Dusklands Study Guide

Dusklands by John Maxwell Coetzee

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Introduction

J. M. Coetzee's *Dusklands*, published in 1974 in South Africa, is actually not a novel but rather two short novellas that share a common theme. That theme is an exploration of power, or the lack of it, depending on whose side you are on. It is about the power to rule that is fought for in war, or the power that is exerted in prejudice against a group of people who are considered less than human. It is about the power of the mind to conceptualize how to demean a nation of people; how to propagandize one's beliefs; or how to rationalize one's horrible and disgraceful actions. And it is about the power of survival. But power is not the only theme. *Dusklands* is not only about the power of extensive military machines or the dominance exhibited by white supremacy or the exploitation of colonization. It is also about the sometimes deadly consequences of culture clash, the disintegration of the human spirit, and the complete destruction of a way of life.

Dusklands is Coetzee's first published work. He went on to write many more novels that reached ever-widening, international audiences. He has won numerous prizes for his skill, including two Booker Prizes, the only writer to accomplish this feat. *Dusklands* is not the most extraordinary nor the most popular of his books, but it contains the seed from which his other novels have bloomed. The undercurrent of bigotry, narrow-mindedness, and insensitivity that create the absurdities of Coetzee's novels are all there, as is the suffering of those who are the victims stranded in the futile realities of Coetzee's fictional worlds.

Author Biography

Nobel Prize—winning author J. M. Coetzee, descendant of seventeenth-century Dutch settlers, was born in Cape Town, South Africa, on February 9, 1940. His well-educated parents promoted an interest in learning in the young Coetzee, who loved to read books. When it came time to enter university, Coetzee studied both mathematics and English. Upon graduating with honors from the University of Cape Town, Coetzee moved to England where he found work as a computer programmer. His love of literature had not diminished, however, and two years after marrying Phillipa Jubber, in 1963, he was accepted as a graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin. In 1969, he received his doctorate in English, linguistics, and Germanic languages.

Coetzee would go on to teach literature at the State University of New York at Buffalo (SUNY) for the next three years. He had wanted to stay in the United States but was refused permanent residency, so he returned to South Africa in 1972. In that same year, Coetzee accepted a position as professor at the University of Cape Town, his alma mater, where he taught until his retirement in 2000. Coetzee would return to the United States from time to time, working as guest lecturer at several universities and colleges, including Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Stanford, and the University of Chicago.

Coetzee took up his interest in writing after receiving his doctorate. His first published book was *Dusklands* (1974). His second book, *In the Heart of the Country* (1977) won South Africa's prestigious literary award, the CNA Prize. But it was with his fourth book, Booker Prize—winning *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983) that Coetzee would be fully acknowledged internationally as a gifted author. And his reputation would be solidly grounded with his eighth publication *Disgrace* (1999), which won Coetzee his second Booker Prize. He remains the only author to win this prestigious award more than once.

Coetzee has also written what he calls two fictionalized memoirs: *Boyhood* (1997) and *Youth* (2002). He also has published several collections of essays on topics such as South African literature and culture, and a study of literary censorship. In 2003, for his life's work, Coetzee was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature.

Coetzee is a somewhat reclusive author who seldom grants interviews. But some details about his life other than his publications have been gleaned from news stories. For example, he has suffered personal tragedy in the loss of one of his two children as well as in the loss of his wife, who died from cancer. Coetzee lives with his partner Dorothy Driver in Adelaide, Australia, where he holds an honorary position at the University of Adelaide. Besides his writing accomplishments, Coetzee is well known as a translator of books for South African authors.

Plot Summary

The Vietnam Project

Coetzee's novel *Dusklands* begins with the section (some people refer to it as a novella) called "The Vietnam Project." The protagonist is Eugene Dawn, who is the author of a special report on propaganda in reference to the Vietnam War. The story opens as Eugene considers the merits of his report, which he feels he must defend since his supervisor, named Coetzee, is not quite pleased with it. Coetzee praises Eugene's ability to write but suggests some changes. Eugene, in the meantime, despite his constant reminders to himself to be confident, feels insecure. "He is going to reject me," Eugene says while recounting the day's events in his supervisor's office.

Coetzee tries to explain to Eugene that the report he has written is for the military, which is made up of people who are "slow-thinking, suspicious, and conservative." So Coetzee suggests that Eugene rewrite his report in words of one syllable and more fully clarify Eugene's abstract concepts. Eugene leaves the office depressed.

Eugene tries to rewrite his report in the basement of the Harry S. Truman Library, where he researches topics related to the culture of Vietnam, "mythography," and propaganda. It is while he is surrounded by books that Eugene feels the closest to happiness, an "intellectual happiness," Eugene informs the reader, which in his mind is the highest form. He mentions Harry, the library clerk, who dislikes it when people take down the books from the shelves. Eugene, in turn, appreciates order and hopes that Harry appreciates Eugene's neatness. Eugene also exposes how rigid his habits are. He faces a certain specific direction when he writes. He can write creatively only in the early hours of the morning, before so-called walls appear in his brain, blocking out his inspiration.

Eugene then describes his wife and his relationship with her, which is very dismal. He blames his wife for there not being any feelings between them. And when he refers to their son, he calls him "her child," and mentions that Marilyn's and the boy's conversations disturb his peace. He does not trust his wife. She is a conformist, he says, whereas he is willing to forge new trails, although this nonconformist side of him is slow to emerge. Thus he has given Marilyn the false image that he is a conformist like her. He also believes that she thinks he leans toward violence because of his involvement with the Vietnam project. Marilyn goes to a therapist for her depression once a week. And it is during this time that Eugene misses her. He leaves work early so he can be there and greet her when she opens the front door. While he hugs her, he sniffs at her, trying to catch the scent of another man. Eugene is addicted to marriage, he states, which is a "surer bond than love."

Eugene carries with him a handful of photographs taken in Vietnam. One is of a U.S. soldier having sex with a Vietnamese woman, maybe a child. Another shows soldiers holding two severed heads of Vietnamese men. Another is of a U.S. soldier walking past

a Vietnamese man locked in a cage. The man has been tortured, and Eugene discusses the affects of torture.

The second part of the story contains excerpts from Eugene's report. In it, he discusses the aims and achievements of propaganda and the difference between its affect on people from Western cultures and those from Asian cultures. One theory that Eugene pays special attention to is that of the "father-voice" and how it works to control the common citizen as well as how it fails as a device of propaganda. Intermixed with the narrative of the report are Eugene's interior monologues. His comments tend to exaggerate his position, such as when he refers to himself as a "hero of resistance."

In part three, Eugene reflects on his childhood and how much time he spent with books. Then he quickly returns to the discussion about Coetzee and how much he wants to please him and be more like him. He then discusses how he feels abandoned by Coetzee, how his boss ignores him. Eugene is bored at work. Sometimes he passes the time by calling his wife. After she did not respond to one of his calls, he left work to spy on her.

Eugene marvels at himself, in part four, because he has "done a deed." He has kidnapped his son and is hiding in a motel room, where he hopes to write. He wants to find the peace and order that his mind requires. And by being away from his wife, he thinks he will find it. His son is happy at first, but he soon becomes bored with the inaction of the daily routine. Eugene believes his son fares better when away from his mother who coddles him. After a few days, Eugene's interior dialogue begins to disintegrate as evidenced when he begins to talk about a child who lives inside of him. This is a child who robs him of nourishment and consumes his inner organs. Shortly afterward, Marilyn arrives with the police. Eugene is taken away but not before it is obvious that Eugene has experienced a mental breakdown. He pierces his son's skin with a knife.

Locked away in a hospital, Eugene feels comfortable. Life is simpler. In his thoughts, he is on an equal basis with the doctors, not with the other patients. He talks about wanting to get out eventually, but not yet. He still has much to figure out. Eugene's story ends with the lines: "In my cell in the heart of America, with my private toilet in the corner, I ponder and ponder. I have high hopes of finding whose fault I am."

The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee

Coetzee's "The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee" completes the novel *Dusklands*. He begins with a "Translator's Preface," giving the novella the feel of a historic piece. Immediately after this, the so-called journal of Jacobus Coetzee begins. The narrative starts with a brief exposition about the changes that have occurred in relationship to the Boers, the white settlers (of which Jacobus is one) and the native, black African tribes. This theme is discussed throughout the narrative, as Jacobus relates circumstances of his life while living in the northern lands of South Africa.

