

The Dream House

THE COMPLETE GUIDE AND RESOURCE

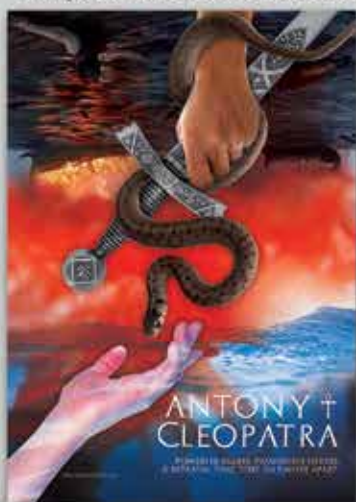
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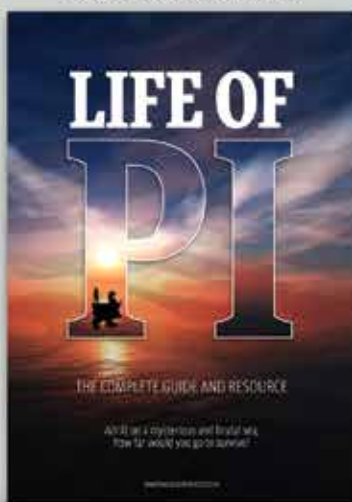
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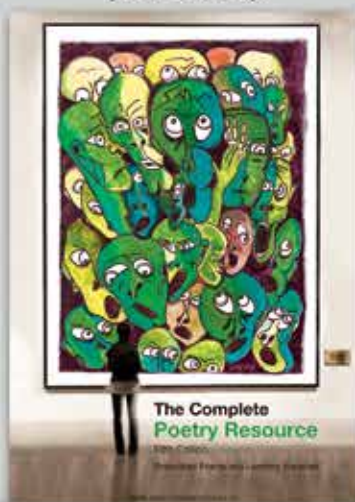
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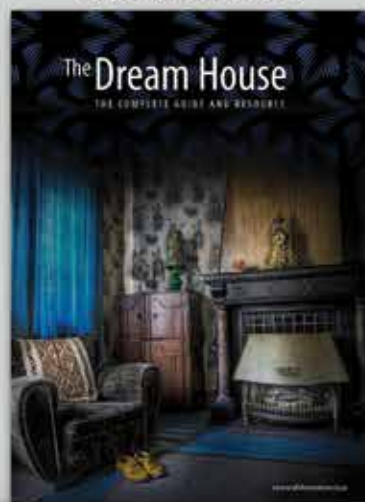
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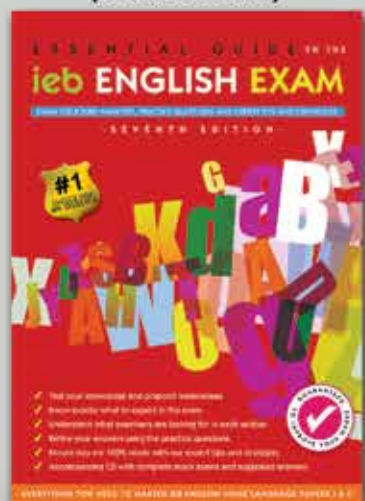
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THE DREAM HOUSE

Complete Guide and Resource

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Foreword

About The English Experience

The English Experience is an independent South African publishing house that specialises in developing high-quality English and Life Orientation educational resources for IEB educators and students. The team of passionate, talented experts behind The English Experience works tirelessly to ensure that every resource encourages insight, growth and debate — enriching and challenging both educators and students — without losing sight of the important goal of academic success and examination readiness.

Focused on bringing the subject to life, every resource The English Experience publishes incorporates a range of features — including content and contextual question and stimulating enrichment materials — designed to encourage a critical appreciation of the subject and to inspire the higher-order thinking for which examiners are always looking.

The world-class English Experience team includes highly experienced educators, some with over 20 years of classroom experience, passionate literary experts in various fields, such as South African fiction, poetry and Shakespeare, fanatical historians and researchers, creative writers, skilled editors, pernickety proofreaders and obsessive fact checkers — together with spirited university lecturers and enthusiastic young minds who help ensure our approach remains unique and fresh.

While academic success is a non-negotiable consideration, our aspiration is to inspire a genuine interest in, and love of, English literature.

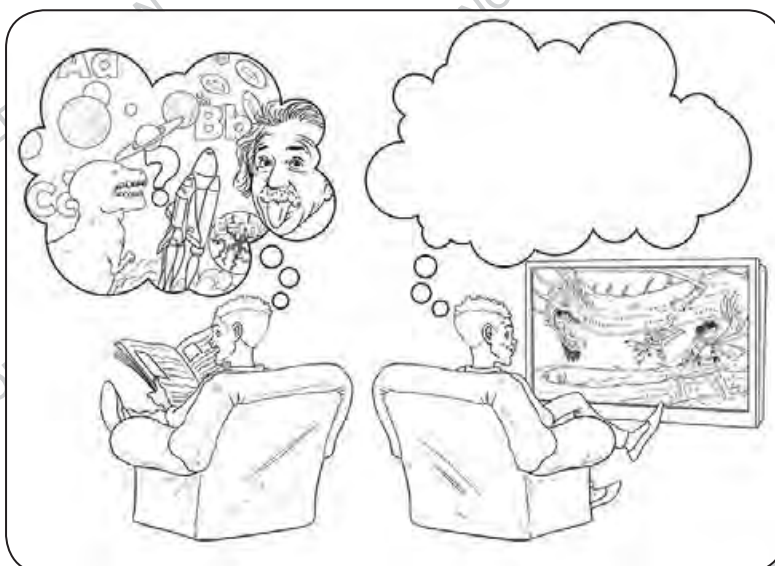


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Our approach

Perhaps the toughest challenge with teaching literature to modern students is convincing them that the extra effort required in reading a novel — compared with the passive immediacy of movies and TV shows — is worth it. Decoding the language and bringing the text to life in the imagination can be taxing for young adults so it’s perhaps not surprising that many of them see novels as works through which they must slog to earn marks or pass an examination.

This resource has been written with this reality in mind. Even though the language, themes and settings of the novel are likely to be easily accessible to Grade 12 students, particular attention has been paid to providing the kind of context and insight necessary to help them empathise with the characters and their struggles fully.



Reading a written description of a person, event or place encourages us to use our imaginations as we picture everything in our minds, unlike watching a movie or TV show, which creates these images for us on the screen. Ultimately, we are only limited by what we can imagine.

We passionately believe that studying literature rewards us with a broader, deeper understanding of ourselves and those around us. Our experience of this rewarding understanding is why this resource does more than provide students with a comprehensive, detailed analysis of the text. It also encourages them to engage with the novel on a personal level and to uncover their own responses through the extensive chapter-specific questions, enrichment tasks and essay topics.

Throughout this resource, students are challenged to agree or disagree with both the characters and events in the novel and the analysis that has been provided. By formulating and expressing their own responses to the opinions, ideas and themes explored in the novel, students are encouraged to reflect and grow as individuals, as well as students.

In the end, we have approached *The Dream House* the same way we approach every text: with two, interrelated goals in mind. The first, non-negotiable objective is to ensure examination readiness and success. The second ambition is to inspire a genuine interest in, and appreciation of, the work being studied.



Using this resource

This comprehensive resource includes: an extensive introduction to the author, the novel and its historical context; detailed summaries; rich literary analyses; diverse, chapter-specific short questions; challenging essay questions; and stimulating enrichment tasks — in short, everything needed to study the novel intensively and bring it to life.

Background to the novel

We recommend working through the *Background to the novel* section first so that students become familiar with the author and the context of the novel: its plot and characters, its historical setting and the central themes it explores.

While much of the story takes place on Dwaleni Farm, the characters are shaped by their experiences as citizens of different races living and growing up during the time of apartheid in South Africa. As a result, a brief knowledge of the historical, political and social complexities of the apartheid era will help students understand the perspectives and motivations of the characters.

The ‘introduction to the novel’ segment completes this section, providing students with an initial overview and appreciation of the plot, characters and themes of the work, before they engage with the text itself.

By working through this comprehensive introductory section first, students will be prepared, engaged and able to read the novel with the right mindset.



Critical commentary

Once students have been prepared and have read through the novel, the chapter-based summaries and analyses provided in the *Critical commentary* section ensure that a solid foundation of knowledge is laid.

Each chapter is summarised and analysed separately. Extensive glossaries are included, and students are required to engage with the content directly through chapter-specific questions.

Students can then methodically build on this foundation, only dealing with the whole novel once they have worked through it step by step.

At the end of the summaries, there is also a series of enrichment tasks and a wide selection of rigorous essay topics, ensuring that students also tackle the novel in its entirety.

Literary analysis

The *Literary analysis* section includes analyses of the plot, narration and structure, characters, themes, motifs and symbols. It also highlights key quotations from the novel, with suggested explanations.

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Literary essay

To ensure examination readiness and success, the resource also features an extensive section on the *Literary essay*. This section provides guidelines on writing literary essays, two annotated examples from which to learn, and a selection of essay topics. It also includes suggested further reading, a useful revision quiz and suggestions on how to prepare for an examination.

We hope you enjoy using this resource as much as we enjoyed putting it together. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

KEY TO USING THE BOXES IN THIS RESOURCE:



Definition or Glossary

The meanings of words and terms used in the text



Information

Additional details or facts about a topic



Alert

Something to which you need to pay attention



Quirky Fact

Fun, interesting, extraneous information



Checklist

A list of items or activities required to complete a task satisfactorily



Quote

An interesting or important quotation from the novel

Background to the novel

Author background

In The Dream House, author Craig Higginson has created a subtle, yet thought-provoking novel that explores the notions of truth and memory, identity and belonging, loss and renewal, and the possibility of emergence from the shadow of the past in contemporary South Africa. In this section, we present a short biography of the author and an interview with him in which he shares with us what inspired him to write the novel, the issues he wished to explore in the text and what he hopes students might gain from reading it.

Author biography



© Craig Higginson

Higginson was born in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1971, and moved to Johannesburg with his family at the age of five amidst the escalating tension surrounding the Rhodesian Bush War. He completed his schooling in the Natal Midlands, where he attended Clifton Preparatory School, Nottingham Road and, later, St Michael's Diocesan College (Michaelhouse). Even though he had already penned a novel and several poems by the time he matriculated, Higginson wanted to be a painter and enrolled to study Fine Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg in 1990.

It was during his early years at university that Higginson discovered his true passion for poetry, nonetheless, and switched his degree to a Bachelor of Arts in English and European Literature. 'I've never really left the state that I started writing in when I was 19 — essentially the state of being a poet in the world,' he said in an interview with Alexander Matthews for *Wanted* magazine. 'I don't think of myself as an activist. I see myself as someone who's trying to write poetry — it's just that the forms in which I write are fiction and theatre.' Matthews noted that Higginson believes poets 'de-familiarise the familiar' and that their work is 'about us reengaging with the everyday'.



St Michael's Diocesan College

St Michael's Diocesan College, or 'Michaelhouse' as it is more commonly known, is a boarding school for boys located in the Balgowan valley in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal.

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A STRANGE SORT OF DREAM

'I think it's practically impossible to be present in the present. It's always just struck me as so mysterious — life — it's such an extraordinary, strange sort of dream we're in. And I've always wanted to catch some of it and explore it and try to understand what it might be.'

Self-portrait by the author

In 1995, after graduating with his Honours degree, Higginson worked as the assistant to the legendary theatre director Barney Simon at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg. After Simon's death, Higginson moved to the United Kingdom, where he would live and work for the next decade. During this time, he worked with theatre greats at the Young Vic and the Royal Shakespeare Company in London, and served as a theatre critic for *Time Out* magazine.

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THEATRE OF THE STRUGGLE

The Market Theatre, founded in Johannesburg in 1976 by Mannie Manim and the late Barney Simon, was constructed out of the 'Indian Fruit Market' building (pictured in 1913). The theatre became internationally renowned as the South African 'Theatre of the Struggle'.

The Market Theatre challenged the apartheid regime, armed with little more than the conviction that culture can change society. The theatre provided a 'voice to the voiceless' and the courage and artistic quality of its work is reflected in the 21 international and more than 300 South African theatre awards it has won.

During the past four decades, the Market Theatre has evolved into a cultural complex for drama, music, dance and the allied arts. It remains at the forefront of South African theatre, actively encouraging new works that continue to reach international stages.

(Adapted from www.markettheatre.co.za)



Higginson admits, however, that his real passion lay with fiction and that he 'kept trying to leave the theatre'. In 1998, his first novel was published in the UK and South Africa. Entitled *Embodied Laughter*, it dealt with his experiences at boarding school in the Natal Midlands. Shortly after its publication, Higginson adapted Vladimir Nabokov's acclaimed Russian novel *Laughter in the Dark* for performance at the Royal Shakespeare Company and on BBC Radio. His reputation as a playwright and author was quickly becoming established.

In 2004, Higginson returned to South Africa to take up the position of Literary Manager at the Market Theatre, where he helped to develop strong and compelling scripts. In rediscovering his connection to South Africa and its people, Higginson was inspired to create his own original works of fiction and plays: *The Hill*, his second novel, was published in 2005, followed by *Last Summer* in 2010 and *The Landscape Painter* in 2011. He also penned four original plays between 2006 and 2015. While many of Higginson's plays are politically charged, in an interview with Matthews he describes his novels as 'shunning the public and the political', exploring instead 'the internal consciousness of the protagonist'.

Higginson's works have been lauded by critics and fellow novelists alike. Most notably, acclaimed South African authors Nadine Gordimer and Andre Brink have praised his writing; Michele Magwood noted that Brink described Higginson as being 'in the vanguard of the latest and most exciting novelists in South Africa, both robust and sensitive, offering a barometer of the best to be expected from the newest wave of writing in the country'. He has been nominated for, and named as the winner of, numerous Naledi Awards. He is a two-time recipient of the University of Johannesburg Main Prize for South African Literature in English, and has been shortlisted for both the *Sunday Times* Barry Ronge Fiction Award and the M-Net Literary Award. His plays have been performed in London's West End and in prestigious theatres throughout South Africa, the United Kingdom, Europe, the United States and elsewhere.

