

Lords and New Creatures Study Guide

Lords and New Creatures by Jim Morrison

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Contents

Lords and New Creatures Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Part I, The Lords, Pages 1-44.....	4
Part I, The Lords, Pages 45-90.....	9
Part II, The New Creatures, Pages 91-123.....	13
Part II, The New Creatures, Pages 124-141.....	17
Characters.....	20
Objects/Places.....	23
Themes.....	26
Style.....	28
Quotes.....	31
Topics for Discussion.....	32

Plot Summary

"The Lords and New Creatures" by poet, musician and lyricist Jim Morrison is an in depth look into Morrison's experiences as an observer of human kind and social conditions.

James Douglas Morrison was a student of film before he became involved in music. The poet was formed early in Morrison and the first meeting with future band mate Ray Manzarek kindled an instant bond over lyrics. Morrison went on to throw himself fully into the role of musician, lyricist, poet and unabashed sex symbol. Morrison's deep connection with spirituality colored much of his work, as did the experiences with drugs and alcohol. Morrison was a voice of a generation, one that lingers even more than it might have except for the mysterious circumstances surrounding his alleged death in 1971.

Morrison is known for exploring society's "underbelly," tapping into people and places that might go unnoticed by the average observer. Although Morrison grew up in a middle class home, the poet seems to have some fascination with the seedier side of life. It is not a perverse fascination nor is it tinged with judgment. It is simply an exploration of the sights and sounds of the places Morrison has traveled. Most of the focus remains on Los Angeles and surrounding areas.

In this work, Morrison continues to celebrate some of his main themes, including sex, death, deification, and the great unwashed. There are several poems that contain the cerebral and behavioral differences between men and women, both ancient and modern. Times have changed greatly in the separation of the sexes. The line is not as clear as it once was; rather, women tend to have gained a great deal in the way of respectability and power as well as the opportunity to engage in many activities which were once forbidden. One example of this is the poem in which Morrison discusses how puppet and shadow plays were the impetus and precursor to film and animation. The plays were not tailored toward women, as many believe but toward the men. In the early days of the theater, women were not permitted to attend. After it became acceptable for women to attend the shadow plays there were still restrictions regarding the access to the performance. Women were permitted to see the show on one side of the screen while the men were permitted to view the play from either side of the screen.

There is also a sense of sadness in Morrison about the direction in which society is headed, sacrificing the primal and free flowing existence for the controlled and often stilted lifestyles of the day. The author also spends a great deal of time investigating and analyzing the various stages of cinema and photography, another of the poet's passions.

The poet believes heavily in spirit and divinity, and refers to the topics often. Morrison believed that he was possessed by a great Indian spirit and that each person has within oneself the ability to tap into divinity and absolute knowledge, casting off the mortal trappings and necessities.



Part I, The Lords, Pages 1-44

Part I, The Lords, Pages 1-44 Summary

"The Lords, Notes on Vision" begins with Morrison telling us that we must "Look where we worship."

Morrison claims that "We all live in the city." Although the city is formed in a physical shape, it also has psychic connotations. Each person in the city has a sense of power, realized or not, that merges and competes against the others. Most people are caught up in their lives and cannot see past the mundane and into the spiritual world. The spiritual world is of utmost importance to Morrison and it fascinates and saddens the poet that people cannot see beyond their own fingertips.

Because the city is made of such a wide array of people, personalities and goals, it is easy to see that there are many who see it as no more than a game. According to Morrison, the whole concept of the city is built on playing a game.

The entire entity is a game, and at its center is sex. Despite the person's background, goals or preferences, sex is always at the center, with people getting it in any way they can from the traditional to the purchase of prostitutes.

It is the heart of the city that contains the most obvious enjoyment of vice. This is especially true in the very center of the city where people can live and breathe virtually unnoticed by those nestled in their suburban homes. The people in the bars and on the street are the ones who are living the rawest part of life. While those people may not be "acceptable" to a portion of society, it is clear that they are not afraid to live life on life's terms.

As one drives toward the outskirts of the city, there are more sophisticated vices married with boredom. There's also child prostitution. Yet Morrison states that the real life, the real crowd exists in the center of the city during the night. Among these people are diseased specimens who gather in boarding houses, pawn shops, brothels, bars, burlesques, and all night cinemas. The real people are the ones dying in the streets.

Morrison refers to "The Game" as the end of life where climax is the culmination of sex.

There is a poem in which an injured leader sits next to a swimming pool, coated with the smell of chlorine. The man is crippled yet lithe and still maintains the physique of a middleweight. There seems to be no direct sadness or remorse as to the condition of the leader yet it is clear that the man is not as vital or powerful as he might have been at one time. The reader is led to believe that the man has often been bombarded with unwanted attention from the media and is relieved when he has the opportunity to be treated fairly.



Beside the man sits a confidant and journalist. The journalist is fond of men who are larger-than-life. The rest of the press however is more interested in creating a story for the curious American. Morrison refers to them as cameras inside the coffin interviewing worms.

Morrison talks about a large murder, which is required to turn over every stone and reveal the life of the discontented madman. People can often get away with many different things and still be above suspicion. The madman will only be exposed when there is enough reason to uncover his crimes.

The camera appeals to Morrison as an omniscient God, satisfying a human longing to be able to see the world from a similar height. Morrison refers to pedestrians as "rare aquatic insects."

There is great power in yoga. One can tap into many powers and areas that may not be within reach otherwise. One can be any place and time or summon the dead. Yoga allows the senses to be privy to otherwise inaccessible images, as well as the deepest recesses of the mind.

The author compares a sniper's rifle to a camera as both are considered to be an extension of the eye. The sniper however, has injurious vision.

There are two poems dedicated to Lee Harvey Oswald. In the first, the assassin flees from the scene until he finds a dark haven out of the center of the madding crowd. In the second problem, Morrison compares the actions of Oswald to the "modern circles of hell." There is a brief abstract of the events from the shooting to the escape into the theater.

