

How does frayn
represent the female
world within "spies"



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Frayn presents us as a reader with a great comparison within one a single theme in the book. We as a reader are presented 2 perhaps extremes within the female world. Firstly motherhood, a world of security and love; however women are also presented in a sexual fashion one of again love but a very different and erotic love compared to that of a mother. A further subdivision is made in the theme of motherhood, we are presented with Stephens mother and Keith's mother who not only differ in class but personality. Keith's mother is top of the rank, a higher social class, but we soon realise that doesn't make her a better mother. " You cant look her in the face. You cant look at her legs." This portrays a different image of female world, Stephen is intimidated by Mrs Hayward and finds it initially difficult to interact with her something that the stereotype of a mother would contain. However in contrast to Mrs Hayward is Stephens mother, although Stephen would generally be able to relate to his own mother in a different way, Frayn still displays her in a far different way to Mrs Hayward. Stephens mother is portrayed as a figure of security and comfort, " I can hardly hear what she is saying, though, because i am running home to mummy." The word mummy brings significance to the security and comfort that Stephens mother offers, mummy is perhaps a puerile term. As a reader from this we pick up that to Stephen no matter his age his mother will always be an important part of his life. Stephens mother fits perfectly into the stereotype of a mother however Mrs Hayward does not. A reason that Frayn may not display Mrs Hayward as the perfect mother is because of Stephens growing attraction to her. Throughout the novel as Stephen hits puberty and Mrs Hayward involves Stephen in aiding the 'German' Stephen becomes more interested in Mrs Hayward. His attraction to her thrives on the attention he receives. " There's <https://assignbuster.com/how-does-frayn-represent-the-female-world-within-spies/>

nowhere left except the bit in between, and that part of a lady as I've known for at least a year now is called their bosom." This demonstrates Stephens focal point when he talks to Mrs Hayward, the 'bosom' this not only underlines his relationship with Mrs Hayward being one of perhaps a sexual nature but gives demonstrates to us the reader Stephens transition through puberty. A character that ties in with Stephens transition thorough puberty is Barbara Berrill. She is Stephens first insight into the female world and Stephen is perhaps uncomfortable about it. "The shininess of the popper that offends me almost as much as her intrusion," This extract is taken fairly early from the book, Stephen is more then disinterested in girls and the female world is one that's very uncomfortable for Stephen. Frayn does this to reinforce the readers understanding of how Stephen will change later on in the novel, from a child to a young man. However in the latter stages of the book, Stephen is deeper into puberty and the female world is no longer taboo. Stephen recognises Barbara for who she is and is no longer worried by his erotic thoughts