

# Character development in mr jed parry essay sample



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A second letter from Jed Parry to Joe handed to him in person when Joe returns from the Logan residence. The letter reveals that Jed has been reading Joe's published articles and he goes on to express his views on what he has read. Consequently he then recites most of his philosophies on religion, science, Joe's career and Joe himself. He briefly digresses on a school trip to Switzerland that he attended and finally Jed emphasises his hatred of being ' ignored'.

### Character Development

In this chapter we learn a lot about Mr Jed Parry and our perception of him may well change by the end. Parry's mood and reasoning behind the letter have changed somewhat from previous writing and he now appears to have adopted a new found hatred for Joe from reading his articles and the phrase ' I hated you' appears often. He is also becoming gradually more frightening and is now continuously implying threats, some physical some not. There is what he said to Joe in the previous chapter and now little phrases that seem to empower Parry like ' you must never...' and ' take a swing at me - if you dare', (p138) the last statement almost taunting Joe. The most frightening statement of all, however, has to be a section of the letter where he tells Joe of the morning cap ride to his apartment. He says: ' I wanted to hurt you. Perhaps even more than that. Something more, and God will forgive me...' (p. 136). This is stereotypical psycho stuff the first real notion that Parry maybe crazy enough kill Joe and even go against the religion he loves so much.

Jed has never really complemented Joe or highlighted things about him he loves, but here he really lays on the insults both about his views and career. He says things like: ' I hated you, Joe for your arrogance', likens Joes ideas to ' dirty washing' (p. 137), his employers to ' fools'(p. 133), according to Jed his readers ' have had their day polluted' by Joe's articles (p133) and referring to scientific theory he says, ' you're a cheerleader for it, an adman hired to talk up other people's stuff' (p. 137). What Parry is saying belittles Joe into nothing, his career, his life, his purpose for being alive is being sneered at by this man. However Parry's rantings about Joe are occasionally quite perceptive, Joe does indeed come across sometimes to be ignorant and definitely arrogant, but Parry also identifies one of Joe's larger character flaws, ' your little cage of reason' (p. 133), '...the traps of your logic.'(p. 135) This is referring to Joes blindness beyond the explainable, which is noticeable from the start of the novel. Joe's judgement is often clouded by his scientific brain and is one of the reasons he does not understand Parry until he is able to give his behaviour a label (De Clerambaults).

After reading this chapter we get a clearer picture than ever before of Jed Parry, beginning to understand him a bit more and making certain assumptions about his personality. He does come across as a very intelligent man (most literary loons are, Hannibal Lecter, Jack the Ripper etc.) it is only that he is so intensely religious that we may over look this. This intelligence is projected in the way McEwan writes Parry's letters giving them a poetic style, clever use of simile (' the little footstampings of a tired infant' p. 136), good construction of argument and Parry's philosophy on science, life and religion. He places an interesting slant on science hailing it as ' extended

prayer' and he never appears ignorant to, nor does he deny science as Joe does religion. For instance when Jed takes the example of the primal soup and then asks, but who is the chef?

More than anything though Parry is summed up in this chapter as a very lonely man whose only salvation has been religion and now Joe Rose.

Ironically he says this of Joe, ' Your articles add up to a long cry of loneliness,' when in comparison to Parry he has (had?) everything. Jed's loneliness is then almost confirmed by his absolute hatred of being ignored. A person who has clearly been on their own for most of his life will develop a certain paranoia and fear of being perceived as insignificant, perhaps why he clings so tightly to God.

#### Relationships Between Characters

As before in Ch. 11 Parry writes as if they were a couple having a great love affair and his constant notions of Joe gradually becoming aware of a love for Jed are quite simply ludicrous, ' I'm impatient for our life together to begin,' (p. 137), ' I see Peace and time stretching out for us' (p. 137). Jed also compares his view of their ' love' to an anecdote from his youth, where on a school trip his party were lead up a steep rocky hill to reveal a beautiful, serene, paradise (p. 137) - perhaps also Jed's view on life.

Along with Parry's explanation of Joe's love he also arrives at possible reasons why Joe has not yet confirmed their love, ' You'll have to tell Clarrisa, you have to move all your stuff...You'll have to explain yourself to all your friends' (p. 137) all of course absolute rubbish. In this chapter Jed's idea of

Joe being his ' mission' seems clearer as he frequently mentions not only  
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making Joe realise this 'love', but at the same time attempts to force religion upon him as if it is Jed's duty, assigned by God to convert him, 'my love - which is also Gods love - is your fate' (p. 136).

### Key Themes in the Chapter

\* Science vs religion - without a doubt the strongest theme in the chapter. McEwan explores the conflict between the two in some detail and shows, in the form of Parry's disgust the views of Joe and probably the majority of the scientific community: 'You pretend to know what He is - a literary character, you say, like something out of a novel.' Parry later proposes science and religion can be embraced together, however he is most likely in a minority and people such as could never dream of such a notion.

\* Point of view - a lot of what Jed says and indeed what Joe writes relies heavily on point of view, for instance from Joes point of view the 'best minds' would agree God does not and never has existed, Jed spits at this proclaiming, 'the best minds would rather die than presume so much' (p. 134). Jed also believes that Joe is not writing 'about the real things like love and faith' (p. 137), in Joe's ideology love and faith are not real enough to write about and it would certainly not be in his character to chose a career writing such philosophy.

\* Delusion - Jed continuously believes Joe to share his love and is always looking for signs to try and confirm this; like the messages Joe supposedly leaves for him in the hedge row, '...and put my hand on the hedge. No message this time.' Also the way he reads Joe's articles, as if they are letters too him, testing him, insulting him (p. 133) smells slightly of delusion, <https://assignbuster.com/character-development-in-mr-jed-parry-essay-sample/>

making us again think the lights are not all on upstairs. We also question whether or not Joe is deluded and if in fact Parry exists. He could just be writing these letters himself, especially when McEwan adds this to the end of the letter: ' But never, never try to pretend to yourself that I do not exist'.

### McEwan's Style

This Chapter is written in the fixed time and it is the second occasion it has been used in the novel. As it is a letter it is essentially timeless; no-one knows when it has been written or in fact who it has been written by. For Parry, McEwan as in his other letter adopts his poetic, pleading lovey-dovey tone, but contrastingly adds sharp hints of confrontation, insult and even malice. Also in contrast to Ch. 11 is the over all structure and purpose of the letter. It reads as if someone is desperately trying to preach what they believe to change another's mind and has hints of a ' poison pen letter' as opposed to his prior message, which was full of loving and happy imagery. I think this also the first time we learn Joe's full name (Joe Rose) a small example of how McEwan loves to drop in little details about the main characters throughout the novel.

As for genre it is very hard to place on such an extract. The stalker element definitely does shine through with Parry's references to visiting Joe's house and wanting to kill him, but as with previous chapters you could be convinced to come under the branch of romance. All in all it's most likely genre, as with rest of the novel would be ' psychological thriller'.