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**THE ANALYSIS OF
THE CHARACTERS IN THE RAZOR'S EDGE
IN TERMS OF MORAL AND
SOCIAL VALUES**

74579

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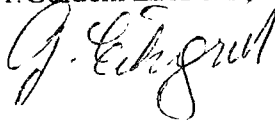
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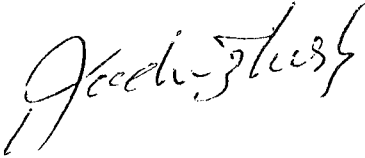
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Konu Kodu:

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Tezin Yazarının

Soyadı: MAUGHAM

Adı: WILLIAM SOMERSET

Tezin Türkçe Adı: The Razor's Edge Adlı Romandaki Karakterlerin Ahlaki ve Sosyal Değerler Açısından İncelenmesi.

Tezin Yabancı Dildeki Adı: THE ANALYSIS OF THE CHRACTERS IN THE RAZOR'S EDGE IN TERMS OF MORAL AND SOCIALVALUES

Tezin Yapıldığı

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Türkçe Anahtar Kelimeler:

1-AHLAK

2-TOPLUM

3-BOZULMA

4-

5-

İngilizce Anahtar Kelimeler:

1-MORALITY

2-SOCIETY

3-CORRUPTION

4-

5-

Tarih: 18/08/1998

İmza:

ÖZET

Ahlaki ve sosyal değerlere farklı açılardan bakan ve değerlendiren William Somerset Maugham bu değerlerin yıkıcı değil, yapıcı olmasından yanadır. Özellikle toplumsal bir çökmenin ve bozulmanın olduğu toplumlarda ahlaki ve sosyal değerleri farklı karakterlerin gözüyle ele almış ve kendi düşüncelerinde ifade etmiştir. Bu değerlerin yanlış yorumlanmasıyla birlikte aslında ahlaki ve toplumsal bir çöküşün meydana geldiğini ve bununla birlikte kişisel özgürlüğün sona erdiğini William Somerset Maugham açıkça vurgulamıştır.

Bu tez William Somerset Maugham'ın, The Razor's Edge adlı kitabını temel almaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı; ahlaki ve sosyal değerleri, kültürel, ahlaki ve sosyal farklılıkları toplum içindeki çeşitli sorunların artmasına bağlı olarak incelemektedir.

ABSTRACT

William Somerset Maugham who had a different point of view and evaluation about moral and social values in the society is positive not destructive. Especially, he, not only considers the corruption and degeneration in the society from the eye of his different characters but also he sums up his own views. Interpreting these values wrongly, in fact moral and social corruption occurs in the society. Consequently, these values cause a social pressure among the members of society. Accordingly, William Somerset Maugham points out that the concept of individuality comes to an end.

This thesis concentrates on one particular book of William Somerset Maugham, The Razor's Edge. The aim of this study is to seek moral and social values and to describe the differentiation among cultural, social and moral values with the increase in the sizes of various problems in society.

Preface

As a man of short stories, William Somerset Maugham devoted his life to the presentation of new characters and ideas. Somerset Maugham never worked at any other job but that of writer over the course of his ninety-one years.

Somerset Maugham has been among the modern writers. In the history of modern literature there is nobody whose work has been more widely sold and translated because of his real merit as a writer, partly because the functional simplicity of his writing made his books accessible.

Somerset Maugham spent his years in a very complex century and experienced lots of changes of the world and the two world wars. His work spans three literary generations, and embraces almost every form of the literary craft except poetry. He gained a high reputation in four distinct media, the novel, the short story, the play, and the sound film.

As a professional humorist, in his novels, short stories, plays, and essays, he created hundreds of characters devised incidents, social relationships and different points of view. He dealt with the problems of society with his clear and logical brain. Taking his readers to different parts of the world, he presented different characters, different social relationships, different problems, and different social and moral values. What primarily inspired me to choose him as the subject of my study is this characteristic of his writing.

I would like to thank William Somerset Maugham for the simple happiness and great pleasure he has given to so many people through his writing. I should like to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Gülten ERTUĞRUL for the advice, the help, the encouragement and so many valuable suggestions which she gave me while I was working on this thesis.

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I. Introduction

In English Literature Maugham's novels play an important role. The Razor's Edge is one of them and is highly praised by critics. The Razor's Edge was published in 1944 and it was later filmed. This novel is a great addition to English literature.

The critic Cyril Connolly, in 1944 in his essay called 'The Art of Being Good', expresses his ideas about The Razor's Edge: "*This is Mr Maugham's best novel since Cakes and Ale, and appearing at a time when the decline in literary taste, it breathes the atmosphere of another world.*" (1) In 1944, one of Maugham's important critics Kate O'Brien in her review praises The Razor's Edge that "*this solid, skilful, accurately calculated book will not only give pleasure and food for reflection to a great number of people.*" (2)

The American educator and critic Joseph Epstein in 1985 relates that "*The Razor's Edge is a representative of Maugham's gifts.*" (3) Joseph Epstein continues to praise the novel in his same essay: "*The Razor's Edge resembles nothing so much as a ring with a large rhinestone at the center and with smaller but perfect gems all around it.*" (4) The critic and American novelist Gore Vidal, in 1990 expresses in his essay that "*The Razor's Edge, the novel on which the film that I found the ultimate in worldly glamour was based.*" (5) In 1992, in World Literature Criticism, the writer James Draper relates that: "*The Razor's Edge, which chronicles a young American's quest for meaning and purpose is highly regarded by critics.*" (6)

In The Razor's Edge the character drawing is excellent. In 1941 in his essay called 'A Critical Survey', H. E. Bates admits that: "*Maugham paints word-portraits of real people.*" (7) In The Razor's Edge Maugham handles his characters perfectly and includes himself, not as a fictional character, but as a real William Somerset Maugham. He is the novelist right inside his novel. He is on the same plane as all the other characters. In 1944, Cyril Connolly in his essay called 'The Art of Being' expresses in the following lines that "*Maugham is not a fictional character, in The Razor's Edge but as the flesh-and-blood Willie Maugham of real life-with complete mastery. He is not a mere stooge or onlooker, or larger than life, not more real nor less.*" (8)

Indeed, in The Razor's Edge, where the narrator in the first person goes by the name of 'Mr. Maugham', he writes about characters whose nationality is not his own. The Razor's Edge is an Englishman's report of what he saw among American characters. Cyril Connolly relates that "*Maugham handles his four or five characters to perfection.*" (9) Maugham portrays these characters so exactly that it is impossible not to know them. Elliott Templeton, a snob of rich people represents the results of an empty social success. The female characters play an important role in the novel. Isabel represents the greedy, heartless typical American woman. Suzanne Rouvier represents charm and common sense and Sophie is the victim of social and moral values. Sophie cannot adapt herself to the difficult conditions of life and she is left to die. Maugham thinks that Sophie leads a lifestyle which moral values of life do not approve. Such a lifestyle is her own choice. According to Maugham after her death there is nothing to be sorry about her anymore because she wants to die. For this reason Sophie in The Razor's Edge can be a symbol of naturalistic feature of Maugham's writing. As a naturalistic writer Maugham does not attempt to make moral judgements.

