THE MODERN(IST) SHORT FORM: CONTAINING CLASS IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY LITERATURE AND FILM

by

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My dissertation analyzes the overlooked short works of authors and auteurs who do not fit comfortably into the conventional category of modernism due to their subtly experimental aesthetics: the versatile British author Vita Sackville-West, the Anglo-Irish novelist and short-story writer Elizabeth Bowen, and the British emigrant filmmaker Charlie Chaplin. I focus on the years 1920-1923 to gain an alternative understanding of modernism's *annus mirabulus* and the years immediately preceding and following it. My first chapter studies the most critically disregarded author of the project: Sackville-West. Her 1922 volume of short stories *The Heir: A Love Story* deserves attention for its examination of social hierarchies. Although her stories ridicule characters regardless of their class background, those who attempt to change their class status, especially when not sanctioned by heredity, are treated with the greatest contempt. The volume, with the reinforcement of the contracted short form, advocates staying within given class

boundaries. The second chapter analyzes social structures in Bowen's first book of short stories, *Encounters* (1922). Like Sackville-West, Bowen's use of the short form complements her interest in how class hierarchies can confine characters. Bowen's portraits of classed encounters and of characters' encounters with class reveal a sense of anxiety over being confined by social status and a sense of displacement over breaking out of class groups, exposing how class divisions accentuate feelings of alienation and instability. The last chapter examines Chaplin's final short films: "The Idle Class" (1921), "Pay Day (1922), and "The Pilgrim" (1923). While placing Chaplin among the modernists complicates the canon in a positive way, it also reduces the complexity of this man and his art. Chaplin is neither a pyrotechnic modernist nor a traditional sentimentalist. Additionally, Chaplin's shorts are neither socially liberal nor conservative. Rather, Chaplin's short films flirt with experimental techniques and progressive class politics, presenting multiple perspectives on the thematic of social hierarchies. But, in the end, his films reinforce rather than overthrow traditional artistic forms and hierarchical ideas. Studying these artists elucidates how the contracted space of the short form produces the perfect room to present a nuanced portrayal of class.

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CHAPTER I

REEVALUATING THE SHORT FORM

While most scholars of modernism and twentieth century literature still neglect the short narrative, some critics have begun to argue for the form's particular significance to modernity. Austin M. Wright, for example, contends that "the only kind of short story is modern" (46). James F. Kilroy claims that the short story is *the* genre of modernism: "Its fragmented action and characterization reflected the disillusionment of the postwar generation" (95); for a brief span, it was "the genre that could be said to best represent the essence of the age" (Ferguson 191). In addition to its ability to express fragmentation, the short's brevity "is directly imitative of the modern experience of being alive" (Shaw 17): the short form, like modern life, moves quickly and exists in a contracted space.

The concision of the short form also led to a compression of language that resonates with the Imagist movement's poetics of compression. But while concision is often taken as key to Imagism's success, it is frequently seen as one of the major limitations of short fiction and short film: many critics still consider short narratives inferior to full-length narratives. This double standard arises in part because short films and short stories are often seen as commodities aimed for popular consumption whereas Imagism is understood to have expressed a modernist "aversion to oversupply," which, according to Aaron Jaffe, forms much of the basis for the modernists' "critical interventions in mass culture and society" (66). Thus, despite the short form's

responsiveness to the mood and mindset of twentieth-century life, the genre still "has not been assigned any definite role in accounts of modernism" (Shaw 18).

Critics often deem the short narrative a low art form, adding to the critical shortsightedness; the genre has been denigrated for its close ties to journalism, its formal limitations, and its crass commercial motivations: "the short story's continued involvement with journalism has damaged its standing while ensuring its popularity" (Shaw 7). Shaw argues that, in an effort to gain popular appeal, short stories and short films cater to and reflect their more popular audiences, often portraying middle- and working-class characters engaged in varieties of modern labor, revealing a repetitive, dreary lifestyle emblematic of the typical Victorian realist novel (209). Due to the contracted space of the short form, these narratives focused on middle- and working-class characters often have a "tightly controlled quality" that limits character development to the point of "depriving [] characters of any self-determined power, making them appear [. . .] locked in a structure [. . .] specifically designed to fate them to passivity and sameness" (Shaw 208).

I agree with short-story scholar Valerie Shaw that the short form's brevity necessarily limits character development and creates a sense of containment, making the genre amenable to a conservative portrayal of lower-, working-, and middle-class characters. However, the short stories and short films I examine use such innovative techniques as free indirect discourse, recurrent characters, dream sequences, and narratives that resist their own containment to interrogate the form's constraints, reflecting the early twentieth century's increasing unmooring of traditional social and

political structures, especially long established class hierarchies. In this way, the short form becomes an ideal genre to portray the excitement and anxiety that accompanied the breakdown of conventional social divisions in the early twentieth century.

Despite scholars' tendency to prioritize poetry, novels, and feature films, my study of short stories and short films today institutionalized as minor works helps reassess and reconfigure the peak years of modernism. Susan Ferguson's essay on the short form equates literary and social hierarchies. Ferguson argues,

> like societies of people, the society of literary genres has its class system [. . .]. Over time, classes reorganize themselves, accept new members, cast old members into the dustbin. It has its aristocracy, its middle classes, and its proletarians, and the genres vie for status as people do, by adopting manners of the upper classes, by marrying up, and by working themselves in persistently at the fringes of the class to which they aspire. (176)

Ferguson's analogy, which essentially equates short narratives with the lower classes and reveals how both attempt to climb their respective hierarchical ladders, reinforces the link between the short form and class politics. Ferguson also postulates that in the late nineteenth century the prestige of the short story rested in the fact that there was "a certain volatility in the class structure, which welcomed the fine differentiation in generic types and social classes so succinctly offered by the forms and content of short fiction" (180). Although I agree with Ferguson that the short form appears interested in and linked to social structures, her account that the short story offers fine differentiation contrasts my findings. Rather, the short narratives I analyze bring more ambiguity than clarity to class and generic boundaries.

The short form proves the perfect arena for examining class hierarchies, class status, and class relations. Thus while many modernists worked with the short form and dealt extensively with issues of class in their short and long pieces, their short narratives and their rich and complex responses to class have yet to receive the critical attention they deserve. Recovering and analyzing neglected short works of the early twentieth century can reveal and illuminate significant interests and formal techniques important to modernists and to artists on the margins of modernism that still remain neglected, overlooked, or misunderstood. Therefore, studying the forms and figures at modernism's margins illuminates not only those on the fringes of modernism but also those at the center of the movement.

My dissertation treats short stories and short films not as apprentice work in preparation for long pieces but rather as art forms in and of themselves. If short narratives are examined solely in relation to long works, formal and thematic qualities that are specific to the short form will be overlooked. Shaw claims that around the end of the nineteenth century, "when all branches of literature and the arts were becoming acutely self-conscious," people also began to "acknowledge that short fiction might be shaped according to its own principles" (3). Yet, the critics who publish works on short stories and short films admit they are unable to decide what, exactly, defines the short form other than length, and I would argue that even this apparently straightforward criterion becomes complicated when considering a hundred-page "short" story or a sixty-minute "short" film. Tobias Wolff admits that "I can't say what a short story is" (xi); Francine Prose concedes "the form keeps defying our best efforts to wrap it up and present it in a

tidy package" (10); and Shaw argues "it is almost impossible to stabilize a definition of the genre" (7). Although theories of the short story often rely on Edgar Allen Poe's concept of the "single effect," meaning the story centers on one event with no extraneous or insignificant details deterring from the main point, Prose counters that few readers can explain what, precisely, "is the 'one thing' that our favorite short story is telling us so intensely" (7). Normam Friedman explicitly states what underlies most critical accounts of the short form: " I do not really believe there is any such thing as the short story more specific than 'a short fictional narrative in prose'" (29). The compilation of essays *The Art of Brevity: Excursions in Short Fiction Theory and Analysis* from 2004 marks the newest book-length work on the short form. The book claims that short story theory began in the 1960s and 1970s. It goes on to explain that part of its project is to extend traditional ideas on the short form by privileging the term "short fiction" over "short story' to reflect the fact that, as Susan Lohafer argues, "discussions of the short story now tend to be genre-bending and interdisciplinary" (ix). Yet, none of the essays in the book address anything but traditional short stories.

My dissertation analyzes the short works of authors and auteurs who do not fit comfortably into the conventional category of modernism in large part due to their more subtle technical experimentation and their closer relations to popular culture: the versatile British author Vita Sackville-West, the Anglo-Irish novelist and short-story writer Elizabeth Bowen, and the British emigrant filmmaker Charlie Chaplin. I focus on the years 1920-1923 to provide an alternative understanding of modernism's *annus mirabulus* and the years immediately preceding and following it. These three artists

utilize the short form in a manner that proves how adept this genre is at straddling the line between innovation and mass attention.

Although studying the short stories of Sackville-West and Bowen in conjunction with the short films of Chaplin may seem incompatible, the commonalities between these three artists emphasize the widespread early twentieth-century concern with shifts in class structures, further dismantle the alleged high art versus mass culture dichotomy, and increase awareness of the wide range of media that were influenced by and influential to the canonical modernists. One of the few critics I found who explicitly mentions the relationship between short films and short stories of the nineteen teens and nineteen twenties is the short-story theorist Kristen Thompson. She notes that

> by the first half of the teens, films were competing with inexpensive popular fiction [. . .], 'The Saturday Evening Post' and 'Collier's,' for instance, offered 'one or two nights' enjoyment of the best serials and short stories for five cents. To lure those readers in at a similar price for a shorter period, film producers felt they had to raise the quality of their offerings. Thus, for the short film at least, the popular short story offered an existing model to be emulated. (163)

Although the short film's length was necessitated by industrial capabilities, making the decision to work in the short form more of a necessity than a choice, this does not negate the cooperative relationship between short films and short stories. Although Thompson implies that short films learned formal and thematic techniques from short stories, I argue that this relationship is symbiotic. For example, whereas short stories became more visual in their representations, presenting numerous tableaus that prove just as significant to such things as character development as dialogue does, short films, though silent, became

more concerned with narrative development rather than with simply presenting a string of gags or images.

The commonalities between the short stories of Sackville-West and Bowen and the short films of Chaplin help clarify the elusive genre of the short form and its significance for understanding early twentieth century culture. Discussing the similarities between short stories and short films, Elizabeth Bowen, a major practitioner of the modern short story, both upholds and undermines the idea that the short form is an ambiguous genre: neither the short story nor the short film "'is sponsored by a tradition; both are, accordingly, free; both, still, are self-conscious, show a self-imposed discipline and regard for form'" (qtd in Shaw 14). Bowen's assessment of the short narrative clarifies some of the key traits of this elusive genre. Being uninhibited by tradition allows short form practitioners to experiment more freely with different themes and formal techniques. Yet this freedom to experiment is balanced by the limitations and constraints imposed by the form's comparative brevity. Thus, the short form straddles freedom and containment, experimentation and convention, modernism and mass culture.

Moreover, the short works of Sackville-West, Bowen, and Chaplin thematize their shared interest in the class system, class status, and relations between the classes at a time of increasing social change and mobility. The short form provides a contained space that reflects the confinement of traditional social boundaries. Yet, these artists' works frequently question and pressure these formal and social constraints. Their interrogation of the short form's conventional generic boundaries mimics and advances these texts' frequently ambivalent interrogation of traditionally rigid class divisions as those divisions

are put under increasing pressure by radical changes in social relations and the distribution of capital during the early twentieth century.

That Sackville-West, Bowen, and Chaplin were particularly concerned with questions of class is not surprising considering their personal experiences and personal histories. Both the English Sackville-West and the Anglo-Irish Bowen were aristocrats writing during a time when, in both England and Ireland, class stations were becoming increasingly unfixed, threatening their position on the top of the class ladder. In contrast, Chaplin went from being a workhouse orphan to becoming the richest man in the world, a shift that also destabilized his sense of class structures. The shifts in social status that these artists experienced underscore the period's increasing social mobility.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, downward mobility was much more common than upward mobility, adding social anxiety to common feelings of displacement. The acquisition of property or capital that allowed for individual business creation was the most likely form of success (Miles 88). Yet, "as a class indicator the amount of money is less significant than the source. The main thing distinguishing the top three classes from each other is the amount of money inherited in relation to the amount currently earned" (Fussell 29). Still, increasing literacy and growing migration from the country to town centers helped improve the chances of upward mobility (Miles 88), though these shifts exacerbated feelings of instability: the increase in literacy erased a longstanding class marker and the move from the expansive country to the contracted town centers further blurred typically clear class boundaries. Adding to this obscuring of traditional social divisions, as Paul Fussell argues, the definition of class status hinges on

such non-essential factors as "style," "taste," and "awareness" (27), grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (153). Because these traditional markers of class are increasingly understood as non-essential, performative, and, therefore, acquirable, the phenomena of class crossing and masquerade become increasingly common.

Despite the common assumption that social mobility, especially upward mobility, connotes a positive experience for the individual and society, as Andrew Miles explains "too much mobility can be just as dangerous as too little because it generates rootlessness, uncertainty and insecurity" (5). As this dissertation demonstrates, the short works of Sackville-West, Bowen, and Chaplin present complex, nuanced, and sympathetic views of traditional class hierarchies during a period of unprecedented social upheaval, registering and analyzing the deep ambivalences toward social mobility that social upheaval entailed. These artists use the short form to underscore the liberation as well as the confusion that accompanies the unmooring of the traditionally rigid class ladder. Though short narratives in literature and film are typically deemed contracted and confining forms, these artists push the boundaries of their short works using such techniques as extended length, recurrent characters, dream sequences, and free indirect discourse, emphasizing the fluidity of social and generic demarcations.

My first chapter, "'Her 'Dual Nature': Vita Sackville-West's Duel with Traditional Class Structures," studies the most critically disregarded author of the project: Sackville-West. Despite being a prolific writer, Sackville-West has long been addressed primarily in terms of her intimate relationship with Virginia Woolf. But Sackville-West's 1922 volume of short stories *The Heir: A Love Story* deserves attention for its

examination of the disintegration of traditional social hierarchies. The stories express both sympathy and cynicism toward the variously classed characters they try to contain and reveal a deep ambivalence about the instability of the social structures they portray.

Sackville-West's stories capture the fact that as social boundaries became more fluid, class identity became unmoored, spurring feelings of liberation, alienation, freedom, and terror. Thematically her stories address how characters cope with the unreliability of class categories while formally her title story is so expansive that it enacts the instability of containment. The fluidity of the class system is also echoed in the stories' use of free indirect discourse; the unpredictability of the narrative voice mimics the instability of the class system. Most of the stories use this third person narrator to inhabit the protagonist's mind, relate a more subjective point of view, and allow the reader access to and, typically, sympathy for characters ranging from the upper to the servile classes, depending on the story. The title story allows this narrator to float from character to character. The narrator's roaming from mind to mind mimics the way characters can cross class boundaries. The use of free indirect discourse also exhibits Sackville-West's flirting with modernist techniques. I argue that while she is not a modernist, Sackville-West's work rests on the stylistic margins of this movement; she uses a mode of narration favored by such canonical modernists as Woolf and James Joyce. Sackville-West's *The Heir: A Love Story* utilizes the short form and modernist tools such as free indirect discourse to help underscore the ambivalence, confusion, and excitement created by the upheaval of the traditional class system.

The second chapter, "'Stray[ing] Across Boundaries': Elizabeth Bowen Confronts Class and Confinement," analyzes the dismantling of traditional social structures in Bowen's first book of short stories, *Encounters* (1923). Bowen has only recently been receiving the critical attention that she deserves. Scholars have begun to take interest in her how her novels relate to issues of nationhood and gender, but her short stories remain largely overlooked. Like Sackville-West, Bowen's use of the short form complements her interest in how class hierarchies can confine characters. Bowen's portraits of classed encounters and of characters' encounters with class reveal both a sense of anxiety over being oppressed by social status and a feeling of social displacement in respect to shifting class relations, exposing how class divisions accentuate feelings of alienation and instability.

The stories in *Encounters* examine meetings between characters of different backgrounds, points of view, and class groups as well as these characters' confrontations with social structures. Although some critics see the short story as a limited form that does not allow for much character development, Bowen takes this necessarily contracted space and utilizes it to present a complex portrait of how physical, social, and mental containment impacts her characters' thoughts and interactions. Some of the characters desire containment, wanting clear boundaries between class groups and rooms of their own, while other characters feel oppressed by their class group or job status, desiring to break out of their present space and enter into a new life. Yet, the characters who refuse to be contained in their class realities as well as in their stories, like the nouveau riche Herbert and Cicely from "The New House" and "The Lover," do not find happiness;

instead, they experience the same sense of displacement that the lady's maid in "The Return," Lydia, feels. In this way, all of Bowen's characters, regardless of class status, experience feelings of liminality and despondency. And though all of the characters share these feelings of confusion and upheaval due to unstable class divisions, they experience them in individuated ways, revealing a sympathetic, nuanced presentation of all the class groups readers encounter in Bowen's volume of short stories.

The last chapter, "'Charles and Charlie': Charlie Chaplin's Multiple Perspectives on Class," examines Chaplin's final short films: "The Idle Class" (1921), "Pay Day (1922), and "The Pilgrim" (1923). While Sackville-West and Bowen achieved only modest success as writers, Chaplin achieved unprecedented fame and fortune with his film career in the United States. But like Sackville-West and Bowen, Chaplin's short works combine popular and modernist techniques and explore questions of class with nuance and rigor. Chaplin is neither a pyrotechnic modernist nor a traditional sentimentalist. His shorts are neither socially liberal nor conservative. Rather, Chaplin's short films flirt with experimental techniques and progressive class politics, presenting multiple perspectives on the thematic of social hierarchies. But, in the end, his films, finally abiding by the conventionality of much popular art, mostly reinforce rather than overthrow traditional artistic forms and hierarchical ideas.

Close examination of Chaplin's final short films offers insight into the transitional years of Chaplin's career: whereas the early shorts typically feature an antagonistic, confrontational, yet confined tramp, the full-length films typically focus on a sympathetic tramp and a more traditional narrative style. These late shorts form the bridge between

these extremes, showing the tramp and Chaplin's cinematic style in transition. During the peak years of modernism, Chaplin produced his final three short films, none of which comfortably fit with the rest of his oeuvre. "The Idle Class" (1921) blurs traditionally stable divisions between class groups and depicts all characters, regardless of class, as morally ambiguous. "Pay Day" (1922) sets the tramp up with a wife, a working-class job, and an apartment, which questions the continuity of the tramp character. And "The Pilgrim" (1923) uses its longer length to establish character growth, showing the tramp change from criminal to upstanding citizen. These three short films reveal how the short form enabled Chaplin to present multiple takes on class politics. Positioning his tramp in slightly different economic groups in each film allows for subtle, nuanced class analyses. Ultimately, Chaplin's short films are neither socially liberal nor conservative. Rather, they play with the confusion and liberation that come with the blurring of established class divisions; even though the films ultimately reinforce rather than overthrow traditional hierarchical ideas, they also expose the impossibility of completely containing class groups.

Not only does the dissertation engage in the study of a genre too long overlooked, but my work also examines the neglected issue of class politics. By exploring these often ignored issues together, the dissertation makes clear that the short form is especially well suited to the portrayal and examination of class hierarchies. The contracted spaces of the short stories of Sackville-West and Bowen and the short films of Chaplin reflect and accentuate the confinement of class, even as their use of modernist techniques facilitate the interrogation of traditional class lines at a time of increasing social change. Yet, as the short

stories of Sackville-West and Bowen and the short films of Chaplin ultimately show, breaking out of class hierarchies could produce profound feelings of insecurity and alienation. Studying Sackville-West, Bowen, and Chaplin and their rich and innovative employments of the short form sheds light on how the contracted spaces of short fiction and short film produces the room to present more nuanced portrayals of class. Thus, delving into the margins of modernism and its miraculous year of 1922 recovers artists whose works do not fit comfortably into institutionalized definitions of high modernism's stylistic and generic categories, but whose works nonetheless drew upon and modified modernist methods, conjoining them to the more "traditional" and "popular" conventions of short stories and short films in order to illuminate the sometimes disorienting social and aesthetic transformations of the first twenty-five years of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER II

"HER 'DUAL NATURE'": VITA SACKVILLE-WEST'S DUEL WITH TRADITIONAL CLASS STRUCTURES

Although Vita Sackville-West enjoyed a long and eclectic literary career and, during her life, "attracted a good deal of attention as a novelist, biographer, and poet" (Stevens 82), since her death in 1962 this prolific writer's output has been deemed "old-fashioned and quaint" (Watson, Preface). Today, Sackville-West is best known for her romantic relationship with one of modernism's preeminent authors, Virginia Woolf. Suzanne Raiitt points out that both women were "highly privileged and articulate" and "were rarely forced by economic need to do things that they did not want to do" (ix). Yet, like Woolf, Sackville-West maintained a heterosexual marriage while engaging in homosexual affairs (Raiitt ix); despite their economic independence both women adhered to certain social norms. Priscilla Diaz-Dorr notes Sackville-West "was confronted with an inner conflict over her own sexuality, what she called her 'dual nature'" (257). Using the same key words, Michael Stevens asserts that her early works "are largely based on problems of heredity and duality" (85). This issue of duality manifests in numerous ways. Not only was Sackville-West engaged in both homo and heterosexual relationships, but she also descended from a family of diplomats and humble Spanish dancers, and, despite a strong connection with the land and history, she was prohibited by her gender from inheriting anything her family had amassed and deemed important. According to Diaz-

Dorr, "the British novelist felt herself an alien in the Edwardian aristocracy that was her heritage" (256).

Despite feeling displaced by the confinements that came with her social standing, Sackville-West renounced neither her heterosexual marriage nor her class status. Born and raised at Knole, Sackville-West appreciated this "ancient and noble house" (Watson 13) as "a living symbol of the continuity of history, of the heritage of a long family-line, of the everyday life-patterns of past ages" (Watson 16). But gender politics complicated Sackville-West's love for Knole and her passion for history and heritage: "if she had been a boy, she could have inherited Knole; she could have been freed from the shackles of Edwardian society; and she would have had the opportunity to attend schools and a university" (Watson 18). Frustrated by her situation, Sackville-West "turned to reading and writing in rebellion against the social code of her class" (Watson 20), though this scholastic revolt did not eradicate Sackville-West's sense of "herself as a scion of the English aristocracy" (Raiitt 42). Sackville-West's personal as well as her literary life reveal an ambivalent rather than a purely rebellious attitude toward social conventions and stereotypes: "Sackville-West, it seems, shared Woolf's sense of the absurdity of many of the conventions of the English upper classes, but it seems only to have increased her fascination with the dilemmas of an anachronistic aristocracy" (Raiitt 92). Much of Sackville-West's work portrays a nuanced, sympathetic, and satiric portrayal of this "anachronistic aristocracy" as well as how the disassembly of this upper tier of the class ladder unmoored people of every rung.

Sackville-West's 1922 volume of short stories *The Heir: A Love Story* reveals an ambivalent reaction to the deterioration of this "anachronistic aristocracy" and the upheaval it caused for those on all rungs of the class ladder. As social boundaries became more fluid, class identity became unmoored, spurring feelings of liberation, alienation, freedom, and terror. Sackville-West's stories capture this dual relationship to social instability. Thematically her stories address how characters cope with the unreliability of class categories while formally her title story is so expansive that it enacts the instability of containment. The fluidity of the class system is also echoed in the stories' use of free indirect discourse; the unpredictability of the narrative voice mimics the instability of the class system. Most of the stories use this third person narrator to inhabit the protagonist's mind, relate a more subjective point of view, and allow the reader access to and, typically, sympathy for characters ranging from the upper to the servile classes, depending on the story. The title story allows this narrator to float from character to character. The narrator's roaming from mind to mind mimics the way characters can cross class boundaries. The use of free indirect discourse also exhibits Sackville-West's flirting with modernist techniques. Diaz-Dorr argues that Sackville-West's use a "traditional style with modern subjects" (264) and that the "enduring value of her works comes from the honesty with which she portrays the emotional turmoil created by the changing social and intellectual environment of the 1920s and 1930s in England" (264). While I agree with Diaz-Dorr's account of Sackville-West's themes, I argue that while she is not a modernist her work rests on the stylistic margins of this movement; she uses a mode of narration favored by such canonical modernists as Woolf and James Joyce.

Sackville-West's *The Heir: A Love Story* utilizes the short form and modernist tools such as free indirect discourse to help underscore the ambivalence, confusion, and excitement created by the upheaval of the traditional class system.

Though there is little written on the title story, what does exist underscores the notion of its being an autobiographical love story: "Running through the story is a deep feeling of tradition, which the house and its contents symbolize [. . .] Blackboys is Knole in light disguise" (Stevens 37). Watson claims that the "author, like the hero of the story, had [. . .] a love-affair with at least two old mansions – Knole and Sissinghurst" (68). Making this apparently semi-autobiographical love story "perfect" for Waston is the fact that "the spotlight is consistently fixed upon Chase, the heir – and the other characters remain shadowy. The action proceeds straightforwardly, always developing the main character [. . .]. The style likewise is simple and direct" (69). While Chase is unarguably at the center of the story and is the character whose mind the narrator most often inhabits, the other characters are far from "shadowy." Sackville-West develops characters from a range of class background, exposing how shifts in the social structure create a ripple effect. Indeed, this is Sackville-West's longest, most heavily populated story, allowing her to represent all class groups. The length, which is more like a novella than a short story, also underscores the instability of containment; there is a blurring of class and formal boundaries. Moreover, Sackville-West's style in this and in the other stories in the volume often vacillates between sympathy and satire, underscoring the stories' ambivalence toward shifts in social structures. And although both critics applaud the short's positive emphasis on tradition, comparing Blackboys to Knole and Sackville-

West's feelings for her own home and heritage, the story does not unabashedly uphold tradition as a good thing. The short story is best read as a condemnation and a celebration of tradition and heredities.

The opening of this story and the collection satirizes the death of an elderly aristocratic woman, undercutting any sense of solemnity regarding this wealthy woman:

> Miss Chase lay on her immense red silk four-poster that reached as high as the ceiling. Her face was covered over by a sheet, but as she had a high, aristocratic nose, it raised the sheet into a ridge, ending in a point. Her hands could also be distinguished beneath the sheet, folded across her chest like the hands of an effigy; and her feet, tight together like the feet of an effigy, raised the sheet into two further points at the bottom of the bed. (3)

Miss Phillida Chase's opulent bed that brings her dead body up toward heaven is comically undermined by the image of her "aristocratic nose" and feet creating peeks and valleys in the sheet covering her. That Miss Chase's body signifies her social status suggests that class is inherent and cannot be purchased or easily performed. Yet, the fact that Miss Chase's "aristocratic nose" holds up the sheet shows how class markers turn this dead woman into something to be laughed at, questioning the privilege that comes with class; social status cannot ward off death or mockery. The image of Miss Chase being an "effigy" indicates that she looks like a dummy, humorously constructed in order to insult this disliked woman. The title Miss indicates her being single, and her last name, Chase, aurally suggests her chasteness, which is highlighted by the image of her "feet, tight together," reinforcing the passing not only of this character but also of her class. This opening does not bemoan the death of the aristocracy; rather, it ridicules this aristocratic woman.

As Mr. Nutley, one of two solicitors, and Mr. Chase, Miss Chase's nephew, discuss her death, the men focus on money rather than emotion. The men "looked resentfully at the still figure under the sheet on the bed" (4). The men's resentment appears to stem from the fact that Miss Chase led a life of luxury and even in death demands being waited on. Miss Chase's demise has forced Chase to come to the country from London, taking time off from work, and Mr. Nutley has had to go to work, things that the men are unhappy about. Miss Chase's "figure" may be inert but the "figure" she is worth impacts the lives of those below her. A delayed coffin has lead to a delayed funeral, which will keep Chase in the country and out of work longer than expected. Nutley worries that Londoners may come too early and be upset about spending an extra day in the country: "'It's very annoying to have one's work cut into'" (4). Nutley fears the Londoners will be annoyed about missing work, but the comment also suggests that Nutley is frustrated because Miss Chase's death has taken away from his clientele, meaning less money for him. Miss Chase's "still" body describes its being physically inactive as well as points to the fact that it is "still" there, ruling these men's lives from beneath a sheet and beyond the grave. That the men stand over Miss Chase's dead body talking about work signifies their true concern at this moment: these middle-class men cannot be upset about Miss Chase's death because they are too focused on making sure they maintain their class positions.

Still in the bedroom, Nutley portrays Miss Chase's home and servants in a stereotypical manner, revealing his adherence to class types despite his frustrations with his own class position. He remarks how "tidy" Miss Chase kept everything:

"'handkerchiefs, gloves, little bags of lavender in every drawer. Yes, just what I should have expected: she was a rare one for having everything spick and span. She'd go for the servants, tapping her stick sharp on the boards, if anything wasn't to her liking; and they all scuttled about as though they'd been wound up after she'd done with them'" (5). Figuring things as what he "should have expected" underscores Nutley's preoccupation with the upper classes. Although Nutley first appears to give Miss Chase sole credit for keeping "'everything spick and span,'" the servants soon enter his discussion as the true agents of the cleanliness. Adding new meaning to her already multi-signifying name, Miss Chase would, it appears, chase the help about until they did everything she demanded. That the workers "scuttled about" highlights their rapid response to their mistress as well as hints at their being insect or animal-like in their motions, and the phrase "as though they'd been wound up" equates the servants with mechanical toys. The mixed image of animal and mechanical life accentuates the less-than-human view Nutley has of the serving class. As a social climber, he demeans those below him to make himself feel more powerful than he really is.

Nutley's first recommendation for Chase, the "'sole heir'" (5), reinforces the solicitor's focus on money. As Nutley "finger[s]" (5) Miss Chase's dresses, he advises Chase on what to do with "'the old lady's clothes'": "'they wouldn't fetch much, you know, with the exception of the lace. There's fine, real lace here, that ought to be worth something'" (5). Despite the possible worth of the "'silk dresses'" that are "'made of good stuff'" (5), Nutley counsels Chase to "'give some to the housekeeper; that'll be of more value to you in the end than the few pounds you might get for them. Always get the

servants on your side, is my axiom'" (5-6). Nutley wants Chase to grant the housekeeper the dresses not to make her happy but rather to make Chase happy. Keeping the servants "'on your side'" proves the power of the serving class, granting them agency; however, that the housekeeper could be kept on one's side with a few old dresses counters this agency, accentuating Nutley's belief that servants are easily appeased. Nutley closes the paragraph as well as the men's time in Miss Chase's bedroom with the comment that "'we're not likely to find any more papers in here, so we're wasting time now'" (6), emphasizing his attention to business since it leads to monetary gain. Nutley's singular motivation accentuates his ridiculous nature, making him laughable rather than likable.

After leaving Miss Chase's room, the men's ensuing conversation indicates Nutley's frustrations with his class status and Chase's discomfort with his heritage. On the staircase, Chase hears a shrieking that Nutley explains comes from the peacocks that Miss Chase refused to get rid of despite their ruining the land: "'you'll soon do away with them. At least, I should say you *would* do away with them if you were going to live here. I can see you're a man of sense'" (6). Nutley's suggestion is more of a directive, confirming that although Miss Chase employs him he does not see himself as inferior to Chase, who, despite his heritage, also works for a living. Nutley's emphatic "'*would*'" stresses that Chase will not remain at the estate. Nutley's conclusion that Chase is a "'man of sense'" not only insinuates that Chase's aunt was not a woman of sense, but also that Chase's not remaining at the estate is the right thing to do. Nutley's bold behavior toward Chase reinforces the solicitor's frustration with his class station; not only

does Nutley desire to climb the class ladder, but also he has designed to do so by taking over Miss Chase's estate, making Chase an obstacle rather than a client.

When Chase shows some sensitivity to the somber situation by leading the crass solicitor out of his aunt's room, he further frustrates the nosey Nutley. After their interaction over the peacocks, "Mr. Chase drew Mr. Nutley and his volubility out on to the landing, closing the door behind him. The solicitor ruffled the sheaf of papers he carried in his hand, trying to peep between the sheets that were fastened together by an elastic band" (6-7). Although Nutley attempts to regain control by gaining access to the family's private papers, he cannot see beyond the rubber band, keeping him out of Miss Chase's affairs until he is asked to help in a professional capacity. This causes Nutley to ruffle his papers, much like a peacock ruffles its feathers, equating Nutley with the vain birds he despises. Despite being shut out by Chase, Nutley attempts to retake control: "'Well, he said briskly," if you're agreeable I think we might go downstairs. [. . .] You see, we are trying to save you all the time we possibly can'" (7). Nutley's attempt to save Chase time reflects Nutley's desire to get rid of his new boss.