Higginson has completed his Master's degree in Creative Writing at the University of the Witwatersrand, where he has also served as an Honorary Research Fellow at the School of Literature, Language and Media. He lives in Johannesburg with his wife and daughter.



© Craig Higginson

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Novels:

The White Room (2018)
The Dream House (2015)
The Landscape Painter (2011)
Last Summer (2010)
The Hill (2005)
Embodied Laughter (1998)

Original plays include:

The Imagined Land (2015)
Little Foot (2012)
The Girl in the Yellow Dress (2010)
Ten Bush (co-writer; 2008)
Dream of the Dog (2007)
Truth in Translation (co-writer; 2006)

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Author interview

Author Craig Higginson shares his thoughts and feelings on a wide range of topics related to the novel, including what inspired him to write it, the issues he wished to explore, his interpretation of the motivations of the main characters, what he believes the work suggests about its major themes, and the importance of challenging the idea that what happened in the past is 'someone else's business' and not our responsibility.



© Craig Higginson

English Experience: What prompted or inspired you to write *The Dream House*?

Craig Higginson: I went to boarding school in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. On the other side of the hill from our school lived a farmer and his wife who were acquaintances of my family. I started to visit them over weekends. They were very similar to the characters of Patricia and Richard in the novel. They were vivid, eccentric and sceptical of my 'city boy' ways, but they were always kind to me. I got to know the farm as well as I knew our garden at home and I always felt welcome there. When I started to write my first play, it was set there. I think it was there, on that farm and in the surrounding Drakensberg hills, that my imagination found its starting place. Several of my plays and novels have been set in that area since.

So, the novel comes from the place and the people, as well as some of the stories that I heard while living there — including the incident when the farmer's Rottweiler dog attacked a young woman who worked at the dairy — but it comes, first and foremost, from me. Richard, Patricia, Looksmart and Beauty are all aspects of myself. When we dream about other people, we are not dreaming about them, but about ourselves — and our relation to them. It's the same with writing. Each character becomes an actor in a dramatic scenario you are developing — and the places and people and experiences that inspired them are soon left behind.



'I hope the reader comes away from the novel more prepared to listen, not so quick to judge, with a greater awareness that our truths are partial.'

EE: How long did it take you to write the novel?

CH: I started writing the idea for the novel when I was living in England — perhaps around the year 2000. At that point, it was a play and, when I picked it up a few years later and finished a draft, it was a short radio play for SAFM, called *Dream of the Dog*, which was first broadcast around 2006.

I then developed the radio play into a stage play and it opened on the Main Programme of the National Arts Festival in 2007, produced by the Market Theatre. I then changed the play again for the Hilton Arts Festival in 2008 and then developed quite a different draft for a production in London in 2010, where Janet Suzman played Patricia. We opened at a small theatre called the Finborough, but the play was so popular that it transferred to a West End theatre called Trafalgar Studios.

I had realised by then that the bones of this story were very powerful and that the issues explored resonated with a broad range of people — overseas as much as in South Africa. I decided in about 2012 to start reworking the play as a novel and it was first published in 2015 under the name *The Dream House*.

Of course, the writing of a play or a novel usually starts some time before you start the literal writing. The seed is planted many years before and it can take years for that seed to germinate and start to nose its way towards the light.

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‘The novel is, ultimately, questioning such absolutes as ‘black’ and ‘white’, ‘African’ and ‘European’. Identity is portrayed as something that is manifold, complex and, in the end, mysterious.’

EE: What are the main themes you set out to address in the work?

CH: When you write, you ask yourself, ‘What story am I telling?’ This is one level of story. Another level of story, which EM Foster called ‘plot’, tries to answer the questions, ‘What am I saying through the writing of this story? What ideas am I exploring?’ This can then be broken down into different threads or strands and these are often described as ‘themes’. We are often only concerned with this first question when writing the first draft of a novel: What story am I telling? The themes often emerge during the writing process and they are refined and developed through the drafts that follow.

From the outset, nonetheless, I was interested in the theme of ‘the truth’ — and how unattainable this can be. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) required people to tell the truth about the terrible things they did in the past so there could be reconciliation. It was an important symbolic moment for our country, but it only ever scratched the surface of things. How can we reach the truth? Past events can be represented in many different ways — and those representing them don’t have access to all the facts. So, if we can’t get at the truth, how can we begin to reach reconciliation? Is the will to tell the truth and to apologise enough for reconciliation, or does it require more for this to happen? You can already see that the confrontation between Patricia and Looksmart, which lies at the heart of the novel, is very much inspired by this concern.

The novel is also about the mysterious nature of the present. It is full of characters who are withholding information from other characters, creating dramatic irony for the reader (who often knows more about what’s going on between the characters than the characters themselves do). So, in this sense, it’s not just a post-TRC novel about memory and forgetting, but also an exploration of our contemporary situation as individuals and South Africans.

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‘The landscape of the novel is in transition and in a middle space between ruin and regeneration, which seemed to me a fitting image for contemporary South Africa.’

This concern with ‘the truth’ is a central theme running through the novel, but it also gave birth to a set of sub-themes. The theme of burial and digging up, of revealing and concealing, of opening things up and getting a better perspective, for instance. This theme is embodied in images like the dog, the mist, the child’s and the dogs’ graves, the bloodwoods, and the house itself, which Looksmart intends to make ‘open plan’.

It also led to the theme of love and hate and the relationship between these feelings. The ‘truth’ of what each of these is can sometimes seem indistinguishable; for instance, when Grace and the dog are locked together in a single image during the dog attack. ‘My love and your fear,’ as Looksmart describes it. Looksmart thinks he hates Patricia, but he realises by the end of the novel that he loved her and, perhaps, in part, loves her still. Trying to identify and distinguish

between love and hate — or what Sigmund Freud called the life-force (*Eros*) and the death-force (*Thanatos*) — is an important concern running through the novel. It affects each of the characters in different ways; for example, the letter John Ford leaves for Patricia.

A third theme that springs to mind is that of 'the home'. Where are we most at home? Are we at home in our homes? Are we at home in our country? This is also related to 'the truth' because it's about finding your real or authentic home as opposed to the false home or homeland you might reside in now. Each character is dreaming of a house where they will one day live. No one is happy with the house they are in now. It feels false to them and inadequate. This theme is something that was not really in the play, *Dream of the Dog*, but it became such a central concern of the novel that, ultimately, it inspired the title of the novel itself. One thing novels do much better than plays is to get right inside the minds (or consciousnesses) of their characters. So, in the novel, the characters are able to dream more, which is perhaps why this theme and the title emerged so strongly.

The landscape in transition was also something that became more prominent in the novel. On one level, the houses rising up out of the mud are structures for a brand-new future. On another level, the houses are like ruined buildings in a battle zone. The landscape of the novel is in transition and in a middle space between ruin and regeneration, which seemed to me a fitting image for contemporary South Africa.



'The novel is showing that each of us — black and white — has an ambiguous relationship with the country in which we are living.'



© Sabin Howard Sculpture

Another question the novel explores is whether or not we can, or should, be defined by our past actions. The Greek philosopher Aristotle argued that character is defined through action. You are not a courageous person if you think you are courageous or tell other people you are courageous. You can only be described as courageous if you act courageously. The same goes for things like honesty or generosity or kindness. We prove we are these things by doing them — consistently — so our past actions should define us.

We don't know why Patricia did not want Grace to go to the hospital in her car, so how can we judge her actions?

In all my writing, however, this idea is made problematic. If we don't know what someone is thinking or intending when they do something, how do we know what their action means? A good example in the novel is when Patricia doesn't want Grace to go to the hospital in her car. She never says why. Looksmart interprets this statement (which amounts to 'an action' as it is a turning point in the story) as Patricia saying she doesn't want Grace's blood on her seats, but Patricia never says this and, later, she honestly can't remember thinking this. So how can Patricia be defined by this action? We don't know what her motives were, so we can't properly interpret the action.

We also repress things about which we feel bad. If we've done something about which we feel guilty, we can try to forget it, but this action will never go away. Even if we pretend that it never happened, it will affect us — and come to define us and our future actions. Richard has dementia and has forgotten his actions, and he has also probably tried to repress them, but they come back to haunt him. In the novel, he wants to disinter (dig up) his dead child, which, it turns out, is not only the child he had with Patricia, but also the unborn child he had with Grace (who died with Grace when he murdered her).

Ultimately, the novel is not denying that people do things in the world — good or bad — and that these can't be reached or uncovered. It is simply suggesting how complicated and difficult this process of discovery can be. By the end of the novel, Patricia learns much more about Richard's actions regarding Grace (and much more than Looksmart will ever know) and, although Richard hadn't been defined in Patricia's mind by this action before, he now is — even though he has lost his own mind — and the consequence is that Patricia decides to send him to 'a home'. She finally finds the resolve to get rid of him.

The novel explores this question, but it doesn't offer a simple answer. We should be defined by our actions, but often we aren't, or can't be, and the novel explores some of the reasons why.



'I think the novel ... is challenging those who think the past is 'someone else's business' and that the needs of the present are not their responsibility.'

EE: Why did you choose this subject matter for the novel?

CH: Writers aren't always that aware of why they write about what they write about, but the play and the later novel were about 'the State of the Nation'. They were about trying to capture where we were at as a country and a society. The issue of the truth — in the present as much as the past — seemed to me very important. It felt to me as if we were all running away from the complexity of our past and our present and I worried that, if we continued to will ourselves into this kind of blindness, or numbness, it would affect our future. So, I had public reasons for writing about this subject matter, if you like. I probably also had private reasons, which remain, at least in part, as obscure to me as anyone else.

EE: How did you decide on the title of the novel?

CH: I have talked about this in relation to the question of 'themes' earlier. When I came upon the title, all sorts of things fell into place. I had something fresh to explore for each character: Do they feel 'at home' in their houses and their country? Have they ever felt 'at home'? What 'home' does each of them dream about? What are they doing to make that future home a reality?

Richard spends the whole novel trying to get back to a home in which he has never felt 'at home'. Patricia dreams about the house in which she grew up in Durban and she thinks she can return to the person she once was, before she moved to the farm with Richard. Beauty dreams about the house she will build when she retires, with its view of the Drakensberg, and she has already secured a piece of land from the Chief. Looksmart, of course, returns to the nightmare house that he wants to transform and make 'open plan', with a 'better view' because he'll cut down all the trees around it. He also wants to reproduce this new house throughout the valley — to try and stamp out that old house. But, of course, this dream house will only ever be the original house, reproduced with slight variations. Looksmart is still too attached to his wound, his sense of grievance, and is not free from it. He is creating a 'gated community' for people fleeing the crime in the cities. He is not creating a place beyond fear and hate, but reproducing it, albeit unconsciously.

Yet the characters still dream and, through that dreaming, they move forward and make some progress. Patricia exiles Richard from her dream house by the sea, Beauty sets off into a more promising future and Looksmart will return to his family in Johannesburg more at peace with himself and, as a result, possibly able to be a better father and a less conflicted, more faithful husband.

EE: Why did you choose this particular narrative form to tell the story?

CH: The novel has a five-act structure, which is something more associated with plays than novels, but the five-act structure is a shadow that underlies all storytelling. You have the world as it is (Act One), the inciting incident (Looksmart's arrival at the house, which triggers Act Two), and then the accumulation of dramatic events or narrative 'turns' (or 'rising action') that usually culminates by the end of Act Four. Act Five is about the characters licking their wounds and beginning to imagine a new future for themselves.

More crucially, this five-act structure is not just carried by the main character/protagonist in *The Dream House*. It is carried by a chorus of characters — Patricia, Looksmart, Beauty, Richard, Bheki and John Ford. Each offers fresh perspectives and insights along the way. Each introduces a new level of complexity. In each section, we are only in that character's point of view. Although the narration is in the third person ('he' and 'she') as opposed to the first person ('I'), we are trapped inside that character's head and we don't have access to what is happening inside the heads of the other characters. This is a device called 'attached third person' or 'free indirect discourse'. It enables the writer to move around more. It also means the novel doesn't have a single 'authorial' narrator with full 'authority' over what is happening. In this instance, the story is in the hands of the characters and each must fight their own battles. It is for the reader to work things out for themselves.



'Fiction can provide a kind of obstacle course that can stretch our humanity and broaden our perspectives and our empathy.'

I chose to use this approach because I wanted the reader to be active — like an investigator who has to decide between what is right and what is wrong. As citizens of South Africa, and the world in general, we have to do this every day in our own lives. Fiction can provide a kind of obstacle course that can stretch our humanity and broaden our perspectives and our empathy. So, the form in which this novel is written provides a kind of workout for the reader — one which, hopefully, makes them more involved, more engaged, while also renewing their relationship with the world — making them more aware of the needs and complexities of others.

EE: What research did you undertake when writing the novel?

CH: This novel came directly out of my own experience — both as a boy growing up in apartheid South Africa and my time as an adult since. I have written other novels that have required extensive research, such as my historical novel *The Landscape Painter*, but this one came out of my own life and the lives of those around me naturally.

It is worth looking at the word 'research', as well as the word 'remember'. To re-search means to search again. To look again for something that you haven't found and may never find. It is an ongoing process. To re-member means to put something together again, something that has been dis-membered. When we write, we search again, and we put things we have experienced together again, but in new combinations. In other words, we are not reproducing the past, but reinventing it in accordance with the needs of the present.

EE: On that note, what do you believe the novel suggests about the relationship between the past and the present?

CH: I think it is trying to break down the division between the two. Whether we like it or not, the past is still present. But how present is the present? Many of us are still looking at the world through the lens of what happened in the past. Looksmart is a prime example of this. The challenge of

© Nicola Samori (Smilla 2008. Mixed media on canvas, 300cm x 150cm)



Patricia realises that she hurt Looksmart — consciously or not — and asks for his forgiveness.

