"Repent, Harlequin!" Said the Ticktockman Study Guide

"Repent, Harlequin!" Said the Ticktockman by Harlan Ellison

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

"Repent, Harlequin!" Said the Ticktockman Study Guide....1
Contents....2
Introduction....3
Author Biography....4
Plot Summary....6
Summary....8
Analysis....12
Characters....14
Themes....16
Style....18
Historical Context....20
Critical Overview....22
Criticism....24
Critical Essay #1....25
Critical Essay #2....29
Adaptations....33
Topics for Further Study....34
Compare and Contrast....35
What Do I Read Next?....36
Further Study....37
Bibliography....38
Copyright Information....39

Introduction

Harlan Ellison's short story, "Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman," first appeared in *Galaxy* magazine in December 1965, and earned Ellison both a Hugo and a Nebula award in 1966. The story was first collected in *Paingod and Other Delusions* in 1965, and has been frequently anthologized over the years, appearing in *Nebula Award Stories 1965* (1966) and *The Essential Ellison: A 50-Year Retrospective* (2001) among other anthologies. Indeed, the story has been anthologized more than 160 times since its first publication, and has been translated into many languages. In 1997, Ellison and Rick Berry collaborated on a lavishly illustrated, oversized edition of the story, published by Underwood Press, with a new introduction by Ellison.

The world of the Harlequin is one run by the Master Timekeeper, generally known as the Ticktockman. In this world, people are on time, or run the risk of having their lives shortened by the minutes of their tardiness. Into this depressingly gray world steps the gaudily dressed Harlequin, throwing jelly beans at workers changing shifts. A comic hero, the Harlequin threatens the existence of the state, and brings the wrath of the Ticktockman down on himself.

Compared by some critics to George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Aldous Huxley's equally famous novel, *Brave New World* (1932), "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" is both dark and humorous, a twentieth-century cautionary tale of mechanical tyranny.

BOOKRAGS

Author Biography

From his early days, Harlan Ellison has been an individualist and social gadfly. Born in Cleveland on May 27, 1934, he published his first short story in 1947 in the *Cleveland News*. By the age of 17, he demonstrated his interest in science fiction by founding the Cleveland Science Fiction Society.

Ellison was not one to suffer the restrictions of academia. Although he attended Ohio State University for two years, he was asked to leave by University administrators. Subsequently, he went to New York where he continued his writing career. While in New York, he joined a gang in order to research his novel, *Rumble*. Ellison's next job was with the United States Army, serving from 1957 through 1959. In the years after his military service, Ellison started both a magazine, *Rogue*, and a publishing firm, Regency Books. Throughout this period, Ellison wrote many short stories and essays.

After moving to Los Angeles in 1962, Ellison began writing for television in addition to successfully publishing both novels and short stories. His list of credits for television include episodes of such popular shows as *The Outer Limits*, *Burke's Law*, and *Route 66*. His best-known television screenplay, however, was his script for *Star Trek* in 1967, "The City on the Edge of Forever." For this episode, he won a Hugo Award in 1967, and a Writer's Guild of America Award in 1968.

In 1965, Ellison wrote "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman," perhaps his most famous and anthologized story. First appearing in *Galaxy* magazine in December 1965, the story received critical acclaim, winning both a Hugo and a Nebula Award. Subsequently, Ellison included the story in his 1965 collection, *Paingod and Other Delusions*. Although the volume takes as its subject agony in many different manifestations, stories such as "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" also suggest Ellison's sense of humor.

During these same years, Ellison wrote some of the stories for which he is most famous, collected in books such as *I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream* (1967) and *The Beast That Shouted Love at the Heart of the World* (1969). In 1967, Ellison edited and annotated one of the most important science fiction anthologies ever published, *Dangerous Visions*. This volume, and the 1972 *Again, Dangerous Visions*, firmly connected Ellison with "New Wave" science fiction, although this is a label that Ellison rejects.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Ellison continued to produce short stories, novels, screenplays, and essays, focusing on critical cultural commentaries. In 1987, a comprehensive collection of Ellison's work, *The Essential Ellison: a 35-Year Retrospective* was edited by Terry Dowling, with Richard Delap and Gil Lamont who updated the collection in 2001 with *The Essential Ellison: a 50-Year Retrospective*.

Although Ellison has been actively writing for more than fifty years, he continues to be involved in a dizzying array of activities. Ellison's long 1992 short story, "The Man Who

Rowed Christopher Columbus Ashore" appeared in the prestigious *The Best American Short Stories* (1993). In 2000 and 2001, he was a consultant and host for a radio series of 26 one-hour short story dramatizations. The series aired on National Public Radio and included an adaptation of "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman." In addition, Ellison continues to produce graphic novels, computer games, screenplays, and an assortment of other creative works. Always the voice of resistance, in 2002, Ellison took America Online to court for copyright infringement. Ellison shows no signs of slowing the pace of his work; indeed, new technologies have opened new avenues for his fertile imagination.

Plot Summary

"'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" is the story of a future world, controlled by a tight schedule and the ticking of a clock. In charge of this world is the Ticktockman, a robot-like figure with the power to shorten or terminate anyone's life as a penalty for running late.

The story begins with a long quote from Henry David Thoreau's essay, "Civil Disobedience." In this passage, Thoreau asserts that most men "serve the state thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies." Further, a "very few" men serve the state with their consciences, a service that forces them into resistance of the state. These men, according to Thoreau, are heroes, and often, martyrs.

Ellison then shifts to the story, beginning somewhere in the middle. He sets the story in the future, at a moment when one individual is resisting the enforced schedule of this extremely regimented society. Worse still, this man, called the Harlequin, has become a hero to some of the lower classes. As such, he represents a threat to the state, and has consequently come to the attention of the Master Timekeeper, otherwise known as the Ticktockman.

The Harlequin, so named for his habit of dressing in the medieval fool's garb of motley, is a trickster figure. He disrupts workers as they try to change shifts, thus disrupting the master schedule. In one instance, he drops 150,000 dollars' worth of jelly beans on workers on automatic sidewalks, trying to change shifts, delaying the master schedule by seven minutes. For this crime, the Harlequin is ordered to appear before the Ticktockman.

Ellison then shifts to what he calls "the beginning." In this section, he offers examples of the increasing intrusion of time schedules into people's lives. He writes, "And so it goes. And so it goes. And so it goes goes goes goes goes tick tock tick tock tick tock and one day we no longer let time serve us, we serve time and we are slaves of the schedule. . .bound into a life predicated on restrictions because the system will not function if we don't keep the schedule tight." As a result of this, all citizens are required to wear "cardioplates" that measure their punctuality, and allow the Ticktockman to turn them off should they literally run out of time.

The story then shifts again into the ending. The Harlequin is at home with his wife or girlfriend, Pretty Alice, who is disgusted with his inability to be on time. Ultimately, she turns his name over to the Ticktockman, which allows his forces the capture the Harlequin.

As it turns out, the Harlequin is not someone very special, just a man named Everett C. Marm "who had no sense of time." Confronted with the demand to repent, Marm tells the Ticktockman to "Get stuffed!" As a result, he is sent to Coventry for brainwashing. To kill him outright would be to martyr him; by brainwashing, the authorities are able to put him on television and broadcast his recantation.

It might appear that the story ends with Marm's demise and failure; however, at the last moment readers discover that the Ticktockman himself is running three minutes late.

Summary

"Repent Harlequin! Said the Ticktockman," by Harlan Ellison, is a short story set in the future which explores the relationship between the individual man and the overall system. The story begins with a short excerpt from "Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau theorizes that men exist to serve the state, some with their manual labor and others with their brains. Still there are others, the great few, who serve with their consciences. These men are called martyrs, heroes, and reformers and are rarely celebrated for their service.

Ellison does not explain the excerpt by Thoreau or its place in his story; rather, he does explain that he will begin in the middle of his story. An unknown man was becoming a nuisance to those who controlled the system. At first he was just a blip on the radar, but now his antics are cause for concern and have been brought up to the Ticktockman, whose job it is to keep track of all of the time. The Ticktockman holds the cardioplate of the menacing man and demands, softly, yet authoritatively, that he must know who the Harlequin is.