When Nutley asks Chase if he wants him to call someone to sit with the body, he confirms Miss Chase's lack of family and friends as well as introduces the reader to the butler, Fortune. Chase defers to Nutley's expertise: "'I really don't know,' said Chase, 'what's usually done? You know more about these things than I do.' 'Oh, as to that, I should think I ought to!' Nutley replied with a little self-satisfied smirk" (7). Chase's honest response that he does not know about such things gives Nutley another opportunity to prove his superior knowledge. Nutley enjoys delivering the information

that although relatives typically sit with corpses, that is not possible as there are no other relatives: "'In this case if you wanted anyone sent in to sit with the old lady, we should have to send a servant. Shall I call Fortune?'" (7). That a butler replaces a relative's duty confirms Miss Chase's lonely existence. The butler's name, Fortune, suggests an allegorical or ironical reading: this serving-class man is not wealthy in money or in luck, yet he might be a personification of chance, a word and notion that recall the name Chase, intimating that Fortune may play a role in Chase's life.

Chase's reluctant response to Nutley's suggestion that the butler sit with Miss Chase's body reveals his sensitivity to the servants and his discomfort with giving orders: "'I don't know: Fortune is the butler, isn't he? Well, the butler told me all the servants were very busy. [. . .] Perhaps we needn't disturb them.' Chase was relieved to escape the necessity of giving an order to a servant" (7-8). Chase's resistance to give an order distinguishes him from his aunt, who thrived on her power over the servants; he is not yet comfortable with his new position. This moment also distinguishes Chase from Nutley. Although of a middle-class background himself, Nutley lacks a family fortune, further removing him from the upper classes. His financial proximity to the servants, and his desire to move up the social ladder explains why Nutley has little patience with yet much advice for Chase; he wants to separate himself from the lower and working classes and appear on par with, if not above, Miss Chase's nephew. As the men go downstairs they see one of Miss Chase's peacocks sitting on the outer ledge of a window. That Miss Chase kept peacocks suggests a vain, proud streak in the aristocratic lady that Nutley tries but fails to imitate, resulting in his mocking it, and in the narrator mocking him: "the

solicitor flapped his arms at it, like a skinny crow beating its wings" (8). Although Nutley sees the servants as scuttling wind-up machines, the narrator portrays Nutley as a "skinny crow," which "in England commonly applied to the Carrion Crow," a "large black bird that feeds upon the carcasses of beasts" (OED). This comparison casts Nutley as a vulture, eager to feed off Miss Chase.

Nutley confirms his vanity as well as his dislike for Chase and his family when he assesses this nephew of the aristocracy: "Nutley glanced at him with a faint contempt. Chase was a sandy, weakly-looking little man, with thin reddish hair, freckles, and washy blue eyes. He wore an old Norfolk jacket and trousers that did not match; Mr. Nutley, in his quick impatient mind, set him aside as reassuringly insignificant" (8-9). Nutley's depiction of Chase positions the nephew as an overly fair, weak, washy, thin man. This unflattering portrayal indicates Nutley's class envy. That the solicitor finds Chase "reassuringly insignificant" confirms Nutley's attempt to undermine Chase's potential power.

Later in the story, the narrator provides a full portrait of Chase that does not exactly counter Nutley's but that does specify how Chase's class status has negatively impacted his physical and mental health: "He was poor; and hard-working in a cheerless fashion; he managed a branch of a small insurance company in Wolverhampton, and expected nothing further of life. Not very robust, his days in an office left him with little energy after he had conscientiously carried out his business. He lived in lodgings in Wolverhampton, smoking rather too much and eating rather too little" (22-23). Whereas the depiction Nutley provides leaves it ambiguous if Chase's weak physical nature is a

result of his aristocratic heritage or his unpleasant lifestyle, the narrator's portrayal clarifies that Chase's lack of robustness comes from being a hard-working man who does not enjoy his job or the existence it allows him. However, these parallel end results of physical frailty question which class is truly in decline.

As Nutley and Chase join the other solicitor, Mr. Farebrother, and the estate's neighbor and sole trustee, Colonel Stanforth, Chase reminds Nutley to introduce him to the Colonel, but Nutley's behavior reinforces his desire to make Chase feel unwelcome and uncomfortable. When the men meet, Nutley details his work for Farebrother, telling him that the paperwork was not locked away; they can thus look it over before the funeral so Chase can return to Wolverhampton as soon as possible, confirming Nutley's desire to get Chase out of the house. After much preamble, Nutley finally looks up at Chase, who is "still standing in embarrassment near the door" (10). In addition to delaying introductions, Nutley makes Chase feel uncomfortable by asserting that "'Colonel Stanforth has lived outside the park gates all his life, and I wager he knows every acre of your estate better than you ever will yourself, Mr. Chase'" (10). Nutley's behavior accentuates his desire to make Chase feel like an interloper.

Farebrother's interactions with Chase and Nutley reinforce that money influences all of the men. Like his name implies, Farebrother conveys a fair and brotherly attitude toward his junior partner, the Colonel, and the middle-class heir. Yet, the first part of his name, fare, suggests that even this most magnanimous of men is concerned with money; Miss Chase's estate is, literally, paying his fare. After Nutley's comments about Chase never getting to know the estate, "Mr. Farebrother, a round little rosy man in large

spectacles, smiled benignly as Chase and Stanforth shook hands. [. . .] But his pleasure was clouded by Nutley's last remark, suggesting as it did that Chase would never have the opportunity of learning his estate; he felt this remark to be in poor taste'" (10). Farebrother's "round" and "rosy" appearance as well as his benign smile and displeasure with Nutley confirm the qualities suggested by his name.

The detriments of heredity take center stage when the estate comes up for discussion. When Farebrother says, despite the "'melancholy circumstances,'" he hopes Chase will be with them for some time (10), Nutley, in his predatory manner, "pounced instantly" on this statement to remind the men that "'Chase never knew the old lady, remember. The melancholy part of it, to my mind, is the muddle the estate is in. Mortgaged up to the last shilling, and over-run with peacocks.'" (11). Chase's never knowing his aunt coupled with his living in Wolverhampton and working a desk job expose how far apart these two family members were in geography and lifestyle. Chase is only at his aunt's side now because he is the sole heir, underscoring the dwindling of this family. The estate's being over-run with peacocks implies that Miss Chase's vanity helped lead to her and the estate's demise. In fact, Miss Chase appears to be part of the impoverished aristocracy, having run the estate on vanity and heredity since there was little ready money to live off or leave behind.

As Farebrother provides a detailed historical account of the estate, Nutley's comments become increasingly mean spirited, verifying his disdain for his job, class position, and senior partner. Farebrother expresses sadness over the state of Blackboys and tries to blame its ruin on "undesirable tenants" as Nutley rudely announces that "'the

place will be on the market as soon as I can get it there'" (12). Nutley goes on to claim that the family tradition of passing down the estate are "'out of date, my good man,' said Nutley, full of contempt and surprisingly spiteful" (13). Nutley's contempt for tradition, especially one that keeps him working for the elite, explains his desire to put everything into terms of money rather than heredity and legacies. That the solicitors' appraisals of the estate as well as their attitudes and approaches to social structures vary so greatly despite their having the same job complicates attempts to simplify or caricature class groups.

Miss Chase's will reinforces her notion that land is more important than money and, to an extent, she is right. The servant, Fortune, and the estate neighbor, Stanforth, both receive money for "services" provided: Miss Chase leaves a legacy of "five hundred pounds to the butler, John Fortune, in recognition of his long and devoted service, and [] a legacy of two hundred and fifty pounds to her friend Edward Stanforth 'in anticipation of services to be rendered after my death'" (13). This money, which is clearly in exchange for "service," will not alter these men's class status. But the gifting of property to an unknown nephew will place him in a new social stratus: Miss Chase leaves the "whole of the Blackboys Estate and all the other [. . .] premises situated in the counties of Kent and Sussex and elsewhere and all other estates and effects whatsoever and wheresover both real and personal to her nephew Peregrine Chase" (14). Chase receives land and status solely because of his family name. But Miss Chase leaves her nephew property that is heavily mortgaged and no money to help rectify the situation. No matter how desperate the situation appears, though, Chase's name implies that he will attempt to

maintain the house. This is the first time that Chase's first name is mentioned: peregrine is a type of falcon, linking Chase and Nutley in predatory imagery; both men covet the trappings of the aristocratic lifestyle.

The reading of the will highlights the dilapidated condition of the estate due to the lack of funds. Stanforth wastes no time in sharing his opinion that the estate must be sold since it is more of a liability than an asset: "'there's a twenty-thousand-pound mortgage,'" and the interest from the farms is "'a bare two thousand a year [. . .]. So you start the year with a deficit, having paid off your income and the mortgage. Disgusting [. . .]: the place must go. One could just manage to keep the house, of course, but I don't see how anyone could afford to live in it, having kept it. [. . .] What figure, Nutley? Thirty thousand? Forty?'" (15-16). The focus on money rather than the estate, tradition, and heredity highlights Stanforth's practical approach. Although becoming the master of Blackboys would place Chase in a new, higher class group, with no money to help he would either have to live like his aunt, off tradition and mortgages or have to surrender the property. Either way, Chase's situation reveals how empty class titles have become. Despite his focus on cash, Stanforth admits that the house is a "'historical'" prize in its being a "'perfect specimen of Elizabethan, so I've always been told, and has the Tudor moat and outbuildings into the bargain'" (16). Stanforth's admittance that he has "been told" of the house's historical worth attests to his disregard for history; Stanforth uses this historical information to support his monetary interests.

Nutley's assessment of the house proves less complimentary than Stanforth's and highlights his frustration with heredity, which keeps him stuck in his class: "'The house

isn't so very large, and it's inconvenient, no bathrooms, no electric light, no garage, no central heating. The buyer would have all that on his hands, and the moat ought to be cleaned out too. It's insanitary'" (16). All of Nutley's qualms with the house have to do with its age, emphasizing his aggravation with history and heredity. Rather than live off of the past, Nutley wants to start anew. He goes on to claim, with a "peculiarly malignant intonation," that he would have no interest in such a place if he had the money, but "'it's a gentleman's place, I don't deny, and ought to make an interesting item under the hammer.' He passed the tip of his tongue over his lips, a gesture horribly voluptuous in one so sharp and meager" (16). Nutley's "malignant intonation" emphasizes his hatred for his situation and, by association, Chase. After all of his negative talk about the estate, Nutley admits that the house is "'a gentleman's place,'" but only because he shifts to how much it will fetch at auction, a thought that leads him to pass "the tip of his tongue over his lips," reaffirming the narrator's sense of his predatory, unlikable nature.

Nutley's first real interaction with Fortune confirms that the solicitor only deals in monetary terms. After concluding that the house should be sold privately to attract the most buyers and best prices, Nutley decides that Fortune should stay on to take care of the house and show potential buyers around: "Fortune, the butler, came in, a thin grizzled man in decent black" (19). Fortune looks distinguished in his blacks despite his thin and graying appearance, which tells of his hard work. Nutley immediately puts himself in charge with the servant, announcing that he is speaking on behalf of Chase: "'Your late mistress's will unfortunately isn't very satisfactory, and Blackboys will be in the market before very long. We want you to stay on until then, with such help as you need, and you

must tell the other servants they have all a month's notice. By the way, you inherit five hundred pounds under the will, but it'll be some time before you get it'" (19-20). Nutley begins by telling Fortune he is speaking on Chase's behalf, admitting that Chase, not Nutley, has the power in this house. Only after Nutley tells Fortune he must stay and to fire the rest of the staff does he mention the inheritance. This ordering of information is a monetary manipulation; Nutley's implicit message is that although the butler has an inheritance coming to him, it will take time and will not mean much, so he best do as asked. Nutley's using someone else's money to control the lower classes reveals his lack of power. When Fortune begins to question the estate's being on the market, Nutley exclaims that he should not "'lament'" and tells him to "'think of those five hundred pounds – a very nice little sum of which we should all be glad, I'm sure'" (20), using money to bribe and pacify.

As Nutley prepares to leave, Chase finally becomes aware of the solicitor's disrespectful behavior, questioning Chase's judgment and priorities. After Nutley tells Chase to telephone if there are any problems during the night, he immediately retracts this statement: "'oh, I forgot, of course, you aren't on the phone here'" (20). Rather than having forgotten, it is more in line with Nutley's behavior that he makes this comment to underscore his dislike of the estate's lack of modern conveniences. But it takes until this point for Chase to realize Nutley's rudeness: "Chase, who had been thinking to himself that Nutley was a splendid man – really efficient, a first-class man, was suddenly aware that he resented the implied criticism'" (21). That Chase found Nutley "splendid" despite all of the solicitor's impolite comments speaks to Chase's being a poor judge of

character, and that he liked Nutley for being "really efficient" shows that Chase and Nutley are not that dissimilar: both men revere quick work, which could be a result of their class status. Chase's liking Nutley until this moment also creates a problem for readers who, until this moment, thought of Chase as the sensible and sympathetic character; for most, Nutley is the comic relief. Nutley's unacceptable behavior and disregard for others allows readers to laugh at him, but Chase's sympathy for, similarity to, and blindness toward Nutley make him laughable too.

Left alone, Chase ponders his life and options, which lead him to pessimistic thoughts on work, money, and inheritance. In addition to his dismal life and job, Chase's outlook on his inheritance is also bleak: "he had always known that some day [. . .] he would inherit Blackboys, but Blackboys was only a name to him, and he had gauged that the inheritance would mean for him nothing but trouble and interruption, and that once the whole affair was wound up he would resume his habitual existence just where he had dropped it" (23). Chase's sense that Blackboys would be nothing but trouble proves that he knew his aunt was rich in land but not money. Despite circumstances, the narrator claims it is Chase's nature to be negative: "Any man brighter-hearted and more optimistic might have rejoiced in this enforced expedition as a holiday, but Chase was neither optimistic nor bright-hearted. He took life with a dreary and rather petulant seriousness, and, full of resentment against this whole unprofitable errand" (23). The root of Chase's unhappiness is not directly stated, but his resenting the "unprofitable errand" of dealing with his aunt's estate intimates that a lack of money contributes to his cheerless outlook.

Mid-way through the lengthy paragraph about Chase and his pessimistic outlook on life, the narrator changes tone and focus: the unfixed narrator shifts from critiquing Chase, to inhabiting the point of view of the house, to finally inhabiting the now positive point of view of the heir, revealing the shifts in Chase's outlook on his inheritance:

> The house looked down at him, grave and mellow. [. . .] It was not a large house [. . .], but it was complete and perfect; so perfect, that Chase [. . .] was gradually softened into a comfortable satisfaction. It carried off, in its perfect proportions, the grandeur of its manner with an easy dignity. [. . .] It was part of the evening and the country. The country was almost unknown to Chase, whose life had been spent in towns – factory towns. [. . .] The house seemed to lie at the very heart of peace. (24)

This "complete and perfect" house "looked down at" Chase, underscoring that Chase cannot equal the house's "grandeur" and "dignity." But whether the house or Chase is "grave and mellow" remains ambiguous, collapsing the distance between man and estate, and confirming that Chase belongs here. Emphasizing Chase's affinity with the house is the narrative's seamless return to the heir's point of view. That the house is part of the country, the evening, quiet, and peace expresses how much this symbol of the aristocracy is embedded in the natural world, making it more than just a structure. And Chase's appreciation of the estate and all that it has to offer makes him more than just a social climber.

As Chase surveys the house and land, he finds himself being drawn into the pastoral scene and straddling two worlds: his middle-class life and his aunt's upper-class world. Despite being the heir to the estate, Chase feels "hesitated, timorous, and apologetic" when he wants to explore the garden since he "could not help being a great respecter of property" (25). Chase's shyness at entering the garden could stem from his

being of a class that does not typically enjoy such luxuries. Yet his being a "great respecter of property" comes from his appreciating private holdings, which contradicts the fact that he also considers himself a Socialist: "that was the fashion amongst the young men [. . .]. He had thought at the time that he would be very indignant if he were the owner of the garden. Now that he actually was the owner, he hesitated before entering the garden, with a sense of intrusion. Had he caught sight of a servant he would certainly have turned and strolled off in the opposite direction" (25-26). Chase's socialism may be a fad, but his desire to be a property holder is strong. Yet, due to his class training, he feels so uneasy with his place in the chain of command that the presence of a servant would make him turn away from the garden that now belongs to him. Chase's ambivalent relationship to his new status and the estate reveal the complexities of class mobility as well as Chase's reverence for his aunt's estate. Unlike Nutley, who only looks at things in terms of money and finds such things as the peacocks in the garden annoying and destructive, Chase sees these birds as "the royal touch that redeemed the gentle friendliness of the house and garden from all danger of complacency" (27). Chase views the peacocks as the elevating and softening touch to the estate, emphasizing his sensitive approach to the land.

As with his response to the garden, Chase is overwhelmed by the fact that the estate now belongs to him and that he can walk around it at his leisure; but his fear of his new role keeps him from fully enjoying the house: "He had been shown the other rooms by Nutley when he first arrived, and had gazed at them, accepting them without surprise, much as he would have gazed at rooms in some show-place or princely palace that he had

paid a shilling to visit. [. . .] but not for a moment had it entered his head to regard the rooms as his own" (28). Chase feels like a paying tourist at Blackboys, emphasizing how foreign his aunt's world is to him as well as his middle-class sense that he must pay to view beautiful things. His disbelief that these stately rooms are his accents his feeling unmoored by his sudden shift up the class ladder. Once alone in his bedroom, Chase is so self-conscious that he does not take off his boots and fears sitting on the delicate bed: "He moved about gingerly, afraid of spoiling something. Then he remembered that everything was his to spoil if he so chose. [. . .] The thought produced no exhilaration in him, but, rather, an extreme embarrassment and alarm. He was more than ever dismayed to think that someone, sooner or later, was certain to come to him for orders...." (29). Chase has a hard time embracing his new role, revealing his ambivalence about climbing the class ladder that has oppressed him for so long. His difficulty accepting his inherited position as well as his sympathy for those now below him results in his still fearing to give orders. Unlike Nutley, who relishes being in charge, Chase cannot fathom such a thing, reinforcing the nuanced portrayal of these middle-class men and their relationship to social hierarchies.

Chase's fear of assuming the role of master to his aunt's servants leads him to act like a prisoner in his new home, showing the depths of deep-seated class behaviors. Chase "hesitated to go downstairs to dinner because he feared there would be a servant in the room to wait upon him. Chase dined miserably, and was relieved only when he was left alone" (30). Although this servant deeply impinges on the consciousness and dinner of the protagonist, he or she barely disrupts the narrative. Chase's dread of interacting

with the servants also leads him to sneak scraps to a companion dog when the servants are not present (31) and, after dinner, Chase leaves the table before he wants to out of fear that "the servant would be coming to clear away" (32). Chase's dread of interacting with the servants echoes his apprehension about seeing himself as the master of the house: he is both enamored by and afraid of his new position on the class ladder and does not know if he should celebrate it or renounce it. As he exits the dining room, Chase hesitates in the hall, unsure of which door to enter, "afraid that if he opened the wrong door he would find himself in the servants' quarters, perhaps even open it on them as they sat at supper" (33). It remains unclear if Chase's anxiety of interacting with the servants comes from his not wanting to upset the servants or himself. The syntax of the sentence, especially the fact that Chase is afraid he would "find himself in the servants' quarters," puts him at the forefront of the thought, highlighting his discomfort at being upset by them. And, like Nutley, some of this uneasiness may come from being mere steps away from this class group. If class boundaries are fluid enough for Chase to become part of the aristocracy, then he can also become part of the serving class. Although the servants are mainly depicted as a nameless, faceless unit, they continually exert their overwhelming presence in Chase's mind, giving them a strong, if not individualized, presence.

Despite Chase's apprehension with the servants, he quickly becomes enamored with the idea of having extra money and living at the estate, showing the lure of luxury. Once alone, Chase "sat thinking what he would do with the few hundreds a year Nutley predicted for him. Not such an unprofitable business after all, perhaps! He would be able

to move from his lodgings in Wolverhampton; perhaps he could take a small villa with a little bit of a garden in front. His imagination did not extend beyond Wolverhampton" (31). Chase's desire for a new abode suggests his unhappiness with his present situation, a situation that can only be remedied with money. Yet, that he does not think beyond Wolverhampton, exposes how bound he is by his middle-class mind set.

As he spends more time at the estate, Chase begins to embrace his heritage and all that it affords him:

> Perhaps he could keep back one or two pieces of plate from the sale; he would like to have something to remind him of his connection with Blackboys and with his family. [. . .] It gave him a little shock of familiarity to see that the coat-of-arms engraved on it was the same as the coat on his own signet ring, inherited from his father, and the motto was the same too: Intabescantque Relicta, and the tiny peregrine falcon as the crest. Absurd to be surprised! He ought to remember that he wasn't a stranger here [. . .]. It gave him a new sense of confidence now, reassuring him that he wasn't the interloper he felt himself to be. (32)

That Chase wants something to remind him of the estate and of his family exposes the power of material objects in the exchange not only of money but also of memories. Chase's shock at seeing the family's crest expresses how much of an outsider he has felt himself to be, but also proves what an insider he really is since he wears the same crest and is further linked to the image by his first name. Though, the family's motto is, curiously, a curse about pining for having forsaken someone or something, which suggests Chase will pine for this new life if he does not stay at the estate. Although he feels like a member of the family, Chase soon leaves the dining room out of fear that a servant will enter, exposing his lingering unsettledness about being master of the house.

Chase's sense of class dislocation continues as he contemplates his position in the house. As he sits with his aunt's greyhound, he looks at the dog's collar to learn its name but only finds the address "CHASE, BLACKBOYS," leading Chase to think "that had been the old lady's address, of course, but it would do for him too; he needn't have the collar altered. CHASE, BLACKBOYS. It was simply handed on; no change. It gave him a queer sensation" (32). Chase has a difficult time accepting the idea that the dog and the house have simply been handed on with no change. Even his aunt's funeral cannot set him free from his feelings of being an "interloper." After his aunt's body is removed from the house, Chase considers how "he could tread henceforth unrestrained by the idea that the corpse might rise up and with a pointing finger denounce his few and timorous orders" (34). This image suggests that, with his aunt's body gone, he can stop worrying about his lack of authority with the servants and can move about "unrestrained" by the old rule, but Chase remains restrained by his vacillating feelings about his place in the house and on the class ladder.

As Chase ponders leaving Blackboys and returning to his life as a clerk, he fears how his friends might react to his shift in class status, highlighting the fact that class mobility can spur feelings of insecurity, jealousy, and confusion: "his few acquaintances in Wolverhampton [. . .] would stare, derisive and incredulous, if the story ever leaked out, at the idea of Chase as a landed proprietor. As a squire! As the descendant of twenty generations!" (36). Chase's sense that his friends would be in a state of either disbelief or contempt for his inheritance intimates that class ascension may be so enviable as to alienate former friends. Yet, Chase's friends are more acquaintances than anything else.

Chase has kept his personal life personal, not telling even his supposed friends his Christian name out of fear that they would ostracize him for being part of a higher class.

Chase's desire to hide from his staff again arises when he is faced with the tenants who live on his deceased aunt's estate and for whom he is now responsible, but his reasons for avoiding these farmers complicates stereotypes. When Farebrother tells Chase he should make the rounds of his tenants, "Chase had gone through a moment of panic, until he remembered that his departure on the morrow would postpone this ordeal" (37). That Chase views visiting with his tenants an "ordeal" that sends him into a "panic" emphasizes his extreme discomfort with his new authoritative role. After eying the tenants at the funeral, he notices "they were all farmers, big, heavy, kindly men, whose manner had adopted little Chase into the shelter of an interested benevolence. He had liked them; distinctly he had liked them. But to call upon them in their homes, to intrude upon their privacy – he who of all men had a wilting horror of intrusion, that was another matter" (37-38). This passage challenges assumptions about why Chase avoids the lower classes. He is not annoyed, disgusted, or afraid of the lower classes but, rather, being a "reticent" man who keeps his life secretive and has "a real taste for solitude" (38), respects their private lives. The narrator's portrayal of the lower classes as a nameless, faceless mass, which might otherwise appear dismissive, is the opportune way of being seen, or not seen, for Chase. That Chase attributes a private life to lower and working-class characters reveals his sympathy for all those on the class ladder. Yet, Chase's description of the farmers, who are continually referred to as "them" and as "big, heavy, kindly men," upholds the stereotype of hulking, dense farmhands who are not "us,"

underscoring Chase's conflicted feelings: maintaining traditional social hierarchies affords him an aristocratic position, but he must break out of his present middle-class life to assume this position. If Chase is going to fully inhabit his role at Blackboys, he must advocate for fluidity as well as fixedness of the class ladder.

Although he stereotypes the tenants, Chase fears becoming a stereotype. As he reads Nutley's legal papers concerning the estate, Chase initially finds the "brocaded stiffness of its ancient ritual and phraseology" laughable (39). But soon "a sort of terror" strikes Chase (38) as "the weight of legend seemed to lie suddenly heavy upon his shoulders, and he had gazed at his own hands, as though he expected to see them mysteriously loaded with rough hierarchical rings. Vested in him, all this antiquity and surviving ceremonial!" (30). Chase fears that antiquity and ceremony will result in his becoming a "rough hierarchical" landowner even though he is appalled at such ritualistic things as new tenants having to swear their loyalty to the land "lord" (40), exposing his discomfort with the more ritualistic aspects of history and heredity.

But as Chase begins to enjoy Blackboys, he feels his historical link to the people, place, and landscape strengthen. Chase begins to view the estate as a place of "stability"; he "absorb[s]" the wisdom of the country and endows the land with knowledge that only those who are intimate with it can tap (45), revealing his sensitivity to his new place and role. Despite Chase's fear of his tenants, he soon remembers that "he had not found the people of the village alarming" (41); in fact, he even compares his situation to theirs, blurring class boundaries. Chase recalls a conversation he recently had with estate tenants. Chase "leaned over the gate that led into their little garden" (41). The gate that

separates the husband and wife from Chase during their intercourse suggests the physical, mental, and financial barrier between landowner and tenant. The woman's position "inside the gate" (41) reflects her being contained by her working-class status, and Chase's tentative compliment of her flowers emphasizes his discomfort with his newly acquired class status. The couple explains that Miss Chase also enjoyed their garden, though she made them dig up their peonies because she did not find the flowers worthy of being on her land, exposing how little control the couple has over their plot as well as Miss Chase's snobbish ways. Soon the three discover a similarity in that both the couple and Chase were born outside the area. The couple tells Chase how proud they are of the garden they have tended for the past twenty-five years, their family of ten that they have raised on this farm, and their home that they have remodeled, but they are now under notice as Nutley has decided to level the cottages to make room for a building site. As the couple "stared mournfully at Chase," he explains that he too is under notice to quit. The couple wishes Chase their apologies for his displacement even though he has not even taken up residence at the estate, an act that surprises Chase with its thoughtfulness. Chase's interactions with the locals break down the class stereotypes that reinforce social hierarchies, revealing the complexities facing a man like Chase: he has power over these people as well as empathy for them.

A fortnight after his aunt's funeral, Chase unexpectedly and secretively returns to Blackboys, exposing his growing attachment to his inheritance. When Nutley comes to look in on the house, he is shocked to find Chase walking around the park with the greyhound at his side. Chase explains that he was in Wolverhampton but thought he

would return to check on the house. Nutley counters that he "'saw Fortune last week, and he never mentioned your coming,'" (46), to which Chase responds that he did not tell the servants of his return, a reply that surprises Nutley more than Chase's being there. Nutley's shock at Chase's not telling Fortune of his plans exposes Nutley's sense that informing the servants of arrivals is not only the proper thing to do, but also the way to ensure that all will be prepared. Chase's not telling Fortune reveals his continued awkwardness with his newly acquired class position and Nutley's response highlights his familiarity with and coveting of upper-class traditions. This interaction leaves Chase feeling "a definite dislike of Mr. Nutley. [. . .] Nutley was too inquisitorial, too managing altogether. Blackboys was his own to come to, if he chose. Still his own – for another month" (46). Chase is annoyed that Nutley interferes with his time at Blackboys. Chase's attachment to Blackboy's can be seen in his broken thought: that the estate was "still his own" is an idea he does not want to let go of, but he has to admit that it is only "for another month," a notion that he wants to keep at bay. Chase's being drawn into Blackboys underscores his desire to be on the upper rung of the class ladder.

Despite Chase's dislike of Nutley, he still desires to impress the solicitor. Although Chase is the heir to the aristocratic house and life, Nutley assumes the airs that accompany such a life, accentuating Chase's insecurities about his new status. Nutley peers "at a crumpled bunch that Chase carried in his hand" and pointedly asks him "'What on earth have you got there?'" (47). Chase explains that he is carrying "Butcher-boys'" (47), to which Nutley responds "'They're wild orchids'" (47). When Nutley, who is apparently offended by the flowers, asks why Chase calls them Butcher-boys, Chase

responds in a manner that exposes his sense of Nutley's superiority: "'That's what the children call them,' mumbled Chase. 'I don't know them by any other name. Ugly things, anyhow,' he added, flinging them violently away" (47). Chase's mumbling, calling the flowers ugly, and tossing them away "violently" indicate his frustration that Nutley's observations about the flowers expose Chase's inexperience with the finer things.

Nutley's frustrations with Chase stem from Nutley's insecurities, exposing the similarities between these middle-class men despite their respective sense of difference from each other. As Nutley walks away from Chase and toward the house, he continues to wonder why Chase has returned to Blackboys: "As though he couldn't leave matters to Nutley and Farebrother, Solicitors and Estate Agents, without slipping back to see to things himself! Spying, no less" (47). Such thoughts show that Nutley feels just as insecure in his position as solicitor and estate agent as Chase does in his role as estate heir. But Nutley does not allow his insecurities to linger, soon turning the situation around to blame Chase, whom Nutley deems "an unsatisfactory employer, except in so far as he never interfered; it was unsatisfactory never to know whether one's employer approved of what was being done or not" (48). That Nutley deigns to call Chase his "employer" is unexpected considering Nutley's disdain for Chase. And his concern over the satisfaction of his job also comes as a surprise, but it reminds that Nutley is, despite his superior attitude, an employee who must satisfy his client or risk being replaced.

After realizing that Chase's return to Blackboys may indicate his desire to remain in the house, Nutley admits his grievance comes from the fact that "the solicitor had always marked down Blackboys as a ripe plum to fall into his hands when old Miss

Chase died [. . .]. He had never considered the heir at all. It was almost as though he looked upon himself as the heir – the impatient heir, hostile and vindictive towards the coveted inheritance" (48). That Nutley "never considered the heir" suggests that Miss Chase never spoke of her nephew, confirming the lack of familiarity between the two; Miss Chase and Chase are family by name, just like Miss Chase's class status is secured by property and heritage, not money. That Nutley honed in on this apparently heir-less estate for himself shows his desire for social mobility. His impatience to get the estate and his hostility toward Chase and Blackboys underscore Nutley's covetous nature as well as his hatred of social traditions that make it difficult for him to climb the class ladder he resents so much.

Nutley's return to the estate reintroduces Fortune to the narrative, which provides insight into how shifts in the social structure cause upheaval for everyone. When Nutley questions Fortune about Chase's putting a padlock on the door to the estate, Fortune explains, in tones "demurely," that Chase has been trying to keep potential buyers away. Fortune delivers this response in a demure manner, which fits his class status; yet he also betrays his new employer by telling Nutley, in rather lengthy terms, about Chase's behavior (49). Although Fortune begins this story by repeatedly saying the phrase "'no, sir,'" and "'yes, sir,'" (49), these class niceties and, for some, necessities, soon fall off, indicating that Fortune is not a servile servant. The narrator declares "Fortune delivered himself of this recital in a tone that was a strange compound of respect, reticence, and a secret relish" (50). For whom or what Fortune has respect remains ambiguous: it could be for the house, Chase, history, or any combination of these things. That he is also depicted

as being reticent intimates that he is only telling Nutley what he wants the solicitor to know, confirming his lack of esteem for this man who hates tradition. As for the secret relish, Fortune most likely relishes frustrating Nutley since the solicitor treats the butler poorly and threatens to either dismantle the estate Fortune is a part of or turn it over to owners, like himself, who would not appreciate the house, its history, or help. Fortune's behavior indicates his desire to maintain the traditions and social structures of the house.

