Lindbergh Study Guide

Lindbergh by A. Scott Berg

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Introduction

Lindbergh is A. Scott Berg's third biography. The first was his 1978 book about Maxwell Perkins, the editor who worked with such literary giants as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. Berg followed this with a 1989 book about legendary Hollywood producer Samuel Goldwyn. Berg's reputation as a meticulous researcher earned him an advance of over a million dollars for his third book, even before he had started writing it. In researching Charles A. Lindbergh, he was given full cooperation from Anne Morrow Lindbergh, the famous aviator's widow, who gave him exclusive interviews and access to private papers that previous biographers had sought to read, with no luck. The resulting 562-page book is considered to be the definitive work regarding Lindbergh's life and personality. It won the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for biography, and Stephen Spielberg has optioned the movie rights.

Berg's book includes all of the minute details about Lindbergh's background and his later life. The bulk of the story is spent, however, examining the events surrounding the three most remarkable occurrences in his life. His unprecedented solo flight over the Atlantic is covered in great detail, of course, from the first time he conceived of the idea, while flying a mail plane, to the ticker-tape parades he experienced that welcomed him around the globe. Berg also writes extensively about Lindbergh's second brush with fame; public interest surrounding the kidnapping of his son, the famous "Lindbergh baby," led to what is still called the Trial of the Century. The book also explains, as well as it can be explained, how public opinion turned against Lindbergh because of his pro-Germany stance in the years before World War II and how the man who had been surprised to find himself a sudden hero was just as surprised to find himself the object of public scorn. From 1941 to his death in 1974, Lindbergh was out of the public eye but pivotal to the development of commercial aviation and the space program.

Author Biography

Andrew Scott Berg was born in Norwalk, Connecticut, in 1949 and raised in Los Angeles, where his father worked as a film producer. In high school, he became so interested in the writings of F. Scott Fitzgerald that he decided to study English at Fitzgerald's alma mater, Princeton University. There, his studies about Fitzgerald led him to an obscure yet important figure in modern American literature, Maxwell Perkins, who edited not only Fitzgerald's works but also works by Thomas Wolfe, Ring Lardner, Ernest Hemingway, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, and James Jones. Berg's senior thesis on Perkins won him an English department award. After graduation, he set about expanding his thesis into a full-length book. *Max Perkins: Editor of Genius,* published in 1978, was hailed by critics and won the National Book Award for that year.

In 1989, Berg published his second book, entitled *Goldwyn: a Biography,* about the legendary Hollywood movie producer Samuel Goldwyn. Although the subject was remotely related to his interest in the early days of the studio system that Fitzgerald had worked for, it was not one that he had gone looking for. Goldwyn's son had approached him and offered the family's cooperation if Berg would write it, and the offer was too rich in possibility for a biographer to pass up. As with the Perkins book, Berg's research was meticulous, but for various reasons, ranging from Goldwyn's personal shal-lowness to Berg's lesser degree of commitment, the resultant biography was met with mixed reviews and is considered to be the weakest of Berg's three books.

Berg's most recent biography, concerning aviation pioneer Charles A. Lindbergh, was met with immediate success when it was published in 1998, earning Berg the Pulitzer Prize for biography anda spot on the best-seller lists. Like his other books, Berg researched *Lindbergh* meticulously, reading hundreds of previously unpublished letters to and from his subject and working closely with a Lindbergh family member, in this case Colonel Lindbergh's widow, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, a respected writer. Berg currently lives in California.

Plot Summary

Part One

Berg starts *Lindbergh* with a brief chapter about the high point of the aviator's life, his arrival in Paris on May 21, 1927, using this moment in his story to summarize many of the important events that are to come. The statement that Lindbergh believed that this flight had started long before its takeoff thirty-three hours earlier, that it began generations earlier "with some Norsemen□infused with the Viking spirit□" is used to catapult the story back to the time of Lindbergh's grandfather and to follow, thereafter, chronologically from Norway in 1859. Lindbergh's grandfather was a swindler named Ola Månsson who, when it was time to flee Sweden, offered to take his wife and children. When they refused, he took his mistress and their illegitimate son. During their passage to America, he changed his name to August Lindbergh and the baby's name to Charles.

Lindbergh's father, Charles, grew up on a farm in Minnesota, earned a law degree, lost his first wife while she was giving birth to a daughter, and married a woman from the wealthy, aristocratic Lodge family. Their son, also named Charles, is born in February of 1902. Lindbergh's father becomes a politician, is elected to Congress, and leaves the family with his wife's relatives in Detroit while he takes off for Washington, D.C., an event that leaves Charles feeling abandoned and embittered. Though politics is what first creates a rift in his family, Lindbergh's father proves spectacularly unsuccessful at it, losing several elections, including one for governor of Minnesota and one for his old house seat before leaving politics to invest in real estate.

Charles, who had been involved with his father in several of his campaigns and schemes, graduates high school and enrolls in the engineering college at the University of Wisconsin. He finds himself failing, unable to concentrate on his studies, and drops out to attend aviation school. The country is in the middle of an aviation boom, with hundreds of biplanes available that were originally commissioned for use during World War I and were later sold to private companies to put on stunt shows and spray pesticides on crops. By 1923, Charles is able to buy his first plane, and after a few years as a stunt pilot he moves to St. Louis, where opportunities have recently opened for flyers to deliver the U.S. Mail. His success increases public interest in airmail delivery□his handsome face appears on posters, and he speaks at business luncheons on the topic□but he finds the work too confining. Thinking about the full abilities of the new Wright-Bellanca aircraft, he comes across a contest offering $25,000 to the first aviator to cross the Atlantic alone.

He leaves Roosevelt Field in New York on the morning of May 20, 1927, in a small, open plane, the *Spirit of St. Louis.* Alone, over the dark ocean, with no contact with any person, he conserves the food he has brought and, throughout the thirty-three hour flight, only allows himself a few sips of water. Arriving in Paris, he finds the streets

mobbed, as 150,000 people have come out to see the man who single-handedly made the world smaller.

Part Two

As news of his feat travels around the globe, Lindbergh becomes an international hero. He is mobbed by reporters wanting interviews and invited to visit with the world's greatest leaders and royalty. He finds his personal life slipping away from him, as he has become, the moment the plane's wheels landed on French soil, one of the most famous people in the world. There are huge ticker-tape parades for him wherever he goes, and songs and dances are named after him. Within a month of returning to New York, he receives five million dollars worth of endorsement opportunities.

After some of the excitement dies down, Lindbergh expresses interest in helping commercial aviation, which at the time is just beginning. He becomes an advisor to the army and a partner with Henry Ford and some railroad officials in a commercial airline. He marries Anne Morrow, the daughter of the ambassador to Mexico. The couple travels the world for more than a year before having a house built just outside of Princeton, New Jersey. It is there that, on the night of March 1, 1932, their two-year-old son disappears from his nursery on the second floor of the Lindbergh house. Once again, the world's attention centers on the aviator as ransom notes are delivered, leads to the kidnappers'identities are released, and negotiations go on with strangers who may or may not know those involved. On May 10, the boy's body is found buried in the woods near the house, having apparently been put there the night he disappeared.

A suspect, Bruno Richard Hauptmann, is arrested two years later, and his trial brings international attention. He is convicted and sentenced to death although many people, including famous celebrities of the time, object that he is being framed by the authorities. In time, the public comes to distrust Hauptmann's conviction, and some of their anger at the judicial system extends to include Lindbergh.

Part Three

To escape the public's curiosity, the Lindberghs move to England, where they end up renting a house and staying for years. While in England, Lindbergh is a guest in other countries. At the invitation of the American Embassy in Berlin, he goes to Germany, inspecting the German air force and offering advice. While not many people anticipated the Second World War in 1936, his friendliness toward Germany raises some concern, especially among American relatives of persecuted Jews. The situation is made worse when, as war in Europe approaches, Lindbergh makes public statements discouraging American involvement, even if that means leaving Germany to overthrow Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Russia. As German aggression against its Jewish citizens and neighboring countries grows, newspapers and politicians denounce Lindbergh. When war actually begins in Europe, Lindbergh is writing articles for American magazines, urging the country to stay uninvolved. He becomes a spokesman for a

grassroots movement, America First, giving speeches on behalf of nonintervention, even as the country is heading toward war.

Lindbergh is called a Nazi sympathizer and becomes one of the most hated men in America. His reputation is somewhat rehabilitated by his working for the United States Air Force during the war, testing experimental jets and helping design assaults in the Pacific.

Part Four

After the war, Lindbergh's work for the government in developing aerial defense systems continues. His noninterventionist attitude toward Germany is reversed because of the spread of communism, which he feels will almost certainly lead to nuclear war. As he spends more and more time away from home, he becomes estranged from his wife. He becomes a best-selling author, and the United States government, which had shunned him during the war, gives him the honorary title of general. A movie about his life is made, starring James Stewart. He becomes a board member for several airlines and is involved with several wildlife conservation groups. In 1969, he has a house built on Maui. When he becomes deathly ill in New York in 1974, he has friends in the airline industry arrange a flight for him so that he can return one last time to his Hawaiian home, where he dies on August 26.

