Paper IX: Unit I

Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

1.Biography

1.1 About the Author:

Thomas Hardy was born June 2, 1840, in the village of Upper Bockhampton, located in Southwestern England. His father was a stone mason and a violinist. His mother enjoyed reading and relating all the folk songs and legends of the region. Between his parents, Hardy gained all the interests that would appear in his novels and his own life: his love for architecture and music, his interest in the lifestyles of the country folk, and his passion for all sorts of literature.

At the age of eight, Hardy began to attend Julia Martin's school in Bockhampton. However, most of his education came from the books he found in Dorchester, the nearby town. He learned French, German, and Latin by teaching himself through these books. At sixteen, Hardy's father apprenticed his son to a local architect, John Hicks. Under Hicks' tutelage, Hardy learned much about architectural drawing and restoring old houses and churches. Hardy loved the apprenticeship because it allowed him to learn the histories of the houses and the families that lived there. Despite his work, Hardy did not forget his academics: in the evenings, Hardy would study with the Greek scholar Horace Moule.

In 1862, Hardy was sent to London to work with the architect Arthur Blomfield. During his five years in London, Hardy immersed himself in the cultural scene by visiting the museums and theaters and studying classic literature. He even began to write his own poetry. Although he did not stay in London, choosing to return to Dorchester as a church restorer, he took his newfound talent for writing to Dorchester as well.

From 1867, Hardy wrote poetry and novels, though the first part of his career was devoted to the novel. At first he published anonymously, but when people became interested in his works, he began to use his own name. Like Dickens, Hardy's novels were published in serial forms in magazines that were popular in both England and America. His first popular novel was Under the Greenwood Tree, published in 1872. The next great novel, Far from the Madding Crowd (1874) was so popular that with the profits, Hardy was able to give up architecture and marry Emma Gifford. Other popular novels followed in quick succession: The Return of the Native (1878), The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886), The Woodlanders (1887), Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1891), and Jude the Obscure (1895). In addition to these larger works, Hardy published three collections of short stories and five smaller novels, all moderately successful. However, despite the praise Hardy's fiction received, many critics also found his works to be too shocking, especially Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure. The outcry against Jude was so great that Hardy decided to stop writing novels and return to his first great love, poetry.

Over the years, Hardy had divided his time between his home, Max Gate, in Dorchester and his lodgings in London. In his later years, he remained in Dorchester to focus completely on his poetry. In 1898, he saw his dream of becoming a poet realized with the publication of Wessex Poems. He then turned his attentions to an epic drama in verse, The Dynasts; it was finally completed in 1908. Before his death, he had written over 800 poems, many of them published while he was in his eighties.

By the last two decades of Hardy's life, he had achieved fame as great as Dickens' fame. In 1910, he was awarded the Order of Merit. New readers had also discovered his novels by the publication of the Wessex Editions, the definitive versions of all Hardy's early works. As a result, Max Gate became a literary shrine.

Hardy also found happiness in his personal life. His first wife, Emma, died in 1912. Although their marriage had not been happy, Hardy grieved at her sudden death. In 1914, he married Florence Dugale, and she was extremely devoted to him. After his death, Florence published Hardy's autobiography in two parts under her own name.

After a long and highly successful life, Thomas Hardy died on January 11, 1928, at the age of 87. His ashes were buried in Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey.

1.2 Hardy as a novelist:

Hardy set his "Novels of Character and Environment," as he did most of his other novels, poems and short stories, around the market town of Dorchester ('Casterbridge'), near his boyhood home at Bockhampton, on the edge of 'Egdon' Heath. Although both Anthony Trollope (1815-82) and George Eliot (1819-80) had used similar settings in their novels, Hardy's rural backdrop is neither romantic nor idealized. From the publication of his first novels Hardy's critics accused him of being overly pessimistic about humanity's place in the scheme of things. In 1901, Hardy expressed the notion that "non-rationality seems. . .to be the [guiding] principle of the Universe." In all his fiction, chance is the incarnation of the blind forces controlling human destiny," as Lord David Cecil remarks in Hardy the Novelist , p. 24-30. Ironically the blind forces of 'Hap' seem to favour certain characters while they relentlessly pursue those who deserve better, such as Tess, as well as those whose ends we might regard as proof of Nemesis or Poetic Justice (Sergeant Troy in Far from the Madding Crowd , Lucetta in The Mayor of Casterbridge , and Alec in Tess of the d'Urbervilles). An entry in Hardy's notebook dated April 1878 gives us a clue to the guiding principle behind his fiction:

> A Plot, or Tragedy, should arise from the gradual closing in of a situation that comes of ordinary human passions, prejudices, and ambitions, by reason of the characters taking no trouble to ward off the disastrous events produced by the said passions, prejudices, and ambitions.

Like the great tragedies of fifth-century Athens and Elizabethan England, Hardy's Novels of Character and Environment convey a strong sense of fatalism, a view that in life human actions have been predetermined, either by the very nature of things, or by God, or by Fate. By his emphasis on chance and circumstance in the plots of his stories Hardy consistently suggests that human will is not free but fettered. In both Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Under the Greenwood Tree , for example, he employs chance coincidence as more than a mere device of plotting. Dick Dewey in Under the Greenwood Tree is called away to a friend's funeral on the same day that his beloved, Fancy Day, is to début as the church organist, and Angel returns to Tess from Brazil and near-death after she has established a common law marriage with Alec.
In The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886), Hardy seems to apply the concept of 'Fortune's False Wheel' (which Chaucer discusses at length in "The Monk's Tale" and to which Shakespeare alludes many times in King Lear) to the rise and fall of Michael Henchard: starting as a poor hay-trusser with a drinking problem, he renounces alcohol and works his way up to become the town's leading corn factor and mayor, only to undergo a startling series of reversals and end life an outcast. Although Far from the Madding Crowd has some of the qualities of Shakespearean

comedy, most of the Novels of Character and Environment also known as "The Wessex Novels") such as The Return of the Native are tragic in their conception.

Rarely do his minor female characters have either inner strength or spiritual power or physical beauty. He treats them with a fond irony, as with Bathsheba's maid Liddy in Far from the Madding Crowd , with her "womanly dignity of a diminutive order." Although the old furmity vendor of The Mayor of Casterbridge , androgynous or an "anti-woman" as she has been dubbed, appears on only a few occasions, Hardy treats her with the same respect and faithfulness of description that characterize his treatment of "Wide-Oh" (more properly, 'Conjurer Fall') in the same novel. Perhaps, as in The Well-Beloved , Hardy's chief female characters are based on the artist's personal conception of the feminine ideal. The quiet, shy, strong-minded, moral, and responsible Elizabeth-Jane of The Mayor of Casterbridge endures the trials of poverty, but is able to learn from bitter experience, even providing herself with an education in the classics, just as young Thomas Hardy, the former Dorchester architect's apprentice, had done. The independently-minded Bathsheba of Far from the Madding Crowd is, in contrast to Elizabeth-Jane, a non-conformist because she tries to run her own farm and manage men; yet Hardy has her act with a spontaneity of feeling and feel at times inferior to men.

1.3Nature As Character in Thomas Hardy's Wessex Novels:

Some of the most powerful descriptive and poetic passages in Thomas Hardy's novels involve the world of nature. His use of closely observed detail when depicting nature and natural processes is perhaps unrivaled in English fiction. One of his great strengths as a novelist is the way he portrays the interaction of his characters with the natural world, which he often characterizes as sentient; in many instances he even gives the natural world human attributes. His characters can usually be seen in different relationships to the natural world: Nature may be seen as merely decorative; it can be seen as illustrative, ie. in harmony with the character (s) moods or situation, in essence, a projection of the inner state of the character; it is sometimes determinative of action, ie. the weather or natural features influence the moods and behavior of the character (s); it may be a controlling influence, causing characters to take action in some way; and finally, it can itself be a main character, as Egdon Heath is in Return of the Native. Nature in all its forms becomes a protagonist in his work. Hardy saw nature as a sentient force with a definite personality; by allowing his characters to interact with nature in his fictional countryside of Wessex (the counties of Berkshire, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset and Devon), Hardy is able to add to his fiction a great sense of drama and a profound vision of man in harmony with the natural world. It has been noted that "Hardy instinctively unites nature and man, making the external setting a kind of sharer in the human fate" and that he writes so

that "the landscape takes its place as an actor in the drama of human life" . Perhaps no other writer, living or dead, had such an understanding of nature and at the same time possessed the writing skill and emotional depth to capture and convey this world in print.

1.4 The theme of alienation in the major novels of Thomas Hardy:

The predicament of human isolation and alienation is a pervasive theme that has not been sufficiently studied in Thomas Hardy's fiction. This study investigates the theme of alienation focussing on Hardy's major novels. Although the term 'alienation' is one of the most outstanding features of this age, it is not very clear what it precisely means. The writer has to draw extensively on Hegel, Marx, Fromm and other thinkers to understand the complex ramifications of the term. The numerous connections in which the term has been used are restricted to include only a few meanings and applications among which the most important refers to a disparity between one's society and one's spiritual interests or welfare. The theme of alienation, then, is investigated in representative texts from the wide trajectory of Victorian literature. It is clear that the central intellectual characteristic of the Victorian age is, as Arnold diagnosed it, "the sense of want of correspondence between the forms of modern Europe and its spirit". The increasing difficulty of reconciling historical and spiritual perspectives has become a major theme for Hardy and other late Victorians. Next, each of Hardy's major novels is given a chapter in which the theme of alienation is traced. In Far from the Madding Crowd, Boldwood's neurotic and self-destructive nature makes him obsessed with Bathsheba, and as a result, murders Troy and suffers the isolation of life imprisonment; Fanny Robin's tragic and lonely death, only assisted by a dog, is a flagrant indictment of society. In The Return of the Native, Clym is the earliest prototype in Hardy's fiction of alienated modern man. He returns to Egdon Heath only to live in isolation unable to communicate with the very people whom he thought of as a cure for his alienation. Eustacia has consistently been leading a life of alienation in Egdon Heath which leads to her suicide. In The Mayor of Casterbridge, Henchard's alienation may be more ascribed to his own character, recalling Boldwood, than to incongruity with society. Yet Hardy emphasises the tendency of society towards modernity which Henchard cannot cope with. In The Woodlanders, not only does wild nature fail to be a regenerative and productive force bet also human nature fails to be communicative and assuring. The people of Little Hintock fail to communicate with iry other. The relationship between Marty and Giles is an "obstructed relationship"; Giles dies a sacrificial death, and Marty ends as a wreck in a rare scene hardly credible in a newly emerging world. Fitzpiers and Mrs Charmond, on the other hand, are isolated in the sterile enclosure of their own fantasies. Grace, anticipating Tess and Sue, is torn in a conflict between two worlds, neither of which can happily accommodate her. In Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Tess, after her childhood experiences at Marlott and later at Trantridge, soon discovers how oppressive society is,particularly when she is rejected by Angel,

whom she loves and through whom she aspires to fulfil herself. Angel suffers from self-division in his character, and the conflict between received attitudes and advanced ideas leaves him an embodiment of an alienated man hardly able to reconcile the values of two worlds. Jude the Obscure is Hardy's most complete expression of alienation. Jude's alienation is explicitly social and implicitly cosmic, and his failure to identify himself in society constitutes a major theme of the novel. The novel foreshadows the modern themes of failure, frustration, futility, disharmony, isolation, rootlessness, and absurdity as inescapable conditions of life. In conclusion, the theme of alienation in the major novels of Thomas Hardy is a pervasive one. Nevertheless, not all his characters are alienated; however their happy condition, like that of the rustics in Gray's Elegy, is seen to stem from their intellectual limitations.

1. About *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

2.1 Background:

In June of 1883, Thomas Hardy and his wife Emma settled into their new home in Dorchester. The Hardys had spent the last few years travelling about England, although they wanted to settle down and perhaps begin a family. Finally, Hardy and Emma decided to return to Dorchester. This town, located only a few miles from his birthplace of Upper Bockhampton, was long important to Hardy--he attended school there in his youth, and later he was apprenticed as a young architect there.

Now Hardy had returned home, and he was there to stay, as he proved through his attempts to become part of the town. He quickly built his home, Max Gate, in town. He also became interested in the issues important to the townspeople, such as the status of the laborers. He eagerly read historical records from the area, savoring the "really valuable and curious" Records of the Town of Weymouth. Despite his efforts to return to the community, however, Hardy's first love was his writing. Although he had written various short stories, he had not written a new novel in three years. Hardy had long wanted to write a novel that combined his love of history with his love of Dorsetshire. In addition, he wanted to capitalize on the success of the Wessex setting from his earlier novels. His desire to immerse himself in the history of the region led him to examine the files of the Dorsetshire County Chronicle in the spring of 1884. In these files, he found an article describing the sale of a wife by an auction. The article about the wife-sale provided him with a spectacular situation for his characters.

After spending several weeks immersed in research, Hardy began to write the novel that would become *The Mayor of Casterbridge* in the summer of 1884. He wrote it in bursts, constantly writing and putting it aside until he finally completed the novel on April 17, 1885. The literary magazine Graphic agreed to publish the novel serially, although with misgivings. The publishers wanted to see everything before it was published, since Hardy was known for his ability to offend everyone, even atheists. Hardy felt so constrained by the Graphic's demands that he alluded to their heavy-handed treatment in the courtroom scene: Stubberd substitutes all the curse words with letters, to the annoyance of the court. Nevertheless, Hardy's novel eventually

began its serialization on January 2, 1886. On May 10 of the same year, The Mayor of Casterbridge was published in two volumes. Although the critics loved Hardy's realism and poetic style, most agreed that the novel was too improbable and too shocking--opinions that would only increase as Hardy continued to write novels.

The Mayor of Castrbridge is set in the county of Wessex, a land that has relied on the beliefs of the farming folk for centuries. Because the farmers are more connected to the land, they follow a more primal religion, based on the changing of the seasons and the forces of Nature. One of the forces of nature is cruel Fate, that "sinister intelligence bent upon punishing" which stops at nothing to keep things from being "as you wish it." This fate usually works through two channels: chance and irony. Chance often brings chraracters: Farfrae and Lucetta are brought to Casterbridge quite unexpectedly, but their arrivals ruin the lives of the Henchards. Irony works upon the people who are already there, making the best laid plans go awry. Just as Michael convinces Elizabeth-Jane that she is his daughter, he finds the note from Susan that tells the truth. Nature also serves to assist Fate--the harvest weather is bad until Michael buys all the ruined grain at high prices and cannot sell it back. With the actions of a primal and unchanging world working against the weak human, life becomes a series of pains, punctuated only by flashes of happiness.

Yet it is not completely the whims of fate that bring the characters to their downfall. When The Mayor of Casterbridge was first published in serial form, Hardy wrote, "It is not improbabilities of incident but improbabilities of character that matter." This is the basic theme of the novel, which has the additional title, "The Story of a Man of Character." Fate may create the situations for the characters, but in the end their personalities determine how they will react. Michael gains a true confidant in Farfrae, but his quick temper and mercurial ways only serve to push the young man away. Michael's pride keeps him from confessing whatever secret he has at the time. Lucetta's reckless nature causes her to do dangerous things for love. The gossiping nature of the townspeople is responsible for the skimmity ride that kills Lucetta, and the gossip that ruins Michael's career. Even Elizabeth-Jane's prudishness pushes Michael away for the first and last time. Character is just as responsible for the foibles of mankind as Fate is.

The *Mayor of Casterbridge* is a tragedy, in the tradition of the Greek tragedies and the plays Othello and King Lear. However, the novel still ends with a hope for humanity. The belief that fate is to blame is a tool of the past, of the superstitious farmers such as the townspeople. When Michael believes that fate is destroying him, his problems continue. Only when Michael looks into the future by casting off old beliefs is he able to change. When he sacrifices duty for love of Elizabeth-Jane, he becomes more aware of his feelings as an individual. That is humaity's only way to escape the pain of life: by relying on present instead of past, character instead of fate, the individual instead of the multitude.

2.2Structure of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*:

The Mayor of Casterbridge is one of Thomas Hardy's most unified works. Never for a moment is Michael Henchard out of our minds. Even when whole chapters are devoted to Donald Farfrae,

Lucetta Templeman, Elizabeth-Jane, or some of the minor characters, Michael Henchard's strength of character lingers on each page like bass notes of impending doom. And indeed, this is how it should be, for Hardy subtitled his novelA Story of a Man of Character.
Hardy does not attempt to qualify Henchard's "character" as good or bad. His structure rests on the effect of Henchard's character upon his own life and the lives of others. It is certainly this element more than others that makes the novel stand out amidst the many Victorian novels whose important characters are less powerfully conceived than Henchard or all too easily disappear early and return from obscurity two hundred pages later. Susan's ruined life is a direct result of Henchard's rashness; by extension, Elizabeth-Jane owes her very existence to Henchard's folly; Donald Farfrae receives his start from Henchard, and indeed Henchard's wild speculations and superstitious nature only help to advance Farfrae; and Lucetta's death is a direct outcome of her past relationship with Henchard. Hardy did not require us to like Michael Henchard; however, he has so structured the novel that we cannot forget him. Henchard is the novel.

How is it, then, that the other characters in the novel keep our attention? In the case of Donald and Elizabeth-Jane, the reader knows they will marry before the end of the novel. Concerning Lucetta, the reader is thoroughly aware that she will not marry Henchard. It is only the pitfalls and vicissitudes of their lives that provide interest and suspense. Thus our interest in these characters is aroused in direct proportion to the catalytic effect that Henchard's character and behavior have in motivating their actions.

Throughout the novel is felt the influence of King Lear, Shakespeare's massive tragedy. One recalls that Lear rashly disowns his true and loving daughter, falls from the heights of regality into suffering and madness, and is briefly reconciled with her before his death. The realization of this structural parallel strengthens our knowledge that the unity of the work is predicated on Henchard's character. After all, his rashness precipitates the events which, once started, move unrelentingly on.

The first two chapters of the novel and the very last serve as a frame for the core of the novel's story. The opening chapters display the unhappy events that initiate the tale, and the last chapter rounds them off, thus bringing the plot full circle. That is, Henchard enters the novel impoverished and miserable, but young, vigorous, and still master of his own fate. In the last chapter he departs from the novel — and from this world — more impoverished, more wretched, barely in his middle-age, master of nothing. If the novel had begun with Henchard already established as mayor, the sale of his wife if pulled out of the closet of obscurity as an old family skeleton, would make the story preposterous.

It was apparently not completely possible for Hardy to escape some of the seemingly melodramatic, and at times forced, incidents which abound in the fiction of his era. Henchard speculates wildly in order to destroy Farfrae, and the weather changes; the "furmity woman" shows up and causes Michael's complete downfall; Newson returns from the dead and destroys

the ex-mayor's only chance for happiness. Nevertheless, though these untoward events may seem heavily weighted on the side of the novelist's plot development, none of them is really incredible. Even Henchard cannot control the weather. What person would not remember the face of the man who sold his wife to the highest bidder (and since the "furmity woman" is a vagabond type, she could easily turn up in Casterbridge as well as anywhere else)? Is it not natural for Newson to attempt to reclaim his own child in order to bestow his fortune upon her as his heir?

These events are justified, although the modern reader may be disturbed by the machinations behind them.

In this vein there are also at least four overheard conversations: Lucetta overhears Henchard reading her letters, and she naturally fears that Donald will surmise her past history; Henchard, earlier, hides behind a stack of wheat and listens to Donald and Lucetta's passionate conversation; Donald and Lucetta listen intently to the two parting lovers in the market, thus uniting their spirits in a romantic bond; and finally, Henchard, once again from hiding, overhears Donald addressing Elizabeth-Jane in tender words and knows the meeting has ended with a kiss. If the reader has assumed that these overheard conversations are melodramatic tricks, let him also note that such tricks are more melodramatic if the listener accidentally overhears. However, in these cases, each of the listeners purposely eavesdrops. The comparative abundance of coincidences, returns from the past, secret letters, and the like, should not lead the reader to think that Hardy has mismanaged his realism. There are many realistic elements in the novel (modern critics tend to think that Hardy's realism of dialogue, precise descriptions of buildings and countryside, etc., are false criteria of his excellence), but the importance of The Mayor of Casterbridge is now generally assumed to lie outside its fidelity to the canons of painstaking realism, either of setting or incident. One critic sees in the sequence of events the working out of a scheme of retribution by an outraged moral order in the universe. Another sees in Henchard an astonishingly perceptive treatment of the character unconsciously bent on his own destruction, in this anticipating the findings of modern psychology. In either event, mere plausibility of structure appears of negligible importance.

2.3 Point of View and Style in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*:

Hardy's narrative style is that of the omniscient or ubiquitous narrator. This gives him a point of view that allows him to comment upon the vagaries of nature, to place himself in the mind of a character in order to give us reasons and motives, and to philosophize or describe the background to clarify whatever point he wishes to make. In short, Hardy knows all and is everywhere in The Mayor of Casterbridge, although we learn only what he wants us to know.

Hardy's actual writing style is usually clear and is often extremely well wrought. If an occasional awkward sentence or overly long descriptive passage comes to light, perhaps we should reflect upon the conventions of the era in which he wrote. The comparative infrequency of his lapses from clarity and economy may serve as a lesson for the student in "blue-penciling" or revision. delineates the personae, the background, and the circumstances from an omniscient narrator's point of view.

In the first two or three pages of the book we are treated to some excellent description, especially perhaps that of Susan's face. We also learn that the couple is unhappily married, the man is discontented, they are poor and somewhat shabby, and that Susan's philosophy toward life is rather pessimistic. Furthermore, the dry dust, the barren countryside, and the "blackened-green stage of colour" of the vegetation lend an oppressive air to the scene as a prelude to the dark events to come. Hardy reveals his somber mastery of setting, mood, and character throughout the novel, and the reader rarely has to search for clarity. Hardy's ability with dialogue is evident on two levels. The dialogue reflects his characters' social position while it adds to our knowledge of their personalities. A passage from Chapter 9 will illustrate this:

Now I am not the man to let a cause be lost for want of a word. And before ye are gone for ever I'll speak. Once more, will ye stay? There it is, flat and plain. You can see that it isn't all selfishness that makes me press 'ee; for my business is not quite so scientific as to require an intellect entirely out of the common. Others would do for the place without doubt. Some selfishness perhaps there is, but there is more; it isn't for me to repeat what. Come bide with me — and name your own terms. I'll agree to 'em willingly and 'ithout a word gainsaying; for, hang it, Farfrae, I like thee well!

This example shows Henchard's very blunt character. Not a word is wasted, and he comes directly to the point. He uses countrified expressions but does not speak like the lower-class townspeople. Furthermore, the impetuous nature of his character is shown in both speeches by his vehement attempt to hire Farfrae because he likes him and to press upon Donald his immediate friendship, without the normal preliminaries, by insisting that he come to breakfast.

Farfrae's kind and fair disposition is amply brought out by a number of his speeches, although he is almost never given a very long speech. Farfrae's reasonableness and sweetness become somewhat cloying in the light of the struggles and transformation which Henchard is undergoing. Nevertheless, his unwillingness to commit an act of blatant vengeance or meanness, and his Scottish economy of speech are distinctly brought forth in these passages from Chapter 34.

"About that little seedsman's shop," he said; "the shop overlooking the churchyard, which is to let. It is not for myself I want it, but for our unlucky fellow-townsman Henchard. It would be a new beginning for him, if a small one; and I have told the Council that I would head a private

subscription among them to set him up in it — that I would be fifty pounds, if they would make up the other fifty among them."

"But I cannet discharge a man who was once a good friend to me? How can I forget that when I came here 'twas he enabled me to make a footing for mysel'? No, no. As long as I've a day's wark to offer he shall do it if he chooses. 'Tis not I who will deny him such a little as that. But I'll drop the idea of establishing him in a shop till I can think more about it."

The letters of Lucetta Templeman are quite as revealing as most of her speeches. The reader wonders why she would be so reckless as to write such candid letters to Henchard. Her candor bespeaks a certain naïveté or trust on her part, but it also shows an element of abandon which Hardy carefully traces to herFrench background. The letters and her bantering with Farfrae show a certain sophisticated ability to play with words in a teasing manner. To Hardy — though not to us today — this is enough to characterize Lucetta with what was to the English mind French sensuality or even licentiousness. The following passages from Chapter 23 catch her character brilliantly.

"I mean all you Scotchmen," she added in hasty correction. "So free from Southern extremes. We common people are all one way or the other — warm or cold, passionate or frigid. You have both temperatures going on in you at the same time."

"It is very hard," she said with strong feelings. "Lovers ought not to be parted like that! Oh, if I had my wish, I'd let people live and love at their pleasure!"

"It is kind-hearted of you, indeed," said Lucetta. "For my part I have resolved that all my servants shall have lovers if they want them! Do make the same resolve!"

Through her speech, Hardy shows the gradual change that takes place in Elizabeth-Jane through the years. At first she has a somewhat natural bent toward good times and playfulness, although she never appears giddy. As her sorrows increase, she turns more and more to study and reflection. At the end of the novel the reader finds Elizabeth-Jane characterized somewhat as a melancholy, kind, matronly woman whose speech seems highly studied and affected, even when her words are deeply emotional:

She flushed up, and gently drew her hand away. "I could have loved you always I would have, gladly," said she. "But how can I when I know you have deceived me so — so bitterly deceived me! You persuaded me that my father was not my father — allowed me to live on in ignorance of the truth for years; and then when he, my warmhearted real father, came to find me, cruelly sent him away with a wicked invention of my death, which nearly broke his heart. O how can I love as I once did a man who has served us like this!"

As far as the lower-class types are concerned, Hardy has characterized them as mischievous knaves who often speak in vulgar terms. Yet, they have a vigorous life of their own, and Hardy

has revealed with enormous skill the picturesque qualities that can only be found in authentic folk dialect.

Another aspect of Hardy's overall style is his fondness for Gothic atmosphere — that is, secret meetings or plots or incidents occurring in gloomy or melancholy surroundings. The opening chapter of the book has this quality to it, as does Henchard's meeting with Susan at the Ring, and his discovery of the "skimmity-ride" figure in the water. With little difficulty the student can probably recall at least two more incidents or surroundings that indicate a Gothic treatment. In its wealth of realistic detail, Hardy's descriptive style created his Wessex world with such conviction and thoroughness that he became the model for dozens of other regional novelists. His realism is not now appreciated as much as his more tragic, universal qualities, but it contributes substantially in The Mayor of Casterbridge to the total tragic effect. Henchard is considered by at least one critic to be the only genuinely successful attempt at a tragic hero in the modern novel. But Henchard is so embedded in the real world of grain dealing, furmity, seed lips, stout breakfasts, and hay bales as to have for the modern reader an affinity with his own experience that other romantic heroes, enveloped in myth and legend, do not. As tragic hero he is of a stature comparable with theirs, but he comes to us, as it were, in the homely corduroy of a hay-trusser rather than in cape or toga. In part because of Hardy's Wessex realism, Henchard is a tragic hero we can touch.

3.Chapter wise Summary

Chapter I

The first chapter starts with a young hay-trusser named Michael Henchard, his wife, Susan, and their baby daughter, Elizabeth-Jane, silently walk along a road in the English countryside toward a large village called Weydon-Priors. They meet a turnip-hoer, and Henchard asks if there is work or shelter to be found in the town. The pessimistic labourer tells the young man that there is neither. The family eventually comes upon a fair and stops for food. They enter a furmenty tent, where a woman sells a kind of gruel made from corn, flour, milk, raisins, currants and other ingredients. After watching the woman spike several bowls of the porridge with rum, Henchard secretly sends up his bowl to be spiked as well. The woman accommodates him again and again, and soon Henchard is drunk. As he continues to drink, he bemoans his lot as a married man. If only he were “a free man,” he tells the group gathered in the furmenty tent, he would “be worth a thousand pound.” When the sound of an auctioneer selling horses interrupts Henchard’s musings, he jokes that he would be willing to sell his wife if someone

wanted to buy her. Susan begs him to stop his teasing, declaring that "this is getting serious. O!—too serious!" Henchard persists nevertheless. He begins to bark out prices like an auctioneer, upping the cost of his wife and child when no one takes his offer. When the price reaches five guineas, a sailor appears and agrees to the trade. Distraught, but glad to leave her husband, Susan go off with Elizabeth-Jane and the sailor. Henchard collapses for the night in the furmity tent.

Summary: Chapter II

Henchard wakes the next morning, wondering if the events of the previous night have been a dream. When he finds the sailor's money in his pocket, however, he realizes that he has, in fact, sold his wife and child. He deliberates over his situation for some time and decides that he must "get out of this as soon as [he] can." He exits the tent and makes his way unnoticed from the Weydon fairgrounds. After a mile or so of walking, he stops and wonders if he told his name to anyone at the fair. He is surprised that Susan agreed to go with the sailor and curses her for bringing him "into this disgrace." Still, he resolves to find Susan and Elizabeth-Jane and bear the shame, which he reasons is "of his own making."

Henchard continues on his way, and, three or four miles later, he comes upon a village and enters a church there. He falls to his knees on the altar, places a hand on the Bible, and pledges not to drink alcohol for twenty-one years, the same number of years that he has been alive. He continues the search for Susan and Elizabeth-Jane for several months and eventually arrives at a seaport where a family fitting the description of the sailor, Susan, and Elizabeth-Jane has recently departed. He decides to abandon his search and makes his way to the town of Casterbridge.

Many critics believe that Michael Henchard, the "Man of Character" to whom the subtitle of The Mayor of Casterbridge refers, is one of Thomas Hardy's greatest creations. Henchard is constructed with a great deal of ethical and psychological complexity, and the first two chapters show some of the contradictions of his character. As a young man, Henchard is volatile, headstrong, and passionate. Even before Henchard works himself into a fury in the furmity tent, Susan's meek behavior as she walks along beside him ("she kept as close to his side as was possible without actual contact") implies his volatile and potentially violent nature. The events that take place in the furmity tent at the fair demonstrate a cycle into which Henchard falls frequently throughout the novel. After finding himself in a shameful situation—this time, having sold his wife and child—he takes full responsibility for his mistakes and sets out to correct them. In fact, his desire to make amends is overpowering. He spends several months searching for his wife and child, proving that his remorse is not halfhearted. This audacious

spirit is a hallmark of Henchard's character, as he switches quickly from ungrateful misogyny to sincere penitence. Ultimately, though, critics have remained interested in Henchard because his success in atoning for his transgressions is ambiguous.

Although Henchard's search for his wife seems to be an example of honest contrition, his true motivation is more likely concern over his personal honor. When Henchard wakes, his remorse stems more from a fear of being disdained than from any sense of moral irresponsibility. His interest in his good name plays a significant role in his sacrifice of personal satisfaction when he swears off alcohol and determines to find his wife. Before he begins to scour the English countryside for his wife and child, he reflects that it is not his own but rather his wife's "idiotic simplicity" that has brought disgrace on him. As he stands outside the fairgrounds at Weydon-Priors, anxiously wondering whether he revealed his name to anybody in the furmity tent, Henchard displays an obsession with public opinion concerning his character that greatly shapes his actions and personality. Critic Irving Howe refers to this trait as Henchard's "compulsive and self-lacerating pride." Henchard's initial irresponsibility suggests that the novel's subtitle may not be an accurate description of him. In a way, then, the subtitle foreshadows Henchard's transition to a man of character.

Though Hardy resented being labeled a pessimist, the The Mayor of Casterbridgeis at times bleakly realistic. Hardy described himself as a meliorist—one who believes that the universe tends toward improvement and that human beings can enjoy this progress as long as they recognize their proper place in the natural order of things—but the world that the novel describes seems pessimistic and difficult. Hardy uses Susan Henchard, who has "the hard, half--apathetic expression of one who deems anything possible at the hands of Time and Chance except, perhaps, fair play," to demonstrate the importance of realistically understanding the natural order of things. We get the sense that the natural world, embodied by "Time and Chance," has little interest in human life or misery. Hardy substantiates this idea by inserting an image of several horses lovingly rubbing their necks together after the ridiculous scene in the furmity tent. Juxtaposing compassion and heartlessness, Hardy shows us that love and violence are competing aspects of both human behavior and the natural world.

Eighteen years have passed. Two women, Susan Henchard, dressed in the mourning clothes of a widow, and her now-grown daughter, Elizabeth-Jane, walk along the same stretch of road toward Weydon-Priors. As the two make their way toward the fairgrounds, they speak of the sailor, Newson, whom Elizabeth-Jane believes to be her father, and his recent death at sea. Susan explains that they are there to look for a long-lost relative by the name of Henchard.

Once at the fair, Susan recognizes the furmity tent and its proprietress, and she takes a private moment to ask the woman whether she remembers a husband selling his wife. After a moment, the furmity-seller does remember, and she states that the man guilty of that deed came back to her tent a year later to ask her to send anyone who came looking for him to the town of Casterbridge. Susan thanks the woman and sets off with Elizabeth-Jane for Casterbridge.

Summary: Chapter IV

As they approach Casterbridge, Susan and Elizabeth-Jane pass by two men who, they believe, mention the name Henchard in their conversation. Elizabeth-Jane asks her mother if she should run after the men to ask them about their relative, but Susan, fearing that Henchard may be a disreputable citizen, advises against it. They arrive in Casterbridge, hungry from their journey, and ask a woman where the nearest baker's shop is. The woman tells them there is no good bread in Casterbridge because the corn-factor has sold "grown wheat," grain that has sprouted before harvest, to the millers and bakers. Susan and Elizabeth-Jane find some biscuits at a nearby shop and head off toward the sound of music in the distance.

Summary: Chapter V

Susan and Elizabeth-Jane arrive in front of the King's Arms Inn, where a crowd is gathered before large, open windows. When Elizabeth-Jane asks an old man what is going on, he tells her that there is an important dinner taking place and that Mr. Henchard, who is the mayor of Casterbridge, and other prominent gentlemen of the community are attending. Susan and Elizabeth-Jane are greatly surprised to hear that Henchard is the mayor, and Susan is unsure whether to make her presence known. As the two watch the diners eat, Elizabeth-Jane notices that Henchard's wineglass is never filled, and the old man tells her that the mayor has sworn an oath to abstain from all liquor.

As Susan, Elizabeth-Jane, and the other bystanders watch the proceedings, someone calls out to the mayor to explain the current bread crisis. Henchard assures the crowd that the damaged wheat was not his fault and that he has hired a manager to ensure that the same situation does not happen again. "If anybody will tell me how to turn grown wheat into wholesome wheat," he tells the crowd, "I'll take it back with pleasure. But it can't be done."

Summary: Chapter VI

A young Scotchman who happens to be passing by hears the discussion about the wheat. He writes a note and asks a waiter to deliver it to the mayor. The stranger then makes his way to the Three Mariners Inn. Having witnessed this interaction, Elizabeth-Jane is intrigued by the stranger. She and Susan are also looking for a place to stay, so they decide to follow the young man to the Three Mariners Inn. The note is delivered to Henchard, who reads it and seems quite interested. Privately, he asks the waiter about the origin of the note. Upon learning that it came from a young man who has gone to spend the night at the Three Mariners, Henchard also makes his way to the inn.

Compared to the high and often unbelievable drama of later chapters, little happens in Chapters III through VI. Given that eighteen years have passed since Henchard's sale of his family at the fair in Weydon-Priors, the function of these chapters is largely expository, and they serve mainly to provide necessary information rather than dramatic development. Here, we learn that Henchard, whose prospects for the future seem limited (if not doomed) after his shameful introduction, has managed to become one of Casterbridge's most prominent citizens. Interestingly, Hardy chooses to bypass the story of Henchard's rise from a young, emotionally volatile hay-trusser to the mayor and primary grain distributor of a small agricultural town. Susan and Elizabeth-Jane's ignorance of Henchard's rise to power emphasizes Hardy's decision to eliminate the story of Henchard's development from the narrative scope of the novel.

Instead, as the full title of the novel promises, the subject of Hardy's focus and interest is Henchard's character. The word "character" has several relevant meanings here. First, and perhaps most obvious, the word connotes the artistic portrayal of a person in a work of fiction. Second, it refers to a quality or feature that distinguishes one person or group from another. In his portrayals of Henchard, Farfrae (the Scotchman), Lucetta, and Elizabeth-Jane, Hardy relies heavily on traits that make his characters subject to larger social phenomena or forces. In these chapters, for example, he establishes the essential conflict between a world marked by tradition—as represented by Henchard, who has no means of salvaging a damaged harvest—and a world marked by progressive and sometimes miraculous modern methods. The third meaning of "character" is the suggestion of moral or ethical strength, as in the novel's subtitle: A Story of a Man of Character. Although the narrative traces Henchard's fall from grace and social respectability, it positions him, time and again, as a man of moral integrity through his limitless resolve.

The idea of integrity manifests itself several times during the short dinner at the King's Arms. First, as Elizabeth-Jane notices, Henchard's is the only wineglass among the celebrants' to remain empty. This simple detail balances the image of Henchard, for although he is a man whose temper can lead him to make rash decisions that are as unwise as they are unkind, he is also a man of exceptional resolve and a man who honors the vows—no matter how extreme—that he makes. The incident involving the sale of "grown wheat" offers a look into another of Henchard's interesting motives. A frustrated citizen's questioning of Henchard as to how he plans to repay the villagers for the past points to Henchard's biggest anxiety: how to make amends for past wrongs. Henchard's actions indicate that he wonders if the mistakes of the past can be undone, and he hones his resolve for the possibility that he may be able to atone for it. But, stricken by guilt, first by his sale of his wife and daughter and, eighteen years later, by the suggestion of shady business dealings, Henchard longs to expunge the dark spots from his personal history.

Summary: Chapter VII

Susan and Elizabeth-Jane arrive at the Three Mariners Inn and take a room. Fearing that the accommodations are too expensive, Elizabeth-Jane persuades the landlady to allow her to work in exchange for a more affordable rate. The landlady asks her to bring the Scotch gentleman his supper. After completing her chores, Elizabeth-Jane takes a tray of food to Susan. She finds Susan eavesdropping on a conversation in the adjacent room, which is occupied by the Scotchman. The mayor, Susan reports, is conversing with the young Scotchman. The women hear Henchard ask the young man if he is Joshua Jopp, who replied to his advertisement for a corn-factor's manager. The Scotchman announces that his name is Donald Farfrae and that, while he too is in the corn trade, he would not have replied to the advertisement because he is on his way to America. He then demonstrates to Henchard the method for restoring grown wheat described in his note. When Henchard offers to pay him for this information, Farfrae refuses. Henchard offers him the position of manager of the corn branch of his business, but Farfrae declines, intent on traveling to America. Farfrae invites Henchard to have a drink with him, but Henchard confesses his vow to avoid alcohol because of a shameful incident in his past.

Summary: Chapter VIII

After Henchard leaves, Farfrae rings for service, and Elizabeth-Jane goes to take away his dinner tray. Once downstairs, she pauses to listen to the musical entertainment. Soon, Farfrae joins the guests and wins them over by singing a song about his homeland. When they learn that

Farfrae is just passing through Casterbridge, they express their sorrow over losing such a skilled singer. Watching from the background, Elizabeth-Jane thinks to herself that she and Farfrae are very similar. She decides that they both view life as essentially tragic. As Farfrae prepares to retire to bed, the landlady asks Elizabeth-Jane to go to his room and turn down his bed. Having completed this task, she passes Farfrae on the stairs, and he smiles at her. Meanwhile, Henchard reflects on his fondness for his new acquaintance, thinking that he would have offered Farfrae "a third share in the business to have stayed."

Summary: Chapter IX

The next morning, Elizabeth-Jane opens her windows to find Henchard talking to Farfrae. Farfrae tells Henchard that he is about to leave, and they decide to walk together to the edge of town. Susan decides to send Elizabeth-Jane to Henchard with a message. Upon arriving at Henchard's house, Elizabeth-Jane is surprised to find Farfrae in Henchard's office. The narrator explains that when the two men reached the edge of town, Henchard persuaded Farfrae to stay on and work for him, telling the young man that he could name his own terms.

Summary: Chapter X

While Elizabeth-Jane waits to speak with Henchard, she overhears a conversation in which Joshua Jopp arrives to accept the position of manager. Henchard tells Jopp that the post has already been filled, and Jopp goes away disappointed. When Elizabeth-Jane finally meets Henchard, she delivers the simple message that his relative, Susan, a sailor's widow, is in town. Upon hearing this news, Henchard ushers her into his dining room and asks her some questions about her mother. He then writes a note to Susan telling her to meet him later that night, encloses five guineas, and gives it to Elizabeth-Jane for delivery. She brings the note back to Susan, who decides to meet Henchard alone.

The placement of rural, agricultural Casterbridge on the border between manufacturing and agricultural life makes it the ideal setting for a showdown between Michael Henchard and Donald Farfrae. Even though their relationship is, at this point in the novel, marked by strong mutual affection, Hardy plants the seeds of their eventual competition in these early chapters. When, in Chapter VII, Farfrae claims that he has "some inventions useful to the trade, and there is no scope for developing them here," he suggests that Casterbrige is not only a town straddling the divide between city and country life but also between orthodoxy and modernity or tradition and progress.

Casterbridge under Henchard's reign is too remote and too removed from the scientific, social, and technological advancements that were sweeping through England during Industrial Revolution in the mid-nineteenth century to offer Farfrae the "scope" he seeks. Indeed, before Farfrae arrives, no one in Casterbridge had ever heard of—let alone developed and perfected—a method of restoring "grown wheat." Farfrae brings with him new methods of organizing and running an agricultural business. His dazzling abilities—there is the suggestion of something miraculous in his knowledge of how to transform damaged grain into palatable bread—work their magic on Henchard and, later, the entire town. But the degree to which Henchard is seized by admiration has more to do with the nature of his own character than the quality of Farfrae's impressive and obscure knowledge. What may initially attract Henchard to Farfrae's methods is the promise of transforming something clearly damaged into salvageable goods, a process that Henchard hopes to apply to his own life in order to atone for his sins.

As is evident in the opening scene in which he auctions off his family, Henchard is ruled primarily by his passions. His actions follow from his emotions rather than from his reason or intellect, as when, after Farfrae shares the secret for restoring damaged grain, Henchard offers him a job. Such an action, in itself, may not necessarily seem odd, but Henchard's admiration for Farfrae and his determination to secure his employment seem irrational. It hardly seems prudent for a respected grain merchant to be willing to give away one-third of his business to a man he hardly knows.

If Farfrae represents Henchard's opposite in relation to progress, he also embodies the flip side of the mayor's passion. Farfrae emerges as an emotionally conservative man. Although he proves a kind and attentive listener to the many troubles of Henchard's heart, he never imagines Henchard to be his confidant. Hardy does not suggest that Farfrae is without sin or troubles but, rather, that he approaches them from a more pragmatic perspective. For example, in Chapter VII, Farfrae sings a moving and sentimental tribute to the homeland he has left behind. Even though he feels intense nostalgia for his homeland, he approaches that emotion pragmatically, at the same time understanding his motivations for leaving Scotland behind. In this way, Hardy draws a dividing line between the two men. Whereas Henchard stands for tradition and unfettered emotions, Farfrae embodies progress and reason.

In these chapters, Hardy uses present-tense narration to suggest that the narration is happening at the same time as the events it describes, a style of writing that hearkens back to eighteenth--century novels, such as Henry Fielding's Tom Jones and Laurence Sterne's Tristram Shandy. Hardy lends his narrative more immediacy—"While Elizabeth-Jane sits waiting in great

amaze at the young man's presence we may briefly explain how he came there"—and we get the sense that we are participating in the action and that the events being described are not part of some distant past.

Susan meets Henchard in the Ring, "one of the finest Roman Amphitheatres, if not the very finest, remaining in Britain." Henchard's first words to Susan are to assure her that he no longer drinks. He asks why she has not returned before now, and she replies that, since she believed the terms of her sale to be binding, she felt unable to leave Newson until his death. They agree that it is impossible for them to begin living together as though they were still married because of Henchard's estimable position in the town, as well as Elizabeth-Jane's ignorance of their dishonorable past. Henchard insists that they proceed with caution and devises a plan: Susan will take a cottage in town as the Widow Newson and allow Henchard to court and marry her, thereby restoring both their marriage and his role as Elizabeth-Jane's father without revealing their past.

Summary: Chapter XII

When Henchard returns home, he encounters Farfrae still at work. He asks Farfrae to leave off working and join him for supper. As the two men eat, Henchard confides in Farfrae about his present situation. He discloses his relationship with Susan, and Farfrae replies that the only solution is to make amends by living with her as husband and wife. Henchard reveals that he has become involved with another woman in Jersey, where he once traveled on business. He adds that their affair caused quite a scandal in Jersey, for which the woman suffered greatly. To make amends, Henchard proposed to her, on the condition that she run the risk of his first wife being alive. The woman accepted, but now that Susan has returned he regrets that he will have to disappoint the woman in Jersey. Farfrae assures him that the situation cannot be helped and offers to help Henchard write a letter breaking off relations with the Jersey woman.

Summary: Chapter XIII

Susan gets established in a cottage in the town, and Henchard begins to visit her "with business-like determination." Rumors go around the town concerning the two of them, and a wedding soon follows.

Summary: Chapter XIV

After Susan and Elizabeth-Jane move in with Henchard, Elizabeth-Jane enjoys a peace of mind that makes her more beautiful. One day, Henchard comments that it is odd that Elizabeth-

Jane's hair has lightened since she was a baby. Susan, with "an uneasy expression" on her face, assures him that nothing is amiss. Henchard says he wants to have Elizabeth-Jane's surname legally changed from Newson to Henchard, since she is actually his daughter. Susan proposes the change to Elizabeth-Jane, who, though reluctant, says she will consider it. When, later that day, Elizabeth-Jane asks Henchard if he wishes the change very much, Henchard says it is her decision. The matter is dropped, and Elizabeth-Jane remains Miss Newson.

Meanwhile, Henchard's corn and hay business thrives under Farfrae's management, and the two men become good friends. Elizabeth-Jane notices that, when she and Susan are out walking, Farfrae often looks at them "with a curious interest." One day, Elizabeth-Jane receives a note asking her to come to a granary on a farm at which Henchard has been doing business. Thinking it has something to do with Henchard's business, Elizabeth-Jane goes to the farm but finds no one there. Eventually, Farfrae arrives. When he reveals a note similar to Elizabeth-Jane's, they discover that neither of them wrote to the other. Farfrae theorizes that someone who wished to see them both must have been penned the notes, and so they wait a little longer. They eventually decide that this individual is not coming, and they go home.

As the Industrial Revolution swept through the English countryside, Hardy witnessed dramatic changes. Isolated agricultural towns like Hardy's native Dorchester, which serves as a model for the fictional Casterbridge, were immutably changed by advances in science and technology. Thus, Hardy's observations of the town's unique topography and customs—the thatched-roof cottages, the Ring, the skimmington ride described in Chapter XXXIX—become a means of preserving a dying culture. Hardy's description of the Ring also serves a thematic purpose, in which the history of the arena supports and confirms the novel's undeniably bleak worldview of the inevitability of human suffering. Having served as a gallows for gruesome public executions, as well as the site of countless "pugilistic encounters," the Ring casts a foreboding shadow over Henchard's meeting with his former wife. But the Ring also stands as a remnant of a culture that no longer exists, which, perhaps, foreshadows Casterbridge's imminent move forward into a more technological future.

Hardy uses foreshadowing liberally throughout The Mayor of Casterbridge. A prime example occurs in Chapter XIV, when Susan and Henchard discuss the colour of Elizabeth-Jane's hair. Henchard's insistence that Elizabeth-Jane's hair has lightened does as much to signal Elizabeth-Jane's dubious paternity as Susan's nervous reaction to Henchard's insistence ("She looked startled, jerked her foot warningly"). Furthermore, the narrator comments that, when Henchard presses the point, "the same uneasy expression . . . to which the future held the key"

appears on Elizabeth-Jane's face. These details gradually begin to indicate that Henchard should question his relationship to Elizabeth-Jane. Here, Hardy's technique draws on the traditions of the Victorian novel, which tended to favor elaborately constructed plots and were often published in serial installments. The Mayor of Casterbridge was first published in weekly installments in Graphic and Harper's Weekly magazines. This mode of publishing presented authors with the challenge of enticing their readers to follow the story and purchase its balance in subsequent issues. Foreshadowing was a favored authorial technique used to keep readers intrigued.

This section also introduces us to Lucetta Templeman. Although she remains unnamed—in these chapters she is merely the woman from Jersey—her presence, in the form of Henchard's confidence to Farfrae, introduces one of the novel's dominant themes, the value of a good name. Lucetta is a woman whose name and reputation have been ruined by her relationship to Henchard. She has suffered scandal because, in Henchard's estimation, "she was terribly careless of appearances." In other words, she has shown little respect for the social conventions that deemed her behavior inappropriate.

Lucetta's inattention to her good name contrasts with the care that the Henchards take in their reputations. When Susan and Elizabeth-Jane arrive in town, for example, Susan regrets allowing her daughter to do chores to pay for their room, because she wants to maintain an air of respectability. Similarly, Henchard's motivations often hinge upon his desire to maintain a respectable appearance and to keep his name in good social standing. Henchard's desire, at the end of Chapter XII, to "make amends to Susan," stems less from a sense of guilt or horror at his past actions than from the need to keep his positions of mayor, churchwarden, and father to Elizabeth-Jane free from "disgrace."

Summary: Chapter XV

Henchard and Farfrae have a quarrel over the treatment of Abel Whittle, a man who is consistently late for his job in Henchard's hay-yard. When Whittle is late for work the day after Henchard reprimands him for his tardiness, Henchard goes to his house, drags him out of bed, and sends him to work without his breeches. When Farfrae sees Whittle, who claims that he will later kill himself rather than bear this humiliation, he tells him to go home and dress properly. Henchard and Farfrae confront each other, and Farfrae threatens to leave. The two men reconcile, but Henchard, upset by Farfrae's insubordination, thinks on him with "dim dread" and regrets having "confided to him the secrets of his life."

Summary: Chapter XVI

A festival day in celebration of a national event is suggested to the country at large, but Casterbridge is slow to make plans. One day, Farfrae asks Henchard if he can borrow some waterproof cloths to organize a celebration. Henchard tells him he can have as many cloths as he wants. Henchard is inspired to plan events for the holiday and begins to organize a grand entertainment on an elevated green close to the town. When the day of the festival arrives, the weather is overcast, and it rains by midday. Henchard's celebration is ruined, but Farfrae's, which takes place under a tent he has ingeniously constructed, goes off without a hitch. Henchard sees Farfrae at the center of a great ball, dancing with Elizabeth-Jane. Prominent townspeople tease Henchard, remarking that Farfrae will soon surpass his master. Henchard replies that no such thing will happen, stating that Farfrae will shortly be leaving the business.

Summary: Chapter XVII

Elizabeth-Jane regrets that she has upset Henchard by dancing with Farfrae. She leaves the tent and stands thinking. After a short time, Farfrae joins her to say that, were circumstances different, he would have asked her something that night. He tells her that he is thinking of leaving Casterbridge, and she says that she wishes he would stay. Later, she is relieved to hear that Farfrae has purchased a small corn and hay business of his own in Casterbridge. Upset by what he takes to be Farfrae's coup, Henchard requests that Elizabeth-Jane break all ties with Farfrae and sends a letter to Farfrae asking the same from him. Elizabeth-Jane dutifully obeys Henchard and engages in no further contact with Farfrae. As Farfrae's new business grows, Henchard becomes increasingly embittered.

Summary: Chapter XVIII

Susan falls ill. Henchard receives a letter from Lucetta Templeman, the woman from Jersey with whom he was having an affair. In it she says that she honors his decision to remarry his first wife and understands the impossibility of any further communication between them. She also requests that he return to her the love letters she has written him. She suggests that he do her this favor in person and announces that she will be on a coach passing through Casterbridge. Henchard goes to meet the coach, but Lucetta is not there.

Meanwhile, Susan has gotten worse. One night, she asks Elizabeth-Jane to bring her a pen and paper. She writes a letter, which she seals and marks, "Mr. Michael Henchard. Not to be opened till Elizabeth-Jane's wedding-day." Susan also admits to Elizabeth-Jane that it was she

who wrote the notes that caused Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae to meet at the farm, hoping that the two would fall in love and marry.

Soon thereafter, Susan dies. Farfrae hears some of the old inhabitants of the village discussing her death. One villager, Mother Cuxsom, relates that Susan had laid out all the necessary preparations for her burial, including four pennies for weighing down her eyes. After Susan is buried, Christopher Coney, a poor townsman, digs up her body to retrieve the pennies, arguing that death should not rob life of four pence.

If there is a main argument in The Mayor of Casterbridge, Hardy states it implicitly in Chapter XVII, where he suggests that "[c]haracter is Fate." These chapters do much to support the notion that one's personality determines the course of one's life—they contain a turning point that hinges upon Henchard's disposition. It is clear that Henchard's emotions dominate his life and tend to determine his actions. When he enters into his friendship with Farfrae, for instance, he does so wholeheartedly. It is not until their relationship begins to sour—first as a result of their disagreement over Abel Whittle and later as a result of Henchard's failed celebration—that Henchard's emotional involvement with and dedication to a man he hardly knows seems reckless. This characteristic extremity of emotion shapes the course of Henchard's life. Just as his exceptional guilt over mistreating Susan leads him to marry for the second time a woman he does not love, his jealousy of Farfrae forces him into a competition that he cannot win.

In terms of their emotional vulnerability, both Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae stand as counterpoints to Henchard. Their reactions to Henchard's request that they no longer see one another mark them as beings ruled by something other than feeling. Given their mutual affection, their willingness to agree to Henchard's demand without so much as a word of protest seems odd. Of course, it is possible that Farfrae's respect for Henchard's wishes makes him noble (later, while remembering Henchard's initial kindness toward him, Farfrae refers to his loyalty to Henchard). But Farfrae's behavior also reveals his distance from passionate emotion. Similarly, Elizabeth-Jane emerges as a study in emotional moderation. Like Farfrae, she bows to Henchard's wish without objection. Hardy encapsulates her character brilliantly in the opening passage of Chapter XV, in which she carefully constructs an outfit so as not to appear too artful or excessive. Her behavior here serves as an important contrast to that of Lucetta, whose eventual ostentatious appearance matches the excess of her emotions.

Summary: Chapter XIX

One night, about three weeks after Susan's death, Henchard decides to tell Elizabeth-Jane the truth about the relationship between him and her mother. Henchard does not admit that he sold the pair, but he does tell Elizabeth-Jane that he is her father and that, during Elizabeth-Jane's childhood, he and her mother each thought the other dead.

Henchard asks Elizabeth-Jane to draw up a paragraph for the newspaper announcing that she will change her name to Henchard and then leaves her alone to collect her thoughts. He goes upstairs to search for some documents to prove his relationship to Elizabeth-Jane and discovers the letter that Susan wrote before her death. Despite the request to leave the letter unread until Elizabeth-Jane's wedding-day, Henchard opens it and learns that Elizabeth-Jane is not, in fact, his daughter. The letter informs him that his child died shortly after he and his family parted ways and that the young woman he has welcomed into his home is actually the daughter of the sailor who purchased Susan at Weydon-Priors.

In the morning, Elizabeth-Jane comes to Henchard and tells him that she now intends to look upon him as her true father. Henchard's discovery of the night before renders her acceptance of him bittersweet, but he decides not to traumatize Elizabeth-Jane further with this additional surprise.

Summary: Chapter XX

Though Elizabeth-Jane continues to live under his roof, Henchard becomes increasingly cold and distant toward her. He criticizes her country dialect, telling her that such language makes her "only fit to carry wash to a pig-trough," and describes her handwriting as unrefined and unwomanly. One afternoon, Henchard reprimands Elizabeth-Jane for bringing Nance Mockridge, one of the workers in his hay-yard, some bread and cheese. When Nance overhears Henchard insult her character, she tells Henchard that Elizabeth-Jane has waited on worse for hire. Elizabeth-Jane confirms that she once worked at the Three Mariners Inn, leaving Henchard shocked and afraid that Elizabeth-Jane has compromised his reputation through her menial labor. One morning, on her way to visit Susan's grave, Elizabeth-Jane sees a well-dressed lady studying Susan's tombstone. Intrigued, Elizabeth-Jane wonders who she is and thinks about her on the way home.

Meanwhile, Henchard's term as mayor is about to end, and he learns that he will not be named one of the town's aldermen. In light of this fact, he becomes even more annoyed that Elizabeth-

Jane was once a servant at the Three Mariners Inn. Henchard is further rankled when he learns that she served Donald Farfrae. Considering Elizabeth-Jane a burden of which he would like to rid himself, Henchard writes to Farfrae withdrawing his disapproval of their courtship. The next day, Elizabeth-Jane meets the well-dressed lady in the churchyard. As they talk, Elizabeth-Jane reveals that she is not entirely happy with her father. The lady asks if Elizabeth-Jane will come live with her as a companion, explaining that she is about to move into High-Place Hall, near the center of Casterbridge. Elizabeth-Jane gladly agrees, and the lady arranges to meet her again in a week.

Summary: Chapter XXI

During the next week, Elizabeth-Jane walks by High-Place Hall many times and thinks about what it will be like to live there. One day, while looking at the house, she hears someone approaching and hides. Henchard enters the house without noticing or being noticed by Elizabeth-Jane. Later that day, Elizabeth-Jane asks Henchard if he has any objection to her leaving his house. He answers that he has no objections whatsoever and even offers to give her an allowance.

The appointed day for Elizabeth-Jane's meeting with the well-dressed lady arrives, and she goes to the churchyard as planned. The lady is there and introduces herself as Miss Templeman. She tells Elizabeth-Jane that she can join her at High-Place Hall immediately, and Elizabeth-Jane rushes home to pack her things. Watching her, Henchard regrets his treatment of Elizabeth-Jane and asks her to stay. But she cannot, she says, since she is on her way to High-Place Hall, leaving Henchard dumbfounded.

Summary: Chapter XXII

The narrator shifts back to the night prior to Elizabeth-Jane's departure, when Henchard receives a letter from Lucetta announcing that she has moved to Casterbridge and will take up residence at High-Place Hall. He then receives another letter, shortly after Elizabeth-Jane leaves, in which Lucetta asks him to call on her. He goes that night but is told that she is busy, though she would be happy to see him the next day. Upset by this rebuff, he resolves not to visit her. The next day, Lucetta waits expectantly for Henchard and is disappointed when he does not come. While she waits, she and Elizabeth-Jane look out on the market and discuss the town and its inhabitants.

Several days pass without a visit from Henchard. Three days later, Lucetta comments to Elizabeth-Jane that Henchard may come to visit her (Elizabeth-Jane). Elizabeth-Jane tells Lucetta that she does not believe he will, because they have quarreled too much. Lucetta then decides to send Elizabeth-Jane on some useless errands and quickly writes a letter to Henchard saying that she has sent Elizabeth-Jane away and asking him to visit. A visitor finally arrives, but when he enters Lucetta sees that he is not Henchard.

The presence of several extremely unlikely coincidences in these chapters underscores the fact that The Mayor of Casterbridge does not attempt to portray reality. Even before this section of the novel, a number of rather fantastic occurrences have accumulated: not only does Henchard sell his wife and daughter, but Susan happens to come upon the furmity-woman who not only has witnessed the event of eighteen years ago but also remembers that Henchard left for Casterbridge, where he still happens to live.

The many coincidences in Henchard's life serve an important function in that they confirm Hardy's bleak conception of the world. In each of his major novels, Hardy makes his characters suffer in unbearable circumstances and, as a result, learn their true place in the universe. As he begins to lose the comforts and position of mayor and businessman, Henchard moves more steadily toward an understanding of life's harshness. In Chapter XIX, he muses, "I am to suffer, I perceive. This much scourging, then, is it for me?" attempting to understand the reality of his emotional pain. As life presents unpleasant obstacles, Henchard becomes convinced there is "some sinister intelligence bent on punishing" him. His acceptance of suffering—"misery taught him nothing more than defiant endurance of it"—illustrates his bleak and fatalistic outlook. The twists and turns of the novel's plot, each of which serves to tighten the screws on Henchard's misery, derive from Hardy's belief that the universe is designed to create human suffering.

Because this philosophy dominates the novel, The Mayor of Casterbridge is a prime example of naturalistic writing. This school of writing, prevalent in the late nineteenth century, sought to render ordinary life. According to the naturalist novelist Frank Norris, it concentrates on "the smaller details of everyday life, things that are likely to happen between lunch and supper." Naturalism describes the details of everyday life but does so according to the philosophical tenets ofdeterminism, the belief that human beings are shaped by the forces that operate on them. Certainly these forces—whether they are the workings of fate or social conventions—are the forms of "sinister intelligence" that Henchard believes are bent on punishing him.

Summary: Chapter XXIII

Lucetta invites Farfrae, who has come looking for Elizabeth-Jane, to sit down. The two talk and watch the bustling marketplace from Lucetta's window. They witness a farmer negotiating the employment of an old shepherd. The farmer refuses to take the old man if his son is not part of the bargain, but the young man is hesitant to go, for it means leaving behind the girl he loves. Touched by this scene, Farfrae goes out and hires the young man so that he can remain close to his love. Minutes after Farfrae leaves, Henchard arrives, but Lucetta has her maid tell Henchard that she has a headache and does not wish to see him that day.

Summary: Chapter XXIV

Elizabeth-Jane enjoys living with Lucetta, and the days pass pleasantly for both. One day, they look out their window at the market and see the demonstration of a "new-fashioned agricultural implement." When they go out to take a closer look at it, they meet Henchard, who ridicules the machine. Elizabeth-Jane introduces him to Lucetta, but as he turns to leave she thinks she hears him accuse Lucetta of refusing to see him. Elizabeth-Jane's suspicions are aroused, but she decides that she must have heard Henchard incorrectly.

Farfrae appears and praises the usefulness of the new machine. Elizabeth-Jane wonders about Henchard's familiarity with Lucetta but soon learns that they have met previously and that Lucetta is interested in Farfrae. One day, Lucetta tells Elizabeth-Jane a story. Claiming to seek advice for a "friend," she relates her present situation with Henchard and Farfrae. Elizabeth-Jane is not fooled by the claim that the story is about a friend and tells Lucetta that she cannot give an opinion on such a difficult subject.

Summary: Chapter XXV

Farfrae continues to call on Lucetta with increasing frequency. One day, while Elizabeth-Jane is out, Henchard calls on Lucetta and tells her that he is ready for them to be married. He claims that he is doing her a favor by making "an honest proposal for silencing [her] Jersey enemies," but Lucetta resists. She refuses to be a slave to the past and defiantly claims, "I'll love where I choose!"

Summary: Chapter XXVI

Henchard and Farfrae meet one day while walking, and Henchard asks the younger man if he recalls the story of the woman from Jersey whom he gave up in order to remarry his first wife.

He tells Farfrae that the Jersey woman now refuses to marry him, and Farfrae states that Henchard has no further obligation to her. Later, Henchard visits Lucetta and asks if she knows Farfrae. She says that she does, but she downplays the significance of her reply by claiming to know almost everyone in Casterbridge. Just then, someone knocks at the door, and Farfrae enters. Henchard thus begins to suspect that Farfrae is his rival for Lucetta's affections.

Henchard decides to hire Joshua Jopp, the man whose managerial position he had earlier given to Farfrae. He tells Jopp that his primary objective is to cut Farfrae out of the corn and hay business. In order to discern harvest conditions, Henchard consults a man known as a "forecaster" or weather prophet. This man predicts that the harvest will bring rain, so Henchard, trusting that the upcoming crop will be bad, buys a large quantity of corn. When harvest comes, however, the weather is fair and the crop is good, which causes prices to fall. Henchard loses money and fires Joshua Jopp.

The chapters in this section foretell the transition of a quaint Casterbridge that stands isolated from modern times into a more industrialized, economically viable town. Under Henchard's reign as mayor, the town does not flourish; rather, it merely, like Henchard, endures. Indeed, when the novel opens, the citizens find themselves in dire straits over a damaged crop. Without Farfrae to introduce the modern method by which grown wheat can be restored, one imagines that the people of Casterbridge would have continued to suffer with their hunger and that Henchard would have sought in vain for a way to make amends. But as Henchard falls, so too do the proverbial walls that keep progress and modernity at bay. Hardy uses Henchard's reliance on the outdated weather prophet to encapsulate a fading, bygone era. In the face of progress—embodied by Farfrae in his reliance on and fondness for modern machinery—Henchard cannot compete.

Although the novel proclaims itself, in its subtitle, A Story of a Man of Characterand, as such, concentrates primarily on Henchard, these chapters provide us with a keener understanding of Farfrae, Elizabeth-Jane, and Lucetta. In many ways, Lucetta Templeman seems familiar. Like Henchard, she is ruled by her passions. Just as she once refused to conceal her affair with Henchard to secure her good name in Jersey, she now refuses to bow to his whims or his threats and marry him against her will. In her declaration that she will love whomever she chooses, we recognize the same sort of blind resolve that possesses and often misleads Henchard.

But Lucetta differs from her ex-lover in a crucial respect: she refuses to enslave herself to the past. She recognizes no obligations, feels no compulsion toward self-sacrifice, and voices no desire to make amends. That Henchard does oblige himself to right past wrongs and so willingly flays himself for his sins sets him apart. Indeed, it is this desire to undo the past, regardless of what it means for his present or future life, that makes Henchard a man of character and proves the rarity and worth of his moral fiber.

While Henchard and Lucetta have similar capacities for emotional vulnerability, Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane stand as their opposites. Throughout the novel, these two demonstrate a tendency for sentimentality—Farfrae sings sad songs of the homeland he misses, for example, and Elizabeth-Jane pines for Henchard's love and attention—but both are capable of a curious emotional detachment that suggests they are ruled by their heads rather than their hearts. In matters of love, for instance, Farfrae proves himself rather passionless. He resumes courtship of Elizabeth-Jane as quickly and with as little ceremony as he abandons it, which makes his motivation seem more a matter of wise business, such as an alliance with Henchard through marriage, than personal desire. The same might be said of Elizabeth-Jane, who accepts the dawning knowledge of Lucetta's affair with Farfrae, the man she supposedly loves, stoically.

Summary: Chapter XXIII

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Summary: Chapter XXVII

While corn prices are low, Farfrae buys a large amount of corn, and the weather suddenly turns poor again, causing the harvest to be less successful than predicted. Farfrae prospers as the corn prices rise, and Henchard laments his rival's success. One night, one of Farfrae's wagoners and one of Henchard's collide in the street in front of High-Place Hall. Henchard is summoned to settle the dispute. Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane testify that Henchard's man was in the wrong, but Henchard's man maintains that these two cannot be trusted because "all the women side with Farfrae."

After the conflict is resolved, Henchard calls on Lucetta and is told that she cannot see him because she has an appointment. He hides outside her door and sees Farfrae call for her. As the couple leave for a walk, Henchard follows them and eavesdrops on their declarations of love. When Lucetta returns to High-Place Hall, Henchard surprises her there. He threatens to reveal their past intimacy unless she agrees to marry him. With Elizabeth-Jane as a witness, she agrees to do so.

Summary: Chapter XXVIII

The next day, Henchard goes to Town Hall to preside over a case (he retains his position as a magistrate for one year after being mayor). There is only one case to be heard—that of an old woman accused of disorderly conduct. The constable testifies that the woman insulted him, and the woman interrupts many times during his testimony with objections. Finally, the woman is granted the opportunity to offer her defense. She recounts the story of an event that happened twenty years ago. She was a furmity-merchant at a fair in Weydon-Priors and witnessed a man sell his wife to a sailor for five guineas. She identifies Henchard as the guilty party and asks how such a man can sit in judgment of her. The clerk dismisses the story as mere fabrication, but Henchard admits its truth and leaves the court. Lucetta sees a crowd around the Town Hall and asks her servant what is happening. The servant tells her of Henchard's revelation, and Lucetta becomes deeply miserable that she has agreed to marry him. She departs to the seaside town of Port-Bredy for a few days.

Summary: Chapter XXIX

Lucetta walks along the road toward Port-Bredy. She stops a mile outside of Casterbridge and sees Elizabeth-Jane, who has decided to meet her, approaching. Suddenly, a bull begins to walk toward them, and the two women retreat into a nearby barn. The bull charges and traps them in the barn. The bull chases them until a man appears; he seizes the bull by its nose ring and

secures it outside the barn. The man turns out to be Henchard, and Lucetta is very grateful to him for saving them. The trio heads home. Lucetta remembers that she has dropped her muff in the barn, and Elizabeth-Jane offers to run back and get it. After finding the muff, Elizabeth-Jane runs into Farfrae on the road. He drives her home, then returns to his own lodging, where his servants are preparing to move.

Meanwhile, Henchard escorts Lucetta home, apologizing for his insistence that she marry him. He suggests an indefinite engagement. When she asks if there is anything she can do to repay his kindness, he asks her to tell Mr. Grower, one of his creditors, that they will soon be married—given Lucetta's wealth, Henchard believes that this arrangement will persuade Grower to treat his debt more leniently. Lucetta replies that she cannot do so, since Grower served as a witness during her wedding to Farfrae, which, she announces, took place this week secretly in Port-Bredy.

Summary: Chapter XXX

Shortly after Lucetta arrives at home, Farfrae follows with all his things. All that remains to be done, she claims, is to tell Elizabeth-Jane of their marriage. Lucetta goes to speak to Elizabeth-Jane and asks if she remembers the story about her friend who was torn between the two lovers. Elizabeth-Jane remembers, and Lucetta makes it clear that that the "friend" of whom she was speaking is actually herself. Lucetta tells Elizabeth-Jane that she wishes her to stay in the house as before, and Elizabeth-Jane says that she will think about it. As soon as Lucetta leaves the room, however, Elizabeth-Jane makes preparations to depart and does so later that night.

The clash between the wagoners of Farfrae and Henchard is symbolic of the larger clash between the two men and the forces they represent. As the drivers meet on the cramped street outside High-Place Hall, the confrontation seems to indicate a clash between two competing corn merchants. But the confrontation is also between age and youth, tradition and modernity, past and future.

The Mayor of Casterbridge is filled with such symbolic events; one of Hardy's preferred techniques is the encapsulation of larger issues and conflicts into passing details. Another example of this technique is Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane's confrontation with the bull. If malicious forces dominate the world, then the bull might be read as a manifestation of those forces. It tracks Lucetta as deliberately as her past and the scandal that ultimately destroys her. This scene also provides a moving counterpoint to Henchard's decline. Having lost his position

of mayor, his prominence as a businessman, and now, with the testimony of the furmity-woman, much of his dignity, Henchard is given the opportunity to demonstrate what he still possesses. His physical strength is on display as he corrals the bull and ushers the women to safety, but so too is the generosity of his spirit. Although he is increasingly estranged from Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane, he risks danger on their behalf, proving that, despite bouts of petty behavior, he is essentially a good man, in full control and possessing fortitude and resolve.

In this section, Henchard's beneficence becomes clearer through his responsible reaction to the furmity-woman's accusations against him. A man in Henchard's position could easily dismiss the old woman's accusations and protect his reputation. The other aldermen turn to Henchard, expecting he will deny her charges. Henchard's willingness to admit the truth of the furmity-woman's story elevates the former mayor in our eyes: he seems dedicated to the truth, even when the truth threatens disastrous consequences. However, Henchard is not moved to confess by some romantic appreciation of the truth. In fact, Henchard has chosen not to tell the truth numerous times throughout the novel: he makes a pact to keep the past a secret from Elizabeth-Jane, then, upon discovering that he is not her biological father, keeps this information from her as well. Given the degree of guilt Henchard feels after selling Susan and her daughter, we can assume there is a degree of masochism in Henchard's admission in the courtroom: he is still punishing himself for his past misdoings. By this point, his residual guilt and self-inflicted punishments have assumed the force of a habit.

Hardy suggests also that Henchard's self-destructive actions are a result of his overly direct nature, a characteristic he rarely represses in the novel. If Henchard fully believes that "some power was working against him" and that he is destined to fail, then his confession to the aldermen is an acknowledgment of his inevitable fate. His "sledge-hammer directness" may serve him well in the town's court, but it is disastrous in terms of public relations.

Summary: Chapter XXXI

The furmity-woman's revelation about Henchard's past spreads through the town, overshadowing all the "amends he had made." His reputation as a man of honor and prosperity declines rapidly. One day, Elizabeth-Jane notices a crowd gathered outside the King's Arms (the inn at which she first sees Henchard presiding over the prestigious dinner as mayor). She learns that the town commissioners are meeting with regard to Henchard's bankruptcy. Having surrendered all his assets, Henchard offers the commission his last valuable possession: a gold watch. Though they find the gesture honorable, the commissioners refuse. Henchard sells the watch himself and offers the money to one of his smaller creditors. When the remainder of

Henchard's effects are auctioned off, Farfrae purchases his business. Elizabeth-Jane makes numerous attempts to contact Henchard, wishing for an opportunity to "forgive him for his roughness to her, and to help him in his trouble," but to no avail. Henchard moves into a cottage owned by Joshua Jopp.

Summary: Chapter XXXII

In Casterbridge, there are two bridges where "all the failures of the town" congregate. One evening, while Henchard stands on the more remote bridge, Jopp meets him and explains that Lucetta and Farfrae have just moved into Henchard's old house, which Farfrae purchased along with all of Henchard's furniture. Jopp leaves, and Henchard is soon met by another traveler, Farfrae himself. Having heard that Henchard plans to leave Casterbridge, Farfrae proposes that he live in the spare rooms of his old house. Henchard refuses. Farfrae then offers Henchard whatever furniture he might want. Henchard, though moved by the man's generosity, still refuses.

Elizabeth-Jane learns Henchard has fallen ill and uses his confinement as an excuse to see him. At first, Henchard tells her to go away, but she stays and not only nurses him to a quick recovery but provides him with a new outlook on life. Henchard goes to Farfrae's corn-yard to seek employment as a hay-trusser. When he hears that Farfrae is being considered for mayor, however, he begins to lapse into his old moodiness, counting the number of days until his oath to abstain from alcohol is up. When that day arrives, Elizabeth-Jane hears that Henchard has begun to drink again.

Summary: Chapter XXXIII

After Sunday church services, the men of Casterbridge gather at the Three Mariners Inn to discuss the sermon, sing, and "limit [themselves] to half-a-pint of liquor." Released from his vow, Henchard flouts this tradition by getting drunk and singing insulting words about Farfrae to the tune of a psalm. Elizabeth-Jane arrives to bring Henchard home. On their way, he complains that Farfrae has taken everything from him and that he will not be responsible for his deeds should they meet. Worried that Henchard will make good on this threat, she decides to keep an eye on him and, during the week, goes to the hay-yard to help him with his work.

Several days later, Farfrae and Lucetta come to the hay-yard. Lucetta is surprised to see Henchard there. Henchard speaks to her with bitter sarcasm, and the next day she sends him a note asking him not to treat her so poorly. With this incident, the gulf between Henchard and

Lucetta grows wider. Later, Elizabeth-Jane observes Henchard and Farfrae on the top floor of the corn-stores and believes she sees Henchard extend his arm as if to push Farfrae. She decides it is her duty to warn him of the apparent danger in which he is placing himself by associating with Henchard.

Summary: Chapter XXXIV

The next morning, Elizabeth-Jane approaches Farfrae as he leaves his house. She warns him that Henchard may try to harm him. Unable to contemplate such evil motives, Farfrae dismisses the warning. Wanting to provide a "new beginning" for the man who, years earlier, had offered him a job and position, Farfrae arranges to purchase a seed shop that Henchard can manage. While Farfrae and the town clerk arrange the matter, the town clerk confirms that Henchard hates Farfrae. Farfrae is troubled by this news and decides to delay the purchase of the seed shop.

At home, Farfrae laments to Lucetta that Henchard dislikes him. Afraid that he will learn of her former involvement with Henchard, she urges him to move away from Casterbridge. As they discuss this plan, however, one of the town's aldermen comes to their house to inform them that the newly elected mayor has just died. He asks Farfrae if he will accept the position; Farfrae agrees to do so.

Lucetta asks Henchard once again to return her letters. Realizing that the letters are locked in the safe of his old house, Henchard calls on Farfrae one evening to retrieve them and, while there, reads several letters to Farfrae. Farfrae still does not know that Lucetta wrote the letters, and so he listens to Henchard politely but with little interest. Tempted as he is to reveal the author of the corres-pondence, Henchard cannot bring himself to ruin Farfrae and Lucetta's marriage.

After word spreads of the furmity-woman's accusation, it is remarkable how quickly and completely Henchard "passe[s] the ridge of prosperity and honour and [begins] to descend on the other side." Whereas he earlier enjoys a position of prominence as the mayor of the town, he now stands on a bridge where thwarted lovers and other desperate figures contemplate suicide. Henchard's desperation has much to do with Farfrae and his successes, which seem like some sort of betrayal to Henchard, who helped Farfrae establish himself in Casterbridge. Since Farfrae's introduction, he and Henchard have moved steadily in opposite directions, the former toward prosperity and achievement, the latter toward failure and obscurity. In these chapters, where Farfrae purchases the debt--ridden Henchard's home and business, the transition is

complete. Whatever bright eminence the former mayor enjoyed is now eclipsed by his protégé's development, as the refurbished sign outside the grain market makes clear: "A smear of decisive lead-coloured paint had been laid on to obliterate Henchard's name, though its letters dimly loomed through like ships in a fog. Over these, in fresh white, spread the name of Farfrae."

We can understand why Henchard would wish not to live with the man he considers his archrival, let alone with his ex-lover, but his refusal of Farfrae's charity is, as these chapters illustrate, more a function of his character than an aspect of his relationship with Farfrae. Henchard does everything to an extreme: he cannot merely be dissatisfied with married life but, instead, must feel the need to sell his wife; he cannot drink responsibly but, instead, must swear off liquor for twenty-one years, only to return to it with an alcoholic's vengeance. Similarly, just as his emotions for Farfrae run hot or cold, his extreme contempt for Elizabeth-Jane becomes a boundless and needy love. The extremity of Henchard's passions is, in large part, responsible for the severity of his fall. Hardy, appropriating the words of the eighteenth-century German writer Novalis, stresses that "[c]haracter is Fate." Henchard's response to his bankruptcy hearing validates such a hypothesis. His extreme emotions and inability to compromise or show restraint lead him to sell his last valuable possession, his gold watch. Thus, an honorable act launches him further into poverty and despair.

Henchard's behavior remains consistent throughout the novel. He does not undergo a significant change, nor does he learn from his past mistakes and alter his ways. Farfrae's plan to purchase a small seed store for Henchard to manage shows that Farfrae does believe that such change is possible. Ultimately, though, the novel adheres to a philosophy of determinism, which suggests that human beings are never free enough to exert their own will on the universe. Instead, there are forces that determine the course of every human life, regardless of human desire. As Henchard observes: "See now how it's ourselves that are ruled by the Powers above us! We plan this, but we do that."

Summary: Chapter XXXV

Lucetta overhears the conversation between Farfrae and Henchard and becomes extremely agitated, fearing that Henchard will reveal her authorship of the letters. When Farfrae comes upstairs, she gathers that Henchard has not disclosed her. The next morning, she writes to Henchard, arranging a meeting for later that day at the Ring. There, she begs him to have mercy on her and return the letters, which he agrees to do.

Summary: Chapter XXXVI

When Lucetta returns from her meeting with Henchard, she finds Joshua Jopp waiting for her. He has heard that Farfrae is looking for a business partner and asks if she would recommend him. She refuses, and he returns home disappointed. When Jopp gets home, Henchard asks him to deliver a packet to Mrs. Farfrae. Jopp inspects the packet, discovers that it contains letters, and then goes on his way to deliver it.

Jopp meets the peasant women Mother Cuxsom and Nance Mockridge, who tell him they are on their way to Mixen Lane, the center for "much that was sad, much that was low, some things that were baneful" in Casterbridge. Jopp accompanies them and meets the old furmity-woman, who asks about the parcel he carries. He replies that they are love letters and reads them aloud to the crowd. Nance Mockridge exclaims that Lucetta is the author of the letters and remarks that this information provides a good foundation for a "skimmity-ride," a traditional English spectacle the purpose of which was to express public disapproval of adultery. A stranger, dressed in a fur coat and sealskin cap, expresses interest in the custom and donates some money for the ceremony. Jopp returns home, reseals the letters, and delivers them to Lucetta the next morning.

Summary: Chapter XXXVII

The citizens of Casterbridge soon become aware that a "Royal Personage" plans to pass through the town. The town council, which is to address this esteemed guest, meets to arrange the details of the event, and Henchard interrupts the meeting to ask if he can participate. Farfrae says that Henchard's involvement would not be proper, since he is no longer a member of the council. Henchard vows that he will welcome the Royal Personage in his own way. The special day arrives, and, as the royal carriage stops, a drunken Henchard stands in front of it waving a handmade flag. Farfrae forcefully drags Henchard away.

Summary: Chapter XXXVIII

Incensed by Farfrae's treatment of him, Henchard decides to seek revenge. He leaves a message at Farfrae's house requesting that Farfrae meet him at the granaries. When Farfrae arrives, Henchard, who has tied one of his arms to make a more even match, tells him that they will finish the fight begun that morning. The men wrestle, and though Henchard overpowers Farfrae, he cannot bring himself to finish off his opponent. Farfrae leaves, and Henchard is flooded with shame and fond memories of Farfrae. He feels the desire to see Farfrae again but remembers hearing that Farfrae was to leave on a journey for the town of Weatherbury.