As the conversation between Nutley and Fortune continues, the two men vie for the power position. Despite Fortune's wish to keep his position as butler, he also has a fair amount of agency, complicating typical views of the lower classes. When Nutley notices a bowl of flowers, Fortune explains that Chase put them there with "the satisfaction of one who adds a final touch to a suggestive sketch" (51); Fortune's attitude affirms that he enjoys taunting Nutley with Chase's unexpected behaviors. When Fortune asks if it is not unnatural for Chase to have feelings about selling the estate, Nutley, "to reassure himself," dismisses this claim "because he knew that Fortune, stupid, sentimental, and shrewd, had hit the nail on the head" (51). Nutley's dismissal of Fortune exposes Nutley's denial that Chase may want and gain residence of the estate. Nutley's reaction to Fortune marks the second triad of adjectives used in conjunction with Fortune. But rather than the narrator's depiction of his "respect, reticence, and a secret relish," now he is portrayed as "stupid, sentimental, and shrewd." The first set of descriptors focuses on "r" and "s" sounds. The adjectives match the butler's behaviors and the sounds further suggest his rock-like solidity but also his slyness. The second set of contradictory adjectives says more about Nutley than Fortune: the repetitive "s" sounds

underscore Nutley's snake-like manner. Nutley's calling Fortune "stupid" and "sentimental" reaffirm the solicitor's class biases as these terms are typically attached to the lower classes, but Nutley's inclusion of "shrewd" contradicts "stupid" and "sentimental," betraying the fact that Nutley is flustered by Fortune. The interaction concludes with Fortune telling Nutley how well Chase had been getting along with the locals. Fortune clearly nettles the solicitor with this information: the last image of the men is of Fortune standing "by the table, demure, grizzled, and perfectly respectful" while Nutley bristles in a "pre-occupied and profoundly suspicious" manner (52). This portrait elevates Fortune as a gentleman and demotes Nutley to a jealous child, problematizing the stereotype that those higher in class are also better behaved.

Nutley's bitterness toward class traditions continues when Chase arrives at Blackboys for lunch; Nutley now views Chase as a "weedy, irritable little man" (53). Nutley's increasingly negative views of Chase highlight the solicitor's growing frustration over the fact that this middle-class man might take the reigns of the estate, dashing Nutley's dreams of social advancement. Their interaction intimates that Chase will stay at the house and Nutley will continue at his job. Nutley's observations during lunch reveal Chase's gaining comfort in his new role: Chase was "playing the host, sitting at the head of the refectory-table while Nutley sat at the side. Naturally. Very cordial, very open-handed with the port. Quite at home [. . .]. How long ago was it, since Nutley was warning him not to slip on the polished boards?" (53-54). By sitting at the head of the table and, in general, making himself at home, Chase not only upsets Nutley's plans of becoming master of the house, but also confirms how quickly he has become

accustomed to this life of luxury. Chase even decides to keep the peacocks in the garden. The one word sentence "Naturally" can be read in numerous ways, but considering that the narrator is presenting Nutley's point of view here, the sentence reads sarcastically. Chase is not really the host, he merely is "playing the host" while making Nutley play the role of guest. Indeed, Chase's lord-of-the-manor behavior confuses Nutley since all Chase talks about is the sale of the house, confirming Chase's deeply ambivalent relationship to the estate and his place in it.

But Chase remains at Blackboys and grows to disdain his old life: "he knew that it was his duty to go [to Wolverhampton], but he stayed on at Blackboys. Not only that, but he sent no letter or telegram in explanation of his continued absence. He simply stayed where he was, callous, and supremely happy" (56). Chase's former life and job are painted in such a dreary light that it is no wonder he disregards his obligations there to remain on his aunt's estate. Chase shirks his work responsibilities not so much for family responsibilities but rather for his own happiness. Chase's appreciation for the land, the house, nature, and all that he has inherited excuses his dismissal of his previous life and job. Unlike Nutley, who is only concerned with money, Chase is obviously enamored with and humbled by his new life.

The longer Chase stays at Blackboys, the more he interacts with his farmhand tenants and servants, revealing his conflicted opinions about the people who now serve under him and his new place in the social order:

> he liked to rap with his stick upon the door of a farm-house, and to be admitted with a 'Why! Mr. Chase!' by a smiling woman into the passage, smelling of recent soap and water on the tiles; to be ushered into the sitting-room, hideous,

> pretentious, and strangely meaningless, furnished always with the cottage-piano, the Turkey carpet, and the plant in a bright gilt basket-pot. The light in these rooms always struck Chase as being particularly unmerciful. [. . .] He must sit and sip the sherry, responding to the social efforts of the farmer's wife and daughters (the latter always coy, always would be up-to-date) [. . .]. After shaking hands all round with the ladies, [Chase] might take his cap and follow his host out into the yard, where men pitchforked the sodden litter [. . .]. Here, Chase might be certain he would not be embarrassed by having undue notice taken of him. The farmer here was a greater man than he. Chase liked to follow round meekly, and the more he was neglected the better he was pleased. Then he and the farmer together would tramp across the acres, silent for the most part, but inwardly contented, although when the farmer broke the silence it was only to grunt out some phrase of complaint, either at the poverty of that year's yield, or the dearth or abundance of rabbits [. . .] thus endowing the land with a personality actual and rancorous, more definite to Chase than the personalities of the yeomen, whom he could distinguish apart by their appearance perhaps, but certainly not by their opinions, their preoccupations, or their gestures. They were natural features rather than men – trees or boles, endowed with speech and movement indeed, but preserving the same unity, the same hidden unwieldiness, that was integral to the landscape. (60-62)

This passage relates Chase's typical experience with his tenants, emphasizing his looking at these people and events collectively rather than individually. In the first part of this passage, the narrator uses the word "always" repeatedly while depicting the womenfolk and their houses, underscoring how all of these women, their children, and their homes appear the same to Chase. When Chase shifts his focus to the men and land the word choice also shifts to "might," indicating the slightly less predictable disposition of the farmers and nature. Yet, despite this change in phrasing, Chase continues to view "them" as a mass rather than as individuals: he does not think about proper names or anything else to personalize or individualize his tenants. Their homes and lives are "hideous, pretentious, and strangely meaningless" with lighting that is "particularly unmerciful." And, although Chase sees the farmers as "greater" men than he, this is due to their

physical rather than their intellectual or financial importance. These "greater" men "grunt" and are indistinguishable by their opinions, confirming their thoughts do not matter to Chase. They are important because they are intimately linked to the land, making them "natural features," putting them in the stereotypical light of being part of the ground they work. Unlike Chase's previous reticence with the servants and tenants, he now enjoys calling on the farmers, yet he feels he "must sit and sip the sherry," revealing his self-consciousness about the "social efforts" included in his position. His favorite part of these visits is his time on the land, where he feels he can escape embarrassment, follow around "meekly" and be "neglected." Chase's wanting to shrink into the background when with these men compounded with his shift to "might" indicates his unfamiliarity with the land and the men who work it. His content feelings when on the land proves his desire to rule, but not necessarily work, his estate.

Chase's linking the working men with the land becomes more pronounced as he continues to think about the farmers, yet he also complicates stereotypes by individualizing and even naming some of the men. In the same paragraph in which he looks at the men, women, and homes collectively, Chase's mind turns to think about "one old hedger in particular who [. . .] had grown as gnarled and horny as an ancient root, and was scarcely distinguishable till you came right upon him, when his little brown dog flew out from the hedge and barked" (62-63). This hedger is directly linked to the roots in the ground, romanticizing this hard working and worked man, who is "scarcely distinguishable" until the appearance of his dog, placing the dog in a more distinctive role than the man. The narrator explains that Chase then goes on to ponder,

> another chubby old man, a dealer in fruit [. . .]. This old man was intimate with every orchard of the country-side [. . .]. And for Chase, whom he had taken under his protection, he would always produce some choice specimen [of apple] from his pocket" and tell Chase autumn was the best time for apples. Chase would remind Caleb that he would no longer be there in the fall, but Caleb would "jerk his head sagely and reply [. . .], 'Trees with old roots isn't so easily thrown over,' and in the parable that he only half understood Chase found an obscure comfort. (63-64)

The fact that the old man is named Caleb individualizes him in this long paragraph of nondescript workers. Also, the man is said to have taken Chase "under his protection," indicating that this wise old man shows Chase around the land, and the paragraph ends with him "sagely" reciting a parable to Chase. The notion of the wise old man is as much of a stereotype as the characterless workers: the former romanticizes the working classes, which discourages class mobility, while the latter oppresses the working classes, which also inhibits significant shifts on the social ladder. Chase's thoughts about his tenants reveal a subtle opposition to class mobility, which reinforces the ambivalence with which social change is met. The malleability of class boundaries has allowed Chase to become part of the landed upper class, but this opportunity comes with the fear that further fluidity will displace him from this newly acquired position.

The approaching sale of Blackboys means the arrival of inventory men and dealers to survey the estate; the portrayal of these characters, and their portrayal of Chase, provides insight into Chase's resentment of anyone who disrupts his new lifestyle. The inventory men "soon put [Chase] down as oddly peevish, not knowing that they had committed the extreme offence of disturbing his dear privacy. In their eyes, after all, they were there as his employees, carrying out his orders'" (65). That Chase's "employees"

figure him as "oddly peevish" confirms Chase's ambivalence about selling the estate. This entry into the inventory men's thoughts also reaffirms the narrator's mobility, which formally underscore the thematic of class fluidity. As the inventory men ticket everything in the house, Chase either sulks in his room, "impotently" watches the items get assessed, or goes "amongst the men when they were at their work" asking what things might be worth "and, when told, he would express surprise that anyone could be fool enough to pay such a price for an object so unserviceable, worm-eaten, or insecure" (67). Chase's alternating moods and actions betray his ambivalence about the sale of the estate: he detests the idea of returning to his old life, but the thought of his new life brings with it feelings of displacement and instability. His shock at the prices reflects his middle-class disbelief that anyone would pay for objects that are not new and serviceable. Whereas the narrator portrays the inventory men equitably, Chase views the dealers in a negative light, exposing his contempt for anything and anyone that comes between him and Blackboys: "Cigars, paunches, check-waistcoats, signet-rings. Insolent plump hands thumbing the velvets; shiny lips pushed out in disparagement, while small eyes twinkled with concupiscence" (69). The dealers are reduced to material objects and body parts, indicating that Chase resents what these workers represent: the dealers are rude, greedy, lustful men who Chase sees as linked to his return to Wolverhampton. Chase's thoughts read as if these dealers are molesting the estate, casting Chase as the victim of these middle-class workers. One of the items that identify these men, their signet-rings, echoes Chase's signet-ring, which reaffirms the collapsing of formerly rigid boundaries.

As Chase's relationship with the estate shifts so does his relationship with the butler, alternately depicted as a social equal and a social inferior: "Towards Fortune his manner changed, and he appeared to take a pleasure in speaking callously, even harshly, of the forthcoming sale; but the old servant saw through him" (68). Although Chase appears callous about the sale, Fortune knows the heir wants to keep his inheritance. The narrator explains that Chase was now showing the house with what potential buyers see as anxiety to sell due to being "hard-up" or not really caring since the estate belongs "to a distant branch of the family." Chase is both "hard-up" as well as of a "distant branch of the family," but neither of these things truly motivates him; he loves Blackboys and is distraught over the sale. As Chase contemplates the auction, he becomes "aware that Fortune was standing beside him," causing Chase to "blush[] and stammer[], as he always did when someone took him by surprise, and as he more particularly did when that someone happened to be one of his own servants. Then he saw tears standing in the old butler's eyes. He thought angrily to himself that the man was as soft-hearted as an old woman" (74). The butler's standing beside, not behind, Chase implies equality between the men that their disparate classes would oppose. That Chase reacts to his company in a way that he would to anyone, but especially to one of his "own servants" first places Fortune outside of class but then not only reclassifies him but also makes him the property of Chase, which also speaks to Chase's shift in viewing himself as master of the house. Though, Chase's blushing and stammering confirm his discomfort in this role. Chase seeing Fortune in an emotional state humanizes as well as taps into the depths of Fortune's character; Fortune is more distraught than Chase at the thought of Blackboys

selling. Due to his inheritance, Chase's life has become uprooted, but Fortune's way of life is threatened too. If the estate is sold, Fortune may be dismissed or he may have a new employer who is difficult to work for. Chase's shift on the class ladder puts him as well as all those around him into a state of confusion.

But the breaking down of class barriers cannot happen fast enough for Nutley; when Chase leaves the estate, Nutley's covetous feelings take center stage. Although "not a very sensitive chap, perhaps – he hadn't time for that – he had become aware that very little eluded Chase's observation" (76-77). Nutley's relief at having his overseer gone is evident, but the claim that he does not have time to be sensitive suggests that such feelings are a luxury the middle class cannot afford. With Chase gone, "Nutley arrived more aggressively at Blackboys, rang the bell louder, made more demands on Fortune, and bustled everybody about the place" (77). Nutley's behavior exposes his desire to be in charge but his restraint when his employer is near. His overall animosity also betrays Nutley's growing sense that he will not get the estate. Once inside of Blackboys, Nutley feels uncomfortable with how much everyone misses Chase: "perhaps, Nutley consoled himself, it was thanks to tradition quite as much as to Chase's personality, and he permitted himself a little outburst against the tradition he hated, envied, and scorned" (77). This rage against tradition emphasizes Nutley's frustration that he cannot simply shift class groups; he must work extremely hard to obtain a new social status, and even then he would be seen as part of the nouveau riche rather than a part of the landed aristocracy, highlighting his lack of proper lineage.

At Blackboys, Nutley and Fortune again clash, highlighting their opposing interests in the fate of Blackboys. When the estate dog meets Nutley at the door, Fortune asserts "'He misses his master'" (77), subtly reminding Nutley that he is not in charge of this house or its people, animals, and things. Nutley tries to ascertain when Chase will return, but Fortune subverts his questions and instead discusses what a shame it is for Chase to miss such fine weather: "Fortune [would] not yield[] to Nutley, who merely shrugged, and started talking about the sale in a sharp voice" (78). That Fortune refuses to "yield" to Nutley indicates his dedication to tradition, which includes Chase, and his dislike of Nutley. But Nutley does not relent either; he discusses the sale of the estate, a topic that nettles the longtime butler who would rather have Chase be his employer than Nutley, an unknown master, or be dismissed altogether. The mutual dislike between these men and their conflicting hopes for the estate expose their similarity rather than difference; they both want what is best for themselves and will do what is necessary to get it.

Nutley's thoughts about his most promising buyer for the estate, an unpretentious Brazilian cattle magnate with ostentatious children, reaffirm the solicitor's jealousy of those who have achieved a greater class status than he. Nutley views their "white Rolls-Royce" with "disapproving respect" (81), indicating his disapproving that they have entered the class he covets but his respecting the fact that they have managed the transition. The narrator's relation of Nutley's outlook on this family echoes his reaction to their car: while the solicitor respects the cattleman for his hard work, he disapproves of the children who have not had to work for anything. Nutley sees the patriarch's simple

manner as indicative of his hard earned fortune, but his children epitomize the "spoilt and fretful" nature of those who get everything they desire (81): they were the "tyrants of their widowed father, who listened to all their remarks with an indulgent smile" (81). The son's hair shines "like the flanks of a wet seal, his lean hands weighted with fat platinum rings, his walk [. . .] slightly swayed, as thought the syncopated rhythm of the plantations had passed forever into his blood; and, observing him, the strangest shadow of envy passed across the shabby little solicitor in the presence of such lackadaisical youth" (82). The son's "wet seal" appearance undermines the image of him as a slick, handsome adult. Also, his "lean hands" indicate a working-class past, but the "fat platinum rings" show his advancement in status. Yet, that these rings are "fat" on his "lean" fingers symbolizes how he is still growing into his new social position. The "plantations" were in his blood, implying that his family's farming past can never be fully erased, just like the aristocracy in Chase's blood cannot cease to exist: blood will out. During the depiction, which is mainly from the point of view of Nutley, the narrator interjects that Nutley envies this nonchalant boy, indicating that Nutley wishes he could be on the receiving end of someone's wealth rather than have to work for it. Shifting back to Nutley's point of view, he sees the daughter as "more languid and more subtly insolent, so plump that she seemed everywhere cushioned: her tiny hands had no knuckles, but only dimples, and everything about her was round, from the single pearls on her fingers to the toecaps of her patent leather shoes. Clearly the father had offered Blackboys to the pair as an additional toy" (82). The satirical description of the sister as being plump, lazy, and disrespectful highlights Nutley's negative view of the newly rich as well as his lack of

wealth; he resorts to satire because it is all the power he can wield. That the estate is a "toy" for these children to play with emphasizes Nutley's frustration that these spoiled children will not take this piece of land he covets seriously.

The auction of the estate affords an opportunity for numerous members of various classes to convene at Blackboys, but Nutley, who watches the locals "pour" in, appears disgusted with everyone but the potential buyer, underscoring his focus on money:

> farmers in their gigs, tip-toeing awkwardly and apologetically on the polished boards of the hall while their horses were led away into the stable-yard, and there were many of the gentry too, who came in waggonettes or pony-traps. Nutley, watching and prying everywhere, observed the arrival of the latter with mixed feelings. On the one hand their presence increased the crush, but on the other hand he did not for a moment suppose they had come to buy. They came in families, shy and inclined to giggle and to herd together, squire and lady dressed almost similarly in tweed, and not differing much as to figure either, the sons very tall and slim, and slightly ashamed, the daughters rather taller and slimmer, in light muslins and large hats, all whispering together, half propitiatory, half on the defensive, and casting suspicious glances at everyone else. Amongst these groups Nutley discerned the young Brazilian, graceful as an antelope amongst cattle, and, going to the window, he saw the white Rolls-Royce silently manoeuvring amongst the gigs and the waggonettes. (89-90)

Nutley's point of view of the sale is prioritized. That the locals "pour" in shows the mass interest in the sale, but also suggests that these locals, whether farmers or gentry, are too poor for the sale. Nutley barely pays any attention to the farmers, only quickly noting their awkward and apologetic nature. Of the gentry, Nutley sees them as "shy," "ashamed," eager to please, defensive, and inclined to "herd together" like "cattle." The shyness of the gentry echoes the awkwardness of the farmers. That the gentry are seen as herding together breaks stereotypes by figuring the upper rather than the lower class as cattle. For Nutley, everyone except the potential purchaser of the estate is bothersome

and uninteresting. The Brazilian may not be seen initially in the most positive light, but among the locals he is deemed, by Nutley, to be "graceful as an antelope."

Highlighting what and whom are the most important, the auction progresses in a hierarchical manner, moving from the farms to the mansion, and depicts the desperation of the working classes as they attempt to keep their homes. After an unnamed tenant manages to buy his farm, another tenant lot goes on the block. Jakes' cottage, a favorite of both Chase and his aunt, leads Nutley to wish for its demise: "his cottage would first be sold as a building site and then pulled down," Nutley thinks, as he looks at Jakes: "he looked terribly embarrassed, and was swallowing hard; the Adam's apple in his throat moved visibly above his collar. He stood twisting his cap between his hands. Nutley derisively watched him [. . .], surely he wasn't going to bid! A working-man on perhaps forty shillings a week! Nutley was taken up and entertained by this idea" (95). Jakes' body language betrays his anxiety. But rather than feel sorry for him, Nutley is surprised and entertained at his effort to bid. This moment proves how much Nutley hates those above and below him on the class ladder; they all threaten him since the upper classes are unreachable and the working classes are too close for comfort. Jakes' cottage becomes the focus of a bidding war between a "fat man" who is a "proprietor of an hotel" and who is "after the cottage for some commercial enterprise" and the "trembling voice[d]" Jakes (97). The fat man's physical stature echoes his financial means as well as caricatures him. Jakes is the realistically detailed character in the scene, granting him the spotlight and the sympathy – if not his house: Nutley "scornfully" watches Jakes lose his land (98).

During Jakes' auction, Chase unexpectedly arrives and passes empathetic judgment on Jakes' situation, which echoes his own: "where did he imagine he could get the money? Poor fool" (97). As Chase "compassionately" watches the auction, Nutley "scornfully" watches, exposing the difference between these two middle-class men (98). Both Chase and Nutley are in similar situations to Jakes. Neither Chase, Nutley, nor Jakes can afford the home he wants, but Chase responds to this similarity with charity, whereas Nutley approaches the situation with the attitude that if he cannot have something no one should. Once there, Chase realizes that, though he felt drawn to the auction, he "had surely been mad to come – to expose himself to this pain, madder than poor Jakes, who at least came with a certain hope" (99). Despite his not having any hope, Chase continues to figure Blackboys as "his" home, yet he knows that all those at the sale who have met him understand that he is "poor – obliged to sell; the place, for all its beauty, betrayed its poverty. Only the farmers looked prosperous. (Those farmers must have prospered better than they ever admitted, for here was one of them buying-in at a most respectable figure the house and lands he rented)" (102). This passage presents a picture of social transformation as wealthy farmers buy their land while impoverished aristocrats cannot afford to keep their estates.

As the bidding on Blackboys begins, Chase's desire to maintain his newfound status gets the best of him and he soon becomes the "poor fool" he figured Jakes as: "he didn't much resent the fields and woods going to the farmers. If anyone other than himself must have them, let it be the yeomen by whom they were worked and understood" (103). Although Chase grants the lands to the men who work them, a

generous act compared to Nutley's attitude, he wants the house for himself. Chase, like Jakes, refuses to give up his land without a fight, bidding thirty-one thousand dollars "in a strangled voice" (113). Chase's bid surprises the auctioneer and the other bidders, prompting them to wonder "who was this fierce little man, who had shot up out of the ground so turbulently to dispute his prize?" (114). Chase's shooting up from the ground figures him as a root coming up from the land, establishing his belonging at Blackboys. He is no longer just a little man but also "fierce," revealing his fading uncertainty about his inheritance. As Chase continues to bid "he was no longer pale, nor did he keep his eyes shamefully bent upon the ground; he was flushed, embattled; his nostrils dilated and working. But everyone else thought him crazy" (115). Chase's drive to keep his land enlivens him out of his middle-class "shyness and false shame" (115). But, like his aunt, he relies on heredity rather than money: "bidding in these outrageous sums that need never be paid over, he was possessed of an inexhaustible fortune" (117). Chase's fantasy of being "possessed of an inexhaustible fortune" reveals his notion that he can live on credit but also brings up the thought of the butler, who has inexhaustibly pushed for Chase to take over the house, questioning who wields the power in this story about the instability of traditional class hierarchies.

After winning Blackboys at the auction, Chase, like his aunt, is left money poor but land rich: "Poor? yes! but he could work, he would manage; his poverty would not be bitter, it would be sweet" (119). But Chase does not intend to return to the work he has been doing; he is excited "to cast off the slavery of the Wolverhamptons of this world": "What was the promise of that mediocre ease beside the certainty of these exquisite

privations? What was that drudgery beside this beauty, this pride, this Quixotism?" (120). This passage highlights the differences between middle- and upper-class life. Chase views the town as "mediocre" and his job as "drudgery" and "slavery," but he sees the country as "exquisite," beautiful, and quixotic. Though, that Blackboys is a quixotic venture proves that Chase realizes he is overlooking practical considerations, considerations that will, eventually, need to be dealt with.

While Chase basks in his house, Fortune provides the last line of the story, asserting the importance of the butler: "Fortune opened the door of the house. 'Will you be having dinner, sir,' he asked demurely, 'in the dining-room or in the garden this evening?'" (120). That Fortune opens the door to the house, to Chase's new life, links Fortune to Chase's "fortune." Fortune's modest question about dinner gives the impression that all is right in the class hierarchy: Fortune is still a butler, Chase is his new master, and Blackboys has remained in the family. But although Chase manages to save his estate from the grips of the lazy Brazilian, it is hard to dismiss the fact that he cannot afford his actions and will either have to mortgage the land, as his aunt did, or work harder than ever to maintain the estate. Either way, money will be a battle, making Fortune's final entrance ironic.

"The Heir: A Love Story" presents a sophisticated view of class hierarchies and individual anxieties over the mutability of class divisions. The uncontainable length of this short story as well as the unfixed third person narrator echo the unmooring of traditional class systems in the early twentieth century. The mobile narrator stays closest to the upwardly mobile Chase, granting this character the most extensive inner life and

evoking the most sympathy for him, but the narrator also spends a great amount of time inhabiting the consciousness of Nutley, rousing dislike for his covetous ways. Numerous other characters are also afforded a bit more of an interior world thanks to this roaming narrator. The story's form and theme reinforce the notion that the class ladder has become destabilized and the result of this upheaval is, for all involved, exhilarating and terrifying. In the end, it is difficult to not feel both sympathy for and frustration with Chase as he sits in his new home without a cent to his name, underscoring the state of confusion caused by shifts in traditional class structures.

As with "The Heir," the next story, "The Christmas Party," examines how disrupting class structures can cause negative psychological effects. Lydia Protheroe, the pseudonym of the story's protagonist, owns and operates a theatrical costume and wig shop, much to the dismay of her "respectable" family (126) who fear her business will bring "shame upon them" (127). Lydia, originally known as "Alice [Jennings], who might enjoy all the advantages of a gentlewoman; Alice, who might reasonably have looked for a husband, a home, a family, of her own; Alice, who up to the age of twenty-one had given them scarcely any anxiety, who had been so very genteel, all things considered" (127), opens her own business with the "thousand pounds left her by her grandfather" (128). Unlike Chase, Lydia descends the class ladder. She renounces her domestic path to open her own shop. Although she breaks out of the limited life that her middle-class background was preparing her for, Lydia's deep-seated class mentality conflicts with her new life, resulting in her disturbed, unsettled mind.

"Armed with her thousand pounds" (129), Lydia does not fear setting out on her own, confirming the importance of ready money. Lydia craves the fight that comes with freedom:

> backed up by her family, she would have felt herself backed up by the whole of the English middle-class, cushioned, solid in the consciousness of its homogeneity and resources [. . .], inimical to the exotic, mistrustful of the new, tenacious of the conventions that were as cement to its masonry; a class sagacious and shrewd, nicely knowing safety from danger, and knowing, above all, its own mind, since nothing was ever admitted to that mind to which it could not immediately affix a label. This was the class to whose protection Alice Jennings had the birthright now rejected by Lydia Protheroe. (130)

Lydia portrays the middle class as conservative, traditional, uniform, fearful of change or newness, and "oppressive" (138). Such terms as "solid" and "cement" portray the class system as rigidly fixed, a rigidity that relies on the mistrust of change and difference. Although Lydia rejects her family's attempts to keep her in the fold, resulting in their turning their backs on her, she does accept her inheritance, making her independent venture relatively safe. Moreover, she maintains aspects of the middle-class mindset, causing an internal conflict between her old and new life.

Despite her feelings of freedom from the shackles of middle-class life, Lydia retains domestic servants and shop workers, which highlights not only her business success but also her middle-class attitude. Employing a staff of three in a busy shop makes sense for a woman of any class, but having a servant girl contradicts Lydia's desire to steer clear of oppressive class traditions, signifying that Lydia's problem with class is how it impacts her, not others. The servant girl was "always scared and never in the least devoted" (142), emphasizing the similarities between how Lydia and the

aristocratic Miss Chase abuse their staff. Lydia's treatment of her shop employees appears just as tyrannical:

> she would observe her hirelings with real dislike [. . .] until Miss Protheroe, unable longer to endure the sight of their hands fumbling among the objects [. . .], descended upon them [. . .] with a thin disdain that was twice as humiliating. For years she was deeply ashamed after these manifestations; then she grew to be less ashamed, and they increased in frequency. She became, coldly, more autocratic; would not have anything touched without her permission. (146)

Lydia treats her "poor," "innocent," "fumbling" "hirelings" like children who need to be humiliated to do proper work. Despite her continued disdain for her family who, by remaining ashamed of her new lifestyle, become "symbolic of that wary, chary majority whose enemy she was" (148), Lydia cannot shake her class's biases. Rather, over time she becomes colder and more dictatorial.

Although Lydia denies her class, her actions betray an inability to truly renounce her former status, exposing the confusion that ensues when attempting to break out of class roles: "an outcast from the auspices of middle-class propriety, she was driven into the refuge of her queer fantastic world" (150). The fact that Lydia is an "outcast" from middle-class life is her own doing, yet the phrasing that "she was driven" out of this world indicates a lack of agency, contradicting Lydia's earlier account. This contradiction implies that Lydia may feel that she wants to but cannot return to her old social status. No longer supported by her family and friends, Lydia feels pushed into "the refuge of her queer fantastic world." The costume shop can be seen as the odd shelter described here, with its dusty, dark, cluttered atmosphere that has an air of the haunted and grotesque to

it. But this "queer fantastic world" can also denote Lydia's imagination, where she creates stories about her past and present that help her justify her situation.

When, after forty years of silence, Lydia receives a letter from her brother Bertie asking if he, their sister Emily, and their spouses can join her for Christmas, class anxieties upstage family relations. Lydia's first response is that her siblings "had got wind of her riches! So they had an eye on her will! So her prosperity might sanction, at last, her discreditable trade!" (152). Lydia, who was so desperate to renounce class, can only think of monetary reasons why her brother and sister want to see her, implying that Lydia has struggled for money, making her paranoid of others trying to get what she has worked so hard for. Her reaction to her family also signifies the workings of a distressed mind, reinforcing that class mobility can create mental upheaval Lydia is sure that the brother-in-law she has never met will be "all sugar to the rich sister-in-law, well-primed by the rest of the family. She let out a shrill of laughter. She would get them all into the house. She would put up the shutters and turn the key, and her Christmas entertainment would begin" (153). Lydia's "shrill" laughter and ominous idea of shutting her family up for her own "entertainment" emphasize her troubled mental state. Lydia fantasizes about containing her family in her space, contrasting how she broke free of her family's class conventions and traditions. Unmooring herself from her class structure has left Lydia confused and alienated.

When Lydia's family arrives, her paranoia concerning their interest in her money takes hold, displaying her fixation on class and her distorted vision of her family. Lydia treats her family with suspicion. She is convinced that Emily had been

> tempted by the pictures Bertie drew of Lydia's wealth [. . .]. They wouldn't find much – the vultures – they would find that Lydia hadn't hoarded, hadn't kept back more than the little necessary to her own livelihood [. . .]. It was not part of Lydia's creed to feast while others went hungry. Not for that had she broken away from her traditions and her family [. . .]. They had thrown her out when she was poor; they fawned on her now that they thought her rich. Well, she would teach them a lesson (159-60).

Lydia's conviction that she uses her money in a charitable manner is interesting when compared to how she treats her "hirelings" and her female servant, none of whom appear to get any type of monetary or emotional charity from their strict, demeaning boss. Lydia feels she has only reserved enough money to live on, yet she keeps employees, underscoring her middle-class mentality. That Lydia rewrites the past to make it read that her family tossed her out when she was poor rather than her leave with a bit of inheritance to begin her own business proves her upset mental state. This troubled mind cannot be trusted to provide reliable information as to why her vulture-like family has come to see her.

On Christmas morning, Lydia wrenches her family out of their middle-class safety by stripping them of their dignity, freedom, and money. Lydia gives her family breakfast and presents, making them don the latter in order to receive the former, turning these apparently respectable characters into a series of grotesque masks and costumes: "Sackville-West very cleverly uses the masks as symbols of the bourgeois affectations and false fronts of the members of Lydia's family. And Lydia, once a young rebel against society, herself becomes a grotesquerie through a long-consuming hate" (Watson 70). For this darkly comedic, disturbing masquerade breakfast Lydia provides "a big, pink turned-up nose for Bertie, a blue wig for Bertie's wife, a pair of ears for Fred, and a black

moustache for Emily" (161). Bertie's turned up nose suggests his class snobbery, his wife's blue wig evokes an elderly woman, Fred's large ears imply buffoonery, and Emily's moustache indicates masculine traits. After making her siblings eat breakfast in their costumes, Lydia locks her family in the shop and forces them, at gunpoint, to give her their money. She then sends them upstairs so she can sit at the now empty table and "laugh. But it was not quite the wholesome laugh of one who plays a successful practical joke; it was, rather, a cackle of real malevolence" (165). This scene confirms Lydia's deranged mind, and such actions as her stealing her family's money links her mental instability to her disrupting the class system. Bertie asserts that despite the forty-year absence Lydia "paid us out" (172), meaning she has gotten her revenge, but the phrasing as well as Lydia's stealing her siblings' money underscores that her madness is class-based.