Characters

Dr. Alexis Carrel

Dr. Carrel became a figure of major importance in Lindbergh's life. Berg presents him as a father figure, stating that "in Dr. Carrel, the hero found a hero□the first since his father; and Carrel found a son." Lindbergh is introduced to Carrel in 1930, when Lindbergh inquires about why an artificial pump could not be used to circulate blood during an operation on his sister-in-law's heart and is told that the doctor is working on just such a thing. Carrel was the first surgeon awarded the Nobel Prize, in 1912, for work on the grafting of blood vessels and organs. He was researching the artificial heart question for the Rockefeller Institute of Medical Research, where he was well respected but also considered somewhat of an oddball for his interest in holistic medicine and the occult. Like Lindbergh, Carrel was a man of broad interests, who sought to connect the physical and spiritual worlds. It was greatly due to the influence of Dr. Carrel that Lindbergh began to take more interest in the human body, and the doctor's death in 1944 raised spiritual concerns for Lindbergh.

John F. Condon

When Charles Lindbergh III was thought to be in the hands of kidnappers, Dr. Condon, a former school teacher and local eccentric from the Bronx, offered his services as an intermediary, an offer that the kidnappers accepted. The kidnappers gave Condon instructions on how to contact them through newspaper ads, using the pseudonym "Jafsie" (a form of his initials, J. F. C.). The police sent Condon to meet with a representative of the kidnappers, and they had an hour-long conversation. When he did deliver the money to the kidnappers, he talked them into taking $20,000 less than had been arranged, thinking that he was saving the Lindberghs some money. By doing this, he actually made the case more complex, because the $50 bills that were in the package that he held back would have been the easiest to trace, because the police gave him specially selected ransom money for this purpose. Condon's eccentricities gave the defense a chance to discredit his testimony against Hauptmann, one of the kidnappers on trial.

Robert Hutchings Goddard

Goddard is the father of rocket engineering, a man whose dream of sending a ship through outer space was routinely mocked in the press as a lunatic fantasy until Lindbergh took an interest in him, convincing wealthy investors to support his work. He was the chairman of the Physics Department at Clark University, when Lindbergh read an article about his work concerning the use of gasoline and liquid nitrogen to power vessels that could reach as far as the moon. The press wrote him off as a dreamer who wanted to reach the moon, but Lindbergh realized the practical application of rocket

science to aviation and urged Henry DuPont, of DuPont Chemical, to support Goddard's research.When DuPont proved uninterested, Lindbergh went to the Carnegie Institution and finally to Daniel Guggenheim. Goddard and Lindbergh kept up a lifetime of correspondence.

Hermann Goering

General Goering was one of the most important men in Hitler's Third Reich. He was a man of many interests; not only was he the German Air Minister, but he also served as commissioner of the four-year plan for economic recovery, director of the state theater in Prussia, minister of forests, and presiding minister of the Reichstag. At a luncheon given for Lindbergh in 1936, Goering and his wife served as courteous hosts to Charles and Anne. Two years later, in 1938, Goering surprised Lindbergh during a dinner of international diplomats by presenting him with the Service Cross of the German Eagle. During the war, Lindbergh's detractors pointed to his closeness with Goering and his acceptance of the medal, as well as his refusal to return it, as a sign that he was a Nazi sympathizer.

Betty Gow

Gow was the nurse that the Lindberghs hired to watch young Charles III. When the baby disappeared, she was suspected of being an accomplice with the kidnappers, and her suitor, "Red" Johnston, was the first person arrested for suspicion because of the access that his relationship with Betty gave him to the house.

Bruno Richard Hauptmann

Hauptmann was the German-born carpenter who was accused and convicted of the kidnapping and death of the Lindbergh baby. He came to the attention of the authorities in 1933, more than a year after the boy's body was found, when he spent one of the bills from the ransom at a gas station. There was substantial evidence against Hauptmann: a large amount of the ransom money was found in his garage; a sketch of a ladder like the one used in the kidnapping was found in his sketchbook; a board from the ladder was identified as having come from his attic; he spelled some words in a certain way that was similar to the ransom note. Upon investigation, it was discovered that Hauptmann had been arrested several times before leaving Germany and had spent four years in jail there. He was so mysterious about his past that his own wife did not know until after his arrest that his real first name was Bruno. Hauptmann asserted his innocence throughout the trial, raising enough suspicion in the eyes of the public that there are people who, to this day, feel that the police persecuted an innocent man. After appeals, he was put to death on April 3, 1936.

Ambassador Myron T. Herrick

Herrick, the American ambassador to France in 1927, was the one to take Lindbergh home the night that he landed in Paris after his famous flight, giving him a place to rest, away from the mobs of people that suddenly wanted his attention. Ambassador Herrick arranged the young aviator's social schedule, guiding him into public life, taking him to embassy parties, government ministries, and meetings of influential organizations, all the while guarding him from the pressures caused by the hundreds of people who wanted to meet him, touch him, and get his autograph.

Arthur Koehler

Koehler was the wood technologist who examined the ladder that had been used in the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby, tracing it to a particular lumberyard in the Bronx before other evidence lead to Hauptmann.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Anne first met Lindbergh when she was visiting her parents during Christmas break, 1927, the year of his flight to Paris. She became infatuated with him but assumed that he must be interested in her older sister Elisabeth. Later, Anne and Charles' romance received international press coverage, as did their marriage in 1929. For several years, Anne joined Lindbergh in travelling the world, settling down in 1930, when their son, Charles III was born. When the baby was kidnapped and later found dead, Anne retreated into herself, staying away from the Hauptmann trial. Throughout their marriage, Anne worked as a writer, producing novels, memoirs, and magazine articles. Her most successful book, personally and financially, was *Gift From the Sea,* published in 1955. Despite its commercial success, critics lambasted the book.

From the late 1950s on, as their children grew old enough to develop their own lives, Anne and Charles grew increasingly apart. He was often on trips so they spent most of their time in different cities, a situation that she came to realize she did not mind. She had her own career and a brief affair with her doctor, Dana Atchley. In the late 1960s, the Lindberghs reconciled, but they were never really close and still did not spend much time together.

Charles August Lindbergh Jr.

Lindbergh is the subject of this book and appears on every page of it. He was born in the Midwest and raised, for the most part, by his mother while his father was away tending to politics or business. In his childhood, young Charles showed a disposition for understanding mechanical things and a curiosity to find out what made things run. After graduating from high school, he showed little affinity for any particular field of work. He went to college to study engineering but eventually dropped out when he saw a

brochure offering courses in a subject that he was really interested in: airplane flight. Lindbergh learned to fly and bought a small plane, which he used to make money putting on shows at fairs. While working for the earliest airmail service in St. Louis, he became interested in a contest offering money to the first person to fly across the Atlantic Ocean. He found financial backers, bought a suitable plane, calculated the necessary adjustments to be made, and in 1927 became the first person to fly across the ocean. The public reaction was enormous, making him one of the most recognized and revered people on the planet.

The other two defining events in Lindbergh's life were the kidnapping of his eighteen-month-old son, Charles III, in 1932, and his amicable relations with high-ranking members of Hitler's government at the beginning of World War II. The first event brought Lindbergh and his wife, Anne, an outpouring of sympathy from all over the world, but the second made many Americans reconsider the man they had called a hero, changing admiration into scorn.

After his history-making flight, much of Lindbergh's life was spent using his fame to promote worthy causes and investigate scientific subjects that concerned him. His involvement was one of the most important elements in the growth of commercial aviation in the early 1930s, and, with Dr. Alex Carrel, he helped to devise a pump to keep blood flowing during heart surgery. He was a sponsor of Robert Goddard, who was the man most responsible for the development of rocket science. He was active in the World Wildlife Fund and was an unofficial goodwill ambassador to countries all over the world. His many achievements came at the expense of his family life: like his father, Lindbergh was seldom home with his family, spending his time travelling and pursuing one mission after another.

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Charles August Lindbergh Sr

The father of the great aviator, Charles August Lindbergh Sr. was a man of principles; however, he was not well suited to be a father. He did not treat his son poorly, but, on the contrary, he treated him like a peer, which meant the boy was left to his own devices while growing up. C. A. was a poor businessman but passionate about politics. His greatest achievement came in 1907, when he was elected in Minnesota to the U.S. House of Representatives. He was insistent about the existence of conspiracies within the government and, like his son, was a strident isolationist who felt that the United States should remain out of the affairs of Europe. He did not get along with Lindbergh's mother and had affairs with other women but was careful not to bring his son into the middle of their disagreements. When the younger Lindbergh grew up, C. A. tried to bring him into his business deals, but the young aviator was uninterested; still, his effect on Lindbergh's personality is undeniable.

Dwight Morrow

Lindbergh first met Morrow when he was the senior partner at J. P. Morgan & Co. Morrow took on the responsibility to advise Lindbergh on how to invest the windfall of money that he had suddenly come into after the flight to Paris. Soon after, Morrow left the financial world when President Coolidge asked him to become America's ambassador to Mexico. While staying with Morrow and his family in Mexico City, Lindbergh developed a romantic interest in the ambassador's daughter, Anne, whom he later married.

H. Norman Schwarzkopf

The first superintendent of the New Jersey State Police, Schwarzkopf took over the investigation into the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby almost immediately. Trained in military tactics (he is the father of the man with the same name, who gained national prominence during the 1991 Persian Gulf War), he coordinated the investigations into the various leads that, for the most part, turned out to be pointless.

