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ਪਟਿਆਲਾ

JAGAT GURU NANAK DEV

PUNJAB STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

(Established by Act No. 19 of 2019 of the Legislature of State of Punjab)

The Motto of the University

(SEWA)

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M.A. English
Semester – I
Course Code: MAEM23103T
Course Name: ENGLISH NOVEL (Upto 19th Century)

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PREFACE

Jagat Guru Nanak Dev Punjab State Open University, Patiala, established in December 2019 by Act 19 of the Legislature of State of Punjab, is the first and only Open University of the State, entrusted with the responsibility of making higher education accessible to all especially to those sections of society who do not have the means, time or opportunity to pursue regular education.

In keeping with the nature of an Open University, this University provides a flexible education system to suit every need. The time given to complete a programme is double the duration of a regular mode programme. Well-designed study material has been prepared in consultation with experts in their respective fields.

The University offers programmes which have been designed to provide relevant, skill-based and employability-enhancing education. The study material provided in this booklet is self-instructional, with self-assessment exercises, and recommendations for further readings. The syllabus has been divided in sections, and provided as units for simplification.

The Learner Support Centres/Study Centres are located in the Government and Government aided colleges of Punjab, to enable students to make use of reading facilities, and for curriculum-based counselling and practicals. We, at the University, welcome you to be a part of this institution of knowledge.

Prof. G. S. Batra,
Dean Academic Affairs

M.A English
Semester-I

MAEM23103T : ENGLISH NOVEL (Upto 19th Century)

MAX.MARKS: 100
EXTERNAL: 70
INTERNAL: 30
PASS: 35%
Credits: 5

Objective:

This course introduces students to the English novel from the beginning to the late nineteenth century and the literary context in which the genre developed. It further attempts to develop insightsinto various textual dimensions of the novel as a distinct genre.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PAPER SETTER/EXAMINER:

1. The syllabus prescribed should be strictly adhered to.
2. The question paper will consist of five sections: A, B, C, D, and E. Sections A, B, C, and D will have two questions from the respective sections of the syllabus and will carry 15 marks each. The candidates will attempt one question from each section.
3. Section E will have four short answer questions covering the entire syllabus. Each question will carry 5 marks. Candidates will attempt any two questions from this section.
4. The examiner shall give a clear instruction to the candidates to attempt questions only at one place and only once. Second or subsequent attempts, unless the earlier ones have been crossed out, shall not be evaluated.
5. The duration of each paper will be three hours.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES:

Candidates are required to attempt any one question each from the sections A, B, C, andD of the question paper and any two short questions from Section E. They have to attempt questions only at one place and only once. Second or subsequent attempts, unless the earlier ones have been crossed out, shall not be evaluated.

SECTION -A

Charlotte Bronte: Jane Eyre Charles

SECTION -B

Dickens: Hard Times

SECTION -C

George Eliot: Middlemarch Thomas

SECTION -D

Hardy: Jude the Obscure

Suggested Readings:

1. Bloom, Harold. Charles Dickens' Hard Times. (Modern Critical Interpretation), 1991.
2. Kaplan,Fred (Ed.) Hard Times. (Norton Critical Edition), 2000.
3. E.M Forster: Aspects of the Novel. London: E Arnold, 1927.
4. Ian Watt: The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding. Berkeley, Universityof California Press, 1957.
5. Terry Eagleton: The English Novel: An Introduction. Maiden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005
6. http://swayam.gov.in/
7. http://edx.org. formerly http://mooc.org/
8. http://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/

M.A. (English)
Semester-I
COURSE: ENGLISH NOVEL (Upto 19th Century)
Section-A

UNIT 1: CHARLOTTE BRONTE : JANE EYRE

STRUCTURE

1.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Study the Novel Jane Eyre, one of the famous novels by English writer Charlotte Brontë, published under the pen name "Currer Bell", on 16 October 1847. The novel revolutionized prose fiction by being the first to focus on its protagonist's moral and spiritual development through an intimate first-person narrative, where actions and events are colored by a psychological intensity. Charlotte Brontë has been called the "first historian of the private consciousness".
- Understand the elements of social criticism, with a strong sense of Christian morality at its core, and is considered by many to be ahead of its time because of Jane's individualistic character and how the novel approaches the topics of class, sexuality, religion and feminism.

1.1 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charlotte Brontë (21 April 1816 – 31 March 1855) was an English novelist and poet, the eldest of the three Brontë sisters who survived into adulthood and whose novels became classics of English literature.

She enlisted in school at Roe Head in January 1831, aged fourteen years. She left the year after to teach her sisters, Emily and Anne, at home, returning in 1835 as a governess. In 1839, she undertook the role as governess for the Sidgwick family but left after a few months to return to Haworth where the sisters opened a school, but failed to attract pupils. Instead, they turned to writing and they each first published in 1846 under the pseudonyms of Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell. While her first novel, *The Professor*, was rejected by publishers, her second novel, *Jane Eyre*, was published in 1847. The sisters admitted to their Bell pseudonyms in 1848, andby the following year were celebrated in London literary circles.

Brontë was the last to die of all her siblings. She became pregnant shortly after her marriage in June 1854 but died on 31 March 1855, almost certainly from hyperemesis gravidarum, a complication of pregnancy which causes excessive nausea and vomiting.

1.1.1 Jane Eyre

Orphaned as an infant, Jane Eyre lives with at Gateshead with her aunt, Sarah Reed, as the novel opens. Jane is ten years old, an outsider in the Reed family. Her female cousins, Georgiana and Eliza, tolerate, but do not love her. Their brother, John, is more blatantly hostile to Jane, reminding her that she is a poor dependent of his mother who should not even be associating with the children of a gentleman. One day, he is angered to find Jane reading one of his books. So, he takes the book away and throws it at her. Finding this treatment intolerable, Jane fights back. She is blamed for the conflagration and sent to the red-room, the place where her kind Uncle Reed died. In this frightening room, Jane thinks she sees her uncle's ghost and begs to be set free. Her Aunt Reed refuses, insisting Jane remain in her prison until she learns complete submissiveness. When the door to the red-room is locked once again, Jane passes out. She wakes back in her own room, with the kind physician, Mr. Lloyd, standing over her bed. He advises Aunt Reed to send Jane away to school, because she is obviously unhappy at Gateshead.

Jane is sent to Lowood School, a charity institution for orphan girls, run by Mr. Brocklehurst. A stingy and mean-hearted minister, Brocklehurst provides the girls with starvation levels of food, freezing rooms, and poorly made clothing and shoes. He justifies his poor treatment of them by saying that they need to learn humility and by comparing them to the Christian martyrs, who also endured great hardships. Despite the difficult conditions at Lowood, Jane prefers school to life with the Reeds. Here, she makes two new friends: Miss Temple and Helen Burns. From Miss Temple, Jane learns proper ladylike behavior and compassion; from Helen, she gains a more spiritual focus. The school's damp conditions, combined with the girls' near- starvation diet, produces a typhus epidemic, in which nearly half the students die, including Helen Burns, who dies in Jane's arms. Following this tragedy, Brocklehurst is deposed from his position as manager of Lowood, and conditions become more acceptable. Jane quickly becomes a star student, and after six years of hard work, an effective teacher. Following two years of teaching at Lowood, Jane is ready for new challenges. Miss Temple marries, and Lowood seems different without her. Jane places at advertisement for a governess position in the local newspaper. She receives only one reply, from a Mrs. Fairfax of Thornfield, near Millcote, who seeks a governess for a 10-year-old girl. Jane accepts the job.

At Thornfield, a comfortable three-storey country estate, Jane is warmly welcomed. She likesboth her new pupil, Adèle Varens, and Mrs. Fairfax, the housekeeper at Thornfield, but is soon restless. One January afternoon, while walking to Millcote to mail a letter, Jane helps a horseman whose horse has slipped on a patch of ice and fallen. Returning to Thornfield, Jane discovers that this man is Edward Fairfax Rochester, the owner of Thornfield and her employer. He is a dark-haired, moody man in his late thirties. Although he is often taciturn, Jane grows fond of his mysterious, passionate nature. He tells Jane about Adèle's mother, Céline, a Parisian opera-singer who was once his mistress. Adèle, he claims, is not his daughter, but he rescuedthe poor girl after her mother abandoned her.

Jane also discovers that Thornfield harbors a secret. From time to time, she hears strange, maniacal laughter coming from the third story. Mrs. Fairfax claims this is just Grace Poole, aneccentric servant with a drinking problem. But Jane wonders if this is true. One night, Jane smells smoke in the hallway, and realizes it is coming from Rochester's room. Jane races down to his room, discovering his curtains and bed are on fire. Unable to wake Rochester, she douses both him and his bedding with cold water. He asks her not to tell anyone about this incident and blames the arson on Grace Poole. Why does not he press charges on Grace, or at least evict her from the house, Jane wonders.

Following this incident, Rochester leaves suddenly for a house party at a local estate. Jane is miserable during his absence and realizes she is falling in love with him. After a weeklong absence, he returns with a party of guests, including the beautiful Blanche Ingram. Jane jealously believes Rochester is pursuing this accomplished, majestic, dark-haired beauty. An old friend of Rochester's, Richard Mason, joins the party one day. From him, Jane learns that Rochester once lived in Spanish Town, Jamaica. One night, Mason is mysteriously attacked, supposedly by the crazy Grace Poole.

Jane leaves Thornfield for a month to attend her aunt, who is on her deathbed following her son John's excessive debauchery and apparent suicide. Jane tries to create a reconciliation with her aunt, but the woman refuses all Jane's attempts at appeasement. Before dying, she gives Jane a letter from her uncle, John Eyre, who had hoped to adopt Jane and make her his heir. The letter was sent three years ago, but Aunt Reed had vindictively kept it from Jane. Sarah Reed dies, unloved by her daughters.

When Jane returns to Thornfield, the house guests have left. Rochester tells Jane he will soonmarry Blanche, so she and Adèle will need to leave Thornfield. In the middle of this charade,

Jane reveals her love for him, and the two end up engaged. Jane is happy to be marrying the man she loves, but during the month before the wedding, she is plagued by strange dreams ofa destroyed Thornfield and a wailing infant. Two nights before the wedding, a frightening, dark-haired woman enters her room and rips her wedding veil in two. Although Jane is certain this woman did not look like Grace Poole, Rochester assures her it must have been the bizarre servant. The morning of the wedding finally arrives. Jane and Rochester stand at the altar, taking their vows, when suddenly a strange man announces there is an impediment to the marriage: Rochester is already married to a woman named Bertha Antoinetta Mason. Rochester rushes the wedding party back to Thornfield, where they find his insane and repulsive wife locked in a room on the third story. Grace Poole is the woman's keeper, but Bertha was responsible for the strange laughter and violence at Thornfield. Rochester tries to convince Jane to become his mistress and move with him to a pleasure villa in the south of France.

Instead, Jane sneaks away in the middle of the night, with little money and no extra clothing. With twenty shillings, the only money she has, she catches a coach that takes her to faraway Whitcross. There, she spends three days roaming the woods, looking for work and, finally, begging for food. On the third night, she follows a light that leads her across the moors to Marsh End (also called Moor House), owned by the Rivers family. Hannah, the housekeeper, wants to send her away, but St. John Rivers, the clergyman who owns the house, offers her shelter. Jane soon becomes close friends with St. John's sisters, Diana and Mary, and he offers Jane a humble job as the schoolmistress for the poor girls in his parish at Morton. Because their father lost most of his money before he died, Diana and Mary have been forced to earn a living by working as governesses.

One day, St. John learns that, unbeknownst to her, Jane has inherited 20,000 pounds from heruncle, John Eyre. Furthermore, she discovers that St. John's real name is St. John Eyre Rivers.So, he, his sisters and Jane are cousins. The Rivers were cut out of John Eyre's will because of an argument between John and their father. Thrilled to discover that she has a family, Jane insists on splitting the inheritance four ways, and then remodels Moor House for her cousins,who will no longer need to work as governesses. Not content with his life as a small-time clergyman, St. John plans to become a missionary in India. He tries to convince Jane to accompany him, as his wife. Realizing that St. John does not love her but just wants to use herto accomplish his goals, Jane refuses his request, but suggests a compromise by agreeing to follow him to India as a comrade, but not as a wife.

St. John tries to coerce her into the marriage,
and has almost succeeded, when, one night Jane suddenly hears Rochester's disembodied voice calling out to her.

Jane immediately leaves Moor House to search for her true love, Rochester. Arriving at Millcote, she discovers Thornfield a burned wreck, just as predicted in her dreams. From a local innkeeper, she learns that Bertha Mason burned the house down one night and that Rochester lost an eye and a hand while trying to save her and the servants. He now lives in seclusion at Ferndean.

Jane immediately drives to Ferndean. There she discovers a powerless, unhappy Rochester. Jane carries a tray to him and reveals her identity. The two lovers are joyfully reunited and soon marry. Ten years later, Jane writes this narrative. Her married life is still blissful; Adèle has grown to be a helpful companion for Jane; Diana and Mary Rivers are happily married; St. John still works as a missionary, but is nearing death; and Rochester has regained partial vision, enough to see their first-born son.

About Jane Eyre

When *Jane Eyre* was first published in 1847, it was an immediate popular and critical success. George Lewes, a famous Victorian literary critic declared it "the best novel of the season." It also, however, met with criticism. In a famous attack in the *Quarterly Review* of December 1848, Elizabeth Rigby called Jane a "personification of an unregenerate and undisciplined spirit" and the novel as a whole, "anti-Christian." Rigby's critique perhaps accounts for some of the novel's continuing popularity: the rebelliousness of its tone. *Jane Eyre* calls into question most of society's major institutions, including education, family, social class and Christianity. The novel asks the reader to consider a variety of contemporary social and political issues: What is women's position in society, what is the relation between Britain and its colonies, how important is artistic endeavor in human life, what is the relationship of dreams and fantasy toreality, and what is the basis of an effective marriage? Although the novel poses all of these questions, it does not didactically offer a single answer to any of them. Readers can construct their own answers, based on their unique and personal analyses of the book. This multidimensionality makes *Jane Eyre* a novel that rewards multiple readings.

While the novel's longevity resides partially in its social message, posing questions still relevant to modern readers, its combination of literary genre keeps the story entertaining

and enjoyable. Not just the story of the romance between Rochester and Jane, the novel also

employs the conventions of the bildungsroman (a novel that shows the psychological or moral development of its main character), the gothic and the spiritual quest. As bildungsroman, the first-person narration plots Jane's growth from an isolated and unloved orphan into a happily married, independent woman. Jane's appeals to the reader directly involve us in this journey of self-knowledge; the reader becomes her accomplice, learning and changing along with the heroine. The novel's gothic element emphasizes the supernatural, the visionary and the horrific. Mr. Reed's ghostly presence in the red-room, Bertha's strange laughter at Thornfield, and Rochester's dark and brooding persona are all examples of gothic conventions, which add to the novel's suspense, entangling the reader in Jane's attempt to solve the mystery at Thornfield. Finally, the novel could also be read as a spiritual quest, as Jane tries to position herself in relationship to religion at each stop on her journey. Although she paints a negative picture of the established religious community through her characterizations of Mr. Brocklehurst, St. John Rivers and Eliza Reed, Jane finds an effective, personal perspective on religion following her night on the moors. For her, when one is closest to nature, one is also closest to God: "We read clearest His infinitude, His omnipotence, His omnipresence." God and nature are both sources of bounty, compassion and forgiveness.

In reading this novel, consider keeping a reading journal, writing down quotes that spark your interest. When you have finished the book, return to these notes and group your quotes under specific categories. For example, you may list all quotes related to governesses. Based on these quotes, what seems to be the novel's overall message about governesses? Do different characters have conflicting perceptions of governesses? Which character's ideas does the novel seem to sympathize with and why? Do you agree with the novel's message? By looking at the novel closely and reading it with a critical focus, you will enrich your own reading experience, joining the readers over the last century who have been excited by plain Jane's journey of self-discovery.

1.2 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 1

1.2.1 Summary

It is a cold, wet November afternoon when the novel opens at Gateshead, the home of Jane Eyre's relatives, the Reeds. Jane and the Reed children, Eliza, John and Georgiana sit in the drawing room. Jane's aunt is angry with her, purposely excluding her from the rest of the family. So, Jane sits alone in a window seat, reading Bewick's *History of British Birds*.

As she quietly reads, her cousin John torments her, reminding her of her precarious position within the household. As orphaned niece of Mrs. Reed, she should not be allowed to live withgentlemen's children. John throws a book at Jane and she calls him a "murderer" and "slave- driver." The two children fight, and Jane is blamed for the quarrel. As a punishment, she is banished to the red-room.

1.2.2 Analysis

This opening chapter sets up two of the primary themes in the novel: class conflict and gender difference. As a poor orphan living with relatives, Jane feels alienated from the rest of the Reed family, and they certainly do nothing to make her feel more comfortable. John Reed says to Jane: "You have no business to take our books; you are a dependant, mamma says; you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not to live here with gentleman's children like us" John claims the rights of the gentleman, implying that Jane's family was from a lower class. She appears to exist in a no-man's land between the upper and servant classes. By calling John a "murderer," "slave-driver" and "Roman emperor," Jane emphasizes the corruption that is inherent in the ruling classes. Her class difference translates into physical difference, and Jane believes that she is physically inferior to the Reed children.

Jane's argument with John also points to the potential gender conflicts within the text. Not only is Jane at a disadvantage because of her class status, but her position as female leaves her vulnerable to the rules of a patriarchal tyrant. John is an over-indulged only son, described by Jane as "unwholesome" and "thick," someone who habitually gorges himself. Contrasting with Jane's thin, modest appearance, John Reed is a picture of excess: his gluttony feeds his violent emotions, such as constant bullying and punishing of Jane. One of Jane's goals throughout the book will be to create an individual place for herself, free of the tyrannies of her aunt's class superiority and her cousin's gender dominance. By

fighting back when John and his mother torment her, Jane refuses the passivity that was expected for a woman in her class position.

Jane's situation as she sits reading Bewick's *History of Birds* provides significant imagery. The red curtains that enclose Jane in her isolated window seat connect with the imagery of the red- room to which Jane is banished at the end of the chapter. The color red is symbolic. Connoting fire and passion, red offers vitality, but also the potential to burn everything that comes in its way to ash. The symbolic energy of the red curtains contrasts with the dreary November day that Jane watches outside her window: "a pale blank of mist and cloud." Throughout the book,

passion and fire will contrast with paleness and ice. Jane's choice of books is also significant in this scene. Like a bird, she would like the freedom of flying away from the alienation she feels at the Reed's house. The situation of the sea fowl that inhabit "solitary rocks and promontories," is similar to Jane's. Like them, she lives in isolation. The extreme climate of the birds' homes in the Arctic, "that reservoir of frost and snow," the "death-white realms," again creates a contrast with the fire that explodes later in the chapter during John and Jane's violent encounter.

Books provide Jane with an escape from her unhappy domestic situation. For Jane, each picture in Bewick's tale offers a story that sparks her keen imagination. But Jane also says that the book reminds her of the tales that Bessie, one of the Reeds' servants, sometimes tells on winter evenings. Books feed Jane's imagination, offering her a vast world beyond the claustrophobia of Gateshead; they fill her with visions of how rich life could be, rather than how stagnant it actually is. Not a complacent little girl, Jane longs for love and adventure.

1.3 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTERS 2-3

1.3.1 Summary

As she is being dragged to the red-room, Jane resists her jailors, Bessie and Miss Abbott. After the servants have locked her in, Jane begins observing the red-room. It is the biggest and bestroom of the mansion, yet is rarely used because Uncle Reed died there.

Looking into a mirror, Jane compares her image to that of a strange fairy. The oddness of being in a death-chamber seems to have stimulated Jane's imagination, and she feels superstitious about her surroundings. She is also contemplative. Why, she wonders, is

she always the outcast? The reader learns that Jane's Uncle Reed — her mother's brother — brought her into the household. On his deathbed, he made his wife promise to raise Jane as one of her own children, but obviously, this promise has not been kept.

Suddenly, Jane feels a presence in the room and imagines it might be Mr. Reed, returning to earth to avenge his wife's violation of his last wish. She screams and the servants come running into the room. Jane begs to be removed from the red-room, but neither the servants nor Mrs. Reed have any sympathy for her. Believing that Jane is pretending to be afraid, Mrs. Reed vows that Jane will be freed only if she maintains "perfect stillness and submission." When everyone leaves, Jane faints.

Jane awakens in her own bedroom, surrounded by the sound of muffled voices. She is still frightened but also aware that someone is handling her more tenderly than she has ever been touched before. She feels secure when she recognizes Bessie and Mr. Lloyd, an apothecary, standing near the bed. Bessie is kind to Jane and even tells another servant that she thinks Mrs. Reed was too hard on Jane. Jane spends the next day reading, and Bessie sings her a song.

After a conversation with Jane, Mr. Lloyd recommends that Mrs. Reed send her away to school. Jane is excited about leaving Gateshead and beginning a new life. Overhearing a conversation between Miss Abbot and Bessie, Jane learns that her father was a poor clergyman who married her mother against her family's wishes. As a result, Jane's grandfather Reed disinherited his daughter. A year after their marriage, Jane's father caught typhus while visiting the poor, andboth of her parents soon died within a month of each other and left Jane orphaned.

1.3.2 Analysis

Stating that she is resisting her captors like a "rebel slave," Jane continues to use the imageryof oppression begun in the previous chapter. When Miss Abbot admonishes Jane for striking John Reed, Jane's "young master," Jane immediately questions her terminology. Is John really her master; is she his servant? Again, Jane's position within the household is questioned, particularly her class identity. When Mr. Lloyd asks about Jane's relatives on her father's side, Jane replies that she "might have some poor, low relations called Eyre." Mr. Lloyd wonders ifJane would prefer to live with them, and she immediately pictures a world of "ragged clothes, scanty food, fireless grates, rude manners and debasing vices." Fundamentally, Jane shares the Reed's belief that poor people are morally inferior to the

wealthy, and she honestly admits that she is not "heroic" enough to "purchase liberty at the price of caste." Jane is slowly shaping the parameters of her ideal lifestyle; poverty, she realizes, is not acceptable to her. When Mr. Lloyd suggests school as another option, Jane imagines it as inspiring place, where she could learn to paint, sing and speak French. Unlike poverty, education offers Jane the possibility of improving her position in society; thus, school may allow her freedom with a potential increase in "caste." Learning about her family background reveals that Jane is not from a "beggarly set," as her aunt had suggested. As a clergyman, her father held an acceptable, even gentlemanly position within Victorian society. Thus, this chapter ends with a refinement in the understanding of Jane's class position.

Miss Abbot, who has the final word on Jane's position, however, calls Jane "a little toad," reminding readers that beauty, as well as class, defines a woman's position within a patriarchal culture. Both Bessie and Miss Abbot believe Jane's plight would be more "moving" if she were as beautiful as her cousin Georgiana who looks "as if she were painted." The novel specifically critiques this "wax-doll" prototype of female beauty, and one of Brontë's goals in this book was to create a poignant, yet *plain*, heroine. As a shy, impoverished and plain child, Jane decides she is a "useless thing." Thus, she needs to discover her "use," one that is outside the realm of class and beauty.

Color is once again symbolic, revealing the mood of the scene and providing insight into character. While in Chapter 1, Jane was enshrouded by the red curtains, here she is locked within the red-room. Chapter 3 opens with Jane remembering a nightmare image of "a terrible red glare, crossed with thick black bars." For Jane, red has become the color of a hellish nightmare, in which she is jailed behind impenetrable black bars. But this negative connotation soon dissipates, because Jane realizes that the red is simply the glare from her nursery fire. From a sign of evil and hellish fires, red has been transformed into a nurturing, warmth-giving glow. Thus, the significance of symbols and colors in this novel is not static; instead, they change to reflect Jane's emotional and social situation. Skin color is also important. Here, the reader learns that John reviles his mother for her "dark skin," a supposedly negative quality that he has inherited from her. The novel appears to support an ethnocentrism that links "darkness" with an unacceptable foreignness, while lightness is affiliated with English purity.

The characterization of Jane is also developed in this chapter. As she gazes at her image in the red-room's mirror, Jane describes herself as a "tiny phantom, half fairy, half imp" from

one of Bessie's bedtime stories, a spirit-creature that comes out of "lone, ferny dells in moors" and appears in the eyes of "belated travelers." The association of Jane with a fairy will be repeated throughout the novel, and her notion of appearing, sprite-like, in the eyes of travelers foreshadows her first meeting with Rochester. As fairy, Jane identifies herself as a special, magical creature, and reminds the reader of the importance imagination plays her(delete) in her life. Not only is Jane an undefined, almost mythical creature, but the narrative she creates also crosses boundaries by mixing realism and fantasy. We see the first instance of a supernatural intrusion into the novel in this chapter. As Jane sits nervously in the red-room, she imagines agleam of light shining on the wall and believes it is "a herald of some coming vision from another world." The novel suggests that Jane has psychic powers — she is haunted by other

apparitions and by prophetic dreams. Generally, these ghostly visitations prefigure drastic changes in Jane's life, as this one does.

To improve Jane's spirits, Bessie sings a song that Jane has often delighted in. Now, though, the song suggests only sadness, so Bessie begins another ballad. Like *Gulliver's Travels*, this tune tells the tale of a desolate traveler. The narrator of this song is a "poor orphan child," who has wandered a long way, through wild mountains and dreary twilight. Just as in the previous chapter, Jane meditated upon the purpose of her suffering, the speaker in this song wonders why he or she has been sent "so far and so lonely." The only hope for this lost child is in heaven because God will provide mercy and protection. Implicitly, Bessie suggests that Jane should become a spiritual traveler, looking toward heaven for solace, rather than worrying about her troubles in this world. Jane feels meager comfort in the song's message because she longs to find happiness on earth. Jane's interactions with religious figures and their promise of spiritual salvation will be repeated throughout the text. Should we focus on heaven to the exclusion of earth? In general, Jane does not believe humans should be so focused on heaven that they forget the pleasures available for them here on earth.

The narration in this section reminds readers that the tale is being told by an older, wiser Jane remembering her childhood experiences. For example, there are frequent interjections by the older Jane, explaining or apologizing for her feelings. At one point, she says, "Yes, Mrs. Reed, to you I own some fearful pangs of mental suffering. But I ought to forgive you, for you knew not what you did." Jane says she "ought" to forgive Mrs. Reed, but she does not necessarily do it. Similarly, this older narrator explains that

children are often unable to express their feelings in words. Therefore, the reader should not be surprised by the meagerness of Jane's response to Mr. Lloyd's question about the source of her unhappiness in the Reed household. The frequent intrusions of this older voice increase sympathy for Jane, providing more insights on Jane's motivations. Notice that the novel's full title is *Jane Eyre*: *An Autobiography* and that the title page claims that it was edited, rather than written, by Currer Bell.

1.4 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 4

1.4.1 Summary

Following her discussion with Mr. Lloyd, Jane expects that she will soon be sent away toschool. But the only change Jane notices in her status following her experience in the red-room

is that the boundary between Jane and the Reed children is more solid. On January 15, after three months of waiting for a change, Jane is finally summoned to the breakfast-room. Here, she finds Mr. Brocklehurst waiting for her. Standing like a black pillar, Mr. Brocklehurst interviews Jane about hell, sin and the Bible. Her aunt's worst suspicions about her moral character are confirmed when Jane declares to Brocklehurst that the "Psalms are not interesting." As a final poke at Jane, Mrs. Reed declares that her niece is a liar, and Brocklehurst promises to alert the other members of the school to Jane's deceitful nature.

Jane resents Mrs. Reed's statements about her character, and when the two are alone together, Jane retaliates against her aunt. Angry and hurt, Jane declares that she is not a liar, that she isglad Mrs. Reed is not her relation, and, finally, that Mrs. Reed is hard-hearted. Jane feels a sense of triumph and exultation, and Mrs. Reed sheepishly leaves the room.

The chapter ends with a conversation between Jane and Bessie. Jane makes Bessie promise to be nice during Jane's final days at Gateshead. Bessie claims she likes Jane more than she likes the Reed children, and confesses that even her mother has noticed how often Jane has been mistreated by the Reeds. In celebration of their new friendship, Bessie tells Jane some of her most enchanting stories and sings her sweetest songs

1.4.2 Analysis

Mr. Brocklehurst enters the book in this chapter, ushering in the change that will alter Jane's life. On first seeing this grim man, Jane describes him as "a black pillar! — such,

at least, appeared to me, at first sight, the straight, narrow, sable-clad shape standing erect on the rug;the grim face at the top was like a carved mask." A clergyman, Brocklehurst symbolizes Jane's aversion to some of the versions of organized religion. A straight, black, narrow, erect pillar, this man is hard and inflexible in his beliefs, certainly not attributes admired by the adventurous Jane. The "carved mask" of his face suggests his inhumanity, as does Jane's later reference tohim as the "stony stranger." Unlike Jane who is associated with fire and energy, this man is cold and aloof as stone, someone with no passion and even less compassion. When Brocklehurst plants her straight in front of him, Jane exclaims, "what a great nose! and what amouth! and what large, prominent teeth!": Brocklehurst has been transformed into the big bad wolf of fairy-tale fame, waiting to devour the innocent Little Red Riding Hood. From his firstintroduction into the story, one realizes that this spiritual man will offer Jane little comfort and no salvation.

Besides signaling Jane's lack of interest in the self-righteous religion Brocklehurst professes, their interaction also reminds readers of Jane's general lack of respect for tyrannous authority figures. Her inability to quietly accept unfair treatment becomes pronounced in her interaction with Mrs. Reed. When her aunt tells Brocklehurst that Jane's worst trait is her "deceitful nature," Jane immediately recognizes her lack of power: How can a poor child defend herself from unfair accusations? When Brocklehurst leaves, Jane is filled with a "passion of resentment," contrasting clearly with Mrs. Reed's "eye of ice" that dwells "freezingly" on Jane. Indeed, Mrs. Reed's iciness incites Jane's passions, causing her entire body to shake, "thrilled with ungovernable excitement" and her mind has become a "ridge oflighted heath, alive, glancing, devouring." Following an outburst against her aunt, Jane feels a sensation of freedom and triumph. In fact, she declares herself the "winner of the field" and revels in her "conqueror's solitude." Has she simply stepped into her cousin John's role, becoming for a moment the "Roman emperor" she had earlier critiqued him for being?

Struck by the fate of Jane's enemies, many critics have viewed this novel as Jane's revenge fantasy. As the story progresses, notice what happens to Jane's attackers; all seem to meet with misfortune and unhappiness. Jane's fiery, passionate nature transforms as the novel progresses, and she learns to balance passion and reason. In this scene, Jane's passion quickly drains away, and she is left with its aftertaste, "metallic and corroding," showing her that excessive emotions will not lead to happiness. Yet releasing her inner fire has a positive result. Because of it, shebefriends Bessie at the end of the chapter. This conversation reveals

Bessie's sympathy — even affection — for Jane.

1.5 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 5

1.5.1 Summary

January 19, the date of Jane's departure from Gateshead has arrived. She rises at five o'clock in the morning, so that she will be ready for the six o'clock coach. None of the family rises to bid Jane farewell, and she happily journeys far away from the Reeds. The porter's wife is surprised that Mrs. Reed is allowing such a young child to travel alone. Jane's imaginative nature is once again apparent, and she worries that kidnappers will snatch her away at the inn where the coach stops for dinner.

The day of Jane's arrival at Lowood is rainy, windy and dark. Jane is led through the unfamiliar, labyrinthine halls of Lowood, until she reaches a large room in which eighty other girls sit doing their homework. Soon it is bedtime, and Jane wearily makes her way to bed. The next day, Jane follows the full routine of the school, studying from pre-dawn until five o'clock in the evening. The chapter is filled with Jane's observations of the school. Jane discovers the kind Miss Temple and the unreasonable Miss Scatcherd, who unfairly punishes Helen Burns. While solitary and isolated through most of the day, Jane does converse with Helen, who tells Jane that Lowood is a charity institution for orphan children. She also learns that Miss Temple must answer to Mr. Brocklehurst in all she does.

1.5.2 Analysis

Jane is making progress in her journey of self-knowledge, and has now progressed from Gateshead (note the significance of the name, as the starting point of Jane's quest) to Lowood. Its name alerts the reader that the school will be a "low" place for Jane, and, thus, it appears on her first day. Modelled after the Clergy Daughters School at Cowan Bridge where Charlotte Brontë and her sisters Maria, Elizabeth and Emily were sent, Lowood is not appealing. The school day begins before dawn, the students are offered eat meagre rations of burnt and unappetizing food, and the grounds surrounding the school are blighted and decayed. The chapter shows the harsh realities of charity-school life in Victorian times.

Besides acquainting us with the rigors of Lowood, the chapter also introduces us to two women who will have significant impact on Jane's development: Miss Temple and Helen Burns. Miss Temple's name signifies Jane's worshipful feeling for Lowood's

superintendent, as does her appearance: she is tall, fair and shapely, with a "benignant light" in her eyes and a "stately" posture. Notice how Miss Temple's appearance contrasts with the stony, dark, rigid exterior of her employer, Mr. Brocklehurst. Supplying the compassion, he lacks, Miss Temple orders a decent lunch for her students to compensate for their burnt breakfast.

Another hero in Jane's story, Helen Burns, is introduced in this chapter. What does Helen Burns' name signify? She is burning with a passion for heaven, and her fate is to die of a fever. Burns is based on Charlotte Brontë's oldest sister, Maria, who died when she was twelve years old after contracting consumption at the Clergy Daughters School. Brontë's second-oldest sister, Elizabeth, also died from this disease, caught at the unsanitary and damp school. Both Charlotte and Emily were withdrawn from the school before the following winter for the sake of their health. Like Helen Burns, Maria was known for the precocity of her thinking;

Mr. Brontë said that "he could converse with her [Maria] on any of the leading topics of the day with as much freedom and pleasures as with any grown-up person."

When Jane first notices Helen, her friend is reading Samuel Johnson's didactic tome, *Rasselas*, an essay arguing that happiness is often unobtainable. Although she enjoys reading, Jane is not interested in Helen's book because it does not contain any fairies or genii. Like Jane, Helen isa poor, lonely child, but her method of dealing with her problem's contrasts with Jane's, as is apparent in the interaction with Miss Scatcherd. After being unfairly disciplined by Miss Scatcherd, Helen neither cries nor looks humiliated; instead, she accepts her situation with composure and grace. Wondering how Helen can accept this treatment so quietly and firmly, Jane notices that Helen seems to be "thinking of something beyond her punishment," and her sight seems to have "gone down into her heart," emphasizing Helen's focus on spiritual rather than material matters. Jane is fascinated with Helen's self-possession, which signals a depth of character that is new to her. At this point in the story, Jane does not know how to judge Helen:Is she good or bad? Jane's goals in this first section of the book is to learn to recognize character and to find a role model.

