BA (English-Honours) Semester IV
Paper II: Fiction (B) (Code: Eng- 402)

Department of English and Modern European Languages
University of Lucknow

***(Course Instructor: Raj Gaurav Verma)**

Unit-I
Jane Austen : *Pride and Prejudice*
Charlotte Brontë : *Jane Eyre*

Unit-II
Mary Elizabeth Gaskell : *Ruth*
Charles Dickens : *Great Expectations*

Unit-III
George Eliot : *Mill on the Floss*
Thomas Hardy : *Mayor of Casterbridge*

Unit-IV
Nathaniel Hawthorne : *The Scarlet Letter*
Mark Twain : *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Recommended Readings

- *The Pelican Guide to English Literature* by Boris Ford
- *A Critical History of English Literature* by David Daiches
- *A History of English Literature* by Arthur Compton- Rickett
- *English Literature in Context* by Paul Poplawski
- *A History of English Literature* by Michael Alexander
- *A Short History of English Literature* by Pramod K Nayar
- *A Compendious History of English Literature* by R.D. Trivedi
- *A History of English Literature* by Edward Albert
- *A History of Literary Criticism* by Harry Blamires

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UNIT I
Pride and Prejudice- Jane Austen

Jane Austen (16 December 1775 – 18 July 1817) was an English novelist known primarily for her six major novels, which interpret, critique and comment upon the British landed gentry at the end of the 18th century. Austen's plots often explore the dependence of women on marriage in the pursuit of favourable social standing and economic security. Her works critique the novels of sensibility of the second half of the 18th century and are part of the transition to 19th-century literary realism. Her use of biting irony, along with her realism, humour, and social commentary, have long earned her acclaim among critics, scholars, and popular audiences alike.

With the publications of *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *Emma* (1816), she achieved success as a published writer. She wrote two additional novels, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, both published posthumously in 1818, and began another, eventually titled *Sanditon*, but died before its completion. She also left behind three volumes of juvenile writings in manuscript, a short epistolary novel *Lady Susan*, and another unfinished novel, *The Watsons*. Her six full-length novels have rarely been out of print, although they were published anonymously and brought her moderate success and little fame during her lifetime.

A significant transition in her posthumous reputation occurred in 1833, when her novels were republished in Richard Bentley's Standard Novels series, illustrated by Ferdinand Pickering, and sold as a set. They gradually gained wider acclaim and popular readership. In 1869, fifty-two years after her death, her nephew's publication of *A Memoir of Jane Austen* introduced a compelling version of her writing career and supposedly uneventful life to an eager audience. Austen has inspired many critical essays and literary anthologies. Her novels have inspired many films, from 1940's *Pride and Prejudice* to more recent productions like *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), *Emma* (1996), *Mansfield Park* (1999), *Pride & Prejudice* (2005), *Love & Friendship* (2016), and *Emma*.

Development of the Novel

Pride and Prejudice is a romantic novel of manners written by Jane Austen in 1813. The novel follows the character development of Elizabeth Bennet, the dynamic protagonist of the book who learns about the repercussions of hasty judgments and comes to appreciate the difference between superficial goodness and actual goodness. Its humour lies in its honest depiction of manners, education, marriage, and money during the Regency era in Great Britain.

Austen began writing the novel after staying at Goodnestone Park in Kent with her brother Edward and his wife in 1796. It was originally titled *First Impressions*, and was written between October 1796 and August 1797. On 1 November 1797 Austen's father sent a letter to London bookseller Thomas Cadell to ask if he had any interest in seeing the manuscript, but the offer was declined by return post. The militia were mobilised after the French declaration of war on Britain in February 1793, and there was initially a lack of barracks for all the militia regiments, requiring the militia to set up huge camps in the countryside, which the novel refers to several times. The Brighton camp for which the militia regiment leaves in May after spending the winter in Meryton was opened in August 1793, and the barracks for all the regiments of the militia were completed by 1796, placing the events of the novel between 1793 and 1795.

Austen made significant revisions to the manuscript for *First Impressions* between 1811 and 1812. As nothing remains of the original manuscript, we are reduced to conjecture. From the large number of letters in

the final novel, it is assumed that *First Impressions* was an epistolary novel. She later renamed the story *Pride and Prejudice* around about 1811/1812, which she sold the rights to publish the manuscript to Thomas Egerton for £110 (equivalent to £7,381 in 2019). In renaming the novel, Austen probably had in mind the "sufferings and oppositions" summarised in the final chapter of Fanny Burney's *Cecilia*, called "Pride and Prejudice", where the phrase appears three times in block capitals.[16] It is possible that the novel's original title was altered to avoid confusion with other works. In the years between the completion of *First Impressions* and its revision into *Pride and Prejudice*, two other works had been published under that name: a novel by Margaret Holford and a comedy by Horace Smith.

Style of Jane Austen

Pride and Prejudice, like most of Austen's works, employs the narrative technique of free indirect speech, which has been defined as "the free representation of a character's speech, by which one means, not words actually spoken by a character, but the words that typify the character's thoughts, or the way the character would think or speak, if she thought or spoke".Austen creates her characters with fully developed personalities and unique voices. Though Darcy and Elizabeth are very alike, they are also considerably different.[30] By using narrative that adopts the tone and vocabulary of a particular character (in this case, Elizabeth), Austen invites the reader to follow events from Elizabeth's viewpoint, sharing her prejudices and misapprehensions. "The learning curve, while undergone by both protagonists, is disclosed to us solely through Elizabeth's point of view and her free indirect speech is essential ... for it is through it that we remain caught, if not stuck, within Elizabeth's misprisions." The few times the reader is allowed to gain further knowledge of another character's feelings, is through the letters exchanged in this novel. Darcy's first letter to Elizabeth is an example of this as through his letter, the reader and Elizabeth are both given knowledge of Wickham's true character. Austen is known to use irony throughout the novel especially from viewpoint of the character of Elizabeth Bennet. She conveys the "oppressive rules of femininity that actually dominate her life and work, and are covered by her beautifully carved trojan horse of ironic distance." Beginning with a historical investigation of the development of a particular literary form and then transitioning into empirical verifications, it reveals Free Indirect Discourse as a tool that emerged over time as practical means for addressing the physical distinctness of minds. Seen in this way, Free Indirect Discourse is a distinctly literary response to an environmental concern, providing a scientific justification that does not reduce literature to a mechanical extension of biology, but takes its value to be its own original form.

Pride and Prejudice: Plot

The news that a wealthy young gentleman named Charles Bingley has rented the manor of Netherfield Park causes a great stir in the nearby village of Longbourn, especially in the Bennet household. The Bennets have five unmarried daughters—from oldest to youngest, Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty, and Lydia—and Mrs. Bennet is desperate to see them all married. After Mr. Bennet pays a social visit to Mr. Bingley, the Bennets attend a ball at which Mr. Bingley is present. He is taken with Jane and spends much of the evening dancing with her. His close friend, Mr. Darcy, is less pleased with the evening and haughtily refuses to dance with Elizabeth, which makes everyone view him as arrogant and obnoxious.

At social functions over subsequent weeks, however, Mr. Darcy finds himself increasingly attracted to Elizabeth’s charm and intelligence. Jane’s friendship with Mr. Bingley also continues to burgeon, and Jane pays a visit to the Bingley mansion. On her journey to the house she is caught in a downpour and catches ill, forcing her to stay at Netherfield for several days. In order to tend to Jane, Elizabeth hikes through muddy fields and arrives with a spattered dress, much to the disdain of the snobbish Miss Bingley, Charles Bingley’s sister. Miss Bingley’s spite only increases when she notices that Darcy, whom she is pursuing, pays quite a bit of attention to Elizabeth.

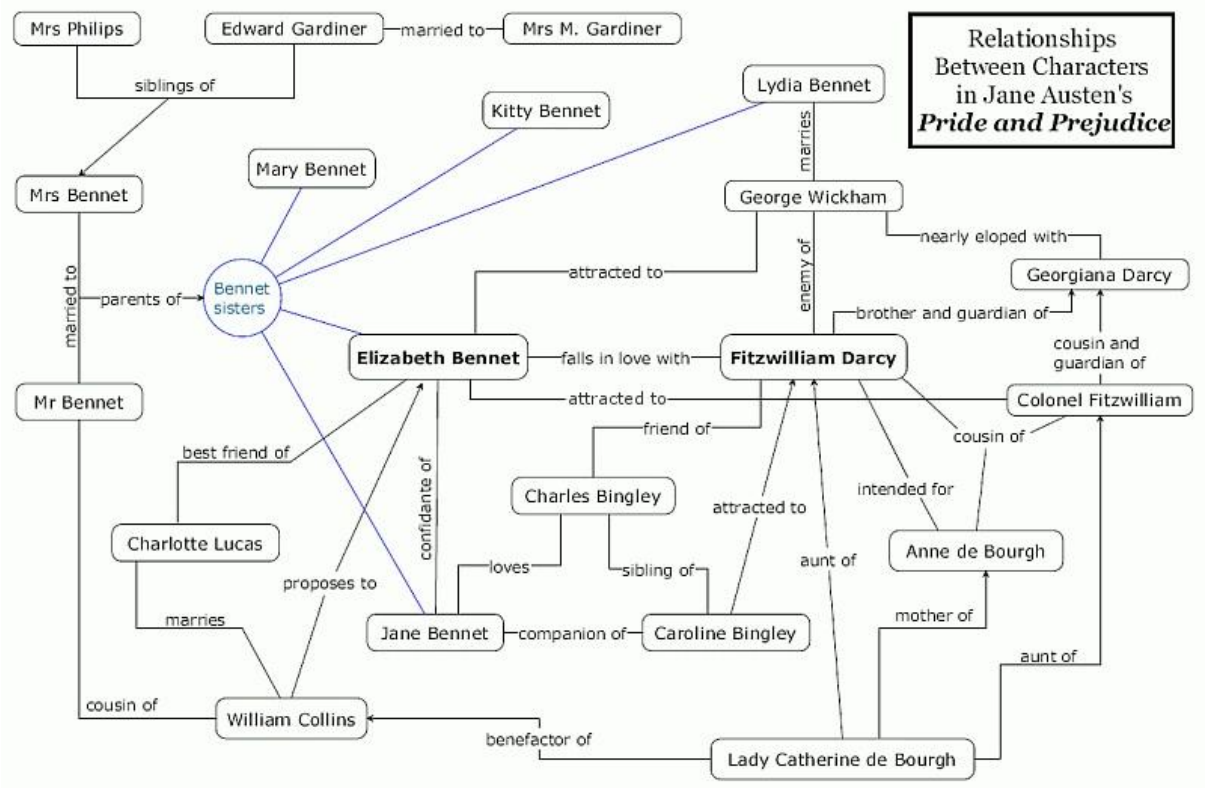
When Elizabeth and Jane return home, they find Mr. Collins visiting their household. Mr. Collins is a young clergyman who stands to inherit Mr. Bennet's property, which has been "entailed," meaning that it can only be passed down to male heirs. Mr. Collins is a pompous fool, though he is quite enthralled by the Bennet girls. Shortly after his arrival, he makes a proposal of marriage to Elizabeth. She turns him down, wounding his pride. Meanwhile, the Bennet girls have become friendly with militia officers stationed in a nearby town. Among them is Wickham, a handsome young soldier who is friendly toward Elizabeth and tells her how Darcy cruelly cheated him out of an inheritance.

At the beginning of winter, the Bingleys and Darcy leave Netherfield and return to London, much to Jane's dismay. A further shock arrives with the news that Mr. Collins has become engaged to Charlotte Lucas, Elizabeth's best friend and the poor daughter of a local knight. Charlotte explains to Elizabeth that she is getting older and needs the match for financial reasons. Charlotte and Mr. Collins get married and Elizabeth promises to visit them at their new home. As winter progresses, Jane visits the city to see friends (hoping also that she might see Mr. Bingley). However, Miss Bingley visits her and behaves rudely, while Mr. Bingley fails to visit her at all. The marriage prospects for the Bennet girls appear bleak.
That spring, Elizabeth visits Charlotte, who now lives near the home of Mr. Collins's patron, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who is also Darcy's aunt. Darcy calls on Lady Catherine and encounters Elizabeth, whose presence leads him to make a number of visits to the Collins's home, where she is staying. One day, he makes a shocking proposal of marriage, which Elizabeth quickly refuses. She tells Darcy that she considers him arrogant and unpleasant, then scolds him for steering Bingley away from Jane and disinheriting Wickham. Darcy leaves her but shortly thereafter delivers a letter to her. In this letter, he admits that he urged Bingley to distance himself from Jane, but claims he did so only because he thought their romance was not serious. As for Wickham, he informs Elizabeth that the young officer is a liar and that the real cause of their disagreement was Wickham's attempt to elope with his young sister, Georgiana Darcy.

This letter causes Elizabeth to reevaluate her feelings about Darcy. She returns home and acts coldly toward Wickham. The militia is leaving town, which makes the younger, rather man-crazy Bennet girls distraught. Lydia manages to obtain permission from her father to spend the summer with an old colonel in Brighton, where Wickham's regiment will be stationed. With the arrival of June, Elizabeth goes on another journey, this time with the Gardiners, who are relatives of the Bennets. The trip takes her to the North and eventually to the neighbourhood of Pemberley, Darcy's estate. She visits Pemberley, after making sure that Darcy is away, and delights in the building and grounds, while hearing from Darcy's servants that he is a wonderful, generous master. Suddenly, Darcy arrives and behaves cordially toward her. Making no mention of his proposal, he entertains the Gardiners and invites Elizabeth to meet his sister.

Shortly thereafter, however, a letter arrives from home, telling Elizabeth that Lydia has eloped with Wickham and that the couple is nowhere to be found, which suggests that they may be living together out of wedlock. Fearful of the disgrace such a situation would bring on her entire family, Elizabeth hastens home. Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Bennet go off to search for Lydia, but Mr. Bennet eventually returns home empty-handed. Just when all hope seems lost, a letter comes from Mr. Gardiner saying that the couple has been found and that Wickham has agreed to marry Lydia in exchange for an annual income. The Bennets are convinced that Mr. Gardiner has paid off Wickham, but Elizabeth learns that the source of the money, and of her family's salvation, was none other than Darcy.

Now married, Wickham and Lydia return to Longbourn briefly, where Mr. Bennet treats them coldly. They then depart for Wickham's new assignment in the North of England. Shortly thereafter, Bingley returns to Netherfield and resumes his courtship of Jane. Darcy goes to stay with him and pays visits to the Bennets but makes no mention of his desire to marry Elizabeth. Bingley, on the other hand, presses his suit and proposes to Jane, to the delight of everyone but Bingley's haughty sister. While the family celebrates, Lady Catherine de Bourgh pays a visit to Longbourn. She corners Elizabeth and says that she has heard that Darcy, her nephew, is planning to marry her. Since she considers a Bennet an unsuitable match for a Darcy, Lady Catherine demands that Elizabeth promise to refuse him. Elizabeth spiritedly refuses, saying she is not engaged to Darcy, but she will not promise anything against her own happiness. A little later, Elizabeth and Darcy go out walking together and he tells her that his feelings have not altered since the spring. She tenderly accepts his proposal, and both Jane and Elizabeth are married.



Pride and Prejudice: Characters

- **Elizabeth Bennet** – the second eldest of the Bennet daughters, she is twenty years old and intelligent, lively, playful, attractive, and witty – but with a tendency to form tenacious and prejudicial first impressions. As the story progresses, so does her relationship with Mr Darcy. The course of Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship is ultimately decided when Darcy overcomes his pride, and Elizabeth overcomes her prejudice, leading them both to surrender to their love for each other.

- **Mr Fitzwilliam Darcy** – Mr Bingley's friend and the wealthy, twenty-eight-year-old owner of the family estate of Pemberley in Derbyshire, rumoured to be worth at least £10,000 a year (equivalent to £796,000 or $1,045,000 in 2018). While he is handsome, tall, and intelligent, Darcy lacks ease and social graces, and so others frequently mistake his initially haughty reserve and rectitude as proof of excessive pride (which, in part, it is). A new visitor to the village, he is ultimately Elizabeth Bennet's love interest. Though he appears to be proud and is largely disliked by people for this reason, his servants vouch for his kindness and decency.

