

Ape and Essence Study Guide

Ape and Essence by Aldous Huxley

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Plot Summary

"Ape and Essence" by Aldous Huxley is an intriguing novel which explores mankind's lack of humanity. In "Tallis," the narrator finds a script of "Ape and Essence" by the recently deceased William Tallis. "The Script" introduces the destruction of mankind by war and other factors in the future America. "Ape and Essence" offers ideas that are both entertaining and extremely frightening.

In "Tallis," the narrator and Bob Briggs discuss Bob's personal problems on the day of Gandhi's assassination in 1948. They cross across and read a script, "Ape and Essence" by William Tallis, and the next Sunday, they drive to Murcia, CA to meet the author only to learn that he has died. The narrator reprints Tallis' script without change or comment. In "The Script," a baboon girl sings, and two groups of baboons battle and kill one another. It is February 20, 2108 when the New Zealand Rediscovery Expedition set out on the Canterbury to rediscover America after the destruction caused by atomic bombs during World War 3. As the group heads toward the oil wells on shore, Dr. Poole lingers behind to examine plants and collect specimens. He is kidnapped and taken to the Chief at the Hollywood Cemetery where a crew of gravediggers rob corpses of their clothes.

The Chief retracts his mandate to have Dr. Poole buried alive when he learns that Dr. Poole can increase their food production. Dr. Poole joins the procession heading toward town, and on the way, he meets Loola, a young woman who laments that everything is terrible suffering. When he watches the Patriarch impale deformed babies as the mothers cry, Dr. Poole faints, reviving in a room with the Arch-Vicar who initiates a conversation about religion and history. He is disgusted as people begin celebrating Belial Day by chasing one another to engage in copulation, but he participates in the celebration when Loola approaches and embraces him. They then each turn to other partners and the Arch-Vicar interrupts Dr. Poole to inform him that his party from the Canterbury was injured while searching for him.

Dr. Poole and Loola rediscover monogamy and romantic love during the next two weeks until they return to the Unholy of Unholies to receive their annual assignments. They are separated with Loola returning to the cemetery and Dr. Poole being given a laboratory to experiment on ways to increase food production. His results do not please the impatient Chief. Dr. Poole visits Loola at the Hollywood Cemetery before visiting the Arch-Vicar who wants him to join the church. Dr. Poole secretly meets Loola and convinces her that what she is doing is right, but the Arch-Vicar is very angry when he finds the Dr. Poole is not in the laboratory and orders a search party. Dr. Poole and Loola head toward Bakersfield to locate the community of Hots, and when they stop to eat and rest, they find Tallis' tombstone where they read Shelley's poetry as they dine.



Section 1: Tallis

Section 1: Tallis Summary

"Ape and Essence" by Aldous Huxley is an intriguing novel which explores mankind's lack of humanity. In "Tallis," the narrator finds a script of "Ape and Essence" by the recently deceased William Tallis. "The Script" introduces the destruction of mankind by war and other factors in the future America. "Ape and Essence" offers ideas that are both entertaining and extremely frightening.

On the day of Gandhi's assassination, the sightseers are more interested in their picnic baskets and at the lunch table in the Studio Commissary, Bob Briggs' only concern is talking about himself. As he begins with the latest installment of his history, it is obvious that he likes talking about his predicament because it allows him to see himself as all of the Romantic Poets rolled into one. Bob and Elaine go to Acapulco when she demands it as an ultimatum while he is still considering whether to leave his wife, Miriam, and make Elaine his mistress. Bob is bound to adultery the way Gandhi is bound to nonviolence but with more and deeper misgivings. Now, Elaine is acting strangely and has been seen several times with the Moldavian baron, while Miriam refuses to divorce Bob but used his absence to transfer their homes and vehicles into her name using her power of attorney for his estate. Since Bob owes the government \$33,000 in arrears for income taxes, he asks Lou Lublin, the producer, for a pay increase but Lou denies him. As Bob talks about his original that his agent claims will be profitable, the narrator thinks that Lou's denial would make a great subject for a religious painting and imagines how different artists might portray it. He thinks about the tyranny held up as the idea form of government in the Republic which leads to ignoring individuals' rights and Gandhi's murder.

The narrator doubts Gandhi was interested in art, and that is why the forward-looking believers in Order and Perfection killed him: because he was a revolutionary who only believed in people. Gandhi got involved in nationalism with the hope to convert the satanic in the State into something like humanity, but nationalism proved too much for him as the dream of the Order begets tyranny. Gandhi was killed because, after briefly playing the political game, he refused to continue dreaming of a national Order and tried to bring the focus back to real people and the Inner Light. As the narrator and Bob walk into the sunshine, Bob says it is too bad about Gandhi whose "great secret was not wanting anything for himself" (pg. 8.) A truck filled with screenplays to be destroyed swerves and drops several works. The narrator picks up and begins to read "Ape and Essence" by William Tallis from Murcia, California. Bob wants to keep it and see what the end of it is like after reading the opening poetry which claims the ends are ape-chosen and only the means are man's.

The following Sunday, the narrator and Bob drive to Tallis' Cottonwood Ranch in Murcia. When they finally reach their beautiful destination, they ignore the signs warning away trespassers and continue down the road. An elderly woman greets them and tells them



Mr. Tallis died six weeks ago of heart trouble. She insists that they come inside where she introduces them to her husband, Mr. Coulton, and her granddaughter, Katie. The narrator and Bob explain that they only know Mr. Tallis by his work and have come to make his acquaintance only to learn of his tragic death. As they talk about the movie industry, the Coultons' other granddaughter, Rosie, enters. Rosie studies singing and wants to get into movies, so she and Bob go to the kitchen where he offers her advice. The narrator talks to Mrs. Coulton about William Tallis. She knew he was interested in movies because he wanted money to educate his granddaughter in Germany; his ex-wife and child died during World War I because they were Jewish. Tallis had married again to someone on stage, but she ran off with some other fellow. In the ensuing silence, the narrator fabricates an entire biography for the deceased William Tallis. He wishes he had known him, and Mrs. Coulton assures him that he would have liked Tallis. She still visits his grave, but Mr. Coulton says Tallis probably hates his grave because he wanted to be buried in the desert. The narrator agrees because Tallis' script said as much. When Rosie returns to the room, excited because Bob claims that he can arrange for her to have a screen test, the narrator tells Bob that it is time to leave. That is the nearest they got to Tallis in the flesh, but the reader can discover the reflection of Tallis' mind in the following as the narrator prints "Ape and Essence" without change or comment.

Section 1: Tallis Analysis

The first section of Aldous Huxley's "Ape and Essence" is entitled "Tallis." There are many allusions within these pages, including those to Gandhi, Calvary, Ptolemy, Beddoes, Byron, Keats, Shelley, Martin Luther, Plato, Piero, Rembrandt, Athena, Catherine of Siena, Humphrey Bogart, Hitler, World War I, "Anna Karenina", "Timaeus" and "Republic." The story begins on the day of Gandhi's assassination, dating the story as occurring in 1948. The narrator listens halfheartedly as Bob Briggs tells his self-absorbed narrative about his monetary and relationship problems. The narrator's mind wanders to Gandhi as he compares the way Bob is bound to adultery to the way that Gandhi is bound to nonviolence, though Bob's binding contains more and deeper misgivings. Learning that Bob's request for a pay increase has been denied, the narrator thinks that the scene would make a great subject for a religious painting and imagines how different artists might portray it. He also thinks about the tyranny held up as the idea form of government in the Republic which leads to ignoring individuals' rights and Gandhi's murder.

The narrator's thoughts return to Gandhi as he considers that Gandhi was killed for refusing to continue dreaming of a national Order and trying to bring the focus back to real people and the Inner Light. Bob seems to agree when he states that Gandhi never wanted anything for himself. When a truck filled with screenplays to be destroyed drops several of its screenplays, the narrator and Bob Briggs read and become engrossed with "Ape and Essence" by William Tallis when they read the opening poetry which claims the ends are ape-chosen and only the means are man's. Their interest leads them to Cottonwood Ranch in Murcia, California the following Sunday in a search for the author, William Tallis. Unfortunately, their efforts prove futile as Mrs. Coulton greets



them and informs them that Tallis is dead. While Bob talks to Rosie about the movie industry, and presumably flirts with the Coultons' young granddaughter, the narrator discusses Tallis with the Coultons and learns a few facts about the man's history. As a result, he fabricates an entire biography for the deceased William Tallis. When the narrator mentions that Tallis' script basically says that he wanted to be buried in the desert, this foreshadows Tallis' inclusion in his script. The narrator laments being unable to meet William Tallis before his death and reprints "Ape and Essence" without change or comment.