Meanwhile the Harlequin himself is hovering in his airboat high above the city. He watches smiling as one labor shift leaves the Timkin and another arrives at work. Suddenly, he lowers the airboat so that it will fluster the proper ladies walking below. As he passes them he sticks his fingers in his ears and wags his tongue. The traffic on the automatic sidewalk is disrupted briefly but soon resumed its normal activity.

Harlequin shifts the airboat so that it is positioned above the workers at which time he drops his load, $150,000 worth of jelly beans, above them. The jellybeans bounce off the hardhats of the women, roll onto the sidewalk, and gum up the machinery. This is more than a simple distraction; it is chaos! Everyone is laughing, eating the brightly colored candy when they should be on schedule. The disruption causes a 7-minute delay. The shift, the time people leave for home, and ultimately the master schedule is delayed 7 minutes. Seven minutes may not seem like a significant delay, but it is in this society that is driven by the clock. Thus, the Harlequin is ordered to the Ticktockman's office. The word is sent that he must be there at precisely 7 pm. However, he does not show until 10:30 pm and with no remorse. He even sings a song about a mysterious place called Vermont before quickly leaving.

The question still remains as to who the Harlequin is. The greater question is how someone has been allowed to become such a disruption and how he had found so many jellybeans. The joyous candy has not been made in over a century.

The author, having finished the middle of the story, starts on the beginning. It had begun slowly. People were more and more regimented in their schedules and intolerant of tardiness for any reason. Eventually, people lived their lives by the numbers on the clock. By the year 2389, the office of the Master Timekeeper had figured a way to keep track of the time of everyone through the processing of their individual cardioplates. For

every minute of time a person is late an equal amount of time will be taken from their life. If you are late too often then your time is expired and you are simply "turned off."

That night Pretty Alice shows her husband, the Harlequin, the wanted poster calling for his capture. She does not understand his need to dress in his clown costume and disrupting people's routines. He tells her before he leaves that he does not know why, he just needs to. Soon after he leaves his wife, the Harlequin fires a rocket into the sky announcing his intention to arrive at the 115th Annual International Medical Association Innovation at 8pm. He surprises the authorities, who naturally think he will be late, by arriving 20 minutes early. The authorities are frightened and end up getting caught in their own traps. The physicians are laughing at the silly clown and the authorities trapped in the nets.

Later, the Harlequin goes to the "Efficiency Shopping Center" and addresses the crowd with his bullhorn. He questions the authority of time that everyone is beholden to and tells them to enjoy life. The shoppers are confused and nervous that this Harlequin has thrown them off their schedules. The disruption causes the purchasing and production schedules to be unbalanced.

The Ticktockman orders his men to capture the Harlequin using any methods necessary. Finally, the authorities succeed in capturing the simple man, Everett C. Marm, the Harlequin. The Ticktockman orders Harlequin to repent his sin; however, Everett refuses by declaring that he would rather be dead than live under the watch of a tyrant. The Ticktockman argues that he is merely doing his job and that the Harlequin must adjust to the world around him. Furthermore, he argues, most people enjoy the order of the city and do not appreciate the disruptions that he has been causing. The Harlequin disagrees, stating that most people find joy in the unexpected relief from the stress of time that he provides.

The Ticktockman once again threatens to turn Everett off, but when the Harlequin remains unfazed, the Ticktockman decides he will instead send him to the Coventry. There, in the Coventry, Everett is brainwashed through various techniques known to those who have read Orwell's, 1984, which no one in this society has. He returns announcing that he was wrong and that everyone must obey the schedule and the supremacy of time. Everett may not have been turned off, but his spirit was destroyed. This is often the case when martyrs, heroes, and reformers work to foment change.

Some time later, a worker tentatively approaches the Ticktockman. He had been 3 minutes late and now the whole schedule is off. The Ticktockman is taken aback and orders the worker to check the time again.

Analysis

Ellison uses the excerpt from Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" to serve as an introduction to his story. The subjects that Thoreau explored in his essay are a preview of what is to come in "Repent Harlequin! Said the Ticktockman." These subjects include the

relationship between the individual man and the system that he belongs to, specifically the government or state, and the types of men of which the system is comprised. For example, Thoreau asserts, and Ellison surely agrees with him, that there are men who serve the state as physical laborers. These are the men who build the roads, buildings, and infrastructure, as well as manufacture the goods that a viable society needs. The second type of man serves the state through his intellect. These men form the laws that a government needs to function and manage the laborers. Finally, there is a third, rarer, type of man. These are the men who effect change through revolutionary behavior aimed at getting their fellow man to question what has become the norm. These men serve as a check on the power of the system to dictate unfairly how the individual lives his or her life. It is this last type of man who is the focus of Ellison's short story. Ellison's theme is that this third group of men, who are often punished for their actions, are necessary to develop the most just government.

The protagonist, known only as the Harlequin, is introduced at the very beginning of the story. The reader comes to know that he has been causing a problem for the system and is thus in trouble. Ellison's placement of the forward by Thoreau causes the reader to want to root for this unknown character because he is part of the third group of men who effect change. Thus the system and its representative, the Ticktockman, become the antagonists. The difference between these two characters, the Ticktockman and the Harlequin is further distinguished in their very description. The Harlequin is given warm, human features, such as "elfin grin," "thatch of auburn hair," and "tanned features." While on the other hand, the Ticktockman has a machine-like presence. Not only is his title reminiscent of a machine, he also dons a mask and is therefore made symbolize the system rather than a man.

The reader is briefly introduced to the type of society in which these characters reside. It is a society that favors schedules and timeliness, not distractions and interruptions. The Harlequin is a man who chooses to change the status quo by having fun in an attempt to show people that there is another way to live. For his first prank, he has somehow amassed a large quantity of jellybeans, a candy that symbolizes childhood and carefree times, and drops them onto busy worker bees. For a few short minutes, 7 to be precise, the population forgets what time it is and what they should be doing, and they simply laugh and eat jelly beans. The dourness of the society is revealed further when the narrator says that jellybeans have not been manufactured in over 100 years.

The Harlequin's prank no doubt gets him into trouble, and he is summoned to appear before the Ticktockman to explain himself. In a society that values time so highly, it is an especially pointed insult that Harlequin does not show up for this meeting on time. The author is revealing that not only does the protagonist wish to give the population brief moments of joy, but he has no regard for timeliness. When he does arrive, he sings a merry song about Vermont. Vermont symbolizes a quiet, easygoing state and, thus, state of mind. In this society the place, and indeed mood, of Vermont is unknown. The people know only what is told to them by the timekeepers. This is why it is so perplexing that not only did Harlequin get his hands on a large quantity of jellybeans, but he also knows about this place called Vermont. How does he have access to such information that is supposedly impossible to acquire?

Having elevated the reader's interest by starting in the middle of the story, Ellison finally decides to explain the beginning. More specifically, Ellison means to explain how this society came to be how it is. It began with a society and government not unlike the one we have in the United States, particularly larger cities such as New York City. People are very busy and concerned with meeting times, getting ahead, being punctual, and moving on to the next big opportunity. Often, getting the deal or landing the promotion means beating out another candidate. Over time, the importance of timeliness superseded all other considerations. By slowly recounting everyday occurrences in which punctuality becomes a problem in people's daily life, the author is able to draw a parallel between the reader's life and that which he created. Like most science fiction, this piece raises the question, what if? What if our society became too regimented? Then it could look very much like the one controlled by the Ticktockman. Thus, the character is not only the Harlequin's nemesis but our own.

The level of fear that the Ticktockman and the rest of the government creates is evident in the fact that Pretty Alice is afraid for her husband. She does not understand his desire for change and is afraid that his actions will negatively impact her.