The story closes with an image of a crazed family and a sane Lydia, exemplifying the disorientation that comes with the disintegration of class boundaries. As Lydia's fearful family, now returned to the dining room, gets drunk, she sits with her gun, laughing at and enraged with them. Lydia's doorbell interrupts the deranged scene: "She recognized many of her fellow-tradesmen; she heard their words, 'Your well-known charity, Miss Portheroe'" (176). Lydia invites the men in to see her grotesque family Christmas, prompting a still costumed Bertie to proclaim his sister "mad" (177). The outsiders stare at the masked, drunken family and the "stiff correctness" of Lydia, a stare that closes the story. This ending confirms that appearance is an unreliable indicator of character, especially in a time when social structures are becoming more fluid.

In many ways, "The Christmas Party" is the most modernist short story in this collection. The narrator primarily inhabits Lydia's mind, making the reader intimate with someone who is mentally disturbed. Lydia's unreliability forces the reader to puzzle out her and her family's history and motives. Although the third person narrator could fill in many of these gaps, in this case the narrator remains quite limited, mostly focusing on Lydia's subjective point of view. Lydia's troubled mind, which disrupts the clarity of the narrative, stems from her having disturbed the class ladder. As with "The Heir," these formal qualities, including the use of the short form, underscore Sackville-West's thematic interest in social systems. But unlike "The Heir," which takes place in the big house and is the volume's longest short story, "The Christmas Party" plays out in a cluttered costume shop and in a much shorter story. Additionally, while "The Heir" represents a deeply ambivalent attitude toward class ascension, "The Christmas Party" presents more of a cautionary tale against moving down on the class ladder, suggesting the direction one moves in as well as one's gender impacts the consequences of class destabilization. The subtle differences between these two stories confirm a nuanced, sophisticated approach to class.

The final story of the volume, "The Parrot," splits its focus between a caged parrot and an under housemaid. "The Parrot" privileges the point of view of the poorest character in the compilation and is the shortest story in the volume, directly contrasting the first story, "The Heir," which is the longest story and deals with the wealthiest characters in the volume. The contracted space of this final story echoes the confined space of the literal cage the bird lives in and the figurative cage in which the servant

resides. Both of these miserable creatures desire a life of freedom, but they are so oppressed by their circumstances that mobility does not appear to be an option for them, leaving them more despondent than any of the other characters in the volume. Contrasting the ambivalence with which class mobility is met in the other stories, this story exposes the fatal results of forced confinement.

This tragic story begins like a fairy tale, building anticipation for a happy ending: "Once upon a time there was a small green parrot, with a coral-coloured head. It should have lived in Uruguay, but actually it lived in Pimlico, in a cage, a piece of apple stuck between the bars at one end of its perch, and a lump of sugar between the bars at the other. It was well cared for" (245). The bird's being in a cage in the domestic Pimlico with enticements to please it at either end rather than free in its native and exotic habitat of Uruguay questions the happiness of such an existence. Despite being "well cared for," having fresh water and seed, and not having cats come near it, "the bird was extremely disagreeable," not allowing people to approach it and admire its colors (245). And, when unobserved, the bird "returned to the eternal and unavailing occupation of trying to get out of its cage" (246). The parrot's escape efforts lead to better built cages and reprimands from its owners, who try to convince the bird that breaking out of these confines would lead to the challenges of a big world, which would lead to its death. Thus, the parrot's owners rob the bird of any type of mobility.

The under housemaid looks after this parrot, a job that brings her the only joy and mental freedom she knows; thus, the parrot and the under housemaid share the frustration of being confined to unfavorable circumstances. The housemaid is portrayed as

> a slatternly girl of eighteen, with smudges of coal on her apron, and a smear of violet eyes in a white sickly face. She used to talk to the parrot, [. . .] confiding to it all her perplexities. [. . .] In spite of its lack of response, she had for the parrot a passion which transformed it into a symbol. Its jade-green and coral seemed to give her a hint of something marvelously far removed from Pimlico. Her fifteen minutes with the parrot every morning remained the one fabulous excursion of her day. (246-47)

The housemaid looks to the parrot as a confidant and as a symbol of something great in the world. That her time with the parrot marks her "one fabulous excursion" of the day reinforces how physically and mentally confined this servant girl's life is. Although this sense of containment echoes the parrot's existence, the physical image of the housemaid is diametrically opposed to the parrot: the former is sickly, unsightly due to neglect, and far from exotic, while the latter is beautiful, fanciful, and mysterious.

But, like the parrot, the maid does not live up to expectations due to her general disinterest in her job: "Apart from the function of cleaning out the cage, which she performed with efficiency, she was, considered as a housemaid, a failure. Perpetually in trouble, she tried to mend her ways [. . .], [but] then, as she relapsed into day-dreams, the most important part of her work would be left forgotten. Scolding and exasperation stormed around her ears" (247-48). Daydreaming is the only sense of freedom the housemaid gets, but even this is stifled when it interferes with her work, which "remained to her, in spite of her efforts, of small significance" (248). That the housemaid's work is not central to her life reveals the fact that servants have other aspirations than to simply serve their masters. Even though the housemaid remains unnamed, which is somewhat dehumanizing, she is granted an inner life. The story's upper-class characters lack not only an interior world but also a gendered exterior, figured only as "the indignant

authority" (248) and the parrot's "owners" (247), unsettling stereotypical ways in which certain classes are depicted.

Despite their best efforts to either mentally or physically escape their present, oppressive situation, the parrot and maid soon resign their attempts for a better life and settle into an unpleasant routine, revealing the despondency of stagnation: when "the parrot gave up the attempt to get out of its cage, and spent its days moping upon the topmost perch" (248), the maid too seemed "a transformed creature: punctual, orderly, competent, and unobtrusive. The cook said she didn't know what had come over the bird and the girl" (248). The parrot's acceptance of its miserable life disheartens the maid so much that she begins to perform her duties well; she is no longer distracted by the visions of faraway places that the formerly feisty parrot evoked. Although the cook and presumably her employers are pleased with this transformation, the cook's thoughts betray that she misses the vivaciousness of the maid and parrot: "it would have been hypocritical to complain that the girl's quietness was disconcerting. When her tasks were done, she retired to her bedroom. [. . .] Well, if she chose to spend her time. . . ." (249). The girl's excessive quietness leaves the cooks uneasy as well as parallels the parrot's tendency to now simply sit huddled up in its cage. Now that "the two rebels had at last fallen into line with the quiet conduct of the house" (248), their personalities and will to live has disintegrated.

The story ends with a final parallel between the girl and the bird that underscores the tragic consequences of rigid mental and physical containment:

> One morning the cook came down as was her custom, and found the following note addressed to her, propped up on the kitchen dresser: 'Dear Mrs. White, i have gone to wear the golden crown but i have lit the stokhole and laid the brekfast.' Very much annoyed, and wondering what tricks the girl had been up to, she climbed the stairs to the girl's bedroom. The room had been tidied, and the slops emptied away, and the girl was lying dead upon the bed. She flew downstairs with the news. In the sitting-room, where she collided with her mistress, she noticed the parrot on its back on the floor of the cage, its two little legs sticking stiffly up into the air. (249-50)

The maid's committing suicide and the parrot's death reveal the dangers of not trying to escape one's class confines. The maid addresses her note to her immediate supervisor, the cook, and briefly lists the duties she performed before killing herself, indicating that service was the focus of her unhappy life and the last thing she did before her death. The girl's use of lower case personal pronouns indicate a lack of education as well as a lack of self-importance. That she has "gone to wear the golden crown" shows that suicide is this character's idea of class ascension. Seeing no other way out of her stifling circumstances, the maid ironically and desperately chooses death as her mode of mobility. The final image of the dead parrot questions whose death came first; if the girl's love of the bird is any indication, it can be assumed that when she found the parrot dead in its cage she realized there was no hope in reviving her daydreams, which were her only form of escape. So, after performing her earthly duties, the maid escaped the only way she knew how, highlighting how traditional social divisions can create an unbearable life for some.

"The Parrot" ironically undermines its fairytale beginning: no one lives happily ever after. Starting with the language of the fairytale and ending with a dead maid and a dead bird accentuate the extremes of this simultaneously comedic and tragic short story. Such images as the girl "dead in her bed" evoke sympathy as well as produce a laugh at

the singsong quality of the simple phrase, revealing sympathy for as well as cynicism about those trapped by social structures. The image of girl dead in her bed also echoes the first image of the volume: Miss Chase dead in her bed. Death is the one place where class divisions completely dissolve. Thus, although the maid is the most contained person in the volume, inhabiting the shortest story and allowed the least amount of personal freedom, even she cannot be totally confined. The maid's death confirms that formerly reliable boundaries are no longer reliable.

Raiitt asserts that Sackville-West used her fiction to blatantly display "her hostility to the working class" (41) and focused on "working-class communities" in order to critique them (49). Yet, Sackville-West's stories leave no class free from criticism or compassion. *The Heir: A Love Story* reveals a complex representation of characters from all social groups. And the short form as well as such tools as free indirect discourse and satire work to emphasize the themes of class mobility and confinement. Ultimately, Sackville-West's stories express a deep ambivalence toward traditional class structures and their disintegration, revealing the complexities of social transformation.

CHAPTER III

"STRAY[ING] ACROSS BOUNDARIES": ELIZABETH BOWEN CONFRONTS CLASS AND CONFINEMENT

Although "her books have always remained in print" (Ellmann 17), Elizabeth Bowen has suffered decades of critical neglect: "it is partly because Bowen's fiction resists categorization that it has been neglected in academic criticism" (Ellmann 17). Yet, with the rise of feminist literary criticism, Bowen's works slowly started to come under examination in the early 1980s (Ellmann 18). Bowen's being born in Ireland but mainly being raised in England also highlights the "multiple ways that her narratives stray across boundaries and resist neat identifications" (Osborn 228), but in the past few decades Bowen's writing has become of much interest to studies on nationhood. Finally, Bowen's work is "too conservative for modernism, too idiosyncratic for traditionalism" (Ellmann 16), again placing her on the stylistic margins of major movements. Most recently a special edition of *Modern Fiction Studies* (2007), edited by Susan Osborn, as well as Osborn's new book, *Elizabeth Bowen: New Critical Perspectives* (2009), worked to further open the field of Bowen studies, including readings that examine the similarities between Bowen and Samuel Beckett in their use of inertia, ritual, and cultural dislocation (Mooney); representations of only children and their implications on gender identity (Cullingford); portrayals of inanimate objects (Inglesby); and how the pressure of the marketplace influences literary production (Miller).

All of these ways of exploring Bowen's work are informative as well as important, but one area that has remained relatively neglected is Bowen's representations of class politics. While issues of gender and nationality rightfully garner the greatest critical focus, class hierarchies interact with these central concerns in interesting ways. It is hard to ignore the predominance of class systems and how they influence character behavior in Bowen's work. Janet Egleson Dunleavy explains that during the time Bowen was writing her first book of short stories, *Encounters* (1923), the power of the Irish Ascendancy was being challenged by such events as the Irish War of Independence and the Irish Civil War, which left the Irish Aristocrats displaced. Bowen's examinations of social class respond to such events by highlighting the notion that nothing, including class, is fixed:

> Instability characterizes the lives of the men and women in her short fiction (most of them people of her own social class). Seldom are they depicted in a settled home. Some live in respectable rooming houses or flats, or are just returning from or going somewhere, or are in the process of moving. Their emotional lives are also in flux. Some are trying to adjust to the death or departure of one with whom they had shared an intimate relationship. Intimacy, when it is achieved, may be but a brief moment during a chance encounter, unlikely to be repeated. Isolation may be a pathological condition. (Dunleavy 156)

Dunleavy's insights into Bowen's dislocated characters are crucial to my readings of class politics in Bowen's short stories. And while the majority of Bowen's characters are in the author's social group, those who are not, and there are quite a few, often undergo the same feelings of isolation as the upper classes. Regardless of social status, most of Bowen's characters experience some sense of alienation from their lives, jobs, spouses, and homes. This overwhelming feeling of disaffection reveals Bowen's sophisticated

rather than romanticized or derogatory portrait of different social groups; no matter what people's income or heredity, they cannot escape the dissatisfaction and instability that accompany shifts in traditional social systems.

In addition to this thematic oversight, most critics neglect Bowen's short stories. Osborn's new book includes a chapter on Bowen's late short stories and their depictions of wartime London, but her early short stories, in particular, are rarely mentioned, and, when they are, typically are read in terms of Bowen's biography. Critics such as A.C. Partridge dismiss Bowen's earliest work: "most stories in *Encounters* and its immediate successors are mere sketches, with no plot and little development of character" (172). On the other hand, Laurel Smith celebrates Bowen's use of the short form, highlighting how well it suits her thematic interests: "The tight structure of the stories, comparable to that in the finely wrought stories of Henry James, allows Bowen to maintain control and to reveal, not state, those values and insights that present the truth of human feeling" (Smith 55). However, Smith does not analyze any of the early stories except for a brief biographical reading of "Coming Home."

Bowen's use of the short form complements her interest in classed encounters. Whereas the novel offers an expansive landscape, the short story is, to some extent, contained. Without the luxury of space, the short story has to contract its world, which for Bowen means focusing on a few characters and on a central interaction. The majority of encounters in her first book of short stories occur between characters who are experiencing feelings of displacement or alienation due to shifts in the social hierarchies they populate, which impact their jobs, domestic lives, and senses of identity. The stories,

like the physical spaces depicted in the stories, tend to enclose the characters, though this containment is not always reliable. Some characters leave the confines of their homes, jobs, or luncheon sites while others spill into other stories, and many find that breaking free of these smaller spaces is more disturbing than remaining in them; thus, Bowen's stories express a strong ambivalence toward the disassembly of traditional class structures. Whether we read these stories as individual, fragmented entities or as intact parts of a whole also influences issues of containment. Unlike many short story authors, Bowen's stories were not published in magazines or newspapers; rather, her stories were published in a compilation, suggesting a collected meaning, which troubles notions of total containment. Adding to this nuanced view of class is Bowen's use of a free indirect discourse. In each story, the narrator inhabits the central consciousness of a differently classed character, allowing the reader to become intimate with the nouveau riche, the serving class, and everyone in between. Bowen's portraits of these classed encounters and of characters' encounters with class reveal both a sense of anxiety over being confined by one's social status as well as a sense of displacement that comes with breaking out of one's class group, exposing how class hierarchies accentuate feelings of alienation and instability.

The volume *Encounters* (1923) opens with the opening meal of the day, "Breakfast," but rather than use this meal to regulate or root the day, the story examines the unhappy, displaced lives of boarding house tenants, proprietors, and servants. The setting of the boarding house places the characters in a liminal space: the boarding house is both a domestic as well as a commercial place. The characters' sense of being uprooted

is enacted formally by the story's abrupt beginning, its apparently random introduction of indistinct characters, and its slow unveiling of key details that shift the reader's sense of stability in the narrative. This story, like all of the stories in the volume, uses the favored modernist tool of free indirect discourse, which allows access to characters' inner thoughts. In this case, Mr. Rossiter, one of the boarding-house tenants, becomes the mind through which the reader experiences most of the morning. This intimacy with Mr. Rossiter affords an understanding of how occupying a space in Mrs. Russel's boarding house means living in a house that is also a business and sharing meals with strangers as well as landlords, all of which lead to a contracted social space that blurs class lines and emphasizes class frustrations and generalizations.

Though it is slowly revealed that the Russel family runs a boarding house where Mr. Rossiter, the central figure in the story, and others are guests, the confusion that the story opens with launches the reader into a world that must be puzzled out rather than simply and passively read:

> 'Behold, I die daily,' thought Mr. Rossiter, entering the breakfast-room. He saw the family in silhouette against the windows [. . .] There were so many of the family it seemed as though they must have multiplied during the night; their flesh gleamed pinkly [. . .] and they were always moving [. . .] There was a silence of suspended munching and little bulges of food were thrust into their cheeks that they might wish him perfunctory goodmornings. Miss Emily further inquired whether he had slept well, with a little vivacious uptilt of her chin. (1)

At first it appears that Mr. Rossiter "dies daily" because he is the unhappy patriarch of this ever-expanding family. That the family seems to "have multiplied during the night" plays upon the stereotype of the middle and lower classes as breeders. Yet, the next image gives the reader the impression that the family is wealthy: "flesh [that] gleamed

pinkly" conjures the stereotype of people who are so rich that they are plump and pink because they do not work or play in the outdoors. The depiction of the family greedily stuffing food in their cheeks could reinforce the upper-class reading: the fat, fleshy, wealthy characters selfishly taking more than they need. But this portrayal could also imply that the family is uncouth or does not get enough food on a regular basis, therefore making them of the poorer classes. Ultimately, however, the unflattering image of this pinkish, munching family indicates that they covet upper-class softness and overindulgence but are trapped by their middle-class vulgarity and voracity.

The "family" stops its eating just long enough to offer a "perfunctory" salutation, indicating the lack of feelings among these people, which questions the relationship between them and Mr. Rossiter. The passage begins to position Mr. Rossiter in less of a patriarchal role than he appeared in at first. He refers to one of the family as "Miss Emily," which suggests that Mr. Rossiter is not related to these people he dislikes so much. Mr. Rossiter then waits for Miss Emily to finish "sopping up the liquid fat from her plate with little diced of bread [. . .] because he would be expected to take her plate away" (1-2), figuring Mr. Rossiter as more of a servant or a lower-class friend than a patriarch. Beginning the short in this disorienting manner thrusts the reader not only into the middle of a scene but also into a world that presents a complex view of the middle classes.

In the light of day, Mr. Rossiter considers how he nearly began to like Miss Emily the night before since she was the only lady who was not tapping her foot or head to the gramophone, but now he avoids her, unable to separate her from this unpleasant scene:

"but here, pressing in upon her by the thick fumes of coffee and bacon, the doggy-smelling carpet, the tight, glazed noses of the family ready to split loudly from their skins … There was contamination in the very warm edge of her plate, as he took it from her with averted head and clattered it down among the others on the sideboard" (2). Mr. Rossiter sees Miss Emily as the most ladylike of the breakfasting group since she refrains from "jerking" her body to the music, suggesting that she is not exactly a lady in the sense of having wealth and manners. Despite Miss Emily's ladylike conduct, Mr. Rossiter still feels her potential "contamination," propagating a stereotypical portrayal of the lower classes as economically, physically, and behaviorally infectious. He is unable to separate her from the "fumes" of breakfast, the "doggy-smelling" room, and the tightly bound family she is a part of. These "fumes" and "doggy-smelling" rooms again underscore that this family is of a middle or lower class status. And the "tight, glazed noses [. . .] ready to split loudly from their skins" suggests that the family, despite their best efforts to appear polished and of a class better than the one they economically assume, cannot hide their true monetary and behavioral status. Mr. Rossiter's fear of becoming like this family results in his averting his eyes from Miss Emily and dropping her potentially contaminated plate in with the others, grouping her with her family while setting himself apart.

Miss Emily's mother, Mrs. Russel, soon emerges from the background as the boarding-house proprietress and a social snob. When her guest enters the dining room, Mrs. Russel "insinuated" bacon and an egg for Mr. Rossiter (2), highlighting either her distaste for the dish or her distaste for serving her guest. Mrs. Russel, in a statement that

insults both Mr. Rossiter as well as a servant, then asserts "'I'm afraid you couldn't hardly have heard the gong this morning, Mr. Rossiter. That new girl doesn't hardly now how to make it sound yet. She seems to me to give it a sort of *rattle*'" (4). Mrs. Russel links Mr. Rossiter to "that new girl" syntactically by claiming that he could "hardly" hear the gong since the girl "hardly" knows how to ring it. She also links them by explicitly censoring the girl for not sounding the alarm correctly while implicitly censoring Mr. Rossiter for being late. Mrs. Russel's condemnation of Mr. Rossiter and the new girl suggests the matriarch's sense of superiority. By referring to the servant as "that new girl," Mrs. Russel intimates her desire to differentiate herself from her help: the pronoun "that" creates physical distance and the noun "girl" infantilizes the help. Mrs. Russel claiming that the new girl simply "*rattle*[s]" the gong figures her as a child with a toy rather than an adult with a job. When Mr. Rossiter takes the blame off the new girl and puts it on a missing collar stud, Mrs. Russel reprimands him for being "'a little reckless about buying new ones before you were quite sure you'd lost the others. [. . .] Annie found three good ones, really good ones, under the wardrobe, when she was turning out your room'" (4-5). That Mrs. Russel admonishes Mr. Rossiter for his extravagant collar-stud purchases suggests that Mr. Rossiter does not have much of a disposable income. This type of familiarity about income among characters who are not family exposes the uncomfortable, liminal state that Mr. Rossiter exists in as a resident of a boarding house.

As Mr. Rossiter attempts to defend his lateness, the Bevels, middle-class siblings who have apparently been at the table the entire time, are introduced; this manner of slowly unveiling who is in the room keeps the reader slightly off balance. As the others

stop eating to hear Mr. Rossiter's excuse for being late, "only Jervis Bevel drained his coffee-cup with a gulp and a gurgle" (4). Jervis Bevel's indecorous "gulp" and "gurgle," as with the family's face-stuffing, expose him as an ill-mannered member of the middle classes. Jervis' sister, Hilary Bevel, "dared indelicacy, reaching out for the marmalade" (3), expressing her desire to appear refined but not if it means compromising her appetites. Of the Bevels, who tease Mr. Rossiter about his lost collar studs and his lateness, Mr. Rossiter "hated Bevel, with his sleek head," and thinks Hilary "affected a childish directness and ingenuousness of speech which she considered attractive. Her scarlet, loose-lipped mouth curled itself round her utterances, making them doubly distinct" (6). These negative depictions of slickness and childishness also figure the Bevels as middle-class characters who aspire for upper-class appearance. Yet, the image of these gulping, gurgling characters exposes Mr. Rossiter's mocking view of those who assume upper-class airs without upper-class means.

Yet, this negative depiction of the Bevels is followed by a negative depiction of Mr. Rossiter, specifically of Mr. Rossiter's outfit, which the others at the table think is above his social status; the critique of Mr. Rossiter's clothes following his critique of the Bevels confirms that all of these characters attempt yet fail to appear more distinguished or well-off than they really are. Hilary announces to the group that "'Mr. Rossiter's got another tie on, a crimson tie!'" (6). This unwanted attention to his wardrobe causes Mr. Rossiter to become "aware, not only of his tie, but of his whole body visible above the table-edge. He felt his ears protruding fanwise from his head, felt them redden and the blush burn slowly across his cheekbones, down his pricking skin to the tip of his nose"

(6). Soon Mr. Rossiter's red tie matches his "redden[ed]," "blush[ed]," "burn[ed]," skin, expressing his embarrassment, self-consciousness, and rage over Hilary's pointing out his attire. Mr. Rossiter is aware of the fact that he is dressing a part that he does not fully or comfortably inhabit, making him uncomfortable with any notice of his embellished look.

The discussion of Mr. Rossiter's tie is immediately followed by Mrs. Russel, diminutively referred to as Rosie, and her aunt, Miss Willoughby, arguing over the management of the boarding house staff. This sudden shift in focus relocates the reader's attention, mimicking the chaotic atmosphere of this breakfast room:

> "Oh, but you wouldn't, Aunt Willoughby. Not when they've got five or six rooms to settle up every day, you wouldn't. You see, with you, when poor uncle was alive, it was a different thing altogether. What I mean to say is, in proportion to the size of the family you had more of them, in a kind of way. It was a larger staff."
>
> "Ah then, Rosie, but what I always used to say, 'You do what I expect of you and we won't expect any more than that. I'm reasonable,' I used to say, 'I won't expect any more than that.' Annie could tell you that was what I used to say to her. [. . .] There are those that can get good work out of their servants and those that can't. We mustn't be set up about it, it's just a gift, like other gifts, that many haven't got. [. . .]"
>
> "Annie is a funny girl," reflected Mrs. Russel; "she said to me – of course I never take the things those girls say seriously – 'I wouldn't go back to Mrs. Willoughby not for anything you might give me, I wouldn't.' I said, 'But she spoke so well of you, Annie,' and she just wagged her head at me, sort of. She is a funny girl! Of course, I didn't ought to tell you, but it made me laugh at the time, it did really."
>
> "I came down on her rather hard," admitted Aunt Willoughby swiftly. "I was so particular, you see, and she had some dirty ways. Now I should wonder – when was it you lost those collar studs, Mr. Rossiter?" (7-8)

This exchange exposes how the servants are treated more as bargaining chips than as humans. What Aunt Willoughby "'wouldn't'" do is never overtly explained, but it has to do with the allocation of the servants or, as Mrs. Russel refers to the staff, "'them.'" The

two women barter over who will get the largest number of "'them.'" Aunt Willoughby explains how she expected the servants to do only what they were told, no more, no less, making her a "'reasonable'" employer. Not disclosing what her expectations were and how "'reasonable'" they might be in addition to placing herself in the category of those who have a "'gift'" to "'get good work out of their servants'" implies that Aunt Willoughby intentionally speaks in vague terms because she controlled her staff in a less than humane manner. That Aunt Willoughby "raised her voice, anticipating interruption," confirms that she is not the kind of woman who tolerates opposition. Aunt Willoughby's claim that Annie could attest to this treatment shows that Annie has been transferred from one member of the family to another. Mrs. Russel's interjection that Annie "wagged her head" portrays the servant as a dog, and the comment that she is a "'funny girl'" infantilizes Annie. Mrs. Russel continues to demean all of her servants by adding that "'of course I never take the things those girls say seriously.'" Referring to all of her female servants as girls, using the term "'those,'" and never genuinely listening to her servants highlights Mrs. Russel's snobbish manner. She goes on to say that she finds Annie's desire to stay with her rather than return to Aunt Willoughby silly, which could indicate that either Annie was unhappy with the so-called "'reasonable'" Aunt Willoughby or that Mrs. Russel invents this conversation to keep Annie in her service; when Mrs. Russel explains that she "didn't ought to tell" her aunt, her statement implies that she did, indeed, mean to tell her. Aunt Willoughby takes the bait, admitting that she was hard on Annie since the girl had "'some dirty ways,'" but Aunt Willoughby never clarifies what these "'dirty ways'" are, leaving it unclear how physically or morally

"dirty" the "'girl'" is. The exchange ends with Aunt Willoughby intimating that Annie stole Mr. Rossiter's collar studs despite Mrs. Russel's earlier claim that the same servant found them. Aunt Willoughby's accusation of thievery should cast Annie in an ethically ambiguous light, but the condescending manner of these two middle-class women make Annie the most sympathetic character in this exchange. Although Annie is obviously confined by her social status, the fact that she is shuffled between these two women also indicates the unreliability of containment; Annie need only play one woman against the other to get herself moved to the house and job of her choice.

When Mr. Rossiter neither convicts nor exonerates Annie, his class sympathies and desires show through. When asked when his studs disappeared, Mr. Rossiter "basely" responds "'I don't exactly remember'" (8). That the narrator classifies this response as "base[]" implies that Mr. Rossiter is lying. His ambiguous response could be read as his trying to keep Annie out of trouble, but it is, more likely, an effort to gain the acceptance of Mrs. Russel. The narrator explains that Mr. Rossiter "felt Mrs. Russel's approval warm upon him, but was sorry to have failed Aunt Willoughby, who, disconcerted, relapsed into irrelevancy" (8). Mr. Rossiter's reply to the question about Annie undermines Aunt Willoughby's negative theories about the lower class and upholds Annie's ethics. Yet the impetus for this answer is not Annie's integrity, but rather Mr. Rossiter's desire to win the approval of the boarding-house proprietor.

Mr. Rossiter's effort to gain Mrs. Russel's esteem despite his apparent dislike of her and her family comes from his overall wish to rise above his fellow boarding-house tenants; he wants to see himself as better than the Bevels and the Russels. Mrs. Russel

offers Mr. Rossiter another cup of coffee, explaining that he has time before he must leave as he tends to "'eat rather faster than the others'" (10), making Mr. Rossiter wonder "did he really bolt his food and make, perhaps, disgusting noises with his mouth?" (11). Mr. Rossiter's self-consciousness, which echoes his blushing over his tie, exposes his wish to appear better than those around him. Mrs. Russel's comment that Mr. Rossiter eats quickly echoes her earlier observation that he does not have the money to keep losing collar studs; such claims reveal the blurring of boundaries between boarding-house owners and tenants. Mrs. Russel becomes a sort of surrogate mother to these renters: an early breakfast is "'so much homier, one feels, than rough-and-tumble modern breakfast nowadays. Everybody's sort of rushing in and scrambling and snatching and making grabs at things off a table at the side. There's nothing so homely,' said Mrs. Russel with conscious brilliance, 'as a comfortable sit-down family to breakfast'" (11). Mrs. Russel's focus on how "homey" her "family" breakfast feels overlooks the fact that her "family" is comprised of relatives as well as middle-class lodgers. In this way, Mrs. Russel redefines the modern family as being comprised not of relatives but rather of those people you happen to encounter, dislodging this formerly fixed structure.

When Jervis exclaims that another railroad strike is pending, meaning he must take an earlier train, Mrs. Russel announces an earlier breakfast to accommodate the strike; this moment exposes everyone's selfish rather than socially conscious thoughts. The story ends with Mr. Rossiter contemplating how this annoying earlier breakfast is part of the house's "'home comforts.' This was one of the privileges of which Rossiter paid her twenty-four shillings a week" (12). Money buys neither a family nor happiness;

all it buys, according to Mr. Rossiter, is "Mrs. Russel, her advances, her criticisms, her fumbling arguments that crushed you down beneath their heavy gentleness until you felt you were being trampled to death by a cow. By a blind cow, that fumbled its way backwards and forwards across you . . ." (13). This portrayal of Mrs. Russel as a "fumbling" "blind cow" that crushes people with her "heavy gentleness" indicates that While Mrs. Russel may not mean to be critical or rude, she does not have a sense of how her words and actions impact those around her, underscoring the sense of self-involvement that accompanies feelings of alienation.

"Breakfast" presents a slice of discontented life in this boarding house. These various middle-class characters are bought together in a liminal yet confining place out of monetary necessity and must perform certain roles and functions in order to fit into an artificial family. That Mr. Rossiter's point of view is granted priority makes him the closest character to a patriarch in the story despite being the only person in the house who does not have a relative there. In this way, the most alienated, dejected character is also the man the reader becomes most intimate with, encouraging the reader to sympathize with the frustrations of this middle-class man.

The second story in the volume, "Daffodils," examines the inner-life of a middle-class teacher and her desire to break free of her confining circumstances. Miss Murcheson is an elementary school teacher who lives with her mother. She feels constrained by these realities, especially since she has seen what joy and freedom life can hold when not working. Miss Murcheson turns to nature, and especially daffodils, to recapture her sense of wonder and independence. The story reveals the ways in which

work, money, and family life can lead to feelings of containment and resentment, and the ways in which nature can liberate one from these feelings of despondency.

"Daffodils" begins with the exchange of hard earned money for a bit of the natural world and emotional relief: "Miss Murcheson stopped at the corner of the High Street to buy a bunch of daffodils from the flower man. She counted out her money very carefully, pouring a little stream of coppers from her purse into the palm of her hand" (15). The way the "little stream of coppers" are "carefully" treated by their owner confirms that Miss Murcheson does not have much money in reserve, making the daffodils an extravagance. Despite this initial concentration on currency, or the lack thereof, the story soon takes a turn toward the fanciful, showing the transformative effect of the flowers on this middle-class woman. As Miss Murcheson walks down the street, a "gust of wind" "whirl[ed] her skirts up round her like a ballet-dancer's." The "slender gold trumpets tapped and quivered against her face," and the entire scene makes Miss Murcheson feel like "she had been enticed into a harlequinade by a company of Columbines who were quivering with laughter at her discomfiture" (15). Her sense of being in a play, but one that embarrasses her, implies that she is not accustomed to allowing herself such flights of fancy. As the wind calms she peers around the streets to make sure no one witnessed her whirling skirts. Despite her self-consciousness, Miss Murcheson's state of daffodil-induced bliss continues as she notices that on this particular day the "houses seemed taller and farther apart; the street wider and full of a bright, clear light that cast no shadows" (16). Essentially, Miss Murcheson sees room, space, and light, all things that middle-class people typically covet.