1.6 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTERS 6-7

1.6.1 Summary

When the girls wake for breakfast on Jane's second morning at Lowood, they discover that

the water in the pitchers is frozen. Before, she had been merely a spectator at Lowood, but now Jane will become an actor, participating fully in the events at the school. As Jane sits sewing, she notices once again how unfairly Helen Burns is treated. Miss Scatcherd picks on Helen for inconsequential things, such as poking her chin unpleasantly or not holding her head up. Despite Miss Scatcherd's criticisms, Helen appears to be one of the brightest students in the class. She has answers for the most difficult questions.

Later in the evening, Jane converses once again with Helen. She learns more about Helen's philosophy of life and her doctrine of endurance. Helen praises Jane for her virtues, such as the ability to pay careful attention during lessons. In contrast, Helen believes she herself suffers from carelessness and poor concentration, spending too much time daydreaming about her home in Deepden, Northumberland. While Jane thinks Helen should fight against injustice, Helen tells her to follow Christ's example by loving her enemies. Jane's first quarter at Lowood passes, and Chapter 7 records Jane's general impressions of her first three months at the school. Again, she focuses on the harshness of life at Lowood: the severe cold, near starvation, and the long hours spent memorizing the Church Catechism and listening to long sermons. Fortunately for Jane, Mr. Brocklehurst, the financial manager of Lowood, is absent during most of this time. Finally, he appears at the school. Jane is worried at his arrival, because she remembers Mrs. Reed's comments to him about Jane's deceitfulness and Mr. Brocklehurst's promise to warn the teachers at the school of Jane's unsavory character.

During his visit, Jane accidentally drops her slate. Brocklehurst immediately brands her as careless. Although Miss Temple tells her not to be afraid of punishment, Jane is soon made the dunce of the school. Brocklehurst stands her on a stool and announces to the entire school that Jane is a liar. No one is to speak to Jane for the rest of the day, but Helen silently supports her friend by smiling every time she passes Jane's stool.

1.6.2 Analysis

The significant differences between Jane's and Helen's philosophies of life become apparent in this chapter. While Jane is always ready to fight against her enemies, Helen practices a doctrine of patient endurance. Although Helen accepts all punishment without a tear, the "spectacle" of her friend's suffering causes Jane to quiver with "unavailing and impotent anger." What are the reasons for Helen's endurance? First, she does not want to be a burden on her family, causing them grief by misbehaving. She also feels all people

are required to bear what fate has ordained for them. Her belief in predestination, the idea that one's life is guidedby fate rather than choice, shows her adherence to the philosophy of *Calvinism*. Founded by the Swiss theologian John Calvin, a leader in the Protestant Reformation movement, Calvinists follow a strict moral code and believe in the salvation of a select few who have been elected by God's grace.

Although Jane thinks Helen may have access to some deep spiritual truth, Jane cannot understand Helen's "doctrine of endurance" or her sympathy for her torturer. Unlike Helen, Jane believes in being good to people who are good to her. When struck without reason, the victim needs to "strike back again very hard," in order to teach the assailant a lesson. As readers saw in her final conversation with Aunt Reed, Jane firmly believes in retaliation and vengeance. Helen argues that a true Christian should mimic Jesus by loving, blessing and benefiting her neighbors. In Helen's opinion, Jane should even try to forgive her Aunt Reed, because life is too short for "nursing animosity." With her mind aimed squarely at heaven, Helen urges Jane to remember the eternal spirit that animates her temporary, corruptible body. Helen offers a view of Christianity that contrasts with the strict, hypocritical religion of Mr. Brocklehurst. While her compassion for other people is admirable and her rejection of vengeance and retaliation temper Jane's passionate anger, Helen will not offer Jane a completely acceptable model of Christianity because of her refusal to live in the real world. She is too much like the poor orphan in Bessie's song who rejected the real world in her dreams of heaven.

Brocklehurst's hypocrisy is highlighted in this chapter. At the arrival of this dour man, who looks "longer, narrower, and more rigid than ever," Jane is immediately upset. Her intuitive dislike for him is clearly justified in this scene. Brocklehurst insists that the girls eat a starvation-level diet so that they do not become accustomed to "habits of luxury and indulgence." Brocklehurst justifies this extreme lifestyle by referring to Christian doctrines. Like the primitive Christians and tormented martyrs, the girls should revel in their suffering and accept Jesus' consolations. Brocklehurst's hypocrisy becomes most apparent when his own wife and daughters enter the classroom. As Brocklehurst lectures Miss Temple on the need tocut off the girls' long hair — it's a sign of vanity — his wife and daughters walk into the room, ornately dressed in velvet, silk and furs. Jane notes that his daughters' hair is "elaborately curled" and that his wife wears fake French curls.

Rather than arguing with Brocklehurst, as the headstrong Jane might have, Miss Temple attempts to hide her emotions, but Jane notices that her face appears to become as cold

and fixed as marble, "especially her mouth, closed as if it would have required a sculptor's chisel to open it." Miss Temple turns to stone rather than confront her boss. While her compassion, elegance and reverence for learning make her a valuable role model for Jane, Miss Temple's failure to confront injustice directly is unacceptable to Jane.

Calling Jane an "interloper and an alien," Brocklehurst attempts to place Jane back into the inferior, outsider position she occupied at Gateshead. Although she is initially humiliated by his punishment, feeling that she is standing on a "pedestal of infamy," Helen offers solace. The light that shines in Helen's eyes when she walks past Jane's stool sends an "extraordinary sensation" through Jane, as if a "hero" has walked past a "slave or victim, and imparted strength in the transit." Again, Jane employs the language of heroism and slavery — but while she had been a "rebel slave" at the Reeds, here Helen's heroism passes into Jane so that she can relinquish her victimization. Again, Helen's power is spiritual rather than corporeal: Her eyes are inspired by a "strange light" and her smile is angelic. Through Helen's actions, Jane learns that heroism is not achieved by vengeance, but by dignity, intelligence and courage. Equally, she learns to change her behavior by changing her attitude; Helen's mere smile turns Jane's shame into strength.

1.7 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTERS 14-15

1.7.1 Summary

At first, Jane sees little of Rochester. During their brief encounters, she notices his moodiness, but it does not upset her. Finally, one evening, he summons Adèle and Jane, offering Adèle her long-awaited present. Jane notices that Rochester is in a friendlier mood than usual, probably due to his dinner wine. Rochester enjoys Jane's frank, sincere manner, and confesses that he has not lived the purest, most innocent life. They discuss sin, remorse and reformation. Finding Jane a good listener, Rochester speaks to her as freely as if he were writing his thoughts in a diary. He says he has given up his shameful lifestyle, and is ready to begin a new, pure life. Rochester tells Jane he is rearing Adèle in order to expiate the sins of his youth.

In Chapter 15, Rochester tells Jane about his passion for Céline Varens, a French opera-dancer whom he naively believed loved him. One night, however, Céline arrived home with another man and they mocked Rochester's "deformities"; Rochester overheard the

conversation and immediately ended the relationship. Céline told Rochester that Adèle was his daughter, but he is not sure because she does not look anything like him. Several years later, Céline abandonedher daughter and ran away to Italy with a musician. Although he refuses to recognize Adèle as his daughter, Rochester took pity on the abandoned and destitute child and brought her to England.

At two o'clock one morning, Jane hears a demoniac laugh outside of her bedroom door and the sound of fingers brushing against the panels. She thinks it might be Pilot, Rochester's dog, wandering the hallways, but then she hears a door opening. Going into the hallway, she sees smoke billowing from Rochester's room. She rushes into his chamber and discovers the curtains on fire and his bed surrounded by tongues of flame. Unable to wake him, she delugesthe bed with water. Rochester won't let Jane call for help; instead, he says that he must pay a visit to the third floor. He tells Jane that Grace Poole was the culprit and then thanks her warmly for saving his life. He asks Jane to keep the incident a secret.

1.7.2 Analysis

Early critics of the novel, such as Elizabeth Rigby, objected to Rochester's character, finding him "coarse and brutal." In her opinion, the novel as a whole showed an unwholesome "coarseness of language and laxity of tone." The conversation between Jane and Rochester inthese chapters was shocking to a Victorian audience; as Rochester himself admits, telling thestory of his affair with an opera-dancer to an inexperienced girl seems odd. He justifies his action by arguing that Jane's strong character is not likely to "take infection" from this tale of immorality; indeed, he claims that he cannot "blight" Jane, but she might "refresh" him. Again, Rochester hopes that his relationship with Jane will bring innocence and freshness back into his life.

Just as women need to lead active lives, Brontë argues, they should not be sheltered from life's seamier side. Not only does the Rochester's past reveal his growing faith in Jane, it also shows the Byronic side of his nature. Like Lord Byron, a romantic, passionate and cynical poet of the early nineteenth century, Rochester let himself be ruled by his "grande passion" for Céline, despite its immorality. Rochester is not afraid to flout social conventions. This is also apparent in his developing relationship with Jane; rather than maintaining the proper class boundaries, Rochester makes Jane feel "as if he were my relation rather than my master."

Rochester's responses to Adèle provide insights on his past life, which help identify the reasons for his attraction to Jane. Adèle Varens provides Rochester with a daily reminder of his past indiscretions. Attracted to luxury, to satin robes and silk stockings, Adèle displays a materialism Rochester dislikes primarily because it reminds him of her mother, Céline Varens, who charmed the "English gold" out of his "British breeches." Emphasizing his British innocence, Rochester's comments are ethnocentric, but they also show that he dislikes the "artificiality" and the materialism of women who, like Céline, are pleased with "nothing but gold dust."

Rochester continues to create a contrast between Céline's superficiality and Jane's sincerity. While Céline pretended to admire his physical appearance, for example, Jane honestly tells him that she does not find him handsome. Céline presents an unsavory model of femininity, but also an image of unattractive foreignness. Jane's comment implies that the English, unlike their French neighbors, are deep, rather than superficial, spiritual rather than materialistic. Not only does the novel question class and gender roles, but it also develops a specific ideal of Britishness. Jane provides a prototype of the proper English woman, who is frank, sincere and lacking in personal vanity. Rochester is intrigued by the honesty of Jane's conversation and the spirituality of her drawings, which clearly contrast with the values of the women with whom he has previously consorted. Honestly admitting that his life has not been admirable, Rochesteris now looking for happiness, for "sweet, fresh pleasure." Rochester's goal is self- transformation, a reformation to be enacted through his relationships with women.

The end of Chapter 15 takes a strange, almost supernatural turn. Beginning with Rochester's revelation of his illicit passion for Céline Varens, the chapter, not insignificantly, ends with an image of "tongues of flame" darting around his bed. Rochester's sexual indiscretions have become literalized in the vision of his burning bed, an excess that Jane douses. The scene foreshadows Jane's role in channelling Rochester's sexual profligacy into a properly domestic, reproductive passion. Jane's final dream also foreshadows the direction of her relationship with Rochester: She is "tossed on a buoyant but unquiet sea, where billows of trouble rolled undersurges of joy." Unable to reach the "sweet hills" that await her, Jane must remain for a while in the unquiet sea. Recognizing her growing love for Rochester, Jane's unconscious warns her that their relationship will be a rocky one. Rather than letting herself be blown around by the chaos of passion and delirium, she should maintain her sense and judgment. In this novel, thebounds of reality

continually expand, so that dreams and visions have as much validity as reason.

1.8 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 16

1.8.1 Summary

On the morning following the fire, Jane dreads seeing Rochester, but his behavior has not changed. Watching the servants cleaning Rochester's room, Jane is amazed to find Grace Poole sewing new curtain rings. Grace seems calm for a woman who tried to commit murder the previous night. Like the other servants, Grace seems to believe that Rochester fell asleep with his candle lit, and the curtains caught on fire. Grace advises Jane to bolt her door every night. Throughout their conversation, Grace gives no sign of guilt at having set the fire, astonishing Jane with her self-possession and hypocrisy. Jane is curious about Grace's role in the household. Why has not he fired Grace following the previous night's near murderous arson? At first, Jane believes Rochester might be in love with Grace, but rejects this idea because of Grace's unattractive and matronly appearance. Jane is dismayed to learn that Rochester has left the house to attend a party at the Leas, home of Mr. Eshton, and will be gone for several days. She is particularly upset to learn that a beautiful woman, Miss Blanche Ingram, will be at the party. Recognizing that she is falling in love with Rochester, Jane tries to discipline her feelings by drawing two pictures: a self-portrait in crayon and an imaginary picture of Blanche on ivory. Whenever her feelings for Rochester become too intense, Jane compares her own plainness with Blanche's beauty.

1.8.2 Analysis

Jane's love for Rochester becomes apparent in this chapter. In her jealousy, Jane imagines a past love relationship between Grace and Rochester; perhaps Grace's "originality and strength of character" compensate for her lack of beauty. Jane does not think Rochester is overly impressed by women's looks; for example, Jane is not beautiful, yet Rochester's words, look, and voice on the previous night indicated that he likes her. But a major difference exists between Jane and Grace; as Bessie Leaven said, Jane is a lady. In fact, she looks even better than she did when Bessie saw her, because she has gained color, flesh and vivacity from the pleasures she enjoys in her relationship with Rochester. She is especially pleased with her ability to vex and sooth him by turns, but always maintaining "every propriety of my station." All of these meditations show Jane's anxieties about Rochester hinge on the issues of social class and beauty.

Her hopes are dashed when she learns of Blanche Ingram. Considered the beauty of the county, Blanche, whose name means "fair" or "white," has "noble features," "raven-black" hair arranged in glossy curls and brilliant black eyes, which contrast with the "pure white" clothes she wears. As with Jane's descriptions of Mrs. Reed and her son John, "darkness" often has negative connotations — the ethnocentricity of Victorian England tended to associate dark with night and evil. Therefore, Jane's description of Blanche, which emphasizes her dark, Spanish features, implies a negative side of her personality; like Céline, Blanche will be an unacceptable model of femininity. But at this point in the novel, Jane views Blanche as an accomplished and beautiful rival. Most important, as the daughter of landed gentry, her class position more closely matches Rochester's, making Jane's earlier claims to be a "lady" seem insignificant. Jane's dream of the previous night is quickly becoming reality: Rather than allow herself to be brutally tossed around in the sea of her passion for Rochester, Jane vows to be sensible and accept that Rochester could never love her. In creating contrasting portraits of herself and Blanche, Jane emphasizes her own plainness. To Blanche, on the other hand, she gives the loveliest face she can imagine, a Grecian neck, dazzling jewelry and glistening satin. Once again, Jane's passions have become hyperbolic, as she cannot fully discipline her jealousy of Blanche. In her portraits, Jane excessively emphasizes the material differences between the two women, showing that Jane has not yet learned the value of her own spiritual superiority. Jane still has a long way to go on her path to self-knowledge.

1.9 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 17

1.9.1 Summary

Jane is sickeningly disappointed when Rochester has not returned in a week, and Mrs. Fairfax suggests that he might go directly to Europe, not returning to Thornfield for a year or more. After two weeks, Rochester sends a letter telling Mrs. Fairfax that he will arrive in three days, along with a party of people. Jane is still amazed by Grace Poole's erratic behavior, yet no one else in the house seems to notice her odd habits, her isolation or her drinking. One day, Jane overhears some of the servants discussing Grace, emphasizing how much Grace is being paid. From this conversation, Jane concludes that there is a mystery at Thornfield from which she isbeing purposely excluded.

On Thursday evening, Rochester and his guests arrive. Together, they give Jane an

impression of upper-class elegance, unlike anything she has ever experienced. When Rochester summons Jane and Adèle to meet the party, Adèle is ecstatic, but Jane is nervous and remains inconspicuously in a window-seat. Jane gives her impressions of the guests, including the dark, majestic Blanche Ingram, whom she thinks Rochester must admire. Jane tries to sneak away from the party, but Rochester stops her. He notices she looks depressed and wonders why. At first, he insists that she return to the drawing room, but when he sees tears in her eyes, he allows her to leave. In future, though, she must appear in the drawing room every evening. He says goodnight, stopping himself from adding a term of endearment.

1.9.2 Analysis

In this chapter, the negative attributes of Blanche's character become apparent, at least in Jane's eyes. While Blanche's beauty lives up to Mrs. Fairfax's description of her, it also contains a "haughtiness," a "fierce and hard eye" that resembles her mother's. According to Jane, Blanche is "the very type of majesty." But majesty is hard to live with, and Jane wonders if Rochester truly admires her. Blanche appears to dislike both children — she notices Adèle with a "mocking eye" — and governesses. Her dislike of governesses goes beyond economizing. She rudely (because she knowingly speaks so Jane can hear her) calls them "detestable," "ridiculous" incubi, sucking the lifeblood from the family. Blanche's mother supports her, arguing "there are a thousand reasons why liaisons between governesses and tutors should never be tolerated a moment in any well-regulated house." Not only are these employees subject to constant persecution, but they are desexualized, not allowed to fall in love. Other members of the party join in with their stories of governess abuse; obviously, it was not pleasant to be responsible for teaching the children of the upper classes. The Ingrams' cruelty is similar to the Reeds', and Jane says Lady Ingram's "fierce and hard eye" reminds her of Mrs. Reed's.

Jane's gaze is active, almost masculine in this chapter: "I looked, and had an acute pleasure in looking — a precious yet poignant pleasure; pure gold, with a steely point of agony: a pleasure

like what the thirst-perishing man might feel " Generally, gazing is a power men have over

women, appropriating women by looking at them, cataloguing their beauty. But here, Jane appropriates that power for herself. While Blanche is looking for Rochester's gold coins, Janefinds her gold in gazing at her beloved. The mixture of pleasure and pain in her

description — "poignant pleasure" and "steely point of agony" — suggest the erotic appeal of Rochester to her; this is not an innocent glance, but a gaze tinged with sexual tension.

1.10 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTERS 18-19

1.10.1 Summary

With guests at Thornfield, life is cheerful. One night, they are preparing for a game of charades. Rochester's group goes first, pantomiming a marriage ceremony with Rochester and Blanche as the happy couple. They then enact the story of Eliezer and Rebecca, and end with Rochester as a prisoner in chains. Colonel Dent's team correctly guesses the overall meaning of the three charades: Bridewell, an English prison. No longer interested in the charades, Jane watches the interactions between Rochester and Blanche. Their intimate style of conversing leads Jane to believe they will soon marry.

But Jane does not believe they love each other. Rochester is marrying for social and political reasons, while Blanche is marrying for money. Mr. Mason, an old acquaintance of Rochester, arrives one day. Jane immediately dislikes Mason's "unsettled and inanimate" face. From Mason, she learns that Rochester once lived in the West Indies.

A gypsy woman, old Mother Bunches, arrives from a nearby camp and wants to tell the fortunes of "the quality." Lady Ingram wants the old woman sent away, but Blanche insists upon having her fortune told. After fifteen minutes with the old woman, Blanche returns, and has obviously received disappointing news. Mary Ingram, and Amy and Louisa Eschton have their fortunes read together and return laughing, impressed by Mother Bunches' intimate knowledge of their lives. Finally, the gypsy insists upon telling Jane's fortune. Jane is not frightened, just interested and excited.

Jane enters the library and finds the gypsy woman seated snugly in an easy chair. She sits in front of the fire, reading something that looks like a Prayer Book. Despite Jane's protests to the contrary, the gypsy woman tells Jane she is cold, sick and silly. Jane, she foretells, is very close to happiness; if Jane made a movement toward it, bliss would result. Soon, the gypsy's speech has wrapped Jane in a dream-like state, and she is surprised by how well the old woman knows the secrets of her heart. The gypsy also explains that she (the gypsy) crushed Blanche's marriage hopes by suggesting Rochester is not as wealthy as he seems. The gypsy then reads each of Jane's features, as the voice drones on it eventually becomes Rochester's. Jane tells Rochester the disguise was unfair and admits she had suspected Grace Poole of being the masquerader. Before leaving, Jane tells

Rochester about Mason's arrival; he is visibly upset by this news. Rochester worries that Mason has told them something grave or mysterious about him. Later that night, she hears Rochester happily leading Mason to his room.

1.10.2 Analysis

More aspects of Blanche Ingram's bad behavior are presented in this chapter. For example, she pushes Adèle away with "spiteful antipathy" and her treatment of Jane is no much better: She"scorned to touch [Jane] with the hem of her robes as she passed" and quickly withdrew her eyes from Jane "as from an object too mean to merit observation." Jane concludes that Blanche is an inferior example of femininity because, like Céline Varens, she is showy, but not genuine. Her heart is "barren," her mind is "poor," and she lacks "freshness," the one trait Rochester
claims to be searching for. Qualities Jane admires in women include force, fervor, kindness and sense.

The chapter contains many prophetic events. Linking marriage with imprisonment, the charade foreshadows the circumstances of Rochester's marriage that has trapped him for life with a mad woman; Rochester is stuck in a "Bridewell" of his own creation. The arrival of Mr. Mason also prefigures change. Immediately disliking the tame vacancy of Mason's eyes, Jane compares him with Rochester, finding they differ like a gander and a falcon. Mason's difference lies in foreignness; recently arrived from the West Indies, Mason appears to suffer from a heat-induced languor. Mason will play a pivotal role in the plot of the story, and his presence provides another example of how foreigners are denigrated in this novel.

In posing as a gypsy woman, Rochester is assuming an ambiguous role — a position of both gender and class inferiority. In his disguise, he is almost denied admittance to his own home, and is referred to here by Jane as "mother" rather than "master." Many critics argue Jane's relationship with Rochester is marked by ambiguities of equality and independence: In their first meeting, for example, Rochester is dependent upon Jane to return to his horse. As gypsy woman, Rochester breaks gender boundaries and further aligns himself with mystical knowledge. During this tale, Rochester wears a red cloak, connecting with other red images in the novel and showing his connection with the element of passion. Given the class differences between them, Rochester cannot reveal his feeling for Jane in plain English, but must keep his words, like his face, veiled. As his

language becomes plainer, more directly revealing the secrets of her heart, it paradoxically leads her not into reality, but into a dream state: Jane says the gypsy's strange talk leads Jane into "a web of mystification."

Rochester's almost supernatural powers are highlighted in this scene: His ability to weave a magical web around Jane with words and, more importantly, his ability to look almost directly into her heart so she feels an "unseen spirit had been sitting for weeks by my heart watching its workings and taking record of every pulse." He has also seen through Blanche's heart, recognizing her fortune-hunting mission. His witch's skill is being able to peer deeply into women's hearts, extracting their secrets: Notice that he does not tell the fortunes of any of the men in the party.

1.11 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 20

1.11.1 Summary

Later that evening, Jane lies in bed, gazing at the moonlight coming in her window. Suddenly, she hears a heart-stopping cry for help. Jane hurriedly puts on some clothes, horror shaking her body. All members of the party have gathered in the hallway, wondering if the house is on fire or if robbers have broken in. Rochester assures them that the noise was simply a servant having a bad dream and sends them back to their beds. Jane knows this is a lie, because she heard the strange cry, a struggle, and then a call for help. Before too long, Rochester knocks on her door, asking if she can help him, as long as she is not afraid of blood. Together they climb to the mysterious third storey of the house.

There they discover Richard Mason with a bloody arm. Rochester asks Jane to sop up the blood while he runs for the surgeon, but insists that Mason and Jane not speak with each other; if they do, Rochester will "not answer for the consequences." Jane stares at a cabinet in the room, which bears a grim design: the twelve Christian apostles with a dying Jesus hanging from a cross above them. As dawn approaches, Rochester finally returns with the surgeon. While he dresses Mason's wounds, the men speak obscurely of the woman who bit and stabbed Mason. Rochester has Jane run downstairs to find a special cordial he bought from an Italian charlatan. He measures twelve drops of the liquid into a glass, and has Mason drink the mixture, which Rochester claims will give him the "heart" he lacks for an hour or so.

After Mason has left, Jane and Rochester walk through the gardens. Rochester tells Jane the hypothetical story of a wild boy indulged from children, who commits a "capital

error" whilein a remote foreign country. He lives in debauchery for a while, then seeks to resume a happy, pure life with a kind stranger, but a "mere conventional impediment stands in his way." Whatwould Jane do in such a situation, Rochester asks? Jane's answer is that a sinner's reformation should never depend on another person; instead, he should look to God for solace. Rochester then asks Jane, without parable, if marrying Blanche would bring him regeneration? He describes Blanche as a "strapper," big and buxom, like the women of Carthage, then rushes off to the stables to speak with Dent and Lynn.

1.11.2 Analysis

The secret residing on the third floor of Rochester's house is becoming ever more difficult for Rochester to disguise. Rochester's feelings are apparent through his description of his house; while for Jane, it is a "splendid mansion," for Rochester it is a "mere dungeon," a Bridewell. While she sees only the glamour of the place, he sees the gilding as slime, the silk draperies as cobwebs, the marble as "sordid slate." Jane is unable to see below the surface to the secret residing within Rochester's domestic space. Under a veneer of domestic tranquillity lies a monstrous secret — in the form of the strange woman who lives on the third floor. As Jane notes, this crime or mystery is one that can be neither "expelled nor subdued by the owner," emphasizing Rochester's inability to control this woman. Descriptions of her — she "worried me like a tigress" and "she sucked the blood: she said she'd drain my heart" — suggest her ferocious power and vampiric tendencies. Bertha seems to represent a silent rebellion brewing in women's minds, one Jane will discuss later in the novel.

Jane Eyre combines the techniques of several literary genre, including the bildungsroman (a novel that shows the psychological or moral development of the main character), the romance and the gothic novel. Elements of gothic predominate in this chapter. Generally, gothic usesremote, gloomy settings, and a sinister, eerie atmosphere to create a feeling of horror and mystery. Jane's language in this chapter — filled with references to the supernatural, mystery, crime, secrets and excessive emotions — fits this rubric. For example, Jane's description of her experience on the mysterious, remote third story of the house contributes to the reader's sense of horror and impending mystery: She tells of the "mystic cells" of "a pale and bloody spectacle" of a mystery that breaks out "now in fire and now in blood, at the deadest hours of night," creating a "web of horror." Her portrait of the grim cabinet depicting the twelve apostles, on which she imagines Judas "gathering life and threatening a revelation of Satan

himself," suggests a devilish, supernatural evil. Similarly, Rochester's ability to conjure up a cordial to give Richard almost supernatural strength, hints at his mysterious, possibly unnatural powers.

1.12 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 21

1.12.1 Summary

Jane remembers Bessie Leaven saying that dreams of children are a sign of trouble, either to oneself or one's kin. Jane is worried because she has been dreaming of infants for the past seven successive nights, including the night she was roused by Mason's cry. It also happens on the day Jane learns of her cousin John's death. The news of her son's death has caused Mrs. Reed to have a stroke, and she is now asking for Jane.

Jane arrives at Gateshead at five o'clock on May 1, greeted by Bessie, who prepares tea for them both. As they sit discussing old times, Jane realizes that the flame of her old resentments against the Reeds has been extinguished. She walks into the main house and meets her two cousins again: Eliza is tall and ascetic looking, while Georgiana is buxom and beautiful. Bessie takes Jane to see Mrs. Reed, whose face is as stern and restless as ever. While Jane would like to be reconciled with her aunt, Mrs. Reed won't relinquish her animosity. Jane learns the source of Mrs. Reed's anger toward her: Mrs. Reed was jealous of the relationship that Jane's mother, Mr. Reed's favorite sister, had with her husband, and of the fact that he showed Jane more attention than he ever showed his own children.

To pass the time, Jane sketches. Both Eliza and Georgiana are surprised with her skill, and Jane volunteers to draw their portraits. This breaks the ice between Jane and her cousins, and Georgiana begins confiding in her. Eliza is busy all day, every day; she plans to enter a convent when her mother dies. One rainy day, Jane sneaks upstairs to her aunt's room. Awaking from her lethargy, Mrs. Reed gives Jane a letter from her uncle, John Eyre. Written three years earlier, the letter reveals that he wishes to adopt Jane and leave her his fortune. Mrs. Reed didnot send it to Jane because she hated her too much and wanted to get revenge. One final time,Jane tries to seek reconciliation with her aunt, but Mrs. Reed refuses to forgive her. Her aunt dies at midnight.

1.12.2 Analysis

This chapter develops the characters of the Reeds, who have not changed much in the

years since Jane last saw them. The three Reed women are models of three different types of unacceptable female behaviour. Eliza's ascetic appearance and crucifix signal her religious rebirth. Extremely rigid, Eliza has every aspect of her day planned out, yet Jane cannot find any "result of her diligence." When her mother dies, she plans to join a convent. Despite her seeming devotion, Eliza knows as little about compassion or love as does Mr. Brocklehurst. An angry, bitter woman, Eliza offers another negative image of Christianity. All of her work is self-centered, and she has little interest in her mother's health, not even shedding a tear when she dies. Always cold, rigid and impassible, Eliza is an example of a character who is too icy, too lacking in generous, passionate feeling. Jane's belief is that "judgement untempered by feeling is too bitter and husky a morsel for human deglutition"; Jane seeks a balance between judgment and feeling that will allow her a full, but healthy share in human joy.

While Eliza has too much judgment, too little feeling, Georgiana has the opposite: feeling without judgment. Where Eliza has consecrated herself to excessive asceticism, Georgiana has devoted herself to an immoderate fashionableness. Where Eliza is tall and extremely thin, Georgiana is buxom and voluptuous. Vain and shallow, Georgiana shows no interest in her brother's death or in her mother's illness. In a fashion similar to Céline Varens, Georgiana's mind is fully devoted to recollections of past parties and "aspirations after dissipations to come." Neither Eliza's nun-like life nor Georgiana's fashionable fluff interests Jane.

Aunt Reed is also a negative model. Refusing forgiveness or compassion, her aunt cherishes only ill-feelings for Jane. While Jane's fiery passions have been extinguished, her aunt maintains a heated hatred for Jane until the moment of her death. In fact, she wishes Jane had died in the typhus outbreak at Lowood. This animosity is based on jealousy: She could not accept her husband's love of his sister or her child. Despite her attempts to keep John Eyre away from Jane, his repeated appearance in the story foreshadows his role later in her life, a role that will center on money. Aunt Reed's revenge attempt will be unsuccessful.

1.13 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 22

1.13.1 Summary

Jane remains at Gateshead for a month, helping Georgiana and Eliza prepare for their departures: Georgiana to her uncle in London, and Eliza to a nunnery in Lisle, France.

Eliza compliments Jane on her independence and hard work. The older Jane interrupts the narrative, telling Eliza's and Georgiana's futures: Eliza becomes the Mother Superior of a convent while Georgiana marries a wealthy, worn-out man of fashion. Mrs. Fairfax writes to Jane while she is at the Reeds, informing her that the house party has ended and that Rochester has gone to London to buy a new carriage, supposedly in anticipation of his upcoming marriage to Blanche.

Returning to Thornfield feels odd to Jane. She wonders where she will go after Rochester marries and is impatient to see him again. Unexpectedly, she sees him sitting on a narrow stone stile, with a book and pencil in his hand. He teases her about sneaking up on him, like a "dream or shade." Almost against her will, Jane tells him that her only home is with him. At the house, Jane is warmly greeted by Mrs. Fairfax, Adèle, Sophie and Leah, declaring there is no happiness like being loved. Over the next two weeks, Jane is surprised that no wedding preparations are being made, nor does Rochester journey to Ingram Park to visit Blanche. Never has she seen Rochester so happy; never has Jane loved him so well.

1.13.2 Analysis

In this chapter, Jane is again described as a magical creature. Indeed, the entire setting has become invested with magic. Walking on the road to Thornfield, Jane notices that the sky seems lit by fire, a spiritual "altar burning behind its screen of marbled vapor." When he sees her coming down the lane, Rochester wonders why she has not called a carriage "like a common mortal," but instead, steals home at twilight like a "dream or a shade." Similarly, when she declares she is returning from visiting her dead aunt, Rochester interprets her as saying she comes from the "other world — from the abode of people who are dead." If he had the courage, he would touch her to be sure she is not "a substance or shadow" or elf. Touching her would be like touching one of the blue *ignis fatuus* lights in the marsh, a deceptive light that cannot be found. In the same way, when she asks him whether he has been to London, Rochester wonders if she "found that out by second sight." Rochester wishes he could be more beautiful for his future bride, and asks fairy Jane for "a charm, or a philter" that would make him handsome, just as he earlier provided Richard Mason with a potion to make him fearless. In her admiration for Rochester, Jane believes a "loving eye is all the charm needed." That evening, Jane sits with Mrs. Fairfax and Adèle in the drawing room, and a "ring of golden peace" surrounds them. Their

domestic happiness appears to be controlled by a magical power beyond their control, a magic circle of protection and repose, induced by Jane's prayers that they not be parted.

Jane is not the only one with special powers. She reminds the reader of Rochester's ability to read her unspoken thoughts with incomprehensible acumen. In addition, his "wealth" of power for communicating happiness also seems magical. As she tries to leave him, an impulse holds her fast, "a force turned me round. I said — or something in me said for me, and in spite of me," wherever he is will be her home — her only home. In this instance, it is as if Rochester is compelling her to confess her feelings for him, and she cannot possibly resist. Why is so much emphasis placed on both lover's otherworldly powers? The supernatural elements add to the gothic feel of the tale, and also make their love seem special, magical, like something existing outside of ordinary time and space. Yet Jane is not secure in her relationship with Rochester. Despite their obvious closeness, Jane still hears "a voice" warning her of near separation and grief. Her magical, psychic powers do not reveal a painless future. Similarly, she dreams of Miss Ingram closing the gates of Thornfield against her and sending her away, while Rochester smiles sardonically. As Rochester suggests, Jane seems to have a second sight, warning her of impending danger andseparation from her beloved.

1.14 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 23

1.14.1 Summary

It is a beautiful midsummer's night. As the sun sets, Jane walks around the gardens of Thornfield, enjoying the solemn purple that colors the sky. Smelling Rochester's cigar from a window, Jane moves into the more secluded space of the orchard. But Rochester is now in the garden. Jane tries to escape unseen, but he speaks to her, asking her to look at an interesting moth. Although uncomfortable being alone with Rochester at night, Jane is unable to find a reasonable excuse for leaving him.