The Razor's Edge is a philosophical novel. In this book the central character is an American youth, Larry Darrell, who looks on death in the first World War and who gives up a life of love and money-making for the Hindu Vedanta and who disappears in the end of the novel with "*calmness, compassion, selflessness, forbearance and continence*" (10). Larry Darrell does not want to live the life which his relatives and friends mapped out for him. He searches for the good life, the ideal of the saints. The pattern of his search is woven against the worldly design of the lives of his relations. Larry tries to find the truth by reading, traveling, manual labour and meditation. He finds what he wants in India and when he goes back to America, he tries to live like a saint. In The Razor's Edge Maugham uses Larry as a symbol of good and sophisticated man.

John Brophy praises the characters in The Razor's Edge in the following lines:

The Razor's Edge, the most ambitious, undertaking of Maugham's later period, seems indeed to invite in the attributed though unrealized character of Larry, a comparison with Dostoevski's The Idiot and the

comparison makes it quite clear that Maugham's place is among the supreme masters." (11)

The Razor's Edge is famous for its characters. The characters in the novel rank with the other important characters of other precious novels. Thus critics put Maugham and The Razor's Edge among important novels, and writers.

The critic and short story writer H.E Bates in his essay 'A Critical Survey' in 1942 says that: "*In The Razor's Edge, Maugham took what maybe called the outer psychological values of a person.*" (12) In The Razor's Edge Maugham draws the psychological development of Larry Darrell. Joseph W. Beach in his essay 'Maugham Considers Mystics' in 1944 expresses in the following way:

"The Razor's Edge is out of that remote and fading world that his voice now comes to us in a philosophical novel, whose theme will suggest men of a later generation, Charles Morgan and Aldous Huxley, as well as an earlier Tolstoy and Dostoevsky." (13)

The essayist Diana Trilling in 1944 in her review points out in the following way:

"William Somerset Maugham's The Razor's Edge is subtitled 'the story of a man who found a faith,'but it is not a religious novel. It is not even a mystical novel, really, despite the fact that one of its chief characters is the man who finds faith, in India, in the mystical worship of the Absolute." (14)

Maugham deals with mysticism in The Razor's Edge, but on the whole it is not a religious novel which relates only the teaching of a particular religion. Maugham uses religion in The Razor's Edge as a mean to explain the moral, social and psychological development of his central character, Larry Darrell.

Diana Trilling keeps on telling us about the relationship between the mysticism and the characters in The Razor's Edge in her review:

"Mysticism, that is, is bound to be inviting to the person who is afraid of the deep emotions; yet it can never fully win him, any more than humanity can fully win him. All the characters in Maugham's latest novel inevitably inhabit the non-dimensional universe which is all that is left when the deep emotions have been disavowed." (15)

In The Razor's Edge we are not face to face with a teaching of a particular religion. Religion is a symbol of goodness and goodness can be defined with Larry in the novel.

Joseph W. Beach in his essay in 1944 relates that: "The Razor's Edge is a novel of ideas. The novel is a contribution to the problem: How many the spirit maintain its life in a world of corruption?" (16). In The Razor's Edge corruption can be seen in some aspects of life. Social and moral corruption is deeply pointed out by Maugham in his novel. In a kind of world which is full of corruption it is really difficult to be completely clarified from it. The characters of the novel are the victims of social and moral corruption expect Larry Darrell.

Cyril Connolly in 1944 in his essay expresses his ideas about the theme of the novel and he praises Maugham that "The Razor's Edge ranks with Huxley's Grey Eminence and Head's Man the Master as powerful propaganda for the new faith or, rather new version of an old faith, which is called by various names; neo Brahmanism, or the Vedanta of the West." (17) Cyril Connolly continuous to express his ideas in the following lines:

"The Razor's Edge is indeed a study in pre-sanctity in the early years of a man whom the author hints is capable of saving the world, I think that, for a writer who is not a mystic, Maugham has managed to do this; he conveys well the passionate quest for truth." (18)

Somerset Maugham is not a mystic writer, but in The Razor's Edge he uses mysticism to define his character's maturity. 1946 Cyril Connolly expresses in the following way:

"Mr Maugham never forgets the spiritual dust-bowl which every American carries within him and which he vainly tries to irrigate with alcohol, statistics, or labour saving devices. Mr Maugham seems to say that 'the New messiah is going to have his work cut out.'" (19)

In 1958 John Brophy in his work Somerset Maugham relates that "The Razor's Edge is between the spiritual and materialist." (20) The Razor's Edge gives the materialistic features of life by means of materialist characters and at the same time it is a spiritual novel.

Brophy relates that "The Razor's Edge, which may be considered his most serious novel, contains 'sardonic grins', 'sinking hearts' and 'disparaging glances'." (21) Brophy points out that "Maugham deals with belief in The Razor's Edge." (22) He says that "The Razor's Edge made conforming gestures towards a kind of unattached mysticism then coming into literary fashion." (23)

Maugham studied snobbery and society passionately in The Razor's Edge. They can be found everywhere in his work "as motive, as background and as theme." (24) Society and social relationships are released by Maugham actively. In 1944 in the essay called 'Maugham Considers Mystics' J.W. Beach expresses that "society and snobbery he has studied with the passion of a Proust. No American writer knows better this Chicago-in-Paris." (25) The Razor's Edge is written for Americans and Maugham presents his American characters efficiently. In 1985 Joseph Epstein expresses in his essay in the following way:

"Avarice, fear, lust, and snobbishness were the four reigning qualities in Somerset Maugham's own triumphant, lengthy and finally rather sad life." (26)

Maugham's technique in The Razor's Edge is perfect and it is highly regarded by critics. In 1937, the critic Elizabeth Bowen in her essay called 'A Straight novel' praises Maugham's style in the following lines :

"In The Razor's Edge Maugham's style is stripped: there is no American cuteness, no attempted poetry, it is professional writing, without a touch of amateur privilege- and this is pretty rare now. Rare also- a good deal too rare- is a novel not setting up to be anything but a novel, not made the parade ground of indignation or fantasy. (27)

In The Razor's Edge Maugham's writing is simple. Maugham does not use pompous words to adorn his writing. He uses simple words to give direct messages to his readers. His style in writing lets his readers understand and interpret the novel easily.

