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Resources and Publications

Acknowledgement – thanks to the following publications and resources for the material covered. Much of this resource could not have been made up without the use of these resources:

BBC Learning Clips

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/search/learning/?q=the+cone+gatherers>

ASLS Publication

<http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/scotlit/asls/SN10.html>

BBC Bitesize

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00ry4x1>

BBC Education Scotland

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/education/eng/cones/>

BBC National 5 English

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/z6xcwmn/revision>

Education Scotland

http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/nq/t/nqresource_tcm4229620.asp

Glow Resources

https://wikis.glowscotland.org.uk/0003824/Mr_Mackenzie_English_Class/S5%2F%2F6_Higher_English_2013-14/The_Cone_Gatherers_class_resources_and_homework

A Literary Odyssey Blog

<http://aliteraryodyssey.blogspot.co.uk/2012/08/the-cone-gatherers-by-robin-jenkins.html>

YouTube clips

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pssen1yO2mc>

INTRODUCTION

- Robin Jenkins was born in Cambuslang, Scotland in 1912.
- After attending Hamilton Academy, Jenkins studied English at the University of Glasgow, graduating in 1936.
- He was an English teacher in Glasgow for a number of years, moving to the Borders at the start of WWII. A conscientious objector to the war, he worked for the Forestry Service in Argyll.
- He first started writing after the war, his first novel, *So Gaily Sings the Lark*, was published in 1951.
- He later moved abroad, working for the British Council in Afghanistan, Spain and Borneo. In 1968 he returned to Scotland, and became a full-time writer two years later.
- Jenkins has written around thirty novels, and in 2002 was awarded the Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun prize by the Saltire Society for his lifetime achievement as a writer. He was also awarded an OBE in 1999.
- Robin Jenkins died in 2005, aged 92.

Jenkins:



As a consequence of my having been brought up in a small community I have never been at ease living in a large city and few of my novels have urban settings. As a university student I used to go hiking in the Highlands, often alone, which was foolish from the point of view of safety but valuable in that it compelled me to feel closer to nature than I would have if I had had companions to talk to. Also, walking through a desolate glen for hours at a stretch, often in mist and rain, with only birds and sheep and deer for company, was a good way of getting to know not only the presences all around me but also, more importantly, myself. Novelists who seek to study the virtues and vices of humanity find them all most readily in themselves.

Jenkins is the kind of novelist who explores “the virtues and vices of people and in fact goes further than that as he explores good and evil as well.” Jenkins believed that we find the virtues and vices of humanity most readily in ourselves. It may be true that everyone has the capacity to be a Duror but Jenkins is also careful to say that these characters came out of his imagination. He did not actually see these people in the world around him.

Jenkins also refers to the General Strike of 1926 in which the miners were involved. (Jenkins was born and brought up in a mining village.) He saw,

“miners armed with clubs ready to attack any bus driver who tried to drive through... I have never forgotten the anger on these miners’ faces. They were men I had often seen sitting in the sun chatting or playing cards... I had been given a glimpse of the fury and resentment below the surface, not only in them but in all of us. I am sure that experience helped me to create the character of Duror in The Cone Gatherers”.

Jenkins means that hatred is not an alien concept as Duror is not a monster we cannot understand. “Fury and resentment” have partly made him what he is. In the same way as the miners were incited to hatred by the constriction of their lives.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

PLOT:	A thorough knowledge of what happens in the text
KEY THEMES:	Conflict, Good vs. Evil, Class Division
KEY CHARACTERS:	Calum Neil Duror Roderick Lady Runcie-Campbell
SETTING:	Time - World War II (1939-1945) Place - Remote Highlands of Scotland; Estate and the wood
SYMBOLISM:	Christian allegory - The Fall of Man Nature - The cycle of life is inevitable, beautiful but cruel: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Cones - represent the resurrection▪ Tree imagery - illustrate Duror's mental state
KEY INCIDENTS:	The Deer Hunt The Beach Hut The Ending
OPENING and CLOSING	
METHOD OF NARRATION:	Third person, omniscient narrator allows the reader an insight into the key characters, particularly Duror and his insanity; Lady Runcie-Campbell's inner conflict of rank vs. Christian ethos; Calum's innocence and purity.

It is up to you how you wish to structure your notes.

If you decide to take chronological notes on each chapter, ensure that you clearly label the notes you make on narrative, characters, plot, setting, symbolism and themes.

GLOSSARY/Dictionary of Scots (Colloquial Language)

Conscientious Objectors	those who refuse to fight in a war, often on religious grounds
National Service	service for one's country, usually in the armed forces in wartime, but sometimes in such occupations as forestry
Home Guard	a volunteer force for home defence, used first in the Second World War
Landgirl	women who completed National Service by working on the land
Rations	the amount of food and clothes available to one person were restricted during the war and they were awarded on a coupon system
Wireless set	a radio. There would be no TV at this time. Wireless sets were usually large and run on batteries
"The Rowan Tree"	a Scottish song
Thrawn	stubborn
Bothy	hut
Wean	child
Gean tree	the wild cherry
Beaters	people employed to rouse game for others to shoot at
Wizard	magical, wonderful

Quid pro quo	something in return for something given
Tocher	dowry
Glakit	foolish
Huff	a fit of anger or sulk
Oxter	armpit
Shooting brake	an estate car
Grue	shudder
Byke	nest
Tholing	enduring
Saps	a mixture of bread and tea (or milk)
Mak siccar	make sure
A staunch Kirk hand	a regular church-goer
Beelzebub	a devil
Scunners	sickens
Godmongers	dealers in religion
ATS	Auxiliary Territorial Service, now superseded by the Women's Royal Auxiliary Corps
Forby	as well as that
Drooking	drenching



People and places

Cone Gatherers	people hired to pick cones that could be used to grow more trees. A lot of trees were felled during WW2 so it was essential to replant.
Christian	the hero of <i>The Pilgrim's Progress</i> , famous book by John Bunyan (1628-88)
Cupid	the God of Love
Hercules	very strong Greek hero, was tricked by Atlas, who held the world on his back, to take over the burden
Lord Byron	a famous 19 th century Romantic poet, well-known for his good looks
Pilate	the Roman Governor who ordered Christ crucified
Sir Galahad	one of the Knights of the Round Table famous for his courtesy
African desert	the North African Desert was used in the war and later General Montgomery inflicted a decisive defeat on Rommel, the German general, at El Alamein
Mull	an island off the west coast of Scotland
Sargasso	a floating mass of seaweed in the Western Atlantic
Stalingrad in Russia	the unsuccessful and prolonged siege of the city by the Germans was a turning point in the war



Thomas Worthington Whittredge
The Pine Cone Gatherers (1866)



CHARACTERISATION



A: DUROR

Duror is, in many ways, the most tragic figure in this book. He also causes tragedy for others.

Below is a list of Duror's actions and thoughts in each chapter. Trace the stages **by which he comes to his tragic end**. Write notes and relevant quotes on each of the aspects of his character which are shown in these chapters.

