The Leopard Study Guide

The Leopard by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa

BOOKRAGS

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Plot Summary

The Leopard is the story of a middle-aged, Sicilian aristocrat caught in the middle of a political and personal revolution. As his influence and status are eroded in the wake of a working class rebellion, his sense of status and self-importance is eroded in the wake of his personal encounters with ambitious members of the working class and with his own superficiality. As the narrative follows the aristocrat, known as the Prince, to the ultimate confrontation with the inevitable and universal process of change, it develops themes relating to the shallowness of religious faith and the futile power of money.

This novel, set in 1860's Sicily (a time of considerable socio-political upheaval), follows the life and career of Prince Fabrizio de Salinas, or simply the Prince as he's referred to throughout the novel. The narrative begins with a description of what, for the Prince, is a normal evening - prayers with his family, fondly exasperated worries about a beloved nephew, a walk with his joyful dog, and visits from his crafty tenants. All the while, however, his generally easy temper is put on edge by awareness that change is in the wind - there is a revolution brewing, in which his nephew is participating and which, he (the Prince) fears will result in the eventual loss of his status. Throughout the novel, he struggles to convince himself that this loss, this fundamental change in the nature of his existence, is inevitable, necessary, and good. Later events, however, make that difficult.

Those events include the revolution itself, which takes place at a geographical distance, but which hit close to home. His nephew comes home from battle wounded, his (the Prince's) freedom to travel now comes at the cost of considerable negotiations and considerable bribes, and his economic and social status are both equaled by a ruthless middle-class merchant. The daughter of that merchant, meanwhile, attracted by the nephew's upper-class social standing, works towards attracting and marrying the nephew. At the same time, uncle and nephew, both attracted to the daughter's seemingly endless monetary resources, work towards the same end. Caught in the middle of their manipulations is the Prince's daughter, in love with the nephew but discarded when her perceptive, pointed, thoughtless comments about what she sees as bad behavior quite literally push him into the arms of the merchant's daughter.

The nephew and the merchant's daughter delude themselves that they're deeply in love and truly meant for each other, but narration makes it clear that they are in the relationship solely for what they can get from each other. Meanwhile, the fathers of the bride and the groom negotiate a marriage arrangement, and the Prince's daughter withdraws into a shell of bitterness and resentment. The Prince, too, begins to withdraw from both the high class social life in which he once rejoiced and from life itself. As his body begins to shut down, so do his emotional resistances to the processes of change that are resulting in his social life becoming repugnantly shallow and superficial to him. Finally, he succumbs to the ultimate, and most inevitable, process of change there is, surrendering his physical life to what he perceives as the true, transcendent, ultimate source of joy.

The novel's final chapter narrates an incident in the late life of the Prince's daughter, in which she comes to realize that the incidents that led her to disdain her one-time beloved and to a life of bitterness were, in fact, the result of a misunderstanding. She comes to realize that she has lost an opportunity for joy, and that the time has come to get rid of all her bitterness and anger. The novel's final image is one of rejection of the past and simultaneous willingness to at least begin to move on, a final manifestation of the book's over-arching theme relating to the inevitability of change and the potential for joy inherent in embracing it rather than struggling against it.

Chapter 1, Part 1

Chapter 1, Part 1 Summary

This novel is the story of a middle-aged, Sicilian aristocrat caught in the middle of a political and personal revolution. As his influence and status are eroded in the wake of a working class rebellion, his sense of status and self-importance is eroded in the wake of his personal encounters with ambitious members of the working class, and with his own superficiality. As the narrative follows the aristocrat, known as the Prince, to the ultimate confrontation with the inevitable and universal process of change, it develops themes relating to the shallowness of religious faith and the futile power of money.

The first chapter is set in May of 1860.

"Introduction to the Prince", pp. 9-29. This chapter begins with a detailed description of the exquisitely-decorated room where the Prince and his family say their daily prayers. After the prayers are finished, the Prince (Fabrizio de Salina) wanders out into the garden, where the sickly, over-ripe smells of lush foliage threaten to overwhelm him with memories - specifically, of a dead soldier, who, in his last moments, had clawed his way into the garden and died there. He recalls the specific, gut-spilled details of the soldier's body, recollections that lead him to a brief contemplation of death (see "Quotes", p. 15). The Prince, perturbed by these thoughts, takes refuge in watching his dog, Bendico, joyfully dig up the garden, and in contemplation of the behavior of his wayward nephew, Tancredi.

At dinner, the Prince's family is aware that he is perturbed, and stays quiet. At one point, he angrily announces his decision to go into Palermo. The adults at the table, including the Princess and the Priest, know that the only reason he's going is to be with his mistress. As the Prince is driven in his carriage into the city, he passes Tancredi's villa, worrying again that Tancredi's fallen in with bad company (see "Quotes", p. 24) - specifically, with the rebels fighting the authority of the king and aristocracy. The military guardsmen, posted to prevent the entrance of the rebels, pass him freely into the city, where he makes his way to the home of his mistress. His thoughts veer back and forth between anticipation and self-loathing, between disgust with the Princess (who crosses herself whenever he has an orgasm) and self-righteousness at her prudery. Two hours later, his thoughts run a similar course, with the addition of a kind of disgusted satisfaction with his mistress and a satisfied disgust with his own body. He is driven back to the villa, again passes the bonfires and again worries about Tancredi. When he arrives back home, he finds the Princess in bed, thinks affectionately of her, climbs into bed with her, and finds he can't sleep. "Towards dawn, however," narration states, "the Princess had occasion to make the sign of the Cross."

Chapter 1, Part 1 Analysis

The first element to note about this chapter is its exploration of the novel's central character, the Prince. He is portrayed here, at the start of his spiritual and ultimately physical transformation, as autocratic, moody, and self-indulgent. There are hints, however, that he has a degree of sensitivity to the concerns of at least one other person - Tancredi, his troublesome ward. The Prince's complicated relationship with his poor but charismatic nephew is one of the novel's key ongoing narrative lines, and plays out within the context of another - the historically accurate socio-political revolution going on in Sicily and Italy at the time in which the novel is set. Both narrative lines manifest the novel's central theme - the inevitability of change. For consideration of this aspect to the novel, see "Themes - The Inevitable Process of Change."

Symbolic elements introduced in this first chapter include the reference to Bendico, the Prince's carefree canine companion and a symbol throughout these early chapters of carefree joy (in the final chapter, Bendico - or rather, the rug made from his skin, becomes a symbol of the deteriorative property of longing for LOST joy). Other symbolic elements are the leopard on the ceiling (which represents the Prince's image of himself, of his family, and of his family's place in the world), and Palermo, which symbolizes the Prince's animalistic, sensual side. The Prince tries to inhibit these animalistic opportunities (such as time with his mistress); he eventually loses those carnal urges as a result of age. Finally, there is the vivid image of the gut-spilled soldier, representing both the military/revolutionary conflict surrounding the Prince and the way the "guts" of his self-identity are "spilled" as the result of the revolution's resolution in favor of the rebels.

Chapter 1, Part 2

Chapter 1, Part 2 Summary

"Introduction to the Prince," pp. 29-48. The Prince's morning shave is interrupted by the arrival of Tancredi, who jokes with him about his visit to the city - Tancredi was at the guard post and saw him arrive. Tancredi also reveals his relationship with the rebels has deepened. The Prince suddenly imagines his beloved nephew dead in the garden with his guts trailing out like the rebel, and attempts to talk him away from the rebels. But Tancredi says he's fighting for a good reason. "If we want things to stay as they are," he says, "things have to change." Later, as the Prince gets dressed, he realizes the wisdom of Tancredi's words, and that he and his nephew are more aristocratically like-minded than he thought.

After breakfast, the Prince (accompanied by the playful Bendico) goes into his office, which is lined with century-old paintings of the family's territory (see "Quotes", p. 33). As he sits at his cluttered desk, the Prince recalls how much he dislikes both the room and the work it represents. This dislike intensifies during visits from his accountant and one of his tenants, both of whom are allied with the rebels and both of whom assure him that the revolution will be peaceful and ultimately result in benefits for everyone, including the Prince. The Prince allows himself to be reassured, realizing that what makes him the aristocrat he is will remain unchanged no matter what.

The Prince's subsequent visit to Pirrone, atop a tower where the men practice their joint hobby of astronomy, reinforces this belief. Pirrone insists that the revolution will eventually result in the destruction of the church, with its wealth and property (like that of aristocrats like the Prince, he points out) to be distributed among the rebels. The Prince assures him that the transformations of time are inevitable, and while the Church is desperate to hold on to its status, to attempt to do so is foolish. Both angry and both resentful, the Prince and Pirrone take refuge in conversation on the safe topic of the stars, with "the bluster of the one and the blood on the other merg[ing] into tranquil harmony. The real problem," narration continues, "is how to go on living this life of the spirit in its most sublimated moments, those moments that are most like death."

At lunch, the Prince becomes aware that his family is worried about Tancredi, and the Prince makes an effort to appear simultaneously concerned and reassuring. When dessert is brought out, he is surprised and pleased to see it's his favorite - a large, castle-shaped jelly. Narration describes how the castle is essentially demolished before Paolo, the Prince's son and heir, gets a chance to have any. After lunch the Prince returns to the office, where he finds that two of his tenants have come with his share of their product - a particular cheese, which the Prince hates, slaughtered lambs, whose spilled guts remind the Prince of the soldier's, and a cluster of hysterical chickens. He gives orders for everything to be disposed of, for the windows to be opened to let out the smell, and for Ferrera to write out receipts.

That evening, the Prince receives a letter urging him to flee to safety from the revolution. In response, he simply laughs. Later, as the family gathers to say their prayers, the Prince reads in a newspaper of the approach of Garibaldi, a rebel leader. The Prince is disturbed, but reassures himself that Garibaldi will be reigned in.

Chapter 1, Part 2 Analysis

The first part of this section of the book introduces Tancredi, the narrative's second-most important character. In many ways, he functions as an antagonist to the Prince, with both his actions and his beliefs triggering and deepening the process of change taking place within the Prince. It's interesting to note, meanwhile, that in some ways, Tancredi comes across as somewhat undeveloped - his actual appearances are relatively few early in the novel, and even later in the narrative when events in his life take focus, relatively few aspects to his personality are explored. On one level, this lack of development is, in fact, defining - he is clearly superficial and shallow. On another, and more technical, level, the lack of development makes Tancredi one of those characters that's important because he's thought about a great deal by other characters and considerably affects developments in both other characters and the plot, rather than actually participating much in the story. This is true not only of his relationship with the Prince, but of his relationship with Concetta. Meanwhile, for consideration of Tancredi's enigmatic and thematically relevant comments to his uncle, see "Topics for Discussion - "Discuss Tancredi's comments...").