During their ensuing conversation, Rochester tells Jane she will soon need to leave Thornfield forever because he is finally marrying Miss Ingram, whom he humorously calls "an extensive armful." Rochester teasingly tells her of a governess position, undertaking the education of the five daughters of Mrs. Dionysius O'Gall of Bitternutt Lodge in Ireland. Together, they sit ona bench under a chestnut tree to discuss Jane's trip. Now, Rochester admits his strong feelingsfor Jane, and she reveals her love for him. He proposes marriage. At first, Jane does not believe he is serious, but she reads the truth in his face and accepts

his proposal. He savagely declaresthat God has sanctioned their union. So, he does not care what society thinks of the relationship.

A flash of lightning sends them rushing home through the rain. They are soaked, and when Rochester helps her out of her coat, he kisses her repeatedly. Jane looks up to see Mrs. Fairfax watching, pale and amazed. During the night, lightning splits the great chestnut tree in two.

Analysis

Throughout this chapter, nature symbolically mimics Jane's feelings. Blissfully spending time with Rochester, Jane notices that "a band of Italian days had come from the South, like a flock of glorious passenger birds, and lighted to rest them on the cliffs of Albion." Everything is in its "dark prime," as the apex of Jane and Rochester's relationship is reached. On this splendid

midsummer's evening, Jane notes the sky is "burning with the light of red jewel and furnace flame at one point"; the sky, like their love is passionate, flaming. Not a delicate white jewel,the heavens now glow with a fervent red. Ripe and blooming, the world offers various sensual pleasures; the gooseberry tree is laden with fruit large as plums; the sweet-briar, jasmine and rose have yielded a "sacrifice of incense"; Rochester tastes the ripe cherries as he walks through the garden; and the nightingale sings. This moment combines material pleasures with the spiritual pleasures of a "sacrifice of incense" and Jane's feeling that she could "haunt" the orchard forever.

But the world has changed by the end of the chapter: The chestnut tree under which Rochesterproposed now ails, "writhing and groaning" in the roaring wind. Thunder and lightning crackand clash. So, Jane and Rochester are forced to race back to the house in the pouring rain. Therelationship has reached the zenith of ripeness, and a fallow, tragic time is on the way, symbolized by this raging storm. During the night, lightning splits the great chestnut tree, foreshadowing the separation that will soon befall Jane and Rochester.

The chapter also continues themes discussed earlier, such as the problems of class difference and the spiritual nature of their relationship. Early in their conversation, Rochester treats Janelike a good servant: Because she has been a "dependent" who has done "her duty," he, as heremployer, wants to offer her assistance in finding a new job. Jane confirms her secondary status, referring to Rochester as "master," and believing "wealth, caste, custom" separate her from her beloved, even though she "naturally and

inevitably" loves him. In this quote, Jane creates her love for Rochester as essential and uncontrollable, and, therefore, beyond the bounds of class. Similarly, Rochester argues that an almost magical cord connects him to Jane. Yet she also believes Rochester may be playing with her feelings, that he may see her as an automaton, "a machine without feelings"; because she is "poor, obscure, plain and little," he may mistakenly think she is also "soulless and heartless." At this point, she speaks to him beyond the "medium of custom, conventionalities," even flesh, and her spirit addresses his spirit in a relationship of equality. Again, Jane creates equality by moving the relationship outside of the material world, and into the spiritual: At "God's feet," they can stand side-by- side, rather than with Rochester leading, Jane following.

1.15 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTERS 24-25

1.15.1 Summary

The next morning, Jane wakes, wondering if the previous night was just a dream. She feels transformed; even her face looks different, no longer plain. Believing Jane has taken an immoral turn, Mrs. Fairfax is cool and quiet at breakfast, but Jane feels she must let Rochester give explanations. When she walks up to the schoolroom in search of Adèle, Jane finds Rochester instead. He calls her "Jane Rochester," which she finds frightening, and tells her the wedding will be in four weeks. Jane does not believe the wedding will actually happen — it would be a "fairy-tale," too much happiness for a real human.

Rochester vows to make the world recognize Jane's beauty, but she worries that he is trying totransform her into a costumed ape. Jane is upset by Mrs. Fairfax's response to the news of theengagement. Rather than being delighted with the relationship, Mrs. Fairfax warns Jane to maintain a distance from Rochester, because she is worried about the differences between their ages and social classes. Later that day, Jane and Rochester drive to Millcote to make purchases for the wedding, and Adèle rides with them. They shop for silk and jewels, making Jane feel like a "doll." She vows to write her uncle in Madeira when she returns home, reasoning that she would be more comfortable accepting Rochester's gifts if she knew she would one day have her own money to contribute to the relationship. That evening, Rochester sings Jane a romantic song, but she has no intention of sinking into a "bathos of sentiment." She plans to keep her distance until after the wedding vows.

In Chapter 25, all of the preparations are ready for the wedding, which takes place the next day. Jane cannot bring herself to label her luggage with the cards that say "Mrs. Rochester," because this person does not yet exist. Together, they eat their last dinner at Thornfield before leaving on their European honeymoon. Jane cannot eat, but tells Rochester about a strange occurrence that happened the previous night, while he was away: Before Jane went to bed, she discovered a hidden gift from Rochester — an expensive veil from London that she doubts can transform her from a plebian to a peeress. As she slept, she dreamt of a child, too young and feeble to walk, who cried in her arms. Rochester walked on a road ahead of her, but shewas unable to catch him. The dream then took her to Thornfield Hall, which had become a "dreary ruin," with nothing remaining but a "shell-like wall." Trying to get a final glimpse of Rochester, she climbed the wall of Thornfield, but it collapsed, causing her to fall and drop the child. When she woke, she saw the figure of a woman in her room, someone she did not recognize. The woman, whose face was ghastly, "savage," vampirish, threw Jane's veil over her own face. After gazing at herself in the mirror, the woman took the veil off, ripped it in two, and trampled it. Then the woman walked over to Jane's bed and peered into her face,

causing her to faint for the second time in her life. When Jane woke in the morning, she discovered the veil on the floor, torn in two. So, she knows the experience was not a dream.

Rochester thanks God that Jane was not harmed and then suggests that the woman must have been Grace Poole. In a state between sleeping and waking, Jane simply did not recognize her. He promises to explain everything in "a year and a day" after their marriage. Rochester insists that Jane sleep in Adèle's bed this night, with the door securely fastened.

1.15.2 Analysis

Now that Jane has accepted Rochester's proposal, he seems intent on transforming her into the ideal object of affection. Already that morning, he has sent to London to have the family jewels sent to Thornfield for Jane, and he wants her to wear satin, lace and priceless veils. Jane worries she will lose herself if "tricked out" in these "stage-trappings." Not only does he want to make Jane a "beauty," Rochester also wants her to be his "angel" and "comforter." Jane reminds him that she simply wants to be herself, not some "celestial" being. A flaw has become apparent in Rochester's approach to love. While he claims to dislike fortune-

hunting women, such as Céline Varens or Blanche Ingram, he seems to be trying to turn Jane into one of them. In fact,she argues that if she accepted his demands, he would soon grow tired of her. As "performingape," Jane would be no better than a kept woman, an elegantly clothed object performing for her master. Instead, Jane wants to maintain both her personality and her independence. What Rochester values in Jane is her pliancy, which allows him to shape her into the woman he desires, something that would not have been possible with a powerful woman like Blanche. Rochester still has much to learn about love.

Allusions to fairy tales continue in this chapter. Rochester tells Adèle that Jane is the fairy from Elf-land whose errand is to make him happy. This fantasy reminds the reader that one of Rochester's primary hopes from this marriage is that it will somehow purify him: For example, he wants to revisit all of his old haunts in Europe, tracing all of his old steps, but now "healed and cleansed" by his angelic Jane. By recreating her as fairy or angel, Rochester fulfills his own fantasy of magically erasing his past transgressions and beginning a fresh, new life.

But what does this fantasy offer Jane? Reduced to muse or "doll," Jane has no power over her own future. Jane makes this idea apparent when she claims Rochester gives her a smile such as a sultan would "bestow on a slave his gold and gems had enriched." Insisting that he prefers his "one little English girl" to the "Grand Turk's whole seraglio," Rochester points to Jane's

powerlessness, her reduction to sex slave. Rather than becoming slave, Jane vows she will become a missionary, preaching liberty to women enslaved within harems. While her comments imply a Eurocentric understanding of eastern culture — the enlightened Englishwoman coming to the rescue of poor, imprisoned Turkish women — she insightfully implies that the position of English women is not much better than that of their Turkish counterparts; both are enslaved by male despotism, which makes women objects of male desire, rather than thinking, independent subjects.

Chapter 25 is filled with prophetic symbols and dreams, as Brontë prepares the reader for theclimactic Chapter 26, in which Jane discovers Rochester's secret. As in the previous chapter, nature reflects the coming tragedy. The wind blows fiercely and the moon is blood-red, reflecting an excess of passion. The cloven chestnut tree symbolically foreshadows Jane's future with Rochester, both their impending separation and their ultimate union. Jane's visions of Thornfield's desolation prefigure its charred remains

after Bertha Mason torches it. Critics have often seen the child in Jane's dreams as a representation of Jane's fear of marriage or of childbearing. Throughout these chapters, Jane's anxieties about a loss of identity within her marriage are apparent. Thus, her dream of the small child, "too young and feeble to walk," could easily represent her immature self, unable to create an independent identity. When she tries to speak to Rochester, she is "fettered" and "inarticulate" — she feels she will have no power and no voice within the relationship.

As with previous changes in Jane's life, this one is foreshadowed not only by dreams, but also by the appearance of a ghostly apparition, Bertha Mason. This strange woman who rends the wedding-veil in two has been viewed by critics as Jane's double. While the powerless child reflects Jane's feelings of helplessness, Bertha shows Jane's rebellion. Bertha does Jane a favour — Jane did not like the veil nor the sense that Rochester was trying to alter her identity by buying her expensive gifts, and her resistance is enacted through Bertha's actions. Bertha's vampiric appearance suggests that she is sucking away Rochester's lifeblood, but she also has a sexual power: The "blood-red" moon, a symbol of women's menstrual cycles, is reflected in her eyes. Like Blanche Ingram, Bertha is a woman Rochester cannot control, a woman with "savage" and, probably sexual, power. Small and naïve, Jane cannot compete with these women. In the final image of this scene, Jane curls up in bed with Adèle — significantly, Rochester has suggested Jane spend the night locked in the nursery, once again emphasizing her childish, dependent status and his desperate attempts to shelter her from Bertha's potent and sexualized rage.

1.16 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 26

1.16.1 Summary

At seven o'clock on Jane's wedding day, Sophie arrives to help her dress. Jane wears the plain blond veil she has made herself, rather than the fancy veil that was destroyed by Bertha. In her wedding dress, Jane looks so different from her usual self that she seems a stranger to herself. As they drive to the church, Rochester looks grim, and Jane is so nervous that she does not notice whether the day is fair or foul. In the cemetery near the church, Jane observes two strangers and sees them again in the shadows of the church. When the clergyman is about to ask Rochester whether he takes Jane for his wife, a voice declares the wedding cannot continue because of an "impediment." Rochester has another wife who is still living: Bertha Antoinetta Mason, a Creole woman he married fifteen

years ago in Jamaica. Richard Mason appears, confirming this evidence, and Rochester admits that he had planned to commit bigamy.

Rochester commands everyone back to Thornfield to see his wife. Refusing to let go of Jane'shand, Rochester leads her up to the secret room on the third floor. They find Bertha grovelingon all fours, running backwards and forwards like a beast. Her hair, wild as an animal's mane,hides her face. The woman attacks Rochester, almost throttling him, until finally he binds herto a chair.

Briggs surprises Jane by telling her that her uncle, John Eyre, had alerted Richard Mason to the marriage. John Eyre is a business associate of Mason. So, when Jane's letter arrived, announcing her engagement, he shared the information with Mason, who was resting in Madeira on his return voyage to Jamaica. John Eyre was dying and could not return to England to rescue Jane. So, he sent Mason instead. Everyone leaves the attic, and Jane locks herself inher room. All her hopes are dead. In this moment of despair, Jane returns to God, silently praying that he remains with her.

1.16.2 Analysis

Rochester's secret has been revealed. In the previous chapter, Bertha was merely an apparition; in this one, she becomes fully flesh and blood. An insane, Creole woman, Bertha represents British fears of both foreigners and women. Part human, part beast, Bertha is Jane's double, representing all of her rage and anger over the loss of identity the marriage promises to bring. Unlike Jane, who submissively gives in to Rochester's demands, Bertha refuses to be controlled; a woman whose stature almost equals her husband's, she fights with him, showing a "virile" force that almost masters the athletic Rochester. Finally, she is roped to a chair, much as Jane almost was in the incident in the red-room. Post-colonialist critics, such as Gayatri Spivak, have argued that Bertha, the foreign woman, is sacrificed so that British Jane can achieve self-identity, and the novelist Jean Rhys has written a novel called The Wide Sargasso Sea that presents Bertha's life in Jamaica before her madness. Both of these women writers suggest Rochester's relationship with Bertha was not as innocent as he claims; as a colonialist, he was in Jamaica to make money and to overpower colonized women. In the nineteenth-century, men had almost complete legal power over women, and perhaps this lack of power contributed to Bertha's madness, just as it caused Jane's temporary insanity in the red-room. These critics remind the reader that Jane Eyre is not merely a story critiquing the social injustices against women, but also exposing the brutality of colonialism. In the

previous chapter, Jane had joked about leading a rebellion of the women in Rochester's imaginary seraglio. Now, she has almost become a member of that harem, but Bertha leads the resistance.

Brontë's use of ice imagery in this chapter contrasts with the fiery images of the previous few chapters. In Chapter 25, for example, the wild wind and blood-red moon symbolized Jane's passion, but here all of that energy has drained away. Bertha's red eyes and virile force emphasize her excessive, crazy passions, but Jane has become a husk. Gone is the "ardent, expectant woman," and in her place is the "cold, solitary girl again." Jane imagines nature mimicking her desolation and chill: a Christmas frost has whirled through June, and "ice glazed the ripe apples, drifts crushed the blowing roses; on hayfield and cornfield lay a frozen shroud." All the world has symbolically become icy, frozen and snowy in sympathy with Jane's dead hopes. For Jane, the world has become a white waste, a chill, stark corpse that will never revive.

1.17 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 27

1.17.1 Summary

Later that afternoon, Jane awakes, wondering what she should do: Leave Thornfield at once is the answer. At first, she does not think she can leave Rochester, but an inner voice tells her she both can and should. Jane leaves her room, tripping over Rochester, who sits in a chair outside the door. He carries her down to the library, offering her wine and food. Rochester plans to lock Thornfield up, send Adèle away to school, and escape with Jane to a villa in the south of France, where they would live "both virtually and nominally" as husband and wife. Jane will

not accept his logic; if she lived with him, she would be his mistress, a position she does not want. Afraid of his passionate nature, Jane calls to God for help.

Rochester tells Jane the history of his family: His greedy father left all of his estate to Rochester's older brother Rowland, so that the property would not be divided. When Rochester left college, he was sent to Jamaica to marry Bertha, who supposedly would receive a fortune of thirty thousand pounds. Bertha was a beautiful woman, tall and majestic like Blanche Ingram. Bertha seemed to be a dazzling woman and Rochester was aroused by her. He mistook this lust for love. Before he knew it, they were married. After the honeymoon, Rochester learned that Bertha's mother was shut in an asylum and her younger brother was mentally challenged. Ultimately, Bertha's excesses led her into premature insanity. Rochester contemplates suicide, but then decides to return to Europe with Bertha. Both his father and brother are dead, and no one else knows of his marriage. Rochester spends the next ten years searching for a woman to love, but finds only mistresses. From his story, Jane realizes she can never live with Rochester; she would become simply another of his now-despised mistresses.

That night, Jane dreams her mother, transformed from the moon, whispers into her heart, "My daughter, flee temptation." Jane does. She packs up a few trinkets, grabs her purse, which contains a mere twenty shillings, and steals away. Walking past Rochester's room, Jane knows she could find a "temporary heaven" there, but she refuses to accept it. Instead, she sneaks outof the house, beginning a journey far away from Thornfield.

1.17.2 Analysis

In this chapter, Jane learns more about Rochester's past, particularly his relationship with Bertha. Much of this information hinges on the problem of excessive sexuality. As Rochesterconstantly reminds Jane, he is not "cool and dispassionate"; instead, he seems to devour her with his "flaming glance." His passionate nature seems to have contributed to his marriage, and to his current problems. When he first arrived in Spanish Town, Rochester found Bertha dazzling, splendid, and lavish, all qualities that excited his senses. But he soon discovers that she is sexually excessive: "coarse," "perverse," "intemperate" and "unchaste." Rochester implicitly suggests his inability to control Bertha then (as now) hinges on her sexuality: She chose her own sexual partners, refusing to maintain the monogamy required by British moral standards. While he criticizes Bertha's sexual excess, Rochester participates in his own with his three

mistresses — Céline, Giacinta and Clara — and his current attempt to make Jane part of the harem. When he tries to accuse Jane of flinging him back to "lust for a passion — vice for an occupation," she reminds him that these are his choices. She senses that his passion is out of control — he is in a "fury" and glowing like a furnace, with "fire" flashing from his eyes

— and Jane needs to walk away from the relationship until he has learned self-control and until she can enter the relationship on a more equal footing.

These are not lessons Jane wants to learn. To keep herself from the "temporary heaven" of Rochester's bedroom, Jane hears prophetic voices that guide her on the path of moral righteousness. When the chapter begins, a voice instructs her to leave Thornfield at once. Later, a kinder voice, the moon transformed into the "white human form" of her mother, insists she flee the temptations in Rochester's thorny field. Therefore, Jane sets out on the next stage of her quest: to regain her personal identity, almost lost through her consuming passion for Rochester. Significantly, when she leaves Thornfield, Jane takes only a few trinkets with her

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— no extra clothes, nothing to remind her of her past life, nothing associated with the "visionary" bride she had almost become. Jane is slowly stripping herself down to nothing, so she will be able to rebuild herself from nothing. Her future is now "an awful blank: something like the world when the deluge was gone by." Just like the passengers on Noah's Ark after the rains subsided, Jane is beginning life with nothing but a great emptiness.

1.18 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTERS 28-29

1.18.1 Summary

Two days later, the coachman drops Jane off in Whitcross. He could not take her any further because she has run out of money. Accidentally, Jane leaves her packet in the coach and is now destitute. Nature is Jane's only relative, the "universal mother" who will lodge her without money. So, Jane spends the night sleeping on the heath. Too hurt by memories of her broken heart to sleep, Jane rises, kneeling in the night, and prays to God. The next morning, she follows the road past Whitcross. Walking to the point of fatigue, she finally finds a town and enters a bakery to beg for bread or a job. No one will help her, and even the parson is away, at Marsh End, due to the sudden death of his father. Finally, she finds a farmer who gives hera slice of brown bread.

That night, Jane is unable to sleep peacefully in the woods. The only food she eats the next dayis a pot of cold porridge that a little girl was about to throw into a pig trough. Across the moors,

she suddenly sees the light of a house. Jane follows a road leading to the house, and enters its gate, peering in the lighted window. Inside she sees a well-kept house, a rough-looking elderly woman, and two graceful ladies dressed in mourning. The women are waiting for their brother, St. John, to return home. These cultivated young women, named Diana and Mary Rivers, are practicing their German. Jane knocks on the door, but the old servant, Hannah, turns her away. St. John overhears the conversation and offers Jane shelter because he thinks she is "a peculiar case." The Rivers offer her bread and milk, and allow her to stay for the night. Jane tells themher name is "Jane Elliott."

Jane spends three days and nights in bed. Diana and Mary are happy to have taken her in, believing she would have died if they had left her outside. Looking at Jane, they conclude that she is well educated, because nothing in her appearance indicates "vulgarity or degradation." On the fourth day, Jane rises and dresses in her freshly washed clothes; she is once again clean and respectable, with no traces of dirt or disorder in her appearance. Jane goes downstairs and works in the kitchen with Hannah, from whom she learns that the house is called Marsh End or Moor House and is owned by the Rivers. Jane lectures Hannah for unfairly judging the poor, and Hannah begs Jane's forgiveness for initially denying her entrance to the house; the two women slowly become friends. From Hannah, Jane discovers that the Rivers are an "ancient"family. Several years ago, their father lost much money when a man he trusted went bankrupt. So, Diana and Mary were forced to find work as governesses. Mr. Rivers died three weeks earlier of a stroke.

Jane tells the Rivers some of her history. The reason for her departure from her governess position she does not reveal, but assures them that she was blameless in the situation. She tellsthem Jane Elliott is not her real name. Knowing Jane will not want to accept their charity for long, St. John promises to find her some unglamorous job.

1.18.2 Analysis

Jane has reached the dark night of her soul. Leaving the carriage that has brought her to Whitcross, Jane has nothing but the clothes she was wearing. Before beginning the final section of her journey of self-discovery, Jane must strip herself of all connections with humanity and rediscover her spiritual self. In some ways, this separation from society

may be her punishment for the passion that elevated Rochester above God in her imagination and for her near participation in a bigamous relationship. Nature becomes Jane's mother, and she seeks

repose at this great mother's breast. For her, nature is "benign and good," a safe mother who loves Jane, even though she is an outcast. Closely aligned with nature is God, whom Jane realizes is everywhere: At those moments when closest to nature, "we read clearest His infinitude, His omnipotence, His omnipresence." Like nature, Jane's God is filled with bounty, compassion and forgiveness. The difference between Jane's loving God, and the malicious, demanding Christ of Mr. Brocklehurst or Eliza Reed is apparent. Nor is Jane's God similar toHelen Burns.' While Helen's God taught her to savour heaven over earth, Jane's God is closer to a pagan spirit, who offers both spirituality and material comfort. Jane wishes she could live in and on the natural world, but she cannot. Instead, she must return to the companyof humans to find food and permanent shelter. But her experience in the wilderness has begunto repair her damaged spirit.

Jane's return to the human world is difficult. Penniless and dirty, she discovers that beggars are often objects of suspicion, and "a well-dressed beggar inevitably so." Because she does not fit into any class, neither a "real" beggar nor a "real" lady, Jane is outside of society's pre- ordained categories, and therefore, is viewed with mistrust and rejection. As Hannah says, "You are not what you ought to be, or you wouldn't make such a noise." Hannah implies that moral transgression is the only answer for the question of Jane's destitute position. In some sense, she's right. By placing her love for Rochester above all spiritual concerns, Jane has in some ways transgressed, and her present journey charts the process of her atonement. Washed of all sins by her night on the dewy moors, Jane is now ready to reenter human community. Peering through the window of the house on the moors, Jane sees an idyllic world. Unlike the stateliness of Thornfield, in which Jane felt inferior, the rustic simplicity of this cottage is comforting. Diana and Mary, serene, intelligent and graceful, are the models of femininity that Jane seeks, and Jane is comforted by their "power and goodness." Similarly, St. John's willingness to allow an unknown beggar into his home suggests compassion, something Janehas not often known. As she crosses the threshold of his house, Jane no longer feels an "outcast, vagrant and disowned by the wide world." She is able to put aside the character of mendicant and resume her "natural manner and character"; she says, "I began once more to know myself." Jane's dark night has ended: She lost herself on the moors but has rediscovered herself in

thecomfort of the Rivers' home.

Jane has reached the final destination on her journey of discover; significantly, the house is called Marsh End, as Jane has reached the end of her march. This chapter develops the personalities of the residents at Marsh End. The housekeeper, Hannah, has been with the family

for thirty years and works hard to protect Diana and Mary. Hannah admits she has no respectfor Jane, because she has neither money nor a home. This class prejudice angers Jane, who reminds Hannah that poverty is no sin; in fact, many of the best people, such as Christ, lived destitute, and a good Christian should not reject the poor. In this section, Jane recognizes the spiritual value of her experience of absolute poverty, which has stripped her of all markings of class. Now, however, she rejects the label of "beggar," showing that she, like Hannah, has prejudices against those who beg for a living. Jane has been careful to erase all signs of dirt and "disorder" from her appearance, so she can resume her proper identity. Similarly, the record she provides of Diana and Mary's conversations about her as she slept emphasizes herladylike appearance: she is educated, her accent is pure, and her appearance does not indicate decadence. While Jane warns Hannah not to judge the poor, Jane is careful to erase all marks of poverty from her own appearance.From Hannah, Jane discovers that the Rivers are ancient gentry, class-related information that will be important to Jane later in the novel. Their superiority is evident in Diana's and Mary's appearances and manners. Both women are charming, pretty and intelligent, although Mary ismore reserved than the more willful Diana. Like Miss Temple, these women provide Jane with a model of compassionate, refined, intellectually stimulating and morally superior femininitythat contrasts with the capriciousness of the Reeds and the self-centeredness of Blanche Ingram. St. John River's appearance also indicates a moral and intellectual superiority. According to Jane, his face's pure outline is Greek, and he has "a straight, classic nose; quite an Athenian mouth and chin." St. John's classic, handsome features contrast with Rochester'srugged appearance. The two men are like ice and fire. While St. John's blue eyes and ivory skin align him with ice, Rochester's dark hair and passionate nature connect him with fire. Jane immediately detects a restlessness or hardness under St. John's seemingly placid face, however. The differences between the two men will be further developed as the novel progresses.

1.19 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 30

1.19.1 Summary

After a few days, Jane has recovered her health enough to sit up and walk outdoors. Her conversations with Diana and Mary revive and refresh Jane, because their values and interests are so perfectly aligned with hers. Diana and Mary are better read than Jane, and Jane eagerly devours all the books they lend her. Drawing is the only area in which Jane's skill surpasses theirs. The intimacy Jane feels with the women does not extend to St. John, partly because he is often away from home, visiting the sick, and partly because his nature is so reserved and brooding.

A month passes. Diana and Mary prepare to return to their positions as governesses in a large, fashionable city in the south of England. Jane wonders if St. John has found any employment for her? Since he is "poor and obscure," he says he has only been able to devise an insignificant post for Jane — if she wants it, she can run a school for poor girls in Morton. Her salary would be thirty pounds, and she would have a furnished cottage to live in, provided by Miss Oliver, the only daughter of the rich owner of a needle factory and iron foundry. Although humble, the position's independence and safety appeal to Jane. St. John guesses that Jane won't remain long in Morton, because she will soon long for society and stimulus. But St. John has a similar "fever in his vitals," as Diana reveals, and they know he will soon leave England. As the women sit talking, St. John enters the room, and announces their Uncle John has died, leaving all of his fortune to another relative. Their uncle and father had quarreled, and it was John's fault that Mr. Rivers lost most of his property and money.

1.19.2 Analysis

The "dark and hoary" appearance of Moor House seems to match Jane's psychology at this point of the novel; she has moved from Thornfield's luxury to Marsh End's natural and rugged beauty. Describing the environment around the house, Jane emphasizes its rustic, hardy feel: The fierce mountain winds have caused the trees to grow "aslant"; only the hardiest flowers bloom near it; and it is surrounded by some the "wildest little pasture fields that ever bordereda wilderness of heath."

In this chapter, Jane emphasizes her intellectual affinity for the Rivers sisters. Being in their presence rekindles Jane's joy in learning, and the three women mutually share and bolster each other's skills; Diana teaches Jane German, while Jane offers Mary drawing

lessons. As in earlier chapters, Jane here emphasizes the incongruity of the position of governesses. Although the Rivers sisters are members of an ancient and esteemed family that has fallen on hard times, they must spend their lives as the "humble dependents" of wealthy and haughty families whocannot fully appreciate their talents. For these families, Diana's and Mary's skills are comparable to those of their cook or waiting woman. Brontë's depiction of the Rivers is probably based on personal experience. Like them, she was forced to work as a governess fora family she despised; like them, she took time to learn new languages so that she could increase her wages and open up a school of her own. Sadly, her attempt to open a school failed miserably, as not a single student applied for admittance.

While the Rivers girls are depicted favorably, Jane's feelings for St. John are more conflicted. His reserve and brooding suggest a troubled nature, and his zealous Christianity offers him neither serenity nor contentment. St. John's real nature is revealed in his sermon — Jane is unable to render accurately its effect on her. While St. John's tone is calm throughout, his nervous words have a "strictly restrained zeal" that reflects his bitterness and lack of "consolatory gentleness." His doom and gloom leave Jane feeling inexpressibly sad, because she feels his eloquence is born of disappointment. Jane compares his despair to her own regrets at the loss of her heaven with Rochester. Despite St. John's strictness, or perhaps because of it, he has not found the peace in God that reassured Jane during her awful night on the moors. Instead, St. John dwells on his poverty and obscurity, always looking for a way to become thehero he longs to be. Again, his difference from Rochester is apparent; while Rochester vents his passions, St. John hides his in "a fever in his vitals."

The death of their Uncle John is also significant. The astute reader will remember that Jane also had an uncle named John, one who was too ill to save her from Rochester's bigamous plot. The connections between the families will grow in the remainder of the novel.

1.20 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 31

1.20.1 Summary

Jane has moved to her new home: the schoolroom cottage at Morton. Classes begin with twenty students; only three can read and none can write or do arithmetic. Some are docile and want to learn, while others are rough and unruly. Rather than feeling proud of her

work, Jane feels degraded. She knows these feelings are wrong and plans to change them. Did she make the right decision, Jane wonders? Is it better to be a "free and honest" village schoolmistress or Rochester's mistress?

St. John interrupts Jane's reverie to offer her a gift from his sisters: a watercolor box, pencils and paper. Jane assures him that she is happy with her new position. Seeing that Jane's discontent, he tells her his story. He, too, felt he had made a mistake by entering the ministry

and longed for an exciting literary or political career, a profession that might bring him glory, fame and power. Then one day he heard God's call, telling him to become a missionary, workrequiring the best skills of the soldier, statesman and orator. St. John has only to cut one morehuman tie and he will leave for India to fulfill his dream.

After he says this, their conversation is interrupted by the arrival of a beautiful young woman dressed in pure white: Rosamond Oliver. Jane wonders what St. John thinks of this "earthly angel"? Given the sudden fire she sees in his eye, Jane imagines he must be in love with Rosamond.

1.20.2 Analysis

Although Jane was quick to point out Hannah's class prejudices in Chapter 29, in this chapter Jane shows a lack of feeling for the peasants who are now her students. Jane chose this position, in part, to avoid becoming a governess/servant in the house of a rich family. Having met her uncultured students, Jane wonders if she has taken a step down the social ladder. Interestingly, when weighing her options in this chapter, Jane seems to have forgotten about the possibility of being a governess. Instead, she meditates on the merits of being caught in a "silken snare" as Rochester's mistress in the "fool's paradise at Marseilles," or of being "free and honest" as village schoolmistress in the "healthy heart of England." As before, a trade-off is made between the purity of England and the corruption of Europe; the British must go abroad to live out their illicit loves. Chastising herself for her criticism of her pupils, Jane tries not to forget that their "flesh and blood" is as good as that of the wealthy, and that the "germs of native excellence, refinement, intelligence, kind feeling, are as likely to exist in their hearts as in those of the best born." Jane's duty will be to develop the "germs," to transform the manners of the lower classes so they conform to upper-class standards of proper behavior. To St. John, Jane claims to be content to have friends, a home, and a job, when only five weeks earlier she was an outcast and beggar. Yet the seeds of her discontent are growing here, as they did at Lowood.

The chapter also develops St. John's personality. As Jane had guessed, he is riddled by restlessness and despair. Rather than becoming a priest, St. John would like to have been a politician, author, orator — any position that brought the possibility of glory, fame and power.

Instead, he is the clergyman for a poor and obscure parish. His solution is to become a missionary. Just as Jane retrains the minds of the lower classes in England, he will reform the values of the pagans in India. Both characters perpetuate a belief in British, Christian superiority. Both also confirm the supposed moral superiority of the upper classes. For instance, despite her documentation of the faults of the upper classes, she still seems to associate "refinement" and "intelligence" with the gentry, and "coarseness" and "ignorance" with the peasants. The iciness of St. John's character becomes more pronounced when he declares his intention to leave Morton after "an entanglement or two of the feelings" has been "broken through or cut asunder." This entanglement arrives in the form of Rosamond Oliver, who has "as sweet features as ever the intemperate clime of Albion moulded." Rosamond is the icon of British beauty and in love with St. John, yet he rejects her. While her appearance incites St. John like a thunderbolt, though he flushes and kindles at the sight of her petting his dog, St. John would rather turn himself into "an automaton," than succumb to her beauty or fortune. His ambition to forge a heroic career cuts St. John off from all deep human emotions. Perhaps, then, his religious zeal is the result of his repressed sexual feelings.

1.21.1 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 32

1.21.1 Summary

After working with her students for a while, Jane discovers some intelligence among them. Jane is even surprised by their progress and begins personally to like some of the girls — and they like her. Jane teaches them grammar, geography, history, and needlework. Despite her popularity within the community and her growing happiness with her job, Jane is still troubled by strange dreams at night in which she always meets Rochester. Rosamond Oliver visits the school almost every day, usually when St. John is giving his daily catechism lesson. Although he knows Rosamond loves him, and he obviously loves her, St. John is not willing to sacrifice his heavenly ambition for worldly pleasure. When Rosamond learns that Jane can draw, she asks her to make a portrait.

St. John visits Jane while she is working on Rosamond's portrait. He has brought her a

book of poetry, Sir Walter Scott's *Marmion*. While St. John gazes at Rosamond's picture, Jane offers to make him a copy, then, being bold, she suggests that he marry Rosamond at once. For exactly fifteen minutes, St. John imagines himself yielding to Rosamond, allowing human love to overwhelm him with its pleasures. Although St. John loves Rosamond wildly, he knows she would not be a good wife for him, and he would be probably tired of her in twelve months. Rosamond would not make an effective missionary's wife, and St. John is not willing to relinquish his goals, because he is a cold, hard, ambitious man. As they sit talking, St. John suddenly notices something on Jane's blank piece of paper. She does not know what it is, buthe snatches the paper, then shoots Jane a "peculiar" and "inexpressible" glance. He replaces the paper, tearing a narrow slip from the margin, then bids Jane "Good Afternoon."

