

The Rocking-Horse Winner

by D.H. Lawrence

Analysis Questions:

1. Structure:

- A. The first three paragraphs are peppered with conjunctions that indicate a contrast: for example, consider the phrase "She had bonny children, **yet** she felt they had been thrust upon her." Identify contrasts present in the beginning of the text and analyze their function. Why does Lawrence choose to structure the text in this way?
- B. What phrases are repeated throughout this text? What is the purpose of their repetition?

2. Specifics:

- C. What words would you use to describe the mother? What details in the text (what she says, how she's described, how she interacts, etc.) support your assertion?
- D. List the traits listed to describe the home or nursery in the text. Pick one of these settings and explain the connection of physical place to one or more of the characters?
- E. What specific instances in the plot characterize Paul? What specific traits would you attribute to him?

3. Technique:

- F. The opening of the text is oddly reminiscent of a fairytale. What is the function of opening the story in this way? How does it relate to the meaning of the work as a whole?
- G. What is the function of the supernatural in this story? What is the significance of Lawrence referring to the home as "haunted"? Consider the ambiguity in this story. Is the house **literally** speaking or is it meant to be taken figuratively? How does the use of ambiguity impact our overall perception of the text?
- H. Consider Lawrence's choice of a rocking-horse as Paul's supernatural vehicle of luck. What does a rocking-horse do? How might the toy's use align symbolically with Paul and his mother's plight?

4. Perspective:

- I. Although the text is written in third person, the speaker's perspective is still revealed throughout the text. Where can we see the speaker's perspective indicated in the text?
- J. What effect does the point of view have on us? How would the story be different if told by a character from the text?