The stars, as discussed in "Objects/Places," are an important symbol in both the Prince's life and the novel exploring his life. They are a touchstone of stability; their lack of change becomes a means by which the Prince measures and feels the changes in his world. The stars are a representation of the eternity he longs for, but knows deep in his body and soul he can never truly be part of. Meanwhile, the Prince's debate with Pirrone beneath the stars can be seen as encapsulating the novel's central thematic point about the inevitability of change. The question arising here is whether the Prince truly believes what he's saying at this point in his life— he certainly comes to believe it later, or whether he's still trying to convince himself that he, his family, and his way of living/thinking/believing are going to remain unchanged despite the revolution.

The concluding section of Chapter 1 is more notable for the symbols it develops rather than events in the plot - although the reference to Garibaldi, the real-life rebel leader, who led the real-life revolution fictionalized throughout the novel, certainly qualifies as an important element of the plot. The most notable of these symbols is the jellied castle. Its very nature symbolizes the unstable nature of the aristocracy in general and of the Prince's position in particular, while the fact that it's essentially destroyed before the Prince's heir gets any symbolizes and foreshadows the way the Prince's position and authority will themselves be destroyed before Paolo gets to reap the benefits. Meanwhile, the tributes received by the Prince symbolically embody his fears of what's going to happen to him after the revolution - he will be given, essentially, rewards that are dead and worthless to him.

Chapter 2, Part 1

Chapter 2, Part 1 Summary

This chapter is set three months later, in August of 1860.

"Donnafugata," pp. 49 - 63. Narration describes how the Prince, his faithful dog, and his squabbling family arrive after a long hot drive at their country farm on the way to their estate at Donnafugata. As lunch is prepared, using water from the farm's well (see "Quotes", p. 50), narration describes the harsh song of cicadas as "a death rattle from parched Sicily at the end of August vainly awaiting rain."

As the Prince travels on to Donnafugata, he and the narration reflect on how the revolution had taken place, how the citizens of Palermo rejoiced, and how local leaders of the revolution had come to the Prince's palace and treated him with respect (one even flirting with Concetta). Narration also describes how the Prince had been having bad dreams (see "Quotes", p.56), and how "with the rising of the sun" (see "Objects/Places - The Sun"), the dreams and the fears triggered by them had faded.

As his entourage draws nearer to Donnafugata, the Prince anticipates his usual warm welcome. The welcome is indeed warm, with both the officials of the town, including the new mayor, Don Calogero, and its citizens, including the church organist, Don Ciccio, greeting the aristocratic family as gladly as always. Narration describes the Prince's graciousness, the Princess' fatigue, and the somewhat seductive way Tancredi brushes flies away from Concetta's face. After the service, the Princess invites the officials to the traditional first night dinner, with Don Calogero asking to bring his daughter Angelica instead of his wife. As the Prince gives his consent, the Prince also invites the villagers to visit later in the evening. "And the Prince," narration says, "who had found Donnafugata unchanged, was found very much changed himself; for never before would he have issued so cordial an invitation: and from that moment, invisibly, began the decline of his prestige."

As the Prince inspects his property and possessions, the manager lists everything that's been done to keep the estate in order, and then passes on some local news - Calogero, who was active in the revolution, has become a wealthy landowner and businessman, to the point where he has almost as much money as the Prince. He adds that Angelica, Calogero's daughter, has become quite full of herself as a result, and the Prince wonders what dinner will be like with the two of them there. He realizes that he is somewhat resentful of Calogero's status, but narration comments "deep down he had foreseen such things; they were the price to be paid." He then goes into the house for a nap and a bath before dinner.

Chapter 2, Part 1 Analysis

The novel's central narrative conflict, between the process of change and those such as the Prince. who simultaneously acknowledge and resist that change, becomes active in this section. Up to now, that conflict has been played out with relative subtlety, indeed in almost theoretical terms. The Prince has never actually been confronted by a manifestation of the revolution. With the appearance of Calogero and his daughter, he is actually confronted by those who both embody the revolution, i.e., the process of change, and benefit from it.

It's important to note here that while Calogero and his daughter don't actually appear until the following chapter, the idea of them is portrayed in this section as almost as much of a threat as the reality of them.

At this point, the narrative theme and plot begin to entwine, each defining and reinforcing the other. Meanwhile, the Prince again appears to be rationalizing the conflict, perhaps in an effort to protect himself from both its inevitable results and the fear of those manifestations.

Other important elements developed in this section include the ultimately tragic relationship between Tancredi and Concetta and the reference to the toxic water in the well, foreshadowing the toxic appearances of Calogero and Angelica.

Chapter 2, Part 2

Chapter 2, Part 2 Summary

"Donnafugata", pp. 63 - 75. The Prince's bath is interrupted by the sudden, urgent arrival of Pirrone, who, in spite of being embarrassed at seeing the Prince naked, nevertheless passes on his message. Concetta, fearful of her father's reaction, has asked Pirrone to tell the Prince that she is in love with Tancredi, that she believes he is in love with her, that she believes he's about to propose, and that she wants to know what she is to say in response. Narration describes how the Prince's fondness for his daughter is based in her apparent submissiveness and placidity, but that he's missed the occasional flash of steel will in her eyes when she doesn't get what she wants. Narration also describes his thoughts of Tancredi, whom he believes is destined for great things - things that will require more money than Concetta will bring to her marriage. Keeping his thoughts to himself, the Prince tells Pirrone to tell Concetta that the Prince will discuss it with her later - when he's sure "it's not all just the fancy of a romantic girl."

After a nap, the Prince goes out into the garden, where his contemplations of an erotic statue are interrupted by Tancredi's teasing comments about sanctified and unsanctified sex, comments which he also applies to a small crop of beautifully ripe peaches in a nearby grove. The Prince uneasily changes the subject, and he and Tancredi gossip their way back to the house, where they join the rest of the family and as some of the already-arrived dinner guests in the house. Soon after, Calogero arrives, and the Prince is relieved to see that he's dressed very badly. His relief ends abruptly when Angelica arrives - he finds her attractive enough to feel a stir of sexual attraction. Tancredi, unusually for a young man so fond of female beauty, merely returns to his conversation, but Pirrone, looking through his Bible, spends the rest of the evening reading the stories of Delilah, Judith and Esther, all women who enjoyed the sensual company of men and who manipulated them to advantage.

Chapter 2, Part 2 Analysis

This section of the book contains several references to sensuality - the Prince's bath is described in some detail, as is the erotic statue and the sensual appeal of the peaches. Also, the narrative's comments on the Prince's nakedness and on his reaction to Angelica, as well as on Pirrone's Bible reading, all suggest an atmosphere of lush indulgence in physicality. This foreshadows both the events and the writing of the following section and of Chapter 4, Part 2, in which the sensuality of the atmosphere at Donnafugata plays a more significant role in the action.

Also in this section, the principal subplot of the tragic relationship between Concetta and Tancredi develops further. The term "tragic" is used here in the classical, traditional sense - specifically in reference to the ignoble end of a once noble character as the

result of an essential flaw in that character. In this case, the character in question is Concetta, whose beauty and grace and dignity have been portrayed sketchily but clearly, and whose love for Tancredi is wholesomely free from the sensuality and greed of his relationship with Angelica. Her flaw, in the tragic sense, is her pride - pride is what brings about the confrontations she has with Tancredi in the following section, and ultimately her unhappy adulthood and old age as portrayed in the novel's final chapter. For consideration of the relationship between the Concetta sub-plot and the main plot involving the Prince, see "Topics for Discussion - In what ways ..."

Finally, the reference to the Prince's awareness of what/who Tancredi requires in a marriage indicates that he has a clear and strong streak of pragmatism, a piece of evidence that suggests his attitude towards the inevitability of change in general, and towards the revolution in particular, is on some level actually genuine.

Chapter 2, Part 3

Chapter 2, Part 3 Summary

"Donnafugata", pp. 75 - 85. Narration of this section begins with a detailed, sensual description of the dinner's first course. As the guests each enjoy their food, narration comments that they did so "because sensuality was circulating in the room..." This sensuality, narration adds, emanates from Angelica, who flirts openly with Tancredi - who, in his turn, finds himself attracted to both Angelica's beauty and her money. For her part, Concetta is furious (see "Quotes", p. 77), and at the conclusion of dinner, as Tancredi flirtatiously tells the enraptured Angelica stories from his revolutionary battles, including a raucous story about an incursion into a convent in the company of a man named Tassoni, Concetta berates him for being bad mannered.

The following day, the Prince and his family uphold a centuries-old family tradition and visit a convent founded by a female ancestor. Narration details the reasons why the Prince is one of only two men allowed to enter the convent. While everyone is waiting for admission, Tancredi suddenly announces his wish to go into the convent as well, saying that a particular interpretation of the rules would allow it. Before the Prince can respond, Concetta makes cutting comments about how Tancredi has already been in a convent (in the story he told Angelica at dinner the night before). Before Tancredi can respond, and before the Prince can absorb the meaning of Concetta's words, the nuns open the door. After his visit, the Prince is surprised to learn that Tancredi has left supposedly because Tancredi suddenly remembered an urgent letter he had to send.

After returning from the convent, the Prince looks out his window at Donnafugata's town square and sees Tancredi, dressed in what Tancredi has previously described as his "seduction color," carrying a box of peaches (from the grove visited in Chapter 2 Part 2) and knocking on the door of the house where Angelica lives with her father the mayor.

Chapter 2, Part 3 Analysis

There are several noteworthy elements in this section. The first is the sensual quality of the writing - here as in the previous chapter and in Chapter 4, Part 2, the writing is as seductively thrilling, and thrillingly seductive, as the events described. The second important element is the developments in the Tancredi/Concetta subplot, which are played out with relative subtlety but which prove to be profoundly significant in terms of developments in these characters' later lives. That significance, however, only becomes apparent in the novel's final chapter—the story of the invasion of the convent, Concetta's comments during the visit to the second convent, and the reference to Tassoni foreshadow Tassoni's appearance in the novel's final moments where the meaning of all these incidents becomes clear.

Other noteworthy elements include the vivid demonstration of the Prince's aristocratic self-absorption. Specifically, because he's so involved in his own attractions to/desires for Angelica, he has no clue of what's really going on between any of the young people. This aspect of his character contrasts clearly and vividly with the streak of pragmatism evident in him in the previous chapter, making him contradictory, complex, and ultimately all too human.

Chapter 3, Part 1

Chapter 3, Part 1 Summary

This chapter is set two months later, in October 1860.

"The Troubles of Don Fabrizio," pp 86 - 104. This chapter begins with a lyrically-written introduction to the silent, still, dim, early morning world at Donnafugata in which the Prince likes to walk with Bendico. (see "Quotes", p. 87). Narration then describes how Tancredi writes every week, but never to Concetta and always with comments that he would like the Prince to pass on to Angelica, who, in turn, visits every day, pretending to come to see the girls but in reality to learn news of Tancredi. All the while, Prince is becoming more and more uneasy with the unaccustomed tact he has to employ with the rest of the family and with the world at large since the revolution. Narration likens his unease to that of a modern man accustomed to leisurely trips in a small airplane who suddenly finds him on a fast trip in a jet.