- **Mr Bennet** – A late-middle-aged landed gentleman of a modest income of £2000 per annum, and the dryly sarcastic patriarch of the now-dwindling Bennet family (a family of Hertfordshire landed gentry), with five unmarried daughters. His estate, Longbourn, is entailed to the male line. His affection for his wife wore off early into their marriage and is now reduced to him tolerating the other. He is often described as indolent in the novel.

- **Mrs Bennet (née Gardiner)** – the middle-aged wife of her social superior, Mr Bennet, and the mother of their five daughters. Mrs Bennet is a hypochondriac who imagines herself susceptible to attacks of tremors and palpitations (her "poor nerves"), whenever things are not going her way. Her main ambition in life is to marry her daughters off to wealthy men. Whether or not any such matches will give her daughters happiness is of little concern to her. She was settled a dowry of £4,000 from her father, Mr Gardiner Sr., most likely invested at 4 per cents, allowing her to receive £160 per annum, as it was indicated by Mr Collins during his proposal ["to fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall made no demands of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with; and that one thousand pounds in the 4 per cents. which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to", that it is probable that her settlement had increased to £5,000 over the years, but remains invested at 4 per cents. **Jane Bennet** – the eldest Bennet sister. Twenty-two years old when the novel begins, she is considered the most beautiful young lady in the neighbourhood and is inclined to see only the good in others (but can be persuaded otherwise on sufficient evidence). She falls in love with Charles Bingley, a rich young gentleman recently moved to Hertfordshire and a close friend of Mr Darcy.

- **Mary Bennet** – the middle Bennet sister, and the plainest of her siblings. Mary has a serious disposition and mostly reads and plays music, although she is often impatient to display her accomplishments and is rather vain about them. She frequently moralises to her family. According to James Edward Austen-Leigh's *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, Mary ended up marrying one of her Uncle Philips' law clerks and moving into Meryton with him.

- **Catherine "Kitty" Bennet** – the fourth Bennet daughter at 17 years old. Though older than Lydia, she is her shadow and follows her in her pursuit of the officers of the militia. She is often portrayed as envious of Lydia and is described a "silly" young woman. However, it is said that she improved when removed from Lydia's influence. According to James Edward Austen-Leigh's *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, Kitty later married a clergyman who lived near Pemberley.

- **Lydia Bennet** – the youngest Bennet sister, aged 15 when the novel begins. She is frivolous and headstrong. Her main activity in life is socializing, especially flirting with the officers of the militia. This leads to her running off with George Wickham, although he has no intention of marrying her. Lydia shows no regard for the moral code of her society; as Ashley Tauchert says, she "feels without reasoning."

- **Charles Bingley** – a handsome, amiable, wealthy young gentleman from the north of England (possibly Yorkshire, as Scarborough is mentioned, and there is, in fact, a real-life town called Bingley in West Yorkshire), who leases Netherfield Park, an estate three miles from Longbourn, with the hopes of purchasing it. He is contrasted with Mr Darcy for having more generally pleasing manners, although he is reliant on his more experienced friend for advice. An example of this is the prevention of Bingley and Jane's romance because of Bingley's undeniable

dependence on Darcy's opinion. He lacks resolve and is easily influenced by others; his two sisters, Miss Caroline Bingley and Mrs Louisa Hurst, both disapprove of Bingley's growing affection for Miss Jane Bennet. He inherited a fortune of £100,000, which could be either invested at 4 per cents or 5 per cents for a sum of £4,000 or £5,000 per annum.

- **Caroline Bingley** – the vainglorious, snobbish sister of Charles Bingley, with a fortune of £20,000 (giving her an allowance/pin money of £800 or £1,000 per annum, depending on the percentage of investment). Miss Bingley harbours designs upon Mr Darcy, and therefore is jealous of his growing attachment to Elizabeth. She attempts to dissuade Mr Darcy from liking Elizabeth by ridiculing the Bennet family and criticising Elizabeth's comportment. Miss Bingley also disapproves of her brother's esteem for Jane Bennet, and is disdainful of society in Meryton. Her wealth (which she overspends) and her expensive education seem to be the two greatest sources of Miss Bingley's vanity and conceit; likewise, she is very insecure about the fact that her and her family's money all comes from trade, and is eager both for her brother to purchase an estate, ascending the Bingleys to the ranks of the Gentry, and for herself to marry a landed gentleman (i.e. Mr Darcy). The dynamic between Miss Bingley and her sister, Louisa Hurst, seems to echo that of Lydia & Kitty Bennet's, and Mrs. Bennet's & Mrs. Phillips; that one is no more than a follower of the other, with Caroline in the same position as Lydia & Mrs. Bennet, and Louisa in Kitty's & Mrs. Phillips (though, in Louisa's case, as she's already married, she's not under the same desperation as Caroline). Louisa is married to Mr Hurst, who has a house in Grosvenor Square, London.
- **George Wickham** – Wickham has been acquainted with Mr Darcy since infancy, being the son of Mr Darcy's father's steward. An officer in the militia, he is superficially charming and rapidly forms an attachment with Elizabeth Bennet. He later runs off with Lydia with no intention of marriage, which would have resulted in her and her family's complete disgrace, but for Darcy's intervention to bribe Wickham to marry her by paying off his immediate debts.
- **Mr William Collins** – Mr Collins, aged 25 years old as the novel begins, is Mr Bennet's distant second cousin, a clergyman, and the current heir presumptive to his estate of Longbourn House. He is an obsequious and pompous man, prone to making long and tedious speeches, who is excessively devoted to his patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh.
- **Lady Catherine de Bourgh** – the overbearing aunt of Mr Darcy. Lady Catherine is the wealthy owner of Rosings Park, where she resides with her daughter Anne and is fawned upon by her rector, Mr Collins. She is haughty, pompous, domineering, and condescending, and has long planned to marry off her sickly daughter to Darcy, to 'unite their two great estates', claiming it to be the dearest wish of both her and her late sister, Lady Anne Darcy (née Fitzwilliam).
- **Mr Edward and Mrs M Gardiner** – Edward Gardiner is Mrs Bennet's brother and a successful tradesman of sensible and gentlemanly character. Aunt Gardiner is genteel and elegant, and is close to her nieces Jane and Elizabeth. The Gardiners are instrumental in bringing about the marriage between Darcy and Elizabeth.
- **Georgiana Darcy** – Georgiana is Mr Darcy's quiet, amiable (and shy) younger sister, with a dowry of £30,000 (giving her an allowance/pin money of £1,500 per annum), and is aged barely 16 when the story begins. When still 15, Miss Darcy almost eloped with Mr Wickham, but was saved by her brother, whom she idolises. Thanks to years of tutorage under masters, she is accomplished at the piano, singing, playing the harp, and drawing, and modern languages, and is therefore described as Caroline Bingley's idea of an "accomplished woman".
- **Charlotte Lucas** – Charlotte is Elizabeth's friend who, at 27 years old (and thus very much beyond what was then considered prime marriageable age), fears becoming a burden to her family and therefore agrees to marry Mr Collins to gain financial security. Though the novel stresses the

importance of love and understanding in marriage, Austen never seems to condemn Charlotte's decision to marry for money. She uses Charlotte to convey how women of her time would adhere to society's expectation for women to marry even if it is not out of love, but convenience. Charlotte is the daughter of Sir William Lucas and Lady Lucas, neighbours of the Bennet family.

- **Colonel Fitzwilliam** – Colonel Fitzwilliam is the younger son of an earl, and the nephew of Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Lady Anne Darcy; this makes him the cousin of Anne de Bourgh and the Darcy siblings, Fitzwilliam and Georgiana. He is about 30 years old at the beginning of the novel. He is the co-guardian of Miss Georgiana Darcy, along with his cousin, Mr Darcy. According to Colonel Fitzwilliam, as a younger son, he cannot marry without thought to his prospective bride's dowry; Elizabeth Bennet joked that, as the son of an Earl, Colonel Fitzwilliam wouldn't be able to settle for a bride with a dowry lower than £50,000 (which suggests that Colonel Fitzwilliam's living allowance is about £2,500 per-year).

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Jane Eyre- Charlotte Brontë

Jane Eyre /ɛ ər/ (originally published as ***Jane Eyre: An Autobiography***) is a novel by English writer Charlotte Brontë, published under the pen name "Currer Bell", on 16 October 1847, by Smith, Elder & Co. of London. The first American edition was published the following year by Harper & Brothers of New York.[1] *Jane Eyre* follows the experiences of its eponymous heroine, including her growth to adulthood and her love for Mr. Rochester, the brooding master of Thornfield Hall. The novel revolutionised 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 coloured by a psychological intensity. Charlotte Brontë has been called the "first historian of the private consciousness", and the literary ancestor of writers like Proust and Joyce. The book contains 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. It, along with Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, is one of the most famous romance novels of all time.

The early sequences, in which Jane is sent to Lowood, a harsh boarding school, are derived from the author's own experiences. Helen Burns's death from tuberculosis (referred to as consumption) recalls the deaths of Charlotte Brontë's sisters, Elizabeth and Maria, who died of the disease in childhood as a result of the conditions at their school, the Clergy Daughters School at Cowan Bridge, near Tunstall, Lancashire. Mr. Brocklehurst is based on Rev. William Carus Wilson (1791–1859), the Evangelical minister who ran the school. Additionally, John Reed's decline into alcoholism and dissolution recalls the life of Charlotte's brother Branwell, who became an opium and alcohol addict in the years preceding his death. Finally, like Jane, Charlotte became a governess. These facts were revealed to the public in *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857) by Charlotte's friend and fellow novelist Elizabeth Gaskell.

The Gothic manor of Thornfield Hall was probably inspired by North Lees Hall, near Hathersage in the Peak District. This was visited by Charlotte Brontë and her friend Ellen Nussey in the summer of 1845, and is described by the latter in a letter dated 22 July 1845. It was the residence of the Eyre family, and its first owner, Agnes Ashurst, was reputedly confined as a lunatic in a padded second floor room. It has been suggested that the Wycoller Hall in Lancashire, close to Haworth, provided the setting for Ferndean Manor to which Mr. Rochester retreats after the fire at Thornfield: there are similarities between the owner of Ferndean, Mr. Rochester's father, and Henry Cunliffe who inherited Wycoller in the 1770s and lived there until his death in 1818; one of Cunliffe's relatives was named Elizabeth Eyre (née Cunliffe). The sequence in which Mr. Rochester's wife sets fire to the bed curtains was prepared in an August 1830 homemade publication of Brontë's *The Young Men's Magazine, Number 2*. Charlotte Brontë began composing *Jane Eyre* in Manchester, and she likely envisioned Manchester Cathedral churchyard as the burial place for Jane's parents and the birthplace of Jane herself

Jane Eyre: Plot Overview

Jane Eyre is a young orphan being raised by Mrs. Reed, her cruel, wealthy aunt. A servant named Bessie provides Jane with some of the few kindnesses she receives, telling her stories and singing songs to her. One day, as punishment for fighting with her bullying cousin John Reed, Jane's aunt imprisons Jane in the red-room, the room in which Jane's Uncle Reed died. While locked in, Jane, believing that she sees her uncle's

ghost, screams and faints. She wakes to find herself in the care of Bessie and the kindly apothecary Mr. Lloyd, who suggests to Mrs. Reed that Jane be sent away to school. To Jane's delight, Mrs. Reed concurs. Once at the Lowood School, Jane finds that her life is far from idyllic. The school's headmaster is Mr. Brocklehurst, a cruel, hypocritical, and abusive man. Brocklehurst preaches a doctrine of poverty and privation to his students while using the school's funds to provide a wealthy and opulent lifestyle for his own family. At Lowood, Jane befriends a young girl named Helen Burns, whose strong, martyrlike attitude toward the school's miseries is both helpful and displeasing to Jane. A massive typhus epidemic sweeps Lowood, and Helen dies of consumption. The epidemic also results in the departure of Mr. Brocklehurst by attracting attention to the insalubrious conditions at Lowood. After a group of more sympathetic gentlemen takes Brocklehurst's place, Jane's life improves dramatically. She spends eight more years at Lowood, six as a student and two as a teacher.

After teaching for two years, Jane yearns for new experiences. She accepts a governess position at a manor called Thornfield, where she teaches a lively French girl named Adèle. The distinguished housekeeper Mrs. Fairfax presides over the estate. Jane's employer at Thornfield is a dark, impassioned man named Rochester, with whom Jane finds herself falling secretly in love. She saves Rochester from a fire one night, which he claims was started by a drunken servant named Grace Poole. But because Grace Poole continues to work at Thornfield, Jane concludes that she has not been told the entire story. Jane sinks into despondency when Rochester brings home a beautiful but vicious woman named Blanche Ingram. Jane expects Rochester to propose to Blanche. But Rochester instead proposes to Jane, who accepts almost disbelievingly.

The wedding day arrives, and as Jane and Mr. Rochester prepare to exchange their vows, the voice of Mr. Mason cries out that Rochester already has a wife. Mason introduces himself as the brother of that wife—a woman named Bertha. Mr. Mason testifies that Bertha, whom Rochester married when he was a young man in Jamaica, is still alive. Rochester does not deny Mason's claims, but he explains that Bertha has gone mad. He takes the wedding party back to Thornfield, where they witness the insane Bertha Mason scurrying around on all fours and growling like an animal. Rochester keeps Bertha hidden on the third story of Thornfield and pays Grace Poole to keep his wife under control. Bertha was the real cause of the mysterious fire earlier in the story. Knowing that it is impossible for her to be with Rochester, Jane flees Thornfield.

Penniless and hungry, Jane is forced to sleep outdoors and beg for food. At last, three siblings who live in a manor alternatively called Marsh End and Moor House take her in. Their names are Mary, Diana, and St. John (pronounced "Sinjin") Rivers, and Jane quickly becomes friends with them. St. John is a clergyman, and he finds Jane a job teaching at a charity school in Morton. He surprises her one day by declaring that her uncle, John Eyre, has died and left her a large fortune: 20,000 pounds. When Jane asks how he received this news, he shocks her further by declaring that her uncle was also his uncle: Jane and the Riverses are cousins. Jane immediately decides to share her inheritance equally with her three newfound relatives.

St. John decides to travel to India as a missionary, and he urges Jane to accompany him—as his wife. Jane agrees to go to India but refuses to marry her cousin because she does not love him. St. John pressures her to reconsider, and she nearly gives in. However, she realizes that she cannot abandon forever the man she truly loves when one night she hears Rochester's voice calling her name over the moors. Jane immediately hurries back to Thornfield and finds that it has been burned to the ground by Bertha Mason, who lost her life in the fire. Rochester saved the servants but lost his eyesight and one of his hands. Jane travels on to Rochester's new residence, Ferndean, where he lives with two servants named John and Mary.

At Ferndean, Rochester and Jane rebuild their relationship and soon marry. At the end of her story, Jane writes that she has been married for ten blissful years and that she and Rochester enjoy perfect equality in their life together. She says that after two years of blindness, Rochester regained sight in one eye and was able to behold their first son at his birth.

Jane Eyre: Themes

Love Versus Autonomy
Jane Eyre is very much the story of a quest to be loved. Jane searches, not just for romantic love, but also for a sense of being valued, of belonging. Thus Jane says to Helen Burns: “to gain some real affection from you, or Miss Temple, or any other whom I truly love, I would willingly submit to have the bone of my arm broken, or to let a bull toss me, or to stand behind a kicking horse, and let it dash its hoof at my chest” (Chapter 8). Yet, over the course of the book, Jane must learn how to gain love without sacrificing and harming herself in the process.

Her fear of losing her autonomy motivates her refusal of Rochester’s marriage proposal. Jane believes that “marrying” Rochester while he remains legally tied to Bertha would mean rendering herself a mistress and sacrificing her own integrity for the sake of emotional gratification. On the other hand, her life at Moor House tests her in the opposite manner. There, she enjoys economic independence and engages in worthwhile and useful work, teaching the poor; yet she lacks emotional sustenance. Although St. John proposes marriage, offering her a partnership built around a common purpose, Jane knows their marriage would remain loveless.