1.21.2 Analysis

Both Jane and St. John suffer from unrequited love in this chapter. While Jane is pleased with her "useful existence," she is not fully satisfied with her new, safe life, and her repressed desires manifest at night in strange dreams: "dreams many-coloured, agitated, full of the ideal, the stirring, the stormy." Filled with adventure and romance, these dreams often lead her to Rochester. Similarly, St. John's "repressed fervour" for Rosamond shows in a subtle glow in this "marble-seeming features." A statesman, priest, and poet, St. John is unable to limit himself to a single passion or to "renounce his wide field of mission warfare" for the tamer pleasures of love. For St. John, missionary work won't involve compassion or joy, but "warfare."

This chapter also provides us with a short explanation of the role of art in modern life. Looking at the copy of Sir Walter Scott's poem *Marmion*, Jane calls it "one of those genuine productions so often vouchsafed to the fortunate public of those days — the golden age of modern literature." Scott's poetry belonged in the era of Romanticism, and it is not surprising Jane should view the Romantics as the ideal of modern literature. Her own narrative inherits many themes and landscapes from them: the hills and moors of Scott and the romantic and passionate hero of Byron. In the Victorian era, the artist seemed in danger of becoming caught in the capitalist marketplace, as the industrial revolution ushered in a new focus on profitability. Jane assures her reader that neither poetry nor genius are dead, "nor has Mammon gained power over either, to bind or slay." Even in a capitalist age, art will maintain its freedom and strength: "they not only live, but reign and redeem: and without their divine influence spread everywhere, you would be in hell — the hell of

your own meanness." These quotes indicate Brontë's own anxieties about the position of the artist in the modern world, yet she vehemently maintains art's spiritual power, which keeps it separate from mundane contamination. Art and genius are "[p]owerful angels, safe in heaven" that will redeem and enlighten.

1.22.1 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 33

1.22.1 Summary

While a snowstorm whirls outside, Jane sits reading *Marmion*. Suddenly, she hears a noise at the door: it's St. John. After a long delay, he tells Jane's own story, ending by saying that finding Jane Eyre has become a matter of serious urgency. St. John explains that he discovered her true identity from the paper he tore from her art supplies, which had the name Jane Eyre inscribed on it. The reason everyone has been looking for Jane is that her uncle, Mr. Eyre of Madeira, is dead and has left his entire fortune to her, so she is now rich. Jane is astonished to learn she has inherited twenty thousand pounds and wishes she had a family to share it with.

As St. John prepares to leave, Jane asks why Mr. Briggs, Eyre's attorney, sent him a letter inquiring about Jane's whereabouts. St. John completes the story: his full name is St. John Eyre Rivers. So, the Rivers are Jane's cousins. Jane feels she has found a brother and two sisters to love and admire; relatives, in her opinion, are real wealth, "wealth to the heart." Now, she has the opportunity to benefit those who saved her life. She decides to share her legacy with them, to divide it into four pieces, making five thousand pounds each. That way, justice will be done, and Jane will have a home and family. St. John reminds her of the lofty place could take in society with twenty thousand pounds, but Jane insists that she would rather have love.

1.22.2 Analysis

This chapter highlights the differences in personality between Jane and St. John; while he is so cold "no fervour infects" him, Jane is "hot, and fire dissolves ice." For icy St. John, reason is more important than feeling, but for fiery Jane, feeling predominates. Relating her story, St. John expects Jane's primary concern will be to know why Briggs has been searching for her; instead, she is more interested in Rochester's fate, worrying that he has returned to his life of dissipation in Europe. After learning of the inheritance, Jane is sorry to hear her uncle, a man she's never met, is dead, and wishes she had a "rejoicing family" to share the money with, rather than her isolated self. So, discovering she has

three cousins is heavenly for Jane. In fact, the blessing of relatives is "exhilarating — not like the ponderous gift of gold: rich and welcome enough in its way, but sobering from its weight." St. John believes Jane is neglecting the essential points (the money) for the trifles (family). For a clergyman, St. John's lack of understanding of or caring for people is shocking. Sharing the wealth, Jane will transform it

from an unwanted weight into a "legacy of life, hope, enjoyment," but her comment that the money will help her win "to myself lifelong friends," sounds as if she is planning to buy friendship with the legacy. Jane says she is happy to indulge her feelings, something she seldom has the opportunity to do. Jane values family and feeling above all else, while St. John thinks only of the opportunities, if she keeps the inheritance, that Jane will have to take her place in society.

Describing his love for his sisters at the end of the chapter, St. John says his affection for them is based on "respect for their worth, and admiration of their talents," and he believes he will be able to love Jane because she also has "principle and mind." How cold his description of love is compared with Jane's passionate connection to Rochester, with her heartfelt "craving" for love and family. Her inheritance may lead Jane back to her relationship with Rochester. Earlier in the novel, as she planned her wedding, Jane worried because she could not offer Rochester beauty, money, or connections; now she has at least two of the three — relatives she is proud of and plenty of cash! Slowly, she is

moving into a position of equality with Rochester.

1.23.1 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 34

1.23.1 Summary

Christmas has arrived and Jane is closing the Morton school. She is happy to discover that she is beloved by the girls and promises to visit the school for an hour each week. St. John asks Jane if she would not like to dedicate her life to working with the poor, but she wants to enjoy herself, as well as cultivating others. Jane sets off for Moor House to prepare for the arrival of Diana and Mary.

St. John shows a disappointing lack of interest in the renovations Jane has done at Moor House, but Diana and Mary ungrudgingly appreciate Jane's hard work. The women spend the week in "merry domestic dissipation," a pleasure St. John cannot enjoy. He tells them Rosamond Oliver is to be married to a Mr. Granby, but the news does not seem to upset him. To Jane, St. John seems more distant than before they knew they were

cousins.

One day when Jane sits home with a cold, St. John suddenly asks her to give up German lessons and learn Hindustani, the language he is studying in preparation for his missionary work. Slowly, St. John takes more control over Jane, sucking away her freedom; she does not enjoyher new servitude. She is also stricken with sadness, because she is unable to discover what has happened to Rochester since she left him. Then St. John surprises her. In six weeks, St.

John will leave for India, and he wants Jane to accompany him, as his wife. If she goes to India, Jane knows she will die prematurely, but she agrees to go anyway — if she can go as his sister, not his wife, because they do not love each other as husband and wife should. St. John insistson the marriage. After much discussion, they are unable to overcome the obstacle of the marriage issue. So, St. John asks Jane to think about his proposal for a couple of weeks. He warns her that rejecting his proposal means rejecting God.

1.23.2 Analysis

St. John's absolute, God-sanctioned despotism becomes apparent in this chapter. Just as Brocklehurst was a "black pillar," St. John is "a white stone" and a "cold cumbrous column"; Brocklehurst was evil and St. John is good, but both men are equally stony. Even St. John's kisses are "marble" or "ice" kisses: No warmth or affection warms them.

St. John's God is an infallible, warrior deity: king, captain, and lawgiver. Similarly, Jane saysshe would accompany St. John as "comrade" or "fellow-soldier." He uses imagery of war to describe his devotion to this God: He will "enlist" under the Christian "banner," Jane says he prizes her like a soldier would an effective weapon, under God's "standard" St. John "enlists" Jane, and she should "wrench" her heart from humanity to fix it upon God. All of these quotes suggest the violence and severity that underlies St. John's views of Christianity. Like Helen Burns, he has his eyes turned on heaven, but while her spirituality emphasized a martyred compassion, his makes God into a warrior tyrant who demands absolute submission. While Helen sought solace in heaven to compensate for her unhappy life on earth, St. John seeks glory in heaven to make up for his obscurity on earth.

The representation of marriage in this chapter suggests its inherently oppressive nature.St. John argues that a wife would be "the sole helpmeet I can influence efficiently in life, andretain absolutely till death"; thus, he wants a wife he can control completely. Jane recognizes the imperialism in his statement. As his "curate" or "comrade," Jane

could preserve her "unblighted" self, but as his wife, she would become "part of" him and, therefore, "always restrained," her flame "imprisoned," perhaps leading to the madness that afflicts Bertha Mason. As husband, St. John would invade the private places in her mind, trample her with his "warrior-march," ultimately erasing her identity and dousing her passions for life. Rather than resisting like the madwoman in the attic, Jane would become a mere husk. Both Rochester
and St. John value Jane for her seeming submissiveness, thinking they can shape her into theirideal versions of woman, but her strength surprises them both.

1.24 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 35

1.24.1 Summary

Rather than leaving for Cambridge the next day, St. John delays his trip for a week. During that time, he subtly punishes Jane for not obeying him. Remembering that he once saved her life, Jane tries to reconcile with him, asking him to treat her as a kinswoman, rather than a stranger. She tells him she retains her resolution not to marry him, and adds that he is literallykilling her with his icy chill. But her words do not help; instead, they make him hate her. St. John accuses her of breaking her promise of going to India, and Jane invokes the reader's memory, asking us to confirm that she never gave him a formal promise. Before going to India, Jane wants to be certain she could not be of greater use in England. St. John recognizes that she refers to Rochester, and tells her she should crush this "lawless and unconsecrated" attachment. He then leaves for a walk.

Recognizing that St. John and Jane have quarreled, Diana discusses the situation with Jane. Diana does not think Jane would live three months in India, and urges her to reject St. John'sproposal. Like Jane, Diana feels it would be crazy for Jane to chain herself to a man who sees her as nothing but a useful tool. Following dinner that evening, St. John prays for Jane and she feels veneration for his talent and oratorical powers. At this moment, Jane is tempted to yield to his influences and marry him. All the house is quiet, except for St. John and Jane. Suddenly, she feels an electric shock pass through her body, and the words, "Jane! Jane! Jane!" repeated in Rochester's voice. For Jane, this is not superstition, but nature, saving her from a grave error. Now, she is able to resist St. John's power.

1.24.2 Analysis

Notice that the imagery in this chapter continues to develop St. John's inhumanity: he is "no longer flesh, but marble"; his eye is "a cold, bright, blue gem"; and his heart seems

made of “stone or metal.” For Jane, his coldness is more terrible than Rochester’s raging; she asks if her readers know the “terror those cold people can put into the ice of their questions? how much of the fall of the avalanche is in their anger? of the breaking up of the frozen sea in their

displeasure?” St. John is associated with falling avalanches and the breaking up of frozen seas, natural events that are unpredictable and uncontrollable. Despite St. John’s obvious flaws, Diana and Jane continually remind the reader that he is a “good man.” This goodness is not obvious in Jane’s depiction of him. For a twenty-first-century reader, even his missionary zeal is morally suspect, because it shows his participation in the colonialist project, which resulted in violence and the violation of native peoples. The goal of this project was to represent native peoples as “savages,” in need of British guidance and enlightenment. St. John’s cold heartedness suggests the brutality and self-serving function of colonialism. Jane claims St. John “forgets, pitilessly, the feelings and claims of little people, in pursuing his own large views”: imagine the damage he will inflict on any native people who resist him; like Jane, they will be “blighted” by his merciless egotism. Yet Jane is drawn to this merciless man, as if she wants to lose herself. By the end of the chapter, she is tempted to stop struggling with him, and “rush down the torrent of his will into the gulf of his existence, and there lose my own.” She is saved, not by her own powers, but by the supernatural. A major change in Jane’s life is once again signaled by a psychic event. As she is about to accept St. John’s wishes, Jane experiences a sensation as “sharp, as strange, as shocking” as an electric shock. Then she hears Rochester’s voice calling her name. So powerful is this voice that Jane cries, “I am coming,” and runs out the door into the garden, but she discovers no sign of Rochester. She rejects the notion that this is the devilish voice of witchcraft, but feels it comes from benevolent nature, not a miracle, but nature’s best effort to help her — the “universal mother” nurtures Jane again. As during her dark night on the heath, Jane feels the solace of a comforting nature helping and guiding her. She gathers enough force and energy to finally assert her independence from St. John: It is her time to “assume ascendancy.” Following this experience, Jane returns to her room to pray in her own way, a way that is different from St. John’s, but effective. Jane has already rejected St. John’s approach to love, and now she also rejects his way of spirituality. While St. John maintains distance from God, who is always his superior, Jane penetrates “very near a Mighty Spirit; and my soul rushed out in gratitude at His feel” — this spirit, not necessarily the Christian God, provides her with the comfort and peace that

St. John never feels.

1.25 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 36

1.25.1 Summary

At dawn the next morning, Jane rises. St. John slides a note under Jane's door, reminding her to resist temptation. It is the first of June, yet the day is chilly and overcast. Jane wanders the house, thinking about the previous night's visitation: Was it a delusion? It seemed to come from her, not from the external world. At breakfast, she tells Diana and Mary she will be away at least four days. She catches a coach at Whitcross, the same one she road from Thornfield ayear earlier.

Alighting from the coach, Jane finds herself again on Rochester's lands. She is anxious to seehim again and hurries the two miles from the coach stop to the house, worrying that he may be in Europe. Like a lover who wishes to catch a glimpse of his lover's face without waking her, then finds she is "stone dead," Jane is appalled by the sight that awaits her: Thornfield is a blackened ruin. What is the story behind this disaster, Jane wonders? Jane returns to the inn near the coach station, the Rochester Arms, to find an answer. She discovers that Bertha Mason set the house on fire last autumn. Before this happened, Rochester had shut himself up like a hermit in the house, as if he had gone mad. When the fire broke out, Rochester saved the servants, then tried to save Bertha, but she jumped from Thornfield's roof. Rochester has losthis sight and one of his hands in the fire. He now lives in Ferndean with two old servants, John and Mary.

1.25.2 Analysis

Suspense builds in this chapter, as Jane delays the revelation of Thornfield's tragic end and of Rochester's history. Upon entering the coach at Whitcross, Jane reflects on the major changes in her situation since her arrival there a year earlier. Then she was "desolate, hopeless, and objectless"; now she has friends, hope and money. Then she paid all the money she had to ride the coach, now she has a secure fortune. Arriving in Thornfield, Jane notices the difference between the scenery here and in Morton (the place she has just left); Thornfield is mild, greenand pastoral, while Morton is stern. Thornfield's landscape is as comfortable as a "once familiar face," whose character she knows intimately. Notice the stark contrast between Jane's comforting, flowering, breathtaking dream of Thornfield and the reality of its trodden and wasted grounds; the world's vision of the upper classes does not always capture the hidden passions that boil under the veneer of genteel

tranquility. The passions kindling at Thornfield have finally sparked and burned the house down; Rochester's burning bed was merely a prelude. Jane's psychic powers have been reaffirmed as another of her dreams has become reality.

The passions that have burned down Rochester's family mansion, leaving it "a lonesome wild," are, in Jane's version of the story, centered in a woman: Bertha Mason. Jane refuses to recognize her own part in this tale of excessive passion: the innkeeper tries to tell her of Rochester's irresistible love for Jane, which he labels a midlife crisis: "when gentlemen of his age fall in love with girls, they are often like as if they are bewitched." But Jane cuts him off, asking him to tell this part of the story at another time. As simply a specimen of a common phenomenon

— midlife crisis — Jane and Rochester's love loses some of its romantic force. In addition, Jane does not want to be associated with Thornfield's tragic end; so, Bertha Mason becomes the scapegoat. Critics have viewed Bertha as the odious symbol of Rochester's sexual drive; as Jane's double, the angry, repressed side of the orphan child; or as a scapegoat destroyed to redeem Jane. In setting fire to Thornfield, Bertha begins by torching the hangings in the room next to her own, but then kindles Jane's old bed. Her anger seems to focus on sexual jealousy of her rival. During her final rebellion, Bertha stands on the roof of Thornfield, "waving her arms above the battlements, and shouting out till they could hear her a mile off," with her long, dark hair "streaming against the flames." The fire becomes a representation of Bertha's power. She is a strong, large, extravagant, and sensual woman, who contrasts with Jane, described by the innkeeper as "a little, small thing ... almost like a child."

Rochester must pay for the transgression of almost making Jane his mistress. Following her departure from Thornfield, he becomes "savage" and "dangerous," but redeems himself by saving his servants and even trying to rescue his hated wife; as the innkeeper says, Rochester's courage and kindness resulted in his injuries. Unlike her depiction of St. John, which uniformly emphasizes his coldness and domination, Jane peppers her description of Rochester with examples of his compassion and caring.

1.26 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 37

1.26.1 Summary

Jane rushes to Ferndean, a building buried deep in the woods. While she watches the building, the door slowly opens, and Rochester reaches out a hand to see if it is raining.

She notes that

his body has not changed, but his face looks “desperate and brooding.” After Rochester has returned to the house, Jane knocks on the door. Mary is surprised to see her so late at night and in this lonely place.

Mary is taking a tray with candles and a glass of water to Rochester, and Jane volunteers to carry it instead. As she walks into the parlor, Rochester’s dog, Pilot, is excited to see Jane, almost knocking the tray from her hand. Rochester wonders what is wrong. Realizing Jane is in the room with him, Rochester initially thinks she is only a disembodied voice. He grabs herhand, and wraps her in his arms. She assures him she is not a dream and promises to stay withhim forever.

The next morning, as they wander through the woods, Jane tells Rochester the story of her experiences during the year they have been apart. Rochester is jealous of St. John Rivers, believing she has fallen in love with her handsome cousin. Jane assures him she could never love the cold and despotic St. John. He proposes to her, and she accepts. Rochester then apologizes for trying to make Jane his mistress; he now regrets that decision. He reveals that four nights earlier, during a low point in his life, he had frantically called Jane’s name and thought he heard her answer. Jane does not tell him about her similar experience, because she does not want to upset him in his weakened state. Rochester thanks God for his mercy, vowing to live a purer life from then on.

1.26.2 Analysis

Jane has now reached her final destination: Ferndean. Her description of Ferndean emphasizes its isolation. It is deep in the woods, unsuitable and unhealthy. Recall that earlier in the novel,Rochester chose not to send Bertha there, because he did not want her to hasten her death. Thewoods surrounding the building are thick, dark and gloomy, as if lost in a fairy-tale realm; Jane can barely find an opening through the dense trees to the house. Here, Jane and Rochester create the “private island” he longed for earlier in the novel.

In describing Rochester, Jane uses language Rochester often used in the past to characterize her: he is a “wronged” bird, a “caged eagle.” But now their positions are reversed: Jane is free, and he is fettered. In their first conversation, Jane emphasizes her independence: “I am independent, sir, as well as rich: I am my own mistress.” While earlier Rochester treated Jane as object — his possession — he now accepts her independent subjectivity; thus, when he proposes marriage this time he says, “Never mind fine clothes and jewels, now: all that is not worth a fillip.” Like Jane, Rochester

needed to "pass through the valley of the shadow of death" in order to become the perfect mate; his fire and virility are tamed and he becomes the ideally docile husband. Rochester suffers more than Jane — blinding, maiming and complete isolation
— because his sins were greater than hers. In fact, critics have often noted that both Bertha and Rochester can be viewed as victims of the forces Jane uses to acquire identity and independence; Bertha's life is sacrificed, as well as Rochester's vision, so that Jane can have her ideal, non-threatening relationship.

Ensconced in Ferndean's desolation, the lovers have also achieved spiritual isolation. While Jane emphasizes Rochester's atonement for the sin of trying to make Jane his mistress, she also reminds readers of the ideal telepathic bond between the lovers. This psychic sympathy leads Jane to hear Rochester's frantic call for her, and for Rochester to pick her response out of the wind. In fact, he even correctly intuits that her response came from some mountainous place. Jane cannot find the words to explain this awful coincidence to Rochester: His mind is already dark, and does not need the "deeper shade of the supernatural." Yet the reader's mind evidently does not suffer the same deficiency as Rochester's, because Jane is happy to share this odd occurrence with her audience. In some sense, Jane seems to be patronizing Rochester here. If their minds are supposedly in "perfect concord," why can't she share this information with Rochester? Although Brontë used this psychic affinity to emphasize the spiritual bond between the lovers, critics have often argued that the novel relies too heavily on coincidence.

1.27 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS – CHAPTER 38: CONCLUSION

1.27.1 Summary

Rochester and Jane finally marry with a quiet ceremony. Immediately, Jane writes to the Rivers, explaining what she has done. Diana and Mary both approve of her marriage, but Jane receives no response from St. John. Not having forgotten Adèle, Jane visits her at school. The girl is pale, thin and unhappy. So, Jane moves her to a more indulgent school. Adèle grows into a docile, good-natured young woman.

At the writing of this story, Jane has been married for ten years. She feels blessed beyond anything language can express, because she and Rochester love each other absolutely. For two years, Rochester remained almost completely blind, but slowly his sight has returned to him. He was able to see his first-born son. And what has happened to the rest of the cast? Diana and Mary Rivers have both married. St. John is still a missionary in India, but is

nearing death. The final words of the novel are his: “Amen; even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

1.27.2 Analysis

The novel has a typically — for a Victorian story — happy ending. All of the characters who were good to Jane are rewarded. Diana and Mary Rivers have made loving marriages; Adèle, not at fault for her mother’s sins, has become Jane’s pleasing companion. Notice Jane’s final ethnocentric comment in relation to little Adèle: “a sound English education corrected in a great measure her French defects.” Only through a good English lifestyle has Adèle avoided her mother’s tragic flaws — materialism and sensuality — characteristics the novel specifically associates with foreign women. Rochester and Jane have been reunited in a marriage that appears to be perfect: “[n]o woman was ever nearer to her mate than I am: ever more absolutely bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.” While she feared losing herself in a relationship with St. John, she seems perfectly content to become one with Rochester. What are the differences in the relationships; how does Jane maintain her integrity with Rochester? Primarily through his injuries. As his “vision” and “right hand,” Jane maintains a sense of dependence over her husband. Thus, the chapter blends an odd mix of language designating their “perfect concord” with language showing Rochester’s dependence: He sees nature and books through her, for example. Could this relationship have flourished without Rochester’s infirmities? For two years of good behaviour, Jane grants Rochester partial regeneration of his sight, though he still cannot read or write much.

St. John Rivers has also received his just reward. He toils in India, laboring for “his race.” A great warrior, St. John sternly clears the “painful way to improvement” for the natives, slaying their prejudices of “creed and caste,” though obviously not his own. In his zealous Christianity, he obviously sees the Indians as an inferior race, and hopes to implant British virtues and values in their supposedly deficient minds. Perhaps to the joy of those he disciplines in India, St. John is nearing death. Despite Jane’s difficulties with Christianity throughout the novel, St. John’s words of longing for heaven end the novel. Telling his “Master” that he comes “quickly,” St. John’s words to Rochester’s disembodied cry: “I am coming; wait for me.” Love is still Jane’s religion; in relationship, Jane has found her heaven.

1.28 CHARACTER LIST

Jane Eyre

The orphaned protagonist of the story. When the novel begins, she is an isolated, powerless 10-year-old living with an aunt and cousins who dislike her. As the novel progresses, she grows in strength. She distinguishes herself at Lowood School because of her hard work and strong intellectual abilities. As a governess at Thornfield, she learns of the pleasures and painsof love through her relationship with Edward Rochester. After being deceived by him, she goes to Marsh End, where she regains her spiritual focus and discovers her own strength when she rejects St. John River's marriage proposal. By novel's end, she has become a powerful, independent woman, blissfully married to the man she loves, Rochester.

Edward Fairfax Rochester

Jane's lover; a dark, passionate, brooding man. A traditional romantic hero, Rochester has lived a troubled wife. Married to an insane Creole woman, Bertha Mason, Rochester sought solace for several years in the arms of mistresses. Finally, he seeks to purify his life and wants Jane Eyre, the innocent governess he has hired to teach his foster daughter, Adèle Varens, to become his wife. The wedding falls through when she learns of the existence of his wife. As penance for his transgressions, he is punished by the loss of an eye and a hand when Bertha sets fire to Thornfield. He finally gains happiness at the novel's end when he is reunited with Jane.

Sarah Reed

Jane's unpleasant aunt, who raises her until she is ten years old. Despite Jane's attempts at reconciliation before her aunt's death, her aunt refuses to relent. She dies unloved by her children and unrepentant of her mistreatment of Jane.

John Reed

Jane's nasty and spoiled cousin, responsible for Jane's banishment to the red-room. Addicted to drinking and gambling, John supposedly commits suicide at the age of twenty-three when his mother is no longer willing or able to pay his debts.

Eliza Reed

Another one of Jane's spoiled cousins, Eliza is insanely jealous of the beauty of her sister, Georgiana. She nastily breaks up Georgiana's elopement with Lord Edwin Vere, and then becomes a devout Christian. But her brand of Christianity is devoid of all

compassion or humanity. She shows no sympathy for her dying mother and vows to break off all contacts with Georgiana after their mother's death. Usefulness is her mantra. She enters a convent in Lisle, France, eventually becoming the Mother Superior and leaving her money to the church.

Georgiana Reed

Eliza's and John's sister, Georgiana is the beauty of the family. She is also shallow and self- centered, interested primarily in her own pleasure. She accuses her sister, Eliza, of sabotaging her plans to marry Lord Edwin Vere. Like Eliza, she shows no emotion following their mother's death. Eventually, Georgiana marries a wealthy, but worn-out society man.

Bessie Lee

The maid at Gateshead who sometimes consoles Jane by telling her entertaining stories and singing her songs. Bessie visits Jane at Lowood, impressed by Jane's intellectual attainments and ladylike behavior. Bessie marries the coachman, Robert Leaven, and has three children.

Mr. Lloyd

The kind apothecary who suggests that Jane be sent to school following her horrifying experience in the red-room. His letter to Miss Temple clears Jane of the accusations Mrs. Reed has made against her.

Mr. Brocklehurst

The stingy, mean-hearted manager of Lowood. He hypocritically feeds the girls at the school starvation-level rations, while his wife and daughters live luxuriously. The minister of Brocklebridge Church, he represents a negative brand of Christianity, one that lacks all compassion or kindness.

Helen Burns

Jane's spiritual and intellectual friend at Lowood. Although she is unfairly punished by Miss Scatcherd at Lowood, Helen maintains her poise, partially through her loving friendship with Miss Temple. From Helen, Jane learns tolerance and peace, but Jane

cannot accept Helen's rejection of the material world. Helen's impressive intellectual attainments inspire Jane to work hard at school. Dying in Jane's arms, Helen looks forward to peace in heaven and eventual reunion with Jane.

Maria Temple

The warm-hearted superintendent at Lowood who generously offers the girls bread and cheese when their breakfasts are inedible. An impressive scholar, a model of ladylike behavior and acompassionate person, Miss Temple is a positive role model for Jane. She cares for Jane and Helen, offering them seedcake in her room and providing Helen with a warm, private bed when she is dying.

Miss Miller

Teacher for the youngest students at Lowood who greets Jane on her first night at the school.

Miss Scatcherd

The history and grammar teacher at Lowood. She constantly humiliates and punishes Helen Burns.

Miss Smith

A red-cheeked teacher at Lowood who is in charge of sewing instruction.

Madame Pierrot

The likeable French teacher at Lowood who comes from Lisle, France.

Miss Gryce

Jane's roommate and fellow teacher at Lowood.

Mrs. Alice Fairfax

The housekeeper at Thornfield; Jane first thinks she is Thornfield's owner. She warmly welcomes Jane to Thornfield, providing a contrast to Jane's cold treatment at Gateshead, the Reed's house. Mrs. Fairfax does not approve of Jane and Rochester's marriage because of the differences in their ages and social classes. When she leaves Thornfield after Jane's mysterious disappearance, Rochester offers her a generous pension.

Blanche Ingram

The beautiful and haughty society woman Rochester pretends to love. Her comments about the insipidness of governesses show the lack of respect that most governesses faced in the wealthy Victorian families where they worked. As a fortune-hunter, more interested in Rochester's money than his personality, Blanche is depicted as an unappealingly materialist model of femininity.

Adèle Varens

Jane's pupil at Thornfield, whose foreignness, like her mother's, reveals many of Jane's Anglocentric prejudices. Adèle initially shows unpleasantly French (in Jane's opinion) characteristics such as sensuality, materialism and egocentrism. But a firm British education erases all of these negative characteristics, and by the end of the novel, Adèle has become a docile, pleasant companion for Jane.

Céline Varens

Once Rochester's mistress, this Parisian opera singer used Rochester for his money, although she actually despised him. Rochester discovers her true feelings when he overhears a conversation between her and one of her other lovers. He immediately breaks off relations with her. She eventually runs away to Italy with a musician, abandoning her daughter, Adèle, whom she claims is Rochester's child. Her hypocrisy, sensuality and materialism make her another negative mode of femininity.

Bertha Antoinetta Mason Rochester

Rochester's wife, the crazy woman in the attic. A Creole woman from Spanish Town, Jamaica, Bertha was betrothed to Rochester by the arrangement of their fathers, who planned to consolidate their wealth. This beautiful and majestic woman disintegrates into debauchery, coarseness, and, eventually, madness soon after their wedding. Bertha's mother was also mad and the novel suggests that Bertha's problems are a maternal inheritance. Following the deaths of his brother and father, Rochester returns to England with Bertha, locking her up in the third storey of Thornfield, with Grace Poole as her keeper. She occasionally escapes her imprisonment, perpetrating violence whenever she gets loose. Eventually, she sets fire to Thornfield. Bertha is another example of unsavory foreignness in the novel.

Richard (Dick) Mason

Bertha's brother, a weak-willed man. During his visit to Thornfield, he is bitten and stabbed by Bertha when he goes up to her room alone. When he learns of Jane's upcoming wedding to Rochester, he arrives to thwart Rochester's bigamous intentions.

Grace Poole

Bertha's keeper at Thornfield who has a predilection for gin. Her alcohol-induced lapses allow Bertha to escape from the third floor and perpetrate various crimes in the house, including the eventual fire that destroys Thornfield and maims Rochester. Grace is initially accused of perpetrating all of Bertha's sins in the household.

Mother Bunches

Rochester's alias when he is disguised as a gypsy fortuneteller during a house party at Thornfield.

Hannah

The Rivers' elderly housekeeper who initially denies Jane access to Moor House. Jane chastises Hannah for her class prejudices, but she and Jane later become friends.

St. John (pronounced *sin'jin*) Rivers

Jane's cousin, St. John is a cold, despotic, excessively zealous. Unhappy with his humble position as the minister at Morton, St. John wants to become a missionary in order to meet hisambitions for power and glory. St. John tries to force Jane to marry him and move to India. Jane resists him, and he spends the rest of his life furthering British colonialism by forcing Christian values on the natives.

Diana and Mary Rivers

St. John's sisters and Jane's cousins, Diana and Mary are exemplars of accomplished, benevolent and intellectual women. Working as governesses, they show the ways intelligent, well-bred women are degraded by their positions in wealthy families. Diana's support of Janefollowing St. John's marriage proposal helps Jane maintain her independence when faced with his despotism.

Rosamond Oliver

The beautiful and flirtatious daughter of a wealthy man in Morton, Rosamond finances the girls' school in Morton. Although she seems to love St. John, she has become engaged to the wealthy Mr. Granby before St. John leaves for India. While St. John is physically attracted to her, he realizes that Rosamond would never be a good wife for him, because of her light- hearted, almost shallow, personality.

Mr. Oliver

Rosamond's father and the only wealthy man in Morton. While the Rivers are an ancient and esteemed family, the Olivers have "new money." He approves of St. John's talents, finding him a suitable husband for his daughter, but thinks missionary work is a waste of St. John's intellect.

Mr. Briggs

John Eyre's attorney, Briggs prevents Jane's bigamous marriage to Rochester and searches for her following her uncle's death so that she can claim her inheritance.

John Eyre

Jane's and the Rivers' uncle, John Eyre makes a fortune as a wine merchant in Madeira. Although he plans to adopt Jane, he dies before they ever meet, but leaves his entire fortune — 20,000 pounds — to her. He quarreled with Mr. Rivers, and therefore, did not leave his money to the Rivers' children.

Alice Wood

Hired by Rosamond Oliver, Alice is an orphan who serves as Jane's assistant at Morton.

The Elderly Servants

They are the ones who care for Rochester at Ferndean after Thornfield is destroyed by the fire.

Character Analysis – Jane Eyre

The novel charts the growth of Jane Eyre, the first-person narrator, from her unhappy childhood with her nasty relatives, the Reeds, to her blissful marriage to Rochester at Ferndean. Reading, education and creativity are all essential components of Jane's growth, factors that help her achieve her final success. From the novel's opening

chapters to its close, Jane reads a variety of texts: *Pamela*, *Gulliver's Travels* and *Marmion*. Stories provide Jane with an escape from her unhappy domestic situation, feeding her imagination and offering her a vast world beyondthe troubles of her real life: By opening her inner ear, she hears "a tale my imagination created
... quickened with all incident, life, fire, feeling, that I desired and had not in my actual existence." Similarly, she believes education will allow her the freedom to improve her position in society by teaching her to act like a "lady," but her success at school, in particular her drawing ability, also increases her self-confidence. Jane confesses that artistic creation offers her one of the "keenest pleasures" of her life, and Rochester is impressed with Jane's drawings because of their depth and meaning, not typical of a schoolgirl.

Although artistic and educational pursuits are essential elements of Jane's personality, she also feels a need to assert her identity through rebellion. In the opening chapters of the novel, Jane refers to herself as a "rebel slave," and throughout the story, she opposes the forces that prevent her from finding happiness: Mrs. Reed's unfair accusations, Rochester's attempt to make her his mistress, and St. John's desire to transform her into a missionary wife. By falling in love with Rochester, she implicitly mutinies against the dictates of class boundaries that relegate her, as a governess, to a lower status than her "master." Besides rejecting traditional views ofclass, she also denigrates society's attempts to restrict women's activities. Women, she argues, need active pursuits and intellectual stimulation, just as men do. Most of Jane's rebellions target the inequities of society, but much of her personality is fairly conventional. In fact, she often seems to provide a model of proper English womanhood: frank, sincere and lacking in personal vanity.
Jane's personality balances social awareness with spiritual power. Throughout the novel, Jane is referred to as an imp, a fairy, a relative of the "men in green." As fairy, Jane identifies herself as a special, magical creature. Connecting herself with the mythical beings in Bessie's stories, Jane is affiliated with the realms of imagination, with the fantastic. Jane's psychic abilities are not merely imaginary: her dreams and visions have a real impact on her life. For example, supernatural experiences, heralds of visions "from another world," foreshadow drastic changes in Jane's life, such as her move from Gateshead to Lowood, or her rediscovery of Rochester after their time apart. Thus, Jane's spirituality is not a purely Christian one — in fact, she rejects many of the Christian characters in the novel, such as

St. John Rivers, Eliza Reed and Mr. Brocklehurst — but a mixture of Christian and pagan ideas. Like nature, Jane's God is filled with bounty, compassion and forgiveness — qualities lacking in many of the spiritual leadersshe criticizes in the novel.