One particular day a letter arrives from Tancredi in which he asks the Prince to ask Angelica's father for permission for Tancredi to marry her. He uses several arguments to convince the Prince to do so, among them being she will bring money into the family and guarantee that the family will continue to have status in the post-revolutionary society. The Prince finds himself agreeing with many of Tancredi's points, and takes a little second-hand sensual pleasure in knowing that he'll soon be able to enjoy seeing Angelica more often. The next morning, the Prince, in the company of his usual morning companions, Don Ciccio (the organist) and Bendico, takes his gun with him on his walk and shoots a rabbit. "The animal," narration states, "had died tortured by anxious hopes of salvation, imagining it could still escape when it was already caught, just like so many human beings." Later, the Prince and Ciccio eat their picnic lunch and settle down for a nap - with narration describing how, at that same moment, Garibaldi and his rebels were fighting hard, but feeling the breeze passing over the Prince, ruffling their hair as well. Instead of sleeping, however, the Prince finds himself contemplating the recent Plebiscite of Unification, which is a vote taken on the question of whether Sicily should politically join with Italy. The Prince remembers how windy and dusty it was on the day of the vote, and how he couldn't decide which way to mark his ballot. Eventually he voted "yes," and then recalls the excitement that greeted the result - a unanimous vote in favor.

Chapter 3, Part 1 Analysis

There are several important elements in this section. The first is the development of the Concetta/Tancredi plot, which both triggers and reflects developments in the deepening thematic/narrative confrontation between tradition-the Prince and change-Calogero. Here, it's important to note the tension within the Prince himself - he knows that to preserve his family's position, they must have more money, and the easiest route is

Tancredi's marriage to Angelica. But he also knows that the family's social status and reputation will suffer by the affiliation with the coarse, unsophisticated Angelica and her father. The Prince is being given a chance to survive - but not as he was, and at considerable cost. An interesting aspect to the narrative from here on in is the way it charts the way the Prince walks the tightrope between the demands of his reputation and the demands of his pocketbook.

At the same time, socio-political tensions in the outside world are manifesting within both the walls of the Prince's villa and of his psyche. At this point in the novel, and in all areas of his life, the Prince is being asked to compromise, giving rise to the question as to where the line gets drawn between self-preservation and self-destruction? Narration includes a metaphoric exploration of these parallel tensions as it describes the same wind blowing across the Prince as the one that is blowing across Garibaldi, the leader of the revolution; change is manifesting everywhere. Finally, in its portrayal of the dead rabbit, the reader can't help seeing a symbolic representation of the Prince's own feeling of being trapped, of the death of his way of life, and of his later physical death in Chapter 7.

On a stylistic level, this chapter introduces a somewhat jarring but effective narrative technique. This is the way elements of life from the time period the novel was written are used to illuminate incidents, feelings, and experiences in the time when the time the novel is set. In this case, the reference is to air travel, a reference that's anachronistic but which is quite evocative of the sense of disconnection, disorientation and confusion experienced by the Prince. For further consideration of this aspect of the novel's stylistic approach see "Style - Point of View" and "Topics for Discussion - Discuss the novel's use of ..."

Chapter 3, Part 2

Chapter 3, Part 2 Summary

"The Troubles of Don Fabrizio," pp 104 - 125. Back in the present, the Prince contemplates what he believes to be the historical significance of the vote and also its deeper meaning (see "Quotes", p. 104), which leads him to ask Ciccio what the people of Donnafugata really think of Calogero. Ciccio speaks at angry length of how many people dislike Calogero in spite of, or perhaps because of, his embodiment of a harsh reality - that "every coin spent in the world must end in someone's pocket." The Prince then asks the question that's really on his mind - what is Angelica truly like? Ciccio speaks rapturously of her beauty, grace and sophistication, and then speaks crudely about how her family's coarseness seems to have not affected her. The Prince firmly tells him that from now on, because she and Tancredi are to be married, she must be spoken about with appropriate respect. Ciccio bursts out that for Tancredi and Angelica to marry, it would be the end of the good qualities of the family! The Prince thinks to himself, however, that the marriage would not be the end of everything, but the beginning!

The Prince takes his time dressing for his meeting with Calogero, and when he finally goes downstairs, he has a vision of the two of them as animals (see "Quotes", p. 115). Their conversation is, for the most part, polite, with both men making occasional slips into tactlessness but both ultimately making the truths of the situation quite apparent. For the Prince, that truth involves Tancredi's excellent lineage but extreme poverty, while for Calogero the truth involves his wealth, which is much greater than the Prince expected, and the fact that Calogero is in final negotiations to purchase the title of Baroness for his daughter. After agreement is reached that the marriage is to proceed, Calogero departs to consult with Angelica, who, he is convinced, will say yes. The Prince goes to bed, passing the room where his daughters are playing. Several of them notice him and smile, but Concetta "was embroidering and, not hearing her father's steps, did not even turn."

Narration then describes how, as preparations for the wedding between Tancredi and Angelica progressed, the Prince and Calogero each became more like the other - the Prince became more ruthless in his business dealings, while Calogero saw the value of good manners and better grooming. Calogero, narration suggests, began "that process of continual refining which in the course of three generations transforms innocent peasants into defenseless gentry."

Narration also describes, in a tone that's at times enraptured and at other times pointedly cynical, Angelica's first visit to the Prince and his family following her betrothal to Tancredi. Dressed beautifully, she makes her entrance with perfect timing, and immediately endears herself to the Prince by embracing him and calling him a nickname given to him (and shared with Angelica) by Tancredi. Only Bendico, growling in a corner, seems unhappy to see her. Finally, narration also describes how Angelica, as she's

listening, coolly considers the financial and sexual prosperity that awaits them (see "Quotes", p. 132), and comments that a few years after the marriage, Angelica becomes one of the most powerful backroom politicians in Italy.

Chapter 3, Part 2 Analysis

Throughout this section, the narrative draws insistent and clear lines of tension between the Prince's world and Calogero's, between aristocracy and capitalism, between life before the revolution and life after. These lines of tension illuminate and define the novel's thematic focus on the process of change and how that process is ultimately, and unavoidably, difficult. What's interesting about this section, however, is the way it paints clear parallels between the two men, and therefore between their two social-spiritual positions. These parallels include a sense of pragmatism—both are realistic about their respective realities, albeit a little less so about the realities of the other, a love for money, skill at manipulation, and above all profound self-absorption. In the exploration of these parallels, the narrative suggests that their only difference are the ways in which they manifest their essential greed. It's also interesting to note that when Angelica finally makes her appearance after the betrothal, her manipulations of the family are portrayed clearly and defines her as being just as ruthless, just as self absorbed, and just as manipulative as both her father and her prospective father-in-law. The resulting image is that of a chess game - with Angelica as the powerful and ruthless queen and Tancredi the relatively-weak, but high status king, whose identity and safety must be preserved. Both are moved around the marital board by the older men who run essentially run their lives

Into the middle of this multi-textured exploration of the novel's thematic tensions, the narrative interjects a line of such penetrating clarity that it seems to sum up, in one way or another, the novel's thematic and narrative core. This is Ciccio's comment that "every coin spent in the world must end in someone's pocket." To put it in the words of a more contemporary expression, "money makes the world go 'round." Money certainly makes the events of the novel's three plots go round. The Prince plot, in which his desire to preserve his status is grounded in his need for money, the Concetta/Tancredi plot, in which their relationship, and the troubles therein, are grounded in concerns about money, and the revolution plot—the context within which the other plots are developed all are are defined by the omnipresence of money. For further consideration of Ciccio's comment, see "Topics of Discussion - Consider the comment in..."

Another anachronistic reference appears in this section - specifically, the comment about Angelica's timing being similar to that of a moment in a film. It's interesting to note an element of detail in that reference. The scene in question (the pushing of a baby-filled pram, or baby carriage, down a set of steps during a battle sequence) is universally regarded as one of the most emotionally and symbolically resonant images in film history. The emotion is base terror for the safety of the child, while the symbolic resonance is of the sense of carelessness and destruction surrounding war and hostility,i.e., the battle around the carriage. Further - narration juxtaposes the reference with comments about timing and Angelica, suggesting first that her appearance was

timed for maximum emotional effect in the same way as the film image. The juxtaposition simultaneously suggests that Angelica's appearance was a manifestation of the ultimate carelessness and destruction inherent in her character, in her father, in their mutual greed (and perhaps that of the Prince and Tancredi), and perhaps even that of both their classes.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

"Love at Donnafugata," p. 126 - 174 A week or so later, the family's quiet evening is interrupted by the sudden and unexpected arrival of Tancredi, who has brought a friend with him (Count Carlo). After taking a few minutes to dry off and change, Tancredi and the Count come into the family drawing room, now in their full dress uniforms, which fascinate the Prince's daughters and puzzles the Prince, who says he thought they were still fighting for Garibaldi. Tancredi and the Count react with disgust, saying there was no way they could stay with such a rough outfit when positions with the new king's army were available. Tancredi then produces the ring he purchased for Angelica with money sent to him by the Prince. A moment later, Angelica rushes in, having been informed by a note that Tancredi is back. The lovers embrace; sensuality fills the air, and narration describes in detail what Tancredi feels at that moment (see "Quotes", p. 142).

Narration then describes in complex, poetic detail how love and sensuality fill the subsequent days at Donnafugata. The Count dreamily, and ineffectually, pursues Concetta, while Concetta's younger sisters (Carolina and Caterina) dream romantically of Tancredi and the Count, and Tancredi and Angelica spend their time exploring the palace's many rooms, each of which contains some representation of a leopard, the family insignia. Narration describes how, on several occasions, Tancredi and Angelica are tempted to give in to their mutual sensual desire, but never do... and how this idyllic time of romantic, intimate gaming between them was a happy prelude to the miserable, unsuccessful marriage that followed.

One day during this idyllic time, a government representative (Chevalley di Monterzuolo) arrives and tells the Prince that because of his aristocratic background and social influence, the government wants him to sit as a chosen (as opposed to elected) member of the Senate, where he would both advise and monitor the government. At first, the Prince is quite silent, leading Chevalley to attempt to flatter him into accepting the offer (see "Quotes", p. 163) - an attempt that doesn't work. The Prince explains at increasingly intense, often poetic length, why he, like other Sicilians, has no interest in being involved in government. "In Sicily," he says, "it doesn't matter about doing things well or badly; the sin which we Sicilians never forgive is simply that of 'doing' at all." He goes on to describe how Sicily's ways of thinking and being and doing are those of an old tired society that doesn't want to change. "This violence of landscape, this cruelty of climate, this continual tension in everything ... all these things have formed our character, which is thus conditioned by events outside our control as well as by a terrifying insularity of mind." Chevalley makes one more attempt at persuasion, but the Prince tells him that Sicilians think they're gods and don't need to change and/or improve their status. "Their vanity," he says, "is stronger than their misery."