There are three poems that refer to the eyes, whether they are being blinded, burned or dripping and stinging. Each deals with the natural elements from water to air.

The people who embrace chance are the actor, the child, and the gambler. The concept of chance does not belong in the world of these people. Morrison claims that chance is the way to survive the modern city and possession. Chance is also the way to survive in cinema.

The central fact in modern society is that most things have been changed into separate entities, the actor and the spectator. Society is obsessed with its heroes. Morrison wonders what would happen if televisions, radios, cinemas, paintings and books were destroyed. The world would be a foreign place far from the days when a mad body danced on a hillside.

Prisoners have a lot of adjusting to do once they are inside. None of them ever regains a sense of "sexual balance." In the case of the prisoners in the poem, there was a theater created to stave off boredom with a young sailor acting out female roles. The man became the "town darling." By that time the prisoners had formed their own town, complete with police, a mayor, and aldermen.



The prison theme continues with a reference to the policies of the Russian Czar who would grant a prisoner a week out of jail based on conduct. The prisoners were the ones to choose the candidate for release.

Morrison pays homage to travel by train, claiming that the passengers in the cars experience sadness upon departing replaced with a constant state of transformation as they wander from car to car while the cities are but a blur in the windows.

A man wakes up suddenly to the sound of a jet flying overhead. Meanwhile there are children on the beach who are gleeful, trying to jump into the jet's shadow.

There are two poems on the topic of windows. In the first, the author talks about wasps and birds who do not understand the concept of windows, particularly when the creatures are trapped inside a room. Likewise, man is also confined in the same spaces, even if it is by choice.

Prostitutes, voyeurs and secrets are a fascination of the poet's and he dedicates a series of poem to those topics.

In Rome, the rulers often posted naked prostitutes atop buildings so that men could look and see that the women represented lust and therefore, a potential threat to the "fragile order of power." The prostitutes were sometimes portrayed by patrician women who liked to disguise themselves and stand naked atop the buildings in place of the prostitutes so that they may have their own private excitement.

Voyeurs are a dark and interesting topic because of the nature of their addiction. Voyeurs tend to be lonely people who seek to make partnerships with others who are unaware of the connection. Therein lays the voyeur's power, as he peeks into the real lives of those he violates. While personal relationships are involved and often difficult, the Peeping Tom can simply walk away when he's ready to move on.

The poet talks about his reluctance to venture out into the real world. Although the man has studied the outside, he states that the reader must come to him, inside his own internal universe.

Part I, The Lords, Pages 1-44 Analysis

Morrison is fascinated by the religious beliefs of others and how they fit into everyday life. The author also takes issue with the lives of religious leaders, particularly when they are hypocrites.

Morrison is known for his celebration of the seedier side of life, the underbelly of society. All people on the outskirts of the city may present a more socially acceptable, sophisticated front but Morrison knows that underneath all people are the same and that those who were being true to themselves are the ones in the heart of the city. Those people in the center of the city, no matter what their actions, can be viewed as being real.



In Morrison's view, all games contain some form of death.

Morrison has a love-hate relationship with the media. The author enjoys having a larger-than-life personality, and although he had a confidant and trusted journalist as a close friend, many reporters and photographers were like vultures merely looking for a story while ignoring the man.

In modern society, it is common for murderers to go relatively unnoticed until there is a large enough crime to warrant exposure.

As a student of film, Morrison appreciates the ability to see life differently through a camera lens. The camera allows a person to hone in on a specific time and place yet seems to remain anonymous. The camera also allows one to see the enormity of life.

With yoga employing the power of mind, body and spirit, one is able to achieve things otherwise thought impossible. Morrison appreciated being able to tap into abilities that were often ignored.

In regards to the two poems about Oswald, Morrison questions the identity of the assassin. Although it was commonly assumed that JFK's murderer was Lee Harvey Oswald, many had doubts. Morrison echoes those doubts in these poems. Morrison refers to the assassination as the modern circles of hell, and it uses the metaphor of escaping from light into dark as Oswald leaves the swarming streets of Dallas to escape inside the movie theater.

In these poems, Morrison uses vision as a metaphor. While the reader may take the references literally, Morrison is focused on seeing with his mind and spirit rather than using his eyes.

All the people may work hard to achieve certain things, yet there is a great element of chance and success and survival. In the world of the primitive and childlike person, chance is not a concept, but rather a fact.

Once again Morrison embraces his primitive spirit and laments that man no longer understands the contentment and enjoyment in dancing on a hillside. Instead, the focus is changed to celebrities and spectators, worship and punishment.

Morrison shows the reader that even prisoners have their own society and sense of order, from creating and enacting the play to creating their own laws, and choosing their own superiors.

The concept of the train is appealing to Morrison as he liked to experience everything he could and usually at a fast pace. The train is merely a metaphor for life as it speeds by the passengers.

Morrison draws a clear line between childhood and adulthood in the poem about the jets. While adults have so many duties, children are free to be joyful.



Secrets are delicious things that bring excitement into every life. This is seen in the action of the patrician ladies who parade naked atop the buildings in Rome.

The poet returns to a metaphor representing the omniscience of God. In this case, the series of poems on voyeurs links the all-seeing deity to the peeping tom who sees all, while the subject is unaware.



Part I, The Lords, Pages 45-90

Part I, The Lords, Pages 45-90 Summary

The first two poems deal with being able to see but not touch the things in life such as the mother and phantoms. For Morrison, there is always some indefinable thing or presence which might be felt but not touched. This may be a sense, emotion, or divine energy. Even if those things cannot be touched, they still exist and are therefore tangible.

The poet addresses the use of tarot cards and how they are read. No matter how the cards are shuffled, they will come up in the way they are meant to not simply by chance. In the same way, the reader interprets what she sees and does not alter the cards or the meaning to suit any whim.