Chapter 1: An insight into Duror's problem with Calum:

1. As Head Gamekeeper he is good at setting traps.
2. Watching Calum weeping over the rabbit.
3. His thoughts about killing Calum.
4. The imagery of sea sweeping over him.
5. His feelings for the wood.
6. Other people's tolerance of the cone gatherers.
7. His watching of the cone gatherers' hut.
8. His attitude to the German extermination camps.
9. His thoughts about strong men dying in the war.



Chapter 2: We learn, at least partly, why Duror is so bitter:

1. Peggy.
2. The Doctor's opinion of Duror.
3. The tree outside his house.
4. His arguments with Mrs Lochie.
5. His attitude to his dogs.

Chapter 3: Duror's plans to discredit the cone gatherers:

1. Roderick's attitude to Duror.
2. The story he tells Mrs Effie Morton.
3. What he hopes to get from her.

Chapters 4-6: The deer hunt:

1. Lady Runcie-Campbell's hopes for the hunt.
2. His suggestion that the cone gatherers should help.
3. His knowledge of Calum's fear of killing.
4. Duror's fear as he climbs the tree.
5. The organisation of the hunt.
6. The killing of the deer.



Chapters 8-10: Duror's developing hatred of Calum:

1. Duror telling Roderick that Calum is evil and hinting at the lie he had told Mrs Morton.
2. His memory of himself like a poisoned tree.
3. The Doctor's attempt to explain what is wrong with Duror.
4. His observation at the inn of the soldier's story of the monkey.

Chapters 13-15: The doll:

1. How does each of the characters see the doll?
 - Duror
 - Calum

Chapter 16: The death of Duror and Calum:

1. What does Graham think as he sees Duror march off towards the cone gatherers?
2. What does Lady Runcie-Campbell realise as soon as she hears Duror has gone?
3. Who does she realise will be most hurt Duror's murder of Calum?
4. What is the significance of the way Calum hangs in the tree?
5. Why does Duror shoot himself too?
6. Why does Lady Runcie-Campbell weep for "pity, and purified hope, and joy"?

QUOTES: DUROR

- First introduction: *"Hidden among the spruces at the edge of the ride, near enough to catch the smell of larch off the cones...stood Duror the gamekeeper, in an icy sweat of hatred, with his gun aimed all the time at the feeble-minded hunchback grovelling over the rabbit. To have pulled the trigger...would have been for him, he thought, release too, from the noose of disgust and despair drawn, these past few days, so much tighter".*
- Language choice expresses hatred: *"dwarf", "diabolical joke", "hunchback's drivelling sorrow".*
- Imagery: describes his emotions in relation to nature: *"He could have named, item by item, leaf and fruit branch, the overspreading tree of revulsion in him."*
- *"Therefore what Duror heard was roaring within him, as if that tree of hatred and revulsion was being tossed by a gale."*
- Approves of barbarity: *"outwardly, as everybody expected, he condemned such barbarity; inwardly, thinking of idiocy and crippledness not as abstractions but as embodied in the crouch-backed cone-gatherer, he had profoundly approved."*
- Peggy: *"for the past twenty years she had lain in bed and grown monstrously obese, her legs were paralysed."*
- Peggy is linked to Calum: *"Her wheedling voice reminded him of the hunchback's."*
- He is envious of the cone gatherers: *"he was envying the tranquillity and peace of mind in the cone gatherers' hut"*
- His plan for the deer hunt: *"[Calum] must be driven by the sight of butchered deer into a drivelling obscenity."*
- He is prepared to manipulate Effie: *"To his own destruction, and the cone gatherers, ought he to add hers?"*
- Hints of a son: *"For a moment he thought of that incommunicable phantom, his son; and he felt the treachery of regret."*
- Self awareness: *"It seemed to him that he must therefore be far more ill and decayed than he had thought."*
- Nightmare about Peggy: *"Suddenly everything had turned dark. There was a tremendous fluttering and chirping. Thousands of thrushes were flying out of the gean tree straight towards Peggy...it was in the terror of that paralysis that he had awakened."*
- Isolation: *"They thought he must be ill; but none cared to ask."*
- Reaction to the deer hunt: *"He seemed to be laughing in some kind of berserk joy."*
- Duror connects Calum and his situation: *"For many years his life had been stunted, misshapen, obscene, and hideous; and this misbegotten creature was its personification. Had the face been savage, brutal, ugly, in keeping with the body, there could have been no identification with his own case."*
- Duror's name is synonymous with endurance; the doctor suggests "endurance" as a panacea for ills.
- Has no hope, he is despairing: *"For Duror there was nothing."*
- He is described as a predator: *"He...was prowling in the alcove, sniffing at the affection between the brothers, smelling the fragrance of cones off them, and snarling at their unconscious complicity in his torment."*

- Duror's mental state is represented by his physical appearance: *"She noticed the gamekeeper was again unkempt, with the neck of his shirt grubby. His tie was askew with a knot low, as if, chocking, he had wrenched it loose. Two buttons of his waistcoat were unfastened; his boots were thick with mud."*
- *"He was walking away among the pine trees with so in his every step..."*
- *"Duror, with his face shattered and bloody, lay dead."*

Essay 1:

Choose a character whose downfall seems inevitable. Discuss how the author creates a sense of inevitability throughout the novel and yet maintains our interest.

This essay will require you to take the stages in the novel which lead to Duror's death. This is a suggested plan.

Section 1 Discuss the first two chapters showing how the hatred Duror feels for the cone gatherers is described and explained.

Comment on possible outcomes suggested by this description.

Show how the fear and tension are built up.

Comment on his relationship with his wife and his attitude to deformity.

Section 2 Consider Duror's first attempt to discredit Calum and different characters' reaction to it.

Section 3 Key scene: analysis of deer hunt. What seems to be happening to Duror during the preparations for the hunt?

What does he seem to think he has done when he kills the deer?

What do we fear he may do now?

Section 4 The further build up of his hatred for Calum.

Attempts to offer solutions or to help him.

Imagery: Duror as a poisoned tree.

Section 5 Symbolism: the doll. Look at how the reaction to the doll brings out the innocence of the other characters. Only he sees evil in it.

Section 6 The death of Calum. Duror's suicide. Lady Runcie-Campbell's reaction to it.

Essay 2:

Choose a character that is NOT attractive and explain how interest in that character is nonetheless maintained throughout a novel you have read.

This essay will follow a similar pattern but in this case you are looking at the character and assessing your interest. This interest will be maintained by emotions e.g. pity, fear, sympathy, anger, indignation and relief.



B: CALUM

Calum, like Duror, is a complex character. At first reading he may appear simple and his actions may seem unimportant. **On subsequent analysis the reader should note that Calum is a symbol** and is used by Jenkins as a tool to establish the novel's real meaning.



Complete notes on the ideas below and answer any questions to build up a detailed analysis of Calum:

Established facts about Calum:

- Age
- Appearance
- Mind
- Skills
- Background

Chapter 1: Introducing Calum:

1. His empathy with an owl.
2. The image of the monkey.
3. His attitude to trapped animals.
4. His attitude to the War.
5. His attitude to the trees.
6. Neil's comment: *"is it daft never to be angry, or jealous or full of spite?"*

Chapter 3: Duror's lies:

7. Why might people believe these lies?

Chapter 6: The deer hunt:

8. Why had Mr Tulloch and Neil tried to keep him from it?
9. Why did he have to go?
10. The death of the deer.

Chapter 7: Saturday afternoon in Lendrick:

11. Why does he want to stay with the deer in the forest?
12. His fears about Neil.
13. His attitude to conscientious objectors: *"honest, generous and truly meek."*
14. Monkey story.