Although the Hottentots and Boers share similar circumstances and therefore also share a particular way of life, Jacobus states that the main difference between the two groups is Christianitythe Boers are Christian and the Hottentots are not. Even if the Hottentots are converted, their "Christianity is an empty word." The Hottentots, Jacobus believes, use Christianity in order to gain favors from the whites. Jacobus proves, through the tone of his writing, that his understanding of the Hottentots and the Bushmen is stereotypical. This is because he considers himself a master and the black Africans as slaves to help further Jacobus's own cause.

Jacobus goes on to describe the Bushmen, the other major tribe that he encounters. Jacobus describes how the white people set traps for the Bushmen, much like they set for animals. He offers instructions on how to kill them and thus clear the countryside of them. "A bullet is too good for a Bushman," he writes. Then he tells of seeing a Bushman tied "over a fire and roasted."

After these descriptions, Jacobus records the incidents of a journey to the "Great River." He takes some of his men with him on an elephant hunt to gather ivory. He hires one extra man, Barend Dikkop, a good shooter but a troublemaker. Jacobus eventually tells Dikkop to leave the troupe, but before Dikkop takes off, he steals a horse and some supplies. Jacobus beats him when he finds him and leaves him in the desert. As the remaining troupe continues on their travels, the harsh land exhausts them. Although his men do most of the work, Jacobus states that they would have all perished if he had not told them what to do. "They saw me as their father," he writes.

After a few days on the trail, Jacobus and his men encounter members of the Great Namaquas, who are tantalized by the supplies that Jacobus carries in his wagon. They taunt Jacobus, who manages to save his supplies, then promises to visit their village. These people invite Jacobus to join in a meal with them, but he is wary of their motives, suspecting that they will ransack his supplies. When Jacobus finds the villagers doing just that, he cracks his whip into their midst. And then he leaves the village.

Jacobus becomes ill, which he describes in very graphic detail. As his fever takes over, he descends into dreams of his childhood. He awakens for brief moments and hears his men talking. Jacobus suspects they are planning to betray him. Jacobus is taken back to the village, where he is placed in a special isolated hut.

While in the depths of his fever, Jacobus envisions his role in the wild. He ponders death and the boundlessness of the wild land. When Klawer comes to visit him, Jacobus asks why his other men did not also come. Klawer tries to conceal the truth from Jacobus, but Jacobus becomes even more suspicious of the remaining men. Jacobus is fed and cared for but he continues to demean the people who help him back to health. He criticizes their way of life, their food, their lack of spirituality. He sees no sense to their lives.

When he is strong enough to walk, Jacobus leaves the hut and searches for his men. He finds them sleeping off a wild night of drinking and sex. He tries to rouse them but only Klawer pays any attention to him. When Jacobus attempts to awaken Plaatje, the

young boy threatens Jacobus with a knife. Plaatje then tries to convince Jacobus that he should leave all the men alone, let them continue to sleep. Jacobus leaves to take a bath in the river. When he is in the water, children come and steal his clothes. Jacobus chases them. When they jump him and punch him, Jacobus bites off one of the children's ears. Men come and insist that Jacobus leave without a horse, supplies, or weapons. Klawer is the only one who leaves with him.

As they travel across the desert, Klawer becomes sick. Jacobus promises to come back for him, but there is no further mention of Klawer. While Jacobus travels alone, he wishes he could stay in the limitless existence of the wild. He almost fears finding his farm and returning to the domesticity and boredom of routine.

Jacobus finally arrives home and soon after returns to the Great Namaqua village to claim his vengeance. He returns with an army of men, who burn the huts. Jacobus singles out the men who betrayed him and focuses his attention on Plaatje. He tells them he is there to execute them. Jacobus personally kills Plaatje and seems to relish in the act.

There is an "Afterword," supposedly by the author, following Jacobus's account. The afterword, much like the "Translator's Preface," adds authenticity to this fictionalized history.

The Vietnam Project

The Vietnam Project Summary

Dusklands is the combination of J.M. Coetzee's two stories, "The Vietnam Project" and "The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee." Although three hundred years apart in their plot lines, the stories explore the eternal concepts of power struggles through both physical and emotional intimidation.

The narrator of the story introduces himself as Eugene Dawn, who is compiling a report called the New Life Project that covers the role of propaganda used by the United States during the Vietnam War. Eugene labors over his report, trying to incorporate his own need for free expression with the needs of his supervisor, Coetzee, to criticize both form and content.

Eugene feels that Coetzee should be better able to manage creative people, having been one himself at one time. Coetzee, however, has moved into management and has taken on the critical and sometimes impersonal role.

Eugene is nervously anticipating his meeting with Coetzee. At the meeting, Coetzee tells Eugene to write with a more common touch, as the audience will be military men not aesthetes. Coetzee describes the military men as "slow-thinking, suspicious and conservative" men, who will not understand Eugene's intellectual conceptual thinking. This rejection is devastating because Eugene admires Coetzee's opinion very much, and Eugene is not accustomed to rejection in his creative endeavors.

In order for Eugene to continue his project with a more focused approach, he spends his afternoons in a basement cubicle of the Harry S. Truman Library in the city where he lives, San Diego, California. Eugene becomes aware of the library clerk named Harry, who works diligently to keep the bookshelves in order and resents any disruption to this sense of order. Eugene would like to know Harry a little bit better and regrets that there is no room for information about Harry in this story.

Eugene does his creative writing in the mornings when his mind is free to wander and to explore before any outside forces have the chance to enter his head and distract him from his vision and inspiration. Eugene's rambling moves to his thoughts about his wife, Marilyn, and the lackluster marriage that they share. Marilyn does not understand Eugene's work and wishes he would take a simpler job so that she could spend more time with her. The fact that Eugene cannot share with Marilyn the documents related to his project sets up a wall of suspicion that keeps the couple in a negative space at all times.

To add further suspicion to the marriage, Eugene thinks that Marilyn is having an affair with another man. Each Wednesday Marilyn drives into San Diego for a therapy appointment, and Eugene finds himself sniffing her body and hair when she returns,

expecting to detect the presence of another man. Although their marriage is not a happy one, Eugene feels addicted to it because it is a "surer bond than love." Eugene thinks now about the photographs in his briefcase, which show atrocities against the Vietnamese people and which Eugene looks at periodically for inspiration in writing his report.

Eugene then provides the details of the project's report, which he submits to Coetzee. The report naturally covers the psychological influence of propaganda on the affected people as well as the impact on the overall war effort. Eugene is moved by the contents of the report but feels an obligation to publish the facts for those who lived through it and for those who will come and hopefully learn from it.

Eugene moves from the present day to memories of his childhood, spent in study and scientific experiments. Eugene feels as if he is one of his crystal garden experiments, where formations seem to come out of nowhere and take root in his psyche. Eugene abruptly thinks about Coetzee once more and his wish to be more like him even though Coetzee is distant and clinical as a boss. This feeling of abandonment and not being involved at work makes Eugene feel bored most of the time, and sometimes he calls Marilyn to see if she will pick up the phone.

One day when Marilyn does not answer, Eugene leaves work early and drives home. Seeing Marilyn's car in the drive, Eugene peeks into the bedroom window to find Marilyn reclining and reading a magazine. Eugene feels a vicarious thrill about his activity and hopes the neighbors do not see spying in his own window.

On another day, Eugene takes Marilyn's young son, Martin, with him to a motel near the San Bernardino Mountains. It is Eugene's intention to find some peace and quiet in this remote place so that he can write without interruption from Marilyn. For the first four days of their stay, Eugene and Martin function quite nicely.

Eugene writes in the mornings while Martin plays with the toys brought along for the trip. Meals in the motel's restaurant are uneventful, and Martin is pleased to be able to order anything he likes. Eventually though, Martin wearies of the slow pace and the lack of activity in this new daily schedule and is anxious to return home.

Eugene feels that he should be happy living in the motel because he has cut his ties with Marilyn and has the opportunity to raise Martin without his mother's constant coddling. A feeling of despair begins to wash over Eugene as he plunges deeper into a melancholy and waits for something to happen.

Unexpectedly, a brisk knock comes on the motel room door, and Marilyn has arrived accompanied by two police officers. Eugene is only vaguely aware of what is happening because he is only spending time with his son. It never occurs to Eugene that Marilyn has reported that Martin has been kidnapped and that Eugene is in very serious trouble.

Eugene holds tightly onto Martin and hears one of the policemen tell him to put it down, but it is not until Eugene feels the fruit knife in his hand piercing Martin's skin that he

realizes what the man means. Eugene can feel the knife go into Martin and stop due to the hindrance of the handle.

Eugene hears Marilyn's screams and smiles at the others in the room. He suddenly finds himself pushed to the floor and recalls the smell of the carpet as being the same as when he used to lie on the carpet at home and think as a young boy. Eugene is aware of pain and that someone is really hurting him, and he is amazed at the sensation.