The next prank that the Harlequin attempts is ironic because he uses time against the authorities. He knows that they are expecting him to be late. The authorities and the government act on expectations and routines, while the Harlequin is unpredictable. As he foils the government plan to catch him, he strikes a chord with the physicians attending the conference because they see the humor in the situation. This is proof that the Harlequin is correct in his assertion to the Ticktockman, upon his final capture, that most people do not like the extreme control that time has over their life, and they welcome the reprieve. The Ticktockman seems confused by Everett. He is just a simple man, yet he is not afraid of the power of the government or the Ticktockman's ability to turn him off. Everett is so passionate about his desire to live in a free world that he would rather be dead. This belief is symbolic of revolutions around the world, throughout time. It is the democratic ideal that people be free and that they are entitled to their liberty. Time, in this case, is symbolic of all types of repression.

In the end, Everett may have been beaten by the timekeepers because he was brainwashed, but he opened the door for the next man or woman who is fed up with the inflated value of time in this society. The final irony of the story happens in the last paragraph. The Ticktockman himself has his lateness pointed out to him. No one in the society, not even the Ticktockman himself, is beyond the reach of the clock.

Analysis

Ellison uses the excerpt from Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" to serve as an introduction to his story. The subjects that Thoreau explored in his essay are a preview of what is to come in "Repent Harlequin! Said the Ticktockman." These subjects include the relationship between the individual man and the system that he belongs to, specifically the government or state, and the types of men of which the system is comprised. For example, Thoreau asserts, and Ellison surely agrees with him, that there are men who serve the state as physical laborers. These are the men who build the roads, buildings, and infrastructure, as well as manufacture the goods that a viable society needs. The second type of man serves the state through his intellect. These men form the laws that a government needs to function and manage the laborers. Finally, there is a third, rarer, type of man. These are the men who effect change through revolutionary behavior aimed at getting their fellow man to question what has become the norm. These men serve as a check on the power of the system to dictate unfairly how the individual lives his or her life. It is this last type of man who is the focus of Ellison's short story. Ellison's theme is that this third group of men, who are often punished for their actions, are necessary to develop the most just government.

The protagonist, known only as the Harlequin, is introduced at the very beginning of the story. The reader comes to know that he has been causing a problem for the system and is thus in trouble. Ellison's placement of the forward by Thoreau causes the reader to want to root for this unknown character because he is part of the third group of men who effect change. Thus the system and its representative, the Ticktockman, become the antagonists. The difference between these two characters, the Ticktockman and the Harlequin is further distinguished in their very description. The Harlequin is given warm, human features, such as "elfin grin," "thatch of auburn hair," and "tanned features." While on the other hand, the Ticktockman has a machine-like presence. Not only is his title reminiscent of a machine, he also dons a mask and is therefore made symbolize the system rather than a man.

The reader is briefly introduced to the type of society in which these characters reside. It is a society that favors schedules and timeliness, not distractions and interruptions. The Harlequin is a man who chooses to change the status quo by having fun in an attempt to show people that there is another way to live. For his first prank, he has somehow amassed a large quantity of jellybeans, a candy that symbolizes childhood and carefree times, and drops them onto busy worker bees. For a few short minutes, 7 to be precise, the population forgets what time it is and what they should be doing, and they simply laugh and eat jelly beans. The dourness of the society is revealed further when the narrator says that jellybeans have not been manufactured in over 100 years.

The Harlequin's prank no doubt gets him into trouble, and he is summoned to appear before the Ticktockman to explain himself. In a society that values time so highly, it is an especially pointed insult that Harlequin does not show up for this meeting on time. The author is revealing that not only does the protagonist wish to give the population brief moments of joy, but he has no regard for timeliness. When he does arrive, he sings a

merry song about Vermont. Vermont symbolizes a quiet, easygoing state and, thus, state of mind. In this society the place, and indeed mood, of Vermont is unknown. The people know only what is told to them by the timekeepers. This is why it is so perplexing that not only did Harlequin get his hands on a large quantity of jellybeans, but he also knows about this place called Vermont. How does he have access to such information that is supposedly impossible to acquire?

Having elevated the reader's interest by starting in the middle of the story, Ellison finally decides to explain the beginning. More specifically, Ellison means to explain how this society came to be how it is. It began with a society and government not unlike the one we have in the United States, particularly larger cities such as New York City. People are very busy and concerned with meeting times, getting ahead, being punctual, and moving on to the next big opportunity. Often, getting the deal or landing the promotion means beating out another candidate. Over time, the importance of timeliness superseded all other considerations. By slowly recounting everyday occurrences in which punctuality becomes a problem in people's daily life, the author is able to draw a parallel between the reader's life and that which he created. Like most science fiction, this piece raises the question, what if? What if our society became too regimented? Then it could look very much like the one controlled by the Ticktockman. Thus, the character is not only the Harlequin's nemesis but our own.

The level of fear that the Ticktockman and the rest of the government creates is evident in the fact that Pretty Alice is afraid for her husband. She does not understand his desire for change and is afraid that his actions will negatively impact her.

The next prank that the Harlequin attempts is ironic because he uses time against the authorities. He knows that they are expecting him to be late. The authorities and the government act on expectations and routines, while the Harlequin is unpredictable. As he foils the government plan to catch him, he strikes a chord with the physicians attending the conference because they see the humor in the situation. This is proof that the Harlequin is correct in his assertion to the Ticktockman, upon his final capture, that most people do not like the extreme control that time has over their life, and they welcome the reprieve. The Ticktockman seems confused by Everett. He is just a simple man, yet he is not afraid of the power of the government or the Ticktockman's ability to turn him off. Everett is so passionate about his desire to live in a free world that he would rather be dead. This belief is symbolic of revolutions around the world, throughout time. It is the democratic ideal that people be free and that they are entitled to their liberty. Time, in this case, is symbolic of all types of repression.

In the end, Everett may have been beaten by the timekeepers because he was brainwashed, but he opened the door for the next man or woman who is fed up with the inflated value of time in this society. The final irony of the story happens in the last paragraph. The Ticktockman himself has his lateness pointed out to him. No one in the society, not even the Ticktockman himself, is beyond the reach of the clock.

Characters

The Harlequin

The Harlequin, whose real name is Everett C. Marm, is a "man who had no sense of time." Dressed in motley fashion, the Harlequin disrupts the daily activities of the society in which he lives through practical jokes (such as showering shift workers with jelly beans) and his general lack of attention to time. Physically, the Harlequin is a small man, "elfin and dimpled and bright-eyed." He becomes a sort of hero to the lower classes, the people who through their daily work allow the entire system to run. Because of this, he comes to the attention of the Ticktockman who sends out his minions to find out who the Harlequin really is.

As a man, Everett C. Marm is not "much to begin with," but as the Harlequin, he is a danger to a society that depends on punctuality and smooth running of its machinery. His general nonconformity and his anarchistic actions threaten the culture. Indeed, he incites crowds of people to "saunter a while," to "enjoy the sunshine." When he tells the crowd, "down with the Ticktockman," he is essentially committing treason. Consequently, the Harlequin is captured, apparently brainwashed, and made to appear on television to recant.

Because "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" is a kind of allegory, none of the characters are developed or rounded, nor are they intended to be. Although the Harlequin is the main character, he represents a type of character rather than a realistic individual. His reply to the Ticktockman, "Get stuffed!" is indicative of his status as the trickster/rebel, the character who refuses to cooperate with authority in spite of the danger to himself.

Everett C. Marm

See The Harlequin

Pretty Alice

Pretty Alice is Everett C. Marm's girlfriend or wife. She is someone who "wants to belong," someone who finds living in the conformity and regularity of the society both comfortable and desirable. She is disgusted with Marm's role as the Harlequin, and she is out of patience with Marm's habitual lateness. Ultimately, she betrays the Harlequin to the Ticktockman by revealing his real name.