Chapter 11: The beach hut:

15. What does he believe about his mother?
16. What does he claim to have had?
17. What does he want the doll for?
18. What can he understand about Lady Runcie-Campbell?
19. How is his understanding different to Neil's?

Chapter 16: Calum's death:

20. What had Roderick wanted to do?
21. Describe the scene of his death.
22. How does Lady Runcie-Campbell see his death?

QUOTES: CALUM

1. *"he was indigenious as squirrel or bird."*
2. *"his sunburnt face was as alert and beautiful with trust."*
3. *"This was the terrifying mystery, why creatures he loved should kill one another".*
4. *"with consummate confidence and grace began the descent through the inner night of the great tree...on the ground...hurrying to keep close behind, often stumbled."*
5. *"demoralised as always by hatred."*
6. *"He could not remember his mother, who had died soon after he was born."*
7. *"he shared the suffering of the rabbit."*
8. *"Here were his friends the finches, safe from the hawk scouting above."*
9. *"He became like an animal in danger with no way of escape."*
10. *"Calum no longer was one of the beaters; he too was a deer hunted by remorseless men."*
11. *"He planned, with chuckles into the chuckling water, to buy Neil a present as a surprise."*
12. *"stroking his brow with a hand as small as a child's."*
13. In response to the soldier's joke: *"Calum smiled. 'It's all right.'"*
14. When Neil tried to dissuade him about believing in heaven: *"Maybe I did see her, Neil."*
15. *"It was the strap of his bag which had caught on a branch. He hung therefore in twisted fashion, and kept swinging. His arms were loose and dangled in macabre gestures of supplication. Though he smiled, he was dead. From his bag dropped a cone, and then another."*



C: NEIL

Neil is Calum's older brother. He can perhaps be summed up as Calum's protector and guardian. He is also a father-figure to Calum in many ways but is sometimes shown to be weighed down by this responsibility.

Complete notes on the ideas below to build up a detailed analysis of Neil:

Established facts about Neil:

- Age
- Appearance
- Background
- His ability in the trees

His views:

- His role as Calum's protector.
- On marriage.
- His attitude to Lady Runcie-Campbell and the aristocracy.
- His wishes for Saturday entertainment.
- His fears for Calum's future.



Chapter 1: Introducing Neil:

1. Neil's views on their present job.
2. His attitude to the rabbit trap.

Chapter 6: The deer hunt:

1. How his working attitudes upset.
2. His fears for Calum.



Chapter 7: Saturday afternoon in Lendrick:

1. Looking at the ships: his dreams.
2. His attitude to Roderick.
3. His attitude to Lady Runcie-Campbell.
4. The soldier's story about the monkey.



Chapter 11: The beach hut:

1. His beliefs on an after-life.
2. Attitude to forbidden summer house.
3. His frustrations.
4. His version of the events to Mr Tulloch.

Chapter 16: Roderick in the tree:

1. His attitude to helping him; explain 'a man can only surrender so far.'

QUOTES: NEIL

1. Lacks patience with Calum at times: *"No wonder they come and stare up at you, as if you were a monkey."*
2. *"Don't we spend most of our lives in trees? And don't we live in a box fit for monkeys?"*
3. The beach hut: *"It just wouldn't do for us to be using what the grand folk one used"*
4. *"...to look after his brother, he had never got married, though once he had come very near it: that memory often revived to turn his heart melancholy."*
5. *"The trees are more precious than we are', he added bitterly."*
6. Calum, looking for reassurance that Neil was not going to get drunk: *"Neil noticed the appeal, and though it crushed his heart he would not surrender to it. He would not have explained his obduracy."*
7. *"Maybe", he added, in a whisper anguished in its disloyalty, "being soft in the wits has its advantages."*
8. *"...he ought to be shouting out to people about the wonderful superiority of Calum."*
9. He told Calum: *"Keep being yourself. You're better than all of us."*
10. *"Neil's dignity and composure, proper to a sea-captain, crumbled into the abjectness of a peasant. He fumbled at his cap."*
11. *"And he began to pour out an account of the expulsion from the beach hut, all mixed up with the story of the insult in the hotel bar."*
12. He told Mr. Tulloch: *"I wanted revenge...I wanted to take my spite out on you."*
13. In response to Graham's request that they help rescue Roderick: *"she cannot one day treat us lower than dogs, and next day order us to do her bidding. We will starve first. If she wishes help, let her come and ask for it."*
Graham's response: *"but why punish the boy, who's as innocent as any herring in the loch there."*
14. The final description of Neil: *"with moans and yelps of lamentation like an animal his brother was struggling along that branch to try and reach him."*



D: LADY RUNCIE-CAMPBELL

Lady Runcie-Campbell is the character who watches as the tragedy unfolds. She understands that there is something wrong with Duror. She tries to look after the estate, in her husband's absence, both as a member of the aristocracy and as a Christian. Her feelings are divided between these two duties which do not seem to be compatible. She is the mother of the heir to the estate, Roderick. She seems to take on some meaning from the final tragedy.

Complete notes on the ideas below and answer any questions to build up a detailed analysis of Lady Runcie-Campbell:

Chapter 4: Lady Runcie-Campbell's first appearance:

1. Her appearance.
2. Her character.
3. Her affects on Duror.
4. Her ideals.
5. The difference between her and her husband.



Chapter 6: The deer hunt:

1. Before the hunt: Her attitude to deer.
2. Her attitude to Duror's suggestion that the cone gatherers should help.
3. Her attitude to Calum.
4. Her hopes for the hunt.
5. What she thinks afterwards.

Chapter 3-15: Sending the cone gatherers away:

1. Sending the cone gatherers away is mentioned several times. What are her motives each time?
2. After the deer hunt.
3. After the incident at the beech hut.
4. The Saturday in Lendrick.
5. Her reaction to Roderick speaking to the cone gatherers.
6. Her worries about bringing him up.
7. Her concern for Duror.
8. The difference between her attitude and Duror's - 'Rose thorns to the tiger's claws of aversion.'

Chapter 10: Visit to Peggy:

1. Why does she do it as a penance?
2. What is her to Peggy?
3. What is her problem with being a Christian and a landowner's wife?
4. What are her worries over Roderick?
5. What are her hopes as she walks through the wood?

Chapter 11: The beach hut:

1. Why does she react so badly?
2. Why does she clash with Roderick?
3. What is Sheila's reaction to the two of them?
4. What do you think her father meant by 'scruples could burn a heart out, if that heart was not fortified with a robust and intelligent appraisal of humanity'?
5. What do you think she is going to say to Roderick about 'pity'?

Chapter 13-15: The doll:

1. What is her first reaction to Mrs Lochie telling her Duror has the doll?
2. How does she respond to Duror's claims about the doll?
3. What does she realise when Mr Tulloch holds it?
4. What does Sheila add to the picture?
5. How is her memory of looking at monkeys relevant to what she realises about the doll incident?