The French Deck is shuffled and reshuffled by the master hand. Each image is placed and replaced until the dealer stops and lays out the cards. The final lay out contains kernels of both life and death, a chance arrangement. Life is the same way. The world is a combination of the infinite and the finite card game.

Muybridge managed to gain inspiration from the Philadelphia Zoological Garden when creating his masterpiece. Men were chosen from the university and the women, models and actresses, paraded nude in front of a plethora of cameras. The artist used 48 cameras positioned at different locations so that it was possible to capture every facet of the subject, whether it was human or animal, still or in motion. It was important to capture every movement so that the photos could be strung together to imitate the movement. Morrison is fascinated by the invention of the method as it is clearly an impetus to the concept of film.

There is a large section devoted to cinema and the progression of film as an art and a science. Morrison praises the Modern East with having the best cinema as it evolved from shadow puppet plays and the art is connected to a religious rite and experience. Cinema takes people out of their real lives and puts them into situations where one can receive consolation, excitement, and experience fear of death. Cinema creates spectators and has become both a blessing and a curse to modern society.

Cinema is often considered to be a female art form. Morrison claims that film is created for men by men to offer a sense of consolation. In the Eastern part of the world, women were forbidden to attend early cinema. The shadow plays were designed and intended for men only. When women were permitted to attend, they were only allowed to watch the shadows, where as men could view the event from either side of the screen.

The poet celebrates lives and achievements of several famous men from Edward Kynaston to Robert Baker to Carl Wilhelm Gropius to Mayhew. Each man was a creator



of shadow and light, from the diorama to the pleorama and puppetry, each a forerunner of cinema.

Morrison pays tribute to Robert Baker who made the discovery of the Panorama while in debtor's prison. The discovery led to the Diorama which still exists. This is a rare thing since most of the time the Dioramas ended by burning up from some source of artificial light.

Phantasmagoria is the art of creating a magic lantern show without any substance. The shows were able to offer "complete sensory experiences" by using lighting, incense, noise, and water. Morrison thinks that perhaps there will be a day when people will have to go to "Weather Theaters" to remember what it was like to feel the rain.

Over the years to cinema has split into two paths. One is the phantasmagoria, while the other is no more than a peep show. With the phantasmagoria, the goal is to create a complete substitute world for the senses. The peep show offers an erotic and realistic observance of life and effectively imitates a window or keyhole through which the voyeur gazes.

Cinema does not use art such as theater literature or painting to achieve its goals, but rather focuses on popular diversions such as Tarot decks, magazines, and chess.

Because cinema does not derive from of those forms of art it relies upon ancient wizardry. Film is "a contemporary manifestation" of the evolving history of shadows. It fosters a belief in the magical. Morrison believes that the lineage of cinema is linked to sorcery and priests.

There are poems devoted to summoning and warding off the dead. The practice goes back to ancient times when séances were held to attract spirits or ward off evil entities.

Séances were typically led by a shaman. There may have been a heightening of senses brought about by dancing, chance, or drugs. Morrison refers to them as "professional hysterics." Because the shaman was able to exist between the spirit world and man's world, they were often highly esteemed. The ability to make a mental journey often formed the center of tribal religion.

Séances were often used as a cure for illness, to ward off the evil spirits that brought illness and misfortune. Séances were thought to be a way to rid a person of demon possession, to prevent illness or regain the stolen soul.

It is a mistake to believe that art needs a spectator in order to exist. Art is art for its own sake.

The poet states that the presence of the ether in a room full of people creates in itself an actor. The chemical allows itself to act out poetry through the bodies of the people, to create a wide variety of permutations.



Multimedia, according to the author, is really nothing more than a sad comedy. The action of combining art and spectator is like "colorful group therapy." The performers must have their audience, yet the audience could just as easily find the same type of entertainment at a freak show.

The stranger was often observed as being the biggest threat of ancient civilization. The most dangerous enemy is one that is not known.

Metamorphosis occurs when a person or thing cuts itself off from all habits and associations. It is then free to reinvent itself and to become virtually anything at all.

Objects through a camera lens are real and are not colored by the thoughts and beliefs of the human mind.

Morrison dedicates several poems to the topic of alchemy. Alchemy, the "erotic science" of metals; the "Mother of Chemistry." The poet warns that one should not confuse the mystical art with the simple transformation of the elements. Alchemists practice ancient skills so that they may marry the mystical with the physical. Although material developments are not the goal, the byproducts are evident.

In the poet's view, alchemists see the erotic in nearly everything from the growth of plants, mineral formations, and the meeting of the rain and the earth. The interaction extends to all things natural. Morrison can easily see a romantic affair between chemicals and the stars.

Alchemy encourages the juxtaposition of objects, sounds, sights, odors and weapons in unusual and often disturbing ways. In the same way, cinema achieves the same goal. Therefore, cinema can be seen as an heir to alchemy.

The last poem in this section, "The Lords," revolves around the concept of the lords living our lives for us, the choices are theirs and everything that happens is out of our hands. The only way to gain some form of control is to play lords ourselves and enslave others. In order to avoid rebellion, the lords use disguises and offer us many distractions.

Part I, The Lords, Pages 45-90 Analysis

Once again, Morrison plays the voyeur and claims that the reader may only experience some things from afar.

Fate and chance are addressed in the poem about the French Deck. While the desk contains certain images and events, it is the dealer, ultimately God or the Fates, that stops the shuffle to lay out the course of how things will be.

Muybridge was a famous 19th century British photographer known for developing a method of joining photographs to create an animation similar to film, which had not yet been invented. The photographer used animals at the Philadelphia Zoo, along with



models, to first create the sense of movement. As a student of film, Morrison was fascinated with Muybridge.

Morrison continues his homage to film and its appeal worldwide. The author keeps up on techniques and the evolution of the art and never ceases to be fascinated by it.

There is a fascination with custom when it comes to women being allowed to participate in the early "cinema."

