The Fall of Edward Barnard Study Guide

The Fall of Edward Barnard by W. Somerset Maugham

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites".

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers".

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Introduction

W. Somerset Maugham's short story "The Fall of Edward Barnard" was published in *The Trembling of a Leaf: Little Stories of the South Sea Islands* in 1921 (available from Replica Books). The story is principally about two young men from Chicago, Bateman Hunter and Edward Barnard, who have been friends since their college days. They are in love with the same woman, a Chicago socialite named Isabel Longstaffe. For reasons of business, Edward travels to the South Sea island of Tahiti. He is expected to return in two years and marry Isabel. But after a while, Edward discovers that he likes living on the island, and he has no plans to return. Bateman travels to Tahiti and tries to persuade Edward, whom he believes to be wasting his life, to return to Chicago. But Edward, who has discovered a new set of values in Tahiti, refuses to change his mind. He plans to marry a Tahitian girl and spend the rest of his life in this tropical paradise.

Thematically, "The Fall of Edward Barnard" deals with a clash of cultures between East and West. Maugham uses much irony to ensure that the East, where life is lived closer to nature, is seen in a better light than the materialistic West, as represented by Bateman and Isabel. The story also presents ideas about the role the social and cultural environment plays in shaping human character, and it illustrates Maugham's dislike of conventional morality.

Author Biography

William Somerset Maugham was born at the British Embassy in Paris on January 25, 1874. His mother died when he was eight and his father, an English lawyer, died when Maugham was ten. Maugham was sent to England to live with his uncle, a clergyman, and his aunt in Whitstable. He attended King's School in Canterbury, then spent over a year in Germany. From 1892 to 1897, Maugham attended medical school at St. Thomas's Hospital in London, receiving an M. D. degree. However, he had no desire to practice medicine, wanting instead to be a writer. His first novel, *Liza of Lambeth*, was published in 1897.

The next ten years constituted Maugham's literary apprenticeship. He published four more novels and a collection of short stories, *Orientations: Short Stories* (1899). He also wrote plays, but in that genre he had no initial success. But in 1907 his play *Lady Frederick* ran for over a year in London. It was the first of twenty-nine of his plays that would be produced over the next twenty-six years.

From 1914 to 1915, at the outset of World War I, Maugham served with a British ambulance unit and with military intelligence in Geneva. In 1915, he published what many regard as his finest novel, the autobiographical *Of Human Bondage*, which has twice been made into a movie. The following year, he visited the South Sea islands, which were to inspire several short stories, and in 1917 he was chief agent in Russia for the British and American secret services.

Although Maugham had homosexual tendencies throughout his life, he married Syrie Wellcome in 1917. They had a daughter, but the marriage was not happy, and the couple divorced in 1929.

Maugham's career continued to flourish and plays, novels, short stories and travel books poured from his pen. His major works from this period include three plays, *The Circle* (1921), *Our Betters* (1923), and *The Constant Wife* (1927); three short story collections, *The Trembling of a Leaf: Little Stories of the South Sea Islands* (1921), *The Casuarina Tree* (1926) and *Ashenden* (1927); and three novels, *The Moon and Sixpence* (1919), based on the life of Paul Gauguin, *The Painted Veil* (1925) and the comic novel, *Cakes and Ale* (1930).

Maugham's literary output remained prolific throughout the 1930s. He wrote three more novels, *The Narrow Corner* (1932), *Theatre* (1937), and *Christmas Holiday* (1939), as well as three more short story collections, and *The Summing Up* (1938), an autobiographical sketch.

During World War II, Maugham lived in the United States where he wrote one of his most important novels, *The Razor's Edge* (1944), as well as *The Mixture as Before* (1940), a collection of short stories. He published his last novel, *Catalina* in 1948.

By the 1950s, Maugham was perhaps the most widely read novelist of the century. In his old age he continued to write, publishing two collections of essays, *The Vagrant Mood* (1952) and *Points of View* (1958).

Maugham died at his villa on the French Riviera on December 16, 1965, at the age of ninety-one.

Plot Summary

"The Fall of Edward Barnard" begins as Bateman Hunter is returning home to Chicago after a trip to Tahiti. He has some vital news to tell Isabel Longstaffe, a young woman he greatly admires, but he is unsure of how to convey it.

Bateman's father meets him at the train station. He asks about Edward Barnard, but Bateman says he would rather not talk about him. When they get home, Bateman calls Isabel, and she invites him to dinner that night. After dinner with her parents, Bateman and Isabel talk alone. She asks whether Edward Barnard is coming back, and he says no.

Then Bateman tells her his long story, and the narrator also gives the reader the background to what happened. Bateman and Edward are old friends, and they were both in love with Isabel. But Isabel chose Edward, and they were engaged to be married. But then Edward's father met with financial disaster, and Edward, who no longer had any money or prospects, arranged to join the business of a family friend named Braunschmidt. Braunschmidt is a South Sea merchant who owns a branch agency in Tahiti. The plan was for Edward to work in Tahiti for one or two years, learning the business, and then return to take up a position in Chicago. Isabel agreed to wait for him.

Before Edward's departure, his father warned him to stay clear of Arnold Jackson, his brother-in-law, who was the black sheep of the family, having served time in prison for financial fraud. Jackson was living now in Tahiti.

In Tahiti, Edward regularly wrote to Isabel. All seemed well, except for the fact that after a while Edward made no mention of returning to Chicago. Isabel was puzzled but not alarmed. Then Bateman heard that Edward no longer worked for Braunschmidt, having been fired for laziness and incompetence. Bateman decided to go on a business trip to Honolulu and return via Tahiti, to find out what was going on with Edward.

When Bateman reached Papeete, Tahiti, he was surprised to find that Edward was known to the locals as Arnold Jackson's nephew. He eventually found Edward, who was working as a salesman at a trading store. Bateman was surprised to find him in such a humble position, but Edward appeared to be perfectly content, happy, and relaxed.

They returned to Bateman's hotel, where they drank cocktails on the terrace. They were soon joined, to Bateman's confusion and alarm, by Arnold Jackson. Jackson invited them both to dinner that night at his house. He said his wife was a good cook, which puzzled Bateman who knew that Jackson had a wife in Geneva. In the conversation that ensued after Jackson left, Edward revealed his admiration and affection for Jackson, to Bateman's further consternation. Bateman resolved to find out why his friend was so attached to a man Bateman regarded as reprehensible. He also noted that his friend's values seemed to have changed.

Jackson's house was on a hill overlooking the Pacific Ocean, and when Edward and Batman arrived, they went bathing. Jackson joined them, wearing a *pareo*, the native dress. As the three men walked back to the house, Edward was also dressed in a *pareo*, but Bateman insisted on wearing his own Western clothes. At the house, Jackson spoke with great idealism and spirituality, and Bateman had to remind himself of the man's unsavory history. Jackson's beautiful young daughter Eva mixed a cocktail for them, and Jackson spoke unself-consciously of his prison days. Bateman was embarrassed and angry. His discomfort increased when Eva placed on his head a garland of flowers that she had made.

After dinner the three men talked on the verandah. Jackson told romantic stories of the history of the island. After Jackson left them alone, Edward told his friend that he was happy in Tahiti and had no plans to return to Chicago. Bateman urged him to rethink, saying that he had succumbed to evil influences. Edward then explained how he had changed since he arrived in Tahiti two years before. At first he had been full of energy and had many ideas for how the island could be developed and modernized. But gradually he came to like life the way it was in Tahiti, with its ease and leisure and its good-natured people. He found he had time to think and read, and he realized that everything he had formerly thought to be important—the bustle and industry of a large city—seemed trivial. Now he valued beauty, truth, and goodness. He said he still admired Isabel and was prepared to marry her if she held him to his promise, but it was clear that this was not what Edward really wanted. Edward then said that Bateman should marry Isabel instead. Bateman was shocked, but he felt some exultation over the idea. Edward went on to say that he planned to marry Jackson's daughter and move to a small island a thousand miles away. Jackson owned the island and had offered to give it to him. Bateman once more was bewildered and perplexed, thinking that his friend was wasting his life. But Edward looked forward with zest to his future. He believed he would live a peaceful and happy life.

After Bateman finishes telling Isabel his story, she realizes that the situation is hopeless. She knows she will not be able to persuade Edward to return, and she declares that Edward is his own worst enemy.

Bateman then blurts out his love for Isabel, and she says she loves him, too. As they embrace, it is clear that they will marry. Bateman thinks of his glowing future in business, and Isabel thinks of all the antique furniture she will be able to acquire and the cultured life they will lead together.

Detailed Summary & Analysis

Summary

Bateman Hunter is a young man returning to Chicago after a trip to Tahiti. The trip is long: two weeks by ship and another three by train, with Bateman nervously anticipating having to share some unfortunate news with his friend Isabel Longstaffe all the while. Additionally, his conscience is beginning to bother him, and he wonders if he is indeed doing the right thing. He knows that if Isabel suspects that his motives are in any way insincere, there will be no way to change her mind. Despite this, Bateman acknowledges that he loves everything about her.

When the train finally reaches Chicago, Bateman is overcome with a sense of relief at having finally arrived home. To him, Chicago is the most important city in the world, eclipsing even New York and San Francisco in terms of value to America's future. As he steps off the train, he finds his father waiting for him. The two men exchange greetings and then head to the car for the trip home. They talk briefly about Bateman's trip before his father asks if Edward Barnard has returned with him. Bateman replies that he has not, and that he would prefer not to talk about him. Shortly after arriving home, he telephones Isabel and makes plans to have dinner with her that evening. While Isabel asks if Bateman has news to share with her, she does not specifically ask what the news is. Bateman is impressed by her show of restraint.

