Hatter Fox Study Guide

Hatter Fox by Marilyn Harris

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Introduction

Hatter Fox, published in New York in 1973, was Marilyn Harris's fourth novel. Tapping into an emerging public interest in Native American history and culture, Harris created a story about Hatter Fox, a rebellious, angry seventeen-year-old Navajo girl who is despised by white society in New Mexico. Locked up in a reformatory and on a path of self-destruction, Hatter meets Teague Summer, an idealistic young white doctor from the Bureau of Indian Affairs who is determined to save her from herself. Eventually, after many false starts, Hatter begins to make progress. Summer takes on more and more responsibility for her welfare, and an unlikely friendship takes root before the novel reaches its tragic conclusion.

The novel raises many important social issues that are as relevant today as they were in 1973. For example, how should society deal with young offenders and those who simply do not fit into the way society operates? How should society treat minorities, in this case Native Americans? Should Native Americans assimilate into the dominant culture or retain their own distinct cultural identity? As these issues unfold in the novel, it becomes clear that *Hatter Fox* is about a deep racism in society that creates individual victims and victimizers. Although there are some good, well-meaning characters in the novel, and the relationship between Hatter and Summer shows that goodness can triumph, the novel clearly shows the negative consequences for both groups when one culture oppresses and tries to change another.

Author Biography

Marilyn Harris was born on June 4, 1931, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the daughter of John P., an oil executive, and Dora (Veal) Harris. Harris was educated in her home state, attending Cottey College from 1945 to 1951, then transferring to the University of Oklahoma, where she received a bachelor of arts degree in 1953 and a master of arts degree in 1955.

Harris's first collection of short stories, *King's Ex*, was published by Doubleday in 1967. After that Harris proved a prolific author, publishing seventeen books, including novels, short stories, romance/ historical fiction and children's fiction in a twenty-year period from 1970 to 1989. These works included *In the Midst of Earth* (1969), *The Peppersalt Land* (1970), *The Runaway's Diary* (1971), *Hatter Fox* (1973), *The Conjurers* (1974), *Bleeding Sorrow* (1976), *The Portent* (1980), *The Last Great Love* (1981), *Warrick* (1985), *Night Games* (1987), and *Lost and Found* (1991).

Harris also wrote the widely known, sevennovel "Eden" series, a historical saga about the Eden family of England. The series contains *This Other Eden* (1977); *The Prince of Eden* (1978); *The Eden Passion* (1979); *The Women of Eden* (1980); *Eden Rising* (1982); *American Eden* (1987); and *Eden and Honor* (1989).

Harris's work has received a wide readership; in 1983, nine million of her books were in print, and her work has been translated into many languages, including French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Polish, and Japanese. She has been an author in residence at Oklahoma's Central State University, and has also received numerous awards for her writing, including the University of Oklahoma Literary Award, in 1970; Lewis Carroll Shelf Award, 1973, for *The Runaway's Diary*; Oklahoma Federation of Writers Teepee Award, 1974; Women in Communications By-Liner Award, 1975; Oklahoma Writers Hall of Fame Award, 1980; and Cottey College Distinguished Alumna Award, 1981. Harris is also an O. Henry Award winner.

Harris married Edgar V. Springer, Jr., a professor, in 1953; the couple have two children: John P. and Karen Louise.

Plot Summary

Summer Attacked by Hatter

Hatter Fox is set in New Mexico in 1973. Teague Summer, a young doctor who works for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, is summoned to a crowded jail cell in Santa Fe to attend to a wounded Navajo boy. He notices that among the group of about twenty imprisoned youths there is a Navajo girl of about seventeen who appears to be their leader. When he enters the cell, the girl, whose name is Hatter Fox, looks at him with a terrified expression on her face. Then she attacks him, stabbing him in the shoulder with a knife.

Summer Seeks Out Hatter

After Summer recovers, he is curious about Hatter, who is still at the jail. He visits her and observes her in an isolation cell chanting to herself. Within a few days, he receives a request from a social worker from the State Reformatory for Girls outside Albuquerque, asking if he has any information on Hatter Fox. He ignores the request, still haunted by the image of Hatter chanting in the jail cell. Two weeks later, Dr. Thomas Levering, head psychiatrist at the reformatory, sends Summer another letter, begging him to come down to the reformatory and give them whatever information he has about Hatter. She is unmanageable, having destroyed property, tried to escape, and attacked another girl. No one knows anything about her or her background, including the local Navajos.

On his initial visits, Summer is shocked by what he finds. First, he discovers that as a punishment, Hatter is sometimes confined in a dog pen outside in the freezing cold. Then he finds her in solitary confinement in a basement isolation cell, strapped down on a cot so she cannot move. She has also been subjected to force-feeding. Summer asks to be left alone with her, and Dr. Levering reluctantly agrees. Summer removes the straps from Hatter, and tells her that he is here to help her, but Hatter refuses to speak, and again looks terrified. Then, when he turns his back, she attacks Summer again, jumping on his back and clawing at his face and eyes.

Summer is determined to have nothing more to do with her, but a snowstorm prevents him from returning to Santa Fe. Levering persuades him to try once more to help Hatter. He meets the administrator of the reformatory, Dr. George Winton, who tells him that in seventeen years at the reformatory he has never had a failure and does not want one now. Though Summer dislikes the bureaucratic attitudes exhibited by Levering and Winton, he agrees that he will do what he can□but before he makes any decision, he wants to see Hatter once more.

Back in the basement again, Summer meets Clito and Claude, the two huge guards in charge of the cells. Summer takes Hatter a cup of coffee and talks to her, but still she refuses to respond. Then finally, she looks directly at him and drinks the now-cold

coffee. Summer finds this an encouraging sign, and thinks that at last Hatter may be willing to let him help her. He arranges to stay at the reformatory for a few weeks.

Summer Moves into the Reformatory

The following morning he finds Hatter back in the restraining bed. Claude tells him that she has refused to sleep on her cot, insisting on the floor instead. This is against the reformatory rules. Summer again tries to get through to Hatter, worried by her condition. She is half-starved, and her struggles against the restraints have cut her flesh. He believes she will die if she continues in this way. He feels compassion for her, persuades Claude to release the restraints, and bandages her wounds. A lewd remark by Claude suggests to Summer that Claude may have raped Hatter at some point.

Summer has no proof, but he shares his suspicions with Levering. Angered by Levering's bureaucratic, unresponsive attitude, he declares that he is quitting and returning to Santa Fe. But in a bar in Albuquerque he quickly changes his mind, and decides to spend three days in the cell adjoining Hatter's. On the first day, Hatter refuses to eat. Summer physically struggles with her and forces the food down her throat; she bites his finger in the process.

The next day, Hatter begins to speak to Summer, but she is still fearful and resentful. She says she is sick and tells him to go away. Realizing that Hatter has developed a fever, Summer transfers her to the infirmary. Once there, the efficient but overbearing nurse, Rhinehart, takes over.

Rhinehart understands Indian beliefs, and she tries to convince Hatter that Claude, not Summer, is the "witch" who has been tormenting her. She then performs a traditional ritual to destroy the hold the witch has over Hatter. Although Hatter claims that she does not believe in witches, she does becomes more cooperative. However, she is still subject to violent and unpredictable moods, and a screaming fit lands her in a straitjacket once more. This time she pleads with Summer to help her by killing her. After the outburst, Rhinehart convinces Dr. Winton, the administrator, to let Summer stay and work in the infirmary to keep a close eye on Hatter.

During a late-night dinner in Rhinehart's apartment, the nurse relates her history to Summer; they begin to repeat these dinners each evening.

Hatter Begins to Make Progress

Days pass, and Summer works in the infirmary tending to various girls and watching Hatter, who is cooperative but silent. Christmas approaches. Summer returns to Santa Fe on Christmas Eve for some fresh clothes and a break from the monotony, and contemplates not going back to the reformatory.

He returns that evening, surprised to see that Rhinehart is throwing a private Christmas party for Summer and Hatter, who is charming and wellbehaved. She even gives

Summer a gift of handkerchiefs. But when Hatter retires to her room and Summer follows, she starts to tell him about the abuse that she has suffered at other institutions like this. Summer apologizes for these events, but tells her that if she behaves herself she can be out of the reformatory by spring. As he leaves that night, she asks him, "When it's all over, will I be white or Indian?" Summer doesn't know how to answer her.

He arranges for her to work in the infirmary where he can keep an eye on her. Some tranquil days follow, as Hatter works hard and well, and opens up more to Summer about her past. She seems to have become reasonably calm and productive.

But the calm is shattered when Hatter becomes jealous of Mango, one of the girls at the reformatory, whom Summer also befriends. Hatter tries to attack Mango with a knife as she sleeps, but Summer stops her. Summer is the only one who witnesses the incident, but he doesn't say anything.

Trying to overcome this setback, Summer gets permission to take Hatter on a trip to Albuquerque. She is nervous in the city, but seems to come alive when she guides Summer to a rocky ledge high on the side of a mountain, with a spectacular view of the surrounding area. She tells Summer she used to go there as a child, then tells him that the reason she was nervous in the city was because she had worked as a prostitute there the previous year, to make enough money to survive. She remains silent for an hour, lost in the beauty of nature.

But soon there is another setback. Back in the reformatory, Hatter is attacked by a gang of girls, who give her a merciless beating. Summer is angry that Winton will not hold an investigation to find out the culprits.

Hatter Leaves the Reformatory

Hatter recovers, and March passes uneventfully. But during April, Summer realizes that Hatter is expecting to go with him to Santa Fe when she is released. He is not prepared to take on this responsibility, and so raises no protest when the reformatory arranges for Hatter to be taken in by the Good Hope orphanage, even though the orphanage has a bad reputation. But when Summer sees her being dragged off roughly to the orphanage, he intervenes. Agreeing to become her guardian, he drives her to Santa Fe, arranges for her to stay in a rooming house, and tries to find her a job. She works briefly at a mock Indian trading post, where she has to dress in an Indian outfit and be photographed with tourists. She soon walks out and finds herself a better job, working at a grocery store owned by a Navajo man.

Hatter seems happy, and for several weeks Summer's friendship with her blossoms. But one day, Summer becomes angry with her and insists that before they go for a day out she must return to find a paycheck that she has lost. Returning with the check, Hatter is focused only on Summer and carelessly crosses the road, where she is run over by a bus and killed. Summer is grief-stricken and blames himself for her death.

The First Encounter

The First Encounter Summary

Hatter Fox is Marilyn Harris' novel of a seventeen year-old Navajo Indian girl living in New Mexico in the early 1970's. The story is one of isolation, alienation, and finally the redemption that comes when a young doctor befriends Hatter. The doctor has his own personal issues of disappointment and feelings of inadequacy until Hatter enters into his life.

The story is taken from the notebooks of Doctor Teague Summer and is based on his notes about a girl named Hatter Fox. Dr. Summer has never met Hatter Fox when he became a doctor at the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1973. His opinion of this notorious girl is based on what he has heard from other people, who seem to blame everything from the bad economy to bad politics on this seventeen-year-old Navajo girl.

Dr. Summer soon gets a close up look at Hatter when he is called to the local jail to attend to a boy who has slit his wrists. Dr. Summer sees that the boy is leaning against the back wall of a big jail cell where Hatter Fox stands directing two single-file rows of young inmates in some sort of weird march.

The floor of the cell is covered in the wounded boy's blood and Hatter smears some it on her face and clothes as the other young people stop marching to watch her movements. Dr. Summer is allowed into the cell to tend to the wounded boy but the doctor catches Hatter's gaze and immediately feels her knife plunged into his back. The doctor falls to the floor and looks up to see Hatter's smiling face.

Dr. Summer spends a few days in the hospital and then visits the jail so that he can see Hatter face to face. The police officers warn Dr. Summer about Hatter's wild demeanor but he proceeds to her cell where he sees her lying stiffly under a blanket. Hatter has refused to put on her prison dress so she lies naked under the rough blanket, staring straight ahead.

Hatter refuses to speak to Dr. Summer but chants in a low voice until the doctor tires of this response and leaves. A few days later, Dr. Summer drives to Taos to spend some time with an artist friend while he recovers. Returning home several days later, Dr. Summer receives several letters from the State Reformatory for Girls in Albuquerque asking for his help in the matter of Hatter Fox.