"Shorty George" Snowden

Snowden was a harlem musician who coined the name of a popular dance after Lindbergh. On the night Lindbergh landed in Paris, Snowden looked out at the crowd at the Savoy Theater jumping up and down with excitement: "I guess they're doing the Lindy Hop," he observed. The dance caught on and, like Lindbergh himself, became a national craze.

Themes

Heroes and Heroism

For a generation of Americans, Charles A. Lindbergh defined what heroism was all about. While traditional understandings of heroism generally imply victory over some sort of enemy, Lindbergh's heroic action entailed braving the elements and the laws of physics and making his airplane stay aloft for thirty-three hours. His was a type of heroism that was particular to his day, which was a time when technology was new enough to be fascinating and not comprehensive enough to be frightening. From the time of the Wright Brothers' first flight in 1903 to Lindbergh's flight in 1927, the idea of airplane travel had become common, but it was always associated with short distances. The amount of time it took to travel between America and Europe, which had been measured in months at the start of the 1800s and in weeks at the start of the 1900s, was suddenly measured in hours, and making this mind-boggling feat conceivable to average people was not accomplished by an abstract corporation but by a single, handsome individual.

It is Lindbergh's individuality, as much as anything, that made him a hero in the eyes of the world. The cockpit of an aircraft was much more complex than anything most people had ever experienced, but imaginations could grasp the idea of his being isolated in a small, dark space, with no connection to the world at large. As more and more machines imposed themselves upon civilization, there was something almost primitive about the idea of his flight, with the wind blowing in his face and the bright stars above. And at the same time, he wasin control of his machine, making it achieve what no machine ever had. According to Berg's account, Lindbergh had the perfect blend of brains, charm, and self-assurance to fit the role of a hero for his time.

Helplessness

One of the things that made the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby such a huge news story was the way that it presented such an extreme reversal from all that the public knew about their hero. If the 1929 flight was taken as a sign of one individual's ability to triumph over natural forces, the kidnapping drama showed how vulnerable anyone, even the most celebrated man on the planet, could be. An attack on Lindbergh's person could be fought off with the macho strength that the public had come to expect from its heroes. Even an attack on Anne Morrow Lindbergh, who as an adult had her own life and responsibilities, would not be as horrifying as the threat to the couple's child. While the flight across the Atlantic was considered a triumph over impossible conditions, the kidnapping episode was a true test of Lindbergh's character, an impossible situation of which he could not gain control.

The public, though sympathetic, could not see how controlled Lindbergh was during this ordeal. Although the kidnappers had the upper hand and could not be provoked without

putting young Charlie in danger, Lindbergh still kept a cool head and did what little he could to create a favorable situation. While he did not interfere with the police investigation, he did act efficiently and quickly to make sure that all possible leads were explored and that ransom money was available as soon as it was requested. Although obviously disturbed, Lindbergh had too much self-control to allow his feelings of helplessness gain control over him, but that coolness meant staying out of the public eye and saying little to the press, which fostered concern that the pressure had gotten to him. When a drop of the ransom money was arranged, Lindbergh was ready to go to the site and confront the kidnappers himself. For a man accustomed to acting alone, the proven police procedure was as crippling as the kidnapping itself, adding to his sense of helplessness. When the baby was found dead, and the months of patience proved to be worthless, Lindbergh briefly lost faith, but his own natural curiosity kept him from shrinking away from public view for long.

Isolationism

While Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic will always be one of humanity's great feats, many Americans will remember Lindbergh the man with scorn for his isolationist policies concerning the Second World War. Berg does much to show the factors that led to this isolationism, presenting it as a fairly reasonable reaction to the times and not, as Lindbergh's detractors would have it, a sign of sympathy for the policies of the Nazi regime. Lindbergh's father took a strong stand on isolationism, suffering in his political career because of it. Although they were not very close, it would make sense that the son would at least pick up some of the political theories of the father who raised him. Lindbergh had a fiercely independent spirit that enabled him to distinguish himself with his solo flight, an act which brought him public attention in the first place. Also, his travels to other countries, from 1927 on, gave him a perspective on international politics that many Americans lacked, gaining their information about such matters from the media.

Berg portrays Lindbergh's isolationism as being nothing too unusual for its time, an impression that he supports with ample evidence. The very fact that the America First party, which Lindbergh headed, became so popular in the late 1930s shows that the idea was fairly common. Berg reminds readers that Franklin Roosevelt won reelection in 1940 by promising to keep America out of the war in Europe and that the isolationist cause had many influential supporters. Still, Berg does acknowledge that Lindbergh was an apologist for Hitler after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and he does chronicle the aviator's views on Jews, which many suspected to be at the root of his drive to keep America from fighting Germany. Although many Americans were unable to forgive Lindbergh for his isolationist policies, the federal government forgave him after the war was over and Roosevelt, who hated him, was dead. The next generation brought a massive popular struggle against America's involvement in another overseas war, in Vietnam.

Search for Knowledge

Having become internationally famous at a young age, Lindbergh spent most of his life working on intellectual pursuits, a fact that is made abundantly clear in this biography. He becomes personally involved in a number of experimental programs, showing equal degrees of curiosity about them all. His weeks of work in the laboratory of Dr. Alex Carrel forced him to learn about blood, tissue, and microorganisms, with the end result contributing to the development of an artificial heart pump. He supported Robert Goddard's work with rockets, realizing the potential this had in the field of weaponry and in eventually breaking out of the Earth's orbit. During the Second World War, he worked with military specialists on assault strategies, and, when the United States Government refused to accept his assistance in any official capacity, he worked quietly with government scientists, test-flying bombers and allowing himself to be, as Berg puts it, a "guinea pig" for tests on high-altitude pressurization. In his later years, understanding the complex balance of ecology, he took up the environmental cause before it became popular. In his seventies, he often visited the Philippines, a country that Berg says "was one great test laboratory for Lindbergh, where the laws of human nature could be tested." On one visit there, he lead the first expedition from civilization to the land of the Tasaday, a cave-dwelling, primitive people. While another person may have rested securely with his fame established, Lindbergh was driven to know more, to build his mind, and to not take the respect accorded to him for granted. He was a scientist at heart, having learned from his grandfather that "science is the key to all mystery."

Style

Archetype

An archetype is a recurring image that is recognized throughout society, meaning practically the same thing to all people. The concept comes from the psychological concept of a collective unconscious, which theorizes that people all have deep within them similar memories, leading back to one common source. A mother holding a child, for instance, is an archetypal image that is universally recognized, as is an extended hand or a clenched fist. Usually, archetypes are thought to be images or ideas that date back thousands, if not millions, of years, to a time before different cultures developed out of one common source.

Charles Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic is an archetype for the mechanical age. Spectators across the world, in all corners of the globe, marveled at the news of the aviator's accomplishment, indicating that there is something in humans of all societies that recognize what an incredible thing it is for a person to be able to fly. For the first twenty-five years of aviation history, the world saw airplanes as crude machines, chugging and puffing to pull themselves above the ground. Lindbergh's flight, though, imbued air travel with the magic and grace that earlier civilizations must have imagined when they speculated whether humans could ever fly. Because of who he was, with his good looks and refined personality, Lindbergh focused attention on the pilot, not the machine, tapping into dreams as old as the ancient Greek myth of Icarus, who made wings of wax that melted when he flew too close to the sun. In Lindbergh's case, however, a single man was triumphant over nature, and people throughout the world recognized him as the model of a new age of technological wonder.

In medias res

In medias res is a Latin term meaning "in the middle of things." It refers to the technique of beginning a story at its midpoint and then using various flashback devices to reveal previous action. *Lindbergh* does not use this technique throughout, but it does apply it in a small sense. The first chapter, "Karma," drops readers into the middle of Lindbergh's life, at the moment of his greatest triumph, in fact. Berg gives the facts about the crowds of people lining the streets of Paris, waiting for *The Spirit of St. Louis* to appear. By using this technique, Berg starts his story of Lindbergh's life on a lively note, whetting readers' appetites for the background of this event, buying attention that might otherwise dwindle as readers slog through the standard biographical fare of the subject's ancestors, his childhood, and the first signs that he is bound for greatness. The book, in fact, does slip back almost immediately to the earliest chronological point of the Lindbergh saga, picking it up in the year 1859 at the beginning of Chapter Two. After starting in the middle of the action for one introductory chapter, the rest of this autobiography follows in standard time sequence, with the scene described in the first chapter occurring about a quarter of the way through the story.

Style

Many things are involved in understanding the style of a written work. Writers make choices about which words to use, which scenes belong where, and which perspective to view the events from. Usually, readers can also get a sense of a writer's personality by noticing which information she or he chooses to give and which information is left out. What makes A. Scott Berg so well respected as a biographer is that his writing style does not overpower his subjects. He lets the story tell itself, with only the slightest indication of how the writer feels about the events he is describing. Because of the nature of biography, this can be an extremely difficult feat: there is seldom enough recorded information to know all of the facts of a situation that is being reported, and some writers are tempted to fill in by speculating about what their subject might have felt or how things might have seemed. Berg is able to fill in the minute details because of his exhaustive research on any subject. He can speak of any particular situation from Lindbergh's life from different perspectives because he has dug up the memoirs, letters, and public statements of other participants. He knows his subject thoroughly and so is able to give each moment in his book a feel of truth without having to draw attention to the facts, which he presents to speak for themselves. The fact that readers seldom take note of his writing style is proof that his knowledge of his material is thorough and authoritative.