Section 2: The Script, pages 25-50

Section 2: The Script, pages 25-50 Summary

The title, credits and finally the name of the producer appear across the screen, accompanied by music. The music changes in the hour before sunrise. The night lingers as the light mounts toward the zenith, and the morning star is visible in the east. The narrator states that though the beauty and peace on the screen must look like an illustration to a poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, the audience must be reminded to understand what is what because "out of the sublime in Nature, Art all too often manufactures only the ludicrous" (pg. 25-26.) The scene fades to a palace filled with an audience of well-dressed baboons of all ages. Proud man, dressed in brief authority, makes the angels weep with his fantastic tricks, like an angry ape, according to the narrator. A bosomy young female baboon wearing makeup walks to the microphone as the hairy hands applaud. Michael Faraday, collared, leashed and on all fours, crawls behind her. What is called knowledge is only another form of ignorance, and man's stature has now increased by Higher Ignorance which is man's knowledge so the least among man is a baboon and the greatest is a gorilla. When Faraday attempts to straighten, the baboon girl chides and beats him with a riding switch as she begins singing about the essence of love. As Faraday's tearful face registers disgust and shame, a montage flashes across the screen to show a baboon housewife, baby, financier and teenagers listening gleefully to the song on the radio. When the baboon singer sees Faraday's tears, she beats him as the audience cheers.

As the screen fades to a silhouette and then to the emblem of Eternity, the narrator asks if the audience has forgotten the sea, sky and planet that lies beyond the mental zoo. The camera moves across the sky to a rocky island where a ship, the Canterbury, sails past with the captain and his group of passengers at the rail, staring toward the east, through binoculars, until they see a line of barren coast as the sun suddenly rises behind the silhouette of the distant mountains. The passengers are members of the New Zealand Rediscovery Expedition to North America. New Zealand survived the belligerence of World War 3 and modestly flourished in isolation for nearly a century due to the radioactive condition of the rest of the world. The danger over, on February 20, 2108, the first explorers set out to rediscover America from the west. On the other side of the world, two groups of baboons war with one another and are all killed. The scientists of the Rediscovery Expedition are nothing spectacular, but they are quiet, provincial, and humane. When a scientist spots shore through his binoculars and points out the oil derricks still standing, a discussion about bacteria, radioactive gases, and diseases of plant foods ensues between Old Professor Craigie, Professor Grampian, Miss Ethel Hook, Dr. Cudworth, Dr. Schneeglock, and Dr. Poole. Dr. Schneeglock cannot imagine why soldiers found it necessary to use their weapons of mass destruction. The narrator claims that love and fear cast one another out, and fear, the foundation of modern life, also casts out intelligence, goodness, beauty, truth and humanity, leaving only desperation. Truth without charity is not God but rather an idol.



The scene moves to a point on the coast of Southern California, approximately twenty kilometers west of Los Angeles where the scientists of the Rediscovery Expedition land from a whaleboat with a huge sewer in the background. They cross the beach, making their way towards the oil wells, as Dr. Poole examines flowers and collects specimens. He is neither unattractive nor a fool, but his intelligence seems to be only potential and his attractiveness is latent; Dr. Schneeglock will blame this on the fact that Dr. Poole still lives with his mother. Miss Hook enthusiastically enters, and she and Dr. Poole discuss the plant life he has found. Miss Ethel Hook is wholesome and hopes that Alfred Poole will soon propose as his mother wishes him to do so and he is a dutiful son. As the other members of the expedition toil up the hill towards the oil wells, they realize Dr. Poole and Miss Hook are missing, and Craigie shouts for them, worried about people lagging behind in a strange country. Hearing the summons, Dr. Poole and Miss Hook head towards the others, but Dr. Poole is distracted by *Echinocactus hexaedrophorus* and tells Ethel to go ahead as he begins digging it up. Ethel watches in silence for a moment, feeling responsible for and loving this man because he is unhappy and helpless, but then she continues with Dr. Poole's promise that he will not be long. Though Dr. Poole admires Ethel, the idea of marrying her is unthinkable despite his mother's wishes. Three villainous men emerge behind Dr. Poole, gag him and drag him out of his companions' sight.

The scene switches to a panoramic view of Southern California as the narrator expounds on the beauties of the great Metrolopolis of the West. A nearer view shows a ghost town of what was once the world's largest oasis where a small group of gravediggers work as an overseer monitors them from the roof of an adjacent mausoleum. The youngest gravedigger looks intensely at the plump girl beside him and is tempted to touch her, but his conscience gets the better of him and he returns to digging with redoubled zeal. When they finally hit the coffin, they rob the corpse of his watch and jewelry. When a gravedigger is caught stealing a ring, the Chief whips him and orders twenty-five lashes this evening because "this is a Democracy. We're all equal before the Law and the Law says that everything belongs to the Proletariat- in other words, it all goes to the State" (pg. 49), and the penalty for robbing the State is twenty-five lashes. The Chief divests the cadaver of its clothes and dons them himself.

Section 2: The Script, pages 25-50 Analysis

The second section of this novel is entitled "The Script" and encompasses the majority of Huxley's novel as a whole. As such, this section of the novel has been divided into five parts for analysis. The script is written by William Tallis with the intent of being produced as a film so there are many directorial comments within the text itself. "The Script" contains many allusions, and within the first twenty-five pages, some of these include allusions to Debussy, Michael Faraday, Albert Einstein, Louis Pasteur, "Land of Hope and Glory," "Onward Christian Soldiers," Johann Sebastian Bach, the Last Judgment, the Parthenon, the Sistine Chapel, Newton, Mozart, Shakespeare, Napoleon, the Coliseum, Queen Victoria, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Ichabod from "Sleepy Hollow" and Canterbury as the name of the ship that the New Zealand Rediscovery Expedition travels on, insinuating a pilgrimage of some sort. As the film



begins, a beautiful scene is portrayed, but the nature addresses the audience that art often manufactures the ludicrous out of the sublimity of nature. The scene shows a large group of well-dressed baboons with a female baboon singing with Michael Faraday on a leash. The narrator's speech indicates that man is no more than a baboon as he states what is called knowledge is only another form of ignorance, and man's stature has now increased by Higher Ignorance which is man's knowledge so the least among man is a baboon and the greatest is a gorilla.

The next scene shows a ship, the Canterbury, with its passengers, members of the New Zealand Rediscovery Expedition to North America. Furthermore, at this point, the narrator explains that the novel is set in 2108, a century and a half in the future, and that the world has been decimated by the third World War. New Zealand survived the war, but it is evident that the United States of America did not, so the New Zealand Rediscovery Expedition travels to North America to rediscover the lost continent. Meanwhile, two groups of baboons battle and kill one another; this is evidently a comparison to mankind's futile and often pointless wars. On the Canterbury, the scientists discuss bacteria, radioactive gases and plant diseases. The narrator interjects that love and fear cast one another out, and fear, the foundation of modern life, also casts out intelligence, goodness, beauty, truth and humanity, leaving only desperation. Truth without charity is not God but rather an idol.

The scene then shows the scientists landing on the coast of Southern California and approaching the oil wells seen from the ocean. Dr. Poole is introduced as the protagonist, and the narrator spends some time describing Dr. Poole and Miss Ethel Hook, as well as the relationship, or lack thereof, between them. After Miss Hook leaves Dr. Poole to examine plants, Dr. Poole is kidnapped by three villainous men. From a panoramic view of Southern California, the scene narrows to the ghost town that was once Hollywood. A group of gravediggers are seen as they rob corpses of their valuable possessions with which they were buried. The young man is tempted by the girl beside him but resists touching her; this foreshadows the relationship between men and women that exists in this location at this time. Also, the culture in Southern California in 2108 is seen when the Chief orders a gravedigger to be whipped for attempting to steal a ring found on a corpse because everything found belongs to the State. The Chief dons the cadaver's clothes himself, showing that he is obviously an important person within the State.