The First Encounter Analysis

The story is told from the first person point of view, that of Dr. Teague Summer. This means that the reader understands only this character's perceptions of the plot as it

extends. There is no insight into the emotions or motives of any other character in the story while the main character's emotions and thoughts are quite clear.

The location of the story is New Mexico in 1973 and Dr. Teague Summer is only twenty-eight years old, a relatively young doctor, working in the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Dr. Summer is from Massachusetts so he is out of place in the Southwest, both functionally and emotionally. The doctor's sensibilities are strict New England and it will be interesting to see his perceptions change as he grows to know the culture of the Navajo people.

The Reformatory

The Reformatory Summary

Dr. Summer had ignored the request from the reformatory as long as possible and, a week later, decides to make the trip to Albuquerque on a cold December morning. Dr. Summer finds the reformatory to be a somber place in the middle of nowhere and he wonders what a young girl must think as she is driven past the guard and into the gated walls. The interior of the facility has the look and odors of all state buildings drenched in cleaning solutions and old coffee.

Dr. Summer encounters sullen guards and mazes of hallways until he finds the office of Dr. Thomas Levering, the psychiatrist who had requested his help. Dr. Levering wants to know everything that Dr. Summer knows about Hatter and is disappointed to find out that Dr. Summer's only encounter with Hatter had been in the jail cell where she stabbed him.

Dr. Summer rises to look out onto the inner courtyard of the facility where he sees some sort of animal locked in a pen outside in the freezing rain that is turning to snow. After a closer look, Dr. Summer realizes that the figure is not an animal but a girl who is trying desperately to escape from the cage. Soon, two male attendants unlock the cage and the girl tries to escape, but is cornered and carried inside by the attendants.

Dr. Levering tries to explain that Hatter had slashed twelve mattresses the day before and this type of punishment was necessary. The head of the reformatory believes that putting girls in the "dog house" is the most effective punishment because of the humiliation it causes. Dr. Summer is outraged and demands to see Hatter. Dr. Levering does not see the point because Hatter speaks to no one, but he finally relents and tells Dr. Summer to return the next day and he will try to get permission for a visit.

The freezing rain has now turned into an ice storm so Dr. Summer spends the night at a hotel in Albuquerque rather than driving back to Santa Fe. The next day, Dr. Summer arrives at the reformatory at noon and Dr. Levering tells him that he plans to have Hatter sent to the state hospital because they have run out of solutions at the reformatory.

Dr. Summer is appalled at the thought of the treatment Hatter will receive in a mental institution and demands to see the girl immediately. Dr. Levering leads Dr. Summer through many locked doors and hallways and finally into a sub-basement where the worst girls are kept in isolated cells. Dr. Summer is finally admitted into a windowless room where Hatter is confined to a hospital bed with leather straps binding her entire body.

Dr. Levering shares the fact that they must provide nutrition via an intravenous line because Hatter refuses to eat. Two bulky male attendants stand by and shake their

heads incredulously when Dr. Summer asks to be left alone with Hatter. Hatter will not acknowledge Dr. Summer, staring fixedly at a point on the ceiling.

Realizing the risk he is taking, Dr. Summer removes the leather straps that hold Hatter to the bed but the girl does not move or even seem to breathe. Getting no response to any question, Dr. Summer realizes his defeat and tells Hatter to have someone call him if she should decide that she wants to talk. Dr. Summer turns to leave and before he realizes what has happened, Hatter has jumped on his back clawing his face and holding onto his body with her tightly gripped legs.

Dr. Levering and the two attendants hear Dr. Summer's cries for help and manage to subdue Hatter before too much damage is inflicted. Hatter is once more restrained to the bed and Dr. Summer rushes out of the reformatory after telling Dr. Levering that Hatter's only two words had been, "fuck off." The snowstorm has worsened forcing Dr. Summer to spend another night in Albuquerque.

Later that night, Dr. Summer receives a phone call from Dr. Levering asking if he will return to the reformatory tomorrow to meet with Dr. George Winton who heads the facility. Dr. Winton had been encouraged by Hatter's response to Dr. Summer and thinks that Dr. Summer might be the only hope of reaching Hatter. Dr. Summer reluctantly agrees to come, after Dr. Levering tells him that Hatter had asked for Dr. Summer.

The next day, Dr. Summer meets with Dr. Levering and Dr. Winton, who is more concerned with his flawless record of rehabilitation than for Hatter's individual needs. This blasy attitude toward Hatter fuels Dr. Summer's drive to try to reach the girl one more time. Dr. Winton has arranged for Dr. Summer to move into a guesthouse at the facility in order to assist with Hatter's treatment but Dr. Summer declines the offer.

Dr. Summer is again led through the maze of hallways and locked doors to reach the basement where Hatter has been upgraded to a cell instead of a hospital bed. Dr. Summer asks for two cups of coffee and enters the cell area to meet with Hatter again. Dr. Summer sits down in Hatter's cell, offers her a cup of coffee, and tells her that he is there to help her, not harm her.

Hatter is completely unresponsive until she tires of Dr. Summer's recitation of his life history and puts her fingers in her ears as a sign of boredom. Before long, the two male attendants return to bring Hatter's lunch and Dr. Summer moves outside the cell. For the first time today, Hatter looks Dr. Summer in the eye and downs the now cold cup of coffee in one drink. Hatter does not take her eyes from Dr. Summer's face as she continues to eat and Dr. Summer knows that in some way, Hatter is trying to communicate.

Dr. Summer decides to take Dr. Winton's offer to stay at a guest cottage. Dr. Levering is not altogether pleased that Dr. Summer sees some glimmer of hope with Hatter, which he had not seen.

The Reformatory Analysis

Dr. Summer is not trained in psychiatry or social work, but feels that he can communicate with Hatter in a way that others cannot. Perhaps it is Dr. Summer's own feelings of inadequacy that helps him relate to Hatter. Dr. Summer feels as if he is a disappointment to his parents because of his lackluster performance in school and a low rank in medical school and feels that he cannot disappoint one more person, even this terrified Navajo girl.

The author uses the literary technique of irony in the story when she writes about an Navajo who names himself Sitting Bull and sells Native American-related knick-knacks in a store by the highway. Dr. Summer visits the store on his way back to Santa Fe after his first visit to the reformatory and realizes that this man has sold out himself and his culture by diminishing it with his tawdry trinkets.

Hatter Fox, in contrast, will not give in to societal pressure and she is unwavering in her position and her culture. Dr. Summer feels that someone who is this stalwart should be afforded at least as much of a chance for success as the Navajo who has sold out with his cheap items.

Dr. Summer Moves In

Dr. Summer Moves In Summary

Dr. Levering summons one of the girls named Mango to help Dr. Summer settle into his cottage. Mango shows Dr. Summer to his tiny quarters and proceeds to make his bed and share some of the cottage rules. Mango also shows Dr. Summer the scar from a slash that Hatter Fox had inflicted on her not too long ago. Mango does not understand why Dr. Summer is dedicated to helping the wild Hatter but he is determined to try.

The next morning, Mango arrives at the cottage to escort Dr. Summer to the reformatory and he can tell that she is angry with him, perhaps for his dedication to helping Hatter, who has harmed so many people.

Dr. Summer returns to the basement and finds Hatter chained to her cot in an awkward position. Claude, the male attendant, informs the doctor that Hatter wanted to sleep on the floor and the rules prohibit that. Dr. Summer can see that the chains have cut into Hatter's skin from her thrashing around so he sends Claude for some water and first aid materials.

While Claude is gone, Dr. Summer tries to talk to Hatter and tells her that her cooperation will speed up her release from solitary confinement. Hatter is insolent but cooperates slightly when Claude returns with the first aid articles so Dr. Summer can tend to her skin abrasions. Dr. Summer instructs Claude that he wants to be alone with Hatter and Claude interprets this comment to mean that Dr. Summer has inappropriate intentions toward the girl. Claude's leering statements, combined with lacerations on Hatter's breasts, and bruises in her groin area lead Dr. Summer to believe that Hatter has been sexually assaulted while in solitary confinement.

Dr. Summer is concerned that Hatter is trying to starve herself to death and begs for her to eat when lunch is brought in. Hatter staunchly refuses, so Dr. Summer tries to force-feed her and the pair struggles, resulting in Dr. Summers subduing Hatter on the floor and feeding her like he was trained to do with animals. At the end of the struggle, Hatter does swallow a few bites on her own. Although there is more food on her dress and on the floor than she has consumed, Dr. Summer feels some satisfaction that she has had some nutrition.

After Hatter eats, Dr. Summer yells for Claude again to bring some warm water and a clean dress for Hatter. Claude is not pleased at the mess in Hatter's cell but brings the requested articles and, once more, leaves Dr. Summer behind locked doors with Hatter.

While Hatter sleeps, Dr. Summer alternately watches her and paces the floor, all the while wondering how a person can remain sane in solitary confinement. Dr. Summer's mind begins to wander and he tries to stay focused on his job, which becomes more difficult with no window or even a clock with which to mark time.

When Claude returns to check on the situation in Hatter's cell, Dr. Summer announces that he needs to see Dr. Levering and Claude escorts him to the doctor's office. When Claude leaves, Dr. Summer insinuates that Hatter has been raped and that he wants her removed from Claude's watch immediately.

Dr. Levering counters the insinuation with the fact that no girl has ever accused anyone of any sexual impropriety while in solitary confinement. Dr. Summer contends that the girls are in no position to accuse anyone. Dr. Levering is resolute on not releasing Hatter any sooner than her apportioned time and tells Dr. Summer that being sick enough to go to the infirmary is the only way that she will be released from the basement early.

Dr. Summer reaches his point of tolerance for the bureaucratic rules that are slowly killing Hatter, and he withdraws his offer to stay and help. For once, Dr. Levering is at a loss for words, and Dr. Summer returns to Santa Fe.

Later that night, Dr. Summer calls Dr. Levering from a bar where Dr. Summer has had a few drinks. Dr. Summer makes a proposition that Dr. Levering cannot refuse. Dr. Summer wants to move into the cell next to Hatter's so that he can gain her trust and build some sort of bond so that she feels safe enough to communicate with him.

Dr. Levering reluctantly agrees as long as Dr. Summer agrees to take full responsibility for his own safety. Dr. Summer buys some items to use as bribes when he returns to the reformatory; a carton of cigarettes for Mango, girlie magazines for Claude and his colleague, and a plastic comb, brush, and mirror set for Hatter.

Dr. Summer Moves In Analysis

Although Dr. Summer is not formally trained in psychology or sociology, he is possibly better equipped to help with Hatter than the administrators of the reformatory because of his empathy for her. More than once, he tries to imagine himself as a young girl facing the sound of the heavy locked doors and the endless blackness of the windowless rooms and cells.

The author vividly writes Dr. Summer's thoughts as he sits in the cell next to Hatter and tries to keep his mind active while she sleeps. Dr. Summer's talks to himself by saying, "In the beginning, God created... And they wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him... Call me Ishmael... It was the best of times, it was the worst... The watch was broken... Time?... No time... Space?... Nothing but space... And silence... What was I doing there?... Why didn't someone come?... The weakened structure of the building was going to collapse, and I was going to be buried alive..."

Dr. Summer's thoughts continue in this vein so the author can show the rambling pattern of an intelligent man who tries to hang onto his sanity, having been in solitary confinement just a few hours. In contrast, Hatter has been in solitary confinement for nearly a week and Dr. Summer gains a new appreciation and respect for the girl who

can stay so strong. He now better understands her personal agony having experienced it to a small degree himself.

Dr. Summer Returns

Dr. Summer Returns Summary

Later that night, Dr. Summer returns to the cottage where he once more gains admittance from Mango, whose sullen demeanor brightens considerably when presented with the carton of cigarettes. Dr. Summer asks Mango to keep quiet about his return so that the other girls would not make trouble over his attention to Hatter.

Dr. Summer presents the girlie magazines to Claude and his buddy and is shown to the basement where Hatter regards him once more with silent hostility. Dr. Summer lies down on his cot, never taking his eyes from Hatter's prone, still body. Suddenly, Hatter rises and Dr. Summer is startled, both from her sudden movement and her announcement that she needs to urinate. Dr. Summer considers the brief statement a minor victory and the night passes without incident

The next morning, Dr. Summer awakens to find that Hatter is gone so he calls Claude who informs Dr. Summer that Hatter is in the back room strapped to the hospital bed so that she can be fed intravenously. Dr. Summer is outraged because he promised Hatter that if she ate yesterday she would not have to be strapped down. Claude claims that Hatter did not eat enough to warrant bypassing the IV.