That evening, Bateman dines with Isabel and her parents at the Longstaffe home. The dinner conversation is primarily guided by Isabel, who makes sure that the topics don't stray too far from meaningless small talk. As Isabel describes her afternoon, which was spent at a musical performance, Bateman realizes just how happy he is to be back in the civilized world that is Chicago.

When dinner is finally over, Isabel tells her mother that she and Bateman have something they would like to discuss privately and that they will be going to her den to do so. After spending a moment talking about the care that Isabel has taken to decorate the room with furnishings from a specific period, she sits down and directly asks Bateman if Edward is coming back. Bateman replies that he is not, and then the two fall silent for several moments. Eventually, Bateman begins to speak, and he tells her the entire story.

We learn that Bateman and Edward have known Isabel since they were in college. Although they had known her when they were children, she had gone away to Europe to finish her education before returning to Chicago. When they meet again, both young men quickly fall in love with her, but Bateman, recognizing that she is far more interested in Edward than in he, decides to let his friend have the honor of being with her. Although Bateman often feels conflicted about this, he values his own friendship with Edward too much to disclose his true feelings for Isabel. Eventually, Edward and Isabel are engaged, but they agree not to marry until Edward finishes college.

Shortly before the wedding is to take place, Edward's father loses his entire fortune in a bank failure. Distraught at the idea of being penniless, Mr. Barnard takes his own life. A week later, Edward comes to Isabel to suggest that they break their engagement, as he is sure she will not want to be with him now that he has no money. Isabel refuses his offer, saying she does not care about his lack of wealth.

Pleased that she still wants to be with him, Edward tells Isabel that he has made arrangements to work at the business of an old family friend. However, this will require Edward to be away for one, possibly two years, since the position he is to take is in Tahiti. Upon his return, he will be given a position in Chicago, and then he and Isabel will be able to marry. Isabel assures Edward that she will wait for him.

On Edward's last night in Chicago, he has dinner with Isabel and her parents in their home. Afterward, Mr. Longstaffe tells Edward that he would like to speak with him privately. Because Mr. Longstaffe had already enthusiastically endorsed Edward's plan, Edward is uncertain as to what he might want to discuss. Alone in Mr. Longstaffe's smoking room, the two men make small talk until Longstaffe finally asks Edward if he has heard of Arnold Jackson. Arnold Jackson is Mrs. Longstaffe's brother, who at one time was a wealthy banker, philanthropist and respected member of his community. Several years before, however, he had been found to have committed a major act of fraud and was sent to jail for seven years. When he was finally released, he had left the country and settled in Tahiti. Meanwhile, his wife and children had been sent to live in Europe where they were supported by family members.

Although Edward would rather deny that he knows the man, he knows that doing so would be dishonest, and so he says that he does. Mr. Longstaffe tells Edward that Arnold is now living in Tahiti and suggests that he do his best to stay away from him. If, however, Edward should encounter Arnold during his stay there, Longstaffe says he and his wife would be glad to know of any news he could bring.

Edward subsequently leaves for Tahiti, and two years pass with Isabel and Edward faithfully writing to each other each month. At first, Edward's letters suggest that he is quite homesick and that he is contemplating leaving Tahiti before the agreed upon period of time passes. Isabel encourages him to remain, and eventually it seems as though he has become quite content in his new surroundings. At the end of the first year, Isabel is sure that Edward will again suggest that he come home, but he does not mention any plans to do so. Isabel takes this as a sign that Edward is doing everything he can to ensure that their future together is as prosperous as possible.

When the second year passes and Edward still does not mention coming home, Isabel begins to become concerned. Re-reading his letters, she begins to detect a sense of comfort and complacency that she had not seen before. One afternoon, she asks Bateman if Edward had mentioned plans for returning to him, but Bateman replies that he had not, and that he had assumed Edward had shared his plans with her. Isabel suggests to Bateman that he ask the next time he writes to Edward, a request Bateman agrees to carry out.

When Bateman and Isabel are together a few days later, Isabel can detect that there is something troubling her friend. She asks him to explain, and Bateman finally admits to having heard that Edward had left his original employer nearly a year before. Upon confirming this with the company's owner, Bateman had learned that Edward was fired for laziness and incompetence. This news greatly upsets Isabel, and she begins to cry. Bateman consoles her, and eventually she asks if he had noticed anything strange about Edward's recent letters. Bateman replies that he has; it seems to him that Edward's sense of priorities has changed.

A few days later, a letter from Edward arrives. Even though Isabel and Bateman are certain he must have received Bateman's letter, with the question regarding his return home by then, Edward mentions no plans to return to Chicago. Isabel is distraught and begins to wonder if perhaps he isn't coming home at all. In an attempt to console her, Bateman says that he has decided to go to Tahiti to find out for himself what is going on.

Bateman departs, and after conducting some business for his father's company in nearby countries, he finally arrives in Tahiti. All the while, however, he is thinking of his two friends, and he vows to do whatever it takes to make them happy, including offering Edward a position in his father's company. On his way to the hotel, he asks the driver if he knows Edward. The driver replies that he does and that Edward is Mr. Jackson's nephew. This momentarily startles Bateman, but he decides that the driver must be referring to a different Mr. Jackson. After arriving at the hotel, Bateman makes his way to the offices of the company where Edward had worked and inquires about his whereabouts. He is told that Edward is working nearby, at a place called Cameron's.

Bateman makes his way to Cameron's which, to his surprise, turns out to be a trader's store. Inside, he finds Edward measuring a length of cotton for a customer. He quickly catches sight of Edward and, apparently not the least bit embarrassed at having been found working in such an establishment, offers him a hearty handshake. He offers Bateman a seat, but Bateman suggests they go to his hotel where they can talk privately.

As they walk, Bateman expresses his surprise at having found his friend at such a job. When Edward replies that the job provides an income adequate to sustain him, Bateman counters that he is sure his friend wouldn't have been satisfied with that two years ago. Edward answers that people seem to grow wiser as they grow older, and Bateman is struck by how nonchalant and relaxed his friend seems. They reach the hotel and have cocktails on the terrace. Edward asks Bateman about all the latest news from Chicago, and even inquires about Isabel, although in Bateman's opinion he could just as well have been inquiring about any old friend. The conversation drifts on to other subjects, with Bateman unsuccessfully trying to bring it back to the subject of Isabel. As they talk, they are approached by a middle-aged man whom Edward seems to recognize. He invites the man to sit and introduces Bateman to him. The man shakes Bateman's hand before telling him his name: Arnold Jackson.

Bateman's surprise is obvious, and Jackson suggests that perhaps he has heard his name before. Bateman isn't sure how to respond, and while he thinks of a suitable

answer, Jackson tells him that he has heard from Edward that he is friendly with the Longstaffes. Then, telling Edward that he must go, he invites the two men for dinner at his home that evening and tells Bateman that his wife is a wonderful cook. Bateman tries to decline the invitation, but Jackson will not permit him. As Jackson walks away, Bateman tells Edward that he thought Jackson's wife was in Europe. Edward responds by saying that he assumes Jackson is referring to a different wife.

Unable to conceal his disgust any longer, Bateman tells Edward that Jackson is a despicable man. Edward agrees, and suggests that since he spends quite a bit of time in Jackson's company, then perhaps he is as well; he then adds that Jackson has adopted him as his nephew. When Bateman reminds Edward of the crimes Jackson committed, Edward says that he is well aware of his past, but that even so, he can't think of a more agreeable companion. He has learned plenty from the man, he says, and the two of them get along quite well.

Bateman is surprised to hear this and asks Edward what he has learned from Jackson. Edward replies that he has learned how to live. Bateman asks if those lessons included throwing away his future so that he can work in a trader's store. Rather than answer, Edwards says that Jackson has a wonderful personality, which Bateman will be able to appreciate at dinner that evening. When Bateman replies that he has no intention of coming to dinner, Edward asks him to come for the sake of their friendship. Bateman agrees.

Edward tells Bateman that he must go back to work but that he will return at five o'clock so that the two of them can drive to Jackson's home. As they walk out of the garden, Bateman says that he had assumed that, since the hotel they are at is the only decent one in town, Edward would be staying there as well. Edward responds that he cannot afford to stay there and that he rents a room outside of town; he describes the room as being cheap and clean. Bateman points out to Edward that when he was still living in Chicago, cheap and clean were not the most important characteristics of a home. He then asks Edward when he thinks he might return to Chicago. Edward responds that he often wonders.

Edward returns later as promised, and the two men set out for Jackson's home. When they arrive, they are greeted by a native woman, whom Edward introduces as Jackson's wife. The woman, whose name is Lavina, tells them that Jackson hasn't returned home yet, and so Edward tells her that they will go for a swim while they wait. They go down to the water and swim, and then relax on the beach with a few cigarettes. Bateman realizes that he has never seen his friend this relaxed. Before long, Jackson arrives to let them know that dinner is nearly ready. As they prepare to go back to the house, Bateman decides that he would rather not don the pareo - a type of loincloth - offered to him. The other two men are wearing pareos, and Bateman finds himself slightly uncomfortable at the sight of the two men dressed in such a way.