Section 3: The Script, pages 50-75

Section 3: The Script, pages 50-75 Summary

There is no machinery left to make clothes, and for many years after the radioactivity, they could not even raid graves and lived in the wilderness until the past thirty years. Now, it is safe to enjoy previous comforts such as clothes stolen from the dead. As the three captors approach with Dr. Poole, they explain to the Chief about seeing Dr. Poole with his party and capturing him. When Dr. Poole adds that he arrived on a large ship with sails, the Chief is surprised to learn that New Zealand still has steamers after the Devil took over. Dr. Poole explains that New Zealand was left alone during the third World War because it was of no strategic importance. The Chief is excited that New Zealand still has trains so that Dr. Poole can help repair theirs, but when Dr. Poole claims that he cannot because he is not an engineer, the Chief orders his workers to bury Dr. Poole. Dr. Poole screams as he is buried up to the waist and, begging for mercy, insists that he can teach them to grow better crops and increase their food supply. The Chief orders Dr. Poole to be dug up and administered a restorative which intoxicates him. Dr. Poole follows behind the litter which carries the Chief as they walk toward their town. One of the female gravediggers, Flossie, introduces herself to Dr. Poole and explains that her desire to bury him was not ill-intentioned but only for fun before continuing onward to speak to the Chief.

Loola, another girl, stays to talk to Dr. Poole, and deciding to call him Alfie, she confides that she does not like the public burials. She tells Dr. Poole that he is lucky to have been dug up and to walk straight into the Purification Ceremonies held to cleanse the culture of the deformed babies caused by Belial. Dr. Poole, somewhat fascinated by Loola, extends the courtesy of allowing her to walk in front of him on the narrow footpath, and they walk side by side when the road widens. When Dr. Poole questions Loola about her melancholy expression, she explains that everything is terrible suffering and wanting. Belial possesses everyone, causing men to hit women and call them a Vessel of the Unholy Spirit. After Belial Day, they are punished for what He made them do if they have a baby. Loola hopes that her baby will not be deformed if she ever has one. Her friend Polly's baby was born with eight fingers and no thumbs and has already been condemned. As their march through the dunes continues, Loola cries in fear of having a deformed baby, but when Dr. Poole tries to comfort and kiss her, she pushes him away and looks around in guilty terror before running away.

On the corner of 5th Street and Pershing Square, the Chief eats as Dr. Poole is outraged by the books brought to the baker to be incinerated. He snatches a volume of Shelley's poetry to safety. The Chief explains that the people only know and only need to know the "NO" written across women's clothing. None of the vessels produced a baby this season, and the Chief does not know what they will do for manpower. Dr. Poole is horrified and amazed as a chorus of youths sings that "the chief end of Man is to propitiate Belial" (pg. 69.) The Chief points out the leading Satanic Science Practitioner who praises the chorus and begins preaching, calling for a vessel. Loola



stares in horror as a young girl is brought to the Practitioner, and Dr. Poole glances between Loola and the victim. The Practitioner exclaims about how revolting the vessel is and asks her about the Nature of Woman, beating her as she answers that woman is the vessel of the Unholy Spirit. The Chief is displeased with this progressive education and feels that there is no longer proper discipline. Crying as she looks at the victim, Loola is relieved to look into Dr. Poole's kindly face as he agrees that it is unjust. They hurry after the others to the Cocktail Bar where the Chief is presented with a necklace made of bones. The procession continues to the main lobby, which is filled with women and their deformed babies.

Section 3: The Script, pages 50-75 Analysis

In the twenty-fifth through fiftieth pages of "The Script", some additional allusions that are presented are God, Satan, "Annie Laurie", "In Memoriam", Dostoevsky, socialism, Democracy, "Liebestod", "Tristan," "The Phenomenology of Spirit," native Americans, "Lord of the Flies," Hell and Percy Bysshe Shelley, and his works. These pages also detail the condition of the culture in Southern California at this point in time, such as there is no machinery left with which to manufacture clothes so the people raid graves to steal clothing from the dead. Dr. Poole is taken to the Chief who orders Dr. Poole be buried when he learns the doctor cannot help revive the use of trains as Dr. Poole is not an engineer. Dr. Poole's pleading does no good to dissuade the Chief, but the fact that he insists he can increase their food production leads the Chief to order Dr. Poole to be unburied and receive a restorative.

As Dr. Poole follows the group to town, Flossie explains that her desire to bury him was not ill-intentioned but only for fun. Dr. Poole also meets Loola on this journey and is infatuated with her. She describes the Purification Ceremonies held to cleanse the culture of the deformed babies caused by Belial. She also explains that everything is terrible suffering and wanting; Belial possesses everyone, causing men to hit women and call them a Vessel of the Unholy Spirit. After Belial Day, they are punished for what He made them do if they have a baby. When Dr. Poole tries to comfort and kiss her, she pushes him away and looks around in guilty terror before running away, indicating the prohibition against touching in her culture. In the town, Dr. Poole is outraged that books are burned, and he rescues a volume of Shelley's poetry. The women were clothing with the word "NO" written across it to warn men against the sins of the flesh. The Chief explains to Dr. Poole that they worship Belial as a chorus of youths sings that "the chief end of Man is to propitiate Belial" (page 69). Dr. Poole watches in horror as a woman is beaten for being a vessel of the Unholy Spirit. He rejoins Loola as they follow the procession to the main lobby of the Cocktail Bar which is filled with women and their deformed babies.



Section 4: The Script, pages 75-100

Section 4: The Script, pages 75-100 Summary

Dr. Poole stares in horrified bewilderment at the babies, and when he notes that they all look the same age, Loola explains that they were all born between December 10 and December 17. She spots Polly and hurries toward her with Dr. Poole following. Polly and Loola cry as Loola comforts her friend who loves her child and does not want to see him killed. Silence is ordered as the Arch-Vicar of Belial is introduced and the Chief advances to meet him. The Arch-Vicar orders all of the mothers to be lead to their place of shame, and the women, holding their deformed babies, move toward the door with pained expressions. Polly is beaten when she hesitates in joining the others. A baboon's hand advances toward the camera, engulfing everything in blackness. In the interior of the Los Angeles Coliseum, the congregation chants "Glory to Belial, to Belial in the lowest" (pg. 79) as the women with the deformed babies kneel before the steps of the High Altar. The chorus' song changes to being about the terrible thing it is to fall into the hands of the living Evil, the Enemy of Man, and to conspire with him against oneself. Two Postulants seize a woman and lead her to the altar where they present her baby to the Patriarch of Pasadena who impales the child on a knife. When the chorus begins to chant for blood, the woman runs down the steps with the Postulants whipping her, and her screams punctuate the chanting. Polly and her child are dragged up the steps, and when Polly begs that her child be spared, she is restrained as the Patriarch impales her son. Dr. Poole, sitting in the first row, faints.

Dr. Poole revives in the interior of the Unholy of Unholies where the Arch-Vicar reclines on a couch. Dr. Poole claims that the screams of yet another mother is horrible, but the Arch-Vicar points out that there is blood in Dr. Poole's religion as well, quoting the Bible. The Arch-Vicar wants Dr. Poole to understand that they have good reasons for believing as they do and asks if Dr. Poole is familiar with world history. The Arch-Vicar read quite a bit of history before the Thing, and he has managed to save 3000-4000 volumes from various libraries to house in the Seminary. According to the Arch-Vicar, man pits himself against nature for 100,000 years with no side gaining, but in the last three centuries, man begins to win against the Order of Things, beginning with machines and food for the hungry; however, these things come at a stiff price as "copulation resulted in population- with a vengeance!" (page 91). The planet becomes overcrowded and the land is ruined, causing hunger to return which results in war. Belial would have achieved his purposes even without the atomic bomb, though it may have taken longer, because men destroy themselves by destroying the world in which they live. From the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, men lose all sense of reality from their use of technology, and they see themselves as conquering Nature, destroying the earth and calling it Progress. The Arch-Vicar insists that Belial puts the ideas of Progress and Nationalism into men's heads, and history shows evidence of Belial's guiding hand. The two ideas are absurd and leads to fatal actions, yet humanity accepts these notions as guides to conduct. The Devil prompted man to accept these ideas because he desires the degradation and destruction of the human race. When Dr. Poole objects to the idea of



demonic possession, the Arch-Vicar claims that this is the only explanation for man's acceptance of beliefs and actions that lead to their own destruction and provides examples of Man's stupidity and obvious demonic possession from wars. He pauses to listen to the chorus chanting for blood. Man was created by purely natural means, but it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the Living Evil. Dr. Poole asks why they worship Belial if he is so terrible, and the Arch-Vicar responds that they do so to put off the horror of the inevitable for at least a few more minutes. As another scream sounds, Dr. Poole's expression of horror is mitigated by one of scientific curiosity, causing the Arch-Vicar to ask "Getting used to it, eh?" (pg. 100.)