Clearly, there is objective and subjective truth. Objective truth: a dog attacked a girl called Grace. Subjective truths: for those, you'll have to read *The Dream House*!

EE: What point do you think the novel makes about forgiveness and exoneration?

CH: I think the novel is saying that forgiveness is available to those who genuinely understand what harm they have done and ask for forgiveness. Patricia realises that she hurt Looksmart — consciously or not — and asks for his forgiveness. She receives it. Richard does not ask for forgiveness and he does not receive it. Forgiveness is complicated, however; if you say you're sorry, does the harm you caused go away? Not usually. The consequences live on and we have to live on with them. See the last phrase of the novel, for example, where they 'raise their hands and carry on'. We can never be fully exonerated because we can't remove the harm we have caused. We have to live with this knowledge and, hopefully, try to live better in the future.

EE: What do you believe the novel suggests about the relationship between inequality and race?

CH: This is a very complex issue and not one that the novel tries to solve. The novel is about post-apartheid South Africa more than it is about apartheid, but apartheid casts its shadow over the present, whether we like it or not. It seems that little has changed since 1994 for Beauty or Bheki, but much has changed for Looksmart. Quite a bit has also changed for Richard and Patricia, who have been left behind by the progress of history. As the novel shows, there has been more transformation in the urban than the rural areas, but the changes are finally beginning

how to be present in the present — fully alive and aware and receptive — is something that can get more difficult the older we get. Like Patricia, we sometimes need to be shaken a bit and woken up. Habit is a terrible thing, it makes everything around us feel naturalised, already-known, half-dead. The novel is trying to make the 'past present' so that we may be more properly present in the present and, hopefully, have a better chance of not repeating past mistakes in the future.

EE: What do you believe the novel suggests about the relationship between memory and truth?

CH: There are events that happen in time. Two airplanes fly into the Twin Towers in New York, for instance. No one can deny that the event happened. But the event was witnessed by millions of people — both in New York and across the world on live television. Each person experienced that event differently. It has a slightly different meaning for everyone because each witness to it is in a different place, not just physically, but psychologically, emotionally, socially. This means that the event has a different meaning for each person. It is not one event, but many events — too many events, in fact, for anyone to be able to capture. Its full meaning will never be available to us, even if we can't deny that it happened.

Philosophers like to ask: If a tree falls down in a forest and no one sees it, did it happen? This might be worth thinking about. It might have happened objectively, but what meaning does it have if no one knows it happened?

to reach the rural areas too — although not necessarily in the ways that we might have hoped. As Looksmart observes, he is not giving the land back to ‘his people’, who were ‘dispossessed’, but to more affluent people who are fleeing the cities — most of them white.

The novel also demonstrates that class is becoming an increasingly important factor alongside race. See the way, for example, that Looksmart uses English when he speaks to Bheki.

So, race is a factor and class is a factor, but education is also a factor. It is what helped Looksmart — at least, initially — to transcend his circumstances. Bheki sees the value of this and that is why he decides to remain on the farm: he believes that Looksmart will help to educate his son in the way Patricia once helped Looksmart.



‘Yet, as the novel shows, the past is never past, and it keeps reinventing itself.’

EE: What do you believe the novel suggests about the notion of ‘white guilt’?

CH: I think the novel is about the absence of white guilt. It is not saying white people need to carry on feeling ‘guilty’, either. It is challenging those who think the past is ‘someone else’s business’ and that the needs of the present are not their responsibility.

We share an equal humanity, no matter how young or old, male or female, dark or pale. This is what Patricia doesn’t understand — or, indeed, feel — when Grace is attacked by the dog. She doesn’t respond to a black woman being attacked in the way she would have if a white woman had been attacked. Looksmart sees this and his relationship with Patricia is devastated by this fact. He sees the great gap between Patricia and Grace and, therefore, the great gap between himself and Patricia.

Whether Patricia was worrying about her seats or not is not really the point. The point is that she didn’t respond in the way Looksmart expected. Patricia is made to acknowledge this, at least to some degree, in the novel. Not so that she can feel guilty, but so that she can be honest. Looksmart thinks he deserves at least that.

EE: If you were asked to try and summarise the message of *The Dream House*, how would you do so?

CH: If a book could be distilled down to a simple message it may not be worth writing. The book is about dialogue, ambiguity and uncertainty. Yet I could, perhaps, sum up its spirit, which is one of openness and empathy. It is showing how different we are and yet we are not different at all. We each have hopes, fears, sources of pain and regret. Even Richard, the most morally reprehensible character in the novel, is not denied his humanity.

Apartheid has taught us that drawing a line can be an act of violence. While we may do things that are wrong, and things we regret, we are always free to change the legacies we’ve inherited and find a different way of being in the world. I hope the reader comes away from the novel more prepared to listen, not so quick to judge, with a greater awareness that our truths are partial. When Looksmart first arrived in Johannesburg, he used to give money to beggars and draw a strange comfort from the touch of their hands. Later, he stops seeing them. Perhaps I would like my reader to re-engage with the world — and see everyone equally, beggars included, and meet their gaze.



‘We are always free to change the legacies we’ve inherited and find a different way of being in the world.’

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EE: Do you believe that South Africans are still burdened by the past and, if so, in what ways?

CH: The legacy of apartheid — like the legacy of colonialism before that, and slavery before that — is something that will be written deeply into us forever. Not just in our psyches, but in the land itself: who owns it, where people live on it, the journeys they have to make between home and work, and so on.

South Africa must try to find a way of functioning that helps all of its people to live more prosperous lives. The country is also burdened by the present — mass illegal immigration, corruption in government, exploitation in the workplace, limited access to education and basic services, climate change, etc. We shouldn’t fixate on the burden of the past, but we need to carry on carrying it because, if we deny it or hide from it, it will only come back to haunt us, as it haunts Patricia, Richard and Looksmart.



‘We shouldn’t fixate on the burden of the past, but we need to carry on carrying it because, if we deny it or hide from it, it will only come back to haunt us.’

EE: How do you imagine seventeen-year-old South African students will respond to *The Dream House*?

CH: I have no idea. I didn’t write it for any specific age group. The novel has a thriller structure and there is a great deal of tension running through it, as well as dramatic surprises along the way. It is a novel full of ideas and allegorical resonances, but it can also be read as a gripping story. I think it’s important that a reader would want to turn the next page to find out what will happen next.

EE: Do you think younger readers will be able to relate to the older characters and their experiences?

CH: Good books are able to take us into places that are unfamiliar. They make us care where we never thought we would. The task of the writer is to make the characters and the events in the novel matter. Whether this novel is a good book or not is something for each reader to judge for themselves.

EE: Could you describe the inspiration behind the complex character of Looksmart?

CH: Driving around the streets of Johannesburg, there are a great many young men who look a lot like Looksmart: they are young, successful, confident, black. They are the very picture of success. But life is not so simple — not for any of us. In a way, I suppose, I wanted to question the idea that a man in a suit with a smart silver car is everything to which we should aspire and that a semi-literate, rural domestic worker is someone we should look down on or dismiss. In the novel, it is the character with the least education, the least money, the least love, the fewest prospects, who is also the carrier and dispenser of the truth: Beauty.

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'I wanted to question the idea that a man in a suit with a smart silver car is everything to which we should aspire and that a semi-literate, rural domestic worker is someone we should look down on or dismiss.'

EE: Why does Beauty keep the truth to herself for all those years?

CH: The #MeToo campaign has shown that it often takes many years for terrible truths to come out. When a bad thing happens to you, it often feels impossible for you to talk about it, let alone report it to the police (if it's illegal). Beauty was in no position to dispute Richard's version of events. She would have been cast out and almost certainly fired. As she explains to Patricia, she needed her job. Yet the world changes and, sometimes, we find ourselves in a context that is finally ready to accept the truth of what happened. By the end of the novel, Patricia is finally ready to hear the truth about Richard. In Beauty's opinion, Looksmart is not. Perhaps because — unlike Patricia — Looksmart still has too much to lose.

EE: What do you think 'the dream house' symbolises for Patricia and Looksmart, ultimately?

CH: Patricia's dream house in Durban is about returning to an untroubled past. Looksmart's dream house is about creating an untroubled future. By the end of the

novel, they have both become a bit more ironic about such a notion. Yet they will both continue the journey towards their dream houses, crossing over on the driveway at the end of the novel, as they both go off in opposite directions.



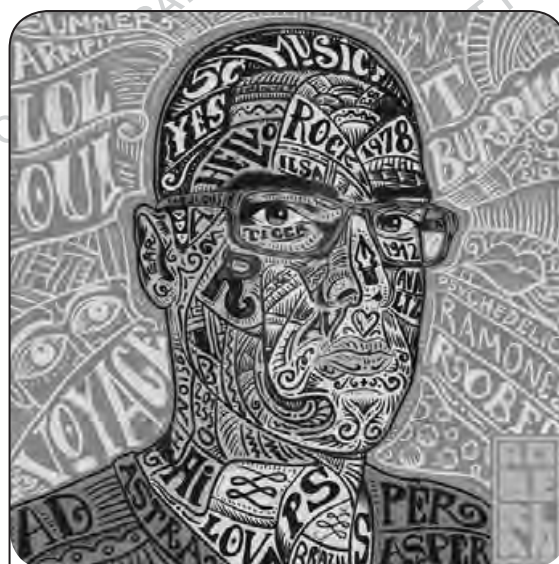
'Patricia's dream house in Durban is about returning to an untroubled past.
Looksmart's dream house is about creating an untroubled future.'

EE: Would you argue that Patricia and Looksmart come to terms with their pasts by the end of the novel?

CH: Patricia is the protagonist of the novel and, yes, I think she does to the extent that anyone can. Looksmart also does, to a great degree, even if we, the reader, know he doesn't have access to all the information. Looksmart still thinks Grace loved him and was raped by Richard (when, in fact, the truth is more complicated, even if almost as terrible). Yet, as the novel shows, the past is never past, and it keeps reinventing itself.

EE: What do you think the novel suggests about English-speaking white South Africans and their identities as ‘Africans’?

CH: The novel is showing that each of us — black and white — has an ambiguous relationship with the country in which we are living. The characters in the novel are not yet living in the ‘homes’ they envision for themselves. The fact that the ‘English-speaking white South Africans’ in the novel are fluent in Zulu does not change this. It does not help Patricia to gain access to Bheki’s inner thoughts and feelings, for instance. I’m not sure any of the white characters are trying to be ‘African’. Is Looksmart trying to be ‘white’ because he speaks to Bheki in his impeccable English? No — I don’t think so. He is using the English language playfully, ironically, sometimes as a weapon, sometimes as a wand. The novel is, ultimately, questioning such absolutes as ‘black’ and ‘white’, ‘African’ and ‘European’. Identity is portrayed as something that is manifold, complex and, in the end, mysterious.



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‘[Looksmart] is using the English language playfully, ironically, sometimes as a weapon, sometimes as a wand.’

EE: What reactions to the novel from readers have surprised you the most?

CH: The novel has had one very critical review and a great many unambiguously positive reviews — in South Africa and abroad. I have been surprised by the positive responses and encouraged by the positive responses from black — especially Zulu — readers. I think this response is, in part, because I set out to write a novel that was bigger than myself and my own concerns. I was trying to write a narrative prose poem that was choral in nature — sung by a range of sometimes conflicting voices. My previous novels are less about ‘the State of the Nation’ and more about individuals — often unusual individuals. Critics were also much concerned with ‘the farm novel’ and whether or not this was a farm novel. I was writing very consciously against this trope, but not all readers understood that.

EE: If you were to rewrite the novel now, would you do anything differently?

CH: I have rewritten it enough now — as a radio play, a stage play (with three distinct versions) and a novel. Each time, the story and characters changed because the context in which I was writing changed. The thought of writing it again now only gives me a headache!

EE: What is your next novel about?

CH: My new novel is called *The White Room*, which is due to be published in September 2018. It takes some of the issues raised in *The Dream House* further and places them in a more international/global context. It is set in Paris and is — superficially, at least — about the relationship between an English teacher and her student of Congolese descent.

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What the critics said

Extracts from reviews of the novel

‘It’s here at last — the South African novel that throws off all the literary baggage of political cliché and posturing, and gives us an honest exploration of not only what it is to be human, but what it is to be South African in the 21st century.’

— Kate Turkington, *Books Live* (2015)

‘Past and present collide with iridescent effect on a misty evening in *The Dream House*, the new novel by Craig Higginson. As it observes the intersections between its small cast of deeply-etched characters, the novel tears open a set of truths far broader in scope than the claustrophobic confines of its Natal Midlands farm setting. Here is the complexity of contemporary South Africa — in all its anger and unease.’

— Alexander Matthews, *Aerodrome* (2015)

‘The flow of words in *The Dream House* is poetic; the language is melancholic and fluid, and reads as though it were an oral story, reflecting the subject matter in every sense, and reminding the reader that every story has a background, and that every action, however small, may have enormous consequences in the unforgivable flow of time.’

— Samantha Gibb, *Women 24* (2015)

‘The dramatic qualities of the text are subtle [...] and serve as support for the interiority that the novel, as a literary form, allows, and which Higginson exploits with his multi-voiced approach. These qualities, together with the poetic imagery and verisimilitude used to describe the surroundings, produce a novel that evokes an intense emotional response and raises questions about the wisdom of exploring the past.’

— Beverley Jane Cornelius, *Literary Tourism* (2016)

Enrichment task

Exercise 1: Visual literacy

Consider the following *Madam and Eve* cartoon strip by South African cartoonists Stephen Francis and Rico Schacherl, and answer the questions that follow:



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1.1 Provide a definition for the Figure of Speech known as 'double metonymy', providing an example from the comic strip to illustrate your explanation. (6)

NOT FOR REPLICATION

1.2 Explain how Mother Anderson uses the example of a piano to define apartheid. (3)

NOT FOR REPLICATION

1.3 Comment on the irony of Thandi's remark in the final panel. (3)

- 1.4 Identify and explain the function of the apostrophe in Thandi's question, 'What's apartheid?'

