The Snows of Kilimanjaro by Ernest Hemingway

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The Snows of Kilimanjaro by Ernest Hemingway

- Ernest Hemingway
- Major Works:
  - The Sun Also Rises
  - A Farewell to Arms
  - The Old Man and the Sea
  - For Whom the Bell Tolls
  - True at First Light
The Lost Generation

- This term was in regular use after the First World War in reference to the host of young men who were killed in it. The phrase is believed to have been invented by Gertrude Stein.

- The mood of the lost generation was well represented by some American novelists; particularly Scott Fitzgerald.

- The group of men who later came to be known as ‘war poets’ also belonged to the lost generation.
World War I

The First World War was a painful experience for Europe and America. It involved almost every European nation and at the time, the European nations controlled vast areas of Africa and Asia. New technologies of war including airplanes, vehicles and poison gas were used for the first time.
Africa and Europe

Africa

Mount Kilimanjaro is located in Kenya. It was a popular destination for courageous American and European tourists during the time between the two world wars.

Europe

Hemingway and the rest of the Lost Generation wandered around Europe, drank, spent time together, and produced some of the greatest art and literature of the 20th century. Many of this group were aimless, not happy with their home countries and refused to assimilate into the European culture.
Setting

- **Time** – Afternoon until night that same day; between First World War and Second World War

- **Place** – Safari camp on the plains of Tanzania

- **Mood** – Detachment

- **Tone** – Futility; regretful
Conflict

- **External Conflict**
  Man vs. Man (Woman) – Harry thinks that the women in his life have kept him from achieving great success as a writer.

- **Internal Conflict**
  Man vs. Himself – Harry struggles a lot to come to terms with his own death
“Compton” turns out to be a character in Harry’s deathbed hallucinations, as he never left his cot by Helen’s side at the camp. However, he exists only in Harry’s dream.

Harry

- Harry is an American writer who has spent his recent years married to various rich women in order to live a life of luxury. Trapped while on safari in Africa with his current wife Helen, a thorn scratch leads to his leg becoming infected with gangrene.
Characters

- Helen

Helen is Harry’s wife. Also known as The Wife, she remains unnamed until the end of the story when Harry refers to her by her name as he dies. He does not seem to love her, but he does respect her to a certain degree for her skill with a gun. She comes from a wealthy family and Harry has hatred for that. However, Helen cares for him greatly and tries to relieve his suffering.
Characters

**Molo**
An African servant boy provided on the safari trip. He helps change the dressings on Harry’s infected leg, serves drinks and helps move Harry’s cot.

**Williamson**
Williamson was a bombing officer Harry fought with in World War I. Williamson was mortally wounded by a German patrol, and Harry gave him all his morphine tablets to ease the pain of death.
Techniques

- **Flashbacks**
  - A term which probably derives from the cinema, and which is now also used to describe any scene or episode in a play, novel, story or poem which is inserted to show events that happened at an earlier time. It is frequently used in modern fiction.
Techniques

Flashbacks

The story is divided between six present-time sections which are set in regular type and flashbacks which are set in italics. In the present-time sections, the protagonist is facing his death. All he needs is whiskey and soda to accept his death. On the other hand, in the flashback sections, Harry faces his life. His flashbacks show the reader that he has had an exciting and well-travelled life but that he is also haunted by his memories of World War I.
Foreshadowing

- Foreshadowing - The technique of arranging events and information in a narrative in such a way that later events are prepared for or shadowed forth beforehand. The end is contained in the beginning and this gives structural and thematic unity.
Foreshadowing

- **The leopard’s skeleton** – The leopard’s skeleton foreshadows the death of the protagonist, Harry.

- **The hyena** – The hyena foreshadows the death of the protagonist.

- **Vultures** - Vultures foreshadow the death of the protagonist.
Symbolism

- **The Leopard** –
  - Leopard is a symbol of immortality. Harry himself was a ‘leopard’ at certain times in his life.
  - Harry is seen as a leopard in his youth, when he lived in a poor neighborhood of Paris as a writer.
  - In the war, when he gave his last morphine pills for himself to the horribly suffering Williamson and on his deathbed when he mentally composes flashbacks and uses his intention to write.
Symbolism

1. Mount Kilimanjaro

- **Immortality** – In most civilizations, God's promise of immortality resides on the highest mountain top: Mount Olympus for the Greeks and Mount Fuji for the Japanese.

2. The plains – The plains symbolize evil and confusion.

3. The hyena – It is a symbol of death that Harry fears.
Themes

- **Death** – Man’s spirit can triumph in spite of death. Three actions during Harry’s life make this possible:
  - Harry's intention to write in his painful state of unconsciousness.
  - Giving away his last morphine pills that he saved for himself to his friend Williamson who was in pain.
  - Sacrificing himself to his wife as opposed to absolving himself.
Study Questions

1. Write a note on the relationship of Harry and Helen in The Snows of Kilimanjaro.
2. Comment on the structural element in The Snows of Kilimanjaro.
3. Discuss Hemingway’s worldview in The Snows of Kilimanjaro.
4. Comment on the plot structure of The Snows of Kilimanjaro.
5. Comment on the setting of The Snows of Kilimanjaro.
Study Questions

6. Attempt a character sketch of Helen in *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*.

7. Bring out the significance of the title *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*.

8. Attempt a character sketch of Harry in *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*.

9. Comment on the narrative technique employed in *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*.

10. Comment on the symbolism used in *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*. 
References


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THANK YOU