Dr. Summer tries to appeal to Claude's fear for his job and tells the attendant that a person can live by intravenous feedings for only a short time, and that if Hatter is going to live she needs real food. Dr. Summer tries to appeal to Claude's better judgment, saying that if Hatter is to die, investigations may prove that Claude is responsible. The tactic works and Claude leaves Dr. Summer alone with Hatter. He releases the gaunt girl from the bed restraints and carries her back to her cot in her cell.

Dr. Summer tries to convince Hatter that she must eat something and she tells him to leave her alone because she is sick. Hatter eats a few bites and withdraws on her cot questioning why Dr. Summer is following her. Hatter is suspicious about Dr. Summer's claims that he is here to help her and she begs him to go away. Almost immediately, Hatter's body is seized with contortions and a high fever.

Dr. Summer calls for Claude to open the door so that he can carry Hatter to the infirmary. Claude objects because the request breaks the rules but Dr. Summer is insistent and he carries the unconscious Hatter to the infirmary where he encounters the head nurse, Rhinehart.

Rhinehart is officious and sarcastic when Dr. Summer reveals that he cannot find a cause for Hatter's illness. Dr. Summer recalls an Indian woman he had as a patient once whose husband died and the woman did not want to live out of grief and embarrassment. The woman had presented herself to a hospital where she was

examined and declared in perfect condition. The woman died two days later, however, and gave Dr. Summer his first lesson in the power of Indian culture and beliefs.

Rhinehart removes Hatter's dress, gasps at the marks on the girl's body, and notes that they are consistent with those found on most girls held in solitary. Rhinehart finds no obvious cause for Hatter's illness either and Dr. Summer suggests that Hatter be transferred to a local hospital. Suddenly Rhinehart feels a bump on the side of Hatter's head that Dr. Summer can explain only by a stumble Hatter took when using the slop jar in her cell.

Rhinehart is able to rouse Hatter, and the girl starts at the sight of Dr. Summer. Rhinehart tries to comfort Hatter by telling her that Dr. Summer is not the witch, that he is not the one who has hurt her. Rhinehart tells Hatter that Claude is the evil witch and that Dr. Summer is the good man who has rescued her from Claude. She tells Hatter that Claude is the one who made the corpse poison and shot it under the door. Rhinehart moves Hatter's hand up to the bump on her head and tells her that that is the spot where the poison entered. Finally, Hatter calms down and falls asleep.

Rhinehart explains to the incredulous Dr. Summer that Hatter believes that a witch is at work making her sick. Rhinehart and Dr. Summer go to Rhinehart's room at the back of the infirmary where Rhinehart calls Claude to come up. Rhinehart is able to snip a piece of Claude's hair and a section of his shirt collar and then Claude leaves angrily.

Rhinehart and Dr. Summer return to Hatter's room and perform a ritual where Hatter can see that the items from the witch have been burned. Hatter screams and writhes in pain as the hair and fabric burn in a basin and Dr. Summer is confident that he smells burning flesh.

Rhinehart and Dr. Summer bathe Hatter, re-wrap her wounds, and put her in bed to sleep. Rhinehart leaves Dr. Summer alone with Hatter, who soon wakes and is embarrassed to find out that he helped to bathe her. Hatter's quiet, cooperative demeanor soon escalates into another screaming fit when Dr. Summer pushes her to discuss the fact that her friends have not come to visit her in the reformatory.

Hatter's screams have penetrated the reformatory walls and soon Dr. Winton and Dr. Levering arrive with a male attendant, who is ordered to fasten Hatter into a straitjacket. Dr. Hatter is consumed with guilt that he has prompted this latest attack and that he has failed in his promise to Hatter that she would never be restrained again.

When the administrators leave, Dr. Summer enters Hatter's room and removes the gag from her mouth. Realizing there is nothing more he can do and that he will probably be asked to leave the reformatory, Dr. Summer turns to leave when he hears Hatter whisper that she wants Dr. Summer to help her by killing her. Dr. Summer advises Hatter to get well and do that task on her own when she is in the outside world again.

Rhinehart returns to the infirmary after being chastised by Dr. Winton. Dr. Summer is surprised to hear that the administrators want Dr. Summer to move into the infirmary and treat other patients while tending to Hatter.

Dr. Summer Returns Analysis

Success in reaching Hatter is a twofold proposition for Dr. Summer. Not only does he want Hatter to be healthy and functioning, but he also needs a personal success in his own life. Dr. Summer feels that he is a huge disappointment to his parents and that he is continuing that trend with Hatter and is not equipped to reverse the pattern. Dr. Summer's perseverance is fueled almost as much by his own needs as by Hatter's needs.

Dr. Summer is ill equipped to treat Hatter in the Navajo ways that Rhinehart knows about. The idea of the forces of witches is something that Dr. Summer could have never even guessed. Rhinehart is twice Dr. Summer's age, has lived in the Southwest much longer than he has, and is better able to treat Hatter's problem than the doctor with his stoic New England medical education.

Settling In

Settling In Summary

Rhinehart tells Dr. Summer and Hatter that she has defended them to the administrators and that Hatter is now Dr. Summer's responsibility. A male attendant named Ned escorts Dr. Summer to his cottage to collect his things and back to the infirmary where Dr. Summer will be staying.

Dr. Summer looks in on Hatter and she has returned to her insolent, silent behavior. Dr. Summer reminds Hatter that these quarters are better than being in solitary confinement but Hatter does not answer.

Dr. Summer goes to Rhinehart's apartment down the hall for a dinner of cold chicken and beer and the pair exchange stories about their backgrounds. Rhinehart grew up in Australia, the daughter of an extreme Methodist minister and a non-existent mother. Rhinehart ran away to New York when she turned nineteen and became a nurse.

A wealthy patient paid Rhinehart to care for him in Arizona during a terminal illness and left her money in his will, but it was rescinded when the man's family intervened. Rhinehart began the trip back to New York when she found out about the nursing job at the reformatory and she has been here ever since.

Dr. Summer asks about the wrongs and injustices that seem to abound at the reformatory, and Rhinehart defensively answers that she is the only medical person in the institution to care for three hundred girls, and she cannot fight all the wrongs. Dr. Summer realizes that he has offended Rhinehart, which is not his intention, but she offers him a pair of flannel pajamas and ends the evening by sending Dr. Summer back to his room.

The next day begins Dr. Summer's stint in the infirmary where he treats menstrual cramps, migraines, and minor illnesses. Hatter is allowed to work in the infirmary and is pleased to be kept apart from the other girls in the dormitories.

Soon it is Christmas Eve, and Dr. Summers tells Rhinehart that he must return to Santa Fe to pick up some personal items and to check on his home. Promising Rhinehart and Hatter that he will return later today, Dr. Summers leaves the reformatory not entirely sure that he will return.

After picking up his mail and rejecting the idea of buying Christmas gifts for Rhinehart and Hatter, Dr. Summer drives to his trailer which is in the same state of disarray in which he left it. His mood bleak, Dr. Summers sits immobile all afternoon until he realizes that he will return to the reformatory because there are people who need him there as opposed to the loneliness he encounters at home.

The first thing Dr. Summer does when he returns to the infirmary is to check Hatter's room but she is missing and he begins to panic. Arriving at Rhinehart's apartment, Dr. Summer enters to the delicious aromas of Christmas dinner and the sight of Hatter dressed in a red bathrobe, setting the table and lighting candles.

Rhinehart is putting the finishing touches on an elaborate holiday meal and is thrilled and relieved that Dr. Summer has returned. No one looking at the scene of these three people at dinner would ever be able to guess the terrible events which have brought them all to this place. Hatter eats dinner with no problem and even laughs at some of the stories told by Dr. Summer and Rhinehart.

Hatter's calm is broken when Dr. Summer urges her to remember any possible details from her past but she cannot or will not. The evening stalls but picks up again with opening the few gifts, which Rhinehart has for each of her guests. Hatter's gifts are some hair ribbons and a necklace made of terra cotta beads. Rhinehart makes a hideous remark telling Hatter that the necklace looks nice and that Hatter looks "almost human."

This callous remark essentially ends the evening and Hatter and Dr. Summer leave for their respective rooms. Before retiring for the night, Dr. Summer checks on Hatter who has changed out of the red robe and thrown it and the Christmas gifts into a corner of the room. Hatter's demeanor has sunk to her normal sullen attitude and she offers to tell Dr. Summer the details of her experiences at the Christian mission school where she and the other children were physically and emotionally abused by the minister and his wife.

Dr. Summer is overcome with pity for Hatter and apologizes for all the wrongs ever inflicted on her in the name of Christianity or white people in general. Dr. Summer counsels Hatter to behave and cooperate so that she may be released from the reformatory in the spring. Before Dr. Summer leaves her room, Hatter wants to know whether, after her period of cooperation, she will be Indian or white but Dr. Summer cannot answer that.

Settling In Analysis

The author introduces the theme of prejudice against Native American people throughout the novel. In this section, Rhinehart makes two blatantly prejudiced statements which are so much a part of her behavior that she does not even pause when Dr. Summer takes offense. After Rhinehart and Dr. Summer bathe Hatter and put her to bed, Dr. Summer is not sure how to interpret Hatter's recurring silence. Rhinehart asks him, "What happened? Didn't she fall down and kiss your feet?.... I should have warned you. Indians aren't long on gratitude."

The other event in this section occurs during the Christmas dinner when Hatter puts on the necklace Rhinehart had given her as a gift and Rhinehart tells Hatter, "They look nice. You look nice, almost human." It is possible that no one else hearing this comment

directed at them would react so strongly but Hatter takes immediate offense because of the comparisons of Indians to animals, a stereotype which has permeated her entire life.

Dr. Summer tries to salvage Hatter's pride and apologizes for the indignities and pain she has suffered at the hands of supposedly well-intentioned Christian white people but Hatter separates Dr. Summer from those who have hurt her and her concern is that she stay distinctive and not become white after her release from the reformatory.

Hatter's History

Hatter's History Summary

The winter progresses uneventfully with Hatter, Rhinehart, and Dr. Summer working as a team in the infirmary, which gains the attention of the administrators for its new efficiency. Rhinehart chalks their success up to having an in-house doctor, which she has wanted for quite some time. Hatter does all the maintenance work while Rhinehart and Dr. Summer tend to the sick girls and their pattern continues until one day later in February.

Dr. Summer learns that Mango is in the infirmary with the flu on the day that she was scheduled to be released for good because the reformatory's matron does not want to release a sick person. Although Mango can leave as soon as she is better, the disappointment is devastating to her, so Dr. Summer spends the day with Mango, much to Hattter's chagrin.

Dr. Summer catches Hatter in Mango's room in the middle of the night, where she stands poised with a knife pointing down at Mango's sleeping form because she knows that Mango had been a prostitute at one time. Dr. Summer sternly lectures Hatter on the crime she almost committed and tells Hatter to kill herself with the knife and save the state the time and money of doing it someday. Dr. Summer realizes that his statements are harsh but they open Hatter up to reveal some facts about her past.

Hatter tells Dr. Summer that she had been left as a small child with an old woman who kept her until she died. The woman had told Hatter to wait for someone to come for her after the old woman's death but no one ever came and Hatter was starving. Finally, one day, the old woman's ghost appears to Hatter and walks with her toward the mountains and then makes Hatter continue without her.

Hatter meets a shepherd boy who takes Hatter to his home and she stays until she is accused of killing a young girl by shoving her off a cliff. Hatter had seen the boy who actually shoved the girl, but the adults do not believe her and punish Hatter by tying her up and placing her body next to the body of the crushed dead girl. Hatter cannot remember how long she was punished but she eventually was sent to the Christian missionary school.

Dr. Summer is almost paralyzed by what Hatter tells him and tries to improve her life the best he can. One day Dr. Summer is able to acquire a pass for Hatter so that he can take her out for the day. Rhinehart warns Dr. Summer that sometimes the girls are uncomfortable with being outside the reformatory because they feel safe in the institution in spite of their confinement.