When Miss Murcheson's job interrupts her enjoyment, the language used to depict the scene reflects the negative aspects of having to work for a living. Walking down the street, Miss Murcheson is "conscious of her wings" until she "paused again to hitch up the bundle of exercise books slithering down beneath her elbow, then [she] took the dipping road as a bird swings down into the air" (16). Miss Murcheson's being "conscious of her wings" highlights the transformative impact of her flower purchase. However, soon the "bundle" of school materials "slither[]" like a snake. This passage confirms that Miss Murcheson works for a living; she is a teacher. The image of her "bundle" of books expresses the physical weight of her work. And that her work "slither[s]" down her body shows the distastefulness, even the evil snake-like quality of her job. This snake imagery contradicts the wing imagery just prior to it, highlighting the duality of Miss Murcheson's existence: daffodils add a heavenly quality to her life while work is demonic. But Miss Murcheson soon forgets her burden as she lights upon the dipping road "as a bird swings down into the air," emphasizing her feelings of freedom in nature.

As she continues home, the houses along Miss Murcheson's route indicate a middle-class neighborhood, but the teacher is again elevated out of her class status by nature. Although the occasional house dons a "purplish rose colour" and all of the houses enjoy "coloured fanlights over all the doors" (16-17), these brighter elements are overshadowed by dull and drab domiciles. As she moves further away from High Street, the homes become "square, flat-faced and plasterfronted, painted creams and greys and buffs [. . .]. Venetian shutters flat against wall broadened the line of the windows [. . .].

Spiked railings before them shut off their little squares of grass or gravel from the road" (16-17). The scene offers little to be desired: the houses and shutters are "flat," "square," and lackluster in color and material. The "little square of grass and gravel" are surrounded by "spiked railings," evoking more of a sense of a jail than a home. But "between the railings branches swung out to brush against her dress and recall her to the wonder of their budding loveliness" (17). Just as the daffodils keep Miss Murcheson's "wings" out, these branches with their buds recall her to a happier place. The branches swinging out between the railings connote nature breaking free of the tyranny of human-made structures and systems. Miss Murcheson's reaction to her purchased flowers and these swaying buds indicate that she too desires to break out of this inhospitable lifestyle.

Miss Murcheson's living situation highlights the claustrophobic, unpleasant nature of these middle-class abodes. As she approaches her house, "Miss Murcheson remembered that her mother would be out for tea, and quickened her steps in anticipation of that delightful solitude" (17). Sharing a home with her mother may be a financialnecessity, but Miss Murcheson's response to her mother's absence emphasizes her desire to live alone. Before entering her home, Miss Murcheson looks at the "silver birch tree that distinguished their front garden" and "hesitated, as her gate swung open, and stood looking up and down the road. She was sorry to go in, but could not resist the invitation of the empty house" (17). Miss Murcheson's love of nature flags at the promise of an empty home, but as she enters "the day's dinner still hung dank and heavy in the air of the little hall" (18). Dinner hanging "dank and heavy" in the "little hall" underscores the unwelcome, confining atmosphere of the house, leading Miss Murcheson to "fl[i]ng

open the window" (18). Once inside, though, Miss Murcheson goes to work. She attempts to correct the student essays she has assigned on the topic of daffodils by a "square of daylight" (18), echoing the "square of light" in the "dark entrance" (18) and the square houses with tree branches trying to swing out beyond the railings. These geometric patterns reaffirm the cold, angular, boxed-in world that the teacher inhabits.

While Miss Murcheson reads her students' essays on daffodils, she laments their lack of originality and interest, which she subtly links to their upper-class privileges: "'They're so terribly used to things. Nothing ever comes new to them that they haven't grown up with. [. . .] When spring comes they get preoccupied, stare dreamily out of the windows. They're thinking of their new hats" (20-21). Miss Murcheson's frustrations with her students' complacency suggest that they are higher up on the class ladder than their teacher and, therefore, do not pay much attention to natural phenomenon; they are too interested in material objects. Such phrases as their being "used to things" and their having "grown up with" everything implies that the students have never wanted for anything, so a subject such as daffodils, which they may very well have all about their homes and gardens, inspires nothing in their minds. Also, that spring has them thinking of their "new hats" echoes Miss Murcheson's looking forward to the promises that spring holds, but, unlike her students who get their material rewards, Miss Murcheson can only dream of attaining hers.

As Miss Murcheson ponders opening her own high school where she could challenge students to think outside the confines of their little worlds, she hears three of her students, Millicent, Rosemary, and Doris, pass under her window, prompting her to

invite them in; but Miss Murcheson quickly regrets her impetuous action since it will expose her class status. As she waits for the girls to enter her house, she looked "back at the sitting-room as though she had never seen it before" (22); she sees her home for the first time with a class-conscious eye. As soon as she looks back at this room, Miss Murcheson thinks "why had she asked them in, those terrible girls [. . .]. They would laugh at her, they would tell the others" (22). Miss Murcheson's harsh reaction, deeming her students "terrible" and fearing they might "laugh at her" and "tell the others" indicates that she is ashamed of her humble state.

When the girls enter their teacher's house, the image they project contrasts with their surroundings, accentuating the difference in class between teacher and students. Miss Murcheson suddenly realizes "what large girls they were; how plump and well-developed" (22), implying that these "thick-bodie[d]" girls (23) come from hearty homes, not "dank" "small" spaces like their teacher. As the girls sit down, they "travestied their position in the class-room and made her feel, facing them, terribly official and instructive" (23). In the living room the girls become a distorted version of themselves in the schoolroom. Miss Murcheson's comparing this scene to the "class-room" highlights the fact that even at home Miss Murcheson cannot remove the veil of her job. As the girls and teacher talk about their daffodil essays, Miss Murcheson explains to them that their dislike of writing about things that they are "used to" makes them "'so lazy; you're using my brains; just giving me back what I gave you again, a little bit the worse for wear'" (24). The teacher wants her students to think and dream for themselves, but they are

young yet and do not see the draw of something as simple as flowers or the importance of opening up their minds, especially when faced with confining social structures.

As the girls "prowl" around the sitting room, seeking information about their teacher, they see a picture of Miss Murcheson in which she appears "'awfully happy, and prosperous, and – cocksure'" (25), making the girls reassess their view of her. As the girls marvel at "'a pretty photograph,'" they ask "'who is it? Not – not *you*?'" (24). The italics underscore their disbelief that this "prosperous" looking woman could be their teacher. Miss Murcheson mocks her student's tone with her response: "'*Me*?' said Miss Murcheson with amusement. 'Yes. Why not? Does it surprise you, then?'" (24). Miss Murcheson takes joy in the fact that the girls do not believe it is their teacher in the photograph. The students are so impressed with the picture that they want copies for themselves and are even more awed by their teacher when they learn that she does not have extra copies because she has given them all to her friends. The scene exposes the fact that these girls only see Miss Murcheson as a teacher, confining her to her life inside the classroom. Yet, the fact that Miss Murcheson's framed picture portrays a much happier, assured woman than the one presented in the story indicates that her joy is also confined.

Miss Murcheson explains to the girls that she was thinking of daffodils when the picture was taken and tries to give the girls her flowers for inspiration, but they retreat from her offer and her house, upset over their teacher's "bad form" (28). When Miss Murcheson engages her students in a sincere conversation about objects and associations and why certain things hold importance for people, the girls become "suddenly hostile.

[Miss Murcheson] was encouraging them to outrage the decencies of conversation. It was bad form, this flagrant discussion of subjects only for their most secret and fervid whisperings" (28). The students' violent reaction to their teacher's conversation about emotions exposes how they can only view their teacher as a teacher, not as a person with feelings. They need to contain Miss Murcheson's identity in order to feel comfortable. If their teacher also becomes their friend, then the girls will not know how to behave. Whereas Miss Murcheson dares to cross social and class boundaries, the girls are confused by this blurring of divisions.

When Miss Murcheson tells the girls that she simply wants them to be as happy as she has been, the girls become even more uncomfortable and start to plan their retreat, again revealing their discomfort with the idea that their teacher is more than her job. When asked to stay for tea, they quickly decline and leave their teacher's home. As the girls walk down the sidewalk, they determine that "'Miss Murcheson has never really *lived*,'" as they "linked arms again and sauntered down the road" (30). The girls' fast retreat from the house and their conclusion about their teacher indicates their uneasiness with the idea that Miss Murcheson does anything other than teach them. This is a typical response of children who see the world revolving around them, and it is also a typical response of the upper-classes who tend to see people in positions of service as nothing more than the service they provide. That the girls "saunter" down the road suggests that they can move at an easy pace because they are of the upper classes, unrushed by jobs or household duties. Their "linked arms" expose their attempt at solidarity after this awkward but potentially enlightening encounter.

Though happy in her photograph, Miss Murcheson feels frustrated by her life as a teacher and a cohabitant in her mother's house. Miss Murcheson proves to be a multi-faceted character who obviously has a rich past and a passion for teaching and nature. Yet, her economic status keeps her partially alienated from her passions, requiring her to choose between grading and enjoying the wind, saving money or buying flowers. This short story allows another view on middle-class life, one quite different from the overwhelming negativity of Mr. Rossiter in "Breakfast," revealing the nuanced ways in which the short form can tackle such a large topic as class structures.

"The Return," moves down the social ladder to focus on the serving class. Specifically, the short examines the complicated life of a lady's maid, Lydia. Lydia's job alienates her: she is on the top rung of the servant hierarchy, spending most, if not all, of her time upstairs with her mistress and essentially being the mistress of the house when her employers are away, yet she is still of the serving class. This alienation can been seen not only in how miserable Lydia is when her employers return home but also in her tendency to resist naming the other servants, effecting a stereotypically upper-class attitude of seeing the servants as nameless, generic beings. The third person narrator mainly inhabits Lydia's mind. Privileging the maid's thoughts, Bowen not only provides an intimate and sympathetic portrait of this dislocated woman's experiences, but also reveals a sophisticated view of class relations.

The story opens with the return of Lydia's employers and underscores her liminal position in the house. The opening paragraph is made up of the simple declarative statement "Mr. and Mrs. Tottenham had come home" (31). Where the couple has been,

for how long, where home is, and who this couple is have yet to be revealed. However, the social class of the couple soon becomes clear as the second paragraph contains a portrait of the Tottenham's servants: "Lydia Broadbent listened from the doorstep to the receding gritty rumble of the empty fly, and the click and rattle as the gate swung to. Behind her, in the dusky hall, Mr. Tottenham shouted directions for the disposal of the luggage, flustered servants bumped against each other and recoiled, and Porloch the gardener shouldered the heavy trunks" (31). Lydia Broadbent's peculiar position is the house becomes clear because she is neither clumped with the nameless group of fearsome, scrambling servants nor identified by her job, like Porloch the gardener, whose actions also identify him as a worker. Porloch's name implies his economic state, conjuring images of both the poor and, although a loch is a lake or narrow part of the sea, it also sounds like lock, connoting that this man is locked into his poor state and hard labor due to his class status. That Porloch is referred to by one generic name upholds the way servants are typically addressed: using a single, non-gendered name that could be a Christian or a surname obscures human, identifying marks from the serving class. Lydia Broadbent is the only person in the passage to be identified with a first and last name, removing her from both masters and servants. The first name genders her female, and her last name, when pulled apart like Porloch's, suggests a large yet bowed women, which would put her in the category of the workers. Lydia is a servant of high-ranking position, as is indicated when Mrs. Tottenham complains "'Porloch has been very careless of the paint. You might have watched him, Lydia!'" (32). This reprimand concerning Porloch

confirms Lydia's superior place in the servant hierarchy and her inferior place in the house in general.

Lydia figures the homeowners return to their estate as a violent, violating process, revealing how accustomed she has become to being mistress of the house and how difficult it is to shift positions: "Lydia heard Mrs. Tottenham burst open the drawing-room door and cross the threshold with her little customary pounce, as though she hoped to catch somebody unawares. She pictured her looking resentfully round her, and knew that presently she would hear her tweaking at the curtains" (31). Mrs. Tottenham bursts open doors, pounces through rooms, and tweaks curtains, exposing a lack of thoughtfulness to her home. That the mistress crosses "the threshold" confirms her stable status in the house as opposed to Lydia's in-between position. In contrast to this aggressive treatment of the house, for Lydia the home "had grown very human," confirming her sensitivity to her surroundings. Upon the Tottenhams return home, Lydia "felt now as if [the house] were drawing itself together into a nervous rigour, as a man draws himself together in suffering irritation at the entrance of a fussy wife" (31-32), depicting the Tottenham's as badgering their home and, in turn, those within it. As the Tottenhams settle back in, Lydia notes that "outside the brown gloom deepened" and the 'young distorted trees loomed dark and sullen, the air was thick with moisture, heavy with decay" (33). These images of "gloom," darkness, sullenness, and distortion emphasize the unhappiness of the home and of Lydia at the return of the owners. The Tottenhams' arrival displaces Lydia, shifting her from temporary mistress to mistress's maid, revealing the confusing and alienating world of a high-ranking servant.

When Mrs. Tottenham begins complaining about Lydia's performance of her duties, the lady's maid escapes to an empty room in the house to gather herself; this moment reinforces Lydia's liminal role in the house as well as her desire to maintain a space of her own. After Mrs. Tottenham's admonishments, "she vanished slowly into the gloom above" (32). Whether the "she" refers to Mrs. Tottenham or to Lydia remains ambiguous, confirming that Lydia is both mistress and servant depending on the circumstances. Further exposing the liminal position of a lady's maid is the image of Lydia warming herself by the fire; this description provides an image of Lydia as mistress of the house, an image reinforced by the contrast between the luxuriating Lydia and the unnamed and working servant: "Lydia went into the drawing-room and stood warming her hands before the fire. A servant with a lighted taper passed from gas-bracket to gas-bracket and the greenish lights sprang upwards in her wake" (32-33). The contrast between the unnamed servant and Lydia echoes the contrast between Lydia and Mrs. Tottenham, emphasizing the fact that Lydia does not fit comfortably anywhere in the house.

As she stands in front of the fireplace, Lydia's complex, rich consciousness challenges stereotypical notions of servants as well as confirms her feelings of alienation and her lack of private space:

> To-day there had been no time to think. Lydia was aware but dimly of a sense of desolation and of loss. Something was shattered that had built itself around her during these coherent weeks, something violated which had been sacred unawares. Every fibre of her quivered with hostility to these invaders who were the owners of the house. She was at odds with herself again, at odds with her surroundings. She stared at her gaunt reflection in the fireplace and knew that her best companion had drawn back again, forbidding her. She would be baffled once

> again by the hostility of Lydia Broadbent, her derision, her unsparing scorn. "I was such friends with myself when they left us together; we were so harmonious and at ease with each other, me and myself and the house. Now we are afraid and angry with each other again." (33-34)

The passage opens with the statement that "To-day there had been no time to think," implying that Lydia "think[s]" on a daily basis. This statement opposes typical notions about the serving class, whose job it is to not think but rather to take orders from the thinking upper classes. The return of her employers, whom she figures as "invaders," leaves Lydia "shattered," her "coherent" sense of self gone. Being at odds with her feelings and surroundings make Lydia a modernist subject: she feels alienated from her environment and from herself. This sense of being shattered and the loss of coherence also confirm that Lydia leads two lives: the life of a servant and the life of a temporary mistress. The "gaunt" cruel servant conflicts with the self that is a "harmonious" human being. Servitude makes Lydia an "angry," hostile, unforgiving person, revealing the difficulty of always being at another's side and in another's space. For Lydia, the Tottenhams' home is at once a commercial and a domestic sphere since she both lives and works in this house, contracting her world in a way that blurs the lines between living and working. This contraction leads to a fracturing of, or an inability to contain, her self.

When Mrs. Tottenham and Lydia join Mr. Tottenham, his actions and remarks confirm Lydia's dual role in the house as employer and employee: she works for the Tottenhams, but to some degree the servants work for her, especially when the Tottenhams are out of town. Mr. Tottenham exclaims that he has "'been talking to Porloch – garden's in an awful way; shrubberies like a jungle. Did 'e sell the apples?' He

darted the inquiry at Lydia, turning his head sharply towards her" (38-39). That Mr. Tottenham turns to Lydia for information on Porloch echoes the Tottenhams' expectation that Lydia watch the gardener to make sure he does not disturb anything, affirming Lydia's importance in the house and her position at the top of the serving-class ladder. When Mr. Tottenham remembers an engagement at his friends' home, he exclaims "'Write it down, my dear girl, write it down, and tell them about orderin' the cab'" (40). The identity of "my dear girl" remains vague: it could be either Lydia or Mrs. Tottenham since both women are present. It appears that the "them" refers to the fact that the friends should order the cab. But the narrator clarifies this moment by stating that Mr. Tottenham "always referred to Lydia obliquely as 'they' or 'them'" (40). Mr. Tottenham's using genderless, plural pronouns to "obliquely" refer to Lydia echoes the fact that he "does not look at anybody" (39), revealing his tendency not to deal with things directly, no matter who or what it is. The use of the pronouns "them" and "they" also accentuates the idea that Lydia's self has fractured and multiplied due to her position in the house.

Lydia's liminal position in the household and her shattered sense of herself again arises when Mrs. Tottenham's routine complaints begin: "'This cake is uneatable, Lydia. Wherever did you buy it?' Her grumble lacked conviction; it was a perfunctory concession to her distrust of her companion's housekeeping" (40). That Mrs. Tottenham regularly rebukes Lydia regardless of anything being wrong underscores the fact that being an employer has made Mrs. Tottenham no happier than being an employee has made Lydia. Lydia's response indicates how routine this scenario is as she simply apologizes and offers more tea. But the exchange upsets Lydia, making her feel

"embarrassed and discomfited. She listened with derision to her glib and sugary banalities of speech. 'The perfect companion!' taunted the hostile self. 'What about all those fine big truths and principles we reasoned out together? Yesterday we believed you were sincere'" (40). The part of Lydia that is hostile toward her servile position taunts her for trying to be a good companion. Yet, the narrator's relation of Lydia's response to Mrs. Tottenham does not appear to make her a "perfect" maid: her reaction to her mistress is mocking, overly sweet, and ordinary. There is also a curious pronoun shift in this section that provides an image of Lydia being the container for these multiple selves, just like the house is a container for these multiple people and problems. As Lydia's internal warring continues, her hostile self asks about all of the reasoning "we" did yesterday and how "we" believed "you" were sincere. Lydia's public and private selves can reconcile when the Tottenhams are not home, but once they return her public self takes over, inhibiting her private self and its desires. This internal exchange exemplifies the importance of Lydia's inner, if fractured, self, and how servitude has left her feeling untrue to herself and to Mrs. Tottenham. Lydia performs a role, the role of servant, but this role is not who she really is, highlighting that class status cannot and should not be equated with personal identity.

As the scene ends and Lydia performs her duties, her battling selves take center stage: "Lydia began to gather up the tea things, and a servant darkened the windows with a musty clatter of Venetian blinds" (41). This generic servant reinforces stereotypes of the lower classes. The image of the servant "darken[ing] the windows" acts on a realistic level as this faceless person blocks the light by lowering the blinds. Additionally, this

image reinforces how Lydia's servant-self blocks the light from her inner, un-classed, true self, pulling down the bars to contain her authentic personality. As Lydia leaves the tearoom, she looks at the morning room, which "beckoned her with its associations of the last six weeks. She saw the tall uncurtained windows greywhite in the gloom" (41). These uncurtained windows signify Lydia's un-classed self, but they are now in the "gloom" of the Tottenhams return home and Lydia's return to servitude. While Lydia peers in at the morning room, she sees her unfinished book on the table, which undermines stereotypical notions that servants are uneducated and unmotivated. This morning room becomes a place of mourning as Lydia realizes that the return of her employers means the rest of her book will remain unread: "If only this room were all her own: inviolable. She could leave the rest of the house to them, to mar and bully, if she had only a few feet of silence of her own, to exclude the world from, to build up in something of herself" (42). Lydia senses that if she could physically contain herself in one room then she could mentally set herself free to do such things as think and read without interruption. She appreciates the value of space, unlike her employers, who "mar and bully" their home.

As Lydia prepares to return to her mistress's side, her increasing anger and upset propel her into fantasizing about murder, exposing the mental trial of being in a position of servitude that alienates her from the other servants and from her employers. Lydia "vaguely [] pictured headlines: 'Laurels' Murder Mystery. Bodies in Cistern. Disappearance of Companion'" (42). In her daydream, Lydia remains vague on how many bodies are in the cistern. It is safe to assume that she wishes her employers out of her life, but Lydia might also imagine the other servants in this tank of water, allowing

her total access to the house. She figures her own fate as a disappearance, which completely displaces this already displaced character. Rather than gain stability or space, this fantasy ends with Lydia vanishing. This troubling fantasy may be the only way that Lydia can see a future for herself. She does not fit any place, not even in her own dream.

Toward the end of the story, Mrs. Tottenham's agitated mind and mood come into focus, confirming that upper class status does not guarantee emotional wellbeing. Mrs. Tottenham summons Lydia not for labor but rather to talk, which Lydia hates: "Mrs. Tottenham's confidences were intolerable. Better a hundred times that she should nag" (44). Mrs. Tottenham explains that she "'did very well for [her]self when [she] married,'" but "'it was a lonely life'" (44), underscoring that money cannot buy happiness. As Mrs. Tottenham talks, Lydia appears more in tune with the house than with her mistress's feelings: "Lydia listened to a distant surge of movement in the house beneath her; steps across the oil-cloth, windows shutting, voices cut off by the swinging of a door. She felt, revoltedly, as though Mrs. Tottenham were stepping out of her clothes" (45). Although the house below her is drawing in on itself for the night, closing windows and doors, Mrs. Tottenham refuses to be contained, instead revealing her adulterous behavior to Lydia. Mrs. Tottenham breaks down crying, admitting that she is drawn to rekindle the affair because it is wrong: "It's this awful *rightness* that's killing me" (47). Mrs. Tottenham's feelings confirm that she too feels caged by social expectations. In the end, though, Mrs. Tottenham represses her feelings and burns the man's picture. Mrs. Tottenham's decision to give up her fantasy life for her dutiful life awes Lydia, who has, essentially, been battling a similar situation. That she deems Mrs. Tottenham "heroic"(47) for her actions

indicates that Lydia will remain a faithful servant and companion, suppressing her fantasies and unclassed self.

This story epitomizes the volume's sophisticated representations of class. The narrator most closely identifies with Lydia, allowing intimacy with and sympathy for this serving-class woman. But both Lydia's and Mrs. Tottenham's characters appear nuanced and complex; neither is romanticized. Rather, both women end up where they started. Contained by class, propriety, and duty, these women feel alienated from their true wants and selves. And although Lydia desires more time alone in her mistress' house and her own room within it, ultimately this house oppresses both women. Lydia can never be at home or fully herself in a house where she is both a servant and a substitute mistress, and Mrs. Tottenham cannot be at home or fully herself in a house where she is bound to a husband she does not love because of money she thought she wanted and needed. Both women return to their unfulfilling lives to maintain their obligations, but neither is fulfilled emotionally.

Like Mrs. Tottenham and Lydia, siblings Cicely and Herbert in the story "The New House" experience feelings of dislocation and anxiety. But unlike the wealthy Mrs. Tottenham and the servile Lydia, these siblings are part of the upwardly mobile. Though they seem proud of their financial accomplishments, some of their thoughts and actions betray a sense of inadequacy and social anxiety due to their new class status. And while Herbert, in particular, beams to think of his monetary accomplishments, he soon becomes overwhelmed with having too much space and not knowing how to fill it. So while

Herbert and Cicely break out of their class group, they break into a realm that is too expansive, leaving them feeling dislocated and craving containment.

The story opens with sister Cicely welcoming her brother Herbert to their new home, which marks an entrance into a bit of money. But Herbert's "unearthly" experience with his new house is undermined when he notes its "pasteboard unreality" (91), exposing the lesser quality of this house that is supposed to pass for a genuine upper-class domicile. Once inside, Herbert gets frustrated with his sister for not properly lighting the house as he wants to be able to marvel at its size: "'You might have lighted up and made the place look a bit more festive. It's all very well to *hear* how big one's house is, but I'd like to see it with my own eyes'" (92). Herbert is concerned with visuals: he wants the house to look festive, and he wants to see how large it is. This focus on the superficial echoes the fact that the house is covered in pasteboard; a mask covers the house and its owners, making them appear more substantial than they really are.

Herbert's response not just to his house but also to the workers indicates that Herbert and Cicely have only recently ascended the class ladder and feel anxious and excited about their new position. Despite the unreality of this new house, Herbert does not enjoy it for long; he is upset because "that stupid fellow at Billingham's had made a muddle over those window measurements for the blinds; I had to go over to the workshop and give the order personally" (91). While explaining his superior competence when compared to the "stupid" workman, Herbert suddenly feels satisfied as he hears "his voice ring out into spaciousness": "'I never realized how big it was,' he said with gratification" (91). Herbert's "gratification" at the spaciousness of his new home

indicates that he has worked for this lifestyle rather than inherited it. The suggestion that he is, or was, of the lower middle class also sheds light on his condescending response to the workman; his disdain for the man's incompetence may be a result of his being, at some point, similar in class status to this man; by asserting his superior ability he attempts to mentally remove himself from this class group. This notion of Herbert's asserting himself is underscored by his exclamation that he "'never realized how big it was.'" Although this claim appears to be about the house that his voice rings out into, it can also be read as referring to his voice. Herbert never realized how big his own voice is and how large its capacity to complain about others is until he had the money to back up his words.

Herbert again insults the working class and exposes his own insecurities when, as he surveys the house, he complains that he cannot have uncovered windows because "they're quite indecent. Haven't you even got a dust sheet to pin up across them?'" to which Cicely responds, "'the man was in to-day about the fittings, and he says they won't be able to turn the gas on at the main till to-morrow afternoon,'" prompting Herbert's retort of "'How tiresome these people are'" (93). Herbert's complaint about "these people" reaffirms his seeing the working classes as a lazy, inconveniencing, generic group that he wants to distance from himself. That both of Herbert's complaints about the house have to do with covering the windows echoes the scene in "The Return" when a servant blocks Lydia from the light of the windows. Here, however, Herbert desperately wants to cover the windows. Part of Herbert's desire to cover the windows comes from his sense that this is the proper thing to do, but his anxiety over window coverings also

underscores an anxiety about being seen. That he would prefer Cicely to pin a dust sheet up rather than to leave the windows bare intimates that Herbert wants to contain his and his sister's world until he can properly fill it with all of the trappings of their new class status.

Cicely's as well as the narrator's treatment of the story's one named servant, Janet, upholds stereotypical renderings of the lower classes as background functionaries who, if anything, tell more about their masters than themselves; in this case, Janet's treatment highlights the fact that Cicely comes from a lower class than she currently occupies. As Cicely objects to Herbert's intimation that she has merely been enjoying the house and not working on it, she exclaims that she "'*had* been working'" and to "'come in and see what I have done. The library – *Janet*!' she called down a dark archway. 'Janet, *tea*! The master's in'" (92). Cicely's crass, laughable screaming for Janet exposes her lack of a class pedigree; it suggests she is unused to having and dealing with servants. Moreover, Cicely's inability to finish her sentence concerning the library as well as her plugging Janet's name in at the end of the comment suggests that Janet, not Cicely, has done much of the work on this room. Underscoring this idea that Janet has at least helped with the house is the use of italics, especially concerning the fact that Cicely "'*had* been working,'" intimating that Cicely protests too much; perhaps a good part of her work has been ordering Janet around. Yet, the narrator suggests that Cicely has done some work too. As she talks to Herbert, she "folded paper into a spill and lighted a long row of candles" (93), showing that Cicely knows how to do things for herself. Moreover, when Herbert looks up at her he notices that "her cheeks were smeared with dust, [and] her tall

thin figure drooped with weariness" (94). Cicely's being streaked with dust and drooped over with weariness implies that she has done some work on the house, exposing her liminal position in the house and in her mind: she is neither rich enough to have the servants do all the work nor poor enough to have to do everything herself.

Though Janet's name enters the narrative at this point, her body and much of her work are erased, containing the servant to the point of practically erasing her. In Cicely's calling for Janet, Cicely's frantic screams are suggested by Janet's name appearing in italics. While this emphasis makes the owner of the name seem important, in the second utterance "tea" is the operative word, making Janet's work, not her person, the important factor. The following paragraph not only prioritizes Janet's work but goes so far as to erase her from the narrative, confirming that the family values her labor, not her self: "His chair was pushed up to the fire and an impromptu tea-table covered with newspaper had been set beside it. His books were stacked in piles against the walls, and their mustiness contested with the clean smell of scrubbed and naked boards" (93). Who, exactly, has scrubbed and cleaned and arranged is never mentioned as the use of passive voice removes any subject: Janet is the obvious agent, yet Cicely might also be erasing her own work to distance herself from what she deems a servant's job.

As Janet literally enters the picture, Cicely's status as nouveau riche, not old money, receives further confirmation. When Cicely again calls for Janet to serve tea, Herbert "detected a smile of indulgence as [Cicely] raised her voice and shouted: 'Janet – *hurry*!'" (94). This sense of "indulgence" implies that this is the first time Cicely has had a servant. This may also be the cause behind Cicely's "shining" eyes despite her worn

down appearance: she finally has help and status (94). As the siblings await their tea, "they heard Janet stumbling up the three steps from the kitchen. She entered with the squat brown tea-pot, one hand splayed against her heart. 'Such a house!' she gasped. 'It's that unexpected, really it is!'" (95). Hearing Janet "stumbling up the three steps," "one hand splayed against her heart" as she "gasped" conjures the image of a clumsy, ungraceful and physically unfit servant. Additionally, the "squat brown tea-pot" that she carries does not exactly give the image of upper-class luxury. Rather, the teapot speaks to the fact that Herbert and Cicely not to the manor born but parvenus.

As Cicely and Herbert survey the house, the fact that they have ascended the class ladder is confirmed, but their anxiety over this shift in class is also present:

> every step of Herbert's through the disordered house [was] a step in a triumphal progress. Every echo from the tiles and naked boards derided and denied the memory of that small brick villa where he and Cicely had been born, where their mother's wedded life had begun and ended, that villa now empty and denuded, whose furniture looked so meager in this spaciousness and height. (96)

Their upward mobility is echoed in Herbert's "every step" being one of "triumphal progress." But that the furniture from their old house "looked so meager in this spaciousness and height" mirrors how Herbert and Cicely try to fit into their new surroundings but do not quite mesh. They have become dislocated in their class transition, too socially superior to fit into the old villa and too economically pinched to fill the space of their new house. And no matter how much they try to deny their past and assume their present role, they cannot fully erase their background. The fact that they never refer to their mother without attaching the adjective "poor" underscores how much their class is embedded in them. Though they might use the word "poor" to emphasize

how pitiful their mother was, they wind up stressing how economically deprived she, and, in turn, they, were.

As Herbert enters the master bedroom, his anxiety over his inability to fully shift into his new class role is exposed: "he saw himself reflected in the mirrored doors of a vast portentous wardrobe, and beamed back at his beaming, curiously-shadowed face" (97). Herbert's "beaming" literally reflects his pride at his social ascendance, but the curious shadow that falls across his face suggests that he realizes he will never fully fit in to the upper-middle-class as his lower-middle-class past will always live in and show upon him. The fact that Herbert looks at himself in "mirrored doors" also accents his sense of liminality. Doorways are literally spaces of transition; Herbert is, figuratively, in the doorway between two classes. He cannot fully own or escape his former class, and he cannot fully enter his new class because he does not yet have the material or the imaginative means to do so. This shadow, then, also intimates Herbert's lurking fear of class decent.

In an attempt to further distance himself from his origins, Herbert states that they must have people to the new house and entertain since they "'can afford it now!' He was glad when she did not seem to realise how their circumstances had bettered – it gave him the opportunity for emphatic reminders" (97). Herbert may think he is reminding Cicely of their new status, but he is also reminding himself. His fears over his new class and domestic space continue to arise: "'Damn the gas-man'" he blurts as he tries to feel his way along the dark hall (98). This dark hall echoes the shadow on Herbert's face; he cannot fully excise his former economic deprivations:

> at the root of his malaise was a suspicion that the house was sneering at him; that as he repudiated the small brick villa so the house repudiated him. That Cicely and the house had made a pact against him, shutting him out. He was no bourgeois and no parvenu. He, Herbert Pilkington, was good enough for any house bought with his own well-earned money. He pushed savagely against the panels of the drawing-room door. (98-99)

Herbert rejects his old villa and all that it represents: lower-middle-class status and literal confinement in a small space. But he now senses his new house rejects him, confirming that he is overwhelmed by his new social status and his inability to literally and figurative fill the amount of space it offers. He fears not having enough furniture for the house just as he fears not having enough experience with upper-class encounters to fill the mental gap between his old and new economic selves. Despite Herbert's protest that he is no "parvenu," his thoughts confirm his recent rise in class status, and his actions affirm his anxiety that he will still be considered inferior by himself and others when compared to those of the established upper-middle class. That Herbert tries to convince himself he is good enough for this house because he purchased it with his own "well-earned money" supports the fact that he had to earn this new place; it is not inherited. The image of him "savagely" pushing against the door conjures the idea that he is desperately trying to push through his position of social dislocation, but does not yet feel settled on either side of the class line. Herbert does not give up trying to fit in, however. Rather, he immediately states that next year they will buy a grand piano, attempting to show the class status he cannot yet feel.

