

Peter's Essay Excerpt

1. Identify the Task

Following the wording of the assignment, Peter plans primarily to identify differences in this essay.

While the male characters in *Herland* possess individual characteristics, each man represents an archetype of masculine nature. By contrast, the female characters Celis, Alima, and Ellador are more individual and are not broken into exclusive types. Each of these women changes in the novel from being confused and amused upon first meeting the men to loving the men. However, each woman loves her man in a distinct way. This raises another question: Are the women of Herland distinct because of their different reactions to the men, or are they distinct and therefore react differently to the men? There may be insufficient evidence in *Herland* to answer this question one way or the other because the novel is written exclusively from a male's perspective. Whatever the cause, Celis, Alima, and Ellador, though similar to each other in ways, are more individual than Jeffrey, Terry, and Vandyke because the girls are portrayed with more depth, whereas the men are portrayed as stereotypes.

2. Gather Evidence

Peter incorporates textual evidence to support each claim.

3. Organize

Peter has decided to discuss the characters as pairs: each male and a corresponding female in the following paragraph.

• Terry, for instance, representing the overly aggressive male, is unfit for Herland because his only desire is to meet and court the girls of the country. Even after staying for some time in Herland,

• Terry insists that because Herland is civilized, "there must be men" (p. 66). Terry's concept of Herland is incorrect and is the source of his incompatibility with the society. Upon realizing that the girls are not the ignorant, submissive girls he was looking for, Terry shows his overwhelming masculinity more than ever by refusing to admit that the girls are indeed female. Terry's fundamental misconception is that to be feminine, one must be inferior, obey, and be impressed by males, as shown by Terry's failed attempt to impress the girls with jewels.

4. Check Transitions

The transitional phrases allow the reader to follow Peter's argument easily.

• Alima, by contrast, is distinct from her fellow females; she "had a more stormy temperament than either of the others" (p. 106).

5. Draw Conclusions

Following on his thesis from the introduction, Peter will compare not only males to females but also females to each other, thus, firming up his point that female characters in the work are more individualized.

Furthermore, Van characterizes Alima as strong: "She never gave an inch. A big, handsome creature, rather exceptionally strong even in that race of strong women" (p. 75). These descriptions prove that Alima is not who she is because of Terry; rather, she is an individual suited to Terry because she is strong and stubborn . . .