Because Henchard feels things more deeply than any other character, with such conviction and force, it is difficult to hold him accountable for his actions. When, for example, he reads Lucetta's letters to Farfrae, he does so not to torment the woman who eavesdrops from a neighboring room, but because he is seized by the profound and helpless feeling that he has been wronged. Similarly, his determination to fight Farfrae arises not from the "rivalry, which ruined" him or the "snubbing, which humbled" him, but rather from the "hustling that disgraced" him. Henchard's concern about his public image makes him particularly despise the idea of being disgraced (this same concern compels him to seek to make amends with Susan nearly two decades after their shameful parting). When he fights Farfrae, then, he is motivated less by vengeance than the need to free himself from the burden of feeling shamed. Indeed, Henchard's complete subservience to his own emotions is manifested in his cries as he breaks from the struggle that "no man ever loved another as I did thee at one time. . . . And now—though I came here to kill 'ee, I cannot hurt thee!"

Though powerful, Henchard is no bully, and he uses his both his physical and political strength sparingly. Though he laments that he has taken Farfrae's dismissal "like a lamb," he wants nothing more than a fair fight from the Scotchman. This desire for fairness is further manifested in his decision to bind one arm before the wrestling match begins, since he is the stronger of the two men. Furthermore, he cannot bring himself to destroy Lucetta, whose duplicity and wayward emotions have left him feeling abandoned and unloved. Nothing would be easier for Henchard than to bring shame upon Lucetta, but he determines, quite honorably, that "such a woman was very small deer to hunt." These moments of restraint—rare for a man of Henchard's domineering passions—prove and preserve Henchard's humanity. Indeed, these conflicts reveal the complexity of Henchard's character and are the reason that many critics have found him to be the most human of all Hardy's creations.

In addition to giving us a more fully developed understanding of Henchard's character, these chapters build suspense by hinting at two major imminent events: the skimmity-ride and the arrival of Newson. The interest displayed in the skimmity-ride, manifest in the fur-wearing stranger's piqued curiosity about the ritual, hints at the ride's inevitability. The ride was a custom popular in rural towns and involved a parade of effigies and music used to shame publicly those guilty (or suspected) of adultery. Although the custom was prohibited by law in 1882, it continued for years after. Hardy foreshadows Newson's arrival very cleverly, using the details of his clothes. In describing a stranger "dressed with a certain clumsy richness—his coat being furred, and his head covered with a cap of seal-skin," Hardy evokes the weatherproofed sailor who, as many years ago at Weydon-Priors, has money at his disposal.

Summary: Chapter XXXIX

The narrator shifts back to the moments following the wrestling match between Henchard and Farfrae. After Farfrae descends from the loft, Abel Whittle delivers a note to Farfrae requesting his presence in Weatherbury. The note has been sent by some of Farfrae's workers who hope to get Farfrae out of town in order to lessen the damaging impact of the "skimmity-ride." After Farfrae departs for Weatherbury, Lucetta hears commotion in the distance. Outside her window, she overhears two maids describe the proceedings: two figures are sitting back to back on a donkey that is being paraded through the streets of Casterbridge. Just as Elizabeth-Jane enters the room and tries to close the shutters, Lucetta realizes that the figures are meant to represent her and Henchard. She becomes hysterical and suffers an epileptic seizure, fearing that her husband will see the spectacle. Elizabeth-Jane calls the doctor, who recognizes the seriousness of the situation and tells her to call immediately for Farfrae.

Summary: Chapter XL

Having observed the skimmity-ride, Henchard goes in search of Elizabeth-Jane. Upon arriving at Farfrae's house and learning of Lucetta's condition, Henchard explains that Farfrae must be found on the way to a town called Weatherbury, not another town called Budmouth as originally planned. Because no one believes him, he departs to find Farfrae himself. Eventually, he comes upon Farfrae and urges him to return to Casterbridge, but Farfrae distrusts him and refuses to return. Henchard rides back to Casterbridge only to find that Lucetta is no better. When he returns home, Joshua Jopp tells him that a seaman of some sort called for him while he was out. Farfrae finally returns and sends for another doctor, and Lucetta is much calmed by her husband's arrival. He sits with her through the night as Henchard paces the streets, making inquiries about the patient's health. Early the next morning, a maid informs him that Lucetta is dead.

Summary: Chapter XLI

After hearing of of Lucetta's death, Henchard goes home and is soon visited by Elizabeth-Jane. She falls asleep as Henchard prepares her breakfast, and Henchard, not wanting to disturb her, waits patiently for her to wake. Feeling a surge of love for Elizabeth-Jane, he hopes that she will continue to treat him as her father. Just then, a man knocks at the door and introduces himself as Newson. He says that his marriage to Susan had been happy until someone suggested to her that their relationship was a mockery; she then became miserable. Newson adds that he let Susan believe that he was lost at sea. He tells Henchard that he has heard of Susan's death and

asks about Elizabeth-Jane. Henchard tells him that the girl is dead as well, and Newson departs in sorrow.

Although it appears that Newson is gone, Henchard remains paranoid that his deception will be discovered and that Newson will return to take Elizabeth-Jane away from him. Elizabeth-Jane wakes, and the two sit down to breakfast. When she leaves, however, he becomes despondent, fearing that she will soon forget him. The rest of his life seems unendurable to him, and he goes to the river just outside of Casterbridge with thoughts of drowning himself. As he prepares to throw himself into the water, he sees his image floating in the pool and desists.

Henchard returns home and finds Elizabeth-Jane waiting outside his door. She says she has come back because he seemed sad that morning. He brings her to the river to show her the image, and she realizes that it must be the effigy from the skimmity-ride. Henchard remarks how strange it is that the performance that killed Lucetta has actually kept him alive. Elizabeth-Jane realizes what he means by this statement and asks if she can come to live with him; he joyfully assents.

Summary: Chapter XLII

Henchard continues to fear Newson's return, but, meanwhile, he and Elizabeth-Jane live happily in his home. They see Farfrae only occasionally, as Henchard now owns a small seed and root business that Farfrae and other members of the town council purchased for him. One day, Henchard observes Farfrae looking at Elizabeth-Jane and begins to think of the possibility of their union. He is very much opposed to the idea but decides he should let Elizabeth-Jane make her own decision. As time passes, Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae begin to meet more frequently. Eventually, Henchard obtains proof of their intimacy when he sees Farfrae kiss Elizabeth-Jane.

In these chapters, the full complexity of Henchard's character reveals itself. Despite his hatred for someone who now enjoys all the benefits he once did—his business and his lover—he cannot bring himself to enact the vengeance he desires. Instead of seeking revenge, Henchard takes it upon himself to fetch Farfrae and urge him back to Lucetta's bedside. When Henchard declares to Farfrae, "I am a wretched man but my heart is true to you still," his words point not to the fickleness of his affections but to the deeply conflicted nature of his psyche. His motivations are as muddled as his emotions: given his previous efforts to protect his name and reputation, Henchard may hope to mend his damaged image in the eyes of those who "would not believe him, taking his words [regarding Farfrae's whereabouts] but as the frothy

utterances of recklessness." But a self-imposed desire to restore his good name is not the only thing that sets Henchard on the road to Weatherbury. As his unwillingness to pummel Farfrae when he has him pinned down in Chapter XXXVIII shows, he still harbors genuine affection for the man.

Like Farfrae's budding romance with Lucetta when Henchard is ready to take Lucetta as his wife, Newson's unexpected arrival at Henchard's house disrupts Henchard's life noticeably. His newfound desire to have a close relationship with Elizabeth-Jane, like his desire to marry Lucetta, constitutes a heavily considered and deliberate change of attitude on his part. The unpredictable obstacle Newson presents to the happiness Henchard seeks with Elizabeth-Jane is made painfully clear by Hardy's melodramatic rendering of Newson's reappearance:

In truth, a great change had come over [Henchard] with regard to [Elizabeth-Jane], and he was developing the dream of a future lit by her filial presence, as though that way alone could happiness lie.
He was disturbed by another knock at the door. . . .

By juxtaposing Henchard's apparent sole way to happiness and Newson's knocking, Hardy suggests that Newson's intrusion actually disturbs Henchard's "dream of a future." Given the structure of the novel thus far, wherein peripheral characters, such as the furmity-woman, tend to appear at the most inopportune times, Newson's reappearance can only bode ill.

Henchard's selfish and deceitful means of dealing with Newson threaten to rob him of his last bit of self-respect. Despite all this deception, pettiness, and his rabid temper, Henchard remains an essentially sympathetic character. Given his deep, newfound love for Elizabeth-Jane, and the desperateness of his desire to have that love returned, we understand Henchard's deceitful behavior. Like so many of Henchard's decisions, fooling Newson has nothing to do with calculation or manipulation and everything to do with "the impulse of a moment." In this light, Henchard's treatment of Newson is the frantic act of a scared, lonely, and highly pitiable man.

Summary: Chapter XLIII

Henchard continues to worry about what will become of him if Elizabeth-Jane marries. One day, while spying the spot where Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae normally meet, he sees Newson through his telescope. When Elizabeth-Jane comes home, she has not yet met Newson, but she tells Henchard that she has received a letter from someone asking her to meet him that night at Farfrae's house. Much to her chagrin, Henchard tells her that he has decided to leave

Casterbridge that very evening. Elizabeth-Jane believes that he is leaving because he disapproves of her impending marriage to Farfrae, but he assures her that such is not the case. Alone, Henchard departs town. He compares his fate to that of the biblical figure Cain but declares, "[M]y punishment is not greater than I can bear!"

That evening, at Farfrae's house, Elizabeth-Jane meets Newson and immediately understands the reason for Henchard's sudden departure. She is overjoyed at her reunion with the father she had believed dead, but she is upset when she learns of Henchard's deception. Newson and Farfrae begin to plan the wedding.

Summary: Chapter XLIV

Meanwhile, Henchard makes his way through the countryside and eventually arrives at Weydon-Priors, the very spot where he sold his wife more than twenty-five years earlier. He reflects briefly upon those past events and then goes on, settling in a spot some fifty miles from Casterbridge and finding employment as a hay-trusser. One day, he speaks to some travelers who have come from Casterbridge and learns that the wedding between Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane is to take place on St. Martin's Day. He decides to go to Casterbridge for the wedding and sets off on his journey. On the night before the wedding, he stops in a nearby town and buys some proper clothes and a caged goldfinch as a present for Elizabeth-Jane.

When Henchard arrives at Farfrae's house in Casterbridge, the celebration is already underway. As he enters, he leaves the caged bird under a bush near the back of the house. He watches the dancing unseen, until Elizabeth-Jane's housekeeper informs her that she has a visitor. She comes in to see him and reprimands him for deceiving her about Newson. So coldly received, he decides to leave and promises never to trouble her again.

Summary: Chapter XLV

Several days after the wedding, Elizabeth-Jane discovers the birdcage with a bird—now dead from starvation—inside, and she wonders how it got there. About a month later, after speaking to one of her servants, Elizabeth-Jane figures that Henchard must have brought it as a gift, and she begins to regret the way she treated him. When Farfrae comes home, she asks him to help her find Henchard so that she can make her peace with him. They track Henchard to the cottage of Abel Whittle, who tells them that the man has just died. He gives them a piece of paper that Henchard left, which turns out to be his will. The will stipulates that Elizabeth-Jane not be told about his death, that he not be buried in consecrated ground, that no one mourn

for him, and that no one remember him. Elizabeth-Jane regrets her harsh treatment of Henchard the last time they met, and she determines to carry out his dying wishes as best she can.

In these final chapters, Michael Henchard succumbs to the defeat he has courted throughout the novel. The plot of The Mayor of Casterbridge is essentially a series of incidents in which Henchard tries again and again to expunge the guilt he feels for his shameful behavior at the fair at Weydon-Priors. The depth of Henchard's guilt is apparent in many of his actions and emotions: his desperate need to divulge his secret to Farfrae, his determination to remarry a woman he never loved, his willingness to care for Elizabeth-Jane even after he learns that she is not his daughter. Above all, the burden that Henchard bears for his guilt manifests itself in his acceptance of the forces that seem bent upon his destruction.

There is an element of self-destructiveness in Henchard's character. For example, Henchard could have easily denied the accusations of the furmity-woman in the courtroom and spared himself from insult and injury. His willingness to suffer is an important thread in the fabric of his character. His sense of what is right trumps his desire for comfort and makes it impossible for him to live a life he is convinced he has not earned. Henchard believes that he must suffer, as though misery were a means of becoming worthy of such love and comfort. As he leaves Casterbridge, having alienated Elizabeth-Jane and therefore destroyed his last hope of happiness, Henchard compares himself to Cain, the son of Adam and Eve whom God, according to the Bible, condemned to a lifetime of suffering for killing his brother, Abel. His resolute exclamation that, unlike Cain, he can bear his punishment reflects his willingness to do so.

It is through defeat that Henchard becomes a man of true character. His willingness to bear the brunt of his suffering and his continual refusal to foist his misery on others and resist suicide mark him as a hero. Indeed, in many respects, Henchard conforms to the tradition of the tragic hero, a character whose greatest qualities or actions ultimately lead to his or her downfall. In the novel's last chapters, Henchard's determination to spare Elizabeth-Jane any sorrow elevates him into this admirable realm. As he faces a lonely death in a humble cottage, his resolve lies in his desire not to burden any further a world that seems so bent on human suffering. The tragic irony of Henchard's story is that leaving Elizabeth-Jane to live her life in peace is his greatest and most selfless act, proof that he is a man of worthy name and reputation. Instead, the novel ends with the promise of his obscurity. There is no greater punishment for a man whose every struggle has been to secure his public standing than the dictum that he be forgotten; in keeping with his character, Henchard has already embraced this punishment.

4.Character Analysis

Michael Henchard

At the end of The Mayor of Casterbridge, the ruined Michael Henchard wills that no one remember his name after his death. This request is profoundly startling and tragic, especially when one considers how important Henchard's name has been to him during his lifetime. After committing the abominable deed of selling his wife and child, Henchard wakes from a drunken stupor and wonders, first and foremost, if he told any of the fair-goers his name. Eighteen years pass between that scene on the heath of Weydon-Priors and Henchard's reunion with Susan in Casterbridge, but we immediately realize the value that Henchard places on a good name and reputation. Not only has he climbed from hay-trusser to mayor of a small agricultural town, but he labors to protect the esteem this higher position affords him. When Susan and Elizabeth-Jane come upon the mayor hosting a banquet for the town's most prominent citizens, they witness a man struggling to convince the masses that, despite a mismanaged harvest, he is an honest person with a worthy name.

As he stares out at an unhappy audience made up of grain merchants who have lost money and common citizens who, without wheat, are going hungry, Henchard laments that he cannot undo the past. He relates grown wheat metaphorically to the mistakes of the past—neither can be taken back. Although Henchard learns this lesson at the end of Chapter IV, he fails to internalize it. If there is, indeed, a key to his undoing, it is his inability to let go of his past mistakes. Guilt acts like a fuel that keeps Henchard moving toward his own demise. Unable to forget the events that took place in the furmity-woman's tent, he sets out to punish himself again and again. While he might have found happiness by marrying Lucetta, for instance, Henchard determines to make amends for the past by remarrying a woman he never loved in the first place. Possessed of a "restless and self-accusing soul," Henchard seems to seek out situations that promise further debasement. Although Donald Farfrae eventually appropriates Henchard's job, business, and even his loved ones, it is Henchard who insists on creating the competition that he eventually loses. Although Henchard loses even the ability to explain himself—"he did not sufficiently value himself to lessen his sufferings by strenuous appeal or elaborate argument"—he never relinquishes his talent of endurance. Whatever the pain, Henchard bears it. It is this resilience that elevates him to the level of a hero—a man, ironically, whose name deserves to be remembered.

Donald Farfrae

Farfrae, the young Scotchman, serves as a foil (a character whose actions or emotions contrast with and thereby accentuate those of another character) for Henchard. Whereas will and intuition determine the course of Henchard's life, Farfrae is a man of intellect. He brings to Casterbridge a method for salvaging damaged grain, a system for reorganizing and revolutionizing the mayor's business, and a blend of curiosity and ambition that enables him to take interest in—and advantage of—the agricultural advancements of the day (such as the seed-sowing machine).

Although Henchard soon comes to view Farfrae as his adversary, the Scotchman's victories are won more in the name of progress than personal satisfaction. His primary motive in taking over Casterbridge's grain trade is to make it more prosperous and prepare the village for the advancing agricultural economy of the later nineteenth century. He does not intend to dishonor Henchard. Indeed, even when Henchard is at his most adversarial—during his fight with Farfrae in the barn, for instance—the Scotchman reminds himself of the fallen mayor's circumstances, taking pains to understand and excuse Henchard's behavior. In his calm, measured thinking, Farfrae is a model man of science, and Hardy depicts him with the stereotypical strengths and weaknesses of such people. He possesses an intellectual competence so unrivaled that it passes for charisma, but throughout the novel he remains emotionally distant. Although he wins the favor of the townspeople with his highly successful day of celebration, Farfrae fails to feel any emotion too deeply, whether it is happiness inspired by his carnival or sorrow at the death of his wife. In this respect as well he stands in bold contrast to Henchard, whose depth of feeling is so profound that it ultimately dooms him.

Elizabeth-Jane Newson

Elizabeth-Jane undergoes a drastic transformation over the course of the novel, even though the narrative does not focus on her as much as it does on other characters. As she follows her mother across the English countryside in search of a relative she does not know, Elizabeth-Jane proves a kind, simple, and uneducated girl. Once in Casterbridge, however, she undertakes intellectual and social improvement: she begins to dress like a lady, reads voraciously, and does her best to expunge rustic country dialect from her speech. This self-education comes at a painful time, for not long after she arrives in Casterbridge, her mother dies, leaving her in the custody of a man who has learned that she is not his biological daughter and therefore wants little to do with her.

In terms of misery, one could easily argue that Elizabeth-Jane has a share equal to that of Henchard or Lucetta. Unlike these characters, however, Elizabeth-Jane suffers in the same way she lives—with a quiet kind of self-possession and resolve. She lacks Lucetta's sense of drama and lacks her stepfather's desire to bend the will of others to her own. Thus, when Henchard cruelly dismisses her or Lucetta supplants her place in Farfrae's heart, Elizabeth-Jane accepts these circumstances and moves on with life. This approach to living stands as a bold counterpoint to Henchard's, for Henchard cannot bring himself to let go of the past and relinquish his failures and unfulfilled desires. If Henchard's determination to cling to the past is partly responsible for his ruin, then Elizabeth-Jane's talent for "making limited opportunities endurable" accounts for her triumphal realization—unspectacular as it might be—that "happiness was but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain."

Lucetta Templeman

Like Michael Henchard, Lucetta Templeman lives recklessly according to her passions and suffers for it. Before arriving in Casterbridge, Lucetta becomes involved in a scandalously indiscreet affair with Henchard that makes her the pariah of Jersey. After settling in High-Place Hall, Lucetta quickly becomes enamored with Henchard's archrival, Farfrae. Their relationship is peaceful until the town learns of Lucetta's past relationship with Henchard, whereupon they make her the subject of a shameful "skimmity-ride." Although warned of these likely consequences, Lucetta proceeds to love whomever she wants however she pleases. Still, her character lacks the boldness and certainty of purpose that would elevate her to the level of "the isolated, damned, and self-destructive individualist" that critic Albert Guerard describes as "the great nineteenth-century myth." Lucetta emerges not as heroic but as childish and imprudent. Her love for Farfrae, for example, hinges on her refusal to accept Henchard's visits for several days, a refusal that makes her seem more petty than resolute. Similarly, her rapidly shifting affections—Farfrae eclipses Henchard as the object of her desire with amazing, almost ridiculous speed—brand her as an emotionally volatile Victorian female, one whose sentiments are strong enough to cause the most melodramatic of deaths.

The townspeople of Casterbridge

Unlike the people of Weydon-Priors, the people of Casterbridge make it a point to remark and get involved in the affairs of the other townspeople. They are the ones who point out that Michael's crops don't sell, that Farfrae is a charming and wise young man, that Lucetta needs a comeuppance. Through these remarks, they serve as a Greek chorus.

Joshua Jopp
He is the first applicant for the position of Michael Henchard's general manager. Because Farfrae was chosen, Jopp hates him and will do anything to ruin him. From this point, Jopp behaves as the typical villain. He hates Lucetta because she refuses to help him, and he plays upon the hatred of the townspeople and the weaknesses of Michael to ruin her.

Abel Whittle
Abel works in Henchard's company, but he is always a bit tardy. Michael becomes so angry one day that he punishes Abel by making him come to work without pants. Nevertheless, Abel remains a faithful employee. Because Michael was kind to his mother, Abel willingly cares for Michael in his final days and delivers his last will to Elizabeth-Jane.

5.Themes,Motifs and Symbols

5.1.Themes

The Importance of Character

As a “Story of a Man of Character,” The Mayor of Casterbridge focuses on how its protagonist’s qualities enable him to endure. One tends to think of character, especially in terms of a “Man of Character,” as the product of such values as honor and moral righteousness. Certainly Michael Henchard does not fit neatly into such categories. Throughout the novel, his volatile temper forces him into ruthless competition with Farfrae that strips him of his pride and property, while his insecurities lead him to deceive the one person he learns to truly care about, Elizabeth-Jane. Henchard dies an unremarkable death, slinking off to a humble cottage in the woods, and he stipulates in his will that no one mourn or remember him. There will be no statues in the Casterbridge square, as one might imagine, to mark his life and work. Yet Hardy insists that his hero is a worthy man. Henchard’s worth, then—that which makes him a “Man of Character”—lies in his determination to suffer and in his ability to endure great pain. He shoulders the burden of his own mistakes as he sells his family, mismanages his business, and bears the storm of an unlucky fate, especially when the furmity-woman confesses and Newson reappears. In a world that seems guided by the “scheme[s] of some sinister intelligence bent on punishing” human beings, there can be no more honorable and more righteous characteristic than Henchard’s brand of “defiant endurance.”

The Value of a Good Name

The value of a good name is abundantly clear within the first few chapters of the novel: as Henchard wakes to find that the sale of his wife was not a dream or a drunken hallucination, his first concern is to remember whether he divulged his name to anyone during the course of the previous evening. All the while, Susan warns Elizabeth-Jane of the need for discretion at the Three Mariners Inn—their respectability (and, more important, that of the mayor) could be jeopardized if anyone discovered that Henchard's family performed chores as payment for lodging.

The importance of a solid reputation and character is rather obvious given Henchard's situation, for Henchard has little else besides his name. He arrives in Casterbridge with nothing more than the implements of the hay-trusser's trade, and though we never learn the circumstances of his ascent to civic leader, such a climb presumably depends upon the worth of one's name. Throughout the course of the novel, Henchard attempts to earn, or to believe that he has earned, his position. He is, however, plagued by a conviction of his own worthlessness, and he places himself in situations that can only result in failure. For instance, he indulges in petty jealousy of Farfrae, which leads to a drawn-out competition in which Henchard loses his position as mayor, his business, and the women he loves. More crucial, Henchard's actions result in the loss of his name and his reputation as a worthy and honorable citizen. Once he has lost these essentials, he follows the same course toward death as Lucetta, whose demise is seemingly precipitated by the irretrievable loss of respectability brought about by the "skimmity-ride."

The Indelibility of the Past

The Mayor of Casterbridge is a novel haunted by the past. Henchard's fateful decision to sell his wife and child at Weydon-Priors continues to shape his life eighteen years later, while the town itself rests upon its former incarnation: every farmer who tills a field turns up the remains of long-dead Roman soldiers. The Ring, the ancient Roman amphitheater that dominates Casterbridge and provides a forum for the secret meetings of its citizens, stands as a potent symbol of the indeli-bility of a past that cannot be escaped. The terrible events that once occurred here as entertainment for the citizens of Casterbridge have, in a certain sense, determined the town's present state. The brutality of public executions has given way to the miseries of thwarted lovers.

Henchard's past proves no less indomitable. Indeed, he spends the entirety of the novel attempting to right the wrongs of long ago. He succeeds only in making more grievous mistakes, but he never fails to acknowledge that the past cannot be buried or denied. Only Lucetta is guilty of such folly. She dismisses her history with Henchard and the promises that she made to him in order to pursue Farfrae, a decision for which she pays with her reputation and, eventually, her life.

5.2Motifs

Coincidence

Even the most cursory reading of The Mayor of Casterbridge reveals a structural pattern that relies heavily on coincidence. Indeed, the story would hardly progress were it not for the chance occurrences that push Henchard closer and closer to failure. For example, the reappearance of just one long-lost character would test our willingness to believe, but here we witness the return of Susan, the furmity-woman, and Newson, each of whom brings a dark secret that contributes to Henchard's doom. Although we, as modern readers, are unlikely to excuse such overdetermined plotting, we should attempt to understand it. Hardy's reliance on coincidence relates directly to his philosophy of the world. As a determinist, Hardy believed that human life was shaped not by free will but by such powerful, uncontrollable forces as heredity and God. Henchard rails against such forces throughout the novel, lamenting that the world seems designed to bring about his demise. In such an environment, coincidence seems less like a product of poor plot structure than an inevitable consequence of malicious universal forces.

The Tension between Tradition and Innovation

Casterbridge is, at first, a town untouched by modernism. Henchard's government runs the town according to quaintly traditional customs: business is conducted by word of mouth and weather-prophets are consulted regarding crop yields. When Farfrae arrives, he brings with him new and efficient systems for managing the town's grain markets and increasing agricultural production. In this way, Henchard and Farfrae come to represent tradition and innovation, respectively. As such, their struggle can be seen not merely as a competition between a grain merchant and his former protégé but rather as the tension between the desire for and the reluctance to change as one age replaces another.

Hardy reports this succession as though it were inevitable, and the novel, for all its sympathies toward Henchard, is never hostile toward progress. Indeed, we witness and even enjoy the

efficacy of Farfrae's accomplishments. Undoubtedly, his day of celebration, his new method for organizing the granary's business, and his determination to introduce modern technologies to Casterbridge are good things. Nevertheless, Hardy reports the passing from one era to the next with a quiet kind of nostalgia. Throughout the novel are traces of a world that once was and will never be again. In the opening pages, as Henchard seeks shelter for his tired family, a peasant laments the loss of the quaint cottages that once characterized the English countryside.

The Tension between Public Life and Private Life

Henchard's fall can be understood in terms of a movement from the public arena into the private one. When Susan and Elizabeth-Jane discover Henchard at the Three Mariners Inn, he is the mayor of Casterbridge and its most successful grain merchant, two positions that place him in the center of public life and civic duty. As his good fortune shifts when his reputation and finances fail, he is forced to relinquish these posts. He becomes increasingly less involved with public life—his ridiculous greeting of the visiting Royal Personage demonstrates how completely he has abandoned this realm—and lives wholly with his private thoughts and obsessions. He moves from "the commercial [to] the romantic," concentrating his energies on his personal and domestic relationships with Farfrae, Lucetta, and Elizabeth-Jane.

5.3Symbols

The Caged Goldfinch

In an act of contrition, Henchard visits Elizabeth-Jane on her wedding day, carrying the gift of a caged goldfinch. He leaves the bird in a corner while he speaks to his stepdaughter and forgets it when she coolly dismisses him. Days later, a maid discovers the starved bird, which prompts Elizabeth-Jane to search for Henchard, whom she finds dead in Abel Whittle's cottage. When Whittle reports that Henchard "didn't gain strength, for you see, ma'am, he couldn't eat," he unwittingly ties Henchard's fate to the bird's: both lived and died in a prison. The finch's prison was literal, while Henchard's was the inescapable prison of his personality and his past.

The Bull

The bull that chases down Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane stands as a symbol of the brute forces that threaten human life. Malignant, deadly, and bent on destruction, it seems to incarnate the unnamed forces that Henchard often bemoans. The bull's rampage provides Henchard with an opportunity to display his strength and courage, thus making him more sympathetic in our eyes.

The Collision of the Wagons

When a wagon owned by Henchard collides with a wagon owned by Farfrae on the street outside of High-Place Hall, the interaction bears more significance than a simple traffic accident. The violent collision dramatically symbolizes the tension in the relationship between the two men. It also symbolizes the clash between tradition, which Henchard embodies, and the new modern era, which Farfrae personifies.

6.*Study Questions*:

6.1. Important Questions

1. The Mayor of Casterbridge tells the story of one man's fall and another's rise. Indeed, Henchard's fortune seems inversely proportional to Farfrae's: whatever Henchard loses, Farfrae gains. Is this a believable exchange? If not, is there something more important than realism suggested by Henchard's relationship with Farfrae?

In terms of realism, the relationship between Henchard and Farfrae seems too finely plotted to be wholly credible. Given Farfrae's charisma, we might believe that he succeeds in winning the heart of Elizabeth-Jane and even in detracting from Henchard's business by winning the hearts of the citizens of Casterbridge. But his successful seduction of Lucetta, his succession to the seat of mayor, his purchase of Henchard's house, and his acquisition of Henchard's furniture convey the feeling that the characters are puppets being conveniently manipulated by the author. The predetermined nature of main characters' reversals of fortunes suggests that realism was not Hardy's first priority. Indeed, the relationship between Henchard and Farfrae carries symbolic weight. When they clash, their disagreement represents a conflict between age and youth, tradition and innovation, and emotion and reason. Henchard, for example, is the mayor of a town that has remained untouched by the scientific, philosophical, or technological advances of the age. Casterbridge exists in a sort of bubble, and Henchard rules it accordingly. He manages his books in his head, conducts business by word of mouth, and employs weather-prophets—already obsolete in many parts of the country—to determine the success of a harvest. When Farfrae arrives, he brings a new system of organization that revolutionizes Casterbridge's grain business, making it more efficient and dependent on developing agricultural technologies. In his proud display of the automatic seeder to a disdainful Henchard, there is clearly more at stake than the friendship between two men.

2.Discuss the role of coincidence in the novel. Many critics of Hardy have argued that the astonishing coincidences throughout The Mayor of Casterbridge make the story improbable and unbelievable. Do you think this is the case?

By Chapter III, in which Susan Henchard learns her husband's whereabouts from the same furmity-woman who witnessed their shameful parting eighteen years earlier, unlikely coincidences already play an important role in the novel. Such strange occurrences accumulate rapidly: Farfrae, who has a secret for salvaging grown wheat, passes by the Three Mariners Inn just as Henchard cries out for a solution to his damaged crop; Henchard finds the letter revealing that he is not Elizabeth-Jane's father only moments after he pledges his paternal devotion to her; Elizabeth-Jane meets Lucetta Templeman because she strolls past Susan's grave when Lucetta is studying Susan's headstone. These incidents do detract from the realism of Henchard's story: no one, not even the most generous reader, could deny Hardy's reliance on outlandish coincidences to propel the narrative. Because many novels were published in serial form, Victorian novelists depended upon such effects in order to hook their readers and boost future sales. In The Mayor of Casterbridge, Hardy's plotting relates directly to the plight of his main character: the coincidences that often serve to push the mayor closer to destruction form the machinery of a world bent, as Henchard observes time and again, on human suffering.
3.Discuss the role of the peasants of Casterbridge, such as Christopher Coney, Solomon Longways, Nance Mockridge, and Mother Cuxsom.

The peasants, or rustics, serve two important functions in The Mayor of Casterbridge. First, they provide commentary on the actions of the principal characters. In this respect, they act like the chorus in ancient Greek drama, in which bands of actors appeared onstage to comment on the play's events. The rustics congregate after Susan's death and, later, in Mixen Lane where they learn of Lucetta's affair with Michael Henchard. In both scenes, the peasants' commentary provides context for understanding the world of the novel. Christopher Coney's insistence that he is justified in stealing the pennies out of Susan's casket not only testifies to the hardships of the poverty-stricken inhabitants of Casterbridge but also confirms Hardy's measure of the depth of human suffering.

Disturbing as Coney's admission is, however, the scene is a rather comic one. With their colorful dialect and untraditional manners, the rustics lend a bit of welcome comic relief to the novel, even though their second function is serious. Unlike a Greek chorus, which comments on the main action without participating in it, Hardy's rustics play a vital role in the unfolding drama. Nance Mockridge suggests that Lucetta Templeman be publicly chastised for her relationship with Henchard, and soon a "skimmity-ride" sweeps through the town streets, which causes

Lucetta enough shame to bring about her death. In this way, the rustics act as one of the uncontrollable (and often malignant) forces that bring about human suffering.

6.2.Suggested Essay Topics:

1. Hardy described himself as a determinist—in other words, he believed that the course of human life was shaped by forces, internal or external, beyond human control. Does this philosophy hold true in The Mayor of Casterbridge? What forces are responsible for shaping Henchard's life?

2. Is Henchard a tragic character? Why or why not? Does he possess a tragic flaw that leads to his downfall? If so, what is it?

3. Discuss the similarities between Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae, as well as those between Henchard and Lucetta. What effects does Hardy achieve through these pairings?

4. Is Henchard a sympathetic character? Should we pity him at the end of the novel, or does he seem to get exactly what he deserves?

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Paper IX: Unit II

E.M.Forster's *A Passage to India*

1.About the Author:

Edward Morgan Forster (1879) made a considerable stir in the world of letters in the early period of 20th Century. His moral and religious values remain quite mysterious and powerful. His fiction comes to be recognized under the category of the contemplative novel. The discontents of our civilization give rise to his writings, which are charged with the 'philosophical overtones'. He is recognized as a powerful symbolist, his symbols being the most potential media of the expression of ideas. When E. M. Forster completed *A Passage to India,* he was in his mid−forties and was already a respected and relatively successful novelist. Between1905 and 1910 he had published four well−crafted Edwardian novels of upper−middleclass life and manners: *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *The Longest Journey*(1907), *A Room With a View* (1908), and *Howards End* (1910). However, although hehad continued to write short stories as well as another novel, *Maurice* (published in1971, after Forster's death), he published little in the decade after *Howards End.*Born in London on January I, 1879, E. M. Forster was an only child. His father, anarchitect, died when Forster was only a year old. The boy was raised by his mother,grandmother, and his father's aunt, who left Forster the sum of 8,000 pounds in herwill. This large amount of money eventually paid for Forster's education and his earlytravels. Early in the new twentieth century it also enabled him to live independently while he established his career as a writer.

Forster grew up in the English countryside north of London, where he had a happy early childhood. He attended an Eastbourne preparatory school and then the family moved to Kent so that he could attend Tonbridge School (a traditional English public school), where he was miserable. However, he found happiness and intellectual stimulation when he went to Cambridge University. There, at King's College, he studied the classics and joined a student intellectual society known as the Apostles.Among his teachers was the philosopher G. E. Moore, who had an important influenceon Forster's views. He made many friends and acquaintances, some of whom went onto become important writers and eventually became active in the Bloomsbury Group.After graduating from Cambridge, Forster traveled in Italy and Greece. These experiences further broadened his outlook, and he decided to become a writer. He became an instructor at London's Working Men's College in 1902 and remained withthem for two decades.

***2.A Passage to India* : An Introduction**

A Passage to India, published in 1924, was E. M. Forster's first novel in fourteen years, and the last novel he wrote. Subtle and rich in symbolism, the novel works on several levels. On the surface, it is about India−which at the time was a colonial possession of Britain−and about the relations between British and Indian people in that country. It is also about the necessity of friendship, and about the difficulty of establishing friendship across cultural boundaries. On a more symbolic level, the novel also addresses questions of faith (both religious faith and faith in social

conventions). Forster's narrative centers on Dr. Aziz, a young Indian physician whose attempt to establish friendships with several British characters has disastrous consequences. In the course of the novel, Dr. Aziz is accused of attempting to rape a young Englishwoman.Aziz's friend Mr. Fielding, a British teacher, helps to defend Aziz. Although the charges against Aziz are dropped during his trial, the gulf between the British and native Indians grows wider than ever, and the novel ends on an ambiguous note. When *A Passage to India* appeared in 1924, it was praised by reviewers in a number of important British and American literary journals. Despite some criticism that Forster had depicted the British unfairly, the book was popular with readers in both Britain and the United States. The year after its publication, the novel received two prestigious literary awards−the James Tait Black Memorial Prize and the Prix Femina Vie Heureuse. More than seventy years later, it remains highly regarded. Not only do many scholars, critics, and other writers consider it a classic of early twentieth−century fiction, but in a survey of readers conducted by Waterstone's Bookstore and Channel 4 television in Britain at the end of 1996, it was voted as one of the "100 Greatest Books of the Century."

3.Forster's Writing Technique:

Forster's narrative style is straightforward; events follow one another in logical order. Structurally, his sentence style also is relatively uncomplicated, and he reproduces accurately the tones of human conversation; his handling of the idiom of the English-speaking Indian is especially remarkable.However, Forster's rhetorical style is far from unsubtle. His descriptions of the landscape, however unattractive it may be, frequently have a poetic rhythm. He makes lavish use of both satire and irony, and the satire is especially biting in his treatment of the English colonials, particularly in the events before the trial in the "Caves" section. But he is also capable of gentle humor, notably in his depiction of the high-spirited and volatile Aziz.As has been noted earlier, there are numerous themes and symbols — such as the wasp, the echo, the "Come come" of Godbole's song — which recur throughout the novel; these are not introduced in an obvious fashion, and it is not until the end of the book that their full significance is apparent. Some of the statements in the book are in the form of questions to which answers are obvious; but for many of them no answers are suggested or even implied — an indication of the philosophical nature of the novel. Forster is not the man with all the answers, and perhaps he is implying that he himself is not certain whether life is (in the terms he frequently uses) "mystery or muddle" — or both.

4.General Meaning of *A Passage to India:*

The question that the Indians discuss in Chapter 2 — "Is it possible for the Indians to be friends with the English?" — is the focal point of the plot of A Passage to India. Can East meet West on a plane where each not only tolerates but also appreciates the other? In a larger sense Forster asks if universal understanding is possible. (It should be pointed out that this novel does not

really suggest an affirmative answer to that question.) He then proceeds to introduce characters from the major factions in India and to show their interactions. As he traces the interplay, he keeps before the reader symbols that show forces above and beyond the reach of most men's grasp. The sky and a hint of arches beyond it are prominent examples. To show that not only are there heights which only the most perceptive minds can comprehend, but also depths, he shows especially sensitive people finding beauty — and God — in the lowest of creatures, the jackal and the wasp. Within this framework he treats of three of the great religions, Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism.

Islam is shown in a decadent state reveling in past glory. The Westernized Moslem finds it hard to maintain his belief. His festivals are empty ceremonies in which the participants bicker about inconsequential matters. Aziz, whom Forster chooses to represent Islam, professes to skepticism about the precepts of his religion; his poetry is devoted to flamboyant exploits of the past. All he appears to have left is a sadness because of the decline of Islam, and a contempt for the Hindus.The phrase that Mrs. Moore uses to describe Christianity, "little talkative Christianity," seems to be Forster's view of that religion. He chooses to use many biblical allusions, often in an ironic manner, which point up what Christianity professes, but does not practice. The religion of the English in India takes second place to affairs of state and does not enter into the practical aspect of their lives; it is merely a conviction.The events of the story lead the reader step by step to a consideration of Hinduism. Professor Godbole, its main exponent, is pictured as a man of peace, a man of wisdom, who refuses to become enmeshed in the petty quarrels of men. The short climactic section at the end of the novel shows Hinduism in action. The religious zeal of the participants in the festival causes them at least to suspend momentarily, if not to disregard entirely, any self-seeking for position as leader, even though the rajah is near death. The adoration of the god is so intense that when the sick and aged rajah is brought to the ceremony, he is scarcely noticed.

The ceremony includes ecstasy, merriment, and solemnity, suggesting that religion should embody the whole of life. The biblical passage "God is love" has an error in spelling, but none in practice. The Hindus' faces are mild and serene, because "religion is a living force to the Hindus," and among its tenets, one of the most important is the "peace that passeth understanding." But Hinduism too has its imperfections; Forster points out that in Mau, though there is no strife between Moslem and Hindu, there is between Brahmin and non-Brahmin.

The key phrases in regard to the characters are "the understanding heart." Aziz, warmhearted and impulsive, possesses understanding, but his volatility reduces its effectiveness; Adela is cold, honest, and reserved. Mrs. Moore has both kindness and an innate understanding of people at the beginning of the novel, but the kindness at least does not withstand her experience in the caves, and understanding without kindness is of no use to her.Fielding is the key figure who develops with the novel. He not only crosses racial and national lines, but he responds as though they did not exist. He professes atheism, but by the end of the novel he has

at least become personally aware of spiritual influences: puzzled by the pleasing change in his wife after the encounter with Hinduism, he is intrigued by whatever it is that the Hindus seem "to have found."Professor Godbole is not so much a character as a "carrier" for an ideology that suggests at least a theoretical answer to the question Forster poses at the beginning of the book, "Can the Indian be friends with the English?"There is a historical aspect to this novel as well as a religious one. Forster's premise seems to be that no nation can subjugate another without inflicting wounds that leave deep scars. No nation can be of service so long as the ruling nation holds itself superior and aloof. The book is not a strictly historical account, of course, because Forster is more concerned with social relationships than he is with history. But he does indicate the spirit of rebellion that is beginning to build in India and shows the English losing their grip on the government. The last few paragraphs of the novel seem almost prophetic of Indian independence, which did not take place until 22 years after the book's publication.

5.A Passage to India Essay - Critical Evaluation

E. M. Forster was part of the intellectual Bloomsbury group, which flourished in London just before and after World War I. Educated at Cambridge, as were many of the group, Forster became one of England’s leading novelists during the prewar Edwardian period. His Bloomsbury friends included biographer Lytton Strachey, novelist Virginia Woolf, art critic Clive Bell, painter Roger Fry, economist John Maynard Keynes, and philosopher G. E. Moore. The group rejected convention and authority and placed great faith in its own intellect and good taste.Forster wrote several acclaimed novels between 1905 and 1910: *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *The Longest Journey* (1907), *A Room with a View* (1908), and *Howards End* (1910). After a hiatus of fourteen years came *A Passage to India*, the last work he published during his lifetime. He once confessed that he did not understand post-World War I values and had nothing more to say. *A Passage to India*, however, belies this statement, as it remains relevant. Forster took his title from the Walt Whitman poem by the same name, an odd choice, since Whitman’s vision is of the total unity of all people while in Forster’s novel the attempt to unite people fails at all levels. The book is divided into three sections: Mosque, Cave, and Temple. These divisions correspond to the three divisions of the Indian year: cool spring, hot summer, and wet monsoon. Each section is dominated by its concomitant weather. Each section also focuses on one of the three ethnic groups involved: Muslim, Anglo-Indian, and Hindu. The Cave could also have been called the Club. Just as the Mosque and the Temple are the Muslim and Hindu shrines, so is the Club the true Anglo-Indian shrine. Forster knew that religious-ethnic divisions control social modes of activity. The Muslims are said to be emotional; the British said to rely on intellect. Only the Hindus, in the person of Godbole, are said to have the capacity to love. The novel, however, is much more than merely a social or political commentary. Forster belittles social forms on all sides of the conflict and favors neither the Indians nor the British.

The bridge party, Fielding's tea party, and Aziz's cave party are all failures. More important than social forms are the relationships among individuals. The novel's theme is the search for love and friendship. Forster presents primarily relationships between men with the capacity for mutual understanding, and his male characters are the most clearly defined. The women—Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested—have no real possibility of finding friendship across ethnic lines. Mrs. Moore is too old, Adela too British. Both women want to see the "real" India, but they are unprepared for it when the experience comes. Mrs. Moore at the mosque and the first cave, and Adela at the cave and the courtroom, discover the real India, and both suffer an almost catatonic withdrawal. The male characters are more complex. With his Muslim sensitivity, Aziz is determined to find humiliation no matter what the experience. He tries to be both physician and poet—healer of body and soul—but he is inept in both attempts. In the last section, readers see him abandoning both. Aziz needs love and friendship, but ultimately he is incapable of establishing a satisfying relationship among his own people, with the Hindus, or, more important, with Fielding. Muslim sensitivity prevents him from accepting friendship when it is offered. Out of the multiple failures of the first two sections of the novel there is only the relationship between Aziz and Fielding that holds any promise of reconciliation. Muslim and Anglo-Indian, they meet in the final section in the Hindu province. Both men desire friendship and understanding, but in the final scene the very land seems to separate them. They are not in tune with nature, which is renewing itself in the monsoon downpour, and neither man has come to accept the irrational. They are not ready, in the Hindu sense of love, to accept things as they are. Only Godbole, a Hindu, can fully accept India and its people. The nothingness of the caves and the apparent chaos of the people do not disturb Hindus. The most crucial scene in *A Passage to India* is the visit to the Marabar Caves. These caves puzzle and terrify both Muslims and Anglo-Indians and form the center of the novel. Only Godbole understands them. The Hindus had called India home before either the Muslims or the British. The caves are elemental; they have been there from the beginnings of the earth. They are not Hindu holy places, but Godbole can respect them without fear. Cave worship is the cult of the female principle, the sacred womb, mother earth. The Marabar Caves, both womb and grave, demand total effacing of ego. The individual loses identity; whatever is said returns as Ommm, the holy word.The caves are terrifying and chaotic to those who rely on the intellect. The trip itself emphasizes the chaos that is India. Godbole can eat no meat; Aziz can eat no pork; the British must have their whisky and port. The confusion of the departure epitomizes the confusion that pervades the novel. Significantly, it is Godbole, the one person who might have helped, who is left out. Once in the caves, the party encounters the Nothingness that terrifies. Only Mrs. Moore seems to accept it on a limited scale, but the caves have reduced her will to live. She retreats from the world of experience. She came to India seeking peace; she finds it in death. The conclusion of the novel emphasizes the chaos of India, but it also hints at a pattern that the outsider, Muslim or British, cannot understand. Drenched in water and religion, the last chapters portray the

rebirth of the god Shri Krishna. It is the recycling of the seasons, the rebirth and renewal of the earth that signals the renewal of the Hindu religious cycle. Godbole shows that humans may choose to accept and participate in the seeming chaos, or they can fight against it. They must, however, be in tune with the natural rhythms of the universe to receive true love and friendship. Neither Fielding nor Aziz, products of Western civilization, can accept the confusion without attempting to impose order. Although they move toward the irrational in the course of the novel, they do not move far enough.

6.A Passage to India :Summary

E.M. Forster's A Passage to India concerns the relations between the English and the native population of India during the colonial period in which Britain ruled India. The novel takes place primarily in Chandrapore, a city along the Ganges River notable only for the nearby Marabar caves. The main character of the novel is Dr. Aziz, a Moslem doctor in Chandrapore and widower. After he is summoned to the Civil Surgeon's home only to be promptly ignored, Aziz visits a local Islamic temple where he meets Mrs. Moore, an elderly British woman visiting her son, Mr. Heaslop, who is the City Magistrate. Although Aziz reprimands her for not taking her shoes off in the temple before realizing she has in fact observed this rule, the two soon find that they have much in common and he escorts her back to the club.

Back at the club, Mrs. Moore meets her companion, Adela Quested, who will likely marry her son. Adela complains that they have seen nothing of India, but rather English customs replicated abroad. Although a few persons make racist statements about Indians, Mr. Turton, the Collector, proposes having a Bridge Party (to bridge the gulf between east and west). When Mrs. Moore tells her son, Ronny, about Aziz, he reprimands her for associating with an Indian. When Mr. Turton issues the invitations to the Bridge Party, the invitees suspect that this is a political move, for the Collector would not behave so cordially without a motive, but accept the invitations despite the suspicion.

For Adela and Mrs. Moore, the Bridge Party is a failure, for only a select few of the English guests behave well toward the Indians. Among these is Mr. Fielding, the schoolmaster at the Government College, who suggests that Adela meet Aziz. Mrs. Moore scolds her son for being impolite to the Indians, but Ronny Heaslop feels that he is not in India to be kind, for there are more important things to do; this offends her sense of Christian charity.

Aziz accepts Fielding's invitation to tea with Adela, Mrs. Moore, and Professor Narayan Godbole. During tea they discuss the Marabar Caves, while Fielding takes Mrs. Moore to see the college. Ronny arrives to find Adela alone with Aziz and Godbole, and later chastises Fielding for leaving an Englishwoman alone with two Indians. However, he reminds Ronny that Adela is capable of making her own decisions. Aziz plans a picnic at the Marabar Caves for Miss Quested and Mrs. Moore. Adela tells Ronny that she will not marry him, but he nevertheless suggests that they take a car trip to see Chandrapore. The Nawab Bahadur, an important local figure, agrees to take them. During the trip, the car swerves into a tree and Miss Derek, an

Englishwoman passing by at the time, agrees to take them back to town. However, she snubs the Nawab Bahadur and his chauffeur. Adela speaks to Ronny, and tells him that she was foolish to say that they should not be married.

Both Aziz and Godbole fall sick after the party at Mr. Fielding's home, so Fielding visits Aziz and they discuss the state of politics in India. Aziz shows Fielding a picture of his wife, a significant event considering his Islamic background and an important demonstration of their friendship.

Aziz plans the expedition to the Marabar Caves, considering every minute detail because he does not wish to offend the English ladies. During the day when they are to embark.Mohammed Latif, a friend of Aziz, bribes Adela's servant, Antony, not to go on the expedition, for he serves as a spy for Ronny Heaslop. Although Aziz, Adela and Mrs. Moore arrive to the train station on time, Fielding and Godbole miss the train because of Godbole's morning prayers. Adela and Aziz discuss her marriage, and she fears she will become a narrow-minded Anglo-Indian such as the other wives of British officials. When they reach the caves, a distinct echo in one of them frightens Mrs. Moore, who decides she must leave immediately. The echo terrifies her, for it gives her the sense that the universe is chaotic and has no order.

Aziz and Adela continue to explore the caves, and Adela realizes that she does not love Ronny. However, she does not think that this is reason enough to break off her engagement. Adela leaves Aziz, who goes into a cave to smoke, but when he exits he finds their guide alone and asleep. Aziz searches for Adela, but only finds her broken field glasses. Finally he finds Fielding, who arrived at the cave in Miss Derek's care, but he does not know where Adela is. When the group returns to Chandrapore, Aziz is arrested for assaulting Adela.

Fielding speaks to the Collector about the charge, and claims that Adela is mad and Aziz must be innocent. The Collector feels that this is inevitable, for disaster always occurs when the English and Indians interact socially. Fielding requests that he see Adela, but McBryde, the police superintendent, denies this request. Fielding acts as Aziz's advocate, explaining such things as why Aziz would have the field glasses. Aziz hires as his lawyer Armitrao, a Hindu who is notoriously anti-British. Godbole leaves Chandrapore to start a high school in Central India.

The Anglo-Indians rally to Miss Quested's defense and call a meeting to discuss the trial. Fielding attends, and makes the mistake of actually referring to her by name. The Collector advises all to behave cautiously. When Ronny enters, Fielding does not stand as a sign of respect. Mr. Turton demands an apology, but Fielding merely resigns from the club and claims he will resign from his post if Aziz is found guilty.

Adela remains in the McBryde's bungalow, where the men are too respectful and the women too sympathetic. She wishes to see Mrs. Moore, who kept away. Ronny tells her that Fielding wrote her a letter to her pleading Aziz's case. Adela admits to Ronny that she has made a mistake and that Aziz is innocent. When Adela sees Mrs. Moore, she is morose and detached. She knows that Aziz is innocent and tells Adela that directly. Mrs. Moore wishes to leave India, and Ronny agrees, for she is doing no one any good by remaining. Lady Mellanby, the wife of the Lieutenant-Governor, secures Mrs. Moore quick passage out of India.

During the trial, the Indians in the crowd jeer Adela for her appearance, and Mahmoud Ali, one of Aziz's lawyers, claims that Mrs. Moore was sent away because she would clear Aziz's name. When McBryde asks Adela whether Aziz followed her, she admits that she made a mistake. Major Callendar attempts to stop the proceedings on medical grounds, but Mr. Das, the judge, releases Aziz. After the trial, Adela leaves the courtroom alone as a riot foments. Fielding finds her and escorts her to the college where she will be safe. Disaster is averted only when Dr. Panna Lal, who was to testify for the prosecution, publicly apologizes to Aziz and secures the release of Nureddin, a prisoner rumored to have been tortured by the English.

At the college, Fielding asks Adela why she would make her charge, but she cannot give a definite answer. He suggests that she was either assaulted by the guide or had a hallucination. Adela seems to believe that she had a hallucination, for she thinks she had a hallucination of a marriage proposal when there was none. Fielding warns her that Aziz is very bitter. Ronny arrives and tells them that his mother died at sea.

After a victory banquet for Aziz, he and Fielding discuss his future plans. Fielding implores Aziz not to sue Adela, for it will show him to be a gentleman, but Aziz claims that he is fully anti-British now. Fielding reminds Aziz what a momentous sacrifice Adela made, for now she does not have the support nor friendship of the other English officials. Fielding tells Aziz that Mrs. Moore is dead, but he does not believe him. The death of Mrs. Moore leads to suspicion that Ronny had her killed for trying to defend Aziz. Although there was no wrongdoing in the situation, Ronny nevertheless feels guilty for treating his mother so poorly. Adela decides to leave India and not marry Ronny.

Fielding gains new respect for Adela for her humility and loyalty as he attempts to persuade Aziz not to take action against Adela. Adela leaves India and vows to visit Mrs. Moore's other children (and Ronny's step-siblings) Stella and Ralph. Aziz hears rumors and begins to suspect that Fielding had an affair with Adela. He believes these rumors out of his cynicism concerning human nature. Because of this suspicion, the friendship between Aziz and Fielding begins to cool, even after Fielding denies the affair to Aziz. Fielding himself leaves Chandrapore to travel, while Aziz remains convinced that Fielding will marry Adela Quested.

Forster resumes the novel some time later in the town of Mau, where Godbole now works. Godbole currently takes part in a Hindu birthing ceremony with Aziz, who now works in this region. Fielding visits Mau; he has married, and Aziz assumes that his bride is Miss Quested. Aziz stopped corresponding with Fielding when he received a letter which stated that Fielding married someone Aziz knows. However, he did not marry Adela, as Aziz assumes, but rather Mrs. Moore's daughter, Stella. When Fielding meets with Aziz and clears up this misunderstanding, Aziz remains angry, for he has assumed for such a long time that Fielding married his enemy.

Nevertheless, Aziz goes to the guest house where Fielding stays and finds Ralph Moorethere. His anger at Fielding cools when Ralph invokes the memory of Mrs. Moore, and Aziz even takes Ralph boating on the river so that they can observe the local Hindu ceremonies. Their boat, however, crashes into one carrying Fielding and Stella. After this comical event, the ill will

between Aziz and Fielding fully dissipates. However, they realize that because of their different cultures they cannot remain friends and part from one another cordially.

E.M. Forster wrote A Passage to India in 1924, the last completed novel that he published during his lifetime. The novel differs from Forster's other major works in its overt political content, as opposed to the lighter tone and more subdued political subtext contained in works such as Howards End and A Room With a View. The novel deals with the political occupation of India by the British, a colonial domination that ended after the publication of Forster's text and still during his lifetime.

The colonial occupation of India is significant in terms of the background of the novel. Britain occupied an important place in political affairs in India since 1760, but did not secure control over India for nearly a century. In August of 1858, during a period of violent revolt against Britain by the Indians, the British Parliament passed the Government of India Act, transferring political power from the East India Company to the crown. This established the bureaucratic colonial system in India headed by a Council of India consisting initially of fifteen Britons. Although Parliament and Queen Victoria maintained support for local princes, Victoria added the title Empress of India to her regality. The typical attitude of Britons in India was that they were undertaking the "white man's burden," as put by Rudyard Kipling. This was a system of aloof, condescending sovereignty in which the English bureaucracy did not associate with the persons they ruled, and finds its expression in characters such as Ronny Heaslop and Mr. McBryde in A Passage to India.

Indian nationalism began to foment around 1885 with the first meeting of the Indian National Congress, and nationalism found expression in the Muslim community as well around the beginning of the twentieth century. Reforms in India's political system occurred with the victory of the Liberal Party in 1906, culminating in the Indian Councils Act of 1909, but nationalism continued to rise.

India took part in the first world war, assisting the British with the assumption that this help would lead to political concessions, but even with the promise after the war that Indians would play an increased role in their own government, relations between the English and Indians did not improve. After the war tension continued; in 1919 hundreds of Indians were massacred at Amritsar's Jallianwala Bagh during a protest. It is around this time that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi became a preeminent force in Indian politics, and it is also around this time that Forster would wrote A Passage to India. More than twenty years later, after a long struggle, Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act in 1947, ordering the separation of India and Pakistan and granting both nations their sovereignty.

7.Character List

Dr. Aziz

A Moslem doctor living in Chandrapore at the beginning of the novel, he is a widower with three children who meets Mrs. Moore, an elderly English widow who has three children herself and becomes friends with her. Although he is generous and loving toward his English friends, including Mrs. Moore and Cyril Fielding, after Adela Quested accuses him of assault he becomes bitter, vindictive and notoriously anti-British. A primary concern of A Passage to India is the shift

in Dr. Aziz's views of the British from accommodating and even a bit submissive to an aggressively anti-colonial stance.

Cyril Fielding

The schoolmaster of Government College, Fielding stands alone among the British officials in India, for he is one of the few to treat the Indians with a sense of decency and respect. Fielding is an individualist who has no great allegiance to any particular group, but rather to his core set of liberal values and sense of justice. This quality allows Fielding to break with the English who support Adela Quested's charges against Aziz and side with the Indians in support of him. However, the events surrounding Aziz's trial cause Fielding to become disenchanted with India, despite his affection for the nation, and motivate him to leave India and return to resume a different post.

Adela Quested

Adela Quested arrives in India with the intention of marrying Ronny Heaslop, but changes her mind several times and eventually realizes that she does not love him and cannot marry him. She is a woman of conflicting character traits: although an intellectual, she is short-sighted. Although she foolishly accuses Dr. Aziz of assaulting her in the Marabar Caves, she finds the courage to withdraw the charge. She also suffers from hallucinations that are symptomatic of her somewhat unstable personality. However, Forster finally reveals her to be a woman of character and decency who accepts the difficulties she suffers.

Mrs. Moore

An elderly woman with three children, Mrs. Moore visits India with Adela Quested to see her son, Ronny Heaslop. Mrs. Moore is the paragon of Christian decency and kindness, but she suffers from anxiety concerning her own mortality. During the expedition to the Marabar Caves her confidence in the order of the universe is shaken by an echo that she hears in one of the caves. Afterwards, Mrs. Moore becomes sullen and depressed. When Ronny suspects that she will aid Aziz in his defense, he arranges for Mrs. Moore to leave India. On the journey home, she dies from heat exhaustion.

Professor Narayan Godbole

A Deccani Brahmin who is a professor at the college in Chandrapore, Godbole represents Hindu philosophies in A Passage to India. He is a man of calm character and utter repose, showing no worry for the events around him, no matter how significant. He leaves Chandrapore to start a high school in Central India after the trial of Aziz, who later joins him there.

Ronny Heaslop

The son of Mrs. Moore from her first marriage, Ronny typifies the "sun-dried bureaucrat" and Anglo-Indian. He is condescending and cruel toward the Indians, believing that he is not in India to be kind, but rather to rule over the nation. He becomes a martyr during the trial because of the ill treatment of Adela, but shows himself to be manipulative and callous when he pushes to have his mother leave India when he fears she may hurt the prosecution's case.

Mahmoud Ali

This friend of Aziz serves as one of the lawyers for his defense, and takes a defiant anti-British stance. His behavior during the trial is dangerously aggressive, however, and he threatens to

provoke a riot after Aziz's acquittal. Later he refuses to clear up the misunderstanding concerning Fielding's marriage to Stella Moore.

Antony
One of Adela's servants, he was to accompany Adela and Mrs. Moore to the Marabar Caves, but since he was a spy for Ronny Heaslop, Mohammed Latif bribes him not to go. Later he follows Adela as she leaves India and attempts to blackmail her.

Armitrao
Aziz hires this Hindu attorney as his defense lawyer. Since Armitrao is known for his anti-British attitudes, this move highlights the racial and political overtones of Aziz's trial.

Nawab Bahadur
A distinguished local resident in Chandrapore, he is well-respected and admired among the Indians. However, Miss Derek snubs him when his car crashes into a tree while he takes Adela and Ronny on a tour of Chandrapore.

Mrs. Bhattacharya
An Indian woman whom Mrs. Moore meets during the Bridge Party, Mrs. Bhattacharya postpones a trip to Calcutta to have tea with Mrs. Moore, but abruptly cancels at the last minute.

Major Callendar
Major Callendar is the civil surgeon in Chandrapore and Aziz's boss. He also takes part in the trial against Aziz, attempting to stop Adela's confession on medical grounds.

Mrs. Callendar
The wife of Major Callendar, she typifies the Anglo-Indian mindset, openly dismissing the Indians as uncultured inferiors.

Ram Chand
He is one of Aziz's friends with whom he discusses the consequences of attending the Bridge Party.

Mr. Das
The brother of Mrs. Bhattacharya and Ronny's assistant, he is the judge who presides over the trial of Aziz. After the trial, he approaches Aziz to ask him to write for his journal, which is primarily for Hindus.

Miss Derek
A younger Englishwoman, she assists Ronny and Adela after the Nawab Bahadur's car crashes, but snubs the Nawab Bahadur. Later she brings Fielding to the Marabar Caves after he misses the train.

Sir Gilbert
The Lieutenant-Governor of the province, he visits Chandrapore after the trial to deal with the problems of racial discord precipitated by the charges against Aziz.

Mr. Graysford

He is one of the local missionaries in Chandrapore.

Hamidullah
This friend of Aziz, educated at Cambridge, tells Aziz that one can only be friends with an English person outside of India.

Hamidullah Begum
The wife of Hamidullah, she is a distant aunt of Aziz.

Mr. Haq
He is the police inspector who arrests Aziz after

Mr. Harris
He is the Eurasian chauffeur for the Nawab Bahadur who crashes the car into a tree and is snubbed by Miss Derek.

Panna Lal
A friend of Aziz who was to testify for the prosecution at his trial, he makes a public apology to Aziz and secures the release of Nureddin after rumors circulate that he was being tortured by the English officials.

Mohammed Latif
A friend of Aziz, he bribes Antony not to attend the expedition to Chandrapore.

Mrs. Lesley
This friend of Mrs. Callendar takes Aziz's tonga when he arrives at the Callendar's house upon the Major's request.

Colonel Maggs
The Political Agent in Mau, he is the new adversary of Aziz who keeps him under suspicion because of the events in Chandrapore.

Lady Mellanby
The wife of the Lieutenant-Governor, she aids Mrs. Moore in her attempt to leave India by offering her own cabin on a ship traveling to England.

Mr. McBryde
The District Superintendent of Police in Chandrapore, he is the most reflective and educated of the Chandrapore officials, but like the rest of them he has stern prejudices against Indians. He conducts the prosecution of Aziz.

Syed Mohammed
He is the assistant engineer in Chandrapore and a confidant of Aziz.

Ralph Moore
The youngest son of Mrs. Moore, he accompanies his sister and Fielding on their travels around India. Aziz behaves rudely to him, but soon relents and takes Ralph on the nearby river for a tour of Mau.

Stella Moore

The daughter of Mrs. Moore, she marries Fielding after he leaves India, a circumstance that causes Aziz to believe that he has married Adela Quested instead.

Nureddin
This Indian is rumored to have been held and tortured by the police during the trial of Aziz, but is released unharmed.

Rafi
The nephew of Syed Mohammed, he proposes that something suspicious occurred during Fielding's party because both Aziz and Godbole fell ill afterward.

Mr. Sorley
He is one of the local missionaries in Chandrapore.

Mr. Turton
He is the local Collector who proposes a Bridge Party for the Indians, and other than Fielding is the only British official who treats the Indian guests well during that event.

8.Chapter Analysis:

Part One, Chapters 1-5

Part One: Mosque

Chapter One:

Forster begins A Passage to India with a short description of Chandrapore, a city along that Ganges that is not notable except for the nearby Marabar caves. Chandrapore is a city of gardens with few fine houses from the imperial period of Upper India; it is primarily a "forest sparsely scattered with huts."

Analysis:

The first chapter of A Passage to India describes the setting of the novel. Forster establishes Chandrapore as a prototypical Indian town, neither distinguished nor exceptionally troubled. This town can therefore be taken to be symbolic of the rest of India rather than an exceptional case. This allows the actions that occur in the following chapters to be representative of the Anglo-Indian colonial relations that will dominate the events of the novel. By beginning the novel with a mention of the Marabar Caves, Forster foreshadows later events that will occur concerning the Marabar Caves and that will provide the narrative turning point of A Passage to India. It is significant that Forster does not begin the novel with the description of any particular character. This places the story in context of the town of Chandrapore in particular and the nation of India in general.

Chapter Two:

Dr. Aziz arrives by bicycle at the house of Hamidullah, where Hamidullah and Mr.Mahmoud Ali are smoking hookah and arguing about whether it is possible to be friends with an Englishman. Hamidullah, educated at Cambridge, claims that it is possibly only in England, and the three gossip about English elites in India. Hamidullah Begum, a distant aunt of Aziz, asks

him when he will be married, but he responds that once is enough. A servant arrives, bearing a note from the Civil Surgeon; Callendar wishes to see Aziz at his bungalow about a medical case. Aziz leaves, traveling down the various streets named after victorious English generals, to reach Major Callendar's compound. The servant at the compound snubs Aziz, telling him the major has no message. Two English ladies, Mrs. Callendar and Mrs. Lesley, take Aziz's tonga (carriage), thinking that his ride is their own. Aziz then leaves to go to the nearly mosque paved with broken slabs. The Islamic temple awakens Aziz's sense of beauty; for Aziz, Islam is more than a mere Faith, but an attitude towards life. Suddenly, an elderly Englishwoman arrives at the mosque. He reprimands her, telling her that she has no right to be there and that she should have taken off her shoes, but she tells him that she did remember to take them off. Aziz then apologizes for assuming that she would have forgotten. She introduces herself as Mrs. Moore, and tells Aziz that she is newly arrived in India and has come from the club. He warns her about walking alone at night, because of poisonous snakes and insects. Mrs. Moore is visiting her son, Mr. Heaslop, who is the City Magistrate. They find that they have much in common: both were married twice and have two sons and a daughter. He escorts Mrs. Moore back to the club, but tells her that Indians are not allowed into the Chandrapore Club, even as guests.

Analysis:

In this chapter, Forster establishes several of the major themes that will predominate A Passage to India. Most important among these is the vast difference between the English colonial elite and the native population of India. Forster makes it clear that the British elite treat the Indians with disrespect, as demonstrated by Major Callendar's summons to Aziz and his wife's oblivious attitude toward Aziz when she takes his tonga. However, Aziz is too polite to confront the women on their slight. He values behaving politely to these English elites over asserting his own sense of self-respect. This event therefore provides a contrast to later events of the novel in which Aziz becomes less accommodating and more focused on his rights and dignity.

Forster harbors a particular distrust for English women in India, finding that they are more likely to treat Indians with disrespect. The Indians, in turn, are preoccupied with the English treatment of them. The Indians are aware of the degrees of English treatment toward them, as shown when Hamidullah notes that the English in India are less kind than the English in England. This evokes broader themes of colonialism that permeate the novel; Forster will indicate that the position of the English as rulers changes the social dynamic between them and the Indians at the expense of normal, cordial behavior that would otherwise occur.

Dr. Aziz emerges in this chapter as an easily excitable man who is conscious of any slight against him by the English elite, having been trained by experience to notice these snubs. He automatically assumes the worst when dealing with the English, as shown with his premature reprimand of Mrs. Moore, who defies all of his expectations of English women. Yet if Aziz is extremely sensitive to others behavior and initially distrustful of Mrs. Moore, his reserve soon melts around Mrs. Moore after she shows respect for him and his culture. This relates to a major theme in the novel, the interaction between eastern and western culture. Mrs. Moore is to a large extent an idealized character in A Passage to India; this elderly woman is sensitive, intelligent and kind to Dr. Aziz. She is a symbol of all that is decent in western culture: she takes

liberal views and adheres to Christian ideals of behavior. It is not at all surprising that he so quickly takes a liking to her.

Chapter Three:

Mrs. Moore returns to the Chandrapore Club, where she meets Adela Quested, her companion from England who may marry her son Ronny Heaslop; Adela wishes to see "the real India." She complains that they have seen nothing of India, but rather a replica of England. After the play at the Club ends, the orchestra plays the anthem of the Army of Occupation, a reminder of every club member that he or she is a British in exile. Fielding, the schoolmaster of Government College, suggests that if they want to see India they should actually see Indians. Mrs. Callendar says that the kindest thing one can do to a native is to let him die. The Collector suggests that they have a Bridge Party (a party to bridge the gulf between east and west). When Mrs. Moore tells Ronny about her trip to the mosque, he scolds her for speaking to a Mohammedan and suspects the worst, but Mrs. Moore defends Dr. Aziz. Ronny worries that Aziz does not tolerate the English (the "brutal conqueror, the sun-dried bureaucrat" as he describes them). When she tells him that Aziz dislikes the Callendars, Ronny decides that he must pass that information on to them and tells her that Aziz abused them in order to impress her. When she tells Ronny that he never judged people in this way at home, Ronny rudely replies that India is not home. Finally Ronny agrees not to say anything to Major Callendar.

Analysis:

In this chapter, Forster introduces Adela Quested, Ronny Heaslop and Mr. Fielding, each of whom will play major roles throughout the novel. Adela Quested, as her name implies, is on a quest in India. She is motivated by a strong curiosity and a desire to seek what she perceives as the truth about India. Although she has a taste for learning about India and is certainly more receptive to interacting with Indians than her fellow Englishwomen in India, her passion seems somewhat academic; her curiosity about India is not primarily a curiosity about Indians themselves, but rather an intellectual concern with their culture. Forster allows the possibility that the now decent and accommodating Adela will assume the imperialist attitudes that mark the other Englishwomen, whose treatment of Indians is deplorable. Mrs. Callendar's statement about the kindness of letting natives die is perhaps the most egregious example, but even in their more subtle conduct there is a perpetual undercurrent of colonialist superiority that marks most of the English characters. With the exception of Adela Quested and Mrs. Moore, the other female British characters are flat characters. Their sole purpose in the novel is symbolic: they show the racism and cultural superiority felt by the British in India.

Ronny Heaslop exemplifies the colonial bureaucratic mindset that dominates the English elite. He suspects all Indians of wrongdoing and consistently scolds his mother for deeming Indians worthy of her company. However, Forster indicates that Ronny is not completely to blame for his own behavior. Mrs. Moore notes that he never behaved so rudely at home, implying that his position in India has made Ronny suspicious and mundanely malicious. This is a significant point: Forster condemns the colonial system in India for its effects on both the native population and the elite, rather than the individual English bureaucrat who soon adopts the prejudices that colonialism promotes.

Mr. Fielding, however, stands outside of the colonialist bureaucracy. He is primarily an educator whose interests are independent of the colonial political hierarchy. Fielding therefore can transgress social boundaries that the other characters must obey. He will serve as both the conduit between the English and the Indians in A Passage to India as well as the character who can offer the most realistic assessment of the colonial system within India, neither altogether condemning it as do the Indians nor wholeheartedly supporting it as the British bureaucracy do. The degree to which Fielding can move among the English and the Indians illustrates another one of Forster's themes in A Passage to India: the meaning and responsibilities of belonging to a Œrace.' Fielding will demonstrate a fluid conception of race in which belonging to a particular culture does not necessitate supporting that race, yet the degree to which he can break from the English will be tested.

Chapter Four:

Mr. Turton, the Collector, issues invitations to numerous Indian gentlemen in the neighborhood for the Bridge Party. While he argues with Mr. Ram Chand and the elderly and distinguished Nawab Bahadur, Mahmoud Ali claims that the Bridge Party is due to actions from the Lieutenant Governor, for Turton would never do this unless compelled. The Nawab Bahadur is a large proprietor and philanthropist; his decision to attend the Bridge party carries great weight. Mr. Graysford and Mr. Sorley, the missionaries who live nearby, argue that no one should be turned away by God, but cannot decide whether divine hospitality should end at monkeys or jackals or wasps or even bacteria. They conclude that someone must be excluded or they shall be left with nothing.

Analysis:

The Bridge Party is a significant event for the Indians, who consider it with an appropriate skepticism. They believe that the motivation for the party is not a sincere attempt to stimulate a sense of reciprocity among the two societies, but rather the dictate of a higher-ranking colonial official. The decision of the Nawab Bahadur, however, dictates that those invited should accept the invitation. Forster specifically shows the Nawab Bahadur to be a distinguished member of Indian society whose decisions must be respected, a symbol of Indian authority; this foreshadows later events in which he does not receive the appropriate deference from others.

The discussion about religion by the missionaries is a reminder of the hierarchies that dominate A Passage to India. The purpose of these hierarchies is to degrade others to elevate the elite; when such an elite system of inclusion and exclusion occurs, the ability to set who can be can included is the only power that these elites truly have. Their conversation has an obvious analogy in British India. The British define their power by their ability to dominate the Indians and exclude them from certain privileges, whether political or social.

Chapter Five:

Neither Mrs. Moore nor Adela Quested consider the Bridge Party to be a success. The Indians for the most part adopt European costume, and the conversations are uncomfortable. Mrs. Moore speaks to Mrs. Bhattacharya and asks if she may call on her some day, but becomes

distressed when she believes that Mrs. Bhattacharya will postpone a trip to Calcutta for her. During the party, Mr. Turton and Mr. Fielding are the only officials who behave well toward the Indian guests. Mr. Fielding comes to respect Mrs. Moore and Adela. Mr. Fielding suggests that Adela meet Dr. Aziz. Ronny and Mrs. Moore discuss his behavior in India, and he tells her that he is not there to be pleasant, for he has more important things to do there. Mrs. Moore believes that Ronny reminds her of his public school days when he talked like an intelligent and embittered boy. Mrs. Moore reminds him that God put us on earth to love our neighbors, even in India. She feels it is a mistake to mention God, but as she has aged she found him increasingly difficult to avoid.

Analysis:

The Bridge Party is an honorable failure for all those who attend, borne of mostly good intentions but extremely poor execution. It represents all of the problems of cross-cultural exchange between the English and the Indians. With a few notable exceptions, the British who attend the party do not behave well. Of the men, only Mr. Fielding and Mr. Turton behave well, while among the women only Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested are interested in speaking with the Indians. However, these two women, who wish to learn from the Indians, find that this particular setting is stifling.

Even when Mrs. Moore and Adela attempt to reach out to Indians, they find that their attempts go awry. F The interaction between Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Bhattacharya is indicative of this; while Mrs. Moore simply wants to visit with Mrs. Bhattacharya, this woman, unaccustomed to such polite behavior, misinterprets this as a significant event and plans to postpone her vacation for it. Forster indicates that the desire for each of these groups to be polite and sensitive to one another creates a stifling atmosphere between them; those who wish to interact socially have such a fear of offending one another that they create barriers to their own interaction. This also illustrates a prevalent motif in A Passage to India, the insufficiency of good intentions.

Mrs. Moore serves as the moral center in A Passage to India, a woman of exemplary behavior and intentions toward others. She behaves with a direct simplicity, reminding her son of Christian teachings. Mrs. Moore does bear a certain burden because of this uncomplicated goodness; her unwavering, righteous mindset will make her a victim of others' less stringent moral systems, while her belief in the tenets of Christian morality will be tested in the non-Christian landscape of India. Forster mentions that Mrs. Moore finds it more difficult to avoid mentioning God as she ages; this shows that Mrs. Moore has a great concern for her own morality and that she has a preoccupation with death.

Part One, Chapters 6-11

Chapter Six:

Aziz did not go to the Bridge Party, but instead he dealt with several surgical cases. It was the anniversary of his wife's death; they married before they had met and he did not love her at first, but that changed after the birth of their first child. He feels that he will never get over the

death of his first wife. Dr. Panna Lal returns from the Bridge Party to see Aziz and offers a paltry excuse for why he did not attend. Aziz worries that he offended the Collector by absenting himself from the party. When Aziz returns home he finds an invitation from Mr. Fielding to tea, which revives his spirits.

Analysis:

Forster uses this chapter to give more biographical information about Dr. Azizthat illustrates the differences between western European and Indian culture. This chapter serves as a reminder that the differences between east and west are a constant preoccupation for Dr. Aziz, who adopts some western traditions while eschewing others. Forster also demonstrates Aziz's concern that he has offended his English superiors by not attending the Bridge Party, showing once again how Aziz wishes to please the ruling Anglo-Indians.

Forster portrays Dr. Aziz as a person who is prone to bouts of depression and anxiety. His mood can shift suddenly and violently from morose to elated based on external circumstances. One detail that Forster mentions in this chapter will be significant later: the photograph of Dr. Aziz's wife will be an important object in the novel in terms of the plot at two different points in the story.

Chapter Seven:

Mr. Fielding arrived in India late in his life, when he had already passed forty, and was by that time a hard-bitten, good-tempered fellow with a great enthusiasm for education. He has no racial feelings, because he had matured in a different atmosphere where the herd instinct did not flourish. The wives of the English officers dislike Fielding for his liberal racial views, and Fielding discovers that it is possible to keep company with both Indians and Englishmen, but to keep company with English women he must drop Indians. Aziz arrives at Fielding's house for tea as Fielding is dressing after a bath; since Fielding cannot see him, Aziz makes Fielding guess what he looks like. Aziz offers Fielding his collar stud, for he has lost his. When Fielding asks why people wear collars at all, Aziz responds that he wears them to pass the Police, who take little notice of Indians in English dress. Fielding tells Aziz that they will meet with Mrs. Moore and Adela, as well as Professor Narayan Godbole, the Deccani Brahman. Mrs. Moore tells Mr. Fielding thatMrs. Bhattacharya was to send a carriage for her this morning, but did not, and worries that she offended her. Fielding, Aziz, Mrs. Moore and Adela discuss mysteries. Mrs. Moore claims she likes mysteries but hates muddles, but Mr. Fielding claims that a mystery is a muddle, and that India itself is a muddle. Godbole arrives, a polite and enigmatic yet eloquent man, elderly and wizened. His whole appearance suggests harmony, as if he has reconciled the products of East and West, mental as well as physical. They discuss how one can get mangoes in England now, and Fielding remarks that India can be made in England just as England is now made in India. They discuss the Marabar Caves, and Fielding takes Mrs. Moore to see the college. Ronny arrives, annoyed to see Adela with Aziz and Godbole. Ronny tells Fielding that he doesn't like to see an English girl left smoking with two Indians, but he reminds him that Adela made the decision herself.

Analysis:

Mr. Fielding is in many respects the key character in A Passage to India, for it is he who can bridge the gap between the English and the Indians. He is the one character that has some sense of social autonomy, yet this autonomy comes at a price; he is in some ways an outsider among the English, particularly among the women. Forster again reminds the reader that it is the Englishwomen who are most likely to shun him for his association with Indians. This also reinforces the theme that belonging to a racial category in India comes at a price. For Fielding to have the ability to move among the races in India, he must sacrifice certain privileges that are normally afforded the English. Fielding does not symbolize any particular race or social group in India, thus will come to stand for different ideas of liberalism and justice.

Forster examines both the state of India and of Anglo-Indian relations in this chapter. For all of the characters, India is in some sense a muddle, for it uneasily combines eastern and western traditions without fully integrating them. As Aziz shows with his mention of police harassment of Indians in traditional dress, the combination of eastern and western can be imposed on India unwillingly rather than chosen independently. When they discuss how India can be made in England as England has been made in India, Fielding's remark reveals the true intention of the colonial regime: they intend to replicate England on Indian soil, unaware that all traditions will not transfer. However, Professor Godbole demonstrates that an integration of eastern and western society may occur successfully. Forster claims that he has reconciled the products of East and West, yet this conciliation of the two traditions is primarily an internal phenomena. Professor Godbole symbolizes the harmony that may occur in India.

Chapter Eight:

For Adela, Ronny's self-complacency and lack of subtlety grow more vivid in India than in England. Adela tells Ronny that Fielding, Aziz and Godbole are planning a picnic at the Marabar Caves for her and Mrs. Moore. Ronny mocks Aziz for missing his collar stud, claiming that it is typical of the Indian inattention to detail. Adela decides that she will not marry Ronny, who is hurt by the news but tells her that they were never bound to marry in the first place. She feels ashamed at his decency, and they decide that they shall remain friends. Ronny suggests a car trip to see Chandrapore, and the Nawab Bahadur offers to take them. There is a slight accident, as the car swerves into a tree near an embankment. Adela thinks that they ran into an animal, perhaps a hyena or a buffalo. When Miss Derek finds them, she offers to drive all of them back into town except for Mr. Harris, the Eurasian chauffeur. The Nawab Bahadur scolds Miss Derek for her behavior. Adela tells Ronny that she takes back what she told him about marriage. Ronny apologizes to his mother for his behavior at Mr. Fielding's house. Mrs. Moore is now tired of India and wishes only for her passage back to England. Ronny reminds her that she has dealt with three sets of Indians today, and all three have let her down, but Mrs. Moore claims that she likes Aziz. The Nawab Bahadur thinks that the accident was caused by a ghost, for several years before he was in a car accident in which he killed a drunken man.

Analysis:

Forster sets Ronny Heaslop as symbolic of the detrimental effects of English colonialism on India. He is not subtle about his contempt for the Indians whom he considers inferior, even when that supposed inferiority has no actual basis. His criticism of Aziz is an important point; he

mocks him for missing the collar stud, when in fact it was Fielding who was missing the stud and Aziz who kindly lent him his own. This is the most prominent example of irony that Forster employs. Ronny criticizes Aziz for inattention to detail while he himself is inattentive to the fact that Aziz is missing his collar stud because Fielding, an Englishman, was missing his own. Forster creates several scenes that complement this in which Ronny misinterprets the actions of the Indians, assuming the worst when there are important mitigating factors. Although Ronny can presumably claim that three different groups of Indians disappointed Mrs. Moore that day, none of these are clear-cut cases.

Adela Quested's rejection of Ronny can be seen partially as a rejection of his racial values. She even notes that his character flaws are more apparent now than when they met in England, indicating that India has contributed to Ronny's colonialist arrogance and sense of superiority. However, although her decision is sensible, Adela is neither decisive nor altogether clearheaded. She rejects Ronny, then later revokes what she said with little motivation for either event. Forster indicates that Adela is in some ways unformed, with few unwavering characteristics. It is this malleable quality that allows her to open up to Indian society, yet it will also subject her to an impending sense of indecision and confusion.