The following morning, the Prince accompanies Chevalley to the train station. As they walk through the streets of early morning Donnafugata, both of them overwhelmed by the squalor and despair surrounding them, both men think the situation has got to change, but where Chevalley believes it will, the Prince is convinced it won't (see "Quotes", p. 173). As the chapter draws to a close, Chevalley wipes the grime off the train's window. "The landscape," narration suggests, "lurched to and fro, irredeemable."

Chapter 4 Analysis

There are two clearly separate sections to this chapter. The first is lushly written, defined by the variety of romantic entanglements playing out in the rooms and passageways of the palace at Donnafugata. The first element to note here is the relative absence of the Prince from the narrative - viewed in passing as the younger characters rush from room to room, passion to passion and flirtation to flirtation. The Prince's portrayal here evokes a key component in the process of change he undergoes - the lessening and ultimate abandonment of his sensual desires. Another important element here is not unrelated - the relative absence of Concetta. She is presented here as aloof, distant, and uninvolved, far from the general emotion and sensuality and from the particular sensualities of the Tancredi/Angelica relationship. Only late in the book (Chapter 8) when Concetta appears as a bitter old woman do the reasons for this aloofness become apparent. Also important here, and in a similar way, is the development of Caterina and Carolina—characters, who, to this point, have been mostly undeveloped, and who appear in this section as foolish girls. Their appearance foreshadows their being a narrative focus in Chapter Eight, where it seems they have aged into equally foolish old women. Meanwhile, the number of empty and unused rooms Tancredi and Angelica find in the family villa can be seen as representing and foreshadowing the emptiness they find in their marriage - more specifically, their marriage within the context of their respective families' histories.

The second section of the chapter is political (for the implications of this chapter's title in relation to the action of this second half, see "Topics for Discussion - Consider the title of Chapter 4 ..."). The first noteworthy element of this chapter is the direct attempt by the government to integrate the Prince directly into the process of change that he is simultaneously aware of, connected to, and reluctant to fully embrace. The second important element here is the detailed, lengthy speech made by the Prince in support of his position. This is one of the very few occasions in the novel when he speaks at any length at all, and on this purely technical level, the speech must be regarded as significant. The question of whether the Prince's comments are accurate representations of Sicilians is irrelevant to the novel as fiction. The point of this speech seems to be that the Prince is tying his attitudes not only to his family or to his class, but to what he perceives as an entire population. The question that arises is whether he is rationalizing his refusal, expressing a genuinely held opinion, or disguising an opinion about human nature in general in an analysis of attitudes of a specific sort of human being. This last idea is supported by the final images of the chapter, in which the Prince and Chevalley travel through the squalor of Donnafugata (the town), which can be

perceived not only as the squalor of the town or even of Sicily, but as the essential squalor of the human race itself.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

The events of this chapter take place several months later, in February of 1861.

"Father Pirrone Pays a Visit" Father Pirrone visits his hometown, where he is welcomed with teary embraces and warm, friendly memories. Conversations with friends, at times tense and at times mirthful, lead Pirrone to a lengthy speech explaining why the Prince and other aristocrats don't really have any reaction one way or the other to the events of the revolution - they "live in a world of their own ... all they live by has been handled by others". He concludes by saying that the feelings and attitudes that give rise to class sensibility never truly die (see "Quotes", p. 185). His elderly mother comes in, jokes about how he's still talking even though his friends have fallen asleep, and helps him get his visitors home. As he prepares for bed, Pirrone thinks that God is the only being who could have devised a life with so many complications.

The next day, Pirrone finds his sister Sarina in tears in the kitchen, and gets her to admit that her daughter Angelina (whom Pirrone mentally compares to the beautiful Angelica and finds wanting) has gotten pregnant. The father, she confesses furiously, is the girl's cousin, the son of Pirrone and Sarina's uncle. Narration describes a long-standing family feud between Pirrone's father and his uncle, a feud which will, Pirrone believes, make coping with this particular situation particularly difficult. He also believes, however, that God brought him home at this particular time to deal with it. After mass, he goes to visit his uncle and manipulates both him and the father (Santino) into accepting what he proposes as the terms of marriage. He also arranges for them to come see Angelina and her family that evening. Back home, he manipulates Angelina's family into agreeing to the terms of marriage by giving up his own inheritance. Santino and his father arrive; the marriage is contracted, and the young people are happy. Later, on his way home, Pirrone realizes that Santino and his father probably planned Angelina's seduction so they could get their hands on property they believed was rightfully theirs, and also realizes that the aristocracy and the peasantry are, at least on one level, more alike than he thought (see "Quotes", p. 194).

Chapter 5 Analysis

At first glance, this chapter may seem like an anomaly, given that it doesn't involve (until the end) the Prince or any members of his family. On closer reflection, however, the contracting of the marriage between Angelina and Santino can be seen as paralleling the contracting of the marriage of Angelica and Tancredi. Manifestations of the parallel include the roles played by money and property in the negotiations, the role played by sensuality in the relationship in question, and the sense of emotional and manipulative levels of meaning beneath the superficial actions of making the arrangements.

This chapter is also relevant to the novel's entirety because of its dramatization of the layers upon layers, of both respectability and snobbery, playing out within the novel's socio-political-historical context. Particularly telling is Pirrone's comment that everything the aristocracy lives on "has been handled by others". He seems unaware that this is also true of what he lives on (as a dependent on the church), what merchants like Calogero live on (as a dependent on commerce), and of what women like his fondly-thought-of Angelica live on (as a dependent on her father, and on the work of the men who work for him). From the tone and sub-textual content of this chapter, it becomes possible to infer that on some level, the novel is ultimately a condemnation of living life based on what's been, at its most basic foundations, manufactured - be it wealth, reputation, marriage, property, jewelry, religious relics (in Chapter 8), or false beliefs. In that context, the events of Chapter 7 (the death of the Prince) seem to reinforce this idea - that no matter what we've made, or held onto, it means nothing - we all die, leaving everything behind.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

This chapter is set almost two years after the last, in November of 1862.

"A Ball." The Prince, the Princess, Concetta and Carolina attend a ball, one of the most important of the busy Palermo social season. The Prince is both excited and concerned about the evening to come - excited because it will be the first time Angelica and her beauty, are to be presented to the public; he's concerned because he's afraid Don Calogero will make a fool of both himself and the Prince. When Angelica (looking beautiful) and Don Calogero (looking acceptable) arrive shortly after, Angelica, hanks to detailed training in etiquette given to her by Tancredi, makes a huge social success. The Prince, once satisfied that she's been accepted, wanders through the rooms of the Palazzo Ponteleone where the ball is being held, becoming increasingly gloomy at the callowness of the young men, the boredom in the older men, and the silliness of the girls (see "Quotes", p. 205). "They thought themselves eternal," narration writes, "but a bomb manufactured in Pittsburgh Penn[sylvania] was to prove the contrary in 1943." When the Prince notices Tancredi and Angelica dancing happily together, oblivious to the other's desperation, and greed, he comes to realize and accept, if only for a moment, that whatever happiness the lovers feel is to be celebrated, no matter what (see "Quotes", p. 208), and so he slips into the library.

There the Prince contemplates a painting entitled "Death of the Just Man," and considers his own death (see "Quotes", p. 210). His thoughts are interrupted by the arrival of Tancredi and Angelica, who are taking a break from the dancing. As they speak playfully of the painting and of death, and as the Prince smilingly realizes how truly young they are, Angelica asks him to dance with her. Flattered, the Prince agrees. They are a successful couple and dance well, with the Prince's memory flashing back to the days of his youth "when, in that very same ballroom he had danced with [the Princess] before he knew disappointment, boredom, and the rest." As the dance finishes, he realizes the other dancers have stopped and are watching them, his "leonine air" preventing the onlookers from bursting into applause. Angelica asks him to eat with her and Tancredi, and for a flattered moment almost says yes, but then again remembers his youth, recalls how embarrassing it would have been for him to have an old relative eating with him and a lover, and politely excuses himself.

"The ball," narration states, "went on until six in the morning..." - well past the time of general fatigue but just late enough for goodbyes that didn't insult the hosts. The Prince sees his family into their carriages, saying he wants to walk home and get some air. As he walks, he's passed by a cart loaded with gut-spilling bulls fresh from the slaughter house and dripping blood onto the road. Further on, he looks at the stars (see "Quotes", p. 219), and wonders when they, and Venus in particular, will reawaken in him a sense of love and joy?

Chapter 6 Analysis

This section serves to illuminate, for both the Prince and the reader, the experience of the life the Prince is in the process of leaving behind both spiritually and physically. This happens in several ways. The first is the way his life literally passes before the Prince's eyes - in the forms of the swirling dancers, particularly Tancredi and Angelica; in the way Calogero's improved dress can't disguise the fact that he's still at heart a grasping peasant, and in his initial, distaste-ridden perceptions of all the activities in all the rooms of the house. All this raises the question, again, of whether his subsequent contemplations of forgiveness and compassion and perspective are genuine indications of transformation or rationalizations. And again, reference must be made to the events of Chapter 7, the moment of the Prince's death in which the descriptions of his experiences of joy have a much clearer ring of insight. In other words, here again the disgust seems more genuinely reflective of his character and experience in the moment, than his joy.

Another illumination of the Prince's experience, albeit of a different sort, can be found in the reference to the painting, "Death of a Just Man." The painting, its name, and the context in which it's viewed (i.e., death within a swirling, merry, superficially joyful manifestation of life) foreshadows and represents his own death in the chapter that follows. The sense is that for the Prince, the decay of the physical body within the superficial joys of life is not only present, but becoming more so. By contrast, the Prince's dance with Angelica and the reference to his leonine air suggests that in spite of what he learned about himself and the world in the previous chapter, there is still a significant part of him clinging to his self-definition as an omnipotent aristocrat—he might not be as far along in his journey towards true acceptance of change as he believes.

The description of the slaughtered bulls seems to deliberately echo the description of the slaughtered soldier in Chapter 1, suggesting that after attending the ball, the "guts" of the Prince's emotional, spiritual, and cultural truth have been spilled, and that he, too, is on some level dead (as an aristocrat?). At the same time, his desire to walk home and look at the stars suggests that in the middle of all this turmoil and transformation, he has a desire to re-connect with that which he believes is unchangeable (see "Objects / Places - The Stars"). This is in direct opposition to what is represented by the dead bulls (his dead self?) which embody the inevitably fatal, or fatally inevitable, process of change.

This chapter contains another of the novel's anachronistic resonances - in this case, the reference to bombs constructed in Philadelphia, a reference to the Allies' bombing of Italy in their war against Mussolini and Fascism during the Second World War. The suggestion here is that the aristocrats the Prince is coming to despise are not only shallow and self-absorbed - they are self-righteous to a self-destructive degree.