Nonetheless, the events of Jane’s stay at Moor House are necessary tests of Jane’s autonomy. Only after proving her self-sufficiency to herself can she marry Rochester and not be asymmetrically dependent upon him as her “master.” The marriage can be one between equals. As Jane says: “I am my husband’s life as fully as he is mine. . . . To be together is for us to be at once as free as in solitude, as gay as in company. . . . We are precisely suited in character—perfect concord is the result” (Chapter 38).

Religion
Throughout the novel, Jane struggles to find the right balance between moral duty and earthly pleasure, between obligation to her spirit and attention to her body. She encounters three main religious figures: Mr. Brocklehurst, Helen Burns, and St. John Rivers. Each represents a model of religion that Jane ultimately rejects as she forms her own ideas about faith and principle, and their practical consequences. Mr. Brocklehurst illustrates the dangers and hypocrisies that Charlotte Brontë perceived in the nineteenth-century Evangelical movement. Mr. Brocklehurst adopts the rhetoric of Evangelicalism when he claims to be purging his students of pride, but his method of subjecting them to various privations and humiliations, like when he orders that the naturally curly hair of one of Jane’s classmates be cut so as to lie straight, is entirely un-Christian. Of course, Brocklehurst’s proscriptions are difficult to follow, and his hypocritical support of his own luxuriously wealthy family at the expense of the Lowood students shows Brontë’s wariness of the Evangelical movement. Helen Burns’s meek and forbearing mode of Christianity, on the other hand, is too passive for Jane to adopt as her own, although she loves and admires Helen for it. Many chapters later, St. John Rivers provides another model of Christian behavior. His is a Christianity of ambition, glory, and extreme self-importance. St. John urges Jane to sacrifice her emotional deeds for the fulfillment of her moral duty, offering her a way of life that would require her to be disloyal to her own self.

Although Jane ends up rejecting all three models of religion, she does not abandon morality, spiritualism, or a belief in a Christian God. When her wedding is interrupted, she prays to God for solace (Chapter 26). As she wanders the heath, poor and starving, she puts her survival in the hands of God (Chapter 28). She strongly objects to Rochester's lustful immorality, and she refuses to consider living with him while church and state still deem him married to another woman. Even so, Jane can barely bring herself to leave the only love she has ever known. She credits God with helping her to escape what she knows would have been an immoral life (Chapter 27).

Jane ultimately finds a comfortable middle ground. Her spiritual understanding is not hateful and oppressive like Brocklehurst's, nor does it require retreat from the everyday world as Helen's and St. John's religions do. For Jane, religion helps curb immoderate passions, and it spurs one on to worldly efforts and achievements. These achievements include full self-knowledge and complete faith in God.

Social Class

Jane Eyre is critical of Victorian England's strict social hierarchy. Brontë's exploration of the complicated social position of governesses is perhaps the novel's most important treatment of this theme. Like Heathcliff in Wuthering Heights, Jane is a figure of ambiguous class standing and, consequently, a source of extreme tension for the characters around her. Jane's manners, sophistication, and education are those of an aristocrat, because Victorian governesses, who tutored children in etiquette as well as academics, were expected to possess the "culture" of the aristocracy. Yet, as paid employees, they were more or less treated as servants; thus, Jane remains penniless and powerless while at Thornfield. Jane's understanding of the double standard crystallizes when she becomes aware of her feelings for Rochester; she is his intellectual, but not his social, equal. Even before the crisis surrounding Bertha Mason, Jane is hesitant to marry Rochester because she senses that she would feel indebted to him for "condescending" to marry her. Jane's distress, which appears most strongly in Chapter 17, seems to be Brontë's critique of Victorian class attitudes.

Jane herself speaks out against class prejudice at certain moments in the book. For example, in Chapter 23 she chastises Rochester: "Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!—I have as much soul as you—and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you." However, it is also important to note that nowhere in Jane Eyre are society's boundaries bent. Ultimately, Jane is only able to marry Rochester as his equal because she has almost magically come into her own inheritance from her uncle.

Gender Relations

Jane struggles continually to achieve equality and to overcome oppression. In addition to class hierarchy, she must fight against patriarchal domination—against those who believe women to be inferior to men and try to treat them as such. Three central male figures threaten her desire for equality and dignity: Mr. Brocklehurst, Edward Rochester, and St. John Rivers. All three are misogynistic on some level. Each tries to keep Jane in a submissive position, where she is unable to express her own thoughts and feelings. In her quest for independence and self-knowledge, Jane must escape Brocklehurst, reject St. John, and come to Rochester only after ensuring that they may marry as equals. This last condition is met once Jane proves herself able to function, through the time she spends at Moor House, in a community and in a family. She will not depend solely on Rochester for love and she can be financially independent. Furthermore, Rochester

is blind at the novel's end and thus dependent upon Jane to be his "prop and guide." In Chapter 12, Jane articulates what was for her time a radically feminist philosophy:

Jane Eyre: Characters

Jane Eyre

The development of Jane Eyre's character is central to the novel. From the beginning, Jane possesses a sense of her self-worth and dignity, a commitment to justice and principle, a trust in God, and a passionate disposition. Her integrity is continually tested over the course of the novel, and Jane must learn to balance the frequently conflicting aspects of herself so as to find contentment.

An orphan since early childhood, Jane feels exiled and ostracized at the beginning of the novel, and the cruel treatment she receives from her Aunt Reed and her cousins only exacerbates her feeling of alienation. Afraid that she will never find a true sense of home or community, Jane feels the need to belong somewhere, to find "kin," or at least "kindred spirits." This desire tempers her equally intense need for autonomy and freedom.

In her search for freedom, Jane also struggles with the question of what type of freedom she wants. While Rochester initially offers Jane a chance to liberate her passions, Jane comes to realize that such freedom could also mean enslavement—by living as Rochester's mistress, she would be sacrificing her dignity and integrity for the sake of her feelings. St. John Rivers offers Jane another kind of freedom: the freedom to act unreservedly on her principles. He opens to Jane the possibility of exercising her talents fully by working and living with him in India. Jane eventually realizes, though, that this freedom would also constitute a form of imprisonment, because she would be forced to keep her true feelings and her true passions always in check.

Charlotte Brontë may have created the character of Jane Eyre as a means of coming to terms with elements of her own life. Much evidence suggests that Brontë, too, struggled to find a balance between love and freedom and to find others who understood her. At many points in the book, Jane voices the author's then-radical opinions on religion, social class, and gender.

Edward Rochester

Despite his stern manner and not particularly handsome appearance, Edward Rochester wins Jane's heart, because she feels they are kindred spirits, and because he is the first person in the novel to offer Jane lasting love and a real home. Although Rochester is Jane's social and economic superior, and although men were widely considered to be naturally superior to women in the Victorian period, Jane is Rochester's intellectual equal. Moreover, after their marriage is interrupted by the disclosure that Rochester is already married to Bertha Mason, Jane is proven to be Rochester's moral superior.

Rochester regrets his former libertinism and lustfulness; nevertheless, he has proven himself to be weaker in many ways than Jane. Jane feels that living with Rochester as his mistress would mean the loss of her dignity. Ultimately, she would become degraded and dependent upon Rochester for love, while unprotected by any true marriage bond. Jane will only enter into marriage with Rochester after she has gained a fortune and a family, and after she has been on the verge of abandoning passion altogether. She waits until she is not unduly influenced by her own poverty, loneliness, psychological vulnerability, or passion. Additionally, because Rochester has been blinded by the fire and has lost his manor house at the end of the novel, he has

become weaker while Jane has grown in strength—Jane claims that they are equals, but the marriage dynamic has actually tipped in her favor.

Bertha Antoinetta Mason

The first wife of Edward Rochester. After their wedding, her mental health began to deteriorate, and she is now violent and in a state of intense derangement, apparently unable to speak or go into society. Mr. Rochester, who insists that he was tricked into the marriage by a family who knew Bertha was likely to develop this condition, has kept Bertha locked in the attic at Thornfield for years. She is supervised and cared for by Grace Poole, whose drinking sometimes allows Bertha to escape. After Richard Mason puts an end to Jane and Mr. Rochester's wedding, Rochester finally introduces Jane to Bertha: "In the deep shade, at the farther end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell… it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing, and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face." Eventually, Bertha sets fire to Thornfield Hall and throws herself to her death from the roof. Bertha is viewed as Jane's "double": Jane is pious and just, while Bertha is savage and animalistic.

- **Mrs. Sarah Reed:** (née **Gibson**) Jane's maternal aunt by marriage, who reluctantly adopted Jane in accordance with her late husband's wishes. According to Mrs. Reed, he pitied Jane and often cared for her more than for his own children. Mrs. Reed's resentment leads her to abuse and neglect the girl. She lies to Mr. Brocklehurst about Jane's tendency to lie, preparing him to be severe with Jane when she arrives at Brocklehurst's Lowood School.
- **John Reed:** Jane's fourteen-year-old cousin who bullies her incessantly, sometimes in his mother's presence. John eventually ruins himself as an adult by drinking and gambling, and is rumoured to have committed suicide.
- **Eliza Reed:** Jane's thirteen-year-old first cousin. Envious of her more attractive younger sister and a slave to rigid routine, she self-righteously devotes herself to religion. She leaves for a nunnery near Lisle after her mother's death, determined to estrange herself from her sister.
- **Georgiana Reed:** Jane's eleven-year-old first cousin. Although beautiful and indulged, she is insolent and spiteful. Her elder sister Eliza foils Georgiana's marriage to the wealthy Lord Edwin Vere, when the couple are about to elope. Georgiana eventually marries a, "wealthy worn-out man of fashion."
- **Bessie Lee:** The nursemaid at Gateshead. She often treats Jane kindly, telling her stories and singing her songs, but she has a quick temper. Later, she marries Robert Leaven with whom she has three children.
- **Mr. Brocklehurst:** The clergyman, director, and treasurer of Lowood School, whose maltreatment of the pupils is eventually exposed. A religious traditionalist, he advocates for his charges the most harsh, plain, and disciplined possible lifestyle, but not, hypocritically, for himself and his own family. His second daughter Augusta exclaimed, "Oh, dear papa, how quiet and plain all the girls at Lowood look… they looked at my dress and mama's, as if they had never seen a silk gown before."
- **Adèle Varens:**[An excitable French child to whom Jane is a governess at Thornfield. Adèle's mother was a dancer named Céline. She was Mr. Rochester's mistress and claimed that Adèle was Mr. Rochester's daughter, though he refuses to believe it due to Céline's unfaithfulness and Adèle's apparent lack of resemblance to him. Adèle seems to believe that her mother is dead (she tells Jane in chapter 11, "I lived long ago with mamma, but she is gone to the Holy Virgin"). Mr Rochester later tells Jane that Céline actually abandoned Adèle and "ran away to Italy with a musician or singer" (ch. 15). Adèle and Jane develop a strong liking for one another, and although Mr. Rochester places

Adèle in a strict school after Jane flees Thornfield, Jane visits Adèle after her return and finds a better, less severe school for her. When Adèle is old enough to leave school, Jane describes her as "a pleasing and obliging companion – docile, good-tempered and well-principled", and considers her kindness to Adèle well repaid.

- **Grace Poole:** "…a woman of between thirty and forty; a set, square-made figure, red-haired, and with a hard, plain face…" Mr. Rochester pays her a very high salary to keep his mad wife, Bertha, hidden and quiet. Grace is often used as an explanation for odd happenings at the house such as strange laughter that was heard not long after Jane arrived. She has a weakness for drinking that occasionally allows Bertha to escape.

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UNIT II

Ruth –Elizabeth Gaskell

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (*née* **Stevenson**; 29 September 1810 – 12 November 1865), often referred to as **Mrs Gaskell**, was an English novelist, biographer and short story writer. Her novels offer a detailed portrait of the lives of many strata of Victorian society, including the very poor, and are of interest to social historians as well as lovers of literature. Her first novel, *Mary Barton*, was published in 1848. Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, published in 1857, was the first biography of Brontë. In this biography, she wrote only of the moral, sophisticated things in Brontë's life; the rest she left out, deciding that certain, more salacious aspects were better kept hidden. Among Gaskell's best known novels are *Cranford* (1851–53), *North and South* (1854–55), and *Wives and Daughters* (1865), each having been adapted for television by the BBC.

Elizabeth Gaskell once expressed her belief that to live an active and sympathetic life was the indispensable prelude to producing fiction which had strength and vitality in it. This was certainly true in her own case. By the time Mary Barton appeared in 1848, she had a wide experience of the areas of life which were to provide her major themes. Nor did literary fame prevent her from continuing to take part in the spheres of activity to which she was already committed. Neither her temperament nor her circumstances inclined her to the self-absorption which is the pleasure and the peril of a different order of genius. She was receptive to the atmosphere of her age as well as to the varied happenings which filled her busy days. Before considering the themes of her work, it is desirable to look briefly at the sources, personal and social, from which they evolved.

Ruth: Plot Overview

Ruth is a young orphan girl working in a respectable sweatshop for the overworked Mrs Mason. She is selected to go to a ball to repair torn dresses. At the ball she meets the aristocratic Henry Bellingham, a rake figure who is instantly attracted to her. They meet again by chance and form a secret friendship; on an outing together they are spotted by Mrs Mason who, fearing for her shop's reputation, dismisses Ruth. Alone in the world, Ruth is whisked away by Bellingham to London where it is implied she becomes a fallen woman. They go on holiday to Wales together and there on a country walk Ruth meets the disabled and kind Mr Benson. Bellingham falls sick with fever and the hotel calls for his mother who arrives and is disgusted by her son's having lived in sin with Ruth. Bellingham is persuaded by his mother to abandon Ruth in Wales, leaving her some money.

A distraught Ruth attempts suicide but is spotted by Mr Benson who helps comfort her. When he learns of her past and that she is alone he brings her back to his home town, where he is a Dissenting minister, to stay with him and his formidable but kind sister Faith. When they learn that Ruth is pregnant they decide to lie to the town and claim that she is a widow called Mrs Denbigh, to protect her from a society which would otherwise shun her.

Ruth has her baby, whom she names Leonard. She is transformed into a Madonna type figure, calm and innocent once more. The rich local businessman Mr Bradshaw admires Ruth and employs her as a governess for his children, including his eldest daughter Jemima who is in awe of the beautiful Ruth.

Ruth goes away with the Bradshaws to a seaside house while one of Mr Bradshaw's children is convalescing from a long illness. Mr Bradshaw brings Mr Donne, a man whom he is sponsoring to become their local MP, to the seaside to impress him. Ruth recognises Mr Donne as actually being Mr Bellingham and the two have

a confrontation on the beach. Bellingham offers to marry Ruth as he claims he still loves her and for the sake of their child, Ruth rejects him saying she will not let Leonard come in contact with a man like him.
From local gossip Jemima discovers about Ruth's past, though she is still unaware that it was Mr Donne who is Leonard's father. Jemima is headstrong and already jealous that her suitor Mr Farquhar, her father's business partner, seems to admire Ruth over her. The truth is Mr Farquhar is put off by Jemima's erratic behaviour, caused by her father's good intentioned interference. Jemima however decides to keep quiet over Ruth's past as she realises that she comes from a more privileged background and the same could well have happened to her, had she been in Ruth's situation.

Mr Bradshaw discovers also from local gossip however that Ruth is a fallen woman and despite Jemima's passionate defence of Ruth she is thrown out of the house and sacked. Ruth goes home and has to reveal to Leonard that he is in fact illegitimate; he is devastated and ashamed by the news. Mr Bradshaw also goes to his old friend Mr Benson and argues with him as he allowed the lie to be told and for Ruth to enter not only his but also Mr Bradshaw's house.

Jemima and Mr Farquhar marry and have their own child and form a good friendship with Ruth and Leonard but they are still on the outskirts of society. Ruth goes among the poor to work as a nurse to the sick and gains a good reputation there, making Leonard proud of his mother once more and restoring their relationship. Mr Bradshaw's son is found to have been embezzling the company's funds and his father disowns him. However, when his son is later involved in an accident, Mr Bradshaw is distraught and realises that his morals had been perhaps too heavy-handed in the past. His son recovers and Mr Bradshaw starts to rethink his life.