Maugham's technique in the construction of the story is very good in The Razor's Edge. He adorns his writing with irony. In a sense, cynicism has always been a part of the Maugham image. With all his irony, in The Razor's Edge Maugham created a perfect novel. The critic and short story writer H. E. Bates, in 1941 in his essay 'A Critical Survey' explains in the following way that *"Maugham reveals an ironic novel with the stuffiness of literary and moral conventions. The effect is delicious, butter won't melt in his acid mouth."* (28)

Joseph W. Beach, in 1944, in his essay called 'Maugham Considers Mystics' tells about Maugham's technique that *"an urbane personal intrusion into his narrative is one of those happy technical inspirations in which Maugham is so prolific."* (29) Beach continues to say that: *"the story is carried forward with Maugham's usual deftness and ingenuity of manipulation. Everything has been provided for from the start, a heritage from the French realists of the age of positivism."* (30) In the same essay Beach expresses that *"manners and character are Maugham's forte, and here the provision is lavish and unfailing and his irony never sleeps."* (31) Maugham uses irony effectively and his ironic approach in representing his ideas makes his book quite deliberate. Especially in critising characters' manners Maugham's ironic words are quite effective.

Kate O'Brien in 1944 in her review relates her thoughts about Maugham's technique in The Razor's Edge that *"his technique in the construction of a story is almost perfect, he brings all the easier graces to adorn his austere outline; precision, fact, irony"* (32) O'Brien expresses that *"he is never solemn and he is never facetious, and these two seemingly opposed manners are great traps for the pompous."* (33) Here O'Brien praises Maugham's simple writing. His writing is clear, but not pompous. Cyril Connolly in 1944 in his essay called 'The Art of Being Good' praises the technique in The Razor's Edge that *"the novel shows a great technical improvement on the author's recent novels."* (34)

In The Razor's Edge the characters generally say what they mean, no more no less. What they say is so clear. In some points of the book he adorns his dialogues with American slang or with French bourgeois elegance. A little can be found that distinguish one person's speech from another.

Maugham's style is *"neutral, functional and efficient. No phrase is there for its own sake and transparency to meaning is the object."* (35) Maugham's readers should not make a special effort to understand the novel and to get the meaning of it, because Maugham's style is austere in The Razor's Edge. There is no phrase in his writing which leads it to a romantic complexity. The critic Elizabeth Bowen says *"it is professional writing, without a touch of amateur privilege- and this is pretty rare now."* (36)

Cyril Connolly continues to say that *"his handling of plot to force one into a breathless, non-stop reading from the first page to the last."* (37) Seymour Krim in 1954 in his essay called 'Maugham the Artist' says that:

"The essence of Maugham's narrative style lies in his use of words not as instruments written and read, but as spoken and heard.. His comments on the snobbery of people who read a great deal-including himself, and his strategy enables him to satirize others and this establish an immediate bond between reader and writer." (38)

Social and moral life is very important in The Razor's Edge and society has got a great part in the lives of the characters. Man cannot live apart from society, society cannot exist without a social order; a social order requires a general recognition and enforcement of a body of laws or customs and these laws and customs are approved of as right by at least the section of a society.

Somerset Maugham uses the characters in The Razor's Edge as symbols of moral and social life. Using his characters cleverly Maugham tries to enlighten in which ways the materialistic features of life, society and moral values affect the lives of people. Maugham strictly points out that moral judgements may show distinctions from person to person. Wrong moral judgements may put out the life light of a person and this is unfair. Sometimes people, who cannot feel the power and courage to do something different or extraordinary and who cannot present it in a social life, hide behind these moral and social judgements to prove themselves in a particular society. Knowing that what they do is not always fair and knowing that they do not have a life style which is completely attached to these moral and social values they do not hesitate to judge people mercilessly. In The Razor's Edge Maugham gives us great examples of such people.

In The Razor's Edge Maugham is always cool, nearly always detached, but observes all his characters and their attitudes relentlessly so the story is given by Maugham's deftness. In The Razor's Edge Maugham's writing is delightfully flexible, easy and vivid. Maugham again and again uses the "*trick of creating ironic effect by disclaiming all knowledge of what he is talking about.*" (39)

In The Razor's Edge, using the words clearly and using irony, Maugham relates his observations. His brilliant fluency of his writing gives us a delightful reading from the first page of the novel to the last. His vivid, easy, and clear writing makes his book understandable. In The Razor's Edge it is not surprising to see the excellence of Maugham's writing. It is written gracefully, sympathetically.

Not only did Maugham's popularity make Maugham so great, but he also created unforgettable characters that have already taken their places in world literature. As presenting his characters with efficient and ironic writing Maugham has given a great

taste to his readers. With its character drawing, handling of plot and with its observation The Razor's Edge is a novel which can be studied with pleasure. And Somerset Maugham displays his craft in his latest novel very beautifully.



II- Social Values in The Razor's Edge

a) Society and Social Relationships:

Society and social values are studied in The Razor's Edge very beautifully. Social values are social conventions of behaviour which are proper, right and acceptable. Man cannot live apart from society and society cannot exist without a social order; a social order requires a general recognition and enforcement of a body of laws or customs. These laws and customs are approved of right by at least the section of a society.

In this novel characters have different social views, and sometimes society shapes them and puts them into a strict and merciless pattern. Society generally determines the rules, the conventions, but society is itself wrong. Society is corrupted. In a sense, some characters are the victims of society. Corruption is in every page of this novel.

Our social relations exist within a social world. The social world is a world of appearances in The Razor's Edge. People are other than what they present themselves to be in social life. Kierkegaard says that *"if people identify themselves too closely with the positions they have within social life they are in danger of missing the reality of human life."* (1) The world in The Razor's Edge is governed by laws of social behaviour.

In The Razor's Edge we are face to face with such characters who have great or poor social relationships. In The Razor's Edge pictures of the world can be observed, the world in the form of Elliott Templeton, most perfectly drawn of all the characters. Elliott is the painstaking romantic snob:

"In Elliott Templeton, the wealthy expatriate American snob, Maugham has created a character of whom it is not ridiculous to say that, after the Baron de Charlus, he may well be the most interesting snob in modern literature." (2)

Elliott and Maugham have known each other for a very long time. In The Razor's Edge, the characters in the story are people Maugham actually knew. The critic Joseph W. Beach expresses in the following lines that *"manners and character are Maugham's forte, and here the provision is lavish and unfailing."* (3)

Handling his characters perfectly, Maugham includes himself not as a fictional character, but "*as a flesh and blood William Somerset Maugham of real life.*" (4) He is not an onlooker or one that is larger than the other characters in the novel, not more real nor less, but he is on the same boat with the others and he plays his role as a novelist in his own novel. Maugham who tells the story "*strips everything down to the reasonable.*" (5) The story is carried forward with Maugham's usual deftness and being always detached, always cool, but observing directly and relentlessly. Maugham, as a character, plays an important role in the novel. He is never "*solemn and is never facetious.*" (6) In his novel Maugham gives the social relationships with his direct and idiomatic writing.