The poet seems to be interested in things that were discovered by mistake, rather, ordinary things that produced extraordinary results, such as Baker's invention of the panorama, which was created when light from the bars of his cell made moving images through paper.

Morrison continues to express his fascination with film and cinema, comparing the process to ancient magic or voyeurism.

The poet has a deep fascination with the concept of a shaman and seeks to have the same qualities of being able to see beyond the here and now, even if it means having psychotic tendencies.

Art exists for its own purposes and thrives with or without spectators. While art is enjoyed by spectators, it does not determine its importance or existence.

Ether is just one of the elements, chemicals or agents that can deeply affect a person's thoughts and actions while remaining completely unaware.

Morrison enjoys the idea of multimedia bringing together any number of elements in order to create a different and greater whole.

Strangers are a popular topic with Morrison, who sees them as both mysterious messengers and possible symbols of doom.

Alchemy is fascinating to Morrison, just as cinema is for the fact that both marry and juxtapose many things, some of which could never have been imagined by the average man.

The concept of being controlled by one or more divine entities is not new. Morrison suggests that the presence and actions of the lords can be uncovered if one pays attention.



Part II, The New Creatures, Pages 91-123

Part II, The New Creatures, Pages 91-123 Summary

"The New Creatures" is dedicated to Morrison's common-law wife, Pamela Susan. The first untitled poem is divided into eight parts. It speaks of a man with brilliant hair and "Indian eyes" wearing a snake skin jacket as he moves through the African air along the Nile. For some unknown reason the man is traveling in a disturbed area.

Part two continues with the wilderness. Morrison writes the poem as if he is observing another person as he or she goes on a "parade thru the soft summer." The unnamed traveler, who carries a rifle, is responsible for decaying the wilderness to make up for the traveler's emptiness. Morrison asked the traveler to release more of his miracles.

Part three details animals that are required to graze in sick pastures. Meanwhile, an Aztec king lies behind iron curtains stricken with fever. There is a call that comes out of the wilderness, potentially caused by the fever, which is responsible for the King's wet dreams.

Part four refers to a lush wilderness, where undergrowth is overgrown and high. There is "warm green danger." Morrison asks if the sister wants to continue to play, and adore them.

Part five refers to the arrival of strange gods that appear as enemies. The gods are adorned in soft cloth and long hair, complete with arm ornaments. Morrison sees the gods as being pure and yet having the ability to cause fear.

Part six introduces a form of chaos after the arrival of the gods. Animals and members of the tribe are startled and begin running and screaming. There is thick smoke in the air. Amidst the chaos, the caves are being plundered and looted.

Part seven speaks of a lizard woman with insect eyes and who is filled with venom. The lizard woman waits silently while taking in the scene and preparing to defend.

Part eight examines the scene from the presence of the snake and lizard to the eye of the huntsman. The poet and an unnamed companion go into the valley to rescue their sister and take her back to a boat that will head for home.

The second poem is devoted to karma, as wings crash and the poet hears voices and laughter coming from the mountains.

Morrison speaks of various ethnicities, saints and tattoos that all have eyes akin to time.

There is a poem dedicated to temporary and primal encampments. The first man builds a temporary habitation where games are played and there are chambers where one can hide. As time passes, germs of the man's surroundings fill his brain. While the man's



hair and fingernails grow, and he evolves, there are other creatures such as eels, salamanders and cave fish that go about their own business and all exist as if in an aquarium.

Morrison compares the concept of childbirth to the facts surrounding the birth of animals. There is a theory that children are born when they are ready, yet a picture of an unborn foal tends to turn inward, as if trying to retreat further into the womb.

"The City" refers to a civilization that could be comprised of insects or humans. All the citizens within the city have the same parent. In the city center, there is a garden in which lives a caged beast. While there are many who will jump ship like rats there are also those who fight to gamble and dance in bars and cinema during the height of summer.

Morrison discusses another movie in which there is a nude girl, seen only from the back as she stands on a road. The woman is left in the desert, while the city has gone mad. The entire scene is referred to as "savage destiny."

There is a poem dedicated to the brothers and sisters of the Pyramid as well as the sisters of the unicorn. Morrison evokes the image of dance in a religious rite. There are tales of the ancient days amid the celebration, stories delivered by elders with mangled hands. There is a congregation of all in the tribe from the newborn to the most ancient elder.

There is a poem about a seeker who goes into the ghetto to visit a fortune teller. The streets are dark and dangerous. The woman, a prophet and sorceress, lives in a hut lighted only by a candle. The woman is dressed in traditional garb. The woman practices her magic derived from the moon and stars as she reads the seeker's palm.

There is a tale of a building in which the walls are painted a garish red. There are stairs and inside one of the rooms there is an argument. The man and woman are screaming at each other. The man leaves and the screaming is replaced with the renewed sound of music. Morrison refers to this as a mating pit. There may be one that is tempted to leap into the place vacated by the man. On the outside there are riots.

There are lords that exist among us in secret. There are also lords within each of us. Both are born from cowardice and sloth.

There is an intriguing poem about a man who spoke to Morrison and then frightened the author with his laughter. Then the poet was taken by the hand and led through silence into the soft sound of bells.

There are several poems that are small vignettes. They include a group of young people traveling through the woods to a film crew working out on the street in front of the poet's house.

There's another poem about riots. The riot begins and quickly spreads out to encompass lawns and houses. The scene becomes alive and people begin to run.



Racism is addressed in regards to a girl who was murdered in the south. The girl's hands are chopped off and she is nailed to a tree. Morrison claims to have witnessed a lynching, conducted by men from in a cypress-laden southern swamp. It seems that the men took the opportunity to be there and to present themselves as guides to a white god.