Eugene's nervous breakdown has landed him in a mental hospital for men where he chooses not to receive visitors. Finding comfort in the routine and the orderliness of life in the hospital, Eugene tries to be the perfect patient and prides himself on the fact that he is not really crazy, just afflicted with an episodic hysteria.

The doctors at the hospital seem to think that Eugene's study and analysis of the Vietnam propaganda initiated his hysteria and made Eugene oblivious to pain. It is a mystery as to why Eugene has chosen to turn his inner rage and turmoil on Martin, someone he loves very much, but Eugene is willing to work with the specialists to understand.

Eugene also thinks of Coetzee and the work done at the Vietnam Project and remembers a night when a stranger tried to steal Eugene's briefcase. It is clear that what Eugene knows and what he has committed to paper will never be revealed by Coetzee or anyone else, and Eugene vows to rewrite his paper once more when he is feeling better.

Of course the doctors try to pin Eugene's mental distress on his childhood, and Eugene thinks there may be some culpability there but strongly suspects that the information on the horrors of Vietnam has had more of an impact than anyone realizes. Eugene tries not to diagnose his own case, leaving himself in the hands of the experts. He ends the story with high hopes of "finding whose fault I am."

The Vietnam Project Analysis

This story is told from the first person perspective from the viewpoint of Eugene Dawn, who is the protagonist. The story is a chronicle of sorts of the memories Eugene has and his interpretations of the events that occur. This type of inner monologue provides much more character insight than if the author were to prolong situations with a lot of dialogue and events.

Eugene is a study in contradictions, as someone who is not happy but claims to abhor unhappiness. He cannot stand his wife any longer and yet is obsessed to spy on her. He feels he is a creative person, but he cannot feel any confidence about the work that he creates.

In the beginning, the story is ambiguous regarding whether Eugene is mentally distressed or suffering the pangs that most creative people suffer. Eugene's self-esteem

is extremely fragile, and he lives in fear of rejection by his wife and his boss, both of whom have tremendous influence over his sense of well being.

In historical context, at the time this story was written in 1974, America was managing the aftereffects of the country's participation in the Vietnam War. The psychological effects of the traumas experienced by those who served was just beginning to surface, and Eugene represents both the clinical aspect of analyzing the war as well as the impact on human emotions and psyche.

Eugene symbolizes the inner rage of people who were forced to live through the atrocities of the Vietnam War, pictures of which would flash through their minds, paralleling Eugene's regular review of the photos contained in his briefcase. Not surprisingly, the rage must vent at some point, and because there is no safe outlet, people like Eugene vent on people they love, as when he wounds Martin. Eugene is a father figure to Martin, and Coetzee is a father figure to Eugene - one who is cold and discouraging. It seems that Eugene may have issues with his own father, ones that were brought to a head by the violence he studies. The government, too, serves as a father figure, one that cannot be entirely trusted based on the contents of the report.

There is no direct rationale for this behavior and no solutions offered yet from the doctors, but Eugene is hopeful that someone will help him determine the source of his emotional wounds and find out "whose fault I am."

The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee

The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee Summary

This story is told from the perspective of a man named Jacobus Coetzee, a white man living in South Africa in the year 1760. The story is loosely based on the journal entries of events and encounters during an elephant hunting trip.

Jacobus begins the story by describing the differences between the white settlers in South Africa called Boers and the Hottentots, the race of people descended from the native Africans who procreated with the Dutch immigrants. Another group of people, barely considered human by the Boers, is the Bushman of native Africa.

Although some similarities exist between the Boers and Hottentots, Jacobus defines the biggest difference between the two peoples as Christianity. The Boers are Christians by a long heritage of beliefs, while most Hottentots are not religious. Those that are religious claim their Christianity as a badge for easier access into the Boers' world.

According to Jacobus, the Hottentots "will gladly sing your hymns if it means they can spend the rest of Sunday stuffing themselves on your food. For the afterlife they have no feeling at all. Even the wild Bushman who believes he will hunt the eland among the stars has more religion." Jacobus' perception of the Hottentots places the people at parity with the Bushmen in Jacobus' measure, and he feels superior in every way to both races and cultures.

The Bushmen are considered not much higher than animals on the food chain, and Jacobus describes in detail the process, weapons and techniques used to best kill Bushmen encountered in the wild. Jacobus relates that it is only in hunting down the Bushmen as if they were jackals that they are cleared from any stretch of land. Recalling one such event, Jacobus partnered with twenty other farmers, and the number, including the farmers' Hottentots, was close to one hundred. The Hottentots filled the hillsides to scatter the Bushmen, who came running into the gunfire of the farmers' guns.

The Bushmen have their fighting tactics, such as poisoned arrows which inflict long, painful deaths on their targets, but mostly the Bushmen resign themselves to the power of the Boers and even the Hottentots. Jacobus feels that the only redeemable Bushman is one who is captured by the age of seven so that the captor may take advantage of the child's inherent natural survival skills while adding more civilized methods of farming, hunting and gaming. Any girls captured from the Bushmen tribes know that they are essentially dead because the white men will use them and dispose of them with no regard or culpability.

Jacobus begins a story about a long trip north to the "Great River," where he can hunt for elephants and take their prized tusks back to interested patrons. In addition to five of

his own Hottentots, Jacobus hires another named Barend Dikkop, who is known for his shooting skills learned during military service.

Dikkop creates dissension among the other Hottentots, especially Jacobus' main servant, Jan Klawer. Eventually, Jacobus is forced to release Dikkop, who makes the mistake of stealing a horse, some brandy and a gun and leaving in the middle of the night. Jacobus cannot allow this deceit and must make a lesson of Dikkop's behavior in order to thwart betrayal from any of the other men. Before the end of the day, Jacobus and Klawer track down Dikkop and bring him back to camp, where he is beaten by the others and left alone without supplies the next day. Jacobus and the others continue on their journey.

Progress is excruciatingly slow on the trip, as the oxen pull their burdens over the parched land. The little group travels one day and rests for the next, and this pattern continues resulting in only twelve miles traveled per day. Jacobus does none of the heavy labor on the trip and prides himself on his wit and abilities to navigate the group and provide food, just as if he were the father of the group.

One day, Jacobus' crew sees the image of several men running toward them in the morning light. As the natives come closer, it is revealed that they are of the Great Namaquas territory. The tribesmen indicate that they mean no harm, but they also show no respect for Jacobus' supplies and possessions, dancing around the wagons wildly.

Jacobus indicates that he has brought gifts for the men, and the mention of the word sends them into a frenzy. The proffered tobacco is spilled and trampled underfoot. Finally, Jacobus is able to communicate that they will head to the natives' village for rest, but Jacobus has his men secure and hide all the supplies that they can on the wagons, which are kept at a distance from the native village.

Jacobus' suspicions that the natives will steal his supplies are realized, and his anger scares the natives. Jacobus orders his men to prepare to leave the village immediately. Jacobus falls very ill almost immediately and is unable to walk. He is transported out of the village on one of the wagons as his men attempt to carry on with the journey.

Jacobus falls into a hallucinatory state from a fever, and he sees images of his own dead mother reading an announcement of his death. Fading in and out of consciousness, Jacobus becomes aware of the beautiful sunshine and the voices of his men speaking around him, but he cannot manage to stay awake.

Eventually, Jacobus can feel himself being swaddled in blankets and tied between two oxen, which carry him back to the village. Jacobus' fever and severe gastrointestinal distress lead his men to believe that Jacobus will not survive the trip back home at the present time. At the village, Jacobus is placed in a hut reserved for menstruating women across the stream from the rest of the huts in the village.

Jacobus' hallucinations continue in the hut, and he wonders about his dreams and whether his entire life has been nothing but a dream. Jacobus tries to share his frantic dream state with Klawer, who faithfully attends to his master's needs. Jacobus recalls

that his mind wanders to the quest of the hunt and the wilderness, and he reasons in his fevered state that the gun is the ultimate proof of man's not being alone in the world. The gun is the last stand against isolation.

Jacobus also indulges in thoughts of the uninhabited wilds and man's inherent nature to tame and measure elements. It is in these circumstances too that the gun is invaluable because it becomes one way of killing and then measuring creatures one once thought wild.

Periodically, Jacobus rouses from his fevered state, and the faithful Klawer is always with him. Klawer cannot answer truthfully, however, when Jacobus wants to know why the other Hottentots have not come to visit him. Jacobus does not believe that the men are afraid of becoming ill themselves, and he becomes leery of their conspicuous absence and orders Klawer to bring the men with him on his next visit to the hut.