Finally, the reference to Venus both foreshadows and illuminates the appearance of the beautiful woman/messenger of death, who appears in the final moments of the following

chapter, and who is given the name of Venus. The reference here, combined with the reference there, suggests that the novel is perhaps offering the narrative and thematic perspective that only death can bring true, lasting, and transcendent joy

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

This chapter is set almost twenty three years later, in July of 1885

"Death of a Prince" This poetically written chapter begins with the statement that for years, the Prince had felt he was dying, "as if the vital fluid ... life itself in fact and perhaps even the will to go on living, were ebbing out of him ... as grains of sand cluster and then line up one by one, unhurried, unceasing, before the narrow neck of an hourglass." Narration describes how a last minute visit to a doctor tired him so much that it was decided he should not go back to the villa outside Palermo but stay in a hotel in Palermo itself. As he's settled into the hotel, the Prince recalls the fates of several of his family members - Tancredi's political success, and the deaths of Father Pirrone from old age, of the Princess from diabetes, and of Paolo after being thrown by a horse. He also recalls the maturation and dignity of Concetta - who, he realizes, is the true heir of what was good and noble and enduring of his family. He dismisses her son and biological heir, Fabrizietto (named after his grandfather the Prince) as dissolute, shallow, and aimless.

As he feels the flow of life away from him increasing, the Prince considers the joys (sensual, spiritual, political and animal - in particular, the loving and playful Bendico) and sorrows (political, sexual, and familial) he's experienced, concluding that out of the seventy-three years he's been alive, he's only fully lived three of them. In his last moments, with his family gathered round, he sees a young woman appear - beautiful, exquisitely dressed, sensitive, and smiling lovingly. Narration describes her in terms identical to those in which it describes a beautiful woman glimpsed at the train station on the way back to Palermo - in other words, death was present in his life even then. As the woman helps him to his feet, he sees her face, and to him she looks "lovelier than she ever had when glimpsed in stellar space." The implication is that the woman is Venus, a manifestation of love and joy.

Chapter 7 Analysis

The ultimate process of change, from being living to non-living, manifests in this chapter, irrevocably making the point that the process cannot be denied, and suggesting that acceptance of it ultimately brings joy (an idea manifest in the appearance of the Venus figure). Here, the Prince finally comes to peaceful terms with the struggle that has obsessed him all his adult life, and as he reconciles himself to the ultimate expression of that process (death), the novel makes its thematic point that change, consciously accepted or not, is an archetypal human experience - the process of change never changes. This idea is further developed in the appearance of the Venus figure, which on another level of meaning can be seen as a representation of that which

doesn't change - Venus is perceived from earth as a star, and throughout the novel, stars have, for the Prince, been a symbol of the eternal unchanged.

Finally, it's important to consider the symbolic meaning of the Prince dying in Palermo. Throughout the novel, Palermo has represented the human condition (desire and decay), and something the Prince is determined to avoid (hence his establishment of his home outside of the town). He has attempted to set himself physically, as well as socially and mentally, beyond normal humanity. At the moment of his death, however, he can't avoid it any more ... ergo, he dies in Palermo.

Chapter 8, Part 1

Chapter 8, Part 1 Summary

This chapter is set fifteen years later, in May of 1910.

"Relics" pp. 234-242 This chapter begins with a reference to "the old Salina ladies," three elderly sisters whose right to have private masses in their home is, as the chapter begins, being investigated by representatives of the local Cardinal. That investigation, narration suggests, is being undertaken because the ladies have certain relics in their home that, according to rumor, may not be authentic. Eventually, narration reveals the ladies are the three daughters of the Prince - the authoritarian Concetta, the blunt-spoken Carolina, and the paralyzed Caterina. As the priests enter the chapel, they are surprised to see a sensuously-painted Madonna hanging behind the altar, and walls lined with "relics" (fragments of a saint's body or clothing). Narration describes how the sisters collected these relics through an intermediary, Donna Rosa, to whom Caterina and Carolina sometimes confessed their dreams of saints and who, sometimes within a week or two of hearing the dreams, miraculously produced a relic of the dreamed-of saint. "Then," narration adds, "Donna Rosa died, and the influx of relics stopped almost completely." When they leave the chapel, the priests speak among themselves about how so many of the relics and the painting seem to be of doubtful origin.

After the priests leave, Concetta retires to her bedroom,(see "Quotes", p. 241), where she keeps several locked boxes of decaying mementos of her past, including the skin of her father's dog Bendico, which had been made into a rug and which is now completely moth-eaten. There, because she is the most realistic of the three sisters, she foresees what is about to happen - the confiscation of the relics and the painting, the re-consecration of the chapel, the inevitable spreading of stories of the Salinas' humiliation, and the equally inevitable destruction of what's left of the family's prestige. Her thoughts are interrupted by a servant announcing the arrival of "the Princess" - Angelica. Concetta readies herself and goes down to meet her.

Chapter 8, Part 1 Analysis

The chapter begins with an effectively developed sense of suspense. The reader doesn't know which of the three sisters the narrative refers to or the circumstances of their lives since the end of the previous chapter. There is also an intriguing sense of mystery here, with the references to the relics, to their doubtful authenticity, and to what will result from the investigation. This mystery is, in turn, given a layer of emotional meaning by the indications that their faith is extremely important to the three sisters. This, in turn, is given a layer of ironic meaning resulting from the novel's previous hints that, at least in the world of this particular story, religious faith is superficial, easily manipulated, shallow, and ultimately irrelevant (see "Themes - The Failure of Faith"). Eventually, the first part of the chapter climaxes with the revelation of the existence of

Donna Rosa, who to the astute reader is clearly a fraud. This gives the previously established sense of mystery a very powerful twist - now the question is not what's going to happen to the relics but what's going to happen when the truth is discovered/revealed.

A more thematically-relevant element to this chapter is the narration's exploration of the life and/or character of Concetta, who seems to display some similarities in character to her deceased father, the Prince. But rather than the qualities of aristocracy and nobility the Prince saw in her in the moments before his death, what narration reveals here is Concetta's similar pragmatism in not only being aware of but accepting what's about to happen. The question at this point is whether her pragmatism is as much rationalization as her father's sometimes seemed. Another thematically-significant element introduced here is Concetta's collection of relics - most importantly, the rug made from Bendico's skin. At first glance, the rug seems somewhat grotesque, and so does Concetta. It must be remembered, however, that throughout the novel Bendico has represented pure and unconditional joy, which means that his presence here suggests a long ago presence of such joy in Concetta's life. The full meaning of "Bendico's" appearance here becomes apparent in the following section of the chapter - specifically, in the novel's final moments. For consideration of the parallels between the two sets of relics (those in the chapel and those in Concetta's bedroom), see "Topics of Discussion - What are the metaphoric similarities ..."

Chapter8, Part 2

Chapter8, Part 2 Summary

"Relics" pp. 244-255 The well-preserved Angelica, widowed after Tancredi's death a few years before (and already suffering, according to narration, from the illness "which was to transform her into a wretched specter three years later") meets Concetta in the sitting room. She chattily tells Concetta of her plans for celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Garibaldi revolution, says that she'll do her best to keep the family's conflict with the Cardinal, with whom she's close, from getting too nasty, and warns Concetta that an old friend and fellow soldier of Tancredi's, Senator Tassoni, is coming to call. Tassoni then arrives, and after speaking flatteringly of how well Tancredi spoke of her, confesses to Concetta that one night Tancredi tearfully confessed that he had told a lie to Concetta about Tassoni, the story (told in Chapter 2 Part 3) about their being involved in a raid on a convent. Tassoni adds that Tancredi knew he knew had upset her and had carried the guilt of that night with him all his life. After Tassoni and Angelica leave, the shocked Concetta realizes that all the anger, frustration, bitterness, and resentment she had directed at Tancredi for what she believed was an ill-mannered attempt to impress Angelica was a mistake. She also realizes that his subsequent attempt to go into the women-only convent (Chapter 2 Part 3) was an attempt to make up with her, and that her bitter comments in response were what drove him to Angelica (see "Quotes", p. 250).

The next day, the Cardinal inspects the chapel and tells the ladies to replace the painting behind the altar. He leaves behind a priest to go through the relics and determine which are genuine, and a few hours later the priest emerges with a basket full of useless relics and the news that the few left behind are genuine. He then goes, leaving Caterina furious and Carolina in a faint.

For her part, Concetta returns to her room, and contemplates the relics there with new perspective. She realizes an unpleasant smell is coming from what remains of the Bendico rug, and orders it thrown out. "During the flight from the window," narration states, "its form recomposed itself for an instant; in the air there seemed to be dancing a quadruped with long whiskers, its right foreleg raised in imprecation. Then all found peace in a heap of livid dust."

Chapter8, Part 2 Analysis

The appearance of Angelica is in some ways relatively unsurprising - in terms of her still being beautiful, in terms of her outliving Tancredi (there was always the sense that she was a tough survivor), and in terms of her being a manipulator (again, there has always the sense that this was a dominant facet of her character). What is surprising is the truth that she brings with her - specifically, the appearance of Tassoni, who was last referred to jokingly and in passing in Chapter 2. As described in his entry in "Characters," he is a

catalytic character, creating and/or triggering change as opposed to actively being changed himself. In this case, the change he triggers is in Concetta, who realizes as the result of their encounter that she, like her father before her, at least to a degree, has held on too hard and too long to a past that has ultimately corrupted any sense of true joy she may have come to understand in her life. Then, as previously discussed, the appearance of Tassoni here, and the revelation of what happened in the past, makes Concetta's story into a tragedy in the classical sense of the word (for further consideration of this idea, see Chapter 2, Part 1).

Concetta's decision to get rid of the rug implies the eventual getting rid of all the relics in her room and metaphorically represents her determination to get rid of the fake feelings of her past—her resentment towards Tancredi, with the hope of finally realizing that joy she had/has lived without for so long. On another level, the throwing out of the rug might also be interpreted as a powerful symbol of how Concetta, and by extension her ancient family, is finally casting aside what had been, moving into what is, and ahead into what will be. On a third level, however, her getting rid of Bendico (whose metaphoric value as a manifestation of joy has been previously discussed) suggests that on some level Concetta is throwing out the baby with the bathwater. In throwing out what she no longer wants to run her life, she may also be throwing out the one source of true joy she ever knew—her love for Tancredi. The novel never makes the point explicit, but the fact that the final image is one of joy turning to dust makes the implication very clear.

Finally, the appearance of the Cardinal and the almost comically hasty resolution of the relics mini plot seems to suggest that its purpose for existence was to create a context for Concetta's final, life and theme-affirming decision to allow the dammed-up process of change in her life to finally take its course.