The car accident involving the Nawab Bahadur is yet another example of how the British officials and their wives mistreat Indians, yet it is significant for yet another reason. The actual events of the accident are unclear, and explanations for it range from the mundane to the supernatural. This foreshadows later events in the novel in which different characters approach an ambiguous event from different perspectives, and evokes what is perhaps the most important theme in A Passage to India: the difficulty of interpretation. In some cases, such as Ronny's critique of Aziz for missing the collar stud, a character fully misinterprets a situation, but the car wreck is an altogether different case, for a lack of information means that even the reader cannot accurately determine what actually occurred.

Chapter Nine:

Aziz falls ill with fever, and Hamidullah discusses his illness with Syed Mohammed, the assistant engineer, and Mr. Haq, a police inspector. Rafi, the engineer's nephew, suggests that something suspicious occurred, for Godbole also fell sick after Fielding's party, but Hamidullah dismisses the idea. Mr. Fielding visits Aziz. They discuss Indian education, and Aziz asks if it is fair that an Englishman holds a teaching position when qualified Indians are available. Fielding cannot answer "England holds India for her own good," the only answer to a conversation of this type. Fielding instead says that he is delighted to be in India, and that is his only excuse for working there. He suggests chucking out any Englishman who does not appreciate being in India.

Analysis:

Since Mr. Fielding is the one character who can interact easily with both the English and the Indians, he occupies a distinct moral place in the novel. He is the character who can best articulate what must be done for India and voice Forster's own sentiments on the state of India. Mr. Fielding is receptive to Indian culture and to fair treatment of Indian citizens, but he is not an unequivocal patriot for immediate Indian liberation. He does not share the suspicions and cynicism that mark his Indian friends, who harbor a great distrust for any Englishman in India.

Likewise, he will admit to himself that "England holds India for her own good," but is certainly no colonial apologist. Fielding instead ignores the broad issues surrounding English occupation of India to focus on personal experience and events. He suggests that at its base rulership of India requires the rulers to appreciate and adapt to Indian culture.

The discussion of possible conspiracies involving Aziz's invitation to Fielding's home illustrates how Indians are as susceptible to misinterpretation as the English. Their discussion provides an interesting juxtaposition with those of the English, for both groups speak of different cultures with suspicion and paranoia. This indicates that the Indians are prone to making the same mistakes as the English, even if they do not have the social and political power to enforce their particular errors.

Chapter Ten:

Opposite Aziz's bungalow stands a large unfinished house belonging to two brothers. A squirrel hangs on it, seeming to be the only occupant of the house. More noises come from nearby animals. These animals make up the majority of the living creatures of India, yet do not care how India is governed.

Analysis:

Forster uses this chapter as a reminder of the atmosphere of India and its differences from Great Britain, yet also places the events of the novel in a larger perspective. Forster's contemporary India is much closer to nature than the industrialized England. His comments about the various animals who are the majority of India deflates the events of the novel, reminding the reader that so much remains unchanged whether England rules India or India has an independent government.

Chapter Eleven:

Aziz shows Fielding a picture of his wife, a custom uncommon in Islamic tradition. Aziz tells him that he believes in the purdah, but would have told his wife that Fielding is his brother and thus she would have seen him, just as Hamidullah and a small number of others had. Fielding wonders what kindness he offered to Aziz to have such kindness offered back to him. Aziz asks Fielding if he has any children, which he does not, and asks why he does not marry Miss Quested. He claims that she is a prig, a pathetic product of Western education who prattles on as if she were at a lecture. He tells him that Adela is engaged to the City Magistrate. Aziz then makes a derogatory comment about Miss Quested's small breasts. Aziz discovers that Fielding was warm-hearted and unconventional, but not wise, yet they are friends and brothers.

Analysis:

The friendship between Dr. Aziz and Mr. Fielding develops in the chapter, as Aziz confides in Mr. Fielding just as he would a close relative. When he shows Fielding the photograph of his wife, this is a significant development, for it means that Aziz considers Fielding to be like a brother. In Islamic tradition, only one very close to Aziz and his wife would be able to view her, and in all other circumstances she must remain covered. That Aziz shows Fielding the

photograph shows the high regard in which he holds Fielding; this object is a symbol of their intimate friendship.

Forster uses this chapter to illustrate the insufficiencies of three of the novel's major characters. Fielding gives another view of Miss Quested, whom he considers a prig and a dilettante with only academic knowledge, while Aziz realizes Fielding's own intellectual limitations. Forster also shows one of Aziz's major character flaws. He is sexually condescending, disparaging Adela for her small breasts and unattractive appearance. Forster juxtaposes Aziz's criticism with Fielding's: the former dislikes her for her appearance, while the latter dislikes her because of her intellect. Forster thus demonstrates the limitations and insufficiencies of these three major characters that will prove significant throughout the novel, determining the course of action that each character takes.

Part Two, Chapters 12-22

Part Two: Caves

Chapter Twelve:

This chapter is devoted solely to a description of the Marabar Caves. Each of the caves include a tunnel about eight feet long, five feet high, three feet wide that leads to a circular chamber about twenty feet in diameter. Having seen one cave, one has essentially seen all of them. A visitor who sees them returns to Chandrapore uncertain whether he has had an interesting experience, a dull one, or even an experience at all. In one of the caves there is rumored to be a boulder that swings on the summit of the highest of the hills; this boulder sits on a pedestal known as the Kawa Dol.

Analysis:

Forster describes the Marabar Caves as a center of ambiguity in the chapter. Visitors to the cave cannot fully interpret the significance of the caves or even whether or not they are an interesting experience or a dull one. This relates to the theme of difficulty of interpretation prevalent in A Passage to India. The caves will thus serve as a physical manifestation of the events surrounding them. Forster foreshadows future events that will occur in the cave which will be impossible to definitively determine. Forster also creates a sense of irony surrounding the trip to the caves. The characters have treated the Marabar Caves as perhaps the most fascinating site in Chandrapore, but Forster describes the caves as perhaps unexceptional and even dull.

Chapter Thirteen:

Adela Quested mentions the trip to the Marabar Caves to Miss Derek, but she mentions that she is unsure whether the trip will occur because Indians seem forgetful. A servant overhears them, and passes on the information to Mahmoud Ali. Aziz therefore decides to push the matter through, securing Fielding and Godbole for the trip and asking Fielding to approach Miss Quested and Mrs. Moore. Aziz considers all aspects of the trip, including food and alcohol, and worries about the cultural differences. Mrs. Moore and Adela travel to the caves in a purdah

carriage. Aziz finds that Antony, the servant that the women are bringing, is not to be trusted, so he suggests that he is unnecessary, but Antony insists that Ronny wants him to go. Mohammed Latif bribes Antony not to go on the trip with them. Ten minutes before the train is to leave, Fielding and Godbole are not yet at the station. The train starts just as Fielding and Godbole arrive; Godbole had miscalculated the length of his morning prayer. When the two men miss the train, Aziz blames himself. Aziz feels that this trip is a chance for him to demonstrate that Indians are capable of responsibility.

Analysis:

Tensions are high among all involved in the trip to the Marabar Caves, particularly Aziz, who strains to impress Mrs. Moore and the other English visitors. He greatly fears offending the women through cultural insensitivity; he wishes to adapt the trip to English values to the greatest extent possible. This shows the difficulty of the social interaction between the English and the Indians. Even when both groups have the best of intentions, the differences between the two groups and the tension between them make it difficult for the groups to interact casually. This can be seen through the mistake which causes Fielding and Godbole to miss the train.

Aziz's character flaws become more explicit in this chapter, as he feels the strain of trying to impress Adela and Mrs. Moore. Although Aziz has good intentions, he is tense and controlling. Aziz also shows himself to be prone to melodrama, blaming himself for a foolish mistake by Godbole and thinking that the whole trip is ruined because of it. Aziz begins to distrust those around him, sending away Antony, who he believes to be a spy for Ronny Heaslop. The bribery of Antony is a disturbing action for Aziz and Mohammed Latif. They use devious means to ensure that Ronny's servant not attend the trip, and their actions are thus susceptible to great misinterpretation. Furthermore, the absence of Fielding from the trip will leave Aziz without an intermediary between him and the English women that will contribute to the troubles that will soon occur.

Chapter Fourteen:

For the past two weeks in which they had been in India, Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested had felt nothing, living inside cocoons; Mrs. Moore accepts her apathy, but Adela resents hers. It is Adela's faith that the whole stream of events is important and interesting, and if she grows bored she blames herself severely. This is her only major insincerity. Mrs. Moore feels increasingly that people are important, but relationships between them are not and that in particular too much fuss has been made over marriage. The train reaches its destination and they ride elephants to reach the caves. None of the guests particularly want to see the caves. Aziz overrates hospitality, mistaking it for intimacy and not seeing that it is tainted with a sense of possession. It is only when Mrs. Moore and Fielding are near that he knows that it is more blessed to receive than to give. Miss Quested admits that it is inevitable that she will become an Anglo-Indian, but Aziz protests. She hopes that she will not become like Mrs. Turton andMrs. Callendar, but admits that she does not have a special force of character to stop that tendency. In one of the caves there is a distinct echo, which alarms Mrs. Moore, who decides she must leave the cave. Aziz appreciates the frankness with which Mrs. Moore treats him. Mrs. Moore

begins to write a letter to her son and daughter, but cannot because she remains disturbed and frightened by the echo in the cave. She is terrified because the universe no longer offers repose to her soul. She has lost all interest, even in Aziz, and the affectionate and sincere words that she had spoken seem foreign to her.

Analysis:

Forster establishes more of Mrs. Moore's and Adela Quested's traits in this chapter, describing Mrs. Moore as a woman facing a spiritual crisis as she ages. She does not have the need for drama that Adela has, a quality that will cause Miss Quested great pain, but Mrs. Moore does not have the sense of confidence in any ultimate spiritual truth for comfort. The saintly Mrs. Moore thus becomes concurrently more fragile and more hardened to the outside world. The experience in the caves in which she hears the mysterious echo serves as a turning point for Mrs. Moore, reminding her of the emptiness and horror that seems to surround her, yet she demonstrates this great terror by becoming solitary and unconcerned with those around her. The sincerity and graciousness that she had demonstrated becomes foreign to her, and she collapses into a depressive solipsism.

Forster portrays Adela Quested as a woman who is sincere and forthright, but nevertheless a person of weak and shallow character. She admits that she is susceptible to outside influences and that she does not have the strength of character to resist becoming the typical Anglo-Indian with the corresponding narrow-minded view of Indians. This will be an equally important characteristic in terms of impending plot developments; Adela will be unable to stop events that she herself sets in motion. However, whatever Adela's weakness, she is honest and realizes these insufficiencies. This quality of self-awareness, if not completely negating these undesirable traits, permits Adela to admit her mistakes and errors.

The visit to the Marabar Caves becomes more absurd as the novel continues. Forster portrays the entire expedition with a sense of irony. None of the guests truly wish to see the caves, and each of the guests is tense and unable to appreciate the visit. Aziz works too hard to please; if Adela is a person who becomes overwhelmed by events around her, Aziz is a person who throws himself wholeheartedly into events to a loss of any sense of perspective. The trip to the Marabar Caves demonstrates this loss of perspective as it becomes a diversion of gaudy excess that nobody truly wishes to occur.

Chapter Fifteen:

Adela and Aziz and a guide continue along the tedious expedition. They encounter several isolated caves which the guide persuades them to visit, but there is really nothing for them to see. Aziz has little to say to Miss Quested, for he likes her less than he does Mrs. Moore and greatly dislikes that she is marrying a British official, while Adela has little to say to Aziz. Adela realizes that she does not love Ronny, but is not sure whether that is reason enough to break off her engagement. She asks Aziz if he is married, and he tells her that he is, feeling that it is more artistic to have his wife alive for a moment. She asks him if he has one wife or more than one, a question which shocks him very much, but Adela is unaware that she had said the wrong thing.

Analysis:

Mrs. Moore's newly developing disillusionment as well as the absence of Fielding and Godbole leaves Adela and Aziz together, an event fraught with peril, for the two have little regard for one another and interaction between the two takes on a more lurid dimension than the obvious innocent social interaction between the elderly Mrs. Moore and Aziz. This situation is precisely what Ronny fears, for an undercurrent of sexual impropriety pervades this chapter, as shown by Adela's realization that she does not love Ronny and her question for Aziz about whether he has more than one wife. However, whatever the subtext of the conversation, the interaction between the two characters is entirely innocent: there remains no sexual attraction between Aziz and Adela. Forster indicates that part of Adela's rationale for not wanting to marry Ronny is due to a similar lack of sexual attraction, but she must consider the comforts that the stable Ronny can provide.

Chapter Sixteen:

Aziz waits in the cave, smoking, and when he returns he finds the guide alone with his head on one side. The guide does not know exactly which cave Miss Quested entered, and Aziz worries that she is lost. On his way down the path to the car that had arrived from Chandrapore, Aziz finds Miss Quested's field glasses lying at the verge of a cave and puts them in his pocket. He sees Fielding, who arrived in Miss Derek's car, but neither he nor anyone else knows where Adela has gone. The expedition ends, and the train arrives to bring them back into Chandrapore. As they arrive in town, Mr. Haqarrests Dr. Aziz, but he is under instructions not to say the charge. Aziz refuses to go, but Fielding talks him into cooperating. Mr. Turton leads Fielding off so that Aziz goes to prison alone.

Analysis:

The central event of the novel occurs during this chapter, but Forster chooses not to describe it, instead shifting the perspective to Dr. Aziz outside of the cave. The details of the event are deliberately vague: all that Forster indicates during this chapter is that Adela has some physical confrontation in one of the Marabar caves and flees the scene. However, he does establish some points that will come to be important in future chapters, such as the fact that Aziz finds Adela's field glasses. The discovery of the field glasses is perhaps the only explicitly stated event in the chapter, but it is a key event that establishes for the reader that Aziz was not in Adela's presence when she lost them. Nevertheless, the fact that Aziz has the field glasses can easily be misinterpreted as material evidence against him.

Despite the vague circumstances surrounding the attack on Adela Quested, Forster does establish that Aziz is not responsible. By framing the chapter from his perspective, Forster establishes that Aziz could not possibly have been in the cave at the time. However, at this early point only Fielding is ready to avow that Aziz is innocent. Fielding emerges as the pragmatic voice of reason in this chapter, the one English character who attempts to make sense of the attack. Already there seems to be a sharp divide between the other English characters who are united against Aziz and Fielding, who will prove the one exception to this trend.

Chapter Seventeen:

Fielding speaks to the Collector, who tells him that Miss Quested has been insulted in one of the Marabar Caves and that he would not allow Fielding to accompany Aziz to preserve him from scandal. Fielding thinks that Adela is mad, a remark that Mr. Turton demands that he withdraw. Fielding explains that he cannot believe that Aziz is guilty. Mr. Turton tells Fielding that he has been in the country for twenty-five years, and in that time he has never known anything but disaster whenever Indians and the English interact socially. He tells Fielding that there will be an informal meeting at the club that evening to discuss the situation. Fielding keeps his head during the discussion; he does not rally to the banner of race. The Collector goes to the platform, where he can see the confusion about him. He takes in the situation with a glance, and his sense of justice functions although he is insane with rage. When he sees coolies asleep in the ditches or the shopkeepers rising to salute him, he says to himself "I know what you're like at last; you shall pay for this, you shall squeal."

Analysis:

The worst qualities among the Anglo-Indians emerge in this chapter, as they rally to Miss Quested's cause as a means to show their contempt for the Indians. In the eyes of the Collector, Aziz is already guilty and his impending trial shall serve as a retribution for all that Mr. Turton believes to be the faults of the Indians. However, he places some degree of the blame on Adela, claiming that nothing but disaster occurs when Indians and English interact socially. This is an ironic statement, for whatever happened to Miss Quested occurred when she was not in Aziz's presence. It is insufficient interaction between Adela and Aziz that allowed Adela to be assaulted.

Fielding will serve as Aziz's advocate among the English, to his personal and social detriment. If Mr. Turton is adamant that Aziz is guilty, Fielding is equally adamant that Adela must have made a mistake; his staunch belief in Aziz leads Fielding to make damaging statements against Adela. This indicates that, whatever the outcome of the trial, Adela is destined to become a victim once again, suffering whatever indignity actually occurred in the caves and becoming vilified by supporters of Aziz for her mistake. Forster also indicates that Fielding will soon become an outcast among the English. When Mr. Turton tells Fielding that the English will meet at the club to decide a course of action, he presupposes ethnic solidarity. This brings up the theme of the demands of racial identity. Turton assumes that Fielding's status as an Englishman indicates that he will support Adela, while Fielding adheres first to ideas of justice and only secondarily to racial solidarity.

Chapter Eighteen:

Mr. McBryde, the District Superintendent of Police, is the most reflective and best educated of the Chandrapore officials. He receives Aziz with courtesy, but is shocked at his downfall. McBryde has a theory about climatic zones: all unfortunate natives are criminals at heart, for the simple reason that they live south of latitude 30. They are thus not to blame, for they have not a dog's chance. McBryde, however, admits that he seems to contradict this theory himself. The charge against Aziz is that he followed her into the cave and made insulting advances; she hit him with her field glasses, but he pulled at them and the strap broke, and that is how she got away. They find that Aziz has the glasses. Fielding asks if he may see Adela, but the request

is denied. McBryde admits to Fielding that she is in no state to see anyone, but Fielding believes that she's under a hideous delusion and Aziz is innocent. Fielding explains that, if Aziz were guilty, he would not have kept the field glasses. McBryde tells him that the Indian criminal psychology is different, and shows Fielding the contents of Aziz's pocket case, including a letter from a friend who keeps a brothel. The police also find pictures of women in Aziz's bungalow, but Fielding says that the picture is of Aziz's wife.

Analysis:

Even the "best educated and most reflective" of the Chandrapore officials is susceptible to the racist attitudes of his peers, as Mr. McBryde demonstrates, but there are obvious flaws in his reasoning that even Mr. McBryde himself can admit to himself. McBryde is a symbol of the errors of judgment in the educated English. Although he uses reasoning to support his racist views, his judgment, as he even admits, is not quite sound.

Aziz faces great difficulties confronting the charges against him, which become more clear in this chapter. Although the evidence against Aziz, including the field glasses, can be dismissed through rational thought and examination, Forster suggests that there is the possibility that Aziz will not even receive this mere consideration. A Kafkaesque atmosphere surrounds the prosecution of Aziz, as even such evidence as a photograph can confirm the British officials' suspicion that Aziz is an immoral man and must be guilty. The picture of Aziz's wife becomes important for a third time; at first a sign of Aziz's devotion to his deceased wife and then a symbol of his friendship with Fielding, it finally ends up as an ill-used symbol of Aziz's supposed guilt equivalent to pornography.

Fielding believes that, by meeting with Adela, he may solve the misunderstanding between her and Aziz, but even this simple request is denied. For the English, the trial seems to concern first the prosecution of Indians in general and second the specific prosecution of Aziz. Aziz and Adela are merely objects in the struggle between the two ethnic groups. Fielding, in contrast, views the matter in terms of the two persons involved rather than in terms of the larger issues involved.

Chapter Nineteen:

Hamidullah waits outside the Superintendent's office; Fielding tells him that evidence for Aziz's innocence will come. Hamidullah is convinced that Aziz is innocent and throws his lot with the Indians, realizing the profundity of the gulf that separates them. Hamidullah wants Aziz to have Armitrao, a Hindu who is notoriously anti-British, as his lawyer. Fielding feels this is too extreme. Fielding tells Hamidullah that he is on the side of Aziz, but immediately regrets taking sides, for he wishes to slink through India unlabelled. Fielding has a talk with Godbole, who is entirely unaffected by Aziz's plight. He tells Fielding that he is leaving Chandrapore to return to his birthplace in Central India to take charge of education there. He wants to start a High School on sound English lines. Godbole cannot say whether or not he thinks that Aziz is guilty; he says that nothing can be performed in isolation, for when one performs a good action, all do, and when an evil action is performed, all perform it. He claims that good and evil are both aspects of the Lord. Fielding goes to see Aziz, but finds him unapproachable through misery. Fielding

wonders why Miss Quested, such a dry, sensible girl without malice, would falsely accuse an Indian.

Analysis:

Much like the expedition to the Marabar Caves, the trial of Aziz assumes absurdly grand proportions. The trial becomes not about the specific injustice against Adela Quested, but about the relationships among the ethnic groups in India, whether English, Muslim or Hindu. Even the selection of Armitrao as the barrister underscores this, showing the solidarity between the Muslim and Hindus against the British. Fielding therefore must sacrifice his particular racial identity and side with Aziz out of considerations of justice, contrary to his wish to travel throughout India without any particular group status. Forster portrays this situation as a situation of grotesque irony. A mysterious and likely nonexistent event in the Marabar Caves leads to a grand confrontation between the races in Chandrapore.

Professor Godbole's response to Aziz's plight places the trial in different context from the others' consideration of it. Godbole views the trial in terms of humanity as a whole instead of in terms of distinct races. Yet this larger perspective on the situation obscures the details; Godbole appears callous and indifferent to the fate of his friend. Godbole can appear this way because of his inner sense of repose and satisfaction. Since he is convinced that nothing can be done for Aziz, he shows no sense of outrage at the injustice.

Fielding poses the central question of the trial, specifically why the sensible Adela Quested would falsely accuse an Indian. Forster seems to allow for two answers to this question: Adela has been influenced by those around her, forced into inflating her charges by the prejudiced English officials, or Adela may not in fact be sensible. Forster has established that Adela is somewhat impetuous and indecisive; her decision to charge Aziz may be the most dangerous manifestation of this characteristic.

Chapter Twenty:

Miss Quested's plight had brought her great support among the English in India; she came out from her ennobled in sorrow. At the meeting at the club, Fielding asks whether there is an official bulletin about Adela's health, or whether the grave reports are due to gossip. Fielding makes an error by speaking her name; others refer to both Adela and Aziz in vague and impersonal terms. Each person feels that all he loved best was at stake in the matter. The Collector tells them to assume that every Indian is an angel. The event had made Ronny Heaslop a martyr, the recipient of all the evil intended against them by the country they had tried to serve. As he watches Fielding, the Collector says that responsibility is a very awful thing, but he has no use for the man who shirks it. He claims that he is against any show of force. Fielding addresses the meeting, telling them that he believes that Aziz is innocent; if Aziz is found guilty, Fielding vows to reign and leave India, but now he resigns from the club. When Ronny enters, Fielding does not stand. The Collector insists that he apologize to Ronny, but then orders Fielding to leave immediately.

Analysis:

Forster finally returns to the point of view of Miss Quested for the first time since the expedition to the Marabar Caves. Suffering has ennobled Adela and given her social standing as well as a sense of purpose. She is not sickly, as has been reported, but is rather held by the British as a perpetual victim and symbol of Indian barbarity. Certain taboos surround Adela as victim; she does not exist as a person, as the injunction against speaking her name demonstrates. Ronny becomes a martyr to the same degree as Adela, an ironic circumstance considering Adela's revelation that she did not love Ronny immediately preceding the attack. For the British, the circumstances of the trial are both personal and public, as the officials feel that their safety and well-being depend on the proper outcome.

Fielding, who has slowly become an outcast among the British, severs his ties to them completely in this chapter by declaring Aziz's innocence and vowing to resign from his post. His actions are righteous yet foolish. Fielding makes the error of refusing to stand when Ronny enters and behaves rudely to the others. Like the rest of the English, Fielding focuses his anger on the wrong target, essentially blaming Ronny for Adela's own mistake. Nevertheless, although Ronny breaks from his race he cannot completely abandon his identity. Fielding demonstrates the limits of racial identity, for it is essentially fixed but still fluid. Fielding can never totally disavow the English, but can become an outcast from them.

Chapter Twenty-One:

Fielding spends the rest of the evening with the Nawab Bahadur, Hamidullah, Mahmoud Ali, and others of the confederacy. Fielding has an inclination to tell Professor Godbole of the tactical and moral error he had made in being rude to Ronny Heaslop, but Godbole had already gone to bed.

Analysis:

Essentially banished from his own race, Fielding joins the Indians in the defense of Aziz, but this choice is a difficult and problematic one. Fielding regrets both the circumstances that force him to choose sides in the conflict and his own decisions which have made it impossible for him to remain sympathetic to the British. Forster establishes several characters as the victims of circumstance, including Aziz and Adela, and Fielding in this chapter definitively joins this select group. Forster portrays Fielding as a man uneasy about his decision: he chooses his friendship with Aziz and sense of justice over his English identity, but still feels that he has made a sacrifice. Fielding, who at the novel's beginning could easily maneuver between associations with the English and Indians, must now accept that he does not have this freedom of association.

Chapter Twenty-Two:

Adela lay for several days in the McBryde's bungalow; others are over-kind to her, the men too respectful and the women too sympathetic. The one visitor she wants, Mrs. Moore, kept away. She tells that she went into a detestable cave, remembers scratching the wall with her finger nail, and then there was a shadow down the entrance tunnel, bottling her up. She hit him with her glasses, he pulled her round the cave by the strap, it broke, and she escaped. He never actually touched her. She refuses to cry, a degradation worse than what occurred in the

Marabar and a negation of her advanced outlook. Adela feels that only Mrs. Moore can drive back the evil that happened to her. Ronny tells her that she must appear in court, and Adela asks if his mother can be there. He tells her that the case will come before Mr. Das, the brother ofMrs. Bhattacharya and Ronny's assistant. Ronny tells Adela that Fielding wrote her a letter (which he opened). He tells her that the defense had got hold of Fielding, who has done the community a great disservice. Adela worries that Mrs. Moore is ill, but Ronny says that she is merely irritable at the moment. When she sees her, Adela thinks that she repels Mrs. Moore, who has no inclination to be helpful; Mrs. Moore appears slightly resentful, without her Christian tenderness. Mrs. Moore refuses to be at all involved in the trial. She tells that she will attend their marriage but not their trial. She vows to go to England. Ronny tells her that she appears to want to be left out of everything. She says that the human race would have become a single person centuries ago if marriage were any use. Adela wonders whether she made a mistake, and tells Ronny that he is innocent. She feels that Mrs. Moore has told her that Aziz is innocent. Ronny tells her not to say such things, because every servant he has is a spy. Mrs. Moore tells Adela that of course Aziz is innocent. Mrs. Moore thinks that she is a bad woman, but she will not help Ronny torture a man for what he never did. She claims that there are different ways of evil, and she prefers her own to his. Ronny thinks that Mrs. Moore must leave India, for she was doing no good to herself or anyone else.

Analysis:

Forster portrays Adela as primarily a victim of the circumstances surrounding her attack rather than a victim of the attack herself. Adela approaches the events of the cave as simple if unpleasant facts, but her real degradation occurs with regard to the others' treatment of her. The way that the Anglo-Indians treat Adela places her as a perpetual victim, handling her like a fragile child. Adela refuses to play the role of the helpless victim, however, partially to retain her dignity and partially because she remains unsure of the actual legitimacy of her charges.

Two significant forces trouble Adela. The first is her doubt that Aziz is guilty of the crime with which she has charged him, and she even tells Ronny that she believes she has made a mistake. Mrs. Moore confirms this doubt, definitively stating to Adela that Aziz is innocent. Her statement contains great significance, for Mrs. Moore serves as a paragon of behavior for Forster and the statement serves to shatter the atmosphere of condescending tenderness that surrounds Adela. Mrs. Moore's statement that Aziz is innocent is a turning point in the novel: it is the first time that anybody confronts Adela with the idea that she may be mistaken.

The second factor that concerns Adela is the state of Mrs. Moore. She has been kept apart from Adela, perhaps because she might serve as an advocate for Aziz. However, during her separation from Adela Mrs. Moore has become bitter and cynical; despite her status as perhaps the most moral character in A Passage to India, Mrs. Moore doubts her own virtue, considering herself to be in some sense evil. Her actions, however, demonstrate the contrary, as she opposes her son and confronts Adela with what she believes to be the truth. Mrs. Moore's conversation with Adela serves as a turning point for Mrs. Moore as well as Adela. It is here that Mrs. Moore breaks from her depression to take an active role in the story. She reasserts herself as the moral force in the story, a role that Adela's isolation and Mrs. Moore's solipsism had forced her to abandon.

Ronny's realization that his mother must leave India is tainted with some degree of malicious self-interest. He seems to fear that she will interfere with the events of the trial by proclaiming Aziz's innocence and appears ready to send his mother back to England where she cannot oppose his interests. This is perhaps the most disturbing evidence that Ronny and his colleagues are interested not in the facts of the case but in the larger social ramifications. Ronny is ready to manipulate his mother and secure the conviction of an innocent man as part of Anglo-Indian politics.

Part Two, Chapters 23-32

Chapter Twenty-Three:

Lady Mellanby, wife of the Lieutenant-Governor, had been gratified by the appeal addressed to her by the ladies of Chandrapore, but she could do nothing; she does agree to help Mrs. Moore get passage out of India in her own cabin. Mrs. Moore got what she desired: she escaped the trial, the marriage and the hot weather, and will return to England in comfort. Mrs. Moore, however, has come to that state where the horror and the smallness of the universe are visible. The echo in the cave was a revelation to Mrs. Moore, insignificant though it may be. Mrs. Moore departs from Chandrapore alone, for Ronny cannot leave the town.

Analysis:

Another event of unfortunate ambiguity occurs in this chapter, as Lady Mellanby uses her influence to ensure that Mrs. Moore leaves Chandrapore. Although Forster portrays this as a kind and considerate act in the part of Lady Mellanby, it is the ladies of Chandrapore who make the request to secure Mrs. Moore passage out of India. This fits with the possible interpretation that Ronny forces Mrs. Moore to leave so that she cannot defend Aziz's innocence, a portrayal of the situation that contains a modicum of truth but is nevertheless a grave misrepresentation.

Mrs. Moore leaves India without the tender Christian spirit with which she entered Chandrapore. Although she is no less noble than before, Mrs. Moore no longer has faith in the stability of the universe, finding it vast and uncomforting. The echo in the Marabar Caves proves the pivotal event for Mrs. Moore, a reminder of the emptiness that surrounds her. While her son and the others in Chandrapore inflate the events of the Marabar Caves to absurd proportions, only Mrs. Moore sees her circumstances as pitifully small and unimportant.

Chapter Twenty-Four:

The heat accelerates after Mrs. Moore's departure until it seems a punishment. Adela resumes her morning kneel to Christianity, imploring God for a favorable verdict. Adela worries that she will break down during the trial, but the Collector tells her that she is bound to win, but does not tell her that Nawab Bahadur had financed the defense and would surely appeal. The case is called, and the first person Adela notices in the Court is the man who pulls the punkah; to Adela, this nearly naked man stands out as divine as he pulls the rope. Mr. McBryde behaves casually, as if he knows that Aziz will be found guilty. He remarks that the darker races are physically attracted to the fairer, but not vice verse, and a voice is heard from the crowd asking

"even when the lady is so much uglier than the man?" Mahmoud Ali claims that Mrs. Moore was sent away because she would have testified that Aziz is innocent. The audience begins chanting Mrs. Moore until her name seems to be Esmiss Esmoor, as if a Hindu goddess. The magistrate scoldsArmitrao and McBryde for presuming Mrs. Moore's presence as a witness. Adela is the next to testify; a new sensation protects her like a magnificent armor. When McBryde asks her whether Aziz followed her, she say that she cannot be sure. Finally, she admits that she made a mistake and Dr. Aziz never followed her. The Major attempts to stop the proceedings on medical grounds, but Adela withdraws the charge. The Nawab Bahadur declares in court that this is a scandal. Mr. Das rises and releases the prisoner, as the man who pulls the punkah continues as if nothing had occurred.

Analysis:

As Mrs. Moore turns away from her secure faith in Christianity during her exit from India, Adela returns to her spiritual belief to strengthen herself before her trial. Her worries that she will break down during the trial stem partially from her doubt in the legitimacy of her charge against Aziz; the chapter builds to her final admission in court that she in fact falsely accused the doctor. No actual explanation for Adela's charge against Aziz is yet given, but Forster indicates that Adela has been pressured into accusing Aziz by the British officials. Despite the fact that Adela permitted Aziz to suffer in jail for so long, Forster portrays her action as noble and self-sacrificing. When she attempts to revoke the charge, McBryde immediately turns on her, essentially declaring that she has gone mad. This is one of several indignities that Adela suffers throughout the chapter. Both McBryde and Mahmoud Ali humiliate her when she testifies during the trial for her questionable sanity and her unattractive appearance. The embarrassment that she suffers generates some sympathy for Adela, who comes out of the trial a victim for a second time. However, the trial is not the end of her suffering. By revoking her charge she has alienated herself from those persons who once supported her. This, as well as racist accusations by McBryde about the sexual proclivities of Indians, demonstrates that the trial does not essentially concern the attack on Adela, but instead the English bureaucracy's racism against Indians.

Mrs. Moore becomes in some sense immortal during this chapter as her mortality becomes more and more questionable. She is the paragon of English kindness and compassion toward Indians, yet her actual mortality seems more and more important. Upon her exit from India and foreshadowed death, Mrs. Moore becomes a symbol of both English kindness, for she genuinely cared for Aziz, and English injustice, for the Indians believe that she was taken away so that she could not exonerate Aziz. There is some irony in Mrs. Moore's fate, for just as she turns away from spirituality she becomes a religious icon.

Chapter Twenty-Five:

Miss Quested renounces his own people and is drawn into a mass of Indians and carried toward the public exit of the court. Fielding finds her, and tells her that she cannot walk alone in Chandrapore, for there will be a riot. She wonders if she should join the other English persons, but Fielding puts her in his carriage. One of Fielding's students finds him and gives him a garland of jasmine, but Fielding has wearied of his students' adoration. The student vows to pull

Fielding and Miss Quested in a procession. Mahmoud Ali shouts "down with the Collector, down with the Superintendent of Police," but the Nawab Bahadur reprimands him as unwise. A riot nearly occurs, but Dr. Panna Lal calms the situation. Although Dr. Lal was going to testify for the prosecution, he makes a public apology to Aziz and secures the release of Nureddin, for there are rumors that he was being tortured by the police.

Analysis:

Miss Quested joins Fielding as a fellow excommunicate from the English race upon the end of the trial. Despite the acquittal of Aziz, Adela and those around her have created such animosity between the English and the Indians that the damage cannot be undone. Fielding and Adela are literally swept off their feet by the actions of others in this chapter, as chaos breaks out around Chandrapore and a riot nearly occurs. Once again, an event grows out of proportion to its actual significance. Forster shows this through the various rumors that abound concerning the trial, such as the reported incidents of torture.

Victory makes the Indians of Chandrapore bold, but the behavior of several of the Indian leaders is foolish and dangerous. Forster shows that, although they are the victims in this situation, they are capable of short-sighted behavior that equals that of the English. It is only through small gestures such as the apology by Dr. Panna Lal that full disaster is averted. Nevertheless, the acquittal of Dr. Aziz is not the end of the Anglo-Indian conflict. Forster foreshadows that the conflict will continue to plague Chandrapore, at the expense of Adela and even Fielding and Dr. Aziz.

Chapter Twenty-Six:

Fielding and Miss Quested remain isolated at the college and have the first of several curious conversations. He asks her why she would make a charge if she were to withdraw it, but she cannot give a definitive answer. She tells him that she has been unwell since the caves and perhaps before that, and wonders what gave her the hallucination. He offers four explanations, but only gives three: Aziz is guilty, as her friends think; she invented the charge out of malice, which is what Fielding's friends think; or, she had a hallucination. He tells her that he believes that she broke the strap of the field glasses and was alone in the cave the whole time. She tells him that she first felt out of sorts at the party with Aziz and Godbole, and tells him that she had a hallucination of a marriage proposal when there was none. Fielding believes that McBryde exorcised her: as soon as he asked a straightforward question, she gave a straightforward answer and broke down. She asks what Aziz thinks of her, and Fielding tells Adela that Aziz is not capable of thought in his misery, but is naturally very bitter. An underlying feeling with Aziz is that he had been accused by an ugly woman; Aziz is a sexual snob. Fielding offers the fourth explanation: that it was the guide who assaulted Adela, but that option is inconclusive. Hamidullah joins them, and alternately praises and reprimands Adela. Fielding and Hamidullah are unsure where Adela could go, because no place seems safe for her. Fielding has a new sympathy for Adela, who has become a real person to him. Adela thinks that she must go to the Turtons, for the Collector would take her in, if not his wife. Ronny arrives and tells them that Mrs. Moore died at sea from the heat. Fielding tells him that Adela will stay at the college but he will not be responsible for her safety.

Analysis:

The mutual isolation from the other Anglo-Indians forces Fielding and Adela to be reluctant allies, and Fielding's natural sense of justice causes him to rally to Adela's defense. Yet like all alliances in A Passage to India, there is a chance for misinterpretation, particularly considering Aziz's monumental ill-will toward Adela and Fielding's lack of concern for attacks on his reputation. This plays into Aziz's tendency to overreact to situations and behave melodramatically. He will certainly dislike that his ally Fielding is aiding the person he believes is his sworn enemy.

Forster still does not offer a concrete explanation for the events in the Marabar Caves, but he presents several viable options for the attack on Adela. The most likely of these is that the attack was in part a hallucination. Adela's behavior before the caves seems to confirm this observation; Forster has established her as an intellectual with little grip on the reality around her. For Adela, the event in the cave relates to her possible marriage to Ronny; it was he whom she was thinking about before she entered the cave, and Adela relates the events in the cave to the imagined marriage proposal. This indicates how deeply felt her anxieties about her marriage to Ronny truly are; it has, in some sense, driven her to delusion.

Only when she is forced to confront actual facts, as when McBryde questions her during the trial, does she return to clarity. This particular option shows that Adela was not motivated by malice against Aziz; the indignities that she will suffer from both Aziz and the Anglo-Indians will thus seem unjust punishment for the deluded girl. Already the Anglo-Indians abandon Adela, refusing to accept her for thwarting their plans; Aziz himself will seek retribution as well.

Forster develops the more sinister side to Aziz in this chapter. Although certainly the wronged victim in this situation, Forster does not elevate him to martyrdom. His understandable contempt for Adela Quested takes an unfortunate form. His hatred for Adela is in no small part superficial; he hates that such an unattractive woman made the charge nearly as much as he hates the charge itself. The change in Aziz's character indicates the detrimental effect that the trial has had on him. He leaves his imprisonment not ennobled, but bitter, cynical and vindictive.

Chapter Twenty-Seven:

After the Victory Banquet at Mr. Zulfiqar's mansion, Aziz and Fielding discuss the future. Aziz knows that Fielding wants him to not sue Adela, for it will show him to be a gentleman, but Aziz says that he has become anti-British and ought to have become so sooner. Aziz says that he will not let Miss Quested off easily to make a better reputation for himself and Indians generally, for it will be put down to weakness and the attempt to gain promotion. Aziz decides that he will have nothing more to do with British India and will seek service in some Moslem State. Fielding tells Aziz that Adela is a prig, but perfectly genuine and very brave. He tells Aziz what a momentous move she made. Fielding offers to be an intermediary for an apology from Adela, and Aziz asks for an apology in which Adela admits that she is an awful hag. Aziz finally agrees to consult Mrs. Moore. However, when Fielding blurts out that she is dead, Aziz does not believe him.

Analysis:

The events surrounding the Marabar Caves and the subsequent trial have a detrimental effect on each of the characters involved: Mrs. Moore loses her faith in the universe, Adela and Fielding lose their social standing among the British, and Aziz suffers the injustice of prison. However, the temporary loss of his freedom is only secondary to the major loss that Aziz suffers. Aziz loses the sense of kindness he demonstrated upon meeting Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested, instead becoming petty and vengeful. His malice toward Adela is the understandable consequence of the previous chapters' events, but nevertheless renders him unsympathetic. His character assaulted by the British, Aziz now obsesses over his reputation and wishes to make Adela pay in order to maintain dignity.

The death of Mrs. Moore had been foreshadowed earlier in the novel, but the timing of the announcement to Aziz is significant. Fielding tells Aziz about her death as he relishes the possibility of punishing Adela, as if intending to punish Aziz for his selfish behavior. Yet the death of Mrs. Moore also symbolizes the severing of Aziz's connection with Anglo-India. Mrs. Moore is the only truly English character to have a genuine friendship with Aziz, for Fielding belongs to his race only when it is pragmatic. When she dies, this ends the possibility that Aziz might find a complete reconciliation with the British in India.

Forster emphasizes the significant sacrifice that Adela made during the trial. Despite her erratic behavior, Adela behaved with a sense of courage and honor when she admitted her mistake. If her mistake in accusing Aziz is the most significant of the novel, her sacrifice of her own safety and status is equally momentous.

Chapter Twenty-Eight:

The death of Mrs. Moore assumes more subtle and lasting shapes in Chandrapore than in England. A legend sprang up that Ronny killed her for trying to save Aziz's life, and there was sufficient truth in that legend to trouble authorities. Ronny reminds himself that Mrs. Moore left India of her own volition, but his conscience is not clear, for he behaved badly to her. Adela will leave India and not marry Ronny, for that would mean the end of his career.

Analysis:

Mrs. Moore continues to develop a mythology after her death, an appropriate fate for a woman whom Forster portrays as a paragon of kindness and morality. Even Ronny feels a sense of regret concerning the trial. His actions operate on several levels: although he can convince himself that he did nothing inappropriate when sending his mother from India, he must remind himself that his motives were not entirely pure. The suspicions about Ronny contain a particular irony: he is unfairly suspected of engineering his mother's death in the same manner that he wrongly assumed that Aziz assaulted Adela Quested.

Chapter Twenty-Nine:

Sir Gilbert, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, visits Chandrapore. Fielding finds himself drawn more and more into Miss Quested's affairs, and appreciates her fine loyal character and humility. Victory had made the Indians aggressive, attempting to discover new grievances and

wrongs. Fielding uses Mrs. Moore as an attempt to persuade Aziz to let Adela off paying. Adela admits to Fielding that she was thinking of Ronny when she first entered the cave, and now she no longer wants love. Adela leaves India. On her travel out of India, Antony tries to blackmail her by claiming that she had an affair with Fielding, but she turns him away. When Adela arrives in England, she vows to look up Ralph and Stella and to return to her profession.

Analysis:

That the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province must be called in to Chandrapore demonstrates the impact of the trial upon the town and on relations between the British and the Indians. However, as the British were the aggressors during the trial, the role shifts to the Indians, who use the false charge against Aziz as an example of all their grievances. Their behavior is simply that of the British; the only difference is that they lack the bureaucratic clout to effect their plans. Fielding's invocation of Mrs. Moore shows that Aziz still retains some of the kindness and receptivity to others that he demonstrated before the trial. For Aziz, Mrs. Moore exemplifies the ideal of behavior for western culture. Forster even juxtaposes Aziz's dedication to Mrs. Moore with Adela's similar reverence for her. Although Aziz and Adela are in a significant sense enemies, both characters hold Mrs. Moore as a symbol of ideal behavior.

Forster continues to build on his portrayal of Adela Quested as courageous and noble as she is afflicted with various indignities. The events surrounding the Marabar Caves expedition have made her cynical, as they have done with Aziz, but she continues to behave with humility and honor. In some sense she assumes some of the characteristics of Mrs. Moore, a change made more evident by her intention to visit Ralph and Stella when she returns to England. Adela leaves England having suffered greatly and having caused equal suffering, but nevertheless she leaves the country a stronger woman who can better face reality.

Chapter Thirty:

Another local consequence of the trial is a Hindu-Moslem entente. Mr. Das visits Aziz, seeking favors; he asks Aziz to write poetry for the magazine he publishes. Aziz accommodates him, but asks why he should fulfill these when Mr. Das tried to send him to prison. Aziz thinks that the magazine for which Mr. Das asks him to write is for Hindus only, but Mr. Das tells him that it is for Indians in general. When Aziz says there is no category of "Indian" (only Hindu and Moslem), Das says that after the trial there may be. Hamidullah gossips with Aziz, telling him that Fielding may have had an affair with Adela, but this does not faze Aziz, for he claims that he has no friends and all are traitors, even his own children.

Analysis:

This chapter serves to show how the political alliances in Chandrapore change because of the trial. The new political power that the Muslims gain from Aziz's victory leads to an alliance with local Hindus, while Aziz himself becomes a local hero to all Indians. While other characters convey a sense that the trial has forged a new Indian identity, Aziz correctly judges that this is merely an ephemeral shift in the political dynamic. Although Aziz's contempt for Adela Quested has clouded his judgment since the trial, he nevertheless can accurately see that the trial is an altogether divisive event in the long run. The inevitable rumors about Fielding and Adela

Quested, earlier foreshadowed, reach Aziz in this chapter, but he appears unfazed by the gossip out of his newfound cynicism. However, part of this aggressive lack of trust seems forced and defensive; Aziz's true feelings on the matter are yet to be revealed.

Chapter Thirty-One:

The sequence of the events had decided Aziz's emotions and his friendship with Fielding began to cool. He assumes that the rumor about Fielding and Adela is true and resents it. Aziz speaks to Fielding about it, but Fielding tells him not to speak so melodramatically about "dismay and anxiety." Aziz speaks about enemies, but Fielding seems to dismiss the idea that either of them have great enemies. Fielding becomes angry that Aziz thinks that he and Adela had an affair during such a difficult time, but the two clear up the misunderstanding. Aziz and Fielding discuss their future plans. Fielding is conscious of something hostile against him. He leaves Chandrapore, with Aziz convinced that he will marry Miss Quested.

Analysis:

The rumored affair between Adela and Fielding causes an inevitable rift between Fielding and Aziz. Fielding has little conception that reputation matters and that his support of Adela placed him against those persons he originally supported, while Aziz, afflicted with great suspicion, can see only in terms of allies and enemies. In both characters there is a sense of naïveté, for Aziz assumes the worst must always be true and Fielding assumes that alliances do not matter in India. This again demonstrates the possibility for misinterpreting situations, for both character approach the situation in different ways. Aziz conceives of Fielding's behavior in terms of friends and enemies, while Fielding approaches it in terms of literal facts, which he believes are sufficient. This misunderstanding motivates Fielding's departure from India, which gives Aziz additional reason to believe that Fielding will marry Adela Quested.

Chapter Thirty-Two:

Fielding leaves India for travels in other exotic parts of the world. Fielding found Egypt charming, as well as Crete and Venice. He felt that everything in Venice and Crete was right where everything in India was wrong, such as the idol temples and lumpy hills. Elsewhere there is form that India lacks.

Analysis:

Like Adela Quested, Fielding leaves India, yet while Adela was strengthened by her suffering in India, Fielding leaves in mere disgust. He idealizes each of the places that he visits, simply because they are different from India. Fielding's complaint that India lacks form relates back to the earlier comment that India is a Œmuddle.' Both complaints about India have their basis in the idea that the nation does not conform to expectations and reveal the limitations of western interpretations of the country. Despite Fielding's liberalism and ability to appreciate India, he still lacks some ability to fully understand the culture and be entirely part of it. Fielding's escape from India is thus in some part an attempt to rejoin the western culture he abandoned during Aziz's trial.

Part Three, Chapters 33-37

Part Three: Temple

Chapter Thirty-Three:

Hundreds of miles west of the Marabar Hills, Professor Godbole stands "in the presence of God" during a Hindu birth ceremony. Godbole prays at the famous shrine at the palace at Mau. Godbole is now the Minister of Education at Mau. He sings not to the god who confronts him during the ritual, but to a saint. The ritual does not one thing that the non-Hindu would consider dramatically correct. By chance, while thinking about a wasp that he sees, Godbole remembers Mrs. Moore, even though she was not important to him.

Analysis:

Forster releases the dramatic tension that had built concerning the Marabar Caves expedition in this chapter, which takes place removed from the conflict in Chandrapore. This chapter, with the exception of the reference to Mrs. Moore, exists entirely in reference to Indian culture. Forster makes the important point that the birth ceremony is dramatically incorrect for westerners, but nevertheless is appropriate for its particular context.

Godbole's sudden remembrance of Mrs. Moore is an odd intrusion into the specifically Hindu ceremony, but not entirely inappropriate. Mrs. Moore remains the only English character in A Passage to India who proved herself able to fully interact with Indian culture. It is she, and not Fielding, whose pragmatism and independence make him unsuitable for both eastern and western culture, who best achieved reciprocity between the two cultures.

Chapter Thirty-Four:

Dr. Aziz, who had taken part in the ceremony, leaves the palace at the same time as Godbole and sees the Professor, who tells him that Fielding arrived at the European Guest House. Fielding is making an official visit; he was transferred from Chandrapore and sent on a tour through Central India to see what the more remote states are doing with regard to English education. Fielding had married; Aziz assumes that his bride is Miss Quested. In Mau the conflict is not between Indians and English, but between Brahman and non-Brahman. Aziz had destroyed all the letters that Fielding had wrote to him after he learned that Fielding had married someone he knew. Unfortunately, Aziz never read any letters past the phrase "someone he knew" and automatically assumed it was Miss Quested. Aziz still remains under criminal investigation since the trial. Colonel Maggs, the Political Agent for the area, is committed to investigating Aziz, still convinced that he must be guilty based on events in Chandrapore. Aziz receives a note from Fielding, but he tears it up.

Analysis:

Forster bases this chapter on a misunderstanding between Aziz and Fielding. Aziz remains angry at Fielding for supposedly marrying Miss Quested, but there is no definitive information that it is actually Miss Quested that he has married. In fact, for Fielding to do so and expect friendship with Aziz seems quite unlikely. Rather, the identity of the person whom Fielding has married

will soon be revealed. There is some irony in the situation. Aziz deliberately causes this rift between him and Fielding by refusing to finish a sentence.

Aziz remains bitter and cynical because of the events at Chandrapore, but upon leaving the area his temper has cooled significantly. There is still a core of resentment, but Aziz is no longer obsessed with revenge against the English in general and Adela Quested in particular. The different political dynamic at Mau contributes to this greater sense of repose; the omnipresent conflict between the English and the Indians in Chandrapore cedes to different lines of faction in Mau. This new balance of power shows that the problems in India are not part of irreconcilable lines of conflict between east and west; rather, the problem stems from the natural human tendency for factions. In Mau, the English-Indian differences are secondary to other alignments. This is significant because it shows that there is no irreconcilable rift between the English and Indians.

Chapter Thirty-Five:

There are two shrines to a Mohammedan saint in Mau. These commemorate a man who, upon his mother's order to "free prisoners," freed the inmates at the local jail, but whose head was cut off by the police. These shrines are the sites where the few Mohammedans in Mau pray. Aziz goes to the Shrine of the Head with his children, Ahmed, Jemila and Karim. The children see Fielding and his brother-in-law, and tell Aziz. They suggest throwing stones at them, but Aziz scolds them. Aziz, who is fortunately in a good temper, greets Fielding, although he had not intended to do so. Aziz greets the brother-in-law as "Mr. Quested," but he says that his name is Ralph Moore. Fielding had married Stella, the daughter of Mrs. Moore. Fielding blames Mahmoud Ali for the ill will between them, for he knew definitively that Fielding had married Stella. Aziz behaves aggressively and says that he forgives Mahmoud Ali. He tells Fielding that his heart is for his own people only. He leaves Fielding and returns to his house, excited and happy, but realizes that he had promised Mrs. Moore to be kind to her children, if he met them.

Analysis:

Although the reason behind Aziz's anger toward Fielding disappears once the misunderstanding is cleared up, Aziz cannot let go of his long-held dissatisfaction against Fielding. Aziz has been so prepared to think of Fielding as married to Adela that he can barely comprehend that he is mistaken. However, part of the anger that Aziz shows toward Fielding must certainly stem from both pride and embarrassment. Aziz must justify that he has been so angry with his good friend for so long, but feels somewhat foolish for the absurd mistake, for the deception by Mahmoud Ali, and for behaving poorly toward the son of the beloved Mrs. Moore. Also, having been angry at Fielding for so long, Aziz finds it difficult to let go of his bitterness so hastily. Once again, however, Mrs. Moore proves to be the factor that motivates Aziz to behave with more kindness.

Chapter Thirty-Six:

The birth procession had not yet taken place, although the birth ceremony finished earlier. All would culminate in the dance of the milkmaidens before Krishna. Aziz could not understand the

ceremony any more than a Christian could, puzzled that during the ceremony the people in Mau could be purged from suspicion and self-seeking. Godbole tells Aziz that he has known that Fielding was married to Stella Moore for more than a year. Aziz cannot be angry with Godbole, however, because it is not his way to tell anybody anything. Aziz and Godbole continue in the procession as it leads out of town. Aziz becomes cynical once again. He thinks that the pose of "seeing India" is only a form of conquest. Aziz goes to the Guest House where Fielding stays and reads two letters lying open on the piano. In the East the sanctity of private correspondence does not exist. The letters primarily concern Ralph Moore, who appears to be almost an imbecile, but there is a letter from Adela to Stella in which she says that she hopes Stella will enjoy India more than she did and says that she will never repay a debt. Aziz notices the friendly intercourse between these people, men and women, and believes that this is the strength of England. Ralph Moore enters, and Aziz claims that he is there to bring salve for his bee stings. Aziz abruptly prepares to leave, but apologizes. Ralph tells him that his mother loved Aziz, and Aziz claims that Mrs. Moore was his best friend in the world. Aziz offers to take Ralph Moore out on the river, as an act of homage to Mrs. Moore. Ralph is curious about the procession, which marks him as Mrs. Moore's son. The boat which Ralph and Aziz are in collides with another boat carrying Fielding and Stella.

Analysis:

Forster juxtaposes the Hindu birth ceremony that culminates in this chapter with the rebirth of the Dr. Aziz of the first chapters of A Passage to India. Aziz begins to demonstrate once again those characteristics he showed toward Mrs. Moore when he behaves kindly to Ralph Moore and offers to show him Mau. Nevertheless, like the Hindu birth ceremony, the Œrebirth' of Aziz's generosity is a slow process.

Godbole's random revelation to Aziz that he has known about Fielding's marriage to Stella Moore highlights how absurd the conflict between Aziz and Fielding really is. If he had bothered to inform Aziz, or if Aziz had bothered to read the entirely of the letter Fielding had sent to him, there would be no conflict. This in turn shows the absurdity of Aziz insisting on remaining angry at Fielding. Other than pride and stubbornness, there is no reason for Aziz to feel any ill will toward Fielding. Fortunately, Aziz finally relents and abandons his aggressive stance toward the Fieldings and Ralph Moore. The impetus for this is the memory of Mrs. Moore, who still pervades the events in A Passage to India long after her death. When Aziz takes Ralph Moore on the river, this recalls Aziz's first meetings with Mrs. Moore in which he attempted to show her Indian culture out of pure kindness.

The crashing of the two boats forms the climax of A Passage to India. The event proves a sharp confrontation between Aziz and Fielding, but one that is more foolish and absurd than dramatic. The melodrama of the clashing of two cultures, east and west, that drives the majority of the novel gives way to a comic clashing of two boats. This is an ironic event, for the reconciliation between Aziz and Fielding occurs only after a comedic mishap. This also serves as a reminder of the foolishness of most of the dramatic events in A Passage to India. The mini-tragedy of the crashing of the boats occurs out of misunderstandings and understandable errors in judgment. The major difference between the crashing of the boats and the other

events of the novel is that Fielding and Aziz choose to accept the event as comedy rather than tragedy.

Chapter Thirty-Seven:

Fielding and Aziz are friends again, but aware that they can meet no more. After the funny shipwreck there is no bitterness or nonsense. Aziz admits how brave Miss Quested was, and claims that he wants to do kind actions to wipe out the wretched business of the Marabar forever. Fielding realizes that his wife does not love him as much as he loves her. They realize that socially the two men have no meeting place. Fielding cannot defy his own people for the sake of a stray Indian, and Aziz is but a memento. Aziz explains what he can of the birthing ceremony to Fielding. They discuss who should rule India. Fielding mockingly suggests the Japanese, but Aziz wants his ancestors, the Afghans, to rule. To Aziz, India will then become a nation. Aziz cries "down with the English. That's certain," then states that only then will he and Fielding be friends.

Analysis:

Forster ends A Passage to India with a bittersweet reconciliation between Aziz and Fielding, but also with the realization that the two cannot be friends under contemporary conditions. Aziz makes an important concession when he admits that Adela was brave to withdraw her charges, and expresses regret for the aftermath of the Marabar expedition. Aziz thus completes a movement from kindness and generosity of spirit to bitter and cynicism and back. Fielding, in contrast, realizes that he is in fact a true Englishman and belongs among his own race; to defy his race and maintain an active friendship with Aziz would be just, but not pragmatic. This brings back the theme of responsibilities and limitations of racial identity, as Fielding accepts the sacrifices he must make to retain his English identity. In this manner Forster ends A Passage to India as a tragic but platonic love story between the two friends, separated by different cultures and political climates.

Forster does not express any definitive political standpoint on the sovereignty of India in this chapter. Fielding suggests that British rule over India, if relinquished, would be replaced by a different sovereign that would be perhaps worse than the English. However, Aziz does make the point that it is British rule in India that prevents the two men from remaining friends. Forster thus indicates that British rule in India creates significant problems for India, but does not offer an easy or concrete solution.

9.Importance of Echo:

The echo begins at the Marabar Caves: first Mrs. Moore and then Adela hear the echo and are haunted by it in the weeks to come. The echo's sound is "boum"—a sound it returns regardless of what noise or utterance is originally made. This negation of difference embodies the frightening flip side of the seemingly positive Hindu vision of the oneness and unity of all living things. If all people and things become the same thing, then no distinction can be made between good and evil. No value system can exist. The echo plagues Mrs. Moore until her death, causing her to abandon her beliefs and cease to care about human relationships. Adela,

however, ultimately escapes the echo by using its message of impersonality to help her realize Aziz's innocence.

10.Importance of the Marabar Caves:

The Marabar caves do not exist. One of the most potent and compelling locations in modern literature, the caves are the creation of E.M. Forster and form the dark heart of his 1924 novel *A Passage to India*. However, the infamous caves are not without a basis in fact. Forster modeled them after the Barabar Caves, which are located 35Km north of Gaya, in the state of Bihar. A further veneer of reality was provided when David Lean produced a film adaptation of Forster's novel in 1984, utilising locations that allowed him to bring the Marabar Caves to life on the silver screen.

The core event in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* is the 'assault' experienced by Adela Quested in one of the Marabar Caves, where Aziz has taken Miss Quested and Mrs Moore for a day's excursion despite his scarce knowledge of the Hindu caves. The central chapter of the section begins with Aziz, Mrs Moore, Miss Quested and a guide from the local village having climbed up the hills and being away from the rest of the expedition party. Aziz has separated himself from Adela since he lost his emotional balance because of her insensitive questioning. The narrator follows Aziz, who goes into one of the caves where he waits and lights a cigarette in order to recover his equilibrium. When he comes back, Aziz finds the guide who is alone and says that he has heard a noise, the whine of a motor car. Aziz and the guide try to get a better look at the oncoming car. At this moment Aziz runs back to tell Miss Quested that a car is approaching and realizes that she has disappeared. The guide says that she went into a cave and Aziz berates the guide for not keeping track of her. Aziz is confused and a few seconds later sees that Miss Quested had joint her friends at the base of the hill. His relief is followed by disquiet as he finds Adela's field glasses with a broken leather strap lying at the edge of a cave .
In the course of the novel, Adela Quested claims that she has been sexually assaulted in the Marabar Caves by the young Indian doctor Aziz and the subsequent court case polarizes the two communities - the Indian and the English - until Adela admits that she was mistaken and that Aziz is innocent.

11.Significance of Godbole's Song: An essay

Godbole's poignant song reverberates throughout E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*. The melody is baffling yet potent. Godbole places himself in the position of a lowly milk maiden who pleas with her God for unity and connection. Godbole recites this plea to the God Shri Krishna in the form of a *raga*, a rhythmic pattern where the musical notes are repeated over and over, as Godbole reprises, "Come, come, come, come, come, come." The repetition of "come" is in essence an echo. While this motif is most directly associated with the Marabar Caves, it is seen throughout the novel and is first introduced in the form of Godbole's song. The

refrain speaks to the root of tension in the novel and uncovers the underlying source of disunity amongst the characters as well as between England and India. Each character responds uniquely to the echo of the song, which demonstrates either their ability to grasp the multiplicity of India to find unity.

Like the numerous echoes in the novel, Godbole's "come" keeps repeating, yet receives only silence in response. Krishna's silence represents what Gertrude M. White calls "the problem of separation" between matter and essence. His song "signifies man's attempt to forge unity between the material and the spiritual" and each character repsonds to this attmpt differently. The nature of each character's relationship with transcendent powers is inherently distinctive because each character grapples with different aspects of doubt and confusion. It is through their responses to the echo of Godbole's song that "Forster's characters reveal their multiple and often contradictory assessments of the cosmos and the human condition. Forster's use of the characters' "contradictory assessments" demonstrates not only the separation between the material and the spiritual, but also the separations within the social and political world.

Forster shows each distinct culture (British, Muslim, and Hindu) to have an opposing response to the echo in Godbole's song. Forster asserts that "no one is India," as he uses Mrs. Moore and Adela to symbolize the English, Aziz the Muslims, and Godbole the Hindus. The English cannot understand the echo, the Muslim ear is indifferent, and the Hindu strives–and appears to succeed–in grasping the elusive significance of the song.

Despite attempts to comprehend Krishna's response, the English ultimately fail in their quest for greater understanding. To the English, Godbole's song is a mystery; they do not know why Krishna responds with silence or why the milkmaidens seek a sexual union with the God. The English struggle to connect to one another, let alone a higher power. The notion of transcendental powers frightens and baffles the English because there do not appear to be distinct answers, but rather open-ended questions that appear to lack a complete answer. Mrs. Moore even says, "We English. . .hate mysteries." They instead seek definite, concrete answers. For instance, Adela wants to "see the *real* India" manifested in one singular person, such as Aziz. She cannot grasp the plurality of an India that is made up of "a hundred Indians".The English "excel at the practical life, but are lost in the spiritual."

Mrs. Moore acts as a lens through which we view the reaction to the echo of Godbole's song. For Mrs. Moore, the echo is "a frightening assertion of meaninglessness." When she questions Godbole about Krishna's appearance in another song, it becomes clear she cannot acknowledge the possibility of an intangible answer from Krishna. She interprets the silence as indifference. As Mrs. Moore grapples with the idea of a God unconcerned with his devotees, she fears that while "Everything exists, nothing has value." In essence, everything is the same,

but in this sameness is nothing. Krishna's answer (or, rather, silence) catapults her into a state of disillusionment because the emphasis of nothingness and silence threatens her "talkative little Christianity." After witnessing the milkmaiden's fruitless attempt at unity, she becomes apathetic about life; she loses interest in her family and friends. She comes to see that relationships are pointless because there is the possibility of being let down, just as the milkmaidens are let down by their god. Mrs. Moore's apathetic view of relationships is solidified when she feels chafed by Mrs. Bhattacharya's evasion, Adela's failed engagement, and even by her Christian god that cannot help her make sense of India and the question it provokes.

As Mrs. Moore's beliefs shift, she realizes that everything amounts to "Boum": it all "amounts to same ," thus undermining her views of the hierarchical Christian religion that emphasizes the tangible and material. Mrs. Moore is crippled because she is confronted with the abstract, transcendental nature of the Hindu religion. She grapples with the concept of absence and nothingness, as do many who read the novel through a Western lens. The echo, in the form of Godbole's song, brings Mrs. Moore's world crashing in. As she contemplates the idea that her life has been built upon a faulty foundation of relationships and beliefs, she isolates herself. Instead of embracing the nothingness of Krishna's response, she draws away from her faith and her family, dying at sea. She ultimately dies in a transitional phase, neither in England nor India: rejecting her former beliefs, yet running in fear from her newly-discovered truth.

Like Mrs. Moore, Adela also finds disillusionment in Krishna's silence. However, the meaninglessness she feels corresponds to her physical relationship with Ronny rather than to her spiritual relation with the divine.The echo enables her to see that she does not love the man she is about to marry. Krishna's refusal to unite with the milkmaidens foreshadows that there will be no union between Adela and Ronny because, unlike in the song, there is no sexual connection between the couple.White suggests that a loveless union would be rape.The echo instills in Adela an intense fear caused by her anticipated sexual union with Ronny. Driven by anxious expectation of a sexual union or perhaps that there will not be a connection, Adela imagines a sexual encounter with Aziz. Adela's hallucination leads to her embarrassment and to subsequent accusations of Aziz.

The theme of unity in Godbole's song parallels both Adela and Ronny, and therefore India and England's inability to unite. There is nothing pleasant or collective about the relationship between the two countries. In fact, Ronny proclaims that his only job is India is "to hold this wretched country by force." Mrs. Moore rebukes Ronny with the *Bible* verse that says, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not love." Mrs. Moore speaks with the only vocabulary she knows, that of Christianity, a religion that fails to live out its own commandment in the novel. The use of violence and force during and following the trial scene

by the British symbolizes the failure of Christianity and the "utmost degradation of such a union" like that between Ronny and Adela The lack of love and kindness between the two countries represents the imperialistic rape of India by England.

While the Anglo-Indians are distressed by the significance of Godbole's song, Aziz has no reaction. When he first hears the song, it sounds like "a maze of noises" to his Muslim ear. Godbole's language baffles Aziz, emphasizing the divide between Islam and Hinduism. Forster portrays Aziz as baffled by India, his own country, throughout the novel. Through this ambivalence, we see that Islam's tenets do not equip Aziz to encompass the significance of the song. As a result, Aziz fails in his attempts to connect both with the other characters and with India.

Aziz acts under false pretenses when he tries to convince the other characters, namely the English, that he is knowledgeable about India. However, he is wrong about many aspects of India, such as the Marabar Caves. To sound cultured, Aziz interrupts Godbole's explanation of the caves to Mrs. Moore and Adela. He excitedly interjects, yet contributes inaccurate information that Godbole then corrects. Once at the caves, Azia, "in spite of his gay, confident talk, had no notion of how to treat this particular aspect of India; he was lost in it without Professor Godbole." Aziz is no more knowledgeable about India and the significance of Godbole's song than the Christian characters. He does not understand India and he is most definitely not "India," as Adela believes. In spite of their differing reactions, both the English and the Muslims fail to grasp the relationship between the material and spiritual in India, leading us to believe that perhaps Godbole is the only one to completely comprehend the significance of his song to Krishna.

The sexual message of Godbole's song demonstrates his desire for complete unity with Krishna. Rather than interpreting Krishna's silence as an absence of meaning, Godbole sees the silence as "a sign of hope which not only allows but encourages one to beckon divinity." For him, the absence of response does not equate to indifference, but rather serves as a symbol of unity through cosmic confusion. According to Shusterman, Godbole himself is baffled because his plea for religious clarity and unity is answered with silence. However, Godbole welcomes this confusion instead of balking in disillusionment. He realizes that the absence of Krishna's response implies a form of existence that finds value in nothingness. Godbole, through his Hindu beliefs, accepts the confusion, which Hinduism celebrates.

Forster portrays Hinduism as "the most accepting" of the spiritual ambiguity that causes conflict for the non-Hindu characters. Hinduism's centrality in *A Passage to India* is crucial and is intrinsically linked to the echo of Godbole's song because only Hindu servants seem to understand it. "The echo, the symbol of the formlessness, eternity, confusion, and illusion brought into relief by India, cannot be eradicated by the insistent denial of its existence. The

Hindu sensibility understands this and celebrates the essence of the echo," which leads us to conclude that Hinduism is the only religion that allows for the answer to Krishna's response.

"Temple," the third section of the novel, marks the culmination of the story's agenda. The temple represents the Hindu religion and demonstrates its mediation of diversity in the universe. The world is a mystery, not a muddle, because an answer exists to the question of unity; however, the answer is conceptual and metaphysical. The Hindus recognize "the sacred bewilderment" of the characters' reactions to Godbole's song as a mystery that encompasses all things to achieve unity despite apparent contradictions. Hinduism is not concerned with "cosmic contradictions" such as that of good and evil which is explained by Professor Godbole. Forster portrays both Christianity and Islam to rely on form, which then negates the contingency of complete unity. As a result, the English and Muslim characters only perceive Krishna's response as a muddle. Godbole's starkly different interpretation of the song's echo, which reflects his Hindu beliefs, is abstruse to the other characters.

By the end of the novel, we realize that "the way of Godbole is the only possible way: love, even though to exist it must maintain a detachment from the physical world and human relationships, offers the single upward path from the land of steritly and echoing evil." Krishna's response to Godbole's song is provided during the Birth ceremony of Krishna in the form of "infinite love" that came to save the world from sorrow. But the human ability to accept this love is inhibited by the confines of concrete knowledge. Despite Godbole's Hindu beliefs, it becomes clear that no one can achieve unity through "infinite love." During the British ceremony, Godbole "remembered a wasp seen he forgot where, perhaps on a stone. He loved the wasp equally. . .he was imitating God. And the stone where the wasp clung–could he, no, he could not, he had been wrong to attempt the stone, logic and conscious effort had seduced." If the significance of the song is unity through infinite love, then the only way India and England will be unified is if they interact in a loving manner.

While Godbole, through his Hindu beliefs, comes closest to grasping the concept of infinite love, he fails to fully comprehend its significance. Despite his attempt to love everything equally, he still cannot achieve unity with Krishna and instead finds himself standing opposite to him at the Birth ceremony. Godbole's failure to love the stone equally demonstrates that the ideals of Hinduism are simply too great and abstract for the human mind to grasp. After all, "no one is India"–neither the English, nor the Muslims, nor the Hindus, and no one can have India. India, the symbol of infinite love, calls "come," come achieve unity, but it is not a promise, only an appeal.

12.Historical Context

Forster's England

Although the action of A *Passage to India* takes place entirely in India, it should be remembered that Forster was a British writer, and that most of his readers were British. Thus, the work reflects not only the contemporary India, which is its overt subject, but also England and the milieu in which Forster lived and wrote. Moreover, al though Forster published the book in 1924 during the reign of King George V (r. 1910−36), he is commonly regarded as an Edwardian novelist. Forster's first four novels were written in the first decade of the twentieth century, during the reign of King Edward VII (r. 1901−10), and his values and outlook were developed during this period, before World War I. Thus, like Forster's earlier books, A *Passage to India* is commonly regarded as an Edwardian book (an Edwardian novel of manners, at that), even though it was not written during the Edwardian period.

Between the time Forster first visited India and began writing this novel (1912−13) and the time he finished it (1924), Britain had undergone the traumatic experience of World War I. Britain and her allies won the war, but more than 750,000 British soldiers were killed, along with another quarter of a million soldiers from other parts of the British Empire; another two million British and Empire soldiers were wounded, many of them severely. These losses affected people's attitudes toward tradition and authority. The self−confidence that earlier had marked Britain's attitude about its empire and its place in the world was replaced with doubt and uncertainty. Nonetheless, although there was some sympathy for the Indian cause, most British people at the time would have supported the British presence in India.

Between 1912 and 1924, the British political landscape had also changed. At the beginning of this period, the Liberal Party had been one of the two major parties in Britain. (The other major party was, and remains, the Conservative Party.) The Liberals had won the majority of votes in the election of l 908, and were in power from that time until 19l5. However, during this decade the Liberals lost much of their support to the newer and more radical Labour Party, which favored a socialist program. The Labour Party had its first election victory in 1924; by this time, the Liberal Party had dwindled to a third−party status, and it never won another general election. (Forster and most of his circle, including the members of the Bloomsbury Group, were Labour supporters.) Although Labour remained in power for only ten months in 1924, the party had become the main alternative to the Conservatives.

During this period the British Empire was beginning to change. This change was most evident in Ireland, the only region of the British Empire that was right on Britain's doorstep. On Easter Sunday, 1916, a group of Irish rebels declared Irish in dependence from Britain and attempted to seize control of Dublin. Although the British army quickly crushed the rebellion, a more widespread Irish independence movement soon arose, and in l92l the British government signed a treaty recognizing self−rule for the twenty−six southern counties of Ireland.

The Indian Context

Although the Irish rebellion had no direct effect on British rule of India, the fact that

Ireland had gained limited independence helped to strengthen the idea of possible Indian independence in the minds of many Indians. Forster's novel is set during a time of increased tension between the British and their Indian subjects. The British presence in India had begun in the 1600s, when a British trading company, the East India Company, gained a strong foothold in Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta. At this time, much of India was nominally governed by a royal Moslem dynasty, the Moguls. (It was the Mogul emperors and their court that Dr. Aziz in the novel idealized.) However, the Mogul government was weakened by infighting and was unable to control all of India. The Indian population consisted of a number of different ethnic and religious groups, with little sense of an overall Indian identity. The British were thus able to increase their power in India.

In 1773, the English Parliament created the post of Governor General for India. Under Governor−General Cornwallis (1786−93), the British established a sophisticated colonial administration in India. (Cornwallis was also the British general who had surrendered to George Washington at the end of the American Revolutionary War.) Cornwallis instituted a system of British rule that was still mostly intact at the time of *A Passage to India.* Indians were forbidden to hold high government office and were subject to other laws that kept them in a subservient position, both legally and economically. A number of areas of the country known as Native States or Independent States were not under direct British rule, but were governed by local Indian princes or maharajahs However, the British authorities kept close watch on these states, which had friendly policies toward the British.

The British suppressed an Indian rebellion (known as the Indian Mutiny or Sepoy Rebellion) in 1857. By the time of *A Passage to India,* there was a significant organized movement for Indian equality and eventual independence, in the form of the Indian National Congress. In 1919, nearly 400 Indians were shot to death and another 1,200 wounded when soldiers under British command opened fire on a crowd that had gathered illegally in the northeast Indian town of Amritsar. The Amritsar Massacre, as it became known, caused a public outcry both in India and Britain. India stood poised on the edge of widespread violence. In this tense atmosphere, a British−educated Indian lawyer named Mohandas K. Gandhi began a long non−violent campaign of civil disobedience against British rule. Gandhi advocated Indian equality as well as peaceful cooperation between the country's Hindu and Moslem populations. Forster does not mention Gandhi or the Amritsar Massacre, but the division between India's Hindus and Moslems is a major concern in the novel.

There is some critical dispute over the time period during which Forster's novel is set. One Indian who admired the book believed that It was representative of India at the time of Forster's first visit, 1912. One American critic has claimed that the action occurs "out of time." Most Critics and readers feel that the action takes place in the early 1920s, contemporary with the time that the book was finished and published.

In any case, Forster's novel is not only concerned with its own time but also looks forward to the future. The novel hints that the two groups may be able to put aside their traditional differences and live in harmony as Indians. However, this did not turn out to be the case. As independence grew nearer, Moslems demanded the creation of a

separate Moslem nation, Pakistan Indian independence in 1947 was accompanied by violent clashes between Hindus and Moslems, with tens of thousands of deaths on both sides. The next year, Gandhi was assassinated by a Hindu fanatic who believed that Gandhi was making too many compromises with the Moslems. Ironically, today both India and Pakistan have relatively good relations with Britain and the British. So It is likely that Dr. Aziz and Mr. Fielding would today be able to have the sort of uninhibited friendship that is mentioned at the end of the book.

13.Critical Essays:

13.1.Critical Essay

A Passage to India is E. M. Forster's final and perhaps finest novel. Forster visited India twice and wrote another novel, the posthumously published *Maurice,* before finally completing *A Passage to India* in 1924−more than ten years after it was begun. Although Forster has stated that the novel is not really about politics and that it is less concerned with the incompatibility of East and West than it is with the difficulty of living in the universe, the novel does address issues such as colonialism, racism, nationalism, and rape. As a result, much of the critical analysis has focused on political and social themes. One of the major issues the novel attempts to address is introduced in the second chapter through a conversation in which Dr. Aziz, Mahmoud Ali, and Hamidullah discuss "whether or not it is possible to be friends with an Englishman." Shortly after this discussion, Dr. Aziz is befriended by two Englishwomen and the Anglo−Inman Principal at the College, Mr. Fielding. But most Critics tend to look beyond the relationships between individuals and discuss the novel in terms of its depiction of Anglo−Indian colonial society. Debate over whether or not *A Passage to India* is critical of colonialism is ongoing Many critics agree that the novel does attack the traditional justifications for British domination, but convincing arguments can also be made that Forster's attempt to represent India implicates him in the "muddle" of imperial power.

At the centre of the novel is the visit to the Marabar Caves. All the connections and friendships established in the first section of the novel lead to this expedition. Much has been written about what actually happens in the caves but the mystery remains unsolved. One might read Mrs. Moore's and Miss Quested's experiences in the caves as a breakdown of established values resulting from the exposure to "other" conceptions of culture and being. Adela's experience in particular is often read as a hallucination or hysterical reaction brought about by sexual repression. But the mystery remains a mystery because the pivotal scene involving Adela and Aziz is never told. Mrs. Moore has a "horrifying" experience inside one of the caves and sinks into a state of apathy and cynicism. All that is known of Adela's misadventure is that she suffers a maybe−real, maybe−imagined sexual assault and that Aziz is charged with the crime. Whether or not there even was a crime committed, either by Aziz or by

someone else, is never revealed.After witnessing the unsuccessful Bridge Party, Adela vows that she will neversuccumb to Anglo−Indian ideology. Yet, as Jenny Sharpe has noted in her article *TheUnspeakable Limits of Rape: Colonial Violence and Counter−Insurgency in Genders,* the accusations Adela makes against Dr. Aziz seemingly confirm the fears and racist assumptions used to justify imperialism−that the "native" world is chaotic, uncontrollable and evil and thus in need of English domination. Following Aziz's arrest, many of these hateful and unfounded fears are openly manifested. The District Superintendent of Police, Mr. McBryde, is not surprised by Aziz's downfall because he believes that "all unfortunate natives are criminals at heart, for the simple reason that they live south of latitude 30." At the Club, people begin to voice their concern for the safety of the "women and children" and one young woman even refuses to "return to her bungalow in case the 'niggers attacked.'" The prevailing attitude is best represented by McBryde's words at Aziz's trial. He delivers his opening statement almost indifferently because he believes that Aziz's guilt is already accepted as fact. The possibility that Aziz may in fact be innocent is never even considered because, as McBryde tells the court, It is a "general truth" that the "darker races are physically attracted by the fairer, but uot vice versa".

But passages such as these do not lend authority to Adela's allegations against Dr. Aziz. On the contrary, the rhetoric used to justify imperialism is severely parodied. The scenes paint all ugly picture of the English officers sent to India to "do Justice and keep the peace"; they become almost ridiculous when it is remembered that the colonizers' prejudices and fears are aroused by an event that may not have taken place. McBryde's "general truth" is based not on evidence or, as he claims, scientific fact, but on the assumptions and premises which are necessary to support notions of Western superiority.

Similarly, the mystery surrounding the caves and the events that transpired inside them undermine any sense of certainty in the novel. Adela herself becomes unsure about what actually happened in the caves and is plagued by the echoing doubt that her accusations may have been fabricated. Sharpe has argued that this element of uncertainty, introduced into a crime which supposedly confirms the "native's" depravity, reveals the fictionality of what she terms "colonial truth−claims." In other words, Sharpe illustrates how the declaration of Aziz's innocence "undermines the racist assumptions underpinning an official discourse that represents anti−colonial insurgency as the savage attack of barbarians on innocent women and children" The novel's exposure of such politically constructed "truths" thus subverts the conventional justifications for British domination.

However, the novel's condemnation of imperial ideology is not unproblematic. Benita Parry has noted, in *The Politics of Representation* in *A Pas sage to India,* from *E. M. Forster: Contemporary Critical Essays,* that while the text does lampoon colonial rhetoric, its overt criticism of colonialism is phrased in the feeblest of terms. One scene which several Critics have singled out even suggests that colonialism might have been more acceptable had the British only been a little kinder: "One touch of regret... would have made [Ronny] a different man, and the British Empire a different institution." The novel's ending is also troublesome. Fielding, the one man who stood

against his countrymen to defend Aziz, finally throws in "his lot with Anglo−India by marrying a countrywoman" and "acquiring some of its limitations." He even begins to doubt whether he would repeat his defiance of his own people "for the sake of a stray Indian."

Moreover, there are instances in the novel where the narrator appears to be guilty of making broad generalizations about Indians. Compared to the loud and offensive remarks spoken by McBryde, the narrator's occasional reinforcement of racial stereotypes is easily overlooked. But seemingly harmless comments−"like most

Orientals' Aziz overrated hospitality"−do contribute to the West's textual construction of the East. And, as alluded to above, It is this kind of fabricated report which can eventually become accepted as a "general truth." While narrative comments such as these do not necessarily invalidate the novel's criticism of colonialism, they do suggest that the Western novelist's prose about India, like the "pose of seeing India" criticized in the novel, can be a "form of ruling India".

Of course, it is possible to discuss the novel without emphasizing the political and colonial themes. A completely different reading is offered by Parminder Bakshi in *A Passage to India: Theory and Practice Series.* Bakshi argues that *A Passage to India,* like all of Forster's fiction, contains homo−erotic themes and was inspired not by colonial issues but by the barriers to male friendship. She contends that Forster strives to dissociate friendship from politics and illustrates how the novel moves towards creating intimacy between Fielding and Aziz. Central to her argument is the theme of friendship which, Bakshi believes, decenters the hollow and artificial convention of marriage because it poses a threat to male friendship.