Ruth has to give up her work as there is a catching fever in the environment. A local doctor offers to sponsor Leonard's studies at a good school and the Farquhars offer to go away on holiday with Ruth and Leonard. However before Ruth has made a decision she hears that Mr Donne is very sick; she confides in the doctor the truth about who Mr Donne really is, and goes to him. He is delirious with fever and does not recognise her but she nurses him back to health.

Ruth however falls sick and dies from the illness. At the funeral many of the poor that Ruth had looked after praise her, and the chapel is full of people that loved Ruth, despite her being a fallen woman. Mr Donne comes to Mr Benson's house and sees Ruth dead, he is momentarily sad and offers money to Mr Benson who realises who he must be and throws him out of the house.
The novel ends with Mr Bradshaw finding a weeping Leonard at his mother's grave, whom he leads home to Mr Benson, and reforming his friendship with Mr Benson realising that as a member of the society that ostracised Ruth, he is also responsible for her death.

Ruth: Theme

The book is a social novel, dealing with Victorian views about sin and illegitimacy. It is a surprisingly compassionate portrayal of a 'fallen woman', a type of person normally outcast from respectable society. It examines the social stigma of illegitimacy. Ruth goes on to gain a respectable position in society as a governess, and the novel looks at whether the sinful can be reintegrated into society.

Characters

Ruth Hilton – The titular heroine. Later referred to as Mrs Denbigh.
Henry Bellingham – Ruth's lover. Changes his name to Mr Donne.
Leonard – Ruth's illegitimate son.

Mr Benson – Minister who takes in Ruth.
Miss Benson – Sister of Mr Benson.
Mr Bradshaw – Ruth's employer. Local businessman.
Jemima Bradshaw – Friend of Ruth's. Daughter of Mr Bradshaw.
Mr Farquhar – Business partner of Mr Bradshaw. Later Jemima's husband.

Reception of *Ruth*

Ruth received a mixed critical reception. As a work that dealt frankly with seduction and illegitimacy, it inevitably attracted controversy: Gaskell reported that it was a "prohibited book" in her own household, that friends expressed "deep regret" at its publication, and that two acquaintances burnt their copies. On the other hand, some reviewers complained that Gaskell painted Ruth as too passive a victim of Bellingham's advances, eluding the question of Ruth's own sexual feelings. Gaskell loaded the story down with so many extenuating circumstances that Ruth scarcely seemed a representative example of a "fallen woman."
Ruth is one of several 19th-century British and American novels that cast a "fallen woman" with an illegitimate child in the role of heroine. It may be compared to Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), published just a few years earlier, and in many respects it anticipates Thomas Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891). Ruth, like Tess, is a working-class girl who is distinguished from her peers by both unusual sensitivity and sexual ignorance. But Gaskell's treatment of her heroine differs somewhat from Hardy's in that she emphasises Ruth's guilt, regret, and struggle to expiate her sin, while Hardy is less inclined to view Tess as a sinner.

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Great Expectations –Charles Dickens

Great Expectations is the thirteenth novel by Charles Dickens and his penultimate completed novel, which depicts the education of an orphan nicknamed Pip (the book is a *bildungsroman*, a coming-of-age story). It is Dickens's second novel, after *David Copperfield*, to be fully narrated in the first person. The novel was first published as a serial in Dickens's weekly periodical *All the Year Round*, from 1 December 1860 to August 1861. In October 1861, Chapman and Hall published the novel in three volumes.
The novel is set in Kent and London in the early to mid-19th century and contains some of Dickens's most celebrated scenes, starting in a graveyard, where the young Pip is accosted by the escaped convict Abel Magwitch. *Great Expectations* is full of extreme imagery – poverty, prison ships and chains, and fights to the death – and has a colourful cast of characters who have entered popular culture. These include the eccentric Miss Havisham, the beautiful but cold Estella, and Joe, the unsophisticated and kind blacksmith. Dickens's themes include wealth and poverty, love and rejection, and the eventual triumph of good over evil. *Great Expectations*, which is popular both with readers and literary critics, has been translated into many languages and adapted numerous times into various media.
Upon its release, the novel received near universal acclaim. Although Dickens's contemporary Thomas Carlyle referred to it disparagingly as that "Pip nonsense," he nevertheless reacted to each fresh instalment with "roars of laughter." Later, George Bernard Shaw praised the novel, as "All of one piece and consistently truthful." During the serial publication, Dickens was pleased with public response to *Great Expectations* and its sales; when the plot first formed in his mind, he called it "a very fine, new and grotesque idea."

Plot Overview

Pip, a young orphan living with his sister and her husband in the marshes of Kent, sits in a cemetery one evening looking at his parents' tombstones. Suddenly, an escaped convict springs up from behind a tombstone, grabs Pip, and orders him to bring him food and a file for his leg irons. Pip obeys, but the fearsome convict is soon captured anyway. The convict protects Pip by claiming to have stolen the items himself.

One day Pip is taken by his Uncle Pumblechook to play at Satis House, the home of the wealthy dowager Miss Havisham, who is extremely eccentric: she wears an old wedding dress everywhere she goes and keeps all the clocks in her house stopped at the same time. During his visit, he meets a beautiful young girl named Estella, who treats him coldly and contemptuously. Nevertheless, he falls in love with her and dreams of becoming a wealthy gentleman so that he might be worthy of her. He even hopes that Miss Havisham intends to make him a gentleman and marry him to Estella, but his hopes are dashed when, after months of regular visits to Satis House, Miss Havisham decides to help him become a common laborer in his family's business.

With Miss Havisham's guidance, Pip is apprenticed to his brother-in-law, Joe, who is the village blacksmith. Pip works in the forge unhappily, struggling to better his education with the help of the plain, kind Biddy and encountering Joe's malicious day laborer, Orlick. One night, after an altercation with Orlick, Pip's sister, known as Mrs. Joe, is viciously attacked and becomes a mute invalid. From her signals, Pip suspects that Orlick was responsible for the attack.

One day a lawyer named Jaggers appears with strange news: a secret benefactor has given Pip a large fortune, and Pip must come to London immediately to begin his education as a gentleman. Pip happily assumes that his previous hopes have come true—that Miss Havisham is his secret benefactor and that the old woman intends for him to marry Estella.

In London, Pip befriends a young gentleman named Herbert Pocket and Jaggers's law clerk, Wemmick. He expresses disdain for his former friends and loved ones, especially Joe, but he continues to pine after Estella. He furthers his education by studying with the tutor Matthew Pocket, Herbert's father. Herbert himself helps Pip learn how to act like a gentleman. When Pip turns twenty-one and begins to receive an income from his fortune, he will secretly help Herbert buy his way into the business he has chosen for himself. But for now, Herbert and Pip lead a fairly undisciplined life in London, enjoying themselves and running up debts. Orlick reappears in Pip's life, employed as Miss Havisham's porter, but is promptly fired by Jaggers after Pip reveals Orlick's unsavory past. Mrs. Joe dies, and Pip goes home for the funeral, feeling tremendous grief and remorse. Several years go by, until one night a familiar figure barges into Pip's room—the convict, Magwitch, who stuns Pip by announcing that he, not Miss Havisham, is the source of Pip's fortune. He tells Pip that he was so moved by Pip's boyhood kindness that he dedicated his life to making Pip a gentleman, and he made a fortune in Australia for that very purpose.

Pip is appalled, but he feels morally bound to help Magwitch escape London, as the convict is pursued both by the police and by Compeyson, his former partner in crime. A complicated mystery begins to fall into place when Pip discovers that Compeyson was the man who abandoned Miss Havisham at the altar and that Estella is Magwitch's daughter. Miss Havisham has raised her to break men's hearts, as revenge for the pain her own broken heart caused her. Pip was merely a boy for the young Estella to practice on; Miss Havisham delighted in Estella's ability to toy with his affections.

As the weeks pass, Pip sees the good in Magwitch and begins to care for him deeply. Before Magwitch's escape attempt, Estella marries an upper-class lout named Bentley Drummle. Pip makes a visit to Satis House, where Miss Havisham begs his forgiveness for the way she has treated him in the past, and he forgives her. Later that day, when she bends over the fireplace, her clothing catches fire and she goes up in flames. She survives but becomes an invalid. In her final days, she will continue to repent for her misdeeds and to plead for Pip's forgiveness.

The time comes for Pip and his friends to spirit Magwitch away from London. Just before the escape attempt, Pip is called to a shadowy meeting in the marshes, where he encounters the vengeful, evil Orlick. Orlick is on the verge of killing Pip when Herbert arrives with a group of friends and saves Pip's life. Pip and Herbert hurry back to effect Magwitch's escape. They try to sneak Magwitch down the river on a rowboat, but they are discovered by the police, who Compeyson tipped off. Magwitch and Compeyson fight in the river, and Compeyson is drowned. Magwitch is sentenced to death, and Pip loses his fortune. Magwitch feels that his sentence is God's forgiveness and dies at peace. Pip falls ill; Joe comes to London to care for him, and they are reconciled. Joe gives him the news from home: Orlick, after robbing Pumblechook, is now in jail; Miss Havisham has died and left most of her fortune to the Pockets; Biddy has taught Joe how to read and write. After Joe leaves, Pip decides to rush home after him and marry Biddy, but when he arrives there he discovers that she and Joe have already married.

Pip decides to go abroad with Herbert to work in the mercantile trade. Returning many years later, he encounters Estella in the ruined garden at Satis House. Drummle, her husband, treated her badly, but he is now dead. Pip finds that Estella's coldness and cruelty have been replaced by a sad kindness, and the two leave the garden hand in hand, Pip believing that they will never part again. (Note: Dickens's original ending to *Great Expectations* differed from the one described in this summary.)

Great Expectations: Themes

Ambition and Self-Improvement

The moral theme of *Great Expectations* is quite simple: affection, loyalty, and conscience are more important than social advancement, wealth, and class. Dickens establishes the theme and shows Pip learning this lesson, largely by exploring ideas of ambition and self-improvement—ideas that quickly become both the thematic center of the novel and the psychological mechanism that encourages much of Pip's development. At heart, Pip is an idealist; whenever he can conceive of something that is better than what he already has, he immediately desires to obtain the improvement. When he sees Satis House, he longs to be a wealthy gentleman; when he thinks of his moral shortcomings, he longs to be good; when he realizes that he cannot read, he longs to learn how. Pip's desire for self-improvement is the main source of the novel's title: because he believes in the possibility of advancement in life, he has "great expectations" about his future.

Ambition and self-improvement take three forms in *Great Expectations*—moral, social, and educational; these motivate Pip's best and his worst behaviour throughout the novel. First, Pip desires moral self-improvement. He is extremely hard on himself when he acts immorally and feels powerful guilt that spurs him to act better in the future. When he leaves for London, for instance, he torments himself about having behaved so wretchedly toward Joe and Biddy. Second, Pip desires social self-improvement. In love with Estella, he longs to become a member of her social class, and, encouraged by Mrs. Joe and Pumblechook, he entertains fantasies of becoming a gentleman. The working out of this fantasy forms the basic plot of the novel; it provides Dickens the opportunity to gently satirize the class system of his era and to make a point about its capricious nature. Significantly, Pip's life as a gentleman is no more satisfying—and certainly no more moral—than his previous life as a blacksmith's apprentice. Third, Pip desires educational improvement. This desire is deeply connected to his social ambition and longing to marry Estella: a full education is a requirement of being a gentleman. As long as he is an ignorant country boy, he has no hope of social advancement. Pip understands this fact as a child, when he learns to read at Mr. Wopsle's aunt's school, and as a young man, when he takes lessons from Matthew Pocket. Ultimately, through the examples of Joe, Biddy, and Magwitch, Pip learns that social and educational improvement are irrelevant to one's real worth and that conscience and affection are to be valued above erudition and social standing.

Social Class

Throughout *Great Expectations,* Dickens explores the class system of Victorian England, ranging from the most wretched criminals (Magwitch) to the poor peasants of the marsh country (Joe and Biddy) to the middle class (Pumblechook) to the very rich (Miss Havisham). The theme of social class is central to the novel's plot and to the ultimate moral theme of the book—Pip's realization that wealth and class are less important than affection, loyalty, and inner worth. Pip achieves this realization when he is finally able to understand that, despite the esteem in which he holds Estella, one's social status is in no way connected to one's real character. Drummle, for instance, is an upper-class lout, while Magwitch, a persecuted convict, has a deep inner worth.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember about the novel's treatment of social class is that the class system it portrays is based on the post-Industrial Revolution model of Victorian England. Dickens generally ignores the nobility and the hereditary aristocracy in favor of characters whose fortunes have been earned through commerce. Even Miss Havisham's family fortune was made through the brewery that is still connected to her manor. In this way, by connecting the theme of social class to the idea of work and self-advancement, Dickens subtly reinforces the novel's overarching theme of ambition and self-improvement.

Crime, Guilt, and Innocence

The theme of crime, guilt, and innocence is explored throughout the novel largely through the characters of the convicts and the criminal lawyer Jaggers. From the handcuffs Joe mends at the smithy to the gallows at the prison in London, the imagery of crime and criminal justice pervades the book, becoming an important symbol of Pip's inner struggle to reconcile his own inner moral conscience with the institutional justice system. In general, just as social class becomes a superficial standard of value that Pip must learn to look beyond in finding a better way to live his life, the external trappings of the criminal justice system (police, courts, jails, etc.) become a superficial standard of morality that Pip must learn to look beyond to trust his inner conscience. Magwitch, for instance, frightens Pip at first simply because he is a convict, and Pip feels guilty for helping him because he is afraid of the police. By the end of the book, however, Pip has discovered Magwitch's inner nobility, and is able to disregard his external status as a criminal. Prompted by his conscience, he helps Magwitch to evade the law and the police. As Pip has learned to trust his conscience and to value Magwitch's inner character, he has replaced an external standard of value with an internal one.

Sophistication

In *Great Expectations*, Pip becomes obsessed with a desire to be sophisticated and takes damaging risks in order to do so. After his first encounter with Estella, Pip becomes acutely self-conscious that "I was a common labouring-boy; that my hands were coarse, that my boots were thick." (pg. 59). Once he moves to London, Pip is exposed to a glamourous urban world "so crowded with people and so brilliantly lighted," and he quickly begins to "contract expensive habits." As a result of spending money on things like a personal servant and fancy clothes, Pip quickly falls into debt, and damages Herbert's finances as well as his own. Even more troubling, Pip tries to avoid anyone who might undermine his reputation as a sophisticated young gentleman. In the end, sophistication is revealed as a shallow and superficial value because it does not lead to Pip achieving anything, and only makes him lonely and miserable.

Great Expectations: Characters

Pip and his family

- **Philip Pirrip**, nicknamed Pip, an orphan and the protagonist and narrator of *Great Expectations*. In his childhood, Pip dreamed of becoming a blacksmith like his kind brother-in-law, Joe Gargery. At *Satis House*, about age 8, he meets and falls in love with Estella, and tells Biddy that he wants to become a gentleman. As a result of Magwitch's anonymous patronage, Pip lives in London after learning the blacksmith trade, and becomes a gentleman. Pip assumes his benefactor is Miss Havisham; the discovery that his true benefactor is a convict shocks him. Pip, at the end of the story, is united with Estella.
- **Joe Gargery**, Pip's brother-in-law, and his first father figure. He is a blacksmith who is always kind to Pip and the only person with whom Pip is always honest. Joe is disappointed when Pip decides to leave his home to live in London to become a gentleman rather than be a blacksmith in business with Joe. He is a strong man who bears the shortcomings of those closest to him.
- **Mrs Joe Gargery**, Pip's hot-tempered adult sister, Georgiana Maria, called Mrs Joe, 20 years older than Pip. She brings him up after their parents' death. She does the work of the household but too often loses her temper and beats her family. Orlick, her husband's journeyman, attacks her during a botched burglary, and she is left disabled until her death.
- **Mr Pumblechook**, Joe Gargery's uncle, an officious bachelor and corn merchant. While not knowing how to deal with a growing boy, he tells Mrs Joe, as she is known, how noble she is to bring up Pip. As the person who first connected Pip to Miss Havisham, he claims to have been the original architect of Pip's expectations. Pip dislikes Mr Pumblechook for his pompous, unfounded claims. When Pip stands

up to him in a public place, after those expectations are dashed, Mr Pumblechook turns those listening to the conversation against Pip.