Characters

Fabrizio Crobera, Prince of Salina

The novel's central character is a hereditary Sicilian aristocrat, a large man "who liked everything round him to be on his own scale except his wife." At the beginning of the novel, he is portrayed as essentially content - with his position, his family, his lifestyle, and the socio-political environment in which he lives. He has his little affairs, his occasional failings, and an escape - a mathematical fascination with astronomy and with the easily consistent predictability of the movement of the stars. Within his contentment, however, he has a realistic streak - specifically, he is troubled by a growing awareness of impending change. That change manifests in the novel, as it did in real life, in the historically-recorded, social revolution engineered by the rebel leader Garibaldi. As the narrative unfolds, this awareness both deepens and becomes less troubling, with the Prince, whose family crest is a leopard, and who himself is often described as leonine, realizing that the process of change, both social and personal, is inevitable. This aspect of his character and his journey is dramatized to particular effect in the novel's later chapters, as the Prince becomes increasingly aware that his life, his way of thinking, and his hopes for the longevity of his family's integrity are all coming to an end. When his physical life draws to a close (Chapter 7), it represents the end of his family, the end of a cultural tradition, and the end of a socio-political era - in short, the story of his life is the story of a WAY of life.

Tancredi

Tancredi is the prince's nephew and ward, a handsome, sensual, free-spirited young man with a sharp wit, a powerful desire for women, and above all a driving, but lazy, ambition. Narration details how his mother, the Prince's sister, and father both died when he was young, leaving him in the care of the Prince, who is alternately exasperated and indulgent of his freewheeling, free-loving ways. For his part, Tancredi's feelings for the Prince are at times patronizing, at other times very fond, and at still other times crafty and manipulative. In short, Tancredi is an opportunist, seizing chances for advancement wherever he can find them. He joins Garibaldi's army of rebels because he sees advantages to being affiliated with inevitable power, and he courts the beautiful and wealthy Angelica because he knows that her family will pay for him living the lifestyle to which he has become accustomed. He also manipulates and guides Angelica in the ways of society because he knows that if she does well, he does well. Tancredi does have a sensitive side, however, a side that isn't revealed to the person most interested in seeing it, the Prince's besotted daughter, Concetta, until it's too late, and that side is never revealed to the person who perhaps is the most deserving of seeing it —the Prince. That side is essentially loving but inarticulate and shallow, as evident in the late-revealed story of his insensitivity towards Concetta, and his remorse-driven attempt to make up with her. According to narration, he dies politically successful, sexually unencumbered by his wife, and wealthy.

The Princess

The Prince's wife is an emotional, volatile woman, given to such extremes of emotion that the Prince often feels he has to escape and which she medicates with herbal tranquillizers. She is portrayed as sexually confused (crossing herself whenever the Prince has an orgasm), at times tactless (such as when she reveals embarrassing childhood secrets about Tancredi to Angelica), and easily manipulated by the Prince, whose character is essentially much stronger. Narration describes her death, late in life before the Prince dies, of diabetes.

Angelica

Angelica is the beautiful daughter of an ambitious businessman in Donnafugata, the town where the Prince and his family have their summer home. As ambitious and calculating as her father, she nevertheless masks her true self, along with her searching sensuality, with modesty, and, when she gets older and more sophisticated, carefully manipulative tact. Narration describes how, as an adult, she becomes a crafty and successful backroom politician. Her appearance as an old woman in Chapter Eight portrays her in her old age as chatty, still manipulative, and superficially sensitive to the ways and needs of the family into which she married.

Concetta

Concetta is the Prince's eldest daughter. In her youth, she is romantic, emotional, and silent, keeping her adoration of Tancredi to herself until it's too late - his lack of awareness of her feelings and his resultant insensitivity drive Concetta to a lifetime of bitterness and anger. There are indications she does eventually marry - in the novel's final chapters she is portrayed as having given birth to a son, but the nature of her marriage and even the name of her husband are never revealed. In the novel's final chapter, she is portrayed as an old woman with strong ties to both her past and the bitterness that past brought into the rest of her life. But when she realizes that what she had believed was the source of that bitterness was in fact a misunderstanding, she finds herself able to let go of her feelings. What she does with her life from that point on is a question the novel leaves unexplored.

Carolina and Caterina

These are the Prince's younger daughters. Throughout much of the novel they are essentially peripheral characters, taking a degree of focus only in Chapter 4, Part 2, when their girlish crushes on Tancredi's visiting friend form a comic counterpoint to the more sensual relationship developing between Tancredi and Angelica. In the novel's final chapter, Carolina and Caterina have aged into gullible, highly-religious, eccentrically conservative old women - easily impressed by the pomp of the church,

outraged when their family status appears to be questioned, and devastated when they learn they've been duped by a swindler of faked religious artifacts.

Paolo

Paolo is the Prince's eldest son, conservative, aristocratic, and prudish. He is something of an irritant to his father, who is much less close to him than Tancredi. The novel never makes the point explicitly, but it is perhaps the relationship between the Prince and his nephew that triggers Paolo's coldness.

Father Pirrone

Father Pirrone is the resident priest/confessor for the Prince and his family, and also the Prince's confidante. Traditionally religious and conservative, Pirrone is a voice of conservatism that contrasts with the Prince's grudgingly honest acceptance of change. About two thirds of the way through the novel, the narrative takes an intriguing diversion into Pirrone's personal life - as he deals with a family crisis (see Chapter 5), he reveals a somewhat surprising talent for pragmatism and manipulation. He dies of old age in the intervening years between Chapters 6 and 7.

Don Calogero

Calogero is Angelica's ambitious father, a striving and successful businessman in the town of Donnafugata, where the prince and his family have their summer home. Coarse, manipulative, ruthless and barely able to conceal his desperation for advancement, he nevertheless becomes the envy of the Prince (to a point) because of his energy, strict sense of control, and power.

Bendico

Bendico is the Prince's dog, a source of pure joy and pleasure for him in his troubled middle age (it may not be a coincidence that the name bears a strong resemblance to the term "benediction", or blessing). Narration describes how after his death, his skin was turned into a rug, and how the aging Concetta held on to that rug, along with other mementos of the past that, over time, became as useless and as spiritually confining as the memories of her glorious, aristocratic childhood and youth. In the novel's final moments, the Bendico rug is thrown out a window. For a discussion of the metaphoric implications of this act, see "Chapter 8, Part 2 Analysis".

Tassoni

This character appears in person only in the novel's final chapter, but is spoken of much earlier (Chapter 2 Part 3) - as a participant in a risqué story told by Tancredi, a story that

triggered the eventual end of Concetta's dreams of marrying Tancredi and the eventual beginning of Tancredi's relationship with Angelica. During Tassoni's appearance in Chapter 8, he reveals that the story told earlier was a lie, leading Angelica to realize that the feelings that had arisen and the actions that had resulted from those feelings were, on some level, also a lie. In short, Tassoni is a catalytic character, serving to trigger transformation in others rather than undergoing any significant transformation himself.

The Count

This character, a friend and comrade of Tancredi's, appears only in Chapter 4. He functions as the object of the schoolgirl crushes of the young Caterina and Carolina, and, in turn, attempts to court the distant Concetta. He and his innocent relationships are a kind of comic relief/parallel to the intense, more sensual, and more thematically relevant, relationship between Tancredi and Angelica.

Chevalley di Monterzuolo

Another catalytic character, the Chevalley is the emissary from the newly-formed Italian government who invites the Prince to be a participant in that government. His sole appearance in the novel (Chapter 4, Part 2) serves as a trigger for the Prince's important, character-revealing speech relating to the nature of Sicilian life and perspective, a speech that gives important insights into the Prince's personal character as well.

Garibaldi

Garibaldi is an actual historical person, the leader of a revolutionary movement that saw the many and various city states of Italy united into one country. His followers were identified by the red shirts they wore and the red accessories on their uniforms - caps, ribbons, etc. In the novel, his identity and purpose represent the inevitable process of change faced by the Prince and everyone.

Objects/Places

The Leopard

The leopard is the insignia of the Prince and his family, appearing in both fact (as paintings, monograms, carvings in walls and over doors) and in narration (as the animal to which the Prince, and at times Tancredi, is metaphorically likened). Interestingly, the narrative offers no explanation as to why the leopard was adopted by the Salina family as their emblem. It might be that the symbolic value can be found by referring to the proverbial question of whether the leopard can change its spots (see "Themes - The Inevitable Process of Change").

The Stars

The stars are, for the Prince, a symbol of that which doesn't change, of the predictable and consistent. As such they are, for both him and for the reader, a constant by which the process of transformation undergone by the Prince, the people around him, and the world in which they all live, might be measured.

The Villa

The Prince's principal residence is just outside the bustling, corrupt urban center of Palermo. Its location represents the Prince's socio-political position just outside of the process of revolution taking place in the world, with both the villa and the position representing a place of safety and refuge, both of which inevitably turn out to be futile.

Palermo

This is the city the Prince visits to conduct business and to visit his mistress, and to which he essentially banishes his foolish son Paolo. Palermo is representative of corruption and shallow decadence, a world the Prince finds occasionally stimulating but ultimately distasteful and necessary to abandon. One of the novel's final ironies is that the Prince dies in a hotel in Palermo (see below).

Sicily

The action of the novel is entirely set within the boundaries of this island, and becomes over the course of the novel, a province of Italy but which, in the minds and souls of the people who live there, a physically and spiritually independent land. For further consideration of the metaphoric value of Sicily to the novel, see "Style - Setting".

The Prince's Office

Like many aspects of this novel, the Prince's office on the estate of his villa outside Palermo represents layers of meaning. It's the place where the Prince does his business; it's the place where his aristocratic nature is repeatedly confronted with the more earthy and more grasping working-class ethics of his tenants, and where his transforming present is placed within the uncomfortable context of his high status past.

The Sun

The sun is also an ambivalent symbol in the novel, at times life giving, at times joy affirming, at times oppressive, and at times destructive.

The Castle-Shaped Jelly

In Chapter 1, Part 3, this dessert is served, by order of the troubled Princess, to calm the inexplicably angry Prince. Constructed in the shape of a castle and made out of exotic, rare ingredients, its inevitable and messy destruction by the hungry dinner guests simultaneously symbolizes and foreshadows the destruction and consumption of the wealth and power of the Sicilian/Italian aristocracy in the novel and in history.

Donnafugata - the town

This is a small, working class (almost peasant) community once owned by the Prince's family but which has taken on an identity and life of its own. When, in the course of the narrative, the Prince arrives for his traditional summer holiday, his welcome is at first as it always was. The fact that the mayor of the town is an ambitious merchant, whose power and wealth are starting to surpass that of the Prince, represents how the power of the lower/working/merchant classes, in the novel as in life, is beginning to surpass that of the aristocracy.

Donnafugata - the house

The Prince's summer home is large and, in the sections of the house actually used by the family, ornately and richly furnished. However, there are many sections of the house and gardens, all once fully populated when the family was much larger and wealthier, that remain furnished but unused. This juxtaposition of wealth and emptiness, of liveliness and dust, represents the central duality at the heart of the Prince's existence - he, too, is full of life, but his way of life is empty and dying.

