

How does edward
morgan forster
represent the english
character essay
sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

E. M. Forster started writing novels around 1901 and his sought after goal was to identify specific truths and the relationship between those truths. He was truly English at heart and wanted to explore the English character. He was interested in ancient literature; this was his reason for travelling abroad to such places like Italy. While travelling he came to know a certain type of English person, these were who he based his novels on. He was also interested in Art and he liked to question the conventional English views on art, beauty and truth.

In 'A Room with a View', there are two types of English character: the conventional, Miss Bartlett, and the unconventional, George Emerson and his father. Miss Bartlett represents all that is bad in English behaviour both home and abroad. Whereas George Emerson and his father are more free thinking and open to what is deemed real beauty which is expressed through George Emerson declaring his creed. In 'The Story of a Panic', Eustace is not so much unorthodox, but instead he challenges the conventions of English behaviour.

Eustace does not want to conform to what he is told and therefore appears peculiar in the eyes of the writer and those around him, 'Then I asked him to come and bathe-No he could not swim... Every English boy should be able to swim'. There are certain qualities expected of the English. This extenuates the stiffness of the English as a whole and their inability to think for themselves. Eustace develops a strong relationship with Gennaro. This is because they are both outsiders.

Eustace feels isolated from his fellow Englishmen and Gennaro is an Italian in an English community in Italy. They both find comfort in this connection they have, 'Eustace sprung to meet him... leapt into his arms.' This union is deemed unacceptable as Gennaro is a 'social inferior' to Eustace. When the English go on holiday in both stories they leave England to experience the beauty that Italy contains. The main scenes of the two stories are set in a similar landscape, rolling hills with a view.

This is a stereotypical opinion of the renaissance beauty that Italy holds. However when in 'The Story of a Panic,' they experience first hand the true power and beauty of nature they become frightened of the god of nature Pan, this is because Pan breaks down the hierarchical class structure that the middle class English base their lives on. As they are not open to real beauty they are frightened by it. Eustace however is not frightened by Pan's power but instead uses it as a chance to break from the shadow of the old and regenerate themselves.

Lucy has a similar experience on the rolling hilltops when George Emerson introduces Lucy to a world of true love. This is the second time Lucy experiences complex love. The first when she witnesses the murder of the Italian when 'the murderer tried to kiss him... how... odd the Italians are.' This makes Lucy realise the complexity of love and reality. The second being the kiss, she feels the full force of him and this surprises her as she did not think that she would not like it.

The English as Forster portrays them just want to feel as if they are cultured and not actually understand the truth behind Art and Nature. This is also

represented when Lucy visits the Italian church and comments 'it must be a wonderful building. But how like a barn!' Lucy is struggling between what she is supposed to feel and how she really feels. Mr. Emerson encourages Lucy to expose her true emotions as does Gennaro encourage Eustace. The writer in 'The Story of a Panic', represents the conservative English public views, he is a stereotypical Englishman.

There is confrontation between the young and old when the writer interacts with Eustace as there is when Lucy talks with Miss Bartlett. As Eustace, like Lucy, is relatively young, he is still trying to discover himself as a person and is able to be influenced by characters like Gennaro or George Emerson. The young characters are not yet set in their ways in both books; Eustace is more easily persuaded to think freely whereas Lucy ignores her urges and conforms. However Eustace and Lucy eventually have to make sacrifices in order to live a happier life.

Lucy loses her family and previous way of living and Eustace loses every privilege of humans in order to live in the forest, 'far down the valley... there still resounded the shouts and the laughter of the escaping boy'. Forster does not portray the stiff middle class people in a good light as there are many scenes of snobbery. There is no respect for the local Italians: 'wretched down-trodden Italians have no pride... a leap like that would never have killed an Englishman... miserable Italians have no stamina,' anyone who is English is considered better no matter what their attitude or behaviour is.

Eustace is a very peculiar child in the eyes of the writer however he is still 'a young English gentleman' and Gennaro is a 'poor Italian fisher-boy'. The

writer is quite disillusioned as to his disrespectful behaviour as even when he is trying to be nice he comes across as patronising, ' I always make a point of behaving pleasantly to Italians, however little they deserve it. ' There are very strict rules on society and class according to the middle class English.

They are held back by the realms of their ' place'. The writer of ' The Story of a Panic,' feels there are certain things that he must do. However as much as he feels he should keep to his social status, he essentially strives to be upper class in the way he acts. This shows the hypocriticalness of the typical English man as he wishes to better himself but the poorer people are not allowed to. There is a strong contrast between the Italians and the English in their outward show of affection as the English are prevented by class.

The Italian coachman and his girlfriend are rebuked for kissing as this is seen as lower class. This makes the modern day reader of ' A Room with a View', realise the ridiculous of conforming to society. Later on in ' A Room with a View', we encounter another clash between Cecil and Lucy. Lucy, having experienced the style of life that George Emerson experiences, in Italy, she can not bear the nude English Cecil. He stands for everything that George hates and that she slowly realises that she hates. E. M. Forster does not depict the English in a good way especially on holiday.

This is because although the English travel to feel cultured they prefer everything to remain as English as possible because they are afraid of the unknown. This is the reason the English appear very poorly behaved while abroad as they are uncomfortable and also stand out as they do not belong to true nature and beauty Forster in his novels investigates truth by

stereotyping groups of people capturing their essence, this he does very well. The English are represented by the middle class compared to the lower class Italians however the outcome may be different if they were compared to middle class Italians.