(2)

Now consider the cartoon by South African cartoonist and political commentator Zapiro, and answer the questions that follow:



- 1.5 Identify what is represented by the figure shown in the MRI scanner.

(1)

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- 1.6 Drawing on the context of the cartoon as a whole, explain what the figure means by the remarks, '... After 25 years it regenerated!' and '... is it in my DNA?!' (5)

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- 1.7 By referring to both the cartoons provided, compare and contrast the tone conveyed by each cartoonist, and comment on the message that each seeks to convey. (5)

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Critical commentary

Preparation

Reading novels for academic analysis

When reading a novel that you are required to analyse for academic purposes, it is best to approach the text in a slightly different way than you would if reading a novel for pleasure. The following are a few tips to keep in mind when reading novels for academic analysis.

- It may sound obvious, but **make sure you are paying attention** when you read. Often when we are reading, our attention wanders and we don't really take in what it is that we are reading. Be sure that when you are reading a novel for academic purposes, your attention stays focused at all times and that you are not distracted by your phone, television, friends or family members.
- **Make notes** in the page margins as you read. Marking important passages as you read them will help you save time when you are looking for them again later, and will also help to keep you focused as you read.
- **Underline unfamiliar words** so that you can look up their definitions and make a note of their meanings.
- Keep the **themes** of the novel in mind as you are reading and keep asking yourself how these themes are being conveyed and developed in the narrative. Make notes of any recurring **motifs and symbols** and what these represent in the text.
- Remember that you are reading for **meaning** (*what is being said*) and for **form** (*how it is being conveyed*). Literary analysis is about detecting patterns in the text and determining how these patterns convey particular messages.



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Patterns of meaning

Themes (i.e. what is the text saying?)

- How is the plot structured?
- What happens in the narrative, and in what order?
- Where and when does the story take place?
- Who is the subject of the story?
- What are the recurring themes in the narrative?
- What message is being conveyed?
- How do you feel about what is happening in the story?



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Patterns of Form

Technique (i.e. how is it being said?)

- Who is the narrator of the text? When or on what occasion(s) is this narration taking place?
- How does the point of view from which the story is being told affect our understanding?
- How are the characters developed throughout the text? How do they interact with one another, and why?
- Is the narration sequential or achronological? Are there flashbacks or flash-forwards? Why is the narration structured in this way?
- What kind of symbols and motifs recur in the text? What do these symbolise, and how do they reinforce the themes of the novel?
- What do the title and chapter headings tell us about this narrative and how we should interpret it?

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GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT LITERARY TERMS

archetype: a very typical or common example of a particular type of person or thing

bildungsroman: a genre of literature in which the protagonist, usually an adolescent, undergoes spiritual, intellectual, moral, psychological and/or social growth throughout the course of the narrative and, in doing so, achieves maturity (also known as a 'coming-of-age' story)

catharsis: the process through which a character heals, usually through the release of strong or repressed emotions

connotation: an idea, association or feeling that is evoked by the use of a particular word, in addition to its literal meaning

context: the 'things around the text'; the particular circumstances that form the setting for a narrative event, statement or idea

dénouement: the climax or finale of a narrative in which the various strands of the plot are drawn together or resolved

diction: the choice of words used

discourse: written or spoken communication or, in literary terms, the treatment of a particular subject within the narrative

foil: a character who contrasts starkly with another character, usually the protagonist, in order to emphasise the particular qualities or traits of the other character

form: the structure or design of a particular literary work

genre: in literary terms, a particular and distinguishable category of writing which employs distinct, common conventions that

are recognisable across all works of the same genre

ideology: a system of beliefs or ideals which often forms the basis for a political or economic policy, for example, apartheid

irony: a perceptible inconsistency (sometimes humorous) in an apparently straightforward statement or situation which, given its particular context, takes on the opposite meaning or significance. In the case of **dramatic irony**, the reader or audience may know more about the character's situation or circumstances than the character and

is, consequently, able to recognise a sharply different or contrasting perception of the situation to the character

metaphor, metaphoric: a Figure of Speech in which one thing is taken to represent or symbolise something else, in order to transfer particular associations or qualities on to the thing or idea being represented

paradox, paradoxical: a statement that is so obviously untrue or contradictory that it leads the reader to consider alternative contexts in which it may be considered accurate; or a situation, person or

thing that combines contradictory features or qualities

point of view: the position or vantage point from which the events of a story are presented to the reader

protagonist: the main/central character in the narrative

syntax: the way in which words, phrases and clauses are arranged to form a sentence

theme: the central message, idea or insight of a literary work



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Summaries and analyses

Using this section

Working through the novel chapter by chapter ensures that a solid foundation of knowledge is laid, and then gradually and effectively expanded. Students are not required to deal with the entire novel until they have worked through it in a methodical, step-by-step manner.

Each chapter and sub-section is summarised and analysed separately. Extensive glossaries are included and learners are required to engage with the content directly through chapter-specific questions. At the end of the summaries, there is also a series of enrichment tasks and a wide selection of rigorous essay topics, ensuring that students tackle the novel in its entirety and are prepared for the final examination.

INTRODUCTION AND PART ONE

The First Dream House (p.vii-x)

Summary

In this introductory essay to the novel, Higginson describes the farmhouse that served as the inspiration for *The Dream House*. Higginson frequently visited the house when he was a child attending boarding school in KwaZulu-Natal, after his parents befriended the owners, who were horse breeders. The woman who ran the farm would fetch him for weekend visits, and he even brought his friends with him on occasion.

Higginson describes the house as 'a secret, a bolt hole that no teacher at the school knew about' (p.ix), where he learned to fish, explored the surrounding hills, and learned about the livestock. It was also where he first began to write creatively, and he credits the house as being a 'place [that] provided me with magic, with a more abundant life' (p.x).



'There are many houses we pass through during our lives. Maybe it's true that they also pass through us. Some of them remain with us, and we are able to return to them long after they are gone.' (p.vii)



GLOSSARY

impenetrable (p.viii): dense; impossible to understand

insinuated (p.viii): implied; suggested

fastidious (p.viii): demanding; fussy

bolt hole (p.ix): a place to hide or escape

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'I HAD A FARM IN AFRICA'

Higginson comments that the farmhouse he visited as a child and, in particular, its *stoep*, reminded him of Karen Blixen's house on the outskirts of Nairobi in Kenya, as it was portrayed in the 1985 film adaptation of her autobiography of the same name, *Out of Africa* (p.ix). The film used the nearby Ngong Dairy farmhouse as Blixen's iconic home (pictured left), although her actual farmhouse is still standing and has been preserved as a museum (pictured right).

© Florian Keller (Enchanting Travels)



© Make it Kenya (Flickr)

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Analysis

In this introductory essay, Higginson gives the reader some insight, not only into his childhood, but also the creative process behind the writing of *The Dream House*. The farmhouse and its inhabitants bear a number of distinct similarities to the setting and characters of Higginson's novel. The farmer is of British descent, like Richard, and his wife breeds ponies and is described as a 'large woman' (p.viii) like Patricia. The couple employ a driver named Bheki and are surrounded by a large menagerie of dogs. The houses, with their broad *stoeps* and perpetually damp cupboards, are also very similar.

It is interesting to note that Higginson describes the farmer as making him feel a little uncomfortable, with his sexualised jokes and seedy innuendos. The slightly unsavoury nature of his character correlates with Richard's sexual indiscretions in the novel. Higginson and the farmer's wife, meanwhile, seem to enjoy a similar relationship to that between Looksmart and Patricia in the novel. The farmer's wife acts as a kind of surrogate mother to Higginson and he, in turn, is eager to please her by being 'polite' and getting his 'answers right' (p.ix).

The fact that the farmhouse of his childhood continues to grip Higginson with a kind of mythical significance is unsurprising, given that he credits the place with awakening his creative spirit. He goes as far as to declare that his 'imagination found a home [there] during those years' (p.ix).

Higginson acknowledges that 'the people who invited [him] into their home would be faintly horrified by what [he's] made of them' (p.x) in the novel, but that they were 'people of their time, increasingly uneasy in a world that was rapidly outstripping them' (p.x). In other words, the farmer and his wife — and, indeed, Patricia and Richard — were products of a bygone era who no longer had any real place or even relevance in their community.

Although Higginson does not explicitly state as much, the implication is that they were not only being left behind by a rapidly modernising world, but their worldviews were becoming outmoded and even offensive in a country going through significant political turmoil.



© Liz Schultz

'I had made them love each other and hate each other in a way they never had in real life.' (p.x)

1. What does Higginson mean when he suggests that some houses 'also pass through us' (p.vii)? (2)

REPLICATION

SAMPLE SECTION

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SAMPLE SECTION

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Summary

The novel opens with **Patricia (p.3-12)** opening the curtains of her bedroom window to discover that a thick mist has descended on the valley in which they live. It is the last day that she and her husband, Richard, will be living in this house; the property developers who have bought their farm are already clearing the land to make way for the new houses they are building. Richard is confused by the packing, but 'nothing makes much sense to him' (p.4) anymore, and she has simply told him 'that they are going away to the sea' (p.4).

Patricia calls for her domestic worker, Beauty, and asks her to bring Richard through to the dining room for breakfast. She also tells her that she will be going to see Mr Ford that morning, and

Beauty says that she will inform the driver, Bheki. Patricia hears her Rottweiler, Ethunzini, barking outside. Her two other dogs have already been shot and buried as they cannot accompany them on the move, but 'Patricia hasn't yet had the stomach' to order Ethunzini's death even though 'her grave has been waiting for her all week' (p.5).

Though difficult, Patricia knows that the move is right for them. Richard is in the advanced stages of dementia and needs a trained nurse to care for him, as he has developed a habit of wandering off and getting lost. They will be moving to Patricia's childhood home in Durban, overlooking the harbour, and Patricia 'wanted to spend her last days doing little more than staring at the sea' (p.6).

Richard appears at the breakfast table in his pyjamas, seemingly disorientated and confused by the packing. He tells Patricia that he had a dream that they were dead and did not know it. He tells her that the ambulance is on its way to fetch 'two dead children' (p.8). Patricia asks him what he means by 'two' (p.8).

Patricia has owned the same cream-coloured, dog-chewed Mercedes for twenty-five years. She, the car and her driver, Bheki, have become a 'familiar sight in the village' (p.8), although 'in recent years they have started to appear out of place' (p.9) as the village has become gentrified.

Bheki and Beauty will both be accompanying them on the move to Durban. Bheki will serve as their chauffeur and gardener, while Beauty will undergo further training so that she can get 'a better job' (p.4) when Patricia and Richard pass away. Bheki 'rarely speaks to [Patricia] outside of what is practical' (p.9), so she has 'no idea whether it is quiet excitement or dread he feels' (p.9) about the upcoming move.

Bheki stows Patricia's walker in the boot of the car and they set off for Mr Ford's house. They drive past the rubble of what was once the farm buildings, through the paddocks, marshlands and plantations, and eventually reach the road. The place resembles a 'war zone' (p.10) because of the on-going construction of the new housing development. At one point, Bheki briefly loses control of the car on the damaged dirt road.



'The people who come to live here afterwards will know nothing about any of them, and maybe it will be better that way.' (p.3)

In 'clearer moments' (p.11), Patricia is glad that they are leaving the farm. It has never turned much of a profit and Richard was not much of a farmer, even though things improved once Patricia took over its management and started breeding Welsh ponies.

Patricia tells Bheki that she has been thinking about her father lately and, although he died young, 'he had a full life to look back on' and 'a great deal to be proud of' (p.11). Her father only ever spoke against Richard once, when Patricia wanted to marry him, but he was forced to give his consent to their marriage when he found out Patricia was pregnant. Patricia calls her father the 'one good man in [her] life' (p.12).



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There are many different trees called '**bloodwoods**' (p.3) around the world, but those referred to by Patricia are a species of southern African tree called *Pterocarpus angolensis*, more commonly known as the wild teak or *kiaat* tree. It is known locally as the 'bloodwood' tree because of its distinctive red sap that gives the tree the appearance of bleeding.



© weird-wood.blogspot.com



Meanwhile, **Beauty (p.13-15)** has remained at the house to look after Richard, whom she calls 'uBaas'. She has long been afraid of him and, even now, when 'there is little left of the man he was' (p.13) and she has to care for his most intimate needs, she is still afraid of him. He is often confused and appears weak, but 'they both know that he is the one with power over her, and [...] he will never let either of them forget it' (p.14).

“

'Even now she is frightened of uBaas. Her fear has always been there. It exists as the mountains around the farm do. It will never be moved and is no longer worth a thought.' (p.13)

After Patricia and Bheki have left, Beauty sits down at the kitchen table to drink tea from her special cup, the one that helps her to feel 'simple, clear, strong' (p.14), ready to face what needs to be done. She can hear Richard rummaging through the boxes in the spare room, and reflects that he has always been unhappy and ill-tempered. She finds him with a box of rosettes in his lap, which he is sorting according to colour. He has removed his trousers and she leads him back into his room and helps him into another pair.



Patricia (p.16-21) and John Ford have been lovers for thirty years, though they haven't had a sexual relationship for some time. She visits him occasionally in the house he moved into after retiring as headmaster from the local school. His wife died of bone cancer many years before.

John is refined and academic, the opposite of Richard in every way, and Patricia likes to think that this is why she fell in love with him. She 'called herself a Christian for much of her adult life' (p.17) because it gave her an excuse to attend church and be close to John.

Despite the fact that they have already said their goodbyes, John called her the previous evening and asked her to visit. When she arrives, she sees that he is dressed for golf, 'which is his way of saying they don't have long' (p.17). She follows him through the house and onto the back stoep overlooking the village church, where John still attends service every Sunday without fail.