Perhaps most convincing is Bakshi's reading of the novel's final scene. Although politics appear to be the reason for Fielding and Aziz's separation, Bakshi argues that politics are actually superfluous. More traditional readings of the scene interpret Aziz's final words as an acknowledgment that the colonial situation makes friendship between the English and Indians impossible. But Bakshi points out that it is only at the suggestion of male intimacy made by Fielding ("Why can't we be friends now? It's what I want. It's what you want.") that the entire universe rises in protest by hurling countless barriers between them: "the horses did1J't want It−they swerved apart; the earth did1J't want it, sending up rocks through which riders must pass single−file; the temples, the tank ... they did1J't want it, they said in their hundred voices, 'No, not yet,' and the sky said, 'No, not there.'" Through Bakshi's reading, the novel transcends contemporary politics and becomes an indictment against the oppression of male love. Still, it is impossible to read the end of the novel without also considering the political and colonial themes. Forster's text is not optimistic about the future of East−West relations, but it is prophetic. Early in the novel, when Aziz is making his way to Callendar's compound, he becomes depressed by the roads which, "named after victorious generals and intersecting at right angles, were symbolic of the net Great Britain had thrown over India." In his final meeting with Fielding, Aziz recognizes the immediate need to throw off this net and foresees that the time for Indian independence will come with the next European war. Will the act of driving "every

blasted Englishman into the sea" make it possible for an Indian to be friends with an Englishman? The novel provides no simple answer. Forster was certainly aware that the repercussions of British authority would echo for years after the end of British domination, and while his novel's final words, spoken by a chorus of a hundred voices, do suggest the possibility of a better future, it is a future that, in 1924, remains uncertain.

13.2.Critical Essay

The chief argument against imperialism in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* is that it prevents personal relationships. The central question of the novel is posed at the very beginning when Mahmoud Ali and Hamidullah ask each other "whether or no it is possible to be friends with an Englishman." The answer, given by Forster himself on the last page, is "No, not yet− No, not there." Such friendship is made impossible, on a political level, by the existence of the British Raj. While having several important drawbacks, Forster's anti−imperial argument has the advantage of being concrete, clear, moving, and presumably persuasive. It is also particularly well−suited to pursuit in the novel form, which traditionally has focused on interactions among individuals. Forster's most obvious target is the unfriendly bigotry of the English in India, or the Anglo−Indians as they were called At times he scores them for their pure malice, as when Mrs. Callendar says, "The kindest thing one can do to a native is to let him die." More tellingly, Forster shows up their bigotry as prejudice in the literal sense of pre−judgment. The Anglo−Indians, as Forster presents them, act on emotional preconceptions rather than rational and open−minded examination of facts. They therefore fall into logical inconsistencies which the author exposes with his favorite weapon: Irony. For example, at the hysterical Club meeting following Dr. Aziz's arrest for allegedly molesting Adela Quested, the subaltern defends an anonymous native with whom he had played polo the previous month: "Any native who plays polo is all right. What you've got to stamp on is these educated classes." The reader knows, as the subaltern doesn't, that the native was Aziz himself. Against the bigotry of the Anglo−Indians, Forster urged tolerance and understanding in the widest sense.... Forster does much more in his book than simply deride the intolerance of a few accidental individuals. He carefully shows how this intolerance results from the unequal power relationship between English and Indians, from the imperialistic relationship itself The process is best shown in the book in the case of Ronny, who has only recently come out from England to be City Magistrate of Chandrapore. Ronny was at first friendly towards the Indians, but he soon found that his position prevented such friendship. Shortly after his arrival he invited the lawyer Ma1Jmoud All to have a smoke with him, only to learn later that clients began flocking to All in the belief that he had an in with the Magistrate. Ronny subsequently "dropped on him in Court as hard as I could. It's taught me a lesson, and I hope him." In this instance, it

is clearly Ronny's official position rather than any prior defect of the heart which disrupts the potential friendship. And It is his position in the imperial structure which causes his later defect, his lack of true regret when he tells his mother that now "I prefer my smoke at the club amongst my own sort, I'in afraid."

Forster tells us that "every human act in the East is tainted with officialism" and that "where there is officialism every human relationship suffers." People cannot establish a friendship of equals when the Raj is based on an inequality of power.

The one possible exception to this process of corruption among Englishmen is Fielding. He is partially immune to the influence of the Imperialistic power relationship because he works in education rather than government, and because, as he puts it, he "travels light"–he has no hostages to fortune. Fielding establishes a friendship with Aziz and maintains it in defiance of all the other Anglo Indians. There is some doubt, however, whether he can maintain this course and still remain in imperial India. He is obliged to quit the Club and says he will leave India altogether should Aziz be convicted. After Fielding marries Stella, thereby ceasing to travel light, and after he becomes associated with the government as a school inspector, he undergoes a marked change of attitude toward the Raj.

It would surely be a mistake to continue, as several critics do, to identify Forster with Fielding past this point. The omniscient narrator pulls back and summarizes Fielding's situation: "He had thrown in his lot with Anglo–India by marrying a countrywoman, and he was acquiring some of its limitations." Like Ronny and the other English officials, Fielding begins to be corrupted by his position. Thinking of how Godbole's school has degenerated into a granary, the new school inspector asserts that "Indians go to seed at once" away from the British. Fielding almost exactly echoes Ronny's defense of the Raj to his mother when he excuses unpleasantness in the supposedly necessary imperial presence: he had "'no further use for politeness,' he said, meaning that the British Empire really can't be abolished because it's rude." Fielding certainly did not start with a defect of the heart, but, as a result of his new position in the imperial structure, he is acquiring one.

The English, of course, aren't the only ones corrupted by Imperialism. Although most of the Indians in the book have a nearly unbelievable desire to befriend Englishmen, they are ultimately turned from it by the political reality. Some succumb to self–interest. Mahmoud All, for example, seems to have been the first to subvert his budding friendship with Ronny by advertising their smoke to potential litigants. More often the Indians succumb to the fear, largely justified but occasionally erroneous, that they will be scorned and betrayed. The prune example is Aziz. He makes the horrible mistake of assuming that Fielding back in England has married his enemy Adela and further that Fielding had urged him not to press damages against his false accuser so Fielding himself could enjoy Adela's money. Aziz, of course, has been conditioned to expect betrayal from his experience with other Anglo–Indians, and this expectation provides an undercurrent to the friendship from the very beginning. After Fielding returns to India, and Aziz learns he really married Stella Moore, their relationship is partially retrieved, but the damage has been done. The new school inspector has shifted toward the Raj, and Aziz, now leery of all Englishmen, has become a

nationalist, saying of India, "Not until she is a nation will her sons be treated with respect."

In 1924, when *Passage* appeared, the Indian movement led by Mahatma Gandhi was still not yet agitating for independence. They said they wished to achieve dominion status and remain within the empire. Forster took what was at the time a more radical position by declaring that India inevitably had to become free. In an article in *The Nation and the Athenaeum* in 1922, Forster stated that "ten years ago" Indians had looked to Englishmen for social support, but now it was "too late," and he anticipated "the dissolution of an Empire." These phrases are repeated at the end of the novel when Aziz cries, "Clear out, all you Turtons and Burtons. We wanted to know you ten years back−now it's too late."

Forster's novel does not explicitly spell out what has happened in the previous ten years, apart from Aziz's own trial and his blow−up with Fielding. However, the book is full of muted references to recent events. The most important among these was the 1919 uprising in the Punjab which the British brutally suppressed. At the town of Amritsar, General Dwyer ordered his troops to fire on an unarmed crowd, killing nearly four hundred. Later he issued an order requiring Indians to crawl through a street where an English girl, Miss Marcella Sherwood, had been attacked. In *Passage* Mrs. Turton, after the supposed attack on Adela, says of the Indians, "They ought to crawl from here to the caves on their hands and knees whenever an Englishwoman's in sight." After Amritsar, General Campbell issued an order obliging Indians to approach the houses of Europeans on foot. Thus Aziz, when he goes to visit Major Callendar, has to get out of his tonga before he reaches the verandah.

There are two important drawbacks in Forster's argument for independence on the grounds that it is necessary for friendship. The first is that his argument takes little account of the less personal, more abstract issues of imperialism, particularly the economic issues. Apart from a passing reference to "the wealth of India" allowed "to escape overseas," there is no mention of England's economic exploitation of India. We see no plantations or mines in British India Collector Turton presumably takes in tax, but we never see him doing so. And, with the exception of the punkah wallah, we never see an Indian performing physical labor. Thus we have little sense of why the English are in India in the first place.

Forster may have omitted the economics of the Raj because he was ignorant of them or didn't see their significance. Or possibly he did so because he was following the Bloomsbury aesthetic of starting with characters and bringing in the material world only secondarily. In any case, he left out an important aspect of the Raj, and this omission has led the Marxist critic Derek S. Savage to attack him fiercely: "The ugly realities underlying the presence of the British in India are not even glanced at, and the issues raised are handled as though they could be solved on the surface level of personal intercourse and individual behavior." This criticism may be justified, but in defence of Forster It should be noted that his particular argument against the Raj, its disruption of friendship, was shared by the Indian leaders of his day. In a 1921 letter explaining the purpose of the Non−cooperation Movement, Gandhi wrote: "We desire to live on terms of friendship with Englishmen, but that friendship must be friendship

of equals both in theory and practice, and we must continue to non−cooperate till the goal is achieved".

The second drawback to Forster's anti−imperial argument is perhaps more damaging. It is that even if the political barriers are overcome, Forster is still skeptical that friendship can be achieved. This skepticism has the effect of undermining the entire political argument and making us say, "Why bother?" *A Passage to India* suggests a number of non−political barriers to friendship: the selfishness inherent in human nature, cultural differences which Cannot be bridged, and the human potential for insanity. The most important banner, though, is the echo. There have been many interpretations of the echo in the Marabar caves, and it is difficult to explain in words since the echo intrinsically resists language, but It seems first of all to indicate the meaninglessness of the universe. For Mrs. Moore, the echo reduces all human expressions to the same dull "bourn," and it says, "Everything exists, nothing has value."... In the political aspect of the novel, Forster attacked the prejudice of the Anglo−Indians by appealing to a reason which would find the true facts; but in the metaphysical aspect, he tells us that reason is useless.

The effect of the echo on Mrs. Moore is to make her abandon all attempts at human connection After hearing it, she realizes she "didn't want to communicate with anyone She lost all interest, even in Aziz." Mrs. Moore withdraws into herself, leaves India without any further significant interaction with anyone, and finally dies. For her, the echo makes friendship impossible. Later, of course, the figure of Mrs. Moore undergoes a sort of apotheosis in which she is Imagined as a benefactress of India. She becomes the Hindu demi−deity Esmiss Esmoor; Professor Godbole makes her part of his ecstatic devotion, and Aziz tells Ralph, "Your mother was my best friend in all the world." There is no objective basis, however, for this exaltation of her by the Indians, and Reuben Brower seems right in saying, "We can hardly accept this about−face in Mrs. Moore's role and its symbolic value. We cannot at the end of the novel regard Mrs. Moore as in tune With the infinite and conveniently forget the mocking denial of her echo." Whatever her effect on others, she seems irretrievably isolated by the echo. Although she senses that Aziz is innocent, she is indifferent to his plight and does nothing at all to help him. When asked to testify, she says irritably, "When shall I be free from your fuss? Was he in the cave and were you in the cave and on and on and ending everything the echo." She decides of all people, including Aziz, "They do not exist, they were a dream." Mrs. Moore's friendship for Aziz thus comes to an end. The disruption in this case has nothing to do with the Raj or any other political barrier; rather it is caused by something much more powerful and over−riding: the echo.

A Passage to India does suggest a solution to the echo, of course. There is some doubt, however, whether Forster himself subscribed to this solution.

And the solution contributes nothing to the argument against the Raj since it transcends politics and all other worldly concerns. The solution is Hinduism, which is shown countering the echo by abandoning reason and embracing the muddle of the universe with irrational joy. The negative echo "bourn" is thus transposed into the affirmative chant "OM," representing the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. While Hinduism may provide a metaphysical solution, it does not, at least according

to Forster's novel, provide a political one Hinduism is shown embracing everything, including the British empire, with equal mindless affirmation. Professor Godbole points out that good and evil "are both of them aspects of my Lord." There are no villains: everyone attacked Adela. When Shri Krishna is born in the festival of Gokul Ashtami, he saves foreigners as well as Indians.
At the very end of the novel when Aziz tells Fielding, "We shall drive every blasted Englishman into the sea, and then... and then... you and I shall be friends," the Englishman asks him, "Why can't we be friends now? It's what I want. It's what you want." The question is never answered by either man because their horses swerve apart. . One interpretation of this closing paragraph is that Fielding and Aziz cannot be friends until India becomes a nation, but another interpretation, a far more chilling one, is that they can never be friends. Not only politics keep them apart. The very earth and sky do all of existence and the echo prevent human connection.

14.Important Study Questions

1. What do Adela and Mrs. Moore hope to get out of their visit to India? Do they succeed?

From the outset, both Mrs. Moore and Adela assert that their desire is to see the “real India” while they are in the country. Both women are frustrated with the lack of interaction between the English and the Indians, and they hope to get an authentic view of India rather than the standard tour for visiting colonials. Of the two, Mrs. Moore is less vocal than Adela in her impatience to discover the spirit of India, and she seems to be provisionally more successful in her goal. While Adela mopes in the Chandrapore Club, Mrs. Moore is already out on her own meeting Aziz in the mosque. Mrs. Moore, it seems, gets closer to a real sense of India because she seeks it out within Indians themselves, approaching them with sincere sympathy and interest. She does not desire to learn facts about Indian culture, but to forge a personal, individual connection. Adela, on the other hand, does not look to Indians for a glimpse of the “real India.” Instead, she operates in a somewhat academic vein, going around and trying to gather information and impressions of the country. Adela wishes to get in contact with the “spirit” behind the “frieze” of India, but she skips the step in between. Rather than regard Indians as people like herself, she seems to view them as subjects for intellectual study.

Ultimately, both women largely fail in their quest to see the “real India.” Adela is thwarted before she even begins: her engagement to Ronny forces her to give up her quest for communion with India and to take her place among the ranks of the rest of the Englishwomen in Chandrapore. Mrs. Moore, at least, realizes her mistaken quest before leaving India. On her train ride back to the coast to catch a return ship to England, Mrs. Moore begins to understand

that she and Adela have both been misguided in their search for a single India. Mrs. Moore realizes that India exists in hundreds of ways and that it cannot be fathomed by a single mind or in a single visit.

2.What causes Adela's breakdown? Why does she accuse Aziz? What qualities enable her to admit the truth at the trial?

Adela is an intelligent and inquisitive girl, but she has a limited worldview, and is, as Fielding puts it, a "prig." Adela has come to India to experience an adventure and to gauge her desire to marry Ronny. During the early stages of the visit, she weighs both her emotions and her experiences with an almost clinical precision. Adela wants to see the "real India," which apparently means an India unfiltered through the lens of English people and colonial institutions. But in her desire to have a single authentic experience and a single authentic understanding of India, Adela is unable to take in the complexity of her surroundings, which have been muddled even further by the presence of the English. There is no real India; there are a hundred real Indias. But Adela's attempt to make her Indian experience match her comfortable preconceptions cannot prepare her for this fact. As the muddle of India slowly works its way into her mind, it undermines her preconceptions without giving her anything with which to replace them.

On the way to the Marabar Caves, Adela realizes for the first time that she does not love Ronny. The sheer incomprehensibility of experience—as represented by the echo in the caves—overwhelms her for the first time. Traumatized, Adela feels not only as though her world is breaking down, but as though India itself is responsible for the breakdown. This idea solidifies in her mind as the idea that Aziz, an Indian, has attacked and attempted to rape her. Still, Adela is committed to the truth and has a strong mind. When she sees Aziz at the trial, she reenters the scene in her mind in a sort of disembodied vision. She realizes that her actions are ruining a real person's life, and she is therefore able to pull back and withdraw her charge before a verdict can be handed down.

3. What purpose does Part III, "Temple," play in A Passage to India?

The first issue that Forster addresses in *A Passage to India* is whether or not an Englishman and an Indian can be friends. Parts I and II of the novel depict the friendship of Aziz and Fielding, first on the ascendant, and then as it breaks apart. Part II leaves us with a pessimistic sense that cross-cultural communication is futile, and that such friendships cause more hurt than good.

Part III, however, gives us a measured resolution to this issue. In this final section of the novel, Fielding and Aziz meet again after two years and resolve their misunderstandings—though not their differences. Forster shows that while outside forces can make cross-cultural friendships nearly impossible, the friendships themselves, whether successful or not, are still a valuable experience. The pessimistic ending of Part II is thus tempered by Forster's depiction of Aziz and Fielding in Part III.

Additionally, Forster uses Part III to address the issue of how a foreigner can best understand and make peace with the "muddle" of India. Throughout Parts I and II, Forster shows several main characters—Mrs. Moore, Adela, Fielding—experiencing spiritual crises in the face of the chaos of Indian experience. Part III, which is set in the Hindu state of Mau during a Hindu religious festival, offers the Hindu vision of the oneness of all living things as a possible answer to the problem of comprehending India. The most mystical characters of the novel take the spotlight in Part III. Godbole serves in Mau as an educator and religious figure, and Mrs. Moore reappears through her two children, Ralph and Stella. If Forster is pessimistic about Fielding and Aziz's friendship, in Part III he at least offers the collectivity of Hindu love as a potential source of hope and redeeming possibility.

Suggested Essay Topics

1. What is Forster's primary critique of the British in India? What does he appear to think of the Empire in general?

2. Evaluate the role of negation in the novel. Look for instances of the word "nothing," descriptions that use lack or negativity, and plot points in which "nothing" happens, though characters think something does happen. What does negation signify and how is it used?

3. What is the role of nature in *A Passage to India*?

4. What part does sexuality play in the novel? Consider any differences of opinion about sexuality between Fielding and Aziz and between Ronny and Adela.

5. Compare Forster's depiction of the English in Chandrapore with his depiction of Aziz's Indian community. Do the two groups have any similarities? Does Forster portray one group more sympathetically?

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Paper IX: Unit III

Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*

1. Background

2. Major Themes

3. Chapter Analysis

4. Character Analysis

5. Recurring motifs

6. Study Questions

7. Suggested Essay Topics

8. Suggestions for Further Reading

Structure

1. Background

1.1 Introduction to the Author

Charles Dickens: *The Author*

Dickens's novels combine brutality with fairy-tale fantasy; sharp, realistic, concrete detail with romance, farce, and melodrama.; the ordinary with the strange. They range through the comic, tender, dramatic, sentimental, grotesque, melodramatic, horrible, eccentric, mysterious, violent, romantic, and morally earnest. Though Dickens was aware of what his readers wanted and was determined to make as much money as he could with his writing, he believed novels had a moral purpose–to arouse innate moral sentiments and to encourage virtuous behavior in readers. It was his moral purpose that led the London*Times* to call Dickens "the greatest instructor of the Nineteenth Century" in his obituary.

During his lifetime, Charles Dickens was the most famous writer in Europe and America. When he visited America to give a series of lectures, his admirers followed him, waited outside his hotel, peered in windows at him, and harassed him in railway cars. In their enthusiasm, Dickens's admirers behaved very much like the fans of a superstar today.

DICKENS'S CONTEMPORARY REPUTATION

Success came early to Dickens; he was twenty-five when his first novel, *Pickwick Papers*, appeared and made him one of the foremost writers of his day. It is an exuberantly comic novel with almost no shadows, and readers expected all of his novels to follow this pattern. His next two novels, *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickelby*, fit readers' expectations well enough, and they overlooked the social problems he exposed. As he aged, Dickens's view of his society and human nature grew increasingly somber, a fact which disturbed many readers and critics. *A Tale of Two Cities* was attacked for having little, if any humor.

Always concerned to make money with his writings, Dickens took seriously the negative response many readers had to his darker novels. He deliberately addressed their discontent when he wrote *Great Expectations*, which he affirmed was written "in a most singular and comic manner." In a letter to a friend, he explained:

You will not have to complain of the want of humour as in *The Tale of Two Cities*. I have made the opening, I hope, in its general effect exceedingly droll. I have put a child and a good-natured foolish man, in relations that seem to me very funny. Of course I have got in the pivot on which the story will turn too–and which indeed, as you will remember, was the grotesque tragi-comic conception that first encouraged me. To be quite sure that I had fallen into no unconscious repetitions, I read David Copperfield again the other day, and was affected by it to a degree you would hardly believe.

After his death, his literary reputation waned and his novels tended not to be taken seriously. The novelist George Meredith found them intellectually lacking:

Not much of Dickens will live, because it has so little correspondence to life. He was the incarnation of cockneydom, a caricaturist who aped the moralist; he should have kept to short stories. If his novels are read at all in the future, people will wonder what we saw in them.

DICKENS AND LATER READERS

Though Dickens's novels continued to be read by large numbers of readers, his literary reputation was in eclipse. There was a tendency to see his novels as appropriate for children and young adults. From 1880 through the early part of the twentieth century, Russian writers came into vogue and were generally regarded as superior to Dickens. This preference is ironic because the Russian novelists both admired Dickens and learned from him. Turgenev praised Dickens's work and even wrote for Dickens's magazine, *Household Words*, during the Crimean War. Tolstoy wrote of Dickens, "All his characters are my personal friends–I am constantly comparing them with living persons, and living persons with them, and what a spirit there was in all he wrote." Dostoevsky was so impressed that he imitated the death of Little Nell, including the sentimentality, in describing the death of Nelli Valkovsky in *The Insulted and the Injured* (1862). Supposedly, during his exile in Siberia, he read only *Pickwick Papers* and *David Copperfield*. Even if this story is apocryphal, Dickens' influence on *Uncle's Dream* and *The Friend*

of the Family (1859), written while Dostoevsky was in Siberia, is unmistakable. In yet another irony, English critics in the 1880s were puzzled by Dostoevsky's similarities to Dickens.

Dickens' literary standing was transformed in the 1940s and 1950s because of essays written by George Orwell and Edmund Wilson, who called him "the greatest writer of his time," and a full-length study by Humphrey House, *The Dickens World*. Critics discovered complexity, darkness, and even bitterness in his novels, and by the 1960s some critics felt that, like Shakespeare, Dickens could not be classified into existing literary categories. This view of Dickens as incomparable continues through the twentieth century. Edgar Johnson expresses the prevailing twentieth-century view in his assessment of Dickens: "Far more than a great entertainer, a great comic writer, he looks into the abyss. He is one of the great poets of the novel, a genius of his art." This is not to say that every critic or reader accepts Johnson's view; F.R. Leavis could not take Dickens so seriously: "The adult mind doesn't as a rule find in Dickens a challenge to an unusual and sustained seriousness."

In the resurgence of Dickens's reputation, his essays, sketches, and articles have received attention and praise. K.J. Fielding believes, "If he were not so well known as a novelist, he might have been recognized as a great English essayist."

Dickens' Literary Style

Dickens loved the style of 18th century Gothic romance,although it had already become a target for parody. One "character" vividly drawn throughout his novels is London itself. From the coaching inns on the outskirts of the city to the lower reaches of the Thames, all aspects of the capital are described over the course of his body of work.
His writing style is florid and poetic, with a strong comic touch. His satires of British aristocratic snobbery-he calls one character the "Noble Refrigerator"-are often popular. Comparing orphans to stocks and shares, people to tug boats, or dinner-party guests to furniture are just some of Dickens's acclaimed flights of fancy. Many of his characters' names provide the reader with a hint as to the roles played in advancing the storyline, such as Mr. Murdstone in the novel *David Copperfield*, which is clearly a combination of "murder" and stony coldness. His literary style is also a mixture of fantasy and realism.

Characters

Dickens is famed for his depiction of the hardships of the working class, his intricate plots, and his sense of humour. But he is perhaps most famed for the characters he created. His novels were heralded early in his career for their ability to capture the everyday man and thus create characters to whom readers could relate. Beginning with *The Pickwick Papers* in 1836, Dickens wrote numerous novels, each uniquely filled with believable personalities and vivid physical descriptions. Dickens's friend and biographer, John Forster, said that Dickens made "characters real existences, not by describing them but by letting them describe themselves."
Dickensian characters-especially their typically whimsical names-are among the most memorable in English literature. The likes of Ebenezer Scrooge, Tiny Tim, Jacob Marley, Bob Cratchit, Oliver Twist, The Artful Dodger, Fagin, Bill Sikes, Pip, Miss Havisham, Charles Darnay, David Copperfield, Mr. Micawber, Abel Magwitch, Daniel Quilp, Samuel Pickwick, Wackford Squeers, Uriah Heep and many others are so well known and can be believed to be living a life

outside the novels that their stories have been continued by other authors.

Often these characters were based on people he knew. In a few instances Dickens based the character too closely on the original, as in the case of Harold Skimpole in *Bleak House*, based on Leigh Hunt, and Miss Mowcher in *David Copperfield*, based on his wife's dwarf chiropodist. Indeed, the acquaintances made when reading a Dickens novel are not easily forgotten. The author, Virginia Woolf, maintained that "we remodel our psychological geography when we read Dickens" as he produces "characters who exist not in detail, not accurately or exactly, but abundantly in a cluster of wild yet extraordinarily revealing remarks."

Autobiographical elements

All authors might be said to incorporate autobiographical elements in their fiction, but with Dickens this is very noticeable, even though he took pains to mask what he considered his shameful, lowly past. *David Copperfield* is one of the most clearly autobiographical but the scenes from *Bleak House* of interminable court cases and legal arguments are drawn from the author's brief career as a court reporter. Dickens's own father had been sent to prison for debt, and this became a common theme in many of his books, with the detailed depiction of life in the Marshalsea prison in *Little Dorrit* resulting from Dickens's own experiences of the institution. Childhood sweethearts in many of his books (such as Little Em'ly in *David Copperfield*) may have been based on Dickens's own childhood infatuation with Lucy Stroughill. Dickens may have drawn on his childhood experiences, but he was also ashamed of them and would not reveal that this was where he gathered his realistic accounts of squalor. Very few knew the details of his early life until six years after his death when John Forster published a biography on which Dickens had collaborated.

Episodic writing

Most of Dickens's major novels were first written in monthly or weekly instalments in journals such as *Master Humphrey's Clock* and *Household Words*, later reprinted in book form. These instalments made the stories cheap, accessible and the series of regular cliff-hangers made each new episode widely anticipated. American fans even waited at the docks in New York, shouting out to the crew of an incoming ship, "Is little Nell dead?" Part of Dickens's great talent was to incorporate this episodic writing style but still end up with a coherent novel at the end. Dickens's technique of writing in monthly or weekly instalments (depending on the work) can be understood by analysing his relationship with his illustrators. The several artists who filled this role were privy to the contents and intentions of Dickens's instalments before the general public. Thus, by reading these correspondences between author and illustrator, the intentions behind Dickens's work can be better understood. These also reveal how the interests of the reader and author do not coincide. A great example of that appears in the monthly novel *Oliver Twist*. At one point in this work, Dickens had Oliver become embroiled in a robbery. That particular monthly instalment concludes with young Oliver being shot. Readers expected that they would be forced to wait only a month to find out the outcome of that gunshot. In fact, Dickens did not reveal what became of young Oliver in the succeeding number. Rather, the reading public was forced to wait two months to discover if the boy lived.

Another important impact of Dickens's episodic writing style resulted from his exposure to the opinions of his readers. Since Dickens did not write the chapters very far ahead of their publication, he was allowed to witness the public reaction and alter the story depending on

those public reactions. A fine example of this process can be seen in his weekly serial *The Old Curiosity Shop*, which is a chase story. In this novel, Nell and her grandfather are fleeing the villain Quilp. The progress of the novel follows the gradual success of that pursuit. As Dickens wrote and published the weekly instalments, his friend John Forster pointed out: "You know you're going to have to kill her, don't you?" Why this end was necessary can be explained by a brief analysis of the difference between the structure of a comedy versus a tragedy. In a comedy, the action covers a sequence "You think they're going to lose, you think they're going to lose, they win". In tragedy, it is: "You think they're going to win, you think they're going to win, they lose". The dramatic conclusion of the story is implicit throughout the novel. So, as Dickens wrote the novel in the form of a tragedy, the sad outcome of the novel was a foregone conclusion. If he had not caused his heroine to lose, he would not have completed his dramatic structure. Dickens admitted that his friend Forster was right and, in the end, Nell died.

Social commentary

Dickens's novels were, among other things, works of social commentary. He was a fierce critic of the poverty and social stratification of Victorian society. Dickens's second novel, *Oliver Twist* (1839), shocked readers with its images of poverty and crime and was responsible for the clearing of the actual London slum, Jacob's Island, that was the basis of the story. In addition, with the character of the tragic prostitute, Nancy, Dickens "humanised" such women for the reading public; women who were regarded as "unfortunates", inherently immoral casualties of the Victorian class/economic system. *Bleak House* and*Little Dorrit* elaborated expansive critiques of the Victorian institutional apparatus: the interminable lawsuits of the Court of Chancery that destroyed people's lives in *Bleak House* and a dual attack in *Little Dorrit* on inefficient, corrupt patent offices and unregulated market speculation.

1.2 A Summary of the Action of *Hard Times*

The novel is set in Coketown, a northern industrial city. **Thomas Gradgrind** rules his family and his school according to Utilitarianism, the philosophy of the time, which has as its aim the greatest possible happiness for the greatest possible number of people. However, the form of Utilitarianism which Dickens attacks in the novel is plain materialism that denies all other values than material ones, or “Facts” as they are called.

Thomas Gradgrind has two children **Louisa** and **Tom**. They are caught by their father when they try to see **Sleary**’s Circus, where the clown **Jupe** works. Jupe has a daughter **Sissy**, and when Jupe leaves the circus and his daughter, Gradgrind invites her to come and live with his family. **Josiah Bounderby** is the rich owner of the Coketown factories. He is a proud self-made man; but once and again his house is observed by a strange old woman. **Stephen Blackpool** is one of Bounderby’s workers. Blackpool has a troubled life. He has an alcoholic wife, who has left him, but he cannot be divorced from her. He is in love with **Rachel**, a factory girl. When a strike breaks out and Blackpool is not willing to join the trade union his mates will not have anything to do with him. He is fired, and he has to leave town.

Tom Gradgrind starts to work in Bounderby’s bank, and Bounderby proposes to Louisa. Though she is 30 years younger than him, she accepts. Bounderby’s housekeeper **Mrs. Sparsit** is

jealous. Louisa's marriage is unhappy, and**James Harthouse**, a politician, attempts to seduce her.
Bounderby's bank is robbed by Tom. However, it is Steven Blackpool who is suspected, and **Bitzer**, a clerk in the bank gives evidence against him. Mrs. Sparsit has discovered the relationship between Harthouse and Louisa and spies upon them. Louisa turns Harthouse down, and she goes home to her father to talk to him about her problems. He comes near to realizing that his upbringing of his children based on "Facts" has been a misunderstanding. Gradgrind now shelters Louisa from Bounderby, and the couple are permanently separated. Stephen Blackpool is found dying in a disused mine shaft. He asks Gradgrind to clear his name. Gradgrind now learns from Sissy and Louisa that it is Tom that is the bank robber. Tom is now hiding in Sleary's Circus disguised as a clown. His escape abroad is nearly stopped by Bitzer, but Sleary, his horse and his trained dog effect Tom's escape nevertheless.
Mrs. Sparsit finds out that the strange old woman outside Mr. Bounderby's house is in fact his mother, and that he does not have a humble origin as he has claimed. He is not after all a self-made man.
Tom dies abroad, and Gradgrind lives into old age rejecting his Facts and Figures, Faith, Hope and Charity having become his leading principles.

ABOUT THE BOOK

This is one of the most uplifting of Dickens's novels. This book is certainly different from all the other books by Charles Dickens as it has no particular central character. Well all the other novels by Dickens have a strong connection with London but this story depicts Coketown and Coketown only, a typical red-brick industrial city of the north. Hard Times is a very tragic and wonderfully described story of human oppression.

1.3 *THE CHARACTERS*

Among the many characters that appear in the novel, some of the most important ones are:

Mr.Gradgrind, who runs a school at Coketown, a parliament member, a stoic who believes in nothing but facts.

Mr.Bounderby, a heartless, boastful, wealthy manufacturer and a great liar as well.

Louisa Gradgrind, eldest daughter of Mr.Gradgrind, who against her will marries the boastful Bounderby for the sake of her selfish brother, Tom.

Stephen Blackpool, a "hand" at Mr. Bounderby's factory who gets wrongly involved in the robbery of Mr.Bounderby's bank.

Rachael,a factory hand, and friend of Stephen.

Sissy, or Cecilia Jupe, a deserted daughter of a circus clown, who is adopted by Mr.Gradgrind and Louisa's greatest friend and advisor.

1.4 THE STORY

As there is no central character, the story builds up round all the characters who appear in this book.Everyone has a different story,most of which is only tragic.

Since Louisa's name has been mentioned in the last pages of this novel,lets start with Louisa: From childhood,her mind has been filled with facts by her stoic father,with no place left for any emotions,dreams or fantasies.Yet in secret,she had always nurtured her imaginative nature and Sissy's presence has also affected it much.She married Mr.bounderby,who was almost 30yrs older than she was (and whom she hated very much) only for her brother,Tom's sake.And all her life she suffers inwards.

Then there is Sissy,her father a circus clown left her,so that she could lead a better life without him, and then Mr.Gradgrind adopted her to modify her way of living.He tried to fill her with facts like he had filled his own children with, but Sissy was out-and-out indifferent to his practical facts and continued with her own childish and good beliefs.

Then there is Stephen married to a bad woman and in love with his ever-supporting friend Rachael who is also a worker at Bounderby's factory.Stephen gets charged with a crime he didn't committ(Tom committed it) and comes back from an exile he gave himself(another story!) to clear himself but an accident occured and he lost his life.Before death he left Mr.Gradgrind(who has now, after many years, realised his mistakes)with the charge to clear him.Rachael left alone did not fall apart but continued to live a useful life.

As for Louisa, she was misunderstood by Tom for whom she had done everything she could.She was turned out of house by Bounderby and she lived(lets not say very happily but usefully)with her no-more-stoic father,sisters,brothers(not Tom who didn't live to say sorry to Louisa for the wrongs he did to her) and the ever sweet friend Sissy.

1.5 Plot overview

Thomas Gradgrind, a wealthy, retired merchant in the industrial city of Coketown, England, devotes his life to a philosophy of rationalism, self-interest, and fact. He raises his oldest children, Louisa and Tom, according to this philosophy and never allows them to engage in fanciful or imaginative pursuits. He founds a school and charitably takes in one of the students,

the kindly and imaginative Sissy Jupe, after the disappearance of her father, a circus entertainer.

As the Gradgrind children grow older, Tom becomes a dissipated, self-interested hedonist, and Louisa struggles with deep inner confusion, feeling as though she is missing something important in her life. Eventually Louisa marries Gradgrind's friend Josiah Bounderby, a wealthy factory owner and banker more than twice her age. Bounderby continually trumpets his role as a self-made man who was abandoned in the gutter by his mother as an infant. Tom is apprenticed at the Bounderby bank, and Sissy remains at the Gradgrind home to care for the younger children.

In the meantime, an impoverished "Hand"—Dickens's term for the lowest laborers in Coketown's factories—named Stephen Blackpool struggles with his love for Rachael, another poor factory worker. He is unable to marry her because he is already married to a horrible, drunken woman who disappears for months and even years at a time. Stephen visits Bounderby to ask about a divorce but learns that only the wealthy can obtain them. Outside Bounderby's home, he meets Mrs. Pegler, a strange old woman with an inexplicable devotion to Bounderby.

James Harthouse, a wealthy young sophisticate from London, arrives in Coketown to begin a political career as a disciple of Gradgrind, who is now a Member of Parliament. He immediately takes an interest in Louisa and decides to try to seduce her. With the unspoken aid of Mrs. Sparsit, a former aristocrat who has fallen on hard times and now works for Bounderby, he sets about trying to corrupt Louisa.

The Hands, exhorted by a crooked union spokesman named Slackbridge, try to form a union. Only Stephen refuses to join because he feels that a union strike would only increase tensions between employers and employees. He is cast out by the other Hands and fired by Bounderby when he refuses to spy on them. Louisa, impressed with Stephen's integrity, visits him before he leaves Coketown and helps him with some money. Tom accompanies her and tells Stephen that if he waits outside the bank for several consecutive nights, help will come to him. Stephen does so, but no help arrives. Eventually he packs up and leaves Coketown, hoping to find agricultural work in the country. Not long after that, the bank is robbed, and the lone suspect is Stephen, the vanished Hand who was seen loitering outside the bank for several nights just before disappearing from the city.

Mrs. Sparsit witnesses Harthouse declaring his love for Louisa, and Louisa agrees to meet him in Coketown later that night. However, Louisa instead flees to her father's house, where she miserably confides to Gradgrind that her upbringing has left her married to a man she does not love, disconnected from her feelings, deeply unhappy, and possibly in love with Harthouse. She collapses to the floor, and Gradgrind, struck dumb with self-reproach, begins to realize the imperfections in his philosophy of rational self-interest.

Sissy, who loves Louisa deeply, visits Harthouse and convinces him to leave Coketown forever. Bounderby, furious that his wife has left him, redoubles his efforts to capture Stephen. When Stephen tries to return to clear his good name, he falls into a mining pit called Old Hell Shaft. Rachael and Louisa discover him, but he dies soon after an emotional farewell to Rachael. Gradgrind and Louisa realize that Tom is really responsible for robbing the bank, and they arrange to sneak him out of England with the help of the circus performers with whom Sissy spent her early childhood. They are nearly successful, but are stopped by Bitzer, a young man who went to Gradgrind's school and who embodies all the qualities of the detached rationalism that Gradgrind once espoused, but who now sees its limits. Sleary, the lisping circus proprietor, arranges for Tom to slip out of Bitzer's grasp, and the young robber escapes from England after all.

Mrs. Sparsit, anxious to help Bounderby find the robbers, drags Mrs. Pegler—a known associate of Stephen Blackpool—in to see Bounderby, thinking Mrs. Pegler is a potential witness. Bounderby recoils, and it is revealed that Mrs. Pegler is really his loving mother, whom he has forbidden to visit him: Bounderby is not a self-made man after all. Angrily, Bounderby fires Mrs. Sparsit and sends her away to her hostile relatives. Five years later, he will die alone in the streets of Coketown. Gradgrind gives up his philosophy of fact and devotes his political power to helping the poor. Tom realizes the error of his ways but dies without ever seeing his family again. While Sissy marries and has a large and loving family, Louisa never again marries and never has children. Nevertheless, Louisa is loved by Sissy's family and learns at last how to feel sympathy for her fellow human beings.

1.6 Analysis of Major Characters

Thomas Gradgrind

Thomas Gradgrind is the first character we meet in *Hard Times,* and one of the central figures through whom Dickens weaves a web of intricately connected plotlines and characters. Dickens introduces us to this character with a description of his most central feature: his mechanized,

monotone attitude and appearance. The opening scene in the novel describes Mr. Gradgrind's speech to a group of young students, and it is appropriate that Gradgrind physically embodies the dry, hard facts that he crams into his students' heads. The narrator calls attention to Gradgrind's "square coat, square legs, square shoulders," all of which suggest Gradgrind's unrelenting rigidity.

In the first few chapters of the novel, Mr. Gradgrind expounds his philosophy of calculating, rational self-interest. He believes that human nature can be governed by completely rational rules, and he is "ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you what it comes to." This philosophy has brought Mr. Gradgrind much financial and social success. He has made his fortune as a hardware merchant, a trade that, appropriately, deals in hard, material reality. Later, he becomes a Member of Parliament, a position that allows him to indulge his interest in tabulating data about the people of England. Although he is not a factory owner, Mr. Gradgrind evinces the spirit of the Industrial Revolution insofar as he treats people like machines that can be reduced to a number of scientific principles.

While the narrator's tone toward him is initially mocking and ironic, Gradgrind undergoes a significant change in the course of the novel, thereby earning the narrator's sympathy. When Louisa confesses that she feels something important is missing in her life and that she is desperately unhappy with her marriage, Gradgrind begins to realize that his system of education may not be perfect. This intuition is confirmed when he learns that Tom has robbed Bounderby's bank. Faced with these failures of his system, Gradgrind admits, "The ground on which I stand has ceased to be solid under my feet." His children's problems teach him to feel love and sorrow, and Gradgrind becomes a wiser and humbler man, ultimately "making his facts and figures subservient to Faith, Hope and Charity."

Louisa Gradgrind

Although Louisa is the novel's principal female character, she is distinctive from the novel's other women, particularly her foils, Sissy and Rachael. While these other two embody the Victorian ideal of femininity—sensitivity, compassion, and gentleness—Louisa's education has prevented her from developing such traits. Instead, Louisa is silent, cold, and seemingly unfeeling. However, Dickens may not be implying that Louisa is really unfeeling, but rather that she simply does not know how to recognize and express her emotions. For instance, when her father tries to convince her that it would be rational for her to marry Bounderby, Louisa looks out of the window at the factory chimneys and observes: "There seems to be nothing there but languid and monotonous smoke. Yet when the night comes, Fire bursts out." Unable to convey

the tumultuous feelings that lie beneath her own languid and monotonous exterior, Louisa can only state a fact about her surroundings. Yet this fact, by analogy, also describes the emotions repressed within her.

Even though she does not conform to the Victorian ideals of femininity, Louisa does her best to be a model daughter, wife, and sister. Her decision to return to her father's house rather than elope with Harthouse demonstrates that while she may be unfeeling, she does not lack virtue. Indeed, Louisa, though unemotional, still has the ability to recognize goodness and distinguish between right and wrong, even when it does not fall within the strict rubric of her father's teachings. While at first Louisa lacks the ability to understand and function within the gray matter of emotions, she can at least recognize that they exist and are more powerful than her father or Bounderby believe, even without any factual basis. Moreover, under Sissy's guidance, Louisa shows great promise in learning to express her feelings. Similarly, through her acquaintance with Rachael and Stephen, Louisa learns to respond charitably to suffering and to not view suffering simply as a temporary state that is easily overcome by effort, as her father and Bounderby do.

Josiah Bounderby

Although he is Mr. Gradgrind's best friend, Josiah Bounderby is more interested in money and power than in facts. Indeed, he is himself a fiction, or a fraud. Bounderby's inflated sense of pride is illustrated by his oft-repeated declaration, "I am Josiah Bounderby of Coketown." This statement generally prefaces the story of Bounderby's childhood poverty and suffering, a story designed to impress its listeners with a sense of the young Josiah Bounderby's determination and self-discipline. However, Dickens explodes the myth of the self-made man when Bounderby's mother, Mrs. Pegler, reveals that her son had a decent, loving childhood and a good education, and that he was not abandoned, after all.

Bounderby's attitude represents the social changes created by industrialization and capitalism. Whereas birth or bloodline formerly determined the social hierarchy, in an industrialized, capitalist society, wealth determines who holds the most power. Thus, Bounderby takes great delight in the fact that Mrs. Sparsit, an aristocrat who has fallen on hard times, has become his servant, while his own ambition has enabled him to rise from humble beginnings to become the wealthy owner of a factory and a bank. However, in depicting Bounderby, the capitalist, as a coarse, vain, self-interested hypocrite, Dickens implies that Bounderby uses his wealth and

power irresponsibly, contributing to the muddled relations between rich and poor, especially in his treatment of Stephen after the Hands cast Stephen out to form a union.

Stephen Blackpool

Stephen Blackpool is introduced after we have met the Gradgrind family and Bounderby, and Blackpool provides a stark contrast to these earlier characters. One of the Hands in Bounderby's factory, Stephen lives a life of drudgery and poverty. In spite of the hardships of his daily toil, Stephen strives to maintain his honesty, integrity, faith, and compassion.

Stephen is an important character not only because his poverty and virtue contrast with Bounderby's wealth and self-interest, but also because he finds himself in the midst of a labor dispute that illustrates the strained relations between rich and poor. Stephen is the only Hand who refuses to join a workers' union: he believes that striking is not the best way to improve relations between factory owners and employees, and he also wants to earn an honest living. As a result, he is cast out of the workers' group. However, he also refuses to spy on his fellow workers for Bounderby, who consequently sends him away. Both groups, rich and poor, respond in the same self-interested, backstabbing way. As Rachael explains, Stephen ends up with the "masters against him on one hand, the men against him on the other, he only wantin' to work hard in peace, and do what he felt right." Through Stephen, Dickens suggests that industrialization threatens to compromise both the employee's and employer's moral integrity, thereby creating a social muddle to which there is no easy solution.

Through his efforts to resist the moral corruption on all sides, Stephen becomes a martyr, or Christ figure, ultimately dying for Tom's crime. When he falls into a mine shaft on his way back to Coketown to clear his name of the charge of robbing Bounderby's bank, Stephen comforts himself by gazing at a particularly bright star that seems to shine on him in his "pain and trouble." This star not only represents the ideals of virtue for which Stephen strives, but also the happiness and tranquility that is lacking in his troubled life. Moreover, his ability to find comfort in the star illustrates the importance of imagination, which enables him to escape the cold, hard facts of his miserable existence.

2. Major Themes

Hard Times is a unified, compact novel. Its themes often overlap as Dickens points an accusing finger at a specific time and place: England during the time of the Industrial Revolution. The

themes are discussed throughout The Story section as they relate to the plot. They are listed here so that you may be aware of them as you read.

MAJOR THEMES

1. **THE WISDOM OF THE HEART VS. THE WISDOM OF THE HEAD**

   Gradgrind represents the wisdom of the head. His philosophy is based on utilitarianism, which seeks to promote "the greatest happiness for the greatest number." The philosophy is based on scientific laws that dictate that nothing else is important but profit, and that profit is achieved by the pursuit of cold, hard facts. Everything that isn't factual is considered "fancy," or imagination.

   The wisdom of the heart is embodied in Sissy Jupe. Simple, considered uneducable, Sissy brings goodness and purity to bear on many of the characters, including Gradgrind. As he sees the products of his philosophy shattered around him, particularly Louisa and Tom, he begins to wonder if the wisdom of the heart that others have talked about really exists. Sissy proves to him that it does, and she salvages a great deal that might have been lost.

   Closely related to this theme is man's need for "amusement." Sleary, the owner of the traveling circus, insists that people can't work and learn all the time- an idea once odious to Gradgrind.

2. **EXPLOITATION OF THE WORKING CLASS**

   We see this theme worked out through the character of Stephen Blackpool, a factory worker. Stephen's life is "a muddle," in part because he and the other workers are exploited from all sides. Their employer, Bounderby, thinks that their lives are easy and that their complaints stem from selfishness and greed. The utilitarians who run the schools and the government are interested only in profit. The union organizers are driven by power-hungry self-interest. At one point Stephen indicates that the workers have bad leaders because only bad leaders are offered to them. Throughout the novel, the workers are almost all faceless, nameless individuals. They are called by the reductive term "hands," because it is their working hands that are important to the employers- not their souls or brains or spirits.

3. **THE EFFECTS OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION**

   Closely connected with the theme of exploitation, this theme is more all-encompassing. It reveals the abuses of a profit-hungry society that result in a variety of social disgraces:

poor education of its children; smoke-filled cities and polluted water; dangerous factory machines; dreadful working conditions; substandard housing for the workers. This corrupt society is more interested in productivity and profit than in the health and happiness of its citizens. These issues are still relevant today in different degrees in different parts of the world; well over a century has passed since Dickens the reformer wrote Hard Times, but some of the abuses to which he called attention still linger.

4. **THE FAILURE OF THE UTILITARIAN EDUCATION**

   The opening scene in M'Choakumchild's classroom sets the tone for this theme. Students are taught according to what is factual and are ordered to avoid anything imaginative. As governor of the school, Gradgrind not only sets the policy of hard facts but also practices it in the raising of his own five children. Educators like Gradgrind see children as "empty vessels" to be filled to the brim with facts and statistics. They never take into account the child's need for poetry, song, and fiction- those elements that feed the heart and soul, as well as the mind. The failure of this system is seen through Louisa and Tom Gradgrind, and the ambitious sneak Bitzer.

5. **THE ARROGANCE OF THE UPPER CLASSES**

   Mrs. Sparsit and James Harthouse represent this theme. Mrs. Sparsit clings fiercely to her heritage and faded glamor. She is haughty to those "beneath" her and despises the efforts of the workers to organize a union.

   Harthouse is revealed as cynical and directionless. He treats his seduction of Louisa as a diversion, without thinking of the consequences of his actions.

   A related minor theme is the worship of the upper classes by those of the middle class. This is demonstrated in Bounderby's pride over Mrs. Sparsit's lofty background, in his acquisition of the trappings of wealth (despite his apparent disdain for them), and in Tom's admiration for Harthouse's worldly ways.

MINOR THEMES

1. **LOYALTY**
   Examples of loyalty (and its absence) are seen throughout the novel. Sissy remains loyal to her father and his memory, even though he deserted her. Rachael and Stephen are loyal to one another over the years despite their inability to be married. They both remain loyal to Mrs. Blackpool- he by enduring her presence, and Rachael by caring for her- when she comes to town. The most touching example of loyalty is Merrylegs, Jupe's dog, who leaves his master only after the old man is dead.

   Those who prove to have no sense of loyalty include Tom, who turns away from Louisa, his devoted sister; Bounderby, who shuns his mother; Stephen's fellow workers, who

reject him when he won't join the union; and Bitzer, who turns against his mentor, Gradgrind.

2. **PARENT AND CHILD**
   Portraits of parents and their children figure significantly in Hard Times. Only Sissy and her father are seen in a positive light. All the others reveal mistreatment or indifference: Gradgrind and his brood; Bounderby and Mrs. Pegler; and Bitzer, who sends his mother to a workhouse.
3. **IMPRISONMENT**
   The theme of imprisonment works both literally and symbolically. The workers of Coketown are imprisoned by their jobs and their lives, since they have no other place to go to find work. Stephen is trapped in this way, but also by the bonds of marriage, which for him are tightly wound. Gradgrind and Bounderby are imprisoned by their respective philosophies. Louisa is a prisoner of her father's educational principles. And all the characters are shackled by a society that cares less for them than it does for the "well-being" of the economy. Only Sissy, who follows the Golden Rule, seems free from these bonds, and it is she alone who "escapes" to happiness by the novel's end.

OTHER ELEMENTS

STYLE

Dickens's distinctive style is one of the most admired in the English language. Here are some of its notable characteristics, followed by examples from Hard Times.

1. **USE OF WORDS AND SENTENCE STRUCTURE**

   Dickens had a great love of language, which reveals itself in elaborate descriptions of people, places, and events. Long, complex sentences are common, but the words are rarely wasted. When simplicity is called for, Dickens can be frugal with his words. If he does get carried away, remember that his readers were used to long, spacious books with full descriptions. Books provided the main source of entertainment for Victorians, so readers liked to get their money's worth!

   Look at the second paragraph in Chapter 10, Book the First. (It begins "In the hardest working part of Coketown;"). The entire paragraph is one sentence, built of prepositional phrases and subordinate clauses that lead to the introduction of Stephen Blackpool. Not only is this device highly descriptive, but it underlines the importance of the subject of the sentence- Stephen Blackpool- and provides a very dramatic way to introduce him.

2. **REPETITION**

Repeating words and phrases within a sentence or paragraph adds emphasis and musicality to Dickens's prose (and makes it fun to read aloud).

Read carefully the second paragraph of Chapter 1 of Book the First, beginning "The scene was..." Notice the repetition of such phrases as "The emphasis was helped" and such words as "square." This technique is typical of Dickens's style, and is often imitated.

3. **SYMBOLISM AND METAPHOR**

Hard Times is rich in symbolism, from Louisa's identification with fire to Tom's depiction as a sad clown in one of the final scenes. Metaphorically, Coketown is described as a jungle, its smoke a series of serpents, its steam engine an elephant's head.

Other metaphors abound. Gradgrind's hair is a "plantation of firs"; Mrs. Gradgrind is "a bundle of shawls"; time is compared to machinery, with "innumerable horse- power." Watch for Dickens's use of metaphors as you read. Draw up a list of your favorites.

4. **ALLUSIONS**

Dickens peppers his works with allusions to literature, mythology, the Bible, current events. Most of his readers would be familiar with these allusions, but some of them might be confusing to the modern reader. This guide will help you to understand the most important ones.

5. **RHETORICAL DEVICES**

Rhetorical devices are those which mirror techniques used in speech-making: exclamatory sentences, direct address to the audience (and to characters), questions. There are times when you might feel that Dickens is making a speech rather than writing a novel. "Ah, rather overdone, M'Choakumchild," he chides the teacher in Chapter 2, Book the First. "Where was the man, and why did he not come back?" he wonders about Stephen Blackpool in Chapter 5, Book the Third. "Dear reader!" he says in the final chapter. Many readers find these devices pretentious and inflated, but others find them energizing and vivid. How do you feel about them? Do they contribute to your enjoyment of the book?

6. **COMIC RELIEF**

There are few greater comic writers than Dickens. Some say he is a better writer when he is comic than when he is serious and sentimental. Hard Times can be a grim and bitter novel, but it is saved from being completely depressing by its comic moments (although there are fewer in this novel than in most of Dickens's work). The tension is relieved by Sleary and his troupe, by Mrs. Sparsit (before she decides to undo Louisa), even by the pathetic Mrs. Gradgrind with her total lack of logic.

Look at Chapter 6, Book the First, "Sleary's Horsemanship." The tension is high because Gradgrind and Bounderby have come to scold Jupe for bringing up so poorly educated a daughter. But Jupe is missing, and everyone is afraid of Sissy's reaction. Dickens relieves the tension by the comic jousting among Bounderby, Childers, and Kidderminster. Bounderby doesn't realize he's being made fun of, but the ways in which the two performers deflate his pomposity enliven a gloomy scene.The lack of humor in the Stephen Blackpool scenes is one reason some readers feel these parts of the book are less successful than others.

SETTING

The action of Hard Times takes place in the city of Coketown and the surrounding countryside. Coketown represents a number of industrial towns in northern England- such as Manchester and Preston. It was Dickens's visit to Manchester almost fifteen years before he wrote Hard Times that gave him the impetus to write the novel. For further research as he was beginning to write his novel, Dickens traveled to the mill town of Preston, scene of a famous labor strike in 1853. Although Dickens did not choose to dramatize a strike in Hard Times, he probably found the model for the union organizer Slackbridge in Preston.

The atmosphere of Coketown is essential to the novel's mood. Dickens's images suggest an urban jungle. "Serpents" of smoke rise from factory chimneys to clog the skies with soot. The steam engine has an "elephant's head" that monotonously lifts up and down and fills the air with horrible sounds. All the red brick buildings are blackened with soot, and each building looks tediously like the next. Even on a sunny day, the sun can't penetrate the grime in the air. From a distance the town looks like a blur of smoke and dirt.

The depressing surroundings take their toll on the citizens, who are consistently woeful. The dreariness of the town is symbolically liked to the philosophies that govern the citizens' lives. No sunlight can penetrate the clouds, and no sense of imagination or fun is allowed to alleviate the tedium of the workaday world.

The main characters are no less affected by their surroundings. Louisa and Tom are so deprived of color and fun in their lives that the arrival of a traveling circus is a source of guilty pleasure for them. Stephen Blackpool and Rachael are first seen together in the midst of a grimy rain.

Coketown offers them no other pleasure but their friendship. Gradgrind, Bounderby, Mrs. Sparsit, and Bitzer are all humorless, unhappy people. Their grim personalities are as much products of their environment as they themselves are victims of the philosophies that rule their lives.

Some readers have pointed to minor inaccuracies in Dickens's portrayal of Coketown. Not all such towns had these unsanitary conditions or unspeakable working situations. But Dickens was working for a poetic reality, not the literal truth. His occasional exaggerations or inventions are done to prove a point, and few can deny that he achieves a remarkable portrait of an industrial city whose suffocating influence is never far from your mind as you read. In fact, "Coketown" has come to represent a term for such grimy towns throughout the world, some of which still exist, although laws for pollution control have done a great deal to lessen their hazardous effects.

3. Chapter Analysis

Book the First: Sowing: Chapters 1–4

Summary — Chapter 1: The One Thing Needful

In an empty schoolroom, a dark-eyed, rigid man emphatically expresses to the schoolmaster and another adult his desire for children to be taught facts, saying that “nothing else will ever be of any service to them.”

Summary — Chapter 2: Murdering the Innocents

In the industrial city of Coketown, a place dominated by grim factories and oppressed by coils of black smoke, the dark-eyed, rigid man—Thomas Gradgrind—has established a school. He has hired a teacher, Mr. McChoakumchild, whom he hopes will instill in the students nothing but cold, hard facts. Visiting the school, Gradgrind tests a pair of students by asking them to define a horse. Sissy Jupe, the daughter of a horse-riding circus entertainer, is unable to answer, but a pale young man called Bitzer gives a cut-and-dried definition that pleases Gradgrind.

Summary — Chapter 3: A Loophole

While walking back to his home, appropriately named Stone Lodge, Gradgrind catches his two eldest children spying on the circus through a peephole in the fence. Having raised his children according to his philosophy of fact and having permitted them no imaginative entertainment, Gradgrind becomes furious. He drags the young Tom and sixteen-year-old Louisa home. Louisa admits that curiosity drew her to the circus and tries to defend her brother by saying she dragged him there, but all Gradgrind can do is ask angrily what Mr. Bounderby would say.

Summary — Chapter 4: Mr. Bounderby

This same Mr. Bounderby—a wealthy, boastful industrialist who owns factories and a bank—is at that very moment in the drawing room at Stone Lodge, pontificating to the pallid and lethargic Mrs. Gradgrind about his poverty-stricken childhood. Bounderby never fails to talk at length about this subject. He reminds Mrs. Gradgrind that he was born in a ditch, abandoned by his mother, and raised by a cruel, alcoholic grandmother. At this point, Gradgrind enters and tells Bounderby about his children's misbehavior. Mrs. Gradgrind scolds the children halfheartedly, admonishing them to "go and be somethingological." Bounderby theorizes that Sissy Jupe, the circus entertainer's daughter who attends Gradgrind's school, may have led the young Gradgrinds astray. Gradgrind agrees, and they set out to inform Sissy's father that Sissy is no longer welcome at the school. Bounderby demands a kiss from Louisa before they leave.

Analysis — Book the First: Sowing: Chapters 1–4

Dickens was concerned with the miserable lives of the poor and working classes in the England of his day, and *Hard Times* is one of several of his novels that addresses these social problems directly. *Hard Times* is not Dickens's most subtle novel, and most of its moral themes are explicitly articulated through extremely sharp, exaggerated characterization, and through the narrator's frequent interjection of his own opinions and sentiments. For instance, in the opening section of the book, a simple contrast emerges between Mr. Gradgrind's philosophy of fact and Sissy Jupe's frequent indulgence in romantic, imaginative fancy. While Gradgrind's philosophy includes the idea that people should only act according to their own best interests, which they can calculate through rational principles, the actions of the simple, loving Sissy are inspired by her feelings, usually of compassion toward others. The philosophy of fact is continually shown to be at the heart of the problems of the poor—the smokestacks, factory machines, and clouds of black smog are all associated with fact—while fancy is held up as the route to charity and love between fellow men. Philosophically, this contrast is a drastic and obvious oversimplification. Clearly, a commitment to factual accuracy does not lead directly to selfishness, and a commitment to imagination does not signify a commitment to social equality. But for the purposes of *Hard Times,* these contrasting ideas serve as a kind of shorthand for the states of mind that enable certain kinds of action. Cold rationalism divorced from sentiment and feeling can lead to insensitivity about human suffering, and imagination can enhance one's sense of sympathy.

Gradgrind's philosophy of fact is intimately related to the Industrial Revolution, a cause of the mechanization of human nature. Dickens suggests that when humans are forced to perform the

same monotonous tasks repeatedly, in a drab, incessantly noisy, and smoky environment, they become like the machines with which they work—unfeeling and not enlivened by fancy. The connection between Gradgrind's philosophy of fact and the social effects of the Industrial Revolution is made explicit by two details in the first section of the novel. First, the narrator reports that when Gradgrind finds his children at the circus, "Tom gave himself up to be taken home like a machine." By dulling Tom's feelings and his sense of free will, his education has rendered his thoughts and actions mechanical. The second detail illustrating the connection between Gradgrind's philosophy and the process of industrialization is the choice of names for Gradgrind's two younger sons, Adam Smith and Malthus. These children play no role in the plot, but their names are relevant to the novel's themes. Adam Smith (1723–1790) was a Scottish economist who produced the theory that the economy is controlled by an "invisible hand," and that employers and workers do not control the fluctuations of supply and demand. Malthus (1766–1834) was an economist who argued that poverty is a result of overpopulation and that the poor must have smaller families in order to improve the general standard of living in society. Both of these writers addressed the poverty of mind and body that accompanies industrialization. Through these two names, Dickens suggests that the philosophy of fact to which Gradgrind subscribes and the deleterious social effects of the Industrial Revolution are inextricably related.

This first section serves mainly to introduce the contrast between fact and fancy and to establish the allegiances of the main characters. From the very first paragraph, Mr. Gradgrind is established as the leading disciple of fact, but he is also shown to be a loving, if deluded, father. The real villain of the novel is Mr. Bounderby, who seems to share Mr. Gradgrind's love of fact but has no difficulty lying about himself, as later events show. Sissy is clearly on the side of feeling and fancy, as are all the circus performers. Louisa seems torn between the world of her upbringing and a deep inner desire to experience imagination and feeling—a desire that she lacks the vocabulary even to name. Her unhappy status, lost between the worlds of fact and fancy, combined with Bounderby's obvious attraction toward her, serves as the catalyst for the principal conflict in the novel.

Book the First: Sowing: Chapters 5–8

Summary — Chapter 5: The Key-note

On their way to find Sissy's father, Gradgrind and Bounderby walk through the dark, smoky streets of Coketown, passing a number of identically shaped buildings made from identical dirty

red bricks. Soon they meet Sissy Jupe herself, who is being chased by the bullying Bitzer. Sissy, a dutiful and loving daughter, has been out buying oils for her father's aches and pains. The two men follow her back to the dwelling place of the circus performers.

Summary — Chapter 6: Sleary's Horsemanship

Sissy stops at an inn called the Pegasus Arms, where Bounderby and Gradgrind are introduced to the lisping circus master, Mr. Sleary. Sleary informs Gradgrind that, unbeknownst to Sissy, her father has lost his ability as a performer and has abandoned her in shame. Gradgrind decides to take Sissy into his home and raise her according to his philosophy of fact. Sissy agrees to the arrangement, principally because she believes her father will come back for her—an idea that Bounderby and Gradgrind find fanciful and ridiculous. A strange assortment of circus folk gathers to wish Sissy well in her new home. She is sorry to leave them, because these entertainers have been like a family to Sissy during her childhood.

Summary — Chapter 7: Mrs. Sparsit

The next day, Bounderby discusses Louisa with his housekeeper, Mrs. Sparsit, who is connected to the prominent aristocratic Powler family. After falling on hard times, the aristocratic Mrs. Sparsit has accepted employment with Mr. Bounderby, but she constantly reminds him of her family connections. Bounderby worries that the fanciful Sissy will be a bad influence on Louisa, whom he already regards as his future wife. Gradgrind informs Sissy that she may continue to attend his school and that she will care for Mrs. Gradgrind in her free time.

Summary — Chapter 8: Never Wonder

Later that same day, Louisa talks with her brother about her father's plan to apprentice Tom at Mr. Bounderby's bank. Both Louisa and Tom are depressed by the colorless monotony of life at Stone Lodge, but Louisa, attempting to cheer up Tom, reminds him of her affection for him. She seems to feel that something is missing from her life, but when she wonders what it might be, Mrs. Gradgrind warns Louisa never to wonder—wondering contradicts the philosophy of fact, and it also makes Mrs. Gradgrind wish she had never been cursed with a family.

Analysis — Book the First: Sowing: Chapters 5–8

In Dickens's novels, characters' names often reveal details about their personalities. For instance, Mr. Gradgrind's name evokes the monotonous grind of his children's lives, as well as the grinding of the factory machines. Similarly, the title of each chapter in *Hard Times* can be helpful in interpreting the movement of the plot. For example, the first chapter is titled "The One Thing Necessary," and in this chapter we learn that Mr. Gradgrind believes the one thing necessary for a fulfilling existence is fact. The meaning of the title of Chapter 5, "The Key-note," is not so immediately obvious. However, its meaning is clarified at the beginning of Chapter 8, when the narrator declares, "Let us strike the key-note again before pursuing the tune." He then describes how, as a child, Louisa was inclined to wonder about the world around her, to ask questions, and to imagine. Not surprisingly, her father quickly suppressed this inclination, telling Louisa that she must "never wonder." In Chapter 5, the narrator also draws our attention to the need for wonder and imagination when he compares the Gradgrind children to factory workers. He explains that both the children and the workers "have Fancy in them demanding to be brought into healthy existence." From these passages, we can conclude that the conflict between fact and fancy is the "key-note," or the key theme, that the narrator will continue to bring up throughout the novel. Fancy, the narrator implies, is at least as important as fact in a balanced, fulfilling existence. Chapters 5 through 8 thus serve to reinforce the relationship between fact and fancy.

In this section, the circus entertainers are the most obvious representatives of fancy, and Gradgrind accordingly finds them rather distasteful. The entertainers possess the ability to transform the colorless, humdrum world into a place of magic and excitement simply by using their imaginations. This transformation is illustrated by Kidderminster, a gruff young boy who plays the role of Cupid in the circus. In real life, Kidderminster is cheeky, loud, and temperamental, but in the circus ring he is adorably sweet and wins the spectators' hearts. Through fancy, the circus entertainers not only find happiness themselves, but also bring pleasure to others.

In Chapter 8, Dickens draws attention to another mode of fancy that brings pleasure to others: fiction, and in particular, novels. The narrator relates that, much to Mr. Gradgrind's dismay, factory workers flock to the Coketown library "to read mere fables about men and women, more or less like themselves, and about children, more or less like their own." The workers are drawn to these stories because they stimulate their imaginations, causing them to wonder about "human nature, human passions, human hopes and fears, the struggles, the triumphs

and defeats . . . of common men and women." Novels provide a much-needed escape from the drab, mechanical factories in which these workers spend most of their days. In describing the workers' reading habits, Dickens draws attention to the fact that his own readers are in fact reading a novel about, more or less, ordinary men and women. Thus, he presents his novels as a way to counteract the dehumanizing effects of the Industrial Revolution. Significantly, the Coketown workers read what is known as realism, or fiction that attempts to represent real life accurately, and which often describes the lives of common people rather than those of kings, queens, and other aristocrats. In his focus on the common man and the social conditions of Victorian England, Dickens himself is a realist writer. In this passage, he reminds us that even realism is a form of fancy and that even realist novels can both teach us about real life and awaken our imaginations. The realist novel, he suggests, combines fact and fancy. In Victorian England, the novel was often considered a dangerous genre precisely because it was accessible to the working and middle classes. Many people feared that novels would corrupt the minds of these readers by making them too fanciful and even by giving them immoral ideas. By suggesting that realist novels can both teach and entertain, Dickens defends his novel against these charges.

Book the First: Sowing: Chapters 9–12

Summary — Chapter 9: Sissy's Progress

Sissy Jupe does very poorly at the school because she is simply unable to adopt the cold, hard devotion to fact that is demanded of her. Instead, she continues to cling to what Mr. Gradgrind thinks of as ridiculous, fanciful notions, such as the idea that her father will come back for her. One day, Louisa convinces Sissy secretly to talk about life with her father. Louisa, raised to never feel strong emotion, finds herself very moved by Sissy's deep feelings. During the conversation with Sissy, Tom frequently reminds Louisa to watch out for Bounderby, in case he should catch her "wondering" about Sissy's past.

Summary — Chapter 10: Stephen Blackpool

One night, in the most hardworking, grimy district of Coketown, a simple and brutally poor man named Stephen Blackpool goes home from his job as a power loom operator in Mr. Bounderby's factory. Stephen is a Hand, one of the lowest menial laborers in Coketown. He talks briefly in the street to Rachael, the pure, honest woman he loves, then goes home, where he is stunned to find his wayward, immoral, and generally absent wife lying in his bed. In order

to soothe the misery of poverty, his wife has become an alcoholic, and although Stephen wishes to divorce her, he nevertheless pities her.

Summary — Chapter 11: No Way Out

Disturbed by his wife's sudden reappearance, Stephen visits Mr. Bounderby the next day to ask humbly if he has any legal recourse and any possibility of obtaining a divorce. Arrogantly, and with many references to his own impoverished childhood, Bounderby explains that only the wealthy can obtain divorces and that Stephen would be better off accepting his miserable situation.

Summary — Chapter 12: The Old Woman

Outside Bounderby's house, Stephen meets a strange old woman who has traveled into the city from the country. She tells Stephen that every year she saves enough money to make the long journey into Coketown for a single day, just long enough to catch a glimpse of Mr. Bounderby. She fears that Bounderby will not come out of his house that day and says that seeing Stephen just after he saw Bounderby must satisfy her for this year. The old woman follows him to Bounderby's grim factory and inexplicably praises its beauty. After work is over for the day, Stephen wanders the streets, trying to avoid going home to his drunken wife. As he wanders, Stephen imagines the pleasant, happy home he could share with Rachael if only he were free to remarry.

Analysis — Book the First: Sowing: Chapters 9–12

With the introduction of Stephen Blackpool, the novel delves into the world of the Hands, the working-class, horribly impoverished denizens of Coketown whom Dickens uses to represent the plight of the poor. Stephen, with his simple honesty and love for the angelic Rachael, is shown to be a good character despite his horrible marriage. He immediately contrasts with the blustery, self-obsessed Bounderby, a difference hammered home when Stephen visits his employer to ask about the possibility of divorcing his wife. Having heard that there is a law permitting divorce under certain circumstances, Stephen inquires into the details of this law. However, Bounderby makes it clear that there are no laws to help Stephen—all laws are made by the rich, for the rich. Bounderby callously tells Stephen that, as a poor man, he has no recourse but to accept his lot. Furthermore, Bounderby reminds Stephen that "[t]here's a sanctity in the relation" of marriage that "must be kept up." Although he shows no pity for Stephen's misery, these words later come back to haunt Bounderby when his own marriage becomes troubled.

On top of his utter lack of pity, Bounderby then accuses Stephen of wanting to eat turtle soup with a gold spoon. This accusation results from Bounderby's belief that all Hands are improvident, -dishonest cretins who simply want to get ahead, when in reality Bounderby, who very well could eat turtle soup with a gold spoon, is the only character guilty of fitting that description. His belief that Hands are lazy good-for-nothings is part of his rhetoric of the self-made man. As he constantly reminds us, he managed to rise from his humble beginnings to become the wealthy owner of factories and a bank. If the Hands were not so lazy, he implies, surely they could do the same.

While Stephen and Rachael are the only Hands who become fully developed characters in the course of the novel, Dickens provides many generalized views of the Hands and their working conditions. Like the novel itself, these impressions are structured through the contrast between fact and fancy. For instance, at the beginning of Chapter 11, the narrator describes the awakening of the Coketown factories: "The Fairy palaces burst into illumination before pale morning showed the monstrous serpents of smoke trailing themselves over Coketown." The fairy palaces are, in fact, simply the factories bursting with light as the fires are lit inside them. While Dickens suggests that fancy can make even Coketown beautiful and magical, the image is ironic because these palaces house the poorest segment of society and are filled with noise, grime, and smoke. While the description of Coketown does not specify the horrors of the Hands' working conditions, it does create a general impression of filth and noise.

Dickens has been criticized for not developing his working-class characters fully, or not depicting them in as much detail as his -middle-class characters. For instance, when the narrator describes the Hands at work, he merely states: "So many hundred Hands in the Mill; so many hundred horse Steam Power." The term "Hands" itself depersonalizes the workers by referring to them by the part of their body that performs their tasks in the factories. Much of *Hard Times* is devoted to pointing out how the middle classes ignore the poor. Perhaps, then, Dickens is calling for a more sympathetic and insightful examination of the working and living conditions of poor people in Victorian England. The narrator implies as much when he declares that "not all the calculators of the National Debt can tell me the capacity for good or evil . . . in one of these its quiet servants." The narrator thus points out how little is known about the poor and how little interest society shows in their thoughts, feelings, and problems. *Hard Times* does not fully answer the question of how the poor live, but instead tries to impel us to start asking this question for ourselves.

Book the First: Sowing: Chapters 13–16

Summary — Chapter 13: Rachael

When Stephen finally returns to his room, he is shocked to find Rachael sitting next to his bedridden wife, tending to what appears to be a serious illness. Rachael tells Stephen to go to sleep in the chair. Stephen falls asleep, but wakes up just in time to see his wife about to swallow a lethal amount of one of her medicines. Stephen is unable to act, but Rachael awakens suddenly and seizes the bottle from the sick woman, thereby preventing her death. Ashamed of his inability to bring himself to stop his wife's attempted suicide, Stephen looks upon Rachael as an angel.

Summary — Chapter 14: The Great Manufacturer

Time passes, moving relentlessly like the machinery of a factory. Mr. Gradgrind tells Sissy that she is hopeless at the school but that she may continue to live at Stone Lodge and care for Mrs. Gradgrind. Gradgrind has become a Member of Parliament, and he spends much of his time in London. Tom, now a dissipated, hedonistic young man, tells Louisa that her father intends to arrange a marriage between her and Mr. Bounderby, with whom Tom, as an apprentice in the bank, now lives. He encourages Louisa to accept, so that they might live together again, and tells her that she is his best defense against Mr. Bounderby's authority.

Summary — Chapter 15: Father and Daughter

When her father raises the prospect of marriage, Louisa seems puzzled—she does not understand why she is being asked to love the fifty-year-old Bounderby. Although she is sure that she does not love him, she agrees to marry him, asking, "What does it matter?" Louisa realizes that she does not, in fact, know how to love, but she is anxious to please her father by marrying his friend.

Summary — Chapter 16: Husband and Wife

Bounderby tentatively mentions his marriage to Mrs. Sparsit, suggesting that she should take a position keeping the apartments at Bounderby's bank after he and Louisa get married. Mrs. Sparsit evidently disapproves of the marriage, stating ambiguously that she hopes Bounderby is as happy as he deserves to be. Bounderby attempts to show his affection for his bride-to-be by showering her with jewels and fine clothes, but she remains impassive. At the last moment, however, Louisa clings to Tom in fear, feeling that she is taking a drastic and perhaps irrevocable step. Nevertheless, Bounderby and Louisa are united in matrimony, and they set

out on a -honeymoon trip to Lyons, as Bounderby wants to observe the operations of some factories there.

Analysis — Book the First: Sowing: Chapters 13–16

The question of how women, marriage, and the home fit into an industrialized, mechanized society now comes to the forefront. During the Victorian Era, the home was widely regarded as a place of relaxation and pleasure and as an escape from the moral corruption of the business world and from the grinding monotony of factory life—in short, as a refuge from the working world. In *Hard Times,* however, the distinction between home and workplace begins to dissolve. For instance, the Gradgrind household is almost as mechanized as a factory. Similarly, when Stephen's drunken wife suddenly returns, his home no longer provides a refuge from the misery of his factory work, so he resorts to wandering the streets rather than returning home after work. In both of these instances, the home fails to serve as a refuge from the working world.

The homes presented in *Hard Times* derive their tone from whatever female inhabits them. For instance, Gradgrind's wife, who is too complacent to argue with her husband over his mechanistic ways, allows him to determine the fact-heavy tone of the home. Stephen's wife, the lascivious drunk, makes their home a wanton den to which Stephen is reluctant to return. In contrast to Stephen's wife, Rachael embodies the qualities that make home a happy place—she is compassionate, honest, sensitive, morally pure, and generous. She represents the Victorian ideal of femininity. Because of these qualities, Stephen frequently refers to her as his angel. Through her own virtues, Rachael inspires him to maintain his personal integrity, and when she cares for his ailing wife, Rachael lightens the tone of the previously dismal residence.

The other women in the novel also play an important role in the quality of the home. Mrs. Sparsit, in contrast to Rachael, is proud and manipulative—because she is motivated solely by self-interest, she has no desire to waste her time bringing happiness to others. Although Louisa loves her brother Tom, her education prevents her from developing the qualities that Rachael embodies. Only Sissy shares Rachael's compassionate, loving nature. For most of the nineteenth century, a woman's job was to care for the home and children, and to make home a happy, relaxing place. By depicting women who not only deviate from the Victorian ideal of femininity, but also fail in their jobs as homemakers, Dickens suggests that industrialization threatens to dissolve the boundaries between workplace and home, without the stabilizing force of femininity.

This section of *Hard Times* depicts two marriages that are unhappy because the couples are badly matched. Stephen's hardworking integrity contrasts sharply with his wife's dissolute drunkenness, but despite realizing that his marriage was a mistake, Stephen has no alternative but to put up with his wife. Louisa and Bounderby's marriage threatens to be unhappy because they are separated not only by an age difference of about thirty years, but by their inability to communicate with each other. While Louisa does not know how to recognize and express her feelings, Bounderby is only interested in his own feelings and does not really care about hers. Through these mismatched couples, Dickens suggests that a happy marriage must be founded upon mutual love and respect. Mr. Gradgrind, however, tries to reduce marriage, and indeed love itself, to a question of logic. When Louisa asks his advice about whether she should marry Bounderby, her father tells her "to consider this question as you have been accustomed to consider every other question, simply as one of Fact." Gradgrind believes that the question of whether marrying Bounderby would be the best course of action for Louisa can be decided by looking at empirical evidence. Thus, he cites some statistics about the relative ages of husbands and wives to show that a young wife and an older husband can have a happy marriage. Based on these statistics, and on the fact that she has received no other proposals of marriage, Gradgrind calculates that it would be in Louisa's best interest to marry Bounderby. The fact that Bounderby takes Louisa to observe the factories in Lyon for their honeymoon further emphasizes the lack of romance in their relationship, which is purely a marriage of convenience and practicality. Through Louisa's marriage, Dickens again depicts the mechanization of family life. By negating the importance of love, Gradgrind's philosophy of fact turns humans into machines and the home into a veritable factory.

Book the Second: Reaping: Chapters 1–4

Summary — Chapter 1: Effects in the Bank

On one of Coketown's rare sunny days, Mrs. Sparsit sits in her apartment in the bank and talks to Bitzer, a former pupil at Gradgrind's school, and now a porter at the bank. The two are discussing the young Tom Gradgrind, who, although he still works at the bank, has become a "dissipated, extravagant idler." A very well-dressed young gentleman interrupts their conversation by knocking at the door. The stranger explains that he has come to Coketown to enter politics as a disciple of Gradgrind. His suave manner and genteel appearance please Mrs. Sparsit, and she attempts to flatter him. The young man inquires about Louisa Bounderby, of whom he has heard intimidating reports: he imagines that she must be middle-aged, quick-witted, and formidable. When Mrs. Sparsit assures him that Mrs. Bounderby is simply a lovely young woman, he seems very relieved and interested.

Summary — Chapter 2: Mr. James Harthouse

We learn that the strange visitor's name is James Harthouse and that he is a disingenuous, wealthy young man who is only interested in Gradgrind's politics because he hopes they will alleviate his pervasive boredom. He does not really share Gradgrind's philosophy of fact, but he is prepared to pretend that he does in order to pass the time. Harthouse goes to dinner at Bounderby's, where he is very intrigued by Louisa.

Summary — Chapter 3: The Whelp

After dinner, Harthouse takes the caddish young Tom—who is highly impressed with his new acquaintance's amoral worldliness—back to his apartment. Harthouse plies Tom with wine and tobacco and then coaxes the story of Louisa's marriage out of him. The drunken Tom claims that Louisa only married Bounderby for Tom's sake, so that she could use Bounderby's money to help her brother with his own financial difficulties. Once Harthouse learns that Louisa does not love her husband, he privately resolves to seduce her.

Summary — Chapter 4: Men and Brothers

Elsewhere in Coketown, the factory Hands, who have decided to unionize in an attempt to improve their wretched conditions, hold a meeting. An inflammatory orator named Slackbridge gives an impassioned speech about the necessity of unionizing and of showing their sense of fellowship. The only Hand who remains unconvinced is Stephen Blackpool. Stephen says he does not believe that the union will do any good because it will only aggravate the already tense relationship between employers and workers. After he voices this opinion, he is cast out of the meeting. The other Hands—his longtime friends and companions—agree to shun him as a sign of their solidarity. Stephen asks them only to allow him to continue working. He endures four days of ostracism before Bitzer summons him to Bounderby's house.

Analysis — Book the Second: Reaping: Chapters 1–4

At the beginning of Book the Second, Dickens displays his knack for using characterization to articulate his moral themes with the character of Mrs. Sparsit. If Stephen represents the poor and Bounderby and Gradgrind represent the wealthy middle class, Mrs. Sparsit and Harthouse are satires of the aristocracy. Dependent on Bounderby for her well-being, Mrs. Sparsit is adept at manipulating her circumstances around her belief that she is a great lady wronged by others. Much as Bounderby takes pride in his humble origins, Mrs. Sparsit frequently brings up the fact that she descends from one of the best families in the kingdom. Dickens often satirizes her by

describing her control over her features, claiming that she makes her aristocratic Roman nose "more Roman" in a moment of outrage. In this section, she uses Bitzer to gain useful information about the other bank employees. She is clearly spying, but pretends to be too ladylike to want to hear their names. Nevertheless, she manages to ascertain that Bitzer believes young Tom to be a horrible employee.

The two main events in this section are the arrival of James Harthouse, with his menacing amorality and his desire to seduce Louisa, and the union meeting, with Stephen's expulsion from the company of his fellow Hands. Harthouse, with his worldly cynicism and sophisticated boredom, is immediately presented as a foil to the more provincial characters in Coketown. He is neither committed to the philosophy of fact nor capable of any fancy; rather, he is simply looking out of his aristocratic haze for something to pass the time. He is perfectly equipped to capitalize on Louisa's inner confusion and capable of awakening her feelings without caring about the result. Harthouse is a stereotypical aristocratic dandy—he is not motivated by the desire for wealth or power, but rather by boredom and the desire for some new form of entertainment. Louisa presents a special source of interest because he has never met anyone like her before and cannot fully understand her.

