**The Cone Gatherers Notes on Chapter Seven and Eight**

Since the deer drive Neil has been “bitter and rebellious”. Mr Tulloch has told them that they are to be grateful that Lady R.C is allowing them to stay on in the wood, but Neil cannot see how they owe her any gratitude. They have been told to make sure they stay out of the way and Neil’s feelings about all of this are revealed clearly on pages 81-82. He sees the injustices of the class system (one theme of the novel), especially in light of the war and what it was being fought for.

“He could not have explained his obduracy.......especially on his brother.” (Note how the author allows us a clear insight into Neil’s thoughts and feelings in order to convey the themes/concerns of the novel)

The brothers go to Lendrick for the day. **This is the only time the setting of the novel moves away from the estate and it significant in terms of the way the brothers are treated by others.**

The whole day seems characterised by friendliness and understanding, especially in the cafe. It all seems very cosy and friendly- a real community in which they are accepted and respected.

They feel even more accepted because the conscientious objectors are not. They are now accepted at Ardmore but originally were excluded. This makes Neil feel good when in the cafe-Top paragraph of p88, although he really has nothing personal against the men. He just cannot afford to risk his own exclusion by mixing with them.

Calum: did not treat the men any differently just accepted them as he did everyone. It is their treatment of him which is important though. They saw him as a person and listened to what he had to say- some of them men with university degrees. Contrast this with Lady R.C and Duror’s view of Calum as an “imbecile”- they do not come out of the comparison very well.

This is a key chapter because the description of Neil and Calum having a good day on the one day they are away from the estate, and being treated well by others, lets us see them as real people , not just as objects of Duror’s hatred or Lady R.C’s snobbery. Our sympathy/liking for them increases.

The day changes for them when they see the family car of the Runcie- Campbells and have to walk past. Neil is feeling in such good form after their good day that he bears no ill will to them. However when Roderick speaks to them Neil is reminded of the reality of their situation, and of their lowly position and behaves accordingly. (page 90)

**Chapter Eight**

We begin to gain an understanding of the character of Roderick. (Remember his comments to his mother and his role in having Neil and Calum stay on the estate in Chapter 6?)

Roderick’s family worry because he does not see things the way they think a baronet’s heir should, meaning that he doesn’t conform to the upper class view of the world. He thinks they have been unfair to Neil and Calum and that they should say sorry. His mother is horrified but realises that she has because of her Christian beliefs, caused some of this “corruption”.

He even thinks they should offer them a lift. He is being naive and does not understand the system.

He is perceptive enough to know that Duror is not to be trusted because he has a “spite” against them and he refuses to accept Duror’s lie that “the little one is an evil person”

Duror:

P94: As he is walking towards the doctor’s pondering his situation, some very important imagery is used. He imagined the doctor listening to his heart beat and his lungs and finding them healthy, but not hearing:

“the snarling of the tiger, nor the roaring of the storm through **the tree of doom**, now high and ripe in him.”

He elaborates on this thought when thinking about his respectful behaviour to Lady R.C.

“ He had touched his cap, he had murmured gratefully. She had not seen him grow enormous and loom over her **like a tree falling**…….She had never seen this monster in her so respectful, so self controlled, so properly subservient gamekeeper.”

This is a clear analysis of the inability of anyone but himself to see the storm raging within Duror- to others he is just what they see on the outside. At best they think he is physically ill.

Duror, when he visits the doctor, tries and fails to get him to believe that Calum is a sexual pervert. (p99-101)

The doctor then discusses Duror’s own “case”. He was twenty five when he married, and had only three years of marriage before Peggy’s illness and paralysis. The doctor then puts it to Duror that his condition has been brought on by the stress of enforced celibacy ( he and Peggy have never had sexual relations since her illness.) However, the doctor does not offer him any help at all.

“Cans’t thou minister to a mind diseased?”. No Duror, I can’t.

The only advice he offers him, is that endurance is the only answer. (p102)

Ironically he says to Duror “Why man with your physical strength **and natural sanity,** you could endure such symptoms for a hundred years.”