When they reach the house, Jackson ushers them into the dining room and then leads Bateman to a long window. Looking out at the marvelous scenery that lay below, Bateman finds himself in awe of what he sees. Noticing the extent to which Bateman is

captivated, Jackson suggests that he take as much time as he needs to look, for it is unlikely that he will ever see anything that equals it. Bateman spends the next few minutes looking out the window but soon becomes aware that another person has entered the room. He turns around to find a lovely young woman. Jackson introduces her as his daughter Eva.

As the men sit down to enjoy a cocktail, the conversation turns to Jackson's days in the penitentiary. As Jackson speaks, Bateman finds that he is surprised and even somewhat angry at Jackson's casual treatment of such a scandalous series of events. The dinner proceeds, and after they are all quite satisfied, Bateman calls attention to the wreath of flowers at his place. Jackson explains that Eva made the wreath for him and that he should put it on his head. Bateman is reluctant to do this and so Jackson and Edward don similar wreaths that have been left at their places. Eva rises and comes over to Bateman's place to correctly place the wreath on his head, an act which both embarrasses and angers Bateman.

Eventually, the three men make their way to the veranda to talk more. At first, Bateman finds himself to be quite impatient and resentful of having to be in their company. However, after listening to several of Jackson's tales, he becomes enthralled. Soon enough, however, Jackson rises and tells Bateman and Edward that he will leave them alone so that they can talk privately before retiring. When Bateman says he had no intentions of spending the night, Jackson assures him that he will be more comfortable in his home than in the hotel and that he will see to it that he is awakened in time to begin his journey home.

Finally alone, Bateman wonders how he should approach the subject of his friend's return to Chicago. Finally, he bluntly asks. Edward's reply is simple: he is very happy where he is, and he isn't sure that he will ever return. Bateman is aghast; he can't imagine anyone wanting to spend the rest of their life on that island. He tries to convince Edward to come home, saying that once he returns to Chicago, he will see that it is where he is meant to be. Edward is not convinced, however, and he tells Bateman that he has changed during his two years in Tahiti; his priorities and sense of what is important are now different.

Bateman asks Edward if this change of heart has anything to do with Jackson. Rather than answer, Edward tells Bateman that he didn't like Jackson when he first met him either, but that as he got to know him, he found him to be generous and kind. When Edward asks Bateman if he is wrong to judge a man based on his current behavior rather than on things he has done in the past, Bateman replies that in doing so, he seems to have lost his sense of what is right and what is wrong. Edward argues that the confusion does not lie in discerning between right and wrong, but rather in the basic differences between a good man and a bad one.

Edward goes on to tell Bateman that when he first arrived in Tahiti, he was full of energy and ambition. He had plans to industrialize the coconut oil business and in so doing, turn the sleepy town of Papeete into an American-style city. When Bateman asks his friend why he didn't move forward with his plans, Edward replies simply that he does not

want to. Bateman is again confused by his friend's sudden lack of ambition and laments that he no longer understands him.

Edward explains that in the months after his arrival in Papeete, he found that he liked the ease and good-natured demeanor of the residents. He realized that he never had time to simply relax and enjoy life, and soon, he began reading for pleasure. He also discovered the pleasure he derived from having amicable conversations with people. When he started to think of the life he would return to in Chicago, with the constant rushing and long work days, he began to wonder if that was really how he wanted to spend the rest of his life. He finally decided that the only things important to him were beauty, truth and goodness and that he would not be able to find these things in Chicago.

When it becomes clear to Bateman that Edward has no intention of returning to Chicago, he asks what his friend intends to do about Isabel. Edward says that he knows he is unworthy of her and would like Bateman to tell her so. When Bateman protests, Edward reminds him that it is impossible to keep anything from her and that he should tell Isabel that Edward is poor, but happy. He is sure that this will make Isabel change her mind about marrying him, but if she still insists, he says he will come back to Chicago and try to be the best husband that he can. When Bateman says he will have great difficulty conveying that message, Edward suggests that perhaps he could marry Isabel instead. Bateman protests, but Edward persists, and assures Bateman that he would make her happy.

Bateman asks his friend is he is doing this out of respect for their friendship, but Edward assures him he is doing this to make everyone involved happy. Bateman questions Edward further, asking if he really thinks he could be content working in the trader's store for the rest of his life. Edward replies that Jackson has offered to give him a small island he owns one thousand miles away, where he has had coconut planted; assuming Isabel agrees to end their engagement, Edward says, he intends to marry Jackson's daughter Eva.

Bateman asks Edward if he loves Eva, to which Edward replies that he is not sure but that he knows he feels differently about her than he does about Isabel. He feels like he needs to protect Eva, whereas Isabel always had a sense of confidence. He says that he knows that whatever he does, Eva will not be disappointed, and that she loves him for who he is and not who he might be.

The two men decide to retire to bed. Before parting for the night, Bateman tells Edward that he is disappointed to think that his friend will be wasting his energy and talents in this way. Edward assures him that he has not failed; rather he has succeeded and is looking forward to the rest of his life. He says he will always have enough to keep him busy and that he hopes he and Eva will have children. His wish is that when he grows old, he will look back on his life and view it as happy, simple and peaceful. With nothing left to say, the two men fall asleep.

Bateman finally finishes telling this tale to Isabel, omitting few details other than those concerning him being forced to don the wreath of flowers and Edward's intentions of marrying Eva. Even so, Isabel seems to sense that Edward has found someone, and so she asks Bateman to tell her more about Eva. Bateman says that because he has only had eyes for her his entire life, it's hard for him to remember much about the other woman. Isabel seems satisfied with this answer, and so Bateman asks her what she plans to do. Isabel replies that she initially wouldn't allow Edward to break their engagement because she thought remaining engaged would provide an incentive for him to work hard and do the right thing. Realizing that this is no longer the case, she tells Bateman that she wishes Edward a good life; she then takes off her engagement ring.

Looking at Bateman, she wonders aloud how she will be able to thank him for all he has done. Bateman's reply is that he has always loved her and that he would be perfectly happy if she should allow him to love and serve her as her husband. Isabel accepts his proposal, and as the story ends, Bateman thinks of the wonderful life they will share together.

Analysis

Somerset Maugham's short story "The Fall of Edward Barnard" is a tale that explores the differences that often exist between the expectations placed upon a person and the things that actually make that person happy. We can assume that the story takes place at the beginning of the Great Depression, a conclusion supported by the descriptions of Bateman's return trip from Tahiti and the furnishings in the Longstaffe home; the mention of Edward's father's suicide following a stock market crash confirms the assumption.

Before the stock crash, it is clear that Bateman and Edward were both raised in the comfort and luxury afforded by prosperity and wealth. Further, as the story begins, it seems apparent that both men are poised to follow the example of their fathers by working hard in their respective family businesses and remaining important fixtures within Chicago society. Finally, both men seem anxious to embark on their adult lives. At the time of his engagement to Isabel, Edward appears to be every bit as ambitious as his friend Bateman.

It is obvious that Edward's transformation from a power-player in Chicago's business world to a clerk in a Tahiti trader's store is a result of his father's death. While we don't know much about Edward's father, we do know that he lost every penny he had when the stock market crash that triggered the Great Depression occurred. While this transformation does not happen immediately - remember, Edward tells Bateman that when he first arrived in Tahiti he had great plans to revolutionize the coconut industry - it does not take long for Edward to realize that for him, at least, there is more to life than making enough money to afford the lifestyle in which he had been raised. Bateman, however, cannot seem to understand what has caused his friend to undergo such a drastic change. We may wonder how Bateman would have reacted if he were faced

with the death of his own father, but as things are, it is fairly clear that he is a young man driven to succeed and continue the legacy of the family business. Even so, given the fact that Bateman and Edward have been friends since boyhood, it is interesting that he doesn't better understand the impact the death of Edward's father has had on his friend. This is not to say that Bateman is entirely unsympathetic and unfeeling; it was, after all, he who stepped aside so that Edward could court Isabel.

It would appear then that the key difference that exists between Bateman and Edward is the fact that Edward no longer has to deal with the pressure of expectations being placed upon him by his father. While we may wonder why he doesn't feel obligated to take care of his now-widowed mother, since we are not given much information about the rest of his family, it is entirely possible that there are other siblings who have assumed this role. Freed from these pressures, Edward is now able to explore other things and find the type of lifestyle that is best suited to him, a luxury that Bateman is not comfortable considering.

The author effectively uses imagery to help us see these differences. The time Edward and Bateman spend together in Tahiti is illustrative of how different the two men are; while Edward is seemingly comfortable in the native pareo, Bateman insists on re-dressing after their bath. This, combined with Bateman's discomfort at wearing the flower wreath Eva made for him, is symbolic of his inability - or perhaps even refusal - to change.

Given the fact that this story is based at least in part on events that result from the Great Depression, it is possible that the author uses Bateman's character to symbolize America's prosperity before the Great Depression and Edward's character as a symbol of the depth of the despair and poverty felt by so many Americans after the market crashed. Indeed, even the characters' names are indicative of their current positions; while the name Bateman evokes images of wealth and prosperity, the more common Edward is a name typical of someone of a less lofty station. The grand homes in which Bateman and Isabel live - which are probably very similar to the type of home Edward lived in before leaving Chicago - are also symbolic of the pre-Depression era. In contrast, the spare room that Edward takes on the outskirts of Papeete is not dissimilar to the positions in which many people in the United States found themselves following the stock market crash. Further, his position as a trader's store clerk is not very different from the jobs many people in this era found themselves taking after their more lucrative careers ended.