There is a series of poems about battlefields, armies, and political assassination. The first poem deals with an armed camp and the second takes over after there has been a bloody battle. The poem is written from the point of view of the jackal. The jackals leave no bloody remains behind, bodies that belong to the survivors of the caravans. Despite hunger and exhaustion the jackal moves on propelled forward by the scent of death on the wind. People including travelers and strangers can look into the eyes of the jackal and see within each the primal seed of the ancient dog. There is another mention of a caravan comprised of people who are carrying guns to give to Caesar. The troops, which ride on camels, are able to infiltrate the stone walls of the city. No matter what happens in this place and time, life is able to absorb the concept of violence and war.

As battle ensues, people begin to doubt their motives and believe that perhaps they could have avoided the dramatic experience, if only they had chosen to migrate sooner. As people are tortured or killed, sounds emanate from them, comparable to a "high wailing keening piercing animal lament." Although there may not be any actual physical separation between those fighting, there is a fence inside the mind that is successful in dividing the heart.

As creatures infiltrate the camps, they tend to emit a sort of friendliness. The people being invaded see them as evil and attempt in vain to protect themselves and their children. One of the creatures takes a child, nurses her and announces that the child will be taken home to the rain. Although there are objections from the child's mother, there is nothing to be done.

There is a poem that addresses the assassination of a king. The assassin travels many miles in order to remove the man from power with the use of a gun. Meanwhile, the prince faces torture and death.

Part II, The New Creatures, Pages 91-123 Analysis

The first poem, broken into eight parts, is a piece of prose that is devoted to a story in which the poet and an unnamed companion go into the African wilderness. While there they encounter a variety of strange things and people, from lizard people to huntsmen that are eager to destroy the wilderness. Along the way, the poet's sister is taken in by a tribe. Strange gods arrive and chaos ensues in the encampment. There are people dying and the sister ends up dead. It is up to the poet to retrieve the sister's body to take it home.

The poet loves to examine themes and motivations in and behind the movies. Morrison seems to be fascinated with storylines that have a primal sense about them. Typically,

there is one person or small group of people that stands out from the rest who may have managed to survive madness. While that person or group struggles to survive. There is typically chaos or death in the periphery.

There are several poems in which Morrison addresses cultural differences and racism. These behaviors begin at the beginning of time, and seem to increase in intensity. There are many mentions of riots involving everyone from center city into the suburbs. No one seems to be immune. There's also mention of riots revolving around race. The poet also addresses the presence of the Ku Klux Klan in the south, and how they justify their activities by claiming to be servants of a white god.

There are problems that travel from cultural differences and racism into violence and war. The subjects are closely related and within each there is a belief that each is doing the right thing, whether it is motivated by religion or politics.



Part II, The New Creatures, Pages 124-141

Part II, The New Creatures, Pages 124-141 Summary

The first poem in this section laments the urban fall as a cancer takes over, bringing about "summer sadness." As the poet watches, the highways of the defunct town are covered by ghosts in their cars and electric shadows that haunt the barren streets. The second poem carries a loose thread to the first as the poet discusses Ensenada and its decay.

There is a series of poems that conveys slight images of a post urban world. It is unclear why the city has experienced so much decay. While the city tries to sleep there are earthquakes to face as well as the wrath of the ocean. Children run wild and there is no one to catch them as they run the streets with animal gangs.

There is a caravan that travels by day and camps at night. Among the people in the caravan is someone the poet refers to as "tent girl." At night, the chief meets the tent girl at a well where they talk and laugh as lovers. The chief returns to his tent and the girl goes to sleep happy. In the morning, the chief prepares the caravan for travel and the girl packs up her tent and belongings to go on to the next site.

The poet speaks of a "Catalog of Horrors" which includes a list of nearly everything from the occurrences of natural disaster to the list of divine happenings and miracles to the catalog of items in the room to the lists of fish and other things to be found in the sacred river.

The next poem is split into three sections. The first section speaks of the soft parade as it begins on Sunset Boulevard. There is the sound of cars as they approach from the canyon. The place and time are right for the people to meet up again after two years. One tells the other, "You got a cool machine." The poet claims that it is a delight to hear their voices.

The night begins to descend on Sunset and turn the bustle of day into the quiet peace of the evening. As night falls, the clouds begin to fade and die away as the sun becomes "an orange skull" and disappears.

The focus of the poem changes to the soldiers in trenches who want nothing more than to go home and are overly aware of the surroundings and circumstances. There is a case of Gonorrhoea and the poet insists that someone tell the girl to go home.

Part two of the poem begins with artists from hell setting up their easels on the terrible landscapes in the parks while people try to enjoy the scene. Meanwhile the citizens are anxious as bands of savage youth view them as prey.



The poet claims that he is unable to believe that the people are involved in the dance of approaching one another, trying their best to intimidate, and then withdraw.

Morrison refers to these people as ghosts and he is the ghost killer. The ghost killer has great power and should not be questioned or denied. The ghost killer offers kindness and forgiveness to the children that still inhabit a frightening world.

The third part of the poem speaks of a photo booth killer, a bandit that has come from an ambush and is still fragile.

The photo booth killer is urged to kill the poet, a senator, sadness, warfare, disease, madness and badness.

There is a beautiful monster that vomits up a stream of clocks, watches, jewels, silver, knives, copper, coins and blood. There is a well of trouble that includes many disturbing things from razor blades to whiskey bottles, claws, teeth, skulls at the site of ruins, insects, and shard of pottery. All of this debris is laying alongside a lake, gleaming in the sunlight.

Morrison urges the reader to dance naked atop broken bones while one's feet will bleed and the mind is plagued by glass cuts. Meanwhile, someone fishes for trout in the lake. When the fisherman goes to clean the scales off the trout, it is discovered that the knife has been stolen by rival boys across the lake.

The final poem is separated into two parts. The poem begins with the topic of war. Could the people who disguise themselves under the vales of parliament be our friends? A father of a child sent off to war tries hard to convince himself that the child will not die but return home when it is all over. It is the last thing that the peasant fisherman has to hold onto in his bleak life.

The soldiers are pushed into the "infected green jungles" where they must live by wits. The soldiers must live on rainwater and crawl along the jungle floor.