‘For a man who has been in control for so much of his life, John’s more intimate manoeuvres have always had a lurching, heady quality.’ (p.20)

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Patricia notices that his wife’s roses, which were transplanted from the school gardens upon his retirement, need to be pruned. She doesn’t say anything to him, however, because they never speak of his wife.

When John has served her tea and biscuits, she asks if everything is all right. He tells her that he called because he ‘was feeling sentimental’ (p.18). She is surprised by this and tells him that she will call him every Sunday evening after they have moved. He replies that she should only call ‘when [she has] something interesting to say’ (p.19) and that she’s been a ‘good friend’ (p.19).

Patricia wonders whether ‘he will be relieved to see her go’ (p.18) and reflects that ‘[t]here has been a melancholy tone in much he has said and done with her in recent months’ (p.19). He’s ‘always been a difficult man’ with a tendency to ‘withhold himself’ (p.19), even from those closest to him. They first met when Patricia enrolled ‘an unusually clever boy from the farm’ (p.19) at his school, and their affair quickly progressed after their initial meeting.

John asks whether Patricia could ‘get rid’ (p.20) of Richard by sending him to a nursing home once they’ve moved to Durban. Patricia notes that ‘John has always enjoyed belittling Richard’ (p.20) and probably thinks less of her for staying with him. It galls her that John can mock Richard, but the subject of John’s wife is off limits.

John suddenly becomes awkward as he gives her a letter, making her promise that she’ll only read it once she’s in Durban. Patricia feels annoyed as she gets back into the car, ‘though she can’t quite place the source of it’ (p.21), and stuffs John’s letter into the cubbyhole. She does not understand why he called her for this last visit and decides that she won’t ever read the letter. As they drive back to the farmhouse, it seems as though ‘[t]he whole of the Midlands is engulfed in cloud’ (p.21).



© Cath Riley



GLOSSARY

dotage (p.5): old age

bemusement (p.7): puzzled; confused

gentility (p.9): social superiority

verdant (p.10): lush, green with vegetation

dubiously (p.10): suspiciously

folly (p.10): foolishness

pretence (p.11): charade

rosette (p.14): a ribbon awarded to the winner of a competition

baritone (p.17): an adult male singing voice between tenor and bass

disinclined (p.19): reluctant; unwilling

culminated (p.21): finished; ended

Analysis

The reader meets **Patricia (p.3-12)** at a time of great transition and upheaval. She is leaving the farm where she has lived and worked her entire adult life and moving to her childhood home in Durban, where she plans to live out the rest of her days.

Patricia’s feelings about the move appear mixed. She has dreamed about the Durban house ‘her whole adult life’ (p.6) and, in her ‘clearer moments’ (p.11), she knows that it is the right



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thing to leave their embattled home and live in a place where her ailing husband can get the care he needs; however, an air of reluctant nostalgia pervades her attitude as they prepare to uproot themselves.

Her feelings towards the farm appear complicated. Even though the farm has never prospered and has even been a site of unhappiness for her, it seems that she is still attached to the land into which she has invested so much of her emotional and physical self.

Is her nostalgia because she is bidding farewell to the only adult life she has known and is faced with acknowledging her own mortality?

The surrounding landscape of the farm seems to reflect Patricia's internal conflict. The place looks like a 'war zone'

(p.10). The roads have been ripped apart by construction vehicles and many of the buildings have already been reduced to rubble. The ongoing construction is a blight on an otherwise beautiful landscape and alludes to how the life Patricia has always known has already begun to fall apart to make way for something new and unfamiliar. Patricia thinks that 'maybe it will be better that way' (p.3), again, suggesting that her life has been troubled.

While her thoughts about the farm and their impending move are mixed, her feelings towards her husband appear far less ambiguous. Her contemplations suggest that theirs has not been a happy marriage. She describes the farm as the site where 'she and Richard made their mismatch' (p.11) and she denounces her husband as '[not] being good at anything' (p.11). Her father, in contrast, is lauded as '[t]he one good man in [her] life' (p.12). Richard, by implication, has not proven himself to be a good man. In his old age and senility, Patricia appears to deal with Richard with a kind of reluctant tolerance.

Beauty and, particularly, Bheki remain rather opaque in the first chapter of the novel, implying that their lives are impenetrable to Patricia herself. This suggests that, despite how closely they live and work together, they do not truly have an intimate relationship. Bheki and Beauty may have held their employer at arm's length or perhaps Patricia has just never bothered to try and find out more about their lives. Are the habitual, one-sided conversations in the car — where Patricia 'talk[s] freely' (p.11) to Bheki as though he is a priest or psychologist, while he remains stoically silent — telling of their relationship?

An imbalance of power

The reader is given some insight into the character of **Beauty (p.13-15)** in the second chapter of the novel, which is narrated from her perspective. The reader discovers the disturbing nature of the relationship between Beauty and Richard. Despite the fact that Richard is practically an invalid, the balance of power between them is still very much skewed in his favour. Even in his advanced stage of dementia, he does not let Beauty forget that he is the one in charge. This makes the intimate tasks that Beauty has to perform for him all the more demeaning.

It is interesting that she chooses to speak Zulu to him when they are alone. Speaking her own language 'is so much easier for her' (p.15), something that feels natural and even beautiful. Reverting to Zulu could be viewed as a means by which she reclaims some of the power of which Richard has robbed her, putting them on a more equal footing, in a sense. It might also be a means of putting herself at ease in his company, and protecting herself from the fear that he instils in her.

A strained intimacy

Despite the fact that **Patricia (p.16-21)** and John have been having an affair for more than three decades, there is an oddly formal, even strained quality about their relationship. Their conversation is oddly stilted and guarded. The reader is given the impression that Patricia is more emotionally invested in the relationship than John. She describes him as having the tendency to 'withhold himself' (p.19) at important moments and, certainly, he appears to be the one who dictates the terms of their relationship.

These qualities appear to speak more to John's character than they do to his relationship with Patricia, nonetheless. It is not only Patricia from whom he holds himself back emotionally, but also his deceased wife, children, colleagues and pupils. Patricia 'reflects sadly' (p.19) that his taciturn nature and vanity have meant that he is very much alone in his old age.

The emotional distance that he cultivates from those closest to him seems to be the result of an inability, rather than an unwillingness, to connect with others. Patricia notes that his 'more intimate manoeuvres have always had a lurching, heady quality' (p.20) that are at odds with the controlled manner in which he conducts himself usually. This discrepancy, together with his refusal to speak about or dishonour the memory of his dead wife, suggests that John may, in fact, be a man who feels deeply, but is ill-equipped to express or cope with his own emotions.



Questions

1. What role does the farm and the surrounding landscape assume in these early chapters of the novel? (5)

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2. Describe the relationship between Patricia and Beauty, as it is depicted in the first chapters of the novel.

(6)

3. When Richard tells Patricia that an ambulance is on its way to pick up 'two dead children', what is implied by Patricia's response: "What do you mean two?" (p.8).

(1)

4. What does Beauty's tea-drinking ritual (p.14) suggest about her working environment? (2)

5. Describe Richard's character, as he is portrayed by Beauty (p.13-15). (4)

6. Explain the double meaning behind the farmworkers' running joke that 'uBaas is the one who can never keep his zip up' (p.15). (2)

7. Why is it significant that John always held the wine goblet 'just beyond [Patricia's] reach' (p.17) when he assisted with Communion at church? (3)

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8. Why does Patricia feel annoyed with John after their visit and not want to read the letter he has given her? (2)

(2)

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The past in the present (p.22-39)

Summary

Beauty (p.22-26) reflects that '[t]here is too much to do before they go away' (p.22). Many of the Wileys' belongings remain unpacked and the task of deciding what they should take with them to the new house in Durban and what they should discard is not as straightforward as it seemed at first. Beauty has resorted to making many of the decisions herself, since Patricia seems incapable of doing so. She realises that '[t]he problem of what to do with the past would have to carry on in the future' (p.22).

Patricia has told Beauty and Bheki that they may each bring one small suitcase with them to Durban the next day, and the rest of their belongings must be packed in boxes and left for the movers. Beauty doesn't have much to bring with her, however. Her favourite possession is an old watercolour painting of 'an English country lane winding towards a village church' (p.23) that Patricia once gave her.

As she leaves the house now, she conceals her favourite teacup in her overall so that she can pack it with her belongings. She feels 'slightly sick' (p.24) as it's the first thing she's ever intentionally stolen from Patricia, but she 'can't help herself' (p.24).



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Bheki appears in her doorway. Even though she has known him since she was a child and grown up alongside him, 'there are still parts of the older man than remain a mystery to her' (p.25). Lately, he is absorbed by thoughts of his four-year-old son, Bongani, who was born disabled. They converse briefly and Bheki tells her that Patricia seemed relieved to leave John Ford. Beauty is not surprised to hear this, as John 'is from a time that is long past, and uMesis always comes away from him with that empty lost look on her face, like one over-burdened with bad news' (p.26).



© Robert Stickloon

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'But who was to say what was of value and what was not? Many of the things that were in the worst condition were very old and of the greatest value, and some of the things that were in the best condition [...] were in good condition only because they had never been used.' (p.22)

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Patricia (p.27-32) sees Richard attempting to leave the house with a spade and asks him where he is going. She knows that he 'has been angling to dig her up' (p.27) from her simple grave by the bloodwood grove, which is marked with her name, 'Rachel', and the single date of her birth and death. Patricia often visits the grave herself, 'but there is never any sign of Rachel' (p.28).

The site of Rachel's grave is the highest point of the farm. It would have made a good place to build a farmhouse, but their house already existed when they moved onto the farm and so 'they have been confined to the first house' (p.28), which has 'always been as dark and dank as any cave' (p.28).

Patricia tells Richard that they are going to the sea the next day. She asks whether he remembers taking her there on his motorbike when he was still the farm manager. She remembers that they'd stayed up all night talking about their lives and made love just before the sun came up. It had been a peaceful, blissful time, but 'they have never spoken in quite the same way since' (p.29). Richard claims that she is talking about another man and she sardonically responds, "Too bloody right" (p.29).

Beauty sets down their tea tray. Patricia reflects that this was once the time of day when her ponies would have been brought in from the fields and paraded before her for inspection, but the farm animals have all since been sold, save for a single dairy cow and a few chickens. Richard starts to put his boots

on, the same boots he has had for ten years and that Beauty polishes for him every morning. Patricia asks him where he is going, but he ignores her. Patricia asks Beauty to ask Bheki to accompany Richard.

Patricia is hoping that there will be a thunderstorm on this, their last night in the farmhouse. She loves the thunder, even though the lightning is much feared in the area, having killed not only farm animals, but a farmworker and two of the boys from John Ford's school in the past. Lightning once hit the farmhouse directly, damaging its electrical wiring. Rain is not something they need often on the farm, as the 'place is a bog [...] for much of the year' (p.31). Patricia often battled with her ponies developing foot rot and the farmhouse itself is perpetually damp.

Patricia tells Richard to go inside and take a bath, but he ignores her. He takes off across the garden carrying his boots. She calls after him, and then calls for Beauty, but neither respond.



© Paula Sanz Caballero



© Johan Smith

“

'It has been her technique, perfected over the years, to survive her husband by noticing him as rarely as possible.' (p.31)

Meanwhile, **Looksmart (p.33-36)** arrives at Dwaleni Farm and reflects that ‘everything [...] looks exactly as he left it’ (p.33). He rolls down the window and smells ‘wet earth and rot’ (p.33), but nothing feels quite real to him yet — it is as though he is in a dream. He has been driving all afternoon, stopping only to eat a burger in Harrismith.

Looksmart ‘has a shameful secret’ (p.34) that he will not divulge to anyone: he still feels like ‘an intruder in his own land’ (p.34), even now, years after the end of apartheid. He is ‘unaccustomed to the freedom’ (p.34) of being allowed to come and go when and where he pleases, without the fear of being censured.

As he drives down the farm road, he remembers a time when he was a small boy and would run barefoot on the track. He is unsurprised to see the damage that has been wrought by the ongoing construction, as he has been the one managing the project for more than a year. What does disturb him is the project ‘already appears to have failed and been discarded’ (p.35).

Looksmart has made the journey to Dwaleni ‘out of hate’ (p.35), or perhaps ‘out of nostalgia for a time when he could hate properly’ (p.35). While hatred was once his constant, burning companion, the intervening years since he left Dwaleni have tempered his ‘stamina for hate’ (p.35). As he parks the car, he ‘once again experiences a surge of grief, coming like nausea, involuntary and from deep within his gut’ (p.35).



© Andrew Horvath



© Joshua Nava Arts

He thinks about Grace. He has spent most of his life trying to escape the memory of her. Even though she is dead, ‘she is still more powerful than he will ever be’ (p.36). The thought of her brings about a fresh surge of hatred, although he wonders ‘whether he has enough hatred left in him for this encounter’ (p.36).

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‘He told himself that he would be coming here out of hate. Or, more accurately, out of a nostalgia for a time when he could hate properly.’ (p.35)



© Oil and Pen

Patricia (p.37-39) hears the approach of Looksmart’s car, but she is too distracted by the task of packing to heed it. She is sorting through long-forgotten objects, feeling as though everything around her is ‘muted’ (p.37) somehow. She is overcome by a sense of ‘overall numbness’ (p.37). She toys with the idea of simply burning down the house.

She calls for Beauty, and tells her that Richard has wandered off with the spade again. She asks Beauty to go and look for him, or to tell Bheki to get him, and instructs Beauty to check Rachel's grave first. Ethunzini, the Rottweiler, begins to bark outside. Patricia moves from her wheelchair to the armchair. Beauty 'moves the wheelchair off to a tactful distance' (p.39), before looking out of the window to see why the dog is barking.