Section 4: The Script, pages 75-100 Analysis

In the next twenty-five pages of "The Script", Huxley alludes to Faust, Jews, Nazis and Communists. Dr. Poole is horrified as he looks at the deformed babies, and when he notes that they all look the same age, Loola explains that they were all born between December 10 and December 17, indicating that there is a specific time frame allotted for procreation. Loola shows human compassion by comforting Polly who also exhibits characteristics of humanity in mourning her son's imminent death. The Arch-Vicar of Belial is introduced and the proceedings begin. As the chorus chants "Glory to Belial," the women with deformed babies are lead to an altar where their children are seized and murdered before the women are beaten. Dr. Poole faints as he watches these proceedings, indicating that he is more humane than this society of people.

When Dr. Poole revives, he finds himself facing the Arch-Vicar who wants Dr. Poole to understand that they have good reasons for believing as they do and asks if Dr. Poole is familiar with world history. Dr. Poole and the Arch-Vicar discuss history and the motives behind the culture in Southern California. The Arch-Vicar insists that Belial has won the war against humanity by putting the ideas of Progress and Nationalism into men's heads, leading to war and self-destruction. Belial would have achieved his purposes even without the atomic bomb, though it may have taken longer, because men destroy themselves by destroying the world in which they live. From the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, men lose all sense of reality from their use of technology, and they see themselves as conquering Nature, destroying the earth and calling it Progress. These people worship Belial, though he is evil, in order to put off the horror of the inevitable for at least a few more minutes. When another mother screams as her child is murdered, Dr. Poole's expression of horror is mitigated by scientific curiosity as he wonders about this strange culture.



Section 5: The Script, pages 100-122

Section 5: The Script, pages 100-122 Summary

Conscience makes men into cowards, saints and humans, but customs makes all who mangle flesh without qualm or question to mar their certainty of Supreme Service. In the Unholy of Unholies, Dr. Poole glances through the crack between the doors and is both excited and revolted as they leave their seats and begin chasing one another. He says there are limits, but the Arch-Vicar disagrees as he hands Dr. Poole night vision glasses to enable better sight, asking "and you still have doubts about Belial- even after this?" (pg. 102.) After only two generations, people are only permitted to mate for two weeks and then must be punished for having been punished because that is the Law of Belial. There are those who continue with the old-style mating patterns, but these Hots are beaten if they are caught. If they refuse to be discreet, they can run away to a community of Hots up north. Young boys who show early signs of becoming a Hot are made into a priest and eunuch. The Arch-Vicar believes sex is nauseating and is grateful to have been saved from such ignominy, and he looks in disgust at the Chief who is relaxing from the cares of the State as women make themselves obviously accessible. Dr. Poole watches as the Arch-Vicar addresses the congregation, but when Loola sees him, they embrace and retreat to the field where their amorous embrace continues with sounds of moans in the background. The narrator interjects that humans always mate, but the gamma rays have made sex become seasonal, killing romance and love with a female's chemical compulsion to mate.

When Dr. Poole and Loola emerge from the shadows, another man grabs Loola as two young mulatto girls claim Dr. Poole for mating. He fends off their embrace when he is approached by the Arch-Vicar and Patriarch who tell him that his friends were wounded when they tried to search for him; there will be no rescue or escape. Dr. Poole is left to beget as many little monsters as possible while two Postulants stand guard. After the two mulatto girls ravish Dr. Poole, he sleeps, waking in bewilderment to the sounds of girls' laughter. He hides his face with his hands as conscience and principles attack him. Loola appears and extracts food from her bag. As she claims Dr. Poole was more fun than the rest, he asks to talk about something else as his face creases with an expression of moral discomfort. Loola claims they must not think or it stops being fun, and she begins to cry as she thinks of Polly and her baby. When Dr. Poole comforts her, Loola notes that he is different from other men here because he likes to talk to her which only happens with Hots. Now, Dr. Poole embraces Loola to stop her from thinking. The Postulant guard is summoned as his assignment ends. On the Canterbury, Miss Hook and Dr. Cudworth have been injured by arrows and are being nursed. Ethel Hook is distressed by the plan to leave Dr. Poole, but the doctor administers a sedative. Meanwhile, Dr. Poole and Loola kiss. She never wants to say yes to anyone else, and he feels that he has "only just discovered what life's all about" (pg. 121.)



Section 5: The Script, pages 100-122 Analysis

In the next twenty-two pages of "The Script" of "Ape and Essence," the narrator explains that conscience creates humanity, but customs cause mankind to adhere to a society's rules without question. Dr. Poole watches as the celebration of Belial's Day begins. He is disgusted as men and women begin chasing one another for sexual purposes. The Arch-Vicar explains the mating customs of his culture: people are only permitted to mate for two weeks and then must be punished for having been punished because that is the Law of Belial. There are those who continue with the old-style mating patterns, but these Hots are beaten if they are caught. If they refuse to be discreet, they can run away to a community of Hots up north.

The Arch-Vicar is disgusted by sex, but as he leaves, Dr. Poole is accosted by Loola who escorts him into a field where they copulate. Although human beings always mate, the change in society has led to humans being allowed to mate only during a certain season, like animals. After Dr. Poole and Loola have mated, she is claimed by another man as he is claimed by two young mulatto girls. His embrace is interrupted by the Arch-Vicar who informs him that he will not be rescued or escape; his friends were wounded while searching for him. Dr. Poole returns to his companions for the night, and he wakes the next morning to experience a vast amount of guilt. Loola joins him and recounts the fun of the previous evening, chiding him for thinking too much or it will stop being fun. As they embrace, they admit their feelings for one another in a vague way. Meanwhile, on the Canterbury, Miss Ethel Hook is upset at the idea of leaving Dr. Poole behind.



Section 6: The Script, pages 122-152

Section 6: The Script, pages 122-152 Summary

Dr. Poole and Loola rediscover monogamy and romantic love, and he reads aloud to her from the little volume of Shelley's poetry that he rescued. She does not understand, and neither did he before today. Two weeks later, Dr. Poole and Loola enter the Unholy of Unholies after other couples, and they all collect their aprons and enter another queue to await their tasks which are assigned by the Grand Inquisitor's Chief Assistant. When Dr. Poole is told to report to the Director of Food Production where he will receive a laboratory, plot of land and four laborers, Loola begs to be employed as one of his laborers, but she is to be employed in mining cemeteries as in the previous year. She is threatened with twenty-five lashes for objecting and so says goodbye to Alfie and walks away.

In the laboratory at the University of Southern California, the Director of Food Production promises to have the lab cleaned, and a week later, Dr. Poole has three distinguished visitors, the Chief, Arch-Vicar and Director of Food Production in his clean laboratory. He discusses his plans for increasing food production, but the impatient Chief insists that he wants more food immediately. Dr. Poole reiterates that it may take fifty years, and the Arch-Vicar interjects that the deformation rate will double within fifty years. In Hollywood Cemetery, Loola wearily digs a grave as Flossie tries to encourage her. When Flossie leaves, Dr. Poole calls Loola's name and advances cautiously. She turns pale as he embraces her and convinces her to smile. As Flossie returns to inform Loola that they will take a break for lunch in thirty minutes, Dr. Poole retreats to lean against a monument. Flossie is surprised to see Dr. Poole who claims he is passing through to St. Azazel's and looking for the Chief. He bids them goodbye since the Chief is not present, and Flossie chides Loola after he is gone, warning her against the foreign Hot. Inside St. Azazel's, Dr. Poole listens as the Arch-Vicar finishes his lecture. Afterward, the Arch-Vicar claims he has become quite fond of Dr. Poole and wants him to join the church to free himself of the temptations to which he will most certainly be exposed as an un-mutated male. He allows Dr. Poole time to consider the offer.

Nearly six weeks pass as Dr. Poole works in his experimental garden. When he quotes Shelley's verse about joy, the narrator states that joy was murdered long ago; the fruits of the ape-mind are hate, misery and restlessness. Dr. Poole hurries to the garage of number 1993 where he joins Loola in a car. She looks at him silently and in terror. She managed to get away, but Flossie suspects something. Dr. Poole loves Loola, but she is not sure if she loves him. She is sure that she should not be here because it is against the Law. Dr. Poole assures her that she is still human, unlike the others who have been turned into animals, and when she worries that He will kill her, Dr. Poole claims that Belial will not touch them if they do the right thing as he embraces her and quotes Shelley. Loola breaks away from the kiss and retreats to the far end of her seat because this cannot be right since Belial does not want her to be happy. Dr. Poole says Belial cannot win because He is unable to "resist the temptation of carrying evil to the limit.



