

Spring 2015

Presentation on Maaza Mengiste's Beneath the Lion's Gaze Day 2

Andrew Strombeck

Wright State University - Main Campus, andrew.strombeck@wright.edu

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Beneath the Lion's Gaze Day 2

The Literature of Conflict
Spring 2015

Today

- Violent material of *Lion's Gaze* vs. *The Surrendered*
- Form of *Lion's Gaze*, using examples of Sara/taxi driver and Mickey/Dawit
- Shift in tone Part II

Violent material

- List violent details from chapter 18 and chapter 20.
- How is this material similar to the first chapter of *The Surrendered*? How does it differ? How does the inclusion of Mickey affect this scene?



Form of this novel

- Whereas *The Surrendered* moved between timeframes and characters, this novel stays in a single timeframe, but moves among different spaces in revolutionary and post-revolutionary Ethiopia.
- Write down one way in which the shifting of viewpoint shapes the novel's effects.

Sara experience vs. larger revolution

- Write down details from Chapter 22
- What is the difference between the way Sara experiences pain and the taxi driver's experience?
- Why do you think Mengiste juxtaposes these?

Contrast in Chapter 31

- In Chapter 31, Mengiste uses a familiar strategy: she forces us to observe the larger conflicts of the civil war by bringing together two characters who embody different parts of the conflict.
- As we will discuss, this relates to the novel's form, which moves from viewpoint to viewpoint within the same physical environment.

**Left side room:
Everything you associate
with Dawit**

**Right side room:
Everything you associate
with Mickey**

Form of this novel

- Whereas *The Surrendered* moved between timeframes and characters, this novel stays in a single timeframe, but moves among different spaces in revolutionary and post-revolutionary Ethiopia.
- Write down one way in which the shifting of viewpoint shapes the novel's effects.

To what does this passage refer?

- In 1-2 sentences, tell me what “breaking into two” means in terms of part II of the novel.
- “Through the curtains, trees shook shadows onto the hospital lawn. There was the sound of leaves rustling in the wind, the blaring horns of traffic, and the shouts of farmers and vendors. Life outside these walls went on as always. Inside, it seemed the world had shifted off its axis and was breaking into two” (122).



Part II

- What adjectives would you use to describe the dominant feeling in this part of the novel?
- What scenes does Mengiste use to convey this feeling?