Disorder and Early Sorrow Study Guide

Disorder and Early Sorrow by Thomas Mann

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Introduction

Thomas Mann is one of the most important German novelists of the twentieth century. But not to be overlooked are his contributions to the genre of the short story, among which "Disorder and Early Sorrow" is one of his best. It first appeared in 1925 in a publication celebrating his fiftieth birthday. Regarding the story, he said, "For the first time in my life I wrote something literary, one might say to order: the editorship of the Fischer *Neue Rundschau* published a *Festschrift* for my 50th birthday and they wanted it to contain a narrative contribution by the birthday child. So emerged 'Disorder and Early Sorrow,' a story which I like so much that I am tempted to count it among my very best."

The story examines the life of the Cornelius family as they prepare for a party at their home. Through their simple preparations, the reader is given a glimpse into daily life of 1920s Germany during the last years of the Weimar Republic. Frustrations over the country's economic instability and social upheaval constitute the undercurrent of his tale. Professor Cornelius, the patriarch of the family and a professor of history, finds safety and stability in his profession. He says that "the past is immortalized; that is to say, it is dead; and death is the root of all godliness and all abiding significance." It is that dead significance that he finds comforting in contrast to the revolution going on about him. Professor Cornelius also comes into quiet conflict with the modern art forms that so attract his children and their friends. He sees these new styles as fraudulent and phony. These two thematic issues, social upheaval and the role of art and the artist in society, are basic to most of Mann's writings, and such is the case in this story. Additionally, the theme of the search for self-identity plays an important part in the unfolding of the story.

Author Biography

Thomas Mann was born on June 6, 1875 in Luebeck, Germany, to Thomas Johann Heinrich Mann, a government official and small business owner, and his wife, Julia. He started writing at a young age, and had his first story published when he was fifteen. He married Katja Pringsheim on February 11, 1905, and they eventually had six children. Mann was a devoted father and husband, and on those occasions when he was separated from Katja he would become depressed and would question his artistic and creative processes.

As he began his literary career he acquainted himself with many other writers, philosophers, musicians, and thinkers of Germany. He was particularly captivated by the music of German opera composer Richard Wagner. Wagner's use of leitmotiv, a melody that becomes associated with a particular character or idea in a musical work, was a feature that Mann would adapt to his literature. Mann is most widely known for his novels, which often examined the degeneration of society and the conflict between art, the artist, and society. Critics have said that Mann had become suspicious of the role of the artist, because he believed that self-expression could lapse into self-indulgence.

Mann's success as a writer was established from his very first publications, and he maintained this prominence throughout his entire career. In 1929 he won the Nobel Prize for Literature, which established him as one of the most important literary figures of the twentieth century. His most famous works include *Buddenbrooks, The Magic Mountain,* and *Doctor Faustus.* Almost overshadowed by these monumental novels are his contributions to short fiction, which include *Death in Venice, Tristan, Tonio Kroger,* and "Disorder and Early Sorrow."

Mann's writings also included many essays and speeches on a variety of topics, notably his opposition to Nazism and the mistreatment of the Jews. His continuing concern about the plight of the Jews was the impetus for the four novels published as

Joseph and His Brothers. Because of his outspoken opposition to the Nazis, he was exiled to Switzerland in 1933 and lost his German citizenship in 1936. That year he became a Czech citizen. He eventually immigrated to the United States and became a naturalized citizen in 1944. He lectured widely at universities and was a consultant in German literature for the Library of Congress. After World War II, he returned to Switzerland and died of phlebitis in Zurich in 1955.

Plot Summary

"Disorder and Early Sorrow" is a novella that examines the life of Professor Cornelius's family during one day in post-World War I Germany. The scene opens with a discussion between the members of the family and how they interact. Members of the family are identified by their generation: Ingrid and Bert, both teenagers, are "the big folk"; Professor Cornelius and his wife are "the old folk"; Ellie and Snapper, the youngest of the Professor's children, are "the little folk"; and Professor Cornelius's parents, who are only mentioned and have no part in the action of the story, are referred to as "'the ancients." Other members of the household include the servants, Xaver, the Nurse, and the Hinterhofer sisters. Several friends of Ingrid and Bert also appear in the story at the party.

The setting for the tale is Munich in the mid-1920s. It takes place during one day in which Ingrid and Bert plan and give a party for their friends. During the afternoon, there are occasional digressions that reveal incidents from the "big folks" recent past which serve to expand the scope of this tale and give the reader a more complete understanding of the nature of the characters in the story and the times in which they live. The point of view for the story is the Professor's. He thinks about his children, his profession, and his concerns about the modern art forms. The third-person limited narrator allows the reader to witness the action of the story through the Professor's eyes only.

After the opening section, there is the first digression: the incident on the bus. Bert and Ingrid pretend to be people from another part of the country, adopting exotic accents and mannerisms. They "delight in misleading and mystifying their fellow-men" by "impersonating fictitious characters." They talk in loud voices, making up their stories about events that never happened, each one more outrageous than the last. Finally, an old man on the bus has had enough and tells them so. Bert then pretends to want to strike him but holds back his temper. The man gets off the bus at the next stop. This episode is followed by a discussion of Bert and Ingrid's other diversion, to use the telephone to carry on additional pretenses. They call anyone they please (opera singers or government officials), pretending to be a shopkeeper or a Lord or Lady, and spinning tales that annoy those on the other end of the phone.

Ellie and Snapper are children who are dependent on their parents, spending as much time as possible sitting in their laps, getting caressed and cuddled. However, the Professor becomes more attached to Ellie than he believes is natural. He is uncomfortable with the thought and worries that his affection for his daughter might not be "perfectly good and right." In this same passage, he links his love for her to his love for history. He believes that "only the most fanatical . . . could be capable . . . of tearing this purest and most precious feeling out of his heart."

The reader later learns that Ellie is very concerned with her appearance. Her father often reminds her that one of her ears is larger than the other, a defect that she covers with her hair. Snapper also worries about himself, but his concerns are moral rather

than physical. He believes that he is a sinner and that he will go to "the bad place." Snapper also is given to fits, tantrums, and "berserker rages." Because of this he gets extra attention from the Nurse and from his mother. During one of these outbursts he is made to stand in the corner, weeping. The nurse observes his face turning blue and alerts others in the family. As it turns out, the blue is merely a stain from the wall paint that had come off onto his wet face. Nursy teaches the children their nursery rhymes and songs. Ellie is much better at this than Snapper. The children also engage in teacher/student play during which times Ellie instructs Snapper on the pronunciation of bird names and diseases. If he does not do this correctly, she makes him stand in the corner.

As the household prepares for the evening's party, Professor Cornelius withdraws to his study to prepare for his next day's lecture. Soon he falls asleep until he is awakened by the arrival of the guests. He does not like the thought of the party, seeing it as a disruption of his orderly routines. But he tries to accept it and to take part in some small way. He carefully plans the words he will speak as he enters the party for the first time. After he walks through the party, he again retreats to his study. Later he offers the guests a pack of cigarettes.

While in the room he notices the dress of several of the guests. Herr Hergesell is wearing shoes that are too tight; another male guest is wearing make-up, including rouge. Professor Cor nelius finds the actor repugnant because he sees a falseness and an affectation in his manners and behaviors, "a perfect illustration of the abnormality of the artist soul-form." Professor Cornelius again retreats to his den.

Later in the evening, as Max dances with Ellie, Cornelius feels a pang of jealousy at the sight of them dancing. He worries about the party's "power to intoxicate and estrange his darling child." He leaves the house and walks the streets for a while. When he returns, Xaver tells him that Ellie is "in a bad way." He finds her in her bed weeping uncontrollably, surrounded by all the women of the household. She sobs, "Why — isn't Max— my brother." Despite attempts by the Professor and others, she is inconsolable. Finally, Max enters in an attempt to calm her down. He talks to her in literary snippets, designed more to impress her father than her. Once she is calm, he leaves her and the professor alone. Ellie falls asleep as Cornelius watches. He believes that by the morning all this will be forgotten and everything will be back to normal once again.

Summary

In the year 1925, the publishers of a piece celebrating Thomas Mann's fiftieth birthday asked the author if he might write something for the occasion; thus, *Disorder and Early Sorrow* was born.

Disorder and Early Sorrow takes place during the depression of post-World War I Germany in a middle class family, which, even though money is tight, has three servants and a nanny. The story begins with a description of a family eating lunch, narrated by the father and head of household, Professor Cornelius. He sits with his wife and two oldest children, Ingrid and Bert, whom he refers to as the "big folk." Ingrid is eighteen and almost done with school and has dreams of acting. Bert is one year younger than his sister and also has aspirations of going into the entertainment industry, be it as a dancer or cabaret actor. Bert most likely will end up a waiter in a flashy club. The "big folks" are reminding their parents, whom they call the "old folk," that they will be having a party at the house that night.