Miss Havisham and her family

- **Miss Havisham**, a wealthy spinster who takes Pip on as a companion for herself and her adopted daughter, Estella. Havisham is a wealthy, eccentric woman who has worn her wedding dress and one shoe since the day that she was jilted at the altar by her fiancé. Her house is unchanged as well. She hates all men, and plots to wreak a twisted revenge by teaching Estella to torment and spurn men, including Pip, who loves her. Miss Havisham is later overcome with remorse for ruining both Estella's and Pip's chances for happiness. Shortly after confessing her plotting to Pip and begging for his forgiveness, she is badly burned when her dress accidentally catches fire. In a later chapter Pip learns from Joe that she is dead.
- **Estella**, Miss Havisham's adopted daughter, whom Pip pursues. She is a beautiful girl and grows more beautiful after her schooling in France. Estella represents the life of wealth and culture for which Pip strives. Since Miss Havisham ruined Estella's ability to love, Estella cannot return Pip's passion. She warns Pip of this repeatedly, but he will not or cannot believe her. Estella does not know that she is the daughter of Molly, Jaggers's housekeeper, and the convict Abel Magwitch, given up for adoption to Miss Havisham after her mother was arrested for murder. In marrying Bentley Drummle, she rebels against Miss Havisham's plan to have her break a husband's heart, as Drummle is not interested in Estella but simply in the Havisham fortune.
- **Matthew Pocket**, Miss Havisham's cousin. He is the patriarch of the Pocket family, but unlike her other relatives, he is not greedy for Havisham's wealth. Matthew Pocket tutors young gentlemen, such as Bentley Drummle, Startop, Pip and his own son Herbert.
- **Herbert Pocket**, the son of Matthew Pocket, who was invited like Pip to visit Miss Havisham, but she did not take to him. Pip first meets Herbert as a "pale young gentleman" who challenges Pip to a fistfight at Miss Havisham's house when both are children. He later becomes Pip's friend, tutoring him in the "gentlemanly" arts and sharing his rooms with Pip in London.
- **Camilla,** one of Matthew Pocket' sisters, and therefore a cousin of Miss Havisham, an obsequious, detestable woman who is intent on pleasing Miss Havisham to get her money.
- **Cousin Raymond**, a relative of Miss Havisham who is only interested in her money. He is married to Camilla.
- **Georgiana**, a relative of Miss Havisham who is only interested in her money. She is one of the many relatives who hang around Miss Havisham "like flies" for her wealth.
- **Sarah Pocket**, the sister of Matthew Pocket, relative of Miss Havisham. She is often at Satis House. She is described as "a dry, brown corrugated old woman, with a small face that might have been made out of walnut shells, and a large mouth like a cat's without the whiskers."

From Pip's youth

- **The Convict**, who escapes from a prison ship, whom Pip treats kindly, and who in turn becomes Pip's benefactor. His name is Abel Magwitch, but he uses the aliases "Provis" and "Mr Campbell" when he returns to England from exile in Australia. He is a lesser actor in crime with Compeyson, but gains a longer sentence in an apparent application of justice by social class.
- **Mr and Mrs Hubble**, simple folk who think they are more important than they really are. They live in Pip's village.
- **Mr Wopsle**, clerk of the church in Pip's village. He later gives up the church work and moves to London to pursue his ambition to be an actor, adopting the stage name "Mr Waldengarver." He sees the other convict in the audience of one of his performances, attended also by Pip.
- **Biddy**, Wopsle's second cousin and near Pip's age; she teaches in the evening school at her grandmother's home in Pip's village. Pip wants to learn more, so he asks her to teach him all she can. After helping Mrs Joe after the attack, Biddy opens her own school. A kind and intelligent but poor young woman, she is, like Pip and Estella, an orphan. She acts as Estella's foil. Orlick was attracted to her, but she did not want his attentions. Pip ignores her affections for him as he pursues Estella.

Recovering from his own illness after the failed attempt to get Magwitch out of England, Pip returns to claim Biddy as his bride, arriving in the village just after she marries Joe Gargery. Biddy and Joe later have two children, one named after Pip. In the ending to the novel discarded by Dickens but revived by students of the novel's development, Estella mistakes the boy as Pip's child.

Mr Jaggers and his circle

- **Mr Jaggers**, prominent London lawyer who represents the interests of diverse clients, both criminal and civil. He represents Pip's benefactor and Miss Havisham as well. By the end of the story, his law practice links many of the characters.
- **John Wemmick**, Jaggers' clerk, who is Pip's chief go-between with Jaggers and looks after Pip in London. Wemmick lives with his father, "The Aged Parent", in a small replica of a castle, complete with a drawbridge and moat, in Walworth.
- **Molly**, Mr Jaggers' maidservant whom Jaggers saved from the gallows for murder. She is revealed to be Magwitch's estranged wife and Estella's mother.

Antagonists

- **Compeyson**, a convict who escapes the prison ship after Magwitch, who beats him up ashore. He is Magwitch's enemy. A professional swindler, he was engaged to marry Miss Havisham, but he was in league with Arthur Havisham to defraud Miss Havisham of part of her fortune. Later he sets up Magwitch to take the fall for another swindle. He works with the police when he learns Abel Magwitch is in London, fearing Magwitch after their first escapes years earlier. When the police boat encounters the one carrying Magwitch, the two grapple, and Compeyson drowns in the Thames.
- **Arthur Havisham**, younger half brother of Miss Havisham, who plots with Compeyson to swindle her.
- **Dolge Orlick**, journeyman blacksmith at Joe Gargery's forge. Strong, rude and sullen, he is as churlish as Joe is gentle and kind. He ends up in a fistfight with Joe over Mrs Gargery's taunting, and Joe easily defeats him. This sets in motion an escalating chain of events that leads him secretly to assault Mrs Gargery and to try to kill her brother Pip. The police ultimately arrest him for housebreaking into Uncle Pumblechook's, where he is later jailed.
- **Bentley Drummle**, a coarse, unintelligent young man from a wealthy noble family being "the next heir but one to a baronetcy".[31] Pip meets him at Mr Pocket's house, as Drummle is also to be trained in gentlemanly skills. Drummle is hostile to Pip and everyone else. He is a rival for Estella's attentions and eventually marries her and is said to abuse her. He dies from an accident following his mistreatment of a horse.

Other characters

- **Clara Barley**, a very poor girl living with her gout-ridden father. She marries Herbert Pocket near the novel's end. She dislikes Pip at first because of his spendthrift ways. After she marries Herbert, they invite Pip to live with them.
- **Miss Skiffins** occasionally visits Wemmick's house and wears green gloves. She changes those green gloves for white ones when she marries Wemmick.
- **Startop**, like Bentley Drummle, is Pip's fellow student, but unlike Drummle, he is kind. He assists Pip and Herbert in their efforts to help Magwitch escape.

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Unit III

The Mill on the Floss-George Eliot

Mary Ann Evans (22 November 1819 – 22 December 1880; alternatively **Mary Anne** or **Marian**, known by her pen name **George Eliot**, was an English novelist, poet, journalist, translator and one of the leading writers of the Victorian era. She wrote seven novels, *Adam Bede* (1859), *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), *Silas arner* (1861), *Romola* (1862–63), *Felix Holt, the Radical* (1866), *Middlemarch* (1871–72) and *Daniel Deronda* (1876), most of which are set in provincial England and known for their realism and psychological insight.

Although female authors were published under their own names during her lifetime, she wanted to escape the stereotype of women's writing being limited to lighthearted romances. She also wanted to have her fiction judged separately from her already extensive and widely known work as an editor and critic. Another factor in her use of a pen name may have been a desire to shield her private life from public scrutiny, thus avoiding the scandal that would have arisen because of her relationship with the married George Henry Lewes.

The Mill on the Floss is a novel by George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), first published in three volumes in 1860 by William Blackwood. The first American edition was published by Harper & Brothers, Publishers, New York.

Plot Overview

Maggie Tulliver is the impetuous, clever younger daughter of the Tullivers of Dorlcote Mill in St. Ogg's. Maggie frustrates her superficial mother with her unconventional dark coloring and unnatural activeness and intelligence. Maggie's father often takes Maggie's side, but it is Maggie's older brother Tom upon whom she is emotionally dependent. Maggie's greatest happiness is Tom's affection, and his disapproval creates dramatic despair in Maggie, whose view of the world, as all children's, lacks perspective.
Though Tom is less studious than Maggie appears to be, Mr. Tulliver decides to pay for Tom to have additional education rather than have him take over the mill. This decision provokes a family quarrel between Mr. Tulliver and his wife's sisters, the Dodsons. Mr. Tulliver is frustrated by the snobbish contrariness of the Dodsons, led by Mrs. Tulliver's sister Mrs. Glegg, and vows to repay money that Mrs. Glegg had lent him, thereby weakening her hold on him. He has lent almost an equal sum to his sister and her husband, the Mosses, but he feels affectionately toward his sister and decides not to ask for money back, which they cannot pay.

Mr. Stelling, a clergyman, takes Tom on as a student, and Maggie visits him at school several times. On one of these visits, she befriends Mr. Stelling's other student—the sensitive, crippled Philip Wakem, son of her father's enemy, Lawyer Wakem. Maggie herself is sent to school along with her cousin, Lucy, but is called home when she is thirteen when her father finally loses his extended lawsuit with Lawyer Wakem over the use of the river Floss. Mr. Tulliver is rendered bankrupt and ill. Tom returns home as well to support the family, as the Dodson's offer little help. The mill itself is up for auction, and Lawyer Wakem, based on an idea inadvertently furnished to him by Mrs. Tulliver, buys Dorlcote Mill and retains Mr. Tulliver as a manager in an act of humiliating patronage.

Even after Mr. Tulliver's recovery, the atmosphere at the Tullivers' is grim. One bright spot is the return of Bob Jakin, a childhood friend of Tom's, into Tom and Maggie's life. Bob, a trader, kindly buys books for

Maggie and one of them—Thomas a Kempis's The Imitation of Christ—influences a spiritual awakening in her that leads to many months of pious self-denial. It is only after Maggie reencounters Philip Wakem on one of her walks in the woods that she is persuaded to leave her martyrish dullness in favor of the richness of literature and human interaction. Philip and Maggie meet clandestinely for a year, since Maggie's father would be hurt by their friendship as he has sworn to hold Lawyer Wakem as his life-long enemy. Philip finally confesses to Maggie that he loves her, and Maggie, at first surprised, says she loves him back. Soon thereafter, Tom discovers their meetings, cruelly upbraids Philip, and makes Maggie swear not to see Philip again.

On a business venture with Bob Jakin, Tom has amassed enough money to pay off Mr. Tulliver's debts to the family's surprise and relief. On the way home from the official repayment of the debts, Mr. Tulliver meets Lawyer Wakem and attacks him, but then Mr. Tulliver falls ill himself and dies the next day. Several years later, Maggie has been teaching in another village. Now a tall, striking woman, she returns to St. Ogg's to visit her cousin Lucy, who has taken in Mrs. Tulliver. Lucy has a handsome and rich suitor named Stephen Guest, and they are friends with Philip Wakem. Maggie asks Tom for permission to see Philip, which Tom grudgingly gives her. Maggie and Philip renew their close friendship, and Maggie would consider marriage to Philip, if only his father approved. Lucy realizes that Tom wishes to purchase back Dorlcote Mill, and she asks Philip to speak to his father, Lawyer Wakem. Philip speaks to his father about selling the mill and about his love for Maggie, and Lawyer Wakem is eventually responsive to both propositions.

Meanwhile, however, Stephen and Maggie have gradually become helplessly attracted to each other, against both of their expectations and wishes. Maggie plans for their attraction to come to nothing, as she will take another teaching post away from St. Ogg's soon. Stephen pursues her, though, and Philip quickly becomes aware of the situation. Feeling ill and jealous, Philip cancels a boat- ride with Maggie and Lucy, sending Stephen instead. As Lucy has proceeded down river, meaning to leave Philip and Maggie alone, Stephen and Maggie find themselves inadvertently alone together. Stephen rows Maggie past their planned meeting point with Lucy and begs her to marry him. The weather changes and they are far down the river. Maggie complacently boards a larger boat with Philip, which is headed for Mudport. They sleep over night on the boat's deck and when they reach Mudport, Maggie holds firm in her decision to part with Stephen and return to St. Ogg's.

On her return to St. Ogg's, Maggie is treated in town as a fallen woman and a social outcast. Tom, now back in Dorlcote Mill, renounces her, and Maggie, accompanied by her mother, goes to lodge with Bob Jakin and his wife. Despite public knowledge of Stephen's letter, which acknowledges all the blame upon himself, Maggie is befriended only by the Jakins and the clergyman Dr. Kenn. Lucy, who has been prostrate with grief, becomes well again and secretly visits Maggie to show her forgiveness. Philip, as well, sends a letter of forgiveness and faithfulness.

Stephen sends Maggie a letter renewing his pleas for her hand in marriage and protesting the pain she has caused him. Maggie vows to bear the burden of the pain she has caused others and must endure herself until death but wonders to herself how long this trial, her life, will be. At this moment, water begins rushing under the Jakin's door from the nearby river Floss, which is flooding. Maggie wakes the Jakins' and takes one of their boats, rowing it down river in a feat of miraculous strength toward Dorlcote Mill. Maggie rescues Tom, who is trapped in the house, and they row down river towards Lucy. Before they can reach Lucy's house, the

boat is capsized by debris in the river, and Maggie and Tom drown in each other's arms. Years go by and Philip, and Stephen and Lucy together, visit the grave.

Mill on the Floss: Themes

The Claim of the Past upon Present Identity

Both characters and places in The Mill on the Floss are presented as the current products of multi-generational gestation. The very architecture of St. Ogg's bears its hundreds of years of history within it. Similarly, Maggie and Tom are the hereditary products of two competing family lines—the Tullivers and the Dodsons—that have long histories and tendencies. In the novel, the past holds a cumulative presence and has a determining effect upon characters who are open to its influence. The first, carefully sketched out book about Maggie and Tom's childhood becomes the past of the rest of the novel. Maggie holds the memory of her childhood sacred and her connection to that time comes to affects her future behavior. Here, the past is not something to be escaped nor is it something that will rise again to threaten, but it is instead an inherent part of Maggie's (and her father's) character, making fidelity to it a necessity. Book First clearly demonstrates the painfulness of life without a past—the depths of Maggie's childhood emotions are nearly unbearable to her because she has no past of conquered troubles to look back upon with which to put her present situation in perspective. Stephen is held up as an example of the dangers of neglecting the past. Dr. Kenn, a sort of moral yardstick within the novel, complains of this neglect of the past of which Stephen is a part and Maggie has worked against: "At present everything seems tending toward the relaxation of ties—toward the substitution of wayward choice for the adherence to obligation which has its roots in the past." Thus, without a recognition of the past with which to form one's character, one is left only to the whims of the moment and subject to emotional extremes and eventual loneliness.

The Importance of Sympathy

The Mill on the Floss is not a religious novel, but it is highly concerned with a morality that should function among all people and should aspire to a compassionate connection with others through sympathy. The parable of St. Ogg rewards the ferryman's unquestioning sympathy with another, and Maggie, in her final recreation of the St. Ogg scene during the flood, is vindicated on the grounds of her deep sympathy with others. The opposite of this sympathy within the novel finds the form of variations of egoism. Tom has not the capability of sympathizing with Maggie. He is aligned with the narrow, self-serving ethic of the rising entrepreneur: Tom explains to Mr. Deane that he cares about his own standing, and Mr. Deane compliments him, "That's the right spirit, and I never refuse to help anybody if they've a mind to do themselves justice." Stephen, too, is seen as a figure that puts himself before others. His arguments in favor of his and Maggie's elopement all revolve around the privileging of his own emotion over that of others', even Maggie's. In contrast, Maggie's, Philip's, and Lucy's mutual sympathy is upheld as the moral triumph within the tragedy of the last book. Eliot herself believed that the purpose of art is to present the reader with realistic circumstances and characters that will ultimately enlarge the reader's capacity for sympathy with others. We can see this logic working against Maggie's young asceticism. Maggie's self-denial becomes morally injurious to her because she is denying herself the very intellectual and artistic experiences that would help her understand her own plight and have pity for the plight of others.