The Peaches

In the garden at Donnafugata is a small orchard, and in that orchard is a peach tree newly grafted with branches from another tree. The grafted branches aren't yet producing much fruit at the time the Prince and Tancredi see it on their visit, but the fruit that's there is large, beautiful, and juicy. The fruit symbolizes sensuality, as manifest in the way Tancredi presents it to Angelica, with whom he shares a powerful sensual connection. The grafted tree represents and foreshadows the marriage between Angelica and Tancredi, in which her money is "grafted" to his social status to create a new kind of "fruit," a new version of the aristocratic family both wealthy and socially respectable.

The Palazzo Ponteleone

This villa in Palermo is the setting for the grand ball described in Chapter 6, where the Prince comes face to face with his disillusionment with life and where Angelica, newly "grafted" into the aristocracy, makes a successful debut. The palazzo itself, as described in narration from the Prince's perspective, is shabby and outdated, and therefore represents the way of life of the aristocracy as lived by the Prince and others of his socio-political generation. The fact that the shallow, but malleable, Angelica is such a success at the ball suggests that the aristocracy itself is shallow and gullible, inevitable victims of transformation whether they're aware of it or not.

The Hotel in Palermo

This is the setting for the events of Chapter 7, the death of the prince. Setting this event and the shift in perspectives in the Prince that it triggers in Palermo, which is symbolic of decadence and moral decay, can be seen as carrying significant metaphoric weight. Specifically, the setting here makes a metaphoric statement that both the physical and spiritual identity of the self can and will ultimately be corrupted, decayed, and destroyed by the ravages of old age and of life itself.

The Relics / Concetta's Keepsakes

In the final chapter of the novel, the surviving Salina sisters (Concetta, Caterina and Carolina) have, in their private chapel, what they believe to be sacred relics, which are thought to be scraps of body and/or clothing identified with deceased saints. Meanwhile, in her bedroom Concetta keeps locked boxes of keepsakes from her formerly aristocratic past. These keepsakes include the rug/skin of the Prince's faithful dog, Bendico - see "Characters." The vast majority of the relics in the chapel turn out to be useless fakes - a few, however, are declared to be genuine. In a similar way, Concetta determines that all the "relics" of her past life, including the Bendico rug/skin, are also useless, reminders of a fake past.

Themes

The Inevitable Process of Change

This is the novel's central theme, as defined by its central narrative line and in the life lived by its central character, the Prince. Exploration of this theme plays out in a number of ways, some on a larger scale than others. The first "small scale" process is the Prince's sometimes grudging, but ultimately inevitable, acceptance of the changes in his own body - his decreasing libido, his increasing weight, and, in the final chapters, the torrential rush of the departing life force. Other smaller scale processes can be found in the transformation of Angelica from beautiful but unsophisticated merchant's daughter to calculating social success, and in Concetta's transformation at the end of the narrative from embittered old woman to someone awakened to a new awareness of personal truth. All these changes play out within the larger, thematically resonant context of societal change, the (in the Prince's mind inevitable) movement from aristocratic power and control to power through, by, and of the working/merchant classes. It's important to note the cause and effect relationship at work here. The Prince doesn't come to his acceptance of change as the result of the growing revolution; instead, his acceptance of the revolution is the result of his growing awareness of the power and inevitability of change.

Ultimately, the novel suggests that change is the result of growing tension between contradictory forces. In the case of smaller scale changes, tensions arise between the Prince's sensual desire and his body's inability to act on those desires, between what Angelica wants and what she knows how to do, and what Concetta has believed and felt and what she suddenly discovers to be true. On a larger, human scale, those tensions are between the emotional desire to life, physical decay, and spiritual longing for (as manifest at the end of Chapter 7) the ultimate source of true joy. On the socio-political scale, the tensions giving rise to change are essentially those between the aristocracy and the merchant classes. The playing out of those tensions is the foundation of the novel's key secondary theme.

The Tension between Aristocracy and Capitalism

The novel's personal stories of transformation play out within the context of a powerful period of real-life, socio-political transformation in Italy in general, and in Sicily in particular. An examination of the historical specifics and manifestations of this transformation are perhaps best suited to another document, the focus here being on the relationship between big-T (national) transformation and small-t (personal) transformation as portrayed in the particular context of that book. That relationship is manifest in the parallels between the movement of the country from a restricted socio-political identity and the movement of an individual (the Prince, Angelica, Concetta) from a restricted psycho-emotional identity. Both levels of transformation emerge through conflict - in the case of the former, armed conflict between the forces of change and the

forces of conservativeism; in the case of the latter, inner conflict between those same forces as manifest not in guns but in doubts and certainties. It's important to note, however, that the larger conflict (between aristocracy and capitalism) does play out on a personal level - in the conflict between the lazily conservative Prince and the busily ambitious Calogero.

It's important to note that the novel portrays the lives and positions of both men, and those of their financial and spiritual heirs, Tancredi and Angelica, as being transformed by the other. These transformations are not complete, but go far enough to metaphorically suggest that the tension between aristocracy and capitalism is simultaneously parasitic and beneficial. The novel's skillful development of this theme brings the parallel levels of transformation into closer contact and more intimate resonance with each other, resulting in a sense that what is personal is also universal, and vice versa.

The (Futile) Power of Money

When a novel takes the kind of narrative detour that this novel takes when it travels with Father Pirrone to visit his family, it seems appropriate to investigate the detour for thematic resonances. Those resonances, in turn, can only be gleaned through examination of the action in the detour - in this case, Pirrone's skilful manipulations of warring factions of his family into a place of relative peace, manipulations grounded in conflict over money. With this in mind, it's not going too far to suggest that the lure and power of money can be seen, throughout the novel, as a defining factor of action and reaction. Money is the reason Tancredi wants to marry Angelica, the reason Calogero and Angelica want the marriage to take place (in that Tancredi's social status will give Calogero and his daughter the prestige necessary to make MORE money), and the reason the Prince agrees to the marriage. Without money, the prestige of his family and perhaps even the family itself cannot and will not survive. In the larger context of social revolution, the conflict is all about money - specifically, the lower/working classes striving to obtain at least a share of the money controlled by the controlling classes (the aristocracy and the church). Ironically, the final moments in the life of the novel's central character, the Prince, suggest the power of money is, like everything else related to the physical life of every human being, finite - all the money in the world cannot and will not keep death at bay.

The Failure of Faith

In many ways, the religious perspective of the novel and its characters is presented matter-of-factly, as a part of everyday life, which, for European Roman Catholics of the period in which the novel is set religion was an integral part of every day life. Its presence is casual and taken for granted, in much the same way as the Prince casually takes for granted his position, authority, and wealth. There are, in fact, points at which faith seems to be deliberately disregarded. Most notable of these is Chapter 5, the story of Father Pirrone's visit home. It's interesting to note that nowhere during the course of

the manipulations he engineers throughout this chapter does he refer to the marriage being God's will and/or a manifestation of God's love, as one might expect a Roman Catholic priest to say. Pirrone is, essentially, conducting a business transaction, with the human body as both commodity and currency. Thus, his rueful comment about the similarities between the aristocracy and the peasantry can also be seen as referring to the similarities between the priesthood and the laity.

By the end of the novel, when the precious relics collected by the Prince's aged daughters prove in most cases to be worthless, the novel seems to have taken the position that the faith (the Roman Catholic faith in particular) has itself been worthless. Regularly practiced faith didn't help the Prince or his family hold onto their position or their wealth, and it certainly didn't help any of them hold on to their lives. In short, religious faith seems to be portrayed here as a futility - but the point must be made that this aspect of the novel is almost a sidebar, an aspect of life caught in the fallout in the novel's overall fatalistic view of existence. In other words, faith and practices associated with it are no barrier to what must, and will inevitably, happen.

Style

Point of View

The novel is narrated from the third person present omniscient point of view, in general from the perspective of its central character, the Prince. There are diversions; for example, the novel frequently explores the feelings, motivations, and experiences of other characters, particularly Tancredi, Angelica, and in the final chapter when the Prince is dead, Concetta. Another diversion is the detour the narrative takes into the life and perspective of Father Pirrone in Chapter Five - as suggested above, this detour serves the apparent purpose of developing one of the novel's secondary themes - The (Futile) Power of Money. A third type of diversion is the way in which the narrative occasionally offers glimpses into the future lives and deaths, of the characters. The purpose of these diversions seems to be to develop a sense of irony, that the characters do not and cannot recognize either the repercussions or the futility of their actions. Perhaps most intriguingly, narration occasionally moves away from the present point of view completely and interjects comments from the perspective of the author, relating events and experiences of his contemporary life (such as air travel and World War II) to the events and experiences of the characters. These detours into anachronism are sometimes jarring and can seem inappropriate, but they seem intended to create a sense of connection between the experiences of the characters and those of the reader. Whether the intention is successfully fulfilled is open for debate.

Setting

As previously discussed (see "Objects/Places - Sicily") the action of the novel is set almost entirely within the borders of Sicily, the island at the toe of the Italian boot (for the meaning of this reference, check an atlas of Europe). As the Prince himself suggests throughout the novel (in particular Chapter 4, Part 2), in the same way as the island is geographically separated from the rest of Italy, and indeed from the rest of the world, its inhabitants are spiritually and emotionally and intellectually just as separate. They are fiercely independent to the point of being isolationist, generally insensitive to the truths and needs of others, and proud of both their independence and individuality of purpose to the point of being self absorbed and ultimately destructive, of self and of others. This sense of independence and isolation, inherent in being on an island, can also be seen as manifesting in the aristocratic Prince's sense of independence and isolation from the "common people," an aspect of his existence reinforced by another aspect of setting - specifically, the way much of the novel's action is set in stately homes removed from the "common life." The final element of setting to consider is the novel's placement in time, specifically a time of socio/political/cultural revolution in Italy that simultaneously triggers and illuminates the personal revolution of thought undergone by the Prince. Here setting can be seen as reinforcing theme and narrative, a valuable function of setting in all good, well-crafted narrative.

Language and Meaning

The first thing to note about The Leopard is that if it's read in English, it's being read in translation, which is one level removed from the author's original intentions (narrative, thematic, and linguistic). The language used (at least as it is translated) is richly and colorfully threaded with metaphor and meaning, dense with expansive vocabulary, capable of interjecting sudden slashes of truthful insight at places where the meaning and feelings evoked are at their most effective. The use of language is effective in developing point of view and theme, at defining atmosphere and character, and at simply telling a story by invoking deeper awarenesses in a way that will inevitably draw the reader into further revelations. At times, the richness of language veers dangerously close to being indulgent - descriptions of food in particular often seem overly detailed. There are, however, relatively few instances of this, and might be excused because such descriptions are written from the point of view of the Prince, who is himself indulgent with food. Indeed, this point can also be made about most of the language used in the novel. It is, for the most part, powerfully and effectively evocative of a particular life and existence - even in Chapter 5, in which the narrative and linguistic focus on Father Pirrone might be seen as a metaphoric exploration of an aspect of the Prince's life and experience.