There is poison from the poison islands, a granule of snakeroot that may provide the miracle of escape.

There is a helicopter that flies overhead and bombs the land below, killing even those who do nothing but cling to the final scraps of the law. The people in the chopper want to see the smiling eyes of those below and believe the lies they have been told.

There are references to battlefields and schools. With monitors that have gone silent and wandering patrols. The guards in the guard towers are tired of watching from their location on the beach. There is exhaustion and not even one horse left to ride through the destruction with a dog at its side.

At night, the air is silent as there are no more arguments. A Peeping Tom could stare through windows and into parlors where he might see a woman dancing waltzes in a



European gown. The poet thinks that it might be fun to rule over what is now a wasteland.

The second part of the poem focuses on historical events and how the history books are written in favor of the victor while punishing the unforgiven. In history and politics, there is often deceit hidden behind a smile. There are many hardships faced by people who barely have the skills and tools to survive.

Eventually, all of the hardships and bad times will pass and once again people will be able to lie in green grass and gaze upon the face of the mating-Queen who has a smooth complexion and seems to be in love with a horseman.

Isn't it all fragrant? One will look back on the day of July 24, 1968.

Part II, The New Creatures, Pages 124-141 Analysis

Despite the sadness and loss associated with the topic of urban decay, Morrison still manages to instruct his readers to remember to stop and feel the night and the rain.

The tent girl is a young woman who is in love with the tribal chief. The chief pays attention to the girl but his duty and focus is elsewhere. It is clear that no matter what happens, the tent girl will continue to follow the chief on his journeys.

The Catalog of Horrors goes along with the theory that somewhere there is a master list of everything that has ever occurred or is destined to occur.

Morrison observes the actions on Sunset as night begins to fall. While some may see the presence of the cars and rivalry as a threat, the poet enjoys it.

As the ghost killer, Morrison assigns himself a role of potency and knowledge. Although the poet offers to help the ghost children escape, he is still amazed that people continue to behave in such a menacing manner.

Many of the poems in this section deal with civil unrest, war, and the eventuality that all things will pass. Even when the future seems to be bleak and there is little to no hope for a reprieve, the time will come when once again the people can smile.

The date at the end of the poem, and the last words in the book, refers to the date Morrison copyrighted the two manuscripts that were married together to create "The Lords and The New Creatures."



Characters

James Douglas Morrison

James Douglas Morrison (1943-1971) was an American poet, lyricist, musician, film maker. Morrison is best known as the lead singer and front man for the 1960s rock band, The Doors, for which the writer created a dynamic persona that still captivates audiences today.

Morrison is known for exploring society's "underbelly," tapping into people and places that might go unnoticed by the average observer. Although Morrison grew up in a middle class home, the poet seems to have some fascination with the seedier side of life. Many of the subjects in the poet's work are centered on prostitutes, homeless, drunks, and drug addicts.

Morrison was student of film before he became involved in music. The poet was formed early in Morrison and the first meeting with future band mate Ray Manzarek kindled an instant bond over lyrics. Morrison went on to throw himself fully into the role of musician, lyricist, poet, and unabashed sex symbol. Morrison's deep connection with spirituality colored much of his work, as did the experiences with drugs and alcohol. Morrison was a voice of a generation, one that lingers even more than it might have except for the mysterious circumstances surrounding his alleged death in 1971.

Racists

As one who embraced all life and the divinity in each person, Morrison took special exception with racists. There is more than one poem dedicated to the horrific crimes perpetrated by racial unrest, from riots in California to the activities of the Ku Klux Klan in the southern United States. It was beyond Morrison why someone would take the life of another based only on the color of the skin and to do so in such a violent manner was to practice blasphemy.

As Morrison explored and observed the world around him, the poet observed and paid homage to a great number of people who may not have been who society considers to be the most important members of the human race. However, the poet believed that each person was worthy, despite one's choices and issues.

In one poem regarding the lynching of a young girl, Morrison refers to the members of the KKK as being those with narrow focus and unable to see beyond their own back yards.

Morrison details a meeting with "the strange men of the southern swamp/Cypress was their talk/Fish-call bird song/Roots and signs out of all knowing/They chanced to be there/Guides to the white gods."



Eadweard Muybridge

Eadweard Muybridge was a British photographer, well known for his contributions to photography and the panorama. In the late 1800s, Muybridge conducted many experiments using as many as 50 cameras in order to capture motion, which would be converted into crude animation. Morrison sees Muybridge as being one of the founding fathers of cinema.

Russian Czar

In the days of old Russia, the Russian Czar had the power to do what ever he wished in regards to prisoners. The Czar chose to allow the prisoners to elect one person to have a week's leave from the prison as part of a social experiment.

Peeping Tom

Morrison sees the Peeping Tom as a type of comedian, one who takes great delight in infiltrating the private lives of others.

Officer Tippitt

Officer Tippitt was the man shot by Lee Harvey Oswald during his escape.

Assassin

The assassin is one who travels many miles in or her to assassinate the King.

Lee Harvey Oswald

Lee Harvey Oswald is the man accused of shooting and killing US President John F. Kennedy in 1963.

Robert Baker

Robert Baker was a 20th-century artist from Scotland, who was responsible for creating one of the first panoramas while in debtor's prison.

Gropius

In 1832, Gropius took Paris by storm when he exhibited the first pleorama.

Prostitutes

In the days of ancient Rome, prostitutes were paraded naked atop buildings so that they may be witnessed by passersby as a reminder of sex as the downfall of the society.

Film Spectators

Morrison has great respect for film spectators as they experience the sights and sounds, lights and shadows created by the film maker. There is a lament on the other hand, that many people spend too much time in darkened theaters rather than living life as it was intended.



Objects/Places

Los Angeles, California

Los Angeles, California is one of the main locations used throughout the book. The Lords and The New Creatures." It was the home base for Jim Morrison for many years and the spot in which he gathered the majority of his material for the work.