Hatter is clearly uncomfortable riding in Dr. Summer's Jeep and he considers returning to the reformatory early but decides to stop for lunch first at a diner near the university.

Dr. Summer can sense that Hatter is very agitated by being here so they take their sandwiches with them to eat in the Jeep. Hatter wants to stop at a candy store and leads Dr. Summer to a peaceful place several miles out of the city where they spend a couple hours watching the scenery and talking quietly.

Hatter reveals that she had been a prostitute all last year and worked the street corner near the diner, which accounted for her nervous state. Hatter had made a lot of money prostituting for the college boys and was afraid that someone in the diner might recognize her. Hatter had left the area because a Navajo group on campus had banded together and told her to leave because she was a negative image for the Navajo people, a statement which wounded Hatter deeply because she was just trying to make enough money to live.

Hatter's History Analysis

Ironically, Hatter had tried to kill Mango for being a prostitute when Hatter herself had worked as a prostitute just last year. Both girls had done what they needed to do in order to make money to live, but Hatter wants to kill that part of her life and thinks that she can do that by destroying Mango, who reminds her of her own past.

Dr. Summer is gleaning more information to fill in the holes in Hatter's past and the horrific stories seem to be getting worse instead of better. Hatter has tried to hold on to the positive parts of her heritage through her memories of the old woman who cared for her and she tells Dr. Summer, "And that night the old woman came back and told me not to wait any longer.... Her ghost... told me to start walking toward the dawn and not to wait any longer. I begged her to take me with her, but she wouldn't do that. But she walked with me until morning, and kissed me goodbye, and told me to keep walking."

Dr. Summer believes Hatter's stories but realizes that Hatter is caught between the world of her Navajo heritage and the white world in which she is ill-equipped to function.

Hatter's Release

Hatter's Release Summary

In an attempt to ease Hatter back into the world outside the reformatory, Dr. Levering decides it would be good for her to eat her meals in the cafeteria with the other girls instead of staying in the infirmary. For several days Hatter is escorted to the cafeteria by a matron three times each day until one evening Dr. Smith realizes that it is eight o'clock and Hatter has not returned from dinner.

After much searching of the facility, Hatter is discovered bound, gagged, and unconscious in a utility closet. Dr. Winton and Dr. Levering check on Hatter in the infirmary the next morning and apologize that Hatter has been hurt and tell her to stay focused on her own good behavior so that she can be released soon.

Dr. Summer is outraged that there is no formal investigation or chastisement of the girls who beat Hatter, but Dr. Winton believes that a beating by a girl's peers is sometimes more therapeutic than anything the administrators could do to keep a girl in line. Rhinehart motions for Dr. Summer to keep silent and he vows to leave this place as soon as possible.

The month of April passes quietly and Dr. Summer makes plans to leave the reformatory and return to Santa Fe on May 1. Coincidentally, this is the same day that Hatter is to be released to an orphan's home. Dr. Summer feels a sense of relief that he will be free of Hatter but Rhinehart chastises him for abandoning Hatter to a home run by three mentally retarded brothers and a sister who abuse the children in their care.

Dr. Summer rationalizes that he has to return to his own life and not take Hatter to raise. On the morning of May 1, Dr. Summer awakens late and the infirmary is quiet, leading him to believe that Hatter has already left, but Rhinehart and Hatter are waiting at the front door of the reformatory for someone from the orphan's home to pick her up.

Rhinehart is openly crying and Hatter will not speak or look at Dr. Summer as he tries to say goodbye. Suddenly, a beat up station wagon pulls up and a gaunt old man gets out asking where the Indian is. Dr. Summer points inside and runs to his Jeep to avoid this scene but as he pulls out of the drive, Dr. Summer sees the old man push Hatter into the car.

In a fury, Dr. Summer speeds up to the car, pulls Hatter out, and ushers her into his Jeep. Looking back, Dr. Summer yells at Rhinehart to tell Dr. Winton that he has Hatter and Rhinehart's face is beaming with joy.

Dr. Summer has just backed into the position of Hatter's guardian and Hatter is so grateful that she agrees to behave and do everything she is told. Dr. Summer takes her to his trailer which is in a complete state of disarray while he leaves to talk to the

landlady and pick up his mail. When Dr. Summer returns, Hatter has cleaned and straightened the trailer out of habit from her work at the infirmary.

Dr. Summer takes Hatter to a boardinghouse where he had lived in his first weeks in Santa Fe. A very nice woman runs the house and Dr. Summer is content that Hatter has a decent place to live. The next day, Dr. Summer takes Hatter to several shops looking for a job and she finally finds one in a tourist shop. Hatter only works there for a few days because she is forced to wear a Pocahontas costume and have her picture taken with tourists.

The search for a new job continues and Hatter finds employment at a small grocery run by an older Navajo man. Hatter really enjoys her job and seems to glow with Dr. Summer's daily attentions.

One day, Dr. Summer agrees to meet Hatter for lunch so that they can open a bank account with her first paycheck. Hatter is so happy because, in addition to receiving her first paycheck, her employer has also given her a day off tomorrow as a token of her good work. Hatter, of course, wants to spend the day with Dr. Summer and is angry when he cannot commit to taking the day off from his own responsibilities.

To top it off, Hatter has lost or misplaced her paycheck and she is not concerned about it, preferring to discuss her day off. Dr. Summer is irritated at Hatter's irresponsible behavior telling her that he cannot pay her expenses indefinitely and that she needs to become independent.

Dr. Summer sends Hatter back into the grocery to look for her check and he waits across the street. Before long, Hatter emerges from the store waving the check in her hand, happy that Dr. Summer will no longer be angry. In her rush to run to Dr. Summer, Hatter fails to look at the oncoming traffic and is hit by a bus and killed instantly.

Dr. Summer recalls seeing her lifeless hand holding on to the check, which he now keeps, in the amount of $41.28. People have told him how he beat on the steel panels of the bus that day in his grief and a priest tells Dr. Summer that he spent three days and nights in church, but Dr. Summer remembers none of this. All he can remember is a life cut short in a world that did not understand Hatter Fox and the thousands more like her.

Hatter's Release Analysis

The author writes about the themes of isolation and redemption in this last section with the characters of Hatter and Dr. Summer. Dr. Summer has experienced just a few months of isolation in the infirmary but yet it is enough time for him to empathize with Hatter who has been on the fringe of society her entire life. Ironically, both characters emerge changed from the controlled environment of the reformatory, with a better appreciation of the other's life and internal prejudices.

It seems as if Hatter has learned to manage in the outside world thanks to Dr. Summer's intensive influence, and Dr. Summer has finally achieved a success in his life, which he had considered a huge disappointment just a few months before. Tragically, Hatter's death brings an end to both stories of redemption and Dr. Summer knows the pain and risk of investing yourself in a person, even himself, because there is no guaranteed return.

Characters

Claude

Claude is the guard in charge of the solitary confinement cells at the reformatory. He is in his late twenties, and built like a football player. He insists that all the rules of the institution be carried out, but he is not very intelligent and does not know when to be flexible. He is sometimes crude in his manner, and Summer suspects that he may have abused Hatter sexually.

Clito

Clito is an assistant guard at the reformatory. He helps Claude deal with Hatter, and has the responsibility of force-feeding her. He is large and his face suggests he may be Mexican.

Hatter Fox

Hatter Fox is a seventeen-year-old Navajo girl. She is slender, with long straight black hair and delicate features. Her life has been characterized by abuse, neglect and abandonment. She does not know who her parents are, and she was raised in several different environments. As a young child, she was abandoned and taken in by an old woman, whom she called grandmother, but who was not her real grandmother. The old woman told Hatter that Changing Woman had given Hatter to her. Hatter was fond of the old woman, but she died before Hatter was five. Hatter was then taken in by a Navajo Indian family who were also caring for about a hundred other children. But Hatter was soon falsely accused of killing one of them, and the family cruelly abused and abandoned her. She was sent to a Christian mission school, where she was abused again, enduring many beatings and other abuse from the cruel couple who ran the school. She remained at the mission school until she was thirteen.

After this, Hatter appears to have just drifted for several years, and no details are given. Her story resumes when she is about sixteen. For a while she attended classes at the university in Albuquerque, but was kicked out because she was not registered. Then she lived for a year amongst the students in Albuquerque as a prostitute. This episode came to an end when the Indian students on campus told her to leave. Hatter interpreted this as another betrayal from her own people. Hatter then moved to Santa Fe, living in a commune before her arrest with a group of other teenagers. The kids were high on drugs and armed with explosives, which they were apparently going to use to blow up a building called the Palace of Governors. (It is never made clear the extent to which Hatter was involved in this plot.) Hatter's arrest lands her in the jail cell where Teague Summer first encounters her.

Hatter is so traumatized by her painful experiences in life that she can bring herself to trust no one. She is strong-willed, highly intelligent and stands out from the crowd. She is also violent and uncontrollable. She attacks Summer twice, as well as Mango, a girl at the reformatory to which she is sent. Hatter has no friends, and lashes out even at those who try to help her. The girls at the reformatory dislike her and give her a severe beating when they get the chance. Filled with self-destructive tendencies, Hatter has no interest in going on living.

However, Summer is fascinated by Hatter and slowly wins her trust. Gradually, she begins to cooperate with him and prepare herself for a life outside the reformatory. She shows that when she wants to be, she can be charming, graceful and outgoing. But she is still subject to violent moods and fits of despair and confusion. It is hard for such an unusual, high-strung Indian girl to fit tidily into white society, and she is aware of this. But Summer persuades her to make the necessary effort, and she seems to be succeeding, before a tragic accident ends her life.

Dr. Thomas Levering

Thomas Levering is the head psychiatrist at the State Reformatory. In his fifties, Levering is tall, with a gaunt appearance, as if he is about to succumb to an illness or has just recovered from one. He seems weighed down by dealing with all the problems in the reformatory. Levering invites Summer to help in dealing with Hatter, but then angers him by proposing that Hatter be sent to the state mental hospital. Summer dismisses Levering as a bureaucrat, concerned only with relieving himself of the responsibility for an unsolvable problem. However, Levering does care about the welfare of the girls in the reformatory, and he is well-liked and respected by them, and by everyone else in the institution.

Mango

Mango is an inmate of the State Reformatory. She is a big Mexican girl from El Paso who has been imprisoned for attempting to kill her father. Mango does well in the reformatory, however, despite being stabbed in the arm by Hatter, and she is due for release within a month. The staff of the reformatory trust her and she is given responsible tasks to perform. This is because Mango has shown she is willing to learn the rules and abide by them. Summer befriends her and buys her a carton of cigarettes as a gift, then comforts her when she has to delay her departure from the reformatory because she becomes sick. This arouses Hatter's jealousy, and she almost attacks Mango for a second time, although Summer stops her.

Rhinehart

Rhinehart is the nurse in charge of the reformatory's infirmary, and is Summer's guide at the reformatory, letting him know about events that have gone on in the past and assisting him in rehabilitating Hatter, both physically and mentally. In her sixties, small

and overweight (Summer thinks she looks like a woman wrestler), she has a strong personality. She quickly takes charge of the situation when Hatter is brought to the infirmary, and knows enough about Indian beliefs to concoct a ritual to free Hatter from the spell the girl believes she is under. Summer regards her as a good person, "a colorful, brusque, eccentric." Originally from Australia, Rhinehart came to New York when she was nineteen, and worked as a waitress at nights while putting herself through nursing school. She is lonely and regards the girls at the reformatory as her family; they are all she has.

Dr. Teague Summer

Teague Summer is a twenty-eight-year-old doctor, originally from Lowell, Massachusetts, who works for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He first meets Hatter Fox when he is called to a jail cell to attend to a wounded Indian boy. Hatter stabs him in the shoulder with a knife. From that point on, Summer can't forget Hatter. He accepts a request from the authorities to visit her in the state reformatory, and tries to explain to her that he wants to help her. Although sometimes he wants to wash his hands of the troublesome girl, he shows considerable persistence and resourcefulness in trying to get through to her, even though she continues to ignore him almost completely. He even comes up with the idea of going into solitary confinement in the cell next to her so he can observe her. He tells himself he must try to understand her on her terms rather than his. He must learn how to interpret her silences and understand her nonactions as well as her actions. Eventually, Hatter begins to respond to him. Their progress is like a slow dance, one step forward, three steps back.