Practical Knowledge versus Bookish Knowledge

The Mill on the Floss, especially in the first half of the novel, is quite concerned about education and types of knowledge. Much of the early chapters are devoted to laying out the differences between Tom's and Maggie's modes of knowledge. Tom's knowledge is practical: "He knew all about worms, and fish, and those things; and what birds were mischievous, and how padlocks opened, and which way the handles of the

gates were to be lifted." This knowledge is tangible and natural—it brings Tom in closer association to the world around him. Meanwhile, Maggie's knowledge is slightly more complicated. Other characters refer to it as "uncanny," and her imagination and love of books are often depicted as a way for her to escape the world around her or to rise above it—"The world outside the books was not a happy one, Maggie felt." Part of the tragedy of Maggie and Tom Tulliver is that Tom received the education that Maggie should have had. Instead of Maggie blossoming, Tom is trapped. When Tom must make a living in the world, he discovers that his bookish education will win him nothing: Mr. Deane tells Tom, "The world isn't made of pen, ink, and paper, and if you're to get on in the world, young man, you must know what the world's made of." Tom soon returns and takes advantage of his skills for practical knowledge, making good in the newly entrepreneurial world. Tom's practical knowledge is always depicted as a source of superiority for Tom. From his childhood on, Tom has no patience for Maggie's intellectual curiosity. The narrowness of Tom's miseducation under Mr. Stelling seems somewhat related to the narrowness of Tom's tolerance for others' modes of knowledge. Yet Eliot remains clear that Maggie's intellectualism makes her Tom's superior in this case—"the responsibility of tolerance lies with those who have the wider vision."

The Effect of Society upon the Individual

Society is never revealed to be a completely determining factor in the destiny of Eliot's main characters—for example, Maggie's tragedy originates in her internal competing impulses, not in her public disgrace. Yet, Eliot remains concerned with the workings of a community—both social and economic—and tracks their interrelations, as well as their effect upon character, as part of her realism. The Mill on the Floss sets up a geography of towns and land holdings—St. Ogg's, Basset, Garum Firs, Dorlcote Mill—and describes the tone of each community (such as the run- down population of Basset). The novel tracks the growth of the particular society of St. Ogg's, referencing the new force of economic trends like entrepreneurial capitalism or innovations like the steam engine. A wide cast of characters aims to outline different strata in the society—such as the Dodsons, or the Miss Guests—through their common values, economic standing, and social circles. In the first part of the novel, Eliot alludes to the effect these communal forces have on Maggie's and Tom's formation. Toward the end of the novel, the detailed background of St. Ogg's society functions as a contrast against which Maggie seems freshly simple and genuine.

Mill on the Floss: Characters

- Maggie Tulliver – a dark-complexioned miller's daughter. A clever and impetuous child who feels deep passions, but forces herself to suppress them for the good of others.
- Tom Tulliver – Maggie's brother. Originally lives a careless fashion and neglects his studies, but begins to work seriously after his father's downfall.
- Bessy Tulliver (née Dodson) – Maggie and Tom's mother, a simple woman who feels her social decline.
- Jeremy Tulliver – Maggie and Tom's father, owner of the Mill until a lengthy lawsuit leaves him in dire financial straits. A proud and rash man who struggles to adapt to the modern commercial world. Feels deep love for Maggie especially, and for his own sister "Gritty."
- Philip Wakem – hunchbacked classmate of Tom, and friend/suitor to Maggie
- Stephen Guest – affluent suitor to Lucy, who also has eyes for Maggie

Maggie Tulliver

Maggie Tulliver is the protagonist of The Mill on the Floss. When the novel begins, Maggie is a clever and impetuous child. Eliot presents Maggie as more imaginative and interesting than the rest of her family and, sympathetically, in need of love. Yet Maggie's passionate preoccupations also cause pain for others, as when

she forgets to feed Tom's rabbits, which leads to their death. Maggie will remember her childhood fondly and with longing, yet these years are depicted as painful ones. Maggie's mother and aunts continually express disapproval with Maggie's rash behavior, uncanny intelligence, and unnaturally dark skin, hair, and eyes. Yet it is only Tom's opinion for which Maggie cares, and his inability to show her unconditional love, along with his embarrassment at her impetuosity, often plunges Maggie into the utter despair particular to immaturity.

The most important event of Maggie's young life is her encounter with a book of Thomas a Kempis's writings, which recommend abandoning one's cares for oneself and focusing instead on unearthly values and the suffering of others. Maggie encounters the book during the difficult year of her adolescence and her family's bankruptcy. Looking for a "key" with which to understand her unhappy lot, Maggie seizes upon Kempis's writings and begins leading a life of deprivation and penance. Yet even in this lifestyle, Maggie paradoxically practices her humility with natural passion and pride. It is not until she re- establishes a friendship with Philip Wakem, however, that Maggie can be persuaded to respect her own need for intellectual and sensuous experience and to see the folly of self-denial. Maggie's relationship with Philip shows both her deep compassion, as well as the self-centered gratification that comes with having someone who fully appreciates her compassion. As Maggie continues to meet Philip Wakem secretly, against her father's wishes, her internal struggle seems to shift. Maggie feels the conflict of the full intellectual life that Philip offers her and her "duty" to her father. It is Tom who reminds her of this "duty," and Maggie's wish to be approved of by Tom remains strong.

The final books of *The Mill on the Floss* feature Maggie at the age of nineteen. She seems older than her years and is described as newly sensuous—she is tall with full lips, a full torso and arms, and a "crown" of jet black hair. Maggie's unworldliness and lack of social pretension make her seem even more charming to St. Ogg's, as her worn clothing seems to compliment her beauty. Maggie has been often unhappy in her young adulthood. Having given up her early asceticism, she longs for a richness of life that is unavailable to her. When she meets Stephen Guest, Lucy Deane's handsome suitor, and enters into the society world of St. Ogg's, Maggie feels this wont for sensuousness fulfilled for the first time. Stephen plays into Maggie's romantic expectations of life and gratifies her pride. Maggie and Stephen's attraction seems to exist more in physical gestures than in witty discussion, and it seems to intoxicate them both. When faced with a decision between a life of passionate love with Stephen and her "duty" to her family and position, Maggie chooses the latter. Maggie has too much feeling for the memories of the past (and nostalgia for a time when Tom loved her) to relinquish them by running away.

Tom Tulliver

As a child, Tom Tulliver enjoys the outdoors. He is more suited to practical knowledge than bookish education and sometimes prefers to settle disputes with physical intimidation, as does his father. Tom is quite close to Maggie as a child—he responds almost instinctively to her affection, and they are likened to two animals. Tom has a strong, self-righteous sense of "fairness" and "justice" which often figures into his decisions and relationships more than tenderness. As Tom grows older he exhibits the Dodson coolness of mind more than the Tulliver passionate rashness, though he is capable of studied cruelty, as when he upbraids Philip Wakem with reference to Philip's deformity . Repelled by his father's provincial, small-minded ways and the mess these ways caused the family, Tom joins the ranks of capitalist entrepreneurs who are swiftly rising in the world. Tom holds strict notions about gender—his biggest problem with Maggie is that she will not let him take care of her and make her decisions for her. Tom's character seems capable of love and kindness—he buys a puppy for Lucy Deane, and he often ends up reconciling with

Maggie—but the difficult circumstances of his young life have led him into a bitter single- mindedness reminiscent of his father.

Mr. Tulliver

Like the other main characters of *The Mill on the Floss*, Mr. Tulliver is the victim of both his own character and the circumstances of his life. His personal pride and rashness causes his bankruptcy; yet there is a sense, especially in his illnesses, that Tulliver is also sheerly overwhelmed by the changing world around him. Tulliver is somewhat more intelligent than his wife—a point of pride and planning for him—yet he is still "puzzled" by the expanding economic world, as well as the complexities of language. The lifestyle to which Mr. Tulliver belongs—static, local, rural social networks and slow saving of money—is quickly giving way to a new class of venture capitalists, like Mr. Deane. Part of the tragedy of Tulliver's downfall is the tragedy of the loss of his way of life. Mr. Tulliver is one of the few models of unconditional love in the novel— his affection for Maggie and his sister, Mrs. Moss, are some of the few narrative bright spots of the first chapters. Yet Tulliver can also be stubborn and obsessively narrow-minded, and it is this that kills him when he cannot overcome his hatred of Wakem.

Philip Wakem

Philip Wakem is perhaps the most intelligent and perceptive character of The Mill on the Floss. He first appears as a relief to Maggie's young life—he is one of the few people to have an accurate sense of, and appreciation for, her intelligence, and Philip remains the only character who fully appreciates this side of Maggie. Philip himself is well read, cultured, and an accomplished sketcher. Philip's deformity—a hunched back he has had since birth—has made him somewhat melancholy and bitter. Like Maggie, he suffers from a lack of love in his life. His attraction to Maggie is, in part, a response to her seemingly bottomless capacity for love. Philip's gentleness, small stature, and sensitivity of feelings cause people to describe him as "womanly," and he is implicitly not considered as a passionate attachment for Maggie. It is Philip who urges Maggie to give up her unnatural self-denial. He recognizes her need for tranquility but assures her that this is not the way to reach it. Through the remainder of the novel, Philip seems to implicitly offer Maggie the tranquility that she seeks—we imagine that Maggie's life with Philip would be calm, happy, and intellectually fulfilling.

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The Mayor of Casterbridge- Thomas Hardy

Thomas Hardy OM (2 June 1840 – 11 January 1928) was an English novelist and poet. A Victorian realist in the tradition of George Eliot, he was influenced both in his novels and in his poetry by Romanticism, especially William Wordsworth. He was highly critical of much in Victorian society, especially on the declining status of rural people in Britain, such as those from his native South West England. While Hardy wrote poetry throughout his life and regarded himself primarily as a poet, his first collection was not published until 1898. Initially, therefore, he gained fame as the author of novels such as *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). During his lifetime, Hardy's poetry was acclaimed by younger poets (particularly the Georgians) who viewed him as a mentor. After his death his poems were lauded by Ezra Pound, W. H. Auden and Philip Larkin. Many of his novels concern tragic characters struggling against their passions and social circumstances, and they are often set in the semi-fictional region of Wessex; initially based on the medieval Anglo-Saxon kingdom, Hardy's Wessex eventually came to include the counties of Dorset, Wiltshire, Somerset, Devon, Hampshire and much of Berkshire, in southwest and south central England. Two of his novels, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Far from the Madding Crowd*, were listed in the top 50 on the BBC's survey The Big Read.

The Mayor of Casterbridge: The Life and Death of a Man of Character is an 1886 novel by the English author Thomas Hardy. One of Hardy's Wessex novels, it is set in a fictional rural England with Casterbridge standing in for Dorchester in Dorset where the author spent his youth. It was first published as a weekly serialisation from January 1886. The novel is considered to be one of Hardy's masterpieces, although it has been criticised for incorporating too many incidents: a consequence of the author trying to include something in every weekly published instalment.

The book is one of Hardy's Wessex novels, and is set largely in the fictional town of Casterbridge, based on Dorchester in Dorset. The author intended Casterbridge to be an imaginative presentation of certain aspects of the town as he remembered it in the "dream" of his childhood. Although the opening sentence of the novel states that the events described took place "before the nineteenth century had reached one-third of its span" the date of Hardy's own childhood places it rather later — in the mid-to-late 1840s.

The Mayor of Casterbridge: Plot Overview

Michael Henchard is traveling with his wife, Susan, looking for employment as a hay-trusser. When they stop to eat, Henchard gets drunk, and in an auction that begins as a joke but turns serious, he sells his wife and their baby daughter, -Elizabeth-Jane, to Newson, a sailor, for five guineas. In the morning, Henchard regrets what he has done and searches the town for his wife and daughter. Unable to find them, he goes into a church and swears an oath that he will not drink alcohol for twenty-one years, the same number of years he has been alive.

After the sailor’s death, eighteen years later, Susan and Elizabeth-Jane seek Henchard; Elizabeth-Jane believes he is merely a long-lost relative. They arrive in Casterbridge and learn that Henchard is the mayor. The parents meet and decide that in order to prevent Elizabeth-Jane from learning of their disgrace, Henchard will court and remarry Susan as though they had met only recently.
Meanwhile, Henchard has hired Donald Farfrae, a young Scotchman, as the new manager of his corn business. Elizabeth-Jane is intrigued by Farfrae, and the two begin to spend time together. Henchard becomes alienated from Farfrae, however, as the younger man consistently outdoes Henchard in every respect. He asks Farfrae to leave his business and to stop courting Elizabeth-Jane.

Susan falls ill and dies soon after her remarriage to Henchard. After discovering that Elizabeth-Jane is not his own daughter, but Newson's, Henchard becomes increasingly cold toward her. Elizabeth-Jane then decides to leave Henchard's house and live with a lady who has just arrived in town. This lady turns out to be Lucetta Templeman, a woman with whom Henchard was involved during Susan's absence; having learned of Susan's death, Lucetta has come to Casterbridge to marry Henchard.

While Lucetta is waiting for Henchard to call on her, she meets Farfrae, who has come to call on Elizabeth-Jane. The two hit it off and are eventually married. Lucetta asks Henchard to return to her all the letters she has sent him. On his way to deliver the letters, the messenger, Jopp, stops at an inn. The peasants there convince him to open and read the letters aloud. Discovering that Lucetta and Henchard have been romantically involved, the peasants decide to hold a "skimmity-ride," a humiliating parade portraying Lucetta and Henchard together. The event takes place one afternoon when Farfrae is away. Lucetta faints upon seeing the spectacle and becomes very ill. Shortly afterward, she dies.

While Henchard has grown to hate Farfrae, he has grown closer to Elizabeth-Jane. The morning after Lucetta's death, Newson, who is actually still alive, arrives at Henchard's door and asks for Elizabeth-Jane. Henchard tells him that she is dead, and Newson leaves in sorrow. Elizabeth-Jane stays with Henchard and also begins to spend more time with Farfrae. One day, Henchard learns that Newson has returned to town, and he decides to leave rather than risk another confrontation. Elizabeth-Jane is reunited with Newson and learns of Henchard's deceit; Newson and Farfrae start planning the wedding between Elizabeth-Jane and the Scotchman.

Henchard comes back to Casterbridge on the night of the wedding to see Elizabeth-Jane, but she snubs him. He leaves again, telling her that he will not return. She soon regrets her coldness, and she and Farfrae, her new husband, go looking for Henchard so that she can make her peace. Unfortunately, they find him too late, discovering that he has died alone in the countryside. He has left a will: his dying wish is to be forgotten.

The Mayor of Casterbridge: Themes

The Importance of Character

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

The Value of a Good Name

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

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

The Indelibility of the Past

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

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

The Mayor of Casterbridge: Characters

Michael Henchard

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

come upon the mayor hosting a banquet for the town's most prominent citizens, they witness a man struggling to convince the masses that, despite a mismanaged harvest, he is an honest person with a worthy name.

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

Elizabeth-Jane Newson

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

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

Donald Farfrae

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

Although Henchard soon comes to view Farfrae as his adversary, the Scotchman's victories are won more in the name of progress than personal satisfaction. His primary motive in taking over Casterbridge's grain trade is to make it more prosperous and prepare the village for the advancing agricultural economy of the later

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

Lucetta Templeman

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

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UNIT IV

The Scarlet Letter- Nathaniel Hawthorne

Nathaniel Hawthorne (**Hathorne**; July 4, 1804 – May 19, 1864) was an American novelist, dark romantic, and short story writer. His works often focus on history, morality, and religion.
He was born in 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts, to Nathaniel Hathorne and the former Elizabeth Clarke Manning. His ancestors include John Hathorne, the only judge involved in the Salem witch trials who never repented of his actions. He entered Bowdoin College in 1821, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in 1824, and graduated in 1825. He published his first work in 1828, the novel *Fanshawe*; he later tried to suppress it, feeling that it was not equal to the standard of his later work. He published several short stories in periodicals, which he collected in 1837 as *Twice-Told Tales*. The next year, he became engaged to Sophia Peabody. He worked at the Boston Custom House and joined Brook Farm, a transcendentalist community, before marrying Peabody in 1842. The couple moved to The Old Manse in Concord, Massachusetts, later moving to Salem, the Berkshires, then to The Wayside in Concord. *The Scarlet Letter* was published in 1850, followed by a succession of other novels. A political appointment as consul took Hawthorne and family to Europe before their return to Concord in 1860. Hawthorne died on May 19, 1864, and was survived by his wife and their three children.