And whenever evil is carried to the limit, it always destroys itself. After which the Order of Things comes to the surface again" (page 147). This is far in the future for the whole world but not for individuals like Dr. Poole and Loola. Loola does not understand, but she decides she does not care either. He can kill her if He wants as it no longer matters. As Dr. Poole bends to kiss Loola, the image fades to the darkness of a moonless night. Dr. Poole's laboratory is empty as the Director of Food Production escorts the Arch-Vicar inside. As his familiars search for Dr. Poole in the experimental garden, the Arch-Vicar mentions his intention to persuade Dr. Poole to enter religion. He is confused and angry when Dr. Poole is not found in the garden, and he sends the familiars out to search for Dr. Poole. Dr. Poole and Loola climb a landslide and look down over the Mojave Desert. They stop to eat and rest thirty miles from Lancaster, and Dr. Poole says it will take at least two more days to reach Bakersfield. He learned a lot from the Director of Food Production, including that the people up north are friendly to runaways and will not adhere to the government's requests for their return. Loola points out a tombstone, and Dr. Poole reads the inscription of William Tallis, 1882-1948, followed by a verse from Shelley. Loola suggests that William Tallis must have been a very sad man, but Dr. Poole says not so sad as she might imagine. As they sit and begin to eat, he reads the more optimistic stanza from Shelley that follows the one quoted on Tallis' tombstone.

Section 6: The Script, pages 122-152 Analysis

In the final thirty pages of "Ape and Essence", Huxley alludes to the Lady of Guadalupe, St. Joseph, Mary Magdalene, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Rose of Lima, Marxism and Shelley as Dr. Poole quotes Shelley several times and Tallis' epitaph contains one of Shelley's stanzas. Dr. Poole and Loola's relationship develops as they discover monogamy and romantic love, but unfortunately, their time together ends after two weeks when they must return to the Unholy of Unholies to receive their tasks for the upcoming year from the Grand Inquisitor's Chief Assistant. Dr. Poole is directed to report to the Director of Food Production where he will work toward increasing food production while Loola is reassigned to mining cemeteries. She is threatened with lashes when she objects. Dr. Poole works hard on inventing plans to increase food production, but when he presents his report to the Chief, Arch-Vicar and Director of Food Production, the Chief is too impatient to wait fifty years, and the Arch-Vicar interjects that the deformation rate will double within fifty years.

Dr. Poole visits the Hollywood Cemetery where Loola works, making an excuse when they are caught by Flossie. He then visits the Arch-Vicar who wants Dr. Poole to join the church to free himself of the temptations to which he will most certainly be exposed as an un-mutated male. Dr. Poole returns to working in his experimental garden and meets secretly with Loola. She is hesitant and believes that she is doing wrong for meeting him, but Dr. Poole convinces her that what they are doing is right. The Arch-Vicar is infuriated when he does not find Dr. Poole in his laboratory and initiates a search. Meanwhile, Dr. Poole and Loola head toward Bakersfield where they can reside in the community of Hots. They come upon a tombstone of William Tallis which contains a stanza from one of Shelley's poem. The discovery of this tombstone fulfills the earlier

foreshadowing which occurs in "Tallis." Dr. Poole and Loola eat and discuss Shelley, insinuating that they may find happiness together.



Characters

William Tallis

William Tallis is the author of the script, "Ape and Essence." In "Tallis," the narrator and Bob Briggs find the script of "Ape and Essence" and travel to Murcia, California to meet Tallis only to learn he died six weeks earlier from heart problems. The Coultons tell them about William Tallis. He sent his script to the studios to make money for his granddaughter in Europe. Before World War I, he married a German girl, but she had decided to stay in Germany when they divorced. His ex-wife and child were killed by Hitler because they were Jewish, so his granddaughter was all he had left. Tallis wanted to bring his granddaughter to America, but the government would not allow it; sending her money to allow her to eat properly and finish her education was the next best thing he could do for her. Tallis married again to a woman on the stage, but she ran off with some other fellow.

The narrator fabricates an entire biography for Tallis, imagining a carefully educated young man from a good family in New England who had fallen in love in Germany, married and fathered a child. The William Tallis of the narrator's imagination could see that he had, for the sake of pleasure, condemned a wife and daughter to death at the hands of maniacs and a granddaughter to a life of prostitution or something like it. In his script, William Tallis describes being buried in the desert, under a Joshua tree. His tombstone gives the dates of 1882-1948 and quotes Shelley: "Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart? Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here They have departed, thou shouldst now depart!" (pg. 152.)

Dr. Alfred Poole

Dr. Alfred Poole is the protagonist of William Tallis' "Ape and Essence." He is known to his colleagues and younger students as Stagnant Poole. A Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand, Dr. Poole is not unhandsome nor a fool, but his intelligence seems to be only potential, and his attractiveness seems no more than latent. He lives with his mother and is a devoted son, but despite his mother's wishes that he marry Miss Ethel Hook, he absolutely will not do so. When the New Zealand Rediscovery Expedition lands on the coast of Southern California, he falls behind his party in order to examine the plantlife and collect specimens. He is kidnapped by some of the natives and taken to the Chief at Hollywood Cemetery. The Chief orders Dr. Poole to be buried but retracts the mandate when he learns that Dr. Poole can help them increase their food production. Joining the procession to the town, Dr. Poole meets and is infatuated with Loola who decides to call him Alfie.

Dr. Poole is disturbed by the Purification Ceremony in which deformed babies are slaughtered, and he faints, reviving to discuss history and religion with the Arch-Vicar. He then joins the celebration of Belial Day, engaging in sexual relations with Loola



before being swept away into the arms of two mulatto girls. He is remorseful the next day, and Dr. Poole spends the next two weeks with Loola, rediscovering monogamy and romantic love. He is then assigned a laboratory in the University of Southern California in order to experiment with food production, but he sneaks away to visit Loola. When the Arch-Vicar requests that Dr. Poole join the church, Dr. Poole requests and is granted time to consider the offer. He runs away with Loola, heading toward the community of Hots in Bakersfield up north.

Narrator of

The narrator of "Tallis", the first part of the novel, works at a movie studio with Bob Briggs. After lunching with Bob, he finds and saves "Ape and Essence" by William Tallis when it falls from a dump truck headed for the incinerator. The following Sunday, Bob and the narrator travel to Cottonwood Ranch in Murcia, California to meet William Tallis, only to learn that William Tallis died six weeks earlier. The narrator reprints "Ape and Essence" without change or comment after this short narrative.

Bob Briggs

Bob Briggs is a self-absorbed director and writer who complains about his personal problems to the narrator at the studio commissary in "Tallis". He is with the narrator when "Ape and Essence" is found, and he accompanies the narrator to Murcia, California to meet William Tallis. While the narrator is talking to Mr. and Mrs. Coulton, Bob speaks to their granddaughter, Rosie, about her musical aspirations, telling her that he believes he can arrange for her to have a screen test.

Narrator of

The narrator of "The Script," the second part of the novel, comments on various actions and events through William Tallis' play, "Ape and Essence." He compares men to apes and makes many moral observations as well.

Miss Ethel Hook

Miss Ethel Hook wears tweeds and horn-rimmed spectacles. She is wholesome, efficient and intensely English. Still unmarried at thirty-five years of age, she expects Dr. Poole to propose when they return to New Zealand after their expedition. Miss Hook is injured while searching for Dr. Poole and she is administered a sedative when she objects to returning to New Zealand without Dr. Poole.



Chief

The Chief is the head of State in Southern California. At first, he plans to bury Dr. Poole but allows him to go free when Dr. Poole assures him that he can increase food production. On Belial Day, the Chief indulges in copulation with the rest of the humans. He is impatient for Dr. Poole's experiments and plans to yield more food.

Loola

Loola is an eighteen-year-old girl with red hair, dimples, a charming face, and a slender, adolescent body. She falls in love and runs away with Dr. Poole who she calls Alfie.

Arch-Vicar

The Arch-Vicar is the head of Belial's church. He talks to Dr. Poole about history and religion, and he wants Dr. Poole to join the church. The Arch-Vicar is very angry when he finds Dr. Poole missing from his experimental laboratory.

Director of Food Production

The Director of Food Production provides a laboratory for Dr. Poole at the University of Southern California. He also provides Dr. Poole with a lot of information about Bakersfield.

Belial

Belial is the Evil One or the Devil. The people of California blame Belial for all of their suffering and worship him to prolong life for at least a few more minutes.



Objects/Places

Studio Commissary

In "Tallis," the narrator and Bob Briggs discuss Bob's problems inside the studio commissary. Outside, they find the script of "Ape and Essence" by William Tallis.

Cottonwood Ranch

Located in Murcia, California, Cottonwood Ranch is where William Tallis lives when he writes and submits "Ape and Essence." The narrator and Bob Briggs travel to Cottonwood Ranch to meet Tallis, only to learn that he is dead.