Summer sticks to his task because he is idealistic. "I have an absolute and childlike faith in the goodness of man," he states, and he is deeply shocked by what he sees as the cruel and inhuman treatment of Hatter in the reformatory. Summer also shows himself to be levelheaded, usually able to evaluate situations calmly, although he is also subject to fits of anger and indignation when things do not go his way. He can be assertive, and is willing to stand up to the authorities at the reformatory when he thinks they are wrong. He dislikes the rulebound institution and sympathizes with those who are imprisoned in it.

Summer is a modest man who does not have a high opinion of himself. He admits to having a lackluster childhood, with no achievements to speak of. He joined the Peace Corps and went to Bolivia full of idealism but returned disillusioned, for what reason he does not say. He became a doctor in order to please his parents, even though it was against his better judgment. "I'm just a plain, second-rate M.D.," he says. He is also honest enough to admit that nothing in his medical training prepared him for dealing with a person in Hatter's situation.

Summer shows some development during the course of the novel. At the beginning he has a smug attitude about how much white people in Santa Fe have done for the benefit of the Indians. He thinks Indians should learn to adjust, as everyone else has to do. But later, when he has formed an attachment to Hatter, and she mentions Alcatraz, he

points out that the Indians no longer occupy the island. Then he adds, "We had denied them even that," which suggests that he has become more sympathetic to the Indian cause. It is Summer's request for Hatter to find her lost paycheck that leads directly to her accidental death, for which he feels responsible.

George Winton

George Winton is the administrator in charge of the State Reformatory. He is in his sixties, and gives the impression of being "everybody's youngat- heart grandfather." With his ruddy cheeks he looks as if he could play Santa Claus. Winton has been at the reformatory for seventeen years, and believes that he has never had a failure; all the girls in his charge are eventually returned to society to lead productive lives. Although Summer accepts that Winton is well-trained and professional, he thinks Winton is concerned about Hatter more because he does not want his perfect record spoiled than from any real interest in her welfare. Summer wonders whether Winton has ever seen the solitary confinement cells or is aware of the brutal things that go on in the reformatory. But it is Winton who insists that Summer take on the task of Hatter's rehabilitation, so he shares some of the credit for the progress she makes.

Themes

Racism

Racism pervades the novel. Harris creates a picture of a society imbued with extreme prejudice against Indians. This is apparent from the very first page, in which Summer notes that "someone who should know better" referred to Hatter as "the worst of all possible bitches, an intelligent Navajo." Then when Summer first sees Hatter in the jail cell, he overhears someone cursing, "Goddamn Indian kook."

At the reformatory, Levering and Winton do not exhibit racist attitudes, but the otherwise admirable Rhinehart does, offering the comment that Indians "aren't long on gratitude" and telling Hatter, supposedly as a joke, that she looks "almost human." Mango, another girl at the reformatory, believes that Hatter is "crazy in the head, like all Indians," and a matron offers the opinion: "Nothing but trouble, that one. What can you expect?" She suggests there is nothing wrong with Hatter that a beating cannot cure. Later, when Summer is trying to find work for Hatter, Mr. Duncan, who owns a mock Indian trading post, says, "I'm glad to see one of them who wants to work."

All these comments reflect attitudes based on stereotypes of the American Indian. Hatter herself is well aware of these stereotypes, sardonically commenting, "Navajos use buttons for money. And sheep. They're stupid."

There are also signs of more overt racism in the society, in the form of discrimination against Indians: the gallery owner in Santa Fe who does not want an Indian for a receptionist; the white police officers who arrest Hatter for panhandling but ignore the white teenagers who are doing the same thing.

Victim and Victimization

The theme of Hatter as victim is prominent throughout the novel. Summer notices her downtrodden status early on when he remarks, "If ever the Creator had wittingly or unwittingly created a victim, she was it."

Hatter is a classic example of a vicious circle: those who are victims of hatred will hate in return. Hatter's tales of her childhood reveal constant abuse. She was cruelly beaten at the Christian mission school. Then when she was taken in by an Indian family who cared for about a hundred children, she was falsely accused of killing one of them. She was tied up and made to lie next to the girl's bloody corpse. Even Hatter's own people reject her, as when Indian students on the college campus in Albuquerque tell her that she must get out of town because, as a prostitute, she is giving them a bad name.

When Hatter is sent to the reformatory, the pattern of abuse and victimization continues. Summer suspects that she has been raped by a guard, and he personally witnesses her

undergo acts of cruelty and sadism such as being confined to a dog pen and being strapped down on a restraining bed.

Faced with this abuse, Hatter trusts no one. All she can do is hate in return, which can only create more victims and potential victims. She attacks Summer twice, stabs Mango once, and later stands over her, knife in hand, as Mango sleeps. (Only Summer's intervention saves Mango from harm, although Hatter later claims that she would not have hurt the girl.)

Hatter's hatred, born of her victimization, also manifests as self-hatred. Single-mindedly she pursues a course of self-destruction, refusing to eat, refusing to cooperate in any way with the authorities at the reformatory. Summer knows that if something is not done, she will soon be dead. On two occasions also, Hatter begs others (first Mango and then Summer) to kill her. Even at the end, Hatter cannot escape her victimhood, although this time she suffers not at the hand of humans but as the plaything of a cruel fate. It appears that however hard she and Summer try, destiny will not permit her to rise above her allotted role as victim.

Culture Clash

The clash between Indian and white culture is apparent at many points in the novel. There is a clash of Indian beliefs, customs, and attitudes with white civilization. It is clear that white people do not understand the way Indians do things. Hatter relates that when the old woman who cared for her died, the Indians held a four-day "Sing," which is a ceremony or chant. Hatter characterizes the contemptuous reaction of whites: "Thought they could sing away her dying."

Hatter is not well-versed in the Navajo beliefs embodied in such mythological figures as Changing Woman, Monster Slayer, and Child of the Water. She only knows the names that the old woman told her. But she is sufficiently imbued with Indian views and customs to conduct her own "Sing" while in her cell at the reformatory, to see the ghost of the old woman returning, and then to walk with her through the night. Hatter is Indian to the core in the way she responds to the ritual conducted by Rhinehart, the only person in the novel who appears to understand Indian beliefs, which frees her from the spell of a witch. Mystified by the procedure, Summer can find only this explanation for the transformation Hatter has undergone: "A child, lost in the twentieth century, has slipped effortlessly back to the roots of her origin."

For her part, Hatter has as little understanding of Christianity as the whites have of Indian beliefs. In the rooming house where she stays after leaving the reformatory, she removes the picture of Christ from the wall and puts it in a drawer. "Is that one of your gods?" she asks Summer.

The difference between the two cultures is seen again when Hatter leads Summer up to a mountain ledge, where she sits for an hour in a kind of mystical communion with nature. Summer tries to explain what he feels has happened to her: "a release, a

relaxation, a return to absolutes□sun, wind, space." It is as if Hatter has become part of the natural world. The implicit contrast is with the oppressive atmosphere of the city, in which Hatter is uncomfortable. The passage illustrates the difference between the Indian reverence for nature, the sense that human life is intimately connected to the natural world, and the materialist white culture that experiences human life as separate from nature. In the latter view, nature is something to be exploited and dominated by technology, one result of which is that cities spring up in the deserts and large numbers of people crowd together in unhealthy conditions. Sensing this, Hatter wishes that the city of Albuquerque below them could simply go away, taking "all their bricks and smoke and keys and locks with them."

The culture clash is also discernible in Hatter's refusal to conform to the rules of the dominant society. One of the reasons that she remains a victim is that she does not acknowledge the validity of what Summer describes ironically as the rules of the "white civilized world." These are rules such as punctuality, obedience, conformity, "fitting in," working for pay, managing money carefully, pursuing a career. In the end, it is Hatter's failure to conform to what to her is an alien paradigm that literally kills her. Summer insists that she act responsibly and deposit her paycheck before she can take the day off. But to Hatter, the paycheck is "just a piece of paper." Doing what the white world demands, for the princely sum of $41.28, leads directly to her deadly encounter with the tourist bus.

Style

Point of View

The novel is told in the first person ("I") by the character Teague Summer. The use of this technique means that the reader gains insight into the minds of the other characters only through Summer's direct interactions with them and the thoughts and opinions he expresses. No scene can take place in the novel unless Summer participates in it or observes it.

Often in a first-person narrative, the narrator is the principal character and main focus of interest for the reader, in which case he or she is sometimes referred to as a central narrator. But this is not always the case. The narrator's purpose may be to tell the story of another character, not himself, in which case he is sometimes called a peripheral narrator. Which kind of narrator is telling the story is often apparent at the beginning of the novel. In *Hatter Fox*, the first sentence makes it clear that the principal interest is not Summer but Hatter: "I had heard of Hatter Fox, but I had never seen her." In the following few paragraphs the reader learns more about Hatter but nothing of Summer. Although Summer does emerge as an important character in his own right (so that the term peripheral narrator may not be appropriate in this case), the focus of the story is clearly on Hatter Fox.

Setting

The novel is set in several different locations. The main setting is the State Reformatory for Girls, and Harris spends considerable time creating a picture of a very uninviting state-run institution. Summer's very first sight of the reformatory is a grim one: "a barren complex of red-brick buildings surrounded entirely by high barbed-wire fences; at the gate were two guardhouses, and chained outside, four dogs." It would be hard to imagine a more ominous or dispiriting sight. The interior of the administration building is described in similarly depressing terms: "All institutions have the same odor. . . . they all smell the same, a curious blend of floor wax and old coffee, and strong detergents, a necessary odor when dealing with humanity en masse." When Summer accompanies Levering to the basement, he encounters the "all-too-familiar smells of jail cells: old urine and older sickness. The steps were very narrow, lit only by bare bulbs hung from single cords." By the time they reach the subbasement, the air has become clammy and chilly. Thus, by the time Summer first encounters Hatter in the reformatory, the bleak, intimidating atmosphere of the place has been fully established. By way of contrast, there are some scenes set in or around the cities of Santa Fe and Albuquerque, and for the most part (Hatter's discomfort there notwithstanding) these come like a breath of fresh air after the oppressive nature of the institution.

Structure

Although the novel is not divided into chapters, its structure is fairly simple. Events unfold in linear sequence, covering a period of about five months. There are no flashbacks. Nor are there any subplots to complicate the action, and the cast of characters is not large. The effect of this is to keep the focus consistently on Hatter Fox and the slowly developing relationship between her and Summer.

Given the straightforward structure, Harris makes effective use of rhythm and pacing in the plot. Scenes involving much action or tension, such as when Hatter stabs or attacks Summer, or when she is involved in other, less violent confrontations with him, are alternated with quieter scenes of reflection, when Summer gives voice to his thoughts about his own situation and what he proposes to do about Hatter.

Historical Context

When Hatter Fox is trying to convince Summer that she knows where she can go once she leaves the reformatory, she mentions one word: Alcatraz. She is referring to an incident that began in November, 1969. Seventy-eight members of the group Indians of All Tribes, many of whom were college students from San Francisco, took over Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. They demanded that the site of the former federal penitentiary be turned into an Indian cultural center. They offered to purchase the island for twenty-four dollars in beads and cloth. The group said they were following a precedent set by the white man's purchase of Manhattan Island several hundred years earlier.

The occupation lasted until June, 1971. It was a sign of the increasing militancy of Indian activist groups in the late 1960s as they sought to preserve their heritage and rights of self-determination. Encouraged by the gains made by African Americans during the civil rights movement and the militancy of the "black power" movement, Indian activists proclaimed the advent of "red power."

There were more radical incidents in the early 1970s. In November 1972, members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) occupied the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) building in Washington, D.C., demanding reform of relations between Indians and the federal government. They called the building the Native American Embassy. (The BIA is a government agency that comes under the jurisdiction of the department of the Interior. In the novel, Teague Summer is an employee of the BIA.) Then, for ten weeks in 1973, AIM occupied the hamlet of Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, demanding reform of tribal government.

In *Hatter Fox*, Hatter has encountered some of these young Indian activists on college campuses in Albuquerque. Summer is aware of them, too, but has a negative impression of them, commenting on their "futile intensity . . . the suicidal zeal with which they approached their lost cause of salvaging a dead past."