Historical Context

Early Aviation

The idea flight goes back as long as humanity has existed with humans taking note of the ways that bird and human physiognomy resemble one another, except for birds' wings. History has kept no record of most of the small-time dreamers who have tried to make false wings that would give humans flight. One of the earliest recorded flights occurred in England, circa 1100 A.D., when an unnamed monk attached wings to his hands, jumped off a tower, and glided almost six hundred feet before breaking both legs upon landing. Most attempts to fly were of a similar vein: optimistic, ambitious, and futile. Leonardo da Vinci, the great Renaissance inventor and artist, was one of the first to approach the subject of flight from a scientific perspective. In 1500, he drew in his notebook a sketch of a flying contraption that had broad hinged wings that flapped by the power of a man attached to them in a harness. Although da Vinci's flying machine was never practical, some of his ideas about flight were useful to George Cayley, who, in 1804, designed a glider that was based on the ideas of propulsion, or forward motion, and the lift that could be achieved with the proper propulsion. These are the basic ideas that guide modern aviation.

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The next pioneer in the advance of aviation was a German engineer, Otto Lilienthal, who realizedthat wing design was crucial to transferring propulsion into lift. Lilienthal made over 2,500 glider flights with wings attached to his arms, experimenting with variables in balance and shape. His designs resembled hang gliders of today. He died during one of his flights, but he left behind extensive notes, which future generations of aviators drew upon. By Lilienthal's time, the idea of gliding in the air was fairly well established, but no one could find a way for a flying machine to propel itself without having so much equipment that it would be too heavy to lift off the ground.

In the early twentieth century, there were a number of inventors experimenting with the idea of a self-propelled airplane. One notable one was Samuel Langley, the curator of the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. Langley was fascinated with airplane theory, and he wrote an influential book on the subject, *Experiments in Aerodynamics.* In 1903, Langley thought that he had a working airplane, and he called members of the press to witness his initial flight, but as soon as the wires holding the plane down were cut, it rolled to the edge of the houseboat it was launching from and dropped into the ocean. A second attempt in December of that same year ended just as disastrouslyNine days later, the Wright Brothers, Orville and Wilbur, launched a plane at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. It stayed in the air on its own power for twelve seconds, confirming the Wrights' theories and ushering in the modern age of aviation.

Airplanes were still for hobbyists and scientists for the most part of the following decade. It was not until World War I, which started in 1914, that their true practicality became apparent. Originally, they were used by both sides for scouting enemy positions until the Germans thought to equip their planes with machine guns, leading to "dog fights" between enemy planes. This quickly advanced the mobility of airplanes and the number of trained, skilled pilots. After the war, many of these pilots had flying in their blood and continued to show off their talent at barnstorming shows across the country. The growth of the airmail industry, as outlined in *Lindbergh,* kept many ex-army pilots employed, doing what they loved.

Isolationism

Isolationism refers to a political theory which suggests that keeping the United States away from involvement in events in Europe and in the WesternHemisphere is best. The United States has a history of isolationism going back to the early days of the republic. George Washington advised the country, in his farewell address, to stay out of alliances with other countries that might drag the United States into war. Thomas Jefferson expressed similar views. Throughout the nineteenth century, America followed the events in Europe, but there was always a strong, vocal segment of the population who held a high standard for what should be considered in the "national interest," particularly something worth becoming involved in a war.

In the twentieth century, the pull to become involved in European affairs became even stronger. Newer forms of transportation, such as the steamship and transcontinental air flight (which Lindbergh helped pioneer) cut the distance that naturally isolated America. At the same time, the European wars became more complex, involving more and more countries through treaties and obligations. At one time, thirty-two nations were involved in World War I.

Woodrow Wilson was reelected to the presidency in 1916 with the promise that he would keep the United States out of the war that had been raging in Europe for two years. In April 1917, after a coded message was intercepted regarding a German request for Mexico's help in attacking the United States, Wilson asked Congress to declare war. In 1940, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was reelected by promising to stay out of the European war, but that neutral stance was shoved aside when the naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, was attacked by the Japanese in December of 1941. One of the most powerful isolationist groups in the country's history was the America First Committee, founded in 1941, and of which Lindbergh was an active member. Once the country was at war, the general belief that World War II was "The Good War" (a nickname that continues to this day) doomed the cause of isolationism, making its adherents, including Lindbergh, seem cowardly and unpatriotic.

Critical Overview

The thoroughness of his research has led all three of the biographies written by A. Scott Berg to be respected by critics. As the *Library Journal* puts it in a summary review in 1999, Berg's first two books have become "central texts in their fields," and *Lindbergh,* his most recent effort, is a "big, thoroughly researched book [that] is a fine work of restorative storytelling." Since its publication in 1998, critics have been impressed with the amount of work that went into producing *Lindbergh.* Some reviews have emphasized the exhaustive amount of detail about the aviator's life that A. Scott Berg sifted through in his nine years of research, focusing on the facts he presents instead of the way they are presented. Lance Morrow in *Time* magazine, for instance, calls the book a "superb biography," but that is the extent of his evaluation: the rest of the review talks about the aviator, not Berg's writing style. A brief review in *Booklist* does talk about the quality of the work, in the glowing praise that most reviewers use when writing about the book for mass-circulation magazines: "Masterfully written and extensively researched, this beautifully balanced biography depicts one of the twentieth century's most controversial, famous, and yet private of men."

More extensive reviews tend, after giving the book careful consideration, to find more to be critical about. For all of the mass of information that Berg presents, some reviewers are left wanting more. "There are no new insights into the boy flyer," wrote *Publishers Weekly,* "no new theories about the kidnapping, but there is a chilling portrait of a man who did not seem to enjoy many of the most basic human emotions. Perhaps more attention to Lindbergh's near-worship of the Nobel Prize-winning doctor, Alexis Carrel, would have explained more about his enigmatic character." Mark Stricherz, writing in *America,* finds the book's weaknesses to stem from the source of its strength: the very reason that Berg was able to work so many years with Lindbergh's story was an infatuation with the man that, in the end, proves to limit his range as a biographer. "The temptation is to become so enamoured of what you found or whom you know," he writes, referring to the many Lindbergh associates that Berg worked with, "that you lose sight of the subject's real story. . .. *Lindbergh* is marred by Anne Morrow Lindbergh's influence, to the point that the book avoids the most vital aspects of his life." Stricherz notes that the book's ample praise for Lindbergh's better qualities only draws greater attention to his shortcomings. "Lindbergh's life, therefore, must also be reckoned in philosophical and moral terms. The Holocaust did not occur in a vacuum.'

One extensive mixed review, with much good and bad to say about this huge book, is by Sam Tanenhaus, in the January 1999 issue of *Commentary.* He notes that Berg "relates this remarkable story with energy and competence, unfolding his themes with a naturalness possible only because he has mastered vast quantities of detail." That said, however, he notes that the book becomes less interesting when the section about the Atlantic crossing is over. Tanenhaus does not believe that Berg understands the "complex social and political currents of the 1930' s." Tanenhaus believes that Berg seems "unnerved" by this time period so crucial to Lindbergh's story. Even worse, he feels that Berg lacks insight into what motivated Lindbergh during what he calls his "misadventures in isolationism." "Lindbergh's political activities come at us as a string of

regrettable incidents, not as the crisis of character they plainly were," Tanenhaus writes. "Important questions hide murkily below the smooth surface of the narrative, and Berg seems afraid of touching of them." Some readers might find it to be greedy of reviewers to want any more of Berg, given the thoroughness of his work that is universally agreed upon; others might blame the book for being this extensive and yet still leaving curious reviewers unsatisfied.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3
- Critical Essay #4

Critical Essay #1

Kelly is an instructor of creative writing and literature at Oakton Community College in Illinois. In the following essay, he examines how Berg's apparent hesitance to address Lindbergh's Nazi controversy leaves this biographical work incomplete.

One can hardly help being impressed with A. Scott Berg's recent biography of Charles Lindbergh, the famous aviator, inventor, and amateur statesman. As with Berg's previous books, this one is meticulously researched and rendered with a fluent biographical style that does not force readers to be aware of how much information is being handed to them or of the lengths to which the author must have gone when assembling it. Most Americans, familiar with Colonel Lindbergh only for his flight across the Atlantic, the tragedy involving his infant son, and his unpopular political views during the war,will find something new on each of the book's pages. In addition to the details of his life that any competent, diligent researcher could root out, there is also the mass of information that was made available to Berg alone, through an exclusive agreement with the Lindbergh estate. It would be futile to start listing the bits of knowledge about Lindbergh's life that are packed into the book, because they certainly number into the millions.

Yet, for all of this thoroughness, some reviewers have complained that Berg's biography does not let readers really know what the man thought of himself or of the world around him. There are things that can easily be assumed from his life□for instance, the fact that the Lindbergh's move to Europe after their son's murder was motivated by disgust with the United States. But there are other issues that reviewers have found even more problematic. The most obvious of these involve Lindbergh's ties to Nazi Germany. Berg presents this segment of the aviator's life as a huge misunderstanding, during which those favoring America's entry into the war for their own selfish interests made a scapegoat of him, presenting his isolationism as sympathy for Hitler's government. In fact, Berg does give one piece of evidence after another, including numerous quotes from journals, clearly indicating that Lindbergh actually was sympathetic with the Germans.