Script of

The narrator and Bob Briggs find the script of "Ape and Essence" outside the studio commissary in the first part of the book. They travel to Murcia, California to meet the author, learning that he is dead. The narrator of "Tallis" reprints the script without change or comment.

Canterbury

The Canterbury is the ship on which the New Zealand Rediscovery Expedition sails to California.

New Zealand Rediscovery Expedition

The New Zealand Rediscovery Expedition is a group of scientists from New Zealand who sail to California to rediscover America. This group includes Dr. Schneeglock, Old Professor Craigie, Professor Grampian, Dr. Cudworth, Dr. Alfred Poole, and Miss Ethel Hook.

California

California is the main setting of "The Script" in 2108. This is where the New Zealand Rediscovery Expedition lands. The locals of California worship Belial after World War 3.



Hollywood Cemetery

The gravediggers, including Loola, work at the Hollywood Cemetery, robbing graves. Dr. Poole is nearly buried alive here, and Loola is reassigned to this work after her two weeks with Dr. Poole.

Dr. Poole's Laboratory

Dr. Poole's Laboratory is located at the University of Southern California, and it is granted to him so that he can experiment with ways to increase food production for the State.

Shelley Duodecimo

On Belial Day, Dr. Poole rescues a duodecimo by Shelley from the baker's fire, and he reads the poetry within the volume to Loola throughout "The Script."

Unholy of Unholies

The deformed babies are killed in the Unholy of Unholies. This is also where Belial Day is celebrated.

Bakersfield

Bakersfield is the name of the community of Hots up north to which Dr. Poole and Loola decide to run away in order to escape the tyrannical government and their mandated mating rituals which are devoid of love.



Themes

Humanity & Lack Thereof

One of the most important and most obvious themes that is explored in "Ape and Essence" is that of humanity and the lack thereof. To begin with, in "Tallis," the sightseers show a lack of humanity by being more interested in their picnic baskets than the fact that Gandhi has been assassinated. The narrator thinks about the tyranny held up as the idea form of government in the Republic which leads to ignoring individuals' rights and Gandhi's murder. The narrator believes Gandhi was killed because he was a revolutionary who only believed in people. Gandhi got involved in nationalism with the hope to convert the satanic in the State into something like humanity, but nationalism proved too much for him as the dream of the Order begets tyranny. Gandhi was killed because after briefly playing the political game, he refused to continue dreaming of a national Order and tried to bring the focus back to real people and the Inner Light. Another example of the lack of humanity is seen in the allusion to World War I and Hitler's genocide of the Jews.

Another example is seen when a bosomy young female baboon wearing makeup walks to the microphone as the hairy hands applaud while Michael Faraday, collared, leashed and on all fours, crawls behind her. What is called knowledge is only another form of ignorance and man's stature has now increased by Higher Ignorance which is man's knowledge so the least among man is a baboon and the greatest is a gorilla. When Faraday attempts to straighten, the baboon girl chides and beats him with a riding switch as she begins singing about the essence of love. As Faraday's tearful face registers disgust and shame, a montage flashes across the screen to show a baboon housewife, baby, financier and teenagers listening gleefully to the song on the radio. When the baboon singer sees Faraday's tears, she beats him as the audience cheers. On the other side of the world, two groups of baboons war with one another and are all killed. The narrator claims that love and fear cast one another out, and fear, the foundation of modern life, also casts out intelligence, goodness, beauty, truth, and humanity, leaving only desperation. Truth without charity is not God but rather an idol.

This theme is reiterated throughout Huxley's book. It is seen by the young gravedigger's hesitation and fear to touch the woman beside him as well as the Chief's decision to bury Dr. Poole alive, retracted only when he learns that Dr. Poole may be of service in increasing food production. Loola shows her humanity when she confides to Dr. Poole that she does not like public burials and when she worries about having a deformed baby. Evidence of the Chief's lack of humanity is seen when he accepts a necklace made of human bones at the Cocktail Bar. The Arch-Vicar discusses notions of humanity and the lack thereof with Dr. Poole as he discusses his belief that mankind has been subject to demonic possession since men accepted the absurd ideas of Progress and Nationalism. The narrator also insists that customs demolish any remaining vestige of humanity, and he also objects to the seasonal mating of humans, claiming they have been forced to mate like animals. This is demonstrated by the rituals



of copulation on Belial Day. Dr. Poole and Loola desist from these ideas by rediscovering monogamy and romantic love and this is what causes them to seek the community of more humane Hots in Bakersfield.

Science & War

In "Ape and Essence," Huxley cites the major influence that destroys humanity as science and war. This is hinted at in "Tallis" when the narrator claims that Gandhi was killed because, after briefly playing the political game, he refused to continue dreaming of a national Order and tried to bring the focus back to real people and the Inner Light. Furthermore, Tallis' wife and child were killed during World War I because they were Jewish. In "The Script", the setting is formed by the destruction caused by World War 3. New Zealand managed to survive the war, and the New Zealand Rediscovery Expedition sails to North America. Meanwhile, two groups of baboons war with and kill one another. The scientific curiosity of the New Zealand Rediscovery Expedition is seen in their discussion about bacteria, radioactive gases and plant diseases, and Dr. Poole's specific curiosity is seen as he gathers specimens and examines flowers. The narrator explains that people lived in the wilderness for many years after the radiation destroyed society during the war. Dr. Poole saves his life from the barbaric Chief when he promises that, using scientific knowledge, he can increase food production. Deformed babies are slaughtered as a result of the war which causes everyone born to be deformed due to the radioactivity.

According to the Arch-Vicar, man pits himself against nature for 100,000 years with no side gaining, but in the last three centuries, man begins to win against the Order of Things, beginning with machines and food for the hungry; however, these things come at a stiff price as "copulation resulted in population- with a vengeance!" (pg. 91.) The planet becomes overcrowded and the land is ruined, causing hunger to return which results in war. Belial would have achieved his purposes even without the atomic bomb, though it may have taken longer, because men destroy themselves by destroying the world in which they live. From the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, men lose all sense of reality from their use of technology, and they see themselves as conquering Nature, destroying the earth and calling it Progress. The Arch-Vicar insists that Belial puts the ideas of Progress and Nationalism into men's heads, and history shows evidence of Belial's guiding hand. The two ideas are absurd and leads to fatal actions, yet humanity accepts these notions as guides to conduct. The Devil prompted man to accept these ideas because he desires the degradation and destruction of the human race. Dr. Poole's horror begins to be mitigated by scientific curiosity.

The narrator interjects that humans always mate, but the gamma rays have made sex become seasonal, killing romance and love with a female's chemical compulsion to mate. Dr. Poole is told to report to the Director of Food Production where he will receive a laboratory, plot of land and four laborers, and when he discusses his plans for increasing food production, the impatient Chief insists that he wants more food immediately. Dr. Poole reiterates that it may take fifty years, and the Arch-Vicar interjects that the deformation rate will double within fifty years. In his attempt to



convince Loola to run away with him, Dr. Poole convinces her that she is still human, unlike the other people who have been turned into mere animals who mate within a certain season.

Love & Sex

A very important theme in "Ape and Essence" is that of love and sex. It takes very little precedence in "Tallis," being mentioned only in reference to Bob's relationships with his wife and mistress, and then in regard to Tallis' marriages and child. It takes far greater importance in "The Script" as this is one of the principal demonstrations of the dehumanization of mankind. The narrator claims that love and fear cast one another out, and fear, the foundation of modern life, also casts out intelligence, goodness, beauty, truth and humanity, leaving only desperation. Truth without charity is not God but rather an idol. Miss Ethel Hook hopes that Dr. Poole will propose since his mother wishes him to do so and he is a very dutiful son, and she loves him because he is unhappy and helpless; however, Dr. Poole sees marriage to Miss Hook as unthinkable despite his mother's wishes and the fact that he admires her as a friend and scientist. At the Hollywood Cemetery, the youngest gravedigger looks intensely at the plump girl beside him and is tempted to touch her, but his conscience gets the better of him and he returns to digging with redoubled zeal.

When Dr. Poole questions Loola about her melancholy expression, she explains that everything is terrible suffering and wanting; Belial possesses everyone, causing men to hit women and call them a Vessel of the Unholy Spirit. After Belial Day, they are punished for what He made them do if they have a baby. Loola hopes that her baby will not be deformed if she ever has one. As their march through the dunes continues, Loola cries in fear of having a deformed baby, but when Dr. Poole tries to comfort and kiss her, she pushes him away and looks around in guilty terror before running away. Women wear clothing with the word "NO" written all over it to remind men that women, and thus sex, are off limits. The Practitioner exclaims about how revolting the vessel is and asks her about the Nature of Woman, beating her as she answers that woman is the vessel of the Unholy Spirit. When Dr. Poole witnesses the beginning of the celebration for Belial Day as people begin chasing one another, the Arch-Vicar explains the ceremony: after only two generations, people are only permitted to mate for two weeks and then must be punished for having been punished because that is the Law of Belial. There are those who continue with the old-style mating patterns, but these Hots are beaten if they are caught. If they refuse to be discreet, they can run away to a community of Hots up north. Young boys who show early signs of becoming a Hot are made into a priest and eunuch.