Character Analysis – Edward Fairfax Rochester

While Jane's life has been fairly sedate, long, quiet years at Lowood, Rochester's has been wild and dissipated. An example of the Byronic hero, Rochester is a passionate man, often guided by his senses rather than by his rational mind. For example, when he first met Bertha Mason, he found her dazzling, splendid and lavish — all qualities that excited his senses and resulted in their catastrophic marriage. Similarly, he let himself be ruled by his "grande passion" for Céline Varens, despite its immorality. Rochester is not afraid to flout social conventions. This is also apparent in his relationship with Jane: Rather than maintaining proper class boundaries, Rochester makes her feel "as if he were my relation rather than my master."

Like Jane, Rochester is connected with almost psychic powers. His "wealth" of power for communicating happiness seems magical to Jane, as are his abilities to read people's unspoken thoughts from their eyes with incomprehensible acumen. As gypsy fortuneteller, he weaves a magical web around Jane with words and looks directly into her heart so that she feels as "unseen spirit" is watching and recording all of her feelings. He also peers into Blanche's heart, recognizing her for a fortune hunter. Finally, his telepathic cry to Jane when she is at Moor House shows his psychic ability. Like Jane, he taps into the magical powers of the universe in professing his love.

When he meets Jane, Rochester is planning to change his lifestyle. Giving up his wild, dissipated life on the continent, he is searching for freshness and freedom. Rochester's goal is self-transformation, a reformation to be enacted through his relationships with women. Longing for innocence and purity, he wants Jane to be the good angel in his life, creating new harmony. Despite these desires for a new life, Rochester is still caught in a web of lies and immorality: He attempts bigamy and then tries to convince Jane to be his mistress. He also tries to objectify Jane by clothing her in expensive satins and laces, leaving her feeling like a "performing ape." Although Rochester had critiqued Blanche Ingram and Céline Varens for their materialism and superficiality, here he seems to be mimicking them. Rochester's passions and materialism need to be disciplined before he can be the proper husband for Jane. Perhapsnot insignificantly, he is blinded and loses a

hand when Bertha sets fire to Thornfield; symbolically, his excessive passion has finally exploded, leaving him disabled. Rochester haspassed "through the valley of the shadow of death" to become the perfect mate. Having finally paid for his sins, he is now a suitably

Character Analysis – St. John Rivers

While Rochester is a prototype of the fiery, passionate man, St. John Rivers is his opposite: cold, hard-hearted and repressed. His handsome appearance indicates moral and intellectual

superiority — he has "a straight, classic nose; quite an Athenian mouth and chin" — and contrasts with Rochester's more rugged features. Although St. John initially appears perfect, Jane soon detects a restlessness or hardness under his seemingly placid features; he is "no longer flesh, but marble" and his heart seems made of "stone or metal." His reserve and brooding suggest a troubled nature, and his zealous Christianity offers him neither serenity nor solace. St. John's feelings about Christianity are revealed in his sermons, which have a "strictly restrained zeal" that shows his bitterness and hardness. While Rochester vents his passions, St. John represses his. The iciness of St. John's character is most pronounced in his relationship with Rosamond Oliver. Although he "flushes" and "kindles" at the sight of her, St. John would rather turn himself into "an automaton" than succumb to Rosamond's beauty or fortune. His ambition cuts St. John off from all deep human emotions. For Jane, this coldness is more terrible than Rochester's raging; she asks if readers know the "terror those cold people can put into the ice of their questions"?

Not content with his humble local ministry, St. John would like to have been a politician, a poet, or anything that could have offered him glory, fame and power. His solution is to become a missionary, a position that will require all of these skills. The weakness of his supposed Christianity is his lack of compassion for or interest in the people he is supposedly helping. For him, missionary work is not about joy, but a form of "warfare" against the prejudices of the natives, just as he "wars" against Jane's rejection of his marriage proposal. Instead of asking her to help him in a mission of love in India, St. John "enlists" Jane to join his band of Christian mercenaries. He wants a wife he can "influence efficiently" and "retain absolutely," rather than someone he loves. Marriage to St. John would traumatically erase Jane's identity and douse her passions for life. St. John achieves his goal and conducts a "warrior-march trample" through India, ultimately dying young following ten hard years of missionary work.

1.29 THEMES

1.29.1 Love, Family and Independence

As an orphan at Gateshead, Jane is oppressed and dependent. For Jane to discover herself, shemust break out of these restrictive conditions, and find love and independence. Jane must have the freedom to think and feel, and she seeks out other independent-minded people as the loving family she craves. Jane, Helen Burns and Ms. Temple enjoy a deep mutual respect, and form emotional bonds that anticipate the actual family Jane finds in Mary and Diana Rivers. Yet Jane also has a natural instinct toward submission. When she leaves Lowood to find new experiences, she describes herself as seeking a "new servitude." In her relationship with men, she has the inclination toward making first Rochester and then St. John her "master."

Over the course of the novel, Jane strives to find a balance between service and mastery. Jane blends her freedom with her commitments to love, virtue and self-respect. At the end, Jane isboth guide and servant to Rochester. She finds and creates her own family, and their love grows out of the mutual respect of free minds.

1.30 SOCIAL CLASS AND SOCIAL RULES

Life in nineteenth-century Britain was governed by social class, and people typically stayed in the class into which they were born. Both as an orphan at Gateshead and as a governess at Thornfield, Jane holds a position that is *between* classes, and interacts with people of every level, from working-class servants to aristocrats. Jane's social mobility lets

Brontë create a vast social landscape in her novel in which she examines the sources and consequences of class boundaries. For instance, class differences cause many problems in the love between Jane and Rochester. Jane must break through class prejudices about her standing, and make people recognize and respect her personal qualities. Brontë tries to illustrate how personal virtues are better indicators of character than class.

Yet the novel does not entirely endorse breaking every social rule. Jane refuses, for instance, to become Rochester's mistress despite the fact that he was tricked into a loveless marriage. Jane recognizes that how she sees herself arises at least partly out of how society sees her, and is unwilling to make herself a powerless outcast for love.

1.31 GENDER ROLES

In nineteenth-century England, gender roles strongly influenced people's behavior and identities, and women endured condescending attitudes about a woman's place, intelligence and voice. Jane has an uphill battle to become independent and recognized for her personal qualities. She faces off with a series of men who do not respect women as their equals. Mr. Brocklehurst, Rochester and St. John, all attempt to command or master women. Brontë uses marriage in the novel to portray the struggle for power between the sexes. Even though Bertha Mason is insane, she is a provocative symbol of how married women can be repressed and controlled. Jane fends off marriage proposals that would squash her identity, and strives for equality in her relationships. For its depiction of Jane's struggle for gender equality, *Jane Eyre* was considered a radical book in its day.

1.32 RELIGION

Religion and spirituality are key factors in how characters develop in the novel. Jane maturespartly because she learns to follow Christian lessons and resist temptation. Helen Burns introduces Jane to the New Testament, which becomes a moral guidepost for Jane throughout her life. As Jane develops her relationship with God, Mr. Rochester must also reform his pride, learn to pray and become humble. Brontë depicts different forms of religion: Helen trusts in salvation; Eliza Reed becomes a French Catholic nun; and St. John preaches a gloomy Calvinist faith. The novel attempts to steer a middle course. In Jane, Brontë sketches a virtuous faith that does not consume her individual personality. Jane is self-respecting and religious, but also exercises her freedom to love and feel.

1.33 FEELING VS JUDGEMENT

Just as *Jane Eyre* can be described as Jane's quest to balance her contradictory natural instincts toward independence and submission, it can also be described as her quest to find a balance between passionate feeling on the one hand and judgment, or repression of those feelings, on the other. Through the examples of other characters in the novel, such as Eliza and Georgiana, Rochester and St. John—or Bertha, who has no control over her emotions at all—*Jane Eyre* shows that it is best to avoid either extreme. Passion makes a person silly, frivolous or even dangerous, while repression makes a person cold. Over the course of the novel, Jane learns how to create a balance between her feelings and her judgment, and to create a life of love that is also a life of serious purpose.

1.34 THE SPIRITUAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL

Brontë uses many themes of Gothic novels to add drama and suspense to *Jane Eyre*. But the novel is not just a ghost story because Brontë also reveals the *reasons* behind supernatural events. For instance, Mr. Reed's ghost in the red-room is a figment of Jane's stressed-out mind, while Bertha is the "demon" in Thornfield. In *Jane Eyre*, the effects of the supernatural matter more than the causes. The supernatural allows Brontë to explore her characters' psyches, especially Jane's inner fears. The climactic supernatural moment in the novel occurs when Jane and Rochester have a telepathic connection. In the text, Jane makes it clear that the connection was not supernatural to her. Instead, she considers that moment a mysterious spiritual connection. Brontë makes their telepathy part of her conceptions of love and religion.

1.35 UNIT END QUESTIONS

A. Descriptive Questions

1. Explain the importance of paranormal experiences in the novel. What do the characters learn from dreams and visions? How do these experiences modify your understandingof the characters? How do the supernatural elements interact with the novel's realism?
2. Discuss the representations of the various women in the novel: Mrs. Reed, Miss Temple, Céline Varens, Blanche Ingram, Bertha Mason, and Diana and Mary Rivers. What does Jane learn about proper feminine behavior from these women? Which are positive role models? Negative?
3. Explore Jane's ideas of religion. What does she learn about Christianity from

Helen Burns, Mr. Brocklehurst and St. John Rivers? How do their views of Christianity contrast with hers? What problems does she see in their values?

4. Discuss two scenes that show the ambiguity of Jane's social class. What are Jane's opinions of the upper classes and the lower classes? What does the novel say about the social class system in England? Does Brontë critique the system or support it?
5. The narrator in the novel is an older Jane remembering her childhood. Find a few places where the voice of the older Jane intrudes on the narrative. What is the effect of this older voice's intrusions on the story? Does it increase or decrease your sympathy for the young Jane?

Jane gives descriptions of several of her paintings and drawings. Why are these artistic renditions important? What do they reveal about Jane's imagination? About her innerself?

6. Discuss the contrast between images of ice and fire in the novel. What moral attributes are associated with fire and with ice? How is this image pattern used to reveal personality? For example, which characters are associated with fire and which with ice? Does Jane achieve balance between fire and ice?
7. Analyze the importance of the five major places Jane lives on her journey: Gateshead, Lowood, Thornfield, Moor House/Marsh End and Ferndean. What do their names signify? What lessons does Jane learn at each place? Jane provides detailed descriptions of the natural world around each place. What do these descriptions reveal about their character?
8. Compare and contrast Rochester and St. John Rivers. What are their strengths and weaknesses? Why does Jane choose Rochester over St. John?
9. Discuss the representation of foreigners in the novel — Bertha and Richard Mason, Céline and Adèle Varens. How are the colonies represented? What is the source of Rochester's wealth? Of Jane's inheritance?

B. Multiple Choice Questions

1. John Reed abused Jane Eyre when she was small, but the guilt was always hers. What room was she locked in after one of those incidents described in the book?

a. Blue-room

b. Yellow-room

c. White-room

d. Red-room

2. Who in Gateshead Hall was the nicest to Jane?

a. Eliza
b. Miss Abbot
c. Bessie
d. Georgians

3. How does Mr. Brocklehurst, the treasurer of Lowood, humiliate Jane?

a. He makes Jane clean all the floors in the school

b. He refuses to acknowledge Jane when she tries to talk to him

c. He orders Jane to wear a dress with a hole

d. He tells the whole school that Jane is a Liar

4. What would be the best description of Mr. Rochester?

a. Handsome and arrogant
b. Fairly good-looking and kind
c. Plain and shy
d. Ugly and cynical

5. Right after Mr. Rochester proposes to Jane, what is the one question she asks him?

a. Why did he decide to dress as a gypsie?

b. Why did he fire Grace Poole after the fire incident?

c. Why was he pretending that he was going to marry Blanche Ingram?

d. Why did he not tell her that he loved her earlier?

6. What job did St. John find for Jane after she was taken in?

a. A teacher

b. A dressmaker

c. A governess

d. A servant

7. What does St. John Rivers propose to Jane?

a. To marry him and stay at Moor house

b. To marry him and go to India together

c. To go to India together and pass her as his sister

d. To marry him and travel all over the world together

8. What happens to Thornfield Hall by the end of the book?

a. There is a flood
b. There are new owners
c. There is an earthquake
d. There is a fire

Answers

1-d, 2-c, 3-d, 4-d, 5-c, 6-a, 7-b, 8-d

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M.A. (English)

COURSE: ENGLISH NOVEL (Upto 19th Century)

UNIT 3: CHARLES DICKENS: HARD TIMES

STRUCTURE

3.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Study Dickens' widely read satirical account of the Industrial Revolution. Dickens creates the Victorian industrial city of Coketown, in northern England, and its unforgettable citizens, such as the unwavering utilitarian Thomas Gradgrind and the factory owner Josiah Bounderby, and the result is his famous critique of capitalist philosophy, the exploitative force he believed was destroying human creativity and joy.

3.1 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. Tomis apprenticed at the Bounderby bank, and Sissy remains at the Gradgrind's home to care for the younger children.

In the meantime, an impoverished "Hand"—Dickens' 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 apolitical 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.

3.2 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF BOOK I – SOWING: CHAPTERS1-4

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 everbe 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. Hehas 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 16-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 something logical." Bounderby theorizes that Sissy Jupe, the circus entertainer's daughter who attends Gradgrind's school, may have led the young Gradgrind's 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 of Book I – 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' 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 hasrendered 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 the 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.

3.3 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF BOOK I – SOWING: CHAPTERS5-8

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 lifeat 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 offact, and it also makes Mrs. Gradgrind wish she had never been cursed with a family.

Analysis of Book I – 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's 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.

3.4 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF BOOK I – SOWING: CHAPTERS9-12

... not all the calculators of the National Debt can tell me the capacity for good or evil, for love or hatred, for patriotism or discontent, for the decomposition of virtue into vice. . ..

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 casehe 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 longjourney 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 Stephenjust 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 of Book I – 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 theblustery, 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 inquiries 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-nothing 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.

3.5 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF BOOK I – SOWING: CHAPTERS13-16

Thou art an Angel. Bless thee, bless thee!

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 50-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 bymarrying 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-beby 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 of Book I – 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's 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 thanreturning 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 30 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.

3.6 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF BOOK II – REAPING: CHAPTERS1-4

Coketown lay shrouded in a haze of its own ... suggestive of itself, though not a brick of it could be seen.

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 toenter politics as a disciple of Gradgrind. His suave manner and genteel appearance please Mrs. Sparsit, and she attempts to flatter him. The young man inquiries about Louisa Bounderby, ofwhom 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 willalleviate 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 **house**, 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 outof 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 of Book II – Reaping: Chapters 1-4

At the beginning of Book II, 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 make' no complaints ... o' being outcasten and overlooken, fro this time forward, 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.

3.7 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF BOOK II – REAPING: CHAPTERS5-8

... we are awlus wrong, and never had'n no reason in us sin ever we were born.

Summary – Chapter 5: Men and Masters

Bounderby attempts to cajole Stephen into telling him what went on at the union meeting,

butStephen 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 hisbelief that the union will do no good. When he refuses to spy on the other Hands, Bounderbyangrily 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 house, 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 sheoffers him money to help him on his way. Deeply touched, Stephen agrees to accept only twopounds, 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'shouse 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 house, 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 hisinnocence. However, as soon as she leaves his room, he buries his face in his pillow and begins to sob guiltily.

Analysis of Book II – 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 coverage. 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, Louisahad known the Hands only as "[s]something to be worked so much and paid so much," but ingoing 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 thenovel.

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 besomehow 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 herif 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.

3.8 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF BOOK II – REAPING: CHAPTERS9-12

Summary — Chapter 9: Hearing the Last of It

Mrs. Sparsit continues to lurk around the Bounderby's estate, flattering Bounderby's pride and worming her way into his good graces. She also observes shrewdly that Louisa spends a greatdeal 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 Bounderby's house, 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.

3.9 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 howto rectify the situation. Gradgrind is shocked and consumed with sudden self-reproach. Sobbing, Louisa collapses to the floor.

Analysis of Book II – 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 behaviorwas 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* isextremely 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 Chapter 1 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.

3.10 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF BOOK III – 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 suspectLouisa 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 of Book III – Garnering: Chapters 1-4

At the beginning of Book III, Louisa and Mr. Gradgrind begin a process of emotional healingand discovery. The title of Chapter 1, "Another Thing Needful," echoes the title of the Chapter 1 of Book I, "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 solidunder 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 forhis daughter, Gradgrind hopes that Sissy will be able to help her. While Louisa fears that Sissymust 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 wanting' 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.

3.11 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF BOOK III – 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 forhis 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 beenmurdered, 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 allnight 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 heintends 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 of Book III – 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 careershe 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' fiction in that the focus on social ills is prominent throughout the novel, but in the end, Dickens' attention for his characters prevails.

3.12 CHARACTERS

Thomas Gradgrind

A wealthy, retired merchant in Coketown, England; he later becomes a Member of Parliament. Mr. Gradgrind espouses a philosophy of rationalism, self-interest, and cold, hard fact. He describes himself as an "eminently practical" man, and he tries to raise his children—Louisa, Tom, Jane, Adam Smith and Malthus—to be equally practical by forbidding the developmentof their imaginations and emotions.

Louisa

Gradgrind's daughter, later Bounderby's wife. Confused by her cold-hearted upbringing, Louisa feels disconnected from her emotions and alienated from other people. While she vaguely recognizes that her father's system of education has deprived her childhood of all joy,Louisa cannot actively invoke her emotions or connect with others. Thus, she marries Bounderby to please her father, even though she does not love her husband. Indeed, the only person she loves completely is her brother Tom.

Thomas Gradgrind, Jr.

Gradgrind's eldest son and an apprentice at Bounderby's bank, who is generally called Tom. Tom reacts to his strict upbringing by becoming a dissipated, hedonistic, hypocritical young man. Although he appreciates his sister's affection, Tom cannot return it entirely—he loves money and gambling even more than he loves Louisa. These vices lead him to rob Bounderby's bank and implicate Stephen as the robbery's prime suspect.

Josiah Bounderby

Gradgrind's friend and later Louisa's husband. Bounderby claims to be a self-made man and boastfully describes being abandoned by his mother as a young boy. From his childhood poverty, he has risen to become a banker and factory owner in Coketown, known by everyone for his wealth and power. His true upbringing, by caring and devoted parents, indicates that his social mobility is a hoax and calls into question the whole notion of social mobility in nineteenth-century England.

Cecelia Jupe

The daughter of a clown in Sleary's circus. Sissy is taken in by Gradgrind when her father disappears. Sissy serves as a foil, or contrast, to Louisa: while Sissy is imaginative and compassionate, Louisa is rational and, for the most part, unfeeling. Sissy embodies the Victorian femininity that counterbalances mechanization and industry. Through Sissy's interaction with her, Louisa is able to explore her more sensitive, feminine sides.

Mrs. Sparsit

Bounderby's housekeeper, who goes to live at the bank apartments when Bounderby marries Louisa. Once a member of the aristocratic elite, Mrs. Sparsit fell on hard times after the collapse of her marriage. A selfish, manipulative, dishonest woman, Mrs. Sparsit cherishes secret hopes of ruining Bounderby's marriage so that she can marry him herself. Mrs. Sparsit's aristocratic background is emphasized by the narrator's frequent allusions to her "Roman" and "Coriolanian" appearance.

Stephen Blackpool

A Hand in Bounderby's factory. Stephen loves Rachael but is unable to marry her because he is already married, *albeit* to a horrible, drunken woman. A man of great honesty, compassion and integrity, Stephen maintains his moral ideals even when he is shunned by his fellow workers and fired by Bounderby. Stephen's values are similar to those endorsed by the narrator.

Rachael

A simple, honest Hand who loves Stephen Blackpool. To Stephen, she represents domestic happiness and moral purity.

James Harthouse

A sophisticated and manipulative young London gentleman who comes to Coketown to enter politics as a disciple of Gradgrind, simply because he thinks it might alleviate his boredom. In his constant search for a new form of amusement, Harthouse quickly becomes attracted to Louisa and resolves to seduce her.

Mr. Sleary

The lisping proprietor of the circus where Sissy's father was an entertainer. Later, Mr. Sleary hides Tom Gradgrind and helps him flee the country. Mr. Sleary and his troop of entertainer's value laughter and fantasy whereas Mr. Gradgrind values rationality and fact.

Bitzer

Bitzer is one of the successes produced by Gradgrind's rationalistic system of education. Initially, a bully at Gradgrind's school, Bitzer later becomes an employee and a spy at Bounderby's bank. An uncharacteristically pale character and unrelenting disciple of fact, Bitzer almost stops Tom from fleeing after it is discovered that Tom is the true bank robber.

Mr. McChoakumchild

The unpleasant teacher at Gradgrind's school. As his name suggests, McChoakumchild is notoverly fond of children, and stifles or chokes their imaginations and feelings.

Mrs. Pegler

Bounderby's mother, unbeknownst as such to all except herself and Bounderby. Mrs. Pegler makes an annual visit to Coketown in order to admire her son's prosperity from a safe distance. Mrs. Pegler's appearance uncovers the hoax that her son Bounderby has been attesting throughout the story, which is that he is a self-made man who was abandoned as a child.

Mrs. Gradgrind

Gradgrind's whiny, anemic wife, who constantly tells her children to study their "ologies" and complains that she'll "never hear the end" of any complaint. Although Mrs. Gradgrind does not share her husband's interest in facts, she lacks the energy and the imagination to oppose his system of education.

Slackbridge

The crooked orator who convinces the Hands to unionize and turns them against Stephen Blackpool when he refuses to join the union.

Jane Gradgrind

Gradgrind's younger daughter; Louisa and Tom's sister. Because Sissy largely raises her, Jane is a happier little girl than her sister, Louisa.

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'sunrelenting 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 itcomes to." This philosophy has brought Mr. Gradgrind much financial and social success. Hehas 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 onlywantin' 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 "painand 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.

3.13 THEMES

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 Book I, 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 missingin 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-nothing 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 questionof 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 desireto 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.

3.14 MOTIFS

Bounderby's Childhood

Bounderby frequently reminds us that he is "Josiah Bounderby of Coketown." This emphaticphrase usually follows a description of his childhood poverty: he claims to have been born ina 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 wereloving, *albei*t 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.

3.15 SYMBOLS

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." Thepegasus 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 onit 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 worldof 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.

3.16 UNIT END QUESTIONS

A. Descriptive Type Questions

1. Critics have called Hard Times an allegory. Would you agree with this statement? Proveyour response by making direct reference to passages in the novel.
2. Characterize Mrs. Gradgrind; in what ways does she show that, being incapable of comprehending her husband's philosophy, she has withdrawn from the world?
3. Louisa was descending the allegorical staircase of shame. Were there others descending with her? Support your answer.
4. What analogy is drawn between Coketown and the Gradgrindian philosophy?
5. What are Mrs. Sparsit's reasons for not calling Louisa Mrs. Bounderby?
6. Explain what Dickens means by "Bounderby's absolute power"?
7. Rachael and Stephen have been subjected to criticism by readers who say that they arealmost too good to be true. At what points in the story do Rachael and Stephen refute this criticism?
8. What is Mrs. Sparsit's role in the novel?
9. Dickens, as we all know, is utilizing satire to agitate for better conditions in England. To what advantage does Kidderminster serve Dickens' purpose?
10. What motivated Louisa's visit to Stephen? What were the results of this visit?
11. What, according to Tom, was Louisa's method of escape?
12. Of what significance was the "Star Shining" to Stephen? What does this represent symbolically?
13. In the time of the Hebrew prophet Daniel, Belshazzar, last king of Babylon, saw the "handwriting on the wall," which foretold his destruction. How does Dickens utilize this analogy?

14. Why is it significant for the novel to open in the classroom of Facts and conclude in the circus of Fancy?
15. What hope does Dickens give concerning Gradgrind?
16. By clearing Stephen's name, Mr. Gradgrind realized that someone else would be implicated. Who was this person? How does Gradgrind react when he realizes the implications?
17. How does Bounderby's concept of smoke differ from that of the Hands?
18. What is the motive behind Mrs. Sparsit's spying on James Harthouse and Louisa Bounderby?
19. Bitzer states that the entire economic system is based on self-interest. Does his character prove his statement? What characters other than Bitzer would be examples of his statement?
20. How did Gradgrind react when he realized that his educational philosophy was a failure?

B. Multiple Choice Questions

1. Where is the story set?

a. Motown
b. Smoketown
c. Old Town
d. Coketown

2. What does Mr. Gradgrind say is the most important philosophy?

a. Fun
b. Facts
c. Pictures
d. Fiction

3. How does Stephen Blackpool die?

a. He gets electrocuted
b. He gets shot
c. He falls down a disused mine shaft
d. He jumps off a bridge

4. Who stole from Mr. Bounderby's bank?

a. Stephen Blackpool
b. Tom Gradgrind
c. Mr. Harthouse

d. Bitzer

5. What name was given to the workers at Bounderby's factory?

a. The Hands
b. The Bodies
c. The Fingers
d. The Feet

Answers

1-d, 2-b, 3-c, 4-b, 5-a

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M.A. (English)
Semester-I
COURSE: ENGLISH NOVEL (Upto 19th Century)
Section-C

UNIT 1: MIDDLEMARCH

STRUCTURE

1.0 OBJECTIVE

This unit will briefly describe the historical background of George Eliot's age. It will also discuss the life and major works of Eliot. It will reflect upon the influences on her mind and discuss the storyline of Middlemarch: a study of provincial life.

1.1 Historical background of *Middlemarch*

In contrast to the histories of France with its revolution and United States with its Bill of Rights, England was still stuck in its monarchy and feudal system at the beginning of the 19th century. Political power remained in the hands of the aristocracy but the 1830's saw a wave of political and social change. Lord Grey became the prime minister of the United Kingdom in 1830 and introduced the Parliamentary Reform Act which became a law in 1832. This was the first step towards democratization and there was a shift from class determined society which was divided and in which opportunities were available to people based on the social position they held. The reform act restricted the powers of the gentry and readjusted the political constituencies, and this reflected the changes that had taken place in the population. The right to vote was also given to a larger number of people, only men of course by including small landowners, tenant farmers, shopkeepers and men living in towns who paid a yearly rental of ten pounds or more. Most of the working men and all women were still denied the right to vote. The second reform act of 1867 extended the right to more people, but women got the right to vote only in 1928.

There were lot of advances in science particularly in medicine. Earlier medical treatment was based on strange practices that included "change of air," bloodletting and attaching leeches to the bodies of patients. Doctors earned a lot of money from selling drugs rather than visiting patients and treating their ailments which often led to unnecessary prescriptions. This practice

started changing with the advances in research and partly by the rapid spread of diseases and high death rates in overcrowded cities. It was with the introduction of a regulated university education in 1816 that the stethoscope was invented, and improvement was brought in the quality of microscopes thus improving the chance of a proper diagnosis

The 19th century also saw a conflict between religion and science. Works like Darwin's *The Origin of Species* had put forth the theory of evolution and the faith of people was shaken in traditional ideas. Scholars raised questions about the authenticity of the Bible. As a result of this people began to lose faith in religion and became skeptical about the church. George Eliot herself was not untouched by the developments in Science and she too lost her faith in religious beliefs. This is also reflected in the attitude of the characters of *Middlemarch*

There was also a major change in the economic conditions of the country because of industrialization and colonization. The class system was very strong, and it became even more so with the origin of the upper-middle-class in England as people were travelling to, and from the colonies after earning a lot of wealth. It can be said that it was an age of transition in every sphere of life. Mechanized farming and the growth of industry had uprooted many people from the countryside villages and brought them to the town. So, the people of England were moving from monarchy to democracy, agriculture to industry and various new classes could be seen developing in the society. The people and writers of the 19th century were trying to come to terms with these contradictory trends. Writers, poets, and novelists reflected these issues in their works and their efforts to come to terms with these opposing tendencies to strike a balance is called the Victorian Compromise.

Check Your Progress

(i) What major changes occurred in England in the 1830s?

(ii) When was the regulated university education of Medical Sciences set up?

(iii)How did scientific development affect the people's minds?

1.1 Life and works of George Eliot

George Eliot alias Mary Ann Evans was born on the 22nd of November 1819, at South farm Arbury in Warwickshire. She was the daughter of a staunch Tori whose name was Robert Evans. Mary Ann Evans was deeply influenced by the quiet environment with many rivers flowing through the region. She was surrounded by humble country folk, laborers, peasants, and clergymen who led a very relaxed existence and she depicts these people and their calm living style in her early novels with great clarity. She was very fond of reading even as a child and when she was eight years old, she was sent to a school at Nuneaton.

As she grew up George Eliot became more reserved in her attitude and her intellect showed a

bent towards imaginative thoughts. In 1832 she shifted to a school in Coventry. Through her reading of all the different types of books she developed a skeptical mind and began to believe that moral superiority did not rest only upon religious beliefs. She lost her mother when she was 17 years old and her eldest sister got married, so she had to shoulder the responsibility of the home and family. After her brother Isaac got married, she returned to Coventry and through her interaction with intellectuals like Charles Bray she began to question traditional religious views. He introduced her to Hennell's book inquiry concerning the origin of Christianity, Bray's on the philosophy of necessity which increased her critical sensibility and led her to the path of skepticism and doubt. She stopped going to the church and obsessed observing all ritualistic religious practices. Her father was so upset by this that he did not speak to her for some time.

George Eliot translated *Life of Jesus* by Strauss and felt that the soul should be free from religious rituals. However, she could not completely break away from the past. She became the assistant editor of the Westminster review and while on this post she met some of the greatest writers and intellectuals of the times among whom there were stalwarts like Carlyle, J.S. Mill, Francis Newman, Harriet Martineau, Spencer, and Huxley. She met Emerson, Dickens, Mrs. Gaskell, and Thackery at Chapman's house. She learned about August Compte and his philosophy through her interaction with Herbert Spencer. He also told her that among all his women acquaintances she had the most venerable character and that her intellectual and emotional capabilities were of a very high order. In 1851 George Eliot met George Henry Lewes and his intelligence and ability won her heart. Lewes was a married man, but his wife was mentally imbalanced. George Eliot who did not believe in the old traditional values did not allow his marriage to hinder her relations with Lewes. In 1854 she began to live with him as his wife as the stringent divorce laws of the time would not permit Lewes to leave his wife. She went to Germany with Lewes and visited Weimar and Berlin. This relationship gave her happiness and contentment. They returned from Germany in 1855 after which she began to write novels. Lewes encouraged her to do so because he could see that her understanding of life, distinct descriptive ability and knowledge would help her to become a successful novelist. Her first book *Amos Barton* (1857) was a psychological novel, it was published in *Blackwood's* magazine. She wrote to the editor of the magazine that her aim was to create characters of various types with mixed natures who would inspire compassion, tolerance, and sympathy in the minds of the reader. After this she wrote *Mr. Glifil's Love Story* and *Janet's Repentance* which came in 1858 under the title *Scenes from Clerical Life*. This book proved that a new star had been born in the literary firmament. *Adam Bede* appeared in 1859 and this further enhanced her fame and strengthened her position as a writer. *The Mill on the Floss* which is regarded an

autobiographical novel undoubtedly made her the greatest writer of her times. *Silas Marner* was a novella in which model ethics appeared very strongly. Her next novel's *Romola* and *Felix Holt* did not add to her reputation but, *Middlemarch* (1871) is considered her masterpiece and best novel. *Daniel Deronda* (1876) is her last novel but is not regarded as being as good as her other works. Gradually she lost her capacity to write. In 1878 Lewes died, and in 1880 she married John Walter Cross but survived for only eight months after that. She was buried alongside Lewes at the Highgate cemetery. George Eliot contributed immensely to the art of the novel and gave it a new direction. She tried to give the novel a composite structure and paid a lot of attention to the inner workings of the human mind. She gave the message of love, patience, and forbearance to humanity.

Check Your Progress

(i) Which magazine did George Eliot become the assistant editor of?

(ii) Who was George Henry Lewes?

(iii) Who did George Eliot marry?

(iv) Which novel of George Eliot is supposed to be autobiographical?

1.2 Abstract of the novel

Middlemarch was published in eight parts as a serial novel in 1871 and 1872 which appeared after every two months: it is Eliot's largest and most comprehensive novel and it takes up an in-depth study of British provincial life. It takes up the stories of various characters example Lydgate and his struggles as a young doctor, Dorothea on whom the first ten chapters of the novel are based. Her world is presented to us in detail and it is around her and Lydgate that the whole story is woven to give the readers a panoramic picture of a town and its various inhabitants. Lydgate and Dorothea then constitute the core of the novel, they are also described as similar figures who are the soul of the novel. They have much in common like their unhappy marital lives' social aspirations and their reaction to societal pressures and influences. The novel is regarded as being by far the greatest novel written by Eliot and she was acclaimed as one of the greatest novelists in Britain after she wrote this it was an immediate success and it made Eliot's fame spread far and wide. Through it she intended to analyze the political, social, and economic conditions through the personal histories of her characters. How historical change affects the lives of people, how they progress add referred to by Eliot through a lot of events such as the Catholic emancipation, the death of George the IV, the dissolution of parliament in 1831, the outbreak of cholera in 1832, and the reform bill of the same year. The characters are concerned with these developments, but these issues are not the focus of the novel and are balanced with the literary narrative.

A very significant concern of the novel is transition and how people take to it. People react under the stress of historical changes and their desire to progress in their society motivates them. Eliot represents people naturally in detail and critically assesses them while still giving the readers space to formulate their own opinions. The characters are all human beings who can be judged as the reader judges himself and can be interpreted by everyone in his or her own way. The story focuses on two principal characters Dorothea and Tertius Lydgate both of whom are married but unhappy in their relationships with their respective partners. Dorothea is earnest and intelligent, but she fails to realize that Edward Casaubon, a pompous scholar who is much older than her would not make a good husband. Dorothea herself is interested in academics and wants to be involved in his work but he wants her to remain a kind of secretary to him. She becomes skeptical of his talent and so-called great work he wishes to keep her under control and disapproves of her cordial friendship with his cousin Will Ladislaw who is an idealist too. Dorothea is disappointed with her husband but adheres to her commitment of marriage and tries to keep her husband pleased. She devotes herself to his care when he has a heart attack, but he forbids Ladislaw from visiting them because he thinks the latter will pursue his wife after his death. Casaubon subsequently seeks a promise that she will follow his wishes even after his death. Dorothea is hesitant but ultimately decides to obey his wish however unfortunately she cannot inform him about this decision before he dies. His bill contains a clause stating that she will be disinherited if she marries Ladislaw. Initially afraid of scandal Dorothea and Ladislaw stay apart but they finally decide to get married. Ladislaw enters politics and despite all the sacrifices she has made Dorothea is content because the “growing good of the world is dependent on unhistorical acts.”