The Ticktockman

The Ticktockman is the Master Timekeeper of the society. As such, his role is to make sure that everything runs smoothly and on time. He also has the capability of monitoring each citizen's punctuality and deducting the total number of late minutes from the life span of each individual. Thus if a person arrives five minutes late for work, the Ticktockman deducts those five minutes from the person's life. Ultimately, the Ticktockman turns off anyone whose tardiness becomes chronic or who accumulates too many late minutes.

The character of the Ticktockman represents the fusion of the totalitarian dictator with the all-powerful machine; he has both the will and the means to keep the System operating through the cardioplate technology that allows him both access to an individual's every movement and biological processes. As such, this character is a villain.

Because the Ticktockman wears a mask, it is difficult for the reader to determine if he is a human or not. It is just as likely that he is a robot as a human being. Certainly, the noise he makes, "mrmee, mrmee, mrmee" at the end of the story, when he himself is running three minutes late, suggests that he is mechanical rather than human.

Themes

Conformity and Individualism

In "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman," Ellison clearly sets his hero, the Harlequin, in opposition to both the totalitarian regime of the Ticktockman and the master schedule and to the masses of people who choose to conform to the strictures of the society. His opening quotation from Thoreau makes this clear. Thoreau argues that most people serve the state without thinking and without moral reflection. Consequently, for Thoreau, these people have no more worth than "horses and dogs." Real heroes, then, are those who "serve the state with their consciences." Ellison draws on Thoreau's image of "wooden men" who "can perhaps be manufactured" in his description of shift workers heading for their jobs: "With practiced motion and an absolute conservation of movement, they sidestepped up onto the slow-strip and (in a chorus line reminiscent of a Busby Berkeley film of the antediluvian 1930s) advanced across the strips ostrich-walking till they were lined up on the expresstrip."

The futuristic society of the story is one that values conformity and discourages individual differences. Indeed, the Harlequin's idiosyncrasies are considered "a strain of disease long-defunct, now, suddenly, reborn in a system where immunity had been forgotten, had lapsed." Personality itself had been "filtered out of the system many decades before." In a culture that depends on workers arriving on time at factories to do line work, conformity ensures the utmost efficiency in the production of uniform manufactured products. Individualism, then, is dangerous to "The Ones Who Kept The Machine Functioning."

It is in his description of Pretty Alice and the Harlequin, however, where Ellison most clearly demonstrates the contrast between conformity and individualism. Pretty Alice criticizes the Harlequin for speaking with "a great deal of inflection." In addition, she is irritated that he dresses differently from other people. But most of all, Pretty Alice is angry that the Harlequin is always late, in spite of his promises not to be. This anger eventually leads the conformist Alice to turn in the non-conformist Harlequin to the Ticktockman, who tells the Harlequin that Alice "wants to belong; she wants to conform." Even love, then, does not seem to have the power to conquer the suffocating sameness of the culture. Ironically, Alice's betrayal makes the Harlequin even more of an individualist; his loss of Pretty Alice means that he stands alone against the inquisition of the Ticktockman.

Science and Technology

Like many writers of speculative fiction, Ellison seems to have mixed feelings about the ways science and technology affect the lives of citizens of industrialized nations. On one hand, the society in "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" appears to be prosperous; everyone seems to have a job, and even the Harlequin, who is late for

everything, has access to an airboat and manages to secure the money to buy 150,000 dollars' worth of jelly beans. Technology and attention to the clock has made the culture and its people efficient to the maximum degree. Indeed, the entire culture of "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" serves technology. Like worker bees in a hive, the people report to work at exactly the same time each day, each to do his or her specific task designed to make the entire machine of the society run smoothly. This efficiency results in an orderly and safe climate for the citizens, "a society where the single driving force was order and unity and equality and promptness and clocklike precision."

It is science and technology, however, that also enable the government to monitor the individual lives of its citizens for promptness. Time cards and cardioplates are the means through which this happens. The cardioplate appears to be a device that each person wears that both monitors and regulates the flow of blood through the heart to the brain. When a cardioplate is turned off, the person dies. Ellison writes, "What they had done, was devise a method of curtailing the amount of life a person could have. If he was ten minutes late, he lost ten minutes of his life. . . .And so, by this simple scientific expedient (utilizing a scientific process held dearly secret by the Ticktockman's office) the System was maintained."

Style

Allusions

Literary allusions are references to familiar characters, real people, events, or concepts used to make an idea more easily understood. Moreover, allusions serve as a sort of intellectual shorthand; by inserting an allusion in a story, the writer succinctly inserts an additional text, or history, or philosophical system into his or her story, in just a word or two. For example, Ellison's opening passage from Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" not only provides the image of the hero into the story, it also embeds the whole notion of civil disobedience, Thoreau's metaphor of marching to the beat of a different drummer, and the incident of Thoreau's night in jail for his refusal to pay income tax, among other ideas and events. Likewise, by choosing to use Bolivar, Napoleon, Robin Hood, Dick Bong, Jesus, and Jomo Kenyatta as descriptors of how the lower classes thought of the Harlequin, Ellison is able in just a few words to insert the stories and historical events associated with each of these figures into his story.

One of the most important allusions in the story comes in the final page. "So they sent him to Coventry. . . . it was just like what they did to Winston Smith in NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR, which was a book none of them knew about, but the techniques are really quite ancient, and so they did it to Everett C. Marm . . . ." *1984* is a book by George Orwell, written in 1949. The main character, Winston Smith, is a quiet bureaucrat who works in the ironically named Ministry of Truth. Smith secretly rebels against the government, and begins an illicit affair with Julia. Although they love each other, she betrays him during her torture and brainwashing. The novel, with its warning about the dangers of totalitarian society, hit a responsive chord in England and the United States; the world of *1984* seemed very close to the so-called "Iron Curtain" of the Soviet Bloc nations. Ellison's use of Orwell's title inserts the entire novel into the short story. Readers familiar with Orwell's work will recognize that the Harlequin is both brainwashed and destroyed as a result of his nonconformity. They will also recognize that Ellison has a larger purpose in this story, to warn his readers of the dangers inherent in contemporary industrial society.

Utopias and Dystopias

A utopia is an ideal place that does not exist in reality. Utopian literature creates an ideal world. Generally, utopian novels are novels of ideas where people have developed systems or technologies that allow them to focus on what is truly important in life. The word "Utopian" comes from the name of book written by Thomas More in 1516 about a perfect, imaginary place called "Utopia." Other famous utopian books include Plato's *The Republic* and H. G. Wells's *A Modern Utopia*.

Although "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" takes place in a futuristic world filled with technological conveniences, it belongs to a uniquely twentieth and twenty-first

century variation of the utopia called a "dystopia." Rather than a description of an ideal place, a dystopian novel describes an oppressive and horrific world of the future where some of the most troubling aspects of contemporary society have expanded and defined the world of the future. Examples of this genre include George Orwell's *1984*, as well as Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and *Oryx and Crake* (2003).

Dystopias generally serve as cautionary tales, warning readers of what will come if present conditions are not corrected. In "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman," Ellison warns against the homogeneity of modern life, and of the way that time and schedules are kept at the expense of individual human creativity.

Historical Context

McCarthyism and the Cold War

In the two decades before the writing of "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman," a series of events occurred in the United States that marked the culture for years to come. In 1945, the Second World War ended. The Potsdam Conference effectively divided up Eastern Europe into spheres of influence. Consequently, the Soviet Union gained control over large sections of the area and quickly closed down access and communication to and from those countries. Winston Churchill in a famous speech referred to this part of the globe as the "Iron Curtain," and this metaphor persisted until the breakup of the Soviet Union many years later.

Thus, the "hot" Second World War degenerated into a cold war, a time when Western nations vied with the Soviet Union for power and control. Because both sides were developing considerable nuclear arsenals, the cold war was in deadly earnest; during the 1950s and 1960s, Americans lived with the very real fear of nuclear annihilation.