Chapter 15: Roderick stuck in the tree:

1. What does she realise he has been doing?
2. Why does she call it a sacrifice to send for Calum?

Chapter 16: The death of Calum:

1. Graham becomes the messenger: he tells her Neil has said, 'A man can surrender only so far.' How does she react to this?
2. Why does she nearly strike him when she says they will come if she goes herself?
3. What do you think she realises when he says Duror has gone for them?
4. Why do you think she feels these emotions as she runs towards the cone gatherers and Duror?
5. 'Fear, anxiety, love, sorrow, regret and hope'?
6. Why not 'anger'?
7. Who is she thinking of as she hears the shot?
8. What has she learned 'as she wept pity, and purified hope, and joy'?
9. Why is this scene most significant to her who has tried to live as Christian?

QUOTES: LADY RUNCIE-CAMPBELL

1. About Calum: *"I wasn't aware he also suffered from abnormal squeamishness."*
2. After the deer hunt: *"As for...certain others, I think the sooner we see the last of them the better. Times are grim enough, heaven knows, without putting up with what's avoidable."*
3. *"I object to being subjected to such a humiliation on my own land."*
4. *"She was wealthy and influential enough to dispense with conscience, or at least to bribe it successfully."*
5. *"To obey Christ by being humble must mean to betray her husband, and also, perhaps, to amuse her equals."*
6. Roderick did not *"see things as a baronet's heir should."*
7. About Peggy: *"monstrous and feeble, she would fawn and simper and suggest obeisance's almost obscene...it had taken all Lady Runcie-Campbell's self control, buttressed by good breeding, not to shudder and show disgust."*
8. *"After this war, the lower orders are going to be frightfully presumption."*
9. Very significant speech: *"...people below us on the social scale. I agree we ought never to be arrogant and overbearing; common decency itself, apart from any higher consideration, would forbid that...Obviously, in any way you like to look at them, they are our inferiors...It is our duty to find an attitude to them, which recognises that inferiority, but not offensively..."*
10. About the cone gatherers: *"For me anyway the wood will feel healthier and look lovelier with them gone."*
11. *"By being born therefore, or even conceived, one became involved."*
12. Treatment of Harry: *"It was a timid, earnest, sympathetic, respectful suggestion; its reward was a blow on the head."*
13. Reflection on whether or not the cone gatherers would help rescue Roderick: *"they were morally obliged to do it."*
14. Thinking of Calum saving Roderick: *"She had spoken with a sense of sacrifice: her son was to be saved by an obscene misshapen labourer; his virginal body was to be handled by hands, or paws rather, accustomed to bestial practices; his demoralisation was to be seen by eyes that had gloated over unimaginable vileness."*
15. The novel ends with Lady Runcie-Campbell's reaction to Calum and Duror's death: *"...she went down on her knees, near the blood and the split cones. She could not pray, but she could weep; and she wept pity, and purified hope, and joy, welled up in her heart."*

Essay 3:

Choose a character from a novel you have read who is in conflict with themselves. Explain the nature of the conflict and explain whether, through the course of the novel, the character is able to resolve it.

Look at the main events through Lady Runcie-Campbell's eyes. Her Christianity is constantly at odds with her wish to do her duty as the wife of a major landowner. Explain the ways these two wishes battle during the different incidents. Decide for yourself whether you think she has reconciled them in the final scene.

E: MINOR CHARACTERS



Complete notes on the ideas below and answer any questions to build up a detailed analysis of the minor characters:

Roderick is the heir to the estate:

1. What qualities has he taken from his father?
2. What qualities has he taken from his mother?
3. What has he learned from his grandfather?
4. What is his attitude to the cone gatherers, especially Calum?
5. What is he trying to achieve by climbing the tree at the end of the story?

Sheila is Roderick's sister:

1. What qualities has she gained for her mother?
2. From her father?
3. What is her attitude to the cone gatherers?
4. What is her attitude to Roderick?

Write briefly what you know about:

1. **Peggy**
2. **Mrs Lochie**
3. **Mrs Morton**



Quotes: Roderick

1. *"Why don't we offer them a lift, Mother?" asked Roderick, in the quiet voice she had come to regard as ominous. 'We've got plenty of room.'*
2. *"...the boy, so puny in body and backward in mind, was proof that the marriage had been a misalliance."*
3. *"Roderick was now stronger in body, keener in mind, and still with that simplicity in his soul which is so often showed up the twisted doubts in hers."*
4. *"...He was worried that he had not yet asked his mother's permission, and would probably have to go without it."*
5. In response to Mrs Morton's warning: *"He wondered what she meant. Was the evil to be feared from Duror?"*
6. Anticipating Harry's question about the purpose of his visit to the cone gatherers' hut: *"...the explanation that it was a kind of pilgrimage would never have satisfied him. Harry did not approve of mysteries...As for Christian in the Pilgrim's Progress he had scoffed at him as dreary and old fashioned. These were Roderick's heroes, and the visit through the silent sunny wood was in their company."*
7. After recognising that he could not visit the cone gatherers: *"He knew that he could never now take the cake and bag to the cone gatherers, and that, with each darkening minute, the journey back through the wood grew more and more formidable. At the end of it, too, his own house, with his mother and sister who no longer exist in its old way."*

8. In response to his mother's refusal to give the cone gatherers a lift in the car: *"There was room for us all mother,' he said, with a gentleness that almost insulted her into angry frustrated tears."*
9. Graham decided why Roderick had climbed the tree: *"I think he was meaning to collect the cones, like those men from Ardmore."*
10. There is a considerable emotional distance between Lady Runcie-Campbell and Roderick. When he was stuck up the tree: *"He did not answer."*

Essay 4:

Choose a novel which depends on a variety of characters. Explain how the range of characters added to your interest in the novel and contributed to the themes of the novel.

Though there are not a great number of characters in this novel each one has an important role in the unfolding of the tragedy. The best approach would be to explain the main theme of the book, the struggle between Duror's evil and the good of Calum, and to show how the other characters contribute to the situation which develops.

THEMES

You will find, as you build up your notes, that many of the notes start to merge into more than one heading.

A: WAR

War is in the background of all the events of the novel. None of the characters who appear are eligible to fight except for Captain Forgan, who is on leave before going back to war, and the soldiers who appear briefly in the pub.

Answer the following questions to build up notes on the theme of war:

Using the opening pages of the novel:

1. What is the general impression of the scene?
2. What indications are there of the war taking place in the world?
3. What signs of violence are there in the woods?
4. What does Calum think of this?
5. What does he think of war?
6. Just before Calum's death there is a similar scene. Why do you think the author wrote this?

Using the rest of the novel:

1. What is to happen to the forest as a result of the war?
2. What does Calum think about this?
3. What are Calum and Neil doing?
4. What is hoped for after the war?
5. In Chapter 11 the cones are described as being *"as precious as diamonds"*? Why is this?
6. Lady Runcie-Campbell goes down on her knees beside the *"blood and spilled cones"* at the end of the book. What does this symbolise?