The character of Arnold Jackson is used to convey the corruption and temptations that many people were forced to contend with during this period. As we know, Jackson was a well-respected member of his community before falling to the temptations of fraud. His actions so shamed his family that upon his release from prison, he was banished to Tahiti. Once there, he was able to rebuild his life and once again find contentment, happiness and prosperity. While Edward's liaison with Jackson is indeed curious on the surface- remember, he was advised by Mr. Longstaffe to steer clear of him - it appears that Edward's kinship with Jackson is fueled by his desire to emulate Jackson's simple lifestyle. Edward admits that he did not like Jackson when he first met him, but he has

come to appreciate him because he realizes that Jackson accepts himself as he is. They are similar in this respect; Edward seems to be quite comfortable with the choice he has made and does not succumb to the pressure Bateman places on him to return home. Despite this, it appears that Edward is overlooking one important detail: Jackson apparently still has a significant amount of money, as is evidenced by the fact that he is the owner of an island he intends to give to Edward. Given this fact, it can be argued that despite all appearances to the contrary, Edward still is motivated by money.

Taking this assumption further, it would appear that the story's title accurately portrays Edward's circumstances. While it is logical to assume that the "fall" referred to in the title refers to Edward's decision to leave his life in Chicago, this is not necessarily true. Certainly, in Bateman's eyes, Edward is weak, and he cannot understand why his friend is throwing away the promise of a prosperous future. Clearly, Bateman associates happiness with money and cannot imagine being satisfied with a life that does not include wealth and plenty of material possessions. Edward, on the other hand, is more of an idealist and derives his happiness from being satisfied with simple things such as reading and conversation. In the end, both viewpoints are valid, and neither can be singled out as wrong. Rather, Edward's "fall" is his decision to associate with Jackson despite Mr. Longstaffe's recommendation that he keep his distance. When Bateman finally comes to realize that his friend intends to stay in Tahiti, he understands for the first time that his friend is ethically weak and easily led astray. The "fall" referred to in the title, then, is actually Edward's decision to run away from his problems, compromise his ethics, and in effect, take the easy way out.

Finally, it is necessary to examine the role Isabel plays in this story. While she originally appears to be genuinely in love with Edward, it soon becomes evident that she is more concerned with "marrying well" than she is with marrying for love. Like Bateman, Isabel has become accustomed to the finer things and is not willing to make concessions. It is hardly surprising that she and Bateman end up together, especially given the fact that they spent so much time together during her courtship with Edward as well as during the time Edward was in Tahiti. Indeed, Bateman's trip to Tahiti was made more for Isabel's benefit than it was out of concern for his friend, and this may cause the reader to question his motives. In the end, however, it is likely true that Bateman did not make the trip with the hope of "winning" Isabel. This is made evident quite early in the story, when Bateman is described as "like the philanthropist who with altruistic motives builds model dwellings for the poor and finds that he has made a lucrative investment." From Bateman's point of view, the fact that he will wed Isabel is bittersweet, because he feels that it comes at the price of his friend's happiness. From Isabel's perspective, her betrothal to Bateman seems to be every bit as acceptable as being engaged to Edward.

Characters

Edward Barnard

Edward Barnard comes from a well-off family in Chicago and is Bateman Hunter's best friend. But just after Edward becomes engaged to a suitable young lady, Isabel Longstaffe, his father loses his fortune. Edward is left penniless and is forced to do his business apprenticeship in Tahiti, thanks to the assistance of a family friend. Everyone expects great things from Edward, since he is handsome, capable, energetic, and ambitious. But the longer Edward stays in Tahiti, the more his values change. After two years there, he no longer aspires to become a captain of industry in Chicago, or to marry Isabel. On the contrary, he is quite content in a humble occupation in Tahiti, an island he has come to love. He has learned tolerance and understanding. Bateman implores him to return to Chicago and not waste his life, but Edward believes that he can best realize his new ideals of beauty and goodness in the South Seas.

Eva

Eva is Arnold Jackson's beautiful young daughter by his wife Lavina. Edward Barnard plans to marry her.

Bateman Hunter

Bateman Hunter is Edward Barnard's best friend from their college days. They both fall in love with Isabel, but Bateman is magnanimous when Isabel chooses Edward. Bateman remains a loyal friend to both of them, keeping his real feelings for Isabel in check. He does not envy them their happiness. Bateman is ambitious about his career in a conventional kind of way, but his greatest virtue is his loyalty to his friend. When he travels to Tahiti, he has only Edward's best interests at heart, but his encounter with an alien culture reveals some less appealing aspects of his personality. He is rigid, priggish, and stiff, unable to appreciate values and lifestyles other than his own. When faced with life in Tahiti, he is continually uncomfortable. He refuses to wear native clothes and is embarrassed when Eva places a garland on his head. He cannot relax but remains aloof and disapproving. However, Bateman's motivations are impeccable, and he is a man of unshakable integrity. Only when it is certain that Edward and Isabel will not marry does he confess his love for her. He and Isabel seem to have every chance of happiness since they both have the same materialistic values.

Mr. Hunter

Mr. Hunter is Bateman Hunter's father. He is a wealthy Chicago businessman, the owner of Hunter Motor Traction and Automobile Company. He built his own house in the city to resemble a chateau on the Loire.

Arnold Jackson

Arnold Jackson is Isabel's uncle and the black sheep of the family. Many years before the story begins, he had a successful career in Chicago as a respected banker and was a philanthropist and church member. But he was convicted of fraud and served seven years in prison. His crimes involved such consistent and widespread dishonesty that there was nothing to mitigate his disgrace. His relatives never mentioned his name again, and his wife and children had to move to Europe to escape the stigma.

Jackson ended up in Tahiti. When Bateman visits the island, he desperately wants to avoid him but is unable to do so, since Jackson and Edward have become close friends. Jackson turns out to be rather different from the man Bateman imagined him. Bateman expects to find a rogue and a scoundrel, but Jackson is courteous and charming, an engaging storyteller and a perfect host. He speaks of his incarceration without embarrassment and appears to be happy and content. He loves the South Seas and accepts life serenely as it comes to him. Edward regards him as generous and kind, the most agreeable companion he has ever known.

Lavina

Lavina is Arnold Jackson's second wife. She is a native of Tahiti.

Isabel Longstaffe

Isabel Longstaffe comes from one of Chicago's elite families. She is educated, cultured, sophisticated and is a fine conversationalist. She is also slim and beautiful. Her personality is virtuous and upright, with an unyielding sense of honor. But she is also rigid in her judgments which once made, she never changes. Both Bateman and Edward love her. After she and Edward become engaged and Edward departs for Tahiti, she waits patiently for his return. She never doubts his love, but when she hears the bad news about his change of heart, she quickly accepts it and wastes no time on grieving. She is quick to pass adverse judgment on Edward, saying he is his own worst enemy and that he lacks backbone. When she accepts Bateman's marriage proposal, she is happy because she knows she will have a large house with antique furniture (just like the one she grew up in) and will be able to give concerts and have dinner parties with all the most cultured people in Chicago.

Mr. Longstaffe

Mr. Longstaffe is Isabel's father. He advises Edward to avoid any contact in Tahiti with Arnold Jackson, his brother-in-law.

Themes

Culture Clash

Central to the story is the clash between Western and Eastern values and cultures. Bateman sums up the Western way of seeing things when he says, in answer to Edward's question about how a man gets the best out of life, "By doing his duty, by hard work, by meeting all the obligations of his state and station." Bateman, as an embodiment of the Chicago spirit of the 1920s, values money and power. He justifies this by saying that these assets help to create jobs for many people.

In contrast to the eternal hustle and bustle of Chicago, which is emblematic of Western civilization as a whole, is Tahiti. In this haven of the East, the leisurely, relaxed pace of life and the friendliness of the people suggest a completely different set of values. Much of this is shaped by the warm climate and the sheer beauty of the region, which seems to belong less to time than to eternity. For example, this is the view from the verandah of Arnold Jackson's house: "The full moon, sailing across an unclouded sky, made a pathway on the broad sea that led to the boundless realms of Forever."

Edward soon finds in Tahiti that the Western values he formerly lived by were pointless. The things that mattered to him before no longer matter, as Isabel astutely deduces from his letters. Edward decides that the city life he has turned his back on is just a monotonous, draining routine of going to an office each day to work until nightfall and pursuing the same trivial round of leisure pursuits. Worldly ambition now means nothing to him, and Chicago seems like a prison.

If in the West there is an emphasis on achievement, progress, and the conquest of nature, the East prefers to live in harmony with nature. In place of the Western notion of progress is the value of acceptance, of taking life as it comes and as it is. But to Bateman's Western mind, living by this alien set of values is nothing more than a "living death." He tries to convince Edward that he has been "breathing poisoned air." Bateman is entirely blind to the irony of an heir of the Hunter Motor Traction and Automobile Company talking to an inhabitant of the unpolluted South Seas about poisoned air (although to be fair to Bateman, few people in the 1920s could have been aware of the ill effects of air pollution by the automobile).

But Edward believes that it is in the Eastern paradise of Tahiti that he can best live according to his new values of beauty, truth, and goodness. Tahiti also stimulates him to a spiritual view of life. He believes that he has discovered his own soul in his life on the island, and he refers to the New Testament passage that says it will not profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul. Thus the dichotomy between the cultures of West and East is given a religious dimension—it is the West, of course, (in Edward's view) that gains the world but at the price of losing what is most valuable about life.