As they finish looking over the house, Cicely tells her brother that she has accepted a proposal of marriage and will soon be leaving him. This unexpected revelation

makes Herbert question who will take care of him, the move, and the housekeeping, exposing his selfishness and loneliness despite his newfound wealth: "'You don't seem to realize you're leaving me alone with this great house on my hands, this great *barn* of a house; me a lonely man, with just that one silly old woman. I suppose Janet 'll go off and get married next!'" (102). The thought of being left with the "silly old woman" makes Herbert's temper more savage as he does not put much faith in Janet's abilities. He is consumed with the thought of being alone, making the house he was just so proud of more of a "barn" than a luxurious space. This shift in perspective highlights how material possessions cannot eradicate personal doubts and, in some circumstances, can accentuate them. Herbert fears the new space he has acquired: he does not know how to inhabit his house or his class; both suddenly appear uncontainable and uncontrollable. Cicely tries to console her brother by assuring him that he too will marry and have a family: "'You don't want the family to die out, do you, after you've made such a name for it, done such fine big things?'" (103). Cicely feels an obligation to ensure that the family name lives on now that they have wealth, something she apparently did not care about previously.

The story ends with Herbert imagining his future life, which accentuates his anxiety over filling his space. He looks around the room and imagines the

> drawing-room suffused with rosy light. Chairs and sofas were bright with the sheen of flowered chintzes [. . .]. By the fire was the dark triangle of a grand piano; the top was open and a woman, with bright crimpy hair, sat before it, playing and singing. [. . .] There was a crimson carpet, soft like moss, and a tall palm shadowed up towards the ceiling. Muffled by the carpet he heard the patter of quick feet. The little girl wore a blue sash trailing down behind her, and there was a little boy in a black velvet suit. They could do very well without Cicely's escritoire. (104)

Herbert's fantasy remains focuses on the material. The image comes complete with the piano he hopes to buy; a woman who can play the piano, demonstrating her pedigree; and children who are dressed in aesthetically pleasing clothing. The picture might be convincing if not for the closing bitter remark concerning Cicely's escritoire. That he focuses on the loss not of his sister but of her writing desk exposes Herbert's fear of filling his house and his new social role.

"The New House" underscores the feelings of alienation and displacement that all of the characters in these stories, regardless of class, experience. The themes in this story also offer insight into the issue of containment: Herbert cannot contain his former economic status, he fears that he will be unable to maintain his new class status, and, though he felt too contained in his old villa, he feels too vulnerable in his new home. This issue of containment is also enacted formally: this is the only story in the volume that spills over into another story; Herbert and Cicely appear again after the following story, "Lunch," highlighting their social mobility.

"Lunch" is situated mid-way through the book and focuses on the chance meeting of two differently classed strangers, Marcia and "the stranger," at a luncheon spot. Marcia spends the majority of the time lecturing about egoism, using the stranger as a time filler as she waits for a friend. Despite Marcia's focus on herself, the narrator focuses on the stranger, remaining close to this harrowed, lower-middle-class family man. This is one of the few stories in the volume that takes place in a purely commercial space, enabling the representation of a casual encounter between characters of vastly different class

backgrounds. The café becomes a space where classes collide; but the disorienting results of such uncontained interactions indicates that class divisions might be best left in place.

The café's place-setting foreshadows the characters' interaction: "the dinted plate and cutlery slanting together at angles of confusion" (105) emblematize the disharmonious ways in which Marcia and the stranger interact primarily because of their class differences. The café's atmosphere evokes a lower-class establishment, which befits the stranger but not Marcia, who appears to be slumming: "the interior of the coffee-room was murky and repellent; with its drab, disheveled tables, and chairs so huddled tête-à-tête that they travestied intimacy. It was full of the musty reek of cruets and the wraiths of long-digested meals [. . .]. A mournful waitress, too, reproached them" (105-106). The "murky," "repellent," "drab, "disheveled," "musty" atmosphere of the café matches the "mournful" waitress.

Marcia and the stranger appear just as confusedly placed together as the cutlery. Marcia's dress is of an "elusive pattern" (105), and her being at this dingy restaurant is just as hard to understand as her clothes. In addition to her patterned dress, "the jewels flashed in Marcia's rings" (106). Marcia's jeweled hand serves as an exterior indicator of her class. Matching Marcia's jewels is her topic of conversation: egoism. As Marcia dissertates on egoism, the stranger "relaxed his face to a calm attentiveness, and, leaning limply back in his chair, looked at her with tired, kindly eyes, like the eyes of a monkey, between wrinkled lids" (107). Marcia's selfish notions fit her upper-class station, while the stranger's "monkey"-like face, "limply" "leaning" body, and "tired" eyes suggest he is of the lower-middle class. That Marcia is named while "the stranger" is not fits typical

renditions of the classes and intimates that this man is a "stranger' to Marcia on both a personal as well as on a social level. When Marcia breaks her egoistic discourse long enough to ask the stranger if he has children, "the tired man" responds that he has six (107), again fulfilling stereotypes that the lower and middle classes cannot be contained, a crucial source for the threat they pose to the upper classes. Although Marcia is not as sterile as other upper-class women in the volume, she only has half the number of children as the stranger.

Marcia makes the stranger act as intermediary between her and the kitchen staff, implying that he is more fit than she for such menial tasks as taking and giving food orders and can best converse with the waitress since they are of a similar class background:

> The stranger put his head and shoulders through the window. Marcia studied his narrow back in the shabby tweed jacket, his thinning hair and the frayed edges of his collar. [. . .] [S]he thought, 'How terrible to see a man who isn't sunburnt.' She listened to his muffled conversation with the waitress, and pushed her plate away, deploring the oiliness of the salad. (110)

The "narrow back," "shabby tweet jacket," "thinning hair" and "frayed edges of his collar" all indicate a man whose material and physical self are falling apart at the seams. Marcia hates to see a man who is not "sunburnt," a man who does not lead a leisured life; the stranger is a workingman who has little time to relax in the sun. That he has to put his head and shoulders through a window to speak with the waitress positions him as an intermediary between the lower-class waitress and the upper-class Marcia. The stranger inhabits the middle economic position between these two women, enabling him to converse easily with both. As the stranger reappears, "two plump arms came through the

window after him, removed their plates, and clattered on to the table a big bowl of strawberries and a small grayish blancmange in a thick glass bowl" (111). The waitress has now been reduced to body parts and the "grayish" foods mirror the mustiness of the café, its staff, and most of its patrons. That the stranger can enter the waitress' space and that the waitress' arms can enter the stranger's and Marcia's space exposes the difficulty of fixing class. In the compressed world of the short story and the contracted space of the suburban café, clear class differences are less easily identifiable and separable.

Although Marcia sees the stranger's tattered clothes and pale complexion, the implications of these signs do not fully register for her, creating an awkwardness between the two diners: Marcia tells him, "I'll let you go directly after lunch, and you shall find the tranquility you came to look for underneath a lime-tree loud with bees [. . .]. I see a book in your pocket. If I wasn't here you'd be reading with it propped up against the water-jug" (111). That Marcia thinks the man will have time to read after lunch attests to her ignorance about work schedules. When the topic of work does arise, Marcia again misunderstands. The stranger explains that he "work[s] in a publisher's office" (112). Marcia jumps to the conclusion that he is "'a publisher – how interesting. I wonder if you could do anything to help a boy I know; such a charming boy! He has written a book, but – '" (112). Marcia touts the book not of an intelligent man but of a "charming boy," accentuating the superficiality of her perceptions. Her request forces the stranger to admit, "flushed," that "'I am not a – an influential member of the firm'" (112), attesting to his lower position at work and in society.

When Marcia explains that she did not intend to be at this café, but rather was supposed to meet a man who is teaching her to sketch and picnic with him at the river, the stranger apologizes for her winding up with him, highlighting the social separation between these characters: "'I'm sorry,' he said diffidently. 'I'm afraid this must be something of a disappointment'" (113). His "diffident[]" response expresses the lack of self-confidence he feels due to his inferior financial status or intellectual capacities. However, Marcia thanks the stranger for helping her mark time by listening to her: "'I've met very few people who could really listen'" (113). The stranger responds to this accolade with an apparent compliment: "'I've met very few people who were worth listening to'" (114). The stranger's response seems flattering, and Marcia takes it as such: "She raised her brows. Her shabby man was growing gallant" (114). But the statement remains ambiguous because he does not explicitly state that *she* has been worth listening to, only that he meets few people who are worth such notice. That Marcia figures the stranger as "her shabby man" makes her his possessor, which she is in many ways: she has possessed his time, her money possesses his class, and her ideas have possessed the conversation.

Marcia's expected male companion suddenly crashes in on the lunch meeting between Marcia and the stranger, putting an abrupt stop to their conversation and confirming that these upper-class characters do not belong at this café. While Marcia waxes poetic about the summer and romance, the stranger "turned towards her quickly, his whole face flushed and lighted up for speech," but just then "with a grind and screech of brakes a big car drew up under the lime-trees" (114). Why the stranger suddenly

becomes flushed remains unclear; whether he is about to yell at his companion or agree with her remains a mystery. The violent-sounding car that interrupts the stranger belongs to Marcia's companion, John. With only a few sentences left in the story, John is granted a name whereas the stranger and the waitress never get one, playing into the stereotype that the lower classes are nothing more than background characters. Yet, in this story that centers on self-involvement, remaining unnamed is a good thing, separating such hard-working, truly interesting characters as the stranger from the superficial Marcia. As Marcia rushes to the car, admonishing John for being late, she "stood looking down bright-eyed at his weary, passive, disillusioned face" (115). The recipient of Marcia's look is unclear: both men are seated, and Marcia seems midway between the café and car at this point. John's face could be "weary," "passive," and "disillusioned" because Marcia criticizes him for his lateness, but this description appears more in line with the stranger's face, putting a final emphasis on his harrowed, hectic, sad, working-class life. Yet, by letting this moment remain ambiguous, the story intimates that Marcia's constant chatter and John's screeching car may be covers for their own sad lives. Marcia's speechifying, her misreading of her lunch companion, her snobbish ways, even her "grating" her chair along the floor (115) as John "grind[s] and screech[es]" his car (114) confirm these upper class characters are disharmonious in the scene.

In terms of class, "Lunch" examines the interactions of varied social groups in the public sphere. The character with the most money dominates the conversation, the ordering of foods, and the timetable of the meal, revealing how social hierarchies remain fixed despite the setting or the level of personal intimacy. Yet, money does not

necessarily act as an entranceway into any arena. Marcia is obviously out of her element at the café. She barely touches her food, refuses to interact with the waitress, and speaks so much that she does not let anyone around her get too close; in a way, her constant talk of egoism acts as armor. Although such things as Marcia's being at this café and the stranger and the waitress squeezing through windows exposes the instability of economic boundaries, the story questions the good that can come from encounters between those of different classes.

The next story, "The Lover," acts as a conclusion to "The New House," the story before "Lunch." The story opens with Herbert's first visit to the new home of his sister, Cicely, and brother-in-law, Richard, showing a gap in time between the two stories. Cicely's new domestic life and Herbert's pending nuptials set the stage for further examination of how these siblings are managing their new found class status. This story, like the last about these siblings, focuses on Herbert's inner life, and emphasizes the difficulties of making the mental and physical transition from one class group to another.

The story begins with Herbert's thoughts on his sister's house being "trim and orderly enough" (116) for Herbert and his sister to maintain their newly acquired upper-middle-class status. Herbert goes on to think that Cicely "had not done so badly for herself, after all, by marrying Richard Evans" (116). Though Herbert could be thinking that Cicely had not done badly for herself by marrying a nice, stable, or considerate man, the implication of Herbert thinking this as he surveys the house is that Cicely has not done badly for herself financially. He is preoccupied by the fact that Cicely's house will reflect well on both his sister and himself. Highlighting this focus on finances is

Herbert's next thought that "of course it had been difficult to get poor Cicely off" (116). Herbert uses the adjective "poor" to depict his sister overtly as worthy of compassion for her below average attributes but covertly as lacking in material resources.

The behavior of Cicely, her husband Richard, and their maid reveals that, like Herbert, Richard has also recently acquired a higher social status that he is learning to fit into. Herbert's thoughts on the house are interrupted when "the hall-door was opened suddenly by Cicely's nervous little maid, who, flattening herself against the passage wall to allow of his entrance, contrived, by dodging suddenly under his arm, to reach the drawing-room door before him and fling it wide" (116). The maid's having to flatten herself against the wall to allow Herbert to enter indicates that the entryway is not very large, reflecting Cicely's and Richard's modest home. The maid's awkward physical maneuverings also suggest she is new not only to the house but also to her job: the portrayal of her as "nervous," "little," and trying to meld into the wall shows her lack of experience and confidence. That Cicely and Richard employ such an inept maid implies that they are new to a class position that affords them such luxuries. As Herbert enters the house, he hears, "'*Tea!*' commanded Cicely through the crack of the door" (117). Cicely's orders are as abrupt as ever, confirming that she too feels insecure yet giddy in her new position; she deems it necessary to yell and command rather than simply assume her new station. When the tea is delivered, it is "carried in, not noiselessly, but quite unnoticed" (120). Who, exactly, brings the tea in is unclear since the sentence is in passive voice, erasing the servant. That it is carried in with noise suggests the same shy

and untrained maid, the syntax cuts out the servant, but not the servant's ineptitude, exposing Cicely's frustrations with her help.

The fact that Cicely and Richard live in a house slightly above their financial means is reflected in the dressing of the rooms and suggests they are playing at rather than fully inhabiting their class status. Herbert notes that Cicely, in a pink blouse and fluffy hair, looked better than ever. However, the room that she and Richard sit in is not as luxurious as Herbert expected:

> the white-walled drawing-room [. . .] was hung with Richard's Italian watercolours and other pictorial mementos of the honeymoon; it smelt very strongly of varnish, and seemed to Herbert emptier than a drawing-room ought to be. The chairs and sofas had retreated into the corners, they lacked frilliness; there was something just as startled and staccato about the room as there was about Cicely and Richard. (117)

That the furniture is newly renovated or cleaned explains the strong smell of varnish. This smell also intimates either the caring for of antiques or the fixing up of old, unflattering pieces. The chairs and sofas in the corners of the room suggest a small room that the couple attempts to make look bigger by pushing the furniture to the edges. The walls hold honeymoon mementos only, intimating that either the couple has just moved into this house and have not yet had time to decorate or that all they have to decorate with are items from the honeymoon. The emptiness of the room echoes the empty rooms in Herbert's new house; upward mobility has come fast enough to buy new homes, but not fast enough to furnish them. Cicely, looking pink and fluffy, appears ready for her new social group but her house has to catch up.

As the three family members settle into the drawing room, their discussion raises questions about class containment and the inhabiting of certain spaces. Herbert, making small talk, mentions the hot weather, prompting Cicely's response that "'*Richard's* hot," said Cicely proudly; 'he's been mowing the lawn'" (117). Cicely's pride at her husband being hotter than her brother rests upon the fact that Richard has been doing manual labor. Although it seems that such work would not befit her husband and certainly would not induce such pride in Cicely, it does prove Richard's physical prowess, though it also reveals the couple's inability to afford to hire gardeners. If Richard and Cicely were truly well off, then Richard's role in the garden would be in overseeing the gardener or relaxing in the fresh air, not mowing his own lawn. Richard's occupying the space of the garden in this manner betrays his and Cicely's still fledgling class status.

Though Richard's labor is lauded, Herbert's feelings toward the working class have not altered since "The New House"; he still believes that money can and should buy happiness and service. Soon to be married himself, Herbert and Cicely discuss how Doris, his betrothed, is coming along with her trousseau: "'My dear Herbert, those dressmaker women have got you in their fist. If they don't choose to let you have the clothes in time she'll put the whole thing off.' Herbert was not to be alarmed. 'Oh, they'll hurry up,' he said easily. 'I'm making it worth their while. By Gad, Cicely, she does know how to dress'" (118). That the dressmakers have the reins in this scenario confirms the control of the working classes. Yet Herbert's remark that they will have everything done on time because he is "making it worth their while" exemplifies how money rules, ultimately taking power away from the dressmakers and giving it back to

Herbert. That Herbert is impressed with how Doris dresses fits his desire to show his mounting wealth through things like his home and décor.

Herbert's focus on materialism continues as he notes that Doris has given his sister a framed photograph of herself, a photograph and frame that suggest Doris' class, implying that Herbert is marrying up: "A young lady with symmetrically puffed-out hair" and a "slightly bovine intensity" looks out from a "silver frame." "Her lips were bowed in an indulgent smile – perhaps the photographer had been a funny man -- a string of pearls closely encircled a long plump neck" (120-21). This portrayal of Doris speaks to her upper-class status; she is "indulgent" during her picture, implying, as Herbert suggests, that she was tolerating the photographer. Her "puffed-out hair" and pearl encased "plump neck" as well as her cow-like expression all indicate that she is a member of the pampered, plumped, and puffed-up upper class. The silver frame also signifies money. Of the gift, Herbert attempts to take credit for it:

> 'I said to her when we were first engaged, never stint over a present when it is necessary – I think that is so sound. Of course I do not approve of giving indiscriminately [. . .] but when they must be given let them be handsome. It is agreeable to receive good presents, and to give them always makes a good impression' [. . .] continued Herbert, examining the frame to see if the price were still on the back. (121)

Herbert's theory that presents should make a good impression and be given with discrimination follows from his ideas that material objects and money should be used to show one's financial wellbeing to others. That he searches for the price tag indicates his desire to put an actual price on the gift. Herbert thinks only in terms of money. If he sees

that Doris spent an appropriate amount, his emotional reaction to the present will also be appropriate. Without the guidance of a price tag, Herbert is a bit lost.

The story closes with Herbert again trying to separate himself as much as he can from those beneath him, betraying his social anxiety. As Herbert expostulates on the weaknesses of women, he asserts that Doris "'need never dictate – except, of course, to servants, and there she's backed by her husband's authority'" (125). That these "child-like," "easily taught," "simple" women only need "dictate" to hired help and only then with their husbands there to wield the actual authority demeans women but places servants on the lowest rung possible. The next servant to enter the narrative fulfills Herbert's image; the servant appears as nothing more than a generic, passive, nonentity: "through the folding doors he could hear their cold supper being laid out in the dining-room" (128). Once more, this passive construction erases the hired help, focusing on the work rather than on the worker. This erasure of the human confirms that the service, not the servant, is important to those being waited on. Moreover, that the supper is laid out beyond this doorway contains the differently classed characters in separate rooms. But, as Richard's mowing the lawn proves, such boundaries are not always so clearly delineated, leaving room for slippage between classes.

In the end, upward mobility has made Herbert neither a happy man nor a sympathetic character. Herbert and Cicely's snobbish class assumptions and crass shrieking of orders reveal their class anxiety rather than their class confidence. Their attitudes undermine their accomplishments, confirming that money does not buy happiness, good behavior, or social decorum. Rather, for these characters, money has

only gotten them into a cycle of feeling like they need more money to prove their worth and belonging. In the long run, being part of the nouveau riche only adds stress to these siblings' lives as they work to maintain their new found status.

The final story in the volume, "Coming Home," examines the inner life of a young, apparently middle-class girl, Rosalind. When her essay is read aloud at school, she rushes home to tell her mother, Darlingest, a widow. But her mother misses this important moment in her daughter's life because she is out shopping. Rather than wait for her mother calmly, Rosalind begins to recall her father's death and becomes overwhelmed with fear that her mother has met the same fate. During the telling of the story, Rosalind's dislike of the family's servant, Emma, becomes nearly as pronounced as her love for her mother. Emma acts like a stand-in parent, but Rosalind shows nothing but hatred for the woman, hiding from her and figuring her as a monster. The house also plays an important role in the power struggle between Emma and Rosalind, exposing how Emma cannot be fully confined to one place and role.

As Rosalind rushes home, she fears her mother might not be there to receive her and her news, adding anxiety to the child's initial elation over her accomplishment. The closer she gets to home, the slower she walks, wondering why her mother is not at the window watching her. When Rosalind's anxiety is confirmed, the servant takes the brunt of her disappointment: "as soon as she entered the hall she knew that the house was empty. Clocks ticked very loudly; upstairs and downstairs the doors were a little open, letting through pale strips of light. Only the kitchen door was shut, down the end of the passage, and she could hear Emma moving about behind it" (194). Though named,

Emma, apparently the maid, does not count as anyone being home. She does not even emerge into the main house; she remains behind the kitchen door, the only shut door in the house, doing her work. Emma's remaining behind such a tightly shut door clearly divides the servant's workspace from the family's living space. As Rosalind moves about the house, she notes that "tea was spread on the table" (195), placing servile work in passive voice to remove the worker from the action. Rosalind, desperate to find her mother, thinks, "Ask Emma? No, she wouldn't; fancy having to ask *her*! 'Yes, your mother'll be in soon, Miss Rosie. Now run and get your things off, there's a good girl – ' Oh no, intolerable" (196). The "intolerable" nature of having to ask "*her*" for help places Emma in an inferior role to this twelve-year-old girl.

As Rosalind mentally admonishes her mother for not being home and rushes to her mother's room, she hears Emma approaching, revealing that class is not quite as contained as it first appeared: Rosalind "heard the handle of the kitchen door turn; Emma was coming out. O God!" (196); "down in the hall she heard Emma call her, mutter something, and slam back into the kitchen" (197). This image of Emma makes her appear monstrous, coming out of her kitchen lair to hunt for the girl only to return to her den with a "slam." Soon after, Emma again emerges out of the kitchen and tries to talk to Rosalind:

> Emma came half-way upstairs; Rosalind flattened herself behind the door.
> 'Will you begin your tea, Miss Rosie?'
> 'No. Where's mother?'
> 'I didn't hear her go out. I have the kettle boiling – will I make your tea?'
> 'No. *No.*'
> Rosalind slammed the door on the angry mutterings, and heard with a sense of desolation Emma go downstairs [. . .] When they came to tell her about *It*, men

> would come, and they would tell Emma, and Emma would come up with a frightened, triumphant face and tell her. (200)

That Emma only comes halfway up the stairs figures her in a liminal position between servant and household member. While Darlingest is out, Emma has the added job of watching over Rosalind; so she is, in a sense, part of the family. But rather than see Emma, Rosalind hides behind her mother's door, maintaining her distance from the servant despite the fact that the girl feels lonely when Emma retreats. Despite Emma's actions and dialogue seeming innocuous, Rosalind figures her as "angry" and projects that she will be "triumphant" at Darlingest's death, suggesting that Emma would react to her mistress's death as a success because it would mean she could take over the house and child.

Darlingest's return home erases Emma from the text and prompts Rosalind to leave the text, mad at her mother for not being there when she arrived home. The story ends with the widowed mother "standing in the middle of the room with her face turned towards the window, looking at something a long way away, smiling and singing to herself and rolling up her veil" (203-204). Although Emma has retreated to the kitchen and Rosalind has withdrawn to her room, containing both the servant and the child, the story ends with an expansive vision that intimates there is more than what is contained in this house.

Like several other stories in this volume, "Coming Home" uses contracted domestic sphere to bring together differently classed characters who are not fully contained in their social spheres. The instability of social boundaries allows for varied

classes to interact, but this lack of containment can raise issues of anxiety and fear, as it does in Rosalind. The child wants to contain her mother in their house, but instead she finds herself confined with and from Emma. But the ending of the story suggests something beyond the house: an uncontained space where new, promising encounters can take place.

The stories in *Encounters* examine meetings between characters of different backgrounds, points of view, and class groups as well as these characters' confrontations with social structures. Although some critics see the short story as a limited form that does not allow for much character development, Bowen takes this necessarily contracted space and utilizes it to present a complex portrait of how physical, social, and mental containment impacts her characters' thoughts and interactions. Some of the characters desire containment, wanting clear boundaries between class groups and rooms of their own, while other characters feel oppressed by their class group or job status, desiring to break out of their present space and enter into a new life. Yet, the characters who refuse to be contained in their class realities as well as in their stories, like the nouveau riche Herbert and Cicely, do not find happiness; instead, they experience the same sense of displacement that the lady's maid Lydia feels. In this way, all of Bowen's characters, regardless of class status, experience feelings of liminality and despondency. And though all of the characters share these feelings of confusion and upheaval due to unstable class divisions, they experience them in individuated ways, revealing a sympathetic, nuanced presentation of all the class groups readers encounter in Bowen's volume of short stories.

CHAPTER IV

"CHARLES AND CHARLIE": CHARLIE CHAPLIN'S MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES ON CLASS

As night falls in the 1927 German silent film *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*, men and women crowd into a movie theater. Inside the theater, a long shot captures the backs of the audience's heads and a small, lower portion of the film screen. Suddenly, there is movement on the white screen: the wearer of two large, upturned, dilapidated boots walks, or rather waddles, toward the viewers. Above the boots, the pant legs, which are only visible from the shin down, appear scruffy and have slits up the sides. A thin cane bows out at the side of one of the legs. The feet shuffle in place a few times before exiting the screen. Although the man's face is never shown during this four-second shot, there is no doubt that this audience is watching a Charlie Chaplin film. The ease with which Chaplin's tramp character can be spotted, whether in 1927 or 2010, reinforces Chaplin's universality. As Michael North argues, "if one had to choose one thing that every human being living in 1922 – from Evelyn Waugh to Walter Benjamin – could have agreed upon, it would probably be Charlie Chaplin" (163).

However, despite the fact that the tramp is one of the most recognizable characters in history, there are several aspects of this character that remain overlooked, such as his subtle shift in costume. In each film, Chaplin slightly changes the tramp character's social situation, allowing for a variety of perspectives on class hierarchies and lifestyles. One of the ways that Chaplin conveys these changes in social status is through

the tramp's costume. Chaplin scholar Uno Asplund comments that in all of his films the tramp emerges in "his usual outfit" (125), an assessment that many, like Gerald Mast, would agree with but that fails to take into account the slight differences in each tramp-film costume, which roots the tramp in different economic groups. North, like Asplund, assumes the tramp always wears the same clothes:

> The tramp costume itself is so stylized and so faithfully reproduced in film after film once it achieves trademark status that it seems both a mask and a character in its own right at the same time. In fact, everything the tramp does, from his finicky hand gestures to the stuttering walk, is so perfectly stylized and stereotyped as to suggest a character operating on its own, utterly separable from and independent of the actor playing the role. (168)

However, not only does the tramp's outfit change, but so do his ticks, mannerisms, and way of life. These understated alterations between films allow the tramp to respond to each set of characters and circumstances in a way that specifically addresses the tramp's current social status. These modifications reveal that the tramp is not as easily contained or classified as he may appear.

Although the details of the tramp's costume change from film to film, his basic costume, such as his baggy trousers and tight vest, essentially remain the same. This stock costume embodies the films' ambivalence concerning the upheaval of traditional class structures and boundaries. The costume betrays a desire for upward mobility but an inability to completely contain a lower-class status. When asked how he created the tramp costume, Chaplin explains that while working on his first film he was ordered to get into costume and makeup for an unscripted character; the result was Chaplin's first public act of performing the tramp:

> on the way to wardrobe I thought I would dress in baggy pants, big shoes, a cane and a derby hat. I wanted everything a contradiction: the pants baggy, the coat tight, the hat small and the shoes large. [. . .] I had no idea of the character. But the moment I was dressed the clothes and the make-up made me feel the person he was. [. . .] I began to explain the character: "you know this fellow is many-sided, a tramp, a gentleman, a poet, a dreamer, a lonely fellow, always hopeful of romance and adventure. He would have you believe he is a scientist, a musician, a duke, a polo-player. However, he is not above picking up cigarette-butts or robbing a baby of its candy. And, of course, if the occasion warrants it, he will kick a lady in the rear – but only in extreme anger." (Autobiography 154)

Chaplin's depiction of his character highlights his interest in exploiting rather than resolving contradictions. This celebration of opposition allows Chaplin to build a character who is both "a tramp" and "a gentleman," much like Chaplin himself. That the clothing inspired the character suggests that people can, literally, dress a part, which is a modernist notion of identity. Chaplin's claim that the tramp would "kick a lady in the rear – but only in extreme anger" proves the character's delinquent behavior, but the tramp's mischievous side lessens as Chaplin's films lengthen, showing a modification of character in order to maintain a wide audience.

Despite having massive public appeal that spans geographic, social, and temporal boundaries, Chaplin has not always interested scholars. During the 1970s and 1980s, Chaplin "became a somewhat marginalized and sometimes even maligned figure" (Barr 9). This decline in status marked a scholarly reaction against Chaplin's long-time popularity. Originally, "those intellectuals who despised the commercial film industry had always had time for Chaplin, the man who found a way of working so successfully outside its pressures and compromises; he could be taken seriously as an artist because he was so clearly and flamboyantly the author of his own films" (Barr 9). But the new

generation of critics embraced artists who worked within the studio system; Chaplin's control was not interesting. The other common trend in Chaplin criticism of the 1970s and 1980s, which also extends, for some, to today, is to view Chaplin as a popular, sentimental, Dickensian filmmaker whose static style and didactic content work against rather than with modernist trends. Chaplin has often been called the "Dickens of the cinema" since both men experienced childhood deprivations, rapid fame, tremendous ambition, and self-doubt. "These experiences issued in the work of each a preoccupation with feelings of vulnerability, with poverty, wealth and class, and with sudden changes in fortune; in evocations of the problems of living in modern industrial cities [. . .]; and in an occasional proness to sentimental self-indulgence" (Kimber 45).

But Chaplin puts a twist on sentimentality, most often through the use of comedy, a genre that often has been disregarded as purely entertaining rather than educational, enlightening, or artistic. As Mast notes, "surprisingly little attention has been paid to the intellectual complexity of comic films" (ix). This oversight strikes Mast as odd since "literary critics have observed that the twentieth century is [. . .] a comic century [. . .] and that the comic, ironic reaction of twentieth-century literature is an understandably human, reasonable, and healthy response to the devastating chaos of twentieth-century life, politics, morality, and science" (ix). Mast views Chaplin as the "most outstanding film picaro": his tramp acts in a manner akin to the journeying picaresque hero, wandering about, "examining his responses and reactions to various situations," allowing people and events to "bounce off" him (Mast 7). And although pathos is a hallmark of Chaplin's features, his shorts remain free of such emotional trappings due to the tramp's

antisocial, ridiculous behavior, which creates a type of Brechtian alienation between the character and the viewer that allows for an intellectual response to the films (Bergson 5).

In opposition to the prevalent portrayal of Chaplin as a Victorian sentimentalist, a few recent scholars have deemed Chaplin a modernist. North and Susan McCabe grant Chaplin a place in the modernist cannon due to his personal feelings of alienation and his filmic representations of hysteria. McCabe claims that Gertrude Stein's idea of hysteria being a mechanical, repetitive type of movement reflects Chaplin's slapstick (58). This kind of interdisciplinary work reinforces the idea that modernist literature was "greatly helped if not directly suggested by the emergence of parallel conventions in the cinema" (Seeds 70). Indeed, numerous historical factors during the early twentieth century strengthened the connection between film and fiction, including "the appropriation of impressionism from the visual arts, the rise of photography, the reduction in discursive commentary in favour of naturalistic presentation, and a general willingness among the modernists to experiment across media" (Seeds 48). And the universally popular Chaplin was, quite literally, invested in literary modernism: in 1919 Chaplin helped fund a new magazine entitled *The Modernist*: "*The Modernist* never materialized, but the little magazines that did publish modernist work were full of references to Chaplin in 1922" (North 165). While placing Chaplin among the modernists certainly complicates the canon in a positive way, it also reduces the complexity of this man and his art. Chaplin is neither a pyrotechnic modernist nor a traditional sentimentalist; he does not fit comfortably in the modernist canon nor does he seem well suited as a late Victorian.