Direct effect of the war on:

1. Lord Runcie-Campbell
2. Captain Forgan
3. The Soldier who tells us the story about the monkey.

Feelings about war:

1. Duror
2. Neil
3. The Doctor
4. Lady Runcie-Campbell



QUOTES: The Impact of WAR

- Forgan to Duror: *"It's a funny think, Duror, we moan about the vast amount of killing going on in the world, and here I am thirsting for more."*
- Neil reflects: *"Didn't someone say on the wireless that in the war-time everybody's equal?"*
- Neil asked Mr Tulloch: *"Why is it Mr. Tulloch ...that the innocent have always to be sacrificed?"*

B: SOCIAL ISSUES / CLASS

The novel is set on a great estate during the Second World War. Most of the social issues in the novel concern class divides, war and attitudes to war and social standing.

Undoubtedly, one of the themes in the book is that of class. In the upper-classes, we have the absent Laird, Sir Colin; his wife, Lady Runcie-Campbell; her brother, Captain Forgan; her son and daughter, Roderick and Sheila. Doctor Matheson would be middle-class. The rest of the people in the book would probably be characterised as lower-class, including Neil and Calum, Duror and his wife and mother-in-law, Tulloch and the other employees such as Graham, Harry, Betty, the land girl, and Mrs Morton.

Answer the following questions to build up notes on the theme of social issues/class:

1. What kind of attitude does Lord Runcie-Campbell want Roderick to have towards *"social inferiors"*?
2. What does Lady Runcie-Campbell think about her husband's views?
3. What did her father, Lord Forgan, think about Roderick?
4. In what way is Sheila different from Roderick?
5. What is Roderick's attitude to the cone gatherers?

Write notes on Roderick's meeting with the cone gatherers and explain what other people think about his behaviour and views:

1. The deer hunt.
2. The Saturday in Lendrick.
3. The beach hut.
4. His attempted visit to give them cakes.

Neil: Neil sees the war as a hope for the common man. He believes that after the war there will be radical changes.

1. What is Neil's attitude to Lady Runcie-Campbell and the class she represents?
2. What is his attitude to the following occasions? To what extent does he feel able to express his real feelings?
 - The deer hunt
 - Saturday afternoon in Lendrick
 - The beach hut
 - Roderick being stuck in the tree



Mr Tulloch:

- How does class influence his working conditions?

Duror:

- What is his attitude to class?

Lady Runcie-Campbell: In general, Lady Runcie-Campbell's class beliefs are dominant until the very end of the novel. She does not wish to give the brothers a lift back from Lendrick, although later she feels remorse for this. She does try, at times, to be fair and it is probable that her husband would have had no hesitation in dismissing the brothers after the deer hunt. It may be said, in her defence, that she is acting on behalf of her husband who is in the war and this will make her divided and over-anxious, but in the end the reader must admit that during the whole novel her ideas about rank prevail.

- Take note of how her father's teaching given Lady Runcie-Campbell problems throughout most of the novel.

Captain Forgan: We do not see much of Captain Forgan but his ideals seem aristocratic. It is he who wants the deer hunt, though his sister has nothing against the sport. We also see him playing cricket with his nephew. Normally, Roderick would be in a public school except that it is considered that there would be too much rough for him as he is a delicate boy.

Lord Runcie-Campbell: Lord Runcie-Campbell believes, according to his wife, that there is a class structure in heaven; she as a Christian cannot agree with this. The reader imagines him as a typical laird, representative of his class. His daughter would be close to him in her feudal ideas. His son Roderick seems to have been greatly influenced by his grandfather who made more allowances for him than his father did. Lord Runcie-Campbell, because Roderick was not good at sports and was rather delicate, would be a bit disappointed in him.

QUOTES: CLASS

- *"From the tall larch could be glimpsed, across the various-tinted crowns of the trees, the chimneys of the mansion behind its private fence of giant silver firs."*
- Neil reflected: *"He was sure Mr Tulloch had betrayed them: rather than displease the wealthy lady he had sacrificed them because they were humble and poor and homeless."*
- *"Neil's dignity and composure, proper to a sea-captain, crumbled into the abjectness of a peasant. He fumbled at his cap."*
- Lady Runcie-Campbell recognised: *"By being born therefore, or even conceived, one became involved."*
- Lady Runcie-Campbell's husband was reported to have said: *"they're still brutes under the skin, y'know. It's taken centuries of breeding to produce our kind. For God's sakes don't get us mixed. After the war they'll be trying to drag us down to their level. It's up to us to see they don't manage it."*

C: GOOD vs. EVIL

Many questions are raised throughout the novel about God.

Why was Peggy misshapen? Why was Calum deformed? Calum himself shows no bitterness. Duror does, and Neil also does to a certain extent.

Again build up a series of notes using the information and answering the questions below:

Setting:

- The idyllic nature of the wood might remind us of the Garden of Eden into which evil is introduced to destroy the innocent. Duror wishes to expel Neil and Calum from the 'garden'.
- The episode in which the brothers are expelled from the hut by Lady Runcie-Campbell as reminiscent of the 'No room at the inn' scene in the Bible.

Character:

Neil and Calum

- The relationship of Neil to Calum might remind us of the phrase in the Bible, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Finally, when we visualise Calum's body hanging in the tree we may think of the Crucifixion: "He hung... in twisted fashion, and kept swinging. His arms were loose and dangled in macabre gestures of supplication."

Lady Runcie-Campbell

- In the mind and soul of Lady-Runcie Campbell there is a struggle between her ideas of rank and her Christianity. She tries to act in accordance with her Christian ideas by, for instance, visiting Duror's wife even though she finds her revolting. But at the same time her Christian ideals are undermined by the burden of her aristocratic beliefs. She acts by her instinctive ideas of rank when she forces Calum into the deer hunt and cannot understand how he can have the impudence to refuse. She sees no conflict between her belief in Christianity and the slaughter of deer. She puts the brothers out of the hut and she commands them at the end of the book to come and rescue her son from the tree.
- When she is demanding, after the deer hunt, that they be dismissed from the wood, she is reminded by Tulloch of Christianity when he says that he has questioned the brothers and says he can 'find no fault in them'. These are the words used by Pilate, the Roman governor who had Christ crucified, with the simple substitution of 'Him' for 'them. However, she does not seem to hear what Tulloch is saying to her.
- Lady Runcie-Campbell's beliefs are explained in the following way: *"If she had not altogether inherited her religion from her father, certainly it had been much influenced by him. Accustomed to seeing humanity in its most vicious aspects, he had been uncompromising, imperturbable, and ironical in his Christianity. For the Church as an institution he had often expressed a distrust all the more effective for being so judicially delivered. Towards Colin, as a typical master of that Church, with his own feudal enclosure in the local kirk, he had been similarly tolerant but distrustful."*

1. What has she learned from her father, the judge?
2. What problems does this cause her:
 - with her husband?
 - with Roderick?

Roderick

- Roderick was very close to his grandfather. How has this affected his attitude to:
 1. Servants
 2. Duror
 3. The cone gatherers
 4. Calum
 5. What do you think he was trying to do when he climbed the tree

Ending:

- According to Christian belief the crucifixion is not a death without hope, but was intended to happen, and mankind would be saved by means of it. Like Christ, Calum is innocent and his death is, therefore, a sacrifice which in some way is to help men. The other elements of hope are the cones which drip down with the blood and are symbols of renewal and regeneration.