Lost cause or not, *Hatter Fox* implies that many Indians were on the margins of society in New Mexico in the 1970s. They were the poor, the unemployed, the rootless and culturally marginalized, who migrated from Indian reservations to cities such as Santa Fe and Albuquerque in search of work.

This portrait has some basis in fact. Historically, the movement away from the reservations began for the Navajo in World War II, when the war economy created job opportunities in copper mines, on the railroads, in shipyards, and in agriculture. For many Navajos, it was the first time they had experienced life outside of the reservation. Many moved to cities such as Flagstaff, Arizona, and Albuquerque. Some succeeded in adjusting to city life; others became trapped in a cycle of poverty.

The same pattern occurred nationally. During a twenty-year period from approximately 1960 to 1980, more than two hundred thousand Indians left their reservations and

moved to large cities. Many of them were reluctant to assimilate to the values of the dominant culture, and social problems resulted. Research in one large city, Denver, showed that the arrest record for Indians was twenty times the rate for whites and eight times the Hispanic rate. This conflict with the authorities is reflected in *Hatter Fox*: Hatter gets arrested twice, and on the second occasion she is clearly discriminated against, since a group of nearby whites who are committing the same offense of panhandling are not apprehended.

Socio-economic statistics from the period show the difficult conditions endured by Indians nationally. In 1973, the unemployment rate on Indian reservations averaged 37 percent. If underemployment caused by seasonal work was taken into account, the figure rose to 55 percent. In 1970, the median income of Indians was only half that of whites. In the same year, one-third of all Indian families lived below the official poverty level. A *Reader's Digest* article in 1970 (quoted in *Native Americans in the News*) pointed out that life expectancy for Indians was only forty-four years, compared to an average of sixty-six years nationwide; infant mortality was three times the national average; school dropout rates were twice the national average; and teen suicide was five times the national average. The last two statistics are relevant for *Hatter Fox*: Hatter has had little formal schooling, and more than once she expresses a wish to die.

Although the situation of Indians during the period was often bleak, some progress was made in the early 1970s. Under the administration of President Richard Nixon, the federal government was more responsive to Indian aspirations. In some cases Indian land illegally taken by the government was returned to Indians. One such case resulted in the return of Blue Lake in New Mexico, an Indian religious shrine, to the Pueblo Indians.

Critical Overview

As a "popular" rather than a literary novel, *Hatter Fox* did not attract many reviews. The reviews it did receive, however, were generally favorable, although with some sharp dissenting views. A reviewer for *Newsweek* declared it to be a "touching, skillful melodrama," adding that "Fate conveniently glues a 'Love Story' ending onto this romantic fantasy." (The allusion is to the tragic love story that was made into a movie in the 1960s, starring Ali MacGraw.) High praise came from Pamela Marsh in *Christian Science Monitor*, who described *Hatter Fox* as "a steel trap of a book. Advance a few pages and you'll be stuck fast until [Harris] sees fit to let you go." Marsh offered this interpretation of the novel's theme:

> Perhaps . . . Hatter Fox stands for the whole Indian
> nation, puzzling whites by violent reaction to mistreatment,
> puzzled in their turn by violent suppression
> of that violence, and constantly suspicious of
> muddled men of good will who attempt to help.

James Brockway, in *Books and Bookmen*, wondered how much of the material in the novel was authentic and how much the product of the author's imagination: "how much . . . is an accurate picture of what really happens in such 'reformatories?'" He continued, "The novel raises issues, moral, psychological and social, which are really quite frightening." His overall evaluation of the novel was largely positive, although he argued that the first part of the novel, "engrossingly told," was superior to the second part, which "tends to become a report on [Summer's] efforts to save [Hatter], with various incidents inserted, sometimes a little artificially, to maintain the interest, while the dénouement is not free from sentimentality."

A negative review came from the *Listener's* Sara Maitland, who complained of the book's "sentimental idealism, sloppy writing and generally inadequate characterisation." J. K. Yenser, the *Library Journal* reviewer, expressed a similar highly critical view: "However well intentioned, the themes of social injustice and institutional mistreatment are handled in a heavy-handed fashion. Both plot and character fail to convince."

Criticism

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- Critical Essay #2
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Critical Essay #1

Aubrey holds a Ph.D. in English and has published many articles on twentieth-century literature. In this essay, he considers Harris's novel in terms of the cultural climate in which it was written.

Harris's *Hatter Fox*, a popular novel that contains many different perspectives on Native Americans, reflects the cultural climate in which it was written. The early 1970s was a time when old perceptions, stereotypes, and prejudices about Native Americans were starting to give way to a new understanding. This was fueled by several factors. In the late 1960s the rise of the "red power" movement made the general public more aware of Native American grievances and aspirations. New attitudes in the reporting of Native American affairs emerged in newspapers and on television. A number of books, including Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1971), a sympathetic account of Indian history, helped to create for the general public a romantic ideal of the vanishing Native American culture. Finally, literature created by emerging Native American writers, such as N. Scott Momaday in his novel, *House Made of Dawn* (1968), presented the Native American experience from the inside, opening up new ways of understanding a culture that had long been seen only through the distorting lens of white culture. Even the term "Native American" was a part of this new awareness. Up until this time, the usual term, and the one used throughout *Hatter Fox*, was "Indian."

Much of the range of attitudes towards Native Americans, both positive and negative, the old as well as the new, can be found in *Hatter Fox*. The most obvious is the blatant racism with which whites view Indians. The novel is awash with negative stereotypes. An assembly of minor characters, present in the novel to demonstrate the general societal attitude to Indians in New Mexico, make it clear that to whites the Indian is crazy, lazy, untrustworthy, ungrateful, stupid, primitive, and a troublemaker. The comment of a police officer about Hatter, "Her kind spells nothing but trouble," sums up this attitude. And the presentation of Hatter as wild, violent and uncontrollable□at least in the eyes of the white world□is another stereotype, a variant of the way Indians were often identified in the early American imagination as savage, hateful and debased. In this view, Hatter can only be "tamed" by being defeated, having her will broken and being forced to learn the rules of "civilized" society.

The racism depicted in the novel manifests itself in more subtle ways, too, as when Hatter is in a restaurant with Summer. She notices that the waiter is looking at her in a strange way, "Like he didn't like me, but he'd like me for a while as long as I was with you." In other words, the price of her acceptance in polite white society is her association with a white man. As long as that continues, she becomes almost like an honorary white person.

Such negative views and racial stereotyping have their roots deep in American history. They are the result of the persistent tendency to judge Indians in terms of white standards, rather than to try to understand them on their own terms. Because Indians differed from whites, they were seen as not measuring up to white standards. Little

attempt was made to understand Indian values and the Indian worldview. This attitude is known as ethnocentrism.

One consequence of ethnocentrism is the belief that minorities should assimilate, or integrate, with the dominant community. Historically in the United States this idea has been known as the "melting pot." It has been applied generally to immigrants, who are encouraged to submerge their ethnicity and become part of mainstream America.

Assimilation as applied to Native Americans has had a long history. Assimilationists have been active since about 1880, and rapid assimilation of Native Americans was the goal of United States government policy in the 1920s. The idea was that Native Americans could only survive by becoming more like whites. They had to become "civilized." However, historians James S. Olson and Raymond Wilson argue that assimilationist policies had a "negative effect on Native American life. . . . In the name of assimilation, European Americans demanded conformity, but even then Native Americans knew that European American society would never accept them."

In the novel, Summer encounters assimilation when he meets a man named Chief Sitting Bull who owns a convenience store that sells Indian souvenirs just outside Albuquerque. Although he has no connection with the original Sitting Bull, the man is of Indian blood and often dons a feathered headdress to be photographed with gullible tourists. In addition to exploiting the Indian heritage (for which he is disliked by his own people), Chief Sitting Bull, who drives a Cadillac, embraces superficial American materialist values. To Summer, the man's face is "alive with profit" and shows no trace of his Indian heritage. He shuns native crafts and sells plastic tomahawks instead, as well as beads made in Japan. When a tourist asks him what tribe he belongs to, he replies, "No tribe. Just the American tribe." Then he points behind him to a large American flag and a faded photograph of President Richard Nixon.

Ironically, only a few minutes before he meets this unsavory product of assimilation, Summer has been musing on the plight of the Indian, observing smugly that it is not his fault, and that Indians should adjust: "Others had learned to adjust. 'Adapt or perish'□that applied to all of us." But his encounter with Chief Sitting Bull suddenly makes him see the wild and rebellious Hatter in a more favorable light. She has not sold out her heritage; she is the genuine article.

The truth, however, is that even Hatter, for all her pride and rebelliousness, has also felt the siren call of assimilation. Much later in the novel she confesses to Summer that she used to wear "real white powder," as a result of which she "didn't look Indian at all." She adds that when she acts like an Indian, she gets into trouble, but "When I act like a white person, I'm okay." It is clear that the pressure to assimilate is great.

Hatter puts her finger on the problem of what it means to be caught between two worlds when she inquires of Summer at the reformatory, "When it's all over, will I be white or Indian?" Her confusion over her self-identity is understandable, but she receives little support from Summer. He replies by lapsing back into the complacent views he expressed earlier, that Indians should just adapt: "Acculturation took place every day.

Completely painless. Survival for anyone was a matter of adjustment, of flexibility. . . . White or Indian? What the hell difference did it make?" Considering that Summer has spent an entire month doing his best to get Hatter to assimilate and seeing firsthand the problems that raises, his attitude here seems astonishingly ignorant. He seems to have forgotten all about his earlier disturbing encounter with Chief Sitting Bull.

Summer is a well-meaning man, and the fact that he has chosen to work for the Bureau of Indian Affairs suggests that he harbors no prejudice against Indians. But like many white people, he has to struggle with a subtle racism of his own, although he is sufficiently perceptive to be at least half-aware of it. This can be seen from a telling observation he makes about Hatter's appearance and his own reaction to it. As he watches her sleeping in the infirmary, he thinks, "She doesn't look Indian □as though it were wrong for an Indian to look Indian. The delicate oriental features pleased me more than ever, the non-Indian look." In other words, Summer is happiest when Hatter looks least like an Indian.

Another problematic aspect of Summer's reaction to Hatter is that when he first observes her he seems to fall victim to another stereotype, that of the "exotic" Indian who possesses mystical, other-worldly powers beyond those of the white man. This is a perception that developed largely in the 1960s. The movement known as the counterculture saw in Indian beliefs about the connection between man and nature a way of countering the destructive materialism of Western culture.

At the same time, as Michael Dorris put it in his article "The Grass Still Grows, the Rivers Still Flow: Contemporary Native Americans," "the quasi-mystical writings of Carlos Castaneda convinced sundry hippies, romantics, and Californiansof- all-regions that Indians were somehow genetically endowed with extrasensory powers." (Castaneda wrote a series of books alledgedly based on the teachings of an ancient Mexican Indian shaman named don Juan.)

Something of this romanticizing of the Indian finds its way into Summer's perceptions of Hatter. When he first sees her, she seems to have a unique, inexplicable power that enables her to control the other young people in the cell with her. Her flowing movements and ritualistic gestures mark her out as special. On Summer's next visit, he hears her chanting in her cell and is captivated not only by the beauty of the melody but also by its power: "Only an American Indian can take a minor key and make it sound victorious." Hatter also, in Summer's observation, possesses unusual mental powers of concentration that enable her to resist the harsh conditions of her incarceration. She can stare at a spot on the ceiling and completely shut out everything else around her. She can lie completely still for long periods. Even when she is half-starved, lying in the punishment cell, he sees about her a "strange, almost primal mystical beauty. . . she dominated that grim cell, just as she had dominated the cell back in Santa Fe, occupied it and conquered the ugliness somehow."

Just as Summer gives expression to the countercultural stereotype of the Indian whose beliefs, knowledge and unusual abilities make her somehow "special," he also voices some of the attitudes that characterized the militant aspect of Indian activism in the

1960s and 1970s. During this period the goal of assimilation was replaced by the goal of self-determination for Native Americans. Olson and Wilson observe that "Assimilation, by definition a celebration of non-Native American values, became a bad word in the 1970s, a reminder of three centuries of cultural imperialism."