The fear of the Soviet Union and the fear of communism led to what has been described as "The Red Scare" in the United States. In 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy began widespread accusations and investigations of suspected communist activities in the United States. He and his followers managed to elicit great support. Not only were government workers required to take loyalty oaths to keep their jobs, ordinary citizens were called upon to testify against their neighbors, coworkers, and friends. Many businesses and firms refused to hire anyone who had been accused of being a communist, even if they had not been found guilty of any wrongdoing. This led to what has been called a "blacklist." Many writers, actors, artists, and directors found themselves on this list and out of work for many years.

At the height of McCarthyism, the hearings were televised and viewed by Americans all over the country. Many people cooperated with the investigations and accusations as a way of keeping themselves safe from suspicion. Those who chose not to testify and who spoke out against McCarthy's group were often punished through the loss of jobs and income. Like the conformists of "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman," many American citizens strove not to be noticed, rather than to stand up for what was right. Ellison came of age during the McCarthy era; his steadfast support of the individual's duty to resist oppressors of any persuasion reveals the deep impression this period had on him.

The Vietnam War

In 1954, the French defeat at the battle Dien Bien Phu ultimately led to American involvement in Vietnam. In response to a vacuum of power quickly filled by communist nationalists led by Ho Chi Minh, American presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and

Johnson, fearful of the spread of communism in Southeast Asia, sent first advisors and later troops to prop up a faltering and corrupt government in South Vietnam in their fight against the communist nationalists. In 1965, American public opinion, while still largely in support of the Vietnam policies of the American government was beginning to turn. As more men were drafted for service in Vietnam, and as the casualty lists grew larger, Americans began to question American involvement.

In many ways, "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" reflects the growing unrest with the Vietnam War. Ellison's use of Thoreau initially recalls Thoreau's own stance against the Mexican War. His refusal to pay income taxes used to support what he considered an unjust war landed him in jail. Likewise, Ellison reminds his readers that unthinking conformity and support of repugnant government decisions leads to a society where the government controls all. The Harlequin in many ways resembles the anti-war protestors of the 1960s in his essentially peaceful yet naive confrontation with the raw power of the state. The fictional Harlequin's jelly bean drop foreshadows real flowers in the gun barrels of National Guard troops, as does the Harlequin's arrest and imprisonment foreshadow the violence of the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

In the end, it is unlikely that Ellison would support either the government position on Vietnam, or the crowd mentality of many of the war protests. Rather, Ellison demonstrates through this story the importance of the individual of conscience resisting both.

Critical Overview

While Ellison's audience has largely been a popular one, academic writers also find much to say about Ellison and his work. George Edgar Slusser, for example, in an early study of Ellison's work, *Harlan Ellison: Unrepentant Harlequin*, connects Ellison to the tradition established by Poe, Hawthorne, Melville and Twain, that of the "mythical allegory."

D. R. Eastwood, on the other hand, examines "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" through the lens of Aristotelian rhetoric, suggesting that the story is a form of "Deliberative Rhetoric," as is Orwell's *1984*. That is, these stories "caution citizens that their governments are encroaching upon their freedom and thereby diminishing their lives." He specifically identifies "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" as a parable.

Thomas Dillingham, in an article for *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, identifies the Harlequin as one of Ellison's most famous creations, and connects him to other famous literary characters such as Winston Smith from *1984* (1949) and the hero of Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962). He concludes that with this story, "Ellison thus adds his entry to the special subgenre of twentieth-century works that explore violation of the mind as the ultimate form of slavery."

Other critics praise Ellison for his development as a writer, as evidenced by the story. Joseph Patrouch, for example, cites "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" as Ellison's "breakthrough" story, the story that shows "Ellison growing out of the formula."

Nonetheless, while most critics applaud "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" for its daring experimentation and message, one who finds what he considers a fatal flaw in the story is Michael D. White. His concern is that Ellison does not pay attention to historical processes in the story, and thus, although this is a story concerned with time, it is nonetheless a static story. He writes that Ellison's "weakness stems from his inability to place this mechanistic, efficiency-oriented, and profit-geared system in the proper light of its historical origins and development. The system's past is absorbed in its present-future."

Ellen Weil and Gary Wolfe, in their 2002 study *Harlan Ellison: The Edge of Forever*, however, refute White's interpretation, arguing that it is not Ellison who portrays time as static; rather, it is the society the Harlequin wishes to undermine that destroys history. They argue, "One of the subtler ironies of the story is that it reveals how a society that ostensibly worships time in fact destroys or negates it. . . ." For Weil and Wolfe, "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" is the "central story" in *Paingod and Other Delusions*.

Other critics variously see "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" as an apocalyptic story (Oscar de Los Santos); as a mock epic (Stephen Adams); or as a representation of Mardi Gras madness (Earle V. Bryant). The centrality of "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the

Ticktockman" to the canon of Ellison's work suggests that there will be continuing readings of the story in the coming years.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2

Critical Essay #1

Henningfeld is a professor of English literature at Adrian College who writes widely on literary topics for academic and educational publications. In this essay, Henningfeld identifies the ways that Ellison exploits the archetype of the Trickster through the character of the Harlequin, through the narrator of the story, and through his own role as writer of the tale.

"'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" is a deceptively simple tale. It is clearly a parable, a short illustrative story intended to teach a moral lesson. Set in a surreal future world where workers ride to work on moving sidewalks and everyone dresses alike, the characters of the story are more types than personalities.

Ellison draws on an established tradition to create his main characters: the Italian commedia dell'arte, a theatrical form that flourished throughout Europe from the late Middle Ages through the 18th century. In the commedia dell'arte, actors wear masks to identify the stock characters they are playing, and the plots are highly stylized and conventional. A Harlequin is a principal stock character in the commedia dell'arte, and is often witty, capricious, and wily. Dressed in a tight costume covered with colored diamond shapes, the Harlequin also carries a slapstick with which he hits other characters. Anyone watching a production will recognize the mask of the Harlequin immediately; indeed, in the commedia dell'arte, the mask is more important than the player.

In creating his character of the Harlequin, Ellison not only utilizes the conventions of the commedia dell'arte to provide a quick understanding of the role of this character, he also reaches deep into an almost universal archetype, the trickster. Trickster figures function in oral tradition and literature across cultures; tricksters play important roles in North American Indian legends as well as in stories from such widely diverse areas as Japan, Africa, and South America. These figures are paradoxical; on the one hand, they are often represented as immature pranksters. On the other, they are also often cultural heroes. Tricksters both destroy and recreate systems, undermining power and authority structures.

Everett C. Marm, in his guise as the Harlequin, is clearly a trickster figure. Small, impish, with an "elfin" grin, he fits the physical description of the trickster archetype. Further, Tricksters tend to be young and rebellious, jokesters who undermine the established order through their own refusal to go along with the rest of the crowd. Ellen Weil and Gary K. Wolfe write that "'Repent, Harlequin!' equates anarchic, immature behavior with the creative force in an otherwise mechanized society."

Earle V. Bryant also identifies the Harlequin as a type of trickster. In his article suggesting that the Harlequin bears close resemblance to a Mardi Gras float rider, Bryant introduces yet another incarnation of the trickster figure, the Lord of Misrule, who, for a day, turns the world upside down. He calls the Harlequin a "rebel who uses

merriment, not only as a curative to revitalize a populace that has forgotten how to laugh, but also as a weapon to topple a tyrannical regime . . . ."

The Harlequin, however, is not the only trickster in "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman." The narrator of this story serves a similar function but in a slightly different arena, that of literature. The narrative voice in this story is ironic and parodic, and breaks many of the conventions of storytelling. As Ellen Weil notes, "the relationship between author, storyteller, and narrator is . . . complex." In the first place, the narrator uses a series of allusions as he describes the Harlequin. "[H]e was considered a Bolivar; a Napoleon; a Robin Hood; a Dick Bong (Ace of Aces); a Jesus; a Jomo Kenyatta." These allusions, while descriptive, are also jarring. How do Jesus and Dick Bong end up on the same list? How does a rebel independence fighter like Bolivar or Jomo Kenyatta compare to men dedicated to world domination like Napoleon? The narrator uses these allusions to both inflate and deflate the description of the Harlequin.