God and Religion:

- Pain and illness, and in this case deformity, might well raise questions about God's dealings with people. Duror himself is not religious, and it may be that this is because of his wife's illness.
- Mrs Morton tells Duror, who has been trying to poison her mind about the brothers and especially Calum: *"There's nothing known to their discredit, if that's why you mean, John. It's true the small one's not as God meant a man to be; but that's God's business not ours."*
We might gather from this that Mrs Morton is a believer who is willing to leave the conduct of the world to God, except for a little remark she makes to Roderick: *"No harm will come to you, laddie... if God looks after His own. If," she added, turning away.'*
- **Faith:** the ability to believe in something without necessarily having logical evidence for it. Christians believe in an after-life in which they go to Heaven or Hell.
 1. What is the difference between Neil's attitude to their mother being in Heaven and Calum's attitude? (Chapter 11)
 2. What does Calum claim to have seen?
- **Punishment:** According to the Christian Church we will be punished for our sins but if we suffer we will be rewarded in Heaven.
 1. In Chapter 2 Mrs Lochie repeats a conversation she had with Mary Black. What had Mary Black suggested about Peggy's illness?
 2. What does Mrs Lochie think of Mary Black's theory?
 3. What does she say about Duror?
 4. Evil is seen as the opposite of good. In what way could Duror be seen as evil?
 5. What kind of things does he say about Calum?
 6. How does the doll bring out the nature of evil in Chapters 14-15?

- **The Jewish Question:** By setting the novel against a background of the Second World War, Jenkins added an extra dimension to his novel. During the Second World War the German nation was led by a dictator, Hitler, who had a pathological hatred of the Jews. He believed that Jews were an inferior race and the German/Aryan race a master race. For this reason, Jews were put into concentration camps and systematically murdered in what became known as the Holocaust. Jews had been persecuted before but there had been no attempt to wipe them out completely as Hitler was determined to do. Homosexuals, too, were to be destroyed, as were the handicapped. In this sense, Duror's attitude may be likened to that of a Nazi towards a Jew.
- In this novel there are references to the policy of murdering the Jews. We learn that Duror had: *"read that the Germans were putting idiots and cripples to death in gas chambers. Outwardly, as everybody expected, he condemned such barbarity; inwardly, thinking of idiocy and crippledness not as abstractions but as embodied in the crouch-backed cone gatherer, he had profoundly approved"*. Later, we read with regard to Neil: *"They were not Jews being dragged to the concentration camp."*
- The Jews and those being persecuted by the Nazis are mentioned twice. Explain the significance of each example:
 - Chapter 1 "He had heard they were..."
 - Chapter 7 "They were not Jews..."

QUOTES: GOOD vs. EVIL

- In response to Tulloch's claim that he found no fault in the cone gatherers' behaviour during the deer hunt, Lady Runcie-Campbell replied: *"She gasped, and looked sharply at him, wondering if her words were deliberate quotation aimed against her faith. Or whether the resemblance to Pilate's words were fortuitous."*
- Duror reflected: *"If the crooked little imbecile was sent back now to the forest at Ardmore, he would live happily there whilst her in the wood Duror own torment continued. His going therefore must be destruction, an agony, a crucifixion."*
- Lady Runcie-Campbell reflected that superstition was a powerful force: *"Christ of course would be banished forever into the darkness."*
- The Doctor outlined Duror's options for dealing with his domestic situation: *"Any advice I can offer has already occurred to you long ago: other women, for one thing, religious acceptance for another ...and of course there's always the old stand-by, the prescription scribbled by primitive man on the sands of time, and still in the twentieth century unequalled: endurance."*
- Calum was often reminiscent of Christ in his behaviour. After the soldier had apologised for his thoughtless joke: *"Calum smiled. 'It's all right,' he murmured."*
- Pilgrimage imagery is associated with Roderick: *"Harry did not approve of mysteries...he had been sceptical and indifferent about his quest for the grail of goodness. As for Christian in the Pilgrim's Progress he has scoffed at him as dreary and old-fashioned. These were Roderick's heroes and his visit through the silent sunny wood was in their company."*
- Calum claimed to have seen a vision of his mother: *"'I saw her up there, Neil.' He pointed to the sky above the tree."*

D: NATURE Though nature can be beautiful, it can also be cruel:

- Calum: at home in the wood. He knows that an owl must kill voles but that it does so for food and survival. Man, however, kills for sport and causes unnecessary pain. Calum, however, suffers with the suffering animals: he tries to free the rabbits from their traps and thus antagonises Duror. He runs with the fleeing deer as if he himself were a victim.
- Duror: needlessly cruel - even his dogs are afraid of him. He fantasises about whipping them still the blood comes out and his behaviour during the deer hunt is barbaric. Duror has a nightmare of his wife being attacked by thrushes. Animals prey on each other but man adds to the cruelty by killing for sport as in the deer hunt. Deer, which to the rest of us are lovely elegant animals, are considered by Duror to be 'vermin'.
- Neil: considers Nature to be hostile. Neil worries whether he himself might have an accident in which case there will be no one to look after Calum.
- Roderick: thinks of the wood as an enchanted place which can also be frightening.

People are also compared to animals:

- Calum: compared to a monkey and like a monkey he is at home in the trees. Calum is compared to a *'dog in the presence of someone who has been cruel to it'*. In the pub scene Calum is by implication compared with an ape.
- Doctor: compared by Duror to a *'greedy old pig'*.
- Duror: the doctor tells Duror when he is examining him that he is *'sound as an ox'*.
- Roderick: has a *'deer's eyes and hare's teeth'*.
- Lady Runcie-Campbell: tells Tulloch that the brothers are being *'as discreet as squirrels'*.
- Neil: objects to himself and his brother being treated like *'dogs'*. Neil decides after the deer hunt that they should keep out of the way like insects, *'not bees or any which could sting and bit, but tiny flies which could do no harm since there was nothing in creation so feeble as not to be able to molest them'*.
- Betty: laughter is compared to a *'hyena's'*.

One of the interesting things to consider in the novel is the idea of regrowth. The idea behind collecting the cones is to replant them to ensure an adequate supply of trees for the future.

Chapter 1: Calum and Neil are talking about the cones:

1. What is Calum's feeling about the trees and the cones?
2. What does Neil realise about them?
3. How does Neil connect the cones to the men killed in the war and his own life?

Chapter 11: Storm:

1. What does Neil think is more important than the cones?
2. What, nonetheless, does he compare them to?

Chapter 12: Mr Tulloch watches Neil picking the fallen cones:

1. What does he think of Neil's actions?
2. What is the problem with the cones?
3. What is his final comment in that paragraph about the job the men are doing?

Chapters 14-15: Roderick climbs the tree:

1. What has he been studying?
2. Why does he go to one of the largest trees?
3. What is he trying to do?
4. What does he realise about Calum?

Chapter 16: Ending:

- What is the link between the blood of Calum and the cones?
- How is this symbolically linked to the death of Christ?