There are many references to spots in and around the city, from Sunset Boulevard to Santa Ana to Ensenada to the poet's own house. Even when the location is not mentioned, it is clear to the reader that Morrison is speaking about Los Angeles.

In addition to the size and diversity of the city, both which offer a great deal of fodder for Morrison, there is a mixture of many cultures from the artsy to the wealthy to the seedy that appeals to the poet. As a film student, Morrison appreciated the city as the hub of film as art. As a musician, Morrison was privy to every bar, club, and stage. Most notable in Morrison's career was the foray into the Whisky A Go Go, a hot spot for rock and roll in the 1960s.

Although Morrison was a superstar during the time the book was written, he always managed to slip out of the limelight and into obscurity if not isolation, in order to write about his myriad observations.

Morrison eventually left LA due to legal troubles and utter exhaustion. Morrison and his common-law-wife moved to Paris, where he died at the age of 27.

Film

Film was a passion of Morrison's and therefore, a great number of poems were written by him regarding the topic. Morrison was a student at the UCLA film school before he met Ray Manzarek and ventured into his career as a lyricist and musician with The Doors.

The art of film was fascinating to Morrison because of its almost unlimited possibilities regarding the technique and subject matter. The medium supported Morrison's beliefs that anything was possible and that the mundane lives of those in modern society had shut themselves off from the possibilities. The poet enjoyed experimenting with various subjects and whether or not the product was well received, there was a learning experience that was translated into other creative outlets.

In "The Lords and The New Creatures," Morrison also examines the history of film, including those people and techniques that were in the forefront of photography and crude concepts of animation, motion, and light.



Camera

Morrison often refers to the camera as a type of all seeing God. Through the lens of the camera it is impossible to lie or to view anything without a sense of objectivity and truth.

Paris

In 1832, Paris was the site of Gropius' triumph with his art. Paris is also a site highly regarded by the poet, the city where he chose to live until his death in 1971.

Regent's Park

Regent's Park in London is the site on which the diorama still exists.

Alchemy

Morrison is fascinated by alchemy, the science in which metals are studied, transformed, and created.

Sunset Boulevard

Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles, California is the site on or near the areas in which Morrison has many observations of people and their lifestyles.

Santa Ana, California

Santa Ana, California is a small city located on the Pacific Ocean.

Rome

Rome is the capital of Italy and the site of one of the most ancient civilizations on record. Morrison is fascinated by the behavior of the Romans from their barbaric ideals to advanced civilization.

Philadelphia Zoological Garden

The Philadelphia zoological Garden is the site in which Muybridge chose to create one of his first works using a multitude of cameras in order to capture the illusion of motion on film.



Islington Green

Islington Green, a site in England, mentioned in more than one poem. The area is a part of London, which has a great number of pubs and nightlife activity.

The Cinema

The Cinema and is one of the main topics in the lords and the new creatures. Morrison is fascinated by the Cinema, not only by the technical aspects, but by the impact it has on society.

Panorama

Robert Baker created the first panorama while in debtor's prison. The concept was derived from a light traveling into the prisoner's cell and filtering itself through a letter to create a transparent image.

Themes

Foreign Cultures

A great number of Morrison's poems deal with foreign cultures in one way or another, from the culture of the racist to that of East Asia, the cave dweller and the Aztecs. As an observer of human nature, Morrison was fascinated by the way people interacted with one another in daily life and how they behaved when confronted with strangers who may or may not pose a threat. In Morrison's eyes, there was nothing more dangerous to the tribes as an approaching stranger as the entire world of the tribe could be put into jeopardy if the stranger meant harm.

The poet pays homage to East Asia in regards to its puppet shadow plays and how the medium was responsible for creating the impetus for film. The reader will note that Morrison longed to be one of the men who were granted access to nearly every part of the play and the techniques utilized within the performance.

The foreign culture of the military is also examined, both from the point of the attacker to those who were attacked and left for dead. Following the poems surrounding bloody battles and war was the tale of the bodies that remained and how they were eaten or carried off by starving jackals.

Death

Death is a main theme in "The Lords and The New Creatures" by Jim Morrison. Morrison claims to have been inhabited by the spirit of a dying Indian and gained a great deal of insight into life and death. Death did not frighten Morrison. Instead of an ending, the poet saw it as merely a transition. There are many kinds of death, from the physical to the spiritual.

In more than one instance, Morrison compares death with sex. While death denotes the end of the game, the end of life and existence in the mortal realm, climax is the end of sex. Both represent a culmination of a goal, the accomplishment of which should be celebrated.

Aside from the soft transition from life into death, violent death is also examined. The untimely and violent deaths described in the book are mainly focused around conflict or war as a person's life was often taken without cause or remorse.

Also examined are the lengths to which people will go to avoid death out of fear. There are several poems in which one or more people visits a shaman or sorceress to find out one's fate and how to conquer impending dread, doom, and death.

Film and the Cinema

Film and the cinema are the main theme of "The Lords and The New Creatures" by Jim Morrison.

Film was a passion of Morrison's and therefore, a great number of poems were written by him regarding the topic. Morrison was a student at the UCLA film school before he met Ray Manzarek and ventured into his career as a lyricist and musician with The Doors.

The art of film was fascinating to Morrison because of its almost unlimited possibilities regarding the technique and subject matter. The medium supported Morrison's beliefs that anything was possible and that the mundane lives of those in modern society had shut themselves off from the possibilities. The poet enjoyed experimenting with various subjects and whether or not the product was well received, there was a learning experience that was translated into other creative outlets.

In "The Lords and The New Creatures," Morrison also examines the history of film, including those people and techniques that were in the forefront of photography and crude concepts of animation, motion, and light.

It is clear that the poet greatly respected the discoveries of those artistic masters that set the precedent for film making, from the East Asian theater to Gropius, Robert Baker, and Eadweard Muybridge.

With such vision in regards to film and its impact on culture and society, it is a shame that Morrison was not able to direct more than one documentary in his time.