Structure

The narrative structure of the novel is essentially chronological and linear, with the central story having a clearly-defined beginning, middle, and end. As was the case with point of view, however, there are significant diversions from this essential plan. To begin with, the narrative frequently takes large jumps of time between chapters, almost as long as two years in one case. This means that in a number of cases, a considerable portion of each chapter is taken up with explaining what happened in the time not narrated. On one level, this narrative technique creates a sense of suspense in that one never knows "when" the next chapter opens. However, these gaps also create a sense of something missing - that there is more to the lives of these characters that could be mined. The gaps in the narrative can be explained by the requirements of story - the chapters define and explore the key points on the transformative journeys undertaken by the Prince and the other central characters. What happens between, unless glimpsed in relation to moments in the key chapters, is irrelevant.

It may be that by structuring the novel in this way the author is suggesting that life is made up of moments of importance, with the gaps between those moments made up of forgettable irrelevancies. This idea is supported by the narration of Chapter Seven, in which the dying Prince recalls his life as a series of such moments, mostly of joy. Here again, as was the case with both setting and language, there is the very clear sense that the author's stylistic/narrative choices illuminate the story - that form and content simultaneously define and reinforce each other in a well-crafted, evocative blend of style and substance.

Quotes

"In a family which for centuries had been incapable even of adding up their own expenditure and subtracting their own debts [the Prince] was the first (and last) to have a genuine bent for mathematics; this he had applied to astronomy ... in his mind, now, pride and mathematical analysis were so linked as to give him an illusion that the stars obeyed his calculations ..." p. 12

"The Prince put [a rose] under his nose and seemed to be sniffing the thigh of a dancer from the Opera." p.14

"Dying for somebody or for something, that was perfectly normal, of course: but the person dying should know, or at least feel sure, that someone knows for whom or for what he is dying ..." p. 15.

"...Tancredi could never do wrong in his uncle's eyes: so the real fault lay with the times, these confused times in which a young man of good family wasn't even free to play a game ... without involving himself with compromising acquaintanceships ..." p. 24

"'...seven children I've had with her, seven; and never once have I seen her navel.'" p. 27

"... the wealth of centuries had been transmuted into ornament, luxury, pleasure ... wealth, like an old wine, had left the dregs of greed, even of care, and prudence fall to the bottom of the barrel, leaving only verve and color ..." p. 33

"...next to the main farm building a deep well ... mutely offered various services: as swimming pool, drinking trough, prison or cemetery. It slaked thirst, spread typhus, guarded the kidnapped and hid the corpses both of animals and men till they were reduced to the smoothest of anonymous skeletons..." p. 50

"The sun ... was showing itself the true ruler of Sicily; the crude brash sun, the drugging sun, which annulled every will, kept all things in servile immobility, cradled in violence and arbitrary dreams..." p. 40

"These early morning fantasies were the very worst that could happen to a man of middle age ... they left a sediment of sorrow which, accumulating day by day, would in the end be the real cause of his death." p. 56

"A man of forty-five can consider himself still young till the moment comes when he realizes that he has children old enough to fall in love. The Prince felt old age com over him in one blow...suddenly he saw himself as a white haired old man walking beside -herds of grand-children on billy-goats in the public gardens of Villa Giulia." p.66

"...under her pale blue bodice [Concetta's] heart was being torn to shreds; the violent Salina blood came surging up in her, and beneath a smooth forehead she found herself brooding over day-dreams of poisoning ." p. 77

"Donnafugata with its palace and its new rich was only a mile or two away, but seemed a dim memory like those landscapes sometimes glimpsed at the distant end of a railway tunnel; its troubles and splendors appeared even more insignificant than if they belonged to the past, for compared to this remote unchangeable landscape they seemed part of the future ... extracts from a utopia thought up by a rustic Plato and apt to change in a second into quite different forms or even not to exist at all..." p. 87.

"In reality the Princess too had been subject to Tancredi's charm, and she still loved him; but the pleasure of shouting 'I told you so!' being the strongest any human being can enjoy, all truths and all feelings were swept along in its wake." p. 94.

"Italy was born on that sullen night at Donnafugata, born right there, in that forgotten little town, just as much as in the sloth of Palermo ... once could only hope that she would live on in this form; any other would be worse." p. 105.

"...now [the Prince] knew who had been killed at Donnafugata, at a hundred other places, in the course of that night of dirty wind: a new born babe: good faith, just the very child who should have been cared for most ..." p. 106

"As [the Prince] crossed the two rooms preceding the study he tried to imagine himself as an imposing leopard ... preparing to tear a timid jackal to pieces ..." p. 115

"...free as [Don Calogero] was from the shackles imposed...by honesty, decency and plain good manners, he moved through the forest of life with the confidence of an elephant which advances in a straight line, rooting up trees and trampling down lairs, without even noticing scratches of thorns and moans from the crushed." p. 126

"... [Angelica] had too much pride and too much ambition to be capable of that annihilation, however temporary, of one's own personality without which there is no love ..." p. 132

"...[Tancredi felt as if by those kisses he were taking possession of Sicily once more, of the lovely faithless land which [his family] had lorded over for centuries and which now, after a vain revolt, had surrendered to him again, as always to his family, its carnal delights and golden crops." p. 142

"... the pair of them spent those days in dreamy wanderings, in the discovery of hells redeemed by love, of forgotten paradises profaned by love itself." p. 150

"Flattery always slipped off the Prince like water off leaves in fountains: it is one o f the advantages enjoyed by men who are at once both proud and used to being so." p. 163

"...[Chevalley] found himself pitying this prince without hopes as much as the children without shoes, the malaria-ridden women, the guilty victims whose names reached his office every morning; all were equal fundamentally, all were comrades in misfortune segregated in the same well." p. 170

"'All this shouldn't last; but it will, always; the human always, of course, a century, two centuries ... and after that it will be different, but worse. We were the Leopards and Lions; those who'll take our place will be little jackals, hyenas; and the whole lot of us, Leopards, jackals and sheep, we'll all go on thinking ourselves the salt of the earth ...'" p. 173.

"...if, as has often happened before, this class were to vanish, an equivalent one would be formed straight away with the same qualities and the same defects; it might not be based on blood any more, but possibly ... on, say, the length of time lived in a place, or on greater knowledge of some text considered sacred." p. 185

"Nobles were reserved and incomprehensible, peasants explicit and clear; but the Devil twisted them both round his little finger all the same." p. 194

"...[the Prince] felt like a keeper in a zoo looking after some hundred female monkeys; any moment he expected to see them clamber up the chandeliers and hang there by their tails, swinging to and fro, showing off their behinds and loosing a stream of nuts, shrieks and grins at pacific visitors below..." p. 205

"The crowd of dances among whom he could count so many near to him in blood if not in heart, began to seem unreal, made of the raw material of lapsed memories ..." p. 207

"[the Prince] felt his heart thaw; his disgust gave way to compassion for all these ephemeral beings out to enjoy the tiny ray of light granted them between two shades - before the cradle, after the last spasms ..." p. 208

"As always the thought of his own death calmed him as much as that of others disturbed him: was it perhaps because, when all was said and done, his own death would in the first place mean that of the whole world?" p. 210

"As always seeing [the stars] revived him; they were distant, they were omnipotent and at the same time they were docile to his calculations; just the contrary to humans, always too near, so weak and yet so quarrelsome." p. 219

"... this continuous whittling away of his personality seemed linked to a vague presage of the rebuilding elsewhere of a personality (thanks be to God) less conscious and yet broader." p. 222.

"[Concetta's] was one of those rooms (so numerous that one might be tempted to say it of all rooms) which have two faces, one with a mask that they show to ignorant visitors, the other which is only revealed to those in the know, the owner in particular to whom all its squalid essence is manifest." p. 242.

"The specters of the past had been exorcised for years; though they were, of course, to be found hidden in everything, and it was they that made food taste bitter and company seem boring: but it was a long time since they had shown their true faces; now they came leaping out, accompanied by the ghastly laughter of irreparable disaster." p 249.

"There had been no enemies, just one single adversary, herself; her future had not been killed by her own imprudence, but the rash Salina pride; and now, just at the moment when her memories had come alive again after so many years, she found herself even without the solace of being able to blame her own unhappiness on others, a solace which is the last protective device of the desperate." p. 250.

Topics for Discussion

Consider the character of the Prince as portrayed in Chapter 1 as compared to the portrayal in Chapter 6, the chapter in which he dies. In what ways is he different? In what ways has he changed? What events in his life have played roles in any transformation that's taken place? In what ways has he resisted, and/or remained immune from, the influence of outside events?

Discuss Tancredi's comments in Chapter 1, Part 2 - specifically, his contention that "If you want things to stay the same, things have to change." What does he mean when he says that? Consider, when making your analysis, the fact that the Prince comes to agree with him. What clues in the Prince's character and story, and in Tancredi's own, can be found to explain the meaning of this statement?

In what ways does the subplot involving Concetta and Tancredi relate to the main plot involving the Prince - in what ways are the thematic resonances of the two plots similar? In what ways are they different? What parallels are there between the ending of the Prince's story and the ending of Concetta's? In what ways do they come to similar realizations and acceptances? In what ways are their reactions to their lives different?

In what ways might the title of the book apply (at least metaphorically) to Tancredi as well as to the Prince? What characteristics do the two men share? What characteristics unique to Tancredi does Tancredi share with leopards and/or other predatory big cats? Consider the possible metaphoric meaning of the title as discussed in "Objects/Places."

Discuss the novel's use of anachronism (the references to objects/places/incidents and/or circumstances other than those inherent in the novel's setting (i.e., the references to jet air travel and to World War II). Are they effective as a narrative technique or are they confusing and inappropriate? Why or why not?

Consider the comment in Chapter 3, Part 2 that "every coin spent in the world must end in someone's pocket." Is this cynicism, or an essential modern truth? Why or why not? In what ways does the comment reflect attitudes and relationships in contemporary society, and indeed of history? Explain your answer.

The novel explores the nature, value, and consequences of compromise from several perspectives. Discuss the relative accuracies of these perspectives - is there value in the belief that ultimately compromise is good for everyone involved? in some way destructive for everyone involved? the easy way out? Why or why not.

Consider the title of Chapter 4 - "Love at Donnafugata". In what ways does the political maneuvering of the second half of the chapter reflect, ironically or literally, the title? In other words, where is the love?

Consider the quote from p. 242, describing Concetta's room. In what ways could this quote be applied to Concetta as a person? To the Prince? To Tancredi? To Angelica? To Calogero? To other characters?

What are the metaphoric similarities between the relics in the Salina sisters' chapel and the relics in Concetta's room? Consider their literal nature, their thematic function, and their eventual fates.