Lydgate’s story also unfolds during this time. He has a career as a progressive young doctor who is passionate about medicine and research. He arrives in Middlemarch gets involved with and later marries Rosamond Vincy, who he thinks is docile, polished, refined and possesses all the qualities to be seen in an ideal wife. Rosamond thinks that her marriage with Lydgate will improve her social status little realizing that he is poor. Lydgate becomes aware of her shallow nature and of the fact that he has made a wrong choice. Rosamond's expensive lifestyle leads him to the brink of financial ruin. He seeks a loan from a banker Nicholas Bulstrode but fails in getting it. Bulstrode has his own problematic concerns his unsavory past has made him vulnerable to John Raffles who is blackmailing him. When Raffles fall sick Bulstrode looks after him and summons Lydgate for his treatment. He also agrees to lend the money Lydgate wants and the latter accepts the loan. Later, he disregards Lydgate's advice for Raffles treatment leading to the death of the blackmailer. When the true story of Bulstrode and Raffles comes to

light suspicions arise about Lydgate's involvement in the latter's death of. One of the few people who do not suspect Lydgate is Dorothea and he is impressed by her compassionate and kind attitude. Lydgate and Rosamond shift to London where he becomes wealthy, but he considers himself a failure and dies at the age of 50.

Along with the stories of these two characters around whose lives the action revolves Eliot gives a rich picture of the life of a small town in provincial England. The novel was regarded as too gloomy for a woman writer, but Virginia Woolf praised it as being one of the few English novels written for grown up people. It deals with the 19th century events but is modern because of its psychological insights and moral ambiguity The dilemma of human existence is presented in a very lucid manner and there is no happy ending which was expected of all women writers who wrote romances. This novel in fact presents the realities of life and the vagaries of marital relationships.

Check Your Progress

(i) When was Middlemarch published?

(ii) Who is Lydgate?

(iii) What is Bulstrode' s role in the novel?

(iv) What did Virginia Woolf say about the novel?

1.3 Outline of the story

Middlemarch is George Eliot 's most important novel and one of the several seminal works of English realism. The story is set in the early nineteenth century just a few years before the United Kingdom 's Parliamentary reform act of 1832 was passed. George Eliot modelled *Middlemarch* on the English town of Coventry where she lived with her father after her mother 's death. The plot is based on the idea that people's pasts determine t their futures and everything in life has its repercussions on them.

Young gentle woman Dorothea Brooke lives with her sister Celia and her bachelor uncle Mr. Brooke. She has a keen mind and an independent spirit, puritanical and idealistic attitude and is not liked by everyone. However, her beauty has made her a sought-after prospective bride for two men. The good-natured Sir James Chettam and the pale erudite scholar Edward Casaubon who is much older than her and is researching on a book on myths. Dorothea however thinks that Chettam is interested in her sister and her idealistic view of marriage is that of a husband who is more of a father figure and so she accepts Casaubon's offer of marriage. He is a man of high intellect and spiritual insight according to her and these are both things that she longs for in a prospective groom. Many of her friends and relatives are shocked by her choice because they feel that the Casaubon is a very dry man and too old for Dorothea .The two get married quickly

and set off on their honeymoon to Rome where Casaubon hopes to pursue his research.

Tertius Lydgate is new to Middlemarch, he has chosen a life in a small town to escape the intrigues and professional jealousies he witnessed in London. His profession is very important to him as it combines his love for scientific study with charity and service to mankind. His first experience of Middlemarch comes with the choice of a curate for the new hospital. He realizes that social politics play a very significant in this small town and finds himself voting against his conviction for the candidate who is supported by Middlemarch's banker Mr. Bulstrode who finances the hospital. Rosamond Vincy is the beautiful, superficial daughter of a local businessman who regards the local men to be beneath her dignity, so she is impressed with Lydgate who is an outsider and the nephew of a Baronet. She believes that her marriage with him would enable her to rise in the estimate of the people in the society. Lydgate also enjoys flirting with Rosamond and sees her as a perfect example of feminine grace and excellent upbringing. But he does not have any intention of getting married soon because his research is too important for him.

In Rome, Casaubon spends most of his time in the library at the Vatican and Dorothea is left alone. She realizes that her hopes for marriage to Casaubon were illusionary. When she asks him when he intends to begin writing the manuscript for his book, they have their first quarrel. Casaubon's young cousin Will Ladislaw also happens to be in Rome and he and Dorothea start spending a lot of time together. They are attracted to each other and he falls in love with her.

Fred Vincy is Rosamond's happy-go-lucky brother, fails his theology exam and finds himself in debt after hiring horses on credit from a local dealer, Mr.Bambridge. When it is time to renew the bill of credit Fred requests the estate manager Caleb Garth with whose family he is close, to cosign the debt. Fred hopes to receive some money from Peter Featherstone an old rich widower with whom his aunt was married. Featherstone often told him that he might leave his estate to Fred. Fred's plan of exchanging his horse for a better one by getting extra pounds to settle the debt backfire and the new horse starts kicking and lames itself, so when payback day arrives Fred has to ask Caleb to pay the debt for him which strips them of all their savings. Fred is extremely sad because he's in love with Mary Garth who is Caleb's daughter. She has continually rejected him since she does not want to marry an idle frivolous creature and now, he has brought trouble to the family so this doesn't improve her view of him. Shortly after this unpleasant affair Fred is afflicted with typhus fever. Their family doctor Mr. Wrench diagnoses the illness wrongly. Lydgate is called for. He makes the correct diagnosis and is soon considered a hero and a lifesaver because he cures him. His growing reputation leads to jealousy from the other long-established doctors in the area. His daily visits to check on Fred enables Lydgate to

spend more and more time with Rosamond and they start flirting openly. While Rosamond is already planning their marital home in her mind, Lydgate sees their relationship as a merely entertaining diversion. But in the gossip loving little town rumors of an engagement start to make the rounds. Lydgate avoids going to evening gatherings at the Vincy's and when they meet again Rosamond starts crying. Lydgate falls in love with her and they get engaged.

Dorothea and Casaubon return from Rome and find that Chettam and Celia are engaged. Casaubon becomes anxious about completing his work and Dorothea cannot rid herself of the feeling of unhappiness and disappointment because she's not able to support her husband. She feels that she has become a burden on him. He reacts very unpleasantly to a letter from Ladislaw asking if he could visit them. By this time Dorothea is at the end of her tether and loses her patience with him. Shortly after Casaubon gets breathless and is unable to speak. Dorothea rushes to his aid, Lydgate is called, and he warns Dorothea that if Casaubon doesn't rest and take a break from his studies it could be a serious health hazard for him. Dorothea requests her Uncle to write to Ladislaw and tell him that a visit from him would be unwelcome. Mr. Brooke does contact Ladislaw but instead of following Dorothea's instructions he invites him to stay at his place.

Meanwhile, Featherstone is on the verge of death and Mary becomes his nurse. One night he opens a box full of gold and asks her to get him a second box so that he can give her money. He tells her that he has written two wills and wants to destroy the second one. Mary however refuses to touch anything because she does not want to be accused of grabbing money from Featherstone by any of his relatives. Featherstone dies that night.

As the Featherstone family gathers for the reading of his will Joshua Rigg who is his illegitimate son suddenly appears. When the executor reads out the first will Fred is to receive a handsome amount. However, the second will which is valid makes Rigg the sole benefactor of Featherstone's fortune leaving Fred and all the others empty-handed. Mary feels responsible for Fred's loss as she had refused to destroy the second will. Sir Chettam enquires from Garth whether he would manage both his and Mr. Brooke's estates. This offer puts an end to Garth's financial problems and Mary can stay in Middlemarch.

Casaubon's health is still very delicate, and his dislike of Ladislaw is increasing. When Brooke brings Ladislaw to visit, he inadvertently gives Casaubon the impression that Dorothea had asked him to invite Ladislaw to stay with him. Ladislaw is now working as an editor for a newspaper that Brooke has bought. Without telling Dorothea, Casaubon writes to Ladislaw and orders him to leave Middlemarch as his new position of editor places him below the status that Casaubon and Dorothea enjoy in society and so it reflects badly on them. Ladislaw gets annoyed

and refuses to leave. Casaubon is convinced that Ladislaw is trying to win Dorothea so that he can get all her money once Casaubon is dead.

The strain in the marital relationship described in the novel is also visible in Lydgates and Rosamonds case. Lydgate does not understand her social ambitions and she cannot tolerate his constant desire for professional enhancement, scientific advancement and zeal for reform which keeps him busy for a very long time. Besides all the other doctors in Middlemarch also annoyed with him. Lydgate also feels the pressure of Rosamond's high lifestyle and expectations and he is forced to accept that to keep her comfortable.

Dorothea and Casaubon also grow more estranged she feels trapped in the marriage and totally loses faith in her husband's capabilities and work. Casaubon on the other hand is afraid that he will die before he can complete his work and so he begins to take desperate actions. One evening he tells Dorothea to promise that she will fulfil his wishes after his death. Thinking that he would ask her to finish his work for him she's hesitant. Casaubon is deeply hurt, and Dorothea is also restless, but she finally convinces herself that it is her duty to obey his wishes. When she goes to give her consent, she finds him dead. Dorothea goes to stay with her sister who has had her first baby. After Casaubon's funeral Dorothea comes to know that he has made an addendum to his will: she is the mistress of his whole estate but will lose it immediately if she marries Ladislaw. This makes her very angry and makes her consider her feelings for Ladislaw seriously for the first time. Ladislaw is unaware of this addendum but knowing that Dorothea is a rich widow it becomes impossible for him to pursue her because everybody would think that he was doing so to get her money. So, he decides to stay away from her.

During this time Fred Vincy has managed to pass his theology exam but has changed his mind about becoming a vicar. He tells Camden Farebrother a local vicar that he would join the profession only if it won him Mary 's affection. He requests Farebrother to speak to Mary on his behalf and when he asks her she is reluctant to answer but eventually concedes to the fact that she loves Fred. Her condition is that Fred stands a chance only after he starts working and being responsible only then she would marry him. She is sure about one thing that she would never marry him if he were to become a vicar because it would make her feel that she was looking at a caricature. Farebrother conveys this to his friend who is very relieved.

At this time a man called John Raffles appears in Middlemarch and starts blackmailing Bulstrode who has-a notorious past. As a young banker Bulstrode had got involved in a large pawnbroker business run by Mr. Dunkirk who made money through stolen property. He was his partner and when Mr. Dunkirk died Bulstrode married his widow who was Ladislaw's grandmother. After the marriage she asked Bulstrode to help her look for her daughter who had

run away from home because she disapproved of the wrongly earned money of her father. Bulstrode had found her but never told his wife because he wanted to get all her fortune when she died. Trying to get rid of his guilty conscience Bulstrode confesses the whole story to Ladislaw and offers him money as recompense. Ladislaw refuses to take it as he feels it is tainted money.

Meanwhile Fred gets an offer from Garth to be his assistant and he accepts it, thereby disappointing his parents. Lydgates cousin Captain Lydgate the son of a Baronet comes to visit, and Rosamond is elated. She believes that being seen in his company will enhance her social status and she spends a lot of time with him. In contrast Lydgate finds his cousin very dull and avoids him. Rosamond is pregnant but she agrees to go for a ride with the captain. When Lydgate finds out he tells her not to take this risk again, but she ignores him. Her horse bolts and she lose the baby. Soon after Lydgate tells her about the debt. She reacts very coldly and starts regretting her decision to marry him.

Even though Ladislaw intends to leave Middlemarch his departure is delayed. He spends a lot of time with Rosamond and one day she tells him about Casaubon's addendum to his will. He realizes that it would not be in her interest to marry him and decides to go and see her before leaving for London. He tries to tell her of his feelings, but she misunderstands and thinks that he is talking about Rosamond. Unbeknown to her husband Rosamond continues to write letters to Ladislaw after his departure. She believes that he is in love with her and she's hoping that he will come and rescue her from her miserable marriage.

On the one hand and Rosamond pretends to support Lydgates attempt to adjust their lifestyle to their means, on the other she writes to Sir Godwin, Lydgates uncle requesting him for some money. Sir Godwin does not reply to her, but he writes a scathing letter to Lydgate reproaching him for asking his wife to beg him for money. He refuses to give them anything, so Lydgate finally turns to Bulstrode and tells him about his financial problem. The banker refuses to give him the loan and withdraws his financial support to the fever hospital. Bulstrode promises to pay Raffles the blackmailer the money he is asking for on the condition that he leaves Middlemarch and never returns. But shortly after Garth tells Bulstrode that he has picked up a very ill man on the road and put him up in Stone Court which is one of Bulstrode' s properties. It turns out that the sick man is Raffles, who is delirious and drunk. Lydgate is called, he tells Bulstrode to administer a dose of opium but not to give him alcohol. Bulstrode looks after him for two nights to make sure he does not disclose his past to anyone. When Lydgate comes to check up on Raffles, Bulstrode tells him that he has changed his mind about lending him money and he gives him a note for £1000. Lydgate is surprised but takes it gratefully. On the third night. Bulstrode' s

housekeeper takes care of Raffles. She asks whether she can give him some alcohol and Bulstrode agrees seeing it as a chance to get rid of the blackmailer. The next morning Raffles is dead. Rumors begin to spread about Bulstrode' s suspicious past, Raffles death and the payment to Lydgate and circumstances lead to make both outcastes as people are convinced that Lydgate was paid money to kill Raffles.

Dorothea believes in Lydgate's innocence and wants to help him, so she pays off his £1000 debt to Bulstrode and talks to him about continuing to work at the fever hospital. When he confides in her that Rosamond was not happy in Middlemarch, she takes his permission to visit his wife and convince her of his innocence. When she arrives at the house, she finds Rosamond and Ladislaw sitting close together on the sofa and Rosamond is in tears. Ladislaw is holding her hand. This confirms Dorothea's assumption that there is something between them, so she leaves quickly without any hope of finding happiness in life. Ladislaw realizes that she has misunderstood his closeness to Rosamond and his anger and hopelessness of the situation makes him turn against Rosamond and he tells her that he could never love anyone except Dorothea. After a disturbed night Dorothea decides to rescue the marriage of Rosamond and Lydgate. She tells Rosamond that she thinks Lydgate is innocent and he is solely motivated by the desire to keep Rosamond happy. Overwhelmed by Dorothea's gentleness and sincerity Rosamond tells her what really happened with Ladislaw the day before and that he is deeply in love with Dorothea.

A few days later Miss Noble who is Mrs. Farebrother's sister visits Dorothea on Ladislaw's behalf to ask her whether she would be willing to meet him. Dorothea agrees to do so and finally there is an open conversation between them. He laments that he would never be rich enough to marry her. Just as he's about to leave Dorothea breaks down, she tells him she's not interested in wealth and has her own fortune which would enable them to live comfortably. They decide to get married despite the disapproval of Middlemarch society.

Despite all the efforts that Dorothea makes Lydgate and Rosamond move to London where he starts a successful practice and a continental bathing place. He sacrifices his dream of scientific discovery and progress and dies when he's only 50. Garth gives Fred the opportunity to manage Mr. Brooke's estate a position that allows Fred and Mary to get married. Dorothea and Ladislaw move to London where he starts a successful career in politics.

Check Your Progress

(i) In which period is the setting of the story of Middlemarch?

(ii) Who does Dorothea marry and why?

(iii)Why is Ladislaw not allowed to visit Casaubon's home?

(iv) Who is Fred Vincy?

(v) Who is Raffles?

(vi) Why does Lydgate fall into debt?

(vii) How does Mary finally agree to marry Fred?

CONCLUSION

Middlemarch has a subtitle, *A study of provincial life*. George Eliot herself had spent her childhood and youth at Aubrey and Coventry in the provinces and shifted to London later. Her personal experience of the life in the countryside is reflected through the novel. Though Middlemarch is a fictitious town it is based on Coventry and it embodies the same kind of lifestyle and community feeling. The people of Middlemarch are very familiar with each other. Eliot successfully paints a picture of life as it is lived outside London. Middlemarch is a novel about people, their ambitions, and disappointments. As the protagonists represent humanity as a whole.

Essay Questions

1. What was the historical scenario in which George Eliot was writing?
2. Write an essay on the life and works of George Eliot and show how she contributed to the art of the English novel.

Short Questions

1. Write a note on the Victorian Compromise
2. Write a brief note on the two main characters of Middlemarch?

Suggested Readings

- Leavis, F.R. (1950) The great tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad. New York: George W Stewart
- Swinden, Patrick. ed (1972) George Eliot: Middlemarch: A case book. London: Macmillan
- Blake, Kathleen (1976) “Middlemarch and the woman question.”
- Ashton, Rosemary (1983) George Eliot. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Chase, Karen (1991) Eliot: Middlemarch (Landmarks of world literature). Cambridge: Cambridge University Pres

UNIT II - MIDDLEMARCH

OBJECTIVE

This unit discusses the structure of *Middlemarch*. It is an unwieldly novel with more than eighty chapters. Initially it was published in the serial form with a gap of two months and over two years 1871 – 72. It also describes the style and techniques used by George Eliot to braid the various strands of the story together. This unit will also discuss the variety of themes George Eliot has taken up in the novel. The novel is sometimes called a historical novel, sometimes a political novel. However, the large number of issues it deals with makes it difficult to pinpoint what type of novel it is. It deals with a very wide range of subjects including the woman question, class divisions, human desires and failures, marital relationships etc.

STRUCTURE

2.0 Structure and style

2.1 Themes

2.0 Structure and style

Middlemarch was initially split into eight parts which were published over a period of one year in a serial form. Eventually the novel was published in four volumes with 86 chapters. The time span covered by the novel is two years and it ends in 1832 shortly before the reform of Parliament which is mentioned very often throughout the novel. The first 10 chapters tell us the story of Dorothea, her family and her courtship and marriage with Casaubon. It is in chapter 11 that Lydgate and Rosamond come on the scene and after this the two stories of unhappy marriages unfold together.

All the other characters in the novel revolve round these two main storylines and the lives of the people of Middlemarch interconnect and affect one another. As a result, Eliot introduces various perspectives and paints a panoramic picture of the moral dilemmas, social behaviour of human beings and the imperfections of life. The omniscient author technique is employed to reflect the thoughts and feelings of the characters and the narrator comments quite freely upon their lives and characters, as well as their thought processes. So the narrator gives a kind of running commentary and this technique is not liked by some readers because it suggests that they need guidance from the writer to fully understand and appreciate the motives and attitude of the various characters.

The novel has a complex sentence structure and there are sometimes confusing networks of sub-clauses which modern readers are not patient with. It is an example of the realistic novel. *Middlemarch* is also a novel of parallels and contrasts. The two major characters and their stories unfold in parallel however their reactions to the realities of the system and their situations are different. Similarly, Casaubon and Lydgate are similar in their dedication to research and in

their attitude towards women. They regard women as accessories and adornments in the lives of men. Both their wives undermine and destroy the confidence of their respective husbands. Dorothea's realization that Casaubon's work is fruitless leads to his feeling of inadequacy and self-torment. Lydgate's ambitions are destroyed by Rosamond's lack of interest in anything intellectual. The plot also seems to suggest that no individual can escape his or her past . Victorian readers received books in serial form with enthusiasm and also gave their feedback demanding sometimes more or less favorable consequences for the characters according to their likes and dislikes. So, the readers took an active part in the creation of the novel because the mode of publication and the readers response had an influence on the structure of the novel in general. Some critics feel that the novel lacks symmetry. However, keeping in mind, the circumstances of the Victorian readers who had more leisure, the novel was acceptable with all its meanderings and diversions. The novel was planned on a grand scale, it deals with the community and not with an individual. The changes that were coming about in Victorian society naturally influenced the writing of the novel. Industrialization had caused new power structures and George Eliot wanted to show not only the protagonists living their own lives but also how the rural people opposed industrial growth and the establishment of railways. Pioneering efforts in medicine and other sciences led to the rise of the novel of ideas. All old values were being questioned there were no new ideas that could give solace to the troubled Victorian mind. Having taken up a vast mass of material Eliot concentrates on what she wants to say rather than how to give it a compact structure. A variety of techniques are used by her to prevent monotony. There are several unforgettable scenes centered around the major characters which are interspersed with the whole narrative. The omniscient author moves from one to another and is seen guiding the readers about how to interpret them and exploring the motives of the characters by reading their minds. The novel can be divided into eight carefully planned sections and contains several parallels and contrasts linking the events together. Eliot manages to connect and provide a symmetry to the complex material. She has created some memorable linking scenes to bring the townspeople together. Through their interaction some interesting undertones and class relations are exposed. These scenes also create the impression of how public opinion can have its effect on the reactions of people and how they may be seen.

The narrative is sometimes said to consist of four plots with an equal emphasis. The life of Dorothea Brooke, the career of Lydgate, the courtship of Mary Garth and Fred Vincy and the disgrace of Nicholas Bulstrode are the four stories that are woven into the novels structure. The two main plots are of course those of Dorothea and Lydgate.

Each chapter of *Middlemarch* begins with a small quotation or lines of poems that constitute the

epigraph. These summarize the following chapter and act as pointers towards how the plot is going to proceed. This works to place *Middlemarch* in the canon of literary works as Eliot chooses her epigraphs from Shakespeare, Dante, Chaucer and William Blake. Another element of the style and technique used by Eliot is that her characters do not speak directly to the people of the other gender. They communicate through others by sending messages and not speaking for themselves. This shows that the community of Middlemarch is like a web. Gossip is often used as an important tool to convey important information and so the characters avoid direct conversation because they know that information will eventually reach them through the grapevine.

Initially Eliot planned to write two separate novels one devoted to an idealistic doctor and another entitled Miss Brooke about the mistakes of an ardent and worldly young woman. Eliot later decided to combine them. She divided the story into eight books each of which has a carefully thought over title. Each title has a significance; for example the title of the second book Old and Young does not merely refer to the age difference between Dorothea and Casaubon who decide to get married but it also refers to Lydgate's arrival in Middlemarch and the old doctors already practicing in the town who are upset by his presence in their area. The third book entitled Waiting for Death tells us about the impending death of Peter Featherstone and-it also refers to Dorothea and Casaubon 's first apprehension about his ill health and his death. This structure allowed Eliot to keep changing her viewpoints in a way that constantly deepen and complicate the readers understanding of the characters and their relationship. It also shows that George Eliot was conscious of the fact that the same thing can look different when seen from the perspective of many people. This seems to suggest that the writer wants to convey that it is not wise to side with one person rather than another and the narrator often corrects herself when she feels she has done some wrong. Eliot shifts viewpoints to explore the mutual misunderstanding among the characters involved in the two unhappy marriages in the novel.

The plot suggests that any actions a person performed in the past will have their repercussions on his life. The writer is revealing that respectability can also be a facade for hypocrisy and conspiracies. Blackmail and other crimes are brought into the complacent world of Middlemarch. People know each other well enough yet they come to the wrong conclusions about others. Dorothea does not trust her own conclusions about people and tells Celia "one is constantly wondering what sort of lives other people lead, and how they take things. "This wondering is what constitutes Eliot 's great novel. Eliot herself is often speaking in the first person to her readers. The narrator appears to be humorous and she manages to be so by making observations from life very subtle.

According to V. S. Pritchard "*Middlemarch* is one of the many novels about groups of people in provincial towns. They are differentiated from each other not by class or fortune only, but by their moral history and this moral differentiation is not casual, it is planned and has its own inner hierarchy."

Test Yourself Questions

(iv) What constitutes the plot of *Middlemarch*?

(v) What is special about the structure of the novel?

(vi) Each section of the novel has a title. What do these titles signify?

(vii) What is the function of the epigraphs of each chapter?

2.1 Themes

The themes of the novel *Middlemarch* can be said to deal with a large variety of subjects of social, political, and economic nature. It deals with the position of women in society, the imperfections of marriage, social expectations, self-determination as opposed to chance, the importance of money, the progress of industry, the lives of people in provincial England, the major historical upheavals of the time.

Woman question

Women and gender are one of the important themes of *Middlemarch*. Although women were beginning to realize that they were not being given a fair deal, nothing concrete was done to improve their condition. In fact, the beliefs that existed regarding women were unreasonable. They were regarded as intellectually and physically weaker than men. So much so that they were supposed to be unfit for various activities including the writing of novels. This was the reason that Mary Anne Evans adopted the pseudonym George Eliot when she published her work. She was quite in advance of her times and was concerned with the woman question quite seriously. So, she created women protagonists like Maggie Tulliver and Dorothea Brooke who are unconventional because of their intellectual interests. They are women with independent minds, but society limits their powers to exercise their powers. In the 19^{th} century there was an environment in which typical gender roles were prevailing and they were strictly enforced. While men were expected to live up to gender ideals and behave in the most masculine manner, in *Middlemarch* the focus is on how these expectations are oppressive and restrictive in the case of women. This is explored through the central character of Dorothea Brooke who dreams of an intense and meaningful life that is grand and elegant. This is basically incompatible with the rule society has prescribed for her. She is confused about what she really desires and makes some bad decisions that only distance her from them even more. All the women live under the

pressure of their social obligations. At the same time, it is also stated that any kind of resistance put up by women can only have a limited benefit because alternative ways of living were not available to them. As a heroine Dorothea is ambitious, idealistic, single and she cannot bring herself to conform to the gender norms of the society which she inhabits. She is fond of activities like horse riding, building cottages for tenant farmers so that they can live in a better condition, but such interests are not supposed to be possessed by women. She must curb her desires and use force to keep them under control. She wants to conform to a feminine ideal which makes her so self-conscious that she continually makes decisions which she cannot keep. For example, she decides to give up her passion for horse riding but fails to do so.

Ambition and disappointment

Ambition and disappointment is the experience which unites all the characters of *Middlemarch*. It is disappointment which happens on a broad scale and on the individual level as well. In fact, George Eliot herself writes, "we mortal men and women divide many a disappointment between breakfast and dinner time." This indicates that disappointment is a universal experience and it is very difficult for an individual to realize his/her ambitions.

Community and Class

Eliot does not focus on the lives of a small group of characters but encloses an entire community in Middlemarch, the fictional town. The book is set 30 years before it was written, and it embodies a detailed account of the tumultuous period that it describes.

The role of society and community is also very significant in the lives of people. Social behavior and judgement passed by people play an important role. When the expectations of the social community are belied, individuals must face harsh public criticism. For example, Ladislaw is judged harshly because of his mixed parentage. Fred Vincy is almost disowned because he goes against his family 's wishes and does not become a vicar but it is only when he goes against the community that he actually finds happiness. Rosamond's need for gentility and her desire to rise in the social ladder becomes the cause of Lydgate's downfall. On the other hand, Dorothea's decision to defy the rules of society makes her emerge as an admirable character.

Progress and Reform

Middlemarch is set at a time when dramatic developments were taking place in all sphere's life. Science and industrialization were having a major impact on the country. The Parliamentary reform act of 1832 played a significant role in the lives of the people of England, but reform refers to progress and change not only in politics but the socio economic and other spheres too.

As mentioned earlier the age is one of transition and English society is evolving in social, economic, and scientific arenas. Socially the class system is in flux. Women are proving more

and more competent and the industrial revolution has led to a greater amount of social mobility. England is shifting from an agrarian to an industrial economy, from a feudal to a commercial world in which business and manufacturing are gaining significance. Progress can be seen in science, medicine and in areas like transportation. *Middlemarch* is also affected by this.

Money and greed

Money plays a very important role in the lives of the people of *Middlemarch*. Possessing money or lack of it or both is the cause of problems for the characters in the story. Some are obsessed with money whereas others spurn it. However, the novel seems to convey the message that it is better not to be ruled by money and to focus on other types of fulfilment. But it is also made clear that not caring about money can also lead to trouble and so it is not possible to ignore it.

Debt is also present throughout Middlemarch and money plays an important role in the lives of people. The attitude of people towards money makes them reveal their true characters. Things and characters are also used as symbols, for example the portrait of Ladislaw's grandmother appears in the text many times and is symbolic of Dorothea's decision about her future. She too will give up wealth to be with the man she loves. When Dorothea offers the portrait to Ladislaw as a gift, he refuses to take it, and this indicates that he does not want to hold on to the past. Symbolically this suggests that the future holds the hope that they will end up together. The character Raffles is also symbolic of the return of the past. most often he appears as a lonely black figure walking down the country roads. He is a man of ill-repute and questionable background. He ties together the dark secrets of Bulstrode and Ladislaw's past. His death arouses gossip that almost sends Ladislaw away from the town and he poses a threat to Bulstrode as well.

Money is the root of all evil, but it can be diverted towards obtaining good ends. Those who do not have it are desperate for it and those like Dorothea are generous when they have plenty of it, so they help others. The Garths save carefully to live within their limited means. Money has a profound effect on the character within the novel and too many people are judged by the amount of money they have. Many of the best people like Will Ladislaw and Mr. Farebrother have very little. Money also determines social position which means a great deal in *Middlemarch*. How much a person is respected, how he is treated and regarded etc. is determined by his wealth. People of high status are treated delicately and respectfully more than people with less wealth. High birth and connections are also important in obtaining a place in society

The desire for money is at the root of the plot of Middle march and it is so deeply embedded in the text that it remains almost hidden. Money plays a very important role in societal relations. Financial success and failure are social facts witnessed by neighbors. Prosperity is admired and

envied, but it is also precarious. Respect and regard are given to those who are wealthy.

The theme of marriage

Most of the characters in the novel get married for love rather than obligation. Yet marriage appears negative and unromantic for all of them. Marriage and the pursuit of it, is one of the central concerns in *Middlemarch*. In the 19th century marriage was the destiny of women but in *Middlemarch* marriage is not considered the ultimate source of happiness. The failed marriages of Dorothea and Lydgate prove this. Dorothea 's marriage is a failure because of her wrong assumptions regarding Casaubon that lead to her disillusionment. Lydgate's marriage fails because of their irreconcilable personalities. Most of the marriages in the novel are problematic and none of them reach a perfect fairytale ending. So, the usual portrayal of marriage as romantic is missing in *Middlemarch*. How mismatching can lead to broken marriages is reflected in the novel.

Self-determination and chance

Self-determination and chance work together to control the lives of people. When the characters strictly follow that they believe in chance of self-determination bad things happen. For example, Rosamond's act of self-determination by writing to Sir Godwin puts Lydgate in a very awkward situation. His uncle refuses to help him and rebukes him. He tells him to forbid his wife from asking for money. Almost all the characters are influenced by their self-determination and chance. Related to this is the theme of responsibility. Both Fred and Will Ladislaw must become responsible for their finances and choices they must learn to rely upon themselves and to become independent in many ways.

The People of Middlemarch do not like anyone who is not from the town or anyone whose reputation is suspect. Will Ladislaw and Lydgate are both good people, but it is the initial prejudice about outsiders which is based on unreasonable and circumstantial reasons that makes them unacceptable. The preconceived notion of many characters is proven tragically wrong in the story. Dorothea and Casaubon have unrealistic ideas about marriage, so they are disappointed. Lydgate and Rosamond have the same ideas but are let down by their own weaknesses. Life is always different from one's expectation, so the happiest people are those who are flexible and have only a few expectations. Middlemarch society does not allow people to cross the gender borders, specially women cannot deviate from the norms. Dorothea is tolerated because she belongs to a family of high status. Her actions do not disrupt the society she is living in. But she experiences a great deal of pressure to change herself to conform to the ideas of people and submit herself to male leadership all the time. The important modern question that is raised is, does one do what one thinks is right or what gives one the most

benefit? Lydgate often goes for self-interest and gets into trouble for this. Societal expectation is related to conformity. People are expected to conform to the social norms and ideals. Dorothea is expected to be a proper wife and then the proper widow. Will Ladislaw fits into no position that society tries to put him, so he is disliked. All the characters in the novel learn something about themselves during the trials and tribulations that they face. Lydgate and Rosamond find out more about the characters through their financial troubles, but they do not adjust accordingly. On the path of self-discovery Dorothea learns a lot about her strengths and weaknesses.

Vanity and pride is something which both helps and hinders many people in the book and is most applicable to Dorothea. For Lydgate, pride is the stumbling block which prevents him from putting his life in order and doing what is necessary to improve his marriage and his practice. Dorothea and Will Ladislaw are proud of who they are personally. Neither of them likes to be regarded poorly and will defend themselves and their decisions when required. They generally follow their own course with regard to everything.

One very peculiar thing in *Middlemarch* is the way in which people are interconnected, so much so, that every decision taken by each character has some repercussions on someone else in the town. Mary ‘s decision to marry Fred leaves Farebrother without a wife. Dorothea’s decision to marry Casaubon leads to Celia’s marriage with James Chettam, Bulstrode’ s dirty dealings with Raffles bring disgrace to Lydgate and Will Ladislaw. No one can act without disturbing someone, else.

While reviewing *Middlemarch* in 1873 Henry James said “it sets the limit, we think, to the development of the old-fashioned English novel“; *Middlemarch* does indeed take a vast, swarming, deep colored panoramic picture of the town after which the novel is named. It is crowded with episodes, with vivid images, with master strokes, with brilliant passages of expression, “it, produces the total sum of life in an English village “this was indeed a unique level of achievement. *Middlemarch* is the culmination of the panoramic Victorian novel as practiced by the great exponents Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray. Eliot took on the responsibility to raise the level of the novel from a source of entertainment to the serious expression of ideas. As pointed out by Virginia Woolf, it was a novel for adults or grown up people. The depth of the writer’s intellect and breadth of learning is reflected through this masterpiece. Eliot was deeply moved by the religious and philosophical issues of the age and she was the first major English writer who did not follow the tenets of Christian theology. However, she is morally committed, and this was because of her evangelical Christian heritage. She uses the novel as the instrument for teaching a lesson of duty and self-renunciation.

Eliot seems to think that fiction has a moral force it may not be didactic but it inculcates in the readers an attitude of sympathy for human beings which leads to the performance of justice and compassion and this in turn helps in reducing the burden of the human condition. She seems to endorse the idea that is expressed in the second commandment " love thy neighbors as thyself" Eliot turned away from Christian theology in her youth but she understood and totally practiced Christian morality as she had imbibed it during her early years .