The four discuss who will be coming to the party and what will be served. Cornelius concludes that many of the attendees will be from the artsy crowd with whom his older children spend time. Bert is so enamored by his performer friends that he has taken to darkening his eyes with makeup, much to the chagrin of his parents. Throughout their conversation the telephone rings, always for Bert or Ingrid.

Although times are hard, Cornelius has been able to afford their telephone service when many other households had to give it up. Their house is comfortable; however, it is in need of repairs that cannot occur for lack of materials, and their clothes are worn and have been repeatedly mended. This, like many things, is harder for Cornelius and his wife to accept for poverty is new to them; in contrast, the children have grown up with these unfashionable garments and thus do not know anything different.

As lunch nears an end Frau Cornelius reminds her children that they had better leave soon in order to get the eggs in time for the party. Each family is allowed to buy only five eggs per week and the nearest shop is fifteen minutes away. In order to maximize the amount of eggs that they can buy, the neighbor boy, Danny, and one of the household servants, Xavier, go with Bert and Ingrid. Each person pretends to be from a different household; thus, they are able to buy twenty eggs. Ingrid and Bert love this weekly outing, as they have great fun developing different personas, which they adopt and maintain throughout the journey.

After lunch the two younger children, referred to as the "little folk," who take their meals upstairs with their nanny, come to visit their parents. Eleanor, or Ellie, is five years old and the apple of Cornelius's eye. Every time he holds his sweet little daughter in his arms he cannot believe how much he loves her. He also has the habit of remarking, as if he has just noticed the anomaly, that his daughter's ears are mismatched in size. Ellie's younger brother by one year, Snapper, is the favorite of Frau Cornelius. He is a good boy overall; however, he has frequent bouts of bad behavior and temper tantrums.

Snapper is quite hard on himself as he cannot control his emotions and believes that he is destined to Hell. Ellie and Snapper are great friends and do everything together. Ellie even helps him with his studies and tries to aid him in controlling his temper.

The children leave to play upstairs with the nanny and Cornelius goes to his study while his wife busies herself with party preparations. Cornelius is a professor of history at the local university and therefore spends the time in his study preparing lecture material for tomorrow's class. After working for some time, he goes upstairs to take his usual afternoon nap. However, today the noise of the preparations keeps him awake and he does not sleep for more than five minutes. He finally stops trying to rest and goes downstairs to join the party, which has just begun. His wife and Bert are already sitting with two guests. Cornelius mingles with the guests, all of whom are artists or performers. The conversation often veers toward dance, theatre, or folk music. Soon, the music starts and the dancing begins. Ellie and Snapper, dressed in matching frocks, have been allowed to join the party and are dancing with each other in the middle of the dance floor.

Cornelius excuses himself and returns to his study where he reads some more and polishes his lecture. He also writes a short letter. It is the music that brings Cornelius out of his study once more. As he is passing the dance floor he sees Max Hergesell dance with his Ellie. Max is stooped over and everyone is very amused by the dance. Cornelius smiles and returns to his study where he completes some other small projects. Later, he returns to the party as Herr Moller is entertaining the revelers with folk songs. Frau Cornelius is holding both children in her lap, and Cornelius notices that Ellie's focus is not on the singer, but rather on Hergesell. Cornelius once again returns to his study, emerging to visit the party now and then. It is during one of these brief visits that he sees Ellie running across the dance floor and attempting to catch Max Hergesell's coattails. Cornelius is disturbed by this and mentions to his wife that perhaps it is time for the children to go to bed; however, his wife does not see the harm in the children having a little more fun.

Cornelius leaves to take a walk outside in the winter air. He uses these walks as a way to clear his thoughts and think about his life. Tonight he thinks about his children and how they are growing up rather quickly. He also thinks about his work and different theories of history that he will teach to his students. When Cornelius arrives back at his house he is summoned to the nursery by his servant, Xavier. Xavier tells his employer that Ellie is crying herself sick over Max Hergesell. Professor Cornelius does not believe what he has just been told, and he hurries upstairs to the nursery.

Snapper lies fast asleep while Ellie sits sobbing. Her little body is shaking like a frail bird. and her cries are filled with heartfelt anguish. Cornelius is taken aback at the emotions of his little girl and orders everyone out of the room after the nanny points out that Ellie is very young to be so upset over a man. Cornelius tries to comfort his young daughter by asking her what causes her such trouble. Ellie replies that she wishes that Max was her brother. She demands that she be brought downstairs so that she may dance with Max again. However, Cornelius knows that Max is dancing with a young woman his own age. He does not know what to do as Ellie refuses to sleep; she would

rather continue to cry and wallow in her misery. Suddenly, Ellie and her father hear someone coming down the hall. It is Max Hergesell himself Max approaches Ellie's crib, announcing that she may stop crying as he has arrived. Cornelius tries to apologize to Hergesell and at the same time thank him, as Cornelius is terribly embarrassed, but Hergesell does not mind this chore. As soon as Max enters the room Ellie's tears stop falling and she now smiles up at the young man. Hergesell tells Ellie that she can sleep now like a good little girl and Ellie readily obeys.

After Hergesell leaves, Cornelius stays and watches his beloved daughter fall asleep. He believes that the next morning when Ellie wakes she will have forgotten Hergesell, and be once again immersed in childhood. Tomorrow he will play games with her and once again be the most important person in her life.

Analysis

The exposition of *Disorder and Early Sorrow* sets the scene for the story. The main character is described to be a middle aged professor of history living in post war Germany with his wife and four children. This short story of a day in the life of his household represents what he feels is happening in his life;mainly, he feels that disorder has replaced his formerly ordered life and that he is no longer in control of those around him. Thus, disorder and early sorrow become both the theme and the title of the piece. Cornelius is aging and so are his children, and he feels as if they are pulling away from him and he is now more of an outsider.

This sentiment is first symbolized in the names that he and his older children have for each other. He and his wife are known as the "old folks" and their older children are known as the "big folks." The word *big* symbolizes the power that Bert and Ingrid have in the household and over their parents. The use of the word *old* symbolizes the obsoleteness of the parents, their way of life, and their viewpoints. Both Bert and Ingrid have chosen paths that are foreign to Cornelius. Although he can accept his daughter's wish to be an actress, he is more troubled over his son's choice of being an entertainer. This is most likely explained as a product of the story's era when the man was expected to be the breadwinner of the family. Additionally Cornelius, as a history professor, a professional, desires that his son would also choose a respected, traditional profession. However, this is far from the case as Bert is dramatic and even wears eye makeup.

The younger children, too, are described with quite adult characteristics. For example Ellie has a love for language and even a preference for certain phrases, which is quite unusual for a child of just five years old. Snapper is even younger but already believes that there is something so wrong with him that he will not be admitted into heaven, and is resigned to the fact that his soul has an alternative destination.

Ellie is further described as the person whom Cornelius loves more than anyone else. She is more than just his favorite; he is her favorite, and the source of all of his pride and dreams of the future. It is important to note just how much Cornelius loves his

youngest daughter as she will be the source for a good portion of his sorrow and discontent.

The story continues to follow Cornelius and his movements throughout the preparations for the party and the party itself, which is the main event of the members of the household. Cornelius is removed from the preparation activities. He has almost no opinion in what occurs or how it is accomplished. Furthermore he is not regarded as a true part of the actual party. Rather he walks in and out of it when the mood strikes him and spends much time in his study completing mundane, unimportant tasks. The theme of discontent and sorrow is felt heavily in Cornelius's role in, and actions at, the party. He does not feel comfortable with the activity going on around him and the people at the party, including his family. Additionally, it appears as if none think of him as a necessary part of the evening. It is if Cornelius does not feel either comfortable in his study alone nor around the crowd of the party, a sign that socially acceptable norms are evolving.

It is through one of his passes through the party that he first sees his daughter, Ellie, dancing with a nice young man, who is around the age of his older children. He, like everyone else at the party, sees the cuteness in this little dance and he moves on. However, during another glance at the dance floor later in the evening he sees his daughter running after the same young man as the man dances with someone his own age. Cornelius tries to get his daughter's attention but is unable to distract her from her target;he instantly feels a pang of jealousy. The person that he loves more than anyone and that loves him so has found another amusement. Cornelius is used to being the one to whom Ellie looked for affection and attention.