The union meeting takes us deeper into the world of the Hands and allows Dickens to satirize the everyday, agitating spokesman with the harshly drawn caricature of Slackbridge. The narrator informs us that Slackbridge differs from the other Hands in that he is "not so honest, he [is] not so manly, he [is] not so good-humored." His primary intention is apparently to stir up the workers' feelings until they are in an impassioned frenzy against their employers. Dickens's own feelings about labor unions, and about any attempt to right wrongs through hostility and conflict, are expressed through Stephen's views. Stephen immediately recognizes that Slackbridge does not care so much about creating unity among workers as he does about creating tension between employers and employees. This tension, Stephen believes, will do nothing to aid the workers in their desire for better working conditions and pay. Thus, Stephen asks only to be allowed to make his living in peace: "I mak' no complaints . . . o' being outcasten and overlooken, fro this time forrard, but I hope I shall be let to work." Stephen is unwilling to sacrifice his belief in what is right, even if he will be made a pariah. With his hardworking integrity, Stephen represents a very sentimental and idealized portrait of a poor worker, which Dickens wields to arouse our sympathy. Through the contrast between Slackbridge and Stephen, however, Dickens suggests that the working class contains both good and bad individuals, just like the rest of society.

Book the Second: Reaping: Chapters 5–8

Summary — Chapter 5: Men and Masters

Bounderby attempts to cajole Stephen into telling him what went on at the union meeting, but Stephen refuses to be used as a spy. He says that Slackbridge is no more to blame for the desire of the workers to unionize than a clock is to blame for the passing of time, but he repeats his belief that the union will do no good. When he refuses to spy on the other Hands, Bounderby angrily dismisses him from the factory. Because his fellow Hands have ostracized him, Stephen will have to leave Coketown in search of work.

Summary — Chapter 6: Fading Away

Outside Bounderby's, Stephen encounters Rachael with the old woman he met once before, who introduces herself as Mrs. Pegler. Stephen takes the pair back to his room for tea, telling Rachael the news of his dismissal. In spite of Stephen's misfortune, they pass an enjoyable evening and are surprised by the appearance of Louisa and Tom at Stephen's door. Louisa was impressed with Stephen's refusal to help her husband break up the union, and she offers him money to help him on his way. Deeply touched, Stephen agrees to accept only two pounds, which he promises to pay back. Tom summons Stephen outside and makes him another offer of help. Tom tells Stephen to wait outside the bank late at night for the next few nights, and if all goes well, someone will appear with assistance. Stephen spends the next few days preparing to leave Coketown, and he waits outside the bank each evening, following Tom's instructions. He notices several people observing his loitering, including Mrs. Sparsit and Bitzer, but no one comes to offer him help. Finally, one morning, Stephen walks by Rachael's house one last time, then sets out down the road out of Coketown, the trees arching over him, his own heart aching for the loving heart of Rachael that he is leaving behind.

Summary — Chapter 7: Gunpowder

As James Harthouse begins to enjoy some political success, he also begins to plan his seduction of Louisa. He and Louisa spend a lot of time together at Bounderby's country estate near Coketown, and through their private conversations he learns how to manipulate the emotions that Louisa herself does not know she has. Realizing that her brother is the only person for whom she truly cares, Harthouse uses his influence over Tom to make him act more kindly to Louisa—and he makes sure she knows who is responsible.

Summary — Chapter 8: Explosion

One morning, Bounderby charges in upon Harthouse and Louisa, announcing that the bank has been robbed of roughly 150 pounds. The only suspect is Stephen Blackpool, who was seen loitering outside the bank late at night, shortly before fleeing from Coketown. Mrs. Sparsit, whose nerves have been shocked by the event, temporarily moves in with the Bounderbys, where she begins to spend more and more time with Mr. Bounderby, and insists upon referring to Louisa as "Miss Gradgrind." Knowing that her brother is deeply in debt, Louisa suspects Tom of stealing the money. She confronts him about it one night, and he protests his innocence. However, as soon as she leaves his room, he buries his face in his pillow and begins to sob guiltily.

Analysis — Book the Second: Reaping: Chapters 5–8

Thus far, *Hard Times* has consisted of two seemingly separate plot strands—the first involving Louisa and Bounderby's loveless marriage, and the second describing Stephen's ostracism from his fellow workers. In this section, however, these plots begin to coverge. This interweaving of the previously separate plot strands is illustrated by Stephen and Louisa's meeting in Chapter 6, a meeting that brings Louisa into contact with a person of the working class for the first time in her life. This meeting illustrates that Louisa is not entirely without compassion or feeling, and it serves to further awaken her latent emotions. Previously, Louisa had known the Hands only as "[s]omething to be worked so much and paid so much," but in going to Stephen's room, she sees for the first time the suffering that these individuals experience.

The meeting at Stephen's room is also important because it sets the stage for the bank robbery. While Louisa shows her ability to feel compassion, Tom reveals his self-interested, manipulative side when he tells Stephen that help may come to him if he waits outside the bank for several consecutive nights, since Tom is the person who robs Bounderby and frames Stephen. The weaving together of the two plots signifies that the narrative is approaching its climax, the moment when the conflict erupts.

This section of the novel also reveals changes in Tom and Louisa's relationship. Ever since Tom asked Louisa to marry Bounderby for his sake, he has been growing increasingly distant from his sister. While he formerly confided in her and treated her affectionately, Tom now becomes sulky, refusing to answer her questions regarding his knowledge of the bank robbery. Indeed, Louisa is beset by problems on all sides. Not only must she contend with Tom's sulky silence and his requests for money, but she is also prey to Mr. Harthouse's advances. Meanwhile,

Bounderby remains oblivious to her precarious situation, as he is concerned only with the bank robbery. Again, Louisa's problems point toward the approaching climax of the novel.

The reappearance of the mysterious Mrs. Pegler in Chapter 6 illustrates the important role that seemingly minor characters play in Dickens's novels. Characters such as Bitzer, Mr. Sleary, and Mrs. Pegler serve to draw together the many divergent plot strands, thereby moving the narrative forward. With Mrs. Pegler's second appearance, we begin to realize that she must be somehow important to the plot. While Dickens keeps us in suspense about who she is and why she is important, he does provide some significant clues. For instance, when Stephen asks her if she has any children, Mrs. Pegler does not say that her son is dead, but instead replies, "I have lost him." Furthermore, when Mrs. Pegler believes that Bounderby is about to enter Stephen's room, she becomes extremely agitated and looks for a means to escape. From these details, and from the fact that she journeys to Coketown each year simply to catch a glimpse of him, we can infer that Mrs. Pegler is in some way connected to Bounderby.

Book the Second: Reaping: Chapters 9–12

Summary — Chapter 9: Hearing the Last of It

Mrs. Sparsit continues to lurk around the Bounderby estate, flattering Bounderby's pride and worming her way into his good graces. She also observes shrewdly that Louisa spends a great deal of time with James Harthouse. It is not long, however, before this new pattern is interrupted: Louisa receives a letter from Stone Lodge, telling her that her mother is dying. Louisa rushes to her mother's side and sees that her younger sister, Jane, who is being raised primarily by Sissy, seems happier and more fulfilled than Louisa felt as a child. Before her death, Mrs. Gradgrind calls Louisa to her, explaining that she feels like she has missed or forgotten something and that she wants to write a letter to Mr. Gradgrind asking him to find out what it is. After a whining farewell, Mrs. Gradgrind dies.

Summary — Chapter 10: Mrs. Sparsit's Staircase

Even after Mrs. Sparsit leaves the Bounderbys, she continues to visit very frequently. Thinking about Louisa's burgeoning relationship with Mr. Harthouse, Mrs. Sparsit begins to imagine that Louisa is on a giant staircase leading into a black abyss. She pictures Louisa running downward and downward, and she takes great pleasure in imagining what will happen when she reaches the bottom and falls into this abyss.

Summary — Chapter 11: Lower and Lower

One day, Mrs. Sparsit discovers that Tom has been sent to the train station in Coketown to wait for Harthouse and that Louisa is at the country estate, all alone. Suspecting a ruse and ignoring a driving rain, Mrs. Sparsit hurries to the country, where she heads into the forest and discovers Louisa and Harthouse in an intimate conversation. Harthouse professes his love for Louisa and states his desire to become her lover. Louisa agrees to meet him in town later that night but urges him to leave immediately. He does so, and Louisa at once sets out for Coketown. Scrambling to follow her, Mrs. Sparsit gleefully imagines Louisa tumbling off the precipice at the bottom of her imaginary staircase. However, she loses track of Louisa before Louisa reaches her ultimate destination.

Summary — Chapter 12: Down

Contrary to Mrs. Sparsit's expectations, Louisa does not go to meet James Harthouse but instead goes to Stone Lodge, where she rushes into her father's study, drenched to the bone and extremely upset. She confesses to her father that she bitterly regrets her childhood and says that the way he brought her up exclusively on facts, without ever letting her feel or imagine anything, has ruined her. She claims that she is married to a man she despises and that she may be in love with Harthouse. Consequently, she is thoroughly miserable and does not know how to rectify the situation. Gradgrind is shocked and consumed with sudden self-reproach. Sobbing, Louisa collapses to the floor.

Analysis — Book the Second: Reaping: Chapters 9–12

After a great deal of buildup, this section constitutes the climax of the story, in which the primary conflicts erupt into the open. Louisa's collapse gives Dickens a chance to show the damaging consequences of Gradgrind's method of raising his children. Deprived of any connection with her own feelings, Louisa is empty and baffled. When she suddenly discovers her own emotions, the pain of the discovery overwhelms her. Gradgrind, formerly the most potent believer in the philosophy of fact, also sees how his philosophy has warped his daughter, and he begins to reform.

Significantly, Mrs. Gradgrind also realizes before her death that something, although she does not know what, has been missing from her family's life, something that she can recognize in Sissy Jupe. Even though Mrs. Gradgrind is unable to communicate this revelation to her husband, he learns through Louisa's collapse that his philosophy has deprived his family of the happiness that only imagination and love can create.

Mrs. Sparsit's imaginary staircase symbolizes the standards of social conduct during the Victorian era. If a woman spent time alone with a man who was not her relative, her behavior was considered morally suspect, or a sign of her possible mental, if not physical, unchasteness. If Louisa had indeed eloped with Harthouse, her reputation would have been ruined irreparably—as it is, her character has merely fallen under Mrs. Sparsit's suspicion. Mrs. Sparsit's mental staircase also emphasizes the manipulative and even vicious side of her own personality. While pretending to be a model of virtue, Mrs. Sparsit secretly takes pleasure in the idea of Louisa's fall. Structurally, this section marks the moment in the novel in which the villains stand most triumphantly over the good characters: Harthouse and Mrs. Sparsit have destroyed Louisa emotionally; Bounderby and Tom, who is, of course, the real bank robber, have ruined Stephen's good name; and Gradgrind is devastated by Louisa's collapse.

The third section of the novel affords the good characters an opportunity to improve these miserable conditions, largely with the aid of the purest, most innocent, and most fanciful character of them all: the once-maligned Sissy Jupe. In general, the structure of *Hard Times* is extremely simple, but it is also important to the development of the action. The novel is divided into three sections, "Sowing," "Reaping," and "Garnering"—agricultural titles that are ironic alongside the industrial focus of the novel. In the first section, the seeds are planted for the rest of the novel—Sissy comes to live with the Gradgrinds, Louisa is married to Bounderby, and Tom is apprenticed at the bank. In the second section, the characters reap the results of those seeds—Louisa's collapse, Tom's robbery, and Stephen's exile. In the third section, whose title, "Garnering," literally means picking up the pieces of the harvest that were missed, the characters attempt to restore equilibrium to their lives, and they face their futures with new emotional resources at their disposal.

The titles of the sections, however, refer not only to the harvesting of events, but also to the harvesting of ideas. In the first chapter of *Hard Times,* Gradgrind declares his intention to "plant" only facts in his children's minds, and to "root out everything else," such as feelings and fancies. This metaphor returns to haunt him when, just before her collapse, Louisa points to the place where her heart should be and asks her father, "[W]hat have you done with the garden that should have bloomed once, in this great wilderness here?" Louisa implies that by concentrating all his efforts on planting facts in his children's minds, Gradgrind has neglected to plant any sentiments in their hearts, leaving her emotionally barren.

Book the Third: Garnering: Chapters 1–4

Summary — Chapter 1: Another Thing Needful

In her bed at Stone Lodge, Louisa recuperates from her trauma. Her father remorsefully pledges his support but acknowledges that he does not really know how to help her because he himself has never learned “the wisdom of the Heart.” Sissy lovingly vows to help Louisa learn how to feel and how to find happiness.

Summary — Chapter 2: Very Ridiculous

The day after Louisa’s arrival, Sissy takes it upon herself to visit James Harthouse, who has been in a nervous state since Louisa’s failure to appear at their tryst in Coketown. Sissy tells Harthouse that he will never see Louisa again and that he must leave Coketown and swear never to return. Baffled and feeling very ridiculous, Harthouse is able to resist neither Sissy’s simple, persuasive honesty nor her beauty; he grudgingly agrees to leave Coketown forever.

Summary — Chapter 3: Very Decided

At the same time, Mrs. Sparsit, now stricken with a bad cold caught from her drenching in the rain, tells Bounderby what she witnessed between Louisa and Harthouse. Bounderby furiously drags Mrs. Sparsit to Stone Lodge, where he confronts Gradgrind about Louisa’s perceived infidelity. Gradgrind tells Bounderby that he fears he has made a mistake in Louisa’s upbringing, and he asks Bounderby to allow Louisa to remain at Stone Lodge on an extended visit while she tries to recover. He reminds Bounderby that as Louisa’s husband, he should try to do what is best for her. Bounderby, enraged, threatens to send back all of Louisa’s property, effectively abandoning her and placing her back in her father’s hands if she is not home by noon the next day. Gradgrind does not budge, and Louisa remains at Stone Lodge. Bounderby makes good on his threat and resumes his life as a bachelor.

Summary — Chapter 4: Lost

Bounderby diverts his rage into the continuing efforts to find Stephen Blackpool. Slackbridge gives a speech blaming Stephen for the robbery, and the Hands are roused to track him down. One day, Louisa is paid a visit by Bounderby, her brother, and a sobbing Rachael, who protests that Stephen will return to clear his good name. Although she is loath to suspect Louisa of deceit, Rachael fears that Louisa’s previous offer of money was merely a cover for her plan to frame Stephen for the robbery. Rachael has sent Stephen two letters explaining the charges against him, and she claims that he will return to Coketown in one or two days. But a week passes, and still he does not return. His continued absence only increases suspicion against him.

Analysis — Book the Third: Garnering: Chapters 1–4

At the beginning of Book the Third, Louisa and Mr. Gradgrind begin a process of emotional healing and discovery. The title of Chapter 1, "Another Thing Needful," echoes the title of the first chapter of Book the First, "The One Thing Needful," revealing that Gradgrind has realized that fact alone cannot sustain a happy and fulfilling existence. However, the healing process is very slow. Because Louisa and her father are so accustomed to living their lives according to the philosophy of fact, learning how to change their mode of thinking is difficult at this point. Thus, Mr. Gradgrind declares to Louisa: "The ground on which I stand has ceased to be solid under my feet." Although he no longer believes that fact alone is necessary, he does not know exactly what else is needed to make Louisa happy. Recognizing that he is not a fit teacher for his daughter, Gradgrind hopes that Sissy will be able to help her. While Louisa fears that Sissy must hate her for her former coldness, Sissy is understanding and forgiving, as usual. Together with Louisa's loving younger sister Jane, Sissy undertakes to restore happiness to Louisa's life.

The meeting between Harthouse and Sissy indicates the importance of a character who has remained in the background for much of the novel. Through this meeting we are reminded of the values that Sissy represents—compassion, forgiveness, and joy. The narrator establishes a contrast between these values and the sophisticated Harthouse's self-centered manipulation of other people. Indeed, the narrator relates that Sissy's good-natured reproach touches Harthouse "in the cavity where his heart should have been." In suggesting that Harthouse has no heart, the narrator suggests that he has not been motivated by evil intentions but rather by a lack of good intentions—Harthouse is amoral rather than immoral. Harthouse himself acknowledges that he had "no evil intentions" toward Louisa but merely "glided from one step to another" without realizing the emotional havoc that his seduction might cause.

Like Bounderby, Tom, and Mrs. Sparsit, Harthouse is motivated only by his own interest and does not consider how his actions might impact other people. Through these characters, Dickens again illustrates the moral dangers of a society that values fact more than feeling. Ultimately, Harthouse, the worldly cynic, is completely overpowered by Sissy Jupe, the loving innocent; he is easily sent away from Coketown, never to threaten Louisa again.

In this section of the novel, Dickens returns to the issue of the Hands' unionization, again suggesting that unionization does not in fact unite individuals, but divides them, turning one person against another. While Slackbridge repeatedly addresses the other Hands as "fellow-

countrymen," "fellow-brothers," "fellow-workmen," and "fellow-citizens," he ironically encourages them to exclude Stephen from their fellowship. Rather than supporting their fellow worker in his time of need, they disown him. Rachael sums up Stephen's predicament when she declares despairingly: "The masters against him on one hand, the men against him on the other, he only wantin' to work hard in peace, and do what he felt right. Can a man have no soul of his own, no mind of his own?" In his unfailing integrity and his desire for peace and harmony, Stephen becomes a martyr. He suffers not only for what he believes in but also for another person's crime.

Book the Third: Garnering: Chapters 5–9

Summary — Chapter 5: Found

Sissy visits Rachael every night as they wait for news of Stephen. One night, as they are walking past Bounderby's house, they see Mrs. Sparsit dragging Mrs. Pegler into the house. Mrs. Sparsit tells Bounderby she has found the old woman, who was seen in Blackpool's apartment before the robbery, and has brought him the possible accessory to the crime for questioning. But far from being pleased, Bounderby is furious: Mrs. Pegler is his mother, and as their encounter falls out, it becomes clear to the assembled company that she did not abandon him in the gutter, as he had claimed. Rather, she raised, educated, and loved him. He abandoned her, refusing to allow her to visit him now that he has become wealthy and successful. The myth of Bounderby, the self-made man, is exploded, and he refuses to offer an explanation for his former lies about his past.

Summary — Chapter 6: The Starlight

Stephen still fails to appear. One morning, Sissy takes Rachael for a walk in the country to restore her strength, and they discover Stephen's hat. Rachael instantly fears that he has been murdered, but, after walking on a little farther, they discover that he has fallen down an old mining pit called Old Hell Shaft and is still clinging to life. The women seek help, and a large crowd assembles around the pit. A rescue team manages to lift Stephen out, and a doctor attends to his injuries. Nonetheless, after bidding a loving farewell to Rachael and telling Louisa to have Gradgrind ask Tom for the information that will clear his name, Stephen dies.

Summary — Chapter 7: Whelp-hunting

When the crowd disperses, Tom is missing. Back at Stone Lodge, Gradgrind and Louisa feel that their fears are confirmed: Tom robbed the bank. Louisa reveals that Sissy encouraged Tom to seek refuge with Mr. Sleary's circus, currently camped near Liverpool. From there, Tom might leave England on one of the many boats sailing for South America or the Indies. Relieved that Tom might escape prison, Sissy, Louisa, and Gradgrind set out in two separate coaches for Mr. Sleary's circus, hoping to send Tom safely out of the country. Louisa and Sissy travel all night and reunite with Sleary, who tells Sissy that Tom is safe. Gradgrind arrives not long after. They are joined by the sullen Tom, who has been participating in the circus performance dressed up in blackface. They agree to send him up the coast to Liverpool, where he can book passage out of the country. Tom is rude to Louisa, blaming her for his predicament because she refused to finance his gambling habit, but she cries out that she forgives him and that she loves him still. Suddenly, the pale-faced Bitzer appears and says that Tom cannot leave, for he intends to take him back to Coketown and hand him over to the police.

Summary — Chapter 8: Philosophical

With the assistance of some of Sleary's circus people, Bitzer takes Tom to arrange rail passage back to Coketown. However, Sleary double-crosses Bitzer with a trick involving madly barking dogs and dancing horses, which enables Tom to escape aboard ship after all. The next morning, Tom's family learns that he is safely away from England. Sleary has one more surprise in store: he confides to Gradgrind that Merrylegs, Sissy's father's dog, has unexpectedly returned alone to the circus, a sure sign that her father is dead.

Summary — Chapter 9: Final

In the aftermath of the incident with Mrs. Pegler, Bounderby fires Mrs. Sparsit and sends her away to live with her unpleasant relative, Lady Scadgers. Looking proudly at his portrait, Mr. Bounderby does not guess that he will die from a fit in the streets of Coketown in a mere five years' time. The narrator reveals that in that future, Gradgrind will cease serving fact and will instead devote his skills and money to faith, hope, and charity. He will also publish writings exonerating the name of Stephen Blackpool. Furthermore, the narrator discloses that Louisa will never marry again. Tom will soon repent of his hostility toward his sister, and he will die abroad longing for a last look at Louisa's face. Rachael will go on working and continue in her sweetness and good faith, and Sissy will have a large and happy family. Louisa will be deeply loved by Sissy's children, through whom she will vicariously experience the joy and wonder of

childhood. And Louisa will always strive to understand and improve the lives of her fellow human beings.

Analysis — Book the Third: Garnering: Chapters 5–9

In this section, everyone gets their just desserts. The narrator demonstrates his omniscience and his moral authority by assigning futures to the main characters according to each of their situations and merits. In other words, the characters who are clearly good are rewarded with happy endings, while those who are clearly bad end up miserable. Bounderby is exposed as a fraud with the revelation that his life story is a lie designed to cover up his wretched treatment of his kindly mother. Mrs. Sparsit is packed off to Lady Scadgers, having ruined her own chances with Bounderby through her excessive nosiness. Tom manages to escape but realizes the guilt of his awful behavior after it is too late to make amends with Louisa, and he dies, missing her terribly. Sissy, of course, ends up happy. The one exception to this general rule of poetic justice is the death of Stephen Blackpool. While Stephen seems to look forward to death as a release from his miserable existence, he leaves Rachael bereft and alone after he dies. Rachael's misery and Stephen's undeserved death are perhaps a part of Dickens's intent to rouse sympathy for the poor.

Unlike Bounderby and Sissy, some of the characters in *Hard Times* cannot be clearly labeled as either good or bad. The narrator assigns ambiguous futures to these characters—they are not simply rewarded, but neither are they simply punished. Of these ambiguous futures, Mr. Gradgrind's fate is perhaps the most ironic of all. At the beginning of the novel, he reviles the circus troupe and accuses it of corrupting his children. At the end, he is forced to depend on the troupe to save one of his children. After that, he behaves morally, devoting his political power to helping the poor, but is in turn reviled by the fact-obsessed politicians whose careers he helped to create.

Louisa is the most ambiguous character in the novel, and she faces an equally mixed fate: free of Bounderby and free of Harthouse, she is loved by Sissy's children, but she never has a family of her own. In wrapping up the plot, Dickens strays from his concern with social problems in favor of a focus on the inner lives of his characters. The book does not offer any resolution to the situation of the Hands beyond advocating love and fellowship among men, and the end of the novel is designed to let us know how each character will fare in the future, rather than how larger social issues will be addressed. At the heart of Dickens's writing, social protest and satire are almost always secondary to the more fundamental issues of character and story. *Hard*

Times is remarkable among Dickens's fiction in that the focus on social ills is prominent throughout the novel, but in the end, Dickens's attention for his characters prevails.

4. Character Analysis

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- **THOMAS GRADGRIND, SR.**

  A leading businessman of Coketown and governor of the school, Gradgrind becomes a member of Parliament during the course of the story. He is married and the father of five, including Louisa and Tom, Jr., two of the major characters.

  Gradgrind is a strict disciple of the philosophy of Utilitarianism that prizes hard fact above all else. Anything not a fact is considered "fancy" or sentiment. Gradgrind practices what he preaches- to the letter. Not only are his learning techniques taught in the school he governs, but his children have been raised by its laws. Their learning has been strictly scientific, free from the "corrupting" influence of poetry, fairy tale, or song.

  The novel charts Gradgrind's growing realization that his theories, when applied without the humane influence of the heart, can be destructive. A marriage arranged for profit and convenience between Louisa and Bounderby ends in disaster. Tom, Jr., becomes a liar and a thief, forced to escape the law in disguise.

  A basically decent man (unlike Bounderby), Gradgrind is not beyond redemption, according to Dickens. Largely through the influence of Sissy Jupe and the trauma of Louisa's failed marriage, Gradgrind grows in wisdom and experience. He pays for his earlier insensitivity by seeing the harmful results of his philosophy: Tom's life of crime, Bitzer's cold-hearted practicality, and Louisa's emotional breakdown. By the end of the novel, however, he is a wiser and better man.

- **LOUISA GRADGRIND (MRS. BOUNDERBY)**

- Daughter of Thomas Gradgrind and, later, wife to Josiah Bounderby, Louisa is first seen curiously peeking at the goings-on at the horse-riding performance. Her action is symbolic of her yearning to experience more than the hard scientific facts she has learned all her life. Instinctively seeking romance and laughter when all she has known are theory and statistics, Louisa is viewed by Dickens as a pathetic product of her father's philosophy.

- Attractive and sensitive, Louisa has always masked her emotions under a cool and passive facade. She is often linked symbolically to fire: Dying embers represent her fading hopes for happiness, and the fires of Coketown chimneys that are frequently hidden beneath smoke represent her inward passions.
- Her humanity emerges gradually as the novel progresses. At first she cares only for her brother Tom; for his sake she marries Bounderby, a much older man. But as the lovelessness of her marriage takes its toll, she reaches out, first to Stephen Blackpool, an oppressed factory worker, and then to James Harthouse, an arrogant aristocrat who tries to seduce her. Pressed to the brink of madness by the temptation that Harthouse offers, Louisa throws herself on her father's mercy. Nothing in her previous education has prepared her to handle her emerging passions. She saves herself from disgrace just in time, helped by the friendship of Sissy Jupe, who represents the wisdom of the heart- a wisdom Louisa has never known.
- Louisa and Gradgrind's changes of character mark the greatest progression in the novel. Louisa begins as a passive, daydreaming girl and ends as a mature, generous, and humane young woman. She dedicates her life to helping those less fortunate than she.

- **JOSIAH BOUNDERBY**

  A powerful citizen of Coketown, Bounderby owns a factory and a bank. If Gradgrind represents the Utilitarian philosophy in the novel, Bounderby symbolizes the greedy capitalist, shockingly insensitive to the needs of workers.

  Bounderby (whose name is British slang for "cad") is also the "Bully of humility," a self-made man who endlessly repeats the story of his rise from poverty and childhood abuse to his current position of power. He claims to loathe the trappings of wealth- a grand home, beautiful furnishings, art objects- but he nonetheless collects them avidly.

  His greatest source of pride is Mrs. Sparsit, his housekeeper, a woman of high station brought low by a bad early marriage. The delicious irony that this highborn lady should now work for him- who was born a pauper- is irresistible to Bounderby. He reminds everyone, including Mrs. Sparsit, of this striking contrast time and again.

  Bounderby is shattered by his marriage to Louisa, who never respects him as he thinks he deserves. He is also highly embarrassed when it is discovered that Mrs. Pegler is his mother and that he has paid her to stay out of his life. He suffers a dual humiliation when Louisa deserts him and Mrs. Pegler reveals that he has lied about his past. To make matters worse, he learns that Mrs. Sparsit- the one person whose respect for him seemed unshakable- has long held him in contempt.

  Bounderby is a one-dimensional character. He learns nothing from his trials, and he seems to have no inner life. He begins and ends as a blustering, opinionated fool. Drawn

from a comic tradition that Dickens began with The Pickwick Papers, Bounderby is "flat," almost a cartoon. His effect on other characters in the book, such as Stephen Blackpool and Louisa, is powerful and real, but he is not as fully rendered a character as his friend Gradgrind.

- **CECILIA JUPE ("SISSY")**

  Daughter of a horse-riding acrobat and clown at Sleary's traveling circus, Sissy is taken into the Gradgrind household when her father deserts her. From the first, Sissy is treated by Gradgrind and Bounderby as a bad influence on the Gradgrind children, one who has been poorly educated and corrupted by the vulgar show folk who raised her. But Sissy symbolizes the "Wisdom of the Heart" that has been sadly lacking among the Gradgrinds. Little by little, her positive influence is felt. Louisa's sister Jane is visibly happier than Louisa ever was as a child, and even the self-pitying Mrs. Gradgrind wonders, as she lays dying, what has been missing from their lives.

  When Louisa leaves her husband and returns to her childhood home, Sissy becomes a dominant force in the novel. She offers Louisa the healing balm of friendship to bring her from the brink of emotional breakdown. Sissy confronts Harthouse with her ultimatum that he leave Coketown. She comforts Rachael and helps find Stephen. And she provides Tom with a means of escape via Sleary's circus. Sissy, more than any other character, proves to Gradgrind that the wisdom of the heart is no myth, but is as real as any fact he ever learned.

  Sissy is awarded the Victorian ideal of true happiness- a husband and children. Although never sure her father still lives, she painstakingly keeps the jar of nine-oils to soothe his bruises should he ever return.

- **STEPHEN BLACKPOOL**

  A forty-year-old factory worker, Stephen Blackpool is honest, hardworking, and kind. He symbolizes all the oppressed workers of the town as he toils long hours for little pay and lives in impoverished conditions. But Stephen is also burdened by circumstances that greatly add to his misery. His wife became a drunkard and a public disgrace some years ago. She returns from time to time, tattered and dirty, in spite of his having paid her to stay away. The divorce laws prevent Stephen from ridding himself of her and marrying his true love, Rachael. Even though passing thoughts sometimes tempt Stephen to kill his wife, he knows in his heart there is nothing he can do to improve his desperate situation.

  Stephen also refuses to join the workers' union on principle, a decision that causes him to be shunned by his fellow workers and ultimately fired. After having left town to find work, he is on his way back to Coketown to clear himself of a false accusation of crime

when he falls into the shaft of an abandoned mine. His subsequent death makes him a helpless victim of a social system that abuses and exploits the working man.

While Stephen Blackpool's surname suggests the waters clouded by industrial waste, his first name suggests St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Some readers see Stephen as a pathetic, even tragic figure. Others regard him as an obvious symbol, too contrived to be a successful fictional creation. As you read you'll have to come to your own assessment of him. Whatever opinion is held of Stephen, it is generally agreed that his catchphrase for the confused unhappiness of life- "It's a muddle"- is one of the novel's most memorable lines.

- **MRS. SPARSIT**

- Once a lady of wealth, Mrs. Sparsit was brought low when her young husband wasted a fortune and died, leaving her penniless. Known for her Coriolanian (Roman style) nose and dark eyebrows, she is first seen as Mr. Bounderby's housekeeper and then as his tenant in rooms at the bank. She and Bounderby enjoy a symbiotic relationship: he needs her to give him impressive credentials, and she needs him to remind the world of her lofty past.
- When Bounderby marries Louisa, Mrs. Sparsit is forced to watch the world go by from her window, but frequent visits to the Bounderby home provide her with plenty of opportunity to practice her busybody ways. She frequently reminds Bounderby of Louisa's weaknesses as a wife and begins an organized and obsessive effort to prove that Louisa and Harthouse are about to run away together. All the while, she praises Bounderby to his face and calls him a "noodle" behind his back.
- Eager to prove herself correct about Louisa, Mrs. Sparsit is shattered by Louisa's decision to return to the Gradgrind home. And she is reduced to embarrassment and misery when she unwittingly is instrumental in revealing Bounderby as a liar and a fraud. Her relationship with Bounderby ends with hostility and ill-bred name-calling.
- Mrs. Sparsit (the "sparse" of her name suggesting the scantiness or meagerness of her character) represents the faded aristocracy so hated by Dickens for its laziness, smugness, and disregard for those less fortunate.

- **THOMAS GRADGRIND, JR. (TOM)**

Tom represents another dismal product of the Gradgrind philosophy of education. From the very first he is selfish, self-centered, and insensitive. He sees his sister's disastrous marriage to Bounderby as a means for an easier life for himself, with little regard to what such a match might mean to Louisa. Tom is also easily swayed by the trappings of Harthouse's wealth, and it is his willingness to talk freely to Harthouse about Louisa that clears the path for the older man to try to seduce her. Even worse, Tom shows no guilt about robbing the bank to pay his gambling debts and then implicating Stephen Blackpool, an innocent man. Tom's actions indirectly lead to Stephen's death. But Tom is unrepentant; he even resents Louisa for telling the truth. Dickens characterizes him as a hypocrite and a monster.

- **JAMES HARTHOUSE**

  An aristocrat who comes to Coketown to enter politics for Gradgrind's Hard Fact party, Harthouse represents the jaded upper classes. Cynical and amoral, Harthouse sets out to seduce Louisa, motivated not by love or passion, but out of boredom. One philosophy is as good as the next as far as he's concerned, and his lack of commitment has driven him from one lackluster career to the next. He is not a villain in the sense that he sets out to do evil, but he is harmful nonetheless, like the drifting iceberg that wrecks ships. His only nod to goodness comes when he faces Sissy and decides to leave town at her request. His name ("hearthouse") is an ironic comment on his lack of compassion.

  Some have felt that Harthouse is a believable character. Others argue that he is just a plot contrivance. How do you feel? What evidence can you offer in support of your opinion?

MINOR CHARACTERS

- **BITZER**

  You first see Bitzer in M'Choakumchild's classroom, offering the perfect factual definition of a horse. The direct opposite of Sissy Jupe, he is the perfect product of the Gradgrind philosophy- emotionless, coldhearted, and ambitious. Bitzer later becomes a porter at Bounderby's bank, spies for Mrs. Sparsit, and nearly catches Tom Gradgrind before his escape. Everything about him is so light- hair, complexion, eyes- that he is colorless. What does such a description tell you? If someone suggested that Bitzer was pale because he had been drained of the colors of humanity, would you agree or disagree?

- **RACHAEL**

A factory worker who is Stephen's best friend, Rachael is selfless, loving, patient, and long-suffering. Her name reminds us of the Biblical Rachel, whom Jacob loved but had to wait many years before he could marry. Like her Biblical counterpart, Rachael is in love with a man she can't marry, and she accepts her fate. She compassionately helps the wretched Mrs. Blackpool whenever that lady wanders into town, drunk and abusive. Rachael continues her care of the woman after Stephen's death.

- **MRS. PEGLER**

  Mrs. Pegler is Bounderby's mother, paid by him to stay out of his life. This sweet old woman is content to visit Coketown once a year and gaze at her successful son from a distance. For a time she is implicated in the robbery because she has been seen with Stephen, but her "capture" by Mrs. Sparsit only reveals the lies Bounderby has been telling about his "cruel" childhood.

- **MR. SLEARY**

  Owner of Sleary's Horse-riding, a traveling circus, Sleary is kindhearted and generous. He speaks with a lisp (the result of chronic asthma) and represents a philosophy- "People must be amused"- that is the direct opposite of Gradgrindism. He is responsible for helping Tom escape from Bitzer's clutches to safe passage overseas.

- **MR. M'CHOAKUMCHILD**

  A teacher at Gradgrind's model school, M'Choakumchild is a recent graduate of an educational "factory." There he learned a wide variety of subjects but little about the art of teaching beyond stuffing the heads of his students with facts. He represents some of the worst abuses of the educational system.

- **MRS. BLACKPOOL**

  Mrs. Blackpool, Stephen Blackpool's wife, turned to drink some years ago and sold their possessions to support her habit. Stephen paid her to stay away, but she returns on drunken jags, to bring shame and disgrace on her husband, as well as prolonged emotional anguish.

- **SLACKBRIDGE**

  Slackbridge is the union organizer who urges the workers to reject Stephen for refusing to join their ranks. An unattractive and sour man, Slackbridge represents those who would exploit the workers to satisfy their own need for power.

- **MR. JUPE**

  A horse-riding acrobat, and Sissy's father, Jupe never appears in the book, but his presence is felt through Sissy's devotion to him. He deserts Sissy rather than have her see him lose his agility. Jupe is assumed dead when his dog Merrylegs returns alone to Sleary's circus.

  Do you see Jupe's desertion of his daughter as an act of kindness or an act of cruelty?

- **CHILDERS AND KIDDERMINSTER**

  Childers and Kidderminster are performers in Sleary's circus, who deflate Bounderby's pomposity early in the book.

5. Recurring motifs

Themes, Motifs & Symbols

Themes

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work.

The Mechanization of Human Beings

Hard Times suggests that nineteenth-century England's overzealous adoption of industrialization threatens to turn human beings into machines by thwarting the development of their emotions and imaginations. This suggestion comes forth largely through the actions of Gradgrind and his follower, Bounderby: as the former educates the young children of his family and his school in the ways of fact, the latter treats the workers in his factory as emotionless objects that are easily exploited for his own self-interest. In Chapter 5 of the first book, the narrator draws a parallel between the factory Hands and the Gradgrind children—both lead monotonous, uniform existences, untouched by pleasure. Consequently, their fantasies and feelings are dulled, and they become almost mechanical themselves.

The mechanizing effects of industrialization are compounded by Mr. Gradgrind's philosophy of rational self-interest. Mr. Gradgrind believes that human nature can be measured, quantified, and governed entirely by rational rules. Indeed, his school attempts to turn children into little machines that behave according to such rules. Dickens's primary goal in *Hard Times* is to illustrate the dangers of allowing humans to become like machines, suggesting that without

compassion and imagination, life would be unbearable. Indeed, Louisa feels precisely this suffering when she returns to her father's house and tells him that something has been missing in her life, so much so that she finds herself in an unhappy marriage and may be in love with someone else. While she does not actually behave in a dishonorable way, since she stops her interaction with Harthouse before she has a socially ruinous affair with him, Louisa realizes that her life is unbearable and that she must do something drastic for her own survival. Appealing to her father with the utmost honesty, Louisa is able to make him realize and admit that his philosophies on life and methods of child rearing are to blame for Louisa's detachment from others.

The Opposition Between Fact and Fancy

While Mr. Gradgrind insists that his children should always stick to the facts, *Hard Times* not only suggests that fancy is as important as fact, but it continually calls into question the difference between fact and fancy. Dickens suggests that what constitutes so-called fact is a matter of perspective or opinion. For example, Bounderby believes that factory employees are lazy good-for-nothings who expect to be fed "from a golden spoon." The Hands, in contrast, see themselves as hardworking and as unfairly exploited by their employers. These sets of facts cannot be reconciled because they depend upon perspective. While Bounderby declares that "[w]hat is called Taste is only another name for Fact," Dickens implies that fact is a question of taste or personal belief. As a novelist, Dickens is naturally interested in illustrating that fiction cannot be excluded from a fact-filled, mechanical society. Gradgrind's children, however, grow up in an environment where all flights of fancy are discouraged, and they end up with serious social dysfunctions as a result. Tom becomes a hedonist who has little regard for others, while Louisa remains unable to connect with others even though she has the desire to do so. On the other hand, Sissy, who grew up with the circus, constantly indulges in the fancy forbidden to the Gradgrinds, and lovingly raises Louisa and Tom's sister in a way more complete than the upbringing of either of the older siblings. Just as fiction cannot be excluded from fact, fact is also necessary for a balanced life. If Gradgrind had not adopted her, Sissy would have no guidance, and her future might be precarious. As a result, the youngest Gradgrind daughter, raised both by the factual Gradgrind and the fanciful Sissy, represents the best of both worlds.

The Importance of Femininity

During the Victorian era, women were commonly associated with supposedly feminine traits like compassion, moral purity, and emotional sensitivity. *Hard Times* suggests that because they possess these traits, women can counteract the mechanizing effects of industrialization. For

instance, when Stephen feels depressed about the monotony of his life as a factory worker, Rachael's gentle fortitude inspires him to keep going. He sums up her virtues by referring to her as his guiding angel. Similarly, Sissy introduces love into the Gradgrind household, ultimately teaching Louisa how to recognize her emotions. Indeed, Dickens suggests that Mr. Gradgrind's philosophy of self-interest and calculating rationality has prevented Louisa from developing her natural feminine traits. Perhaps Mrs. Gradgrind's inability to exercise her femininity allows Gradgrind to overemphasize the importance of fact in the rearing of his children. On his part, Bounderby ensures that his rigidity will remain untouched since he marries the cold, emotionless product of Mr. and Mrs. Gradgrind's marriage. Through the various female characters in the novel, Dickens suggests that feminine compassion is necessary to restore social harmony.

Motifs

Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, or literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.

Bounderby's Childhood

Bounderby frequently reminds us that he is "Josiah Bounderby of Coketown." This emphatic phrase usually follows a description of his childhood poverty: he claims to have been born in a ditch and abandoned by his mother; raised by an alcoholic grandmother; and forced to support himself by his own labor. From these ignominious beginnings, he has become the wealthy owner of both a factory and a bank. Thus, Bounderby represents the possibility of social mobility, embodying the belief that any individual should be able overcome all obstacles to success—including poverty and lack of education—through hard work. Indeed, Bounderby often recites the story of his childhood in order to suggest that his Hands are impoverished because they lack his ambition and self-discipline. However, "Josiah Bounderby of Coketown" is ultimately a fraud. His mother, Mrs. Pegler, reveals that he was raised by parents who were loving, albeit poor, and who saved their money to make sure he received a good education. By exposing Bounderby's real origins, Dickens calls into question the myth of social mobility. In other words, he suggests that perhaps the Hands cannot overcome poverty through sheer determination alone, but only through the charity and compassion of wealthier individuals.

Clocks and Time

Dickens contrasts mechanical or man-made time with natural time, or the passing of the seasons. In both Coketown and the Gradgrind household, time is mechanized—in other words,

it is relentless, structured, regular, and monotonous. As the narrator explains, “Time went on in Coketown like its own machine.” The mechanization of time is also embodied in the “deadly statistical clock” in Mr. Gradgrind’s study, which measures the passing of each minute and hour. However, the novel itself is structured through natural time. For instance, the titles of its three books—“Sowing,” “Reaping,” and “Garnering”—allude to agricultural labor and to the processes of planting and harvesting in accordance with the changes of the seasons. Similarly, the narrator notes that the seasons change even in Coketown’s “wilderness of smoke and brick.” These seasonal changes constitute “the only stand that ever was made against its direful uniformity.” By contrasting mechanical time with natural time, Dickens illustrates the great extent to which industrialization has mechanized human existence. While the changing seasons provide variety in terms of scenery and agricultural labor, mechanized time marches forward with incessant regularity.

Mismatched Marriages

There are many unequal and unhappy marriages in *Hard Times,* including those of Mr. and Mrs. Gradgrind, Stephen Blackpool and his unnamed drunken wife, and most pertinently, the Bounderbys. Louisa agrees to marry Mr. Bounderby because her father convinces her that doing so would be a rational decision. He even cites statistics to show that the great difference in their ages need not prevent their mutual happiness. However, Louisa’s consequent misery as Bounderby’s wife suggests that love, rather than either reason or convenience, must be the foundation of a happy marriage.

Symbols

Symbols are objects, characters, figures, or colors used to represent abstract ideas or concepts.

Staircase

When Mrs. Sparsit notices that Louisa and Harthouse are spending a lot of time together, she imagines that Louisa is running down a long staircase into a “dark pit of shame and ruin at the bottom.” This imaginary staircase represents her belief that Louisa is going to elope with Harthouse and consequently ruin her reputation forever. Mrs. Sparsit has long resented Bounderby’s marriage to the young Louisa, as she hoped to marry him herself; so she is very pleased by Louisa’s apparent indiscretion. Through the staircase, Dickens reveals the manipulative and censorious side of Mrs. Sparsit’s character. He also suggests that Mrs. Sparsit’s self-interest causes her to misinterpret the situation. Rather than ending up in a pit of shame by having an affair with Harthouse, Louisa actually returns home to her father.

Pegasus

Mr. Sleary's circus entertainers stay at an inn called the Pegasus Arms. Inside this inn is a "theatrical" pegasus, a model of a flying horse with "golden stars stuck on all over him." The pegasus represents a world of fantasy and beauty from which the young Gradgrind children are excluded. While Mr. Gradgrind informs the pupils at his school that wallpaper with horses on it is unrealistic simply because horses do not in fact live on walls, the circus folk live in a world in which horses dance the polka and flying horses can be imagined, even if they do not, in fact, exist. The very name of the inn reveals the contrast between the imaginative and joyful world of the circus and Mr. Gradgrind's belief in the importance of fact.

Smoke Serpents

At a literal level, the streams of smoke that fill the skies above Coketown are the effects of industrialization. However, these smoke serpents also represent the moral blindness of factory owners like Bounderby. Because he is so concerned with making as much profit as he possibly can, Bounderby interprets the serpents of smoke as a positive sign that the factories are producing goods and profit. Thus, he not only fails to see the smoke as a form of unhealthy pollution, but he also fails to recognize his own abuse of the Hands in his factories. The smoke becomes a moral smoke screen that prevents him from noticing his workers' miserable poverty. Through its associations with evil, the word "serpents" evokes the moral obscurity that the smoke creates.

Fire

When Louisa is first introduced, in Chapter 3 of Book the First, the narrator explains that inside her is a "fire with nothing to burn, a starved imagination keeping life in itself somehow." This description suggests that although Louisa seems coldly rational, she has not succumbed entirely to her father's prohibition against wondering and imagining. Her inner fire symbolizes the warmth created by her secret fancies in her otherwise lonely, mechanized existence. Consequently, it is significant that Louisa often gazes into the fireplace when she is alone, as if she sees things in the flames that others—like her rigid father and brother—cannot see. However, there is another kind of inner fire in *Hard Times*—the fires that keep the factories running, providing heat and power for the machines. Fire is thus both a destructive and a life-giving force. Even Louisa's inner fire, her imaginative tendencies, eventually becomes destructive: her repressed emotions eventually begin to burn "within her like an unwholesome

fire." Through this symbol, Dickens evokes the importance of imagination as a force that can counteract the mechanization of human nature.

6. Study Questions

1.

Hard Times is a novel about the social condition of poverty, but very few of its major characters are actually poor and comparatively little time is spent with the poor characters. With that in mind, do you think the book does an effective job of shaping our view of poverty? Why or why not?

It may be that Dickens chose to center his novel on the wealthy -middle class rather than on the lower classes he sought to defend because he realized that most of his Victorian readers would come from the middle classes and that very few of his readers would come from the lower classes. By centering his book on characters with whom his readers could identify, he was better able to awaken their feelings for characters with whom they might otherwise be unable to identify—namely, the poor of Coketown and of England in general. In that sense, the book does its job. Of course, the contrary argument could also be made that the novel simply reinforces comfortable middle-class stereotypes about the noble poor, and it offers no real solution or possibility for change.

2.

Mrs. Sparsit is a fairly minor character in Hard Times. What themes does she illustrate? Why is she important in terms of plot development?

Although Mrs. Sparsit is a relatively minor character, her pride drives much of the action in the second half of the novel. Originally from an aristocratic background, Mrs. Sparsit has fallen on hard times, and she must work as Bounderby's housekeeper for a living. Because she wants to marry Bounderby so that she can share his wealth, Mrs. Sparsit secretly connives to destroy his marriage to Louisa. Yet even while she panders to Bounderby, Mrs. Sparsit considers him an upstart "Noodle," and considers herself his superior because of her aristocratic blood. Although she is a proud aristocrat, Mrs. Sparsit shares the calculating self-interest of capitalists like Bounderby. Thus, Mrs. Sparsit illustrates the transition from a social hierarchy in which aristocrats hold the power to one in which the wealthy middle class holds the power. In her attempt to retain her power within a new social order, Mrs. Sparsit simply ends up looking ridiculous.

3.

Think about the character of Bounderby. How might this character fit with Dickens's social program to explode the myth of the self-made man?

One defense of the new economic conditions created by the Industrial Revolution was its expansion of individual opportunity. The wealthy could justify the condition of the poor by pointing out that if the poor worked industriously, they could work their way into a fortune. Dickens implicitly mocks that idea by presenting one such supposed self-made man as a blundering braggart. By exposing Bounderby as a fraud who did not actually start from nothing, as he so often claims, Dickens questions the validity of that entire justification for poverty. If the self-made man is a lie, then what can the poor hope to achieve? Moreover, Dickens raises the question of whether the self-made man owes anything to the rest of society. Are the wealthy under any obligation to help the poor? Or must the poor help themselves?

7. Suggested Essay Topics

1. Characterization in *Hard Times*

Introduction

In *Hard Times,* Dickens placed villains, heroes, heroines, and bystanders who are representative of his times. Even though many of these characters have names which indicate their personalities or philosophies, they are not caricatures but people endowed with both good and bad human qualities. Shaped by both internal and external forces, they are like Shakespeare's characters — living, breathing beings who love, hate, sin, and repent. True to the class or caste system of nineteenth-century England, Dickens drew them from four groups: the fading aristocracy, the vulgar rising middle class, the downtrodden but struggling labor class, and the itinerant group, represented by the circus people.

Major Characters

Representative of the fading aristocracy are Mrs. Sparsit and James Harthouse.

Mrs. Sparsit, a pathetic, but scheming old lady, earns her living by pouring tea and attending to the other housekeeping duties for Mr. Josiah Bounderby, whom she despises. Sparing with words, she is literally a "sitter," first in Bounderby's home and later in his bank. She lends her respectability and culture to his crude, uneducated environment. Resentful of Bounderby and others who do not have the background that she has, she seemingly accepts Bounderby's

philosophy of life. In direct discourse with him, she simpers and hedges; when he is not present, she scorns him and spits on his picture. Throughout the novel, Mrs. Sparsit connives and plans for her own advantage. Her role in the first book is one of waiting and watching; in the second book, she continues this role and enlists the aid of Bitzer, an aspirant to the middle class, to bring revenge upon Bounderby; in the last book, she serves as informer and is rewarded by losing her position with Bounderby and by being compelled to live with a hated relative, Lady Scadgers.

James Harthouse, the second face of the aristocracy, is a young man who comes to Coketown because he is bored with life. He is employed to advance the interests of a political party. When introduced to Louisa, he becomes infatuated with her and seeks to arouse her love. Taking advantage of Bounderby's absences from home, he goes to see Louisa on various pretexts. When Louisa refuses to elope with him, he leaves Coketown for a foreign country. The only hurt he has received is a blow to his ego or vanity.

Characters of the middle class take many faces: the wealthy factory owner, the retired merchant who is a champion of facts, the "whelp," and the beautiful Louisa nurtured in facts. Just as the buildings of Coketown are all alike in shape, so are these people alike.

Josiah Bounderby, the wealthy middle-aged factory owner of Coketown, is a self-made man. Fabricating a story of his childhood, he has built himself a legend of the abandoned waif who has risen from the gutter to his present position. To add to his "self-made" station in life, this blustering, bragging bounder has told the story of his miserable childhood so long and so loud that he believes it himself. The story is simple: he says that after being abandoned by his mother, he was reared by a drunken grandmother, who took his shoes to buy liquor; he relates often and long how he was on his own as a mere child of seven and how he educated himself in the streets. In the final book, when his story is proved false by the appearance of his mother, who had not abandoned him but who had reared and educated him, he is revealed as a fraud who had, in reality, rejected his own mother. With this revelation and other events came his downfall and eventual death.

An opinionated man, he regards the workers in his factories as "Hands," for they are only that — not people to him. The only truth to him is his own version of truth.

In the first book, as a friend of Thomas Gradgrind, he is intent upon having Louisa, Gradgrind's older daughter, for his wife. In the conclusion of book one he succeeds — by taking Gradgrind's son into the bank — in marrying Louisa, who does not love him, for she has never been taught to love or dream, only to learn facts. True to braggart nature, Bounderby expands the story of his miserable rise to wealth by letting everyone know that he has married the daughter of a wealthy, respectable man.

Book two reveals him more fully as the bounder; however, he is a blind bounder — he does not know that his young wife has found a younger man to whom she is attracted. In the final book, when she leaves him and returns home, his ego cannot stand the blow. He does not change, even though almost everyone and everything around him changes.

Gradgrind is the father of five children whom he has reared to learn facts and to believe only in statistics. His wife, a semi-invalid, is simple-minded; although she does not understand his philosophy, she tries to do his bidding. As the book progresses, however, he begins to doubt his own teachings. Mr. Thomas Gradgrind represents the Utilitarian philosophy of the nineteenth century.

In the first book, he takes into his home a young girl whose father, a circus clown, has abandoned her. He undertakes her education but fails since she is the product of another environment. In this book, he presents Bounderby's suit for marriage to Louisa and is pleased when she recognizes that wealth is important.

In the second book, Gradgrind emerges as a father for the first time. He takes Louisa back into his home after she leaves Bounderby. Having lived with the foundling in his home, he has come to recognize that there are emotions such as love and compassion. When his daughter comes to him as a daughter looking for help and sanction, he reacts as a father.

In the last book, Gradgrind abandons his philosophy of facts again to help Tom, his wayward son, to flee from England so that he will not be imprisoned for theft. Gradgrind also vows to clear the name of an accused worker. Here he learns — much to his regret — that Bitzer, one of his former students, has learned his lesson well; Bitzer refuses to help young Tom escape.

Tom Gradgrind, the son, is also a face of the middle class. Having been reared never to wonder, never to doubt facts, and never to entertain any vice or fancy, he rebels as a young man when he leaves his father's home, Stone Lodge, to work in Bounderby's bank. He uses Bounderby's affection for Louisa to gain money for gambling and drink. He urges Louisa to marry Bounderby since it will be to his own benefit if she does.

Freed from the stringent rule of his father, Tom (whom Dickens has Harthouse name "the whelp") becomes a "man about town." He begins to smoke, to drink, and to gamble. When he becomes involved in gambling debts, he looks to Louisa for help. Finally she becomes weary of helping him and denies him further financial aid. Desperate for money to replace what he has taken from the bank funds, Tom stages a robbery and frames Stephen Blackpool. Just as he uses others, so is he used by James Harthouse, who has designs on Louisa.

At the last, Tom shows his complete degeneration of character. When he realizes that exposure is imminent, he runs away. The only redeeming feature of his character is that he truly loves his sister and ultimately regrets that he has brought her heartache. Escaping from England, he lives

and dies a lonely life as an exile. In his last illness, he writes to his sister asking her forgiveness and love.

Louisa Gradgrind Bounderby, a beautiful girl nurtured in the school of facts, reacts and performs in a manner in keeping with her training until she faces a situation for which her education has left her unprepared. A dutiful daughter, she obeys her father in all things — even to contracting a loveless marriage with Bounderby, a man twice her age. The only emotion that fills her barren life is her love for Tom, her younger brother. Still young when she realizes that her father's system of education has failed her, she begins to discover the warmth and compassion of life. Only after her emotional conflict with Harthouse does she start her complete re-education.

Dickens employs biblical parallels to portray the characters of the struggling working class. Stephen Blackpool, an honest, hard-working power-loom weaver in Bounderby's factory and the first victim to the labor cause, is likened unto the biblical Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Just as the biblical Stephen was stoned by his own people, so is Stephen Blackpool shunned and despised by his own class. Even though he realizes that Bounderby and the other factory owners are abusing the workers and that something must be done to help them, he refuses to join the union. He is perceptive enough to know that Slackbridge, the trade-union agitator, is a false prophet to the people.

Married to a woman who had left him years before the story opens, Stephen finds himself hopelessly in love with Rachael, also a worker in the factory. Rachael is likened unto the long-suffering woman of the same name in biblical history. Stephen cannot marry his beloved because the laws of England are for the rich, not the penniless workman. When he goes to Bounderby for help to obtain a divorce from his drunken, degenerate wife, he is scorned and bullied until he speaks up, denying Bounderby's taunts. On another occasion he defends the workers against Bounderby's scathing remarks; consequently, he is fired and has to seek a job in another town. When Stephen learns that he is accused of theft, he starts back to Coketown to clear his name; however, he does not arrive there. He falls into an abandoned mine pit and is found and rescued minutes before his death. Although he is just one of the "Hands" to Bounderby and others of the middle class, Stephen Blackpool is a very sensitive, religious man who bears no enmity toward those who have hurt him.

The last social group that Dickens pictures is best represented by Cecilia "Sissy" Jupe, who is the antithesis of the scholars of Gradgrind's school. This group, the circus people whose endeavor is to make people happy, is scorned by the Gradgrinds and the Bounderbys of the world. Sissy, forsaken by her father, who believed that she would have a better life away from the circus, is a warm, loving individual who brings warmth and understanding to the Gradgrind home. Because of her influence, the younger girl, Jane Gradgrind, grows up to know love, to dream, and to wonder. In the conclusion of the book, Sissy can look forward to a life blessed by a husband and children. The handwriting on the wall foretells her happiness and Louisa's unhappiness.

Minor Characters

Dickens used the minor characters for comic relief, for transition of plot, and for comparison and contrast.

Bitzer is a well-crammed student in Gradgrind's model school of Fact. He is the living contrast to the humble, loving, compassionate Sissy. Bitzer can best be characterized as the symbolic embodiment of the practical Gradgrindian philosophy: he is colorless, servile, mean; and he lives by self-interest.

Mr. M'Choakumchild, a teacher in Gradgrind's model school, is an advocate of the Gradgrind system. Dickens says that he might have been a better teacher had he known less.

Slackbridge, symbolized as the false prophet to the laboring class, is the trade-union agitator.

Mrs. Pegler is the mysterious woman who shows great interest in Mr. Bounderby. One meets her, usually, standing outside the Bounderby house, watching quietly.

Adam Smith Gradgrind and Malthus Gradgrind are Thomas Gradgrind's two youngest sons. Their names are in keeping with the economic concern of the book.

Members of the Sleary Circus, in addition to Mr. Sleary, are Emma Gordon, Kidderminster, who plays the role of cupid; Mr. E. W. B. Childers, and Josephine Sleary.

Unnamed characters are members of the "Hands" and the sick wife of Stephen Blackpool

2. Dickens' Philosophy and Style

Charles Dickens, required to write *Hard Times* in twenty sections to be published over a period of five months, filled the novel with his own philosophy and symbolism. Dickens expounds his philosophy in two ways: through straight third-person exposition and through the voices of his characters. His approach to reality is allegorical in nature; his plot traces the effect of rational education on Gradgrind's two children. He presents two problems in the text of his novel; the most important one is that of the educational system and what divides the school of Facts and the circus school of Fancy. The conflicts of the two worlds of the schoolroom and the circus represent the adult attitudes toward life. While the schoolroom dehumanizes the little scholars, the circus, all fancy and love, restores humanity. The second problem deals with the economic relationships of labor and management. Here one sees that Dickens lets the educational system be dominated by, rather than serve, the economic system. His philosophy, expounded through his characters, is best summarized by Sleary, who says that people should make the best of life, not the worst of it.

Dickens' symbolism takes such forms as Coketown's being a brick jungle, strangled in sameness and smoke, the belching factories as elephants in this jungle, the smoke as treacherous snakes, and the children as little "vessels" which must be filled. His symbolism also becomes allegorical as he utilizes biblical connotation in presenting the moral structure of the town and the people.

In addition to dialogue, straight narration, and description, Dickens employs understatement to convey through satire the social, economic, and educational problems and to propose solutions for these problems. His often tongue-in-cheek statements balance the horror of the scenery by the absurdity of humor, based on both character and theme.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. What is the significance of the book's structure? What does each of its three parts represent? Why are the different sections given agricultural titles when the book is about industrial England?

2. Does *Hard Times* have a protagonist? Does it have a main character? What makes you think so, and who might the main character be?

3. *Hard Times* begins and ends with a meeting between Mr. Sleary and Mr. Gradgrind. How are the meetings different? What changes in Mr. Gradgrind's character and values do we see between his first and last encounter with the circus folk?

4. Discuss the character of Stephen Blackpool. How does he represent the poor Hands in *Hard Times*? Do you think it is an accurate representation? Is it meant to be?

5. *Hard Times* is built around a few simple, contrasting thematic ideas. What are some of them, and how do they function in the book? How does Louisa fit among these ideas?

6. As a child, Bitzer is a model pupil at Gradgrind's school. How does his conduct as a porter at Bounderby's bank reflect his early education? Would you consider him a "success" according to Gradgrind's criteria? Why or why not?

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Paper IX: Unit IV

William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*

Structure

1. Background

1.1 Introduction to the Author

THACKERY AND *VANITY FAIR*

Vanity Fair was a turning point in Thackeray's life and career. A gentleman by birth and education, Thackeray was forced to earn his living by writing because most of his money had been lost in a financial crash. The articles, reviews, essays, and sketches he produced for magazines and newspapers did not provide sufficient income either to support a gentleman's status or to provide for the futures of his two daughters. In addition, writing for a living made his status as a gentleman somewhat tenuous. The serialization of *Vanity Fair*, which was a financial success, quickly established Thackeray's literary reputation. Thackeray was jubilant, "There is no use denying the matter or blinking it now. I am become a sort of great man in my way--all but at the top of the tree: indeed there if the truth were known and having a great

fight up there with Dickens." Though Thackeray's novels never sold at the rate of Dickens's novels (in the tens of thousands), he became financially secure with *Vanity Fair*. Also his social status as a gentleman was assured because of his acknowledged genius; he was no longer an amusing, talented hack writer, just one of a crowd of London journalists.

CONTEMPORARY RESPONSE TO *VANITY FAIR*

Contemporary reviewers and novelists appreciated the brilliance of the novel. John Forster wrote, "*Vanity Fair* is the work of a mind, at once accomplished and subtle, which has enjoyed opportunities of observing many and varied circles of society. . . his genteel characters... have a reality about them... They are drawn from actual life, not from books and fancy; and they are presented by means of brief, decisive yet always most discriminative touches" (1848). Charlotte Bronte, whose admiration for his genius was boundless, called him "the legitimate high priest of Truth":

The more I read Thackeray's works, the more certain I am that he stands alone--alone in his sagacity, alone in his truth, alone in his feeling (his feeling, though he makes no noise about it, is about the most genuine that ever lived on a printed page), alone in his power, alone in his simplicity, alone in his self-control. Thackeray is a Titan, so strong that he can afford to perform with calm the most herculean feats; there is the charm and majesty of repose in his greatest efforts; he borrows nothing from fever, his is never the energy of delirium--his energy is sane energy, deliberate energy, thoughtful energy. (1848)

George Eliot's praise was more restrained, "I am not conscious of being in any way a disciple of his, unless it constitute discipleship to think him, as I suppose the majority of people with any intellect do, on the whole, the most powerful of living novelists" (1857).

Not all reviewers and readers agreed. Some were repelled by his realism and his focus on society's moral corruption. Robert Bell complained:

The people who fill up the motley scenes of Vanity Fair, with two or three exceptions, are as vicious and odious as a clever condensation of the vilest qualities can make them. The women are especially detestable. Cunning, low pride, selfishness, envy, malice, and all uncharitableness are scattered amongst them with impartial liberality. It does not enter into the design of Vanity Fair to qualify these bitter ingredients with a little sweetness now and then; to shew the close neighbourhood of the vices and the virtues as it lies on the map of the human heart, that mixture of good and evil, of weakness and strength, which in infinitely varied proportions, constitutes the compound individual. (1848)

An anonymous reviewer wondered, "is it advisable to raise so ruthlessly the veil which hides the rottenness pervading modern society?" (1848). Harriet Martineau could not finish the novel "from the moral disgust it occasions" (1848).

From Thackeray's day to the present, *Vanity Fair* has generally been regarded as a masterpiece and as his best novel. What has changed is the flaw Thackeray, as well as*Vanity Fair*, is most commonly charged with. Critical readers of his day called him cynical and even depraved; comparable readers today call him sentimental and even cloying.

HUMORIST, WRITER AND MORALIST

Until the publication of *Vanity Fair*, Thackeray was known as a humorous writer; he wrote regularly for *Punch*. Thackeray regarded humor as doing more than making readers laugh, "the best humour is that which contains most humanity, that which is flavoured throughout with tenderness and kindness." He was compelled to write the truth about what he saw and how he understood what he saw:

To describe it otherwise than it seems to me would be falsehood in that calling in which it has pleased heaven to place me; treason to that conscience which says that men are weak; that truth must be told; that faults must be owned; that pardon must be prayed for; and that love reigns supreme over all.

There may be wishful thinking in his statement that as the writer "finds, and speaks, and feels the truth best, we regard him, esteem him–sometimes love him." In order to tell the truth, the novelist must "convey as strongly as possible the sentiment of reality." Language should identify exactly, not elevate or exaggerate; for instance, a poker was just that--a poker, not a great red-hot instrument and a coat was only a coat, not an embroidered tunic. He disliked Dickens's highly emotional outbursts and vivid personification of objects; Thackeray protested that the very trees in Dickens's novels "squint, shiver, leer, grin and smoke pipes." A realist, Thackeray consistently deflated the heroic and the sentimental both in life and in literature.

Thackeray saw the writer as serving a necessary function–to raise the consciousness of his readers. Concerned, he asked his mother in a letter, "Who is conscious?" He came to see himself as a Satirical-Moralist, with a dual responsibility--to amuse and to teach, "A few years ago I should have sneered at the idea of setting up as a teacher at all... but I have got to believe in the business, and in my other things since then. And our profession seems to me as serious as the Parson's own." He aimed not only to expose the false values and practices of society and its institutions and to portray the selfish, callous behavior of individuals, but also to affirm the value of truth, justice, and kindness. This double aim is reflected in his description of himself as satiric and kind: "under the mask satirical there walks about a sentimental gentleman who means not unkindly to any mortal person."

Though Thackeray set his novel a generation earlier, Thackeray was really writing about his own society (he even used contemporary clothing in his illustrations for the novel). Thackeray saw how capitalism and imperialism with their emphasis on wealth, material goods, and ostentation had corrupted society and how the inherited social order and institutions, including the aristocracy, the church, the military, and the foreign service, regarded only family, rank, power, and appearance. These values morally crippled and emotionally bankrupted every social class from servants through the middle classes to the aristocracy. High and low, individuals were selfish and incapable of loving.

Well aware of himself as flawed, he identified with the self-centered and foolish characters he portrayed in *Vanity Fair*; his object in writing the novel was

to indicate, in cheerful terms, that we are for the most part an abominably foolish and selfish people "desperately wicked" and all eager after vanities....I want to leave everybody dissatisfied and unhappy at the end of the story–we ought all to be with our own and all other stories. Good God don't I see (in that maybe cracked and warped looking glass in which I am always looking) my own weaknesses wickednesses lusts follies shortcomings? .... We must lift up our voices about these and howl to a congregation of fools: so much as least has been my endeavour.

His identification with the fools and the sinners of Vanity Fair could not be stated more clearly. The image of the cracked-mirror provided the basis of the drawing for the frontispiece when the serialized novel came out in book form in 1848.

What were some of his flaws? By temperament, he inclined to be self-indulgent, liked to eat and drink well, and until he lost his money gambled enthusiastically; today, we might, perhaps, say he had a gambling problem. The Bohemian lifestyle and Bohemians had a strong attraction for Thackeray, as he acknowledged:

I like Becky in that book. Sometimes I think I have myself some of her tastes. I like what are called Bohemians and fellows of that sort. I have seen all sorts of society--dukes, duchesses, lords, and ladies, authors and actors and painters--and taken altogether I think I like painters the best, and Bohemians generally.

As you read the novel, think about whether Thackeray's identification with the characters and perhaps the life of Vanity Fair affects the novel. Does he show a compassion for the follies he describes and for the characters who commit those follies? Is there a sense of connection with them, or does Thackeray adopt a superior stance and look down on them, judging them harshly? Or is Thackeray ambivalent? Is *Vanity Fair*, as A.E. Dyson says, "one of the world's most devious novels, devious in its characterization, its irony, its explicit moralising, its exuberance,

its tone. Few novels demand more continuing alertness from the reader, or offer more intellectual and moral stimulation in return"?

1.2 Summary

Miss Amelia Sedley and Becky Sharp prepare to leave Chiswick Mall for Amelia's home. Miss Pinkerton, who runs the academy, autographs a copy of Dr. Johnson's dictionary for Amelia, whose father is rich. The orphaned Becky, having neither money nor position does not rate one.

Miss Pinkerton writes Amelia's mother a stilted and complimentary letter in regard to Amelia, and adds a postscript that Miss Sharp should stay only ten days, as she has a position in a family of distinction. With this tender missive, she includes Amelia's bill.

Miss Jemima, sister of Miss Pinkerton, tries to give Becky a dictionary, but Becky throws it into the garden as the girls' coach drives off. Everyone loves Amelia; no one cares for Becky. Becky's look of hatred and her vindictive smile as she hurls the book horrify Amelia. When Becky wishes that Miss Pinkerton were at the bottom of the Thames, Amelia remonstrates with her. Becky replies that revenge may be wicked, but it's natural.

Miss Pinkerton has taken Becky into the academy and given her free board and lodging, and the chance to learn what she can plus a few guineas a year. In return, Becky is to teach French. When Miss Pinkerton wants Becky to give free piano lessons, Becky defies and refuses. Becky hates Miss Pinkerton, ridicules her, feels no gratitude.

At night when Becky has walked the floor and sobbed, both she and her acquaintances think it is grief for her father, but actually it is resentment at being confined, without position or money. When Miss Pinkerton can stand Becky no longer, she secures a position for her with Sir Pitt Crawley.

Becky finds out that Amelia's brother, Joseph, is not married. She determines to marry him, if possible, and never go on to the Crawleys. Joseph's obesity, emphasized by his loud and sporty clothes, makes people think of an elephant. His shyness stymies his ambition to be a lady-killer. With affected dignity he extends two fingers for his sister to shake.

Becky makes an impression, saying aloud how handsome Joseph is, then acting "timid as a fawn," and casting her eyes down and not daring to look at him. Joseph, flushed with embarrassment, pulls the bell rope loose.

Mr. Sedley, an aggressive tease, comes in "rattling his seals like a true British merchant." He goads Joseph into taking Becky down to dinner and urges Becky to eat curry, which is very hot.

While her mouth is afire, Joseph asks her if she wants a chili, which she thinks must be cool because of its name. Becky's near strangulation amuses Mr. Sedley and Joseph.

When Joseph absents himself for two or three days, Becky endears herself to the Sedley household. On the night Amelia, Becky, George Osborne, and Joseph plan to go to Vauxhall, it rains. They stay home, visit, sing, and reminisce. Joseph tells Rebecca stories about India and almost proposes to her; but food is served, and appetite and slumber come before the passion of love with Joseph, the Collector of Boggley Wollab. The next day when Joseph brings flowers, Becky gets him to hold her knitting yarn for her.

Analysis

The social strata and the situation in Vanity Fair are made clear. Miss Pinkerton, a snob and name-dropper, honors only those who have money and position. Thackeray outlines Becky's background and her position at Miss Pinkerton's, and reveals something of her temperament when she routs the old lady by speaking to her in French and by refusing to be intimidated. Her triumph over Miss Pinkerton indicates her ability to take care of herself. Thackeray's fine hand at characterization is apparent in this conversation.

Miss Pinkerton says, "I never have seen the individual who has dared in my own house to question my authority. I have nourished a viper in my bosom."

Becky answers, "A viper — a fiddlestick . . . You took me because I was useful . . . Get me a situation — we hate each other and I am ready to go."

On the other hand, here is Rebecca being coy: "Starting back as timid as a fawn. She had previously made a respectful virgin-like curtsy to the gentleman, and her modest eyes gazed so perseveringly on the carpet that it was a wonder how she should have found an opportunity to see him."

The reader gets a view of Joseph — vain, overweight, bashful, and lonely in these ironic lines: "Being an invalid, Joseph Sedley contented himself with a bottle of claret, besides his madeira at dinner, and he managed a couple of plates full of strawberries and cream and twenty-four little rout cakes that were lying neglected in a plate near him."

The author makes particular fun of mothers anxious to marry off their daughters, and pities Becky who has no help in this area. From the first scene of this book, Thackeray begins his revelation and evaluation of the false values of Vanity Fair.

1.3 List of Characters:

- **Rebecca (Becky) Sharp:** The central character. She is Amelia Sedley’s friend, and later Rawdon Crawley’s wife. She is from a poor background but is clever and cunning.

- **Amelia Sedley:** Rebecca's friend and the wife of George Osborne, and mother of Georgy. She is nice but naïve.
- **Joseph Sedley:** Joseph is Amelia's older brother. He is rich, worries about his health a lot and exaggerates his limited achievements.
- **John Sedley:** Father of Amelia and Joseph, he was very rich, but loses all his money.
- **Old John Osborne:** Father of George, John is a mean and calculating man. He is upset and angry with his son. He tries to be good at the end.
- **George Osborne:** George has a long relationship with the Sedley family and with Dobbin. He is a good-looking, self-centred, proud, free-spending, gambler. He marries Amelia and dies in a war.
- **Sir Pitt Crawley:** Sir Pitt is a wealthy nobleman who is uneducated, dirty, a womaniser and mean with money.
- **Rawdon Crawley:** Son of Sir Pitt Crawley and husband of Rebecca. He is a socialite, gambler and an opportunist.
- **Miss Crawley:** Miss Crawley is the sister of Sir Pitt Crawley. She is old and eccentric but also very rich.
- **William Dobbin:** Dobbin is a soldier and is the only real nice person in the book, apart from Amelia, who he is in love with.

2. Major Themes

Vanity Fair Theme of Society and Class

Vanity Fair presents a world in which people are almost entirely defined by the socioeconomic rank within which they find themselves. Some try to claw their way up and end up crashing down; some are buoyed up and down by fate; and some simply remain in place but experience the ups and downs of others around them. But none can escape the fact that all human interactions are based on a detailed, up-to-the-minute calculation of exactly how and where those involved stand in relation to each other.

Vanity Fair Theme of Ambition

The desire to constantly rise higher in the social sphere is the only motivation for action or movement in *Vanity Fair*. No character exerts effort unless it's in the service of finding a better-placed patron, campaigning for a new position, or acquiring a new status symbol. Those who plateau in their journey upward or who never really have the desire to elevate themselves become stagnant, boring, domestic people whose lives are secondary to the thrilling adventures of the strivers.

Vanity Fair Theme of Morality and Ethics

Because *Vanity Fair* is a satire, it is by definition an exploration of the moral and ethical questions of its time. At the same time, satire is a conservative genre, in the most basic sense of that word: it seeks to conserve and preserve the cultural traditions of the past in the face of modern erosion. Thackeray's disparaging eye ranges over rampant materialism, snobbery, and the brutal internal logic of the social hierarchy. The rigid social distinctions of a bygone era are being muddied by the influence of wealth and the desire of the newly moneyed for upward social mobility.

Vanity Fair Theme of Cunning and Cleverness

Vanity Fair does not have much to say about intellectual achievement. Instead its main demonstration of intelligence lies in its characters' ability to plan, scheme, and maneuver strategically around others as they jockey for the best social and financial position possible. In keeping with the cultural stereotypes of his time, Thackeray gives women the edge over men here. Although we frequently see male characters engaged in recreational games of chance, it's the female characters who wager for the high stakes, deploying an innate, almost animalistic cleverness.

Vanity Fair Theme of Philosophical Viewpoints: Life as a Theater

If the world is a fair where vanities are sold, and if external appearance and manners are valued more highly than good character and ethical conduct, then it makes sense that those who can put on the best show in public end up winners. *Vanity Fair* is fixated on performance and the way in which we all act out roles for the benefit of those around us. The only difference is that most of Thackeray's characters do this kind of acting subconsciously (and thus, not particularly well), while his main protagonist, Becky, is a self-aware master of the stage.

Vanity Fair Theme of Jealousy

It makes perfect sense that if everyone is jockeying for position at the top of the heap, the achievements of neighbors, friends, and even family members will occasion jealousy. No holds are barred in *Vanity Fair* and no relationships are too sacred to be spared brutally honest treatment. Sons are sexually jealous of fathers, sisters and brothers are financially jealous of each other, and people form deep friendships only to immediately dissolve them when their relative ranks shift slightly.

3. Chapter Analysis

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 1-4

Summary

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When Joseph absents himself for two or three days, Becky endears herself to the Sedley household. On the night Amelia, Becky, George Osborne, and Joseph plan to go to Vauxhall, it rains. They stay home, visit, sing, and reminisce. Joseph tells Rebecca stories about India and almost proposes to her; but food is served, and appetite and slumber come before the passion

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The author makes particular fun of mothers anxious to marry off their daughters, and pities Becky who has no help in this area. From the first scene of this book, Thackeray begins his revelation and evaluation of the false values of Vanity Fair.

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 5-7

Summary

This installment begins with a flashback about Dr. Swishtail's school. Students have snubbed William Dobbin because his father is a retail grocer. Dobbin has crossed Cuff, the bully of the school, when he tries to take Dobbin's letter away from him. Later Dobbin stops Cuff from beating George Sedley Osborne. In the ensuing fight young Dobbin defeats Cuff.

Dobbin's victory over Cuff has gained his acceptance by the students and the lifelong friendship of George Osborne. This history explains why George invites William, now of His Majesty's ____the Regiment of Foot, to the Sedley house the night of the party at Vauxhall. Dobbin's father has become a rich alderman, consequently he and his family are respected everywhere.

As the evening progresses, Becky catches George admiring himself in the mirror. Joseph Sedley assumes a courteous manner and opens the door with the "most killing grace." All three are actors in Vanity Fair.

Chapter 6 opens with the author making fun of writers. He then describes the evening at Vauxhall, when everyone thinks Joseph will propose to Becky. Mr. Sedley, contemptuous of his son, thinks Becky better than a black daughter-in-law. Amelia has discussed the affair with Mrs. Blenkinsop, the housekeeper, and everyone talks of Joseph's marriage. At Vauxhall, Dobbin carries the shawls; the others pair off. Joseph drinks too much and makes a fool of himself. George takes the girls home; Dobbin takes Joseph home.

The next day Joseph has a terrible hangover. George, Dobbin, and Sedley's valet make him think he has been a veritable lion the night before. Then Osborne tells him the truth, that he was maudlin and couldn't stand up. George mimics Joseph's treatment of Rebecca. George later tells Dobbin that he would rather have a lady for a sister-in-law, that Rebecca should know her station, and that Dobbin can make love to her. When George returns to Sedleys and says Joseph isn't coming, Becky recognizes that George is her enemy. Amelia sends a messenger to Joseph and finds he is ill.

On the arrival of Joseph's letter saying that he is leaving for Scotland, Rebecca knows she is beaten. Blenkinsop, the housekeeper, consoles Amelia by telling her that Becky has read Mrs. Sedley's mail and stolen a ribbon. In vain Amelia defends Rebecca. Everyone, except Amelia, knows it is time for Rebecca to go. On Amelia's insistence Mr. Sedley and George give Becky presents; she departs for the Crawleys, who are supposed to be of a higher status than the Sedleys.

Rebecca is trying to visualize a baronet, Sir Pitt Crawley, when they arrive at Great Gaunt Street. The coachman hates Rebecca because she does not tip and because Amelia has given her some dresses he hoped his girl friend would get. He tells the old fellow who is looking out of the Crawley's window to unload Becky's trunks. The old fellow who turns out to be Sir Pitt, the baronet, helps. Tinker, the housekeeper, and stingy Sir Pitt eat, but do not ask Becky to join them.

Rebecca tries in vain to get information from Tinker. The next morning Rebecca and Sir Pitt catch the stagecoach for Queen's Crawley.

Analysis

Chapter 5 shows that snobbery begins early in Vanity Fair. Dobbin's schoolmates shun and laugh at him because his tuition is paid in goods. Osborne thinks himself better than Dobbin because Osborne's father is a gentleman and keeps a carriage. Even when Dobbin fights for Osborne, the latter is ashamed of him.

After Dobbin whips the bully, Dobbin improves in scholarship; his father, for the first time, respects him and publicly gives him money.

Still snobbish as a young man, George says he doesn't want a governess for a sister-in-law. Although he may have been joking when he suggests Becky is good enough for Dobbin, the reader may feel that George's real attitude toward Dobbin is condescension even though Dobbin's father is now a knighted alderman. Becky sees that George has prevented her marriage and "she loved George Osborne accordingly." Aside from Dobbin, the only admirable person so far is Amelia, and she appears too simple and innocent to be interesting.

Thackeray lets his characters reveal themselves by words. Mr. Sedley remarks that if all the family should die, Joseph would say, "Good Gad!" and go ahead with his dinner. Thackeray also shows them in action. "Jos squeezed through the gate into the gardens." Rebecca flirts with Joseph; when someone steps on her foot she falls "back with a little shriek into the arms of Mr. Sedley, and this little incident increased the tenderness and confidence of that gentleman to such a degree, that he told her several of his favorite Indian stories over again for, at least, the sixth time." Amelia looks "as happy as a rose-tree in sunshine." Thackeray points out that Rebecca cries only so long as the Sedleys can see her; she despises them now that she has failed to get Joseph.

Loathsome as Sir Pitt is, he has the refreshing characteristic of making no pretenses and in this, he is something like Mr. Sedley. Both have enough money to scorn the opinion of society.

Characteristic of Thackeray's frequent reversion to the essay, he begins Chapter 6 with rambling observations directed to the reader, telling how he might have changed the story; he closes the installment with a discourse on how times have changed.

Part of the conflict in Vanity Fair arises from the frantic, often questionable, struggle of all characters, except Dobbin, Amelia, and Briggs (who will be introduced later) to rise in social and financial power. Plot centers around conflict; Thackeray loses no opportunity to point out this struggle. He satirizes the naming of children after celebrities, and mentions the Crawley ancestor, the first baronet of the Tape and Sealing-Wax Office, who was impeached for embezzlement — as were other honest gentlemen.