Klawer tells Jacobus that all the supplies have been taken but that the oxen and horse graze with the others in the corrals. Jacobus' wagon still stands where it was left. Klawer leaves the hut, and Jacobus muses on his situation while his roaming hand discovers a carbuncle on his buttock. This prompts Jacobus to engage in speculations about the bump, ranging from a mild inflammation to an ugly cancerous growth.

Up until this point, Jacobus has been subsisting on a thin yellow soup prepared by the Hottentots, and he demands meat, which Klawer produces one night. Jacobus' system is not prepared for this intrusion, but soon he is able to drink broth made from lean meat stock. His health slowly returns.

One night, Jacobus watches as the villagers have a celebration across the stream, and Jacobus urges Klawer to join in. Jacobus is feeling stronger and manages to cross the stream to join the others, who do not appreciate his appearance at their festivities. They force him back across the stream toward his hut.

Jacobus falls asleep as the villagers revel into the night. Waking with a huge hunger, Jacobus once again crosses the stream to get one of his men to prepare him some breakfast. Jacobus finds his Hottentots in various positions of sleep among women of all ages, and not one of them but Klawer will awaken to help their master.

Jacobus informs Klawer that he is well enough to travel and that they must make plans to leave immediately. One of Jacobus' preparations takes him to the stream, where he disrobes and lances the carbuncle on his buttocks so that he may have an easier time during the travel. Some of the village children swipe Jacobus' clothes, which results in a fracas. Jacobus bites off the ear of one of the offending children.

The adults in the village ultimately intervene, and Jacobus, naked and dirty, is tormented in front of everyone before his clothes are returned. Jacobus is forced to leave the village on foot without weapons or supplies and is accompanied only by the faithful Klawer. As Jacobus and Klawer head south toward home, Jacobus finds himself filled with confidence that he can provide for Klawer and himself until they reach

Jacobus' farm. Jacobus feels an energizing sense of freedom because of the lack of the encumbrances of his hunting team and gear.

Soon Jacobus and Klawer reach the "Great River" and camp for a few days to regain some strength and wait for the water to recede. It never does. The pair attempts to cross, and Klawer steps inadvertently into a hippopotamus hole, loses his balance and is swept away with the current. Klawer falls ill from the experience, and Jacobus makes whatever provisions he can for his servant and leaves the next day, vowing to return with help for the ill man.

Jacobus is only temporarily saddened by leaving his faithful companion and soon lights out across the desert with a light heart and no more responsibilities than a schoolboy. Jacobus revels in his independence and ruminates on the villagers and their treatment of him during his illness.

During Jacobus' stay, he witnessed no special care and yet no special torture. He wonders why he did not arouse any sort of emotion in these people and comes to the conclusion that the villagers are not capable of passion. He decides that his treatment and stay among them was of no real consequence.

Three months after he began his elephant hunting trip, Jacobus returns to his farm with nothing but the clothes on his back in the middle of October in 1760. In August of the following year, Jacobus returns to the village of the Great Namaqua and descends on the sleeping villagers at dawn. Accompanied by another hunting crew, Jacobus has come seeking revenge on the Hottentots who betrayed him when he was here last and refused to travel back home with him at the end of his illness. Jacobus calls out his four Hottentots and declares that they are to be executed for their disloyalty and refusal to serve. The men are taken out into the desert and murdered.

The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee Analysis

This story is also told from the first person narrative point of view, as the reader views events and encounters from Jacobus Coetzee's perspective. The account is reportedly taken from a journal and is written in the style of one writing a diary filled with events as well as personal musings.

Historically, in 1650, at the time period in which the story takes place, Dutch settlers were arriving in South Africa to establish farms. Wars with the native people ensued, with huge casualties of the African people as a result. The resulting extermination of people caused a lack of available workers, and the Dutch people imported people from India and other countries to work the farms.

The Dutch people, along with some later French immigrants to Africa, become known as the Boers, a group to which Jacobus Coetzee belongs. There exists among the Europeans an imperialist mode which renders them superior to the native Africans and which accounts for Jacobus' stance on the different classes of people in South Africa at the time. The Boers also wield a religious superiority over the heads of the people who

do not believe in a Christian faith, and Christianity becomes a social and political tool as well as a spiritual vehicle.

The Boers consider themselves to be saviors of the country not only with their religious beliefs but also in their clearly superior farming and cultural tactics. The land is so barren in places that starvation is rampant, and Jacobus cannot understand the poverty and lack of initiative which allow the conditions to exist.

The picture is bleak as Jacobus describes the "desolate stupidity in the women's eyes. Flies sucking mucus from the lips of children. Scorched twigs in the dust. A tortoise shell baked white. Everywhere the surface of life was cracked by hunger." There is much visual imagery in these phrases, and the metaphor of the surface of life being cracked by hunger is especially descriptive in this context.

Jacobus uses another metaphor to describe his eventual release from illness and his trip back to his home. Jacobus recalls the life cycle of a type of black beetle, which tries to avert injury and death in all the ways available to him. If his path is blocked, the bug will take another route. If every path is blocked and the beetle is picked up, the insect will feign death in order to escape.

The beetle will not reveal any movement even if its legs are removed one by one. It is only with the removal of its head that the beetle allows itself a final shudder. Jacobus compares himself to this tortured beetle, in that he is prepared to lose limbs and possibly even his own life with only a mild shudder while amidst the villagers whose culture is so foreign to him.

Jacobus almost reveres his own resilience and superiority and negates the qualities of the Hottentots as clearly inferior beings. When justifying the deaths of the four Hottentots at the end of the story, Jacobus does not give much credence to their even understanding what is about to happen. "I know with certainty that their life held nothing but anxiety, resentment and debauch. They died in a storm of terror, understanding nothing. They were people of limited intellect and people of limited being. They died the day I cast them out of my head." To Jacobus, these men have no value other than what they can provide to him, and when they cease to be of value to him, they cease to exist.

The significance of the title, *Dusklands,* stems from Jacobus' statement in his journal that he uncharacteristically shares an important theory with Klawer at dusk on the third day of his illness in the village. "Dusk has always found me reckless in my confidences."

Jacobus' story, as well as Eugene's story in "The Vietnam Project," both seem to originate in the Dusklands, that undefined, twilight place where thought meets expression and begins to take shape with the power to alter the lives of the thinkers as well as those over whom they have power and control.

Characters

Adonis

Adonis (from the second novella) is one of the Hottentots who desert Jacobus at the Namaqua village. Jacobus later executes him.

Coetzee

Coetzee appears in "The Vietnam Project" as Eugene's supervisor and the manager of the assignment called the New Life Project, related in some way to the war in Vietnam. Eugene admires Coetzee but admits that he is afraid of him. Readers see Coetzee only through Eugene, who describes Coetzee as a "powerful, genial, ordinary man, so utterly without vision." Eugene suggests that Coetzee was once a creative person who lost his inspiration and now tries to live vicariously through other creative people, like himself.

Jacobus Coetzee

It is in the second novella, "The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee," that the protagonist Jacobus Coetzee appears. He is an arrogant white man of Dutch descent who looks down on all black Africans, believing them to be less intelligent, less spiritual, even less human than himself. He relates his experiences of living in the wilds of South Africa and having to deal with the black tribes that live there. It is through his so-called journals that readers learn of Jacobus's beliefs as well as the events of one particular elephant hunt that he undertakes. While searching for the elephants, Jacobus is taken ill and brought back to health by tribal people. Although he appears to go through some changes during his fever, Jacobus does not really change except that, in the end, he turns out to be even crueler than he was before the illness. He viciously seeks revenge on some of his "slaves" whom he believes betrayed him. Everything in the novella takes place through Jacobus, and therefore the entire narrative is colored by his prejudice and misunderstanding.

Eugene Dawn

The protagonist of the novella "The Vietnam Project" is Eugene Dawn. He describes himself as a person who "cannot stand unhappiness" and needs "peace and love and order." He is a nervous man who believes he is creative. He also believes he envisions things more clearly than his superiors. Although he cannot stand unhappiness, he is anything but happy. He is not in love with his wife. He is not secure in his job. He is not, in general, comfortable with his life. He admits symptoms of depression but claims he is not depressed. However, he feels rejected, throughout most of this story. But he lives in a fog of confusion most of the time. Although he feels rejected by his boss, he also rationalizes that Coetzee is acting out of jealousy when he critiques Eugene's work.