There may seem to be overwhelming evidence, but the biographer can always prove such a simplistic assumption wrong. There is room for discussion about how Lindbergh felt about the policies of the German government in the middle 1930s, especially so if, like Berg, one spent months immersed in the complexity of his personality, his thoughts, and his humanitarian behavior. The casual observer may want to give in to the temptation to find that final clue that settles the question of Lindbergh's beliefs once and for all. Common observers should not rush to judgement; the biographer must not rush to judgment. Still, even with that in mind, there is a lot of information in *Lindbergh* that suggests Lindbergh's comfort with the Nazi regime and little to refute the charges of these leanings except for Berg's unwillingness to believe the facts are damning.

One point of a biography is to free its subject from any gossip or innuendo that he might have labored under in his life. Berg is clear that this is his goal regarding Lindbergh's

political leanings during the pre-war years. One way that he does this is to show how common it was, in 1936, for an American to be enthusiastic about the Third Reich. "In the afterglow of the Berlin Olympics," he writes, "Lindbergh's feelings toward Germany were hardly unique." Berg goes on to name a few others who were "swayed by Hitler's magnetism," including Arnold Toynbee and Lloyd George. In a sense, effective biography writing is all about making today's readers understand actions in terms of their times. People can only act with the knowledge available to them. For instance, some people may look at the writings of former civilizations that accepted narrow definitions of "citizenship" and try to accept that they excluded people. Some of history's most revered literary figures were racist, misogynistic, and anti-Semitic. Is it or is it not fair to think they should have known better? There must be a point at which, if people were to condemn their ancestors for antiquated views, there would be no one left uncondemned, rendering the process of condemnation useless. But there is also a point at which even a man of his times can be taken to task for his beliefs.

Unfortunately for Lindbergh and his supporters, the Nazi regime has come, since the beginning of World War II, to represent the apex of absolute evil. One might look at Thomas Jefferson and James Madison arguing the rights of slaves and think that they were both honest and possibly even decent men, but since the Holocaust came to light, it has been nearly impossible to think of supporting the Nazis as just a case of youthful indiscretion. Berg nearly excuses Lindbergh's feelings for the Third Reich as part of the great wave of support for Germany that followed the Olympics. Careful readers will remember to see the subjects of a biography through their own words, not with the attitude the author projects. A few sentences after describing the Lindberghs' pro-German enthusiasm, Berg presents a quote that seems full of earnestness and innocence, relating Anne Morrow Lindbergh's shock over "the strictly puritanical view at home that dictatorships are of necessity wrong, evil, unstable and that no good can come of them□combined with our funny-paper view of Hitler as a clown□combined with the very strong (naturally) Jewish propaganda in the Jewish owned papers." Yes, it is the biographer's place to take his subjects on their own terms, but it is also the writer's job to be clear on his stance toward his subject. If Berg truly believes that the Lindberghs were unfairly castigated by the American public for holding ideas that were reasonable, given their experience, then Mrs. Lindbergh's idea of what is excessively "puritanical" must be reasonable, in which case Berg does more harm by casting doubt on his own senses than he does good for the Lindberghs' reputation.

It is not likely that Berg approves of the Lindberghs' pro-Hitler beliefs. More likely, it is that he feels his position as biographer limits him to being impartial and staying out of the controversy. There may be merits to such an approach, but they do not really apply here because Berg spends so much effort trying to make Lindbergh seem reasonable that he cannot claim to be uninvolved. For the most part, he positions Lindbergh's detractors in an unflattering way, as bullies and schemers. He does not print reasonable, measured responses to Lindbergh that would show why, even in the light of the knowledge of the Holocaust, the Nazi persecution of Jews was just bad business for humanity. Instead, Berg quotes one carefully worded letter, chastising Lindbergh for consorting with the Nazis, but then makes a mockery of it by linking its author with Cornelius Vanderbilt Jr.' s telegram that grunts, "WHAT AN UNPATRIOTIC DUMB BELL

YOU ARE." He cites the outrage of millions of Americans but follows that with the House and Senate votes on the Lend-Lease bill to help Europe, as if the opposition to Lindbergh were only a segment of a larger political scheme.

Perhaps it was. Certainly, as Berg suggests, the opposition of Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration to Lindbergh served a greater political plan bygiving a face to the war's opponents. Whether the administration's rebuke of Lindbergh was sincere anger, as F. D. R. certainly wished it to be seen as, or was just political posturing, making him a scapegoat for the problems the Nazis caused, is less relevant than the fact that Lindbergh, once the unflattering light was on him, refused to step away from it. It was his own supporter, Billy Rose, who offered him a public forum to do away with the Iron Cross that Nazi General Hermann Goering gave him□to melt it down in front of an audience at Madison Square Garden. Much is made by Berg of the fact that the medal was an unexpected surprise and that Lindbergh courageously refused to buckle under pressure from those who wanted him to show that while he may once have thought that the Nazi plan was acceptable, he did not any more. Where *Lindbergh* fails is that it wants readers to see the aviator as being courageous for standing up to public criticism, but it never really shows why he did it.

Reviewers have accused Berg of being too close to his subject, too immersed in Lindbergh's life to be able to address the man's weaknesses clearly. This may be so; otherwise, how could anyone walk away from this huge book feeling that there are crucial facts about the man's thinking that they do not understand? If Lindbergh had associated with any other organization, it might just be regretable as a personal, if controversial, choice, but since it was the Nazi party, explanations are in order. Whether Berg likes it or not, the Holocaust is one of the defining events of the modern age, even more significant than Lindbergh's solo flight across the Atlantic. Yes, readers have a right to know what he was thinking. He seemed to approve of evil, and Berg does not provide enough evidence to prove that assumption wrong.

Source: David Kelly, Critical Essay on *Lindbergh,* in *Non-fiction Classics for Students,* The Gale Group, 2001.

Critical Essay #2

Palmer is a full-time freelance writer who runs his own consulting business. He has earned an undergraduate degree in journalism. In this essay, he considers Berg's book with regard to the double-edged sword of success and the ways in which the recipients of success sometimes react to the spotlight's constant glow.

Throughout modern history, certain individuals have captured the hearts and minds of vast populations. For whatever reason, the minutest of details pertaining to persons such as Princess Diana, John F. Kennedy, and Tupac Shakur have been fodder for newspaper articles, magazine features, radio clips, and television documentaries. Not even death has robbed these demigods of their cult status. Indeed, their lights still burn as when they were among the living. These were human beings with inherent failings and shortcomings, prejudices and preconceptions, hang ups and pet peeves. But obvious faults and blemishes of character seldom deter the legions from admiring and deifying the fallen. A. Scott Berg's *Lindbergh,* which represents a social commentary on the weight of success, tackles society's obsession with the rich and famous. Berg considers just how swiftly the cheers from the crowd can be transformed into the jeers from the mob, and he comes upon a discovery sure to confound Charles Lindbergh's staunchest critics and puzzle his most ardent supporters: he was indeed only human.

Hero worship, in and of itself, might be deemed a form of revisionism, whereby those given to hero worship esteem and emulate the positive qualities of their heroes while simultaneously ignoring or dismissing obvious character flaws. Diana, Kennedy, and Shakur were imperfect, and so was Lindbergh. Yet, for whatever reason, he has been praised and condemned, cheered and jeered, built up and torn down. Anne Morrow, Lindbergh's wife and the daughter of a U.S. ambassador, granted Berg complete access to 2,000 boxes containing Lindbergh's personal notes. In embarking upon this literary project, Berg's express purpose in taking eight years to research and write the biography was to sketch a more realistic and thorough portrait of a man he believes was grossly misunderstood. Doing so involved digging deeper than any biographer had done previously. It also meant attempting to look at the world through the eyes of a protagonist who kept everything bottled up inside.

Berg essentially performs a delicate operation, with a pen as his tool, to remove the cancerous misconceptions surrounding Lindbergh's true self. Doing so necessitates delving into the mind of an intensely private man, attempting to look at the world through the eyes of the man himself. While it might not be entirely possible to see through another person's eyes, it can be argued that Berg does a commendable job at providing more information on the enigma that was Lindbergh than any biographer prior or since. Through his words, Berg is able to reveal a man who was at odds with society's demands upon its heroes. Berg also shows that Lindbergh was set in his ways and never wavered when it came to giving up his right to privacy. *Lindbergh* provides a more intimate glimpse of the protagonist and gives some explanations as to why he was the way he was. His own little world is trekked through, and the findings do help to flesh out the particulars of his personality. To Lindbergh, the weight of success was akin to an

albatross hanging around his neck. It might be argued that he hated the price of success to the same degree that his fans loved the very ground he walked on. Berg emphasizes that only by looking at the world as the protagonist was prone to do is it possible to see just how uncomfortable he was with fame and everything that came with it.

Rather than going with the rosy picture of celebrity life entertained by many a fan, Berg situates Lindbergh in the reality of his times. This is important in as much that some of his political views, as questionable as they were, stand out less prominently in the context of some of the anti-Semitic and isolationist views expressed during his era. For the purposes of this essay, the term "isolationist" is used to describe a school of thought advocating that America should only involve itself in the affairs of other sovereign nations if America's interests are somehow involved. One complaint leveled against Lindbergh by his critics is that he made several anti-Semitic statements over the course of his lifetime. As true as this is, some writers have demonized him as though he were the only one in history with bigoted ideologies. In *A Short History of Canada,* Desmond Morton writes that not only were there frequent outbursts of isolationist views aired in Congress during the war effort, but that "[r]efugees fleeing Hitler's concentration camps were rejected by Canada." In light of the status quo among the political elite in North America, it hardly seems just to expect Lindbergh to play the role of sacrificial lamb.