Beauty tells her that there is a silver car parked outside and asks whether she should go and investigate, but Patricia is more concerned that she finds Richard first. Beauty leaves the house through the front door and, shortly afterwards, Patricia hears someone enter through the back door.



'[T]here's an overall numbness, a feeling of vacancy, a weight in the arms, that makes it seem impossible to move. She thinks once more of burning down the house.' (p.37-38)



Patricia finds a ticket stub in an old evening bag for a play called ***Dream of the Dog*** — a reference to a play that Higginson himself wrote, that was staged in London in 2010 and starred celebrated actress Janet Suzman. *The Dream House* is, in fact, based on the story of this original play. Higginson is taking a dig at himself and his career when he says that the play 'has no doubt long since been forgotten about' (p.37).



GLOSSARY

rondavels (p.24): small, circular buildings with thatched roofs

fronds (p.27): the leaves of a palm or fern

pastern (p.29): the front, sloping part of a horse's foot

hock (p.29): the joint of an animal's hind leg

circumvents (p.30): sidesteps; evades

canker (p.31): a fungus, ulcer or abscess

furtive (p.32): secretive; sneaky

loping (p.32): scampering; dashing

insurmountable (p.34): impossible; overwhelming

intermittently (p.34): occasionally; erratically

obliterated (p.37): destroyed

Analysis

Beauty (p.22-26) contemplates the question of 'value' as she undertakes the task of packing up the Wileys' belongings. She draws the distinction between monetary value and sentimental value, realising that those things that may not be worth a lot of money may actually be well-loved and cherished possessions. Conversely, objects that may be of monetary value are not necessarily of any importance or worth to the owner.

This is true of Beauty's most treasured possessions: a watercolour painting behind a cracked glass pane, and a faded teacup. Patricia discarded the painting because it was broken, and she deemed it of no value. The teacup was no longer used by anyone but Beauty because it was old and discoloured. These items bring peace and pleasure to Beauty and are therefore valuable to her — so valuable that she is compelled to steal the teacup, despite her scruples, rather than seeing it discarded.

Beauty's emotional investment in the cup is interesting to note. She 'feels for it' (p.24), as though she identifies with it. This may suggest that Beauty, like the cup, was once something 'treasure[d]'

(p.24) and loved, but is now neglected. Patricia once loved the cup and 'there was a time she would drink from nothing else' (p.24), but her interest in it faded along with its picture of the queen and its gold trimmings. Beauty is similarly unloved and neglected, in her unrequited love for Bheki, and her treasuring of the cup may reflect her own deep-seated wish to be loved and cherished.

Cast-offs and castaways

A rather disconcerting aspect of Beauty's narrative in this chapter is the manner in which she, Bheki and the other farm workers are regarded as second-class citizens on the farm. Beauty is the recipient of old and broken things that Patricia no longer wants: broken tape decks, smashed picture frames, old clothes, things that Patricia considers as rubbish. Beauty routinely eats her lunch on a 'mangled wire cage for transporting chickens as her seat' (p.23). Most disturbingly, her rondavel, along with those of the other farm workers, was demolished before they had even moved out, forcing them to live in half-finished houses with no doors, windows, or basic amenities like water or electricity.

It is in this derelict setting that Beauty poignantly dreams of having a house of her own, where she can entertain her guests and grow vegetables. Having 'a roof over her head that she can call her own' (p.24) symbolises a kind of dignity that Beauty craves, but that she does not currently have. It is in this lack of dignity, and the unwittingly condescending treatment meted out by Patricia, that the strains of race and class relations begin to show.

A cankerous marriage

The rancorous nature of **Patricia (p.27-32)** and Richard's marriage is made even more clear. They speak curtly to one another. Patricia rather uncaringly declares that it 'was his problem' (p.31) if the dampness in the house made him ill and reflects that she has learned 'to survive her husband by noticing him as rarely as possible' (p.31).

It was not always this way between them, however. Patricia remembers that they were once blissfully happily, albeit briefly. As Patricia remembers this time, Richard sullenly claims, "That was another man" (p.29) — with which Patricia heartily agrees. The implication is that his dementia not only causes him to forget their past, but it seems to have altered his personality, and he has become another man entirely.

It is further suggested that Richard became 'another man' (p.29) from the one Patricia shared loving moments with on the beach long before his dementia set in. There is another sadness in their past alluded to in this chapter: the death



© Banele Njadayi

'All Beauty wants is a roof over her head that she can call her own. [...] She will grow her own mealies and other vegetables in the yard and keep some chickens and a goat.' (p.24)



© LisaBrice

'Shortly before the sun came up, they made love [...] She often thinks of the swim they had afterwards. [...] Just the sea and their naked bodies, their kisses slippery with salt water' (p.29).

of Rachel, whom the reader infers was their daughter who died on the same day she was born. Both Patricia and Richard are haunted by the death of their daughter. Patricia still regularly visits her grave in unfulfilled desperation to connect with her, while Richard is so disturbed by her ghostly presence that he, quite literally, wants to dig up her corpse. Did the breakdown of their marriage begin with the death of their baby?

Inhospitable surroundings

The bitterness of the Wileys' marriage is reflected by the inhospitable climate in which they live. The Midlands valley where Dwaleeni is situated, while beautiful, is also treacherous. The dampness

causes illness and rot, while the lightning has wrought damage to both life and property. Even the farm buildings are perched precariously on the hill, 'in such a way as to suggest they might slip off, back into the dismal current, never to be seen or heard of again' (p.28). The cobwebs, mildew, airlessness and fleas that infest their home – the house that they have been 'confined to' (p.28), as if against their will – offer an outward manifestation of the affliction that eats away at their marriage.



© Ted Hoefsloot

There is a fitting exchange between Patricia and Richard on the subject of the farm that symbolises the state of their relationship and their life together:

“

'There's nothing out there. Just a dirt road with nothing at the end of it. Who would live to hell and gone like this?'

'Us.'

Richard stares hard at her, trying to locate the source of his wife's apparent mirth. (p.28)

Is Patricia laughing with a sense of grim irony? As their lives are reaching their end, has she found that there seems to have been little point to the road they have travelled together?

A legacy of hatred

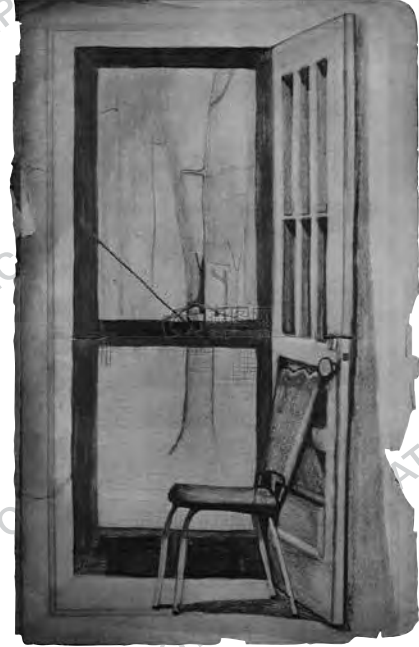
Looksmart (p.33-36) is introduced as an enigmatic, even dangerous character. He is bitter, but erratic, determined to confront Patricia over some as-yet-unknown wrong she has done him in the past. His anger and hatred are connected with a person named Grace, someone who once lived on the farm at the same time as he did and who has since died. Whatever happened to her, it seems to be the source of Looksmart's turmoil, though he has 'softened' (p.36) in the intervening years. He also seems to blame Patricia for Grace's fate, but knows that confronting Patricia will be just as painful for him as it will be for her.

Interestingly, it is revealed that Looksmart is the project manager overseeing the construction work on the farm. He is disturbed, however, by 'the apparent disorder of the place' (p.35), suggesting that whatever he has hoped to achieve by reinventing the farm of his childhood is not as simple or straightforward as he believed.

It is also worth noting another important aspect of Looksmart's character that is revealed in this chapter: his ongoing sense of being 'an intruder in his own land' (p.34). This feeling of not belonging is deeply rooted and demonstrates the ongoing impact of the apartheid legacy.

The past is at the door

Patricia (p.37-39) is, once again, confronted with the problem of what to do with the past as she sorts through long-forgotten objects in an attempt to pack, including an old camera and a ticket stub for a play she does not remember. This final chapter of Section One serves to build tension — the dog's discomfited barking, the mysterious silver car and the sound of the back door closing all heighten the reader's sense that something explosive is about to occur. In a moment of dramatic irony, the reader knows that the door closing signals the fact that Patricia's past has quite literally arrived to confront her, while she remains unaware of what is about to happen.



Questions

1. What is meant by Beauty's observation, 'The problem of what to do with the past would have to carry on in the future' (p.22)? (2)

2. Describe the character of Bheki, as he is portrayed by Beauty (p.24-25). (5)

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3. What is suggested by Beauty's observation that 'uMesis always comes away from [John] with that empty lost look on her face, like one over-burdened with bad news' (p.26)? (2)

4. Why is Richard so determined to dig up Rachel's grave? (3)

5. What is suggested about Looksmart's emotional well-being by the fact that he feels 'a nostalgia for a time when he could hate properly' (p.35). (3)

6. What are the implications of Looksmart's car being described as 'pointing towards the farmhouse like a large silver bullet' (p.36)? (2)

7. Comment on the significance of Patricia's observation that she and Richard will 'each have a different view' (p.38) once they move to the new house in Durban. (3)

[20]

Narration and structure

What is the author trying to say? How are we encouraged to react to the ideas presented in the novel? In this section, we examine some of the literary devices, writing techniques and structural elements that the author, Craig Higginson, uses to convey the message of his novel.

The title of the novel

The meaning behind the title of the novel is multi-layered: *The Dream House* represents something that is both an ideal and an illusion; a fantasy that will never become reality.



Each of the characters yearns for their own version of 'the dream house': for Patricia, the dream house is filled with family and love that never came to fruition at Dwaleini. She resurrects that dream when her surrogate son, Looksmart, reappears in her life, and asks him to visit her at the house by the sea. She imagines that house filled with the warmth and laughter of his family, bringing with them the love she has always craved. Even as she dreams of it, however, it feels 'immediately absurd' (p.182), a fantasy that will never materialise.

Looksmart, meanwhile, seeks to create his dream house by remodelling the farmhouse at Dwaleini. When he was a boy, the farmhouse represented a site of privilege from which he, as the child of a black farm worker, was excluded. Though he formed a kind of mother-son bond with Patricia, the racial divides dictated by apartheid meant that they could never

truly be family. As an adult, he has channelled the feelings of inadequacy, rage and hatred that stemmed from his exclusion into the farm development project. He has taken ownership of that farmhouse — and all that it represents — and plans to transform it into a space that he can occupy. In doing so, he subconsciously wishes to heal the pain of his past. Patricia realises, however, that in building houses across the farm that are modelled on the farmhouse, 'all he's managing to do is reproduce [that pain]' (p.178).

Beauty's dream house is simpler in its conception: 'It has been her dream to have a house of her own' (p.24), a space that is entirely her own domain. She has been saving towards this dream and has even requested a plot on which to build it. Her dream house is a place in which she does not have to serve or answer to anyone else; however, as she prepares to leave for Durban, where she will continue to serve the Wileys, there seems to be no real prospect of her dream being realised.



Bheki's dream house is less easily defined, but it is represented by the ideal of remaining with his family and being in a position to care for them. This opportunity is offered to him by Looksmart. Richard, meanwhile, is simply searching for a home in which he feels welcomed. As his marriage to Patricia soured, he spent his entire adult life as a kind of exile on the farm, and observes that 'it was never his house, but hers, handed down from her father' (p.103).

For each of the characters, 'the dream house' is not just a physical space, but an ideal for which they yearn: a state of bliss or happiness that they feel is missing from their lives or circumstances. On a more general level, 'the dream house' is something for which every South African yearns: Higginson appears to be suggesting that many of us may not feel 'at home' in our own country and that the ideal of an inclusive society has not yet been achieved.

Plot structure

Analysing the plot structure of a novel can be very useful when you are reading through it. Doing so can help you to understand the action as purposeful, connected and moving towards a logical conclusion, rather than seeing the text as a haphazard collection of apparently random episodes.

Since Aristotle wrote his *Poetics* around 335 BC, literary critics have sought ways to define a plot. According to Aristotle, the plot is the most important element in a drama. It is generally understood to be the sequence of events that makes up the 'story' of a work of literature.

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines it more exactly as the pattern of events and situations in a narrative or dramatic work, selected and arranged to emphasise cause-and-effect relationships.

E M Forster, in *Aspects of the Novel*, says the emphasis falls on 'causality'; in other words, that the reader asks, 'what next?' if they are hearing a story, but 'why?' when a plot is being analysed. He is suggesting that a reader examining a plot should look at both the sequence of events (the order in which the events occur) and at what connects the events (why certain things happen).

Five-part structure

The narrative structure of *The Dream House* appears to have been heavily influenced by Higginson's background as a playwright, and the novel's origins as a stage production, as it has been organised into five 'Parts', which closely correspond to the five 'acts' often used to structure plays. The five-act structure is common because it has proved to be an extremely suitable way of ensuring that the events and revelations of the drama occur at an enthralling, satisfying pace. These are the divisions into which the plot of a five-act play typically falls:

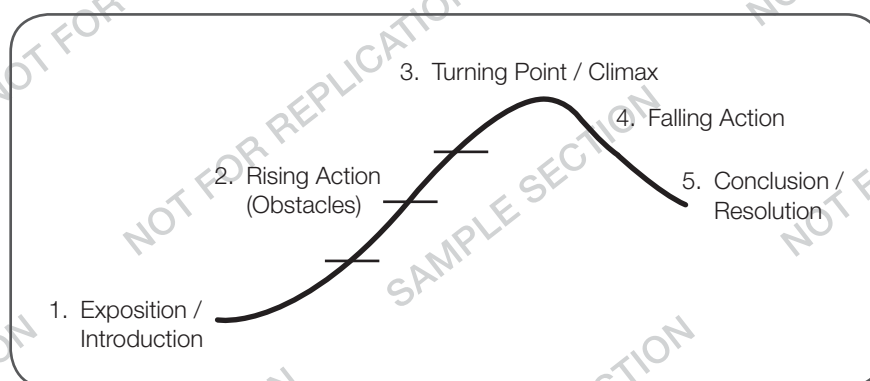


Diagram illustrating the typical plot structure of a five-act play

1. Exposition/Introduction:

This part of the plot introduces the main characters, establishes the relationship between these characters and introduces the situation or conflict with which the main character is faced and will have to resolve.