Marilyn Dawn

Marilyn appears in the novella "The Vietnam Project" as Eugene's wife. She has never, states Eugene, "succeeded in freeing me from my rigors." Eugene blames Marilyn for the couple's lack of deep attachment to one another. He does his "duty," Eugene states, but he believes that his wife is "disengaged." He also believes his wife is jealous of his work. In Eugene's eyes, Marilyn leans toward the hysterical. She is empty and expects him to fill her. She gives Eugene, according to him, no privacy, and he must carry his paperwork around with him at all times in order to keep her from going through them. Although he does not love Marilyn, Eugene feels addicted to their marriage. He misses her most when she goes to her therapist because he suspects that Marilyn is having an affair with the doctor.

Martin Dawn

In the novella "The Vietnam Project," Martin is Eugene's and Marilyn's son. Eugene mentions him first as Marilyn's child and speaks about him more as a nuisance than as a child he loves. He claims that the poor child suffers from his mother's frustrations, which she takes out on Martin. When Eugene kidnaps his son and takes him to a motel, Eugene believes that the boy fares better. He believes that Martin is poorly influenced under Marilyn's care. Eugene hopes to bring color and spirit to the boy. But Martin grows bored with the motel room and complains. When the police show up, Eugene pierces Martin's skin with a knife. But the young boy is not seriously wounded.

Barend Dikkop

Barend Dikkop, a Hottentot who appears in the second novella, is a good hunter. For this reason, Jacobus takes him with him when they search for elephants. He had not previously worked for Jacobus and causes trouble during the hunt. Dikkop had been a soldier at one time and believes he is superior to all the other workers, including Klawer, the supervisor of Jacobus's African men. Eventually, Jacobus tells him to leave. Dikkop steals a horse and supplies but Jacobus finds him and beats him, then leaves him in the desert.

Harry

Harry is a clerk in the library where Eugene (from "The Vietnam Project") spends most of his time doing research and revising his report. Harry appears only briefly. Eugene appears to be one of the few people that he in some small way approves of. Harry likes order. He dislikes it when people take books off the shelves because that disrupts order. Eugene tries to gain Harry's approval by neatly stacking the books he uses, demonstrating to Harry that he, too, loves order. Eugene disapproves of a young girl flirting with Harry, but he does not condone the fact that Harry masturbates in a dark

corner of the library. This might suggest Eugene's own discomfort in relationship with his wife.

Jan Klawer

Klawer appears in the second novella and is a faithful servant to Jacobus Coetzee. Klawer is a Hottentot on whom Jacobus often depends on for survival. He is the foreman on Jacobus's farm and throughout most of the novel, he supervises the other workers when they accompany Jacobus on the elephant hunt. Of all the men on the elephant hunt, only Klawer remains at Jacobus's side when Jacobus becomes ill. Klawer, alone, leaves with Jacobus once Jacobus is well. The other men all desert them. Klawer becomes sick, himself, however, on the trek back to the farm, and Jacobus leaves him in the desert, promising to return; but there is not mention of his rescuing Klawer.

Jan Plaatje

Jan Plaatje is one of the men that Jacobus (in the second novella) takes with him on the elephant hunt. He is one of the youngest of the Hottentots, and at first Jacobus fully trusts him. When Jacobus first encounters the tribe, the Great Namaquas, Plaatje faithfully protects Jacobus's wagon and supplies. However, after Jacobus becomes ill and is taken to the Namaquas village, Plaatje is one of the men who refuse to return to Jacobus's farm. Later, Jacobus returns to the Namaquas and kills Plaatje.

Themes

Power

Whether it is real or perceived supremacy, whether it is inherent or artificial authority, the theme of power dominates both the novellas in Coetzee book *Dusklands*. In the first novella, there is the authority of Eugene Dawn's supervisor (Coetzee) who has the power to either accept or reject the report that Eugene is working on. Coetzee, because of his rank in the office, has the authority as well as the obligation to make sure that his employees' work matches the criteria of the position or fulfills the needs of the department. In this case, Coetzee, although he praises Eugene's work, suggests that he re-write the study in a less abstract and more comprehensive style. Eugene, however, gives Coetzee even more power than the supervisor requests. Through his own lack of confidence, Eugene imagines Coetzee to be a far greater figure than Coetzee really is. In the process, Eugene sacrifices some of his own power, leading him down a spiraling path that takes him well beyond the definitions of reality into a place where he becomes confused and disoriented.

To make up for his perceived lack of power, Eugene belittles his wife and diminishes his need for her. He also devalues the existence of his son, turning him into an object rather than loving him. And on the other side of the equation, in order to make up for his continual disintegration, Eugene often imagines himself to be more powerful than he really is. For example, despite the fact that he has been committed to an institution or to some psychiatric ward of a hospital, Eugene aligns himself with the doctors who work there, thinking of himself as their equal rather than realizing that he is more the equal of the other patients who live and are cared for there. He belies this notion of power, however, when he states that he wants to stay in the hospital long enough to discover whose "fault" he is.

Power in the second novella is perceived through the protagonist Jacobus, who imagines that he is the epitome of intelligence and therefore rules over the native Africans. He cracks his whip, and the people obey him. He carries a gun, and they fear him. But without these weapons, he is as frail as they are in the wild, maybe even more so. Once he becomes ill, he must turn to them to be healed. They provide the potion and the food that cure him. He does not accept this notion, however. He always takes credit for his survival. Even when he must take a group of men with him in order to hunt elephants, he states that if he were not in their presence, his men would not survive. He believes that his workers believe this notion too. He says that they think of him as the father. In other words, he is the leader, the ruler, and the final word. And yet his men betray him, choosing to leave his presence when given another choice. It does not take much to defy him. But Jacobus does have the final word, at least according to his journal. For he goes back and kills those who defied him. He goes, however, with an army of men, equipped with modern weapons. The power, therefore, is not in the individual man but in the gun.

Delusion

The protagonists in both novellas are delusional. The author allows them to speak in their own voices, no matter how far from reality their minds, and thus their words, may stray. In the first novella, Eugene becomes so stressed out in his need to prove his intelligence and to therefore impress his supervisor that his mind snaps. In the beginning of the story, Eugene perceives his supervisor as an all-powerful being, someone Eugene would like to emulate, but he lacks the confidence to do so. He flip-flops through varying impressions that he is at one time better than his supervisor and then that he is subordinate to him. He also goes back and forth in his assessment of his marriage and his wife. At one time he says he is bored with her and yet he continually calls her from work to check up on her. And the moment that she turns her attention from him, he cannot stand it. When he thinks that she is having an affair, he craves her the most. Eugene also cannot fully comprehend his relationship with his son. At times he calls him only "her son" referring to his wife's relationship with the boy. And he mentions how distracting the boy's conversations are. But then when he runs away, he takes his son with him. He wants to make his son stronger, and he believes he can only do this away from his wife. He is the one who needs to be made stronger, but he imposes this condition on his son. And from that point, the delusions just get worse. He is not aware that he has done anything wrong in kidnapping the boy. And when the police arrive, Eugene is not fully cognizant of the harm he is causing when he sticks a knife into his son. Coetzee presents Eugene's type of delusional mind as the source of those who create various rationales for going to war with a country that is non-threatening.

Jacobus, the protagonist in the second novella, is likewise delusional but not quite as noticeably. His view of reality is distorted not by a mind disturbed by stress so much as a mind that is unaware of its own prejudice. Jacobus's thoughts are unrealistically inflated. He is so blinded by his prejudice that he belittles everyone around him. He does not see his own weaknesses but rather imposes those weaknesses on the native Africans who serve him. So in conclusion, he believes that he is the only one with intelligence, the only one who has developed a spirituality, the only one who can survive the harsh conditions of the desert. If it were not for him, his men would die, he believes, and yet he does not give credit to tribes people who have survived in the desert for thousands of years. He does not understand their customs and traditions, so he dismisses them. Their way of life is beneath him, and it is their medicine that saves him. He accuses them of stealing and yet he has stolen their land and hunts their animals, not just for survival but also for profit. By dismissing them as a people not on equal standing with himself, he can justify their murders. He can rid the land of them as some people kill insects that are threatening to eat their crops. He can leave Klawer in the desert and not return to him as he promised, even though if it had not been for Klawer, Jacobus might have been left to rot when he fell sick. Coetzee presents Jacobus's delusional mind as an example of the source of a cruel system such as apartheid.

Style

Journal Writing

The novella "The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee" is written as if Jacobus himself were taking notes and reflecting on events that have happened to him in the recent past. It is as if he were keeping a journal, recording his thoughts as the actions unfold. This gives the story a strong presence as if the reader had come across a private journal of a settler and was reading the thoughts of a man who had no intention of anyone else ever seeing what he had written. This adds authenticity to the piece, as if Jacobus's story comes unfiltered by any self-conscious feelings or inhibitions. Although his reflections on his actions and those of the people around him are, on the one hand, very haughty, and extremely prejudiced on the other, Jacobus never holds back on sharing them with his journal. He not only exposes his most inner thoughts, he also shares the gruesome details of everything from murder to the movement of his bowels. This type of writing can be somewhat nauseating at times but because the reader feels as if this is a journal, it is excusable.

