, is real: back on the plain, Helen is awakened by the distant cries of the hyena, and she discovers a lifeless Harry beside her.

Themes and Characters

Harry, the protagonist of the story, is a writer. As he lies near death on a cot in the African wilds, his thoughts go back to his life experiences. Hemingway skillfully develops Harry's character by use of his cutting words to his wife, his memories of other women and other times, his attitude towards death, and his ceaseless drinking even when he knows it is harmful.

Since Hemingway based this character on himself, he made Harry very realistic, drawing on his own professional resume to establish a journalistic background for Harry. The main character's wife was loosely based on Hemingway's second wife, Pauline. In the story, Harry feels that he has been bought by his wife's money, and it is a feeling he can barely tolerate.

Harry never calls Helen by her name, and it is only near the end of the story, during the plane trip episode in his mind, when she is named. Otherwise, he refers only to her as "she."

Helen is one of Hemingway's more developed women Characters; he gave her a rounded background. She had been devoted to her first husband who died just as their two children had grown and left home, leaving her quite alone and needing to build a new life. She turned to drink, horses, and books. Then she took lovers. When one of her children was killed in a plane crash, she was devastated and scared. She no longer wanted lovers; she wanted a solid relationship, and she found Harry. She admired his books and thought his life exciting. She had started a new life with him, and in turn, he had lost his old life.

There are many minor Characters in this story. At the African camp are the servants, and one is mentioned by name; Molo is called several times to prepare the ever present whisky-soda. Near the end of the story, the pilot Compton flies Harry off toward Mount Kilimanjaro. Other Characters are briefly mentioned in the flashbacks that take place in the many locations where Harry has lived.

Hemingway's hero, when faced with death, looks back on his life and tries to make sense of it. He sees a talent destroyed by not using it, by drinking too much, and by laziness caused by too much money. Most of all, he is filled with regret-some regret for being selfish in his dealings with others, but mostly regret that he will not be able to write all the stories he thought he had time to relegate to a later day. He had put away the most important parts of his

life, waiting for another time to put the emotions and thoughts on paper, and now it is too late.

The theme of facing death with courage and “grace under pressure,” Hemingway’s code of living, is dealt with from the beginning of the story when Harry admits that death is painless. He has lived in fear of death all his life, even been obsessed with it, and now that he is faced with it, he finds he is too tired to fight it. He accepts it. Still, he wished he had written about the things that had affected his life: the joy of skiing, the emotional upheaval of the first true love, the unquestionable loyalty to an old soldier. He has learned too late that every day counts and that tomorrow might not come; every day should be lived to the fullest.