The Arch-Vicar believes sex is nauseating and is grateful to have been saved from such ignominy, and he looks in disgust at the Chief who is relaxing from the cares of the State as women make themselves obviously accessible. The narrator interjects that humans always mate, but the gamma rays have made sex become seasonal, killing romance and love with a female's chemical compulsion to mate. After Dr. Poole mates with Loola, they emerge from the shadows, and another man grabs Loola as two young



mulatto girls claim Dr. Poole for mating. The next morning, Dr. Poole hides his face with his hands as conscience and principles attack him. When Loola joins him, they comfort one another and share their feelings. She never wants to say yes to anyone else, and he feels that he has "only just discovered what life's all about" (pg. 121.) During the next two weeks, Dr. Poole and Loola rediscover monogamy and romantic love, but they are separated to return to their duties for the next year. Dr. Poole sneaks to the Hollywood Cemetery to visit Loola, and she turns pale as he embraces her and convinces her to smile. The Arch-Vicar invites Dr. Poole to join the church to free himself of the temptations to which he will most certainly be exposed as a male that has not been mutated.

Dr. Poole hurries to the garage of number 1993 where he joins Loola in a car. She looks at him silently and in terror. She managed to get away, but Flossie suspects something. Dr. Poole loves Loola, but she is not sure if she loves him. She is sure that she should not be here because it is against the Law. Dr. Poole assures her that she is still human, unlike the others who have been turned into animals, and when she worries that He will kill her, Dr. Poole claims that Belial will not touch them if they do the right thing as he embraces her and quotes Shelley. Loola breaks away from the kiss and retreats to the far end of her seat because this cannot be right since Belial does not want her to be happy. Dr. Poole says Belial cannot win because He is unable to "resist the temptation of carrying evil to the limit. And whenever evil is carried to the limit, it always destroys itself. After which the Order of Things comes to the surface again" (page 147). This is far in the future for the whole world but not for individuals like Dr. Poole and Loola. Loola does not understand, but she decides she does not care either. He can kill her if He wants as it no longer matters. Dr. Poole and Loola climb a landslide and look down over the Mojave Desert. They stop to eat and rest thirty miles from Lancaster, and Dr. Poole says it will take at least two more days to reach Bakersfield. He learned a lot from the Director of Food Production, including that the people up north are friendly to runaways and will not adhere to the government's requests for their return. Loola points out a tombstone, and Dr. Poole reads the inscription of William Tallis, 1882-1948, followed by a verse from Shelley. Loola suggests that William Tallis must have been a very sad man, but Dr. Poole says not so sad as she might imagine. As they sit and begin to eat, he reads the more optimistic stanza from Shelley that follows the one quoted on Tallis' tombstone.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of "Tallis" is in the first person and limited. This is seen by the fact that the narrator only can report upon actions that occur and his own thoughts. This is important as this portion of the work serves as a narrative leading up to the second portion. The narrative is told mostly through the use of exposition as the narrator summarizes conversations rather than recording actual dialogue. This is likely because the ideas are the important aspect of "Tallis", as well as the narrator's thoughts which mirror the ideas presented in "The Script." The viewpoint of "Tallis" follows events as seen by the narrator with no variation.

In "The Script", the point of view is the third person and omniscient. This is seen by the narrator's knowledge of many of the characters' thoughts and emotions even as the events are displayed through their actions and words. This is important as this portion of "Ape and Essence" is written as a script meant to be developed into a screenplay. The story is told using a fairly equal distribution of dialogue and exposition which is important in characterizing individuals as well as allowing the narrator to interject insightful observations throughout the novel. The events are seen mostly from the viewpoint of the narrator and Dr. Poole, but this varies to include Loola, Miss Hook, the Arch-Vicar, the Chief, and other random characters.

Setting

"Ape and Essence" is set in the real world of California. However, it is also set in a fictional alternative of California. "Tallis" portrays a California of 1948 which is much more concrete than Tallis' imagined version of Southern California which he presents in "The Script" which is supposed to be representative of 2108 after the atomic bombs of World War 3 change the world and destroy humanity. In "The Script", Dr. Poole travels to California from New Zealand and is kidnapped by natives who are lacking humanity. The difference between the natives' and Dr. Poole's backgrounds is indicative of the changes that humanity has undergone since the war.

In "Tallis", the narrator and Bob Briggs discuss Bob's problems inside the studio commissary. Outside, they find the script of "Ape and Essence" by William Tallis. Located in Murcia, California, Cottonwood Ranch is where William Tallis lives when he writes and submits "Ape and Essence". The narrator and Bob Briggs travel to Cottonwood Ranch to meet Tallis, only to learn that he is dead. The Canterbury is the ship on which the New Zealand Rediscovery Expedition sails to California. California is the main setting of "The Script" in 2108. This is where the New Zealand Rediscovery Expedition lands. The locals of California worship Belial after World War 3. The gravediggers, including Loola, work at the Hollywood Cemetery, robbing graves. Dr. Poole is nearly buried alive here, and Loola is reassigned to this work after her two



weeks with Dr. Poole. Dr. Poole's Laboratory is located at the University of Southern California, and it is granted to him so that he can experiment with ways to increase food production for the State. The deformed babies are killed in the Unholy of Unholies. This is also where Belial Day is celebrated. Bakersfield is the name of the community of Hots up north to which Dr. Poole and Loola decide to run away in order to escape the tyrannical government and their mandated mating rituals which are devoid of love.

Language and Meaning

As with everything else in "Ape and Essence" by Aldous Huxley, the language and meaning varies between the first and second parts of the novel. In "Tallis", the language tends to be casual and informal. This is common to the time period which is portrayed in this section of the work. The narrator frequently diverts onto tangents that have nothing to do with the narrative itself. However, these tangents present ideas that are explored more fully in "The Script". In "The Script", the language tends to be more formal and stiff as there is some conflict between cultures in this section. Additionally, the narrator of "The Script" tends to explore more abstract ideas, often using poetry to do so.

Throughout "Ape and Essence", the language used serves to distinguish between characters, especially the narrator of "The Script" in comparison to the other characters in this portion of the book. "Tallis" is written using mostly exposition as the narrator summarizes the events and conversations, but "The Script" offers a fairly equal distribution of exposition and dialogue. The language aids in comprehension by distinguishing between speakers as this varies. Overall, the language is somewhat difficult to understand at first, but once the reader grows accustomed to the style, it is very useful in differentiating between characters.

Structure

"Ape and Essence" is divided into two parts and contains one hundred and fifty-two pages. The first chapter is entitled "Tallis" and consists of twenty-four pages, while the second portion of the novel, "The Script", contains one hundred and twenty-eight pages. Each of these sections are titled to refer to the main subject of the section. Each section is long and very detailed. "Tallis" occurs over a period of approximately one week, but "The Script" takes place during several months.

The novel is very complex with many diversions and subplots. Overall, "Ape and Essence" by Aldous Huxley is an intriguing novel which explores mankind's lack of humanity. In "Tallis," the narrator finds a script of "Ape and Essence" by the recently deceased William Tallis. "The Script" introduces the destruction of mankind by war and other factors in the future America. "Ape and Essence" offers ideas that are both entertaining and extremely frightening.

The pace of this novel is quite slow due to the many diversions and alternating scenes. "Tallis" is written as a flashback as the narrator reflects on a time in the past while "The Script" is linear although there is some mention of the past throughout it. Overall, the

novel is fairly difficult to read and comprehend but entirely fascinating and disturbing as the reader is presented with a frightening view of the future of humanity.



Quotes

"And Gandhi, I reflected, just couldn't do anything but resist oppression nonviolently and go to prison and finally get shot" (Tallis, pg. 2.)

"Do you think Gandhi was interested in art?... I think you're right. Neither in art nor in science. And that's why we killed him... Yes, we. The intelligent, the active, the forward-looking, the believers in Order and Perfection. Whereas Gandhi was a reactionary who believed only in people. Squalid little individuals governing themselves, village by village, and worshipping the Brahman who is also Atman. It was intolerable. No wonder we bumped him off" (Tallis, pg. 6.)