2. Rising Action

At this point, the 'plot thickens'. The main character starts working towards resolving his or her problem (conflict). He or she will face challenges and obstacles and be thwarted along the way. How he or she decides to tackle these obstacles sets the stage for the rest of the drama.

3. Turning Point/Climax

This is the focal point of the plot. The main character makes a single critical decision. He or she is ready to engage with his or her antagonist(s) and, consequently, there will be a change — for better or for worse — in the ensuing action of the play.

4. Falling Action

This is a time of great tension and drama. The antagonist appears to have the upper hand and the main character seems to be unable to accomplish his or her goal. Loose ends start to be tied up and complications unravel. The play moves towards its conclusion.

5. Conclusion/Resolution/Dénouement/Revelation

The four terms in this sub-heading all refer to the final act of the drama. There is a confrontation and the conflict (problem) is resolved. Typically, the audience experiences 'catharsis' or the release of tension and anxiety.

Plot structure of *The Dream House***Exposition/Introduction**

In **Part One** of the novel, the background or *exposition* of the storyline is provided. In this section, we are introduced to the five central characters — Patricia, Richard, Beauty, Bheki and Looksmart — and their relationships to one another. We learn that Patricia and Richard Wiley are selling their Natal Midlands farm to a property developer, and will be moving to Durban with their long-serving employees, Beauty and Bheki. Looksmart, meanwhile, is driving towards the farm from his home in Gauteng, intent on confronting the Wileys about the past. Part One closes as Patricia, seemingly alone, hears the ominous sound of someone entering the house through the back door.

Rising Action

In **Part Two**, Richard wanders around the grounds of the farm, as Beauty and Bheki attempt to find him. Looksmart and Patricia become cautiously reacquainted, and it is clear



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'[H]is hatred was his most reliable companion. [...] It burned in him like rage, but was more patient and subtle, and constantly it would drive him to new heights. [...] [H]is success would not have been possible were it not for his stamina for hate.' (p.35)

that Looksmart has a burden of which he needs to relieve himself. At the end of this section, he utters the name of a woman from his past, 'Grace', the memory of whom has driven him to visit the farm after so long an absence.

Turning Point/Climax

In **Part Three**, the story of Grace's violent death slowly unfolds, as Patricia recalls the origins of her relationship with Looksmart. Beauty and Bheki continue the desperate search for Richard, who grows increasingly confused and agitated. At the close of Part Three, Beauty reluctantly confirms Looksmart's accusation that Richard was responsible for Grace's murder.

Falling Action

In **Part Four**, the emotional confrontation between Patricia and Looksmart reaches its dramatic climax, as both vent their regrets and past pain. Richard attempts to dig up the grave of his and Patricia's stillborn daughter before making his way back to the house, where he and Looksmart have an awkward encounter. After Looksmart leaves, Patricia confronts Richard with her knowledge of the murder and the two have an explosive argument. Patricia tries to call Looksmart back, but she is too late.

Conclusion/Dénouement

Finally, in **Part Five**, the inhabitants of Dwaleni awake to their final morning on the farm. Patricia receives the disturbing news that her lover of the past three decades, John Ford, has committed suicide. As they prepare to leave the farm, Patricia and Beauty have a hushed conversation in which Beauty reveals the shocking truth behind Grace's death. As they drive away for the final time, they pass Looksmart driving in the opposite direction, headed to reclaim and transform his childhood home.



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'She draws back the curtains to reveal the mist. It lies there as it did before, filling the valley and invading every cupboard of the house. The bloodwoods are also present, like attendant ghosts awaiting instructions. Little do they know how soon they will be levelled.' (p.211)

Narrative point of view

The novel is narrated in limited **third person** (also known as attached third person), from the perspectives of its five central characters: Patricia, Richard, Looksmart, Beauty and Bheki. This narrative viewpoint offers the reader insight into the internal emotions, thoughts and reactions of the individual characters. Each chapter is **focalised** by a different character, indicated by the names that form the chapter headers.

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When discussing narrative point of view, the **narrative voice** (who is speaking) and the **focalisation** (from whose perspective the story is told) need to be considered; for example, a story which is told in the first person (using 'I') is narrated and focalised by the same character. That character is, thus, both the speaker and the person from whose perspective the story is told.

When a third person narrator has access to the thoughts and feelings of all of the characters and the situations in which they are involved, it is known as **omniscient** narration.

When the story is narrated in the third person from the perspective of only one or two central characters, those characters are known as **focalisers**.



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Third person narration allows the reader to access the hearts and minds of characters.

Each character is provided with a unique voice in the chapters that are focalised by them. The perspectives of Patricia and Looksmart are afforded the most prominence throughout the novel; both are introspective and spend a lot of time reflecting on past events, though the depth and objectiveness of their self-awareness is questionable. In contrast, Bheki is

provided only a handful of brief chapters, which reflect the nature of his character in their comparative opacity. Beauty is characterised by a relatively simple narrative style that mirrors her somewhat guileless disposition. Richard's chapters, meanwhile, effectively demonstrate the confused and disorientated state of his mind.

The influence of Higginson's background as a playwright is evident again in his use of **dramatic irony** throughout the novel. Each character is holding something back from the others, but, based on the access the reader is given to the inner thoughts of all five main characters, readers are able to assemble a more complete story and acquire a more holistic knowledge of the



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The technique of focalising each chapter through a different character allows the reader to experience multiple, often conflicting, perspectives, which helps the reader become comfortable navigating complex, nuanced situations in which there are often no definitively 'right' or 'wrong' answers.

circumstances that have led to the climactic confrontation between Looksmart and the Wileys. The reader appreciates a subtext to the storyline to which none of the main characters is privy and, thus, experiences the plot on a different level from the characters themselves. The reader is not told how to feel or react or what is right or wrong, but is responsible for determining their own responses to the characters and events as the story unfolds. In this regard, the novel format has an advantage over a stage production because the reader has access to the consciousness of the main characters and not simply to their spoken words and actions.



Dramatic irony is a literary technique commonly found in plays, poetry and sometimes novels. It occurs when storytellers create situations in which the audience or reader knows more about the circumstances, conflicts or eventual resolution of the plot than the main characters or actors do. This 'insider knowledge' enables the reader to deduce a deeper significance or layer of meaning in the characters' actions or words.

Storytellers often use dramatic irony to create a sense of unease or state of tension in the reader because this agitation keeps the reader engaged and invested in the plot. Dramatic irony can also be used to create sympathy or empathy for particular characters.

One of the most well-known examples of dramatic irony occurs in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. At the climax of the play, Romeo believes Juliet to be dead, while the audience knows that she is simply drugged and will awake. The incredulous audience has to watch helplessly as the tragedy unfolds and a grief-stricken Romeo commits suicide to join her in death needlessly.

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Symbols

Symbols are objects, characters, shapes or colours used to represent something else, usually an abstract idea or quality. Symbols usually represent something else by association, resemblance or convention, and provide subtle clues to the deeper layers of meaning in a literary work. In this section, we examine some of the more prominent symbolism used by Higginson in the novel.

Dogs

In the novel, dogs appear to symbolise the learned hatred and fear inspired by the apartheid regime. During her lifetime, Patricia has always 'been accompanied by a hurricane of dogs' (p.5); they are trained watchdogs, intended for both companionship and security. There is a darker side to their nature, the capacity for violence has been instilled into them.

The dogs are suspicious of visitors, but, in particular, it seems that they are taught to be wary of black people, even the farmworkers. Their hatred is perhaps not innate, but rather *learned*, and as such they appear to become a tool of violence emblematic of the apartheid regime. This is evident from Richard's refusal to destroy the dog, Chloe, after she attacks and kills Grace. He tells Patricia that '[s]he was only doing her job' and that the farmworkers are unlikely to 'mess with her again after that' (p.114).

Chloe's attack on Grace symbolises the complicated relationship between love and hate in the novel. Looksmart is in love with Grace and his love is annihilated by the dog literally, as he recalls: 'Then Grace is — she is like a double creature, [...] she is half a woman, half a dog, and she utters a sound so horrible, I don't even recognise it as her' (p.112). It is not just Grace that the dog destroys, however, but Looksmart's *capacity* to love as well.

When Grace dies, Looksmart's devastation seems to be compounded by the sense of betrayal he feels as a result of Patricia's lack of empathy. The violent incident appears to make him realise the devastating consequences of deeply-ingrained racism and prejudice, and this realisation seemingly shatters his belief in, and ability to, love. The hatred and fear inspired by apartheid and symbolised by the dog have perhaps destroyed any form of love in Looksmart's life: love and hate become one and the same to him. As he tells Patricia: 'My love and your fear, they grew together. And now, I can no longer separate them. When I think of one, I see the other. I see that double thing, that creature — the beast. Circling the garden, dripping blood' (p.144).



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In consideration of this, it seems significant that the farm dogs are all killed by the close of the novel. They do not accompany the Wileys to their new home in Durban. Bheki, who is the one to shoot the dogs, views it as a kind of 'justice' (p.237); indeed, their destruction can be viewed optimistically as a suggestion that the hatred, fear and racism that they represent has no place in post-Apartheid South Africa.

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Landscape

The farm landscape of Dwaleni could represent the shared history of all of the characters: it appears to be a site of both happiness and devastation for each of them. The landscape encapsulates their memories and their states of mind, and holds their secrets from the past. Long after their physical separation, it is the land and what has transpired on the farm that seems to bind Looksmart and Patricia, 'run[ning] like a fat immovable nerve through both of them' (p.177).

When the events of the novel occur, the land is undergoing a state of transformation that seems to reflect the upheaval both in the characters' lives and in the country as a whole. As Patricia observes on the day before their final departure: 'This verdant stretch, which was once a favourite place of Patricia's — a breathing place between the real world and the farm — has been reduced to a war zone, in which men wander about in the mist like wounded soldiers, their boots heavy with mud' (p.10). The 'war zone' of the farm perhaps reflects the past pain and devastation that comes to light over the course of the novel; it also appears to represent Looksmart's attempts to transform the site of his past, and the wounds it inflicted. Furthermore, it seems to exacerbate Richard's confused and fragile state of mind.

The mist that frequently enshrouds the landscape serves a significant symbolic purpose: it can be interpreted as representing the lies, untruths and omissions that are so prevalent in the characters' lives. Just as the mist obscures the landscape, so, too, do the lies and secrets kept by the characters obscure them from one another and prevent them from seeing each other clearly.

As the Wileys prepare to leave the farm, there is the suggestion that their departure promises a more optimistic future for the land. Patricia observes that the mists are lifting and '[t]he sun is shining through the cloud when she climbs into the car, as if things are finally looking up on the farm now that they're leaving it' (p.240). While the landscape harbours their past pain and devastation, it also has the potential for positive change, 'as an inexhaustible source of renewal and growth' (p.181).



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Looksmart's fish

The fish that Looksmart catches on his first fishing expedition with Patricia can represent their bond and affection for one another — the mother-son relationship that developed between them. Both of them remember the day that Patricia bought Looksmart his first fishing rod and took him to the dam to teach him to fish. It seems significant, however, that the two disagree on the fate of the fish.

Patricia recalls Looksmart insisting that they return the fish to the water: 'You said how beautiful it looked, lying there in the dead grass. And then, just as the rain was starting up, you decided: we had to return it to the water. So you picked it up and you lowered it back' (p.58). In Patricia's version of events, the fish survived, perhaps in the same way that she hopes that the bond between them has done?

Looksmart, however, insists that they killed the fish. His memory reflects his feelings on his relationship with Patricia: 'You sent me to that school, gave me that blazer, corrected my English — you woke something up and then you killed it — you killed it as surely as you made me to kill that fish!' (p.162). Looksmart blames Patricia for the death of the fish, just as he appears to blame her for destroying the bond of familial love between them.

Besides reflecting their feelings about their relationship, Patricia and Looksmart's differing versions of the fishing trip also seem to encapsulate the complicated relationship between memory and truth. Both are steadfast in their belief that their truth is the *only* truth, that their memories are genuine. Patricia is perhaps aware of the mutable quality of memory and truth as she observes: 'the more she speaks her version of events, the clearer they become, each detail fitting nearly into place. For what's to make his account any more accurate than hers? She knows that he is doing exactly what she is doing: making up sentences as he goes along, bridging whatever gaps he encounters as he encounters them' (p.140).

It is also significant to note Patricia's reaction when she discovers Looksmart's old fishing rod: 'When she saw the fishing rod sticking out from under the bed, in a red cotton holder, the segments tied together with black ribbon, it made her lurch internally — even though at first she didn't know why' (p.55). The physical object appears to become a vessel of emotion so powerful that she is, at first, not even consciously aware of the origin of those emotions. The black ribbons that tie the segments of the rod together seem to symbolise her grief over the loss of Looksmart.

Rachel's grave

The grave of Patricia and Richard's stillborn daughter is a powerful site in the imaginations of both parents. It is a physical reminder of their grief and the loss that has perhaps determined the miserable trajectory of the remainder of their adult lives. It appears to be a symbol of disappointment and lost potential. As Patricia notes, after the death of their daughter: 'all she saw was the thin path lying ahead of her, with Rachel's death at the beginning of it and her own death at the end of it. There could be nothing else between' (p.166).