Bateman, on the other hand, believes he can find such things as beauty and truth in Chicago. He is himself a man of integrity, and the story does not entirely favor the East at the expense of the West. He and Isabel value great art, for example, although in Bateman's case this is somewhat undermined by his motivations, as he thinks of the great collection he plans to amass. He simply wants to outdo New York, which is Western competitive spirit at its best (or worst, depending on one's point of view). Western art in any case is an artificial creation, quite different from the natural, artless beauty of the South Seas, a beauty that even Bateman is forced to acknowledge as he looks out of the window at Jackson's house:

[Y]ou saw the vast calmness of the Pacific and twenty miles away, airy and unsubstantial like the fabric of a poet's fancy, the unimaginable beauty of the island which is called Murea. It was all so lovely that Bateman stood abashed.

Nature versus Nurture

The story explores the old debate about whether people are what they are because of certain innate qualities (nature) or because they are shaped by the environment in which they live (nurture). The latter is clearly the case. Isabel, for example, is presented as a product of her environment. Bateman believes that "no city in the world could have produced her but Chicago." Bateman and Edward, before Edward leaves for Tahiti, are also products of their environment. Their values and ambitions have been entirely shaped by the big city environment in which they were raised. Chicago is presented as the most important city in America. Although it is crowded, full of traffic and noise, Bateman does not regard this as a disadvantage. On the contrary, he sees it as the embodiment of a strong collective will to develop the city industrially and so create the kind of wealth that his family, as well as Isabel's, enjoys.

It is because of the importance of environment in molding character that Edward undergoes such a profound change after arriving in Tahiti. At first he is the quintessential American, full of plans to bring the blessings of industrial and technological development to a backward portion of the world. But after a while, the climate, the beauty of the island, and the easygoing, relaxed people all work to change him.

Style

Irony

The title of the story "The Fall of Edward Barnard," is ironic. A statement is ironic if its real meaning is different from the one that is asserted on the surface. In this story, the irony unfolds gradually. When the name of Edward Barnard is first mentioned on Bateman's return to Chicago, Bateman's face darkens, and he says to his father, "I'd sooner not speak about him, Dad." At this point the reader has every reason to suppose that something bad has indeed befallen Edward Barnard. But as the hints unfold in Edward's letters, the reader begins to question whether something else may be the case.

At the same time, Maugham sets up another thread of irony in the story, with the introduction of Arnold Jackson. Jackson is another man who has supposedly fallen. Formerly a respected figure in Chicago society, he served time in prison for financial fraud. So when Bateman travels to Tahiti, he is expecting to find a rogue and a scoundrel, someone beyond the pale of civilized society. But the man he encounters does not fit this expectation. Nor does Edward fit into Bateman's expectations of meeting a man who has failed at his profession and been branded lazy and incompetent.

At this point, the irony becomes so pervasive that it amounts to what is sometimes called structural irony. This is where the irony occurs in more than the odd statement or two; it is central to the author's strategy. In this respect, Bateman functions as what is called a naïve hero, because he fails to see what is obvious to the reader. For example, he insists on interpreting Jackson's character from his own previous expectations. He cannot accurately perceive the man who is in front of his face and so is confused by what he sees and hears. He cannot make the mental leap required to reassess the situation. Here, for example, is the description of Jackson and Bateman's reaction: "His voice was deep and resonant. He seemed to breathe forth the purest idealism, and Bateman had to urge himself to remember that the man who spoke was a criminal and a cruel cheat." The reader immediately appreciates the irony of Bateman's obtuseness.

The same is true for Bateman's perceptions of Edward. He cannot see what is obvious to the reader. When he first sees Edward in Tahiti, for example, he notices something is different about him, but he cannot put two and two together and reach the conclusion that Edward is happy in Tahiti: "He [Edward] walked with a new jauntiness; there was a carelessness in his demeanor, a gaiety about nothing in particular, which Bateman could not entirely blame, but which exceedingly puzzled him."

The irony brings into focus Bateman's basic assumptions (and perhaps the reader's) about what is valuable in life, what success might consist of and what the purpose of life might be.

The final irony in the story turns on Bateman himself. As Bateman clasps Isabel in his arms, Maugham clearly intends the reader to see a superficial couple dreaming empty, materialistic dreams about the future. The surface meaning of the words does not necessarily suggest this, but when taken in the context of the story as a whole, the ironic intention is clear. And the final words of the story, "Poor Edward," uttered by Isabel, also have a different, ironic meaning for the reader than they do for Isabel.

Narrative Technique

Maugham utilizes the technique of the frame story. This occurs when there is a story within a story. The frame in this story is the Chicago setting with which the narrative begins and ends. It is largely concerned with Bateman's interactions with Isabel. In between is the story of Edward and his Tahitian adventure. The frame story is a common technique in both ancient and modern literature. The best known example is probably Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales.*

Point of View

Maugham adopted, for part of the story, the form of the omniscient third-person narrator, who can see into the minds and emotions of all the characters. However, much of the story is told only through Bateman's point of view. This is known as a limited third-person narrator. The reader only knows events and people as they are seen through the eyes of the viewpoint character. During the part of the narrative set in Tahiti, for example, Edward and Jackson are seen entirely through Bateman's eyes, which adds to their mystery and enables Maugham to deepen the irony on which the meaning of the story rests.

Historical Context

Tahiti

Tahiti was first discovered by Europeans in 1767, in the expedition of the English Captain Samuel Wallis. Louis-Antoine de Bouganville followed in 1768, claiming the island for France. England's Captain James Cook followed in 1769. The island is actually two islands that are joined together by a small isthmus. Papeete, where much of "The Fall of Edward Barnard" takes place, lies on the northwestern coast. It is the biggest town on the island. The island of Moorea (Murea in the story) lies about twelve miles northwest of Tahiti.

Tahiti was ruled by the local Pomare dynasty until 1880, when the French assumed control. (The French influence can be detected in the name of the hotel de la Fleur in the story.) In 1891, the French artist Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) visited Tahiti, and the exotic location gave him inspiration for his art. He remained there for two years and returned in 1895.

Maugham had long read about the South Sea islands and formed a romantic notion of them before his trip there in 1916. When he arrived in Papeete, he noted a strong English and American influence, although there was also a decidedly French flavor, since the island was a French colony. French, as well as English and Tahitian, was spoken by the native people. Maugham noted that the roads were as well kept up as many roads in France and that the marketplace might have been in any French village.

Maugham and his traveling companion, Gerald Haxton, were shown several paintings by Gauguin at a house thirty-five miles from Papeete, one of which Maugham purchased and took back to France. Maugham's novel, *The Moon and Sixpence* (1919) was set largely in Tahiti, with a protagonist modeled on Gauguin.

Maugham also took a boat trip to the island of Murea. This is his description of a native dwelling:

The native houses are oblong, covered with a rough thatch of great leaves, and made of thin bamboos placed close together which let in light and air. There are no windows, but generally two or three doors.

The Short Story

Maugham was influenced by the short stories of the French writer Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893), whom he read when he was young. Maugham admired de Maupassant because the French author knew how to tell an interesting anecdote and all of his stories had a beginning, a middle and an end, and they did not wander—qualities that Maugham's stories also possess. Maugham did, however, fault de Maupassant for being weak on character development.

Maugham points out in his writings about his own craft how his work differs from that of the Russian writer Anton Chekhov (1860-1904), one of the acknowledged masters of the short story genre. Chekhov was very influential on many writers at about the time Maugham was writing his South Sea stories. Although Maugham admired Chekhov, he thought he was not a good storyteller, since he wrote mostly about character and atmosphere and so his stories do not have well-developed plots.

Maugham himself was not an innovator, and he did not develop the short story in the way that some of his contemporaries, such as Virginia Woolf or D. H. Lawrence, did. In terms of their form, his stories belong more to the nineteenth century.

Literature of Colonialism

In his South Sea stories and others set in the East, Maugham stands in the tradition of the literature of colonialism. The major writers in this mode before Maugham were Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) and Joseph Conrad (1857-1924). Kipling was a master of the short story, who lived for seven years in India when it was under British rule. He wrote of the problems encountered by the English colonials who lived in India amongst a subject people. Conrad made effective use of his experiences in Malaya and Africa.

Contemporary with Maugham were writers such as George Orwell, Evelyn Waugh, and Graham Greene, all of whom wrote of the colonial experience from a British point of view. E. M. Forster's novel *A Passage to India* (1924) also deals with similar issues.

Critical Overview

"The Fall of Edward Barnard," as well as many of Maugham's other South Sea stories, were originally published in a commercial magazine. The story then appeared as one of six in the collection *The Trembling of a Leaf: Little Stories of the South Sea Islands* (1921). The volume was popular with the reading public and received some critical acclaim. Louise Maunsell Field, in the *New York Times*, admires Maugham's delineation of character, in which "there is a broader sympathy, a deeper, clearer comprehension, a finer tolerance than any shown in his earlier work." Rebecca West, however, is more critical. Writing in the *New Statesman*, she censures Maugham for a "certain cheap and tiresome attitude towards life, which nearly mars these technically admirable stories." She accuses Maugham of being cynical for satirizing the earnestness of Bateman Hunter in "The Fall of Edward Barnard."

