**The Story**

In a chapter on "The Story," Forster begins with the assertion that the novel, in its most basic definition, tells a story. He goes on to say that a story must be built around suspense - the question of "what happens next?" He thus defines the story as "a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence." Forster adds that a good novel must include a sense of value in the story. He then discusses *The Antiquary*, by Sir Walter Scott, as an example of a novel that is built on a series of events that narrate "what happens next." However, he criticizes *The Antiquary* as a novel that adheres to a sequence of events but has no sense of value in the story. Forster refers to Russian novelist Tolstoy's *War and Peace* as an example that includes value in a narrative of events that unfold over time. He brings up the American writer Gertrude Stein as an example of a novelist who has attempted to abolish time from the novel, leaving only value. However, he declares this a failure that results in nonsense.

**Characters**

In two chapters entitled "People," Forster discusses characterization in the novel. He describes five "main facts of human life," which include "birth, food, sleep, love, and death," and then compares these five activities as experienced by real people (homo sapiens) to these activities as enacted by characters in novels (homo fictus). He goes on to discuss the character of Moll Flanders, in the novel by Defoe of the same title. Forster focuses on Moll Flanders as a novel in which the form is derived from the development of the main character. In a second lecture on characters, Forster distinguishes between flat characters, whose characterization is relatively simple and straightforward, and round characters, whose characterization is more complex and developed. Forster finds advantages in the use of both flat and round characters in the novel. He points to Charles Dickens as an example of a novelist nearly all of whose characters are flat but who nonetheless creates "a vision of humanity that is not shallow." He spends less time discussing round characters but provides the examples of Russian novelists Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoyevski, most of whose characters are round. Forster moves on to a brief mention of point of view, concluding that novels with a shifting or inconsistent point of view are not problematic if the author possesses the skill to integrate these shifts into the narrative whole.

**Plot**

In a chapter on plot, Forster defines plot as a narrative of events over time, with an emphasis on causality. He claims that the understanding of plot requires two traits in the reader: intelligence and memory. He discusses George Meredith who, he claims, though not a great novelist, is one of England’s greatest masters of the plot. He then turns to Thomas Hardy as an example of a novelist whose plots are heavily structured at the expense of the characters; in other words, the characters...
E.M Forster's

ASPECTS OF NOVEL

(Short Summary)

are drawn to fit the measure of the plot and therefore lack a life of their own. He asserts that "nearly all novels are feeble at the end," because the dictates of plot require a resolution, which the novelists write at the expense of the characters. He adds that "death and marriage" are the most convenient recourse of the novelist in formulating an ending. He provides the example of Andre Gide’s Les Fauxmonnayeurs as a novel in which the author attempted to do away with plot completely, concluding that, though plot often threatens to suffocate the life out of characters, it is nonetheless an essential aspect of the novel.

Fantasy

In a chapter on fantasy, Forster asserts that two important aspects of the novel are fantasy and prophecy, both of which include an element of mythology. Using the novel Tristram Shandy, by Sterne, as an example, Forster claims even novels that do not include literal elements of the supernatural may include an implication that supernatural forces are at work. He lists some of the common devices of fantasy used by novelists, "such as the introduction of a god, ghost, angel, or monkey, monster, midget, witch into ordinary life." He adds to this list "the introduction of ordinary men into no-man’s land, the future, the past, the interior of the earth, the fourth dimension; or divings into and dividings of personality. He goes on to discuss the devices of parody and adaptation as elements of fantasy, which, he says, are especially useful to talented authors who are not good at creating their own characters. He points to Joseph Andrews, by Henry Fielding, which began as a parody of Pamela, by Richardson. He goes on to the example of Ulysses, by James Joyce, which is an adaptation from the ancient text the Odyssey, based on Greek myth.

Prophecy

Forster describes the aspect of prophecy in a novel as "a tone of voice" of the author, a "song" by which "his theme is the universe," although his subject matter may be anything but universal. He notes that the aspect of prophecy demands of the reader both "humility" and "the suspension of a sense of humor." He then compares Dostoevsky to George Eliot, concluding that, though both express a vision of the universal in their novels, Eliot ends up being preachy, whereas Dostoevsky successfully expresses a "prophetic song" without preaching. Forster confesses that there are only four writers who succeed in creating prophetic novels: Dostoevsky, Melville, D. H. Lawrence, and Emily Bronte. He discusses passages from Moby Dick and the short story "Billy Budd" in order to illustrate Melville’s prophetic voice and from Wuthering Heights for a discussion of Bronte as "a prophetess." He points to D. H. Lawrence as the only living novelist whose work is successfully prophetic.
Pattern and Rhythm

In a chapter on pattern and rhythm, Forster describes the aspect of pattern in the novel in terms of visual art. He describes the narrative pattern of Thais, by Anatole France, as that of an hourglass and the novel Roman Pictures, by Percy Lubbock, as that of a chain. He determines that pattern adds an aesthetic quality of beauty to a novel. Forster then discusses the novel The Ambassadors, by Henry James, which, he claims, sacrifices the liveliness of the characters to the rigid structure of an hourglass pattern. Forster concludes that the problem of pattern in novels is that it "shuts the door on life." He then turns to the aspect of rhythm, which he describes as "repetition plus variation," as better suited to the novel than is pattern. He describes the multi-volume novel Remembrance of Things Past, by Marcel Proust, as an example of the successful use of rhythm. Forster concludes that rhythm in the novel provides a more open-ended narrative structure without sacrificing character.