The narrator also chooses to wreak havoc with the chronology of the story. He refuses to tell his listeners the story in chronological order. Rather, as he tells the reader, "Now begin in the middle, and later learn the beginning; the end will take care of itself." By so ordering the story, the narrator undermines conventional audience expectations of how stories should be told. Instead, he chooses how to structure the story, thus both destroying and recreating the time sequence. Thus, both the Harlequin and the narrator serve as temporal anarchists: The Harlequin refuses to obey the laws of time in his society, and the narrator ignores the "laws" of sequential storytelling.

Finally, the narrator breaks the "third wall," that empty space that separates actors from audience. He chooses to speak directly to the reader in very informal prose, thus creating himself as a character in the story. He uses second person, addressing the reader as "you," bringing the reader directly into the story.

In these three ways, the narrator acts as a literary trickster, a character in his own story who refuses to use the structured and conventionalized formats of storytelling. Like the Harlequin, he mixes up reader response as readers attempt to reassemble the story into something they are familiar with. This narrator, clearly an individualist, deviously resists the "formula" science fiction story; he is a rebel against the fossilized genre in which he finds himself.

It is possible to move out from the story one more level, to find the master trickster behind "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman." This trickster is Harlan Ellison himself, the writer with the name so curiously close to his hero's pseudonym. The similarity extends beyond the name to physical characteristics. At five feet four inches, Ellison resembles the hero he creates. The similarities are so obvious that writer George Slusser titled his 1977 study of Ellison and his work *Harlan Ellison: Unrepentant Harlequin*.

Ellison clearly understands himself to be a trickster, an individual who, through his refusal to go along with the conventions of the science fiction genre as it was at the beginning of the 1960s, creates a new and sometimes grittier kind of writing. Even

Ellison's reluctance to be identified as a "New Wave" science fiction writer speaks to his trickster qualities. The quintessential literary anarchist, Ellison refuses to be boxed into any genre or convention.

In the social arena, Ellison also plays the trickster, a kind of David to cultural Goliaths. In the 1970s, the behemoth he attacked was television; more recently, Ellison has taken on media giant AOL Time Warner. Again, the irony is evident. Ellison made his mark (or at least part of his mark) as a television scriptwriter, and has exploited the new computer/Internet technology with web sites, CD—ROM games, and digital recordings. In so doing, he once again displays his understanding of himself as trickster, the individual who both uses and undermines the cultural conventions and technologies of his day.

Identifying with the Harlequin is not a new strategy for Ellison, who writes himself into many of his stories. As Michael Moorcock argues, "Almost all the characters in these stories are, of course, Harlan Ellison. Harlequin the gadfly is an idealized Ellison, justifying his penchant for practical jokes, giving it a social function (one can almost see him as a 'good' version of Batman's adversary, the Joker.")

Stephen Adams demonstrates another way that Ellison plays the trickster with his own writing by using devices and conventions associated with the epic tradition. In addition to beginning in medias res, or in the middle, Ellison also uses "catalogs, elaborate similes, an arming scene, launching of a ship, a dangerous woman, battles, single combat. . . ." Yet Ellison does not use the conventions in a traditional way. According to Adams, he "introduces epic conventions in order to parody them, twist them, turn them upside down." What he creates is not epic at all, but rather mock-epic.

Finally, Ellison plays the trickster with many of his stories by ongoing revisions and changes in later editions so a reader may find differences from collection to collection. In addition, Ellison adds introductions and annotations to his stories that often alter audience reception. Nowhere is this more evident than in "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman." Ellison's story is a parable, an instructive story with a moral message. The introductory quotation from Thoreau makes his purpose evident, as does the commentary from his narrator. He also connects the story to George Orwell's *1984*, suggesting that he has a strong message he wants to send readers about heroic individuality. And yet, when "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" appears in Moorcock's 1979 collection of Ellison's works, *The Fantasies of Harlan Ellison*, it is with an introduction by Ellison saying that he wrote the story to explain his own unremitting failure to arrive anywhere on time: "I am always late. . . . I've decided that unlike most other folk with highly developed senses of the fluidity of time, the permanence of humanity in the chronostream, et al, I got no ticktock going up there on top. So I had to explain it to the world, to cop out, as it were, in advance. I wrote the following story as my plea for understanding. . . . "These comments, appearing as a headnote before the story itself, utterly undermine the apparent high moral message of the story and render it nearly trivial. Thus, while critics such as Thomas Dillingham argue that Ellison's story is about a "gesture of defiance" and that that gesture, "no matter how self-defeating, may be the only self-authenticating effort an individual can make," Ellison says that the

story is about his own lack of punctuality. Ever the trickster, Ellison subverts critical commentary□like his Harlequin□by metaphorically "inserting thumbs in large ears," "[sticking] out his tongue, [rolling] his eyes and [going] wugga-wugga-wugga."

This is surely a trickster's tale. "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" is shot through with irony: where readers expect the elevated language of epic as in Milton, they get an informal, futuristic slang more reminiscent of Vonnegut; where they expect a hero like Christ or Jomo Kenyatta, they get Everett C. Marm; and where readers expect a grand gesture, they get jelly beans. Nevertheless, in the gap between reader expectation and Ellison's story, there is still room for the moral lesson, a lesson that nearly disappears in the Harlequin's defeat and subsequent television appearance, a lesson that Ellison himself subverts with his later explanations. The moral of the story is that any individual, even someone with a name like Everett C. Marm, can and must stand up to the totalitarian hegemony of schedule and power. No matter how small the gesture, Ellison argues in this story, no matter how small the David and how huge the Goliath, it is the making of the gesture that is important. Thus, what appears as defeat for the Harlequin opens a tiny window in the "mrmee, mrmee, mrmee" of the Ticktockman.

Source: Diane Andrews Henningfeld, Critical Essay on "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman," in *Short Stories for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2005.

Critical Essay #2

Ullmann is a freelance writer and editor. In the following essay, Ullmann discusses how time is tenuous in Ellison's story and how the Harlequin is able to exploit that weakness to further his cause of civil disobedience.

Ellison's short story "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" features a futuristic dystopia□the opposite of a utopia□where humanity is so enslaved to time that even the very vitality of one's heart is controlled by "The Ones Who Kept The Machine Functioning Smoothly." People move from task to task with machine-like regularity; those who are late are punished by having proportional time shaved from end of their lives, until the end catches up with the present and those people are turned off. Ellison here represents tardiness as a crime fit for the ultimate punishment: the death penalty:

. . . and one day we no longer let time serve us, we serve time and we are slaves of the schedule, worshippers of the sun's passing, bound into a life predicated on restrictions because the system will not function if we don't keep the schedule tight.

Until it becomes more than a minor inconvenience to be late. It becomes a sin. Then a crime. Then a crime punishable by . . .

The reader enters the story in the middle of its action where the conflict is created by one man's rebellion against the System and its strict order of time. The Harlequin acts out in ridiculous ways: ruffling shoppers with zany behavior; dropping jellybeans on workers as they change shifts; shouting blasphemous things from rooftops. The extremity of his conduct mirrors the severe actions the Master Timekeeper (known behind his back as the Ticktockman) "and his legal machinery" must take to maintain order and timeliness. The society that the Ticktockman serves is ruled by time. Through his public outbursts, the Harlequin shows the System and the Ticktockman that time is tenuous, thus undermining the Ticktockman's power and, eventually, the order of society. Ellison's story is meant to provoke thought, primarily on civil disobedience, but also on the meaning of time and its usefulness as a tool of control.

Modern Western sense of time is not fixed, but always slowly changing along with societal values. Currently most people keep a day planner or personal calendar to track activities, meetings, and important dates. Many people begin the day being awaked by an alarm clock. Clocks are found in most public areas. And while it is generally considered rude to be late, most people expect there to be some flexibility for unexpected contingencies. The order that time brings to modern life is perceived as a characteristic of civilized life. Thus it is good to pay heed to the time, to have meetings, to schedule events. The organizing strength of time□its consistency, its steady beat□is portrayed in Ellison's story by the machine-efficient flow of society: supply and demand, work and rest.