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 8-11

Summary

Rebecca writes to Amelia describing her sadness at their separation, relating in detail the coach trip, and ridiculing Sir Pitt. She describes the Crawley family, dwells on Sir Pitt's crudeness and stinginess, saying that he even counts the grapes on the vines. At the close of the letter, the author notes that Rebecca reveres only money and success. He says he will tell the truth, and it will not be beautiful.

After the death of his highbred first wife, Sir Pitt has married Rose Dawson, the daughter of an ironmonger. Rose, happy to be Lady Crawley, has given up the man she loved and the friends of her youth, as they cannot be received by one of her station. To her sorrow she finds that no one of her new rank will associate with her. Her only good quality, her beauty, soon fades; she continuously mourns its loss.

Young Pitt Crawley, a very correct person, is attentive to the schooling of the two Crawley girls, his half sisters. Rebecca is to be their governess.

The late Walpole Crawley, beloved by all for his drunkenness and hospitality, has left the family estate financially embarrassed because of a fine incurred for embezzlement. Sir Pitt is too stingy to hire honest workmen and is swindled by the dishonest. He buys cheap horses and loses them by starvation. He will not pay his debts, even those owed his son from the mother's estate. His rich half sister won't loan him money. However, he loves show and will not drive without four horses; and although he eats boiled mutton, he has three footmen to serve it.

Rebecca wins her way into the affections of those who count in this household. She asks Mr. Pitt to translate French for her, though she knows it better than he. She sighs and cries over his pious discourses and tells him she is descended from the Montmorency family, but omits the detail that her mother was an actress. Rebecca plays backgammon with Sir Pitt. She copies his letters, corrects his spelling, reads his law papers, learns about running the estate, and wins the baronet's confidence to the degree that he begins to depend on her advice.

Sir Pitt's sons, Pitt and Rawdon, hate each other. Miss Crawley, the rich aunt, has sent Rawdon, her favorite, to Cambridge. After two years he is expelled, and she buys him a commission in the Life Guards Green where he is a dandy and fights duels. Pitt Crawley objects to visits from his rich aunt because he can't pray and read his sermons. She won't leave him money anyhow, having a weakness for Rawdon's wild, unorthodox, and radical ways, and calling Pitt a "puling hypocrite."

After his description of the honest folk at Queen's Crawley, Thackeray introduces the Reverend Bute Crawley, who bets on the races, boxes, eats, drinks, sings, fishes, follows the hounds, and is generally popular in the area. His wife writes his sermons, runs the house, and lets him go as he pleases, knowing every meal he eats elsewhere saves her money. Bute, in debt from a wild racing bet, thinks his rich sister must leave him half her money. Sir Pitt and Bute quarrel and spy on each other continually, but when their rich sister visits, they love each other and wait on her like toadies.

Snoopy Mrs. Bute writes Miss Pinkerton for information about Becky, and gets plenty. Rebecca writes Amelia about Humdrum Hall (Queen's Crawley) and of Rawdon and how he prefers to dance with her. Horrocks, the butler, tells Sir Pitt he thinks Becky a match for Rawdon, and the author adds, for Rawdon's father too.

The subject of Miss Matilda Crawley's death is hopefully discussed among her loving relatives who want her money. Chapter 11 comments on how people will pretend and flatter to get money.

Analysis

The atmosphere at Queen's Crawley shows in the following conversation. Sir Pitt says, "How's Buty, Hodson? I'm afraid he's better, Sir Pitt."

Sir Pitt brags that there is timber worth six thousand pounds along his driveway and immediately has two little boys flogged for gathering sticks. Although Sir Pitt isn't fit for anything (he can neither read nor spell), yet he is courted by ministers and statesmen. He rates high in Vanity Fair.

Part of the twist of Thackeray's plot is that the always correct and stuffy Pitt Crawley, who frowns on his half sisters' laughter, who will neither let them play cards nor escape household prayers at ten, is the instrument of introducing Becky into the household.

Often the author intrudes to tell the reader what to think. He says this installment is mild, but that he must tell things as he sees them. Rebecca is bad. Some people are "Faithless, Hopeless, Charityless: let us have at them, dear friends, with might and main. Some there are, and very successful too, mere quacks and fools; and it was to combat and expose such as those, no doubt, that Laughter was made." With cutting sarcasm Thackeray points out the foibles of a noble family. Miss Crawley is well treated "for she had a balance at her banker's which would have made her beloved anywhere."

Thackeray wishes someone would send him a rich old aunt, whom he would treat with all kindness, money being all-important in Vanity Fair. He says, "I, for my part, have known a five-

pound note to interpose and knock up a half-century's attachment between two brethren; and can't but admire, as I think what a fine and durable thing Love is among worldly people." And he adds, "What a charming reconciler and peacemaker money is."

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 12-14

Summary

Following the publication of the preceding chapters, some readers wrote that they could see nothing in Amelia. Thackeray says this is the greatest compliment one woman can pay another. With men around, no woman gives another credit for anything. The Osborne girls are jealous of their brother. Miss Maria Osborne's special friend, Mr. Bullock, has danced with Amelia, which attention makes Maria jealous, although she pretends joy.

Osborne is humiliated by the way his fellow soldiers kid him about Amelia's letters. He horrifies Dobbin by lighting his cigar with one. Dobbin hears the men gossiping about Osborne's wild life. Irate, he tells them Osborne is engaged to Miss Sedley. When this revelation angers George, Dobbin asks him if he is ashamed of his engagement. Osborne says he doesn't want his business to be everybody's business and he wants his little fling. Dobbin begs him to make Amelia happy, and Osborne says he will take her a present. Dobbin loans him money, but Osborne buys himself a diamond shirt-pin.

Delighted to see Osborne, Amelia doesn't think of gifts. She has been picturing him tending wounded or performing other rigorous duties. Amelia thinks Lieutenant Osborne the most wonderful man in the world and he agrees with her. She visits the Osborne home in Russell Square. Old Osborne comes home in bad humor, sees Amelia there, glares at her, and complains about the meal.

When George comes home late for supper, his father tells him he can't marry Amelia unless she has ten thousand pounds, and the elder Osborne suspects Sedley's financial condition is shaky. He promises George money, as he wants him to go about in good society, which he believes can do no wrong, but he insists that George must never gamble. Relieved that his father hasn't heard of some of his activities, George seems reconciled to break with Amelia, but he does not tell her.

The scene shifts to Matilda Crawley's home, where Miss Sharp has come home with Miss Crawley to care for her. Rawdon Crawley suddenly becomes much interested in his aunt's health and visits her often. All of the Crawleys are afraid that Miss Matilda will get well.

Rawdon loves Rebecca and "raves about her in uncouth convulsions." Sir Pitt raves because she has left his household.

When Miss Matilda is well enough, Becky takes her to visit Amelia. Miss Crawley likes Amelia and invites her and George Osborne to her home. George tries to patronize Rebecca, but she squelches him by asking what his grandfather did, then reassuring him that he can't help his pedigree.

In the meantime Lady Crawley dies, unmourned except by her stepson, Pitt Crawley, who has been her sole comfort. Almost immediately after her death, Sir Pitt comes to Miss Crawley's house and proposes to Becky, who has to refuse because she is already married.

Analysis

This number starts with biting comment on women and their relationship to each other. "To be despised by her sex is a very great compliment to a woman." Lady Crawley "showed her friendship by abusing all her intimate acquaintances to her new confidante [Becky] (than which there can't be a more touching proof of regard)." Rich people like Lady Crawley take needy people's services as their due. Even Rawdon realizes that his aunt Mrs Bute Crawley is trying to entangle him with Rebecca so that she won't become the third wife of Sir Pitt.

Of Amelia's blind love for George Thackeray says that she doesn't care about the war in Europe but when Napoleon abdicates she throws herself into George's arms because he won't have to go overseas. "The fate of Europe was Lieutenant George Osborne to her." The Misses Osborne do not know such tender passion as does Amelia, and they think her stupid and without charm.

Becky, also in contrast to Amelia, weeps "some of the most genuine tears that ever fell from her eyes," when she has to refuse the proposal of the rich Sir Pitt.

Thackeray contrasts George and William. George reveals himself when he lights his cigars with Amelia's letters, buys himself a pin with money borrowed to get Amelia a present, and wants to sow wild oats. In one thought he observes how much Amelia loves him and how dreadfully his head aches from the wine. By his conduct William betrays his feeling for Amelia and the loyalty of his character. Even though his mouth is full, he bursts out at mealtime in defense of Miss Sedley. He loans George money to buy Amelia a gift, worries about her, and interrogates George as to his intentions.

A minor character, Mrs. Major O'Dowd, manager and meddler, thinks George an elegant fellow; but when she hears he is engaged, she writes her sister Glorvina not to come for a visit. Peggy O'Dowd's recurring and amusing attempts to marry off Glorvina will appear throughout the book.

Conflict arises between William and George because of George's neglect of Amelia. Conflict arises between George and his father because Amelia's fortune has vanished, and with it her charm, so far as the elder Osborne is concerned.

In an earlier chapter the reader has seen George ruin Rebecca's chances to marry Joseph; now he sees George repaid by Rebecca's generous assurance that he can't help his pedigree.

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 15-18

Summary

The mystery of Becky's refusal of Sir Pitt, her consequent embarrassment and tears, the deepening attachment of Miss Crawley's household for the poor child, start this number off with excitement. The author shows the pace by an essay on the probability of a gentleman's marrying a maidservant. "If people only made prudent marriages, what a stop to population there would be!"

Becky begins work on plans for her own and Rawdon's future. When she joins Rawdon, Mrs. Bute Crawley moves in on Miss Crawley. Sir Pitt returns and, finding out about Becky and Rawdon, goes into a rage.

Now the author begins a dissertation about attending sales. He takes the reader to the auction of the Sedley estate and gives details of the varied reactions of people at a sale. (When Jos Sedley hears of his father's business failure, he tells his parents to draw on his agents for money, and then continues his way unconcerned.)

At the sale Becky buys a picture of Joseph, and Dobbin buys Amelia's piano and sends it to her. Meanwhile Miss Crawley has not come through with money for Rawdon, who wishes for a few card games with George to replenish his cash. Rawdon realizes that Mrs. Bute is poisoning Miss Crawley's mind, but he does not regret his marriage; Becky humors him and makes him happy.

At this point an essay shows how Napoleon's actions affect little Amelia Sedley's happiness. Napoleon's activities are blamed for Mr. Sedley's failure and the subsequent breaking up of the Sedley household, the rupture with the Osbornes, and the attempt by old Osborne to break George's attachment to Amelia.

Although all the gossips of Vanity Fair agree that Amelia does not merit George, William Dobbin defends her. At first George has little interest in the misfortunes of the Sedleys; but when he realizes that Amelia may be out of reach, his interest reawakens.

Analysis

Everyone in Miss Crawley's household is putting on an act. Rebecca schemes how she and Rawdon can win forgiveness from Sir Pitt and Miss Crawley.

There is humor in Miss Crawley's hurrying up to see Sir Pitt on his knees; she is bewildered at Rebecca's refusal and tears. Thackeray says Rebecca "wept there so naturally that the old lady, surprised into sympathy, embraced her with an almost maternal kindness . . . I am sure our friend Becky's disappointment deserves and will command every sympathy."

The irony of Vanity Fair is that the people pretend to feel emotions until their pocketbooks, passions, or family names are touched; then they revert to savagery. The worship of money shows in Mrs. Bute Crawley's taking charge of the household ostensibly to protect Miss Crawley, actually to get her money.

The worship of name and position shows in the horror the Crawleys feel because Rawdon has married a governess. Becky's friends say her mother was of a fine French family; her enemies say she was an opera girl. However, if a person has money, like Sir Pitt, he may marry whomever he likes, and the family will conceal its disapproval.

Many incidents of this stage of the story will figure later in the plot: the purchase of Jos' picture by Becky; Dobbin's purchase of the piano for Amelia; the Osborne reaction to Sedley's failure; Rawdon's willingness to live on nothing.

William Dobbin, "the uproused British lion," brings about the reconciliation of George and Amelia and sets the stage for further developments. George, having neglected to find out what has happened to Amelia, feels shame for having forgotten her. Selfish as he is, he can feel embarrassment over his own cruelty. However, as the reader will see, he does not stop being selfish.

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 19-22

Summary

Thackeray contrasts Mrs. Bute Crawley's flattery of the servants with Rawdon's blunt treatment, and concludes that soft words take a person further than unkind ones.

Mrs. Bute Crawley establishes herself in Miss Crawley's house, makes friends of Firkin and Briggs, and digs in for battle, suspecting that Rawdon will try for reconciliation. Mrs. Bute wants to protect Miss Crawley "from the arts of those unprincipled people." Mrs. Bute makes such a fuss over Miss Crawley's illness that she frightens the poor woman. Thackeray observes that the tinsel of Vanity Fair does not persist in the lonely hours of illness and sorrow.

Mrs. Bute would like to convert Miss Crawley and starts out by making her hate all of Rawdon's sins. Thackeray observes that one's relatives can abuse one's reputation worse than anyone else. By making Rawdon and Rebecca as disreputable as possible, Mrs. Bute hopes to prevent Miss Crawley's ever seeing Rawdon again.

But Mrs. Bute is over-jealous and over-zealous. The doctor insists that Miss Crawley have some fresh air. Her guardian is afraid Miss Crawley will see Rawdon and forgive him, although what Mrs. Bute says is that the sight of him will kill the invalid. Dr. Squill and Mr. Clump see through Mrs. Bute's machinations. As for the patient, she hates Mrs. Bute and would like to be free of her. One day Mrs. Bute and Miss Crawley meet Rawdon, but Miss Crawley doesn't speak; triumphant for the moment, Mrs. Bute sees danger in future meetings.

Meanwhile Dobbin helps Amelia and George marry. George, touched by Amelia's sorrow and devotion, is willing to marry her in spite of her loss of fortune and feels himself quite generous. Both fathers oppose the marriage, but Mr. Sedley becomes reconciled when he thinks that the match will make Osborne furious.

Old Osborne wants George to marry Miss Swartz, the rich "Black Princess." He thinks he can starve George into the marriage by withholding money, but if George marries Amelia, his father will disinherit him. Miss Swartz doesn't know what old Osborne has in mind, but she thinks George attractive. George is praising Amelia when his father comes in, eyes afire, but George outglares him, goes back to Dobbin and tells him that he has broken with his father and that he will marry Amelia the next day, which he does.

The scene shifts to Brighton where Joseph, Rawdon, and George watch the crowd and the sea. Rawdon makes a little cash by gambling with Jos. Dobbin, coming in on the coach, is welcomed by everyone. He says he has seen old Osborne but does not reveal what the old man has said. He asks about Amelia, then shocks them all by saying they're ordered to Belgium.

Analysis

Thackeray leaves no doubt of Mrs. Bute's motivations in regard to Miss Crawley's money; but greed is nothing new in Vanity Fair. Commenting on how much his sisters think of Miss Swartz, George tells Amelia, "My dear child, they would have loved you if you had had two hundred thousand pounds."

Thackeray says, "I know some respectable people who don't consider themselves at liberty to indulge in friendship for any individual who has not a certain competency, or place in society . . . People in Vanity Fair fasten on to rich folks quite naturally."

The action of the story is forwarded by the marriage of George and Amelia, their removal to Brighton, their meeting with Becky and Rawdon (who are in Brighton because Miss Crawley is there), and the final orders for Belgium. William Dobbin reveals himself not only capable of

suffering for Amelia and stimulating George to honorable actions, but of feeling shame and remorse for Mr. Sedley and his desolation.

Thackeray points out other practices in Vanity Fair: "I knew once a gentleman, and very worthy practitioner in Vanity Fair, who used to do little wrongs to his neighbours on purpose, and in order to apologize for them in an open and manly way afterwards — and what ensued? My friend Crocky Doyle was liked everywhere, and deemed to be rather impetuous — but the honestest fellow."

"How well those live who are comfortably and thoroughly in debt . . . Long custom, a manly appearance, faultless boots and clothes, and a happy fierceness of manner, will often help a man as much as a great balance at the banker's."

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 23-25

Summary

An essay on friendship explains why Dobbin is so bold for George's interest, whereas he does nothing for himself. In time, now, the reader goes back to Dobbin before his arrival in Brighton.

Dobbin's nervous behavior when he has visited Russell Square has made Miss Lane Osborne think that he is about to propose to her. Finally, Dobbin has come out with the news about George's and Amelia's marriage. When Frederick Bullock hears this, he rejoices because he thinks Maria will inherit more, and when he points out this possibility to the sisters, they rise in their own esteem.

Dobbin has gone to inform Mr. Osborne of George's marriage and has suggested that any differences between father and son should be straightened out because the regiment has been ordered to the Continent. Mr. Osborne, however, has refused reconciliation and has disinherited George. While Dobbin prepares to go to Brighton, Miss Jane waits in vain for his return.

Alone with George in Brighton, Dobbin gives him a letter from old Osborne stating that he is cut off with two thousand pounds from his mother's estate. George blames Dobbin for the outcome and says, "A beggar, by Jove, and all in consequence of my d — d sentimentality." Finally George gets through berating Dobbin for being instrumental in bringing about the marriage and forgives him.

Rebecca outshines Amelia in every way. She charms George, in fact all the men except honest Dobbin. When Rebecca tells George how she plans to trap Briggs for a talk, George's laugh upsets Amelia, who goes off whimpering, feeling she has lost George. When she questions her husband she finds out about his disinheritance and feels better, thinking that money is their

only problem and that George is worried about her. In varying degrees of excitement and anxiety the principal characters prepare to go to Brussels.

The scene shifts back to Miss Crawley. Becky has talked to Briggs and discovered that all the servants rebel against Mrs. Bute's dictatorship. Fortunately, the Reverend Bute breaks his collar bone and his wife has to go home; this is the opportunity that the Rawdon Crawleys have wished for. Immediately they write to Miss Crawley, but she laughs at their letter and sees through their designs. She does, however, agree to meet Rawdon by himself, at which interview he gains a token twenty pounds. Becky laughs at his unhappiness; he has hoped for two hundred.

Analysis

Thackeray's humor shows as he describes William trying to break the news of George's marriage to Miss Jane Osborne, while she thinks he is trying to propose. Turning to irony he shows Mr. Bullock in his visit with the Osborne sisters: "A delightful throb of expectation lighted up his little eyes, and caused him to smile on his Maria, as he thought that by this piece of folly of Mr. George's she might be worth thirty thousand pounds more." And the Osborne sisters, when Fred points out the possibilities of money, "had risen not a little in their own esteem." Thackeray says this respect for money is human, that children follow the one who has the money, the candy, or the possessions.

After Dobbin breaks the news of George's marriage to Mr. Osborne, the latter scratches George's name out of the family Bible. If there is a chance of reconciliation, Dobbin loses it by not proposing to Miss Jane. Old Osborne is agreeable so long as he gets his own way — that is, he is friendly to Dobbin until he realizes he can't manage him. Osborne rules his household with a "loud grating pompous voice." Thackeray has shown Osborne's character through his actions.

The action now moves away from Brighton toward Brussels. Both George and Rawdon are disappointed in their money settlements: George with two thousand and Rawdon twenty. This blocking of hope creates tensions in the plot. Her mind only on George, Amelia begins to suspect Becky, but does not blame George. He has been noble, Amelia thinks, to marry her.

With a cold appraising eye, Becky sees her companions clearly and fears only the honest Dobbin. She displays her forethought by sending the family possessions on ahead, when it is not certain Rawdon will have money to pay lodgings, and by taking a devious route through London to avoid previous creditors. Becky is skillful in finding out the family secrets by choosing the same apothecary as Miss Crawley, and too skillful in helping Rawdon write the letter to his aunt. Becky's mind, constantly on one goal — a booth in Vanity Fair — searches for

opportunities to advance. Although Becky is the villainess, the reader will admire her resourcefulness, her intelligence, and her unfailing drive toward her goal. Those who already have a place in Vanity Fair, like the Osborne sisters, display negative natures most of the time, which do not arouse interest like the wicked but positive Becky.

Death lies outside Vanity Fair. Of the approaching death of Aunt Crawley, Thackeray writes, "The last scene of her dismal Vanity Fair comedy was fast approaching; the tawdry lamps were going out one by one; and the dark curtain was almost ready to descend."

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 26-29

Summary

This installment begins with a description of the style of living practiced by George and Amelia. When Amelia wants to visit her mother, George goes to the theater. Here Thackeray interposes an essay on mothers.

Amelia, married nine days, feels apprehensive rather than happy. "Something which, when obtained, brought doubt and sadness rather than pleasure . . . harmless lost wanderer in the great struggling crowds of Vanity Fair." George gets his money from his father's solicitor; the clerks there prophesy no good end for him. Certain that the outcome of the war will be good, George sends Amelia out to buy dresses and gimcracks. Dobbin's fine military appearance causes Jos to feel friendly, and George's regiment thinks more highly of him after meeting his attractive wife. Mrs. O'Dowd takes Amelia under her protection and begins to connive how she can marry Glorvina to Jos. As usual she talks about Ireland.

The regiment departs for Belgium, Jos and the ladies following in grand style. Jos' pseudo-military appearance makes a great impression, the impression he desires. The gaiety of Brussels with its gambling, feasting, and dancing, entertains Amelia until Crawley's regiment arrives. For reasons she cannot define, Amelia's heart fails.

With the coming of the Rawdon Crawleys, the banterings and courtesies so often a prelude to love begin between George and Becky. Though Amelia does not understand exactly why, she is unhappy. Meanwhile, Becky also plays up to General Tufto.

Dobbin tries to persuade George to quit gambling. At a brilliant ball, George, enamored of Becky, leaves a note in her bouquet. Wretched and depressed, Amelia has gone home to bed. That night the marching orders come. George, overcome by remorse, wishes he hadn't flirted

with Becky, hadn't wounded Amelia, hadn't spent money so recklessly, nor quarreled with his father. In shame and remorse, he embraces Amelia.

Analysis

With such an interrelated play of characters in this section, the reader will find it simpler to regard each individual without concern for chronology.

Amelia's viewpoint is not that of Vanity Fair; her happiness is centered neither in turtle soup nor pompous show. "Love has been her faith hitherto . . . [she] took her opinions from those people who surrounded her, such fidelity being much too humble-minded to think for itself." Later the author calls her a parasite. Popular with the regiment, Amelia blossoms until Becky comes, begins flirting with George, and shows even the gentle Amelia that Becky cannot be trusted.

Even minor characters reflect Vanity Fair. The valet is ashamed of Amelia's address. Greed appears in Bullock, whose "yellow face was over a ledger . . . happened to be in the banking room when George entered. His yellow face turned to a more deadly colour . . . " The family of Bareacres "flung off that happy frigidity and insolence of demeanour which occasionally characterizes the great at home . . . and . . . condescended to mingle with the rest of the company whom they met there . . . 'we needn't know them in England, you know.'"

A true son of Vanity Fair, George insists that Amelia attend the O'Dowd party, although he is ashamed of Mrs. O'Dowd. He cultivates the Lady Bareacres, who will cut him if she ever sees him in London. Later George boasts to Rawdon of his friendship with the Bareacres and tolerates Mrs O'Dowd because she keeps Amelia out of his way. He lets the General assume that he George Osborne is of the Peciage Osbornes. He feels himself kind because he lets Amelia buy new clothes

But George has better moments When the call to battle comes he regrets his involvement with Becky: "Oh how he wishes that night's work undone! and that with a clear conscience . . . he might say farewell to the tender and guileless being by whose love he has set such little store."

Another loyal citizen of Vanity Fair, Joseph is proud to speak to Dobbin when the latter appears important in military uniform. Joseph assumes an air of authority, gives out military information and bravado. He likes the Belgian servant to call him "my lord."

The plot moves forward when Becky conquers General Tufto and begins to flirt with George. Meanwhile she hoodwinks her husband, who condones his wife's behavior and thinks himself too dull for her.

Rawdon shows his better qualities by friendliness to the Osbornes when they first arrive — Becky barely nods — and by talking to Amelia when she is otherwise neglected.

Becky hints at her Montmorency ancestry, criticizes Amelia, works at climbing toward that booth in Vanity Fair. It makes no difference that Amelia is the victim. "Women only know how to wound so. There is a poison on the tips of their little shafts, which stings a thousand times more than a man's blunter weapon. Our poor Emmy, who had never hated, never sneered all her life, was powerless in the hands of her remorseless little enemy."

To reinforce the wholesome character of Amelia, as opposed to Becky, Thackeray brings in Dobbin, the foil for George and Joseph. Dobbin befriends Amelia, tries to influence George to stop gambling, and acts as a balance wheel for tfle whole group. Dobbin, undoubtedly, is the hero of the novel, but since this is Vanity Fair, Thackeray points out that Dobbin's feet are too big; he has neither the physical charm nor the duplicity required of the dwellers in Vanity Fair.

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 30-32

Summary

This section opens with the O'Dowds discussing the forthcoming battle and making preparations for the major's march. After his departure Mrs. O'Dowd reads a book of sermons.

Rawdon, more affected than Becky at their parting, shows his love and worship for her by his concern for her welfare. "She had known perpetually how to divert him; and he had found his house and her society a thousand times more pleasant than any place or company . . ." Becky's thought, however, concerns how much security she has and what she can do in the event Rawdon doesn't come back.

George tells Amelia goodbye, and departs with a sigh of relief. Dobbin wakes the sleepy Jos to charge him to take care of Amelia, and is pained by Amelia's grief.

Joseph, proud to be left in charge of the women, reassures them. Isidor, his valet, hopes the British will be defeated so he can have Jos' possessions. As if to further his interests, he demoralizes Jos with bad news.

Becky, wanting to make sure of a retreat in case of bad news, flatters Jos by begging him not to go and join the troops, to stay and protect the ladies. If Jos has a carriage, Becky expects to share it should flight become necessary.

Amelia finally accuses Rebecca of being a false friend and a false wife. In spite of Amelia's accusations, Rebecca, touched at her grief, tries to reassure her. Since Amelia, obviously, doesn't want Becky around, Becky suggests to Peggy O'Dowd that she stay. Peggy, not liking Becky, answers with sarcasm, but she stays with Amelia.

Suddenly the sound of cannons frightens everyone. Jos wants to flee; Mrs. O'Dowd scorns his cowardice. The cook's soldier-friend comes with the tale that George's company is cut in pieces.

Terrified, Jos gives the eager Isidor his military-looking coat and dresses himself in somber civilian garb so that he looks almost like a clergyman. Lady Bareacres wants to leave but has no horses for her carriage. She tries to buy Rebecca's but receives only scorn; instead, Rebecca sells her horses to the fearful Jos for a fortune.

Amelia wants to go to the army and begs Jos to take her. However, her attention is diverted by the arrival of the wounded ensign, Tom Stubble, who announces that George is safe. Peggy and Amelia nurse Tom Stubble.

Convinced by the rumors of English defeat, Jos rides off, leaving Amelia behind. Becky thinks Amelia stupid to grieve over George. She dreams of what she might do if Rawdon doesn't come back: She might become a duchess. Mrs. O'Dowd watches her patient, reads sermons, mispronounces words, and prays for the Major. Again the cannons roar. George finally dies in the battle of Waterloo.

Analysis

The reader will notice a striking contrast in the reaction of the women whose husbands are called to battle. Peggy O'Dowd, completely devoted to army life, prepares her husband's things, gives him coffee and sweets. Amelia, stricken, can do nothing. Becky figures up her financial status, but shows some kind of loyalty to Amelia.

Rawdon's better self shows in that he, "who had seldom thought about anything but himself, until the last few months of his life, when Love had obtained the mastery over the dragoon . . . went off on his campaign with a kit as modest as that of a sergeant, and with something like a prayer on his lips for the woman he was leaving."

The action in this section shows Jos left in charge, Amelia's prostration, her final accusation of Rebecca, Rebecca's flattery of and power over Jos.

Jos' character shows in his love for eating, his susceptibility to Rebecca's flattery, his brave talk, and his actual cowardice. These traits will lead to the final complication and resolution of the Becky-Joseph relationship. The author excuses Jos' susceptibility: "From Solomon downwards, have not wiser men than he been cajoled and befooled by women?"

But in defense of women Thackeray says; "It was the women's tribute to the war. It taxes both alike, and takes the blood of the men, and the tears of the women."

Tongue-in-cheek, the author makes this comment on Vanity Fair, that when the cannon was heard, "even great English lords and ladies condescended to speak to persons whom they did not know."

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 33-35

Summary

Back in England Miss Crawley hears about Rawdon and thinks what a good marriage for money he could have made. Rawdon, through Rebecca, sends his aunt gifts from the battlefield and anecdotes — both the product of Becky's imagination.

At Queen's Crawley, Miss Horrocks, the butler's daughter, accompanies Sir Pitt as he goes about drinking with all the common people. Sir Pitt's relatives hear about his activities with disgust.

All the family send tokens of love to Miss Crawley. Pitt frequents Brighton courts Lady Jane Sheepshanks, and tells Countess Southdown, Lady Jane's mother, of the advantages there would be in Miss Crawley's friendship. The countess immediately plans to convert the old lady and to dose her with medicine. Pitt restrains his future mother-in-law by cautioning gentleness, lest Aunt Crawley be offended, mentioning that she has seventy thousand pounds. The countess agrees to moderation. Briggs gives a favorable report about Pitt and Lady Jane to Miss Crawley, who invites them to visit her, whereupon Lady Jane wins the old lady's heart.

Mrs. Bute has made the fatal mistake of boring Miss Crawley. In a last attempt to court her favor, the Bute Crawleys send their son James to visit the rich aunt. Encouraged by the double-crossing Pitt, James drinks too much, makes a fool of himself, and finally smokes a pipe in the house. Miss Crawley invites him to leave.

Meanwhile Becky and Rawdon live in Paris in splendor on the money Rebecca has received from Jos for the horses. Proud of Becky's business ability, Rawdon "believed in his wife as much as the French soldiers in Napoleon." One of the French ladies writes Miss Crawley about Rebecca, so "soon to be a mother." "To hear her speak of you, her protectress, her mother, would bring tears to the eyes of ogres. How she loves you! How we all love our admirable, our respectable, Miss Crawley!"

The letter angers Miss Crawley because she thinks Rebecca has used her name to get into French society. She writes to the French lady, who doesn't understand English and can't read the letter. In turn the French lady reports a fine letter from Miss Crawley, and the hopes of the Rawdon Crawleys rise.

On March 26, 1816, Becky has a son. When Miss Crawley hears of it, she instructs Pitt to marry Lady Jane, declaring that she will leave them her money.

War news brings to the Osbornes the shock of George's death. Old Osborne tries to think the death a judgment on the boy for disobedience. Bowed under the weight of the fact that there is no chance now for reconciliation, old Osborne can neither forgive nor receive an apology. Three weeks after George's death, Sir William Dobbin calls on Mr. Osborne with a note George has

written before dawn on the day of the battle. George asks protection for his wife and child and thanks his father for his former kindness.

The first indication that old Osborne has even thought about George comes in the special monument that appears in the church about two months later. Then Mr. Osborne goes to visit the battleground and his son's burial place. When he meets Amelia, he does not speak; he blames her for everything. Dobbin tries to reason with him and says he has a message from George. Old Osborne will not make any provision for his grandchild.

Amelia has nearly lost her sanity at the news of George's death but recovers when little George is born. Dobbin takes her to her mother in England. For a while he stays near and visits Amelia daily, then he rejoins his regiment.

Analysis

As usual the topic of discussion and chief preoccupation of Vanity Fair is MONEY. Miss Crawley thinks of how Rawdon might have married a brewer's daughter with a quarter of a million. Miss Crawley's relatives try to keep in her favor by sending tokens of affection. Later when Countess Southdown is eager to convert and cure Miss Crawley, Pitt says, "Remember she has seventy thousand pounds; think of her age, and her highly nervous and delicate condition: I know that she has destroyed the will which was made in my brother's favour: it is by soothing that wounded spirit that we must lead it into the right path, and not by frightening it . . ."

The author adds, "Lady Southdown, we say, for the sake of the invalid's health, or for the sake of her soul's ultimate welfare, or for the sake of her money, agreed to temporize."

Pitt Crawley (Machiavel) reveals diplomacy and duplicity in getting rid of James. In calling him Machiavel, Thackeray has hinted at his double dealing. Pitt uses psychology and charm on Miss Briggs, and he wins the inheritance. As Bute Crawley says to his wife, "You are a clever woman, but you manage too well, you know." She has out managed herself.

Thackeray says of Lady Jane's character and attachment to Miss Crawley, "The young lady herself had never received kindness except from this old spinster, and her brother and father: and she repaid Miss Crawley's enrollment by artless sweetness and friendship." This reflects the author's opinion of Lady Jane's tract-scattering, medicine-dosing mother.

Rebecca has shown by this time that she can make money and spend it. She can also climb into society. As for Amelia, her only friend is Dobbin, but she neither realizes nor appreciates his devotion.

Old Osborne, still convinced he is right, refuses any help to Amelia or little George.

The reader will remember that it was at Pitt's insistence that some education be provided for his half sisters, and as a result, Becky came into the Crawley family. Although Pitt has many selfish characteristics, this motive, at least, was generous. In spite then, of all the unworthy motives he has, Pitt does inherit Aunt Crawley's money. Whether, in the long analysis, he is a better man than Rawdon, the reader must decide.

At the end of this section, the inheritance of Miss Crawley's fortune is no longer a factor in the struggle; Dobbin has had no luck in pushing Amelia's cause with her father-in-law; Becky still climbs, with Rawdon's full belief reinforcing her.

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 36-38

Summary

Thackeray starts this section with an essay on how people live on nothing. He then talks about Rawdon and Rebecca, who are settled in Mayfair, entertain all the time, yet have no money, except what Rawdon makes by gambling.

The story reverts to the time in Paris when Rawdon has gambled with other soldiers. Colonel O'Dowd has warned Spooney about gambling with Rawdon, at which Becky and Peggy O'Dowd have quarreled. Only Rebecca's intervention with General Tufto has prevented Rawdon's being returned to England.

Rebecca makes Crawley sell out of the Guards so they can return to England to pursue his fortune. Becky spreads the news that Rawdon will inherit from his dying aunt; she orders mourning for herself and little Rawdon. She then skips out on her hotel bill, goes to England, and arranges with her husband's creditors to settle for a percentage of what is owed. Becky then goes back to the Continent, rejoins her son and husband; and the three return to London.

They hire a house from Mr. Raggles, formerly Miss Crawley's butler. This business arrangement is Raggles' downfall, for he is not able to collect the rent and ends up in Fleet Prison because he can't pay his debts. Here Thackeray moralizes on how the gentry rob the servants. Rawdon and Rebecca patronize all Miss Crawley's former tradesmen and pay nobody.

When Pitt inherits Miss Crawley's fortune, Becky insists Rawdon congratulate him and ingratiate himself into his brother's good graces. Rebecca determines that Lady Jane shall sponsor her in London society.

Rebecca secures a woman for her "house-dog" and companion. She neglects little Rawdon but hires a French maid to take care of him. The boy becomes a great favorite with his father, who brings him toys and plays with him. Rawdon takes the boy to see his old trooper friends. One

Sunday morning Rawdon and the boy meet Georgy Osborne, who is walking with his grandfather, Mr. Sedley. Georgy and little Rawdon become friends.

The reader is now brought up to date on Amelia, Dobbin, and Jos. After leaving Brussels, Jos has returned to India, where, because of his many tales, he has earned the name of "Waterloo Sedley."

Amelia has continued to pine for George and has devoted all her time and thought to little George whom she sees as an improved edition of his father. When Mrs. Sedley has attempted to give Georgy some medicine, Amelia has objected and the two women have quarreled.

Mr. Sedley has suspected Dobbin of trickery over the money that has been supposedly left at George's death. Actually the money has come from Dobbin's own pocket because of his love for Amelia. Amelia has accepted whatever Dobbin has told her and has not known how much she owes him. Dobbin is always sending gifts for her and Georgy. Dobbin's sisters have told Amelia that Dobbin is to marry Glorvina O'Dowd. Amelia has protested her happiness about it, but tears have clouded her eyes. Mrs. Sedley knows that Dobbin loves Amelia, but Amelia won't talk of it.

Analysis

The subterfuges Becky has learned from her poverty-stricken father come into play here, not only in her dealing with creditors but in her beginning affair with Lord Steyne. She foresees the necessity of protecting her reputation by hiring a female companion. The greatest flaw in Becky's character (and the one which will contribute to her downfall) is her neglect of little Rawdon. She has no affection for him and scorns Rawdon's paternal love for the boy. Thackeray presents both the dark and the light aspects of his characters. In answer to those critics who think Thackeray too cynical, one should examine the development of Rawdon from a coarse soldier to a devoted husband and father, albeit not a provider. He considers himself too dull for his wife and lets her have her own way. Although he does not realize it, he has become known as "Mrs. Crawley's husband." Thackeray also shows the better side of the braggart Jos. He does provide money for his parents, but his pride and better judgment do not permit him to be taken in by his father's attempt to force him into participation in the questionable wine business. Even the gentle Amelia rises to an unsuspected height of spirit when she defies her mother's medication of Georgy. And although Thackeray does not permit the reader inside Amelia's mind, he lets him see the tears when she hears Dobbin will marry Glorvina. The honest Dobbin, although not of Vanity Fair, practices deception in keeping the Sedleys from knowing how much he has done for Amelia.

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 39-42

Summary

The story goes back to the relatives who hoped to benefit by Miss Crawley's death. Bute has been mourning because he has received five thousand pounds instead of the expected thirty thousand. Mrs. Bute has redoubled her efforts to make good marriages for her daughters.

There is a flashback to Pitt's and Lady Jane's visit to Sir Pitt. Sir Pitt has liked Lady Jane and has given her pearls but has refused to discuss the degeneration of the family estate with his son. Neither has he allowed them to stay with him. Miss Horrocks, the butler's daughter, reigns at Queen's Crawley and Pitt fears his father will marry her. One evening Miss Horrocks tries to play and sing; the kitchen maid whom she has promoted encourages her. Sir Pitt thinks her attempts to be a lady are very funny. He drinks too much and becomes seriously ill.

Within an hour Mrs. Bute and family enter the house, surprise Miss Horrocks ("Ribbons") trying to pilfer Sir Pitt's desks. Mrs. Bute chases Miss Horrocks out with a threat of jail. She also sends word to Pitt and takes over the household from whence the Horrocks have fled. Sir Pitt lingers for months but never regains lucidity. Young Pitt moves into Queen's Crawley and takes over.

After the death of the old baronet, the new Sir Pitt decides to send for Rawdon and Rebecca. Since Rawdon sees no possibility of money forthcoming from the visit, he is not eager to go. But Rebecca, delighted at the invitation, sees all the intricate possibilities of advancement in Vanity Fair. She pictures Rawdon in Parliament and herself presented in Court as a result of the influence of Lord Steyne and Sir Pitt.

Now comes a flashback on the fortunes of Briggs since the death of Aunt Crawley. After various experiences, Briggs has come to be Becky's "housedog." Before six months have passed, the Rawdon Crawleys have borrowed much of her life's savings on pretext of investment.

The author then describes Rawdon's and Becky's trip to Queen's Crawley where they are well received, and Becky exerts herself to make a good impression.

The reader is next taken back to the Osborne family. Mr. Osborne's bitterness has not improved his temper. After much bargaining over the marriage of Maria to Frederick Bullock, who has been holding out for more dowry, the match has been made. Old Osborne keeps the other daughter, Jane, as a slave at home.

Popular little Georgy visits many people. Inevitably becomes in contact with his maiden aunt, Jane, whom he charms. Later at her father's questioning, she bursts into tears and says little George is beautiful as an angel and just like his father. Old Osborne trembles but says nothing.

Analysis

"A Cynical Chapter" brings the action up to Sir Pitt's final illness. Thackeray's cynicism expresses itself in such lines as these about Mrs. Bute:

[who could] have guessed from her frequent appearance in public how she pinched and starved at home . . . I know no sort of lying which is more frequent in Vanity Fair than this: and it may be remarked how people who practise it take credit to themselves for their hypocrisy, and fancy that they are exceedingly virtuous and praiseworthy, because they are able to deceive the world with regard to the extent of their means . . . Mrs. Bute certainly thought herself one of the most virtuous women in England. What will not a mother do for the benefit of her beloved ones?

Miss Horrocks has hoped to become Lady Crawley, but "fate intervened enviously, and prevented her from receiving the reward due to such immaculate love and virtue." Miss Horrocks begs mercy from Mrs. Bute, "but those who know a really good woman are aware that she is not in a hurry to forgive, and that the humiliation of an enemy is a triumph to her soul."

A cynical example of Vanity Fair shows in the kitchen maid whom Miss Horrocks has promoted. First she praises Miss Horrocks' pitiful attempt at music; then when Sir Pitt falls ill and Mrs. Bute takes over, the maid turns against Miss Horrocks.

When Becky is recognized as part of the family by the new Sir Pitt's invitation, she takes another step toward establishment in Vanity Fair. The description of Becky's reaction to Lady Jane's kindness makes the reader wonder if Rebecca is acting or is feeling something like sentiment. "The embrace somehow brought tears into the eyes of the little adventuress — which ornaments, as we know, she wore very seldom. The artless mark of kindness and confidence touched and pleased her."

When Becky remarks that she could be good for five thousand a year, the author points out that temptation may have something to do with goodness:

. . . who knows but Rebecca was right in her speculations — and that it was only a question of money and fortune which made the difference between her and an honest woman? If you take temptations into account, who is to say that he is better than his neighbour? A comfortable career of prosperity, if it does not make people honest, at least keeps them so.

It does appear that the good fortune of the young Sir Pitt helps him to become kinder, more of a gentleman.

The erratic treatment of the dying Sir Pitt by nurse Hester gives rise to the ironic comment of the author:

What love, what fidelity, what constancy is there equal to that of a nurse with good wages? . . . we quarrel with them because, when their relations come to see them once a week, a little gin is smuggled in in their linen-basket. Ladies, what man's love is there that would stand a year's

nursing of the object of his affection? Whereas a nurse will stand by you for ten pounds a quarter, and we think her too highly paid.

Thackeray's comment on the end of life in Vanity Fair is: "For this was all that was left after more than seventy years of cunning and struggling, and drinking, and scheming, and sin, and selfishness — a whimpering old idiot put in and out of bed and cleaned and fed like a baby."

Thackeray makes some pointed comments on governesses keeping their places, on death and funerals, and on the conscience of Vanity Fair. He points out that there are things Vanity Fair cannot buy.

Old Osborne's character hasn't changed. When he kicks Miss Wirt's trunks downstairs, tramples her hand luggage, and shakes his fist at her departing hackney-coach, he exhibits the same character he showed in Chapter 21, where the author says, "He called kicking a footman downstairs, a hint to the latter to leave his service."

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 43-46

Summary

The reader now goes to the Madras division in the Indian Empire, where Sir Michael O'Dowd commands Dobbin's regiment. Mrs. O'Dowd, kind, impetuous, and eager, tyrannizes her husband, bosses the ladies of the regiment, and mothers the young men. She decides Glorvina should marry Dobbin, who, of course, dreams only of Amelia.

When Amelia's letter of congratulation on his marriage to Glorvina comes, Dobbin despairs because he sees Amelia doesn't love him. Then, when he receives a letter from his sister telling him that Amelia may give up Georgy, as she is marrying the Reverend Mr. Binney, Dobbin rushes to Sir Michael and demands leave to return to England.

The scene moves to Great Gaunt Street, the location of the Crawleys' family house which is being renovated. Becky has originated the plan as part of her scheme to get into Vanity Fair. Becky has hinted to Sir Pitt that she and Rawdon need money, but he doesn't respond.

Little Rawdon has grown into a fine boy, generous and soft-hearted, but he has no affection for his mother. Her hatred toward him has destroyed his love. When the Rawdon Crawleys go to Queen's Crawley for Christmas, they are greeted cordially. Sir Pitt has improved the old home place and is repairing the popularity of the Crawleys by making friends in the area.

Becky, as usual, ingratiates herself with all who are important. She even courts the favor of Countess Southdown and shows affection to Mrs. Bute. Her attentions to Sir Pitt flatter him but make Lady Jane suspicious. Two incidents chill Lady Jane's feeling toward Becky. First, Little Rawdon says he always eats in the kitchen at home, and second, when his mother tries to show

off by kissing him, he tells her she never kisses him at home. Rawdon appreciates Lady Jane's attention to his son. Little Rawdon enjoys the affection of all. When the vacation ends, Rawdon and his son are loath to leave, but Becky wants to return to London.

When Parliament opens and Sir Pitt comes to London, Rawdon and his son spend time with Lady Jane and the children, but Rebecca fawns on Sir Pitt and Lady Jane becomes more jealous.

Meanwhile Christmas at the Sedleys must be celebrated without much joy. They have no money. Georgy distinguishes himself with many honors at the Reverend Mr. Binney's school, and Amelia hopes he will be great and famous.

Miss Jane Osborne thinks often of little George. When she speaks up to her father at his question about her gold watch and chain, she defends herself by saying she bought it with her own money. The old man knows she has given it to Georgy and tells her to go buy herself another one.

The Dobbin sisters keep urging Amelia to let Georgy visit them, hoping thereby to reconcile him with his grandfather. Mr. Osborne finally offers to take Georgy on the condition he live entirely with his grandfather, seeing his mother only occasionally at her place. If such arrangements are made he will give Amelia an allowance. Furious, Amelia accuses the old man of trying to buy the child.

Credit becomes difficult for the Sedleys. No money comes from Joseph. All bills are due. Amelia has a quarrel with her parents over the use of her own money. Mrs. Sedley so browbeats Amelia that the latter gives up all her money to her parents.

Analysis

Here is an example of the confusion possible in this narrative. The author has Georgy tell his mother that he has seen Sir William, and Mr. Dobbin, who have promised to show him the Tower of London. According to the previous narrative, Dobbin has just asked leave to return from Madras to London. He does not arrive, according to the account that follows, until Georgy has gone to his grandfather's place and is established in the Reverend Mr. Veal's school. Thackeray does not always keep time, place, sequence, and names in their proper places.

Dobbin measures Amelia's feeling for him by his thought on her letters "how cold, how kind, how hopeless, how selfish they were!"

Thackeray characterizes Peggy O'Dowd: "In a word, in adversity she was the best of comforters, in good fortune the most troublesome of friends; having a perfectly good opinion of herself always, and an indomitable resolution to have her own way." She has determined to get Glorvina a husband, and she will succeed. As for Glorvina, her great desire is to be admired, possibly the reason for her "forty or fifty previous defeats" in matrimonial endeavor.

Becky crawls up the social ladder with every opportunity. But her hatred for little Rawdon — she realizes his potential danger to her double life — begins to undermine Becky's relation with Lady Jane. Thackeray compares Becky's social climb under the eyes of knowing servants to a spider's efforts: "So you see Molly, the housemaid, of a morning, watching a spider in the doorpost lay his thread and laboriously crawl up it, until, tired of the sport, she raises her broom and sweeps away the thread and the artificer." The analogy foreshadows what will happen to Rebecca.

While Rebecca gains favor with Sir Pitt, and loses the confidence of Lady Jane, Rawdon gains Lady Jane's affection — leading eventually to Rebecca's catastrophe.

Amelia, the victim of her own soft heart and the crushing poverty that brings out the selfishness and senility of her parents, perceives that Georgy's welfare demands his transferal to his grandfather Osborne. The softening process in old Osborne, seen when he does not rave about Miss Jane's having given Georgy a watch, will continue rapidly when he has Georgy near him.

One of the few characters untouched by Vanity Fair is loyal Mr. Clapp, who remains faithful to the Sedleys, no matter what their financial condition.

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 47-50

Summary

This installment opens with a description of Great Gaunt Street from the viewpoint of Tom Eaves. Tom thinks that in rich families the sons and fathers naturally hate each other. The son wishes the father would die so he may inherit; the younger sons wish the older son dead so they may inherit.

The insanity of Lord Steyne's son and the fear of its transmission to his grandchildren grieve Lord Steyne. He tries to forget his troubles through pleasure and fabulous parties to which everyone longs to go, although everyone deplores his morals.

Becky finally is presented at Court — the height of her ambition. Lady Jane remarks on the beauty and quality of Becky's gown, and Rawdon questions her about her jewels. She does not reveal that she stole the gown material from the Crawley's house in Great Gaunt Street nor that the jewels are gifts from both Sir Pitt and Lord Steyne.

After Becky's presentation at Court, the Marchioness of Steyne and the Countess of Gaunt invite her to dine. Becky's triumph in view of this advancement is not dimmed by Lord Steyne's conviction that she cannot hold her place in Vanity Fair without money. Lord Steyne wants Becky to get rid of Briggs in order that he can have more time alone with his favorite. Becky cries, saying that she owes Briggs money and can't pay it. Lord Steyne gives her a draft for the

amount she specifies which is twice what she owes Briggs. Becky pays a little on the most pressing bills and conceals the rest in her private hiding place.

The reader now gets a flashback of Lord Steyne's bullying the women of his house into inviting Becky. Lady Blanche is one of the Bareacres ladies whom Becky has insulted in Brussels. At first the ladies have refused to invite Becky, but Lord Steyne has overcome their reluctance by the most brutal methods.

The story continues with an account of the illustrious people Becky meets at the Steyne's home, and the glowing newspaper account of Becky's charm, which publicity fills Mrs. Bute's heart with rage. Actually the ladies at the party ignore Becky, but she is befriended by Lady Steyne, who feels sorry for her. Becky sings religious songs for the old lady, songs which bring nostalgic tears to Lady Steyne. The night ends in triumph for Becky.

The story returns to the Sedleys, who are near starvation. Mrs. Sedley has turned against everyone. Emmy tries to do art work for money, but fails; she seeks private tutoring to no avail. She realizes she must part with Georgy. Thackeray discloses that Joseph hasn't neglected his parents, but Mr. Sedley has sold the annuity as backing for one of his haphazard business schemes.

Old Osborne rejoices that Amelia has been starved out — he had hoped to do the same to George — starvation is one of the weapons of Vanity Fair. He sends for Georgy but gives orders that Amelia is not to come to Russell Square. Two days after his rise to affluence, little Georgy begins to patronize his mother.

Amelia walks to Russell Square and watches the light go out in Georgy's room, prays for him, and walks home in silence. Once she sees Georgy and his aunt going to church. A chimney sweep asks for charity and the footman tries to drive him away, but Georgy gives him money. This kind, impulsive action cheers his mother; she goes into the church and watches little Georgy's head and, above it, the monument to his father.

Analysis

The author offers some excuse for Lord Steyne's dissoluteness by telling of his anxiety over the family insanity. Lord Steyne seeks to forget it through sensuous pleasure; his wife seeks refuge in religion. The inhabitants of Vanity Fair are willing to shut their eyes to Lord Steyne's immoralities because he has both money and position. This fact should be remembered later when Rebecca meets catastrophe.

Tom Eaves, a combination of eavesdropper and Peeping Tom, thinks he knows everything and judges with a cynical eye, yet he too, bows before a "great man" and having put all his money into an annuity, does not hate his relatives and has no "feeling with regard to his betters, but a constant and generous desire to dine with them."

Lord Steyne's prediction that Becky can't stay at the top of Vanity Fair society proves prophetic. Circumstances are closing in about Becky: the cache in her desk will betray her. At first, only the servants have talked about her; now the people at Court notice Lord Steyne's absorbed attention to her. Although she has been invited to Lord Steyne's home by his ladies, and she seems at the culmination of success, the potential of her destruction grows stronger.

The author, presenting the good and the bad, allows the reader to admire Lord Steyne in one incident, at least. Although he is in the best humor when he is torturing his wife and daughter-in-law; yet when his wife rescues Becky, he is grateful and tells his wife. Becky too, shows a moment of human kindness when she appreciates Lady Steyne's kindness in speaking to her and asking her to sing.

Speaking of Amelia's final surrender of Georgy, Thackeray says, "Poverty and misery for all, want and degradation for her parents, injustice to the boy — one by one the outworks of the little citadel were taken, in which the poor soul passionately guarded her only love and treasure."

Thackeray discourses on the subject of men and women. While the following comment fits Amelia, it could not be altogether true of Becky:

I know few things more affecting than that timorous debasement and self-humiliation of a woman. How she owns that it is she and not the man who is guilty: how she takes all the faults on her side and persists in shielding the real culprit! It is those who injure women who get the most kindness from them—they are born timid and tyrants, and maltreat those who are humblest before them. By heavens it is pitiful, the bootless love of women for children in Vanity Fair.

Both Amelia and Becky maltreat those who are humblest before them.

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 51-53

Summary

Thackeray begins this installment with a discourse on how all the doors of fashion now open for Becky and how vain it all is. He lists the important people and places she visits. Becky continues to charm people; the women try to snub Becky but she bests them.

Vanity Fair wonders where Becky gets money to entertain. Some say she begs; some say she levies it. The author says, "The truth is that by economy and good management — by a sparing use of ready money and by paying scarcely anybody — people can manage, for a time at least, to make a great show with very little means."

Charades are popular at this time and Becky urges Lord Steyne to present some. She outshines all the other women in the character of Clytemnestra, and at supper sits with the royal personage in attendance. Becky's triumphs alarm Rawdon; they seem to separate her from him. On the way home from the charade party, Rawdon is arrested by two bailiffs and taken to jail for debts.

A flashback now shows the reader that Lord Steyne has insisted on sending little Rawdon away to a special school. His father has grieved at his departure, but his mother has wanted to be rid of him. Little Rawdon gets on well at school. As Lord Steyne's protege, Sir Pitt's nephew, and the son of a colonel, he has both position and money.

Steyne next has proposed to get rid of Briggs. Failing in this, he has suspected that the money he has given Becky to pay Briggs has been used for something else. He has questioned Briggs and confirmed his suspicions. He has solved the Briggs problem by giving her a position at Gauntly Hall. Becky has attributed her failure in paying Briggs to Rawdon's demands that he have the money himself, telling his wife that he would pay Briggs.

Rawdon, delighted that Briggs has security, has begun to feel uneasy over Becky. Lady Jane and Sir Pitt have protested that Becky shouldn't be allowed to go about without a companion. They have urged Rawdon to go with her. Becky's failure to pay attention to Sir Pitt's remonstrances has resulted in strained relations between the two families. Rawdon has become Becky's watchdog, and her charm has lulled his suspicion.

Now the reader returns to Rawdon, who is not too depressed by his situation. He has been locked up before. But when time passes, and he does not get a reply from his letter to Becky, he wonders. When he finally receives word that Becky will get money from Lord Steyne, all his suspicions return. He writes a note addressed to Sir Pitt or Lady Jane imploring assistance. Lady Jane comes within an hour. Rawdon's violent appreciation startles Lady Jane, and she goes home to pray for him.

Rawdon hurries home and finds Lord Steyne and Becky together. Rawdon strikes Lord Steyne, throws a diamond pin at him, which cuts him on the forehead, leaving a permanent scar. Becky pleads innocence, but Lord Steyne thinks the two of them have laid a trap and he condemns Becky. Taking Becky's keys, Rawdon ransacks her possessions and discovers her secret hoard. Becky admits the thousand pound note has come from Lord Steyne. Rawdon determines to return it, and to pay off creditors with the other money. Even while Becky protests her innocence, Rawdon leaves her. The French maid comes in, comforts Becky, puts her to bed, and gathers up the jewels.

Analysis

Of Becky's rise and fall, Thackeray says it has all happened before and will again. But he admits there are advantages in Vanity Fair: "What well-constituted mind, merely because it is transitory, dislikes roast beef?" It is vanity but one should enjoy it. Thackeray says Becky's brief triumph should be enjoyed because it is brief. "Glory like this is said to be fugitive."

Becky, at the height of her ambition, plays the part of Clytemnestra, a symbolic choice, for she has been having an affair with Lord Steyne, even as Clytemnestra had with Aegisthus. Becky would sacrifice Rawdon as quickly as Clytemnestra did Agamemnon. The role of the nightingale contrasts to that of murderess. Thackeray has again shown both the dark and the light of human nature, for Becky fills both roles.

Thackeray describes the portals of society as being guarded by "grooms of the chamber with flaming silver forks with which they prong all those who have not the right of the entrée . . . the honest newspaper-fellow who sits in the hall . . . dies after a little time. He can't survive the glare of fashion long. It scorches him up, as the presence of Jupiter in full dress wasted that poor imprudent Semele — a giddy moth of a creature who ruined herself by venturing out of her natural atmosphere." Semele, a mortal beloved of Jupiter, was induced by Juno, Jupiter's wife, to ask Jupiter to approach her as he did Juno — with full majesty. The splendor burned Semele up. Thackeray is suggesting that Becky is in the same position.

Thackeray comments on society: ". . . all the delights of life, I say, — would go to the deuce, if people did but act upon their silly principles, and avoid those whom they dislike and abuse."

Becky's catastrophe comes about through Lord Steyne's getting Briggs and little Rawdon out of the house, causing Rawdon to take over as watchdog. If Becky had let Rawdon have the money to bail himself out, he would not have been suspicious. If Rawdon hadn't formed a friendship for Lady Jane, she wouldn't have rescued him. If Rawdon had been less a man, Becky could have kept her treasures. If Becky hadn't implicated Rawdon in her failure to pay Briggs, Steyne might have backed up her protestations of innocence. But Steyne had had too much experience in Vanity Fair.

In the space of forty-eight hours Becky has reached the height of society and fallen into its depths. The title of Chapter 52 is ironic: "In Which Lord Steyne Shows Himself in a Most Amiable Light." He provides for little Rawdon's education and Briggs' future, but his motives are not philanthropic.

Becky shows her femininity by liking Rawdon better when he bosses her and insists on obedience. However, the desire for wealth makes Lord Steyne imperative to her interests, and she has to get rid of Rawdon one way or another — while she caters to Lord Steyne. When Rawdon realizes that Becky has betrayed him, he wishes to be a better person. Becky thinks only of what she has lost — her status in Vanity Fair.

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 54-56

Summary

When Rawdon goes to see his older brother, Pitt thinks him drunk, then believes Rawdon wants money and offers many excuses. When Rawdon says he does not want money, Pitt sighs with relief. Rawdon tells all that has happened and says he may be killed in a duel with Steyne. Rawdon asks only that little Rawdon be cared for and Pitt promises. Rawdon secures an old soldier friend, Macmurdo, as second. Macmurdo tries to convince Rawdon that there is a reasonable doubt of Becky's guilt, but his words are wasted.

Meanwhile Becky sleeps until afternoon. When she rings for her servants, no one answers. She goes downstairs to find the servants sitting around drinking. Insolent, they refuse to obey her. Only Raggles is courteous; he laments because of his financial ruin.

Becky leaves the house and tries to get Sir Pitt to promise a reconciliation with Rawdon. Becky is kneeling before Pitt, kissing his hand when Lady Jane comes in. Irate at last, Jane tells Sir Pitt he can choose between them and sweeps out of the room. Sir Pitt promises to try to mediate peace between Rebecca and Rawdon. She has told Sir Pitt of Rawdon's appointment and how it was to be a surprise and how she knew Lord Steyne favored her; but she accepted and encouraged his attention only for Rawdon's sake. She says she couldn't trust Rawdon with money, as he is a spendthrift.

The scene shifts to Rawdon breakfasting with Macmurdo and other officers. When the two go the club, men start congratulating Rawdon. They have been talking about him and his wife's influence. Rawdon discovers he has been appointed governor of Coventry Island. Lord Steyne's man, Wenham, comes to talk to Rawdon, avoiding the subject of the duel as long as possible and regretting that he and his wife were unable to accept an invitation to the Crawleys that fatal night because Mrs. Wenham had a headache and couldn't go. He says Lord Steyne wants to forget the whole thing. Rawdon doesn't believe the story, but Macmurdo urges him to accept it.

Rawdon takes the position provided by Lord Steyne because he thinks it will infuriate Steyne to have Rawdon living off his influence. Once established, Rawdon sends gifts to his friends, makes an annuity to Becky, and writes his son regularly, meanwhile sending money to his brother for Rawdon's keep. Little Rawdon spends his holidays with Lady Jane and rides to the hounds at Queen's Crawley. His mother makes no attempt to see him.

Little Georgy, established in his grandfather's home, merits all the pride his father had won. Old Osborne plans to make little Georgy an educated gentleman. While both his grandfather and Aunt Jane adore him, his aunt, Mrs. Bullock, hates him for having taken the inheritance she has coveted for her own children.

Georgy's mother makes friends with the schoolmaster in order to see Georgy, who, quick of mind, well dressed, and flush with money, domineers everyone. In Russell Square everyone fears old Osborne, but he fears Georgy. He tries by over-indulgence to make amends to his grandson, trying to forget the harshness to his son.

Mrs. Sedley, who has been under Amelia's constant care, dies. Now Amelia devotes all her time to her father. One day two gentlemen come to school to see Georgy. They are Major Dobbin and a stout gentleman. Georgy recognizes Dobbin who asks him if his mother has mentioned Dobbin. Georgy assures him that his mother has talked of Dobbin hundreds of times.

Analysis

Sir Pitt reacts with his father's stinginess when his first thought is that Rawdon's trouble must be money. When his pocketbook isn't touched, he can relent and promise protection to little Rawdon, although after Rawdon goes to Coventry Island, he remits regularly to his brother, a consideration which shows how much Rawdon has grown in character.

Rawdon wins the reader's sympathy when he shows Macmurdo the thousand pound note and says:

This is what he gave her, Mac: and she kep' it unknown to me: and with this money in the house, she refused to stand by me when I was locked up!" The captain could not but own that the secreting of the money had a very ugly look.

The reader wonders if the withholding of the money proves to Rawdon his wife's infidelity with Lord Steyne. In Vanity Fair, the money would come first, and although Rawdon's values have changed, Rebecca's have not.

One of the most touching word pictures of the whole book is: "He [Rawdon] covered his face with his black hands; over which the tears rolled and made furrows of white . . ." Rawdon has been too disturbed to think of washing, or even of changing from his party clothes, which he was wearing when thrown into detention. Lady Jane, sympathetic, can't bear going to church after seeing Rawdon's agony.

In keeping with the pretense of Vanity Fair, Becky tells Sir Pitt a logical and convincing story of the tragic night. Wenham makes a virtuous case for Lord Steyne and Becky when he talks to Rawdon. Later, he will tell Pitt enough to estrange him forever from Becky.

In spite of the fact that Macmurdo and Rawdon are planning a duel with Lord Steyne, they pretend gaiety with their companions. Thackeray's comments, "Feasting, drinking, ribaldry, laughter, go on alongside of all sorts of other occupations in Vanity Fair . . ." A good example of contrast between those of and those not of Vanity Fair shows in Hester's care of the dying Sir Pitt and Amelia's care of her parents.

Thackeray uses a Biblical metaphor in his reference to Georgy's visiting his mother: "but when her Samuel came to see the widow . . ." Amelia has felt it a religious duty to let old Osborne have little Georgy.

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 57-60

Summary

Old Osborne likes to think of Sedley's being forced to accept charity from him. He hints to Georgy that his mother's father is a wretched old bankrupt, whereupon Georgy patronizes the old man.

Amelia's nature is to sacrifice herself and to think herself guilty of selfish love, thereby accounting for her punishment through loss of the first George and surrender of the second. She devotes herself to her mother. After her mother's death, she takes care of her father, who becomes very fond of her. Amelia has the consolation of doing her duty.

Major Dobbin, upon getting leave to go home, has become ill and at Madras the attendants despair of his life. He has made his will with a request that a hair chain of Amelia's hair be buried with him. Finally, he has been put aboard a homeward bound ship, which has Joseph Sedley as a passenger. Jos, wealthy, is returning to England for his health. Dobbin continually discusses Amelia with Joseph. When Joseph proves to Dobbin's satisfaction that Amelia is not planning on marriage, Dobbin swiftly recovers. He exults in high spirits and is depressed only when the ship is delayed.

Dobbin and Joseph descend from the boat amid cheers. The major wants to leave immediately for London, but Jos wants a good night's sleep. Dobbin, ready to leave early the next morning, departs without the sleepy Jos. Dobbin flings money about to hurry the trip. He goes to his old haunt, the Slaughters', where the old waiter remembers which room he always had and his other preferences. Dobbin recalls his days there with George. The old waiter asks about Mrs. George Osborne.

Dobbin dresses carefully, thinking that if the old waiter recognizes him, Amelia will. Dobbin trembles as he nears Amelia's home. The little girl who used to call him Major Sugarplums comes to the door and recognizes him. He hugs and kisses her; he is so glad to be back. The Clapps bring him up to date on news, but he is afraid to ask if Amelia is married. Miss Polly Clapp offers to take him to find Amelia and her father in Kensington Gardens. On the way they meet the Reverend Mr. Binney walking with his wife and sister. At Polly's explanation that the reverend has married Miss Grits, Dobbin is delighted.

When they see Amelia and her father, Dobbin sends Polly ahead to tell Amelia he is there. At first Amelia thinks there is something wrong about Georgy. Then, when she sees Dobbin, she begins to cry, runs to him. They hold hands. Dobbin misses his cue to take her in his arms and reports he has another arrival to announce. She asks if it is his wife. Horrified at this suggestion, Dobbin says it is Jos. Emmy runs to tell her father, who is much delighted.

Although Dobbin has claimed to be in a hurry, he has time to go back to tea, his eyes always on Amelia, dreaming of her as he has always done. Amelia shows him Georgy's miniature and praises the child. Dobbin tells Mr. Sedley that Jos has come home particularly to see him, because Dobbin wants the Sedley family on good terms among themselves. When Mr. Sedley dozes, Amelia talks more about Georgy, claiming that he is the image of his father. Dobbin won't allow himself to be jealous of her eternal devotion to George but believes that George didn't prize her enough.

Old Mr. Sedley can't rest for putting his papers in order for Jos. On his part Jos is delayed because he has to buy a couple of splendid, colorful vests before he goes to London. On the third day the fashionably attired "Waterloo Sedley" drives to London, stopping to eat and drink every time he has a chance. Dobbin has made Jos promise he will make a home for Amelia and their father, and Joseph tells them they will never want again.

When they move to the new home, Amelia takes her pictures and the piano that she thought George had sent, after the family's financial failure. Dobbin is delighted with her attachment to the piano, even though Amelia thinks George, instead of Dobbin, sent it. Amelia guesses the truth from his expression, and thereafter the piano loses its value for her. She apologizes to William for not appreciating his gift, and he can't stand it any longer. He declares his love, but Amelia loves only George.

After Jos comes home, fortune smiles on the Sedleys. Little Georgy likes and respects Dobbin and learns some new values — not those of Vanity Fair. Georgy mimics Uncle Jos, who doesn't appreciate the humor.

Analysis

Thackeray comments on life:

. . . think how mysterious and often unaccountable it is — that lottery of life which gives to this man the purple and fine linen, and sends to the other rags for garments and dogs for comforters.

And so, if you properly tyrannize over a woman, you will find a halfp'orth of kindness act upon her, and bring tears into her eyes, as though you were an angel benefiting her.

Oh, be humble, my brother, in your prosperity! . . . whose virtue is a deficiency of temptation, whose success may be a chance, whose rank may be an ancestor's accident, whose prosperity is very likely a satire.

Some examples of Thackeray's figures of speech are: "To a traveller returning home it [the English landscape] looks so kind it seems to shake hands with you as you pass through it." Dobbin's dream of Amelia is a "bread-and-butter paradise." Joseph's Indian servant's brown face is the "colour of a turkey's gizzard." William sighing over Amelia's indifference is like ". . . the poor boy at school who has no money may sigh after the contents of the tartwoman's tray."

Thackeray uses names to characterize. Some of the names in this section are: Little Ricketts, who has fevers; Fogle, Fake & Cracksman, a business firm; Baron Bandanna; The Reverend Felix Rabbits, who has fourteen daughters.

"Waterloo Sedley," unchanged since the reader met him, shows his character by vanity in dress and in the tales of himself and great personages, and in his love of nobility; but he is generous with his family when he is forced to see their need. He can't stand Georgy's making fun of him. He has books but never reads them, gifts for people he hasn't yet met. He loves to eat, sleep, and talk.

Dobbin shows his ability to manage little George when the latter doesn't want to go into the pit at the theatre because it's vulgar. Dobbin leaves Georgy where he wants to sit and goes into the pit himself. Soon shamefaced Georgy joins him. Georgy is growing up — a cause for optimism.

Thackeray says of Dobbin, "I am ashamed to say that the major stretched the truth so far as to tell old Mr. Sedley that it was mainly a desire to see his parent which brought Jos once more to Europe." The difference between Dobbin's deceptions and those of Vanity Fair is that Dobbin acts out of unselfish motives, whereas citizens of Vanity Fair think first of themselves. Dobbin even lacks personal vanity to the extent that he is not jealous of the attention young officers pay Amelia. He thinks they are showing good judgment.

Of Amelia the author says, "Emmy was very ignorant, and that is a pity, some people are so knowing." Although Amelia is still the gentle comforter who wipes away her father's tears and kisses him, she has acquired more character. Mrs. Clapp, one of the lower class who still lives in Vanity Fair, wants to fawn on Amelia, but "in the vulgar sycophant who now paid court to her, Emmy always remembered the coarse tyrant who had made her miserable many a time."

In regard to Thackeray's technique, his time sequences are not always clear — sometimes his flashbacks aren't identified, as in Chapter 59 Joseph assures his father and sister they shall never want again. Five paragraphs later, Amelia gets a letter from Jos saying he will be delayed. He hasn't yet left Southampton.

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 61-63

Summary

This section starts with an essay describing the appearance and use of the second-floor arch of a London house where, among other things, the undertaker's men rest the coffin of a deceased person in the household. The subject of this essay leads to Thackeray's revelation that old Mr. Sedley is dying. Before he dies he tells Amelia that he and her mother have been unkind and unjust to her. She prays with him.

After Sedley dies, old Osborne points out his own success and tells Georgy, "He was a better man than I was, this day twenty years-a better man I should say by ten thousand pound."

Old Osborne, at first inclined to underrate Dobbin, begins to hear of his fame from members of his own society. Sir William, Dobbin's father, praises him. Dobbin's name appears in parties of nobility. Then Osborne discovers that Dobbin has in part supported Amelia and Georgy. Dobbin says it was his responsibility that George married Amelia and he felt obligated. Osborne says he is an honest fellow. They discuss Georgy, who is so much like his father. Old Osborne is softening. He sends a card for Mr. Joseph Sedley and defends Dobbin when his daughter Jane belittles him. He asks about Amelia and says he will be reconciled to her, but Mr. Sedley's illness and death prevent. Meanwhile Osborne changes his will, and before he can be reconciled to Amelia, he dies.

Frederick Bullock fears that Osborne has left half his property to his grandson, and he has, with prevision for Amelia and a legacy for Dobbin. Amelia is guardian of Georgy; Dobbin is executor. Amelia is grateful to Dobbin, but grateful only, for the reconciliation which he has effected.

After Amelia has money, the servants respect her; people who never thought of her before visit her now and patronize her, especially Mrs. Frederick Bullock, her sister-in-law. Amelia does not enjoy these people.

The house at Russell Square is dismantled and things put in storage until Georgy's majority. When Joseph, Amelia and Georgy, and Dobbin go to the continent, Joseph eats and sleeps, Amelia sketches Dobbin and Georgy act as her attendants. Amelia hears good music for the first time, likes Mozart, and wonders if it's wicked to be so happy. She begins to appreciate Dobbin, who is the first gentleman she has known despite his large feet and hands.

The author claims to have seen the party at Pumpernickel, to have witnessed Amelia's delight in the opera, Jos interest in nobility, and to have admired Amelia himself. Joseph, greatly impressed by Lord Tapeworm and his doctor and the mineral springs, decides to stay at Pumpernickel. He thinks he will grow young and thin. Lord Tapeworm believes he has impressed Amelia, whereas he has only bewildered her. The group is presented at Court. The

duchy stretches about ten miles but managed with in its small area to offer "famous" theatre, marriage "fêtes" on a grand scale, and moderate despotism; even factional politics was thoroughly entrenched in Pumpernickel — "the society was divided in its allegiance to those two great nations [the French and the English]." In short a variety of experiences, frequently available only in much larger places, was available in the small duchy of Pumpernickel.

Amelia entertains, speaks French, sings, and charms the German ladies. Jos is enamored of Fanny de Butterbrod, a canoness and countess, but during the festival of a royal marriage, Becky shows up She spies Joseph, flatters him, asks him to visit her.

Analysis

Some of Thackeray's figures are: ". . . whilst the sands of life were running out in the old man's glass upstairs . . . The velvet-footed butler brought them their wine . . . She [Amelia] walks into the room as silently as a sunbeam."

The following passage has beautiful description: "At this time of summer evening, the cows are trooping down from the hills, lowing and with their bells tinkling, to the old town, with its old moats, and gates, and spires, and chestnut trees, with long blue shadows stretching over the grass; the sky and the river below flame in crimson and gold; and the moon is already out, looking pale towards the sunset. The sun sinks behind the great castle-crested mountains, the night falls suddenly, the river grows darker and darker, lights quiver in it from the windows in the old ramparts, and twinkle peacefully in the villages under the hills on the opposite shore."

Grandfather Osborne tries to mold little George in the shape of Vanity Fair when he measures grandfather Sedley's goodness by the amount of money he has had. Bullock shows his greed when his first interest at his father-in-law's death is how much money Georgy has inherited.

The lawyers of Vanity Fair smile, but they note their visits in their bills. The people of Vanity Fair now see Amelia, whereas they didn't before:

. . . in this vast town one has not the time to go and seek one's friends; if they drop out of the rank they disappear, and we march on without them. Who is ever missed in Vanity Fair?

Mrs. Frederick Bullock patronizes Amelia and entertains her "with faint fashionable fiddlefaddle and feeble Court slipslop." Joseph, of Vanity Fair himself, likes this Court gossip, but Dobbin is bored. He can't stand the woman with her "twopenny gentility."

Thackeray here offers this definition of gentlemen:

. . . men whose aims are generous, whose truth is constant, and not only constant in its kind, but elevated in its degree; whose want of meanness makes them simple: who can look the world honestly in the face with an equal manly sympathy for the great and the small.

William Dobbin qualifies as a gentleman, with the following, basic to his philosophy:

. . . beauty of art or nature made him thankful as well as happy; and that the pleasure to be had in listening to fine music, as in looking at the stars in the sky, or at a beautiful landscape or picture, was a benefit for which we might thank Heaven as sincerely as for any other worldly blessing.

Thackeray's humor shows in these examples: Marshal Tiptoff, "died in this year full of honours, and of an aspic of plovers' eggs . . ." Although the duchy of Pumpernickel is only ten miles long, Joseph is much excited over its nobility, particularly over Lord Tapeworm. "Mr. Jos had the honor of leading out the Countess of Schlüsselback, an old lady with a humpback, but with sixteen good quarters of nobility, and related to half the royal houses of Germany." Another jibe at Vanity Fair comes in this description of a palace:

. . . the delighted people are permitted to march through room after room of the grand ducal palace, and admire the slippery floor, the rich hangings, and the spittoons at the doors of all the innumberable chambers . . . The army consisted of a magnificent band that also did duty on the stage . . .

Georgy shows an endearing quality when he climbs the pole, wins a prize sausage, and then gives it to a peasant who has nearly grasped it.

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 64-67

Summary

Becky's life, after Rawdon leaves her, consists at first in trying to stay respectable, but just when she has built up a new circle of friends, someone informs about her and she is left alone. She tries at first to get Sir Pitt to listen to her, but Wenham, Lord Steyne's man, has told Pitt too much about her.

Becky wanders about the Continent, fleeing creditors, gambling, and acting as boarding house queen. Vagabond blood flows in her veins. She writes her son once, when, on the death of Sir Pitt's only son, little Rawdon becomes the heir of Queen's Crawley. Little Rawdon is not impressed with his mother's attention; it comes too falsely and too late.

In Rome Becky sees Lord Steyne and hopes to regain his favor, remembering how her wit has amused him and what good fun they have had, but Steyne sends his man to threaten her with death. Steyne has been offended and he never forgets. He dies in 1830, much praised and lamented.

In the course of her travels Becky arrives at Brussels and remembers George, Amelia, and Joseph, and thinks, "they were kind simple people." And then, as the reader has seen, Becky meets Joseph and the others in Pumpernickel.

Joseph, as Becky has requested, goes to her hotel, a dirty refuge which suits Rebecca. She is on good terms with all there; they are her kind of people.

Becky convinces Jos that she has been wronged, that Rawdon and his family have torn her child from her, and that Jos was and is her first and only real love. Joseph goes home and convinces Amelia of Becky's innocence and need. Dobbin objects, never having been taken in by Becky. He says Amelia wasn't always fond of Becky referring to her jealousy over George. Angered, Amelia says she will never forgive him.

Triumphant, Becky moves in. Dobbin, after a last protest about letting Becky stay, reproves Amelia as not being worthy of his love and devotion. Much to Georgy's sorrow and Amelia's regret, Dobbin departs to join his regiment. Becky takes over Joseph's house, winning Amelia by praise of Major Dobbin. A couple of Becky's disreputable friends move in and connive to exploit Amelia. Although she has no idea of what they are planning, Amelia abhors them and writes to ask William Dobbin to come back.

That same day Becky decides she should protect Amelia and tells her that Joseph is too weak, that she should send for William. When Amelia starts the old line about her only being able to love George, Becky shows her the note George has written on the eve of Waterloo asking Becky to run away with him. Amelia cries — for many reasons — but she now feels free to love William.

In two days William returns to marry Amelia. Becky departs during the wedding days, returns and fastens herself on Joseph, and gets all his money. The last time William sees him, Joseph is both fascinated and terrified by Becky, but he won't leave her. Three months later he dies, the implication being that Becky has hastened his ruin as she did Rawdon's. Rawdon dies of yellow fever. Sir Pitt dies. Rawdon, Becky's son, inherits Queen's Crawley. The Dobbins, happy in marriage and their two children, George and Janey, live nearby and are friends of the family at Queen's Crawley.

None of them has anything to do with Rebecca, although her son makes her an allowance. She seems to have plenty of money, lives a respectable life, goes to church, and engages in all sorts of charities.

Analysis

In this section all the story ends are tied together, and the reader knows what happens to all the main characters. Becky has achieved what she set out to do: occupy a booth in Vanity Fair. Her son owns Queen's Crawley where she went first as governess.

Dobbin has Amelia and a daughter, both of whom rejoice his heart. Amelia has married a gentleman, at last, and appreciates him. George, who might have grown up without conscience, without any standards but those of Vanity Fair, has learned from Dobbin that there are other values. Lady Jane has young Rawdon and her own child with Amelia as friend. Becky has destroyed both Rawdon and Joseph. She has played Clytemnestra twice, as Thackeray says. As she began with entangling Joseph in her silken thread, so she ends engaged in the same manner. The plot has rounded into a full circle.

Although the true winners in the book are those who do not have their souls for barter in Vanity Fair, yet Thackeray aliows Becky, his chief protagonist for Vanity Fair, to show some genuine feeling. For example, it is Becky who realizes that Dobbin is a gentleman in spite of his big feet; and it is she who brings Amelia to her senses in regard to her endless worship of George. Becky sees things clearly, uses everything to her advantage, but usually is honest with herself — and once in a while with Amelia and Dobbin.

Thackeray defends his method of presentation by saying that he has only hinted "at the existence of wickedness in a light, easy, and agreeable manner, so that nobody's fine feelings may be offended." He calls Becky "Clytemnestra" and "Circe", allusions that leave no doubt as to her character. He compares Becky to a siren or mermaid or monster. "When they sink into their native element, depend on it those mermaids are about no good, and we had best not examine the fiendish marine cannibals, reveling and feasting on their wretched pickled victims." Another figure describes Becky in her attempt to be considered respectable, to a drowning man who will hang on to anything so long as there is hope.

Thackeray compares lying to being in debt. If one lie comes due, the liar has to make up a new one to take the place of the old one. As time passes both the number of fibs and the danger of their detection increases.

Amelia tyrannizes Dobbin, Thackeray says, as if he were a dog. She makes him "fetch and carry," and he likes to jump when she speaks and "trot behind her with her reticule in his mouth."

Thackeray takes his analogies from many sources:

As the most hardened Arab that ever careered across the Desert over the hump of a dromedary, likes to repose sometimes under the date-trees by the water; or to come into the cities, walk in the bazaars, refresh himself in the baths, and say his prayers in the Mosques, before he goes out again marauding: Jos' tents and pilau were pleasant to his little Ishmaelite. She picketed her steed, hung up her weapons, and warmed herself comfortably by his fire. The halt in that roving, restless life was inexpressibly soothing and pleasant to her.

Thackeray's implication is that as soon as she becomes bored, she will go marauding again.

In a paragraph regarding Dobbin's victory, Thackeray calls Amelia a vessel, a prize, a bird, and a parasite:

The vessel is in port. He has got the prize he has been trying for all his life. The bird has come in at last. There it is with its head on his shoulder, billing and cooing close up to his heart, with soft outstretched fluttering wings . . . Grow green again, tender little parasite, round the rugged old oak to which you cling!

Examples of Thackeray's humor follow: When Joseph arrives to see Becky, she puts a rouge-pot, a brandy bottle, and a plate of broken meat into her bed. She sits on the bed to keep Joseph from sitting on the objects. When Becky begins to move around in her excitement about how Rawdon and his family have torn little Rawdy from her arms, "The brandy-bottle inside clinked up against the plate which held the cold sausage. Both were moved, no doubt, by the exhibition of so much grief."

Dobbin amuses himself with a cigar, "that pernicious vegetable." Becky mourns about Rawdy, but she eats "a very good dinner." After Dobbin has gone, Thackeray says, "As for Emmy, had she not done her duty? She had her picture of George for a consolation."

Some of Thackeray's observations on human nature are: "When a traveller talks to you perpetually about the splendour of his luggage, which he does not happen to have with him; my son, beware of that traveller! He is, ten to one, an imposter." — "She wished to give him nothing, but that he should give her all. It is a bargain not infrequently levied in love."