The only negative comments Morrison has about film surround the fact that so many people give up their daily lives and possibilities therein to sit in a darkened room to stare at a screen.

Style

Point of View

The point of view utilized in "The Lords and The New Creatures" by Jim Morrison varies between first person and third person omniscient.

In the poems using first person, Morrison typically involves personalized observations as well as emotions to convey a particular thought, ideal or scene. Poetry written in first person, given the nature of the art, tends to create more impact than poetry written in the third person.

Some of the topics included in this category include the one about the lynching of the young girl in the southern swamp, in which Morrison expresses his disdain for racists; poetry in which Morrison relates to the presence of the Lords and how they play a part in each life; and the topic of truth in film.

Third person omniscient is used in the majority of the work. Morrison is adept at painting a picture from the ghetto to ancient China to primitive mountain tops to explanations surrounding film, cinema, and other people who have made a great impact on the poet or society at large.

Third person is also extremely effective regarding the poems devoted to ancient cultures, their beliefs and practices and how the situation may have been threatened by war of the approach of a stranger.

Setting

There are numerous settings used in "The Lords and The New Creatures." As the cinema is such a large part of the text, Morrison focuses on the physical structure of the darkened room, the poet also relays the allure of the cinema as a place where one can get away and escape every day life.

Foreign lands are mentioned, from the thick humid rain forests in Africa to East Asia to Paris, the desert, exhausted battle fields and the civilizations of the Aztecs and other primitive cultures. There is mention of several locations in England from the exhibits in Regent's Park to the nightlife of Islington Green.

Morrison also utilizes many locations within the United States, including Philadelphia, where Eadweard Muybridge created the revolutionary experiment using 48 cameras with models and animals to create motion and therefore animation. Los Angeles plays a large part, as it was Morrison's home base for many years. Areas in and around Los Angeles are also mentioned, such as the beach, Santa Ana, Morrison's house, the ghetto, the inner city, Ensenada, and Sunset Boulevard.



The descriptions of individual locations are often compelling, such as the room or apartment in which a couple is having an argument. The poet describes the building with its garish red walls, stairs leading upward and the feeling of despair that surrounds the place. The reader can also gauge the type of building by the caliber of its people and things heard through the paper thin walls.

Language and Meaning

It is clear by the language used in "The Lords and New Creatures" that Morrison is very well read and expressive. There are a great number of references to people and places that are visual in nature. This relates directly to Morrison's training and fascination with the art of film. Visual words, explaining what the poet or main character sees, allows a clearer picture and therefore a more powerful piece.

Morrison practices the art of poetry in many ways through his language. To keep the work interesting, Morrison chooses to use descriptive and unique words rather than settling for the ordinary. This use of language keeps the poetry from becoming mundane and predictable.

Morrison is not afraid to show his intelligence and knowledge of many things including the art and history of film to the existence and practices of other cultures. While staying true to the subject, the poet is careful not to fill each poem with an unnecessary amount of jargon or five dollar words.

It is also important to note the attitudes conveyed through the use of language. Even when dealing with distasteful topics, Morrison manages to keep the language interesting and observant without crossing the line into judgment. This is a difficult task to achieve, particularly when dealing with heinous crimes and activities.

Structure

"The Lords and The New Creatures" by Jim Morrison is a book of poetry comprise of 141 pages. There are two main sections to the book. The first, "The Lords: Notes on a Vision," contains 90 pages. The shortest number of pages for poems in this section is one page; the longest poem is six pages; the average length of a poem is one page.

Each poem in this section is a stand alone although many are written on the same or similar topics. There is not differentiation between the similar poems and those on other subjects. The largest group of like poems revolves around film and cinema.

The second section, "The New Creatures," is comprised of 51 pages. The average length of the two sections is 70 pages.

Unlike the first section, "The Lords," "The New Creatures" does separate some of its poems into parts while the overall feeling of the part is still free form.



Like the first section, the poems in this part are untitled. The first poem in this section is broken down into eight parts. The second poem to be written in segments is three parts long; the third poem in the section to be split into segments consists of two parts.

Throughout both sections there is a continuity of material even though the poet may revisit a topic later in the book.

While the majority of the work focuses on inanimate objects, there is still a significant number of pieces devoted to groups, such as the Aztecs, and individuals such as Muybridge, Robert Baker, and Lee Harvey Oswald.



Quotes

"It takes large murder to turn rocks in the shade and expose strange worms beneath."
Page 16

"Camera, as all-seeing God, satisfies our longing for omniscience."
Page 17

"The idea of chance is absent from the world of the child and primitive."
Page 27

"We have been metamorphosised from a mad body dancing on hillsides to a pair of eyes staring in the dark."
Page 29

"Cure blindness with a whore's spittle."
Page 37

"More or less we're all afflicted with the psychology of the voyeur."
Page 39

"Imagery is born of loss."
Page 44

"Film spectators are quiet vampires."
Page 51

"Cinema is created by men for the consolation of men."
Page 57

"It is wrong to assume that art needs the spectator in order to be."
Page 73

"The lords appease us with images."
Page 89

"The theory is that birth is prompted by the child's desire to leave the womb."
Page 106

"The city sleeps & the unhappy children roam with animal gangs."
Page 127

Topics for Discussion

Why do you think Morrison was so fascinated with the less glamorous aspects of society?

How might the poet's life have been different if he had chosen to concentrate on a film career rather than on music?

Morrison makes many references to historical events from the shadow plays to Gropius. Do you think the references are historically accurate or have they been tainted by creative license?

There are many mentions of sex and death in the same poems. How do you think the topics are related?

Do you think Morrison actually experienced the events in the poems, such as the meeting with the sorceress, or were they invented?

Do you think Morrison considered himself to be among the crowd of film spectators or part of the higher influence of creativity?

What do you think is the poet's fascination with tribal encampments and behaviors?

How might the poet's views on racism have changed if he had lived longer?