Cornelius feels greater jealousy and distress even later in the evening as he receives word that Ellie is quite upset over the man that she had danced with. He is unable to soothe his young daughter and for the first time in her short life he is not the one that she reaches for or desires to be near. It is Hergesell that soothes her and gets her to go to sleep. Afterward, Cornelius watches her sleep and wonders how everything is passing him by and is upset by the prospect of his daughter growing up, thus no longer needing him. However, he placates himself by reasoning that she is still young and will have forgotten Hergesell by the time she wakes up.

Characters

Aladdin

Aladdin is a party guest who is known for his gift-giving and for treating his friends to parties and meals, despite the deteriorating economic situation.

Blue-faced Ann

See Nursy

Abel Cornelius

Professor Abel Cornelius is the 47-year-old patriarch of the family, and the story is revealed through his perspective. He is a history professor who finds great personal satisfaction in preparing lectures. He is a devoted father to his four children, especially Ellie, whom he calls "Eleonorchen" and "childie." Contrasted to this is his appraisal of his older son, Bert, who he believes lacks motivation and intellect in comparison to some of Bert's friends. The Professor dislikes the party but makes a stilted appearance, addressing the guests with a well rehearsed sentence and showing a "mechanical smile." Despite his fascination with history and its "truth," he is himself a phony and puts up a facade to conceal his feelings. He is judgmental of artists and dislikes modern art.

Bert Cornelius

Bert, the Professor's 17-year-old son, wears an elaborate hair style and trendy clothing like the house servant, Xaver. He wants to be a dancer or actor at the local club, the Cairo, much to his father's displeasure. Like Ingrid, he delights in deceiving people by loudly telling false stories on the bus or making prank telephone calls.

Ellie Cornelius

Ellie is the Professor's five-year-old daughter, who has captured his full attention and affection. She calls her father by his first name, Abel. She likes to play games with the kitchen staff and her father. At the party she becomes infatuated with Max and throws a crying tantrum because Max is not her brother. She knows her nursery rhymes and songs better than her brother Snapper; she often plays the teacher to Snapper's student and instructs him in the names of birds and diseases. If he gets things wrong, she makes him stand in the corner or she hits him. She is described as frail and birdlike. She is concerned with her appearance and does not like the way she looks. Her father teases her about her asymmetrical ears, which she tries to keep covered with her hair.

Ingrid Cornelius

Ingrid is the Professor's 18-year-old daughter. She is a student preparing for exams for a certificate that she will never use. She is manipulative "because she knows how to wind masters, and even headmasters, round her finger," and deceptive. She likes to make harassing phone calls and tell loud, obnoxious stories with her brother while riding the bus.

Mother Cornelius

Mother Cornelius has been "broken and worn" by her housekeeping chores, but still maintains her control over the daily routines of the house. She agonizes over the mundane things in their lives: the price of eggs and the devaluation of the currency, but from a practical rather than a philosophic standpoint. She attends to Snapper, especially trying to calm his tantrums.

Snapper Cornelius

Snapper is the Professor's four-year-old son and Ellie's brother, who often tries to make himself look older and more masculine. He throws angry fits in order to get attention from his mother and Nursy. He worries about his moral imperfections and believes that he will go to "the bad place."

Max Hergesell

Max Hergesell is a friend of Bert and Ingrid's who is invited to the party. He is a student of engineering, a profession that the Professor regards highly. He has a nasal twang in his voice, a dark complexion, and no beard. He comes to the party wearing ill-fitting shoes, which gains him sympathy from the Professor. After he dances with Ellie and she becomes disappointed that he is not her brother, he goes to her room in an effort to calm her crying. His words, though, are meant as much to impress the Professor as they are to soothe the crying little girl.

Ivan Herzl

Ivan Herzl, also called Wanja, is acting in a production of *Don Carlos* at the Stadttheatre. He comes to the party wearing make-up, including rouge. The Professor believes that Herzl's appearance and actions "ring false" and that Ivan is aware of this. He is a revolutionary artist and a proponent of the modern arts.

Cecelia Hinterhofer

Cecelia Hinterhofer and her older sister have fallen upon hard times and have had to take on the role of servants for the Cornelius family. They play games with the children but otherwise are only seen on the edges of the story. They take abuse from Xaver over their fall from middle-class status.

Moeller

Moeller is a party guest who plays the guitar and sings several popular songs. He is a bank clerk, and the Professor believes that he is very good at his work.

Nursy

Nursy is a sleek-haired, owl-eyed servant who tends to the young children. Also called Blue-faced Ann, she has a dignified look but is worried that everyone is talking about her new set of teeth. She teaches the children nursery rhymes and songs.

Fraulein Plaichinger

Fraulein Plaichinger is a blonde, plump, snubnosed party guest who dances with Max, to Ellie's great disappointment.

Wanja

See Ivan Herzl

Herr Zuber

Herr Zuber is Ingrid's golfing partner and a guest at the party. He works in his uncle's brewery. The Professor asks him if anything can be done about the watery beer.

Themes

Degeneration of Society

Several prominent themes run though Mann's writing. One is the theme of the degeneration of society and its impact on the people in the society. From his first major work, *Buddenbrooks* (1901), to his last completed work, *Felix Krull* (1954), Mann lived in and wrote about a society that was undergoing major changes. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the effects of the Industrial Revolution were still being felt all across Europe. People were displaced because of the increasing centralization of industry. Workers were losing their individual identity as industrial centers grew larger and more impersonal. Small family businesses and occupations were lost. Human beings were being turned into parts of a greater machine.

In "Disorder and Early Sorrow," the degeneration of society was brought about by the Great War (World War I). Once again, the war displaced people; businesses, towns, and communities were destroyed and abandoned, leaving the people to collect in larger cities to compete for the meager support they could find there. The people were stripped of individuality and thrust into a chaotic society not of their own making, and not to their liking. The Cornelius family is representative of that situation. The Professor has maintained his position as a university history teacher, but his salary, though very high, is consumed by rampant inflation. Food prices and availability are a daily concern for the family. The mother must make special trips to buy eggs before the money loses its value. Others in the family use false names to secure more eggs than the rationing legally allows. These routines, as Mann includes them in this tale, are representative of the broader issues common to Germany at the time.

Art and Artists in Society

A second thematic consideration in Mann's fiction is the role of art and the artist in society. As the story unfolds, Professor Cornelius expresses his disapproval of many of contemporary art forms and society's attitudes towards them. He takes issue with the way Herzl comes to the party wearing make-up. The Professor also takes offense at Herzl's interactions with "the little folk," when Herzl rolls his eyes up and puts his hand over his mouth and blesses them when he first meets the children. The Professor believes "he is so addicted to theatrical methods of making an impression and getting an affect that both words and behaviors ring frightfully false." As with Mann's representation of society by one small family, here too he represents his concerns about the artist in one character. Mann's primary concern is that art and the artist have become too self-indulgent to be taken seriously. The party guests are preoccupied with posturing and looks. He looked at this theme in many other works, most notably in *Tonio Kroger.*

Past versus the Present

The Professor's infatuation with history establishes another of Mann's themes, the conflict between the past and the present. The Professor says on several occasions that he believes that only the past is worthwhile; the present is not as important. He believes that the past is stable and the present is unstable because it is constantly changing, and he dislikes instability.

Search for Self-Identity

Yet another theme that is found in this story is the search for self-identity. Most of the characters in the tale take on false identities or desire to be someone other than who they are. The Professor struggles throughout the story with his loss of prestige due to the country's economic downturn and with the loss of Ellie's affection as she becomes interested in people other than her parents. As a result, he searches for a way to identify himself. Bert tries to look and behave like Xaver; Ingrid and her brother both adopt false identities on the bus and during their telephone pranks. Even Ellie wants to be Max's sister.

Style

Point of View and Setting

In "Disorder and Early Sorrow," the story is narrated in a limited third-person point of view, in which the events are seen from the vantage point of Professor Cornelius. Because it is a limited point of view, the narration does not relate the unobservable thoughts of the other characters. The Professor is not telling the story, but the narrator does recount what the Professor thinks about the events going on around him. The use of limited third-person narration allows the author to reveal insights into activities only from the Professor's perspective.