As Thackeray made allowances for Lord Steyne's depravity, he excuses Becky, "She was of a wild, roving nature, inherited from father and mother, who were both Bohemians by taste and circumstance. . ." And Dobbin, an honest gentleman to the last, tells Becky when he objects to her staying at Joseph's house, "I beg your pardon, ma'am, but I am bound to tell you that it is not as your friend that I am come here now." And Becky respects him for his honesty.

4. Character Analysis

4.1 Rebecca Sharp

The protagonist of the novel, Becky is a strong-willed young woman obsessed with status and wealth. She attends Miss Pinkerton's academy as an orphan alone in the world, and makes only one friend, Amelia, who is friends with everyone. Rebecca frustrates her classmates and instructors, acting superior to them all. For example, she insists on speaking French when she knows that no one understands her, and demands payment for tutoring her classmates.

As soon as she is out of the school, her manipulations begin. She feigns attraction to Joseph Sedley because she understands the position and wealth a marriage with him would bring. She also appeals to Rawdon Crawley, who ends up marrying her. Sir Pitt, the local baronet, also falls for her. It is clear that men fall at her feet, but she doesn't ever express genuine

love for them. She finds Rawdon stupid, sees Sir Pitt only for his status and money, and hates George for his interference in her plan to marry Joseph.

Rebecca is also a compulsive liar. She has an affair with George behind Amelia's back. While she is with Rawdon, she flirts with men of status in order to steal their money, and she tries her best to secure Aunt Matilda's estate by attending to her. As a final act of deceit, Rebecca manages to have Joseph sign an insurance policy of which she is the sole beneficiary, earning her half of what he owned before his death.

Amelia Sedley

Amelia is a good-natured person, and she is easy to like. As a young girl, she makes many friends at Miss Pinkerton's school. Unfortunately, she is easily manipulated and patronized when she emerges into society. George walks all over her, and his sisters are condescending towards her. Regardless, Amelia remains infatuated with George, convinced that he must love her in return. Her innocence is initially framed as something good, but soon the author reveals that this quality is also her tragic flaw. She is a victim of so many things; her family's designs, her family's financial ruin, Becky's ruthlessness, George's indifference, and high society's overall cruelty.

Amelia is nevertheless a determined woman. Her son becomes her obsession, and she fights to keep and provide for him, letting the rest of her family and herself starve and struggle so that he can have nice things. She resolves to commit suicide when he is taken from her, but instead, she spends all her time spying on the boy.

Joseph Sedley

Joseph, or Jos, is Amelia's elder brother and a tax collector in India. He is a relatively wealthy man, and he admires people only based on whether or not they come from a nobility line. He dresses in ridiculous, extravagant clothing and is grossly overweight. Jos' father constantly makes jokes at his expense, which frightens him, just as he is frightened by women, which becomes especially evident when Becky tries to flirt with him and win his hand in marriage.

Jos enters the war as a civilian but dresses in military clothing to impress people. When the war starts, he decides to change back into civilian clothing so that he won't be recognized as a soldier. The sound of bombs frighten him, and he buys horses from Becky at a ridiculous price so that he can escape. His timidity influences every major decision in his life.

Even though his family is at the point of starvation, Jos only sends them a small annual allowance from his paycheck. He refuses to buy his father's wine, even though it will help his business, because he deems the wine inferior. Near the end of the novel, Jos once again finds himself in Becky's snares, and becomes another of her unsuspecting victims.

George Osborne

George is a disrespectful playboy. He is Amelia's love interest and the man she has been promised to since childhood. He is obsessed with the chase and does not seem to have the capacity to love anything other than himself. He gambles, drinks, constantly buys things for himself, and takes advantage of Amelia's feelings for him and of Dobbin's loyal friendship.

Eventually, George marries Amelia partly because she is so touchingly pathetic and partly because it makes him feel generous to be giving the girl her heart's desire. He also seems to derive pleasure from the fact that he is defying his father. George appears on the surface to take his military responsibilities seriously by refusing the comfortable life his father offers him, and as a result, he dies in the Battle of Waterloo.

William Dobbin

George's best friend Dobbin is one of the few characters not consumed by vanity. He is sincere and kind, and he does not expect recognition for his altruism. He is very much in love with Amelia, but he defers to George, and she doesn't even notice his affections for her. He plays an instrumental role in making their marriage possible, but ends up confused about his own gesture, due to his strong feelings for Amelia.

Dobbin is also extremely humble. There are several occasions in the book when he submits to George, even when it is clear that he is in the right. But as often as he encourages George on the right path, at the end of the day, he never truly speaks up for himself.

Sir Pitt Crawley

Sir Pitt is Rebecca's wealthy employer. He is a baronet but has accrued enormous debt over the years and is relying on the beneficiary of his sister's fortune to bail him out when she passes away. He is miserly and cruel and treats his wife with indifference. Furthermore, he has an inappropriate affinity for younger women. The current Lady Crawley is younger than he, and when she dies, he immediately seeks Rebecca's hand in marriage. When she refuses, he moves on to the young Ms. Horrocks, the daughter of his butler.

The end of Sir Pitt's life is spent in embarrassing drunken debauchery. He reveals his true nature when he starts spending all his time with common people, the friends of his servants, and making passes at his butler's daughter. He feels more at ease with this crowd, which makes sense when considering the narrator's commentary on his rough, crude manner at the beginning of the novel.

Young Pitt Crawley

The older son of Sir Pitt, he is one of the contenders for Aunt Matilda's fortune. However, he stands in stark contrast to his irresponsible brother. He is Lady Crawley's favorite and is the only person who pays her any attention. He eventually marries the young Jane Sheepshanks and becomes the heir to Sir Pitt's estate. He treats Rebecca and Rawdon with kindness by inviting them to come stay at his residence.

Eventually, young Pitt Crawley becomes the heir to Aunt Matilda's money and as a result, Rebecca sends her son, Rawdon, to live with him. He turns out to be the most responsible member of the Crawley family and seems to benefit because of it. At the same time, he is a victim of Becky's deceit, since he finds her more intelligent, interesting, and potentially useful than his own wife.

Rawdon Crawley

Rawdon is another of the novel's playboys. He doesn't care about education, and he spends his time fighting duels and gambling. The first honest and honorable thing he does is marry Rebecca, with whom he falls dearly in love, and vows to take care of her. In a gesture of love, he purchases a house and furnishes it with credit, which indicates that he is also financially irresponsible.

Rebecca's reflections make it clear that Rawdon is not very bright and he soon falls victim to her designs. She promises to take care of him and, naively, he takes her word for it. He gambles to earn money, and Rebecca makes sure, using her feminine wiles, that he wins often enough to support them. He eventually lands himself in prison for not paying his debts and when Rebecca doesn't bail him out, he finally becomes suspicious and uncovers all of the fraud she has engaged in over the years with various men. In the end, he walks out on her.

Old Osborne

Old Osborne is George's father. He used to be a friend and beneficiary of Mr. Sedley, but when the Sedleys fall into financial ruin he breaks off all ties with them and encourages his son to abandon their daughter. He also tries to push his son towards a wealthy heiress by encouraging him to forget his military duties and consider joining Parliament.

John Osborne clearly does not have much integrity. He does feel a little remorse at turning his back on the Sedleys, but this does not change his actions. He disowns his son when George decides to marry Amelia, and when George dies he is more worried about appearances than the tragedy itself. Finally, he is willing to wrest a son from his mother when Amelia is in financial trouble, as if exacting revenge for marrying his son.

Lord Steyne

Lord Steyne is a marquis from a long line of wealthy nobles. He ignores his wife and tries to drown his boredom in social gatherings. He has a son, George, who he does not acknowledge because of George's mental illness.

Lord Steyne is one of the many men who falls for Becky's schemes. He finds himself enamored with her and spends many evenings at her home. He gives her money and jewelry, which she hides from her husband. He is quick to believe her lies, because he wants them to be true.

5. Recurring motifs

- **Vanity**. Vanity, which takes a variety of forms, is a major motivation of individuals and characterizes society. Consider the following definitions of vanity from the *OED*: "Vain and unprofitable conduct or employment of time"; "The quality of being foolish or of holding erroneous opinions"; "The quality of being personally vain; high opinion of oneself; self-conceit and desire for admiration." Another meaning of vanity could possibly be the vanity mirror; this meaning relates to the use of mirrors in the text and the drawings.
- **Society's values**. Individuals and society are driven by the worship of wealth, rank, power, and class and are corrupted by them. Consequences of this worship are (1) the perversion of love, friendship, and hospitality and (2) the inability to love.
- **Selfishness**. Everyone is selfish in varying degrees. As little Georgy ironically writes in an essay. "An undue love of Self leads to the most monstrous crime and occasions the greatest misfortunes both in *States and Families*" (page 698, chapter LVIII). The selfishness of characters like Becky, Jos Sedley, and Lord Steyne is obvious; however, even apparently selfless characters like Amelia, Dobbin, and Lady Jane are selfish, though to a much lesser degree.
- **Illusion and reality**. Is it possible to distinguish between illusion and reality? Motivated by self-interest, the characters practice hypocrisy, they misrepresent themselves both to others and to themselves, and they lie. Some characters deliberately choose their illusions or fantasies over the truth. Thus, every character deludes others and/or is self-deluded (does this pattern include the narrator?).

- **Heroism**. Men and women are not heroic; the heroic poses and pretenses of characters, literature, and society are consistently deflated.
- **Fiction versus reality**. The false portrayal of human nature and activities in novels, romance, and literary conventions is distinguished from real life. The subtitle, *A Novel Without a Hero*, Thackeray's identifying various characters as the hero or heroine, and the marriages of Amelia and Becky early in the novel--all violate novelistic conventions. George Osborne parodies the conventional hero. Is Thackeray's shifting narrator a satire of the literary convention that "novelists know the truth about everything" (p. 37, chapter III)?
- **Married and parental relationships**. In a novel of domestic life, there are no happy marriages because of the egotism, selfishness, folly, and false values of individuals and of society. Similarly, selfishness, vanity, snobbery, and/or materialism affect every child-parent relationship.
- **The gentleman**. Thackeray rejects the older concept of a gentleman as a man of rank and leisure, i.e., a member of the gentry or aristocracy. The true gentleman, as well as the true lady, is recognized by moral character, by being considerate, benevolent, and diligent, and by having a certain culture and education. Amelia, Lady Jane, and Dobbin are among the few real ladies and gentlemen in this novel.
- **Time**. Thackeray's concern with time has caused him to be called the novelist of memory. The action is set in the past, and the narrator compares and contrasts the past with the present as he moves between them; occasionally he tells us a future event or outcome. The characters' memories of the past help to characterize them in the present. Thackeray also shows the effect which the passage of time has on the characters. His concern with time is reflected in the structure; the narrator occasionally interrupts the chronology, jumps back in time, and returns to the point where he stopped the chronology.

6. Study Questions

1. **What evidence in the book hints at the original serial format of the novel?**

   Thackeray is constantly interjecting, somewhat informally, his own thoughts in the novel, reflecting on its developments. There are times when he actually starts a chapter referencing the suspense he created by cutting off the story in the previous chapter. There are also clearly-defined sections in the book, framed by important events.

2. ***Vanity Fair* is packed with less-than-impressive characters. Why do you think the author chose to write a book without heroes and heroines, and instead to portray men and women he disdains? Additionally, can all his characters be read at face-value? Or are there important redeeming qualities to be considered?**

   Thackeray writes unlikeable characters to satirize the bourgeoisie of Victorian England. Therefore, his characters are prototypical, and commit often ridiculous acts for the sake of

their reputations and fortunes. He does create sympathy, however, by making his characters subtly complex. Rebecca is manipulative and ruthless, but Thackeray reminds his readers that she did not grow up in the easiest circumstances, and there are a few moments when she shows that she might have a conscience, such as her push to help Amelia and Dobbin realize their mutual affection.

3. **Compare and contrast the characters Amelia Sedley and Rebecca Sharp, Thackeray's female protagonists.**

   On the surface, Rebecca and Amelia are opposites. They come from radically different backgrounds. Rebecca is witty and conniving, while Amelia is sincerely kind and innocent. Rebecca assumes the worst in people; we see this in the letter that she writes to Amelia about the Crawley estate and its residents. Amelia, on the other hand, wants to believe that people are inherently good; she defends Rebecca when she is caught stealing and she continues to believe in her (possibly in an effort to protect herself). At the same time, they are both interested in securing a husband at all costs.

4. **Reflect on the significance of Rebecca playing the character Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's scorned wife, in a game of charades.**

   Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's wife, was left behind for 20 years at their home while her husband was off fighting a war of which she didn't approve. When he returned, he was accompanied by his war prize, Cassandra, the prophetess no one had believed. Clytemnestra was not a woman to be snubbed, so she schemed with Aegisthus, who has taken her as his mistress, to have her husband murdered.

5. **Is there any character evolution in *Vanity Fair*?**

   There seems to be very little character evolution in the novel. Rebecca is probably the best example of the characters' stagnancy; she manipulates everyone from beginning to end, and she never stops doing everything she can to secure herself a good financial situation. She does, however, confess her affair with George to Amelia at the very end of the novel, which she thinks will motivate Amelia to forget George and move on to Dobbin. Dobbin continues to subordinate himself to George throughout the entire novel. He continues to want George's wife, rather than accepting her infatuation with his friend and moving on to find a woman who could appreciate him. He even takes up George's cause of speaking against Rebecca. Amelia eventually comes around to love Dobbin, but it seems more like a convenient choice than one made out of love.

6. **Analyze the humorous implications of the names in *Vanity Fair*.**

   The best example is probably the group of Crawleys. The name implies something base, and indeed, the family is characterized by its scheming, pettiness, dishonesty, and general vice. There is also Sheepshanks, the wife of Young Sir Pitt, whom the author derides via other characters in the novel. Lord Tapeworm suggests a miracle cure for Jos Sedley's obesity. And Jos' girlfriend in Pumpernickel is Fanny de Butterbrod, which gives some indication of what the girl looks like.

7. **Describe situations in the novel when characters behave dishonestly, especially those situations that emphasize Thackeray's focus on the theme of vanity and greed as the primary motivators of human action.**

   The competition over Aunt Matilda's estate features a number of actors who feign appearances in order to appeal to Miss Crawley. Rawdon and Young Sir Pitt pretend to like each other when she is around, as do Bute and Sir Pitt. Rebecca cares for the old woman when she is ill. Joseph Sedley is also an example of this, when he completely abandons his intention to propose marriage to Rebecca simply because George tells him that he made a drunken fool of himself at dinner.

8. **What is Thackeray's conception of motherhood in *Vanity Fair*?**

   Rebecca's mother is absent from the beginning of the book, and it seems that she is haunted by this lack of a motherly figure. Miss Pinkerton, who could have stood in her mother's place, simply rejected Rebecca out of what might have been jealousy. Thackeray seems to think one's experience of motherhood as a child influences how one acts as a mother later in life; Rebecca, unsurprisingly, treats her son with indifference, while Amelia exhibits strong concern for Georgy, even at her own expense.

7. Suggested Essay Topics

1. Plot of *Vanity Fair*

The plot appears complex because of the multitude of characters and because the stated motives are seldom the true ones. Moreover, the author digresses so often in essays on related subjects that the casual reader may lose the thread of the story.

The story, however, is as modern as tomorrow — the struggle to establish oneself in society. Whereas the tale seems disjointed and diverse, it is held together by the one theme: the foibles and deceptions of the inhabitants of Vanity Fair. No matter how minor a character, Thackeray identifies that person — perhaps by the significance of his name only — as living or not living in Vanity Fair. This continuous focus on human nature in all aspects from motherhood to death, from poverty to prosperity, makes the plot both probable and unified.

The conflict is always man against man for the joys and advantages of Vanity Fair. There is little soul-searching. The reader does not often enter the minds of the characters. He watches what they do, he hears what the author tells about them, and then with some direct prompting from the author, judges them. Any conflict with nature is conflict with human nature.

Thackeray wishes to impress on the reader the futility of Vanity Fair but he does not underestimate its values either. He admits that roast beef is good, although it vanishes like all pleasures of Vanity Fair. He points out the duplicity, the dishonesty, the double crossing of human beings all under the guise of doing good, being neighborly, or saving souls; but actually the purpose is to get money or position or advantage.

Most of the characters bow down to wealth and position regardless of the persons who have them. This worship of false values makes it possible for Rebecca to climb to the top, and if she had possessed sufficient money she would not have fallen on account of the discovery of her affair with Lord Steyne. For, although citizens of Vanity Fair may have a low opinion of the morals of their leading personages, this scruple will not deter them from attending balls, dinners, or any affair where one may get a free meal or sit beside nobility.

2. Technique and Style of *Vanity Fair*

The story is presented by summarized narrative, bits of drama, interpolated essays, without much recourse to the minds of the characters. If there is any doubt as to how the reader should judge an individual, the author steps in and makes appropriate comment. For example, when the Sedleys lose their money, the chief critic and enemy is old Osborne, whom Sedley has started in business. Thackeray comments on the psychology of old Osborne's attitude:

When one man has been under very remarkable obligations to another, with whom he subsequently quarrels, a common sense of decency, as it were, makes of the former a much severer enemy than a mere stranger would be . . . a persecutor is bound to show that the fallen man is a villain — otherwise he, the persecutor, is a wretch himself.

Here is an example of dramatic presentation. Amelia visits Becky to find out if she can help her. Becky has hidden her brandy bottle in the bed, and is putting forth every effort to engage Amelia's sympathy by way of little Rawdon:

"My agonies," Becky continued, "were terrible (I hope she won't sit down on the bottle) when they took him away from me I thought I should die; but I fortunately had a brain fever, during which my doctor gave me up, and — and I recovered, and — and — here I am, poor and friendless."

"How old is he?" Emmy asked.

"Eleven," said Becky.

"Eleven!" cried the other. "Why, he was born the same year with George who is — "

"I know, I know," Becky cried out, who had in fact quite forgotten all about little Rawdon's age. "Grief has made me forget so many things, dearest Amelia. I am very much changed: half wild

some times. He was eleven when they took him away from me. Bless his sweet face, I have never seen it again."

"Was he fair or dark?" went on that absurd little Emmy. "Show me his hair."

Becky almost laughed at her simplicity . . .

Usually Thackeray just describes what happens. George and Becky are talking about how Becky can get next to Briggs, Miss Crawley's maid, and thereby see Miss Crawley and regain her favor for Rawdon. Becky says she will find out when Briggs goes to bathe; she will dive in under Briggs' awning and "insist on a reconciliation".

The idea amuses George, who bursts out laughing, whereat Rawdon shouts at them to ask what the joke is. Thackeray does not say Amelia is jealous, he shows the reader what she does: "Amelia was making a fool of herself in an absurd hysterical manner, and retired to her own room to whimper in private."

Instead of showing, sometimes the author tells what the situation is. Of Sir Pitt's second wife, he says, "Her heart was dead long before her body. She had sold it to become Sir Pitt Crawley's wife. Mothers and daughters are making the same bargain every day in Vanity Fair."

Although Thackeray claims to write about real people, at the close of the book, he says, "Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out." Thackeray does write about real people; Amelia is drawn from Mrs. Thackeray. However, in the writing of a story, there is a transformation and adaptation which justifies also the figure of the manipulation of puppets.

The author calls his characters ironic or patronizing names such as "Our poor Emmy," or "Our darling Rebecca." The modern reader may think his writings full of clichés. One must remember, however, that Thackeray makes fun of just such patronizing expressions, and one cannot be sure that he uses such expressions seriously.

Thackeray likes certain words such as "killing." Sometimes his punctuation seems old-fashioned, like his use of the colon instead of a period in sentences like: "William knew her feelings: had he not passed his whole life in divining them?"

Sentence structure ranges from a few words to a whole paragraph. The variety tends to make the story readable, slows the pace or quickens it; variation may come in the form of a question or direct address. Essay or narration alternates with dialogue and dramatic action.

Because the story was written as a serial, Thackeray didn't have the whole manuscript in hand for completion and correction. As a result the story rambles; essays have been inserted as padding; there is a certain amount of confusion in regard to names, places, and time. For

example, Mrs. Bute Crawley is sometimes Martha, sometimes Barbara. Georgy sees Dobbin in London at a time when he is in Madras.

The reader has a complete picture of Joseph's visit with his father and Amelia, his reassurance as to their welfare. Then Amelia gets a letter from Jos saying he will be delayed — he hasn't yet left Southampton.

Whatever his faults in producing a sprawling, sometimes inaccurate manuscript, Thackeray has never missed a chance to point out the futility, the snobbery of Vanity Fair.

3. Symbolism in *Vanity Fair*

Thackeray takes symbols from everyday life, from the classics, and from the Bible. He shows Rebecca ensnaring Joseph in a tangle of green silk, at their first acquaintance. As Becky climbs the social stairway, she is likened to a spider. At the close of the book, she has literally entangled and destroyed Joseph just as a spider would its victim. She sucked his money, his vitality, his personality from him. She did not reduce Rawdon to such a shell, but she played Delilah to his Samson.

At the charade party Rebecca plays Clytemnestra, symbolic of her destruction first of Rawdon, second of Joseph. (Clytemnestra killed her husband, Agamemnon, when her lover's courage failed.) Rebecca is also called Circe, the siren who lured men to their death. Sir Pitt refers to the Bute Crawleys as Beauty and the Beast, a symbolic hint that Bute has married a battle-axe, which he has.

The Osborne household keeps time by a clock representing the sacrifice of Iphigenia. Iphigenia, daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, was sacrificed by her father for success in war, another route to power and position. Old Osborne tries to sacrifice George to a marriage for money; he destroys Miss Jane's one romance for his own selfish convenience. The Iphigenia clock, then, symbolizes the complete subordination of the Osbornes to money and social success.

Amelia's giving up Georgy is compared to Hannah's giving up Samuel. The Bible story has religious significance; Hannah gives up her son to the Lord. In *Vanity Fair*, Amelia, though she is not of Vanity Fair, surrenders her son to advantages that money and position can provide. The symbol here may be ironic.

4. Imagery in *Vanity Fair*

The symbolism described in the foregoing paragraphs constitutes one form of imagery. To continue with similar figures which may not be considered broadly symbolic, one reads of Miss Pinkerton, "the Semiramis of Hammersmith." Sermiramis was an Assyrian queen noted for

beauty, wisdom, and voluptuousness. Hammersmith was a metropolitan borough of London. Obviously the figure is ironic. When Pitt lures James into trouble by urging him to drink and smoke in Miss Crawley's house, Thackeray calls Pitt, Machiavel, a name synonymous with political cunning, duplicity, and bad faith.

Old Sir Pitt, called Silenus, leers at Becky like a satyr. In mythology Silenus is a fat old man, jolly, intoxicated, an attendant of Bacchus. Satyrs are goat-like men, attendants of Bacchus, the god of wine.

Men and women are compared to trees and birds: "While Becky Sharp was on her own wing in the country, hopping on all sorts of twigs and amid a multiplicity of traps, and pecking up her food quite harmless and successful, Amelia lay snug in her home . . ." He compares George to a tree where Amelia can built her nest but says it is not safe. When Dobbin has at last won Amelia, the author says, "The bird has come in at last. There it is with its head on his shoulder, billing and cooing close up to his heart with soft outstretched fluttering wings . . ." He calls Dobbin the "rugged old oak to which you cling."

Dobbin, the "uproused British lion," tells his sisters they "hiss and shriek and cackle . . . don't begin to cry. I only said you were a couple of geese."

Thackeray compares Amelia to a violet, speaks of her nursing the corpse of Love, after George seems to have abandoned her In caring for her father, she appears to Dobbin to walk "into the room as silently as a sunbeam."

Pitt Crawley is "pompous as an undertaker." Lady Crawley is a "mere machine in her husband's house." Amelia is a "poor little white-robed angel," who fortunately can't hear George and his fellows roaring over their whiskey-punch.

When the ladies cry, the author says, "The waterworks again began to play." Miss Swartz, in fancy garments, is dressed "about as elegantly . . . as a she chimney-sweep on May Day." Dobbin, on contemplating Becky's flirtation, has "a countenance as glum as an undertaker's." When Amelia comes out, just before George's departure for battle, holding his sash against her bosom, Thackeray says "the heavy net of crimson dropped like a large stain of blood," a possible symbol of George's fate.

The note George gives Becky asking her to run away with him, lies "coiled like a snake among the flowers." When Becky exploits her fellow men, she is like the mermaid feeding below the surface of the water on the pickled victims. The "sheep-dog," or female companion necessary to the vivacious social climber in Vanity Fair, reminds Thackeray of "the death's head which figured in the repasts of Egyptian bon-vivants . . ."

Mrs. Bowls, formerly Firkin, maid to Miss Crawley, extends her hand to Becky and "her fingers were like so many sausages, cold and lifeless." Mrs. Frederick Bullock's kiss is "like the contact of an oyster."

One of the most humorous comparisons is that of cleaning a woman's reputation by presenting her at Court as one would clean dirty linen by putting it through the laundry. A countess of sixty is compared with faded street lights. She has "chinks and crannies" in her face. The calling cards from the ladies of Lord Steyne's family are "the trumps of Becky's hand." But Steyne says, "You poor little earthenware pipkin, you want to swim down the stream along with the great copper kettles."

When Georgy's nose is hurt, one does not see blood, but "the claret drawn from his own little nose." Becky calls herself a mouse, perhaps able to help the lion, the second Sir Pitt. To indicate that the servants are gossiping about Becky, Thackeray personifies Discovery and Calumny as the waiters who serve the food and drink.

When Dobbin comes home, the English landscape "seems to shake hands" with him. Dobbin's desire is a "bread-and-butter paradise." Becky is a hardened Ishmaelite who halts at Jos' tents and rests.

5. Irony in *Vanity Fair*

Thackeray's irony takes a wide range — sometimes biting, sometimes playful, but always pertinent. A sample of comment on money follows: "I for my part, have known a five-pound note to interpose and knock up a half-century's attachment between two brethren; and can't but admire, as I think what a fine and durable thing Love is among worldly people." "What a charming reconciler and peacemaker money is!" "The good quality of this old lady has been mentioned . . . She had a balance at her banker's which would have made her beloved anywhere."

When Becky and Rawdon look for George in order for Rawdon to gamble with him, the author remarks, "I hope the reader has much too good an opinion of Captain and Mrs. Crawley to suppose that they ever would have dreamed of paying a visit to so remote a district as Bloomsbury, if they thought the family whom they proposed to honour with a visit were not merely out of fashion, but out of money, and could be serviceable to them in no possible manner."

Women come in for a good share of Thackeray's sarcasm. He has his tongue-in-cheek as he describes Becky's need of a mother. "All she wanted was the proposal, and ah! how Rebecca now felt the want of a mother! — a dear, tender mother, who would have managed the business in ten minutes . . ." — "All old women were beauties once, we very well know."

Miss Pinkerton writes Mrs. Bute that Miss Tuffin is sweet, young, eighteen, and therefore, probably not suitable. She illustrates Thackeray's idea that "natural jealousy . . . is one of the main principles of every honest woman." Mrs. Bute is reluctant to forgive the begging Miss Horrocks. "But those who know a really good woman are aware that she is not in a hurry to forgive, and that the humiliation of an enemy is a triumph to her soul." Mrs. Bute, in her treatment of Miss Crawley ". . . ground down the old lady in her convalescence in such a way as only belongs to your proper-managing, motherly, moral woman."

Becky's friendship with Lady Jane is such that ". . . these two ladies did not see much of each other except upon those occasions when the younger brother's wife, having an object to gain from the other, frequented her. They my-loved and my-deared each other assiduously, but kept apart generally . . ."

In ironical comments on society and life in general, Thackeray lets the reader know that even those in modest circumstances love their children. Dobbin writes his mother ". . . who was fond of him, although she was a grocer's wife and lived in a back parlour in Thames St."

Captain Dobbin makes conversation ". . . like a consummate man of the world . . . some topic of general interest such as the opera . . . or the weather — that blessing to society."

Gossips have not changed since Vanity Fair — "The tartwoman hints to somebody, who took an affidavit of the fact to somebody else, that there was a great deal more than was made public regarding Mr. Crisp and Miss Sharp . . ."

Of deaths and funerals, Thackery comments, "Could the best and kindest of us who depart from the earth, have an opportunity of revisiting it, I suppose he or she . . . would have a pang of mortification at finding how soon our survivors were consoled . . ."

Of weddings, he says, "After three or four ceremonies, you get accustomed to it, no doubt; but the first dip, everybody allows, is awful." And of the fighting in Belgium, he says, "For a long period of history they have let other people fight there."

Thackeray's characterizations are often ironic. The rich Miss Crawley says of herself, Rebecca, and Rawdon: "'We're the only three Christians in the county my love,' in which case it must be confessed that religion was at a very low ebb in the county of Hants." George broke up Becky's marriage to Joseph and "she loved George Osborne accordingly." Miss Crawley "showed her friendship by abusing all her intimate acquaintances to her new confidante (than which there can't be a more touching proof of regard)."

Joseph's eating is "the delightful exercise of gobbling." As an invalid, he takes two-thirds of the bottle of champagne. Mr. Sedley says that if Joseph should receive word of the death of the rest of the family, he would say "Good Gad!" and go on with his dinner.

Mr. Osborne's disposition has suffered because ". . . he has not been allowed to have his own way. To be thwarted in this reasonable desire was always very injurious to the old gentleman . . . " Maria Osborne Bullock ". . . felt it her duty to see her father and sister as little as possible."

Mr. Osborne called kicking a footman downstairs a "hint" to leave. Lord Steyne says his wife is as gay as Lady Macbeth and calls his home a "temple of virtue." Lady Fits-Willis is of the "best people." Her patronage helps Becky. The lady "asked her to her own mansion, and spoke to her twice in the most public and condescending manner . . . The important fact was known all over London that night . . ." At Vauxhall "our young people made the most solemn promises to keep together . . . and separated in ten minutes afterwards."

Essay Questions

1. Give examples of Thackeray's use of symbolism in figures of speech and in names.
2. How can it be said that Amelia mistreats those who are humblest before her?
3. How does Thackery use his own experience as a source in Vanity Fair?
4. What faults make this novel difficult to read?
5. Contrast the two main female characters.
6. Give four of Thackeray's opinions on women. Is he usually complimentary or uncomplimentary?
7. What is Becky's greatest asset? Her greatest fault?
8. How does Rawdon change during his ten years of marriage?
9. Why does Miss Matilda leave her money to Pitt? (Characters) What unselfish action on the part of Pitt leads indirectly to his inheritance?
10. What is important to the citizens of Vanity Fair?
11. In what way does Vanity Fair represent other than a physical setting? Explain.
12. Give examples of Mrs. Bute Crawley's domineering actions.
13. What characteristics do Mrs. Clapp, Mrs. Frederick Bullock, and Becky have in common?
14. How does Thackeray excuse the behavior of his characters? Give three examples.
15. Discuss and illustrate Becky's acting ability.
16. How does poverty change a character? Illustrate. How does wealth change a character? Illustrate.
17. Discuss Joseph Sedley, his weakness, his virtue. How does he show his vanity?
18. Why does Thackeray call this a novel without a hero? Explain the irony involved.
19. Compare and contrast George Osborne and William Dobbin.
20. Illustrate Thackeray's use of the classics to point up characterizations.
21. How does Rebecca outsmart herself and bring about her downfall?
22. What is the conflict in Vanity Fair? How do plot and idea support each other?
23. Give three methods of presentation that Thackeray uses in this story.
24. Define satire and show how Thackeray makes use of it in Vanity Fair.

25. Do you believe people today act like those in Vanity Fair? Illustrate.
26. Show how Thackeray's definition of gentleman applies to William.
27. How is hunger a weapon in Vanity Fair? Is it a weapon today? Explain.
28. Does Thackeray respect motherhood? If so, what type of motherhood?
29. Do Thackeray's characters seem real to you or like puppets? Why or why not? Illustrate.

8. Suggestions for Further Reading

- Taylor, D. J. (2004). "Brookfield, Jane Octavia (1821–1896)". *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/56277.
- Harden, Edgar F. (1995). *Vanity Fair: A Novel without a Hero*. New York: Twayne Publishers. ISBN 0-8057-4460-6
- *Vanity Fair*: ISBN 0-19-283443-6 (Oxford World Classics edition, that has explanatory notes and original illustrations)

Paper IX: UnitV

George Eliot's :*The Mill on the Floss*

1. Background

2. Major Themes

3. Chapter Analysis

4. Character Analysis

5. Recurring motifs

6. Study Questions

7. Suggested Essay Topics

8. Suggestions for Further Reading

Structure

1. Background

1.1 George Eliot Biography

George Eliot (1819-1880)
George Eliot was the pen name of Mary Ann Evans, one of the leading English novelists of the 19th century. Her novels, most famously 'Middlemarch', are celebrated for their realism and psychological insights.

George Eliot was born on 22 November 1819 in rural Warwickshire. When her mother died in 1836, Eliot left school to help run her father's household. In 1841, she moved with her father to Coventry and lived with him until his death in 1849. Eliot then travelled in Europe, eventually settling in London.

In 1850, Eliot began contributing to the 'Westminster Review', a leading journal for philosophical radicals, and later became its editor. She was now at the centre of a literary circle through which she met George Henry Lewes, with whom she lived until his death in 1878. Lewes was married and their relationship caused a scandal. Eliot was shunned by friends and family.

Lewes encouraged Eliot to write. In 1856, she began 'Scenes of Clerical Life', stories about the people of her native Warwickshire, which were published in 'Blackwood's Magazine'. Her first novel, 'Adam Bede', followed in 1859 and was a great success. She used a male pen name to ensure her works were taken seriously in an era when female authors were usually associated with romantic novels.

Her other novels include 'The Mill on the Floss' (1860), 'Silas Marner' (1861), 'Romola' (1863), 'Middlemarch' (1872) and 'Daniel Deronda' (1876). The popularity of Eliot's novels brought social acceptance, and Lewes and Eliot's home became a meeting place for writers and intellectuals.

After Lewes' death Eliot married a friend, John Cross, who was 20 years her junior. She died on 22 December 1880 and was buried in Highgate Cemetery in north London.

1.2 Plot Overview

Maggie Tulliver is the impetuous, clever younger daughter of the Tullivers of Dorlcote Mill in St. Ogg's. Maggie frustrates her superficial mother with her unconventional dark coloring and unnatural activeness and intelligence. Maggie's father often takes Maggie's side, but it is Maggie's older brother Tom upon whom she is emotionally dependent. Maggie's greatest happiness is Tom's affection, and his disapproval creates dramatic despair in Maggie, whose view of the world, as all children's, lacks perspective.

Though Tom is less studious than Maggie appears to be, Mr. Tulliver decides to pay for Tom to have additional education rather than have him take over the mill. This decision provokes a family quarrel between Mr. Tulliver and his wife's sisters, the Dodsons. Mr. Tulliver is frustrated by the snobbish contrariness of the Dodsons, led by Mrs. Tulliver's sister Mrs. Glegg, and vows to repay money that Mrs. Glegg had lent him, thereby weakening her hold on him. He has lent almost an equal sum to his sister and her husband, the Mosses, but he feels affectionately toward his sister and decides not to ask for money back, which they cannot pay.

Mr. Stelling, a clergyman, takes Tom on as a student, and Maggie visits him at school several times. On one of these visits, she befriends Mr. Stelling's other student—the sensitive, crippled Philip Wakem, son of her father's enemy, Lawyer Wakem. Maggie herself is sent to school along with her cousin, Lucy, but is called home when she is thirteen when her father finally loses his extended lawsuit with Lawyer Wakem over the use of the river Floss. Mr. Tulliver is rendered bankrupt and ill. Tom returns home as well to support the family, as the Dodson's offer little help. The mill itself is up for auction, and Lawyer Wakem, based on an idea inadvertently

furnished to him by Mrs. Tulliver, buys Dorlcote Mill and retains Mr. Tulliver as a manager in an act of humiliating patronage.

Even after Mr. Tulliver's recovery, the atmosphere at the Tullivers' is grim. One bright spot is the return of Bob Jakin, a childhood friend of Tom's, into Tom and Maggie's life. Bob, a trader, kindly buys books for Maggie and one of them—Thomas a Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ*—influences a spiritual awakening in her that leads to many months of pious self-denial. It is only after Maggie reencounters Philip Wakem on one of her walks in the woods that she is persuaded to leave her martyrish dullness in favor of the richness of literature and human interaction. Philip and Maggie meet clandestinely for a year, since Maggie's father would be hurt by their friendship as he has sworn to hold Lawyer Wakem as his life-long enemy. Philip finally confesses to Maggie that he loves her, and Maggie, at first surprised, says she loves him back. Soon thereafter, Tom discovers their meetings, cruelly upbraids Philip, and makes Maggie swear not to see Philip again.

On a business venture with Bob Jakin, Tom has amassed enough money to pay off Mr. Tulliver's debts to the family's surprise and relief. On the way home from the official repayment of the debts, Mr. Tulliver meets Lawyer Wakem and attacks him, but then Mr. Tulliver falls ill himself and dies the next day.

Several years later, Maggie has been teaching in another village. Now a tall, striking woman, she returns to St. Ogg's to visit her cousin Lucy, who has taken in Mrs. Tulliver. Lucy has a handsome and rich suitor named Stephen Guest, and they are friends with Philip Wakem. Maggie asks Tom for permission to see Philip, which Tom grudgingly gives her. Maggie and Philip renew their close friendship, and Maggie would consider marriage to Philip, if only his father approved. Lucy realizes that Tom wishes to purchase back Dorlcote Mill, and she asks Philip to speak to his father, Lawyer Wakem. Philip speaks to his father about selling the mill and about his love for Maggie, and Lawyer Wakem is eventually responsive to both propositions.

Meanwhile, however, Stephen and Maggie have gradually become helplessly attracted to each other, against both of their expectations and wishes. Maggie plans for their attraction to come to nothing, as she will take another teaching post away from St. Ogg's soon. Stephen pursues her, though, and Philip quickly becomes aware of the situation. Feeling ill and jealous, Philip cancels a boat- ride with Maggie and Lucy, sending Stephen instead. As Lucy has proceeded down river, meaning to leave Philip and Maggie alone, Stephen and Maggie find themselves

inadvertently alone together. Stephen rows Maggie past their planned meeting point with Lucy and begs her to marry him. The weather changes and they are far down the river. Maggie complacently boards a larger boat with Philip, which is headed for Mudport. They sleep over night on the boat's deck and when they reach Mudport, Maggie holds firm in her decision to part with Stephen and return to St. Ogg's.

On her return to St. Ogg's, Maggie is treated in town as a fallen woman and a social outcast. Tom, now back in Dorlcote Mill, renounces her, and Maggie, accompanied by her mother, goes to lodge with Bob Jakin and his wife. Despite public knowledge of Stephen's letter, which acknowledges all the blame upon himself, Maggie is befriended only by the Jakins and the clergyman Dr. Kenn. Lucy, who has been prostrate with grief, becomes well again and secretly visits Maggie to show her forgiveness. Philip, as well, sends a letter of forgiveness and faithfulness.

Stephen sends Maggie a letter renewing his pleas for her hand in marriage and protesting the pain she has caused him. Maggie vows to bear the burden of the pain she has caused others and must endure herself until death but wonders to herself how long this trial, her life, will be. At this moment, water begins rushing under the Jakin's door from the nearby river Floss, which is flooding. Maggie wakes the Jakins' and takes one of their boats, rowing it down river in a feat of miraculous strength toward Dorlcote Mill. Maggie rescues Tom, who is trapped in the house, and they row down river towards Lucy. Before they can reach Lucy's house, the boat is capsized by debris in the river, and Maggie and Tom drown in each other's arms. Years go by and Philip, and Stephen and Lucy together, visit the grave.

1.3 Character List

Narrator
The narrator, unnamed, narrates both as an individual remembering Dorlcote Mill as it was in Maggie's lifetime, and as an omniscient narrator who clearly knows more than any individual could of the thoughts and motivations of the characters. The latter style is predominant, and his or her use of the first person is rare. He or she has a sense of humor which is very satiric. The narrator is reflecting on the lives of the Tullivers from thirty years after Tom and Maggie died.

Maggie Tulliver
Maggie is the very intelligent, very conflicted protagonist of *The Mill on the Floss*. When the novel begins, she is young, clever, imaginative, adoring of her brother, and always getting into trouble. As she grows up, she regularly feels conflicted between acting how her extended family and community would want her to, and following her own desires. The strong pull of both means she is often indecisive, and though she tries to find peace in renouncing all desire -

for education, music, love, literature - in the end this only makes her feelings stronger. Even when she chooses based on her desire, though, as when she starts to elope with Stephen, she ultimately feels the pull of her family and community too strongly, and can't bear to follow through on gaining happiness at their expense.

Tom Tulliver
Tom is Maggie's older brother by four years. He is athletic, prideful, obsessed with justice, and usually rather unforgiving. He has very little book-smarts but he is practical, determined, and willing to sacrifice everything to regain his family's honor. His success comes at the expense of real human companionship and his insistence on justice and distrust of Maggie drives a wedge between them until just moments before they both die.

Mr. Tulliver
Mr. Tulliver is Maggie and Tom's father. At the beginning of the novel he is the proprietor of Dorlcote Mill, which has been in his family for generations. He is hot-tempered, stubborn, and litigious, although also intelligent, though uneducated, and very generous and loving towards Maggie and his sister, Mrs. Moss. He is proud of Maggie's intelligence, although he isn't sure what use it will be to a girl. He is also prideful, especially when he comes in conflict with his wife's very opinionated sisters, and this along with his tendency to "go to the law" leads to him losing all of his assets, including his mill and farm. He believes that all of his troubles are caused by lawyers, particularly Mr. Wakem, and paying back all of his debts and punishing Mr. Wakem become his two obsessions after he loses everything until the moment he dies.

Mrs. Bessy Tulliver
Mrs. Tulliver is Maggie and Tom's mother. She is a blond, comely woman, who is very simple, and though she loves her children, she greatly favors Tom and wishes Maggie were blonder and simpler herself. She is very proud to be a Dodson and is particularly devastated by the loss of her household goods and furniture when Mr. Tulliver goes bankrupt. She shows herself to have more depth than originally expected towards the end of the novel, when she leaves Tom and the mill to live with Maggie in her shame.

Philip Wakem
Philip is the son of Mr. Wakem. Due to an accident in infancy, he is crippled and though he is very intelligent and talented, he feels bitterness over physical inferiority. He is a student with Tom at Mr. Stelling's, and though he never comes to be good friends with Tom, he is immediately drawn to Maggie and ends up loving her for his whole life. Though he is clever, very well educated, and a talented artist, he believes that his breadth of interests and talents mean that he is not particularly talented at any one thing.

Stephen Guest
Stephen is Mr. Guest of Guest & Co.'s only son. When he appears in the novel he is 25, handsome, rich, clever, and conceited. He plans to be a politician. He is very good friends with Philip and tacitly, although not explicitly, engaged to Lucy, who he thinks will be a charming wife. When he meets Maggie, however, he is overcome and quickly falls in love with her. He does not appear in the novel until after Mr. Tulliver's death.

Lucy Deane

Lucy is Maggie's cousin. In childhood, she is the epitome of everything Maggie is not - pleasant, quiet, passive, doll-like and never troublesome. As an adult, she is pretty, kind, and generous, although she has never had any true difficulty to test her spirit except for her mother's death and, eventually, Maggie and Stephen running away together.

Mrs. Jane Glegg
Mrs. Tulliver's oldest sister, Mrs. Glegg is Tom and Maggie's least favorite relative when they are children. Although she and her husband are well-to-do, she takes a great deal of pride in frugality. Like all the Dodsons, and probably more so than anyone else, she believes firmly in pride of family. Though she is not very generous with the Tullivers when Mr. Tulliver loses everything, going so far to say that it is a judgment from God, she is later one of Maggie's strongest defenders after her scandal with Stephen.

Bob Jakin
Bob is a childhood friend of Tom Tulliver's from a poorer family, until Tom thinks Bob tried to cheat him and can't forgive him for it. Later, after Mr. Tulliver loses everything, Bob comes to offer the Tullivers the award he earned for putting out a fire. Though they don't accept, they greatly appreciate this offer, and he becomes a friend of the family again, eventually housing both Tom and Maggie at different times. He is a successful peddler and leads Tom to his first speculation opportunity, which eventually allows him to repay all his father's debts. He is kind and generous, and particularly taken with Maggie - he names his daughter after her.

Mr. Deane
Mr. Deane, Mrs. Deane's husband, is a successful businessman with Guest & Co. who is thought of very highly in St. Ogg's. He gets Tom his first job, and ends up being a mentor towards him as he rises in the world of business. Like the other uncles, he made his fortune through hard work over a long period of time and was not educated.

Mr. Glegg
Mr. Glegg is Mrs. Glegg's husband. He is a retired wool dealer, and doesn't take anything very seriously now that he is done working. He is an avid gardener in his retirement. He married Mrs. Glegg because he made his fortune by slowly saving money, and he thus liked her thriftiness and thought they would be compatible. Though he is cheap, it is in a kind-hearted and evenhanded way - he would go out of his way to save a few dollars for anyone, not just himself.

Mrs. Sophy Pullet
Mrs. Pullet is Mrs. Tulliver's favorite sister. She is very prone to crying and seems to be a hypochondriac, going frequently to the doctor and obsessed with everybody's physical ailments.

Mrs. Susan Deane
Mrs. Deane is Mrs. Tulliver's sister and Lucy's mother. Mrs. Glegg resents her for being too showy with money, for Mr. Deane becomes more and more successful throughout the novel, and Mrs. Deane is not as subtle with her finery as Mrs. Glegg believes a Dodson should be. Mrs. Deane dies while Maggie is away teaching after Mr. Tulliver's death.

Mrs. Gritty Moss
Mrs. Moss is Mr. Tulliver's sister. She married a man with no capital and had eight children, and so ends up being rather a burden on Mr. Tulliver. She is patient and loving, and Maggie's only aunt who treats her kindly in her youth.

Rev. Walter Stelling
Mr. Stelling is an Oxford graduate and a clergyman whose desire for the finer things means his expenditures outweigh his income, so he begins to take on students to supplement this. He is well-educated, self-confident, and ambitious, though he doesn't have the flexibility of approach that would make him a good teacher for Tom. He gives the impression of shrewdness to the uneducated Mr. Tulliver and his parishioners, but other clergymen believe him to be dull.

Dr. Kenn
Dr. Kenn is the clergyman of St. Ogg's. Although he seems cold, he is well-respected by those who realize he is deeply generous. He gives most of his income to charity and takes good care of his parishioners, including Maggie even after her scandal, which happens around the same time that his wife dies.

Mr. Wakem
Mr. Wakem is the lawyer who represents Mr. Pivart in Mr. Tulliver's case against him, who embodies all the worst aspects of the legal profession in Mr. Tulliver's mind. In reality, he is shrewd, somewhat vindictive, and selfish, but he is a very good father to Philip.

Mr. Pullet
Mr. Pullet is Mrs. Pullet's husband, a gentleman farmer with "a great natural faculty for ignorance." He is very unassuming.

Mr. Moss
Mr. Moss is Mr. Tulliver's brother-in-law. He is a poor farmer with a knack for losing money, and so is greatly indebted to Mr. Tulliver, who opposed his sister's marriage to him.

Luke Moggs
Luke is the head miller at Dorlcote Mill. He is very kind to Maggie and Tom, and generous and loyal to the entire Tulliver family.

Mr. Riley
Mr. Riley is an auctioneer and appraiser, and a good friend of Mr. Tulliver. He is highly educated and good-natured, and passionately recommends Mr. Stelling to Mr. Tulliver as a teacher for Tom, although he really doesn't know much about him. When he dies fairly early in the novel, he leaves a lot of debt, which Mr. Tulliver inherits from him.

Kezia
Kezia is the Tulliver's housemaid. She is loyal, good-hearted, and bad-tempered, and stays with the family even after they can't afford to pay her.

Mrs. Stelling
Mrs. Stelling is Mr. Stelling's young wife. She is haughty and expects Tom to help her take care of her daughter, so Tom dislikes her, even though he quite likes the baby.

Mr. Poulter
Mr. Poulter is the schoolmaster of King's Lorton who is employed at Mr. Stelling's to drill Tom on his bearing. He fought against Napoleon's army, and has many stories - one doubts their veracity - about his prowess in doing so.

Mrs. Prissy Jakin
Prissy is Bob's wife, a tiny woman who is very kind to Maggie.

Lizzy Moss
Lizzy is Maggie's younger cousin who Mrs. Moss believes will be clever like Maggie.

Mrs. Moggs
Mrs. Moggs is Luke's wife.

Mr. Turnbull
Mr. Turnbull is the Tullivers' doctor.

1.4 The Mill on the Floss Writing Style

Verbose, Repetitive, Fluid, Detailed

Some of those terms might seem weird. How can a style be "fluid" after all? First off, verbose is a fancy way of saying "wordy," which Eliot definitely is. This book is over five hundred pages long, after all. Eliot's sentences are often extremely long and she uses lots of fun punctuation (dashes, semi-colons) to avoid using periods. Here's an example of a pretty lengthy spiel:

Snow lay on the croft and river-bank in undulations softer than the limbs of infancy; it lay with the neatliest finished border on every sloping roof, making the dark-red gables stand out with a new depth of colour; it weighed heavily on the laurels and fir-trees till it fell from them with a shuddering sound; it clothed the rough turnip-field. (2.2.2)

OK, we're taking a break at the turnip-field. Aside from being long (which it is) this sentence is also full of vivid imagery, metaphors (like "limbs of infancy"), sensory detail (like descriptions of sounds and colors), and detailed descriptions. Eliot is definitely using all these words for a reason, and her sentences do a lot of work. What's fantastic about this sentence is how it manages to make a thematic statement without being overly obvious about it. Here's a sample of what comes after the turnip-field:

[T]he gates were all blocked up with the sloping drifts, and here and there a disregarded four-footed beast stood as if petrified [...] the heavens too were one still pale cloud - no sound or motion in anything but the dark river, that flowed and moaned like an unresting sorrow.(2.2.2)

Within the span of one (long) sentence, Eliot shifts from romantic imagery to much more negative images, like the river "moaning" in "sorrow." Stylistically, this sentence changes as it progresses too. The beginning has a lot of anaphoras, which is a fancy word meaning that each new phrase begins the same way: in this case with "it, past-tense verb." The end of the

sentence abandons this device. Basically, Eliot undermines the romantic view of the snow by elaborating on the reality of a cold, harsh winter. This ties in one of the book's major themes: don't judge things too quickly or make assumptions.

It may seem like "verbose" and "detailed" are the same thing. There is a distinction, though. Eliot's sentences are very long and wordy, hence the "verbose" style. But Eliot also uses a lot of these long and wordy sentences to describe people and events and places, hence the "detailed" style. Detailed here is sort of commenting on entire paragraphs and chapters, which give us a lot of information about everything that is going on in the book. We are very rarely left to make assumptions about things for ourselves. Here's an example where the narrator gives us not only information but also interpretation:

And yet – how was it that she was now and then conscious of a certain dim background of relief in the forced separation from Philip? Surely it was only because the sense of a deliverance from concealment was welcome at any cost? (5.5.90)

Even though Maggie doesn't admit it to herself, the narrator gives us some hints, through the use of leading questions, that Maggie is actually glad to be away from Philip because she isn't really in love with him.

All of this detail and wordiness often lead to a rather repetitive style. Repetitive isn't meant in a bad way, though. Rather, the style is repetitive in order to hammer home certain themes and to highlight the importance of certain conversations and events. We get a lot of repeated conversations in this book. For instance, Maggie and Philip debate the pros and cons of Maggie's self-sacrificial nature. Stephen and Maggie also have a lot of recurring debates revolving around the question of whether or not they should pursue a relationship. This is true to life really – if you have something really important to discuss with a friend, or are having a disagreement, you wouldn't just discuss things one time, right?

Finally, we have fluid. Basically, all of the other stylistic traits (repetition, wordiness, lengthy sentences, lots of detail) combine to create a very fluid style. Fluid here means that the style "flows" and that all the different aspects of the narrative fit together well. For instance, we don't have a lot of dramatic breaks or jarring interruptions here. Even when the narrator goes off on a tangent (usually at the end or beginning of a chapter), the discussion flows directly out of a scene or directly into an upcoming scene. Even the weirdest chapter in the whole book, "A Variation of Protestantism Unknown to Bossuet," is not totally random: it's actually setting up Maggie's upcoming religious experience. The places where we do have breaks in the narrative, like a major time jump, are notable for their scarcity. And even the time jumps themselves aren't really highlighted. The breaks are sort of buried in the rest of the narrative, which continues to flow along with lots of words, descriptions, and repeated conversations. It's also rather fitting that this book stylistically flows, since water imagery and themes play such a major role in it.

1.5 The Mill on the Floss Plot Analysis

Most good stories start with a fundamental list of ingredients: the initial situation, conflict, complication, climax, suspense, denouement, and conclusion. Great writers sometimes shake up the recipe and add some spice.

Initial Situation

Beginning of the book until Tom leaves school

In these early chapters we are introduced to nearly all the main characters and get detailed sketches of Tom, Maggie, and their often stormy relationship. These chapters give us a good understanding of the types of people that Tom and Maggie are and also set up a lot of the book's major plot strands, namely the disastrous lawsuit and the feud with the Wakems.

Conflict

The Tullivers lose their lawsuit and Mr. Tulliver becomes very ill. Tom and Maggie must leave school and work; the family is disgraced

Tom and Maggie's childhoods come to an abrupt end when their father loses his lawsuit. The family falls into financial ruin and all the Tullivers despair at ever paying off their debts. And Mr. Tulliver's health is failing. Mr. Wakem also buys this mill during this stage, which causes further conflict between the Tulliers and the Wakems.

Complication

Maggie experiences a religious awakening and then begins a secret friendship with Philip

Maggie turns to an extreme form of religion to help her cope. After a few years of this she meets Philip again and is eventually convinced to meet with him secretly. During this entire time, Maggie has a lot of inner turmoil and questions where her loyalties lie: to Philip, to her family, or to herself. Maggie is also confused as to whether or not she really loves Philip.

Climax

From Tom's discovery of Maggie's relationship with Philip to the death of Mr. Tulliver

There's actually a series of climaxes, one on top of the other here. First Tom discovers Maggie's hidden relationship with Philip and forbids her from ever seeing him again. Maggie bows to Tom's wishes after some internal strife. Shortly after this, the Tullivers are able to pay off their debts, but the occasion is ruined when Mr. Tulliver attacks Mr. Wakem. Mr. Tulliver dies shortly after this and the family is forced to leave the mill.

Suspense

Tom and Maggie are estranged and a love quadrangle develops between Philip, Stephen, Lucy, and Maggie. This stage ends with Stephen's and Maggie's disastrous elopement and their break-up

The stalemate that settles in after Mr. Tulliver's death is disrupted by the growing relationship between Maggie and Stephen. After fighting their feelings, the two end up eloping. But Maggie quickly changes her mind and they break-up. Maggie is now disgraced and has hurt those closest to her.

Denouement

After Maggie returns to St. Ogg's until the flood

Things start to wrap up in this stage. Maggie returns home and is shunned by the town. But the people closest to her, including Philip and Lucy, forgive her. Maggie makes amends with everyone except Tom.

Conclusion

The flood and the death of Tom and Maggie and the epilogue

The action surges once again during the flood. Tom and Maggie finally reconcile but they both die tragically in the flood. In an epilogue we learn that the other characters survive the flood and move on with their lives.

1.6 The Mill on the Floss Summary

How It All Goes Down

Tom and Maggie Tulliver are two kids growing up at Dorlcote Mill, which has been in their family for generations. The kids have a lot of extended family living nearby, and their aunts and uncles frequently come by to argue amongst themselves and to scold Tom and Maggie. The Tulliver kids have a stormy relationship. They spend most of their time getting along really well or else fighting horribly. Maggie in particular is very smart and very emotional and is always getting into trouble.

Two major things are in the works for the Tullivers: school and a lawsuit. Tom and Maggie are both sent to schools and Tom gets a fancy, if useless, education. While at school he meets a deformed boy named Philip Wakem, who is the son of Mr. Tulliver's arch-nemesis. Mr. Tulliver dislikes Mr. Wakem, a lawyer, since he is involved in a lawsuit against one of Wakem's clients. Mr. Tulliver loses his lawsuit and things go rapidly downhill for the Tulliver family. They go

bankrupt and Mr. Tulliver's health begins to fail. Mr. Wakem buys the Tulliver family mill, which causes Mr. Tulliver to hate the Wakems even more and to curse them in the family Bible.

After the lawsuit fiasco, the Tulliver kids are forced to leave school and start working. Tom slaves away for one of his uncles and is obsessed with paying off the family debts. Maggie finds comfort in an extreme form of religion, but she later puts that aside in favor of a secret friendship with Philip Wakem, who has been in love with Maggie ever since they first met. Maggie's passionate nature continues to cause her a lot of emotional distress.

Tom discovers Maggie's relationship with Philip and forbids her from seeing him again. Maggie is torn but decides that family loyalty comes first. Her relationship with Tom is badly damaged. Shortly after this, Tom manages to pay off the family debts, but the triumph is ruined when Mr. Tulliver attacks Mr. Wakem and then dies shortly afterwards. The Tullivers must move away from the mill.

A few years go by and Maggie returns from a stint as a governess to stay with her cousin Lucy. Tom has worked his way up in his uncle's business and is now successful. Maggie meets Stephen Guest, Lucy's boyfriend, and the two quickly fall in love. Philip also returns and Maggie is embroiled in a messy love quadrangle. Eventually, Stephen and Maggie are unable to control their feelings and the two try to elope. But Maggie has a crisis of conscience and leaves Stephen, returning home in disgrace.

Though Maggie reconciles with those closest to her, she is unable to make amends with the judgmental Tom. After a period of intense emotional suffering for Maggie, the local river floods. Maggie goes to rescue Tom and the two reconcile their differences. But Tom and Maggie are drowned in the flood. The other characters all survive and move on with their lives and Tom and Maggie are buried together.

2. Major Themes

Loss of Innocence

Loss of innocence is a major theme in *The Mill on the Floss*. From the beginning of the novel, the narrator makes it clear that there is a strong demarcation between living in childhood, as Maggie and Tom are doing, and looking back on it, as she is doing. With sentences like, "Childhood has no forebodings; but then, it is soothed by no memories of outlived sorrow" (72), or "Very trivial, perhaps, this anguish seems to weather-worn mortals who have to think of Christmas bills, dead loves, and broken friendships" (56), the narrator repeatedly calls to attention the great distance between the perception of children and the perception of adults.

When Mr. Tulliver loses all his assets and his senses, it becomes clear that the divide between child and adult is not necessarily slowly created over time, but that, for Maggie and Tom at least, it is created in a single episode of rending - a loss of innocence. With powerful imagery, Eliot shows Maggie and Tom going "forth together into their new life of sorrow," "the thorny wilderness," as "the golden gates of their childhood had for ever closed behind them" and they

will “never more see the sunshine undimmed by remembered cares” (159). The knowledge of their family’s great hardships to come is “a violent shock” that separates them permanently from their edenic - in comparison, at least - childhood.

Communal versus Individual Interests

The theme of communal versus individual interests, which could also be called duty versus desire, is of central importance to *The Mill on the Floss*, and is essentially what drives the plot. Maggie, with her unusual looks, her intellectual prowess, her driving curiosity, and her passionate desires, does not naturally fit into the community of St. Ogg’s at all. Her family continually fears what will become of her, she is often misunderstood and almost never taken seriously, and she is certainly never given the praise for her cleverness that she so desires. To fulfill her individual desires, then, is to break out of any role the community is willing to offer her, and so to go against it.

Though Maggie yearns for this at times, in the end she is far too bound to her past, her family, and the broader community to be willing to relinquish it. Though it would seem that marrying Stephen offers her the best opportunity for happiness, she chooses to leave him and, she believes, all future chances of happiness to return to St. Ogg’s. Once there, even the understanding Dr. Kenn, who appreciates her Christian values in staying close to her roots, tells her it would be best for her to go, but still, she stays. When she dies, it is in a boat on a current taking her towards home, so this becomes her final choice, and she has ultimately given her life to stay in the community; she loses her individuality in the most profound sense.

Gender Disparity

The gender disparity in the world of *The Mill on the Floss* is vital to understanding Maggie’s story. She is an intelligent and fascinating woman, but the world she is born into offers nothing for her to do with her talents; women are assumed to be more interested in gossip than reading, adherence to custom is valued more highly than intelligence or knowledge, and whether women are even capable of amassing a depth of knowledge is a subject of debate.

In this world, Maggie’s many talents do nothing for her except make her feel all the more dissatisfied with what is available. This context is crucial to understanding why choice is so difficult for her, why she is pulled so strongly between duty and desire. Her desires would lead her to a masculine pursuit, which is not available to her in any meaningful way and would require a great sacrifice of duty. But duty offers little of interest to someone with her creativity and sharpness, and so is a much harder choice than it is for, for example, Lucy Deane, who can play the appropriate feminine role perfectly. Maggie’s struggles, then, which the author so directly associates with progress, are not just for the general progress of culture away from the previous generation’s comfort with “ignorance” (101), but progress towards greater freedom of possibility for women like Maggie - women like George Eliot.

The Difficulty of Choice

Throughout *The Mill on the Floss*, the individual is pitted against the community, especially in reference to Maggie Tulliver. To make the decision to inhabit her individuality would be, in many ways, the more difficult path, as the book shows us that with the freedom of individuality

comes the responsibility to make choices, and for Maggie, at least, such decisive action is never easy.

If Maggie were to subjugate her will to the greater community, choices become meaningless - she just has to do what everyone does, follow tradition and custom, and so the only choices she would have to make are minor and insignificant because they are within these set bounds.

If instead Maggie were to assert her individuality, as she tries to at various points, the choices she makes define who she is, how she will live, how her community will see her, and in some cases, how those around her will live. Though Maggie is deeply intelligent and passionate and has clearly defined desires, she finds this nearly impossible. She tries to choose between Philip and Tom, fails, and in trying to have both, hurts them both. She tries to choose between Stephen and the community, regrets her decision, but in regretting it after the fact, finds she has already alienated most of the community. The difficulty Maggie finds in making choices, sticking to them, and facing the consequences, leads her to subjugate her will to the community completely.

Renunciation and Sacrifice

Renunciation and sacrifice are at the heart of the major actions of Maggie and Tom's lives. After his father's losses, Tom dedicates his life to repaying his father's debts, and then to getting the mill back from Mr. Wakem. To this end he gives up all socializing so that he won't be tempted to spend any of the money he makes, and he works so hard that when he gets home every night, he is too tired to even converse with his family. He thus essentially sacrifices human interaction to regain his family's honor.

Maggie also becomes fixated on renunciation, but whereas Tom sacrifices pleasure for a specific, concrete aim, Maggie's renunciation is a spiritual attempt to find peace in a world ill-suited to her. Maggie finds the weight of the "conflict between inward impulse and outward fact, which is the lot of every imaginative and passionate nature" (225) too much to bear, and so "renunciation seemed to her the entrance into that satisfaction which she had so long been craving in vain" (237).

Because her sacrifice has no active realm in which to act, as opposed to Tom's, she finds it much harder to adhere to. She lapses from it repeatedly, but in the end, returns to it in her plan to finally renounce a chance for love and happiness with Stephen. Though at that point, the damage has already been done and to marry him would likely not cause any more harm, she does not allow this for herself, because she believes renunciation is right for its own sake, regardless of what is being renounced or the potential consequences.

Nostalgia

Tom and Maggie are cut off from their childhood by their loss of innocence caused by their father's troubles, but that does not mean the ties created in their childhood are severed. The narrator repeatedly makes it clear that "old inferior things" always have a special meaning when you grow up with them, and almost all of her passages describing the mill and the surrounding area are riddled with nostalgic musings. The nostalgic frame for the past makes the

loss of innocence all the more poignant, for the present can never be as good as the nostalgic past, since even the reality of the past was not as good as one remembers.

Nostalgia is important not just in that it distinguishes the adult looking back on childhood from the child, but in that it provides a counterbalance to the human "striving after something better and better in our surroundings" (127). The "deep immovable roots" created by the past and made more strong by nostalgia allow for progress that is tempered and controlled, progress that looks to promote the community where these nostalgic ties are located, and not just the individual.

Progress versus Tradition

The tension between progress and tradition is central in *The Mill on the Floss*. In many ways, it is embodied in Maggie. The pull she feels between her individual desires and her communal duties is very much a pull between progress and tradition, as those communal duties are highly traditional, and her individual desires are far more suited to a more progressive world. There is a clear distinction between generations in the novel, and, especially because the narrator is looking back from a more progressive present to the traditional past, it is clear that the novel's setting, "a time when ignorance was much more comfortable than at present," is on the verge of transformation.

But the novel, though it presents a world which is unfit for Maggie, still does not want uninhibited progress. The "striving after something better and better in our surroundings" is essential, "but heaven knows where that striving might lead" without the tempering influence of tradition. It is easy to imagine that Maggie might have been much happier had she followed through on her elopement with Stephen, ignoring what tradition asks of her, but had she, she would not have had her final reconciliation with Tom, nor given her mother and Mrs. Glegg the opportunity to show how staunchly they would defend her in a time of trouble. Dr. Kenn believes the world is moving away from adhering to the obligations created by tradition with the rise of the individual over the communal, but Maggie is an example of someone with individual desires who still adheres to the duties her past has created. Though she is unable in the end to find the right balance, her struggle is emblematic of the greater societal pull between progress and tradition.

3. Chapter Analysis

The Mill on the Floss Summary and Analysis

Book I - Boy and Girl

Chapter I - Outside Dorlcote Mill

The narrator, asleep in her chair, dreams of Dorlcote Mill, and in doing so describes the town of St Ogg's along the Floss and a little girl standing at the edge of the water by the mill thirty years ago. When she wakes, she resumes the story of Mr. and Mrs. Tulliver's actions on the very afternoon she was dreaming of.

Chapter II - Mr. Tullier, of Dorlcote Mill, Declares His Resolution about Tom

At Dorlcote Mill, Mr. Tulliver explains to his wife Bessy that he is taking their son, Tom, out of his day school to go to boarding school because he wants him to be something better than a miller or a farmer. He plans to ask his friend Mr. Rileyfor advice on where to send Tom to school, but worries that even with a good education, he's not smart enough to ever be truly intelligent, as opposed to Tom's clever sister Maggie. Despite her daughter's cleverness, Mrs. Tulliver complains about how difficult Maggie is; in particular, the girl's hair won't hold a proper curl.

Chapter III - Mr. Riley Gives His Advice Concerning a School for Tom

Mr. Riley visits the mill, and Mr. Tulliver asks him about Tom's schooling. Riley strongly recommends he go to Reverend Stelling, who graduated from Oxford and wants to keep teaching even with his duties to his parish, so wants to take on a few pupils. Riley says he will recommend Tom to Stelling. Hearing her beloved brother's name, Maggie interrupts the conversation. She quickly illustrates how clever she is, showing Mr. Riley engravings in "History of the Devil", a book she's reading. But she is disgraced and belittled by Mr. Riley. Mr. Tulliver laments that if she were a boy, Maggie would go far.

Chapter IV - Tom is Expected

Maggie, impatient with her mother for not letting her go with Mr. Tulliver to pick up Tom from school, runs outside and talks to Luke, the head miller. From him she learns that Tom's rabbits, that she was supposed to take care of, have all died because she forgot to feed them.

Chapter V - Tom Comes Home

Tom comes home with two new fishing lines, one for Maggie to have all to herself, but when Maggie tells him about the rabbits, he takes it back and tells her he doesn't love her. She goes to the attic to sulk and play with a voodoo-doll like toy which she uses to work out her feelings. Though Tom is intent on punishing her, when she comes down again he can't resist her apologies and forgives her, taking her fishing the next day as originally planned.

Chapter VI - The Aunts and Uncles Are Coming

The Tullivers prepare for a visit Mrs. Tulliver's sisters and their families. Tom and Maggie play outside, enjoying freshly-baked jam puff. Tom cuts a third puff in uneven halves and tells Maggie to choose left or right so one of the siblings gets the better half fair and square. Maggie tells her brother he can have the better piece - to impress Tom - but he insists she choose with her eyes closed. Maggie gets the better half and tries to give it to her brother, but Tom insists on fairness. However, after both pieces are eaten, Tom gets jealous and calls Maggie greedy and runs away with his dog Yap, finding his friend Bob Jakin. They go off to watch a rat-catching, but get into a fight over Bob cheating at heads or tails, so Tom, unwilling to go along with a cheat, stalks off.

Chapter VII - Enter the Aunts and Uncles

Mrs. Jane Glegg, Mrs. Sophy Pullet, and Mrs. Susan Deane with her daughter Lucy arrive at Dorlcote Mill. All the aunts criticize Maggie's hair, so she sneaks upstairs with Tom and cuts it herself. Tom laughs at how stupid she looks, upsetting her greatly. He finally convinces her to come down to dinner, and the uncles mock her while the aunts reproach her.

The children are sent outside, and Mr. Tulliver tells everyone his plans for Tom's education. Everyone is surprised, but the uncles are easily convinced it's a good idea. Mrs. Gregg is quite scornful and unpleasant about the decision and ends up fighting with Mr. Tulliver. She leaves angrily.

Chapter VIII - Mr. Tulliver Shows His Weaker Side

Mrs. Tulliver mentions to Mr. Tulliver that he shouldn't have fought with Mrs. Glegg, because she might insist he pay back the 500 pounds he borrowed from her. This convinces Mr. Tulliver that he must pay her back so he won't be beholden to her anymore, so he goes to visit his sister Gritty and brother-in-law Mr. Moss in order to retrieve the 300 pounds he lent them. Mr. Tulliver tells Mr. Moss that he must pay him back, but almost immediately after loses his resolve. He thinks of Maggie and hopes to set a good example for Tom in the event she falls on misfortune. He returns to the Moss farm and tells his sister not to worry about the loan.

Chapter IX - To Garum Firs

Mrs. Tulliver takes Tom, Maggie, and Lucy to Garum Firs, the Pullets' farm. Mrs. Pullet shows the visitors a grand bonnet she has purchased. Maggie is in a bad mood because Tom has been favoring Lucy all morning, as she accidentally knocked over his house of cards. At Garum Firs, the children are sent outside and Mrs. Tulliver and Mrs. Pullet discuss the fight between Mrs. Glegg and Mr. Tulliver. At Mrs. Tulliver's bidding, Mrs. Pullet agrees to visit Mrs. Glegg the following to try to sooth the tension.

Chapter X - Maggie Behaves Worse Than She Expected

Outside, Tom, still mad at Maggie for the morning and for causing him to spill some wine at Garum Firs, ignores her and pays attention to Lucy. This makes Maggie more and more miserable. She gets irrationally mad at Lucy as well. Tom takes Lucy to the pond to look for fish

and Maggie follows behind, but Tom tells her to go away. In retribution, Maggie shoves Lucy into the mud.

Tom takes the crying Lucy back to Pullet house and tells the maid that it was Maggie that did it, and then runs back outside; he knows his cruelty played a part in Maggie's misbehavior. Mrs. Tulliver finds him and tells him to go get Maggie, but she is nowhere to be found. Mrs. Tulliver fears she has drowned in the pond, but Tom says she probably left to go home, so they go off after her.

Chapter XI - Maggie Tries to Run away from Her Shadow

Maggie is so miserable she decides to run away and join the gypsies. She goes off looking for a common where she expects to find them, but in fact stumbles upon a gypsy camp in the lane rather quickly. She announces she wants to stay with them and joins them around their fire, but quickly realizes it wasn't all she imagined it would be and gets frightened. She tells the gypsies she must be off, but they insist on taking her home. Maggie is terrified she will be murdered. On the road, Maggie and the gypsy run into Mr. Tulliver, on his way back from Gritty's. He pays the gypsy for his trouble and embraces his daughter, saying she must never leave him. Maggie does not get in trouble for running away.

Chapter XII - Mr. and Mrs. Glegg at Home

The narrator describes the history of the town of St. Ogg's and the legend of St. Ogg himself. St. Ogg, a boatman who ferried people across the Floss, ferried a poor woman who turned out to be the Virgin Mother. For his kindness, she blessed his boat - which rescued many people during the great flood.

Mr. Glegg is kind-hearted and finds it hard to bear when his wife is at odds with someone, so the morning after the argument with Mr. Tulliver, he hopes that she will have calmed down overnight. She has not, instead picking a fight with him over him siding against her. He convinces her, though, that rather than taking her money back from Mr. Tulliver immediately, it would make more sense to wait until she has an opportunity to invest it in something better.

Chapter XIII - Mr. Tulliver Further Entangles the Skein of Life

Mrs. Pullet comes the next day to petition for the Tullivers, and Mrs. Glegg says she will speak civilly to him if he does to her and won't give the neighbors any cause to gossip, and she feels quite pleased with herself for being so magnanimous. It thus infuriates her when she soon after receives a note from Mr. Tulliver telling her he will repay everything within a month. Mrs. Glegg does not visit again until the day before Tom leaves for school. Mr. Tulliver realizes he will need to find an investor to replace the 500 pounds he returned to the Gleggs. The last person he wants to borrow from is Mr. Wakem, a lawyer, but fate turns out otherwise.

Analysis

The opening chapter of *The Mill on the Floss* frames the novel to come. The narrator introduces us to Dorlcote Mill with a tone of dreamy nostalgia; at the end of the chapter, we realize she is,

in fact, literally dreaming. This device of an adult looking back fondly to childhood crystalizes one of the main themes of the book - nostalgia. The narrator considers the lives of Maggie and Tom from an adult perspective, both acknowledging and reveling the innocence of youth. This reverence for childhood innocence is emphasized by the last image of the book. Maggie and Tom die in an idealized version of their childhood - clasping “their little hands in love” and roaming “the daisied fields together” (422).

This frame works on several levels. The narrator speaks from about thirty years past the events of young Maggie and Tom on the Floss and continually focuses on the differences between a child’s worldview and an adult’s. The coming-of-age tale of the Tulliver children is both objective and subjective, portraying its hero and heroine in their emotional reality while exposing the childlike nature they will soon grow out of. We watch Maggie and Tom as they leave their childhood behind without relinquishing the ties created in this time; moreover, their behavior is continually dictated by those ties. The narrator helps to create intimacy both with the reader and the author. *The Mill on the Floss* is, by George Eliot's own admission, her most autobiographical work. In writing the novel, Eliot is looking back at her own childhood - fictionalized through Maggie's experiences - from an adult's perspective. The reader is privy to the characters' inner thoughts as well as the sometimes critical thoughts of the narrator of these thoughts.

This section is replete with the dramas of childhood that both reflect a certain nostalgia for this time preceding one’s loss of innocence, and foreshadow the great differences in character that will lead to Tom and Maggie intense disagreements in adulthood. We see in Maggie a strong drive to please Tom as well as a frequent inability to do so, either because she can’t understand him due to their vast differences in character - as in the case with the jam puff - or because she is moved by her strong emotions, which she has trouble controlling - as in the incident with Lucy and the mud. Tom's martial sense of justice and order contrasts sharply with Maggie's thirst for knowledge and experience. Tom often punishes his sister for her behavior, especially when her whims get the best of her, but the siblings love each other deeply and maintain a strong familial bond.

Many of the other themes of the novel are also introduced in the first book. Maggie’s inability to fit into a societal role because of the limitations placed on women is abundantly clear, even in her childhood. Mr. Tulliver is the character that loves and supports Maggie most throughout this section, yet even he wishes, on some level, that she were different. He says it’s “a bit of a pity” (11) that Maggie is “too 'cute for a woman” (12). Throughout this section, while the narrator and the reader appreciate her intelligence, almost all of the other characters are dismayed by her cleverness and her reluctance to behave and look the part of a proper girl.

Beyond just the issues of gendered limitations, this book gives the reader a strong sense of the setting which is hugely important to the novel as a whole, since it is Maggie’s struggle between her internal desires and what the community expects of her, between progress and tradition, that drives the plot. We learn that in St. Ogg’s, an “old, old” town (98), “it was a time when ignorance was much more comfortable than at present...and when country surgeons never thought of asking their female patients if they were fond of reading, but simply took it for granted that they preferred gossip” (101). We also learn that the Dodsons stand as the symbol

of community and tradition, as “while no individual Dodson was satisfied with any other individual Dodson, each was satisfied...with the Dodsons collectively,” and one of their core values is their “faithfulness to admitted rules.” It is in this world that the distinctly individual Maggie will struggle to survive.

Book II - School-Time

Chapter I - Tom's "First Half"

Tom finds life at King’s Lorton, where he is now the sole student to Mr. Stelling, unpleasant. The material is harder than anything he has faced before, and he has Mr. Stelling’s undivided attention. Mr. and Mrs. Tulliver, though, are both quite pleased with what they see when they leave him there. Mr. Tulliver thinks Mr. Stelling seems quite shrewd, and Mrs. Tulliver is pleased with Mrs. Stelling’s housekeeping.

A little while later Mr. Tulliver brings Maggie to visit Tom for a fortnight. Maggie quite enjoys getting a chance to follow along with Tom’s lessons, and likes to show off her cleverness to Mr. Stelling, who enjoys her conversation. Mr. Stelling, though, says that girls are often quick and shallow, but aren’t able to get deeply into anything, devastating Maggie, who has always taken pride in being called quick.

Chapter II - The Christmas Holidays

Tom comes back to Dorlcote Mill for the Christmas holidays, and is very happy to be home. However, Mr. Tulliver's bad mood dims the festivities for Tom. Mr. Tulliver is upset because Mr. Pivart, a neighboring farmer, adversely affects the mill's water power with his irrigation plans. He becomes more and more bitter towards Mr. Pivart and the lawyer Mr. Wakem, who he believes is behind everything. Tom finds out Wakem’s son will be joining him at Mr. Stelling’s, but Mr. Tulliver doesn’t mind since he likes the idea of Tom having the same advantages as his foe's son.

Chapter III - The New Schoolfellow

Tom returns to Mr. Stelling’s after the holiday, where he meets Philip Wakem. Due to an accident in infancy, Philip's spine is deformed, resulting in his hunchback. Philip is sensitive and intelligent. Tom feels awkward around the boy at first because of his appearance and Mr. Tulliver's hatred of his father, but he warms to the boy upon hearing tales of mythical and historical war figures. Each wants to make it clear that he is superior to the other in some ways - Philip in intellect and Tom in physical prowess.

Chapter IV - "The Young Idea"

Tom doesn’t quite get over his negative feelings towards Philip, but he does enjoy his company when Philip’s in a good mood - which is fairly inconsistent because of his irritable personality stemming from his sensitivity about his deformity. Tom also enjoys that Philip’s presence leads to Mr. Stelling not focusing on him quite so intensely, so his schooling becomes less unpleasant.

This term also includes physical education for Tom taught by Mr. Poulter, a former soldier. Tom convinces Mr. Poulter to bring his sword to King's Lorton. Tom's excitement drives him to interrupt Phillip's intense piano-playing in order to ask the boy to join him. In a rage, Phillip calls Tom stupid and Tom retorts that Mr. Wakem is a scoundrel. Tom goes back to Mr. Poulter, and bribes him to lend him his sword for a week.

Chapter V - Maggie's Second Visit

The enmity caused by this fight between Philip and Tom continues, and they barely speak to one another. Maggie comes for another visit, and is quickly impressed with Philip's cleverness. Tom brings Maggie up to his room where he surprises her with his loaned sword. In trying to show off his moves, he drops the point on his own foot and promptly faints.

Chapter VI - A Love-Scene

While the doctor is treating his injured foot, Tom is afraid to ask whether he will be permanently lame. As no one thinks to ask on his behalf and reassure him, Philip - knowing how difficult it would be for Tom to go through life deformed - brings him the news that he will soon be back to normal. This leads to reconciliation between the boys, and from then on Philip spends all his time outside of class with Maggie and Tom. As a result, Maggie and Philip become quite close and she promises to kiss him when she sees him again, though, he is disappointed that her affection stems from pity and not simply his intellect. Once Maggie leaves, Tom and Philip eventually cool to their original mixed feelings for one another.

Chapter VII - The Golden Gates Are Passed

Maggie and Lucy go to boarding school at Laceham on the Floss. Mr. Tulliver finally enters into the long-threatened lawsuit with Mr. Pivart, who is represented by Mr. Wakem, increasing Mr. Tulliver's animosity towards him and his son. Maggie thus regrets that she'll probably never be able to be close with Philip again.

Tom, now 16, enters his last quarter at Mr. Stelling's believing his father's lawsuit to be approaching its end - and assuming his father will win. Maggie, now 13, comes to King's Lorton unexpectedly to tell Tom that Mr. Tulliver has lost the lawsuit, and as a result will lose the mill and all his land. Even worse, it seems he has fallen off of his horse and been gravely injured, recognizing no one but Maggie since the accident.

Analysis

In the first book, Maggie and Tom have plenty of small childhood traumas, and the narrator insists that though they may seem silly to an adult, to a child they are truly tragic as they occur before both experiencing and overcoming deeper adult trauma. A child's pain is constantly fresh and seemingly unending. However while these traumas predict later troubles, none is so grave as to force them out of childhood. In this second book we see the loss of innocence that creates the divide between child and adult - a father's ruin and illness. This is the moment that creates this nostalgic figure looking back in rending it from experiencing the child's perspective firsthand.

Right before Maggie comes to tell Tom about their family's misfortune, the narrator describes the promises of childhood as "void as promises made in Eden before the seasons were divided...impossible to be fulfilled when the golden gates had been passed" (155). This simile yokes childhood to Eden and adulthood to life after the fall; innocence is lost through knowledge and its punishment.