For Richard, however, Rachel's gravesite seems to take on added significance. In his advanced state of dementia, he believes that his dead daughter is calling to him from her grave: she is a 'little voice, looking for a way out of the earth' (p.185). While his preoccupation with digging



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up her grave can be attributed to his continued grief over her loss, it also appears to hint at something more, another emotion that plagues him: the guilt he feels over the death of his unborn child with Grace. Richard was responsible for instigating the attack on Grace, which ended not only her life but that of her unborn child — the child she had just told Richard was his. While he seems unable to admit to, or acknowledge, his guilt in his lucid state, his obsession with his ‘two dead children’ (p.8) seems to indicate his remorse, if not for Grace, then for the child. Taking this into account, Rachel’s grave can represent his grief over both children, since Grace’s child was never acknowledged with a grave of its own.

Why does Patricia decide to have Rachel’s coffin dug up and brought with them to Durban? Could this action be interpreted as symbolic of her inability to leave her grief behind? It appears that she and Richard will carry the pain of their loss with them for the remainder of their lives. At the same time, it is also the most significant indicator that they really are leaving Dwaleeni: when Bheki brings the coffin to the house, ‘for the first time [he] begins to understand that these people will be leaving this place for good’ (p.219).



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Essay topic 1:

In an essay of approximately 600 words, examine the way in which dogs function as a symbol in Craig Higginson's *The Dream House*, commenting particularly on the way in which this symbol develops the central thematic concerns of the novel.

(30)



NOTES ON THE ESSAY TOPIC:

- This question requires you to examine the symbolic significance of dogs in the novel.
- This analysis should focus specifically on the **importance of dogs in developing some of the central themes** of the novel.
- **Key words** include 'examine', 'symbol', 'significance', 'develops' and 'thematic concerns'. You should try to use some of these words in the essay itself.

ESSAY

The violent attack on Grace by Chloe, one of the farm dogs at Dwaleni, is the central trauma that drives the action in Craig Higginson's novel, *The Dream House*. The appearance of dogs throughout the narrative also functions as a symbol for some of the most important thematic concerns of the novel: **they represent the learned fear inspired by the apartheid regime, and reveal the inseparable relationship between love and hate for the central characters.** The vicious murder of Grace reveals the devastating consequences of fear and hatred on the bonds of love.

The dogs at Dwaleni are trained watchdogs: they have the capacity to inflict brutal violence, and have been taught to be particularly suspicious of the black workers on the farm. Their hatred and fear is not natural, but rather intentionally instilled into them, and the violence of their behaviour is emblematic of the fear-driven brutality of the apartheid regime. This is evident by Richard's refusal to kill the dog Chloe after she attacks and kills Grace — he tells Patricia that '[s]he was only doing her job' and that the farmworkers are sure not to 'mess with her again after that' (p.114).

COMMENTS

Note the structure of the introductory paragraph: the thesis statement is indicated in **bold**, and this is the main argument that will be referred to throughout the essay. The underlined sentences give a 'preview' of the argument, as these are the topics that will be discussed in the body of the essay.

In the second paragraph, the sentence in **bold** indicates the topic sentence: this is the point with which this paragraph will deal. The quotations and examples from the text support the claim being made by the topic sentence. The underlined sentences form the analysis or elaboration of this point, and explain its relevance to the thesis statement. Note how direct quotations can be integrated in different ways; in this paragraph, the quote is grammatically incorporated into the sentence.

The attack on Grace also becomes emblematic of the complicated relationship between love and hate in the novel.

The image of the dog viciously savaging the woman he loves haunts Looksmart even decades later, and is the root of his profoundly damaged psyche. The 'double creature' (p.112) formed by Grace locked in battle with the dog is symbolic of how closely intertwined love and hate has become for Looksmart: the dog did not only kill the woman he loved, but also destroyed his ability to love innocently and wholeheartedly.

The impact of Grace's murder is compounded by the betrayal Looksmart feels as a result of Patricia's lack of empathy after the attack. Patricia, he realises, is a product of the prejudice inherent in the apartheid regime; though he has grown up believing that she loved him, her heartless reaction to Grace's predicament leads him to believe that Patricia views both him and Grace as 'slightly less than human', and this is 'enough to change every other fact between himself and Patricia' (p.111). The hatred and fear inspired by apartheid and symbolised by the dog have therefore destroyed any form of love in Looksmart's life: love and hate become one and the same to him.

Dogs, then, are agents of fear and violence in the novel, inspired by the prejudices of apartheid. **That fear and violence destroys the influence of love and plants the seeds of hatred in the psyche of Looksmart, and for him, love and hate become one and the same.** As he tells Patricia: 'My love and your fear, they grew together. And now, I can no longer separate them. When I think of one, I see the other. I see that double thing, that creature — the beast. Circling the garden, dripping blood' (p.144). Through this delicate exploration, the central thematic concerns of love, fear and hate are explored in the novel.

Take note of the 'T-E-A' structure of this paragraph (Topic sentence — Evidence — Analysis). The sentence in **bold** is the topic sentence; the quotations and examples provide evidence; and the underlined sentences are the analysis of this point. Providing a page reference may not be possible in an examination context, but you should still alert your examiner that you are quoting or paraphrasing from the novel.

Note how this paragraph brings together the two points made in the previous paragraph to drive home the main argument.

It is sometimes useful to support your conclusion with a relevant quote from the text that encapsulates your main argument. The concluding paragraph sums up the argument, drawing on words and phrases used in both the question and the introduction, but restated in an original way. The sentence in **bold** indicates a restatement of the thesis statement.

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Essay topic 2:

In Part Two of *The Dream House*, we read:

'Had either of them looked at her now, they might have seen the knowledge inside her eyes, smouldering like a fire, but without any light in it.' (p.64)

Using the quotation provided as a starting point, discuss the characterisation of Beauty in *The Dream House*, with particular reference to her relationship to and understanding of the truth.

(30)



NOTES ON THE ESSAY TOPIC:

- This question requires you to provide a character analysis of Beauty, using the provided quotation as a starting point to discuss her perception of the truth.
- The provided quotation should be used as a **guideline for the direction which your argument should assume**.
- Key words** include 'provided quotation', 'starting point', 'discuss', 'characterisation', 'particular reference', 'understanding' and 'truth'. You should try to use some of these words in the essay itself.

ESSAY

The notion of 'the truth' is a complex phenomenon in Craig Higginson's *The Dream House*. Each of the central characters in the novel has their own interpretation of what the truth really means, and its significance to their understanding of the past. Of all the characters, however, **it is Beauty who possesses the most nuanced and astute grasp on the power of the truth and the potential of its consequences.** Beauty instinctively knows when the truth is best revealed, and when it should be concealed in order to prevent its devastating consequences.

COMMENTS

Note the structure of the introductory paragraph: the thesis statement or main argument is indicated in **bold**, while the underlined sentence gives a 'preview' of how this argument will be explored.

As the provided quotation reveals, **Beauty is the only character at the start of the novel who knows the truth behind the death of her sister, Grace, decades previously.** Looksmart's presence in the Wiley household has brought these old memories to the fore, and while Looksmart is driven to confront Patricia with what he believes to be the truth, Beauty 'knows why Looksmart is here. She knows better than even Looksmart does' (p.76). The truth she possesses does not provide her with any 'light' (p.64), however, as demonstrated in the provided quotation: the facts do not provide a beacon that guides her life or determines her actions.

Instead, much like Patricia, **it seems at first that Beauty prefers to hide from the truth.** The memory of Grace and the truth about what happened to her 'is a thing to be avoided', a reality that 'make[s] her want to run from there and be sick' (p.64). The pain and trauma of her knowledge of the past is not something she chooses to dwell on. Far from Patricia's wilful ignorance, however, Beauty's avoidance of the truth is a result of her understanding of just how destructive its revelation can be.

It is for this reason that Beauty chooses not to reveal the truth of Grace's death to Looksmart.

While he believes that the woman he loved was raped and brutally murdered, Beauty knows that she was in fact paid by Richard in exchange for sex; what's more, he murdered her to cover up the fact that she was pregnant with his child. Looksmart's version of the truth has been the root of his hatred and rage for decades, but Beauty instinctively understands that it is a version that he is able to live with, and that the truth would prove devastating to him because it would irreparably alter the pure image he treasures of Grace. When Looksmart confronts her, demanding that she confirm his story, Beauty considers the truth, but 'she does not like what it might lead to' (p.147). Later, she tells Patricia that she did so because 'Looksmart is like a boy. In his heart. He will not be able to hear a thing like that' (p.235). Beauty demonstrates her wisdom in this moment: she realises that hearing the truth and finding out that his perception of Grace and his relationship with her was false will destroy Looksmart.

In the second paragraph, the argument refers directly to the provided quotation, as instructed. The quotation is explained and used as a means of introducing the main point of the argument. The quotations and examples from the text support the claim being made by the topic sentence, which is indicated in **bold**. The underlined sentences form the analysis or elaboration of this point, and explain its relevance to the thesis statement.

Note the use of the connective word 'Instead' to link paragraphs, which ensures the logical organisation and progression of the argument. Other connectives include 'furthermore', 'moreover', 'further to', 'in addition to' etc.

Take note of the 'T-E-A' structure of this paragraph (Topic sentence — Evidence — Analysis). The sentence in **bold** is the topic sentence; the quotations and examples provide evidence; and the underlined sentences are the analysis of this point.

FOREWORD

BACKGROUND
TO THE NOVELCRITICAL
COMMENTARYSUMMARIES
AND ANALYSESLITERARY
ANALYSISLITERARY
ESSAY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FOREWORD	<p>Better than any other character, then, Beauty recognises that the truth is not a simple matter: it is simply ‘another way of presenting oneself to the world’ (p.235), a different framework through which to understand one’s reality. It is for this reason that she tells Patricia that she ‘must find the truth for [herself]’ (p.236). Beauty realises that the truth is a shifting and mutable concept that differs from person to person, and its shades determine the way in which the characters understand themselves and their circumstances.</p>	<p>The concluding paragraph sums up the argument, drawing on words and phrases used in both the question and the introduction, but restated in an original way. The sentence in bold indicates a restatement of the thesis statement.</p>
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[30]

CRITICAL COMMENTARY

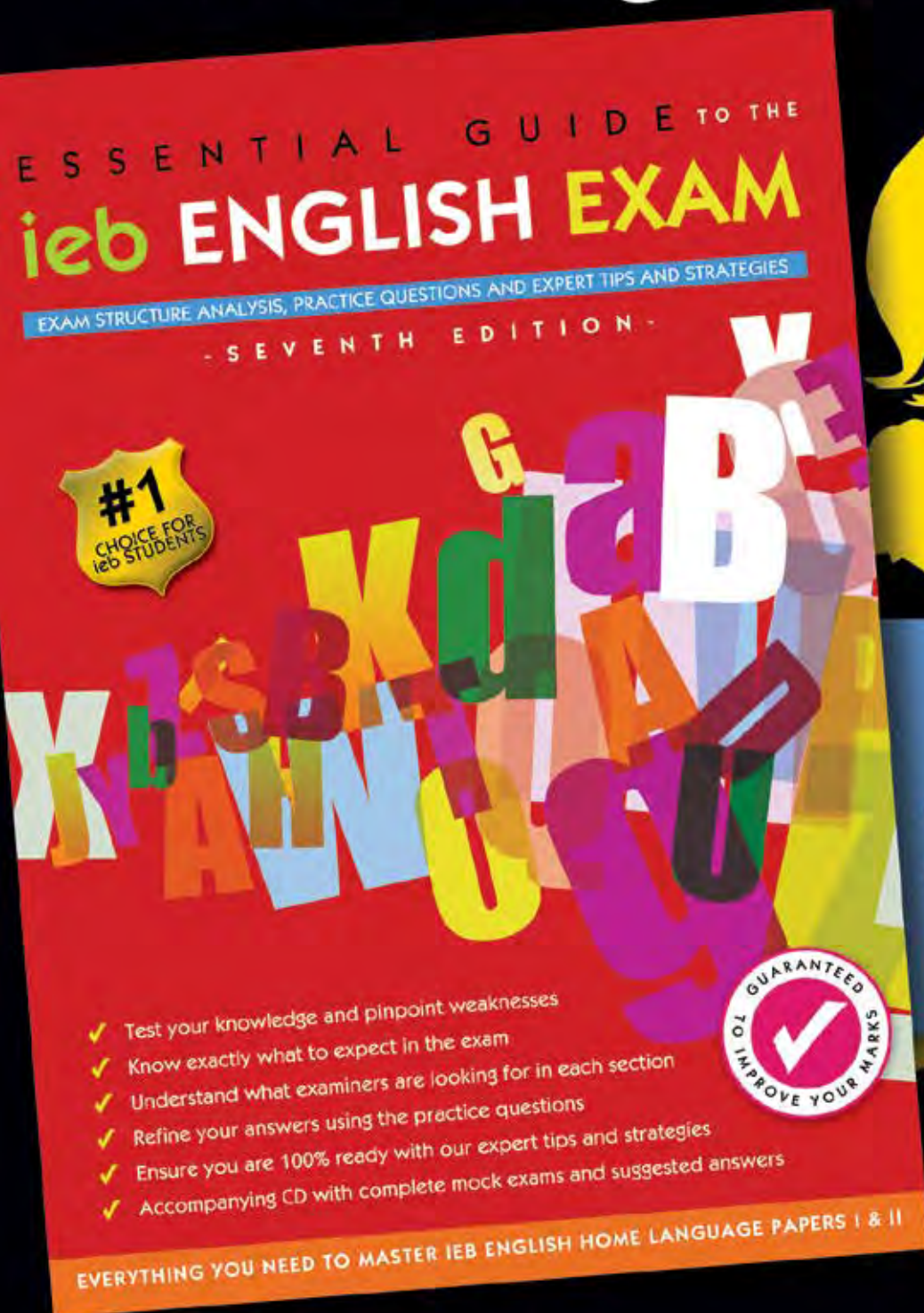
SUMMARIES AND ANALYSES

LITERARY ANALYSIS

LITERARY ESSAY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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