Essay 5:

Describe a character who makes a journey of some kind of self-knowledge. Explain the nature of the journey and show how the character's knowledge of himself is slowly revealed. Did you find the outcome of the journey satisfactory?

For this particular question Duror and Lady Runcie-Campbell are the best characters to choose.

Para 1 Describe the character at the beginning of the novel.

Para 2, 3, 4 Describe different problems they face and what they learn about themselves from them.

Para 5 Describe what they have learnt by the end of the novel and explain whether you think this makes a satisfactory end to the novel.

STRUCTURE, STYLE AND SETTING

STRUCTURE

The novel is structured in a fairly simple manner. There are three main events:

- the deer hunt
- the storm scene / beach hut
- Roderick's entrapment in the tree.

1. The deer hunt is used by Duror to drive the brothers out of the wood by means of Calum's known hatred of cruelty. He calculates that Calum will do something which will offend Lady Runcie-Campbell for whose brother the deer hunt has been organised. Calum turns the deer hunt into a fiasco and Lady Runcie Campbell is furious. However, when Roderick intercedes on behalf of the brothers, and her brother remains neutral, and Tulloch is on their side, she changes her mind and lets them stay. Thus, Duror fails in his plot. A sub-plot used by Duror is his hint to Mrs Morton, the doctor, and Lady Runcie Campbell that Calum is a sexual pervert. This again does not succeed since by this time Duror's own behaviour has become eccentric.
2. The storm scene is important because it brings the brothers into direct confrontation with Lady Runcie-Campbell. This time, because of the heavy rain, thunder and lightning, they break into the beach hut on Neil's initiative, though the hut is forbidden territory to them. Lady Runcie-Campbell is again furious when she finds them there and orders them out. Roderick is silent when she asks him whether she has been unfair. Sheila, the daughter, is triumphant in the tradition of the class-conscious aristocrat.
3. As a direct result of this incident Roderick leaves the house and climbs a tree from which he cannot get down. None of Lady Runcie-Campbell's servants is able to help so she sends peremptorily for the brothers. Neil refuses to come unless she herself pleads with them in person. The messenger, Graham, on his way back with the news of Neil's inflexible refusal, meets Duror whom he informs of Neil's attitude. Without a word, Duror sets off in the direction of the brothers. Lady Runcie-Campbell, hearing of the meeting with Duror as well as of Neil's ultimatum, decides to go and see the brothers herself. As she approaches she hears a gunshot. Duror has shot Calum and then killed himself. This brings the book to an end.

The structure is strengthened by the fact that the action is generally confined to the wood, except for the visit by the brothers to Lendrick. This little tragedy is set against the wider violence of the Second World War whose echoes we hear in the wood. Thus, we get the impression that because of the tragedy in the wood and of the war, man is violent. However, one of the functions of Calum is to show us by the goodness of his nature that there is an alternative.

STYLE

Narrative: This novel is written in the third person so that we can enter the minds of the characters through what they are thinking and what is happening to them. We see the events from different points of view throughout the novel. The author shows us events through the eyes of Neil, Duror and Lady Runcie-Campbell most of the time. However, sometimes he uses minor characters, e.g. Mrs Morton, the Doctor, and Baird.

Complete the tasks below which will highlight the various techniques the author uses. Here we will analyse characterisation, symbolism and theme.

Chapter 1: we are able to first spot the various techniques used within the novel.

1. How do the first two paragraphs bring out the themes of the whole book?
2. Calum imagines himself as the Owl. Explain how this highlights Calum's empathy with nature.
3. Look at the description of Duror as he watches the cone gatherers. How does the part starting: *"He had waited for over an hour ... to the end of the next paragraph....to the trees about him"* explain his state of mind?
4. The description of the cone gatherers' hut is seen through Duror's eyes. How are its sordid aspects emphasised?
5. How is the character revealed as the description continues?

Symbolism can be found in the section on Religion where much of the Biblical symbolism is looked at. Once the possible implication of many of the incidents is recognised more and more parallels are seen. E.g. old Graham carrying the deer and having no one to help could be compared with Nicodemus who was called out of the crowd to carry Christ's cross for him on the way to his death.

Religious symbolism pervades the story, but other objects become symbolic often having different implications in different situations.

Trace the different significations attached to these objects:

- Monkeys
- The doll
- "The tree of revulsion"

Essay 6:

Discuss the style of a novel which you have enjoyed and explain how such features as Narrative technique, structure, Character, Plot, and Language added to your enjoyment.

Plot/Structure: In this novel the plot progress naturally from the opening to the final tragedy. It happens over a short time. In Chapter 1 Duror can hardly stop himself from shooting Calum and there is a sense in which we are expecting it all the time. It seems inevitable. The killing of the deer is a mistake. We might wonder if he is going to harm Peggy also and this adds to the tension.

Setting: Look back on the section on setting and show how the setting contributes to the themes of the story.

Characters: Look back on the characters and show how they each represent an essential part in the final tragedy. Note here how the shifting focus of attention adds to our appreciation of events but also adds to the tension.

Description: Notice how this adds to the themes, especially to the background of the plot.

Symbolism: In this novel symbolism must be discussed even if you do not agree that all the objects and events can be seen as symbolic.

SETTING – THE PERIOD

The period during which the action takes place is the Second World War (1939-45). Britain was fighting against Germany, led by the dictator Hitler.

- On the very first page we read of a destroyer and aeroplanes. The cones themselves are being used to re-seed the forest because much of the wood is being used for war purposes.
- In the first meeting between Duror and Dr Matheson the latter is complaining of the fact that he has to eat spam, a meat which was used because other meats were not available or were strictly rationed.
- When Duror arrives at his house and we encounter his wife Peggy and his mother-in-law, the wireless (radio) is on and Stalingrad is mentioned. Stalingrad was a city in Russia which had to suffer a cruel siege by the Germans. However, it did not surrender and it's a heroic resistance marked a turning point in the war.
- Lady Runcie-Campbell's brother, Captain Forgan, is home for a few days' leave and it is he who asks for the deer hunt.
- In the cafe in Lendrick, Calum and Neil see the Ardmore workers enter. They are conscientious objectors, people who often on religious grounds would not take part in actual fighting but would do non-military jobs which would benefit the country, e.g. forestry or farming. These men were not popular and were often accused of cowardice. The villagers of Lendrick are not friendly towards them and Lady Runcie-Campbell, with her traditional aristocratic values, does not care for them. In the hotel bar in Lendrick we meet four English soldiers, one of whom tells a joke which he apologises for later, as he thinks it might have offended Calum. We learn that Tulloch's brother has been killed in Dunkirk, a major disaster for Britain's forces on the Continent when they were driven into the sea by the Germans and had to be rescued by the Navy and civilian boats drafted in for the occasion.
- Mrs Morton's son Alec is in the Merchant Navy.
- Duror himself would like to be in the war but they will not take him. He is in the Home Guard instead, an organisation in which civilians were given some training in weaponry in order to defend the country if the Germans landed. There is reference by Duror to the fact that "*the Germans were putting idiots and cripples to death in gas chambers.*" This refers to the Nazi ideal of the Aryan as the perfect human.