When we next see Maggie, a mere page later, "her young face had a strangely worn look" (156) as she has already been aged by the hardship that has befallen them; she is no longer in Eden. With Tom, we witness the actual moment of the fall, when he is "awakened" from his "boyish dreams" "with a violent shock" (158). The final paragraph of Book II explicitly states the Tulliver children have lost their innocence: "the golden gates of their childhood had for ever closed behind them" (159), using the same language and thus reinforcing the connection as in the Edenic simile a few pages earlier. Though we know their childhood had its dark moments, here there is a vast divide between its "sunshine undimmed by remembered cares" and "their new life of sorrow" (159). Eliot makes clear that growing up, for the Tulliver children at least, is not a gradual process but a violent rending of childhood and adulthood.

This volume also emphasizes the positive side of calamity - the bringing together of people. The narrator calls this "the gift of sorrow - that susceptibility to the bare offices of humanity which raises them into a bond of loving fellowship". (159) This occurs when the generally unpleasant Mrs. Stelling offers a sympathetic gesture to the children in the wake of their father's illness. Even Philip and Tom's relationship is briefly mended when Tom gets injured. We will soon see that this reaction is not universal - the Dodsons leave much to be desired in their support of the Tullivers after their calamities - but it is really the defining bond of Maggie and Tom's relationship.

The two siblings are so different in temperament that they often have trouble understanding each other's motivations and behaviors, and frequently have trouble getting along. In a smaller pattern in these first two books of their childhood, we see a cycle of fighting leading to mutual support in the face of the trouble that that fighting causes. When true tragedy strikes, they are immediately yoked together, going "forth together into their new life of sorrow" (159). Throughout the final paragraph, they are only referred to as "they," reinforcing this union that makes them "indistinct" from each other.

This section also continues the disillusionment of Maggie in regards to her cleverness. Praised by her father for her wit and aptitude for learning, Maggie wholeheartedly believes that she is special and others will not fail to recognize her gifts. As in the episode in the gypsy camp, her excitement upon meeting Mr. Stelling falls short of expectations. Tom's barb that girls are unable to understand Latin and math is not refuted by his teacher; Mr. Stelling tells the Tulliver children that girls are capable of learning a little bit of every subject, but no more. Maggie is crushed that the same word her father used to praise her, quick, is used against her sex here. Maggie's opinion of herself butts up against society's perception.

Book III - The Downfall

Chapter I - What Had Happened at Home

Right after finding out he has lost the lawsuit, Mr. Tulliver turns his obstinacy towards planning to provide for himself and his family. He believes Mr. Furley, who owns the mortgage on the land, will be willing to buy the mill from Mr. Tulliver and keep him on as a tenant, and that his wife will be able to get a loan from the Pullets so that they won't have to give up their furniture. Still, he writes to Maggie to tell her to come home immediately, as he would find her presence comforting.

He goes the next morning to see his lawyer, Mr. Gore, to find out if Mr. Furley will buy the mill, but on his way he meets Mr. Gore's clerk, who has a letter from the lawyer for him. He reads it before continuing on his way, and learns that Mr. Furley, strapped for cash himself, had sold Mr. Tulliver's mortgage to Mr. Wakem. Half an hour later, Mr. Tulliver's wagoner finds him lying unconscious by the roadside. When Maggie arrives, he has regained consciousness but not his senses; he only asks for the letter and "the little wench", and doesn't seem to recognize his wife or the doctor. Maggie's presence comforts him, but his condition does not improve.

Though the aunts and uncles oppose it, both Mrs. Tulliver and Maggie decide they need Tom at home, so Maggie offers to retrieve him from school. On their way back to the mill, Maggie tells Tom about the letter which was believed to have caused Mr. Tulliver's illness, and Tom tells Maggie that she must never speak to Philip again.

Chapter II - Mrs. Tulliver's Teraphim, or Household Gods

When Maggie and Tom arrive at the mill, a stranger is sitting in their father's chair. Maggie doesn't understand who he is, but Tom figures out that he is the bailiff who has come since they lost the mill. He finds his mother, who explains that all of their furniture and goods are going to be sold. Maggie's incredulous at her mother's behavior; she doesn't understand why Mrs. Tulliver is concerning herself with her possessions rather than her husband. Tom tells his mother that he will find a way to help.

Chapter III - The Family Council

The aunts and uncles, except Mr. Deane, come to Dorlcote Mill to confer. Pullet and Deane offer to buy some of the Tullivers' things when they come up at auction, but only those that they actually want. Glegg thinks Mrs. Tulliver should stop worrying about her things, and think instead of the disgrace her husband has brought to the family.

Mrs. Glegg insists Maggie and Tom join the discussion, in order to be properly humbled. Tom - in a surprisingly mature tone - suggests that the aunts, rather than leaving money to Tom and Maggie in their will, advance it to them now so they can keep their furniture and the mill. Mrs. Glegg is quite offended by this, as she doesn't think she, who has saved her money, should have to pay for those who failed to be as smart with their own. Mr. Glegg, more kindly, explains that with the massive legal debts, it's more important for the aunts and uncles to use their money to make sure the family is fed, rather than keeping their furniture.

Maggie, sick of hearing her father being insulted and blamed, says that the aunts should stay away from them if all they're going to do is berate her father and not even help their own sister. The aunts, of course, take this as confirmation that Maggie, as they always expected, will come to no good.

Mrs. Moss, having heard of Mr. Tulliver's troubles, arrives, and feels quite guilty that she can't afford to pay back the money Mr. Tulliver lent her family. Mr. Glegg points out that if Mr. Tulliver is made bankrupt, the creditors will force Mr. Moss to pay back the money anyway. Tom reports that Mr. Tulliver never wanted her to have to pay it back if it would have been a hardship, so Mr. Glegg recommends they destroy the note.

Chapter IV - A Vanishing Gleam

Mr. Glegg, Tom, Maggie, and Mrs. Moss go to Mr. Tulliver's room to look for the note. The familiar sound of the lid of the chest crashing wakes Tulliver from his stupor, and he is for the first time himself again. He tells Tom he'll have to take care of Maggie and his mother, and agrees that they should destroy Mr. Moss's note. He says that everything that has happened is the law and Wakem's fault, and as he gets agitated again, he falls back into his stupor.

Chapter V - Tom Applies His Knife to the Oyster

The next day Tom goes to St. Ogg's to ask his uncle Deane's advice about getting some kind of job. He believes that like his uncles Deane and Glegg, he should be able to make himself rich through labor. But Mr. Deane is rather discouraging, telling him it will take a long time and lots of work, and his education probably won't help him at all as he has learned no proper skill. Deane suggests Tom find a job on the wharf, but he is fearful of vouching for his nephew as he has yet to prove himself valuable. When he gets home, Maggie tries to comfort him, but he gets mad at her for always acting superior.

Chapter VI -Tending to Refute the Popular Prejudice against the Present of a Pocket-Knife

The sale of the household goods is finally over, and a familiar-looking young man comes to see Tom. He turns out to be Bob Jakin, now 19. He has recently come into some money for preventing a fire at his job and he offers it all to Tom, who he has always remembered fondly for giving him his pocketknife. Tom and Maggie won't accept it, but thank him wholeheartedly.

Chapter VII - How a Hen Takes to Stratagem

Mr. Tulliver seems to slowly be improving, while the sale of the mill is also moving forward. Mr. Deane finds Tom a temporary position in the warehouse and sets him up with lessons in bookkeeping. Mrs. Tulliver secretly plots to go to Mr. Wakem and reason with him in order to keep him from bidding on the mill so that Mr. Deane's company can get it at a reasonable price and keep Mr. Tulliver on as manager.

Telling Tom she is going to sell some pickles, Mrs. Tulliver goes to Mr. Wakem's office instead. She pleads with him not to buy the mill. Before their meeting, Mr. Wakem had no intention of buying Dorlcote, but Mrs. Tulliver's pleading convinces him that not only would it be a great investment, it would also be the perfect humiliation to inflict on Mr. Tulliver.

Chapter VIII - Daylight on the Wreck

Mr. Wakem does indeed buy the mill, and tells all the aunts and uncles that he would be glad to have Mr. Tulliver as his manager once he is well. Mr. Tulliver, still ignorant of this, decides he is ready to leave his bedroom for the first time since his illness, but his family can't get him to understand that several weeks have gone by.

He goes downstairs and sees the absence of furniture, and the children explain everything to him - except they keep from him that it is Wakem who has bought the mill for fear of upsetting him further. Mrs. Tulliver comes in and tells him this last piece of information, pleading with him to take the job of manager, and he is beyond putting up a fight.

Chapter IX - An Item Added to the Family Register

Although Mr. Tulliver abhors the idea of working for Mr. Wakem, he loves the mill and doesn't want to leave it. He also knows that if he did, he would have no way to survive without getting help from his wife's sisters, which he can't stomach. So he agrees to work for Mr. Wakem, although he vows that he will never forgive him for what he's done, and he gets Tom to vow the same by writing as such in the family Bible.

Analysis

In the third book, we see the world after Tom and Maggie's loss of innocence. Though they are united by tragedy at the beginning of their father's illness, cracks in this union begin to form almost instantly as we see their childhood tendencies firming into adult characteristics. Tom's "natural inclination to blame" is solidified by "the natural strength and firmness of his nature...beginning to assert itself" (168-9). This leads to him implicitly blaming Mr. Tulliver for the family's current situation, which Maggie cannot stand: "Maggie hated blame: she had been blamed all her life" (169), and often by Tom.

This crack in their unity is brief, for right after their father's sad presence leads them to forget "everything else in the sense that they had one father and one sorrow" (169). Once again it is a moment of stark painful emotion that unifies them, but in the scene immediately preceding it we have seen how their differences are only becoming more pronounced in their adult characters, and so will cause more major divisions down the line.

The world after the fall is a bleak one, and not just because of Maggie and Tom's inability to get along for any period of time. Mr. Tulliver, though stubborn, prideful, and sometimes ignorant, is essentially a good man, and yet misfortune after misfortune fall upon him as he loses his home, his livelihood, his furniture, his sanity, and his pride. If to some extent his own behavior and litigiousness has led to this outcome, the consequences are most certainly not in proportion to his mistakes, and so the world seems a very bleak place indeed.

The situation should not be the direst, for his wife's relatives have plenty of money and are in a position to help the family; and yet, they do so only in the most minimal ways, buying at auction their sister's household goods that they wanted anyway, and doing nothing to protect the things she cares most about. Their failure of generosity does not mean they stay out of it,

however; they are perfectly happy to heap blame on Mr. Tulliver and revel in their moral superiority, as they believe is evidenced by their material wealth. They care about the Tulliver's fall, certainly, but only in so much as it reflects on their family.

Maggie and Tom are on opposite sides concerning their relatives' plans for the Tullivers. While Maggie aims an outburst of vitriol at her aunts and uncles for showing up only to berate her father, Tom silently understands why money is not handed out: "Why should people give away their money plentifully to those who had not taken care of their own money? Tom saw some justice in severity; and all the more, because he had confidence in himself that he should never deserve that just severity." (200) Thus begins Tom's journey to seek a fortune for himself - though it does not run smoothly.

The Dodson clan's behavior contrasts sharply with that of Mr. Tulliver, who lends to his sister's family even to his own ruin. It contrasts even more dramatically with Bob Jakin's behavior when he offers Tom almost everything he has, just because of a remembered childhood kindness; certainly, he has no familial obligation to the Tullivers. There are these moments of kindness and light in this bleaker adult world that Maggie and Tom have been thrown into, but the lack of generosity of money or of spirit from their own family in the third book makes it clear how important money was to those of a certain class in this society, and how little true generosity was valued. Indeed, Maggie is admonished for her opinion that those with the means should offer help to those in need, no matter what is deemed socially-acceptable.

Book IV - The Valley of Humiliation

Chapter I - A Variation of Protestantism Unknown to Bossuet

The narrator takes a break from the story's action to present an interlude describing the contrast between the ruins of villages on the Rhone and of castles on the Rhine, and how the former feels small and oppressive in the way that the traditions of the older generation of Dodsons and Tullivers were oppressive to Maggie and Tom. The Dodsons were religious out of habit and tradition only and they strove to be honest and rich. Their kin were not to be left out of wills, but reproached severely if they were not a credit to the family. Tom Tulliver's spirituality was adrift, lost in the pursuit of common sense.

Chapter II - The Torn Nest Is Pierced by the Thorns

Mr. Tulliver is recovered enough to attend to business, so he acts as Mr. Wakem's manager, but is constantly depressed and focused only on saving enough of his wages to pay back the creditors that he still owes. Tom and Mrs. Tulliver both agree this is the honorable thing to do, so everyone does their best to help economize. Tom continues at his job and training in bookkeeping, saying very little in the short periods he is at home. Maggie's internal struggle continues as her passions and sense of self contrast greatly with the facts of her situation. She seeks an understanding of her suffering. Her mother tries to spare her hard work, though she is becoming more frail each day. The aunts and uncles visit only rarely, as their social ties are becoming strained in misfortune.

Chapter III - A Voice from the Past

Bob Jakin comes to give Maggie some books he bought for her because he remembered how upset she was when her family's books were sold. Maggie, who has been very unhappy, is grateful. One of these books is *Thomas a Kempis: Imitation of Christ*, which causes her to have a spiritual awakening. She believes that a renunciation of her personal desires is the answer to finding the peace and happiness that has eluded her. She takes up sewing in order to contribute to the family's fund; Tom disapproves. Maggie reads to her father, but her new-found faith is of no comfort to him. He dwells on how his situation will adversely affect Maggie's prospects and maintains his vow of revenge against Wakem.

Analysis

A note on the title of Book IV: "Bousset" refers to Jacques-Benigne Bousset, a 17th century French bishop and theologian. He was a preacher in Louis XIV's court.

The fourth book of *The Mill on the Floss* is the shortest and least important to the plot, but it is very significant thematically. The first chapter of Book IV is the true center of the novel, with 29 chapters on either side of it, and this combined with its irrelevance to the plot of the story marks it as important thematically. Indeed, the narrator even says directly that "it is necessary that we should feel" the "sense of oppressive narrowness" that she highlights in the example of the Rhone ruins to understand the story of Maggie and Tom. The major importance of this chapter is that it ties two of the novel's major themes together - that of progress versus tradition, and that of the communal versus the individual.

We have already seen examples of Maggie's being torn between her individual desires and the needs of the community. She is intelligent and creative but her society does not reward her for these virtues, nor does it give her a place to use them, and this leads to her strive for "affection" because her intelligence is "unsatisfied" (148). But this affection needs to come from somewhere, so she has to find a way to please the community which is so ill-suited to her.

This dilemma, the narrator tells us in this chapter, is what drives human progress--"the onward tendency of human things" who "have risen above the mental level of the generation before them" (222). The stifling nature of the older generation's obsession with "whatever was customary and respectable" (223) drives Maggie to strive for something greater, but she is still "tied by the strongest fibres of" her heart to her family, and this is the source of all the conflict within her nature.

The narrator also makes it clear that, though this is but one family's story, seemingly insignificant in the scheme of human history, "we need not shrink from this comparison of small things with great" (223). These are the tragedies that are "of that unwept, hidden sort, that goes on from generation to generation, and leaves no record" (163), for they are the tragedies of "millers, and other insignificant people" (162), but in writing this very story, and in making the reader care deeply about the characters suffering these indignities small and great, the narrator has proven to us that such tragedies do merit telling, and it becomes all the more powerful when she emphasizes that this is but one example of what happens "in every town, and by hundreds of obscure hearths" (223).

In the rest of this chapter, we see Maggie's attempts to reconcile this interior struggle and achieve happiness through renunciation of all desire. Eliot makes it clear this will not be the answer - the narrator tells us directly that "renunciation seemed to her the entrance into that satisfaction which she had so long been craving in vain" but "she had not perceived...that renunciation remains sorrow, though a sorrow borne willingly" (237). And, indeed, her renunciation is not true renunciation, for "she threw some exaggeration and willfulness, some pride and impetuosity" into it, losing "the spirit of humility by being excessive in the outward act" (239). Both the fact that Maggie is forced into such an extreme set of behaviors, and the fact that we can tell clearly that she is doomed to fail to find peace from them, emphasizes the great strains that her society has put on her, and how deeply her intelligence has doomed her.

Maggie's (albeit fleeting) faith, which is centered around true inspiration, thirst for knowledge and desire to understand her predicament, is contrasted with the spirituality of the Dodsons and the Tullivers. In St. Ogg's, religion is practiced out of respect for tradition rather than faith or belief. The Dodsons especially follow the basic rites - baptism and last rites - because it is expected of them; last rites are equally as important as the proper ham for the funeral. The reading of the will should also bear no surprises - either in reporting the deceased's financial worth or in the inheritences doled out to family members. As seen in their treatment of Mr. Tulliver, the Dodson way of caring for kin is severely admonishing their faults while making sure to leave them what is traditionally owed. Like their faith, the Dodson familial spirit is a hollow gesture. The Tullivers, on the other hand, respect the church but put their faith in common sense. Over the years, Tom's faith has dissipated and even Maggie's fervent beliefs are of no comfort to him. Even in her beliefs, Maggie does not follow the accepted traditions.

Book V - Wheat and Tares

Chapter I - In the Red Deeps

Mr. Wakem comes on one of his usual visits, but this time he brings Philip with him. Maggie (now 17), seeing them approach, hurries upstairs so that she won't have to meet Philip in front of their fathers. Once she thinks they have left, she goes outside to walk and ends up coming upon Philip, who was waiting for her.

Maggie is pleased to see Philip, but tells him that though she wishes it wasn't necessary, she will have to renounce his friendship because of their families. Philip protests that it wouldn't harm anyone for them to see each other every once in a while in secret, and that it would do him great good. Maggie tells him she must think about it so that she doesn't make the wrong decision.

Chapter II - Aunt Glegg Learns the Breadth of Bob's Thumb

Tom's determination at his job does not go unnoticed by Mr. Deane, who is very pleased with his progress. By his second year he has already gotten a raise, but he still puts all but what he needs for necessities into paying back his father's debts. Against his personality, he sacrifices all social activities and pleasure, for he fears that would lead to extra expenses. The aunts and uncles are all impressed with the growing evidence that Tom is more like a Dodson than a Tulliver.

Bob Jakin tells Tom he could speculate in some trading with his savings, so Tom asks Mr. Tulliver if they might try to multiply some of what they have put away - only 116 pounds after two years of saving all they could. Mr. Tulliver is reluctant, having been unlucky speculating in the past, and Tom, seeing how unhappy the idea makes him, decides to ask Mr. Glegg to invest in the prospect and let Tom keep some of the gains until he has enough to invest himself.

Tom brings Bob to explain the idea, and Mr. Glegg is pleased with both Bob and the plan. Mrs. Glegg, offended at being left out, says she'd like to participate too, provided she can trust she won't lose her money. Bob manages to talk her into buying some of his wares as well. Together the Gleggs lend Tom fifty pounds, which he successfully invests, and by the time of Maggie's first meeting with Philip, he has already amassed 150 pounds for himself.

Chapter III - The Wavering Balance

Maggie meets Philip again with the intention of telling him that she has decided they must give each other up as friends. She does so, and he asks only for one last conversation. Tom offers to be Maggie's tutor, to supply her with the books and knowledge she craved before renunciation. Maggie can't say yes. Before they part, he asks if he is forbidden to ever walk in that area where they might meet by chance, without it being secretive. She does not forbid it.

Chapter IV - Another Love-Scene

Almost a year later, Maggie goes to meet Philip in the woods, and it is clear they have been meeting regularly. Philip declares his love for Maggie, who says she can't imagine loving anyone else more than she loves him. However, she also insists that they can't have a future because she would never risk hurting her father, and his father would also disapprove.

Chapter V - The Cloven Tree

Mrs. Pullet stops by Dorlcote Mill to visit the Tullivers. She casually mentions having seen Philip about in the woods, and Maggie blushes aggressively in response, which Tom notices. Combined with the knowledge that Maggie had been often out in the woods, he becomes convinced that she is having secret meetings with Philip.

The next day he confronts Maggie about it, and she doesn't deny it. He makes her tell him all the details, and then says she must vow to never have any contact with him again, or Tom will tell their father everything, breaking his heart and very likely causing him to lose his mind again. Maggie agrees to vow only that she will never contact Philip without Tom's knowledge.

Tom takes Maggie to the woods where he confronts Philip, accusing him of taking advantage of Maggie's ignorance and loneliness caused by their circumstances. Tom also says many cruel things about his deformity. Philip cares only for what Maggie has to say, and she explains that she has agreed to only contact him with Tom's knowledge in order to protect her father, which he accepts.

Philip leaves, and Maggie berates Tom for being so cruel to him, especially about his deformity, and tells him that he is always reproaching others because he has not enough imagination to realize that there are better aims and ways of living than his own. They fight and separate, and

Maggie is distressed primarily by how cruel Tom's insults to Philip were, but she is also a slight bit relieved that she will be forced to be apart from him.

Chapter VI - The Hard-Won Triumph

Three weeks later, Tom comes home to the mill in a particularly good mood and tells his father that he has 320 pounds in the bank, which, combined with what Mr. Tulliver has put aside, is enough to pay back all of their debts. The family is thrilled, and Mr. Tulliver tells Tom he hopes he will buy back the mill one day, when he has made his fortune. Maggie puts aside her anger with Tom and celebrates.

Chapter VII - A Day of Reckoning

The next day, Tom and Mr. Tulliver have a lunch with all of the creditors to repay them. Everyone is very impressed with Tom. On his way home, Mr. Tulliver sits high in his saddle for the first time in years. He comes upon Mr. Wakem just leaving the mill and tells him that he will no longer work for him. Mr. Wakem tries to ride by him, but Mr. Tulliver spurs his horse towards him, and Mr. Wakem's horse throws him off. Before Mr. Wakem can get up, Mr. Tulliver jumps off his horse and attacks him.

Maggie and Mrs. Tulliver run over from the house, and Maggie holds Mr. Tulliver back. Luke helps Mr. Wakem home, and Maggie and Mrs. Tulliver help Mr. Tulliver, who suddenly feels very faint, back to the house. Early the next morning, Mr. Tulliver calls for his children. He tells them he is dying, and asks Tom to try to get the mill back, and to take care of his mother and be good to Maggie, and to never forget the harm that Mr. Wakem did to them - despite Maggie's insistence that he forgive Mr. Wakem.

Analysis

Maggie's suppressed desire is a major feature in the fifth book. She has borne her renunciation easily by taking pleasure in it itself, but once Philip makes a new appearance in her life and reminds her of all she has given up - art, music, literature, good conversation - the true struggle begins. It is intense enough that the narrator says this interior struggle is actually outwardly visible: "one has a sense of uneasiness in looking at her - a sense of opposing elements, of which a fierce collision is imminent" (243). Though she is slow to admit how strong her desires still are, we hear them voiced through Philip, who sees the inevitable failure of her choice of pure renunciation when she is one who desires so fiercely.

Tom stands in stark contrast. He, too, renounces much; though he has "a very strong appetite for pleasure" (252) Tom gives does not indulge in any social interaction in order to focus solely on paying back his father's debts. The difference, though, lies in the lack of struggle for him, for Tom - unlike Maggie - is "a character at unity with itself". (252) Tom's actions are motivated by his own moral compass but also the concrete aim of revenge against Wakem while Maggie's renunciation and friendship with Philip are enacted for more abstract notions - happiness of others. Although this is largely a result of their different characters, gender also plays a major role. For "Maggie's life struggles had lain almost entirely within her own soul" while Tom grapples "with more substantial obstacles...gaining more definite conquests" (251), an option

not available to Maggie because of the restricted options available to women. Maggie has nothing concrete to struggle for, and so the battle remains within her, where it can never be won.

Both she and the narrator make it explicit that this is a gendered issue. The narrator tells us that this distinction "has been since the days of Hecuba...inside the gates, the women...watching the world's combat from afar, filling their long, empty days with memories and fears: outside, the men, in fierce struggle with things divine and human...losing the sense of dread and even of wounds in the hurrying ardour of action." And when Tom criticizes Maggie's behavior, she makes it clear that his sacrifice is different than hers: "'Because you are a man, Tom, and have power, and can do something in the world'" (282). Tom is able to have unity of action and desire because the community provides a clear path for him to follow.

Maggie's internal struggle in this section is particularly interesting because it makes explicit that it is not so simply a case of selfish desire conflicting with what is best for the community. She is dismayed by her father and her brother's intense hatred of Philip because of his father's actions, and she believes that though it would be wrong to hurt her family, their hatred is in itself wrong. This complicates the issue, especially as Maggie feels that her affection would do Philip (and, ultimately, herself) much good, but she is also smart enough to know that "if we only look far enough off for the consequence of our actions, we can always find some point in the combination of results by which those actions can be justified" (268), and she doesn't want to be guilty of excusing behavior that is in fact wrong.

This serves as a microcosm for the setting of Maggie's general internal conflict, for while it is not so clear to the narrator and the reader - both reflecting on an earlier time than the characters inhabit - it is clear that the limitations placed on women in Maggie's day were not right. Thus in struggling to act in a way appreciated by the community, and in feeling the strong pull of tradition against progress, Maggie is smothering her own individuality so that she can fit into what was seen as a woman's role. Though Maggie believes she is striving to subvert the selfish for the greater good, this comes at the steep price of her own interests and desires.

Book VI - The Great Temptation

Chapter I - A Duet in Paradise

Two years later, Mrs. Deane has died and Mrs. Tulliver - who had come to take care of her sister in her illness - is now living at the Deanes'. Lucy tells Stephen Guest that her cousin Maggie is leaving the school where she has been teaching since Mr. Tulliver's death and coming to stay at Lucy's. Stephen isn't pleased, thinking this means he won't get any time alone with Lucy any more. They are in the stage of courtship where each is certain of the other's regard, although no declarations have yet been made.

Chapter II - First Impressions

Lucy tells Maggie about her feelings for Stephen. She asks if Maggie feels as negatively toward Philip as Tom does because he is Stephen's good friend and Lucy wants to invite him to sing

with them. Maggie tells her that she always liked Philip, but before she has a chance to explain that even so, she can't see him, Stephen arrives, interrupting them.

Stephen and Maggie are immediately struck by each other. Lucy, worried only that they wouldn't get along and relieved to see that they do, doesn't suspect anything. After talking for a while, Stephen takes the cousins on a boat ride. He reflects that he finds Maggie's character quirks quite interesting even though he usually doesn't like anything eccentric in a woman.

The Pullets visit the Deane house and lament Maggie's lack of proper evening wear. Mrs. Pullet promises to give the girl some of her old dresses.

Chapter III - Confidential Moments

Lucy comes to Maggie's bedroom as she gets ready for bed and asks her what she thought of Stephen. The subject of Philip comes up and Maggie, swearing Lucy to secrecy, tells her what had happened between them - and that Tom will still forbid any contact. Lucy determines that she will find a way for Maggie and Philip to marry.

Chapter IV - Brother and Sister

Maggie goes to see Tom, who is lodging at Bob Jakin's house. While waiting for Tom to arrive home, Bob tells Maggie that he's worried about Tom, who seems always melancholy and hardly ever socializes. He mentions a puppy that Tom made a lot of fuss to get, and Maggie knows he means Lucy's puppy, and so realizes Tom may be in love with Lucy.

Tom arrives, and Maggie tells him that she wants his permission to see Philip, as Lucy wishes. Tom tells her that if she decides to marry Philip, she'll have to give Tom up forever, but that he will allow her to see Philip in company at Lucy's, even though he doesn't have any faith in her.

Chapter V - Showing that Tom Had Opened the Oyster

Mr. Deane tells Tom that he has done a very good job, and, as the world moves faster now than when he was coming up in it, he and Mr. Guest want to offer Tom a share in the business. Tom is grateful, but he has his heart on returning to Dorlcote Mill. He brings up the idea that the firm might again consider buying his father's mill; since the new caretaker is currently mismanaging the mill, Tom figures Mr. Wakem might be willing to part with it. Mr. Deane says he'll bring it up with Mr. Guest, the head of the business, and they'll look into it.

Chapter VI - Illustrating the Laws of Attraction

Maggie is incorporated into Lucy's social life, and so for the first time experiences a young lady's life. Her beauty is very much admired by the people of St. Ogg's, and her deficiencies in social customs and lack of coquetry mean that the other young women aren't threatened by her, so she is welcomed.

Stephen comes to see Lucy more and more, and although his attentiveness towards her seems to be growing, he and Maggie are more and more entranced by each other, although they hide it well. One evening, when Stephen knows Lucy to have a dinner engagement, he comes by under the guise of leaving music for his sweetheart. But he and Maggie are both overcome by

being alone together, and after he leaves Stephen tells himself he must not trust himself to be alone with her again.

Chapter VII - Philip Re-enters

Philip, having returned from a trip, comes to see Lucy and Maggie for the first time. Maggie tells him that she has spoken to Tom, and he has released her from her vow to relinquish contact with Philip. They speak for a little in private before Stephen arrives and Lucy rejoins them.

Maggie and Stephen are at first stiff with each other, and then very kind, and though Lucy thinks nothing of it, Philip quickly grows suspicious.

Before dinner, Mr. Deane asks Philip a few questions about how his father is enjoying running his farms. Lucy finds this odd, so questions her father about it when they are alone. He explains that they want to try to get the mill back from Wakem and to restore Tom in his father's place. Lucy convinces her father to let her tell Philip, because she thinks he will help them make it happen.

Chapter VIII - Wakem in a New Light

Lucy quickly finds a time to tell Philip, and he develops a plan. He admits to his father that he has always loved Maggie, who tells him he can marry her if he likes, but it will be the end of their relationship. Philip says this is impossible since he has been raised to no profession would be thrust into poverty. Mr. Wakem storms out in anger, but returns later in the evening and agrees to give them his blessing. Philip brings up the question of the mill, and Mr. Wakem agrees to that as well, so long as he doesn't have to have any direct dealings with Tom.

Chapter IX - Charity in Full-Dress

At the church bazaar, Mr. Wakem approaches Maggie's stand and is quite pleasant to her. Stephen witnesses this, and soon after notices that Philip has perched himself across the room where he has a clear view of Maggie, leading him to believe that there is some sort of history between Maggie and Philip. From his seat, Philip has also seen the exchange between Stephen and Maggie, and is quite convinces that there is something between them.

Though Lucy told Maggie that Mr. Wakem would support her marrying Philip and would sell the mill to Guest & Co., Maggie announces that she has accepted a new governess position which begins soon. She explains that she can't give up Tom to marry Philip, and she fears Tom won't change his mind about that for a very long time - if ever.

Chapter X - The Spell Seems Broken

Maggie and Lucy go to a dance at the Guests' home, Park House. Stephen is proud of himself for paying no attention to Maggie, until she starts dancing, and then he cannot stop himself from approaching her and asking her to walk with him in the conservatory. They share a look in which both reveal their feelings, but when Stephen can't stop himself from kissing her arm, Maggie runs off, furious.

The next morning, while Maggie is waiting for her mother so they can go to visit Mrs. Moss, Philip visits. He asks her if there is a chance they will ever be like they were in the past, and she says that she cannot break her ties to Tom, but that is the only thing holding her back. Philip is largely relieved, although he still has some suspicions.

Chapter XI - In the Lane

Maggie has been at her aunt Moss's four days when Stephen suddenly shows up, saying he has a private message for her. When they are alone, he declares his love for her and apologizes for his conduct, but tells her he is being tortured enough by his own feelings and she has to forgive him. She does, and he says that they should marry, that that is the only way either of them will ever be happy, and that it would be cruel for them to marry Lucy and Philip, feeling the way they do.

She tells him that she loves him, too, but that if she married him, she would forever by haunted by the suffering they had caused, and so because they love each other, he must help her to resist him. He acquiesces, but asks for one kiss before they part, which she gives him.

Chapter XII - A Family Party

After her visit with Mrs. Moss, Maggie goes next to stay with Mrs. Pullet. In the brief interlude preceding this, Mr. Wakem's manager of Dorlcote Mill had been drunkenly thrown from his horse and was gravely injured, such that Mr. Wakem turned the property over to Guest & Co. even sooner than expected, and Tom becomes the manager.

Everyone gathers at the Pullets' farm to celebrate the news, and Lucy encourages Mrs. Pullet to donate some linens to Tom's new home at the mill. When it's time to leave, she insists on sitting with Tom so she can talk to him about Maggie and Philip. She explains how Philip convinced his father to sell the mill, expecting that to convince him to forgive Philip, but instead he is resolute, insisting that Maggie can do as she pleases but he will never have any relationship with the Wakems.

Chapter XIII - Borne Along by the Tide

Maggie returns to Lucy's less than a week later. Maggie manages to avoid Lucy in the mornings by going on promised visits to Aunt Glegg and helping Mrs. Tulliver prepare to move to the mill, but in the evenings Lucy insists she spend time with her. Stephen resolves to go on a trip until Maggie leaves, but he can't hold himself to it, instead going to Lucy's as often as possible to see Maggie as much as he can in what little time they have left.

Lucy notices that Maggie is particularly melancholy, but she assumes it is because Tom won't let her marry Philip, and so still suspects nothing. In reality, Maggie is much quieter than usual because she is fighting an inner battle between her desire to marry Stephen - whom she loves - and live in happiness and comfort, and her desire to do the right thing and not hurt Lucy and Philip, who are both very important to her.

Philip pays a visit, and Lucy entreats him to come the next morning to row her and Maggie on the river. Philip is not completely satisfied by Maggie's word that she would marry him if not for

her brother, watches Stephen and Maggie closely, and becomes almost convinced that there is some kind of mutual regard and understanding between the two of them.

He is so upset by this belief that the next morning he sends Stephen a note saying he is too ill to row the ladies, so asks Stephen to go in his stead. Lucy had contrived to get herself and the rest of the household out of the way so that Maggie and Philip could be alone in the boat, so when Stephen arrives, Maggie is the only one home.

They go out in the boat, each in a daze, until Stephen stops rowing and Maggie realizes they have passed their expected stopping place. Stephen proposes that they elope. Maggie at first is furious, but seeing how hurt Stephen is by her refusal, she yields. They ask to be taken aboard a larger vessel heading to Mudport, pretending to be a married couple. Maggie goes into a trance-like state of acquiescence, enjoying Stephen's nearness and care for her, and not struggling with her conflicting desires for happiness and to do what's right.

Chapter XIV - Waking

Maggie wakes on the boat from intense dreaming, and realizes she has done an irrevocable wrong to those dearest to her. Though she despairs to cause Stephen pain, she realizes she must leave him, because though she has already caused pain to those she loves, she doesn't feel she deserves to get the joy out of that pain that marrying him would give her.

Stephen wakes, and though she doesn't say anything about it, he worries from the look in her eyes that she has changed her mind. When they finally near Mudport, she tells him that this is indeed the case - they must part. Stephen tries and tries to convince her, but she is resolved that she would be unable to marry him and live with herself. She must choose unhappiness rather than continue to hurt those to whom she is bound. She leaves.

Analysis

In the sixth book, Maggie's inner struggle between doing what's right for the community and satisfying her own desires comes to a head. Though she had earlier chosen to see Philip against her family's wishes, she believed that those wishes were based on a hatred that was wrong and unfair, and she believed that no one would ever find out, and so would not be hurt by her choices. Plus, Maggie believed, because of his urging, that Philip's happiness depended on their meeting. In this book, however, her (short-lived) decision to elope with Stephen clearly lacks justification - she knows Lucy and Philip will be deeply hurt, and she knows that neither Philip's expectations of her nor Lucy's of Stephen are predicated upon nothing wrong or unfair. Thus here she truly, if only very briefly, chooses her own desires over the community's.

Even before she meets Stephen, Maggie has started to find self-renunciation deeply trying - "she had slipped back into desire and longing: she found joyless days of distasteful occupation harder and harder" (302-3). And as Philip had predicted in their earlier meetings, the unnaturalness of renunciation for her character only makes her desires stronger once she allows them to blossom.

Eliot sets up the relationship between Stephen and Maggie such that she really does have two viable options, and she is forced to make a choice based on her competing desires to remain

deeply connected to her past and tradition, and to follow her desire forward. Stephen is not officially engaged to Lucy, nor is Maggie to Philip, though both have made certain implicit and explicit promises. This means that, though both characters would be deeply hurt if Stephen and Maggie chose to marry, their relationship would be in violation only of personal feelings; ultimately, societal distaste would not be devastating and would ebb in time, and there is no legal barrier. Thus, Maggie has a choice to make.

Choices, in *The Mill on the Floss*, aren't easy. They are an important part of the world the new generation is growing into, and they will lead to progress and the rise of the importance of the individual, but they come with heavy responsibility. Tom is always decisive, making choices quickly according to his narrow set of principals, and never looking back. This is clearly effective for him, as he fulfills all of his father's dreams for him, and manages to get back to their home, even if at the cost of his personal happiness.

Maggie, on the other hand, is chronically indecisive. She often makes her decisions in moments of high passion - as when she cuts her own hair, for example - and then almost immediately after regrets the choice that she made. The biggest choice of her life - deciding to stay in the boat with Stephen - she seems to make in a trance, and again, is met with immediate regret. Once again, though, the damage has already been done. She does not want to elope because of the hurt it will cause Philip and Lucy, but that hurt has already happened by her not reappearing with Stephen when she should have. In choosing to go back to St Ogg's, in spite of the ruin it will cause her and the happiness she is giving up for it, she shows that she finds the burden of decision-making to be too great. High-spirited and intelligent though she is, she would rather go back and disappear into the communal and traditional, rather than remain an individual.

Book VII - The Final Rescue

Chapter I - The Return to the Mill

Five days after Stephen and Maggie first disappear, Tom is back at Dorlcote Mill. Thanks to the news that Bob Jakin saw Maggie and Stephen get off a boat together, he knows there has been no accident. He sees Maggie approaching, and can tell immediately that she is not married, confirming his worst fears.

Maggie tells him that she has come to him for refuge, and to confess everything, but he tells her that she will never have a home with him for she has disgraced their family and deceived and deeply hurt those who cared about her most. He tells her he will support her if she needs it, but she can never enter his home. Mrs. Tulliver, overhearing this, tells Maggie that she will go with her. Not daring to seek shelter with any of the aunts, they go to Bob Jakin's. Bob happily takes them in, and tells Maggie that he and his wife named their baby after her.

Chapter II - St. Ogg's Passes Judgment

Because Maggie returns to St. Ogg's unmarried, everyone assumes Stephen chose not to marry her, and that she is fallen, so she is condemned by the town. Despite a letter Stephen writes to his father in which he assumes all of the blame, disapproving gossip spreads through the parish.

Stephen traveled on to Holland from York and thus stays away from Lucy for the time being. Maggie lives in a state of constant guilt and despair, not expecting to ever feel happiness again, hoping only to never give into another such temptation.

Maggie goes to see Dr. Kenn, and tells him everything. He says that he admires her instinct to come back to her roots and that it is a very Christian ideal, but that in this case, he fears that the town has condemned her beyond the actual evils of her case, and she might be much happier at a distance. Maggie says she can't bear to cut herself off, and she thinks her best chance of showing Lucy how sorry she is is to stay in St. Ogg's. Dr. Kenn promises to help her any way he can.

Chapter III - Showing That Old Acquaintances Are Capable of Surprising Us

Mrs. Glegg, when Maggie first disappears, is sure she is dead, for she cannot believe the alternative, and she scorns Tom for doing so so easily. When Maggie returns unscathed, she doesn't emerge from her bedroom until she hears of the arrival of Stephen's letter, which she feels gives her enough ground to defend Maggie to anyone who insults her. She tries to talk to Tom about it, but even in the face of Stephen's letter largely absolving Maggie, he is irresolute and only believes the worst in his sister because of her history of indulging whims.

Mrs. Tulliver goes to see Mrs. Glegg, who tells her that Maggie is always welcome under her roof and she will defend her from those who speak ill against her. Maggie is very grateful to hear this, but still firmly wants to be independent, and doesn't feel prepared to see anyone besides her mother and Dr. Kenn just yet.

Mrs. Tulliver has also been to see Lucy, who has heard Stephen's letter, and seems to be regaining her health. Maggie is desperate to hear news of Philip, but Dr. Kenn hasn't heard anything verifiable about him and her mother can't find out anything. Finally, she gets a letter from him in which he tells her that he saw what was happening between her and Stephen and he knows that she tried to resist it for Philip's sake as much as she could. Ultimately,he admires her and is better for the chance to have loved her, and does not want her to feel any pain for his sake. Indeed, he will always love her.

Chapter IV - Maggie and Lucy

Dr. Kenn tries to find employment for Maggie, but all the women of St. Ogg's are still set against her. Finally it becomes clear that the only option is for him to hire her himself as governess to his children, which she gratefully accepts. This leads the townspeople to speculate on the relationship between the two of them. Stephen's sisters, having been dismayed by Stephen's attachment to Maggie, report these rumors to him by mail.

Maggie wants desperately to see Lucy, but knows that she can't go to her house, and Lucy isn't well enough to be seen by chance anywhere in the town. Lucy sneaks out one night, however, to come and see Lucy, and they embrace. Lucy tells her that she is going away with Stephen's sisters in a few days, but when she returns and has regained her full strength, she'll be able to see Maggie whenever she wants to. They embrace tearfully.

Chapter V - The Final Conflict

Dr. Kenn hears of the rumors spreading about his relationship with Maggie, and finally feels that because of his moral responsibility to his parishioners, he can't give them any reason to doubt him. He releases Maggie and tells her that he thinks she must move to another town. She goes home and, feeling very weary, tries to mentally prepare herself for such a change. It rains constantly, so she is stuck inside.

A letter from Stephen arrives. He has, unbeknownst to anyone, returned to Mudport, and he pleads with Maggie to let him come to her. She feels, suddenly, that her temptation has only just begun, for after the two months of constant pain, the joy his love offers feels even more powerful than it did when she first renounced it, and she is so pained by the despair in his letter that she wants more than anything to relieve him of it. She comes very close to telling him to come, but holds out, instead burning his letter and deciding to write to him in the morning to say goodbye forever.

Suddenly she realizes that the house is flooding. She runs upstairs to wake Bob and his family, and they get into the boats. Hers is swept away, and she knows she must try to make her way to the mill to help her mother and Tom. She finally makes it to the mill, where she finds Tom is alone - Mrs. Tulliver has gone to the Pullets' - and he climbs into the boat with her.

They row towards the town to check on Lucy, but soon the current brings huge debris towards them, and they have no chance to get out of the way. The mass goes right over their boat, which rises again soon after, but without Maggie and Tom in it. They drown together.

Conclusion

Five years later, St. Ogg's looks much like it did before the flood, although there are some scars that remain. Besides Maggie and Tom, everyone survived the flood. Both Stephen and Philip still visit Maggie's tomb; Stephen eventually marries but Philip remains solitary.

Analysis

Since *The Mill on the Floss*'s original publication, almost all critics have felt dissatisfied with the seventh and final book. Throughout the rest of the novel, Eliot certainly foreshadows that Maggie will die by drowning, and water and flooding is frequently alluded to. So it may not be unexpected, but still many feel that in drowning Maggie in the middle of her most emotional struggle, Eliot leaves too many questions unanswered and prevents Maggie from having to see through the results of her decisions.

Maggie's death comes soon after she has decided to, again, renounce Stephen and the happiness he could bring her. Yet she herself feels that "her real temptation had only just begun" (416), and though she symbolically burns Stephen's letter, the reader is not convinced that, faced with having to leave St. Ogg's and return to lonely, unglamorous work, she would not have ever relented, especially as she seems to have gained Philip and Lucy's forgiveness. Thus by killing her, Eliot allows Maggie to escape the grueling difficulty of following through on such a decision.

Although in some ways it is true that Maggie's death leaves certain of the novel's themes feeling unfulfilled, her death does ultimately feel appropriate in that it highlights how difficult it was for a woman of her intelligence and creativity to thrive or survive at all in the very narrow, claustrophobic world of a small town like St. Ogg's in that time period. Though her death begins with a decisive action - getting into the boat and steering towards Dorlcote Mill to save her family - in the end she is utterly powerless as the current - like in her elopement with Stephen - carries her swiftly to her doom.

The ending also seems to resolve Maggie and Tom's troubled relationship, but this too feels insufficient to many critics. It is abrupt and a repetition of the pattern common throughout the novel - in the face of great trouble and tragedy, Maggie and Tom are overcome with their love for each other. Yet in every other instance in the novel, this mutual regard would soon fall apart in the face of their very different characters and desires, and it is unclear whether their final union would have held if they had survived long enough to test it.

In addition, the final image of the siblings finds them "living through again in one supreme moment the days when they had clasped their little hands in love, and roamed the daisied fields together" (422). This idealized vision of childhood rings clearly false to the reader, who better remembers incidents when, for example, Tom told Maggie he didn't love her, or ignored her while he played with Lucy, or laughed at her for cutting her own hair. Though they did have happy moments of love and reconciliation in their childhood, they were fleeting, and so imagining them in such idealistic terms makes the whole resolution feel oversimplified.

This does, however, reinforce the theme of looking back on the past with nostalgia which is important in the novel. It is also not the only time the narrator glosses over pains of childhood to imagine it as edenic - at the end of the second book when Tom and Maggie have their loss of innocence, the narrator similarly idealizes what came before the loss. This idealization could be part of what makes the past's ties so strong for Maggie, to the extent that she comes back to St. Ogg's and chooses to remain there even though to do so is to cut herself off from almost all society and opportunities to support herself.

In light of the autobiographical nature of *The Mill on the Floss*, this *deus ex machina*ending (where a writer resolves a problem for his or her characters' lives through a contrived action) provides closure to Eliot's relationship with her own brother, which was never resolved in her lifetime.

4. Character Analysis

Character List

Maggie Tulliver - The protagonist of *The Mill on the Floss.* The novel tracks Maggie as she grows from an impetuous, clever child into a striking, unconventional young woman. Maggie's closest tie is to her brother Tom, and she seeks—and constantly feels denied—his approval and acceptance. Maggie is clever and enjoys books, the richness of intelligent conversation, and

music, but her family's downfall lends her a quieter, troubled side that tends toward self-abnegation. With her dark skin, dark hair, and dark eyes, Maggie is often associated with the Tulliver side of the family, and, specifically her father's sister, Mrs. Moss.
Read an in-depth analysis of Maggie Tulliver.

Tom Tulliver - The Tullivers' older son. Tom has his own clear sense of duty, justice, and fairness, and these standards affect his action more so than emotion. Tom has affection for Maggie, but he dislikes her impetuous way of doing what she wants, assuming that she knows better than Tom. When Mr. Tulliver goes bankrupt, Tom must go to work at a young age and with little experience other than the Latin and Euclid he has learned in school. Tom brings the family out of debt and becomes a promising young worker at his uncle Deane's company, Guest & Co. Tom may be in love with Lucy Deane, but he focuses only on his work.
Read an in-depth analysis of Tom Tulliver.

Elizabeth Tulliver - Maggie Tulliver's mother. Mrs. Tulliver is a dull-witted, stout, blond woman. Formerly a Miss Dodson, Mrs. Tulliver still maintains that the respectable ways of the Dodson family are better than the ways of Mr. Tulliver. Mrs. Tulliver's mind works in small circles—she focuses mainly on tactile objects like the linens and the china. Her husband's bankruptcy makes her confused and listless, and all she can do is wonder what she has done to receive such bad luck. Mrs. Tulliver likes Tom more than Maggie as children, but she grows prouder of Maggie as Maggie grows tall, striking, and more demure.

Jeremy Tulliver - Maggie Tulliver's father. Mr. Tulliver works the mill on the Floss river, which is on land his family has held for generations. Mr. Tulliver is fond of Maggie, especially her cleverness, and he often takes her side in family quarrels. Mr. Tulliver's bankruptcy is, in part, the result of his own single- mindedness and pride. Associated with the older, provincial ways, Mr. Tulliver senses enough of the changing economic world around him to be puzzled by it. Tulliver is an affectionate man, who is soft with his daughter, wife, and sister, yet his bitterness toward Mr. Wakem consumes and changes him in the end.

Lucy Deane - The pretty, petite, blond cousin of Tom and Maggie. Lucy is genuinely good-hearted, thinking often of the happiness of others. She is also enough of a child of society life, though, that she pays heed to social conventions and to her own appearance.

Philip Wakem - The sensitive and intelligent son of Lawyer Wakem. Philip has had a hunched back since birth. Of small stature and with a pale face, Philip is often described as "womanly." Philip's love of art, music, and knowledge go some way toward counteracting the severe

sadness he feels about his deformity. Philip first meets Maggie when he is at school with Tom. He falls in love with her the year that they meet in secret during Maggie's father's bankruptcy. Read an in-depth analysis of Philip Wakem.

Lawyer Wakem - Lawyer Wakem is a powerful, and increasingly wealthy member of St. Ogg's society. He remembers his late wife lovingly and is very indulgent but close to his deformed son, Philip. Wakem holds strict ideas about class and money. He is scornful of the vindictive Mr. Tulliver.

Stephen Guest - Stephen Guest is courting Lucy Deane when we meet him but has not yet proposed marriage. He is the son of the senior partner of Guest & Co., where both Tom and Mr. Deane work. Stephen is handsome and self-assured. Though he cares for Lucy, and for the life they would have together, he falls unexpectedly in love with Maggie, drawn to her strikingly different qualities.

Bob Jakin - Bob Jakin was a childhood friend of Tom's. Though Tom rejected his friendship when they were children over an incident of cheating, Bob returns after Mr. Tulliver's bankruptcy to offer help to Maggie and Tom. Bob is a packman—a salesman who buys goods at one place and sells them at another.

Mr. and Mrs. Glegg - Mrs. Glegg, formerly Miss Jane Dodson, acts as the leader of the Dodson sisters. Mrs. Glegg is loudly vocal regarding her disapprovals, which usually involve a violation of the Dodson way of doing something. Yet it is her same strict sense of respectability that allows Mrs. Glegg to stand by Maggie, when no one else will at the end of the novel. Mr. and Mrs. Glegg are miserly, though Mr. Glegg is more good-natured about thrift. Mr. Glegg tries to mediate his wife's ill temper and will stand up to her as well.

Mr. and Mrs. Deane - Mrs. Deane, formerly Miss Susan Dodson, is a pale, quieter, Dodson sister. Mrs. Deane does not say much, and she rehearses what she says beforehand. She dies before the end of the novel. Mr. Deane is a swiftly rising junior partner at Guest & Co. He focuses on business and profit-making more than family claims. Their daughter is Lucy.

Mr. and Mrs. Pullet - Mrs. Pullet, formerly Miss Sophie Dodson, is the closest Dodson sister to Mrs. Tulliver. They share a love of fine household goods. Mr. Pullet is a gentleman farmer, and the couple were originally the most wealthy of the Dodson family, until Mr. Deane began rising in the business world. Mr. Pullet does not have much to say for himself. He covers for this fact by sucking on peppermints.

Luke Moggs - Luke Moggs works for Mr. Tulliver. He is the miller at the mill on the Floss. Luke is practically a family member, and he sits by Mr. Tulliver's sickbed.

Mr. Riley - Mr. Riley is the auction manager in St. Ogg's. Mr. Tulliver looks up to him as a high class and full of wisdom and intelligence, but Mr. Riley is more likely middle class and not entirely full of wisdom. Mr. Riley has died by the middle of the novel.

Mr. Stelling - Mr. Stelling is the clergyman tutor of Tom Tulliver and, later, Philip Wakem. Stelling wants to rise in the world and lives somewhat beyond his current means. He teaches exactly as he was taught, with Latin and Euclid. He doesn't have the imagination or the open-mindedness to help Tom learn in other ways.

Dr. Kenn - Dr. Kenn is the stern, but charitable, minister of St. Ogg's.

Mr. and Mrs. Moss - Margaret Moss, Mr. Tulliver's sister—and "Aunt Gritty" to Tom and Maggie—is a patient, loving woman. She is especially fond of Maggie. She has eight children, and the family is very poor. Mr. Tulliver did not want Margaret to marry Mr. Moss, and Tulliver is still cross about this. Mr. Moss does not have much character, mainly because he must work too much.

Mr. Pivart - Mr. Pivart, who lives down the Floss, begins a dispute with Mr. Tulliver over the river water.

Kezia - Kezia is the Tullivers' servant.

Mr. Gore - Gore is Mr. Tulliver's lawyer.

Mr. Poulter - Mr. Poulter is brought in by Mr. Stelling to give Tom exercise. Mr. Poulter drinks and talks about the war in which he fought.

the Miss Guests - The Miss Guests (there are two) are Stephen Guest's sisters. They are not very attractive and are snobbish.

Analysis of Major Characters

Maggie Tulliver

Maggie Tulliver is the protagonist of *The Mill on the Floss.* When the novel begins, Maggie is a clever and impetuous child. Eliot presents Maggie as more imaginative and interesting than the

rest of her family and, sympathetically, in need of love. Yet Maggie's passionate preoccupations also cause pain for others, as when she forgets to feed Tom's rabbits, which leads to their death. Maggie will remember her childhood fondly and with longing, yet these years are depicted as painful ones. Maggie's mother and aunts continually express disapproval with Maggie's rash behavior, uncanny intelligence, and unnaturally dark skin, hair, and eyes. Yet it is only Tom's opinion for which Maggie cares, and his inability to show her unconditional love, along with his embarrassment at her impetuosity, often plunges Maggie into the utter despair particular to immaturity.

The most important event of Maggie's young life is her encounter with a book of Thomas a Kempis's writings, which recommend abandoning one's cares for oneself and focusing instead on unearthly values and the suffering of others. Maggie encounters the book during the difficult year of her adolescence and her family's bankruptcy. Looking for a "key" with which to understand her unhappy lot, Maggie seizes upon Kempis's writings and begins leading a life of deprivation and penance. Yet even in this lifestyle, Maggie paradoxically practices her humility with natural passion and pride. It is not until she re- establishes a friendship with Philip Wakem, however, that Maggie can be persuaded to respect her own need for intellectual and sensuous experience and to see the folly of self-denial. Maggie's relationship with Philip shows both her deep compassion, as well as the self-centered gratification that comes with having someone who fully appreciates her compassion. As Maggie continues to meet Philip Wakem secretly, against her father's wishes, her internal struggle seems to shift. Maggie feels the conflict of the full intellectual life that Philip offers her and her "duty" to her father. It is Tom who reminds her of this "duty," and Maggie's wish to be approved of by Tom remains strong.

The final books of *The Mill on the Floss* feature Maggie at the age of nineteen. She seems older than her years and is described as newly sensuous—she is tall with full lips, a full torso and arms, and a "crown" of jet black hair. Maggie's unworldliness and lack of social pretension make her seem even more charming to St. Ogg's, as her worn clothing seems to compliment her beauty. Maggie has been often unhappy in her young adulthood. Having given up her early asceticism, she longs for a richness of life that is unavailable to her. When she meets Stephen Guest, Lucy Deane's handsome suitor, and enters into the society world of St. Ogg's, Maggie feels this wont for sensuousness fulfilled for the first time. Stephen plays into Maggie's romantic expectations of life and gratifies her pride. Maggie and Stephen's attraction seems to exist more in physical gestures than in witty discussion, and it seems to intoxicate them both. When faced with a decision between a life of passionate love with Stephen and her "duty" to her family and position, Maggie chooses the latter. Maggie has too much feeling for the

memories of the past (and nostalgia for a time when Tom loved her) to relinquish them by running away.

Tom Tulliver

As a child, Tom Tulliver enjoys the outdoors. He is more suited to practical knowledge than bookish education and sometimes prefers to settle disputes with physical intimidation, as does his father. Tom is quite close to Maggie as a child—he responds almost instinctively to her affection, and they are likened to two animals. Tom has a strong, self-righteous sense of "fairness" and "justice" which often figures into his decisions and relationships more than tenderness. As Tom grows older he exhibits the Dodson coolness of mind more than the Tulliver passionate rashness, though he is capable of studied cruelty, as when he upbraids Philip Wakem with reference to Philip's deformity . Repelled by his father's provincial, small-minded ways and the mess these ways caused the family, Tom joins the ranks of capitalist entrepreneurs who are swiftly rising in the world. Tom holds strict notions about gender—his biggest problem with Maggie is that she will not let him take care of her and make her decisions for her. Tom's character seems capable of love and kindness—he buys a puppy for Lucy Deane, and he often ends up reconciling with Maggie—but the difficult circumstances of his young life have led him into a bitter single- mindedness reminiscent of his father.

Mr. Tulliver

Like the other main characters of *The Mill on the Floss,* Mr. Tulliver is the victim of both his own character and the circumstances of his life. His personal pride and rashness causes his bankruptcy; yet there is a sense, especially in his illnesses, that Tulliver is also sheerly overwhelmed by the changing world around him. Tulliver is somewhat more intelligent than his wife—a point of pride and planning for him—yet he is still "puzzled" by the expanding economic world, as well as the complexities of language. The lifestyle to which Mr. Tulliver belongs—static, local, rural social networks and slow saving of money—is quickly giving way to a new class of venture capitalists, like Mr. Deane. Part of the tragedy of Tulliver's downfall is the tragedy of the loss of his way of life. Mr. Tulliver is one of the few models of unconditional love in the novel— his affection for Maggie and his sister, Mrs. Moss, are some of the few narrative bright spots of the first chapters. Yet Tulliver can also be stubborn and obsessively narrow-minded, and it is this that kills him when he cannot overcome his hatred of Wakem.

Philip Wakem

Philip Wakem is perhaps the most intelligent and perceptive character of *The Mill on the Floss.* He first appears as a relief to Maggie's young life—he is one of the few people to have an accurate sense of, and appreciation for, her intelligence, and Philip remains the only character

who fully appreciates this side of Maggie. Philip himself is well read, cultured, and an accomplished sketcher. Philip's deformity—a hunched back he has had since birth—has made him somewhat melancholy and bitter. Like Maggie, he suffers from a lack of love in his life. His attraction to Maggie is, in part, a response to her seemingly bottomless capacity for love. Philip's gentleness, small stature, and sensitivity of feelings cause people to describe him as "womanly," and he is implicitly not considered as a passionate attachment for Maggie. It is Philip who urges Maggie to give up her unnatural self-denial. He recognizes her need for tranquility but assures her that this is not the way to reach it. Through the remainder of the novel, Philip seems to implicitly offer Maggie the tranquility that she seeks—we imagine that Maggie's life with Philip would be calm, happy, and intellectually fulfilling.

5. Recurring motifs

Themes, Motifs, and Symbols

Themes

The Claim of the Past Upon Present Identity

Both characters and places in *The Mill on the Floss* are presented as the current products of multi-generational gestation. The very architecture of St. Ogg's bears its hundreds of years of history within it. Similarly, Maggie and Tom are the hereditary products of two competing family lines—the Tullivers and the Dodsons—that have long histories and tendencies. In the novel, the past holds a cumulative presence and has a determining effect upon characters who are open to its influence. The first, carefully sketched out book about Maggie and Tom's childhood becomes the past of the rest of the novel. Maggie holds the memory of her childhood sacred and her connection to that time comes to affects her future behavior. Here, the past is not something to be escaped nor is it something that will rise again to threaten, but it is instead an inherent part of Maggie's (and her father's) character, making fidelity to it a necessity. Book First clearly demonstrates the painfulness of life without a past—the depths of Maggie's childhood emotions are nearly unbearable to her because she has no past of conquered troubles to look back upon with which to put her present situation in perspective. Stephen is held up as an example of the dangers of neglecting the past. Dr. Kenn, a sort of moral yardstick within the novel, complains of this neglect of the past of which Stephen is a part and Maggie has worked against: "At present everything seems tending toward the relaxation of ties—toward the substitution of wayward choice for the adherence to obligation which has its roots in the past." Thus, without a recognition of the past with which to form

one's character, one is left only to the whims of the moment and subject to emotional extremes and eventual loneliness.

The Importance of Sympathy

The Mill on the Floss is not a religious novel, but it is highly concerned with a morality that should function among all people and should aspire to a compassionate connection with others through sympathy. The parable of St. Ogg rewards the ferryman's unquestioning sympathy with another, and Maggie, in her final recreation of the St. Ogg scene during the flood, is vindicated on the grounds of her deep sympathy with others. The opposite of this sympathy within the novel finds the form of variations of egoism. Tom has not the capability of sympathizing with Maggie. He is aligned with the narrow, self-serving ethic of the rising entrepreneur: Tom explains to Mr. Deane that he cares about his own standing, and Mr. Deane compliments him, "That's the right spirit, and I never refuse to help anybody if they've a mind to do themselves justice." Stephen, too, is seen as a figure that puts himself before others. His arguments in favor of his and Maggie's elopement all revolve around the privileging of his own emotion over that of others', even Maggie's. In contrast, Maggie's, Philip's, and Lucy's mutual sympathy is upheld as the moral triumph within the tragedy of the last book. Eliot herself believed that the purpose of art is to present the reader with realistic circumstances and characters that will ultimately enlarge the reader's capacity for sympathy with others. We can see this logic working against Maggie's young asceticism. Maggie's self-denial becomes morally injurious to her because she is denying herself the very intellectual and artistic experiences that would help her understand her own plight and have pity for the plight of others.

Practical Knowledge Versus Bookish Knowledge

The Mill on the Floss, especially in the first half of the novel, is quite concerned about education and types of knowledge. Much of the early chapters are devoted to laying out the differences between Tom's and Maggie's modes of knowledge. Tom's knowledge is practical: "He knew all about worms, and fish, and those things; and what birds were mischievous, and how padlocks opened, and which way the handles of the gates were to be lifted." This knowledge is tangible and natural—it brings Tom in closer association to the world around him. Meanwhile, Maggie's knowledge is slightly more complicated. Other characters refer to it as "uncanny," and her imagination and love of books are often depicted as a way for her to escape the world around her or to rise above it—"The world outside the books was not a happy one, Maggie felt." Part of the tragedy of Maggie and Tom Tulliver is that Tom received the education that Maggie should have had. Instead of Maggie blossoming, Tom is trapped. When Tom must make a living in the

world, he discovers that his bookish education will win him nothing: Mr. Deane tells Tom, "The world isn't made of pen, ink, and paper, and if you're to get on in the world, young man, you must know what the world's made of." Tom soon returns and takes advantage of his skills for practical knowledge, making good in the newly entrepreneurial world. Tom's practical knowledge is always depicted as a source of superiority for Tom. From his childhood on, Tom has no patience for Maggie's intellectual curiosity. The narrowness of Tom's miseducation under Mr. Stelling seems somewhat related to the narrowness of Tom's tolerance for others' modes of knowledge. Yet Eliot remains clear that Maggie's intellectualism makes her Tom's superior in this case—"the responsibility of tolerance lies with those who have the wider vision."

The Effect of Society Upon the Individual

Society is never revealed to be a completely determining factor in the destiny of Eliot's main characters—for example, Maggie's tragedy originates in her internal competing impulses, not in her public disgrace. Yet, Eliot remains concerned with the workings of a community—both social and economic—and tracks their interrelations, as well as their effect upon character, as part of her realism. *The Mill on the Floss* sets up a geography of towns and land holdings—St. Ogg's, Basset, Garum Firs, Dorlcote Mill—and describes the tone of each community (such as the run- down population of Basset). The novel tracks the growth of the particular society of St. Ogg's, referencing the new force of economic trends like entrepreneurial capitalism or innovations like the steam engine. A wide cast of characters aims to outline different strata in the society—such as the Dodsons, or the Miss Guests—through their common values, economic standing, and social circles. In the first part of the novel, Eliot alludes to the effect these communal forces have on Maggie's and Tom's formation. Toward the end of the novel, the detailed background of St. Ogg's society functions as a contrast against which Maggie seems freshly simple and genuine.

Motifs

The Disparity Between the Dodsons and the Tullivers

Early on in the novel a distinction between the two families from which Tom and Maggie are descended is drawn out. The Dodsons are socially respectable, concerned with codes of behavior, and materialistic. The Tullivers are less socially respectable and have a depth of emotion and affection. The constant repetition of the characteristics of the two clans serves to

create a division along which Maggie's and Tom's growth can be tracked. Tom is associated with the Dodsons, even more so when an adult, and Maggie is associated with the Tullivers.

Music

We often see Maggie nearly lose consciousness when listening to music; she is so overcome with emotion and forgetful of any punitive or self-denying impulses. As a motif, music works the opposite way too: when Maggie experiences moments of profound, unconscious discovery or understanding, these moments are accompanied by a sense of music, as when she reads Thomas a Kempis for the first time and feels as though she hears, "a strain of solemn music." The vulnerability that Maggie experiences in relation to music can also put her in danger. Stephen Guest woos Maggie with music, not with words, and we see that his singing creates an "emotion that seemed to make her at once strong and weak: strong for all enjoyment, weak for all resistence." Music in *The Mill on the Floss* is not meant to indicate moments when Maggie is either succumbing to evil or experiencing good, but rather it indicates her generally heightened sensibilities—Maggie seems to experience everything with more emotion than others, and music is used throughout the novel to underscore this effect.

Animal Imagery

Especially in the early books of*The Mill on the Floss,* Tom, and especially Maggie, are associated with animal imagery. The imagery is usually of farm-type animals—ponies, dogs, ducks—and usually points to the character's capacity for affection or non-adherence to social convention. Following Darwin, Eliot uses this imagery also to gesture toward the wider relation between humans and animals that can be especially seen in young children. Thus, when Maggie and Tom reconcile in Chapter IV of Book First, the narrator points out, "We [adults] no longer approximate in our behaviour to the mere impulsiveness of the lower animals, but conduct ourselves in every respect like members of a highly civilized society. Maggie and Tom were still very much like young animals."

Dark and Light Women

The motif of darkness and lightness of women—meaning their eyes, hair, or skin—is often used to emphasize the uniqueness of Maggie's appearance. The motif of darkness and lightness connects to the motif of the distinctions between the Dodsons and the Tullivers—the Tullivers have darker skin, while the Dodsons have lighter skin. The Dodsons, and indeed, all of St. Ogg's, respect or covet Lucy Deane's fair appearance. Her lightness is also prized in a larger cultural arena, and, in Book Fourth, Maggie becomes frustrated by the traditional plot lines in which the

light, blond women live happily ever after in love. Maggie's family views her darkness as ugly and unnatural, yet by the end of the novel, it has made men perceive Maggie as more beautiful because her darkness is a rarity.

Symbols

The Floss

The Floss is a somewhat difficult symbol to track, as it also exists for realistic effect in the workings of the novel. On the symbolic level, the Floss is related most often to Maggie, and the river, with its depth and potential to flood, symbolizes Maggie's deeply running and unpredictable emotions. The river's path, nonexistent on maps, is also used to symbolize the unforseeable path of Maggie's destiny.

St. Ogg

St. Ogg, the legendary patron saint of the town, was a Floss ferryman. One night a woman with a child asked to be taken across the river, but the winds were high and no other boaters would take her. Only Ogg felt pity for her in her need and took her. When they reached the other side, her rags turned into robes, and she revealed herself to be the Blessed Virgin. The Virgin pronounced Ogg's boat safe to all who rode in it, and she sat always in the prow. The parable of Ogg rewards the human feeling of pity or sympathy. Maggie has a dream during her night on the boat with Stephen, wherein Tom and Lucy row past them, and Tom is St. Ogg, while Lucy is the Virgin. The dream makes explicit Maggie's fear of having neglected to sympathize with those whom she hurts during her night with Stephen (and also, perhaps, her fear that they will not sympathize with her in the future). But it is Maggie, finally, who stands for St. Ogg, as she rows down river thinking only of Tom's safety during the flood in a feat of "almost miraculous, divinely-protected effort."

Maggie's eyes

Eliot depicts Maggie's eyes as her most striking feature. All men (including Philip, Bob Jakin, and Stephen) notice her eyes first and become entranced. Maggie's eyes are a symbol of the power of emotion she contains—the depth of feeling and hunger for love that make her a tragic character. This unique force of character seems to give her power over others, for better or for worse. In Book First, Maggie is associated with Medusa, the monster who turns men to stone by looking at them. Maggie's eyes compel people, and different characters' reactions to them often reflect the character's relationship with Maggie. Thus, Philip, who will become Maggie's

teacher, in a sense, and first love, notices that her eyes "were full of unsatisfied intelligence, and unsatisfied, beseeching affection." Bob Jakin, who views Maggie as superior to him and a figure of whom to be in awe, reports that Maggie has "such uncommon eyes, they looked somehow as they made him feel nohow." Finally, Stephen, who will exploit the inner struggle that Maggie has felt for the entire novel, notices that Maggie's eyes are "full of delicious opposites."

6. Study Questions

1. **Compare and contrast Maggie's love for Philip, Stephen, and Tom.**

   Maggie's love for each of these characters is very different. Her love for Tom seems most passionate when they are children and grows into something more complicated as they age. It is a love that is symbolic of her deep and often constricting and painful ties to her past, her family, and her community - for though she loves him, he often tries to control her, and he does not truly understand her.

   Contrasting with that for Tom, Maggie's love for Philip is built largely on similarities between them. His love for music, art, and literature, and his significant intelligence, mean she can converse with him in a way she cannot with any of her family members. This love, though, lacks any physical passion. The only physical aspect of her affections is that of sympathy for his deformity. Their bond is one of the mind.

   Finally, Maggie's love for Stephen seems almost purely physical. He has admirable characteristics, certainly - he is witty, charming, and his admiration for Dr. Kenn reflects well on him - but we never see what specifically in his character draws Maggie to him. Rather there is a sense of a strong physical passion which leads her into a kind of mental disengagement or trance. Through Stephen's eyes, Maggie sees herself as a desirable lady for the first time - someone who is acceptable to society. Ironically, their passion causes great scandal for Maggie.

2. **Critique the ending of *The Mill on the Floss*. Does Maggie's death enrich or detract from the novel's themes?**

   The ending of *The Mill on the Floss*, though dissatisfying in a few ways, enriches the novel's themes. Not long before Maggie was swept away by a current that was moving her towards satisfying her individual desires by eloping with Stephen. Instead, she fought to come back to St. Ogg's, and she finds herself again driven by a current, but this time towards family, community, and the annihilation of the individual. The hyper-idealized imagery of Maggie and Tom's death scene reinforces this idea of how powerful the past's hold can be, although in this case it is a simplified version of the past, one that ignores its pitfalls and suffocations, which are ultimately symbolically expressed in the drowning of the two main characters.

3. **Where do Maggie and Tom each fall in the distinction between the Dodsons and the Tullivers? Explain.**

   Although in the first half of *The Mill on the Floss*, Maggie is often explicitly associated with the (darker) Tullivers and Tom with the (fairer) Dodsons, by the end of the novel it is clear that the dichotomy is much more complicated than that, and has shifted over time. Certainly, Maggie is physically more like a Tulliver and Tom more like a Dodson. With Maggie's intelligence and individuality, and Tom's practicality and sense of justice, it would at first glance seem that the breakdown of their characteristics follows that of their looks.

   Yet after their loss of innocence, they each move to the other side of the divide. Maggie becomes fixated with renunciation, much like obsessively frugal Mrs. Glegg, and Tom becomes more and more self-reliant and insistent on doing things his own way, much like Mr. Tulliver. In the end, Maggie chooses the ties of family and the community - the true core of the Dodson philosophy - over individual desire, while Tom remains largely alone. The switch is represented in the fact that, though Mr. Tulliver seemed to favor Maggie her whole life, on his deathbed he is much more focused on Tom, while Mrs. Tulliver, who greatly favored Tom in his youth, chooses to move out with Maggie after her shame. Even Mrs. Glegg, so critical and cautious of Maggie as a girl, becomes a true champion for her after her scandal.

4. **Describe the thematic import of Maggie's decision to relinquish Stephen.**

   Maggie chooses not to marry Stephen even though to do so would give her both emotional happiness and economic comfort and security. In addition to her own pain, her relinquishment comes too late to save Philip and Lucy the pain her marriage to Stephen would cause, and she will have to pay a significant price socially. Thus the fact that Maggie still chooses not to marry him shows how strongly she values keeping her ties to family, community, and tradition over individual freedom, expression, and happiness. In addition, it shows the heavy weight of the responsibility of choice - her first choice, to go with him, hurts those she loves and does intense damage to her reputation, and her second choice, to leave him, does nothing to rectify this, and causes both her and Stephen significant pain. Also, Maggie bears the brunt of criticism for her role in the thwarted elopement, despite Stephen's letter absolving her of blame. As a woman with low social standing, Maggie is painted as a harpy who preyed on Stephen, the son of a prominent businessman. Again Eliot illustrates the disparity between the genders endemic of Maggie's time.

5. **Choose one of Maggie's childhood conflicts and explain how it foreshadows her greater troubles in adult life.**

   When Maggie reacts to her family members discussing her hair and its unfortunate nature by cutting it off, it is not because she thinks it will make her pretty, but because of two desires - she wants to not be noticed for it anymore, a "deliverance from her teasing hair and teasing remarks about it," and she wants everyone to think she is "clever" for this solution. Almost instantly after the act is done, though, she regrets it: "she could see clearly enough, now the thing was done, that it was very foolish" but she had "rushed to her deeds with passionate impulse" (55).

This foreshadows Maggie's adult troubles in many ways. First, it shows the conflicting drives she feels between her individual desire and the community's desires, as she is spurred to action by a wanting to blend into the community, but also by wanting to be singled out for her cleverness. And it certainly foreshadows the regret she frequently feels after almost every choice she makes, since her choices are so often between satisfying those two desires and so she must always sacrifice one. Most significantly, of course, it foreshadows the regret she feels after staying in the boat with Stephen, and just like she can't uncut her hair, she cannot undo the hurt that that decision caused, even though she comes back to St. Ogg's unmarried.

Many of Maggie's childhood actions follow a pattern of her indulging a whim followed by recrimination and regret: Maggie running away to stay with the gypsies, Maggie spilling Tom's wine by rushing towards him unaware, Maggie forgetting to feed Tom's rabbits (though her forgetting stems from childish self-absorption rather than whim), Maggie pushing Lucy into the mud to get back at Tom for spiting her, etc.

6. **Compare and contrast Tom and Maggie. How much are their respective successes and failures a function of gender and how much a function of their distinct characteristics?**

   The defining difference between Tom and Maggie's characters seems to be decisiveness. Tom makes all his decisions deliberately and never looks back. This relates both to his willfulness and inflexibility, and his near obsession with justice - he can't understand anyone else making a mistake, because he doesn't ever believe he has himself.

   Maggie, on the other hand, is completely indecisive. She will either feel so desperately torn between two alternatives that when she does make a choice, it seems random and she almost always immediately regrets it. Or she acts out of a moment of high passion with little understanding of the consequences, and again almost always immediately regrets it.

   She cannot reconcile her cravings for individual expression with the places open for her in the community, so her emotions and desires are constantly in flux. Tom, on the other hand, has both more options and more opportunity for positive action, so he is able to act decisively because he has a clear path. Even though Tom is not as bright as Maggie, his determination and the opportunities available to him as a man engender success. It is not difficult to imagine that in a world that offered her gender more freedoms and ambitions, Maggie could have used her intellectual curiosity and emotional energy towards a greater purpose.

7. **Do a close reading of Book Fourth, Chapter I, and explain its thematic importance in the novel.**

   This chapter, using ruins on the Rhine and the Rhone, illustrates the dichotomy between the collective, suffocating world of the older generation in St. Ogg's, and the striving for individuality in Maggie and Tom's generation, and particularly in Maggie. In doing so, it yokes this striving with progress - with "the onward tendency of human things" - and shows how that tendency combined with the emotional ties to the earlier generation creates

tragedies “by hundreds of obscure hearths” (223), universalizing Maggie’s experience and showing how it is critical to the progress of society.

8. **Compare and contrast Maggie and Lucy, as children and as adults.**

   In childhood, Lucy is presented as the model for how the St. Ogg’s community believes a female child should behave - quiet, pretty, submissive, good, light-complexioned - while Maggie constantly struggles to be pleasing to the community, and almost constantly fails, with her dark, straight hair, her curiosity and eager intelligence, her high spirit and emotionalism. By juxtaposing these two characters, we see just how difficult it would be for Maggie to fit into the female paradigm of her time.

   As they age, Maggie continues to face struggle after struggle, some caused by outside circumstances, some by her internal conflicts, while, excepting her mother’s death, Lucy never faces any real hardship until Maggie runs off with Stephen. Though Lucy’s kindness and generosity, for Maggie particularly, is vast and she is impossible to dislike, we see through this contrast that Maggie’s struggles have added to her vitality - to both the reader and to Stephen she is a starkly more interesting character than Lucy.

9. **What does *The Mill on the Floss* show are the benefits of hardship?**

   In Stephen Guest’s first scene in the novel, he says that he and Lucy “are Adam and Eve unfallen, in paradise” (297), which, combined with Eliot’s early yoking together of the fall with Maggie and Tom’s loss of innocence, shows that they have known little hardship. This puts them in contrast with Maggie and Tom, and though they are certainly an easy pair to be around, this does seem to provide a brittle cast to their characters - it is unclear how they would handle hardship - and certainly they are not as interesting as the Tulliver children.

   But hardship does not just make characters more interesting - it makes them human, it gives others the chance to support them, as when Mrs. Stelling rises above herself to show the children kindness, and it helps them grow. In childhood, Maggie frequently makes excuses for her behavior, but after going through the hardships that make her an adult, when she has run off with Stephen she never once tries to excuse herself, taking full responsibility for the wrong she has done and actively seeking the justice she believes she deserves.

10. **Compare and contrast Tom and Mr. Tulliver. Why does Tom succeed where Mr. Tulliver failed?**

    Both Tom and Mr. Tulliver are driven, independent, prideful, and often obsessive, especially towards the idea of justice. Yet Mr. Tulliver loses all of his property and self-worth, while Tom is able to work to get it all back and even restores himself and his mother to his home. Mr. Tulliver’s problem comes largely from where his personality is more like Maggie’s. Both are impetuous and emotional, and make decisions far more out of emotion than out of cold rationality - thus Mr. Tulliver insists on paying back Mrs. Glegg’s loan after she has offended him; thus he won’t insist on repayment from his brother-in-law because of his love for his sister and his daughter; and thus he attacks Mr. Wakem, bringing on his

own death before he can see his home back in Tulliver hands. Tom, on the other hand, is ruled by his sense of justice before all else, so that he is rarely overtaken by emotion and is able to focus on accumulating the money and honor that his father lost.

7. Suggested Essay Topics

1. Is *The Mill on the Floss* a feminist novel?

The Mill on the Floss is a feminist novel in the sense that it reveals the difficulty of Maggie's coming of age, and that difficulty is shown to be made harder by her society's narrow views about women. Especially during Maggie's childhood, we are constantly confronted with older characters ignoring or devaluing Maggie's obvious intelligence because she is a girl. Even Tom is shown to participate in this narrowness—he considers it his right to keep Maggie in her place, as well as care for her. In scenes such as the one in which Mr. Stelling pronounces the cleverness of women to be shallow, we are clearly meant to become angry at this pronunciation and know automatically that the pronunciation is wrong. Significantly, society's mistaken views about the shallowness of women are shown to adversely effect men as well—it is Tom who suffers just as much as Maggie, through his miseducation. The structure of the novel itself presents Maggie as constrained and unable to move outside of her family circle. We are significantly not shown the chapters in which she is on her own, teaching, and are made to focus, instead, on scenes with Maggie and her family and friends, in which Maggie's subjection, or non- subjection, to their will is at issue. The passages dealing with the hypocritical morality of St. Ogg's society are unsparing in relation to women—the town's females are revealed as the most self-serving and shallow of the population—yet, this harsh realism does not change the basic feminist tenor of the novel.

2. Do the concerns of *The Mill on the Floss* relate to 1830s England?

The Mill on the Floss mainly deals with the troubled childhood and young adulthood of Maggie Tulliver, but a variety of background details reveal the changing community of the time and so relate to the actual sociological and economic shifts in 1830s England. The novel situates itslef on the cusp of a new economic order. The old ways of local provincial relations, illustrated through Mr. Tulliver, as well as the old ways of slow saving, as illustrated by the Gleggs and the Pullets, as shown to be giving way to a new order of speculation capitalism. The Tulliver family has owned Dorlcote Mill for years, but suddenly, new families like the Pivarts are advancing in

the world and becoming moneyed and propertied. Over the course of the novel, we are shown how Mr. Deane advances in the world, making Mrs. Deane the most successful Dodson sister, when Mrs. Pullet had claimed that honor for years prior. Mr. Deane himself points to one of the agents of this change, in the steam engine. Mr. Deane also explains that the age of farming is being succeeded by the age of trade: "Somebody has said it's a fine thing to make two ears of corn grow where only one grew before; but, sir it's a fine thing, too, to further the exchange of commodities, and bring the grains of corn to the mouths that are hungry." Buying goods cheaply and selling them for a profit is the exact way that Tom made enough money to cancel the family debts. Finally, these economic forces are shown to effect the sociology of the society in that fortunes are won and lost more swiftly, and the hierarchies of the community are not as stable. Thus the young people of St. Ogg's are not as restricted in their choices of marriage partner as they may once have been—Stephen can marry down to Lucy Deane, and even to Maggie Tulliver, and Lawyer Wakem can agree to a match between his son and Maggie.

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. In what ways does the author use irony, and what is her purpose in using it?

2. Comment on George Eliot's dramatic sense or her descriptive powers or her ability as a philosopher.

3. What purposes does imagery serve in *The Mill on the Floss*?

4. Discuss the role of the narrator. What is the purpose of having a narrator tell the story in the past tense? With whom does the narrator sympathize? What values does the narrator uphold? What does the narrator ask for from the reader?

5. In what sense is *The Mill on the Floss* a spiritual novel?

6. How does Eliot use water imagery? Does this imagery relate to the Floss? What does the Floss symbolize?

7. Is Mr. Tulliver a tragic character? Is he a tragic hero?

8. Discuss the Dodsons as a group. Are their values upheld?

8. Suggestions for Further Reading

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