Charles Lindbergh's solo flight from New York to Paris in 1927 was a major event for those of the postwar era who were, as Berg states, desperate for heroes. When a 25-year-old pilot from Minnesota boarded his small plane and made possible what was previously thought to be impossible, Americans found the hero they so dearly craved. Berg, who was interviewed by Jamie Allen as part of a book review for CNN *Interactive,* called Lindbergh "the great hero of the century, and then the great victim, and then he became the great villain." Throughout the biography, furthermore, Berg paints a picture that suggests that Lindbergh was greatly put off by the unrelenting demands of an enthralled public. He clung tenaciously to his privacy and continued doing so until his death. In a way, celebrity was not really something he was in a position to accept or reject. It was simply something that society bestowed upon him because of a feat he had accomplished. Society determined that Lindbergh was worthy of being placed on a pedestal, and his own feelings toward this were moot points. In fact, his anti-hero inclinations had the effect of endearing him more to a public enthralled by role models with an edge. Only when he was later perceived as a traitor for not wanting to fight in World War II did the media begin the process of deconstructing the myth they had helped to create. Berg explains how suddenly Lindbergh fell out of public favor and argues that many of these problems have been blown out of proportion. Despite the public campaign to discredit him, the myth had been perpetuated to the point of becoming undistinguishable from the actual man. It is this problem that Berg's biography was designed to remedy.

Berg provides a comprehensive sketch of the protagonist's background that reveals clues as to why he simply was not up to the task of being a hero. At six years of age, his bickering parents parted ways. By the time they split up, the damage had been done. The stormy relationship between his parents simply pushed him further inward. Both his

parents were emotionally distant from him while he was growing up, and this personal reality was a contributing factor to his resolve to keep the inner most longings of his heart to himself. Lindbergh was already a bit antisocial by nature, but his difficult childhood simply served to further refine this character trait. His mannerisms as a youth were but a prelude to the introverted qualities he would exude as a grown man. Berg wipes away at the glossof celebrity and gives a more realistic picture of Lindbergh the man. He points out how his emotional dysfunction impacted upon his marriage, and how his emotional distance played a role in his wife's decision to have an affair early in their marriage. Despite the imperfections, society insisted on foisting the robe of royalty upon his unwilling shoulders. Geoffrey C. Ward of the *New York Times* takes a look at Lindbergh's life and times and says that "through it all, he remained taciturn, aloof, without apparent emotion . .. and something of a mystery even to his own children.'

Another event in Lindbergh's life helps to shed some light on his enigmatic personality. In 1932, the world took notice when it was announced that the Lindbergh baby had been kidnapped. Though Lindbergh did reportedly pay the ransom required, the baby was found dead in close proximity to the family's home. The media attention this event attracted was distressing to the couple, but the trial for the suspect attracted even more widespread media attention. Perhaps the only fitting comparison would be the infamous O. J. fiasco. The subsequent trial ended in a verdict to execute the convicted party, Bruno Richard Hauptmann. Even the convicted killer's death did not stop the rumor mill, as some conspiracy theorists claimed that Lindbergh might have been involved in the murder of his own baby. In response to the media attention and the lack of privacy, both Lindbergh and his wife fled the country for some time alone. As Berg points out, this was not the first time that the couple had disappeared from the public eye. Neither of them much cared for the trimmings that came with being a high-profile couple.

There are, as Berg attests, aspects to Lindbergh's character that cannot simply be ignored or shrugged off. While an early section of this essay suggested Lindbergh should not be made a scapegoat, there is no excuse for attempting to attribute his outbursts to cases of unintentional ignorance. Berg's admitted admiration for the famed aviator seems to have clouded his judgement somewhat in this regard. He seems to make light of some of Lindbergh's questionable beliefs and utterances. Though Lindbergh left little doubt that he was enthralled by certain aspects of the Nazi regime, for example, and though Lindbergh did go on the record with some of his anti-Semitic comments, none of which he ever retracted, Berg appears intent on disassociating Lindbergh from the Nazis. He does so at the expense of his credibility as an objective scribe. Other critics have also noticed Berg's downplaying of some of the protagonist's political views. Geoffrey C. Ward of *New York Post* writes that Berg "argues persuasively that his stubbornly misguided subject was never a Nazi, never a would-be dictator, as Franklin Roosevelt for one believed he was." However, Ward takes issue that Berg suggests that Lindbergh was ignorant only in as much as he did not understand that his comments were anti-Semitic. Ward argues that Lindbergh was fully aware of what it is he said.

Though Berg does a commendable job in giving a much clearer picture of Lindbergh than was previously available, he often comes across as a cheerleader of sorts. For

example, in an article that appeared on CNN *Interactive,* he raved about the importance of Lindbergh's exploits in aviation by drawing a parallel to Neil Armstrong's landmark excursion to the moon. "He really did become the first modern media superstar. He's the most celebrated living person ever to walk the earth ... It's almost as if Neil Armstrong decided to go to the moon ... decided to go by himself, just built his rocket ship and did it." Despite these criticisms, however, the biography represents a solid thrust forward in terms of understanding Lindbergh and in terms of understanding success and society's obsession with its celebrities.

Lindbergh clearly tells the story of how one man shirked the accolades many in society covet. It is the story of a man who saw the price of success and decided to go the other way. It tells the story of the double-edged sword of success and how it attaches itself to whomever it will. While the debate as to the true Lindbergh is far from over, Berg does provide the most comprehensive volume to date. The biography tells the story of an aviator who never had the slightest idea of how his landmark flight would change his life so completely. It also shows the anguish Lindbergh felt at being accosted by media hounds and the inquisitive public. Most importantly, *Lindbergh* drives home the point that even heroes have faults, that sometimes their humanity overshadows their celebrity. The story of Lindbergh's life is of a man who upon running into success while flying through the sky spent the rest of his life trying to escape it. Yet not even in death has he been able to achieve this goal.

Source: Ian Palmer, Critical Essay on *Lindbergh,* in *Nonfic-tion Classics for Students,* The Gale Group, 2001.

Critical Essay #3

In the following review, Tanenhaus finds Berg "relates this remarkable story with energy and competence," but is disappointed by Berg's insufficient attention to the darker aspects of Lindbergh's life.

In an era of staged events and planned spectacles, it is almost impossible to imagine what so many millions felt on May 21,1927, when the news came that a tiny silver aircraft had broken through the morning fog west of Ireland and was pushing on toward Paris. Since Charles A. Lindbergh's takeoff from New York City in the *Spirit of St. Louis* the day before, there had been no word of the plane and its pilot. "While Lindbergh later said that no man before him had commanded such freedom of movement over earth," A. Scott Berg writes in his new biography, "he failed to note that no man before him had ever been so much alone in the cosmos.'

Of course, the instant Lindbergh landed at Le Bourget airfield outside Paris, the sublime solitude ended. The twenty-five-year-old aviator was swept up in a wave of public adoration. When he returned home, courtesy of the U.S. Navy, the entire nation seemed to be waiting at dockside. In Manhattan, more than four million people lined the streets to see him, and within three weeks, Berg reports, "an estimated 7,430,000 feet of newsreel had recorded his movements." Lindbergh had become "the most celebrated living person ever to walk the earth.'

Like so many of his generation's great figures, he came from the Midwest. His father, Charles A. Lindbergh, Sr.□"C.A.," as he was called□was a Swede raised in rural Minnesota, a self-made man who put himself through law school and then started a thriving practice in the town of Little Falls. After C.A. won election to Congress as a Republican in 1907, Charles, then aged two, joined his mother in seasonal migrations between Washington and the heartland. It was a haphazard existence. By the age of eighteen, Lindbergh had attended no fewer than ten schools, passing through them as an indifferent pupil and avid daydreamer, too much the nomad to collect enduring friends.

After flunking out of the University of Wisconsin, Lindbergh found his home□in the sky. "Sharp-sighted and coordinated, with quick reflexes, [he] proved to be a natural pilot," Berg writes. He soon developed a missionary devotion to aviation, applying himself diligently to problems of aeronautics and design.

Through a relative novice when he decided to join the select handful of "flying fools" competing to make the first nonstop trans-Atlantic flight, Lindbergh was surreally confident. Experts said the trip would require two pilots, as no single man could possibly remain alert over the day and a half needed to complete it. Lindbergh, however, preferred to fly solo: a second pilot would mean added weight, and every available ounce was needed for fuel. Thus, his plane□built from scratch to his deeply pondered specifications□was little more than an aerial gas tank. He declined even to install a radio since the primitive equipment always seemed to break down when needed most.

The silly nickname he acquired, "Lucky Lindy," was completely wrong, Lindbergh left nothing to chance. He "compiled endless lists," writes Berg: "equipment he would need; maps he would have to study; landmarks he would have to learn; and information he would need from the Weather Bureau and the State Department." He plotted the 3,000-mile route himself, then recalculated it trigonometrically. So precise were these figurings, and so skilled a pilot was he, that when, after twenty hours in the air, he leaned out of the cockpit to yell to fishing boats 50 feet below, "Which way is Ireland?," he was less than three miles off course. For food he packed five sandwiches, explaining laconically, "If I get to Paris I won't need any more, and if I don't get to Paris, I won't need any more, either.'