Summer's complacent attitudes expressed elsewhere notwithstanding, this is the sentiment that lies behind his comments about "Christian genocide," "the plague of Christianity," and "old injustices [to the Indian] . . . carefully omitted from the history books." Here he sounds rather like a left-wing radical of the 1970s (although this is hardly consistent with his character elsewhere in the novel).

Finally, it is Summer who discovers through Hatter the lure of the Native American worldview as the antidote to the excesses of Western materialism □another belief of the counterculture of the sixties. This occurs when Hatter takes him up the mountains outside of Albuquerque. He notices how she immediately seems to enter into deep communion with nature, with rocks and wind and sky. It is as if she has become a part of eternity, part of the things that never change, in contrast to the ugliness of the smoky city below, the home only of things that have a beginning and an end. As Hertha D. Wong puts it in "Nature in Native American Literatures":

> European Americans have seen Nature as a potent force to be subdued and as a valuable resource to be used, whereas Native Americans have viewed nature as a powerful force to be respected and as a nurturing Mother to be honored.

Hatter Fox, then, gives voice to a whole range of attitudes toward Native Americans and their culture that were part of the cultural atmosphere of the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It should be pointed out, however, that since Harris, the author, is not herself Native American, the novel is not classified as Native American literature. It is essentially a view of Native Americans from the outside. This marks the book as different from another cultural phenomenon of the period, the increased interest in and publication of Native American writers such as Momaday and later writers such as Louise Erdrich and Leslie Marmon Silko, who wrote from within their own traditions.

Source: Bryan Aubrey, Critical Essay on *Hatter Fox*, in *Novels for Students*, The Gale Group, 2002.

Critical Essay #2

In the following review-essay, Seale questions whether Hatter Fox *is acceptable reading material for the classroom, asserting that the novel's message is one of hopelessness for Native Americans.*

Native survivors of public education, of the generation now into the middle years, learned to keep a low profile in the classroom. Most years, there were the Conquistadors and Westward Expansion; every year, we got the Pilgrim Fathers. If you were lucky and quiet, you might get through all of it without being asked to be Indian-show-andtell for Thanksgiving. (There was, at least, no assigned reading on Indians.) Well, we are all long grown, with children, young relatives and friends coming up behind us, and every year they still get Conquistadors, Westward Expansion, Pilgrim Fathers and Thanksgiving. But now history units frequently do include an "Indians" reading assignment.

These reading assignments are given with good intentions. Sometimes, the teacher is sensitive and concerned, with some knowledge of what she/he is talking about. More usually, teachers themselves know very little about the subject, and seem to expect the whole class to come back with a book on Pocahantas or Squanto and how they helped the Pilgrims. Sometimes the assignment takes the form of pick-a-tribe-and-here-is-what-Iwant- you-to-find-about-it. This is a slight improvement, but does not take into consideration the fact that there are some Nations on which very little information is available. (And I will not soon forget the day an entire fifth grade class came into the library for material on the "Chipp*oo* a" Indians.) On the upper elementary and secondary levels, fiction titles are often assigned.

All of this brings me to one of the more unusual manifestations of the assigned-reading-on- Indians phenomenon□a Teacher's Guide on *Hatter Fox*, a novel by Marilyn Harris, which has been prepared and distributed by Ballantine Books, publishers of the paperback edition of that title. The Teacher's Guide is included in Ballantine's 1984 catalog for "Junior-Senior High Classrooms and Libraries." Such publisher-supplied lesson plans are a marketing device to increase sales by tapping the vast school market, in this case, high schools. It is a marketing strategy that□in this case at least□is highly questionable.

Hatter Fox is a novel about a young Navajo girl of that name, told from the point of view of an Anglo Bureau of Indian Affairs doctor, Teague Summer. Hatter had been badly mistreated by her own people and by whites; at seventeen, she has become "Hatter, the renegade, the prostitute, the drug addict, the thief," called by "[s]omeone who should have known better . . . 'that worst of all possible bitches, an intelligent Navajo.'" Summer first encounters Hatter when he is called to a jail cell in Santa Fe where a group of young people are being held on drug charges; one of them, a young Indian, has slashed his wrists. When Summer enters the cell, Hatter stabs him with a knife.

The next time he sees her, Hatter is in a cage at the State Reformatory for Girls; she has proved so intractable that she has been confined to the "doghouse," a cage too small for standing up in, in the yard, in the snow. In a move that must seem at least unlikely to anyone acquainted with the penal system, Summer is given special dispensation to come and "live in" and try to reach Hatter. When, after some indecision, he arrives to take up his new post, he finds that she has been relegated to a subsub dungeon, where she is strapped to a thing euphemistically called a "bed" and is being force-fed and sexually abused by her two keepers. She will neither speak nor indicate in any other way that she is a rational, human creature.

After many encounters, some of them violent, Summer manages to break down Hatter's resistance; he then has her moved to the infirmary, where a "kindly" nurse is of great help to him with his "problem." Here, also, Hatter begins to talk of her past, and a horrifying one it is; abandonment by her people and sadistic treatment by a boarding school headmaster are among the least of it. An attempt to integrate her into the rest of the prison population fails when the other girls attack her and beat her unconscious.

After several months, Hatter is released into Summer's custody. The idea of turning her into a solid citizen has by now become an obsession for Summer, and he insists that she take a job at a "mock Indian trading post," wearing an Indian dress and headband and serving as part of the decor. After she runs from this, a second, more congenial job, with a Navajo grocery store owner, leads to her first paycheck, a milestone of *great* importance to Summer. Promised a day off, Hatter, in her excitement, forgets the check. Summer rages at her; she goes back to the store for the check; on the way back, crossing the street without looking, Hatter is struck by a bus and killed instantly. End of tale.

Critical Essay #3

Marilyn Harris may have intended to write an exposé of white cruelty to Native people, but the book's message is that, for Indians, there is no hope—they do not have a place in white America. Over and over again, the point is made that the fate of Hatter Fox is a metaphor for the fate of her people, and "Hatter Fox was an unworkable genetic formula."

For Indians, Harris sees no options. If they will not—or cannot—assimilate, they are doomed. On the other hand, assimilation can only corrupt the noble savages:

> The Indian with the bogus name who owns the trading post is a pudgy little man with an enormous beer belly and liver spots on his hands and sellout on his face. . . he is not liked or trusted by his own people but he drives a Cadillac, so who cares? . . . I . . . looked into his face . . . for even a single vestige of his heritage, and found nothing, not even the dead look of a survivor.

Those individuals misguided enough to attempt to combine both Indian and white worlds in their lives are portrayed as those "Indian bastards on campus," with the "futile intensity of the young Indian militants," who approach "their lost cause of salvaging a dead past" with "suicidal zeal."

There is, in fact, not one positive non-white character in this book, but since none of the characters are very savory, perhaps I shouldn't complain. The Native and Hispanic people are never spoken of simply as human beings. They are always stereotypes—a "sullen-faced Mexican guard," a "fat, bored-looking Mexican woman with a mouth full of gold teeth," a "strong, rather blank-looking Mexican face." A young woman is "not pretty in the conventional sense, but [has] the strong, almost masculine, sultry beauty of certain Mexican women." There is even a gratuitous reference to "good savage aborigines" from an Australian-born character.

To give her the benefit of the doubt—which, I own, I find very difficult to do, I do not believe that Marilyn Harris intended to write a racist book. Nevertheless, at a time when "life as we know it" seems to be threatened all over the world by the demands of people of color, I would not underestimate the appeal of this sort of writing.

There is, as well, a nearly prurient quality to the descriptions of the abuse inflicted upon Hatter that is very unpleasant. Whether this was unintentional or an attempt to make a statement about Summer's motivation, is impossible to say. Certainly, Summer frequently expresses his satisfaction at the degradation to which Hatter is subjected: "The sight of her totally restrained body now had a curiously pleasing effect on me"; ". . . [T]he moment was a good one, holding her, sharing her defeat. . ."; "I wanted to punish

her, to bring her into line"; and, "I had to be certain she knew that now I literally controlled her destiny."

The sensationalism of the writing, if nothing else, would seem to make *Hatter Fox* unsuitable reading for secondary English classes. Still, there is the undeniable attraction, for some teachers, of having a prepared lesson plan, so that the work of teaching the novel is already done. Added to this is the fact that when *Hatter Fox* was first published in 1973, the reviews were generally good. *The Christian Science Monitor* thought it "a steel trap of a book" and found it moving. *Newsweek* called it a "touching, skillful . . . romantic fantasy," and referred to Hatter as "this emotional Helen Keller." The first paperback edition, from Bantam, came out in 1974; it was followed, in 1983, by the Ballantine edition. *Paperback Review* welcomed the newest edition; their reviewer thought that the book would help "readers understand some of the problems of being an American Indian in contemporary society," and stated that it deserved "serious attention by high school students and teachers who may have missed it during its first appearance." In addition, *Hatter Fox* was a made-for-TV-movie about two years ago, which may have been a factor in Ballantine's decision to push the book to high school teachers since students are more likely to read something they have already seen on television.

There is another aspect of the book that some may find appealing□or at least comfortable□and that is the character of Hatter Fox herself. She reflects an image that is familiar to white Americans from a thousand B movies and bad books. Hatter is not too Indian-looking and therefore beautiful: "She had long straight black hair and the delicate lips, nose, face, and large slanted Oriental eyes of the more unusual type of Navajo." She is the classic, inexplicable, savage-but-noble pagan princess. The reader can feel sorry for her without feeling threatened, because Hatter is clearly at the mercy of the establishment. The Indians are going to lose again.

Bad books, even very racist books, *can be* excellent teaching tools if handled sensitively. Unfortunately Ballantine's Teacher's Guide provides little to assist any teacher hoping to use *Hatter Fox* in a positive way. It was written by a "writer, poet and teacher of writing and literature," but not, I think, a person very familiar with Native American history, culture and current circumstances.

The major fault of the Guide is that it tends to reinforce, rather than counter, the distorted images of the book, because it dredges up so many negative associations that are not sufficiently explored in the follow-up exercises. The Introduction, for instance, describes Hatter as a "character who embodies the spirit of her race and whose personal history encapsulates the history of her people. . . [T]he ultimate truth . . . is that there is, in fact, 'no room in the world' for what Hatter is." The idea is reinforced in a composition suggestion: "Write an essay proving that Hatter Fox's death is an inevitable consequence of who and what she is. Use evidence from the novel to show that there is 'no place in the world for Hatter Fox.'"

The lesson plan does not note that Hatter's death is in fact an "inevitable consequence" of Summer's involvement in her life. As with most do-gooders, his behavior toward her is

at least as much motivated by his own needs as by a concern for her well-being. A refugee from "Lowell, Massachusetts" and his own mediocrity, Summer states that if he can manage to "save" Hatter, it will give him some justification for his own existence. (It does seem appropriate that Summer should be an employee of the B.I.A., although in the interests of accuracy, it should be pointed out that the B.I.A. has not been responsible for Indian health care since 1955.)

The lesson plan□like the book□presents the demise of the Native American as a *fait accompli*:

> There exists a great deal of historical material that
> details precisely how this destruction was accomplished.
> I would suggest drawing upon this material
> . . . to reinforce the idea of Hatter Fox as a character
> who embodies much of the history of her race. . .. . . Many of the books have
> photographs. . . The
> changes in the faces and bodies of a people recorded
> over time dramatize powerfully and sadly all that has
> been lost within them.

There is also a great deal of material, historical and otherwise and including photographs, that demonstrates the strength, endurance and survival of a People, but the Teacher's Guide does not suggest obtaining it. Such materials are not all that difficult to find; they are in fact quite likely to be found in most good public library collections (see the box on suggested reading).

The Guide's first suggestion for "examining the stereotypes of the American Indian" is to be done before the book is read. The teacher is to ask students to "write down the words and images that come to mind when they hear the names 'Indian' and 'Navajo.' . . . You want to bring out all the negative associations you can." The Guide goes on to say:

> Hatter Fox exhibits many of the negative characteristics
> we have come to associate with Indians. . . At
> times . . . she is violent, cunning, uncannily strong,
> dangerous, full of hate for all white people, wild in
> appearance and a believer of witchcraft. . . Harris has
> given the reader plenty of material in support of the
> stereotyped image of the American Indian.