Setting

"Disorder and Early Sorrow" is set in Munich, Germany, in the middle 1920s, after Germany lost World War I and the country was suffering from the chaos and economic insecurity that would soon give rise to the Nazi party. The action takes place specifically in the home of the Cornelius family, which was once securely upper-middle class. Though the Cornelius's still have servants and modern conveniences like a telephone, their existence is more of a struggle than it used to be. The Professor's wife worries about the price of eggs rising during the day, and it is clear that both parents are weary of the instability of the future. Ingrid and Bert, in contrast, have come of age during this hardship and are much more comfortable with the uncertainty of things. They are willing to accept the class divisions between themselves and their working-class friends; they think of obtaining more eggs than their ration allows as a game, and they are less likely than their parents to judge their friends by what they wear or how they look. The war has broken down the former rules of conduct, particularly as they relate to art and the theater (both once considered the realm of the morally corrupt or the unrespectable), and Professor Cornelius finds the resultant relaxing of mores and decorum (in public especially) disconcerting, hence his tendency to want to stay in his study or take a walk by himself.

Symbolism

Symbolism is the literary technique by which an author uses an item, issue, or situation in a story to represent something quite different. In this story, the Professor's bifocals are symbolic of his dualistic view of the world about him. He sees the past as "true" and the present as "repugnant." They also represent his twofold life, as a member of the family and as one who withdraws from the family into his study. Additionally these symbolize his twofold manner of regarding his children. He idolizes Ellie but has little regard for Bert. In the final scene, Ellie's eyes are swollen from weeping. She wants Max to be her brother but cannot see clearly. Symbolically, her tear-filled, swollen eyes represent her inability to see the impossibility of her wishes. Situations can also be

symbolic. The unsettled nature of the afternoon's preparations for the party is symbolic of the unsettled nature of the society in the country now that the war is over. Contained within both are economic concerns, worry about food, and social problems. The interaction between the party guests and the household is symbolic of the interaction of various facets of society.

Style

Mann's style is understated and detached. These characteristics are readily seen in "Disorder and Early Sorrow." Throughout the tale, Mann never raises his voice to get the reader's attention. While some may find this detachment too inactive, it is this very quality that has attracted many to his writings. An example of Mann's detached style is the calm and collected tone of the final scene. While another writer might spend more time on the overt emotional aspects of the scene, Mann focuses on the Professor's quiet demeanor, the sleeping Snapper, the withdrawn Hinterhofer sisters, and Max's calming interaction with the crying Ellie, all of which contribute to this reserved atmosphere.

Throughout the story, events and situations that might warrant more intense scrutiny are quietly reviewed and discussed. The rampant inflation, the deteriorating house, the rationing of food are all critical events, but Mann presents them in understated matter-of-fact ways. The reader learns about them by accident, not through the direct comment of any of the characters. In this way, Mann avoids being didactic-too moralizing — in his fiction. He leaves that to the Professor in his history lectures.

Irony

Irony is a technique that lets a writer or character say or do one thing, while believing something quite different. The Professor, who likes the predictability of history, is a deep thinker and an intellectual, but is unable to see that the daily problems and situations facing his family are similar to those in the lectures he is preparing. The irony is in this is his failure to make the connections between the events of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and those of his own time.

Historical Context

"Disorder and Early Sorrow" was first published in 1925, midway between the end of World War I and the beginning of the Great Depression. This was a time of high hopes and expectations for better life to come in both Europe and the United States, especially for those who had suffered the incredible ravages of the war. But there were still many reminders of the war throughout Europe, and in Germany in particular. The physical devastation of many buildings, the social dislocation of refugees fleeing from war zones, and the economic upheaval that resulted from these disruptions all combined to create a very unstable condition in Germany. Monetary inflation was rampant; eventually money was worth only as much as the paper it was printed on. It was a combination of these circumstances, plus Mann's lingering misgivings about the justification for the beginning of the war in the first place, that contributed to his state of mind. In this situation, he wrote "Disorder and Early Sorrow."

Mann had not expected the war. Writing to his brother Heinrich on July 30, 1914, he said, "one must be ashamed not to have considered this possible, and not to have seen that the catastrophe had to come." Men on both sides of the conflict eagerly took up arms to fight in the war, assuming that it would be brief and victory would be easy and sweet. Mann was depressed over the fact that he did not qualify for wartime service. Within months, however, with both sides bogged down in the trenches and suffering massive casualties inflicted by new technologies, including poison gas and more effective guns, bayonets, and cannons, it became clear that the ramifications of the Great War would be severe.

The shock of the German surrender in 1918 had a negative effect on Mann and his fellow countrymen. Like others, his financial status suffered and he was baffled by the change in the leadership from an imperial government to a Western-style democracy. Henry Hatfield remarked that "to a large extent his development seems to have been determined by political factors. The salutary shock of the German defeat of 1918 . . . had (its) effect" on Mann.

"Disorder and Early Sorrow" was written during the time he was also working on *The Magic Mountain,* even though the novel was published a year before the short story. As Leser says, it is a story "that contains postwar autobiographical references, such as the home, the atmosphere, the language and the characters themselves." Bolkosky notes that, "The war had brought Germans impoverishment, austerity, debt, a collection of revolutions and Putsch, unbelievable inflation, malaise, cynicism, imbalance, loss of values, and a rejection of history. Both the nation and families were wracked by generational conflict and rebellion." These kinds of situations find their way into "Disorder and Early Sorrow" in varying degrees. It has been noted that one of Mann's constant themes, the degeneration of society, is found in this story. The price of eggs goes up daily as the value of money goes down. The Professor's wife must "dash into town on her bicycle, to turn into provisions a sum of money she has in hand, which she dares not keep lest it lose all value."

The effects of the war had an impact on all aspects of German life. The Weimar Republic, despite its heroic efforts, was unable to control the staggering inflation rate, and as a result there was increasing discontent among the people. Political undercurrents, including the rise of Nazism, were threatening the stability of law and order in the country. This culminated in the 1923 Beer Hall Putsch, staged by Adolf Hitler, in Munich, Mann's home town and the setting of the story. Hitler seizes control of the city government as the German mark falls to one trillion to the dollar; he is eventually arrested and sentenced to jail, where he outlines his political manifesto in *Mein Kampf.*

Despite the dramatic nature of these socioeconomic issues, Mann presented them in this story with understated style and tone and lightness of language. According to Henry Hatfield, "the ideological element is kept tactfully in the background." His people are "good and evil, perceptive and blind; extraordinarily real" according to Hatfield. In his way, Mann's contemporary audience saw themselves in his writings and his later audiences saw the society in which Mann lived and wrote.

Critical Overview

"Disorder and Early Sorrow" is often overlooked in the discussions of Mann's literary output. After its first publication in 1925, it was reissued in 1934 with "Marion the Magician" and then in 1936 in the collection *Stories of Three Decades.* It has been included in several short story anthologies, including *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction* (1977) and *The Norton Introduction to Literature: Fiction* (1973). It has received limited attention from reviewers, but perhaps its most impressive appraisal came from Mann himself. On the occasion of his fiftieth birthday, his publisher asked for a special piece to be included in a commemorative collection. He submitted "Disorder and Early Sorrow." He remarked at the time that it is "a story which I like so much that I am tempted to count it among my very best." This praise is noteworthy since Mann was a very severe critic of his own work. About his *The Magic Mountain,* generally highly regarded among critics, he said that it was "a triumph of stubbornness, even if nothing more."

Noted critic Malcolm Cowley remarked that in "Disorder and Early Sorrow," "all the hysteria of the German inflation is distilled into the tears of a six-year-old girl." Agnes E. Meyer, recognizing the story as what Mann once called "little finger-exercises," regards the work as something that allowed the author to clear his head before he moved on to write a longer novel, and calls the story a tale of "impeccable beauty." Franklin E. Court summarized the symbolism of the title in an essay for *Studies in Short Fiction:* The disorder of the world is manifest in the workings of the Cornelius family, and "the revelers . . . seem to have come to terms with the 'disorder' — they ignore it or find happiness in spite of it. Ellie's 'early sorrow' is destined to intensify as long as she believes so firmly in 'swan knights' and 'fairy princes' like Hergesell."

Critical opinion on Mann's writing as a whole has been consistently favorable. Though some critics have suggested that his stories suffer from pretentiousness and that his characters are cold and distant, most praise him for the depth of his vision and the vastness of his intellect. He has been called a master of style, and his works, through their realism and symbolism, have appealed to a wide audience.

Criticism

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

Critical Essay #1

Mowery has a doctorate in rhetoric/composition and literature from Southern Illinois University. He has taught at SIU and Murray State University. In the following essay he examines the theme of the search for personal identity in "Disorder and Early Sorrow."

During the tumultuous years following World War I, most of the nations of Europe struggled to rebuild the homes, businesses, and towns destroyed by the fighting. Individuals also struggled to rebuild their personal lives and identities. In Germany much of this effort found an outlet in newly formed political parties, which offered the defeated people promises of hope and new opportunities. But for many, daily survival was their only concern. The search for personal identity amid the ruins of war is one of the themes of Thomas Mann's story "Disorder and Early Sorrow." In it, the Cornelius family strives to maintain its middle-class status in the midst of a deteriorating social structure, while at the same time dealing with questions of individual identity.