During the 1920s and beyond, in spite of the fact that Maugham's works in many genres enjoyed huge popular success, he was relegated by the British literary intelligentsia to second-rate status. For a while it became fashionable to denigrate his achievements. However, Maugham was more highly regarded in French, German, and American academic circles.

Maugham's South Sea stories have withstood the test of time well. They are often rated as amongst Maugham's best work, and some modern critics have commented directly on "The Fall of Edward Barnard." Stanley Archer describes it as an "ironic and lighthearted sequel to Henry James's novel *The Ambassadors*." Forrest D. Burt draws attention to the similarities between three Maugham characters: Edward in "The Fall of Edward Barnard," Strickland in the novel *The Moon and Sixpence*, and Larry in the novel *The Razor's Edge*. All three characters reject "standard morality and traditional success in favor of the naturalness and spontaneity of life in Tahiti." Finally, Archie K. Loss, in *W. Somerset Maugham*, comments that in all of the South Sea stories, "descriptive details are important in establishing both mood and character."

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2

Critical Essay #1

Aubrey holds a Ph.D. in English and has published many articles on twentieth-century literature. In this essay, Aubrey points out some parallels to the themes of Maugham's story in other literary works.

In his evocation of the naturalness of life in Tahiti as contrasted with the seemingly artificial, pointless life led by many in Chicago, Maugham takes the side of his character Edward. Any doubt about this can be eliminated by consulting Maugham's reflections on his life and career, *The Summing Up* (1938). In section fifty-three, Maugham writes of his experience in the South Seas, saying that his encounter with the East supplied him with "a new self." He had been accustomed to thinking that the most important things in life were art and culture (rather like Isabel in the story). But in the South Seas, he entered a new world in which the people were unlike any he had known before. Few of them had any culture, but they had more vitality than people in the West. They lived a more elemental life and did not disguise themselves with the masks of culture:

They had learnt life in a different school from mine and had come to different conclusions. They led it on a different plane; I could not . . . go on thinking mine a higher one. It was different. Their lives too formed themselves to the discerning eye into a pattern that had order and finally coherence.

This could almost be Edward in the story, trying to explain himself to an uncomprehending Bateman.

In the opposition between nature (Tahiti) and culture (Chicago) that drives the story, "The Fall of Edward Barnard" has many literary echoes. This can be seen not only in the work of other writers of the period who tackled the meeting of East and West (Kipling and Conrad, for example) but also in the themes of the romantic movement in the early nineteenth century. Maugham's back to nature theme might, for example, be illustrated by William Wordsworth's two poems "Expostulation and Reply" and "The Tables Turned" from *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). These poems, like "The Fall of Edward Barnard," contain a dialogue between two men with opposing opinions. One values culture as preserved in books and counsels hard work. The other, who speaks for Wordsworth, finds his fulfillment not in books but in silent communion with nature. He tells his friend to "Come forth into the light of things, / Let Nature be your teacher."

The debate is couched in different terms by Victorian poet Alfred Lord Tennyson, in his two poems "Ulysses" and "The Lotos Eaters," which were inspired by Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*. In "Ulysses," the great virtue is active endeavor. Having returned to his home on Ithaca, Ulysses cannot bear to remain idle. Like the ever-questing, ever-expanding, and progressing Western civilization, he longs to seek out new knowledge and adventures. In "The Lotos Eaters," on the other hand, the people drug themselves into a state of passivity with the fruit of the lotos. They forget their homeland, their own civilization, and are content to rest forever in their calm, dreamy paradise. The two poems illustrate two modes of being, the active and the passive, and in that they

resemble the Chicago and Tahiti of "The Fall of Edward Barnard." Interestingly, this is exactly the position Bateman takes when he tells Edward that his infatuation with the island is like that of a "dope-fiend." He tries to convince Edward that when he gets back to Chicago and pursues an active life again, he will feel relieved to have weaned himself from the drug.

In his use of a framing device to tell his story, Maugham creates yet another literary echo, this time of a common pattern in Shakespearean comedy. In a number of these comedies, the action begins in the real world of the city or court (the equivalent of Chicago in the story) and then moves quickly to a "green world" in which life is lived in a purer way (the equivalent of Tahiti). Finally, the action moves back to the city. This is the pattern found in *As You Like It*, for example. The green world of the Forest of Arden is a place where the characters are freed from their normal social selves and are able to discover deeper values of life, just as Edward and Arnold Jackson do in the "green world" of Tahiti.

The literary echoes in the story are not confined to earlier themes in English literature. The other stories in *The Trembling of a Leaf* (the collection of stories in which "The Fall of Edward Barnard" appears) also provide valuable commentary, pointing up certain themes in the story, modifying our perception of others. For example, "The Fall of Edward Barnard" is the most optimistic story in the collection, and a reader might well suppose that Edward is set for a happy life with his native bride in his South Sea paradise. But reading "Red" and "The Pool" might lessen the reader's belief that such an intercultural marriage can work. In Maugham's stories, fate does not treat lovers with much kindness, and the ultimate results of the encounters between Western men and Eastern women are rarely happy.

In "Red," a young American sailor named Red deserts from his warship and ends up on one of the islands of American Samoa. Like Edward Barnard in Tahiti, Red is enamored of the island, falls in love with a young native girl, and decides to stay. He and the girl live happily for a while, but when a British whaling ship arrives on the island, Red feels a longing for tobacco. Going onto the ship to obtain some, he is kidnapped by the captain who needs an extra hand on board. Many years later, Red, now ugly and fat, returns to the island for one nostalgic visit to the place where he and his girl used to live. The girl is still there but is now an old woman who does not even recognize him.

"The Pool" has an even more negative outcome. Lawson, a young Scotsman in Samoa, falls in love with the island and with a half-caste girl named Ethel. They marry and like Red, are happy for a year or so. But when Ethel gives birth to a son who is dark and looks like a native child, Lawson realizes that the boy will be discriminated against by the whites on the island, so he persuades Ethel to accompany him back to Scotland. But Ethel cannot settle down in the cold climate of Scotland, and as soon as she can, she returns to Samoa with her son. Lawson follows, but he cannot find work on the island and becomes an alcoholic. When he discovers that Ethel is having an affair with another man, he drowns himself in the pool where they first met.

In "Rain," one of Maugham's most famous stories, he develops a theme that is also apparent in "The Fall of Edward Barnard:" a dislike of conventional morality. In the latter story, Arnold Jackson is a man condemned by his society as a cheat and a felon. But Maugham refuses to go along with this judgment. He presents Jackson as a sympathetic figure: kind, generous, and wise. It is the more conventional characters, Bateman and Isabel, who are the object of Maugham's satire.

Maugham's target in "Rain" is the conventional Christian morality of the Davidsons, a missionary couple who are temporarily stranded at Pago-Pago, the capital of American Samoa, on the island of Tutuila. The Davidsons are a dreadful pair. Mrs. Davidson is disgusted by the "natives." She thinks their dancing is immoral, and she and her husband agree that the native dress, a loincloth called a *lava-lava*, is indecent. That too, according to Mrs. Davidson, encourages immorality, and her husband believes that the island will not be Christianized until every boy over ten years old is made to wear trousers. Eventually he cooks up a scheme whereby the natives are fined every time they "sin," and one thing deemed a sin is not wearing trousers. Maugham's biting irony is in fine form here. Interestingly, the same subject comes up in "The Fall of Edward Barnard." Edward and Arnold Jackson feel comfortable wearing the pareo, a loincloth, which is the native costume. But Bateman is embarrassed by the pareo and insists on wearing his high-collared blue serge suit, which seems inappropriate given the local climate. The contrast is part of the nature versus nurture theme. In the more "primitive" society, there is no shame or embarrassment at showing the body, whereas in "civilized" society the body is always covered.

In "Rain," the racism of Mrs. Davidson, who does not trust the natives to do anything right, draws attention to an element that also appears in "The Fall of Edward Barnard," although it is not given great prominence. That element is the disparaging remarks Bateman makes about the native inhabitants of Tahiti. When he notices that the young man who shows him to his hotel has "a good deal of native blood," he involuntarily adopts a haughty manner toward him. Then he refers to one of the customers at the store where Edward works as a "greasy nigger." The racism creeps into little remarks made by Bateman with no ill intent, as when he seeks to reassure Isabel that Edward is a fine fellow: "He's white, through and through." Bateman's racism is unconscious; he has probably never thought much about it. He simply reflects the attitudes that many white people of his time and place shared. They would no more question their belief in white superiority than they would question whether the sun would rise in the morning.

The Davidsons in "Rain" believe in the superiority not only of their race but also of their religion. They also believe in the absolute rightness of their moral principles. But Maugham shows what happens when people get too high and mighty about their own righteousness. The zealous Reverend Davidson is appalled about the presence of a prostitute in the same house where they are staying; he harries and bullies her and cruelly insists that she be put on a ship for San Francisco, even when he knows that she faces a three-year prison term there. He also indulges in long drawn-out prayer sessions with her in order to convert her. But then, one morning, Davidson commits suicide by cutting his own throat. It transpires that in one of his sessions with the

prostitute he had himself fallen prey to lust. Afterwards, he could not live with the knowledge that he had betrayed his own code of behavior.

The moral is that often, underneath the veneer of virtue, lie darker forces that will eventually, when circumstances dictate, rise to the surface. A similar truth emerges in "The Fall of Edward Barnard," although it manifests the other way around. Behind the appearance of vice in Arnold Jackson is a more virtuous self, which life in Tahiti brings to light. Appearances, Maugham seems to be saying, are one thing; reality is another.