Much of Hawthorne's writing centers on New England, many works featuring moral metaphors with an anti-Puritan inspiration. His fiction works are considered part of the Romantic movement and, more specifically, dark romanticism. His themes often center on the inherent evil and sin of humanity, and his works often have moral messages and deep psychological complexity. His published works include novels, short stories, and a biography of his college friend Franklin Pierce, the 14th President of the United States.

Plot Overview

The Scarlet Letter opens with a long preamble about how the book came to be written. The nameless narrator was the surveyor of the customhouse in Salem, Massachusetts. In the customhouse's attic, he discovered a number of documents, among them a manuscript that was bundled with a scarlet, gold-embroidered patch of cloth in the shape of an "A." The manuscript, the work of a past surveyor, detailed events that occurred some two hundred years before the narrator's time. When the narrator lost his customs post, he decided to write a fictional account of the events recorded in the manuscript. *The Scarlet Letter* is the final product.

The story begins in seventeenth-century Boston, then a Puritan settlement. A young woman, Hester Prynne, is led from the town prison with her infant daughter, Pearl, in her arms and the scarlet letter "A" on her breast. A man in the crowd tells an elderly onlooker that Hester is being punished for adultery. Hester's husband, a scholar much older than she is, sent her ahead to America, but he never arrived in Boston. The consensus is that he has been lost at sea. While waiting for her husband, Hester has apparently had an affair, as she has given birth to a child. She will not reveal her lover's identity, however, and the scarlet letter, along with her public shaming, is her punishment for her sin and her secrecy. On this day Hester is led to the town scaffold and harangued by the town fathers, but she again refuses to identify her child's father.
The elderly onlooker is Hester's missing husband, who is now practicing medicine and calling himself Roger Chillingworth. He settles in Boston, intent on revenge. He reveals his true identity to no one but Hester, whom he has sworn to secrecy. Several years pass. Hester supports herself by working as a seamstress, and Pearl grows into a willful, impish child. Shunned by the community, they live in a small cottage on the outskirts of Boston. Community officials attempt to take Pearl away from Hester, but, with

the help of Arthur Dimmesdale, a young and eloquent minister, the mother and daughter manage to stay together. Dimmesdale, however, appears to be wasting away and suffers from mysterious heart trouble, seemingly caused by psychological distress. Chillingworth attaches himself to the ailing minister and eventually moves in with him so that he can provide his patient with round-the-clock care. Chillingworth also suspects that there may be a connection between the minister's torments and Hester's secret, and he begins to test Dimmesdale to see what he can learn. One afternoon, while the minister sleeps, Chillingworth discovers a mark on the man's breast (the details of which are kept from the reader), which convinces him that his suspicions are correct.

Dimmesdale's psychological anguish deepens, and he invents new tortures for himself. In the meantime, Hester's charitable deeds and quiet humility have earned her a reprieve from the scorn of the community. One night, when Pearl is about seven years old, she and her mother are returning home from a visit to a deathbed when they encounter Dimmesdale atop the town scaffold, trying to punish himself for his sins. Hester and Pearl join him, and the three link hands. Dimmesdale refuses Pearl's request that he acknowledge her publicly the next day, and a meteor marks a dull red "A" in the night sky. Hester can see that the minister's condition is worsening, and she resolves to intervene. She goes to Chillingworth and asks him to stop adding to Dimmesdale's self-torment. Chillingworth refuses.

Hester arranges an encounter with Dimmesdale in the forest because she is aware that Chillingworth has probably guessed that she plans to reveal his identity to Dimmesdale. The former lovers decide to flee to Europe, where they can live with Pearl as a family. They will take a ship sailing from Boston in four days. Both feel a sense of release, and Hester removes her scarlet letter and lets down her hair. Pearl, playing nearby, does not recognize her mother without the letter. The day before the ship is to sail, the townspeople gather for a holiday and Dimmesdale preaches his most eloquent sermon ever. Meanwhile, Hester has learned that Chillingworth knows of their plan and has booked passage on the same ship. Dimmesdale, leaving the church after his sermon, sees Hester and Pearl standing before the town scaffold. He impulsively mounts the scaffold with his lover and his daughter, and confesses publicly, exposing a scarlet letter seared into the flesh of his chest. He falls dead, as Pearl kisses him.

Frustrated in his revenge, Chillingworth dies a year later. Hester and Pearl leave Boston, and no one knows what has happened to them. Many years later, Hester returns alone, still wearing the scarlet letter, to live in her old cottage and resume her charitable work. She receives occasional letters from Pearl, who has married a European aristocrat and established a family of her own. When Hester dies, she is buried next to Dimmesdale. The two share a single tombstone, which bears a scarlet "A."

Scarlett Letter: Themes

Sin, Knowledge, and the Human Condition

Sin and knowledge are linked in the Judeo-Christian tradition. The Bible begins with the story of Adam and Eve, who were expelled from the Garden of Eden for eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. As a result of their knowledge, Adam and Eve are made aware of their humanness, that which separates them from the divine and from other creatures. Once expelled from the Garden of Eden, they are forced to toil and to procreate—two "labors" that seem to define the human condition. The experience of Hester and Dimmesdale recalls the story of Adam and Eve because, in both cases, sin results in expulsion and suffering. But it also results in knowledge—specifically, in knowledge of what it means to be human. For Hester, the scarlet letter functions as "her passport into regions where other women dared not tread," leading her to

"speculate" about her society and herself more "boldly" than anyone else in New England. As for Dimmesdale, the "burden" of his sin gives him "sympathies so intimate with the sinful brotherhood of mankind, so that his heart vibrate[s] in unison with theirs." His eloquent and powerful sermons derive from this sense of empathy. Hester and Dimmesdale contemplate their own sinfulness on a daily basis and try to reconcile it with their lived experiences. The Puritan elders, on the other hand, insist on seeing earthly experience as merely an obstacle on the path to heaven. Thus, they view sin as a threat to the community that should be punished and suppressed. Their answer to Hester's sin is to ostracize her. Yet, Puritan society is stagnant, while Hester and Dimmesdale's experience shows that a state of sinfulness can lead to personal growth, sympathy, and understanding of others. Paradoxically, these qualities are shown to be incompatible with a state of purity.

The Nature of Evil

The characters in the novel frequently debate the identity of the "Black Man," the embodiment of evil. Over the course of the novel, the "Black Man" is associated with Dimmesdale, Chillingworth, and Mistress Hibbins, and little Pearl is thought by some to be the Devil's child. The characters also try to root out the causes of evil: did Chillingworth's selfishness in marrying Hester force her to the "evil" she committed in Dimmesdale's arms? Is Hester and Dimmesdale's deed responsible for Chillingworth's transformation into a malevolent being? This confusion over the nature and causes of evil reveals the problems with the Puritan conception of sin. The book argues that true evil arises from the close relationship between hate and love. As the narrator points out in the novel's concluding chapter, both emotions depend upon "a high degree of intimacy and heart-knowledge; each renders one individual dependent . . . upon another." Evil is not found in Hester and Dimmesdale's lovemaking, nor even in the cruel ignorance of the Puritan fathers. Evil, in its most poisonous form, is found in the carefully plotted and precisely aimed revenge of Chillingworth, whose love has been perverted. Perhaps Pearl is not entirely wrong when she thinks Dimmesdale is the "Black Man," because her father, too, has perverted his love. Dimmesdale, who should love Pearl, will not even publicly acknowledge her. His cruel denial of love to his own child may be seen as further perpetrating evil.

Identity and Society

After Hester is publicly shamed and forced by the people of Boston to wear a badge of humiliation, her unwillingness to leave the town may seem puzzling. She is not physically imprisoned, and leaving the Massachusetts Bay Colony would allow her to remove the scarlet letter and resume a normal life. Surprisingly, Hester reacts with dismay when Chillingworth tells her that the town fathers are considering letting her remove the letter. Hester's behavior is premised on her desire to determine her own identity rather than to allow others to determine it for her. To her, running away or removing the letter would be an acknowledgment of society's power over her: she would be admitting that the letter is a mark of shame and something from which she desires to escape. Instead, Hester stays, refiguring the scarlet letter as a symbol of her own experiences and character. Her past sin is a part of who she is; to pretend that it never happened would mean denying a part of herself. Thus, Hester very determinedly integrates her sin into her life. Dimmesdale also struggles against a socially determined identity. As the community's minister, he is more symbol than human being. Except for Chillingworth, those around the minister willfully ignore his obvious anguish, misinterpreting it as holiness. Unfortunately, Dimmesdale never fully recognizes the truth of what Hester has learned: that individuality and strength are gained by quiet self-assertion and by a reconfiguration, not a rejection, of one's assigned identity.

Female Independence

Hawthorne explores the theme of female independence by showing how Hester boldly makes her own decisions and is able to take care of herself. Before the novel even begins, Hester has already violated social expectations by following her heart and choosing to have sex with a man she is not married to; she will later justify this decision by explaining to Dimmesdale that "What we did had a consecration of its own." Because Hester is cast out of the community, she is liberated from many of the traditional expectations for a woman to be docile and submissive. She also has practical responsibilities that force her to be independent: she has to earn a living so that she and her daughter can survive, and she also has to raise a headstrong child as a single parent. These unusual circumstances make Hester comfortable standing up for herself, such as when she violently objects to Governor Bellingham trying to take Pearl away.

The novel suggests Hester's independence comes at a price. The narrator seems sympathetic to Hester's vision of a brighter future where "a new truth would be revealed, in order to establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness." However, the narrator also makes the point that because Hester has been living outside of social conventions, she seems to have lost touch with key ethical principles: "she had wandered, without rule or guidance, in a moral wilderness." The novel also ends with Hester returning to the community to live a humble life, and voluntarily choosing to start wearing the scarlet letter again, both of which suggest that by the end of the novel she has abandoned some of her independent and free-thinking ways. The descriptions of Pearl also suggest that female independence is antithetical to happiness. The narrator says no one knew if Pearl's "wild, rich nature had been softened and subdued, and made capable of a woman's gentle happiness," implying that only by forfeiting her independent spirit could Pearl be truly content.

The Scarlet Letter: Characters

Hester Prynne

Although The Scarlet Letter is about Hester Prynne, the book is not so much a consideration of her innate character as it is an examination of the forces that shape her and the transformations those forces effect. We know very little about Hester prior to her affair with Dimmesdale and her resultant public shaming. We read that she married Chillingworth although she did not love him, but we never fully understand why. The early chapters of the book suggest that, prior to her marriage, Hester was a strong-willed and impetuous young woman—she remembers her parents as loving guides who frequently had to restrain her incautious behavior. The fact that she has an affair also suggests that she once had a passionate nature.

But it is what happens after Hester's affair that makes her into the woman with whom the reader is familiar. Shamed and alienated from the rest of the community, Hester becomes contemplative. She speculates on human nature, social organization, and larger moral questions. Hester's tribulations also lead her to be stoic and a freethinker. Although the narrator pretends to disapprove of Hester's independent philosophizing, his tone indicates that he secretly admires her independence and her ideas.

Pearl

Hester's daughter, Pearl, functions primarily as a symbol. She is quite young during most of the events of this novel—when Dimmesdale dies she is only seven years old—and her real importance lies in her ability to provoke the adult characters in the book. She asks them pointed questions and draws their attention, and the reader's, to the denied or overlooked truths of the adult world. In general, children in The Scarlet Letter are portrayed as more perceptive and more honest than adults, and Pearl is the most perceptive of them all.

Pearl makes us constantly aware of her mother's scarlet letter and of the society that produced it. From an early age, she fixates on the emblem. Pearl's innocent, or perhaps intuitive, comments about the letter raise crucial questions about its meaning. Similarly, she inquires about the relationships between those around her—most important, the relationship between Hester and Dimmesdale—and offers perceptive critiques of them. Pearl provides the text's harshest, and most penetrating, judgment of Dimmesdale's failure to admit to his adultery. Once her father's identity is revealed, Pearl is no longer needed in this symbolic capacity; at Dimmesdale's death she becomes fully "human," leaving behind her otherworldliness and her preternatural vision.

Roger Chillingworth

As his name suggests, Roger Chillingworth is a man deficient in human warmth. His twisted, stooped, deformed shoulders mirror his distorted soul. From what the reader is told of his early years with Hester, he was a difficult husband. He ignored his wife for much of the time, yet expected her to nourish his soul with affection when he did condescend to spend time with her. Chillingworth's decision to assume the identity of a "leech," or doctor, is fitting. Unable to engage in equitable relationships with those around him, he feeds on the vitality of others as a way of energizing his own projects. Chillingworth's death is a result of the nature of his character. After Dimmesdale dies, Chillingworth no longer has a victim. Similarly, Dimmesdale's revelation that he is Pearl's father removes Hester from the old man's clutches. Having lost the objects of his revenge, the leech has no choice but to die.

Ultimately, Chillingworth represents true evil. He is associated with secular and sometimes illicit forms of knowledge, as his chemical experiments and medical practices occasionally verge on witchcraft and murder. He is interested in revenge, not justice, and he seeks the deliberate destruction of others rather than a redress of wrongs. His desire to hurt others stands in contrast to Hester and Dimmesdale's sin, which had love, not hate, as its intent. Any harm that may have come from the young lovers' deed was unanticipated and inadvertent, whereas Chillingworth reaps deliberate harm.

Hester also becomes a kind of compassionate maternal figure as a result of her experiences. Hester moderates her tendency to be rash, for she knows that such behavior could cause her to lose her daughter, Pearl. Hester is also maternal with respect to society: she cares for the poor and brings them food and clothing. By the novel's end, Hester has become a protofeminist mother figure to the women of the community. The shame attached to her scarlet letter is long gone. Women recognize that her punishment stemmed in part from the town fathers' sexism, and they come to Hester seeking shelter from the sexist forces under which they themselves suffer. Throughout The Scarlet Letter Hester is portrayed as an intelligent, capable, but not necessarily extraordinary woman. It is the extraordinary circumstances shaping her that make her such an important figure.

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The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn-Mark Twain

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (November 30, 1835 – April 21, 1910), known by his pen name **Mark Twain**, was an American writer, humorist, entrepreneur, publisher, and lecturer. He was lauded as the "greatest humorist this country has produced", and William Faulkner called him "the father of American literature". His novels include *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and its sequel, the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), the latter often called "The Great American Novel".

Twain was raised in Hannibal, Missouri, which later provided the setting for *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. He served an apprenticeship with a printer and then worked as a typesetter, contributing articles to the newspaper of his older brother Orion Clemens. He later became a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River before heading west to join Orion in Nevada. He referred humorously to his lack of success at mining, turning to journalism for the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise*. His humorous story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County", was published in 1865, based on a story that he heard at Angels Hotel in Angels Camp, California, where he had spent some time as a miner. The short story brought international attention and was even translated into French. His wit and satire, in prose and in speech, earned praise from critics and peers, and he was a friend to presidents, artists, industrialists, and European royalty. Twain earned a great deal of money from his writings and lectures, but he invested in ventures that lost most of it—such as the Paige Compositor, a mechanical typesetter that failed because of its complexity and imprecision. He filed for bankruptcy in the wake of these financial setbacks, but he eventually overcame his financial troubles with the help of Henry Huttleston Rogers. He eventually paid all his creditors in full, even though his bankruptcy relieved him of having to do so. Twain was born shortly after an appearance of Halley's Comet, and he predicted that he would "go out with it" as well; he died the day after the comet returned.

Plot Overview

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn opens by familiarizing us with the events of the novel that preceded it, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Both novels are set in the town of St. Petersburg, Missouri, which lies on the banks of the Mississippi River. At the end of Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, a poor boy with a drunken bum for a father, and his friend Tom Sawyer, a middle-class boy with an imagination too active for his own good, found a robber's stash of gold. As a result of his adventure, Huck gained quite a bit of money, which the bank held for him in trust. Huck was adopted by the Widow Douglas, a kind but stifling woman who lives with her sister, the self-righteous Miss Watson.