Elliott is known as a person who gives importance to social values. Elliott always dresses beautifully and lives the life of a nobleman and acts like a gentleman. Physical appearance plays an important role in his life because he thinks he has to look elegant among the rich ladies who do not care for him. He acts as social values require him to do. Because he has taste and knowledge, this helps him gain a social rank in the society which Maugham studied with the "*passion of a Proust.*" (7)

Elliott Templeton is an American, but he lives in Paris. He thinks that Paris is the only place for noblemen. He declares that he had a humble background, but some people say that his family was very poor and he is gaining his position in the society gradually. Now, he has enough money to live like a noble man. He never explains the method by which he has gotten that money.

Elliott is in a highly respected position in society because he has always given importance to his relationships and always kept his connexions alive. It is also very easy for Elliott to have a social position and to deal with people of title because he is definitely a bright and elegant man. He is a good dancer, and a good tennis player. He likes parties and is fond of going to these parties with flowers and expensive boxes of chocolates.

Social life is essentially a disguise in The Razor's Edge. People hide behind the differences and distinctions that social life maintains. This encourages people who have power to feel superior to other people. It also makes people feel inferior and inadequate when they compare themselves with those who have been more succesful. This makes

Elliott superior to Larry who has no job. Elliott feels that his position in society has been achieved because of the superior qualities he has as a person. Elliott thinks he has so little in common with Larry and with people who have no social position. He does not want to spend time with him. Elliott has become so identified with himself as a person who has a great social standing in society that he can hardly listen to what Larry has to say. He assumes that he has little to learn or receive from Larry. Even if Elliott recognises that Larry has his own thoughts and opinions and that they share similar rights in society and it is easy for Elliott to pay lip service to these democratic notions. He is too identified with his own position of superiority and status.

Elliott knows how to affect the people around him. He spends time with others according to the advantage he gets from them. He likes taking rich ladies to expensive restaurants. At the same time Elliott knows how to act and how to treat people in the life of society, and he determines his principles according to social and moral values. He is too identified with his social life. He always makes himself useful and he can do everything for a person even the tiresome things if you only ask him. Maybe he does not do it with pleasure, but he never hesitates to do so. He has a gift for keeping people alive. He is also a very good person. These are all good points to gain a social importance and he achieves his end.

In London where he has got some friends and in Paris where he settled down he has got a lot of friends and he knows nearly everybody. These people play an important role in his social life, so he thinks he should be on good and intimate terms with these people. Thus, especially the ladies who first introduced him into society are shocked when they see his great success in society and how wide the circle of his acquaintance is, that their own relationships with those people are still very formal and strict. Elliott is a character who knows how to play his game. He uses those people, especially the ladies, as stepping stones to gain social advancement. It is true that he has achieved his end and now he has got a great social life. These ladies who introduced him into society think that he is a snob:

"They were afraid he was a snob. And of course he was. He was a colossal snob. He was a snob without shame. He would put up with any affront, he would

ignore any rebuff, he would swallow any rudeness to get asked to a party he wanted to go to or to make a connexion with some crusty old dowager of great name." (8)

So does the critic and American educator Joseph Epstein in his essay expresses in the following way:

"Four powers govern men: avarice, lust, fear and snobbishness...Avarice, lust, fear and snobbishness are Maugham's great subjects; they are everywhere in his work, as theme, as motive, as background. Avarice, lust, fear and snobbishness were also the four reigning in Somerset Maugham's own triumphant, lengthy, and finally rather sad life." (9)

During the First World War Elliott joins the ambulance corps and he gets a position in the Red Cross in Paris. Then he contributes to the works of the people who have social consequence. He quickly becomes the member of the two most exclusive clubs in Paris. He becomes the greatest ladies' Elliott Templeton. Naturally Elliott does not care about the people who have not a social position.

Maugham tells about it in an ironical way. He explains how Elliott treated him. When Maugham is a young author he meets Elliott. Elliott takes no notice of him because he is just a young writer. Being a person of title and having a great social position, he only shakes hands with Maugham who has no social standing and he shows no desire for further acquaintance. Sometimes, he never sees him or he is apt not to catch sight of him; but when Maugham becomes a leading writer and gains great success, Elliott becomes to regard him with a warmer feeling. Maugham realizes that as he has become a famous play-wright he is gaining many friends and begins to see Elliott more frequently. Elliott sometimes invites him to lunch. Maugham says that:

"I received another invitation to lunch, this time at his apartment; when I arrived I was surprised to see that it was a party of considerable distinction. I giggled to myself. I knew that with his perfect sense

of social relations he had realized that in English society as an author I was not much account, but that in France where an author just because he is an author has prestige. I was." (10)

Here Maugham explains exactly Elliott Templeton's character. According to Elliott, social position and social values are more important than friendship and many other things. Maugham and Elliott begin to see each other more frequently than ever. Their acquaintance becomes more intimate, but Maugham doubts whether they are friends or not. Is it possible for Elliott Templeton to be a friend? He is the man of social relationships. It can be said that he takes no interest in people apart from their social position. He continues to ask Maugham for parties in London or in Paris just because he needs an extra man.

As a consequence of his lifestyle he has to flatter rich and noble people. He thinks this is another way of affecting them. Maugham, again, ironically expresses in the following lines:

"He asked me to come to the party he was organizing. They want to meet you so much; he wrote to flatter me. Mrs. so and so is a very cultivated woman and she's read so and so ;he would then tell me she'd so much enjoyed my book, Mr. Perrin and Mr. Traill and congratulate me on my play The Mollusc. First of these was written by Hugh Walpole and the second by Hubert Henry Davies." (11)

Although Elliott has got many bad and weak points, he is generally a good person. He is helpful kind and generous. It is a pleasure for him to give. He is generous, though early in his career he has doubtless showered flowers, candy, and presents on his acquaintances with an ulterior motive. He has continued to do so when it is no longer necessary. It caused him pleasure to give. He likes inviting people to his house. He is extremely hospitable, but it is not surprising that he chooses his guests for their social importance rather than they are being good friends and nice people. He never forgets to

invite people who have a good sense of humour. He wants them to entertain his guests. He thinks that they are necessary for an amusement party. It is really so sad that the people he invites to his party gossip about him all the time and think that he is a snob, but they accept his invitations with alacrity.