Of the many sobriquets applied to him, "Lone Eagle" was the most apt. The first modern celebrity, he resisted the cheap trappings of success, spurning offers worth over $ 1 million from Hollywood, vaudeville, and hucksters of every kind. He learned early to avoid the press, which he loathed, remaining incorruptibly private, his own man.

Still, Lindbergh could not escape his fame, and it exacted a singular price. The public's insatiable appetite for gossip, cynically fed by newspapers, was to blame, he was sure, for the most terrible event in his life□the 1932 kidnapping and murder of his twenty-month-old son, quickly dubbed the "crime of the century." Almost as shocking as the act itself was the grisly media spectacle of the trial. The ordeal for Lindberg and his young wife, Anne Morrow, ended only with the conviction and execution of the dour German immigrant Bruno Hauptmann, who had steadfastly maintained he had been framed, giving rise to conspiracy theories still widely believed today.

In the wake of the kidnapping, Lindbergh withdrew emotionally. Never shedding a tear himself over his lost son, he forbade his wife to cry as well. After the birth of each of their five other children, he would insist that she accompany him on distant journeys, so as to wean her from the newborn. In later years, her husband's unyielding reticence and rigid self-discipline would leave her repeatedly on the verge of breaking down. These episodes disclosed an especially frigid aspect of what his biographer calls Lindbergh's "Nordic *sang-froid.'*

Convinced that America had descended into barbarism, the Lindberghs fled the country in 1935, settling for a time in England. They returned four years later, but Charles's disillusionment with the U.S. had not abated. As World War II approached, he plunged into the isolationist America First movement. To many it seemed he was lending his prestige to the nascent American fascism espoused by Father Charles Coughlin and Senator Huey Long. In nationwide radio addresses, Lindbergh darkly inveighed against the "Jewish" media; his letters and diary entries from the period abound with musings about "the pressing sea of Yellow, Black, and Brown" and "the infiltration of inferior blood."

Nor did Lindbergh disguise his admiration for Germany's industrial and military revival under the Nazis. In richly publicized trips, he toured the new Reich's airplane factories and allowed himself to be feted and decorated. He refused to denounce Nazi

atrocities—he would continue in this refusal even after the war—and became for a time as mistrusted in the United States as he had once been adored.

After Pearl Harbor, Lindbergh sought redemption. Denied a military commission by Franklin Roosevelt, who had always disliked him, he volunteered his services to the burgeoning Army air force and won praise for his courage and effectiveness flying missions in the Pacific. In peacetime, he spent years developing the fresh, evocative prose that earned him a Pulitzer prize for *The Spirit of St. Louis* (1953), his splendid memoir of his flight. And there was a final surprise: by the time of his death in 1974, Lindbergh had repudiated the very technology he had done so much to romanticize. Reborn as a conservationist, he proclaimed himself at one with birds rather than airplanes.

A. Scott Berg relates this remarkable story with energy and competence, unfolding his themes with a naturalness possible only because he has mastered vast quantities of detail. The highlight of the book, fittingly, is Lindbergh's historic flight to Paris. Berg makes us see just how grand a feat it was, fully the equal of the moon landing 42 years later. Indeed, for all the courage of the Apollo astronauts, their success was a coronation of large-scale technological wizardry. Lindbergh's achievement, by contrast, was swashbuckingly human. In a*tour de force* of narration, Berg evokes the eerie otherworldliness of the trans-Atlantic flight, and the mysterious power it conferred on Lindbergh as ur-aviator.

But in the instant Lindbergh's life begins its descent, so too does Berg's biography. After the landing at Le Bourget, the action flags, the drama wanes. For the remainder of the book, Berg's attention is captured by the emotional travails of Anne Lindbergh during her 45-year marriage to a trying, distant husband.

More problematically, Berg—whose previous subjects were the literary editor Maxwell Perkins and the movie mogul Samuel Goldwyn—seems unnerved by the complex social and political currents of the 1930's. His pages on the kidnapping trial—expert but businesslike, in the manner of a prosecutor hurrying to convict—skimp on the atmospherics that might help us see why this was the most gripping of Depression-era dramas, a cathartic public spectacle, and why it belongs in the sequence of politically-charged trials that includes the Sacco-Vanzetti case and the confrontation between Alger Hiss and Whittaker Chambers.

Even more disappointing is the book's cursory treatment of Lindbergh's misadventures in isolationism. Berg forgoes any deep exploration of the America First movement or of the kindred malign forces abroad in the U.S. as late as 1941. Lindbergh's political activities come at us as a string of regrettable incidents, not as the crisis of character they plainly were. Important questions hide murkily below the smooth surface of the narrative, and Berg seems afraid of touching them. Did Lindbergh, with his matchless celebrity, really see himself as an unelected tribune destined to keep the nation out of war? Was he motivated by a lingering hatred of the public? Was he following the doomed example of his father, whose own political career ended catastrophically when he became a vocal opponent of American entry into World War I?

The irony is that in his peak years, no other man succeeded so well as Lindbergh in binding the Old World to the New, not only because of his great transoceanic flight but also because he effortlessly embodied traits that seemed uniquely American: modesty, courage, plain-spokenness, innocence, and invincible youth. But the darker side of Lindbergh was of course no less American and no less integral to his being. It is this conjunction of light and dark, of heroism and folly, that continues to make Lindbergh so intriguing, even as his claim to our interest steadily weakens.

Source: Sam Tanenhaus, "First in Flight," in *Commentary,* Vol. 107, No. 1, January 1999, pp. 61-63.

Critical Essay #4

In the following review, Miller discusses Lindbergh's life and commends Berg for "his outstanding biography."

When Charles Lindbergh landed *The Spirit of St. Louis* in darkness at France's Le Bourget airfield on May 21, 1927, all he wanted to do was sleep. His nonstop journey of 3,614 miles from New York to Paris, which made him the first pilot to fly alone across the Atlantic Ocean, had lasted more than 33 hours. He had stayed awake the night before his departure; when his head finally hit the pillow early in the morning on the 22nd, he would have to make up for 63 hours of sleeplessness. His feat revealed to the world the great potential of aviation, but it was arguably his plane's primitive technology that kept him alive. Struggling against drowsiness almost from the start, Lindbergh saw ghostly images wander in and out of his cabin twenty hours after takeoff; he was hallucinating and probably would have fallen asleep in the sky were it not for his jerky plane's inability to stabilize.

There must have been times in his remarkable life when Lindbergh wondered whether it was all worth the effort. Upon his arrival in France, a spontaneously gathered crowd of 150,000 revelers mobbed him with giddy enthusiasm. Lindbergh was a global celebrity from that moment until his death in 1974. For years he and his family were hounded by the press□early versions of today's infamous paparazzi. The notoriety that made him a hero led to the kidnapping and death of his first child. The unwanted publicity drove his family into temporary exile from the United States, and it also led to a troubled marriage.

In his outstanding biography, A. Scott Berg describes how this shy Midwesterner became "the most famous man on earth" by age 25. Unlike so many of the celebrities who would succeed him, Lindbergh won his fame from an actual accomplishment, one which advanced the common good through a single act of stunning bravery. Upon his return to the United States, Lindbergh participated in parades (roughly 1,285 miles of them) all across the country. An estimated thirty million people one-quarter of the population turned out to see him in scores of public appearances. A new magazine called Time launched its "Man of the Year" feature so that it would have an excuse to put Lindbergh on the cover and attract readers. He was the subject of songs and poems; offers came in from Hollywood. "People behaved as though Lindbergh had walked on water, not flown over it," says Berg.

Lindbergh was born of Swedish stock in 1902 in Detroit, but he grew up mainly in Little Falls, Minn., and in Washington, D.C., where his father served as a populist congressman for ten years. He never made good grades, but he showed an aptitude for mechanics. Having enrolled in a Nebraska pilots' academy, he was soon earning a living as a professional barnstormer. Planes were a novelty in the early 1920s, and Lindbergh traveled around the Midwest offering flights to curious customers. He also became a stuntman, occasionally going by the name "The Daredevil Lindbergh," performing as a wingwalker and skydiver, and even participating in an aerial wedding (his plane carried the judge, another one of the bride and groom). According to Berg, "there was one

flight□recorded in Lindbergh's papers with the exact location discreetly omitted□during which a man wanted to fly over his home town and urinate on it... a wish Lindbergh granted." He later became one of America's first air-mail carriers.

Fatalities were common during these early days of flight. "Lucky Lindy" had to parachute from faulty planes four times. Despite the risks, aviation technology was steadily advancing to the point where it was becoming possible to contemplate a trip from the United States to Europe. In 1926, Lindbergh began to think seriously about doing it himself. He set about securing the financial backing he would need to custom-build an aircraft; he received most of his help from boosters in St. Louis, a contribution he recognized in christening his plane. A pair of French pilots tries to reach the United States two weeks before Lindbergh's own departure; they disappeared without a trace. Lindbergh would surely have shared their fate were it not for his incredible powers of concentration.