As *Huckleberry Finn* opens, Huck is none too thrilled with his new life of cleanliness, manners, church, and school. However, he sticks it out at the bequest of Tom Sawyer, who tells him that in order to take part in Tom's new "robbers' gang," Huck must stay "respectable." All is well and good until Huck's brutish, drunken father, Pap, reappears in town and demands Huck's money. The local judge, Judge Thatcher, and the Widow try to get legal custody of Huck, but another well-intentioned new judge in town believes in the rights of Huck's natural father and even takes the old drunk into his own home in an attempt to reform him. This effort fails miserably, and Pap soon returns to his old ways. He hangs around town for several months, harassing his son, who in the meantime has learned to read and to tolerate the Widow's attempts to improve him. Finally, outraged when the Widow Douglas warns him to stay away from her house, Pap kidnaps Huck and holds him in a cabin across the river from St. Petersburg.

Whenever Pap goes out, he locks Huck in the cabin, and when he returns home drunk, he beats the boy. Tired of his confinement and fearing the beatings will worsen, Huck escapes from Pap by faking his own death, killing a pig and spreading its blood all over the cabin. Hiding on Jackson's Island in the middle of the Mississippi River, Huck watches the townspeople search the river for his body. After a few days on the island, he encounters Jim, one of Miss Watson's slaves. Jim has run away from Miss Watson after hearing her talk about selling him to a plantation down the river, where he would be treated horribly and separated from his wife and children. Huck and Jim team up, despite Huck's uncertainty about the legality or morality of helping a runaway slave. While they camp out on the island, a great storm causes the Mississippi to flood. Huck and Jim spy a log raft and a house floating past the island. They capture the raft and loot the house, finding in it the body of a man who has been shot. Jim refuses to let Huck see the dead man's face.

Although the island is blissful, Huck and Jim are forced to leave after Huck learns from a woman onshore that her husband has seen smoke coming from the island and believes that Jim is hiding out there. Huck also learns that a reward has been offered for Jim's capture. Huck and Jim start downriver on the raft, intending to leave it at the mouth of the Ohio River and proceed up that river by steamboat to the free states, where slavery is prohibited. Several days' travel takes them past St. Louis, and they have a close encounter with a gang of robbers on a wrecked steamboat. They manage to escape with the robbers' loot.

During a night of thick fog, Huck and Jim miss the mouth of the Ohio and encounter a group of men looking for escaped slaves. Huck has a brief moral crisis about concealing stolen "property"—Jim, after all, belongs to Miss Watson—but then lies to the men and tells them that his father is on the raft suffering from smallpox. Terrified of the disease, the men give Huck money and hurry away. Unable to backtrack to the mouth of the Ohio, Huck and Jim continue downriver. The next night, a steamboat slams into their raft, and Huck and Jim are separated.

Huck ends up in the home of the kindly Grangerfords, a family of Southern aristocrats locked in a bitter and silly feud with a neighboring clan, the Shepherdsons. The elopement of a Grangerford daughter with a Shepherdson son leads to a gun battle in which many in the families are killed. While Huck is caught up in the feud, Jim shows up with the repaired raft. Huck hurries to Jim's hiding place, and they take off down the river.

A few days later, Huck and Jim rescue a pair of men who are being pursued by armed bandits. The men, clearly con artists, claim to be a displaced English duke (the duke) and the long-lost heir to the French throne (the dauphin). Powerless to tell two white adults to leave, Huck and Jim continue down the river with the pair of "aristocrats." The duke and the dauphin pull several scams in the small towns along the river. Coming into one town, they hear the story of a man, Peter Wilks, who has recently died and left much of his inheritance to his two brothers, who should be arriving from England any day. The duke and the dauphin enter the town pretending to be Wilks's brothers. Wilks's three nieces welcome the con men and quickly set about liquidating the estate. A few townspeople become skeptical, and Huck, who grows to admire the Wilks sisters, decides to thwart the scam. He steals the dead Peter Wilks's gold from the duke and the dauphin but is forced to stash it in Wilks's coffin. Huck then reveals all to the eldest Wilks sister, Mary Jane. Huck's plan for exposing the duke and the dauphin is about to unfold when Wilks's real brothers arrive from England. The angry townspeople hold both sets of Wilks claimants, and the duke and the dauphin just barely escape in the ensuing confusion. Fortunately for the sisters, the gold is found. Unfortunately for Huck and Jim, the duke and the dauphin make it back to the raft just as Huck and Jim are pushing off.

After a few more small scams, the duke and dauphin commit their worst crime yet: they sell Jim to a local farmer, telling him Jim is a runaway for whom a large reward is being offered. Huck finds out where Jim is being held and resolves to free him. At the house where Jim is a prisoner, a woman greets Huck excitedly and calls him "Tom." As Huck quickly discovers, the people holding Jim are none other than Tom Sawyer's aunt and uncle, Silas and Sally Phelps. The Phelpses mistake Huck for Tom, who is due to arrive for a visit, and Huck goes along with their mistake. He intercepts Tom between the Phelps house and the steamboat dock, and Tom pretends to be his own younger brother, Sid.

Tom hatches a wild plan to free Jim, adding all sorts of unnecessary obstacles even though Jim is only lightly secured. Huck is sure Tom's plan will get them all killed, but he complies nonetheless. After a seeming eternity of pointless preparation, during which the boys ransack the Phelps's house and make Aunt Sally miserable, they put the plan into action. Jim is freed, but a pursuer shoots Tom in the leg. Huck is forced to get a doctor, and Jim sacrifices his freedom to nurse Tom. All are returned to the Phelps's house, where Jim ends up back in chains.

When Tom wakes the next morning, he reveals that Jim has actually been a free man all along, as Miss Watson, who made a provision in her will to free Jim, died two months earlier. Tom had planned the entire escape idea all as a game and had intended to pay Jim for his troubles. Tom's Aunt Polly then shows up, identifying "Tom" and "Sid" as Huck and Tom. Jim tells Huck, who fears for his future—particularly that his father might reappear—that the body they found on the floating house off Jackson's Island had been Pap's. Aunt Sally then steps in and offers to adopt Huck, but Huck, who has had enough "sivilizing," announces his plan to set out for the West.

Huckleberry Finn: Themes

Racism and Slavery

Although Twain wrote *Huckleberry Finn* two decades after the Emancipation Proclamation and the end of the Civil War, America—and especially the South—was still struggling with racism and the aftereffects of slavery. By the early 1880s, Reconstruction, the plan to put the United States back together after the war and integrate freed slaves into society, had hit shaky ground, although it had not yet failed outright. As Twain worked on his novel, race relations, which seemed to be on a positive path in the years following the Civil War, once again became strained. The imposition of Jim Crow laws, designed to limit the power of blacks in the South in a variety of indirect ways, brought the beginning of a new, insidious effort to oppress. The new racism of the South, less institutionalized and monolithic, was also more difficult to combat. Slavery could be outlawed, but when white Southerners enacted racist laws or policies under a professed motive of self-defense against newly freed blacks, far fewer people, Northern or Southern, saw the act as immoral and rushed to combat it.

Although Twain wrote the novel after slavery was abolished, he set it several decades earlier, when slavery was still a fact of life. But even by Twain's time, things had not necessarily gotten much better for blacks in the South. In this light, we might read Twain's depiction of slavery as an allegorical representation of the condition of blacks in the United States even *after* the abolition of slavery. Just as slavery places the noble and moral Jim under the control of white society, no matter how degraded that white society may be, so too did the insidious racism that arose near the end of Reconstruction oppress black men for illogical and hypocritical reasons. In *Huckleberry Finn,* Twain, by exposing the hypocrisy of slavery, demonstrates how racism distorts the oppressors as much as it does those who are oppressed. The result is a world of moral

confusion, in which seemingly "good" white people such as Miss Watson and Sally Phelps express no concern about the injustice of slavery or the cruelty of separating Jim from his family.

Intellectual and Moral Education

By focusing on Huck's education, *Huckleberry Finn* fits into the tradition of the bildungsroman: a novel depicting an individual's maturation and development. As a poor, uneducated boy, for all intents and purposes an orphan, Huck distrusts the morals and precepts of the society that treats him as an outcast and fails to protect him from abuse. This apprehension about society, and his growing relationship with Jim, lead Huck to question many of the teachings that he has received, especially regarding race and slavery. More than once, we see Huck choose to "go to hell" rather than go along with the rules and follow what he has been taught. Huck bases these decisions on his experiences, his own sense of logic, and what his developing conscience tells him. On the raft, away from civilization, Huck is especially free from society's rules, able to make his own decisions without restriction. Through deep introspection, he comes to his own conclusions, unaffected by the accepted—and often hypocritical—rules and values of Southern culture. By the novel's end, Huck has learned to "read" the world around him, to distinguish good, bad, right, wrong, menace, friend, and so on. His moral development is sharply contrasted to the character of Tom Sawyer, who is influenced by a bizarre mix of adventure novels and Sunday-school teachings, which he combines to justify his outrageous and potentially harmful escapades.

The Hypocrisy of "Civilized" Society

When Huck plans to head west at the end of the novel in order to escape further "sivilizing," he is trying to avoid more than regular baths and mandatory school attendance. Throughout the novel, Twain depicts the society that surrounds Huck as little more than a collection of degraded rules and precepts that defy logic. This faulty logic appears early in the novel, when the new judge in town allows Pap to keep custody of Huck. The judge privileges Pap's "rights" to his son as his natural father over Huck's welfare. At the same time, this decision comments on a system that puts a white man's rights to his "property"—his slaves—over the welfare and freedom of a black man. In implicitly comparing the plight of slaves to the plight of Huck at the hands of Pap, Twain implies that it is impossible for a society that owns slaves to be just, no matter how "civilized" that society believes and proclaims itself to be. Again and again, Huck encounters individuals who seem good—Sally Phelps, for example—but who Twain takes care to show are prejudiced slave-owners. This shaky sense of justice that Huck repeatedly encounters lies at the heart of society's problems: terrible acts go unpunished, yet frivolous crimes, such as drunkenly shouting insults, lead to executions. Sherburn's speech to the mob that has come to lynch him accurately summarizes the view of society Twain gives in *Huckleberry Finn*: rather than maintain collective welfare, society instead is marked by cowardice, a lack of logic, and profound selfishness.

Guilt/shame

Huck experiences guilt and shame at various points throughout the novel, and these feelings force him into serious questions about morality. Huck's guilt is largely tied to the religious morality he learned from Widow Douglas. Not long after he and Jim set out on their journey, Huck realizes that by helping Jim escape he has done harm to Jim's owner, Miss Watson. He explains: "Conscience says to me, . . . 'What did that poor old woman do to you, that you could treat her so mean?' . . . I got to feeling so mean and so miserable I most wished I was dead" (Chapter 16). Here Huck recognizes that has broken the Golden Rule of Christianity, which states, *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*. Huck remains conflicted until near the end of the book. The breaking point comes in Chapter 31, when he finds himself unable to pray. Huck realizes that in his heart he doesn't believe Jim should be returned to slavery, and saying so in a

prayer would result in him “playing double” and hence lying to God. When he finally resolves to help Jim escape for the last time, Huck banishes the last vestiges of guilt.

Empathy

The theme of empathy is closely tied to the theme of guilt. Huck’s feelings of empathy help his moral development by enabling him to imagine what it’s like to be in someone else’s shoes. The theme of empathy first arises when Huck worries about the thieves he and Jim abandon on the wrecked steamboat. Once he’s escaped immediate danger, Huck grows concerned about the men: “I begun to think how dreadful it was, even for murderers, to be in such a fix.” Huck’s concern drives him to go and find help. Another significant example of empathy in the book comes in Chapter 23, when Huck wakes up to Jim “moaning and mourning to himself.” Huck imagines that Jim is feeling “low and homesick” because he’s thinking about his wife and children: “I do believe he cared just as much for his people as white folks for their’n. It don’t seem natural, but I reckon it’s so.” Despite the residual racism in this comment, Huck’s capacity for empathy has a strong humanizing power.

Huckleberry Finn: Characters

Huckleberry Finn (Huck Finn)

From the beginning of the novel, Twain makes it clear that Huck is a boy who comes from the lowest levels of white society. His father is a drunk and a ruffian who disappears for months on end. Huck himself is dirty and frequently homeless. Although the Widow Douglas attempts to “reform” Huck, he resists her attempts and maintains his independent ways. The community has failed to protect him from his father, and though the Widow finally gives Huck some of the schooling and religious training that he had missed, he has not been indoctrinated with social values in the same way a middle-class boy like Tom Sawyer has been. Huck’s distance from mainstream society makes him skeptical of the world around him and the ideas it passes on to him.

Huck’s instinctual distrust and his experiences as he travels down the river force him to question the things society has taught him. According to the law, Jim is Miss Watson’s property, but according to Huck’s sense of logic and fairness, it seems “right” to help Jim. Huck’s natural intelligence and his willingness to think through a situation on its own merits lead him to some conclusions that are correct in their context but that would shock white society. For example, Huck discovers, when he and Jim meet a group of slave-hunters, that telling a lie is sometimes the right course of action.

Because Huck is a child, the world seems new to him. Everything he encounters is an occasion for thought. Because of his background, however, he does more than just apply the rules that he has been taught—he creates his own rules. Yet Huck is not some kind of independent moral genius. He must still struggle with some of the preconceptions about blacks that society has ingrained in him, and at the end of the novel, he shows himself all too willing to follow Tom Sawyer’s lead. But even these failures are part of what makes Huck appealing and sympathetic. He is only a boy, after all, and therefore fallible. Imperfect as he is, Huck represents what anyone is capable of becoming: a thinking, feeling human being rather than a mere cog in the machine of society.

Jim

Jim, Huck’s companion as he travels down the river, is a man of remarkable intelligence and compassion. At first glance, Jim seems to be superstitious to the point of idiocy, but a careful reading of the time that Huck and Jim spend on Jackson’s Island reveals that Jim’s superstitions conceal a deep knowledge of the natural

world and represent an alternate form of “truth” or intelligence. Moreover, Jim has one of the few healthy, functioning families in the novel. Although he has been separated from his wife and children, he misses them terribly, and it is only the thought of a permanent separation from them that motivates his criminal act of running away from Miss Watson. On the river, Jim becomes a surrogate father, as well as a friend, to Huck, taking care of him without being intrusive or smothering. He cooks for the boy and shelters him from some of the worst horrors that they encounter, including the sight of Pap’s corpse, and, for a time, the news of his father’s passing.

Some readers have criticized Jim as being too passive, but it is important to remember that he remains at the mercy of every other character in this novel, including even the poor, thirteen-year-old Huck, as the letter that Huck nearly sends to Miss Watson demonstrates. Like Huck, Jim is realistic about his situation and must find ways of accomplishing his goals without incurring the wrath of those who could turn him in. In this position, he is seldom able to act boldly or speak his mind. Nonetheless, despite these restrictions and constant fear, Jim consistently acts as a noble human being and a loyal friend. In fact, Jim could be described as the only real adult in the novel, and the only one who provides a positive, respectable example for Huck to follow.

Tom is the same age as Huck and his best friend. Whereas Huck’s birth and upbringing have left him in poverty and on the margins of society, Tom has been raised in relative comfort. As a result, his beliefs are an unfortunate combination of what he has learned from the adults around him and the fanciful notions he has gleaned from reading romance and adventure novels. Tom believes in sticking strictly to “rules,” most of which have more to do with style than with morality or anyone’s welfare. Tom is thus the perfect foil for Huck: his rigid adherence to rules and precepts contrasts with Huck’s tendency to question authority and think for himself.

Although Tom’s escapades are often funny, they also show just how disturbingly and unthinkingly cruel society can be. Tom knows all along that Miss Watson has died and that Jim is now a free man, yet he is willing to allow Jim to remain a captive while he entertains himself with fantastic escape plans. Tom’s plotting tortures not only Jim, but Aunt Sally and Uncle Silas as well. In the end, although he is just a boy like Huck and is appealing in his zest for adventure and his unconscious wittiness, Tom embodies what a young, well-to-do white man is raised to become in the society of his time: self-centered with dominion over all.

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