Professor Abel Cornelius struggles the most with his self-image. He has been a respected college history professor. But now his position is less valued because of the instability of a society that has more dire issues to worry about than education. "The Professor shaved his pointed beard and goes smooth faced. The pointed beard had become impossible— even professors must make some concession to the changing times," Mann wrote in an example that illustrates the necessity for people to keep up with the times. The concessions are deeper than having to shave every morning. His beard was once "the symbol of his academic individuality," but now it is gone, and his position at the university has been diminished, according to critic Franklin E. Court. His professorship had been awarded because he had "written a valuable work on" the Counter-Reformation. But his stature is dwindling because he has not written equally worthy papers recently. His cigar burns down, just as his status and career symbolically burn down.

In the face of his decreasing status, the professor tries to maintain his academic identity. He continues to retreat to his den to prepare class lectures on old topics. In an act of meditation on his past academic glory, "He savors his sentences; keeps on polishing them while he puts back the books he has been using." He takes long walks by the river, during which he ruminates on "scientific preoccupations," especially as they relate to his historical specialty. He "communes with himself." But just as he "puts back the books," he is symbolically put back on the shelf while the river moves on.

Despite these ironic withdrawals to the den, which separate him from his family and the difficulties of daily life, he wants to be a good father to his children. He wants to be seen as an important person in the life of the household. He dotes on Ellie, cuddling her in his lap and sitting by her side as she cries herself to sleep. But he has misgivings about the attention he lavishes on her, believing that "something (is) not perfectly right and good in his love." He draws himself up by thinking that the questions he has just asked himself are merely scientific in nature. These thoughts reinforce his combined needs to be the professor and good father without fault or bad judgment.

On other occasions he is a critic, raising another of Mann's major themes: the role of art and the artist in society. He makes remarks and judgments about the behaviors of the party guests "that ring frightfully false" and about their occupations as "artist(s) of the modern school." He is offended by their "mad modern dances." He condemns Herzl for wearing rouge. But then, in contrast, he flatters him by calling him a "Court actor" as an "atonement for his previous hard thoughts about the rouge." After hearing Moeller sing several songs, in a moment of over reaction he "applauds with ostentation. It warms his heart and does him good, this outcropping of artistic, historic, and cultural elements all amongst the shimmying." In this one moment he has let down his critical guard and has combined the arts that he dislikes with disciplines he admires, revealing an ambivalence in his attitude.

Bert is not immune from his barbed judgments. "And here is my poor Bert, who knows nothing and can do nothing and thinks of nothing except playing the clown, without even talent for that!" Even his positive remarks about Bert are tinged with sarcasm and pessimism. Comparing Bert to Moeller, the Professor says that "his dancing and table-waiting are due to mere boyish folly and the distraught times." He denies his son the right to choose his own career.

In spite of his antipathy to his children's friends, he still feels attracted to the party and the guests. His carefully rehearsed first entry stands in ironic contrast to his disdain for actors and their role playing. He acts out the role of gracious host, and later recreates and adds to it by giving the party guests a package of cigarettes. After putting the package on the mantel with a flourish and a smile, he looks around the room to see if anyone noticed. He is looking for recognition, just as an actor does at the end of a drama.

As Ellie dances with Max, the professor "feels an involuntary twinge." At first this is jealousy, but it also becomes a desire to participate in the party activities. The Professor is not averse to fun and games, often playing "four gentlemen taking a walk" with Ellie and the kitchen staff. But as Ellie and Max dance, he becomes more agitated and finally leaves the house for a brief walk in the evening air.

He escapes into illusion at the end of the story, according to Bolkosky. And because of this, the Professor never really finds himself. After Ellie goes to sleep in her crib, he sits and thinks that things in the morning will return to the way they used to be. Hergesell has noted that "she's beginning young," echoing an earlier remark by blue-faced Ann: "It's pretty young for the female instincts to be showing up." The comment caused the Professor to snap back at Ann, hiding his agony at the realization that despite Ellie's youth she was growing up. Yet, in his mind, he returns to the past and to his past self, the history professor who reveres history and things dead. He wants Ellie to return to his vision of the past. But this act of self-deception conceals the reality that Ellie will not forget and things will not return to the way they were.

The Professor is not the only one searching for a personal identity. Both Bert and Ingrid struggle continually to find their identity, much of which is focused on mimicking and mocking others. They assume phony *personae* on the bus and tell tall tales about

nonexistent lives, using exotic accents. They call dignitaries and make up false identities while they harass the unsuspecting listeners.

Bert seems most insecure in his attempts to find himself. He struggles with his school work but "intends to get done with school somehow." Then he plans to "fling himself into the arms of life. He

will be a dancer or a cabaret actor." His goals for his future are not well planned. As Court notes, "Bert is forced to mimic others." He adopts the mannerisms and dress of Xaver, wearing his "hair very long on top, with a cursory parting in the middle," just as Xaver does. When he is seen from behind while leaving the house, "Dr. Cornelius from his bedroom window cannot, for the life of him, tell whether he is looking at his son or his servant." Bert even tries to emulate Xaver by smoking, but comes up short because he "has not the means to compete with Xaver, who smokes as many as thirty a day." In his attempts to be like Xaver, Bert is not up to the task.

Ingrid has her own difficulties with self-identity. She will soon take an exam for a certificate that she does not plan to use. In the process, she winds the "masters, even the headmaster, round her finger." She becomes a kind of vamp who can manipulate others and who has "a marked and irresistible talent for burlesque." In her manipulation of the masters, she has lost the sense of the difference between her real life and the stage life to which she aspires. By failing to make these distinctions, as well as by her phone and bus behaviors, she is acting even as she lives. Her sense of personal identity has been lost in the false characters she has created for herself.

Even Ellie is not content with her identity. She fusses at her appearance, aggravated by her father's constant reminders about her ears. Perhaps the most telling incident is her reaction to the dance with Max. Afterwards, she is not content with being the daughter of the Professor; in her youthful naivete, she has defined herself in terms of being the sister to Max.

The guests at the evening party also seem to be on a quest for their own personal identities. Some of them come wearing make-up. These artists "find their identity in artifice, in a self-created world," according to Court. The guests, however, do not hide behind the conventions of the older generations. They talk to each other "offensively to an older ear; of social forms, of hospitable warmth, there is no faintest trace. They call each other by their first names." These deviations amuse and irritate the Professor because they violate his sense of order. To the guests, these behaviors establish themselves as equals among their own age groups. The theme of disorder and disruption is also found in the identity searches of the party guests. As Bolkosky says, Mann "captures not only the personal disorder and sorrow of a family . . . but . . . the confusion of generations."

Xaver stands out among the characters in this tale because of his individuality, self-assurance, and personal strengths. He is unmoved by others and makes no attempts to assume any other identity. He leads a "free and untrammeled existence," satisfied with himself as he is. He "is not a puppet," according to Court. He has "quite distinct traits of

character of his own," which his employers have conceded. He lives at his own pace, being willing to get out of bed at any time of the night for his own reasons, but "to get up before eight in the morning, he cannot do it" when schedules require it. He has demonstrated in this way that he will work for the Cornelius family, but he will not become one of them. He will "not be trained to the performance of the daily round." He does not obey the family rules; "he will not jump over the stick" as though he were a trained dog.

Xaver is the object of Bert's attentions and the Professor's quiet praise, despite being called "a thorough-paced good-for-nothing and a windbag" because he speaks his mind and is a "follower of the revolution, Bolshevist sympathizer." The Professor also calls him the "minute man" because he responds to crises quickly and without hesitation. He gets gratification from the egg-buying enterprise as he dons "civilian garb and attends his young master and mistress." They all "delight in misleading and mystifying their fellow-men." But he does not make this experience the major focus of his life. It serves him as a diversion, not as way of living.

The search for individual identity is an experience shared by characters in fictional tales and by real people. But the manner and success of this journey depends on the circumstances that accompany the individuals, as well as the depth and strength of character of the individual doing the seeking. In this story the two most insecure people, the Professor and his son, Bert, have the most difficulty in finding themselves. The Professor hides in the well-known past, and Bert hides in an unknown future. But hiding does not complete their searches. At the end of the tale both are still looking for themselves. They still have someone to find.

Source: Carl Mowery, for *Short Stories for Students,* Gale, 1998.