Lindbergh, in fact, was so single-minded about flying that he apparently had never even gone on a date before his historic flight. He just hadn't given much thought to girls. On a trip to Mexico City, however, he met Anne Morrow, the daughter of the American ambassador. They soon married. Although they experienced many periods of great happiness together, Charles at times seemed totally detached from his wife. He had difficulty showing his emotions□Anne never saw him cry, even when their baby was kidnapped. Long business trips did not help matters, and Anne found only limited comfort in her own extraordinary commercial success as a writer and poet. Still, the Lindberghs remained together and watched five children reach adulthood.

Berg, who is the first biographer to receive complete access to the Lindbergh papers as well as the full cooperation of the family, deftly fits the copious details of the Lindbergh's life into these pages. Many or his readers will have assumed that Lindbergh's accomplishments ended in 1927, or that they were restricted to the field of aviation. Flying over the Yucatan in 1929, Lindbergh took aerial photographs of several Mayan ruins, leading to the discovery of as many as six lost cities. Working at a Princeton lab in 1935, he developed the "Lindbergh pump," which made it possible for the first time for an organ to live outside the body. Lindbergh was instrumental in helping rocketry pioneer Robert H. Goddard secure funding for his important work.

Lindbergh also, and less fortunately, became involved in international politics. He encouraged the United States to stay out of the Second World War, taking a prominent position with the anti-interventionist America First Committee. Because of this, Lindberg was widely suspected of being a Nazi sympathizer□a suspicion that Berg effectively lays to rest. It is clear, however, that Lindbergh was at least mildly anti-Semitic (as were so many Americans in those days) and that he seriously underestimated Hitler's evil. As the United States moved closer to war, Lindbergh's anti-intervention rhetoric heated up and his popularity plummeted. "Few men in American history had ever been so reviled," notes Berg.

Lindbergh did strongly support the war effort following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He served in the Pacific air corps, eventually becoming an expert bombardier.

He was truly horrified to learn of the Holocaust, and he even visited the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1945. He continued to defend his pre-war political views, however, and he was too stubborn ever to admit that he had misjudged Hitler.

A modicum of privacy described on Lindbergh in the 1950s and 1960s, and he turned his energies toward global conservation. He even seemed to have second thoughts about the technologies he had helped develop: "Where civilization is most advanced, few birds exist. I realized that if I had to choose," he wrote in 1964, "I would rather have birds than airplanes." Ten years later, surrounded by his family at their vacation home in Hawaii, he succumbed to lymphoma and was given a traditional Hawaiian burial. A. Scott Berg never my-thologizes Charles Lindbergh, but he understandably admires him. With honesty and style, he performs the important task of reviving this flawed but essential figure, a true American hero.

Source: John J. Miller, "The Daredevil Lindbergh," in *National Review,* Vol. L, No. 20, October 26,1998, pp. 50-52.

Adaptations

An abridged audiocassette version of *Lindbergh,* read by Eric Stoltz, is available from Random House Audio.

Susan Hertog's biography of Anne Morrow Lindbergh is available on audiocassette from Blackstone Audiobooks. It is read by Marguerite Gavin.

The Arts and Entertainment Network has produced a video as part of their "Biography" series called *Charles and Anne Lindbergh,* available in 2000 on A&E Home Video.

An older, less complete biography called *Lindbergh,* by Leonard Mosley and James Cunningham, is available on cassette from Books on Tape, Inc.

Newsreel footage from the time of Lindbergh's flight can be seen on Time-Life Video's *The Century of Flight: Epic Flights, 1919-1939,* released in 1999.

California Newsreel Corporation of San Francisco has released a videocassette called *Legacy of a Kidnapping: Lindbergh and the Triumph of the Tabloids.* This documentary, with journalist Lewis Lapham, traces the decline of journalistic standards, from the Lindbergh baby to the O. J. Simpson trial, the death of Princess Diana, and the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

Brendon Gill's 1985 book *Lindbergh Alone* is available on audiocassette, read by John MacDonald.

The story of Lindbergh's flight was told in the 1957 film *Spirit of St. Louis,* which was directed by Billy Wilder and starred James Stewart, Patricia Smith, and Arthur Space.

Public Broadcasting System has produced, as part of their American Experience series, a video of the show *Lindbergh,* produced by Ken Burns and directed by Stephen Ives. It was originally broadcast in 1990.

Topics for Further Study

Parallels have been drawn between the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby and the murder of JonBenet Ramsey, a child who died during an alleged kidnapping in 1996. Read about the Ramsey case and report on the similarities.

Examine the significance of Lindbergh's contribution to heart surgery, the Lindbergh Pump, and compare it to the most recent techniques.

America has always had groups like America First that oppose military involvement in the affairs of other countries. Find a web page from a group that is critical of the current government's foreign involvements and compare their arguments to those used by Lindbergh during the Second World War.

Make a tape of songs that might have played at celebrations in America when news came that Lindbergh had landed safely in Paris.

Report on what has happened to the Tasaday people of the Philippines since Lindbergh brought them into the modern world.

Write a report on Amelia Earhart, who was the first woman to fly solo across both the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans, explaining the details of her journeys and the hardships she faced.

Compare and Contrast

1920s: In the prosperous postwar economy, people look for diversions to keep themselves entertained. The tremendous celebration after Lindbergh's arrival in Paris is considered another reason to have a party.

Today: For entertainment, broadcasters have found that people like "reality" shows with danger involved, such as *Survivor* and *When Animals Attack.*

1927: The first federal agency for regulating airplane transportation is just a year old.

Today: The air travel industry is crucial to the nation's economy, with many companies vulnerable to any disruption in business.

1927: The world is astounded that a person could be walking around in America one day and be in France thirty-three hours later.

Today: Airfreight companies routinely deliver letters between the two continents on a daily basis. The need for this has dropped since people are now sending information over the internet.

1930s: An enthusiastic amateur like Lindbergh could work with a Nobel Prize-winning scientist on a major medical development like the heart pump.

Today: Medical and technical training is so common and specific that there is little room for amateurs to become involved.

What Do I Read Next?

A. Scott Berg's first book, *Max Perkins: Editor of Genius,* was met with critical acclaim. It is about the editor at Charles Scribner' s Sons publishing company who worked with Ernest Hemingway, Thomas Wolfe, F. Scott Fitzgerald, James Jones, and others. This winner of the 1978 National Book Award was reissued in paperback in 1997.

Berg's only other book is *Goldwyn: A Biography* (1998), concerning the legendary Hollywood producer Samuel Goldwyn. Berg's usual thoroughness is applied to a segment of American popular culture, the studio system that produced movies in the first half of the twentieth century.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery, the author of *The Little Prince,* was a friend of the Lindberghs. His book *An Airman's Odyssey* (1984) covers his early days as a pilot.

After the enormous press coverage of the kidnapping of the Lindbergh's first child, public attention to their home life waned. In 1998, their youngest child, Reeve Lindbergh, published her memoir of what it was like growing up in the famous family. Her story, entitled *Under A Wing,* gives an insider's perspective of her parents.

Many books have been written questioning whether Bruno Hauptmann was indeed the kidnapper of the Lindbergh baby. One of the best, and most frequently cited, is Ludovic Kennedy's *The Airman and the Carpenter,* published in 1985. Kennedy, a British journalist, claims that the real kidnapper confessed his crime to him.

The other half of Lindbergh's marriage is the focus of Susan Hertog's book *Anne Morrow Lindbergh: Her Life,* based on a series of interviews with the aviator's widow. Published in 2000, this is a useful companion piece to Berg's book.

Lindbergh's first account of his flight across the Atlantic, *We,* was published soon after the flight occurred. It is flawed but still makes for a quick, easy-to-read, engrossing tale. He wrote a more detailed account of the same material in *The Spirit of St. Louis,* which was reissued in 1998.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh's most personal and best-loved book, *Gift From the Sea* (1986), is currently available in paperback. Also available is *Return to the Sea: Reflections on Anne Morrow Lindbergh's "Gift From the Sea'* (1998), by Anne M. Johnson.

Lindbergh's thoughts on nature and spiritual issues, from his perspective later in his life, are presented in his book *Autobiography of Values* (1992).

Further Study

Gill, Brandon, *Lindbergh Alone,* Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1977.

Much less detailed than Berg's biography, Gill's book focuses most of its attention on the transatlantic flight.

Langewiesche, Wolfgang, *Stick and Rudder: An Explanation of the Art of Flying,* Tab Books, 1990.

This book, meant to serve as a primer for beginning pilots, helps readers understand the task that Lindbergh faced in flying the *Spirit of St. Louis.*

Lindbergh, Charles, *The Wartime Journals of Charles A. Lindbergh,* Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1970.

This book provides Lindbergh's thoughts at a particularly trying time in his life when the country was turning against him and branding him a traitor and a coward.

Newton, James, *Uncommon Friends: Life with Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone, Alexis Carrel and Charles Lindbergh,* Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1989.

Uncommon Friends is written by a man who knew all of the persons referred to in its title. The book fits each of these men into the larger scheme of the early twentieth century.

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Stricherz, Mark, "Enigmatic Aviator," in *America,* May 1, 1999, p. 26.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Nonfiction Classics for Students (NCfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NCfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on

□classic□ novels frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NCfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NCfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NCfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NCfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NCfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Nonfiction Classics for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NCfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NCfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Nonfiction Classics for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Nonfiction Classics for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NCfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Nonfiction Classics for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NCfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Nonfiction Classics for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NCfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Nonfiction Classics for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NCfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Nonfiction Classics for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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