Elliott has a gift for speeches. He is a good talker. Maybe this is the reason why he has taken an important position among rich ladies and gentlemen. He is a person who keeps in touch with people. Knowing all the scandals, he has good news for you all the time. Elliott nearly knows everything about the people of title:

"There was no scandal about these exalted personages that did not reach his ears. From him I learnt who was the father of Princess X's last child and, who was the mistress of the Marguis de Y. I don't believe even Marcel Proust knew more of the inner life of the aristocracy than Elliott Templeton."
(12)

Elliott is on familiar terms with the exalted people of Paris and London. Maugham never understands the reason of his snobbishness. Maugham says *"he was indefatigable."* (13) Maugham summarizes Elliott's character in the following lines:

"When he had fixed his eye on his prey he hunted it with the persistence of a botanist who will expose himself to dangers of a flood, earthquake, fever, and hostile natives to find an orchid of peculiar." (14)

In The Razor's Edge Maugham tries to give the very opposite characters in his novel. On the one hand is Elliott Templeton, on the other hand a snob of rich people who gains a highly respected position in society and on the other hand Larry Darrell, who never cares for society, social position or money. Larry does not act or decide to do something according to social values. He has got his own values. Larry is an aviator in the war. He runs away from school and takes part in the air corps. He fights in France. Now he has got no job and lives with his little income.

Larry's disinclination to go to work disturbs everybody, especially his fiancée, Isabel. Larry decides not work after the war. According to the social values of a community, a man has to work. Otherwise, he has no place in the society. At first his decision appears very normal, but later on it is understood that Larry will never be ready for work. Elliott and the rest of the family, Elliott's nephew, Isabel, and his sister, Mrs. Bradley, gradually feel the gap between Larry and his cold relationships with the other people. There is something remote in Larry:

"Almost everything about The Razor's Edge is brilliant-except, alas, Larry Darrell's quest. This may be because goodness, which young Darrell is tiresomely meant to represent, is usually less interesting than its reverse, it may be because ultimate truths about the meaning of life are never quite convincing, it may be because Somerset Maugham's powers of idealization had long since withered." (15)

According to social values, a man has to work to get a position in the society. Social life encourages people to identify themselves with the particular position they have in society, so they tend to gain a sense of individual identity. It becomes easy to identify themselves with what they do to earn a living. They identify themselves with the externalities of social life and tend to judge others in this way. The fact that Larry's friend Gray is a stock broker and can draw considerable prestige from this position does not mean that he is a sensitive and imaginative person. The respect for his position might blind people to the truth of what kind of person he is. There is much more to a person than the position he or she has, even if they closely identify with it.

Elliott and his family think that Larry is a burden to his family because he does not want to work, and the most important thing is that he is useless to the community. Elliott feels sorry for Isabel, and he thinks Larry does not deserve Isabel. He thinks Larry is useless to his relatives and his community. He compares Larry to Gray and thinks that Gray who has had a bishop, soldier and scholars in his family is very convenient for Isabel. Larry, on the other hand, has nothing. He has not even a social

standing. Gray wants to marry Isabel. Elliott thinks it would be a great match. Larry wants to find his way by reading books, and wants to get out into the world. He thinks he needs nobody to lead him for his purpose and wants to find his own way in this world. Even the social conventions do not interfere him to do so. He has no time to spend with other people. As a matter of fact, Larry hesitates to generalise what his purpose is. The most surprising thing is that he wants to loaf. Actually, Larry wants to find himself without actually knowing what he means by loafing.

Larry goes to Paris to find the meaning of life and he thinks he cannot go back to Chicago now, because he is on the threshold of finding himself and is eager to travel. He wants to see the vast of lands of spirit.

Isabel thinks that Larry is escaping from his responsibilities. According to Isabel, he is missing so much. She thinks Europe is already finished and America is very strong, and Americans are the greatest and the most powerful people in the world. She is so dependent on social values. She thinks he has a duty to take part in the development of his country. She thinks Larry has not the courage to stand up to work. Most people in the book follow the normal course but Larry does not. Larry wonders if there is God or not and why evil exists and wants to know everything about life after death, if there is one. He is an extraordinary man who speaks such things in an ordinary way. This not very normal for Isabel. According to her, these are the questions which have been asked for many years, but no satisfactory answers have been found so far. Larry thinks that for thousands of years man cannot help asking them, and they have found lots of answers; actually, there are more answers than questions, but he wants to find the answer which is satisfactory for him.

Money does not mean a thing to Larry, but according to Isabel money is one of the main parts of life. Without money, life would be more difficult and she cannot live on little money. Larry hates the materialistic features of life and life is worth much than money. He denies the central importance of the material conditions of people's lives. Isabel thinks that Larry is so silly and impractical. She is so surprised when Larry asks her to live with him on little money. She thinks she is young and wants to live a good life:

"Of course I want to travel but not like that. I don't want to travel second-class on steamships and put up at third-rate hotels without a bathroom, and eat at cheap restaurants." (16)

Isabel wants to have fun and go to parties and dances. She does not want to live in a sordid beastly way with nothing to look forward to. She does not want to drudge to the day of her death. She wants to wear beautiful clothes. In fact, she wants to do all things that rich people do. It is so wrong to spend years to find the answers to insoluble questions. On the contrary, Larry does not depend on other people. He wants to live his own life, but Isabel takes other people's lives as an example. She says:

"Can't you imagine what it means to a girl not to be as well dressed as the rest of her crowd? D'you know what it means, Larry, to buy your friends' old dresses when they are sick of them and be thankful when someone out of pity makes you a present of a new one? I couldn't even afford to go to a decent hairdresser to have my hair properly done. I don't want to go about in street cars and omnibuses; I want to have my own car. And what do you suppose I'd find to do with myself all day long while you were reading at the library? Walk about the streets window shopping or sit in the Luxembourg Garden seeing that my children didn't get into mischief? We wouldn't have any friends." (17)

Money means nothing to Larry, and money means nothing to Charles Strickland in the fictional biographical novel The Moon and Sixpence. Strickland paints but does not sell his pictures: "...he must paint, and paint he does, without selling, pictures which after his death are fought for as masterpieces by dealers and collectors." (18)

Larry was a normal boy before war. He was just like everybody, but he has changed a lot. Up to now, nobody knows what experience he had during the war. According to Maugham it was a sudden shock for which he was unprepared, whatever it

was. Filling with a transiency of life and with an anguish Larry begins to feel that will be a compensation for the sin and sorrow of the world. That is why after war he has changed a lot and tries to find something about God. Isabel begins to think that these things are all morbid because to live our lives as we like it and that we should take it as it is. She does not want to believe all these things and she feels miserable when she is with Larry because she is sure that Larry is in the wrong way. Larry and Isabel are quite different people from each other. Maugham describes their friendship very beautifully:

"You're like two friends who want to take their holiday together, but one of them wants to climb Greenland's icy mountains while the other wants to fish off India's coral strand. Obviously it's not going to work." (19)

On the other hand, Isabel thinks that Larry has not got common sense and he is the dreamer of a beautiful dream. Even if his dream did not come true, he would feel a great satisfaction to have dreamt it. Maugham tells a story to enlighten Larry's present state of mind in the following lines:

"I don't forget that at all. Years ago, when I was young, I knew a man who was a doctor and not a bad one either, but he didn't practise. He spent years borrowing away in the library of the British Museum and at long intervals produced a huge pseudoscientific, pseudo philosophical book that nobody read and that he had to publish at his own expense. He wrote four or five of them before he died and they were absolutely worthless. He had a son who wanted to go into the army, but there was no money to send him to Sandhurst, so he had to enlist. He was killed in the war. He had a daughter too. She was very pretty and I was rather taken with her. She went on the stage but she had no talent and she traipsed around the provinces playing small

parts in second rate companies at a miserable salary. His wife, after years of dreary, sordid drudgery, broke down in health and the girl had to come home and nurse her and take on the drudgery her mother no longer had the strength for. Wasted, thwarted lives and all to no purpose. It's a toss up when you decide to leave the beaten track. Many are called but few are chosen." (20)

In Chapter III Isabel marries Gray Maturin after the termination of her engagement to Larry. Elliott does not want to leave Paris for Chicago for the wedding because he will miss Paris because of the number of grand parties. Maugham ironically expresses his feelings about this marriage which enlightens Elliott's character a little bit more in the following lines:

"Remembering that French aristocrats had gone to the guillotine in all their finery, he made a special journey to London to get himself a new morning coat, a dove-grey double-breasted waistcoat, and a silk hat. On his return to Paris he invited me to come and see them on. He was in a state of perturbation because the grey pearl he usually wore in his necktie would not make any sort of effect against the pale grey tie he had chosen as suitable to the festive occasion." (21)

During the time of the wedding even at the time of the ceremony, Elliott compares everything to the things in Paris, and he always shows his social importance and materialism. He says *"not like a wedding at Notre Dome."* (22) Elliott, now, at the age of 65, has born his years gallantly. He has always cared for himself and has always been moderate in his habits and he has especially taken care of his appearance, because appearance has played an important role in his life ever since. Maugham expresses ironically in the following way:

"He had no intention of submitting to the ravages of time so long as he could have his clothes made by the best tailor in London, his hair dressed and his face shaved by his own particular barber, and a masseur to come in every morning to keep his elegant body in perfect condition. He had long forgotten that he had ever so far demeaned himself as to engage in a trade, and without ever saying so outright, for he was not so stupid as to tell a lie that might be found out, he was inclined to suggest that in his youth he had been in the diplomatic service. I must admit that if I had ever had occasion to raw a portrait of an ambassador I should without hesitation have chosen Elliott as my model." (23)

Elliott is an old man now and is not very popular among the fashionable men. They find him tiresome, boring and ridiculous. Yet, they are eager to come to his great luncheon parties, but Elliott is clever enough to realise that they come to meet each other rather than to see him. He is no longer invited to parties, unlike the times when he picked and chose one of the invitations so he suffers a lot with the humiliation of eating his dinner by himself. He is too proud to humiliate himself. He has got his own rules and conventions. His lifestyle depends on his social relationships and social conventions. He thinks that everything is changing in a bad way. Elliott feels the corruption of society to which he has devoted himself. He cannot bear or cannot accept the changes in the world easily, so he criticises it. He complains about the present society of Paris and London, because English society has been ruined.

Elliott is a very kind and soft-hearted person. For instance, he helps Paul Barton, the American man who wants to be the member of high society. Elliott helps him in all possible ways. He presents Paul to several of his friends. He gives Paul some valuable hints about getting into society and talks about his own experiences. Paul has high spirits and engaging manners so he easily takes part in parties and becomes one of the most wanted people of the parties. He gains what he wants in a few weeks, unlike Elliott

who achieved his aim after years of determination. Soon, Paul does not need Elliott's help anymore. He was so kind and pleasant to Elliott, but then he begins to pretend not to see him. Elliott calls him to his parties to make it go, but Paul throws Elliott over at the last moment. Therefore, Elliott goes crazy when Paul treats him in such a way. Elliott believes that English society has been changing. Paul Barton is a good example of it because if high society invites such a snobbish man to his parties, there must be something wrong with it. Elliott does not find France much better than England. According to Elliott, everything goes wrong in Paris as well. He tolerates nothing about social relationships and criticises it.

Society is so important for Elliott that he does not even like nature because he feels that nature is an impediment to social life, and he has no patience with people who prefer nature to a beautiful painting. He thinks that watching a Regency commode or a painting by Watteau is more attractive and beautiful than watching a mountain, a lake, or a beautiful waterfall. Elliott always remarks that *"I can resist anything but temptation."* (24)

Social life is not truthful because it tends to exaggerate the differences that exist between people. It is untruthful because it makes us focus upon the differences that exist between people in the social lives they have not in the individual qualities they have. So, in The Razor's Edge, the life of Elliott and his relationships with others cannot be truthful. The philosopher Kierkegaard expresses in the following lines:

"..Alas, but in actual life one fastens the upper garment of his difference so tightly that it completely conceals the fact that this difference is an outer garment, because the inner glory of its likeness to others never or so very infrequently skines through, as it nevertheless should or ought to do... the reality of life, even if it is not, like eternity, the truth, ought to be truthful, and therefore the other man, who everyone essentially is, ought always to be glimpsed through the disguise..." (25)

Elliott is aware that royal people are not good friends, but he invites them to his parties to show off and for nothing more. He thinks that they deserve nothing and he knows that if he needs them, none of them will do him a favour, but they know how to use the people around them. They are the most ungrateful people in the world. They can break your heart any time. If they do not need you any more, they can cast you aside like a frayed shirt. These are the examples of the corrupt social relationships.

The processes of social life make people feel different from each other. Social relations of power separate people. In The Razor's Edge, people are mediated by relations of class. People do not have to make discriminations in their relations with others if they treat them as individuals with particular abilities and qualities. It is hard for Sophie to understand what makes her feel so small and inadequate in her relations with Isabel, Elliott and the others. She finds it so easy to assume she has nothing to say that could possibly interest them. She has a sense that they almost live in different worlds, so that Isabel and Elliott are not ordinary people. Sophie knows that Isabel and Elliott have a social standing and she is so conscious and aware of the social power they have. She experiences the equality that exist in the personal relationship they have. Sophie feels the gap between her and the others. She feels so anxious and inadequate when she thinks she is going to meet Isabel or Elliott. Rather it can make her blame herself as she internalises this sense of inadequacy without developing much grasp of what is making her feel this way. She feels she is powerless and oppressed within society because she does not lead a life that society wants her to do.

"In Kierkegaard's way of thinking, people's different social position accords with the idea of actors playing different parts. Since this is a 'part' someone is playing it should not be taken too seriously, nor could it have profound effects upon a person's character or personality. It is easy to slip into thinking that a person's character or personality is to be identified with something essentially 'inner' that remains untouched by the particular part

someone happens to be playing. Social life becomes almost a contingent matter." (26)

On the 23rd of October, 1929, the New York market broke. Gray, Isabel husband, ruins after that event and his father Henry Maturin dies. In spite of the crisis, nothing changes in Elliott's life; he does not even diminish his staff or lessen their wages. He keeps on inviting royal people to his house and continues to provide them food and beverage. He buys a new car. He generously gives charity for the families of the workers. He lives and behaves as though there has never been a crisis and that half of the world is not staggering from its effects.