Critical Essay #2

In the following essay, Bolkosky discusses "Disorder and Early Sorrow" as not only the story of a family, but also as an illustration of "national disorder and sorrow, the confusion of generations."

. . . . "Disorder and Early Sorrow" is a "realistic" description of a day in the life of an upper middle-class family in the Munich of 1924. It has, however, deeper significance, suggesting an analysis of the time more pointed than any of Mann's previous aesthetic undertakings. He seems almost off his guard, somehow at ease, with a keen if relaxed eye for historical results. Written in 1925 at and about a time when the turbulent circumstances of people's lives were indisputably attributable to such a monumental political event as World War I, the narrative makes a political statement and embodies Mann's evolving feelings about life in the Weimar Republic and the future of Germany.

The war had brought Germans impoverishment, austerity, debt, a collection of revolutions and *Putsch,* unbelievable inflation, malaise, cynicism, imbalance, loss of values, and a rejection of history. Both the nation and families were wracked by generational conflict and rebellion. Instead of *Kultur,* "dedication to a basic order of things and its lasting values," there was disorder, which Mann addressed here, from its midst, in every conceivable aspect. In "Disorder and Early Sorrow" he satirized what one critic has dubbed his "seismographic neutrality" through a poignant self-accusation, and he expressed moral, historical, social, and political opinions— unequivocally.

Abel Cornelius, the head of the family in "Disorder and Early Sorrow," is a university professor. He and his wife are referred to by their children as the "Old Folk"; the grandparents, "The Ancients," are never seen. The two older children, teenagers Bert and Ingrid, are the "Big Folk"; and the younger ones, Ellie and Snapper, ages five and six, the "Little Folk." The household includes servants, the most important of whom is Xaver Kleinsgutl, a proletarian contemporary of the Big Folk. The day is a special one because of an informal party the Big Folk are giving for their friends. During the party Ellie becomes enchanted by a young man, Max Hergesell, who playfully dances with her. She is heartbroken when she must leave the party with her brother and go to bed; she weeps bitterly as she watches Max dance with a plump, Germanic girl, and cries out that she wishes he were her brother. Professor Cornelius, profoundly, ineffably attached to his daughter, is helpless and anguished. Xaver fetches Max who appears like a fairy-tale prince, dashingly competent, to soothe Ellie, who, with her father, is astonished at his heroic appearance and magnanimity. She drifts off to sleep peacefully, Cornelius thanks Hergesell gratefully yet with some inexplicable resentment, and the story concludes with the professor pondering the prospect of a normal tomorrow filled with games.

The apparent straightforwardness of the novella is, of course, deceptive. Mann captures not only the personal disorder and sorrow of a family and a child, but the national disorder and sorrow, the confusion of generations. There are more or less standard types: Xaver, the "child of his time," Max, the "new man," Cornelius, the representative

of older traditions and institutions, Ellie and Snapper, the new life born at around the same time as the Weimar Republic and, like it, troubled, disturbing, and problematic. But Mann's genius for humanizing stereotypes is perhaps more evident here than in the major works. Through deft and subtle descriptions he begins to express a sociopolitical stand regarding Germany's future— this before the anti-Fascist statement in "Mario," before the clear and present danger of Nazism, before his open, if ambiguous, defenses of the Republic. It is a position in many ways consistent with his earlier attitudes, but more concrete, overtly critical of both the new and the old choices. It is a political statement because any consideration of German society after World War I was forced to deal with politics; the economy, the social structure, the educational institutions, as well as ideologies were all directly traceable to political experience. In a sense, then, "Disorder and Early Sorrow" marks a significant turning point in Mann's career because it bridges his earlier and later work. More than that, it discloses continuity along with discontinuity, consistency along with contradiction, commitment and engagement along with apparent aloofness and detachment.

"Disorder and Early Sorrow" presents a surprisingly detailed account of daily life in the Weimar Republic. The economic plight of Germans during the inflation reveals itself in the first sentence as the Cornelius family dines on croquettes made not of meat but of turnip greens and a trifle made from "those dessert powders we use nowadays": unnatural food suitable for unnatural times. Frau Cornelius is no more than a shadow in the story, but Mann relates simply yet fully that the "fantastic difficulties of the housekeeping have broken and worn her" to whom "everything seems upside down." She is frantic over the need to buy the rationed, one-thousand mark eggs as soon as possible before the price rises. The task rests with the Big Folk and Xaver— the resourceful "moujik."

For this egg escapade the Big Folk must use assumed names in order to exceed the family egg quota. Xaver dons "civilian clothing" to assist, and dressed in outgrown clothes similar to those of his master's son, he is virtually indistinguishable from Bert. Indeed, Cornelius has intimations that this fellow of the lower classes is somehow superior to his own son. The younger children add to the confusion by addressing their father by his first name, Abel, and the disturbing, painfully descriptive initial paragraphs become explicitly sarcastic in the mocking conduct of Ingrid as she reminds Abel of the forthcoming party, calling him "Darling old thing." The unnatural, strained, and comic tone of the scene is heightened by the contrast between the children and Abel who, despite the discontinuity of life, still "presides in proper middle class style."

We are immediately aware of a generational conflict and that children lack respect for parents and ghostly grandparents. They lack more; their goals either are not defined or flaunt traditional aspirations. Eighteen-year-old Ingrid, on the eve of her exams, having ingratiated herself with teachers and headmasters through guile and deviousness, leans toward stage burlesque. Seventeen-year-old Bert plans to finish school "somehow, anyhow, and fling himself into the arms of life," perhaps as a dancer or a waiter. Seeking diversion in Weimar's notorious underground, they are shocking and publicly irreverent toward the older generation and its values. Apparently addicted to the telephone, they call anyone— government officials, operatic celebrities, Church authorities, any

representative of the old establishment— to play tricks; Mann labels these verbal vandals "wanton and impish." From the perspective of the father's generation, their lives are aimless, their goals unanchored and ephemeral.

In the center of the activity, a bit confused and frazzled by the commotion, a bit absent-minded, is Professor Abel Cornelius. His name suits him: "Cornelius" evokes a portrait of a classical and patriotic outlook and "Abel," the obedient servant of authority, formal, precise and faithful— but doomed. He is the " *geistiger Mensch,*" akin in some respects to Aschenbach, but more to Mann himself. As historian, he is faithful to the past, obsessed with time, watching clocks and calendars, losing track of the days, trying to hold time back and to become history. He is old Germany: the historian as state bureaucrat, pedantic civil servant, teacher and authority figure who, before World War I, was conformist, unquestioning, and, most importantly, apolitical. Because of his love for the past, for the "timeless," the "eternal," and "infinity," he hates the revolution. But as an apolitical man by scholarly principle and commitment, he does not confront it actively. Abel has made compromises: he has shaved his pointed beard (probably reminiscent of the Kaiser), for example, and silently tolerated the laziness and near-insolence of the servants and children.

When the present confronts him, Cornelius "withdraws to his study." Mann does not have him "go," "retire," or "move," but "withdraw" (*Zuruckziehen*), a word that increasingly implies retreat. And there he reads. Is reading perhaps an escape from disorder? A way to combat it? Words seem to control past events in the historian's "art," to order them clearly and to define and explain rationally the flow of history. Unchanging words provide unchanging significance and meaning for him, while perfectly ordered syntax provides perfectly ordered history; both disappear in the world of the party. What attracts the historian, Abel thinks, is the certainty and order of the past— certain, even immortal, because it is dead "and death is the root of all godliness and abiding significance." Such pious Hegelian ruminations sound not profound, but foolish, irrelevant, almost quaint in the historical context of this story. Dutiful Abel withdraws to his inner sanctum and escapes the living present and its hostile insecurities by reading of "genuine history," the dead past. The washbasin, broken for two years, remains unfixed, the quest for eggs not his worry, the myriad of minor and major crises remote from him. And the language of the young remains unintelligible to him, alienating him from his children, from the party, from real life and action.

Professor Cornelius is simultaneously a realistic figure and a rich literary symbol of a way of life that was fast fading from existence in 1924. He encapsulates more than the "preoccupation with death of a typical bourgeois of the pre-war period" in Lukacs' limiting description of him. Life in his study is the life of the mind, replete with words separated from action and reality. He reads backwards in time: first of England in the seventeenth century, the origin of the English public debt; then of Spain's enormous debt at the close of the sixteenth century. Here is food for a lecture comparing the prosperity of England despite its debt with the catastrophic failure of Spain under similar circumstances. A wealth of material rests in the English and French texts from which the professor will form an ethical and psychological analysis. All this provides a means of discussing his specialty, Philip II of Spain and the Counter-Reformation. (Cornelius has

already written a monograph on the subject.) In his self-contained refuge, Abel makes no connection whatsoever between these historical crises and that of Germany in 1924, between the end of Spain's Empire and the collapse of Germany's in wars against England. His failure to do so is breathtaking in its blindness. This boundary between mind and matter, this divorce from reality testifies to a fatal flaw in those of Abel's class, profession, and ethos. And Mann does not justify it, sympathize with it, or pity it. We feel the pathos of Abel's situation, but no sympathy for his separation; no meditative, artistic excuses for disengagement insinuate themselves.

