

Bounce's car: a  
symbol of freedom  
lost and gained



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

In William Golding's "The Pyramid", the idea of freedom, both lost and gained, is encapsulated in the symbol of Bounce's car. Oliver is part of the events involving the car but is only a spectator, not fully understanding the manipulation that occurs. The car is a tool used to gain control, both sexually and emotionally, and is also a symbol of the freedom lost and gained by society as a whole. The piece of technology ultimately overtakes the town as Oliver's love of music is overtaken by his father's urgings to pursue chemistry. Ultimately, the car is only a decoration, a memorial to the freedom that it took and gave as it sits in a garage after Bounce dies. The book opens as Evie rudely interrupts Oliver's dreaming of Imogen by asking him to help get Bounce's car out of a pond where Robert Ewan had crashed it while he and Evie were having sex. From the beginning of the novel, the vehicle is presented as a dirty get-away car, used for lewd, lustful acts carried out in the dark of night. The driver, Robert Ewan, is a spoiled, pretentious man who refers to Evie as "young Babbacombe" and is rude to Oliver. A doctor's son, he is quite high in the Stillbourne social hierarchy and would not be seen as an acceptable match for Evie, the town crier's daughter. He escapes the confines of his position by using Bounce's car to disguise himself in the town. Oliver realizes this, thinking "I understood that the son of Dr. Ewan couldn't take the daughter of Sergeant Babbacombe to dance in his father's car. Didn't have to think. Understood by nature" (9). However, as the car slides into the pond Robert loses this freedom because he requires Oliver's help, someone he looks down on. Oliver feels this incident is a victory over the boy he loathed. He expresses jealous contempt for Robert's boarding school, college promotion and red motorbike, and recounts how Robert referred to him as his servant when they were younger

<https://assignbuster.com/bounces-car-a-symbol-of-freedom-lost-and-gained/>

because Oliver's father worked in Robert's father's office. Using simply common sense, Oliver is able to do what Robert cannot and feels a certain sense of self confidence. Unfortunately, he realizes that with this event, "something had not ended. Something had begun" (12), possibly referring to the lust for Evie that was beginning to creep into him. For his favour to Evie, Oliver expected something in return, which turned into an obsession that he could not escape as he preyed upon her until he got the gratification he was seeking. Evie expected to gain freedom from her father's wrath as she enticed Oliver to help move the car, but instead found herself entrapped in physical lust. Like Robert, she finds freedom from social standards and expectations in Bounce's car, but the night the car ends up in the pond, loses her cross necklace and begins to fear the consequences of her actions. Oliver comes to her rescue by locating the necklace and returning it to her. The car is a tool for sexual gain in the first scene, offering freedom from social standards for Robert and Evie, and giving Oliver an opportunity to become sexually involved with her. At the same time, the car is also used to show the loss of freedom that occurs as a result of this manipulation, as Robert must request outside help from a man he deems lower than himself. Later on in the novel, Oliver has a flashback upon seeing the car in Henry's garage many years after the pond incident. Through Oliver's reminiscing, the car's role as symbol of the loss and gain of freedom is seen in Henry's emotional manipulation of Bounce. As Oliver walks through Henry's new garage, he sees Bounce's two-seater, gleaming like a trophy in pristine condition. Oliver is taken back to the first day he came in contact with Henry and how Henry convinced Bounce to buy a car, offering to keep his eye out for a good price and to teach her how to drive. Henry shared Bounce's love

<https://assignbuster.com/bounces-car-a-symbol-of-freedom-lost-and-gained/>

of music and used this common interest to gain her trust. She, despite her father's staunch disapproval, follows Henry's suggestion and buys a car that she and Henry drive together. Oliver noticed a change in Bounce as she escapes the dark, isolated music room and continues driving with Henry. However, this freedom is conditional upon Henry, who single-handedly cares for the car and teaches Bounce to drive it. The limitation is evident when Bounce went out to start the car and it stalled, forcing her to wait for Henry to come and fix it for her. Nonetheless, Oliver notices that "possession of a car seemed to make Bounce herself more amiable" (153). In referring to Henry refusing monetary payments for his service to Bounce, Oliver's mother compares him to, "a sprat to catch a mackerel" (151), implying Henry will eventually manipulate Bounce for later. Oliver's mother proves correct when Henry eventually moves into Bounce's house with his wife and son and begins to take away the one thing that gives Bounce a sense of escapism – her music. The noise from his own cars and his "mechanical surgery" (159) begin to overtake her music lessons, and his family takes over Bounce's house and life. Later on, Oliver meets Bounce and finds she has crashed her car on many occasions in vain attempts to win back Henry, who eventually moved out. The car is again an object of manipulation as Bounce tries to make Henry come back to her. Instead of embracing her freedom, Bounce drives badly and eventually gets her license revoked for hurting someone. Henry continues to care for the car, but no longer gives attention to Bounce. Seeing this, she claims his actions are simply "a penance" (178). Bounce's car is presented directly and indirectly as a symbol of freedom being lost and gained. Usually this occurs in the form of a type of manipulation – with Robert, sexually, and with Henry, emotionally. In the grander scheme of

things, Bounce's car stands for the way industrialization reduces the gap between upper and lower classes, forcing a new way of life on the occupants of Stillbourne. This amalgamation of classes is the only way the town will be able to escape its complacency. Henry climbs the social ladder because of his focus on cars, especially Bounce's, and is unaware of class distinction. Oliver, like Bounce, gives into the lust of technology and buys a car, but finds a freedom and protection in it that Bounce did not. Oliver's car was a symbol of freedom from the threat of nostalgia and heartbreak. As soon as his feet touch the ground, he feels "adolescent" (132) and as though he has nowhere to go or hide. This feeling of isolation is swept away as he sees Bounce's car, a "familiar" (133) object which gives him a sense of comfort. He cries out that he hates Bounce because she was not content with her car and wanted more – in the same way that Evie was not content with the superficial sex she had in Bounce's car and instead wanted love from Oliver. The book ends as Oliver realizes that if he could give in to music, to flesh, and to feet, he would be happy. But instead, he gets into his car – his protection from the standards and expectations of society, his freedom from manipulation and hurt of others – and is content.