TIME: Second World War.

Explain how this has directly affected the following characters:

- Lord Runcie-Campbell
- Lady Runcie-Campbell
- Duror
- Neil
- Calum
- Captain Forgan
- The Doctor
- The soldiers at Lendrick
- The conscientious objectors
- Mr Tulloch

Important Quotations – Setting

Opening of the novel:

- *“It was a good tree by the sea-loch, with many cones and much sunshine; it was homely too, with rests among its topmost branches as comfortable as chairs”*
- *“Misted in the morning, the loch had gone through many shades of blue and now was mauve...Seals that had been playing tag in and out of the seaweed under the surface had disappeared under the surface like children gone home for tea. A destroyer had steamed seawards, with a sailor singing cheerfully. More sudden and swift than hawks, and roaring louder than waterfalls, aeroplanes had shot down from the sky over the wood...In the silence that had followed gunshot had cracked far off the wood.”*

Opening of Chapter Three:

- *“Next morning was so splendid that as he walked through the policies towards the mansion house despair itself was lulled. The sky itself was vast and bright; the withered leaves underfoot were iridescent with melting frost; the very air glittered...It was a morning that seemed to beguile the mind with recollections of a time of innocence before evil and unhappiness were born”*

Opening of Chapter Five:

- *“They were safely in another good tree by the loch side. So brightly shone the sun amongst the orange branches and on the blue water, it dazzled their eyes and made every cone glitter, so that they seemed to be plucking nuts of sunshine.”*

Chapter Eight:

- Duror on his way to an appointment with the doctor: *“Whin bushes, profusely golden in the summer, stirred in the breeze...further off, with even stronger temptation of distance, were stars, so remote, and so obvious of his infinitely petty existence that for a few moments he experienced rest and hope.”*

Opening of Chapter Eleven:

- *“In the tip of the tall larch they were in a good position to watch the approach of the storm. At the sea-end of the loch for the past half hour indigo clouds had been mustering, with rumbles of thunder still distant and half-hearted...At the very crest, Calum was frightened and exhilarated.”*

Essay 7:

In many novels, setting in time and place is an important factor in influencing the main characters and determining their actions. By referring closely to one novel, show how the setting affected the characters.

For this question it might be better to look at **time** first, then at **place**.

- Section 1** How the war has brought everyone to the estate.
- Section 2** How some characters are away; while others feel frustrated because they have to stay.
- Section 3** How do the cone gatherers come to the estate and how this affects Lady Runcie-Campbell and Duror?
- Section 4** How Calum fits into the wood but how the first crisis, the deer hunt, arises.
- Section 5** How, during the visit to Lendrick, there is a brief time of happiness.
- Section 6** How the crisis develops because of the incident in the beech hut, and leads to the final disaster in the trees with Duror's death contaminating the beauty of the promontory.

THE ENDING OF THE NOVEL

Some might find the end of the novel puzzling. Calum has been killed and Duror has committed suicide. Yet Lady Runcie-Campbell, while kneeling down among the blood and the spilt cones, wept, 'and as he wept in pity, and purified hope, and joy welled up in her heart.'

Where does this hope come from, or is this joy? It cannot surely come from the death of Calum. After all, his life has not been a fortunate one, though he has not shown bitterness.

The case is rather complicated and to understand it we must think of Calum not simply as a person but as a symbol. What, therefore, does Calum symbolise in the book? In the first place, he seems to symbolise goodness. Duror sees him as partly monstrous but also having a beautiful angelic face. His brother, Neil, thinks that he is the best of human beings. He seems entirely innocent and without malice.

He, therefore, appears a Christ-like figure. Christ, too, was innocent, without malice and without bitterness. Christ, too, did not repel violence with more violence. Christ in spite of this was crucified. And Calum's position in the tree as described at the end looks like a crucifixion.

Christ's crucifixion was not an end but a beginning. By means of it, men and women were forgiven for their sins. His crucifixion was a symbol of hope. He paid for the sins of Human beings with his own death.

It must be that Lady Runcie-Campbell saw Calum not as a simple human being but as a Christ-like symbol and this explains her 'hope' and 'joy'.

Whether, however, Calum can take on himself the weight of a Christ is dubious. After all he is not, as Christ was, the Son of God. Unlike Christ, he was a retarded human being. Nor can Duror be simply as a Judas. After all, Judas was one of Christ's disciples and Duror hated Calum from the beginning. It is also possible that it was not just Calum's death that made Duror kill himself: his life, such as it was, was wretched and miserable.

Thus, it was be that the reader will find the ending unsatisfactory. The novelist may be putting too much weight on Calum's death as a symbol for renewals well as on the cones as a similar symbol.

It is for readers to make their own mind up about the ending. It may be that for some readers the ending will appear entirely satisfactory and a solution to the events that have been preceded it. Or is the author perhaps saying that Calum's death has not been in vain since it has so profoundly affected Lady Runcie-Campbell?

One of the pleasures of reading good novels is that these questions can be argued. There is no set answer as in mathematics and each reader can bring to the book his or her knowledge and experience.

THE NOVEL AS A FABLE

Because of the simplicity of the structure of the novel and its atmosphere, *The Cone Gatherers* has been compared to a fable though generally, as in Aesop's *Fables*, such stories are about animals such as foxes and hens, and there is a moral at the end. An extended form of fable is *Animal Farm* which is about animals and in which George Orwell was teaching a moral about political power, among other things.

The fact that this novel is for the most part set in a wood suggests a certain simplicity. It deals with essentials which might be disguised if, for instance, it were a novel set in a busy town.

The number of characters of importance is very small and these react on each other in a fairly confined space. It is true that there is a scene in Lendrick but the action is set mostly in the wood.

The fact, too, that Neil and partially Calum are so at home in the trees suggests, in fact, they are almost like animals and, indeed, Calum is described in terms of a monkey or an ape. There is one particular section which is interesting and that is the one where Roderick is travelling through the wood in search of the brothers in order to give them a cake. The wood to him is a place of magic and terror. It 'was enchanted, full of terrifying presences. ...Low hanging branches were evil bird swooping with talons ready to rip his face'. It reminds him, for instance, of the knight Sir Galahad and of Christians in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. These people were often to encounter evil beings as he was shortly to see Duror.

It is often possible, too, to think of a wood as a place where we might get easily lost, where the way is not clear, and in this wood the way is not clear sometimes for Roderick or his mother or his two brothers.

It is possible, too, to think of Duror as an animal whose helpless prey is Calum and who may be attracted into murder by Calum's weakness.

Most fables such as those of Aesop are set in a rural environment. For example a fox or some other animal may be tricked and speaking.

The Cone Gatherers – Critical Essay Questions

1. Examine in detail the theme of evil or innocence or love as portrayed in the novel by Robin Jenkins.
2. Examine in some detail the use of minor characters such as Roderick and Tulloch in conveying the central message of the novel.
3. How does the writer use symbolism to help the reader understand the key message of the novel?
4. How does the writer use setting to enhance the plot, characters and theme of the novel?
5. Choose one character in the novel for which you have strange feelings. Explain what these feelings are and how Jenkins is able to arouse in you such a reaction to his character.