Abel's scholarly specialty conveys his own essence, symbolizes his most hidden nature. He has written on Philip II, son of Emperor Charles V, defender of the Church against the revolutions of Protestantism. With his "conservative instinct" Abel identifies with Philip to some extent, much as Mann had earlier identified with Frederick the Great, whom he had characterized as waging hopeless wars to test himself. To Abel, Philip is a tragic figure engaged in a "practically hopeless struggle . . . against the whole trend of history." With idealistic aplomb and abstraction he conceives Philip's fight to have been against the "Germanic revolution," never consciously acknowledging his own opposition, as futile as Philip's, to another Germanic revolution. Even as he ponders the dramatic impact of the well-formed sentences he writes for tomorrow's lecture on "black-clad Philip," past and present "mingle with a confused consciousness." His thoughts circle back to the party — from Philip to the party— and he dozes, escaping.

Abel's historical interpretation of his hero illuminates his own character. Philip seems to him to cling gallantly, if tragically, to his ideal of Right as it is rigidly defined by the past. He represents order, obedience, traditional standards, duty and authority: all the qualities of life that Abel honors and embraces. Historically, however, Philip II was perhaps the man most directly responsible for the decline of Spain, having assumed the throne at the apogee of its imperial glory and leaving it with only shadows of greatness glimpsed in subsequent artistic and intellectual flowering. One historian describes him as "narrow, despotic and cruel." And Mann's description of Frederick's temperament, "as vicious as it is melancholy," may be applied to Philip. Determined at all costs to force strict conformity, Philip instituted the worst aspects of the Spanish Inquisition and initiated the war for suppression of the revolt in the Netherlands— a rebellion led by his son, Don Carlos. His portraits suggest his character: austere, black-clad, bookish, deceptively serene, and efficiently bureaucratic. Unlike Schiller in *Don Carlos,* northern historians have painted him as the secret murderer of his son, dark and foreboding. His enormous kingdom was in turmoil, disunited, almost as polyglot as the eastern Hapsburg Empire, and as divided as Germany— while he, inactive, tried to rule from his desk by written decree. His shadow hung over the generation of fathers in Weimar Germany, manifested in the image of authority created by post-World War I intellectuals and personified in historians and teachers: an unfeeling figure, the betrayer of the lost generation of sons as well as the lost empire. Abel has unwittingly assumed the qualities— all of them— of Philip. . . .

Abel faces this new world of intensified pragmatism and, like his model Philip II, cannot accept it. Whereas the aesthetic man of the *Reflections* voluntarily disengaged himself and loftily observed politics and history at a distance, isolated because he refused to

take sides or abide by totalizing definitions and dogmas, Abel flees to illusion, to the past, as confused by the needs of life (Ellie) as Aschenbach was by the ecstasies he experienced when he too confronted youth and real life. In "Disorder and Early Sorrow" Mann declares that change is imminent, inescapable— declares, too, that the viability of the apolitical isolation of the phlegmatic thinker is superannuated— lamentably, perhaps, but necessarily. This testimony simultaneously reaffirms the condemnation of *Gesellschaft* or *Zivilisation* and rejects the virtue of the apolitical or disengaged man of mind. Erich Heller suggested that Mann attributed the isolation of the artist to the nature of art and that he could not yet see, in 1918, another possible basis for isolation: "the misdemeanour of society." Mann felt it, and saw it by 1925. Bourgeois society and values had been terrifyingly, depressingly transformed beyond radical and conservative labels to confusing mixtures of both, to apolitical stances by uncultured and unscrupulous new young men.

This new phenomenon, a decline of *Kultur* worse even than nineteenth century mediocrity, was not the Dionysian witch's brew that some critics have claimed prefigured Nazism in Mann's early stories. For all the discussion of the famous tension between Dionysian frenzy and bureaucratic control, it was the latter that would prove the greater threat. Historians have discerned the deadliest aspects of Nazism in its cold, technological, bureaucratic amorality: a "logical" product of a bourgeois spirit devoted to order, administration, and success that facilitated the routine execution of "civilized" terror. This other side of Nazism had its roots in the nineteenth century but found fertile soil in the Weimar Republic of 1925-1930. Who better than the dispassionate, unfeeling, and rational engineer—antithesis of irrationality and passion— to represent the new man? Despite his apolitical stance, Max is political, plastic, and practical. He is not the mystifying, artistic tyrant of "Mario," but he would certainly fall under the tyrant's spell—logically. Abel will be displaced by this Cain/Max who has no past to hinder or bind him in any way. Ronald Gray has described Mann's narrator in "Mario" as "unattached, calmly setting down the catastrophe." In "Disorder and Early Sorrow" Mann described an impending social catastrophe that involved him, and judged it. His writing reveals a political and social consciousness that predated the rise of Fascism. Bertolt Brecht would argue years later that for all the unspeakable horror, Hitler was nevertheless a comic fool. It is ironic, then, that Mann described Max Hergesell as "the fairy clown."

Source: Sidney Bolkosky, "Thomas Mann's 'Disorder and Early Sorrow': The Writer as Social Critic," in *Contemporary Literature,* Vol. 22, No. 2, Spring, 1981, pp. 218-233.

Critical Essay #3

In the following essay, Court examines deception and irony in "Disorder and Early Sorrow."

Professor Cornelius's loss of his young daughter, Ellie, and Ellie's loss of Max Hergesell, the "fairy prince" who captures her tiny heart at the "big folks'" party in Mann's "Disorder and Early Sorrow," are but the final movements in a narrative that suggests fraud and hopelessness from beginning to end. The opening paragraph, for example, quite appropriately begins with a reference to one of the most deceptive of all foods— croquettes—deceptive because the ingredients are disguised. The Corneliuses, a very "proper" middle class family, living in an illusory house outwardly appearing elegant but actually badly in need of repair, a house in which "they themselves look odd . . . with their worn and turned clothing and altered way of life," sit to eat a dinner of "croquettes made of turnip greens" followed by a trifle that is "concocted out of those dessert powders" that the reader learns really taste like something else— soap.

Here we have a small example at the outset of how Mann uses a stylistic device called "parody of externals" to create irony, a subject that John G. Root discusses in an enlightening article on Mann's style, but one which has never been successfully applied to an analysis of "Disorder and Early Sorrow." This brief study will attempt to explain how the *leitmotiv* of deception in this unusual tale is reinforced through the description of physical externals. We will find that in each character considered, except one, outer traits complement inner peculiarities. The one exception is the servant, Xaver, who has the ironic last name of Kleinsgutl, ironic because he is without doubt the only character in the story who is "his own man."

In contrast to Xaver, the other characters are poseurs, bearing more resemblance to puppets or mannequins than to real beings. The "big folks" (Bert and Ingrid), for instance, seem to lack integrity. They are much like the telephone that plays such a prominent part in their lives: expressionless, capable only of audible contact, an artificial sound device. Bert, the Professor's seventeen year old son, having succumbed to Ivor Herzl's influence, "blackens the lower rim of his eyelids" and assumes the unnatural pose of a performer. Like Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray, who is a creation of the artistic imagination of Lord Henry Wotton, Bert is Herzl's creation. From a distance, Bert is said to resemble Xaver, but there the resemblance ends; the doubles are inconsonant— Xaver is not a puppet. He toys with the idea of being engaged by a cinema director, but he is, as the Professor envisions, too much of a "good-for-nothing . . . with quite distinct traits of character of his own" ever to take the cinema dream seriously. He must be taken "as he is." Xaver does what he has the urge to do (he smokes thirty cigarettes a day, for instance); Bert, because he lacks "the means to compete with Xaver," or, for that matter, with anyone else, is forced to mimic others. Bert's deficiency manifests itself by the paternal envy his father experiences when comparing Bert's failures with the accomplishments of a number of male guests at the party. Bert's fraudulent, showy outward behavior mirrors his inner failure: "'poor Bert, who knows nothing and can do

nothing . . . except playing the clown'." His external appearance parodies his hollow, self-deception.