In contrast to the orderliness that time brings to people's lives, time is also perceived as a prison or a cage. People may now and then feel burdened by their packed schedules

and never-ending parade of commitments. Yet they feel obligated to continue—or perhaps schedule a vacation. These days spontaneity is not always an option because it is too random, too uncontrolled. In "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman," the Harlequin relishes spontaneity. He brings relief to his predictable society, dropping sweet, brightly-colored jelly beans into people's lives as they come and go from work, creating a holiday, a reprieve from the workday.

The Harlequin also brings chaos, as the supply and demand of the economy suffers from unexpected delays in the schedule. This is what is meant by time being tenuous. Timeliness has become so important in this society that it is, in fact, a weakness because it is *too* important. Time has become such a crucial feature to how this future society is organized that a small ripple causes big waves. The Harlequin exploits this weakness to make his point that this rigid world is awful and needs to change and flexibility.

In this story, time is represented by the human heart (known colloquially as a "ticker") which is controlled with a cardioplate. The heart is like a living clock, which this society oppresses in the name of order and civilization. Time is thus a tool of life and death that is wielded by totalitarian leaders. Although they control the passage of a person's life, it is not against the passage of time that the Harlequin rebels. He fights the control of time, seeks to return choice of how time passes to the individual.

The Harlequin gambles with his life but he is beyond caring for life in this world. "After all, his name was Everett C. Marm, and he wasn't much to begin with, except a man who had no sense of time." The Harlequin probably knows he will die sooner rather than later and the only way for that to not happen—and for this to be a tolerable world in which to live—is for society's values to change. And for that to change takes tremendous effort. He uses his limited time to work toward that change.

The Harlequin shows how time is tenuous with his pranks. Schedules are easily thrown off by minor, unexpected disturbances, sometimes by minutes, sometimes by hours. Eventually, as a wanted man, just his presence disrupts the schedule, throwing off a carefully maintained balance of supply and demand. The products listed are so silly-sounding (wegglers, popli, Smash-O, swizzleskid) as to make the reader question even how important the supply-demand cycle is when it's delivering only junk and not the necessities of shelter, food, and warmth. While the everyday citizen may see only a tremor, the effect the Harlequin has on society is, from the point of view of those at the top, that of an earthquake and just as potentially devastating.

. . . in a society where the single driving force was order and unity and equality and promptness and clocklike precision and attention to the clock, reverence of the gods of the passage of time, it was a disaster of major importance.

Though the Harlequin tries to reach everyone with his public outbursts—ladies of fashion, workers changing shifts, Thursday shoppers, physicians—he ultimately does not convince society as a whole that time is tenuous and living one's life is more meaningful than living a schedule. Some people are happy in the moment of his

disruptions but none make a change or a choice like the Harlequin's. In fact, at the end of the story they all accept the brainwashed Harlequin's broadcast apology as proof that society's order is right: "and if that's the way the system is run, then let's do it that way, because it doesn't pay to fight city hall, or in this case, the Ticktockman."

While time can bring a sense of control and orderliness, along with it comes a burden of responsibility to maintain that incessant pace. The Harlequin's power is in his abilities to move beyond the expected, embrace spontaneity, and have no fear as to the repercussions of his actions (as seen in the scene with Pretty Alice showing him the Wanted poster). His power is also his guilelessness: the Harlequin is what he is, without reservation or disguise. Despite his nickname, he hides behind no masks, literal or figurative. He stands in polar opposition to society's desire for order, and especially in opposition to the Ticktockman.

Even the physical characteristics of the two main characters are diametrically opposed. Where the Ticktockman is tall, the Harlequin is elfin, or small. One is soft-spoken and controlled; the other is loud and wild. The Ticktockman keeps the machine of society running smoothly while the Harlequin seeks to undermine its regularity. The Harlequin, in fact, equates timeliness itself with death: "'Don't be slaves of time, it's a helluva way to die, slowly, by degrees . . . down with the Ticktockman!'"

The Harlequin is unsuccessful at convincing the masses to behave differently, to have less regard for time. His pranks are no more than minor disruptions in individual lives; however, the Ticktockman appears to be intrigued by this troublemaker. The Ticktockman first threatens to turn off the Harlequin's cardioplate and then immediately says that he's not going to do that. Although he is known as a man of few words, the Ticktockman wants to speak with the Harlequin—he claims to want to know *who* he is, not just *what* he is. What is most telling of the Harlequin's success with the Ticktockman is that at the end of the story, the Ticktockman is three minutes late, doesn't care that he's late, and is muttering *"mrmee, mrmee, mrmee, mrmee"*—which is onomatopoeia for Marm, the Harlequin's real last name. The Ticktockman seems to have become insane, as if, perhaps, he were the one who went through reprogramming. Or even, as if, the Harlequin and the Ticktockman changed identities. The Ticktockman is masked, therefore, who would know? The author leaves these questions unanswered at the end.

The Harlequin's success at undermining the Ticktockman's sense of time foreshadows the eventual downfall of this society. As the Master Timekeeper, if the Ticktockman has lost his regard for the schedule then it is only a matter of *time* before society suffers many more of the same delays and disruptions that were originally caused by the Harlequin's pranks. Although punished with death, the Harlequin's cause thus will live on. And if the Ticktockman does not change things himself, another Harlequin, another trickster will rise. As acknowledged in the beginning of the story, the Harlequin spirit is inexplicable and irrepressible. Kill it, breed it out, vaccinate against it and this personality will always reappear—just as Everett C. Marm, a man with no sense of time, was born and lived in a world where time was sacred, above human life.

Ellison begins his story by quoting from Henry David Thoreau's seminal work of nonfiction *Civil Disobedience*. This long essay was inspired by a night Thoreau spent in jail after refusing to pay taxes, which was his opposition to the U.S.-Mexican War. Thoreau's other famous feat was the two years of solitude that he spent living in a cottage at Walden Pond in Massachusetts. Although the Harlequin is a poster-child for civil disobedience, he never chooses to remove himself from society. Unlike Marshall Delahanty, he does not run, he does not seek the solitude of nature, and he does not place himself outside the reach and influence of society. The Harlequin's mission, like any trickster, is to cause chaos and change and to do this he must be in the thick of things.

The ultimate proof of time's tenuousness is the brevity of individual human life as compared to the rest of history. The Harlequin, giving up this own life without repentance, seems to know this. Unfortunately, the brevity of individual human life means that it's that much easier for humanity to be doomed to repeat history's mistakes. "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" is a story that stands as a modern fable, exposing some faults and weaknesses of today's society in hopes that by exposing them, humanity never spirals down that path.

Source: Carol Ullmann, Critical Essay on "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman," in *Short Stories for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2005.

Adaptations

"'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" was adapted as a graphic novel in 1997 by Ellison and illustrator Rick Berry. The book was published by Underwood Books.

A collection of Ellison short stories is available as an electronic book, released by Fictionwise.com in 2003, and available for download through Microsoft Reader. Volume 1 includes the story, "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman."

A recording of Ellison's adaptation of "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" for the radio series *2000x*, released in 2000, is provided by Hollywood Theatre for the Ear and is available through Audible.Com. Ellison narrates the story, and Robin Williams plays the Harlequin.

Topics for Further Study

Read Thoreau's 1849 essay, "Civil Disobedience." What are the circumstances in which Thoreau wrote this essay? What are the main points that he makes? Why do you think that Ellison chose to use the quote that he did to start "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman?"

Examine the adaptation of "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" by Ellison and Rick Berry as a graphic novel, looking particularly at the illustrations. How do the illustrations change or affect your reading of the story? What techniques does illustrator Berry bring to Ellison's short story? Pick some of the drawings that you would have done differently, redraw them according to how you think they should appear, and share with your class why you think your adjustments help convey the story better.