Middlemarch explores the questions of renunciation and self-indulgence with subtlety and clarity. She develops more or less four distinct plot lines and unites them with her moral concerns which creates various cross connections among the plotlines. The all-pervasive theme. of reform also links them together. Meaningful action was difficult to achieve in the fragmented era in which Eliot was writing. By exploring the moral achievements and failures of people against the background of society which does not allow people to use their talents freely and successfully George Eliot paints a picture of the dilemma of humanity.

The novel has as a subtitle *A Story of provincial life* which is appropriate in that it draws attention to the recognition of the fact that in society limited options are available. The subtitle suggests that the novel was undertaken in the spirit of sociological enquiry and scientific scrutiny. References are made to Victorian experimental science like batteries, microscopes, optical effects. Eliot refers to Mrs. Alwaleed's efforts to bring together Celia and Sir James Chettam as "a microscope directed on the water drop"

To some critics *Middlemarch* also seems to be a kind of historical study because it is situated in the time period that had passed 30 years earlier. It discusses the movement to reform Britain's corrupt electoral system, Catholic emancipation, the first stages of setting up the railways, but these do not make it a historical novel. *Middlemarch* is definitely for grown-up people because it acknowledges the complications of the human condition and studies characters psychologically. The subtitle of the novel a study of provincial life also has its significance. Two senses of the provincial are fused together that is on one hand the geographical which means all parts of the country except London and on the other it signifies an individual who is sophisticated or narrowminded. Carolyn Steedman relates Eliot's emphasis on provincial life and *Middlemarch* to Matthew Arnold 's discussion of social classes in Culture and anarchy. Arnold classifies British society into three types the barbarians, the Philistines, and the populace. Steedman believes that *Middlemarch* is a portrait of Philistine provincialism. What must be kept in mind is that unlike Dorothea, Eliot went to London where she achieved fame which is more than what Dorothea achieved in the provinces. Eliot's family disapproved of her relationship with Lewes and she could never ever go home again. She visited the Midlands in 1855 but did not go to

Coventry, on which the fictitious town of Middlemarch is based. *Middlemarch* contains all aspects of Victorian life and its social classes. The working class, middle class and country gentry live together and interact in a community. The reader is exposed to all levels of social class and the intricacies associated with each. Social and familial rituals are represented, the clergy and religion and medical issues are exposed in a factual manner that is true to Victorian life in the 19th century.

In *Middlemarch* the idea that women cannot hope to achieve a heroic stature is quite evident. Eliot thinks that the heroine lives at the wrong time amidst the conditions of an imperfect social state, in which great feelings will often take the aspect of error and great faith the aspect of illusion. "According to Kathleen Blake, George Eliot is more concerned with Saint Theresa's very concrete accomplishments "the reform of a religious order "rather than the fact that she was a Christian mystic. Some critics are of the opinion that Dorothea is not only less heroic than Saint Theresa and Antigone but also George Eliot herself. Two critics Ruth Yeazell and Kathleen Blake taunt them for "expecting literary pictures of a strong woman succeeding in the period that did not make them likely in life. "Critics have also criticized the ending of the novel because we feel that Dorothea 's marriage with Will Ladislaw is not justified as he is clearly her inferior. Henry James describes that Ladislaw's not the concentrated power essential in the man chosen by so nobly strenuous a heroine.

"Both the principal plots in *Middlemarch* are case studies of unsuccessful marriages. The desires of Dorothea and Lydgate are unfulfilled because of their disastrous marriages. Dorothea gets a second chance when she marries Ladislaw. Besides these two marriages there is the meaningless and blissful marriage of Celia Brooke and Sir James Chettam and Fred Vincy's proposing of Mary Garth. Mary does not agree to marry Fred until he gives up his church job and finds a more suitable career. Dorothea was described as a Saint Theresa born in the wrong century who mistakes a pompous pedant as a sort of angel of vocation. *Middlemarch* is like a bildungsroman novel because it focuses on the moral growth of the protagonists. Dorothea blindly gropes forward making mistakes in her sometimes foolish, often egotistical, but also admirably idealistic attempt to find a role or vocation with which to fulfil her nature. On the other hand, Lydgate also makes the mistake of thinking that Rosamond is a perfect wife, someone who can sing and play the piano and provide the soft cushion for a husband to rest after work. Rosamond is an utter contrast to Dorothea. She is the cause of Lydgate's deterioration from ardent researcher to a fashionable doctor in London.

Test Yourself Questions

(i) Are marriages successful in *Middlemarch*?

(ii) How does money play an important role in the lives of people?

(iii)How do self-renunciation and indulgence affect the lives of Dorothea and Lydgate?

(iv)how does the novel deal with religious and medical issues?

(v) Write a note on the woman question in *Middlemarch*.

Conclusion

Middlemarch: A study of provincial life thus emerges as a panoramic novel that has an omniscient author but, its narrator can assume various voices. Through this polyphonic presentation of people and situations the reader gets a clear picture through different perspective, of the same things in the story. She has also used separate titles for each book and epigraphs for each chapter that help the reader to understand what is to follow. The eclectic vision of George Eliot and the number of issues she takes up enriches the novel and make it an in-depth study of a wide range of aspects of Victorian life.

Long Questions

1. Write an essay on the plot structure and style of *Middlemarch.*
2. What are the major themes of *Middlemarch*?

Short Questions

1. Write a note on the significance of the sub-title of the novel.
2. Why does Dorothea's marriage fail?

UNIT III - MIDDLEMARCH

OBJECTIVE

This lesson intends to discuss George Eliot's art of characterization and shows how she changed the trend of the English novel by moving action inside the character rather than concentrating on the outside. It will also review the criticism available on George Eliot to update the latest insights into her work. She's considered to be a writer with a moral commitment but that is not enough to make any writer a great novelist. Her other extraordinary qualities will be highlighted through this lesson.

Structure

3.0 Art of characterization

3.1 Character Analysis

3.2 Minor Characters

3.3 Review of Criticism

3.0 Art of characterization

George Eliot was interested in depicting the inside of the minds of her characters. She had an extraordinary psychological insight which enabled her to create characters with an in-depth complexity. She is unsurpassed in her portrayal of tangled motives, intricate self-deception, and the anguished struggle of a noble soul. Her fictional world combines a broad view of society and psychological insights of each character.

The progress of her career as a novelist made Eliot draw characters, who were more complex paradigms that could be thought of as exemplary figures, as well as warnings to her readers. The greatest achievement of a character is the renunciation of their own claims to happiness to safeguard the needs of others who are sometimes less deserving and whose lives influence theirs in one way or another. The act of renunciation includes any acknowledgement of the claims of community and it provides a sense of continuity with the characters past or traditions. So, the characters who are condemned by Eliot most severely are those who evade their responsibilities by delivering themselves or overindulging in themselves. They avoid hard choices and hope that they will be saved from the consequences of their selfish actions. Characters are often pushed towards renunciation by others who are messengers who prompt them to follow this path. This process of renunciation is associated with their commitment to community through their religious belief and background. Egotistical self-indulgence is however the outcome of a relationship that is clearly inappropriate, though it may not be illegitimate. As her career advanced Eliot realized that there was no scope for finding a purposeful life in the troubled England of her time but she continued to practice her individual moral responsibility.

In *Middlemarch* Eliot focusses on the upper middle class and gentry. This gives her an opportunity to deal with characters whose experience is wider and whose motives are more sophisticated and complex than the characters of the early novels. The characters of the town are moved by self- deception and deception of others that surround them. It is about the process of understanding the experiences and perceptions of others, of suffering through self-deception and disillusionment, social positioning, class- consciousness, and the desire for self-improvement with the help of education and money. Critics have praised the novel because of the realistic presentation of characters that enables their identification with the characters and participation in their joys and sorrows. Huge Witemeyer comments “the variety of meanings it can encompass, from the moral and psychological to the historical and sociological, makes Eliot’s literary portraiture richer than that of any earlier novelist in English. “Eliot focusses upon the human condition of the characters in spite of the fact that they are doomed to suffer disillusionment. She establishes an attachment between the reader and the character to present a convincingly

real world and to convey the truths about human nature. The women in her novels are faced with the same dilemmas and responsibilities as the women in Victorian society. Victorian women belonging to the upper and middle classes were expected to contract marriages which would ensure financial security. They were to stay at home to raise the family and manage the domestic affairs. Woman was to be the angel in the house. They lack the chance of getting the kind of education that men had and they were judged based on their behavior towards their husbands. In Middlemarch education and money determines the lives and opportunities available to the characters. Eliot's chief concern is that women are not properly prepared for life as they should be.

Test Yourself Questions

(viii) What kind of characters does Eliot write about?

(ix)What picture of Victorian women is drawn by Eliot in Middlemarch?

3.1 Character Analysis

Dorothea Brooke is an intelligent and independent young woman who differs from the conventional woman of the Victorian age. While other Victorian ladies are preoccupied with fashion and marriage. Dorothea is concerned with issues of philosophy, spirituality, and service to mankind. George Eliot points out that Dorothea's beauty is genuine as it is the kind of beauty which is emphasized by the plain dresses she wears. In fact, her dress sense is compared with that of the Blessed Virgin and she is described as dignified. Dorothea's clothing is designed very plainly thereby accentuating her dignity and purity. Dorothea 's lack of concern with fashion makes most people of Middlemarch regard her as being odd. They feel that sane people followed their neighbors and because she does not follow the fashions Dorothea is strange. George Eliot mocks social norms by praising the purity of young and inexperienced Dorothea Brooke.

Sometimes it is felt that Dorothea is too perfect, but she evolves from her immaculate personality after she goes astray and marries Edward Casaubon. Dorothea's feelings for him are influenced by his supposed wisdom and she hopes that he will allow her to become educated, to have her curiosity nurtured and to be of constant assistance to a man of sixty who really needs her eyes only for reading. Bernard Paris sees Dorothea as a mimetic character whose desire for intensity, greatness, and an epic life are not manifestations of the spiritual grandeur but of a compulsive search for glory. Her craving for illimitable satisfaction is an expression of insatiable ambition. She experiences this despair because she cannot actualize her idealized image of herself and proves hopeless. She wants to be a person of world historical importance. Casaubon misunderstands the reasons for marrying her because she idolizes him and later

realizes that her own spiritual propriety had made her take this wrong decision. She is shattered by the fact that Casaubon goes to work alone at the Vatican when they are on their honeymoon. Dorothea embodies all the issues regarding women that George Eliot was trying to deal with. She is a young girl with a nature that is ardently concerned with the welfare of the poor. She is intellectually strong and is trying to come to terms with the narrow-restricted education and social life which is also very limited. Thus, she feels that she is in the maze of small paths that lead nowhere. Her attempts to give her life consequence and purpose fail. She later realizes the futility of her attempts to reach the ground of power. She recognizes that Casaubon is sensitive only to his work and jealous of her friendship with his nephew Will Ladislaw. Her hopes are shattered, and ambitions crushed by social pressure.

Dorothea is a deeply religious woman and is also committed to social reform. She designs and plans a colony for workers but fails in completing this dream. She is aware that she does not conform to the ideal of femininity and she tries to reconcile her ambition with the desire to meet this ideal by getting married at the age of eighteen. However, she is bitterly disappointed by it and ends up being tormented and confused, but her spirit is never dampened. She is widowed when she is 21 and despite the condition that Casaubon has appended to his will regarding her remarriage Dorothea eventually decides to forego her money for the sake of love and gets married to Will. Some critics are upset by the fact that Dorothea is not able to lead the greater life and leave behind a larger legacy.

Lydgate's story is also similar as he is also limited by society. He adds to his own difficulties by indulging in himself. His well-intentioned plan for medical research is good but he lacks sensitivity to the feelings of both patients and other practitioners. He is also involved with Nicholas Bulstrode an unpopular but powerful leader in the Middlemarch community affairs. He also becomes the victim of a mismatched marriage to Rosamond Vincy the beautiful and self-centered daughter of the mayor of Middlemarch. This unhappy relationship shatters his hopes of success. Added to this is the problem that he and Rosamond overspend carelessly on the misconstrued assumption that they ought to live well. He gets drowned in debt and when he tells Rosamond she is not willing to make any sacrifices, so she blames him for all the problems. Dorothea is deeply moved by Lydgate's medical and financial problems she goes to help him. Dorothea has serious suspicions about Will and finding him in proximity with Rosamond she does not think of her own sorrow but only wishes to improve the three lives whose contact with her make her feel obligated to assist them. She succeeds in reconciling Rosamond and Lydgate and discovers that Will Ladislaw is innocent. This revives the chances of her marriage with Will.

Rosamond desires the comfortable lifestyle of high-class society. She is egotistical and unwilling to make sacrifices in her style of living even though she knows that Lydgate is financially in the doldrums. Rosamond's marital vocation does not recognize the life of a hero and his serious business in the world. She just wants to climb the social ladder and find a place among the upper classes. Rosamond wants her father to invite Lydgate to a dinner party because she wants to meet him and thinks he will fulfill her requirements. She does not approve of any of the young bachelors in Middlemarch. Rosamond knows what she wants out of life; to become a member of the aristocracy. Her marriage to Lydgate is not what she had imagined it to be. George Eliot felt just as her characters do, that education given to women and their social vocation does not prepare them for the hardships that married couples experience. She used Rosamond as a foil to Dorothea, she highlights the importance of seeing reality instead of appearance.

Lydgate also has the desire for the meaningful life as Dorothea does and wishes to pursue the study of medicine. He works hard for his success but at the very outset Eliot hints at his impending failure. Lydgate has the drive and ambition to make a difference in the world and advance studies in the medical field. He knows that he is taking a risk because common people would not have any clue that newly discovered cures could work. On the other hand, he believes that there is a vast field for discovery and improvement in medicine, so he perseveres. Lydgate wants to do good work for Middlemarch and great work for the world, but he remains obscure in this because of his passion for women. His encounter with Laure in Paris teaches him that his passion for women could lead to his own destruction. So, he returns to his studies and vows that he will never make this mistake again. But when he meets Rosamond, his emotional needs lead to his impulsive proposal. His descent into debt and his busy career makes Rosamond and other characters believe that she is neglected. Lydgate sacrifices his own interest to ensure her happiness, though he is not certain whether Rosamond will reciprocate his affection. He accepts all doom and still has the ambition of making something in the world better - that is his own marriage.

Casaubon is almost 27 years senior to Dorothea in age. Their courtship is very dry, and his marriage proposal is worded in cold, controlled, and measured language. He is attracted to her elevation of thought and capability of devotedness. Casaubon's house is dark and dreary. He's not a real scholar in the true sense because he has not been keeping abreast of all the latest developments in theological scholarship. He is a man of delicate hell and dies soon after his marriage with Dorothea. His suspicious nature and jealousy is evident in his treatment of Will Ladislaw and the addendum he attaches to his will.

Dorothea soul hunger is contrasted with the vibrant materiality of a sister who enjoys good clothes, jewels, horse riding. She takes pleasure in being young and attractive and fun loving. George Eliot is not critical of such a woman and it would appear that she places Celia's trivial concerns as a contrast to Dorothea sobriety. Dorothea 's tendency to self- renunciation makes her control all her emotions including those of being attracted to the jewels. She seems to be aware of her contradictions. When compared to her sister and in relation to her husband she remains deluded about the gap between her intentions and her abilities. Experience will show that this is a tragic situation in which even the women of a more common nature can discern Dorothea's moral blindness. Celia also thinks that her sister is not always consistent. Will Ladislaw is a much-disliked cousin of Casaubon whom Dorothea innocently befriends during her honeymoon in Rome. Dorothea begins to make comparisons between him and her husband. She is charmed by his brightness and Casaubon's neglect of her during their honeymoon makes her feel more attracted to Will. Dorothea feels she is justified in befriending a cousin of her husband. She reasons intellectually and seems to have no knowledge of jealousy, sexuality, and emotion. Critics feel that Ladislaw is an insubstantial and unconvincing figure not suited to a novel of social realism, contrived situations keep him in the plot. He happens to be in Rome when Dorothea and Casaubon are on their honeymoon. He meets Dorothea by chance but later in the novel he works to support Mr. Brooke's political ambitions, Rosamond's flirtation and Bulstrode's secret past. F.R. Lewis sees Ladislaw as an aspect of Dorothea's immature tendencies. He is a man of many talents. He paints, writes, sings, reads, travels but he lacks intellectual or moral depth that can match Dorothea's ardor for the upliftment of the poor community. His seductive charm lies substantially in his ability to play with words. His easy companionable nature attracts Dorothea who is young, idealistic and who wishes to discuss her own ideas and visions with someone. Her husband does not have time or patience for her. Ladislaw is the descendant of two generations of rebellious women. His grandmother Julia had married a Polish musician and was abandoned by her wealthy family and his mother Sara ran away from her family when she discovered that her father's pawn breaking business was based on theft. She became an actress after that. Will also has this rebellious spirit. He comes to live in Middlemarch because he wanted to be close to Dorothea. Mr. Brooke hires him to edit his paper called the Pioneer. Will is interested in pushing the issue of electoral reforms. After Casaubon's death Will and Dorothea get married and move to London where he enters politics and becomes a famous public figure.

Celia

Celia is Dorothea's Sister and Mr. Brooke's niece. She is kind and cheerful but less intelligent

than her sister whom she does not understand. Celia conforms to the idea of womanhood that was upheld in the 19th century and enjoys living life in this way. She marries James Chettam and has a son named Arthur.

Mr. Brooke

Mr. Brooke is the uncle of Celia and Dorothea. He is in-charge of their education and is their guardian after their parents died. He is a widely travelled man and a lifelong bachelor. He has an amiable personality but can also be foolish at times. He has a wavering mind and sometimes seems to struggle to understand complicated issues. His actions belies his statements so he is considered to be a hypocrite.

Sir James Chettam

Is a charming young man whose land borders Mr. Brooke's. Initially he is interested in Dorothea. When she rejects him, he turns his attention to Celia and marries her instead. He remains friendly with Dorothea even though he does not like the decisions she takes on life. He appreciates her idealism and uniqueness.

Mrs. Elinor Cadwallader

Mrs. Cadwallader is a friend of the Brooke family. Her husband Mr. Cadwallader is neither high-ranking nor nobility. She herself is born into a noble family but married below her status. She is an interfering busy body, who is very fond of gossip and matchmaking in Middlemarch. She can be very charming and delivers some of the most memorable lines in the novel.

Mr. Nicholas Bulstrode

Mr. Bulstrode is the wealthy banker who was not born in Middlemarch but moved there as an adult. Not much is known about his family background, so he is an object of suspicion. This is heightened by the fact that he's an evangelical Methodist which is not appreciated by the people of Middlemarch. He occupies a number of important positions including being the founder and financer of the New Hospital for which he hires Lydgate to direct. Bulstrode tries to bring medical reform to this area and is frustrated because he is opposed. Another secret about Bulstrode is revealed when Raffles come to Middlemarch. However he survives the scandal thanks to the loyalty of his wife.

Mrs. Lucy Vincy

Mrs Vincy is a somewhat obnoxious woman who is responsible for spoiling her children by claiming that Fred and Rosamond are the best young man and woman in Middlemarch. Mrs. Featherstone was her sister and the link between her family and Featherstone makes them believe that Fred will inherit Featherstone's money.

Fred Vincy

Fred is a lazy, irresponsible young man who has failed his university exams and returned home. He is hoping to become the heir of Mr. Featherstone. As a result of this, he is overconfident and reckless with money. He gets into debt through gambling and causes financial trouble to the Garth family. Fred is guilty of causing trouble to the Garth's, but he can be very selfish. He is in love with Mary Garth and his hopes to marry her are dampened when Mr. Featherstone leaves all his property to his illegitimate son, Joshua Rigg. Mr. Vincy forces Fred to go back to the university and complete his degree in theology. However, Fred does not pursue his career in the church and becomes an apprentice to Mr. Garth. He matures and becomes more responsible in the process. Ultimately, he and Mary get married and he becomes a prosperous farmer.

Mary Garth

Mary is the eldest daughter of Caleb and Mrs. Garth. She is intelligent, practical, honest, and honorable but plain looking. She looks after Mr Featherstone while he is dying. She is frustrated by Fred's irresponsible attitude. It is due to him that her family loses on its savings. Eventually she marries Fred and writes a successful children's book but gives the author's credit to Fred. This could also be a hint of the restriction on women who could not take up certain professions, such as writing.

Mr. Peter Featherstone

Mr. Featherstone is a wealthy and unpopular man in Middlemarch. As he is dying, all his family members gathered around him not because they love him but because they hope to inherit some of his wealth. His second will bestows all his property to his illegitimate son, Joshua Rigg. Thus, shattering the hopes of Fred Vincy who expected to inherit some money from him.

Mr. Caleb Garth

Mr. Garth is a kind, honest, hard-working, and generous man. He is deeply interested in his business and works in construction and development of land. However, he does not take what is due for his work and sometimes works even without a fee. So, his family is poor. Morally he's one of the strongest characters in the novel. He helps many people including Fred even though the latter leads him into trouble. He knows of Fred's interest in his daughter Mary. Mr. Garth becomes the manager of both Freshitt and Tipton and this results in the improvement of his state.

Mr. Camden Farebrother

Mr. Farebrother is the local vicar and a bachelor. He is a very helpful man not very strict or spiritual, but he possesses the Christian values of love generosity and acceptance. He's interested in Mary God but steps aside when he knows about Fred and Mary's feelings for each

other. After Casaubon dies he takes over his post at Lowick.

Joshua Rigg

Joshua Rigg is the illegitimate son of Mr Featherstone he inherits. He inherits Featherstone's property and shocks the rest of his relatives. He ultimately sells Featherstone's house Stone Court Bulstrode and leaves the town to set up a money changing shop on a busy quay.

John Raffles

Raffles is Joshua's stepfather. He is an alcoholic who would beat up Joshua. Bulstrode had hired him to find Mrs Dunkirk's daughter Sarah and then pretend that Sarah could not be found. Raffles returns to Middlemarch threatening to expose Bulstrode's secret. Bulstrode tries to pay him off but fails. Raffles contracts alcohol poisoning and because he is administered the wrong treatment he dies.

Mrs. Dunkirk

Mrs. Dunkirk married Bulstrode after her husband's death. She wanted to find her estranged daughter Sarah so that she could give her, her fortune. However, Bulstrode did not disclose to her that Sarah had been found because he wanted to keep the property for himself.

Laure

Laure is an actress Lydgate fell in love with while he was in Paris. During a theatre performance, she actually stabbed her husband to death because as she later claimed she doesn't like husbands. Lydgate had fallen in love with her and had thought that she was innocent. But her disclosure that the murder was intentional frightened him. This episode gave Lydgate a lifelong fear of women.

Test Yourself Questions

(i) Compare and contrast the characters of Dorothea and Celia.

(ii) What kind of man is Mr. Casaubon?

(iii)What role does the Garth family play in the novel?

(iv)Who is Joshua Rigg?

3.2 Minor Characters

Mr. Humphrey Cadwallader

Mr. Cadwallader is the rector at Tipton grange and a friend of the Brooke family. He's very kind and non-judgmental man unlike his wife who says that this is because all he cares for is his fishing.

Mr. Tucker is the curate Casaubon's estate Lowick Manor

Dowager Lady Chetamm is Sir James's mother

Mr. Walter Vincy is a wealthy manufacturer. He and his wife spoil their children and later on

regret his son Fred's behavior.

Mr. Tyke is an evangelical clergy man whom Bulstrode favors and gets appointed as Chaplin at the New Hospital. Farebrother is a contender for the post but Bulstrode forces Lydgate to vote for Tyke

Mrs. Harriet Bulstrode is very loyal to her husband. She is Mr. Vincy's sister.

Mr. and Mrs. Waule are related to Mr. Featherstone

Dr. Sprague is one of the old high-ranking doctors in Middlemarch who lacks medical skill

Mrs. Plymdale is a high-ranking woman and the mother of Ned

Mrs. Farebrother is Mr. Farebrother's mother. She is friendly but socially reserved woman

Miss Henrietta Noble is Mrs. Farebrother's unmarried sister who ultimately brings about a meeting between Dorothea and Ladislaw

Winifred Farebrother is Mr. Farebrother's sister.

Mr. Trawley was Lydgate's roommate in Paris.

Dr. Minchin is the local Middlemarch man

Mr. Toller is a medical practitioner in Middlemarch.

Mr. Hawley Sr is a lawyer in Middlemarch.

Reverend Edward Thesiger is Bulstrode's pastor.

Tantripp is a servant at Lowick Manor. She goes to Rome with Dorothea and Casaubon on their honeymoon.

Mr. Bambridge is the local host dealer who has a habit of lending money to young reckless men including Fred.

Mr. Horrock is the veterinarian in Middlemarch.

Letty Garth is one of Caleb and Mrs. Garth's daughters. Ben Garth is their son. Alfred Garth is also their son. They are forced to give away the money they were saving for Alfred's apprenticeship when Fred cannot pay his debt.

Ned Plymdale is a young wealthy and high-ranking bachelor in Middlemarch. He marries Sophie Toller.

Jonah Featherstone is one of Mr. Featherstone 's relatives.

Mr. Trumbull is an auctioneer in Middlemarch.

Mr. Standish is Mr. Featherstone 's lawyer.

Mr. Hackbutt is a local man.

Young Hawley is the son of Mr. Hawley Sr. He is training to be a lawyer like his father.

Julia Ladislaw was Will Ladislaw's grandmother and Casaubon's great aunt. She was born into

a high-ranking prosperous family but was abandoned by her relatives when she married a poor Polish musician.

Mr. Dagley is one of Mr. Brooke's tenants.

Mr. Mawmsey is the Middlemarch grocer.

Sarah Ladislaw is Will's mother. She was born into the Dunkirk family but ran away when she came to know that her father's business of pawn broking was flourishing on stolen goods.

Hiram is the wagon driver in Middlemarch.

Solomon Featherstone is a landowner opposed to the railway and he's related to Mr. Featherstone.

Tom is Caleb's assistant. He is attacked by local farm workers who are opposed to the railway.

Christy Garth is one of Garth's children who is very passionate about his education.

Captain Lydgate is a high-ranking relative of Tertius Lydgate. Rosamond adores him but Tertius dislikes him. So, Sir Godwin is Tertius's rich high-ranking uncle who refuses to lend money to Lydgate and Rosamond after Rosamond writes to him to ask for it.

Mr. Dover is the local silversmith.

Mr. Dunkirk was the man who befriended the young Bulstrode and made him the accountant of his pawn broking business.

Sophie Toller is a high-ranking young woman who marries Ned Plymdale.

Mrs. Garth is the wife of Caleb Garth. She is generally kind and tolerant woman, perhaps too kind, even though she knows that her husband is too generous.

Adolf Naumann is a German painter and a friend of Will Ladislaw and also tutors him in art and painting. Naumann is also very impressed with Dorothea.

Mr. Wrench is the Vincy family's doctor

Test Yourself Questions

(i) Why do you think, Eliot has introduced so many minor characters in her novel?

(ii) Who is Mrs. Harriett Bulstrode?

3.3 Review of Criticism

Eliot depicts her characters motivations and approaches them as beings who already exist. She watches them and listens to them and ruminates about why they behave as they do. (John Mullan). Pritchard talks about the novel as being one which has something to offer to almost everyone who reads it because they can identify with the characters. The novel means something to readers of all ages. In fact, readers who read the novel find new insights every time they go through it.

Today Middlemarch is one of the five most recommended books for reading. It has been

described as staggeringly brilliant and to read such a huge novel is like a labour of love. It is a character driven narrative with Dorothea Brooke who is Tolstoyan in her richness. This is what Esi Edugyan the novelist has to say about her. Rebecca Goldstein opines that the novel is deeply ethical. She feels that George Eliot is not only a great novelist but a fine philosopher. Emrys Westacott also feels that it is very good at showing how people act against their own interest because of subtle social social pressures that lead them a certain way. Philip Davies remarks that it's like several novels in one. The idea that while you read successively, the events being narrated happen simultaneously. It makes you appreciate that there are so many lives interconnected and separated going on at the same time in this little world. Middlemarch is only a provincial town, but it's an image of the whole world. Recently critics have revived the study of Middlemarch but nothing can surpass Virginia Woolf's comment, Eliot's talent "is at its highest in the mature Middlemarch, the magnificent book which with all its imperfections is one of the few English novels written for grown-up people."

Maria Lee Weltzmanin in her article entitled Dorothea and the Written Word: feminism in Middlemarch writes that George Eliot questions all previous assumptions about gender by associating Dorothea with masculine authority and feminine emotion. Dorothea is connected to the act of writing and to artistic production. Unlike Rosamond Vincy she's not satisfied with popular poetry but is connected to more elevated pursuits which are associated with male authority. By driving the plot Dorothea assumes the role of the writer in many ways. She ensures Celia's marriage with Chettam by opting for Casaubon, she reconciles Lydgate and Rosamond and helps to restore Lydgate's good name. Eliot gives Dorothea writing characteristics that a stereotypically feminine and are motivated by love and intimacy, yet writing is stereotypically a masculine activity. By infusing the intimate with the powerful and associating both with the act of writing Eliot conflicts the typical province of woman with the typical province of men that is disrupting convention of both gender and genre.

Test Yourself Questions

(i) Write an essay on Eliot's art of charactization.

(ii) Do you think Middlemarch is a feminist text?

(iii)Which characters of Middlemarch you like the most and why?

Conclusion

George Eliot's characters are psychologically presented. She not only gives us an authentic description of each character but also delves into their minds to give us a clear picture of why they perform their actions. She is one of the writers who is considered modern because of her concerns with the psychological presentation of character and also the study of women and their role in society. In fact, recent feminist criticism has read the novels of George Eliot from the

feminist perspective and shown how she is supporting the rights of women. She has found place in the literary canon of English literature because of her ability to write about human issues like all classical writers do. Middlemarch reveals George Eliot's capacity as a writer and places her among the greatest writers of all time.

Suggested Reading

Leavis, F.R. (1950) The great tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad. New York: George W Stewart

Swinden, Patrick. ed (1972) George Eliot: Middlemarch: A case book. London: Macmillan

Blake, Kathleen (1976) "Middlemarch and the woman question."

Ashton, Rosemary (1983) George Eliot. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Chase, Karen (1991) Eliot: Middlemarch (Landmarks of world literature). Cambridge: Cambridge University Pres

M.A. (English)

COURSE: ENGLISH NOVEL (Upto 19th Century)

UNIT 2: THOMAS HARDY: JUDE THE OBSCURE

STRUCTURE

2.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Study the novel *Jude the Obscure* and try to understand Thomas Hardy as a novelist. *Jude the Obscure* began as a magazine serial in December 1894 and was first published in book form in 1895. It is Hardy's last completed novel. Its protagonist, Jude Fawley, is a working-class young man, a stonemason, who dreams of becoming a scholar. The other main character is his cousin, Sue Bridehead, who is also his central love interest. The novel is concerned in particular with issues of class, education, religion, moralityand marriage.

2.1 SUMMARY

Jude Fawley dreams of studying at the University in Christminster, but his background as an orphan raised by his working-class aunt leads him instead into a career as a stonemason. He is inspired by the ambitions of the town schoolmaster, Richard Phillotson, who left for Christminster when Jude was a child. However, Jude falls in love with a young woman named Arabella, is tricked into marrying her, and cannot leave his home village. When their marriage goes sour and Arabella moves to Australia, Jude resolves to go to Christminster at last. However, he finds that his attempts to enroll at the University are met with little enthusiasm.

Jude meets his cousin Sue Bridehead and tries not to fall in love with her. He arranges for her to work with Phillotson in order to keep her in Christminster, but is disappointed when he discovers that the two are engaged to be married. Once they marry, Jude is not surprised to find that Sue is not happy with her situation. She can no longer tolerate the relationship and leavesher husband to live with Jude.

Both Jude and Sue get divorced, but Sue does not want to remarry. Arabella reveals to Jude that they have a son in Australia, and Jude asks to take him in. Sue and Jude serve as parents to the little boy and have two children of their own. Jude falls ill, and when he recovers, he decides to return to Christminster with his family. They have trouble finding lodging because they are not married, and Jude stays in an inn separate from Sue and the children. At night, Sue takes Jude's son out to look for a room, and the little boy decides that they would be better off without so many children. In the morning, Sue goes to Jude's room and eats breakfast with him. They return to the lodging house to find that Jude's son has hanged the other two children and himself.

Feeling she has been punished by God for her relationship with Jude, Sue goes back to live with Phillotson, and Jude is tricked into living with Arabella again. Jude dies soon after.

PART I: AT MARYGREEN

Summary

Everyone in Marygreen is upset because the schoolmaster, Richard Phillotson, is leaving the village for the town of Christminster, about twenty miles away. Phillotson does not know how to move his piano, or where he will store it. So, an eleven-year-old boy, Jude, suggests keeping it in his aunt's fuel house. The boy, Jude Fawley, has been living with his aunt Drusilla, a baker, since his father died. Drusilla tells him that he should have asked the school teacher to take him to Christminster, because Jude loves books just like his cousin Sue.

Jude tires of hearing himself talked about and goes to the bakehouse to eat his breakfast. After eating, he walks up to a cornfield and uses a clacker to scare crows away. However, he decides that the birds deserve to eat and stops sounding the clacker. He feels someone watching him and sees Mr. Troutham, the farmer who hired him to scare the crows away. The farmer fires him and Jude walks home to tell his aunt. She mentions Christminster again, and he asks what it is and whether he will ever be able to visit Phillotson there. She tells him that they have nothing to do with the people of Christminster. Jude goes into town and asks a man where Christminster is, and the man points to the northeast.

Jude walks two or three miles toward Christminster and climbs a ladder onto a roof where two men are working. He says he is looking for Christminster, and they tell him that sometimes it is visible, but not today. Jude is disappointed and waits, hoping he will see it before going home. Finally, he sees it off in the distance and stares at its spires until the view disappears. He goes home. He decides that he wants to see the night lights of the city and goes back at dusk one day. On the road, he meets men carrying coal and asks if they are coming from Christminster. They tell him that the people there read books he would never understand, and go on to describe the town. Hearing this, Jude decides that it is a "place of light" where the "tree of knowledge grows," and that it would suit him perfectly. He runs into Physician Vilbert, a quack-doctor, on his way home and asks him about Christminster. Vilbert says that even the washerwomen there speak Latin, and Jude expresses a desire to learn Greek and Latin. Vilbert

promises to give Jude his grammar books if Jude advertises his medicines in the town for two weeks. After two weeks, Jude meets Vilbert and asks for the grammar books, but the doctor does not have them. Jude is very disappointed, but when Phillotson sends for the piano, Jude has the idea of writing to the schoolmaster to ask for grammar books. Phillotson sends them, but when the books arrive, Jude is surprised to discover that there is no easy way to learn Latin, that each word has to be learned separately. He thinks that it is beyond his intellect.