Interior Monologue

Closely related to the style of journal writing, the novella "The Vietnam Project" is written as if the protagonist were talking to himself, or as if the reader could hear the inner thoughts of the protagonist. The result is similar to the style of the second novella but because it appears to be coming directly from the inside of the protagonist's mind, the reader feels even more closely involved with the protagonist of the first novel than with the protagonist of the second. The inner monologue of a person is even more unfiltered than that of a person who takes the time to write down his thoughts. In the process of writing, one can change or edit an original thought. However, when a story is told as if one were hearing the thoughts of another person, the reader feels as if no editing were done at all. This is demonstrated more clearly when the protagonist Eugene Dawn begins his decline into a mental breakdown. He is confused and his thoughts begin to have very little connection with reality. The reader senses that something is wrong because Eugene is not thinking about what he is doing, or he is misinterpreting what he is doing. In the journal-writing style, used in the story about Jacobus, although the reader might not agree with what Jacobus is doing, Jacobus records his actions accurately.

Fictionalized History

In both of these novellas, Coetzee fictionalizes actual historic events. In the first, he only uses history to construct a story in which a fictionalized character creates a fictionalized method of propaganda for the Vietnam War□a real event. But in the second novella, Coetzee uses real events and writes his story, including a "Translator's Preface" and an

"Afterword," as well as footnotes to make the whole piece appear as if it were an actual translation of a real journal of an authentic South African settler. Whether these events really took place is unknown. They may be based on truth, but since Coetzee publishes the account as fiction, one can assume that the history that is presented has basically materialized out of Coetzee's imagination.

Historical Context

Colonization of Vietnam

From about 12,000 b.c. until 200 b.c., the indigenous people of what would later be called Vietnam thrived as farmers and fishermen. Then the first of many invasions from other cultures began. The first outsiders to try to seize control of Vietnam were the Chinese. They would continue to try to push their way into Vietnam for many centuries to follow. The Vietnamese won most of the battles with the Chinese. But this did not stop China from wanting to gain control in Vietnam, which they would try again and again through the eighteenth century.

Things did not improve very much for Vietnam's fight for independence during the nineteenth century. It was during this time that French missionary Pierre Pigneau de Behaine, who had come to Vietnam to introduce Christianity, convinced France to provide money and mercenary soldiers to help reunify Vietnam after a peasant rebellion threatened to tear Vietnam apart. Behaine asked for French support, hoping to gain favors for the French government in Vietnam. However, the Vietnamese soon became suspicious of the French and began persecuting French missionaries. Then in 1845, another country, this time the United States, became involved in the politics of Vietnam when they sent a military ship to Vietnam to rescue some French priests the Vietnamese were threatening to kill. This event would mark the first U.S. military involvement in Vietnam, and it would not be the last.

Two years later, the French returned to Vietnam in force. They were determined to avenge the murders of their citizens. They bombed Da Nang (a major city in central Vietnam that was called Tourane under French occupation) in an attempt to punish the Vietnamese. The French continued fighting the Vietnamese in the following decades, and in 1861, they defeated the Vietnamese army in the south. As the French tried to expand their hold to include northern Vietnam, the Chinese became involved, and a war between the French and the Chinese ensued. In 1885, the French defeated the Chinese and claimed all of Vietnam as French territory. The French colonization lasted until 1945, when Japanese troops defeated the French and occupied Vietnam. The Japanese were in Vietnam for only a short period of time as they were soon defeated in World War II. This left Vietnam temporarily in a political vacuum.

During the Potsdam Conference in 1945, in which the Allied Forces determined how to relegate power after the war, Vietnam was officially divided in two: South Vietnam and North Vietnam. France was given the right to rule the southern portion. Ho Chi Minh, a Vietnamese military leader in the north wanted to unify Vietnam, and so he fought the French in an attempt to rid his country of European rule. China, which was then under Mao Tse Tung's Communist regime, supported the North Vietnamese. To counter the Chinese collaboration in North Vietnam, President Truman, in 1950, authorized millions of dollars to aid the French effort in South Vietnam. In the following years, the U.S. government sent billions of dollars worth of war weaponry to South Vietnam. The term

"domino effect" was used by each newly elected U.S. president after Truman to justify U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Like a stack of dominoes falls one by one, each fall affecting the next one, U.S. officials claimed that if Vietnam was allowed to come under communist rule, so would all the other Asian countries. But despite the U.S. financial aid, the French surrendered in 1954, after a horrific war in which more than 400,000 people perished.

Ho Chi Minh then declared war against South Vietnam as he tried to reunite the country. In 1961, President Kennedy sent a small contingency of marines to South Vietnam to train soldiers and to build fortified camps in the jungles to stop the infiltration of North Vietnamese troops into South Vietnam. U.S. involvement quickly escalated from that point. At the height of the war, in 1968, more than one thousand U.S. soldiers died in battle each month. After fifteen years of battle, the last U.S. soldiers finally left Vietnam in defeat. It was the first war that the United States had ever lost. More than two million American people served in Vietnam. Almost sixty thousand of them died.

On April 30, 1975, North Vietnamese soldiers took control of Saigon, the major city in the south. Vietnam was once again unified, this time under communist rule. Today Vietnam has reestablished diplomatic relationships with the United States, France, and China.

Colonization of South Africa

South Africa, for more than 100,000 years, was the land of several different tribes. These included the Xhosa people, the San and Khoekhoe (referred to as the Bushmen and the Hottentots and collectively as the Khoisans), and the people of the Zulu confederation. As maritime trade developed in Europe, it became important for the European nations to establish supply points along the Cape of Good Hope. In 1652, the Dutch East India Company, led by Jan van Riebeeck, established the first European settlement in South Africa. Many of the Dutch who came to South Africa were farmers. They competed with the African tribes people for land, with such actions often resulting in wars. Over the next century, the Dutch settlements spread east, away from the coast and deeper into the traditional lands of the tribes. To do this, according to some accounts, the Dutch nearly exterminated the San people. To help them work the land, many of the Dutch settlers imported slaves from Indonesia and India. Descendents intermarried with the Dutch, creating what would later be called the "colored" people of South Africa, as opposed to the darker skinned native Africans.

Another group of white Europeans, the Huguenots (Protestants from France) migrated to South Africa in order to escape religious persecution. They too were good farmers and easily intermingled with the Dutch, gradually adapting themselves to the Dutch language and joining the Dutch in their expansion away from the coast. Together they (the Dutch and the French Huguenots) came to be referred to as the Boers.

In 1795, the British took control of the Cape of Good Hope and tried to impose their lifestyles and laws on the Boers. Unwilling to bear British rule, many of the Boers

decided to leave their farms and head even farther into the eastern wilderness. However, as the Boers settled the new land, the British were never far behind, claiming the land for the British crown. The British actions accelerated when gold and diamonds were discovered in Boer land. In 1880 and again in 1899, this lead to the so-called Boer Wars, fought between formal British troops and the more renegade Boers. The Boers were able to prohibit the British advances in the first war. But additional forces from Britain were sent to supplement the British soldiers, who were then successful in subduing the Boers in the second war. Many Boers, as well as Africans who worked for them, were placed in concentration camps. (Coetzee's Booker Prize—winning novel *Life and Times of Michael K* is a fictionalized account of this second war.) Outbreaks of fighting continued between the Boers and the British until 1902 when the Boers signed a peace treaty with Britain.

In 1910, the Union of South Africa was created with the most influential political power in the hands of the white minority, both of British and Dutch descent. In 1948, the National Party came into power and the system referred to as apartheid was put in place. Blacks were denied the power to vote; interracial marriages were banned; and Africans were deprived of equal education. Black Africans could only attend agricultural or trade schools. Apartheid would continue for more than forty years. After the release of the political prisoner Nelson Mandela, the first, multiracial democratic elections were held. In 1994, Mandela became the country's first black African president.