Whether scholars view Chaplin as a modernist or as an anti-modernist, however, nearly all of them pass over his short films in favor of his features. When critics do address Chaplin's shorts, they often examine them as apprentice works leading up to the full-length films. But Chaplin's short films deserve analysis. While Chaplin's earliest, shortest films focus on the tramp, the character is much more obnoxious and intentionally disruptive than the well-known and well-liked character from the later features. Between Chaplin's gag-centered early shorts and his moralistic feature films lie some of his most interesting works. During the peak years of modernism, Chaplin produced his final three short films, none of which comfortably fit with the rest of his oeuvre. "The Idle Class" (1921) blurs traditionally stable divisions between class groups and depicts all characters, regardless of class, as morally ambiguous. "Pay Day" (1922) sets the tramp up with a wife, a working-class job, and an apartment, which questions the continuity of the tramp character. And "The Pilgrim" (1923) uses its longer length to establish character growth, showing the tramp change from criminal to upstanding citizen. These three short films reveal how the short form enabled Chaplin to present multiple takes on class politics. Positioning his tramp in slightly different economic groups in each film allows for subtle, nuanced class analyses. Ultimately, Chaplin's short films are neither socially liberal nor conservative. Rather, they play with the confusion and liberation that come with the blurring of established class divisions; even though the films ultimately reinforce rather than overthrow traditional hierarchical ideas, they also expose the impossibility of completely containing class groups.

"The Idle Class" uses such techniques as Chaplin playing both an upper and a lower class man in order to portray how the breaking down of conventional class divisions leads to societal mayhem. The title "The Idle Class" foregrounds a focus on social structures yet keeps the film's class commentary ambiguous. Which group is the idle class remains unclear not only in the proper title but also in the alternative title, "Vanity Fair." If Chaplin had in mind William Makepeace Thackeray's nineteenth-century parodic novel, which spares no character its mockery, the film, like the novel, places all characters and classes under attack. The allusion to Thackeray's novel, subtitled "A Novel Without a Hero," further underscores the idea that all of Chaplin's movies lack a hero; the tramp may be a sympathetic character, like Captain Dobbin in Thackeray's novel, but he is not a heroic figure. Both Thackeray's novel and Chaplin's film evoke John Bunyan's seventeenth-century allegorical tale *The Pilgrim's Progress*. In this narrative, the pilgrim, Christian, stops at a fair in the town of Vanity where men's attachment to worldly, material things is their utmost sin. Chaplin's tramp, like a pilgrim, wanders from film to film, facing new jobs, people, and experiences at each stop. At the conclusion of one journey, he sets off on his next adventure, ending most tales with the tramp walking off down a lonely road by himself. Both the pilgrim Christian and the tramp Charlie have to win battles against the common sins of man, but the tramp does so in a comedic register, making both his achievements as well as his failures entertaining. However, the entertainment value of Chaplin's films should not obscure the fact that they also present a nuanced view of class politics and social hypocrisy.

This two-reel film's opening shots establish a comedic parallel between the rich and the poor, and although the poor tramp mocks the rich summer folk, the film mocks the tramp, making both classes targets ridicule. The first sequence sets up the recurrent theme of doublings and dualities, which accentuates the similarities and oppositions between the rich and the poor. The scene opens on "The Summer Season," which finds yawning, well-dressed men, most of whom look alike, standing on a train platform, while alert, well-dressed women promenade with fashionable dogs and men in high-top hats. As the train arrives, so do the wealthy summer-season people. A dimly lit long shot shows nearly invisible porters scrambling to unload luggage and set up steps for the disembarking train-riders. As two porters set up two steps, two more porters help unload luggage. The scuttle of the barely visible train workers contrasts with the hesitant pace of the clearly shot train riders. The seasonal visitors emerge from the train with looks of skepticism; they are unsure if they approve of their vacation spot. As the wealthy guests come off the train, two men get their literal moment in the spotlight: each capture an individual iris shot and looks similar with glasses, tweed hat, and golf clubs over his shoulders. This sequence's use of extreme lighting and tight iris shots make these summer folk appear much more important than they really are. Such dramatic shots build expectations of seeing focal characters or something important, but instead they show tennis rackets and men who will never be seen again, making these wealthy characters appear more ridiculous than enviable. The way these men are shot mimics the way they see themselves – overly important, worthy of spotlights and lingering looks. But

Chaplin's overemphatic style makes clear that they are not special; rather, they become objects of ridicule rather than reverence.

The last passenger to leave the train is the leading lady, played by Edna Purviance, whose introduction is mirrored by the tramp's, collapsing the boundaries between these economically opposing characters. Before seeing her, we see a close-up of her fashionable boot and lace-clad leg, establishing her upper-class status. Then we see her in full and in fur, looking down the tracks in search of someone. This shot of her searching is followed by a long shot of the luggage compartment under the train popping open and the large shoed feet and baggy pant legs of the obviously lower-class tramp emerging. He dons a black jacket, a black tie covered in dust and dirt, a white shirt, a gray and raggedy vest with a mix of black and gray buttons, and massive gray and black patches on a pair of gray baggy pants. That the outfit appears black, white, and gray indicates the film's desire to communicate a nuanced rather than a black and white view of class, ethics, and character. The large patches and dirty tie signal a downtrodden tramp, portraying him at one of his lowest social points, which sharply contrasts with Chaplin's second, wealthy character in the film; the greater the contrast between the tramp and the gentleman, the funnier the comparisons. Although the focus on the legs and feet of the tramp parallels the focus on the legs and feet of Edna, the camera distance shifts our relationship to these shots and, therefore, these characters. The closeness of the shot of Edna feels voyeuristic while the distance of the shot of the tramp captures the surrounding scene to show the comedy of this man emerging from the underbelly rather than the top level of the train. While Edna is subtly objectified due to her gender, the

tramp is overtly and humorously objectified due to his economic status, making poverty unthreatening and laughable. Once fully out of his berth, the tramp gathers his tattered bag and two golf clubs, confirming that he is not one of the wealthy travelers despite similar tastes; he is the poor-man's version of the summer folk. The scene ends with the tramp walking right out of the frame, revealing his inability to fit in the wealthy world that he has entered into. But this exiting the frame also indicates that the tramp cannot be contained; he can move beyond imposed limits, making him a potential threat to conventional systems.

The second scene continues the first scene's paralleling of the wealthy and the poor as well as underscores how laughable both classes can be. "The Absent Minded Husband" reveals a medium shot of Chaplin, this time in a new tuxedo, top hat, and dark gloves. This well-dressed gentleman stands in a luxurious living room with two bedrooms behind him, each with large doorways covered in lush curtains. This internal framing shows the husband to be firmly in his element, unlike the tramp, who walks out of the frame entirely. Yet, the two doorways also emphasize the theme of doubling, which questions the differences between such characters as the upper-class husband and the tramp. As the husband reads a telegraph from his wife, Edna, he realizes that he is late to pick her up. The husband makes this realization when he looks at his desk clock, which echoes in size and shape the clock the tramp takes out of the luggage compartment. Though the prop links the two men, it is commonplace in the husband's bedroom but ridiculous in the tramp's berth, making the tramp and his ways laughable. Despite being late, the husband removes his hat and brushes his hair, more concerned with his

appearance than with greeting his wife. The film mocks the husband for his ridiculous self-involvement and the tramp for his awkward mannerisms, echoing *Vanity Fair's* equal-opportunity ridicule.

As the scene cuts back to the station, the tramp's actions highlight his social illegitimacy. While porters and drivers continue to help Edna and the other upper-class passengers make their way out of the station, the tramp attends to himself. The tramp goes to the parking lot to find a vehicle to take him into town. However, as with his riding in the cargo hold of the train, rather than get into a taxi, the tramp settles onto a luggage rack. The tramp's means of transportation on the train and on the taxi highlight literally and figuratively his status as an outsider. Moreover, these scenes associate the tramp with baggage, intimating that the homeless are nothing more than hanger-ons in the lives of the upper classes. Yet, the tramp's unconventional methods of transportation also show his ingenuity. But before the audience can be impressed by the tramp's abilities to negotiate the world of money around him, they wind up laughing at his foibles when he falls off the back of the taxi. Although the tramp eventually succeeds in catching his ride, placing humorous obstacles in his way neutralizes any threat he may pose to the upper classes or the class hierarchy. Yet, the taxi caries the tramp off camera, reaffirming the uncontainable nature of this lower-class man.

As the tramp hitches a ride on the back of Edna's car, the scene again cuts to the husband, who repeatedly fails in his efforts to leave the house to get his wife, contrasting his ineptness with the tramp's resourcefulness. The husband acts in a slow, methodical, yet bumbling way: he keeps returning to his toilet to do things he has forgotten about

rather than going to the station to get Edna. The husband's absent-mindedness is fully exposed when the first long shot of him reveals that he is preparing to leave his posh hotel room sans pants. The husband remains totally unaware of his state of undress, making him a visual joke for the viewers. The audience's knowledge places them, regardless of their class background, in a superior position to that of the husband. Eventually, the half-dressed husband makes his way to the lobby, where he realizes his lack of pants and a series of intricate hide-and-seek moments keep him covered and the other upper-class hotel patrons ignorant of his indiscretion. The husband's final hiding place is a phone booth, internally framing as well as containing him, implying that while his wealth may help him fit in upper-class social circles, it does not allow him much freedom. The husband finally makes his way to his bedroom via a squat walk and strategically placed newspaper, making this wealthy man appear more ridiculous than the tramp. Back in his room, the husband reads a note left for him by his wife; Edna has left her husband because of his excessive drinking. A medium shot of his back makes it appear as if he is crying over this news when, in fact, he is mixing a drink, indicating the rich husband's skewed priorities as well as undermining sympathy the viewers might feel for either of these upper-class characters by turning this potentially serious moment into a humorous one.

As the action proceeds, the three main characters are more blatantly compared, questioning the essential difference between the classes. While "A Lonely Husband" happily drinks alone, "A Lonely Wife" happily rides a stallion, solo, through the fields. Edna's and her husband's expressions expose the irony of the intertitles – they might be

alone, but they are not lonely; rather, they are enjoying themselves quite a bit. "The Lonely Tramp" also shows a happy man attempting to golf. But in contrast to Edna's perfect equestrian skills and her husband's seamless mixology abilities, the tramp has less than stellar golf talents. The tramp's lack of aptitude can be linked to his lack of money. His version of a golf game, much like his version of taking a train or a taxi, has him improvising to make up for the fact that he cannot afford to play by the rules. Finally, whereas the wife and husband are introduced by indefinite articles, the tramp is introduced by a definite article, suggesting that the tramp is a specific, particular person while the married couple is nonspecific – the wife and husband could be any rich couple, but the tramp is one of a kind. Despite his lesser social status, the tramp is singled out as a particular man. Yet, this article of speech can also been seen as a way to contain the tramp. While the rich couple could be anyone, anywhere, the tramp is singular, making his antics non-threatening on a large scale.

The tramp's golf game quickly turns chaotic, but it remains ambiguous whether or not he intends to create chaos for those around him, undermining any kind of revolutionary or disruptive social undercurrent. After taking sand from his pocket, placing it on the ground, and preparing for a golf game with his two shoddy looking clubs, the tramp realizes he does not have a ball. This detail leads the tramp to re-pocket his sand and to wander onto an actual golf course in search of a ball. While bumbling through the course, the tramp kicks another player's ball off into the bushes. Despite having to kick the ball several times to get it away from its owner, the intentionality of the tramp's actions remains unclear. And even though he quickly leaves the scene when

the ball's owner nearly confronts him, the tramp gives no indication if his actions are deliberate or not. After losing this "found" ball, the tramp accidentally hooks another player's clubs and a second player's ball. When the rightful owner of the ball, who assumes the tramp has purposely stolen from him, gives the tramp a kick in the butt and a talking to, the tramp, seemingly unwittingly, claims a new ball and upsets another player.

As this chain of taking others' things and upsetting the next in row continues, the tramp plays through with one of his "found" balls, apparently ignorant of his misdeeds; the tramp's supposed innocence makes him seem a benign character. The tramp befriends one of the golfers, and the men are shown in numerous two-shots, depicting them as equals despite their social inequality. Kimber asserts that the tramp "rarely doubts himself in social terms. Indeed, the chief point of his seedy but upper-class costume [. . .] is that he sees himself as superior to all other society, and, for the most part, he makes us the audience accept that view of him" (Paul 57). In this scene, the tramp and the camera view these two men from contrasting classes as equals. When the player offers the tramp a cigarette, the tramp takes one from the player's case, takes the case, offers the player a cigarette, and then pockets the case. This move, like all of the tramp's actions thus far, seems unintentional and innocent, making the tramp more of a bumbling fool, like the husband, than a threatening force.

However, the appearance of a second tramp disrupts this contained, sanitized view of the lower classes. When the tramp accidentally shoots his ball into the mouth of another tramp who is sleeping in the middle of the golf course, Charlie's tramp depresses the man's stomach and retrieves not only his ball but also numerous other balls, making

this sleeping tramp a virtual ball dispenser. The tramp rarely shares the screen with another tramp, so this moment is not only atypical but also complicates class types. As Charlie's tramp proves his ingenuity, this second, inert tramp reasserts class stereotypes, portraying the lower classes as nothing more than comic relief, functionaries, and background characters. Unlike the other characters, this second tramp, who contrasts with Charlie's tramp in his unkempt dress and toilet as well as in his domineering physical size, is barely allowed consciousness. The second tramp both complicates class stereotypes by showing how dissimilar the two tramps are and reasserts class generalizations by proving to be a grimy, hulking, lazy caricature. Despite the obvious physical differences between these tramps, they both infiltrate upper-class territory, exposing the instability of class borders; whereas Charlie's tramp stumbled onto the golf course with an attitude and attire that make him seem like he could belong, the other tramp appears out of place in the scene yet still manages to make his way into upper-class territory.

As the tramp continues his golf game, he encounters Edna, whom he immediately falls in love with; the tramp's ensuing fantasy both complicates and reinforces class stereotypes. When the tramp sees Edna ride by on her horse, he creates a damsel-in-distress daydream. He pictures Edna's horse running amuck. To save the day, the tramp grabs a random donkey and rides atop it in an effort to catch up to Edna and her wild horse. When the donkey bucks the tramp off, he still manages to save the girl by outrunning her horse. That, in his own daydream, the tramp rides on a donkey who kicks him off rather than on a stallion who lets him succeed in his mission makes him the butt

of his own fantasy. It reaffirms that, as with the train, the taxi, and the golf course, the tramp does not belong on a stallion, and he knows it. Rather than attempt to fully cross class boundaries, the tramp exists on their margins, allowing him partial access to upper-class privileges. By putting himself on a donkey, the tramp builds the association that he is an ass who deserves to be laughed at. Yet, when the donkey bucks the tramp, he elevates his physical ability by imaging himself outrunning a stallion. Though this image portrays the tramp's physical prowess, it also compares him to an animal, exploiting the stereotype that the lower classes are more physical and animalistic than the upper classes. Tellingly, this daydream ends not with the tramp saving Edna. Rather, the daydream contains two more quick shots. The first shot is of Edna and the tramp getting married. The second shot presents them sitting on a porch of a house with a baby, confirming their eventual compatibility despite their obviously divergent class backgrounds. Although the sight of the tramp and Edna forming a family poses a threat to the status quo, by mingling classes, none of these fantasies actually occur, reinforcing class stasis rather than class change.

This daydream also exhibits one of the ways in which Chaplin uncovers his characters' subjective experiences and perceptions. David J. Lemaster examines Chaplin's use of dreams as a way to develop pathos between the tramp and the audience. Using Jung's definition of dreams, Lemaster claims that the tramp's dreams are unconscious revelations that allow Chaplin to flesh out the tramp. This use of dreams, which Chaplin incorporated into many of his films, shares with much of modernism an interest in psychology and the subconscious. In Ted Le Berthon's 1923 article for *Motion*

Picture Classic, "Absolutely, Mr. Chaplin! Positively, Mr. Freud!: Psychoanalysis Comes to the Movies," Le Berthon quotes Chaplin as explaining that "'I've put Freud on the screen. I psychoanalyze every character in the story. [. . .] Most photoplays emphasize the apparently important, the outward actions of a human being. Of course, you know that people ever hide their real motives. Of course -- their actions are paradoxical" (69). The man known for physical comedy downplays the "outward actions" of people, explaining his interest in character psychology instead. Although Chaplin uses externals, from physical traits to costumes, to examine the inner workings of humans, he also uses subjective perception in the form of dreams and fantasies to add depth and complexity to even his lowest-class character, the tramp. In Chaplin's shorts, all people, regardless of economic status, have an inner psychology. This focus on the tramp's psychology contrasts with his daydream of being animalistic enough to outrun a stallion, proving the tramp's very human inner life.

As the tramp shrugs off his daydream, his golf-course antics conclude with a final battle of upper class versus lower class, again portraying the socially superior men as behaviorally inferior to the tramp. As the tramp continues his game, his ball hits one of the players, ricochets, and hits and breaks the man's bottle of liquor. This sends the man into a childish outburst of tears, showing the ridiculousness – and pathological drunkenness – of the rich. When the tramp goes to retrieve the balls, he runs into another of the players whose game he disrupted. This man has obviously been beaten up by another one of the tramp's "victims," so the tramp quickly moves on to avoid getting involved in another muddle. Yet, the tramp accidentally leads these two golfers together

where they once more misunderstand the situation, thinking they have been the cause of each other's ills, and begin again to fist fight. The golf course scene ends with one of the beaten men trying to confront the tramp but instead falling into a swamp, solidifying the buffoon-like nature of the upper-class men while the tramp walks out of the chaotic scene he has created, unscathed. As the tramp leaves the golf course, he sees a horse and a woman resting in the grass. Thinking this is Edna, the tramp approaches, finds a less-than-physically-appealing woman, and quickly removes himself from the scene. Because the sequence ends with yet another case of mistaken identity, it confirms the fact that formerly rigid social boundaries are becoming less fixed and reliable.

"That Evening" opens on a hotel costume ball, which provides Chaplin frequent opportunities to play with class stereotypes and boundaries. The earlier intertitles of "The Lonely Husband," "The Lonely Wife," and "A Lonely Tramp" repeat here, emphasizing that none of these characters have developed or changed. "The Lonely Husband" dons a suit of armor, an ironic costume due to his drunken, unchivalrous ways; when it comes to his wife, he is far from a knight in shining armor. The first time we see him in this costume, the husband's actions confirm his less than knightly ways: when he walks around his apartment mixing drinks, he finds a note from Edna saying that if he attends the ball she will forgive him for drinking and ignoring her. But instead of rushing to his wife, the husband finishes preparing his drink. Comically, his costume keeps him from being a total cad: after a sneeze sends his helmet crashing down over his face and locking, he cannot drink. In this way, the costume moves the husband a little closer to being a knight than a drunk, literally exposing how dress can create character. In contrast

to her husband's ironic costume, "The Lonely Wife" costumes herself as an eighteenth-century aristocrat. Although the period is different, the class is similar. That the morally upright wife's costume places her socially above her self-involved husband suggests a link between social class and personal ethics.

Outside the costume party, the tramp's attire marks him as a criminal, but inside the party his clothes are deemed a costume, mocking the reliability of appearances, which, in turn, mocks the stability of traditional class divisions. As the costume party begins inside the hotel, the "Lonely Tramp" takes a seat on a bench outside the hotel. When he sits next to a man in a suit, his tattered looks immediately raise the man's disapproval. And when a pickpocket behind the bench tries to steal from the respectable-looking gentleman, the gentleman unfairly blames the tramp. This interaction proves how often economics and ethics are coupled: if a man is dressed in a manner that suggests he is poor, he must also be morally depraved. This incident sends the tramp, in an attempt to take cover from the pursuing police, running into the hotel lobby where the costume ball is taking place. At the ball, everyone mistakes the tramp for Edna's husband in a tramp costume. In this context, the tramp's daily wear allows him to hide from the police and fit in with upper-class society. As the tramp sits with Edna, they are framed by matching standing lamps and Edna's costume's scepter matches the tramp's cane, reinforcing the notion that these characters are not entirely dissimilar.

The tramp fits into wealthy society so well, indeed, that Edna's upper-class husband is taken away as an imposter, confirming that the tramp is, behaviorally, more of a gentleman than the husband and allowing him access to this wealthy world. At the ball,

the husband unintentionally stabs many of the other guests with his costume sword; his buffoonery cannot be hidden by his costume. When the husband finds the tramp with his wife, who thinks the tramp is her husband, he starts to brawl with the tramp. But the other partygoers quickly break up the fight, carrying the husband rather than the tramp off as the nuisance. Kimber argues that "for Charlie, imposture is the device by which he can most readily penetrate the defenses of our stubborn and orderly centre, a conduit for the introduction of subversion" (18). Imposture allows the tramp access to realms of society typically closed off to the lower classes. Although Kimber argues that Charlie's successful impostures signify his attempt to transform society (18), however, these attempts always end in failure, proving the stability of class boundaries and the containing force of the short narrative.

Accordingly, Edna's father soon recognizes the tramp from the golf course and reveals his lower-class identity, reasserting class divisions. After exposing the tramp's true class identity, Edna's father attacks him, leading to a comedic chase through the ball. Violating expectations, Edna's father, not the tramp, disrupts this wealthy affair. The chase causes Edna to faint, and rather than be taken care of by her "knight" of a husband, she is rescued by the tramp, who takes her up to her room, proving his gentlemanly ways.

The last moments of the film interrogate the stereotypical notion that the higher the economic status the more reserved the mannerisms. As the tramp helps rescue the husband out of his suit of armor, Edna immediately embraces her true partner as she expresses a look of shock and disgust for having allowed the tramp, with whom she flirted during the party thinking him to be her husband, to touch her. Edna rebuffs the

tramp because she realizes that she was physical not only with a man other than her husband, but also with a man of the lower classes. As Edna shifts from being disgusted by to simply ignoring the tramp, her father's anger at the tramp for disrupting everything from his golf game to his costume party explodes. The father yells and kicks at the tramp, shrugging off the tramp's attempts to shake his hand and leave in a civilized manner. The tramp, in contrast to the upper-class characters, appears the most mannered and reserved, upending conventional class assumptions and highlighting how difficult it has become to distinguish class by sight or interaction.

Although class hierarchies and stereotypes are ultimately reinforced, the tramp remains an uncontainable force, leading not only to his next adventure but also to the idea that traditional class boundaries are not as impenetrable as they once were. As the tramp leaves the hotel room, Edna's guilt sets in, and she tells her father that they owe the tramp an apology. After being offered a ride from one of the drivers who mistakes the tramp for one of the costumed rich, exemplifying yet again the instability of class boundaries, he starts down the road alone. When the father finds the tramp and apologizes to him, the tramp initially takes the man's hand but then tricks him into leaning over so he can kick the fat, wealthy, patriarchal figure in the butt before running away down the street. This last image of the downtrodden man kicking an authority figure in the butt provides a laugh at the expense of established social hierarchies, but it also evidences the tramp's childish and unmannered ways. No longer the victim, the tramp is also no longer the object of sympathy. The tramp's kick proves that he can stand up for himself. The final

image of the tramp walking down the sidewalk alone not only echoes the majority of endings in tramp films but also reinforces the idea that the tramp cannot be contained.

Chaplin's next film, "Pay Day" (1922), may be his most atypical film: it portrays a married, working-class tramp, a fact that both questions the continuity of this character and affords Chaplin's tramp the opportunity to examine a different class group. Chaplin never discusses why he decided to set the tramp up in such a unique manner for this film. But it is likely that, as he was preparing to segue into feature films, Chaplin was experimenting with what kind of protagonist would be the most enduring and endearing for his audiences. In very few of the shorts, like "The Immigrant," the tramp marries at the end, but it is rare. Here the tramp begins the film married. And although the tramp often has a job, whether it is as a pawnbroker, bank janitor, or props master, the films suggest that these jobs are only temporary. But in "Pay Day" his construction job is his regular work.

The tramp's costume reflects his shift in class position, confirming the alterations to his costume and the uncontainable qualities of this character. Rather than the overly baggy and patch-worked pants and dirty tie from "The Idle Class," here the tramp's pants are a bit more fitted to his body. The pants do not have any patches, though they do have a slit from the bottom of the leg to the ankle; they are tattered but not completely falling apart. His vest, which has a checkered pattern, is quite small, not covering his stomach fully, and is buttoned with a pin. This costume implies that the tramp, with a steady job, has gained some weight but still cannot afford to be picky about his clothes, choosing price over size. His tie has a floral print, foreshadowing his graceful physical stunts as

well as intimating his flare for the dramatic and playful. In general, all of the clothes fit better than usual and are not as ragged as in other films. This costume nearly allows the tramp to fit in with the middle-class men he cavorts with, though their suits are well assembled, matching, nicely fitted, and they all don overcoats in the evening. Because the tramp's outfit is more individuated than the other working-class men's clothes, which consist of overalls, slacks and shirtsleeves, and an occasional bowler hat, his costume makes the tramp stand out as unique among all social groups; he is atypical rather than emblematic of the lower and working classes.

"Pay Day" focuses on how men in general and the tramp in particular are oppressed by the working-class lifestyle. The opening intertitle informs "Hard Shirking Men." The title plays off of the phrase "hard working men"; rather than doing their best at their jobs, these men do their best to avoid their jobs. This title foregrounds the unpleasant reality of being of the working classes. The intertitle is followed by the image of a fat foreman in the foreground of the frame. This overseer is shown sitting down, reading a paper, and smoking a cigar. Nondescript workmen slowly toil around the work site until the foreman stands up, gets their attention, and sends the men into a frenzied triple time of work. The scene establishes the hierarchy of the worksite, a microcosm of class hierarchies in general; those with more money use fear and intimidation to make those with less money do all the work.

It is into this scene of working-class labor that the tramp walks purposely yet stealthily, questioning the reliability of containment. Following the intertitle "Late," the tramp slinks in through a missing board in a fence, prompting the foreman to look at his

watch and reprimand this tardy worker. This entrance into the worksite not only shows the tramp's trying to sneak in unnoticed due to his tardiness but also reveals the instability of social boundaries; the tramp can come into and out of this working-class site through nontraditional means, allowing him a type of freedom. Though, his getting caught reasserts that social boundaries do exist and can still be enforced.

The tramp is no different from the other "hard shirking men" when it comes to his work ethic. But he does differ in his mannerisms. Rather than jump to work, the tramp offers his boss a flower and a flirtatious smile to make amends for being late. This effeminate behavior undermines stereotypes of the working classes being hyper-masculine or animalistic but does not exactly portray the working classes in a positive light. When the tramp finally gets to work, he jumps into a ditch where he accidentally pickaxes the back of a fellow worker. This mistake shows the tramp's carelessness on the job, highlighting the fact that none of these workers take their jobs seriously. After the worker gets out of the ditch, the tramp toils to produce mere handfuls of dirt. This visual contrast highlights the tramp's ineptness. The foreman, frustrated with the tramp's incompetence, yells at him to work faster and harder. The tramp accidentally shovels dirt into the foreman's face, producing a comic attack on this authoritative figure while literally and figuratively keeping the tramp in a hole in the ground, ultimately reasserting rather than overthrowing the status quo.

When the foreman's daughter, Edna, arrives with lunch for herself and her father, she emerges from the same missing board in the fence that the tramp came through and is framed in the center of the same medium shot, visually connecting the two characters

despite their difference in gender and status. That both the tramp and Edna come into the work site through a missing board in a fence suggests that neither belongs there. Edna is the only non-worker and the only female at the job site. Obviously she is allowed to come because of her father's status, but she is not there on the type of legitimate business that warrants entry through a proper portal. That the tramp uses the same entrance suggests that he does not take his work seriously enough to enter at the designated place. Instead, he tries to sneak in under the radar. Both Edna and the tramp infiltrate this supposedly contained, working-class job site, revealing the porousness of supposedly rigid boundaries. This visual parallel between the tramp and Edna also echoes the introduction of these two actors in "The Idle Class." But rather than the voyeuristic close-up on Edna's wealthy leg from the previous film, in "Pay Day" we have a simple medium shot of the young, clean-cut daughter of a working-class father, intimating that the wealthy are objects of desire to be gawked at while the working classes are grounded subjects. Additionally, there is no comedic contrasting, like Edna coming out of the train car and the tramp coming out from under the train; rather, the tramp and Edna share a similar entrance in mood, shot, and location, verifying that, though her father is the foreman, these characters are not that dissimilar; Edna's gender and the tramp's economic status make them both lower-class citizens.

The fact that the tramp is of an even lower social status than Edna is literalized as the scene progresses. The tramp takes Edna up an open-air elevator to the top level of the building site to meet her father. Always the gentleman despite his lack of money, the tramp takes his hat off and holds it in his hand in the woman's presence. After dropping

her off, he begins to go back down only to keep coming back up, part way, to admire Edna. Because the elevator comes part way back up, the shots emphasize the tramp's lesser economic status by locating him physically beneath Edna. When Edna puts out a soft cheese for lunch, however, the tramp's spell is broken thanks to his uncultivated sense of smell. His disgust over the fancy cheese confirms his working-class taste.

Even though the tramp remains physically below Edna in their first scene together, as the men continue to work the tramp is placed on the second floor of the building site while the other workers are on the ground, demonstrating his superiority to them. The shot tightens in to an iris, commanding audience attention on the tramp and a few workmen. After using his handkerchief to wipe his hands, confirming both his desire to be a gentleman, since he has a handkerchief in his jacket pocket, and his uncultivated ways, since he wipes his dirty hands on it, the tramp deftly catches bricks that are rapidly thrown up at him by numerous men. The tramp uses every part of his body to catch the bricks and place them in the wall, highlighting his agility, adeptness, and gracefulness, qualities not typically associated with the working classes. Adding humor to the incredibly physical performance is the medium shot of the tramp's rear throughout the sequence, rooting the piece in a form of low humor. That the tramp is building a wall underscores the theme of containment: these men are creating a building that they will, most likely, never enter due to their class status. But the sequence ends with another unintentional assault on authority, revealing how fragile and easily reversible social positions have become. When the foreman blows the lunch whistle, the tramp, always a slave to his empty stomach, drops his last brick, which falls directly on top of the

foreman's head, punishing the authority figure as well as making him, rather than the tramp, the butt of the joke.

The lunch whistle reminds the tramp of his hunger and his lack of lunch, which leads to an inventive use of props that highlights the tramp's ingenuity and illegitimacy. The workers eat on the ground floor of the building, the boss and his daughter eat on the scaffolding off the third floor, and the tramp sits on the scaffolding on the middle floor. This configuration represents spatially the social ladder and the protagonists' respective positions on it. The foreman and his daughter are, obviously, the most financially well off of the characters. At times the tramp and the other workers appear to be of the same social class. Sometimes, the tramp appears worse off than the other workers, as his lack of food intimates. But the tramp's gentlemanly attire and manner place him a notch above the other workers, proving the tramp's desire to be seen as financially better off than he really is. His location in the middle of the scene, therefore, not only confirms his ambiguous class status as being somewhere between that of the foreman and the workers, but also places him in the perfect position to benefit from the other characters' lunches. At first the tramp eats the crumbs that fall from above, symbolizing how the lower classes live off of the leftovers of those "above them" on the social ladder. As the scene proceeds, the elevator acts as a dumb-waiter, delivering the other men's food to the tramp. During this scene, the tramp looks like an innocent benefiting from the favors the worksite provides, not a thief. This innocent passivity echoes the tramp's behavior in "The Idle Class," building the image of a kinder, more likable tramp. As he filches the other characters' food, the tramp again proves his savvy when he reinvents some of his

construction tools for kitchen aids, using a hand-crack screwdriver and hammer to hollow out a stale loaf of bread to house a hot dog. And when the bread proves too hard for human teeth, the tramp uses a corkscrew to extract the hot dog. This reinvention of objects confronts the viewer with things that are typically taken for granted, underscoring the film's use of a modernist technique. When the whistle signals the end of the lunch break, the bricks start flying up again and the iris closes on the tramp; this time facing forward, catching bricks after his makeshift meal. Facing forward makes him less the literal butt of the joke, confronting the audience with his physical abilities. This scene plays with class stereotypes by portraying the tramp as an ingenious inventor and a clueless receiver.