Read Ellison's classic collections of essays on television, *The Glass Teat* (1970) and *The Other Glass Teat* (1975). What does Ellison have to say about the influence of television on American culture? Consider the ways television has changed since the 1970s. Write an essay about what you imagine Ellison might say about the television of the present day.

John W. Campbell, writer and editor of *Astounding Science Fiction* and *Analog* is considered the father of modern science fiction. Research Campbell's life and identify those writers on whom Campbell had the most influence. Write an essay that explores what do you see as Campbell's legacy to the field.

Compare and Contrast

1960s: The use of technology grows dramatically during the decade. Supercomputers are linked together to increase their power, and there is both widespread optimism about technology as well as unease with how technology will be used in the future.

Today: Computers are in nearly every home, and most computers are linked to the Internet. This linkage offers ready access to a great deal of information, but many computer uses have concern that the linkages can also divulge private information to a large audience.

1960s: The Soviet Union reaches superpower strength, and the United States engages in a cold war with that nation. Americans fear the Soviet way of life, seeing in communism a denial of individuality.

Today: The Soviet Union no longer exists, and communism is no longer a world force, except in China where the emphasis is still on the community rather than on the individual.

1960s: Clocks and watches have hands and faces, which are significantly human descriptions of their working parts. Most importantly, clocks and watches are analog; that is, the second hands, minute hands, and hour hands move at a continuous, continual, and consistent rate. Measuring time, for most people, is somewhat approximate.

Today: Clocks and watches increasingly have digital displays that render seconds, minutes, and hours in discrete units. As a consequence, timekeeping for most people has become more precise.

What Do I Read Next?

Beginning in the 1940s, Isaac Asimov wrote a series of short stories and novels concerning the interaction between robots and humans. Most famously, Asimov developed the Three Laws of Robotics in these works. Examples of this work are Asimov's *I, Robot* (1952); *Robots and Empire* (1985); and *The Complete Robot* (1983).

George Orwell's novel *1984* (1949) is an important book for any student interested in speculative fiction, dystopian novels, or grim visions of a mechanized future. Written at the beginning of the cold war, and depicting the near future, *1984* is a classic novel and necessary background for students of Ellison's "'Repent Harlequin!'"

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) is another classic of dystopian literature.

Science and Literature: Bridging the Two Cultures (2001), by David Wilson and Zack Bowen, while a sometimes difficult book, offers a compelling interdisciplinary examination of the ways science and the humanities interact with each other. The final chapter, which discusses Huxley's *Brave New World*, is particularly useful for students of the dystopian novel.

Further Study

Ellison, Harlan, "Ellison on Ellison," in *Locus*, Vol. 47, No. 1, July 2001, pp. 6—10.

In this article, Ellison reviews his long career, noting changes in his art and in his beliefs, providing an excellent background for the study of his fiction.

Erlich, Richard D., and Thomas P. Dunn, eds., *Clockwork Worlds: Mechanized Environments in SF*, Greenwood Press, 1983.

In addition to including a chapter on Harlan Ellison, this collection of essays considers the larger subject of mechanical environments and science fiction responses to technology.

James, Edward, and Farah Mendlesohn, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

This is an excellent collection of essays concerning such topics as gender, politics, and race in science fiction as well as illustrating a variety of critical approaches to the genre.

Porter, Andrew, ed. *The Book of Ellison*, ALGOL Press, 1978.

Porter has assembled an introduction by famed science-fiction writer Isaac Asimov, six critical articles, ten essays by Ellison himself, and a nonfiction checklist in this useful book. Although written over two decades ago, it still has merit for the student who wants to know more about Ellison.

Bibliography

Adams, Stephen, "The Heroic and the Mock-Heroic in Harlan Ellison's 'Harlequin,'" in *Extrapolation*, Vol. 26, No. 4, Winter 1985, pp. 285—89.

Bryant, Earle V., "Ellison's "'Repent, Harlequin!" Said the Ticktockman,'" in the *Explicator*, Vol. 59, No. 3, Spring 2001, pp. 163—65.

De Los Santos, Oscar, "Clogging Up the (In)Human Works: Harlan Ellison's Apocalyptic Postmodern Visions," in *Extrapolation*, Vol. 40, No. 1, 1999, pp. 5—20.

Dillingham, Thomas F., "Harlan Ellison," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 8, *American Science Fiction Writers*, edited by David Cowart and Thomas L. Wyner, Gale Research, 1981, pp. 161—69.

Eastwood, D. R., "Three by One: Harlan Ellison's 1966, 1968, 1969 Hugo-Winning Short Speculative Fiction," in *Hypothesis: Neo-Aristotelian Analysis*, Vol. 20, Winter 1977, pp. 16—21.

Ellison, Harlan, "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman," in *The Essential Ellison: A 35-year Retrospective*, edited and introduced by Terry Dowling, with Richard Delap and Gil Lamont, Nemo Press, 1987, pp. 877—86.

Moorcock, Michael, "Foreword," in *The Fantasies of Harlan Ellison*, Gregg Press, 1979, pp. x—xi.

Patrouch, Joseph, Jr., "Harlan Ellison and the Formula Story," in *The Book of Ellison*, edited by Andrew Porter, ALGOL Press, 1978, pp. 45—64.

Slusser, George Edgar, *Harlan Ellison: Unrepentant Harlequin*, Borgo Press, 1977, pp. 3—4.

Weil, Ellen, "The Ellison Personae: Author, Storyteller, Narrator," in *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1988, pp. 27—36.

Weil, Ellen, and Gary K. Wolfe, *Harlan Ellison: The Edge of Forever*, Ohio State University Press, 2002, pp. 137—41.

White, Michael D., "Ellison's Harlequin: Irrational Action in Static Time," in *Science-Fiction Studies*, Vol. 4, 1977, pp. 161—65.

BOOKRAGS

Copyright Information

This Premium Study Guide is an offprint from *Short Stories for Students*.

Project Editor
David Galens

Editorial
Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

Research
Michelle Campbell, Nicodemus Ford, Sarah Genik, Tamara C. Nott, Tracie Richardson

Data Capture
Beverly Jendrowski

Permissions
Mary Ann Bahr, Margaret Chamberlain, Kim Davis, Debra Freitas, Lori Hines, Jackie Jones, Jacqueline Key, Shalice Shah-Caldwell

Imaging and Multimedia
Randy Bassett, Dean Dauphinais, Robert Duncan, Leitha Etheridge-Sims, Mary Grimes, Lezlie Light, Jeffrey Matlock, Dan Newell, Dave Oblender, Christine O'Bryan, Kelly A. Quin, Luke Rademacher, Robyn V. Young

Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

©1997-2002; ©2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc.

Gale and Design® and Thomson Learning™ are trademarks used herein under license.

For more information, contact
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535
Or you can visit our Internet site at
http://www.gale.com

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any

form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution or information storage retrieval systems—without the written permission of the publisher.

For permission to use material from this product, submit your request via Web at http://www.gale-edit.com/permissions, or you may download our Permissions Request form and submit your request by fax or mail to:

Permissions Department
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535

Permissions Hotline:
248-699-8006 or 800-877-4253, ext. 8006
Fax: 248-699-8074 or 800-762-4058

Since this page cannot legibly accommodate all copyright notices, the acknowledgments constitute an extension of the copyright notice.

While every effort has been made to secure permission to reprint material and to ensure the reliability of the information presented in this publication, The Gale Group, Inc. does not guarantee the accuracy of the data contained herein. The Gale Group, Inc. accepts no payment for listing; and inclusion in the publication of any organization, agency, institution, publication, service, or individual does not imply endorsement of the editors or publisher. Errors brought to the attention of the publisher and verified to the satisfaction of the publisher will be corrected in future editions.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". © 1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". © 1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

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

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

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

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

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

Selection Criteria

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

How Each Entry Is Organized

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

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

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

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

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

Other Features

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

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

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

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

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

Citing Short Stories for Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We Welcome Your Suggestions

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

Editor, Short Stories for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535