Critical Overview

Coetzee's first novel *Dusklands* did not receive a lot of international critical attention. This may have been due more to the fact that he published in South Africa than to the content of his work. Since that time, however, and especially since he won the Booker Prize for his third novel *Life and Times of Michael K*, Coetzee has become an often critiqued author. For instance, in a summary of Coetzee's body of work, Kristjana Gunnars for *World Literature Today* describes Coetzee's style and impact in this way, "J. M. Coetzee's fiction strips bare the veneer that protects us, and it ventures unflinchingly into territory of mind and experience most of us are afraid to face." Gunnars further comments on a descriptive word that is frequently used to depict Coetzee's style of writing. That word is *sparse*. However, Gunnars explains that since Coetzee's subject matter usually involves human suffering, there is no other way to write. Gunnars states, "The central issue in much of what he [Coetzee] writes is what is often regarded as the fundamental problem of twentieth—and now twenty-first-century literature in general: how do we witness another's pain?" Gunnars concludes that Coetzee's sparse style of writing accomplishes this feat successfully. And in the process, Coetzee "has produced literature of great consistency and accomplishment."

A fellow South African, Tony Morphet, writing for *World Literature Today*, remembers the first time he read Coetzee's *Dusklands* and that he was somewhat baffled by it. "I read the book in one sitting," Morphet states, "exhilarated but confounded. The narratives were intense and compelling, yet, as I progressed, I felt the pattern of meaning eluding me." Morphet continues by stating that although he could not grasp the meaning, he was "convinced" that *Dusklands* "was a herald. A new form of narration, a new way of imagining—a new prose had entered South African literature." Morphet, a teacher of English literature, promoted the book among his fellow teachers and persuaded the department to include the new novel in the curriculum. The book caused a slight uproar. And as Morphet relates, some of the teachers were concerned that "the book would be a danger to students" because of the "disturbing point of view and the vocabulary." Despite this concern, which Morphet states continues today in South Africa, "few question the judgment that Coetzee is the finest writer of his generation—of many generations."

In the article "The Voice of Africa" written for London's *The Observer*, Robert McCrum refers to Coetzee as "the essential novelist of the new South Africa." McCrum explains that having grown up within the apartheid system, Coetzee "absorbed its crimes into his consciousness and published his first book *Dusklands*, paralleling America's role in Vietnam with the early Dutch settlers in South Africa. . . . He has always wrestled with the peculiar predicament of Africa's white tribe." McCrum continues by stating that Coetzee's "pared-down prose" is particularly "suited to his subject." And McCrum believes that at the time of apartheid, Coetzee "seemed to be the most gifted of a group of South African writers."

And finally, in a *New York Times* article called "A Tale of Heroic Anonymity," which was a review of Coetzee's award-winning novel *Life and Times of Michael K*, Cynthia Ozick

concludes, "Coetzee is a writer of clarifying inventiveness and translucent conviction." She continues, "The grain of his sentences is flat and austere, but also so purifying to the sense that one comes away feeling that one's eye has been sharpened, one's hearing vivified, not only for the bright proliferations of nature, but for human unexpectedness."

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1

Critical Essay #1

Hart is a freelance writer and author of several books. In this essay, Hart compares the two novellas contained in Coetzee's Dusklands *in search of the not so obvious similarities that link the two stories together.*

None other of J. M. Coetzee's works except for his first novel, *Dusklands*, consist of two separate works combined to create a whole. One might argue that this was done haphazardly or with only a weak link connecting the pieces. The works, after all, take place in two separate countries, at two separate times. The protagonists live in very disparate circumstances and come to terms with their personal challenges in very dissimilar fashions. But the connections between the two separate parts of this book do take form. Similarities between the protagonists' personalities and their situations are evident. Themes that appear in one story are reflected in the other. And the actions and motives of both protagonists can be defined in relatively parallel details. After exploring these traits of what at first appear to be two unrelated tales, it is difficult to see this novel as anything but a cohesive project.

The protagonist of the first novella, Eugene Dawn, is a rather meek person, living in a quiet environment. He spends most of his life in the library or in a lonely corner of his drab office. His work entails the intellect but little physical exertion and no travel. Immediate danger to his body is nonexistent. In opposition is the protagonist of the second novella, Jacobus Coetzee, the tamer of the wilds; the elephant hunter; the macho slave master□a man who lives in danger of physical harm almost every day of his life. The former lives in the twentieth century in a quiet, modern town, where he ponders war but has little to do with it. In contrast, Jacobus lives two hundred years earlier in a time of colonial expansion, which demands that in order to survive, one must live by one's wits and superior physical conditioning. So how do these two men relate to one another? Where and how do their personalities connect? What could they possibly have in common?

One of the first and possibly most evident characteristics these protagonists share is their isolation. Eugene, although married and a father, demonstrates very slim, if any, emotional involvement with his family. He admits that he is addicted to his marriage, but he also states that he is not in love with his wife. She is an annoyance to him. The only time he is slightly attracted to her is when Eugene believes she is having an affair with her doctor. It excites him to think that another man might be enamored of his wife, or at least physically lustful of her. And Eugene's relationship to his son is even more flimsy. The boy belongs to his wife, as far as Eugene is concerned. Although he kidnaps Martin, he spends very little time actually communicating with him and more often complains that the boy is a young child who craves attention. Away from home, Eugene has very little contact with the people around him. And when he does meet with fellow employees, it is more often in silence. He listens to his supervisor but has little to say to him, even though the dialogue in his head is enormous. Of all the people around him, it is the quiet, mouse-like figure of Harry, the clerk in the library that Eugene relates to the most. And this relationship is fleeting, at best. Eugene is so busy, and therefore so

distracted, in analyzing everyone around him, trying to figure out how he either fits into the equation or second-guessing how others perceive him that he devotes little time to actually sharing anything with the people around him. He is isolated by his fear and his lack of confidence. He lives inside his head in a tiny room that becomes more and more distorted.

Although Jacobus, unlike Eugene, appears to have little fear and enough self-confidence to believe that no matter what life-threatening circumstances he might find himself in, he can turn it into a game of possibilities and become excited by the challenges, he too lives in a very isolated world. Not only does he live in a place that he refers to as having limitless boundaries, a place where one can walk for days and never see another human being, he also, like Eugene, lives inside of his head. The room he lives in is also very narrow and distorted. Because of the life-threatening challenges that Jacobus faces every day, he has come to believe that he is superior to those around him. He faces death on a continual basis and eludes it. He has survived because of his outstanding intellect, he concludes. Others perish in front of him, because of their stupidity or lack of perception. Like Eugene, Jacobus has no friends. The people around him are merely tools that he uses to get what he wants or needs. He has no one to talk to. The one time he attempts to talk to Klawer, one of his workers, Jacobus dismisses the man's responses as trivial. No one understands him, or so Jacobus believes. If given a choice (which he is given, actually, but which he refuses to fully act on), Jacobus would like to live wild in the desert, naked except for his shoes, and very much alone. He refers to his life as a farmer as one of boredom, a life of practiced and repetitive routine. Jacobus's counterpart, Eugene, also mentions how bored he is with his office job. And yet both men remain in their positions, alone and isolated by their thoughts. Their thoughts, through which these men make themselves feel superior to their fellow beings, keep them locked in a world that has no space for camaraderie. They walk their paths as if they are the only truly human people on earth.

The stories that surround these two men also contain similarities. There is the concept of propaganda that unites them, for example. Eugene works on a theory of propaganda, which he hopes the government will use in the war in Vietnam. This work is the focal point of the story, around which Eugene at once excels, flounders, and finally deteriorates. The propaganda is presented as a way of finding victory in Vietnam; a way of suppressing the desires of the Vietnamese people to fight for their land and their way of life. In a comparable way, Jacobus also deals in propaganda. He does so when he deals with the African men who work for him as well as when he must face strangers, such as the Namaqua people. With his own workers, Jacobus continually reinforces the concept that he is the master and they are the slaves. He does this in words and in actions. These men could easily overthrow him at any time and yet they do not because they believe his propaganda. When Jacobus is in danger of being toppled by the Namaqua people, he praises them for their goodness and charity, claims that he does not fully believe. He tells them these things only to pacify them, to win their temporary willingness to share their hunting fields and to leave Jacobus's supplies in tact. This is a more personal propaganda that Jacobus uses, but its purpose is the same as the propaganda that Eugene creates. Both men's aims are to further exploit another group

of people, to win them over, and change their ways. Both stories, in some ways, revolve around the concept of using propaganda to colonize a foreign country.

There is also a lot of blood and guts, rather graphically detailed, in the two separate stories. Eugene, for instance, carries with him, at all times, photographs of severed heads and other atrocities of war. He carries them, he says, so his wife will not meddle in his business. But he also takes the pictures out from time to time to study them. He is somewhat fascinated by them. It is because of these photographs, his wife tells him, that he is changing. The effects of the war in Vietnam have made him a different person, one she knows less well. Later, when Eugene suffers a mental breakdown, he takes a knife and stabs his son. The details of this stabbing are blurred because of Eugene's state of mind, but nonetheless, the reader can imagine the blood and suffering of Eugene's son.