The workday ends in a payday, allowing viewers to laugh at the tramp's lack of mental acuity. The line to get paid is filled with workmen weaving their way up to a small wooden shack with an unseen payer inside. The men look like cattle waiting to receive food. As they collect their envelopes, they leave the scene – all but the tramp. The tramp emerges from the room convinced he has been underpaid and immediately decides to confront his boss. Initially, the boss remains unseen; we see only the tramp falling backwards after being pushed away a few times. The boss's initial absence from the scene increases his authority and creates an aura of menace. Once we see that the boss is the same man as the foreman, however, the threat appears far less large. This is a known Goliath, and although it is obvious that the tramp will not win his fight, it is also obvious that he will remain unharmed, allowing viewers to laugh at the tramp's situation. The tramp does some math to figure out the foreman's mistake: a close-up shows that two

plus two plus two plus two equals nine rather than eight. The tramp's poor math gets him docked a dollar, a shove from the boss, and a laugh from the audience. Although the tramp's math is incorrect, the excessive physical abuse from his boss and the spiteful docking of his pay accentuates the injustice of the tramp's world.

As the tramp fights for money that he has not earned, a middle-aged, stocky, mannish looking woman whom the intertitle announces as the tramp's wife and "national bank" paces on the sidewalk outside the workplace; the unusual presence of a wife, and a militaristic one at that, provides a new form of oppression in the tramp's life. In addition to having a wife, the tramp and his betrothed also have an apartment, but these shifts from the tramp's typical character only slightly alter the image of him as a consummate bachelor and wanderer. Despite these typically grounding forces, the tramp still appears irresponsible, unattached, and ungrounded. The tramp exits through the same missing board that he entered through earlier that morning, exposing his desire to remain unnoticed by his boss and wife. But, just like his entrance that morning, the tramp cannot sneak past these authoritarian figures. Unaware that his wife is behind him, the tramp, in a moment of obvious deception, takes some of his earnings and hides them in the rim of his hat. Rather than condemn the tramp, however, the audience condones this action because the tramp's wife is so visually unappealing. On his way home, with his wife, unbeknown to him, still shadowing behind, the tramp passes a lovely, well-dressed, upper-middle-class woman, prompting him to "hat" more of his pay, a gesture that indicates the tramp thinks he might be able to woo such a woman and take her out for a night on the town. Such acts prove comical, especially since this woman is so obviously

out of the tramp's league, but they also lessen the tramp's gentlemanly air. Such behaviors make the tramp appear ethically ambiguous. But in contrast to his overbearing boss and wife, he appears justified if not morally superior. As the tramp turns to continue home, he turns into his wife, who demands all of the money. Though, while she takes from his hat, he takes from her purse. As the tramp starts to follow his wife down the street, he soon reverses his step and runs off in the other direction, exposing his desire to escape his wife and life with her. The image of the meek tramp scrambling away from this physically domineering woman evokes a child running away from its mother. The film sets up a patriarchal as well as a matriarchal antagonist, showing that oppression of any kind must be run away from. The tramp momentarily refuses to be contained by such domineering forces as his boss and wife, yet he also willingly subjects himself to their control by continually returning to work and home, revealing the confusion that accompanies attempts to change.

The tramp spends his evening at a bachelor's club where he drunkenly interacts with other drunken men; amongst these middle-class looking man, it is striking how unstriking the tramp appears. Although his shoes carry some scuffs and his suit does not fit perfectly, he does not look as down-and-out as he tends to appear in Chaplin's other films. In "The Idle Class" the tramp's excessively oversized trousers were marked with large, mismatched patches and holes, making him stand out among the upper- and lower-class characters. Yet here the tramp, in fitted slacks, nearly meshes with the bachelor's club crowd. The tramp's clothes also allow him to visually mix in with the workers during the day, exposing how blurry class lines can be and how the tramp can, at least

superficially, cross them. But when put to the test, the tramp still stands alone. The tramp's liminal social location is visually epitomized when he exits the bachelor club: he pushes the swinging doors of the bar out but they quickly swing back in on him, signifying how the tramp swings between two different social worlds.

The men at the club all appear to be of the same social background as they talk and sing and enjoy each other; however, as the men start to separate for the night, the tramp's outsider status becomes pronounced. When the men begin to part ways, one holds his nice overcoat out to the tramp in an effort to gain help in putting it on. But, the tramp, apparently due to drunkenness, straightens the man's sport's coat and sends him on his way. Later in the scene, the tramp begins to put the nice overcoat on himself, but in a state of inebriation does not get the coat fully on his body. Instead, he buttons half of the nice overcoat to half of another nice overcoat worn by one of the men standing behind him. This man then winds up dragging the tramp off in the two coats. The shot ends with the tramp facing the camera being pulled backwards down the street wearing half a light colored and half a dark colored coat, neither of which belong to him. This image of the tramp being on the back of the more materially well off man shows the flip side of wealth – the tramp. It also shows the tramp in limbo: the two coats buttoned together remind the viewer of the tramp's attempt to straddle class lines, something he will, quite literally, do again in "The Pilgrim." But, as with his other films, this attempt to fit in everywhere leaves the tramp fitting in nowhere, making him, as "The Idle Class" continually announced, "A Lonely Tramp." This image also can be read as an indictment on the

lower classes; it cannot be ignored that the tramp, attached to this middle-class man, pulls at him, weighing him down, burdening him.

Just prior to the tramp being pulled off, a lower-class woman who, in many ways, resembles the tramp's wife, confronts the men, highlighting the unappealing physicality and manner of poor females. As the men drunkenly sing together in the street outside the bar, a woman in an apartment window above the bar, decked out in a garish nightdress and rollers, tosses water and then the water basin at the men. This disgruntled, masculine, outspoken woman recalls the image of the tramp's wife, figuring lower-class women as behaviorally and physically unattractive. Yet, both the foreman's daughter and the object of the tramp's flirtation in the middle-class neighborhood appeared well dressed, feminine, and physically attractive. A woman's class and physical attractiveness become linked, creating a social as well as a physical hierarchy.

As the night comes to an end, the tramp, in a series of attempts to get home, battles modernity as well as transforms the ways in which viewers see everyday objects, both of which highlight the film's modernist aspects; the scholarly inability to fully contain Chaplin under the heading of either traditionalist or modernist echoes the film's inability to fully fit the tramp into such roles as workman or husband. After mistakenly swapping his cane for an umbrella just in time to cover himself from a rainstorm, the tramp makes his way to a streetcar stop. However, all of the streetcars are overcrowded. The tramp repeatedly attempts to board the next few cars, each time getting pushed off, thrown off, falling off, or not even getting to the streetcar because single automobiles stand in his way. At one point he does get on the car, but the man whose coat and

umbrella he mistakenly shared knocks him off, showing the middle-class man's refusal to be slowed down by the tramp anymore. The tramp's not fitting in is literally visualized as he cannot fit into the streetcar no matter what group – business men, workers, partygoers – are on board. After getting shoved off the fourth and final car of the night, the drunken tramp mistakes a meat cart for a streetcar, boarding the kiosk and holding on to a hanging sausage for stability until the cart owner extracts the tramp. This transformation of objects makes the viewer confront these ordinary items, just like modernist authors make the reader confront the word – neither language nor everyday things can be easily and transparently dealt with any longer. The sequence ends with the tramp accidentally leaving the cart with a sausage and then trying to light it, thinking it is his cigar. Highlighting another moment of inadvertent stealing reinforces the innocence of the tramp's actions, which makes him a sympathetic character as well as domesticates thievery and the lower class' potential threat to the material well being of the working, middle, and upper-classes.

The tramp's arrival home allows for a view of his apartment, which is atypical in tramp shorts, and a final confrontation with his wife, which highlights the tramp's deceptive ways yet excuses them due to his wife's unlikability. Arriving home at five in the morning, the tramp attempts to sneak in to his apartment undetected by his wife. This moment echoes his attempts to steal in and out of work unnoticed by his boss and wife, highlighting the tramp's resistance to yet his ultimate compliance with his oppressive life. The hallway leading into the apartment has holes in the walls, and the tramp's apartment, though neat, is small with only a kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom, confirming the

couple's working-class status. His wife sleeps in her single bed with a rolling pin in her arms, reaffirming her authoritative manner. Across the room is a small, empty cot, over which is a shelf with a few books and a pipe sitting on it, underscoring the tramp's middle-class desires while accentuating his working-class status due to the scant, sorry nature of the display. After hiding his change under the doormat, again attempting to claim any amount of money as his own, the tramp enters to find a myriad of cats on his dining room table finishing whatever dinner was left out for him. The apartment, once clear of cats, is a mix of unidentifiable litter, lace curtains, and a gramophone, indicating an attempt to perform a better life; just like the tramp dresses above his class, his apartment is decorated above the couple's class, but both the tramp's and the apartment's true status show through. As with the tramp, whose clothes are a mix of too small and too large, the apartment's features conflict, showing both garbage and prize pieces in the same nook.

Once home, the tramp performs for his wife in much the same way that he performs for his boss, confirming his oppressive working-class lifestyle. As the tramp enters his bedroom, oiling his shoes along the way so as to not make a sound, the alarm clock rings, forcing him to pretend that he is just waking up rather than just coming home. As he sneaks off to his laundry-littered bathroom, another marker of the tramp's class status, his wife secretly follows and watches as he jumps into a tub of clothes that obscure the water underneath. The tramp attempts to make it seem like his jumping into the water is a purposeful, timesaving choice, scrubbing his clothes and skin at the same time, but his wife chases him out of the bathroom and the house. In the end, the tramp

cannot even keep his change as his wife sees him collect it and forces him to turn the money over. As the tramp rushes out of the frame, the last shot is a close-up of the disgruntled wife's unpleasant looking face yelling at her husband. This final image highlights how the tramp continually comes under attack, showing the tyranny of both work and marriage. Rather than find more happiness with his better than usual social status, the tramp encounters more angst than in other films. When the tramp assumes his typical lower-class position, work tends to be playful and relationships flirtatious. "Pay Day" reveals that being part of the social system is more deadening than being outside of it, questioning the assumptions that accompany class hierarchies. Finally, the ending of this film, like the film itself, is unusual in that the final shot is not of the tramp walking down a lonely road. Here the tramp runs out of the frame, giving the last shot to his wife. The tramp's leaving the frame echoes his continually walking out of the frame in "The Idle Class"; the tramp does not fit in either of these worlds.

Chaplin's last short, "The Pilgrim," breaks out of the typical aesthetic limits of the short form by showing the tramp undergo character development and breaks out of the formal confines of the short by being four reels long. This short challenges formal and thematic structures. Ira S. Jaffe refers to slapstick as "low art" but contrasts this with Chaplin's form of physical comedy because the former does not involve character development and the latter does. Though Chaplin's earlier shorts play with class stereotypes, it is not until "The Pilgrim" that character development becomes the norm in Chaplin films. Although the film highlights the tramp's positive evolution, this short, which is too long to comfortably fit into this category but too short to be considered a

feature film, reveals how even an ethically reformed, generally acceptable tramp cannot comfortably fit into the middle-class or the criminal class, leaving both the film and its protagonist on the margins of categorization.

The film opens by establishing the tramp's position on the lower rung not only of the class ladder, as is typical, but also of the ethical ladder. In previous films, the tramp's morals have either been ambiguous, as in "The Idle Class," acceptably mediocre, as in "Pay Day," or, as in many early shorts, less than stellar but good for a laugh. This final short opens with an iris shot of a prison's gates. A long, dark shot barely shows a guard come out from behind the bars, glue a wall, and hang a "wanted" poster. The poster shows a picture of the tramp in a striped prison uniform. The announcement, in bold letters over the picture, reads "$1,000 reward escaped convict." Below the photo the caption reads "Description: may be disguised. 30 to 35 years of age. About five feet four inches in height. Weight about 125 pounds. Pale face. Black bushy hair sometimes parted in the middle. Small black mustache. Blue eyes. Small hands, large feet. Extremely nervous. Walks with feet turned out." This wanted poster's description is the perfect sketch of the tramp. That the depiction begins with the warning that the man may be in "disguise" emphasizes the proliferation of disguises and mistaken identities in such tramp films as "The Idle Class." Even in "Pay Day," which does not incorporate disguises proper, the tramp dons the most gentlemanly outfit possible, showing his desire to mask his lower-class status. The poster's note about the wanted man's small hands and large feet encapsulates the conflicting elements that make up the tramp, and the mention of his nervousness and walk highlight his specific ticks and abnormalities. The iris closes on the

image of the escaped convict, confined behind the striped uniform and the poster's title, linking him to the prison that the scene opened with, reinforcing the fact that he is a criminal. Yet, the poster neglects to state why the convict is wanted, leaving the audience to decide the tramp's crimes, which also allows the audience to overlook the fact that there is a specific crime that the tramp is wanted for, keeping him in the most neutral light possible despite his criminal status.

The next scene raises the theme of imposture as the tramp assumes the clothes and, eventually, the character traits of a priest, indicating that clothes can make the man. The scene opens on a man emerging from a lake in swim trunks. He looks for his clothes in the bush where he left them but instead finds striped prison garb. An iris shot closes on this man as he scratches his head and then opens on the tramp walking around a railway station in priest garb of all black, a white collar, and a black hat. These iris shots connect the tramp and the priest, but the tramp's body language raises questions about how deep this link runs: the tramp holds his hands in an inverse prayer position at his crotch, indicating not only that is he not a priest but that he is the antithesis of one.

Yet, others see the tramp as a priest, reading his clothes as proof of identity despite his actions indicating otherwise. As the tramp paces around outside the train station, "the elopers" emerge from the inside. A man in a nice gray suit and a woman in high black heels and a black fur-lined coat and hat embrace each other. But the next shot of "the father," a dark-suited man driving down a dusty road, indicates that the elopers' families do not approve of their union. The male of the pair looks at their engagement rings, then at his fiancé, and finally at the tramp, hoping the tramp can marry them. As

the man approaches the tramp, however, the tramp, fearful of being found out, runs away. The tramp inadvertently leads the hopeful man to the car that has just pulled up containing the irate father. The tramp, exposing himself as a man on the run, assumes that this man is also chasing him. As the tramp tries to outrun both men, the woman also begins to run away but is caught by her father who kicks her fiancé in the rear, showing that base actions are not reserved for the poor.

As fearful as the tramp is of the elopers, he is even more fearful of the railway-station workers because the working classes have more direct control over his fate than the middle classes do; they stand between him and his getting on a train. As the father and daughter run toward the car, the tramp again assumes he is being chased and runs in the opposite direction. But, seeing the porter outside the station, he slows his pace and turns his run into a stationary act, pretending to stretch and do calisthenics. Hiding the fact that he was running for cover shows the tramp is fearful that this working-class man may become suspicious of him. As the family drama clears, the tramp finally enters the station where he gets himself a cup of water that he immediately spits out upon seeing the porter again. The guilty tramp is threatened by everyone he encounters, but this station worker is particularly frightening to him because he holds the key to the tramp escaping to another state, which could mean the difference between him living free or going back to jail. As the porter and the pretend priest watch one another, a two-sided wooden bench in the foreground and a doorway in the background physically and visually separate the two men. The doorway acts as a visual reminder that the tramp is desperate to escape but people like the porter stand in his way. When the porter faces the viewer, badge shining

brightly, reminiscent of a police officer's badge, the tramp turns his back on the viewer, and when the men change positions the viewer sees the tramp's frightened face. This back and forth between the two men expresses how they are on opposing sides of the law: the porter, a morally upright citizen, senses the tramp's deception. Yet, they also represent two sides of the same man: the tramp may be deceitful now, but soon his ethical side will win out.

When the porter finally leaves, the tramp stands in front of the station's interior door, wiping his brow, his body bisected by the bench; this image of division foreshadows where the tramp will wind up, one foot in one country, and one in another, torn between two worlds, two lives, two ways of being. In the film's first close-up of the tramp, he stands before a board listing all of the train destinations, showing his desire to escape. He closes his eyes and randomly pins one of the departing trains, but, when he opens his eyes, he realizes he has pinned Sing Sing. His face registers shock and dismay – he has just escaped from jail but fate seems to be pointing him back in that direction – before he closes his eyes again and, on the second try, pins a fat man who has just entered the frame. The tramp apologizes, puts finger to lips as if to ask the man to go quietly, and tries the pin one more time, this time hitting Dallas. On the third try the tramp's path is set. The tramp appears to allow fate to direct his course by closing his eyes and pinning a map, but his three tries betray the fact that he wants to control his destination and his destiny.

As the tramp tries to purchase his tickets and board the train to Dallas, his true identity keeps rising up to the surface visually and emotionally, threatening to expose

him; he cannot fully assume the character of the priest since he cannot fully contain his criminal self. With his destination in place, the tramp grabs hold of the ticket window bars in his excitement to purchase his tickets, but he soon realizes that these bars remind him of being in jail, making him pull back abruptly and order his ticket. These repeated images of bars and cages never allow the tramp or the viewer to forget his criminal past, no matter how vague that past may be. As the tramp orders his tickets, his hands move about his back searchingly, looking for a pocket or wallet. His not knowing where such things are also reminds the viewer of the disguise. Ticket purchased, he leaves the window, accidentally taking numerous tickets with him, stressing not only his nervousness and clumsiness but also his need to keep running. Outside, the tramp sees his train and immediately goes underneath the locomotive, much like he does in "The Idle Class." Finding a spot to perch himself under the train indicates the type of travel the tramp is most used to and, therefore, defaults to, despite having just purchased legitimate tickets that allow him to ride inside the train. A porter soon finds the tramp under the train and directs him to the proper place inside the car. As the two men walk to the correct train car, the porter leading the way, a shot of their backs reveals similar coat tails and slacks, creating a near mirror image of the men as they walk together. This two-shot exposes how all of these uniforms are interchangeable, collapsing the distinctions between porters, ministers, and, ultimately, convicts. This collapse questions the notion that clothing makes the man. Clothing may obscure one's true self but in the end it takes more than clothes to make a moral man.

The next scene does not include the tramp and functions to set up the mistaken identity plot; however, it also emphasizes the theme of dualism. The shot opens on a church with a stained glass window, two women, and two men, one of whom pins a notice to a board that "The Rev. Philip Pim our new minister will arrive on Sunday." All of the double images in this shot – the two women, though dressed in different colors, the two men, though one large and one small, and the two images of saints in the stained glass, though in slightly different postures – all speak to the main plot of the tramp's struggle between convict and clergyman. That every double is slightly different accentuates the idea that the tramp contains within himself both a criminal and a good man, but he needs to bridge the gap between these two selves; he needs to develop as a character, in order to allow the good man to emerge. The announcement regarding the arrival of the minister adds to this notion of dualism. The notice itself as well as the manner in which it is hung echo the poster about the escaped convict, signifying that the convict and the minister, despite class and cultural differences, might not be that different.

As the tramp arrives in Dallas, his disguised self and his real self come into contact with one another, highlighting issues of duality. On Sunday morning, a train pulls into a station much like the one lately departed, but now a group of men and women clad in their Sunday best await the arrival of the train. Inside the train, the tramp munches nervously on crackers while the man sitting next to him reads a newspaper. The back page of the paper contains an article on the tramp's escape from jail. For an instant, before the camera shifts to a close-up shot of the article, the tramp, dressed as the

clergyman, sits next to his newspaper photo, in which he is dressed in jail stripes. Confronted with both images at the same time, the viewer cannot avoid the fact that this church-clad man is actually a convict. By showing both images at the same time, Chaplin implies that the tramp contains the traits of both a criminal and a clergyman inside of him; it is just a matter of which side will win. The close-up on the article announces,

> Convict Makes Daring Escape. 'Lefty Lombard' alias 'Slippery Elm' Leaps into Drain Pipe in Dining Hall of Prison and Escapes Through Sewer. $1,000 Reward Offered. Guards Stand Petrified with Astonishment as Prisoner Makes Leap. Believed to be Part of Wholesale Escape Plan. One of the most daring and effective escapes in the history of Sing Sing prison perpetrated last night when prisoner 9999, 'Lefty' Lombard, alias 'Slippery Elm,' crawled through a drainpipe leading from the dining hall of the prison for a distance of three miles, coming out into a brook that flows into the Hudson. Prison authorities and the sheriff of the county immediately organized a posse and with orders to shoot on sight they are scouring the surrounding country while posters offering a thousand dollars reward . . .

The notice's mention of two names, "Lefty Lombard" and "Slippery Elm," both of which are nicknames, again accentuates the tramp's dual nature. The tramp's prison number also acts as an identifier: the prison number 9999 is a parody of 666, indicating the tramp is not exactly a devilish figure. The name Slippery Elm, a medicinal herb made from tree bark, implies that the tramp may not be entirely bad but that he is a devious or deceitful character. Yet, to be slippery can also mean that one is unstable and liable to change, which, in this case, is a positive association if the tramp changes from convict to moral citizen. The name Lefty Lombard, with its alliterative slipperiness on the tongue, also suggests that the tramp leans left politically, supporting social change toward a more egalitarian society.

That the tramp escaped through the sewer, a place for rats and garbage, exposes his desperation as well as associates him with vermin and waste, reminding viewers that, although the tramp may be a likable character, he is, still, a criminal. When the tramp catches a glimpse of the article, he spits his crackers out into the paper, causing the gentleman next to him to fold the paper and clean himself off. The fat, dark-suited man then moves to light a cigar, and, when he opens his jacket, he shows his sheriff's badge, sending the tramp running out of the train car. Just as in the train station, the tramp does not trust his disguise; instead, he lets his innate fear drive him. As he runs off the train, the tramp runs into another sheriff. At first turning back to the train, the tramp realizes he is surrounded and offers his wrists to the sheriff. The sheriff misinterprets this action due to the tramp's priestly garb and shakes the supposed new minister's hands. Though the tramp cannot fool himself with his clothes, others only see the outside and believe that the dress makes the man.

The similarities between criminals and churchgoers become apparent as the tramp meets the congregation he will supposedly lead. Like the sheriffs, the church members welcome the new minister without question. As the tramp brings up the rear of the procession, one of the men from the church walks alongside the tramp. Both men wear dark suits, both hold their hands in the same way, and both walk in sync, creating a double image. As the two men walk together, the churchgoer bends over to fix his shoe, leaving his hip flask in clear sight and in pickpocket range for the tramp. The tramp continues his deceptive ways as the man, who has forgotten his glasses, asks him to read a newly arrived telegram. We learn, along with the tramp, that the message is from the

real Reverend, sent from Devil's Gulch, Texas, announcing that he will be delayed a week. The tramp, who can lie as well as he can read, says the telegram confirms that "Lizzie is feeling much better." The man gives the tramp a confused look, obviously not knowing who Lizzie is. However, the man quickly registers a look of fear and immediately rips up the telegram, indicating that he knows several women and is embarrassed by the telegram's possible inferences. The churchgoing man is not only a secret drunk but also a liar, again putting him on a similar level with the tramp. That the real pastor is in Devil's Gulch implies that the "true" priest is not fully ethical either: he has a bit of the devil in him as well. As the men walk on together, a boy tosses his banana peel on the walkway, causing both men to slip and the man's glass flask to break. At the sound of the glass breaking, both men pretend that it does not belong to them. That these men from different class backgrounds posses similar moral deficiencies exposes the fact that class and ethics are not necessarily linked: a person can be lacking in money but not in morals. The comparison between the criminal and the churchgoer reveals the erroneous nature of traditional social boundaries.

The Sunday church service that the tramp has to officiate underscores the theme of duality and foreshadows the tramp's inner fight between leading a moral or an immoral life. The sanctuary visually represents these issues of duality with its two matching windows surrounding the pulpit and the two columns of churchgoers. Unable to escape the service, the tramp steps up to the pulpit. However, as soon as he is faced with the twelve members of the choir, all of whom have dour faces, the convict in him sees a jury, exposing how priestly clothes cannot erase unethical acts. When he is handed a

bible, the tramp tries to swear on it, as if in a court of law. Leading the service proves a challenge for the tramp, who sits when everyone else stands, tries to light a cigarette in a nonsmoking church, sings too long, and takes more interest in the circulation of the collection boxes than in the service. All of these improper acts not only underline the tramp's criminal past but also indicate that this is his first time in a church. Rather than allow the men to return the collection boxes to a back room, the tramp takes them up. When he holds one box in each hand, the tramp suddenly evokes the figure of justice with scales as he weighs the boxes in his hands. This image of him as justice exposes that the criminal in him is balanced with an upright citizen.

The tramp's final act in the church, the delivery of a sermon, perfectly thematizes the issue of dualism; the story of David and Goliath epitomizes nearly every tramp film. The tramp pantomimes the battle between the giant Goliath and the small David, echoing the battle within him between the commanding convict and the emerging clergyman. Ultimately, in both stories the small man wins, but, at this point in the tramp's story, the giant still rears its head. The tramp shows no desire to contain his criminal self. After finishing the story, the tramp takes numerous curtain call bows and tries to leave with the collection boxes, but, between the locked door and the church helpers' stares, the tramp eventually leaves the money behind and simply tries to free himself through a window. Yet, outside the window he bumps into the sheriff, prompting him to pretend he is smelling the flowers and sending him back inside the church where he is given the collection boxes and sent off with Mrs. Brown and her daughter, Edna, with whom he is boarding. Once these boxes are simply given to the tramp, he does not seem as interested

in them, revealing that it is not just the money that he wants, but it is the criminal activity that drives him.

At the Brown house, the tramp enjoys middle-class privileges but also exposes his unfamiliarity with middle class social codes and decorum; the tramp also undergoes his largest character shift at the Brown house, indicating the moral uplift of a good middle-class home and family. Once at the white-picket fenced house, the tramp sits with Mrs. Brown as she shows him the family album. The tramp likes looking at the photos as well as looking at Edna as she sets the table for dinner. The image of the Brown family, from the kindly, maternal Mrs. Brown to the white-picket fence, valorizes middle-class living. When family friends arrive for a visit, however, their rambunctious child not only adds humor and chaos to the quiet home but also shows the ill manners of some members of this class group, breaking stereotypes. Drawn in by this calm lifestyle and by Edna, the tramp tries to help in the kitchen. But his efforts reveal his ineptness at middle-class domesticity: he drops rolling pins, burns himself on hot pot handles, and decorates a hat instead of a cake. Despite not fitting in, the tramp and Edna soon retire to the front yard and flirt with one another. But the tramp's ease is disrupted when he gets his arm stuck in the picket fence, reminding him and the audience of his prison background and his inability to be a part of Edna's docile world.

The arrival of one of his old prison mates prompts the full emergence of the tramp's moral side, though this only serves to expose the fact that the tramp no longer fits with the criminals and cannot fit with the middle-class. While on the way to the Brown house earlier in the evening, the tramp encounters Howard Huntington, alias "Nitro

Nick," alias "Picking Pete," nicknames indicating that this man is a pickpocket and arsonist. When the tramp and the Brown family walk by a dance hall, Howard notices the tramp, but the tramp pretends not to recognize him. A flashback shows the two in jail sharing a cigarette, reminding viewers of the tramp's sordid past and his desire to escape from it. Howard gets himself invited into the Brown's and immediately starts casing the house, making the tramp keep a watchful eye on his ex-prison mate. When Howard pickpockets a Brown family visitor, the tramp struggles with Howard to retrieve the man's wallet, implying either that he does not want Howard to blow his cover or that he actually cares for the people he has met and wants to leave his criminal past behind him. Most likely, his motives are a combination of the two. The tramp goes so far as to put on a faux magic show, re-pick pocketing Howard to return items to their rightful owners. After the family retires for the night, Howard tries to steal the Brown mortgage money. When the tramp and Howard fight over this, the tramp is left knocked out on the floor while Howard escapes with the money. Edna comes downstairs after hearing the fight and helps the tramp regain consciousness. They realize the money is missing and the tramp goes after Howard, who has returned to the dance hall where the tramp first saw him. The tramp is both concerned for his safety as well as for the safety of the family. If he was only watching out for himself, he could leave or try to split the money with Howard, but, instead, he tries to recover the money in order to return it to the Browns. At the bar, the tramp creates another disguise by crooking his hat, unbuttoning his coat, flipping his clergyman's neckpiece around, and pulling a patch of hair off a man to create a goatee. The tramp's new alter ego mirrors his former self – he disguises himself as a

robber. The tramp's true self is no longer a criminal; his priestly clothes now match his ethical code. He walks into the bar, steals the money back from Howard, and walks out. However, this plan is thwarted because another set of robbers has decided to hold up the dance hall. They realize that the tramp is not one of theirs and chase him in an attempt to steal this already twice stolen money. By placing "real" robbers in the scene, Chaplin distances the tramp further from his questionable past; he looks more like Robin Hood than Lefty Lombard. Dressed as the minister, the tramp becomes what his costume promises: an upstanding, ethical man who tries to do the right thing for the Browns.

Regardless of all of his efforts, however, the tramp's criminal past comes to light, but neither the Browns nor the rest of the town turn against this now known criminal, showing the middle-class as sympathetic and open-minded to the idea of personal development. When the Brown women call the sheriff to report the missing mortgage money, the sheriff shows them the wanted poster of the tramp. The next morning Edna waits inside of the family fence. When the tramp returns with the family's money, he remains outside of the fence, passing the money over top. Neither Edna nor the tramp consciously puts this fence between them, but the visual confirms that the tramp's unsavory past makes him an outsider to the people, house, and the domestic life he has, so briefly, enjoyed. Soon the sheriff insists he must take the tramp back to jail. The tramp, with a sweet wave to Edna, leaves with the sheriff despite Edna's protestations. As the sheriff rides his horse behind the walking tramp, they approach the international boundary line between the United States and Mexico. Initially the sheriff stops on the U.S. side while the tramp leans on the Mexico side of the border sign. When the tramp

realizes the side he is on, he moves to the U.S. side as well. The sheriff asks the tramp to pick him some flowers, trying to get him to return to Mexico so he can be absolved of the duty of returning him to prison. The sheriff, like the Browns, has developed affections for the tramp. None of these people want to overtly break the law by not turning him in, but they do try to find a way around the law. Rather than take the cue, the tramp runs after the sheriff as he rides off, determined to give the man his flowers. The sheriff rides the tramp back over to the border and kicks him into Mexico. When the tramp finally realizes the meaning behind the action, he runs over to thank the sheriff, putting himself on the line between the U.S. and Mexico. After parting with the sheriff, the tramp returns to Mexico where he gets one breath of free air before Mexican shooters confront him, sending him back to the boundary line. Chaplin's final short ends with him walking away from the camera with one foot in the U.S and one foot in Mexico, "to the left of him lie the dangers of law (prisons, sheriffs); to the right lie the dangers of anarchy (murder, a jungle world of animals struggling to survive). Neither side holds much promise for the tramp" (Mast 96). He remains stuck, trying to straddle the line between a corrupt and a law-abiding nation, morality and immorality, and lower-class thievery and middle-class domesticity.

This last image from Chaplin's final short encapsulates his films' portrayal of class hierarchies; they straddle the line between progressive and traditional versions of society. The short form is the perfect genre for investigating these ideas. Rather than seeing the brevity of this form as restricting, Chaplin turned apparent aesthetic limits into strengths, using and adapting the short's contained space to play with the idea that class

groups, markings, and boundaries may easily become blurred, but, in the end, each rung of the social ladder is reset in its rightful place. Yet, the final three images from Chaplin's final three shorts subtly undermine this notion that everyone must remain confined to his or her place in the class system. At the end of a typical tramp film, this lonely wanderer walks off alone down a dusty road or suburban street, off to his next adventure. This image of the tramp walking away implies that he cannot be contained to this one film; he will reappear again. Yet, the tramp's remaining on screen contains him in the film frame, reassuring viewers that his mobility is limited. Although "The Idle Class" ends with this expected shot, "Pay Day" closes with the tramp running off the screen, suggesting that he is more mobile than otherwise assumed, and "The Pilgrim" ends with his straddling countries, containing him on the screen yet visually implying that he has the potential to cross social borderlines.

Close examination of Chaplin's final shorts offers Chaplin studies insight into the transitional years of Chaplin's career: whereas the early shorts typically feature an antagonistic, confrontational, yet confined tramp, the full-length films typically focus on a sympathetic tramp and a more traditional narrative style. These late shorts form the bridge between these extremes, showing the tramp and Chaplin's cinematic style in transition. These neglected texts also have much to offer modernist studies. Chaplin is by no means a modernist, but he did experiment with modernist elements, especially those techniques that allowed him to represent the tramp's subjective experiences. Studying artists such as Chaplin who experimented with modernism, not just those who practiced

experimental modernism, brings attention to previously neglected genres and themes that were not only influenced by but also surely influenced the modernist period.

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