Jude decides to make himself more useful to his aunt and helps her with the bakery, delivering bread in a horse-drawn cart. While he drives the cart, he studies Latin. At the age of sixteen, he decides to devote himself to Biblical texts and also to apprentice himself to a stonecutter for extra money. He still dreams of going to Christminster, and saves his money for this possibility. He keeps lodgings in the town of Alfredston, but returns to Marygreen each weekend. One day, when he is nineteen, he is walking to Marygreen and planning his education and his future as a bishop or archdeacon when he is struck in the ear by a piece of pig's flesh. He sees three young women washing chitterlings. He asks one of the girls to come get the piece of meat, and she introduces herself as Arabella Donn. He asks if he can see her the next day and she says yes. He thinks of studying Greek the next afternoon, but decides it would be rude not to call on Arabella as promised and takes her for a walk. He meets her family afterward and is struck by how serious they perceive his intentions to be. The next morning, he goes back to where they walked together and overhears Arabella telling her friends that she wants to marry Jude. Jude finds his thoughts turning more and more to her.

Their romance continues, and two months later, Arabella goes to see the quack-doctor Vilbert. Jude begins to say that he is going away, but Arabella retorts that she is pregnant. Jude immediately proposes, and they marry quickly. Jude does not believe Arabella to be the ideal wife, but he knows he must marry her. Once they are living together, Jude asks when the baby will be born, and Arabella tells him it was a mistake, that she is not really pregnant. Jude is shocked. He feels depressed and trapped by the marriage, and even considers killing himself. He goes home one day to find Arabella gone and receives a letter saying she is planning to move to Australia with her parents.

Early on in the novel, the village of Marygreen is set in opposition to the university town of Christminster. The young Jude sees Christminster as an enlightened place of

learning, equating it with his dreams of higher education and his vague notions of academic success. Yet while Jude lives quite close to Christminster and knows a man who is going to live there, the city is always only a distant vision in his mind. It is nearly within his reach but at the same time unattainable, and this physical distance serves as an ongoing metaphor for the abstract distance between the impoverished Jude and the privileged Christminster students.

At the start of the novel, Jude is portrayed as an earnest and innocent young man who aspires to things greater than his background allows. He resists succumbing to the discouragement of those around him and does not fear the gap he is creating between himself and the other people of his village. He is seen as eccentric and perhaps impertinent, and his aspirations are dismissed as unrealistic. It is this climate, in part, that leads him to marry Arabella. All through his young adult life, he avoids going to Christminster. Perhaps, he is afraid of the failure he might encounter there. In Arabella, he sees something attainable and instantly gratifying, as opposed to the university life, of which he fears he may never become a part. In this way, Jude avoids disappointment, but finds that he cannot live within the confines of an unhappy marriage.

Confinement—particularly in regard to marriage—is a major theme in the novel. Jude feels trapped by a youthful mistake and Arabella's manipulation. He finds that the decision is irreversible and resigns himself to living with the consequences. The freedom he receives after Arabella leaves is only partially liberating: It lets him be independent in a physical sense, but because he is still married, it forbids him from achieving legitimate romantic happiness with someone else.

2.2 PART II: AT CHRIST MINSTER

Summary

Three years after his marriage, Jude decides to go to Christminster at last. He is motivated partly by a portrait of his cousin Sue Bridehead, who lives there. He finds lodging in a suburb called Beersheba and walks into town. He observes the colleges and quadrangles, and finds himself conversing aloud with the great dead philosophers memorialized around him. The next morning he remembers that he has come to find his old schoolmaster and his cousin. His aunt sent the picture of Sue with the stipulation that Jude should not try to find her, and he decides that he must wait until he is settled

to find Phillotson. He tries to find work in the colleges. He finally receives a letter from a stonemason's yard and promptly accepts employment there. He thinks of going to see Sue, despite his aunt's continuing entreaties not to see her. He walks to the shop his aunt described and sees Sue illuminating the word "Alleluja" on a scroll. He decides that he should not fall in love with her because marriage between cousins is never good, and his family in particular is cursed with tragic sadness in marriage.

Jude discovers that Sue attends church services at Cardinal College and goes there to find her. He watches her but does not approach her, remembering that he is a married man. The next time he sees her, he is working on a church and sees Sue leaving the morning service. On another afternoon, Sue goes to the stonemason's yard and asks for Jude Fawley. When she is described to him, Jude recognizes who she was. He finds a note from her at his lodgings, saying that she heard of his arrival in Christminster and would have liked to meet him, but might be going away soon. He is driven to action and writes back immediately, saying he will meet her in an hour. They introduce themselves, and Jude asks if she knows Phillotson, whom he thinks is a parson. She says that there is a village schoolmaster named Phillotson in Lumsdon, and Jude is struck by the realization that Phillotson has failed in his ambitions.

Jude and Sue walk to Phillotson's house, and Jude introduces himself. The schoolmaster does not remember him, and Jude reminds him about the Latin and Greek grammars. Phillotson tells him that he gave up the idea of attending the university long ago, but invites them in. He saysthat he is comfortable with his current existence but is in need of a pupil-teacher. They do notstay for supper, and on the way back, Jude asks Sue why she is leaving Christminster. She explains that she is quarreling with one of the women she works with, and it would be best to leave. Jude suggests that he ask Phillotson to take her on as a teacher, and she agrees. Phillotson agrees to employ her, but points out that the salary is quite low. So, it would not assist her unless she viewed the job as an apprenticeship in a teaching career.

Sue begins working at Phillotson's school right away, and he is responsible for giving her lessons. According to the law, a chaperone must supervise them at all times. The schoolmaster thinks this is unnecessary because he is so much older than she is. However, one day when heis walking toward the village, Jude sees the two walking together. Phillotson puts his arm around Sue's waist and she removes it, but he puts it

back and this time she lets it stay. Jude goes back to see his aunt, who is not well. Jude talks with a friend from home, who is surprised that Jude has not entered college yet. Jude decides to pursue admission in the university more devotedly and writes to five professors. After a long wait, he finally receives an answer from a professor at Biblioll College. The letter recommends that he remain in his current profession rather than attempting to study at a university. Jude grows depressed and goes to a tavern to drink. Another mason, Uncle Joe, challenges him to demonstrate his academic ability by saying the Creed in Latin. Jude does, then grows angry when they congratulate him. He goes to see Sue. She tells him to go to sleep and that she will bring him breakfast in the morning. He leaves at dawn and goes back to his lodgings, where he finds a note of dismissal from his employer. He walks back to Marygreen and sleeps in his old room. He hears his aunt praying and meets the clergyman, Mr. Highridge. Jude tells Highridge of his failed ambition to attend the university and become a minister. Highridge says that if he wants, Jude can become a licentiate in the church if he gives up strong drink.

Commentary

Sue serves to attract Jude to Christminster, and he seeks her out with a strange devotion, as though he is following an inevitable path carved out by destiny. Taken together with his aunt's warning that marriages in their family never end well, Jude's haste to find and fall in love with his cousin creates a sense of foreboding about the young man's fate. His marriage to Arabella prevents him from pursuing Sue fully, but she clearly captivates him.

Summary

Jude is disappointed to find that Phillotson does not remember him and has not fulfilled his ambitions. Phillotson is a foil to Jude, his complacency set against Jude's fervor. Phillotson represents a path more accessible to Jude than his aspirations toward an academic career, but Jude is loath to give up his Christminster ambitions. He also clings to Sue, arranging for her to teach with Phillotson as a way of keeping her near him.

Jude finds that the Christminster colleges are not welcoming toward self-educated men, and he accepts that he may not be able to study at the university after all. His propensity for drinking emerges. The episode in the pub, in which he recites Latin to a group of workmen and undergraduates, shows the juxtaposition of Jude's intellect

with his outer appearance. Christminster will not accept him because he belongs to the working class, yet he is intelligent and well-read through independent study. The realization that his learning will help him only to perform in pubs sits heavily with Jude, and he is comforted only by the possibility of becoming a clergyman through apprenticeship.

2.3 PART III: AT MELCHESTER

Summary

Jude decides to follow the path recommended by the clergyman and become a low-ranking clergyman. He receives a letter from Sue saying that she is entering the Training College at Melchester, where there is also a Theological College. He decides to wait until the days are longer to travel to Melchester himself because he will have to find work there. Sue writes thatshe is desperately lonely and begs him to come at once, so he agrees. Jude arrives and takes Sue to dinner. She mentions that Phillotson might find her a teaching post after she graduates, and Jude expresses his anxiety about the schoolmaster's romantic interest in her. Sue at first dismisses his fears, saying Phillotson is too old, but then she confesses that she has agreed to marry Phillotson in two years, and then they plan to teach jointly at a school in a larger town.

Jude finds work at a cathedral and reads theological books in preparation for his career. He goes for a walk with Sue and they find themselves far out into the countryside. A shepherd invites them to spend the night, saying it is too late to go back to Melchester if they do not know the way.

The next morning the students at Sue's Training College see that she has not returned, and theadministrators decide to punish her. She runs away and arrives, cold and soaked from the rain,at Jude's lodgings. He takes her in and hides her from his landlady. They discuss their education, and Sue tells him about an undergraduate she knew in Christminster. They were friends and shared many ideas, but he wanted to be her lover and she did not love him. He died two or three years later. Jude is struck by Sue's freethinking mentality and calls her "Voltairean" (thinking like the French philosopher Voltaire). As they are leaving, Sue tells Jude that she knows he is in love with her and he is only permitted to like her, not to love her. The next morning she writes a letter saying that he can love her if he chooses. He writes back, but does not receive an answer. He goes to find her, and she tells him she no longer wants to see him because

there are rumors about their relationship. However, she apologizes in another note, calling her words rash.

Phillotson asks Jude about Sue's history, and Jude assures him that nothing untoward has happened between them. Jude tells Sue his own story, including his marriage to Arabella. Sheis angered by his previous dishonesty. Two days later, he receives a letter saying that Sue and Phillotson are to be married in three or four weeks. Sue also asks if Jude will give her away atthe wedding, and he agrees. She comes to Melchester ten days before the wedding and stays in Jude's house. Sue and Phillotson marry on the appointed day. Jude finds he can no longer stand living in Melchester, and when he receives word that his aunt is dangerously ill, he returns toMarygreen. He writes to Sue encouraging her to come and see Aunt Drusilla before she dies.

In the meantime, Jude goes to Christminster for work. He goes to a pub and sees a familiar face: Arabella's. She tells him that she returned from Australia three months before. Jude misses his train to Alfredston and instead goes to Aldbrickham with Arabella. They spend the night together at an inn. In the morning, she says that she married a hotel manager in Sydney. Jude leaves her and unexpectedly encounters Sue. The two go to see Jude's aunt together, and Sue tells Jude that she made a mistake in marrying Phillotson. Jude takes Sue to the train and asks if he can come visit, but she says no. He devotes himself to his studies and develops an interest in music, and on the way back from a trip to see a church composer, he finds an apology and an invitation to dinner from Sue.

Commentary

Sue shows herself to be both radical in her intellectual views and conservative in her social practices. She leaves the Training College because she discovers that its rules are intolerably strict, and her supervisors' suspicions are too much for her to bear. She comes to see Jude as aprotector, and for this reason is disturbed by the realization that he is in love with her. She wavers back and forth in her protests, sometimes wanting to enter into a romantic relationship with Jude and sometimes believing it to be misguided. When he confesses that he is married, she accuses him of dishonesty, but there is a hint of disappointment in her tone because his marriage only adds a further obstruction to their possible romance. She marries Phillotson in this state of anger and frustration, and Jude feels that he cannot and should not dissuade her.

Jude spends the night with Arabella because he feels it is his legal right, and he wants

to ease his longing for Sue. When Arabella tells him that she has married a second time, Jude does not know what to do. He regrets his night with her and is dismayed by the realization that he has committed a form of adultery. Meanwhile, Sue tries to push him away again, then invites him to her home soon after. Sue does not know what she wants, but is slowly coming to the understanding that she finds Phillotson repulsive. She does not admit to loving Jude, but still turns to him to be her protector.

2.4 PART IV: AT SHASTON

Summary

Jude travels to Sue's school in Shaston. He finds the schoolroom empty and begins playing a tune on the piano. Sue joins him, and they discuss their friendship. Jude accuses Sue of being a flirt, and she objects. They discuss her marriage, and Sue tells Jude to come to her house the next week. Later, he walks to her house and sees her through the window looking at a photograph. The next morning Sue writes saying that he should not come to dinner, and he writes back in agreement. On Easter Monday, he hears that his aunt is dying. When he arrives, she has already passed away. Sue comes to the funeral. She tells Jude she is unhappy in her marriage, but that she still must go back to Shaston on the six o'clock train. Jude convinces her to spend the night at Mrs. Edlin's house instead. He tells her that he is sorry because he did not tell her not to marry Phillotson, and she suspects he still has tender feelings for her.

Jude denies it, saying that he no longer feels love since he has seen Arabella and is going to live with her. Sue realizes he is lying. She confesses that she likes Phillotson but finds it tortuous to live with him. Jude asks if she would have married him if not for his marriage to Arabella, but Sue leaves without answering. In the middle of the night, Jude hears the cry of a trapped rabbit and goes outside to free it. He kills the rabbit and looks up to see Sue watching him through a window. She says she wishes there was a way to undo a mistake such as her marriage. She kisses Jude on the top of his head and shuts the window.

Jude decides that he cannot in good conscience become a minister, considering his feelings toward Sue. He burns his books. Back in Shaston, Sue hints at her indiscretionary feelings to her husband. At night, she goes to sleep in a closet instead of her bedroom, and Phillotson is alarmed. She asks if he would mind living apart from her. He questions her motives and asks if she intends to live alone. She says that she

wants to live with Jude. In the morning, Phillotson and Sue continue their discussion through notes passed by their students. She asks to live in the same house, but not as husband and wife, and he says he will consider it. They take separate rooms in the house, but by habit one night, Phillotson returns to the room they once shared, and sees Sue leap out the window. However, she is not badly hurt and claims that she was asleep when she did it.

Phillotson goes to see his friend Gillingham and tells him of his marital troubles. He speaks of his intention to let her go to Jude, and Gillingham is shocked. He says that such thoughts threaten the sanctity of the family unit. At breakfast the next day, Phillotson tells Sue that she may leave and do as she wish. He says he does not wish to know anything about her in the future.

Jude meets Sue's train and tells her he has arranged for them to travel to Aldbrickham because it is a larger town and no one knows them there. He has booked one room at the Temperance Hotel, and Sue is surprised. She explains that she is not prepared to have a sexual relationship with him yet. He asks whether she has been teasing him. They go to a different hotel, the one where he stayed with Arabella. When Jude is out of the room, the maid tells Sue that she saw him with another woman a month earlier. Sue accuses him of deceiving her, but he objects by saying that if they are only friends, it does not matter. She accuses him of treachery for sleeping with Arabella, but he argues that Arabella is his legal wife. Jude tells Sue that Arabella has married a second husband, but he will never inform against her. He adds that he is comparatively happy just to be near Sue.

Back in Shaston, Phillotson is threatened with dismissal for letting his wife commit adultery. He defends himself at a meeting but falls ill. A letter reaches Sue, and she returns to him. She tells Phillotson that Jude is seeking a divorce from his wife, and Phillotson decides to attempt the same.

The moral implications of the friendship and romance between Jude and Sue emerge as an important issue. Hardy dwells on the question of marriage and its ramifications, and his portrayal of the tragic effects of marital confinement, beginning largely in Part IV, did not sit well with critics of the time. Hardy was accused of attempting to undermine the institution of marriage, and Sue in particular was thought to have inappropriate beliefs for a young female character. In many ways, she is a feminist

before her time. She recognizes her own intellect and her potential for a satisfying career in teaching, and marries Phillotson partly out of a desire for a pleasant work environment. She resists a romantic relationship with Jude, but falls in love with him despite her misgivings. However, when it comes time to marry, she does not wish to enter into a legal contract in which she would again be confined.

By marrying Phillotson, Sue hopes to protect her reputation and achieve the traditional lifestyle of a married woman. She likes Phillotson despite his age, but is surprised at her inability to find him attractive. She even comes to be repulsed by him and later admits to jumping out of the window for fear that he would enter her bed. Phillotson tries very hard to preserve at least the external appearance of a typical marriage. As a man, he is legally permitted to force her to stay in his bed and even sleep with him. For this reason, he is viewed with contempt for letting her leave him. However, his understanding brings him only more difficulty, as he is personally blamed for Sue's disobedience of convention.

Jude's relationship with Arabella is equally complicated. He does not love her as much as he cares for Sue, but he sleeps with her when she returns from Australia. Again, Hardy's casual depiction of people acting against established societal norms of marital and sexual behavior aroused controversy in Britain and the United States, and Hardy resolved to give up writing fiction as a result.

2.5 PART V: AT ALDBRICKHAM AND ELSEWHERE

Summary

Some months later, Jude receives word that Sue's divorce has been made official, just one month after his own divorce was similarly ratified. Jude asks Sue if she will consent to marry him after a respectable interval, but she tells him that she worries it would harm their relationship. Jude worries because Sue has still not declared her love for him. One night, Jude returns home to find that a woman has come to see him while he was away. Sue suspects it was Arabella. A knock comes on the door and Sue knows it is Arabella again. Arabella tells Jude she needs help. Sue begs him not to go see her at her lodgings, as she asks. Jude hesitates, and Sue says she will marry him immediately. Jude stays home. In the morning, Sue feels guilty about her treatment of Arabella and decides to check on her at the inn. Arabella treats Sue rudely but asks if Jude will meet her at the station. Sue and Jude postpone their wedding and one day receive a letter

from Arabella. It explains that Arabella gave birth to Jude's child in Australia, and their son has been living with her parents in Australia, but they can no longer care for him. Sue says she would like to adopt him. So, Jude writes to Arabella. The boy arrives sooner than they expected and walks to their house on his own. Sue tells him to call her "mother."

At an agricultural show in early June, Arabella spots Jude and Sue with her son, who is called Little Father Time because of his adult demeanor. Arabella attends the show with her new husband, Cartlett. She points out the family, and Cartlett remarks that they seem to like each other and their child very much. Arabella declares that it cannot be their child because they have not been married long enough.

Jude has trouble getting work. So, he proposes that they move again. They find that people donot believe they are married. Jude wants to live in London because it would allow them moreanonymity.

Two and a half years later, at the Kennetbridge spring fair, Sue encounters Arabella in mourning for her husband. Sue is selling cakes at the fair. She explains that Jude caught a chill while doing stone work and has been ill. Arabella is jealous and discusses her feelings with a friend as they drive toward Alfredston. She recognizes Phillotson on the road and offers him a lift. He says he is the schoolmaster at Marygreen again.

Sue goes home and tells Jude about Arabella. He says that when he recovers he would like to go back to Christminster, though he knows the town despises him; perhaps he will die there.

Commentary

Jude and Sue are both able to obtain divorces from their first marriages. So, legally they can marry each other. Jude decides that he can be happy without being legally married to Sue as long as he is with her, and the two do not tell their neighbors whether they are married or not.However, they live as though they are married and are therefore considered sinful by people around them. The idea of raising Jude's son prompts Sue to think about formalizing their marriage, but ultimately they do not marry. The uncertainty surrounding their status foreshadows difficulties to come, as there is a sense of illegitimacy lingering in their relationship.

When Arabella sees Jude and Sue with her son, she immediately points out to her new husband that the child is too old to be Sue's son, as though claiming motherhood from

a distance. Sue immediately develops a relationship with the boy, although she dislikes the fact that he was born of Jude's first marriage. The child's old, world-weary face points to both his premature wisdom and his ability to see beyond childish things. In his eyes, there is a danger that Sue senses but cannot, at this stage, define.

2.6 PART VI: AT CHRISTMINSTER AGAIN

Summary

Jude and Sue return to Christminster with Little Father Time, who is now also named Jude, and the other two children they have had together. They encounter a procession and see Jude's oldfriends Tinker Taylor and Uncle Joe. Jude tells them he is a poor, ill man and an example of how not to live. The family goes to look for lodging, but finds that people are reluctant to take them in. One woman rents them a room for the week provided Jude stays elsewhere, though when she discovers Sue's history and tells her husband. Her husband orders her to send them away. Sue puts the younger children to bed and takes little Time out to look for other lodgings, but with no success. The boy remarks that he "ought not to have been born" and grows irate when Sue tells him that she is pregnant again.

In the morning, Sue wakes early and goes to see Jude. They have a hasty breakfast together and then return to Sue's lodgings to make breakfast for the children. They get some eggs andplace them in the kettle to boil. Jude is watching the eggs when he hears Sue cry out. He rushes in to find Sue unconscious on the floor, having fainted. He cannot find the children. He looks inside the door to the closet, where Sue collapsed, and sees all three children hanging from clothes' hooks. Beneath little Time's feet lies a chair that has been pushed over. Jude cuts down the three children and lays them down on the bed. He runs out for a doctor and returns to find Sue and the landlady attempting to revive the corpses. On the floor they find a note, written by little Jude, that reads "Done because we are too menny."

Jude and Sue find lodgings toward the town of Beersheba, but Sue is despondent. She decidesthat she is rightly married to Phillotson, and it becomes clear that she and Jude never legally married at all. Arabella visits the house and explains that she did not feel she belonged at the children's funeral. Sue imagines that God punished her by using Arabella's son, born in wedlock, to kill her children, who were born out of wedlock. Phillotson agrees to take Sue back as his wife, and she moves into his house.

Arabella decides she will do the same and takes Jude, who is drunk, back to the house

they lived in when they were married. After a few days, she and her father coerce him into marrying her again by suggesting that he has been living with them on that pretext. He agrees,and they are married. Jude is ill with an inflammation of the lungs. He decides that he wants to die but to see Sue first. So, he travels to her home in the rain. Sue tells him that she still loves him but must stay with Phillotson, and he kisses her. At night, she tells Phillotson that she saw Jude, but swears she will never see him again. She joins Philloston in his bed despite her lackof feeling for him, saying it is her duty.

In the summer, Jude is sleeping when Arabella goes outside to observe the Remembrance Week festivities. She wants to see the boat races, but goes upstairs to check on Jude first. Finding him dead, she decides that she can afford to watch the boat races before dealing with his body. Standing before his casket two days later, she asks the Widow Edlin if Sue will be coming tothe funeral. The widow says that Sue promised never to see Jude again, though she can hardly bear her legal husband. She says that Sue probably found peace, but Arabella argues that Sue will not have peace until she has joined Jude in death.

Commentary

The tragic conclusion of the novel arises as the inevitable result of the difficulties faced by the two cousins. Sue sees young Jude's terrible murder-suicide as the result of her transgressions against the institution of marriage, and her only solution is to return to her ex-husband. Sue sees all the forces of nature working against her and comes to regard her love for Jude as a sin in itself.

Arabella is heartless where Sue is passionate. Jude dies after again being tricked into marrying her, but she is unwilling to sacrifice the diversion of a boat race to be with him while he is dying or even to take care of his body after he dies. She personifies the danger of a bad marriage in the novel, and the murder of Sue's children by Arabella's child perhaps more rightly represents the destruction of true love by adolescent infatuation.

2.7 OVERALL ANALYSIS AND THEMES

Jude the Obscure focuses on the life of a country stonemason, Jude, and his love for his cousin Sue, a school teacher. From the beginning, Jude knows that marriage is an ill-fated venture in his family, and he believes that his love for Sue curses him doubly, because they are both members of a cursed clan. While love could be identified as a

central theme in the novel, it isthe institution of marriage that is the work's central focus. Jude and Sue are unhappily marriedto other people, and then drawn by an inevitable bond that pulls them together. Their relationship is beset by tragedy, not only because of the family curse but also by society's reluctance to accept their marriage as legitimate.

The horrifying murder-suicide of Jude's children is no doubt the climax of the book's action, and the other events of the novel rise in a crescendo to meet that one act. From there, Jude and Sue feel they have no recourse but to return to their previous, unhappy marriages and die within the confinement created by their youthful errors. They are drawn into an endless cycle of self- erected oppression and cannot break free. In a society unwilling to accept their rejection of convention, they are ostracized. Jude's son senses wrongdoing in his own conception and actsin a way that he thinks will help his parents and his siblings. The children are the victims of society's unwillingness to accept Jude and Sue as man and wife, and Sue's own feelings of shame from her divorce.

Jude's initial failure to attend the university becomes less important as the novel progresses, but his obsession with Christminster remains. Christminster is the site of Jude's first encounters with Sue, the tragedy that dominates the book, and Jude's final moments and death. It acts upon Jude, Sue, and their family as a representation of the unattainable and dangerous things to which Jude aspires.

2.8 CRITICAL ESSAYS SYMBOLISM AND IRONY IN JUDE THE OBSCURE

The symbolism in the novel helps to work out the theme. Such a minor symbol as the repeated allusion to Samson and Delilah reinforces the way Jude's emotional life undermines the realization of his ambitions. Two symbols of major importance are Christminster and the character of Little Father Time. They are useful to discuss, since the first is an instance of a successful symbol and the second an unsuccessful one.

Jude's idea of Christminster permeates not only his thinking but the whole novel. From his first view of it on the horizon to his hearing the sounds of the holiday there coming in his window as he lies on his deathbed, Christminster represents to him all that is desirable in life. It is by this ideal that he measures everything. He encounters evidence in abundance that it is not in fact what he thinks it is in his imagination, but he

will not take heed. It finally represents to him literally all that he has left in life. Of course, other characters as well are affected by Jude's idea of the place. It is a successful symbol because it is capable of representing what it is supposed to and it does not call attention to itself as a literary device.

Little Father Time, however, is a different matter. The boy's appearance, his persistent gloom, his oracular tone, his inability ever to respond to anything as a child—all of these call attentions to the fact that he is supposed to represent something. And Hardy makes the child carry moremeaning than he is naturally able to. He is fate, of course, but also blighted hopes, failure, change, etc.

The use of irony is of course commonplace in fiction, and a number of effective instances of it in Hardy's novel are to be found. In some of the instances, the reader but not the character recognizes the irony; in others, both the reader and the character are aware of it. An example of the first is Jude's occupational choice of ecclesiastical stonework in medieval Gothic style in a time when medievalism in architecture is dying out or the way Arabella alienates Jude bythe deception she has used to get him to marry her the first time. An example of the second isJude's dying in Christminster, the city that has symbolized all his hopes, or the way Arabella's calling on Jude in Aldbrickham in order to reawaken his interest in her helps bring about Sue's giving herself to him.

Irony is particularly appropriate in a novel of tragic intent, in which events do not work out the way the characters expect. Certainly, it is appropriate in a novel which has the kind of theme this one does. Struggling to break free of the old, the characters experience the old sufferingsand failure nonetheless.

2.9 CHARACTERS

Jude Fawley

A young man from Marygreen who dreams of studying at Christminster but becomes a stonemason instead.

Susanna Bridehead

Jude's cousin. She is unconventional in her beliefs and education, but marries the schoolmaster Richard Phillotson.

Arabella Donn

Jude's first wife. She enjoys spending time in bars and in the company of

men. Aunt Drusilla

The relative who raised Jude.

Richard Phillotson

The schoolmaster who first introduces Jude to the idea of studying at the university. He latermarries Sue.

Little Father Time (Little Jude)

Jude and Arabella's son, raised in Australia by Arabella's parents. He is said to have themind of an old man, though he is a young child.

2.10 CHARACTER ANALYSIS – JUDE FAWLEY

Jude is obscure in that he comes from uncertain origins, struggles largely unnoticed to realize his aspirations, and dies without having made any mark on the world. He is also obscure in the sense of being ambiguous: he is divided internally, and the conflicts range all the way from that between sexual desire and knowledge to that between two different views of the world. Jude is, therefore, struggling both with the world and with himself.

He is not well equipped to win. Though he is intelligent enough and determined, he tries to force his way to the knowledge he wants. Though well-intentioned and goodhearted, he often acts impulsively on the basis of too little objective evidence. Though he is unable to hurt an animal or another human being, he shows very little concern for himself and his own survival, often needlessly sacrificing his own good. He never learns, as Phillotson finally does perhaps too late, to calculate how to get what he wants. In short, he is more human than divine, as Hardy points out.

He is obsessed with ideals. Very early, he makes Christminster into an ideal of the intellectual life, and his admitted failure there does not dim the luster with which it shines in his imagination to the very end of his life. He searches for the ideal woman who will be both lover and companion, and though he finds passion without intellectual interests in Arabella and wide interests but frigidity in Sue, he maintains the latter as his ideal to his deathbed. Recognizing the Christminster holiday just before he dies, Jude says, "And I here. And Sue defiled!"Jude is reconciled to his fate before he dies only in the sense that he recognizes what it is. In aconversation with Mrs. Edlin, he says that perhaps he and Sue were ahead of their time in the way they wanted to live. He does not regret the struggle he has made; at the least, as he lies ill, he tries to puzzle out the

meaning of his life. At the very end, however, like Job, he wonders why he was born. But then so perhaps does every man, Hardy seems to imply.

2.11 CHARACTER ANALYSIS – SUE BRIDEHEAD

It is easy for the modern reader to dislike Sue, even, as D.H. Lawrence did, to make her into the villain of the book. (Lawrence thought Sue represented everything that was wrong with modern women.) Jude, as well as Hardy, obviously sees her as charming, lively, intelligent, interesting, and attractive in the way that an adolescent girl is. But it is impossible not to see other sides to her personality: she is self-centered, wanting more than she is willing to give; she is intelligent but her knowledge is fashionable and her use of it is shallow; she is outspoken but afraid to suit her actions to her words; she wants to love and be loved but is morbidly afraid of her emotions and desires.

In short, she is something less than the ideal Jude sees in her; like him, she is human. She is also a nineteenth-century woman who has given herself more freedom than she knows how to handle. She wants to believe that she is free to establish a new sort of relationship to men, even as she demands freedom to examine new ideas. But at the end, she finds herself in the role of sinner performing penance for her misconduct. As Jude says, they were perhaps ahead of their time. If she is not an ideal, she is the means by which Jude encounters a different view of life, one which he comes to adopt even as she flees from it. She is also one of the means by which Jude's hopes are frustrated and he is made to undergo suffering and defeat. But it is a frustration which he invites or which is given him by a power neither he nor Sue understands or seems to control.

2.12 CHARACTER ANALYSIS – ARABELLA DONN

Arabella is the least complex of the main characters; she is also the least ambitious, though what she wants she pursues with determination and enterprise. What she is after is simple enough: a man who will satisfy her and who will provide the comforts and some of the luxuries of life. She is attractive in an overblown way, good-humored, practical, uneducated of course but shrewd, cunning and tenacious. She is common in her tastes and interests. She is capable of understanding a good deal in the emotional life of other people, especially women, as shown on several occasions with Sue.

Arabella never quite finds what she wants either. Jude's ambitions put her off when they are first married, but after him, Cartlett is obviously a poor substitute, though she

doesn't complain. She wants Jude again and gets him, but she is not satisfied, since he is past the point of beingmuch good to her.

That she is enterprising is demonstrated everywhere in the novel; she has a self-interest that amounts to an instinct for survival, rather than the self-interest of a Sue that is the same as pride. And, of course, she does survive intact in a way the others do not. Though at the end ofthe novel she is standing by Jude's coffin, Vilbert awaits her somewhere in the city. Life goeson, in short.

2.13 CHARACTER ANALYSIS – RICHARD PHILLOTSON

Phillotson is eminently the respectable man. Though he fails to achieve the same goals Jude pursues, his bearing and view of things do not change much. Even when Arabella encounters him on the road to Alfredston, now down on his luck and teaching at Marygreen because it is the only place that will have him, this air of respectability remains. It must be this which Sue cannot stand about him, the respectability plus the legal right to make love to her. Sue's opinion of him does not make him any less decent. He is like Jude in many ways: he is goodhearted and honorable; he allows instinct to overrule reason; he is too accommodating for his own good; he is intelligent. Like Jude, he is ill-equipped to get what he wants in life and soon resigns himself to mediocrity. However, unlike Jude, he no longer is dazzled by ideals, perhaps because he is older. Maybe too late, he learns to act on the basis of calculation, estimating that Sue's return will be worth the benefits it may bring.

Phillotson, in short, is a man whom it is easy neither to like nor to dislike; he goes largely unnoticed.

2.14 UNIT END QUESTIONS

A. Descriptive Questions

1. Compare Jude's relationship with Arabella to his relationship with Sue.
2. What does the novel say about education and accessibility? Is Jude right to dreamof becoming a scholar? Why?
3. Hardy frequently interrupts the narrative to describe the location where the action takes place. What is the significance of these lush descriptions?
4. Compare and contrast Jude's and Sue's attitudes toward Christianity.
5. Analyze Jude's relationship with alcohol. How does it tie into the novel's

broaderthemes?

6. Discuss Hardy's treatment of setting in the novel.
7. Trains appear very frequently in *Jude the Obscure*. Why might this be significant?
8. Discuss Hardy's use of foreshadowing in *Jude the Obscure*.
9. How does Hardy portray women in this novel?
10. Analyze Arabella's character. How does she change over the course of the novel?

B. Multiple Choice Questions

1. Jude Fawley, the novel's protagonist, longs to become a_____, but circumstancesforce him instead to become a_____.

   a. Scholar, stonemason

   b. Lawyer, merchant

   c. Doctor, butcher

   d. Painter, gravedigger

2. How does Arabella trap Jude into marrying her the first time?

   a. She steals his money

   b. She feigns pregnancy

   c. She threatens his life

   d. She gets him drunk

3. How are Jude and Sue related?

   a. They are siblings

   b. They are cousins

   c. He is her uncle

   d. She is his aunt

4. Why does Arabella grant Jude a divorce?

   a. She feels sorry for Jude and Sue

   b. She wants to marry another man

c. She discovers that Jude has been unfaithful

d. She wants to cut all ties in England and move to Australia

5. What happens to Jude's three oldest children?

a. They are sent to an orphanage

b. They run away

c. They die of plague

d. They commit suicide

Answers

1-a, 2-b, 3-b, 4-b, 5-d

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