Jacobus's story is more specifically graphic. Killing abounds throughout the telling of his adventures. Animals are killed for food and for profit. People are murdered and tortured. Even in Jacobus's illness, the putrid details of infection, nausea, and diarrhea are reported. He tells of having seen a man roasted. And later, in a struggle with a group of children, (somewhat akin to Eugene stabbing his son), Jacobus bites off a child's ear. After his men betray him, Jacobus returns to the Namaqua village and takes pleasure in slowly killing his former slave, the young boy Plaatje. These bloody deeds are visible signatures in both pieces. They are written in the same tone□objectively and simply. Little emotion is expressed in any of these scenes, whether it is a father wounding his son or a master massacring his slave. The sordid details are presented much as a doctor might record the fine points of a surgical operation. In other words, there is a detachment between the perpetrator and the person he attacks.

And finally, there is the motif of dominance. Even meek Eugene sees himself as one who dominates. He admits, on one hand, that he is insecure, but at the same time (or shortly afterward), he claims his superiority. Eugene is smarter than his supervisor, he says, even though he quakes in his presence. His boss does not understand him or his work. Eugene is the only one who sees the truth, who envisions the true path. He is also better than his wife, who is lost in her depression. His only relationship with his son is that of master. He takes his son to the motel with him and does not in any way attempt to create a child's world for his son's benefit. Rather, the son must adjust to his father's life. And to further prove his dominance, when the police come to reclaim the child, Eugene punctures the young boy in an attempt to further deflate him. The police, like everyone else in Eugene's world, do not understand. "The people in front of me are growing smaller and therefore less and less dangerous," Eugene says, just before the police club him over the head.

Jacobus's goal is also to dominate. He plans on wiping out everyone who stands in his way. He and his fellow farmers clear the land of the Bushmen so they can claim the land for themselves. This is the way the Boers conquer. But the Boers are not the only dominant culture. They have been driven into the interior by the British, whose aim is to conquer the Boers. Dominance, whether played out by men versus animals or man against man, is pressed forward in both of these stories through war, propaganda,

slaughter, weaponry, religion, and, in some cases, just an excuse for adventure. One man tries to dominate a whole culture while another attempts to dominate his wife and child. The outcomes vary—one man successfully seeks his vengeance, while the other succeeds only in a total mental collapse. But the desires, motives, and practices of these protagonists, as well as the undertone of these two stories, link the novellas tightly together and present two sides of a compelling narrative.

Source: Joyce Hart, Critical Essay on *Dusklands*, in *Novels for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2005.

Adaptations

The Nobel Prize committee maintains a Coetzee web page at http://www.nobel.se/literature/laureates/2003/coetzee-bibl.html (accessed November 24, 2004) with links to a brief biography as well as Coetzee's Nobel Prize acceptance speech.

Topics for Further Study

Research the Zulu chief Shaka. What were his feats? What were his tactics? How did he deal with the Boers? With the British? With his own people? Do the accounts you researched consider him a hero? Why? If not, explain.

Trace the history of the Boers, then prepare a short report that includes a timeline and a map of their great trek across South Africa.

Choose another author who has won a Nobel Prize for his or her life's work. Compare the acceptance speeches of this other author with Coetzee's speech. What was the focus of each speech? Which one was more emotional? And why? Which one did you relate to more and why? Then pretend you have been awarded a Nobel Prize for the novels you have produced and write your own acceptance speech. What types of things would you like to say about the art of the novel, or art in general? Who would you count as your influences? Who would you thank?

Research the political history of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Some people have suggested that the U.S. war in Iraq is similar to the war in Vietnam. Research the reasons for the U.S. involvement in both wars. How are they the same? How do they differ? Is either war justified in your opinion? Why or why not?

The Zulu are a very musical people. Their songs were used during the demonstrations against apartheid in South Africa. Watch the video *Amandla! A Revolution in Four Part Harmony* about the role of the Zulu protest songs and write a review of this movie and present it to your class along with samples of the music that was used. Explain how the music helped the movement.

Compare and Contrast

1800s: Napoleon III orders French troops into Vietnam to begin occupation of that country.

1900s: The French leave Vietnam defeated by the communist Viet Minh after more than half a million soldiers, both French and Vietnamese, have lost their lives in continual battles.

2000s: France and Vietnam enter a period of economic cooperation as exemplified by a code-sharing plan between Air France and Vietnam Airlines, a plan to increase tourism in both countries.

1800s: Chief Shaka of the Zulu people in South Africa rules over the largest tribe of black Africans in South Africa and defeats the British in the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879.

1900s: Chief Bambatha of the Zulu people fights one of the last battles against the imperial conquest of South Africa. Bambatha becomes an icon in the fight for civil rights against apartheid in South Africa.

2000s: Zulu music, which is said to raise the spirit through tight harmonic phrasings and was therefore once outlawed by apartheid, is now popularized internationally by the group Ladysmith Black Mambazo.

1800s: Dutch is the prominent language among whites in Africa. When French Huguenots arrive, they are encouraged to forsake their native language in favor of Dutch, which causes both languages to merge and evolve into a language specific to South Africa, now known as Afrikaan.

1900s: The British government in South Africa at first recognizes only English and Dutch as the official languages. In the 1900s, Dutch is finally replaced with Afrikaan as the official language.

2000s: There are eleven official languages of South Africa. These include not only English and Afrikaan but also Zulu, Xhosa, and several Bantu languages.

What Do I Read Next?

The Complete Short Prose, 1929—1989 (1997) is a collection of short stories by Pulitzer Prize—winning author Samuel Beckett. Coetzee wrote his doctorate dissertation on Beckett and is sure to have been influenced by Beckett's work.

Coetzee's writing is often compared to Franz Kafka, the great Czech author who wrote during the turn of the twentieth century. Kafka's *The Trial* (1925) is considered by many to be his scariest book, as protagonist Joseph K. becomes entangled in treacherous a legal system.

While working in England as a computer programmer, Coetzee stayed in touch with literature through his studies of British author Ford Maddox Ford. *The Good Soldier* (1915) is one of Ford's best and saddest works. It tackles the subject of infidelity in two marriages, a topic that was more rare in its time than it is today.

Coetzee won the Man Booker Prize ("awarded to the best full-length novel written in English by a citizen of the U.K., the Commonwealth, Eire, Pakistan or South Africa") for two of his novels. The first was *Life and Times of Michael K*. (1983), a story about a young but poor gardener who tries to escape the war that is raging around him; and the second was for *Disgrace* (1999), about a professor who falls from grace because of a brief but rather cruel affair with a student.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is an important work of postcolonial criticism. Said explains how Western people mystified the Orient□through literary, historical, and ethnographic texts□misappropriating the people of that region. The act of understanding other cultures, and writing narratives that depict those cultures, is viewed as a highly political act of power, ultimately marginalizing those who are being depicted by excluding their own voices.

Further Study

Attridge, Derek, and Rosemary Jolly, eds., *Writing South Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 1998.

In the last years of apartheid the world paid a lot of attention to the great literature being produced in South Africa. This book captures some of the breadth and depth of that writing, and there are several references to Coetzee.

Attwell, David, *J. M. Coetzee*, University of California Press, 1993.

Attwell is a professor at a college in South Africa. He offers a critical look into Coetzee's major works, demonstrating how Coetzee's works are complex analyses of the politics in South Africa.

Huggan, Graham, and Stephen Watson, *Critical Perspective on J. M. Coetzee*, with a preface by Nadine Gordimer, Palgrave Macmillan, 1996.

In this collection of critical essays, Coetzee's works are analyzed with respect to how he deals with colonialism, national violence, and the manipulation of language to promote the ideals of state.

Karnow, Stanley, *Vietnam*, Penguin Books, 1997.

In well-written prose that tries to remain objective, Karnow tries to recapture the events of the Vietnam War as they unfolded in Asia and in the United States. He interviews people on both sides of the war in his attempt to shed light on this topic.

Pratkanis, Anthony, and Elliot Aronson, *Propaganda*, Owl Books, 2001.

Psychologists Pratkanis and Aronson take a look at the subject of propaganda, not just as it has appeared in history but also as it affects everyone today. Propaganda invades the American culture through mass media, whether it is trying to sell merchandise or politics.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) 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, NfS 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 NfS 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 NfS 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 NfS 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 NfS 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

NfS 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 Novels 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 NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS 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 Novels for Students

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

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

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on Winesburg, Ohio. Novels 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 NfS, 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 Novels 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 NfS, 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 Novels 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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