Ingrid, the Professor's older daughter, is also a markedly deceptive character whose entire life appears to have been comprised of sham and impersonation. She is said to know how to "wind masters, and even headmasters, round her finger," and she is in school working for a certificate that she never plans to use. The performance that she and Bert put on in the bus, at the expense of the unhappy old gentleman sitting opposite them, and the delight she takes in ridiculing Max Hergesell's nasal drawl reflect a bizarre and sadistic inner quality. Both she and Bert foreshadow through their outward behavior the pose and affectation which will later distinguish the many painted figures who turn up for the party.

What the Professor observes of Herzl the actor seems to encompass the entire guest list: "'Queer,' thinks the Professor, 'You would think a man would be one thing or the other— not melancholic and use face paint at the same time. . . . But here we have a perfect illustration of the abnormality of the artist soul-form'." "The artist soul-form" — shades of Aschenbach, Cipolla, and Tonio Kröger are conjured up by the professor's comment; no doubt the painted, artificial host of guests at the party share with them the soul-form of the artist. The artist-figures who attend the party emphasize by contrast the commonplace, rather mediocre nature of the professor's entire family; the extent of their mediocrity is emphasized finally by the professor himself— who is as self-deceived as his children.

The Professor sees something abnormal in the artist's soul. Unlike the "big folks," he does nothing or wears nothing that gives one the impression that he is self-deceived. Ironically, however, the professor appears less and less attractive as the party progresses. The revelers are artist-figures living devoid of class awareness; the same cannot be said for the "big folks" and the Professor. The artists seem to find their identity in artifice, in a self-created world. They must, because the generation of the "old folks" has given them nothing with which they can identify. And whatever else these art seekers might be, they are not hypocrites. Like the "madmen" and the "immortals" in Hesse's *Steppenwolf,* whom they resemble, their strange outward behavior does not conceal inner deformities. They are surrealistic externalizations of a total acceptance of life's absurdity, and they do not take themselves seriously. The same, however, cannot be said for the "big folks" or for the Professor himself.

The one external feature associated with the Professor, his glasses, suggests the essential weakness in his character. They are bifocals with lenses "divided for reading and distance" and are symbolic of his divided personality which adjusts his view according to the circumstances. Mann explains that being a history professor, Professor Cornelius's heart belongs "to the coherent, disciplined, historic past." We are also told that inwardly the Professor dislikes the pose and artificiality of the artists and resents the party "with its power to intoxicate and estrange his darling child." Yet all of his inward resentment and opinions are hidden by an exterior far more deceitful than the rouged cheeks of Herzl the actor. The Professor laughs at the sick humor of the "big folks," not because he really wants to, but because "in these times when something funny

happens people have to laugh." Although he attacks the changing times in his lectures, he, nevertheless, has shaved his beard, the symbol of his once academic individuality, and now smooth-faced—his "concession to the changing times" — he outwardly embraces the society and world view he detests. He seems to associate the "big folks'" party with the tone of the new society that he attacks in his lectures, yet his mind wanders during the very process of formulating his argument to a pleasurable anticipation of the coming festivities. And when the time does arrive, we see him polishing his glasses (it is time to readjust his perspective to suit the circumstances) and practicing "appropriate" phrases to impress the guests whom he will flatter with undue approval and unnecessary praise. The Professor is a hypocrite.

The devastating irony that Mann achieves mainly through the parody of externals in this story reaches its culmination in the characterization of the Professor. The *leitmotiv* of deception, that pervades the story, ends with the lie that appears at the end of the narrative— the lie that the professor forces himself to believe: that tomorrow the glittering Hergesell will be, for Ellie, "a pale shadow." The story, however, suggests otherwise. His prayers to heaven that Ellie will forget Hergesell and the festive world he symbolizes is the professor's final act of self-deception. She will not forget.

The title of the story is appropriate: the world out of joint, the "disordered" world, is viewed in microcosm in the lives of the Cornelius family; the revelers, at least, seem to have come to terms with the "disorder" — they ignore it or find happiness in spite of it. Ellie's "early sorrow" is destined to intensify as long as she believes so firmly in "swan knights" and "fairy princes" like Hergesell. As Hergesell uncannily seems to know, "'she's beginning young'."

Source: Franklin E. Court, "Deception and the 'Parody of Externals' in Thomas Mann's 'Disorder and Early Sorrow'," in *Studies in Short Fiction,* Vol. XII, No. 2, Spring, 1975, pp. 186-89.

Adaptations

"Disorder and Early Sorrow" was adapted by Franz Seitz for the film *"Disorder and Early Torment,"* Jugendfilm, 1977.

Compare and Contrast

1924: To curb inflation, Germany issues a new Reichmark. Each new Reichmark is worth one billion of the old marks, which are withdrawn from circulation.

1997: Germany of the 1990s has one of the strongest economic systems in the Western world. Even after absorbing the former country of East Germany, it is a leader among all European nations. But this has not come without some difficulties. The industrial output of the eastern parts of the country was far below that of the western section.

1925: Adolf Hitler publishes the first volume of *Mein Kampf,* which he dictates to Rudolph Hess while he is in prison. In it, he outlines his ideas for social reform, commenting that "The great masses of the people . . . will more easily fall victims to a great lie than to a small one."

1998: Nazi hate groups, in both Germany and the United States, come under attack from the Jewish Anti-Defamation League for their Internet Web sites devoted to Holocaust-denial propaganda.

1920s: Cabaret theater is popular entertainment in the big cities of Germany, especially Berlin. Young people are attracted by the relaxed moral atmosphere of the 1920s, and nightclub stage shows often push the boundaries of decorum and obscenity.

1998: A new version of the stage play *The Diary of Anne Frank* opens on Broadway, coming under fire for its revisionist interpretation of *The Diary of Anne Frank,* the story of a teenager's life in hiding from the Nazis during World War II. Cynthia Ozick, a noted Jewish critic and writer, objects to the optimism and universality of the production.

What Do I Read Next?

A Man and his Dog (1919) by Mann. This is an autobiographical story about life in Munich. This story, a "depiction of idyllic domesticity," forms a kind of triptych with "Disorder and Early Sorrow" and "Song of the Child," according to Henry Hatfield.

Tonio Kroger by Mann (1925). This is one of Mann's best known short stories. It is about the development of a young artist; many critics believe it is Mann's personal statement about art and artists.

Mein Kampf, 1925-27, by Adolf Hitler. This two-volume work was the basis for Hitler's rise to power. Written while he was in prison, it formulates economic and social programs that he believed would bring the country back from disgrace at the end of World War I. This work is instructive from a rhetorical standpoint, showing how he was able to captivate his audience and to lead them into thinking the way he did. It is useful as an historical document, coming out of the same time period as "Disorder and Early Sorrow," and showing some of the same socioeconomic difficulties that Mann addressed in his writing.

Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka (1915). This tale is often included in reading lists because of its rather unusual subject: an office worker wakes up one morning to find that he has turned into a large cockroach. However, it is more a tale of interpersonal abuse, intolerance, and isolation.

The Berlin Stories (1946) by Christopher Isherwood, a compilation that explores the decadence of 1930s Berlin through the eyes of a young narrator, just as the Nazi party is gaining political power in Germany.

Further Study

Critical Essays on Thomas Mann, edited by Inta Ezergailis, G. K. Hall, 1988, 270 p.

Reprinted essays on many of Mann's works.

Heilbut, Anthony. *Thomas Mann: Eros and Literature,* University of California Press, 1997, 638 p.

A biography of Mann, in which the author compares Mann to other great writers, including Goethe, Melville, and Kafka.

Prater, Donald A. *Thomas Mann: A Life,* Oxford University Press, 1995, 554 p.

A biography of Mann.

"Thomas Mann," in *Short Story Criticism,* Volume 5, edited by Thomas Votteler, Gale, 1990, pp. 305-60.

Reprinted critical essays on Mann's short fiction.

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Hatfield, Henry. *Thomas Mann,* revised edition, Knopf, 1962.

Leser, Esther H. "New Humanism: Fading of Formal Genre Limitations," in *Thomas Mann's Short Fiction: An Intellectual Biography,* edited by Mitzi Brunsdale, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989, pp. 181-92.

Mann, Thomas. *Stories of Three Decades,* translated by H. T. Lowe-Parker, Knopf, 1936, pp. v-ix.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Short Stories for Students (SSfS) 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, SSfS 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 SSfS 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 SSfS 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 SSfS 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 SSfS 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

SSfS 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 Short Stories 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 SSfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SSfS 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 Short Stories for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Short Stories 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 SSfS 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.□ Short Stories for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

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

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Short Stories 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 SSfS, 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 Short Stories 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 SSfS, 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 Short Stories 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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