On balance, the South Sea stories in *The Trembling of a Leaf* reveal more of the perils than the pleasures that lie in wait for the white man who ventures into one of these apparent tropical paradises. The final example is "Mackintosh." Unlike Edward Barnard, Red, and initially Lawson, Mackintosh hates the Samoan island on which he is an assistant administrator. He does not like the heat, which he would willingly exchange for some cold winds in his native Aberdeen, Scotland, and he is tormented by mosquitoes. (How different this is from the idyllic setting of Tahiti.) He feels like a prisoner on the island. When his boss is killed by the natives whom he regarded as his children, Mackintosh cannot bear the guilt he feels, since he allowed the killer to steal his gun, and he shoots himself.

Maugham never forgot his travels to the East which continued to provide material for his fiction. As late as 1944, in his novel *The Razor's Edge*, he returned to the same theme. Larry, an American from Chicago, travels to India in order to find greater meaning in his life. Like Edward Barnard, he rejects materialism and seeks a more spiritual life. But over the long-term, he does not fare well. Perhaps the reader who enjoyed "The Fall of Edward Barnard" and sympathized with its protagonist can be glad that Maugham chose to pursue Edward's story no further than his early dreams of happiness in the South Seas.

Source: Bryan Aubrey, Critical Essay on "The Fall of Edward Barnard," in *Short Stories for Students*, The Gale Group, 2003.

Critical Essay #2

In the following essay excerpt, Whitehead explores thematic elements in the stories in Maugham's collection The Trembling of a Leaf, *calling "The Fall of Edward Barnard" "pure comedy."*

In the notebooks Maugham brought back from his wartime voyaging in the South Seas were entries relating to other places besides Tahiti, in particular Honolulu and islands in the Samoan group, and these he came to recognize as providing raw material for short stories, a *genre* he had abandoned along with the novel ten years previously on making his breakthrough in the theatre. But the stories suggested by this material would be of a different kind and on an ampler scale than any he had previously attempted. There were eventually six of them, each of between 12,000 and 15,000 words in length, which together made a book about the size of the average novel. *The Trembling of a Leaf* was the first of five volumes published between 1921 and 1932, each containing six short stories of roughly that length. All thirty were issued in one volume in 1934 as Maugham's collected short stories, and they have been included in his subsequent collections; but it is worth stressing at this point how much the reader gains by reading the stories in their original volumes. The six stories in each by supplementing and illuminating one another form a distinct artistic whole, giving a unity of effect which is lost when a particular story is read out of context. In the case of *The Trembling of a Leaf* this effect is enhanced by the stories being prefaced by a sketch of the Pacific and rounded off by an 'Envoi', which do not appear in any of the collected editions. The irony in its sub-title 'Little Stories of the South Sea Islands', which suggests a series of improving tales issued by some missionary society, is only fully borne in on the reader when he has finished the last story.

For Maugham's purpose in these six stories (as well as in those which were to follow) was to explore the extremes of human emotion and behaviour, so that as a matter of course they deal with sex in its less domestic aspects, suicide, and murder. Each has for its skeleton an anecdote with— as Maugham so often insisted—a beginning, a middle and an end; and these bony structures he fleshed out by presenting his main characters in the round against authentically described backgrounds. For equally with Hardy's Wessex fiction they may properly be termed stories of character and environment. There is a further preliminary point to be made. The very readability of Maugham's stories carries with it the inherent risk that the reader will rest content with the superficial pleasures they offer and fail to appreciate their wider points of reference and deeper resonances. 'Mackintosh', the first story in *The Trembling of a Leaf*, furnishes a convenient example of this.

It is set in the fictitious island of Talua in the western part of the Samoan group which, having fallen to Germany's share when Germany and America divided the islands between themselves, was occupied by the British in 1914. It can be inferred that the events described took place two years later, about the time of Maugham's visit to the islands. Despite the story's title its central character is Walker, the 60-year-old, self-made administrator who for a quarter of a century has administered the island with a

rough but benevolent paternalism. Under his coarse banter his assistant Mackintosh, a dour Aberdeen Scot, comes to hate him to such an extent that, though he manages to keep himself under control, his hatred grows into monomania. Walker overreaches himself by his high-handed response to the natives' demand for a fair wage for carrying out a road-making scheme dear to his heart, thereby incurring their enmity as well. Mackintosh, appalled at what he is doing, connives at the theft of his revolver by the chief's son who had instigated the natives' demand and is horrified when Walker is later brought in, dying from bullet wounds. Lying on his bed, Walker calls for whisky and tells Mackintosh he has advised the government in Apia that he is the right man to succeed him in the job of administrator. He asks him to treat the natives fairly: they are children, he says; be firm, kind and just to them. He will not have the crowd round his bed turned out and will not allow anyone to be punished for shooting him; Mackintosh is to say it was an accident.

'You're a religious chap, Mac. What's that about forgiving them? You know.'

'Forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

'That's right. Forgive them . . . '

When Walker dies Mackintosh goes out, gets his revolver (which has been silently returned to him), walks down to the sea and, wading out into the lagoon where he had been swimming when the story begins, shoots himself.

The authenticity of background, on which the effectiveness of this and later Eastern stories depends, is achieved by the process of restraint Maugham imposed on himself. He did not attempt to give more than an intelligent traveller's account of the places in which they are set, nor give the natives parts to play in them that would have demanded a greater knowledge of their customs and language than he possessed—in this avoiding the blunder that falsifies much of Conrad's early work. Maugham's principal characters are European or white American about whom he could write with the authority conferred by sharing a common culture with them; and during his travels he learnt just enough about the places where his stories are located and of their inhabitants to provide the exotic context in which the principal characters could give rein to their idiosyncrasies. As to wider points of reference and deeper resonances, the analogy of the theme of 'Mackintosh', of which sufficient hints are given and which underpins the drama enacted on the island of Talua, is Christ's betrayal by Judas Iscariot. Much of the story's impact is missed if the reader fails to detect this.

No sacred parallel need be sought to the theme of 'The Fall of Edward Barnard' which, in strong contrast to the previous story, is pure comedy. It tells how the beautiful Isabel Longstaffe, a member of a Chicago brahmin family, finding herself rejected by her fiancé Barnard who opts for a lotus life in Tahiti with Eva a half-caste girl—a goddess of the Polynesian spring, expert in mixing cocktails— settles for his best friend Bateman Hunter, a substantial dollar-bringing male virgin. The story with its edge of good-humoured satire is deftly constructed by means of unobtrusive flashbacks and has the additional interest that, twenty years after it was written, its three principal characters

were to be reincarnated in Isobel Bradley, Larry Darrell and Gray Maturin in Maugham's last major novel *The Razor's Edge*. It is not until the reader has read a later story in *The Trembling of a Leaf* called 'The Pool' that a doubt as to the permanence of Barnard's idyll with Eva enters his mind, as it is likely Maugham intended it should.

The third story in the volume 'Red' is put together like a Chinese nest of boxes. All that 'happens' in it—the outer box—is that on the arrival of a shabby schooner smelling of paraffin and copra at an unnamed island in the Samoan group, off its usual run between Apia and Pago-Pago, the skipper, elderly and gross, goes ashore and calls on Neilson, a Swede living in a bungalow there, who tells him the story of the people who had lived there before. The skipper leaves to go about his business, and Neilson decides to return to Europe. The next box enclosed by the outer one is an account of Neilson's earlier history, how he had come to the island twenty-five years before for the sake of his health, having been told he had only a year to live, and been so overwhelmed by the beauty of the island that he determined to spend it there. Eying the repellent obesity of the skipper, he asks him if he had known a man called Red but gives him no chance to reply. The third box inside the other two is the story Neilson tells him of Red, 22 years old and a deserter from an American man-of-war, a comely youth who arrives on the island in a dugout from the native cutter in which he had escaped from Apia and is sheltered by Sally, a beautiful native girl. They fall in love and go to live in a hut on the creek where Neilson's bungalow stands. After an idyllic year together Red is shanghai'd aboard a British whalingship. Broken-hearted, Sally waits month after month for his return and four months after his disappearance bears his stillborn child. Neilson's thoughts wander back to his own part in the story— the next in smallness of the boxes —for two years afterwards he had fallen in love with Sally and married her, only to learn with anguish that she was still in love with Red and waited only for his return. For many years now they had lived in mutual indifference, she having aged prematurely as native women do. Red should be grateful, he tells the skipper, that fate had separated him from Sally while their love was still at its height. Suddenly suspicious, he asks him his name, and just as the skipper has admitted that for thirty years he has been known in the islands as Red, a stout, grey-haired native woman comes in, makes a commonplace remark to Neilson, glances indifferently at the skipper and goes out. The smallest box at the centre of the story is this moment of truth when Red and Sally are brought face to face and do not know each other.

'The Pool' is Maugham's first attempt to describe what happens when a European—in this case Lawson the manager of an English bank in Apia— marries a half-caste girl. Ethel, one of several children by native women begotten by a Norwegian adventurer, though able to wear European clothes with elegance prefers putting on a mother hubbard and swimming in a pool of the river a mile or two out of town. When Lawson takes her and their dismayingly dark-coloured son to Scotland she soon begins to pine and unable to bear it returns home with the child. Lawson follows, and while Ethel relapses more and more into her native background, he takes to drink, descending from job to job until he is glad to work for a half-caste store-keeper. On hearing she has taken a fat, elderly German American as her lover, he drowns himself in the pool where she is accustomed to swim. In writing the story Maugham moved from first-person-singular to third-person-singular narration and back again, a proceeding so unobtrusively

accomplished that it is not until he has reached the end that the reader finds himself wondering how certain incidents could have been known to the narrator.