"And when you finally get what you want, it's never what you thought it was going to be" (Tallis, pg. 8.)

"The leech's kiss, the squid's embrace, The prurient ape's defiling touch: And do you like the human race? No, not much. THIS MEANS YOU, KEEP OUT" (Tallis, pg. 15.)

"Looking back from the vantage point of 1947, the Tallis of my imagination could see precisely what he had done: for the sake of a physical pleasure and the simultaneous excitement and satisfaction of an erotic imagination, he had condemned a wife and a daughter to death at the hands of maniacs, and a granddaughter to the caresses of any soldier or black marketeer with a pocketful of sweetmeats or the price of a decent meal" (Tallis, pg. 22.)

"Beauty inexpressible, peace beyond understanding... But, alas, on our screen This emblem of an emblem Will probably look like Mrs. Somebody's illustration To a poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox. Out of the sublime in Nature Art all too often manufactures only the ludicrous. But the risk must be run; For you there, you in the audience, Somehow and at any price, Wilcox or worse, Somehow you must be reminded Be induced to remember, Be implored to be willing to Understand what's What" (The Script, pg. 25-26.)

"Vertical stripes, horizontal stripes, noughts and crosses, eagles and hammers. Mere arbitrary signs. But every reality to which a sign has been attached is thereby made subject to its sign. Goswami and Ali used to live at peace. But I got a flag, you got a flag, all Baboon-God's children got flags. So even Ali and Goswami got flags; and because of the flags it immediately became right and proper for the one with the foreskin to disembowel the one without a foreskin, and for the circumcised to shoot the uncircumcised, rape his wife and roast his children over slow fires" (The Script, pg. 30-31.)

"What land you ask? And I answer, Any old land. And the Glory, of course, is the Ape-King's, As for the Hope- Bless your little heart, there is no hope, Only the almost infinite probability Of consummating suddenly, Or else by agonizing inches, The ultimate and irremediable Detumescence" (Narrator, The Script, pg. 32.)



"Surely it's obvious. Doesn't every schoolboy know it? Ends are ape-chosen; only the means are man's. Papiro's procurer, bursar to baboons, Reason comes running, eager to ratify; Comes, a catch-fart, with Philosophy, truckling to tyrants; Comes, a pimp for Prussia, with Hegel's Patent History; Comes with Medicine to administer the Ape-King's aphrodisiac, Comes, rhyming and with Rhetoric, to write his orations; Comes with the Calculus to aim his rockets Accurately at the orphanage across the ocean; Comes, having aimed, with incense to impetrate Our Lady devoutly for a direct hit" (The Script, pg. 34.)

"Love casts out fear; but conversely fear casts out love. And not only love. Fear also casts out intelligence, casts out goodness, casts out all thought of beauty and truth. What remains is the dumb or studied jocular desperation of one who is aware of the obscene Presence of the room and knows that the door is locked, that there aren't any windows" (The Script, pg. 38.)

"And that precisely is why you are dying in the murderous service of baboons. Pascal explained it all more than three hundred years ago. 'We make an idol of truth; for truth without charity is not God, but his image and idol, which we must neither love nor worship.' You lived for the worship of an idol. But, in the last analysis, the name of every idol is Moloch. So here you are, my friends, here you are" (The Script, pg. 40.)

"Our friend is a good Congregationalist, but, alas, on the liberal side. Which means that he has never given the Prince of this world his ontological due. To put it brutally, he doesn't believe in Him" (The Script, pg. 53.)

"Cruelty and compassion come with the chromosomes; All men are merciful and all are murderers. Doting on dogs, they build their Dachaus; Fire whole cities and fondle the orphans; Are loud against lynching, but all for Oakridge; Full of future philanthropy, but today the NKVD. Whom shall we persecute, for whom feel pity? It is all a matter of the moment's mores, Of words on wood pulp, of radios roaring, Of Communist kindergartens or first communions. Only in the knowledge of his own Essence Has any man ceased to be many monkeys" (The Script, pg. 55-56.)

"It is the emblem, outward, visible, tangible, of his own inner consciousness. Principle at odds with concupiscence, his mother and the Seventh Commandment superimposed upon his fancies and the facts of Life" (The Script, pg. 61.)

"An inch from the eyes the ape's black paw Eclipses the stars, the moon, and even Space itself. Five stinking fingers Are all the World" (The Script, pg. 79.)

"And yet there's blood in your religion too. 'Washed in the blood of the Lamb.' Isn't that correct?" (The Script, pg. 88.)

"Civilization has no better friend than religion" (Dr. Poole, The Script, pg. 90.)

"And remember this: even without synthetic glanders, even without the atomic bomb, Belial could have achieved all His purposes. A little more slowly, perhaps, but just as surely, men would have destroyed themselves by destroying the world they lived in...



And they called it Progress. Progress, Progress! I tell you, that was too rare an invention to have been the product of any merely human mind- too fiendishly ironical!" (The Script, pg. 93-94.)

"You'd hardly think he could have produced us without a miracle. But He did, He did. By purely natural means, using human beings and their science as His instruments, He created an entirely new race of men, with deformity in their blood, with squalor all around them and ahead, in the future, no prospects but of more squalor, worse deformity and, finally, complete extinction. Yes, it's a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the Living Evil" (Arch-Vicar, The Script, pg. 99.)

"Conscience, custom- the first makes cowards, Makes saints of us sometimes, makes human beings. The other makes Patriots, Papists, Protestants, Makes Babbitts, Sadists, Swedes or Slovaks, Makes killers of Kulaks, chlorinators of Jews, Makes all who mangle, for lofty motives, Quivering flesh, without qualm or question To mar their certainty of Supreme Service" (The Script, pg. 100.)

"Just for these five weeks, that's all. And we only permit two weeks of actual mating... On general principles. They have to be punished for having been punished. It's the Law of Belial. And, I may say, we really let them have it if they break the rules" (The Script, pg. 102-103.)

"Yes, that's our Chief. Until he and the other pigs stop being possessed, the Church just takes over" (The Script, pg. 105.)

"You think too much. You mustn't think. If you think, it stops being fun. If you think, it's terrible, terrible. It's a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living Evil" (The Script, pg. 119.)

"Alfie, I believe I shall never want to say Yes to anyone except you" (The Script, pg. 121.)

"And so, by the dialectic of sentiment, these two have rediscovered for themselves that synthesis of the chemical and the personal, to which we give the names of monogamy and romantic love. In her case it was the hormone that excluded the person; in his, the person that could not come to terms with the hormone. But now there is the beginning of a larger wholeness" (The Script, pg. 122.)

"Well, as I was saying, we must not forget that, if you were to undergo what I may call a physiological conversion, you would be delivered from all the temptations to which, as an unmutated male, you will most certainly be exposed...In these matters, one can never be too sweeping. And let me remind you of what happens to those who succumb to such temptations. The bulls' pizzles and the burying squad are always in readiness. And that is why, in your own interests, for your future happiness and peace of mind, I advise you- nay, I beg and implore you- to join our Order" (The Script, pg. 139.)

"Joy? But joy was murdered long ago. All that survives is the laughter of demons about the whipping posts, the howling of the possessed as they couple in the darkness. Joy is



only for those whose life accords with the given Order of the world. For you there, the clever ones who think you can improve upon that Order, for you, the angry ones, the rebellious, the disobedient, joy is fast becoming a stranger. Those who are doomed to reap the consequences of your fantastic tricks will never so much as suspect its existence. Love, Joy and Peace- these are the fruits of the spirit that is your essence and the essence of the world. But the fruits of the ape-mind, the fruits of the monkey's presumption and revolt are hate and unceasing restlessness and a chronic misery tempered only by frenzies more horrible than itself" (The Script, pg. 141-142.)

"Well, I know. I know I love you. I know I want to be with you. Always. Till death do us part" (The Script, pg. 143.)

"It's too good to be right, I should be too happy if it were. He doesn't want us to be happy" (The Script, pg. 147.)

"I managed to get quite a lot of information out of the Director. He says those people up north are very friendly to runaways from Southern California. Won't give them back even when the government officially asks for them" (The Script, pg. 151.)



Topics for Discussion

What is the significance of the frame story?

What role does religion play in "Ape and Essence?"

How does Dr. Poole change throughout the play?

Why does William Tallis compare humans to apes in his play?

Compare and contrast modern society to the society of Belial in California in "Ape and Essence."

How can this play be seen as prophetic?

Why are the narrator and Bob Briggs so interested in meeting William Tallis after reading his play?

How do you feel about mankind after reading "Ape and Essence?"