Unfortunately, there is nothing here to counteract the book's negative images. The Guide *does* suggest that "Conversely, you *might* [emphasis added] also explore . . . the positive aspects of Hatter's character and of the culture she comes from," but no attempt is made to list any of *these*. The final exercise in this section□a repeat of the listmaking activity□offers no clue as to what a teacher is to do if the second list has as many "negative associations" as the first.

Critical Essay #4

What might initially seem suggestions for countering the stereotypes are likely to be useless. The Guide asks, for instance, "What are the positive aspects of Navajo culture that the author suggests have been lost to us?" How are students to answer this? "Navajo culture" can hardly be said to have been dealt with positively—let alone accurately —in the book. (The book's references to the Indian world of "empty space" and Hatter's silence have more to do with the stereotypic Indian-as-a-child-of-nature image than with anything else.)

Consider the messages the book gives about Hatter's upbringing, which is one of the few things that could conceivably be considered about "Navajo culture." As a little girl, she lived with "the old woman," who was not her grandmother ("I didn't have any parents. . . The old woman used to tell me that Changing Woman had given me to her."). Before she dies, the old woman tells Hatter to wait at the hogan and someone will come for her, but no one does. Reports Hatter, "One day a couple of men rode by on horses, and I got ready to go, and they stopped and looked at me, but they rode off." Why is this child ostracized, let go, as though she were less than nothing? There would have to be a reason, a strong reason. One is never given.

Eventually Hatter leaves the hogan and is finally taken in by a man and woman (apparently Indian) who have "about a hundred kids there already." One day, one of the older boys pushes a little girl off a cliff, because she wouldn't give him his ball. The boy accuses Hatter and everyone believes him—"[T]hey said I did it. . . The woman said I was a witch, said people died when I came around." (On what grounds this statement is made is unclear, since the only previous death was of an old person come to the end of her time, for which Hatter could hardly be blamed.) Says Hatter:

> They had a sing then, and they all took me out to that canyon at the bottom of the cliff where the kid's body was and tied me up and made me lie down next to her. Her head was broken in, and they made me lie down in the blood, and they said her ghost would come back and kill me. . . And they left me there.

This incident seems intended to horrify, to create an impression of superstitious savagery consonant with the "unworkable genetic formula" business, but what basis is there for it in reality? A sing is not held for the purposes of murder and revenge, but for healing, for Hózhó. If you thought you had been witched, a sing might be held to determine who was doing the witching. If you were sure you knew who it was, you could have an Enemy Way done over you, but if the witch died, it would be as the result of their own evil turned back against them, and not from any such performance as the above. Another thing: being a Navajo witch is a *conscious* choice of disharmony, and the likelihood of a child being considered a witch is therefore pretty small.

And yet another point regarding this incident: I cannot say that Indians are never mean to their children. We are as human in our weaknesses as in our strengths. And, as tribal structure has crumbled under the various pressures to which a conquered people is subject, the changes in customary behaviors have been great. By and large, however, Native Americans remain people who treasure their children. For one thing, we've had to fight too hard to keep them. Navajo society is not so demoralized, nor so lacking in a sense of justice, that an accusation like the one made against Hatter would be accepted without any further investigation. That a child would be treated in this fashion, at all, is beyond anything I have ever experienced, read about or heard tell of; it is the absolute antithesis of adultto- child behavior among *all* Native peoples.

It does seem evident that what the Teacher's Guide means by "culture" is material such as this and the "witchcraft" episode, which occurs about halfway through the book. After Hatter has been transferred to the infirmary, she begins to communicate on a rudimentary level, but she still displays great fear of Summer. The nurse discovers that Hatter thinks he is a witch. "You'd better believe it," she tells Summer. "It's real enough to her. . . She's a full blood." (Are these the only people primitive enough to believe in things like the power of evil which is one of the things Navajo witchcraft is about, whether you consider it as reality or as metaphor.) In a scene remarkable for the fertility of the author's imagination if nothing else, the nurse, aided by Summer, sets out to get rid of "the witch" (not Summer, of course). After making an object to stand for the witch, they proceed to burn it. Says Summer:

I did as I was told, although it seemed to me that the
objects over my head fought the descent to the basin.
Glad to be rid of the thing, I struck a match and threw
it down. . . At the first sight of flame, Hatter gave a
scream the size and dimension of which I had never
heard before. . . For as long as the objects burned,
Hatter seemed to be in the worst sort of human agony
imaginable. . . I turned away at last and . . . smelled,
I swear it, burning flesh.

The Teacher's Guide deals with the episode in this fashion:

Describe a ritual activity you have participated in,
something in which you observe a set form of actions,
with no deviations. What purpose does this ritual
serve? . . . Research the purpose and form of a
Navajo ritual and discuss it with the class.

The equation of witchcraft with Navajo ritual reduces Native religious practices and beliefs to the level of primitive superstitions. Navajo witchcraft is not a matter to be taken lightly, but it is *not* identical with Navajo religion, either. A discussion of the difference between superstition and religion and of the differences between the actuality of Native religious beliefs and how they have been perceived by whites would

have been a valuable contribution, but no such material is provided unless one accepts the Bibliography inclusion of Hyemeyohsts Storm's *Seven Arrows* (also published by Ballantine). Unfortunately, this title, by a person who claims to be a Cheyenne Shield Maker, has been cited by a committee of the Northern Cheyenne for its "irreligious and irreverent inaccuracies." And in any case, it has nothing at all to do with Navajo religion.

The Guide's entire Bibliography is in fact problematic. It lists 11 titles, not one of which is devoted to the Navajo nation, even though at least as much good, bad and indifferent has been written about the Navajo as about any other Native people. Why was none of this included? (Five of the 11 books listed are "Ballantine Books I'm sure you'll want to include.") Even if a teacher was actually to do the suggested background reading, these books could give only an overview of Native history, with little basis for evaluating the specifically Navajo *Hatter Fox*.

It is not just that *Hatter Fox* is a bad book, although I think it is. Both *Hatter Fox* and the Teacher's Guide reduce the whole complex reality of Native peoples, past and present, to a level not far above *Love Story*. From neither the novel nor the lesson plan is it possible to learn anything of value about Native American history and culture nor very much that is even true. It is true that the Native peoples of America have suffered in the past, and do still, at the hands of the dominant society, but it is by no means the whole story. The Indian population as a whole is on the increase, despite the deliberate government policies to insure otherwise, the worst health care in the country, and now, close to 80 percent unemployment on the reservations. Our young people, often against impossible odds, do manage to get education. Just like other normal human beings, Indians are lawyers, plumbers, airline pilots, doctors, hockey players, teachers, musicians, librarians, actors and writers of every sort. Many of today's most gifted artists and craftspeople, both young and old, are Indian. Native people frequently live in two worlds, not always easily, but still, they do. The obstacles to achievement and a decent life are large, and a discussion of them outside the scope of this article, but, always, the worst obstacle, the one that makes it possible for all the others to exist, is the racism of white society.

Critical Essay #5

Hatred can take more subtle form than bumper stickers saying, "Save a Salmon, Shoot an Indian." Whether the stereotyped thinking and implicit racism of *Hatter Fox* and the Teacher's Guide are the result of invincible ignorance, or of something even less attractive, does not matter very much; the end is the same. The myths stay intact, the lies and distortions of American history are perpetuated. Since Indians are already doomed, it will not matter very much if they lose their remaining lands and thus what life ways they have managed to preserve to the land consortia, agribusinesses, energy companies, "sports" fishermen and lumber interests that are eyeing them so hungrily.

The use of racist materials in classrooms is hardly so new as to be shocking. However, if education is to serve the needs of all our peoples, sooner or later we are going to have to start telling kids the truth. Or do we want to raise another generation to hate and distrust or hold in contempt all who differ from themselves? Isn't it enough yet?

Source: Doris Seale, "Indians without Hope, Indians without Options The Problematic Theme of *Hatter Fox*," in *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 1984, pp. 7, 10, 22.

Adaptations

Hatter Fox was made into a CBS-TV movie-ofthe- week entitled *The Girl Called Hatter Fox* and was broadcast in October, 1978. It was directed by George Schaefer and starred Ronny Cox as Dr. Teague Summer and Joannelle Nadine Romero as Hatter Fox.

Topics for Further Study

Form an argument for why Native Americans should either assimilate into the general population or retain their own distinct cultural identity.

Is Hatter's death an appropriate end to the story or is it too tragic? What message, if any, does Hatter's death convey? Write a possible alternate ending to the story.

Research the history of some Indian tribes in the American Southwest, including the Pueblos, the Hopi, and the Navajo. What problems do Native Americans face when they leave their reservations to live and work in cities?

Research the history of the "red power" movement in the late 1960s and 1970s. What did Native Americans gain from this movement?

Do some research to find out what current conditions are like on Native American reservations. How has life changed on the reservations in the past fifty years? What are some of the main issues facing Native Americans living on reservations today?

Pick two Native American tribes and research the principal tenets of their worldviews as they relate to religion and the natural world. How do these tribes' belief systems differ from both Christianity and modern secular views? How do the tribal tenets, religious systems, or worldviews differ from each other?

Compare and Contrast

1960-1970s: Many sports teams, such as the Atlanta Braves and the Washington Redskins, have names that refer to Indians, and many sports teams have Indian mascots. Few people question whether this is appropriate.

Today: Many sports teams throughout the nation have dropped names and nicknames that refer to Native Americans. The decade-long movement to abolish "Chief Illiniwek," the Indian mascot of the University of Illinois, continues to gather momentum.

1968: The Navajo Community College is founded; it is the first tribally-controlled college in the United States. During the 1970s, eighteen Indian-controlled colleges are founded as part of the movement toward Indian self-determination.

Today: With campuses at Tsaile, Arizona, and Shiprock, New Mexico, Diné College (formerly Navajo Community College) has an enrollment of more than 4,500 students. There are now thirty-two Indian colleges; a 2001 report by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium and the Institute for Higher Education Policy describes tribal colleges as a critical factor in improving the lives of impoverished Indians.

1973: Members of the American Indian Movement seize control of the village of Wounded Knee, on the Pine Ridge Sioux reservation in South Dakota. The takeover lasts for seventytwo days; it is a highly visible sign of Indian militancy.

1999: President Bill Clinton visits Pine Ridge reservation, becoming the first United States president for more than sixty years to visit an Indian reservation. The visit is intended to bring attention to the poverty suffered by Native Americans. At the same time, the Clinton Administration announces a $1.5 billion package to help those living on reservations.

What Do I Read Next?

This Other Eden (1977) is the first of Harris's seven-novel family saga. It is set in eighteenthcentury England against a background of the French Revolution and follows the fortunes of the noble Eden family.

N. Scott Momaday's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *House Made of Dawn* (1968) tells the story of Abel, a Native American who grew up on a reservation in New Mexico, fought in World War II, and then returned to the United States and moved to Los Angeles. In Los Angeles, Abel slips away from the Native American culture of his upbringing as he tries to deal with the harshness of modern industrial America.

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West (1970), by Dee Alexander Brown, made a huge impact on the American public when it was first published. For the first time it told the story of the Indian wars of 1860-1890 from the Native American point of view□a chronicle of ruthless white settlers, stolen land, and a people destroyed.

Unsung Heroes of World War II: The Story of the Navajo Code Talkers (1998), by Deanne Durrett, tells the fascinating story of how the complex Navajo language was used to create the Navajo Code in World War II. The code baffled the Japanese and provided secure communication for American forces in the Pacific.

Further Study

Griffin-Pierce, Trudy, *Native Peoples of the Southwest*, University of New Mexico Press, 2000.

This book approaches the southwestern Indian cultures
in terms of their cultural vitality and evolution.
There are detailed sections on each culture's language,
territory, history, material culture, social organization,
political organization, religion, and
worldview.

Locke, Raymond Friday, *Book of the Navajo*, 5th ed., Holloway House, 1992.

This is a comprehensive and readable account of
Navajo history and culture.

Young, Robert W., *A Political History of the Navajo Tribe*,

Navajo Community College Press, 1978, pp. 15-52.
The first chapter contains a concise summary of
Navajo history and culture.

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Maitland, Sara, Review, in *Listener*, February 13, 1975.

Marsh, Pamela, Review, in *Christian Science Monitor*, August 22, 1973, p. 22.

Olson, James S., and Raymond Wilson, *Native Americans in the Twentieth Century*, Brigham Young University Press, 1984, pp. 157-77.

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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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