Maugham took a chance of a different kind when constructing 'Honolulu', about the bewitching of the English skipper of a small Chinese-owned schooner plying between Honolulu and the islands. It is the first of his stories to open with a leisurely introduction written in the first person singular as if he were embarking on an essay. There follows an account of his being taken on a tour of the city by an American friend who in the Union Saloon (where Stevenson used to drink with King Kalakaua) introduces him to Captain Butler. Having been presented at length with what amounts to a factual travelogue, the reader is the more ready to swallow the tall story of black magic told to the narrator by Butler after dinner that evening aboard his schooner. The story has an effective surprise ending, though the reader who cares to look back to see how Maugham laid the trap will find that he permitted himself to play a trick which in a detective story would be considered against the rules.

The last of the six stories in *The Trembling of a Leaf* (though the first to be written) is 'Rain', which by way of stage and four film adaptations has become one of the best known of all Maugham's stories. In wartime a ship bound for Apia is detained at Pago-Pago because a crew member had contracted measles, a disease often fatal to Kanakas. Among the passengers are Sadie Thompson an American prostitute, who had joined the ship at Honolulu where she had been plying her trade in Iwelei, its Red Light district, and the high-minded missionary Davidson and his wife. Putting up in inadequately furnished rooms in a two-story frame house belonging to a half-caste, the respectable passengers—their nerves already frayed by the incessant rattling of the rain on the iron roof—are outraged by the wheezy strains of a gramophone playing ragtime and the sounds of dancing and popping corks coming from Miss Thompson's room, indicating that she is in business again. The story moves to its climax as Davidson attempts to bring her to repentance, using as his ultimate weapon the threat of having her deported to San Francisco where a three-year gaol sentence awaits her. The last stage of their duel so strongly resembles the inquisitor's struggle for the soul of the Maid in *St. Joan* (written in 1923) that it is difficult to resist the inference either that Shaw was influenced by Maugham's story or that Maugham had some earlier account of St. Joan's trial in mind when he devised 'Rain'. However that may be, an awareness of the parallel gives the story an added depth.

Source: John Whitehead, "Between the Wars: Far East," in *Maugham: A Reappraisal*, Vision Press Ltd., 1987, pp. 80-114.

Topics for Further Study

Which is more important in shaping a person's personality: his genetic inheritance or his social environment? In other words, is "nurture" more important than "nature," as the story would seem to suggest? If so, are people no more than the products of their environment? How might you be different had you grown up in a different environment?

Research the topic of intercultural marriage. What are some of the problems typically encountered by people marrying someone from a different culture?

Do you think that Edward made the right choice or is Bateman right in thinking that he is wasting his life? Can their different sets of values be reconciled, or must a person always choose one or the other? Can one have what Edward wants— beauty, truth, and goodness—as well as the material values of American life?

Research the effects of the French colonization of Tahiti and other South Sea islands. What were the effects of colonialism? Were the islands helped or hindered by it? What role do the French play in French Polynesia today?

In 1995 and 1996, there were riots in Tahiti over the issue of French nuclear testing in the region, which had been going on since 1966. Research this issue. What were the rights and wrongs involved?

Compare and Contrast

1920s: Because of its excellent harbor, Papeete, the largest town in Tahiti, has been a center of trade since the nineteenth century. Products shipped from Papeete include copra, sugarcane, vanilla, and coffee. The port is also used often by whaling ships, and it is the seat of the French governor.

Today: With its modern harbor and airport, Papeete is a major tourist destination and a center of transpacific trade. It is also the seat of the Territorial Assembly, which is the legislative body of French Polynesia. The Assembly consists of forty-one members elected by popular vote. French Polynesia is made up of 130 South Pacific islands, which together constitute a French Overseas Territory. Tahiti, the largest island, has been fully in charge of its internal affairs since 1984. The Territory as a whole has benefited from a five-year development agreement with France that from 1994 to 1998 created many new jobs.

1920s: Chicago is a rapidly growing city. In 1920, the population is 2,701,705; by 1930, this figure climbs to 3,376,438. Chicago also gains a reputation as a lawless city, typified by the activities of the gangster Al Capone. During the 1920s, Capone controls the gambling industry, brothels, nightclubs, distilleries, and breweries. His income is reported to be $100 million.

Today: In 2000, the population of Chicago is 2,896,016. The population had been falling steadily since the 1950s, but it stabilized in the 1990s. The Sears Tower, built in 1973, is the tallest building in North America and the third tallest in the world. It is 1,450 feet tall (a quarter of a mile), with 110 stories. Chicago has three of the fifteen tallest buildings in the world. In addition to the Sears Tower, these are the Aon Center and the John Hancock Center.

1920s: Colonization by European countries of much of Asia and Africa continues to produce literature written by members of the colonizing nations in which they report and reflect on the colonial experience. Writers such as Maugham, George Orwell, Evelyn Waugh, and E. M. Forster make their mark in this field.

Today: The age of colonialism is over, and a new genre of literature, known as postcolonial literature, has sprung up. The term refers to literature written mostly by African and Asian authors in the period following their nations' independence from the colonizing European powers. Examples of postcolonial literature include Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India*, V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*, and Vikram Chandra's *Red Earth and Pouring Rain.*

Further Study

Brander, L. *Somerset Maugham: A Guide*, Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1963.

This concise guide to the whole of Maugham's work includes a chapter on the short stories. In his comments on "The Fall of Edward Barnard," Brander emphasizes the return to nature theme.

Curtis, Anthony, *Somerset Maugham*, Macmillan, 1977.

This well-illustrated book attempts to give a broadbrush portrait of the writer and his world.

Morgan, Ted, *Maugham: A Biography*, Simon and Schuster, 1980.

This is the most reliable and complete biography of Maugham. Morgan discusses Maugham's fiction and plays in detail and shows how the events of Maugham's life are reflected in his work.

Raphael, Frederic, *W. Somerset Maugham and His World*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977.

This overview of Maugham's life and work contains 110 illustrations.

Whitehead, John, *Maugham: A Reappraisal*, Barnes and Noble, 1987.

Whitehead attempts a close scrutiny of all of Maugham's works, declaring that although many of them are ephemeral, Maugham at his best ranks with the great novelists of the early twentieth century. Whitehead also regards Maugham's Eastern stories as his finest and rates them as highly as Kipling's Indian stories.

Bibliography

Archer, Stanley, *W. Somerset Maugham: A Study of the Short Fiction*, Twayne Publishers, 1993, p. 26.

Burt, Forrest D., W. *Somerset Maugham*, Twayne's United States Author Series, No. 399, Twayne Publishers, 1993, p. 106.

Field, Louise Maunsell, Review of *The Trembling of a Leaf*, in *W. Somerset Maugham: The Critical Heritage*, edited by Anthony Curtis and John Whitehead, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987, pp. 148-51; originally published in the *New York Times*, November 20, 1921.

Loss, Archie K., "W. Somerset Maugham," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 162: *British Short-Fiction Writers, 1915-1945*, edited by John H. Rogers, Gale Research, 1996, pp. 227-39.

_____, *W. Somerset Maugham*, Ungar, 1987, p. 78.

Maugham, W. Somerset, *The Summing Up*, in *The Maugham Reader*, Doubleday, 1950, p. 608.

_____, *The Trembling of a Leaf: Little Stories of the South Sea Islands*, Replica Books, 2002.

_____, *A Writer's Notebook*, Heinemann, 1949, p. 138.

West, Rebecca, Review of *The Trembling of a Leaf*, in *W. Somerset Maugham: The Critical Heritage*, edited by Anthony Curtis and John Whitehead, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987, pp. 153-54; originally published in *New Republic*, November 5, 1921.

Wordsworth, William, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads*, edited by R. L. Brett and A. R. Jones, Methuen, 1965, p. 105.

Copyright Information

This Premium Study Guide is an offprint from *Short Stories for Students*.

Project Editor
David Galens

Editorial
Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

Research
Michelle Campbell, Nicodemus Ford, Sarah Genik, Tamara C. Nott, Tracie Richardson

Data Capture
Beverly Jendrowski

Permissions
Mary Ann Bahr, Margaret Chamberlain, Kim Davis, Debra Freitas, Lori Hines, Jackie Jones, Jacqueline Key, Shalice Shah-Caldwell

Imaging and Multimedia
Randy Bassett, Dean Dauphinais, Robert Duncan, Leitha Etheridge-Sims, Mary Grimes, Lezlie Light, Jeffrey Matlock, Dan Newell, Dave Oblender, Christine O'Bryan, Kelly A. Quin, Luke Rademacher, Robyn V. Young

Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

For more information, contact
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535
Or you can visit our Internet site at
http://www.gale.com

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Short Stories for Students (SSfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, SSfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of SSfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of SSfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in SSfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by SSfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

SSfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Short Stories for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SSfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SSfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Short Stories for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Short Stories for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from SSfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Short Stories for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from SSfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Short Stories for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of SSfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Short Stories for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of SSfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Short Stories for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Short Stories for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535