One day when Maugham and Elliott meet in Paris, Elliott buys undershirts at an expensive store. Maugham sees the intertwined 'E.T' of the initials and a crown on them. He is shocked and Maugham, ironically, gives Elliott's remarks in the following way:

"Did you notice the crown? To tell the truth, I'd forgotten about it when I asked you to come in to Charvet's. I don't think I've had occasion to tell you that his Holiness has been graciously pleased to revive in my favour my old family title Your what? I said, startled out of my politeness. Elliott raised a disapproving eyebrow Didn't you know? I am descended in the female from the Count de Lauria who came over to England in the suite of Philip the Second and married a maid of honour of Queen Mary's 'Our old friend Bloody Marry?' 'That, I believe, is what heretics call her,' Elliott answered stiffly." (27)

In spite of his snobbishness and his absurd affectation Elliott is a kind, honest and affectionate man. He feels sorry very much for his sister's death.

Gray suffers a lot after the crash and he tries to find a job, but it is in vain. Being a symbol of hard working men and a symbol of money-making men of America, he finds himself in the middle of a crisis and loses everything. He loses his job too, and it is so

painful for a man like Gray; and it is very scary not find any work. He is eager to work even as a clerk or work in a badly-paid job, but there is no business. So this results in a nervous breakdown and he begins to have headaches, sometimes for about twenty-four hours. He is aware that according to social values he has to work. Isabel is in a difficult position too. She is without a maid and has no governess for the children, so Elliott gives them his home in Paris to live in and decides to live in Riviera. This proves that Elliott is a very generous person. Maugham expresses that "*who could deny that Elliott, that arch snob was also the kindest, most considerate and generous of men?*" (28)

In Chapter IV Elliott moves to Riviera. He wants to live alone so he leaves Isabel and Gray to live in Paris; and he goes to Riviera because he knows that if he lives with them, he cannot lead the life he wants. Meanwhile Gray has gone to pieces and he has still terrible headaches. He wants to work because he knows that a man ought to work so it humiliates him not to be wanted. Elliott tries to help them financially, but Gray hates the feeling of being a drug on the market. Isabel tries to help him in all possible ways. She feels terrible too, but she knows that she must be strong to help her husband and to go back to their normal life. She explains that she did not want to marry Larry because she thought she could not live on little money, but now she has got two children and has to live on little money. It is rather funny for Isabel. She says she is happy with Gray and her children. Gray loves her very much, and he has been a great husband; they spend grand time together. Gray is very kind, generous and considerate. He adores Isabel, and Isabel is very satisfied to be adored by her husband. So, Isabel thinks that she is very lucky. Isabel is a bit like Elliott. Parties money, society, fun are nearly everything to her. She preferred all these things to Larry. Maugham slightly expresses this is the irony of fate, because once Isabel did not want to marry Larry because Larry was poor and had no social consequence, but now everything has changed and now Gray is penniless and has no job. Maugham tries to give a message. Maybe he expresses the games of life to human beings that they may encounter everybody and people have to bear up life's tricks. Life plays its game very professionally. Maybe the 'razor' symbolizes 'life' itself. Everything has changed. Life played its game well and Gray was a gorgeous, rich man once, but now his appearance has changed a lot. He is ashamed all the time because he is unemployed. The crash did not affect Larry so he has got money. This means he is richer than Isabel and Gray.

Some people may think that death is an end of everything so nothing is important after death, but according to Elliott his social importance should go on after death that everybody should take care of him as a precious man of precious society and so he wants to be buried in a beautiful sarcophagus which he has already prepared. Elliott has always thought that he is a man of aristocracy and he is so noble that he does not want to be buried among ordinary people. Maugham ironically expresses in the following lines.

"I've left proper instructions in my will, but I want you to see they're carried out. I will not be buried on the Riviera among a lot of retired colonels and middle class French people." (29)

Elliott is aware that he is going to leave this world and move into another one in a very short time, and he briefly tells what he has done in his short life by means of Landon's poem in the following lines *"I strove with none, for none was worth my strife Nature I loved and next to Nature Art: I warmed both hands before the fire of life: It sinks and I am ready to depart."* (30)

Elliott has always moved in the best society in Europe and this has nearly been the aim of his life, but he thinks that his society is dying. Elliott thinks his society is dead. America is becoming hopelessly middle-class and Elliott is afraid that America will never create an aristocracy.

Elliott always wants to be seen everywhere. Otherwise, he knows that he can be forgotten easily. For fifty years he has moved in the highest circles so even now he gives parties and invites people in his house and is eager to take part in all the parties. Actually this is a lamentable thing he is making.

As an old man Elliott begins to be afraid because he knows that he is getting older and older, that people will not care for him anymore and that he will be apart from his precious society. Society means everything to him. Society is what he lives for and a party is like a breath that he takes, and if he is not invited to such parties, he would rather die; but being alone is just like mortification for him. That summer he makes a special effort to be invited to the parties and always tries to be amusing. He is full of

gossip. He always knows all the details of a scandal before anybody hears something about it. Elliott has spent all his life running from one party to another. Parties make him alert and alive. Maugham sees him in such parties later on. He knows Elliott is too ill, but he finds reasons to go to parties.

Elliott has got an indomitable spirit which can be admired and has got a passion for society. Having a mortal illness, he still tries to take part in parties and to retain his love for society. He has always wanted to be the life and soul of parties. He plays his role very well in society Maugham says that:

"Like a dying actor when he has the grease paint on his face and steps on the stage, who forgets for the time being his aches and pains, Elliott played his part of the polished courtier with his accustomed assurance. He was infinitely amiable, flatteringly attentive to the proper people, and amusing with that malicious irony at which he was an adept. I think I had never seen him display his social gift to greater advantage." (31)

A few days later he is in bed again and his doctor forbids him to leave his bed. Elliott is so sorry about it. Nowadays there is a great party. It's Edna Novemali's party. She is a rich American widow. Elliott is so eager to go there and to wear the costume of his ancestor, the Count de Lauria. Nearly everybody is asked to the party, but Elliott is not. It is an insult for him. He is not well enough to go there and he says that *"the best party of the season! If I were on my deathbed I'd get up for it."* (32)

Elliott is aware that nobody likes him now because he is ill and old and they have no use for him anymore. When he entertained them once they were glad. Now it is so unkind that he is sick, and nobody cares for him, but a few people, but he has done everything for them. He has run their errands and given parties and provided food and drinks for them. But now he has got nothing out of it. They do not care if he lives or dies. He feels so sorry because Elliott is so romantic and he begins to cry. For the first time Elliott admits that once he was the king of parties. but now he is just like a shabby toy which is put aside. It is so lamentable to see an old man weeping like a child

because he hasn't been asked to a party. He hates them now. Maugham is shocked and laments him very much. Maugham draws the death of Elliott very dramatically in the following way:

"Mr Maugham paints with lingering tenderness, right down to the wonderful death-scene, which is a kind of farewell, offering to his old corrupt world of Paris and the Riviera, whose eclipse he would seem here both to acknowledge and to regret." (33)

Elliott takes the appearances of social life too seriously. He is affected by the social relations of power and dominance in society. Social life has the power to damage and cripple people as human beings. Social life can be seen as a play in which people are acting different parts and they can be deeply hurt and crippled through the processes of social life. People can grow or be prevented from growing in their social lives, that is often absent when they are trapped into thinking of social life as a play. People are so dominated by *"utilitarian conceptions of social life."* (34) *"In real life the individual grows fast to his differences, so that at last death must use force to tear them away from him."* (35)

Maugham nearly begins to cry when he sees Elliott like that, in his bed waiting for death. They call the bishop and the priest comes. After the religious ceremony, Maugham finds Elliott cheerful because the important bishop of the Church comes to see him. He still thinks about his high society, but this time it is not in Paris, but in heaven. Elliott is a religious man. Maugham ironically expresses in the following lines:

"A, great honour, my dear fellow, I shall enter the kingdom of heaven with a letter of introduction from a prince of the Church, I fancy that all doors will be open to me... We know from Holy Writ that there are class distinctions in heaven just as there are on earth. There are seraphim and cherubim, archangels and angels. I have always moved in the best society in Europe and I hope no doubt that I shall move in the best society in heaven. Our Lord has said: The

*House of my Father hath many mansions. It would
be highly unsuitable to lodge the hoi polloi in a way
to which they're entirely unaccustomed." (36)*

In his will Elliott wants to be buried in the dress of his ancestor with his sword by his side and with the order of Golden Fleece on his breast. Elliott's life was so silly, useless and trivial. He had gone to so many parties and he hobnobbed with all the dukes, counts and princes, but they have already forgotten him.

We should not accept the social world as it is, nor the ways that people present themselves in the social world. The distinctions of social life make a person something other than he is. In a social life we can only see that someone is a king and someone else is a beggar, but we are generally mistaken if we think that this is what someone is. Someone is always more than being a beggar, as someone is always more than being a king. Sophie is more than being a prostitute, Elliott is more than being a snob and Isabel is more than being a beautiful mother and wife. The most important thing is to see the deeper side and different types of roles of the people. These are simply the roles that people play and we have to be careful not to identify people with the particular roles they have. Everyone has a part to play so that when the curtain falls they are all quite alike, all one and the same: actors. In a sense, the social world is a play that people are acting. In society we are all actors with the roles we play. We need to become aware of the ways we become more identified with social differences as we grow. This affects the growth and development of human beings.

b) Alienation from Society and Social Life:

Alienation can be seen in some of Maugham's works. "*Maugham deals with characters who find themselves alienated by their environments.*" (1) In The Razor's Edge, Larry is alienated. In The Moon and Sixpence, Charles Strickland and in most of Maugham's short stories lots of characters are alienated and, find themselves in different environments and societies. They try to find different social and moral values and generally they succeed in seeking what they want. Actually where they live, what they eat, how they treat people and how they are treated by the others are not very important for them. Sometimes they try to find themselves in solitude, sometimes in a big crowd. In a sense they are aware that they cannot find themselves in their own society, so, they start to look for another environments to live in.

But Charles Strickland in The Moon and Sixpence, for instance, wants to paint in Paris and giving no reason he insists on living there because he thinks that Paris is the only place to paint for him, but Larry, on the other hand, wants to travel all around the world and tries to find what he wants that he cannot describe or name, in different places and he carries on travelling. Larry's alienation is a little bit different from the alienation of the character Charles Strickland in The Moon and Sixpence. Larry wants to get out into the world.

Larry declares that he wants to go to Paris for two years to loaf. He does not want to live selling bonds like Maturins. Larry has got a lot of questions about life and he wants to find answers to his questions. Paris would be a great place to clear his mind. The critic Kate O'Brien generalizes about Larry in the following lines:

"This story, for instance, is of a young American man, a brilliant air ace of the 1914-18 war, who returns to Chicago to find that he cannot live the life his rich friends and relatives have mapped out for him there, cannot marry the nice girl he has long been in love with, but cannot at first say more of what he really means than that he wants to "loaf".(2)

In The Moon and Sixpence, Charles Strickland deserts everything, his wife and his children, his career and goes to Paris to paint, like Larry does in The Razor's Edge. Nobody not even his family can understand Charles Strickland when he decides to give up everything and go to Paris, and nobody understands Larry either, not even Isabel:

"Charles Strickland lived till the age of forty in a flat of Victoria Street, as a stockbroker, with a wife and son and daughter, secretly going out at night, as he approached the cap de quarantaine, to attend classes in drawing and painting. Suddenly he decamped to Paris and took to the life of the poor genius artist." (3)

Strickland stops working for his dreams and Larry does not want to work, but according to Isabel a man has to work. Larry does not want to work or go to school because he thinks teachers cannot teach him what he wants to know. Larry says that:

"When I came back from France they all wanted me to go to college. I couldn't. After what I'd been through, I felt I couldn't go back to school. I learnt nothing at my prep school anyway. I felt I couldn't enter into a freshman's life. They wouldn't have liked me. I didn't want to act a part I didn't feel. And I didn't think the instructors would teach me the sort of things I wanted to know." (4)

These are all nonsense and meaningless to Isabel, but she promises to wait for him for two years. Actually, she does not understand what he aims at. It seems very complicated to Elliott and Mrs Bradley because nobody knows what will happen at the end of the two years. Mrs Bradley thinks that Larry is playing with Isabel.

It hurts Isabel very much that her friends think of Larry as a washout and her uncle sees everything from the social side and her mother sees things only from her point of view and social values. Isabel suffers a lot because nobody cares for Larry. His

friends look upon him all the time and josh him, but they get angry when Larry does not seem to care. Larry, like Charles Strickland in The Moon and Sixpence, cares for nobody: "*Charles Strickland, the artist, does really not care what other people say or think of him.*" (5)

Strickland breaks with society, and so does Larry. Strickland is entirely against social and moral values. Society means nothing to him. He lives in his own way without any interference of social conventions. He has no moral values. Normally, he does not accept moral values of society. He does not care if society approves what he does or not. He is so rude. He has no job, and he leaves his wife and his children; not caring what they do. He has no relationships, no friends. Society tries to judge him, but he does not even let people judge him for what he has done or what he has not done. Nobody understands Larry because even he does not understand himself. He is looking for something, but he does not know what it is, and maybe he is not sure that it is there. As a matter of fact, something gives trouble to Larry. Maybe, he is frightened of something and maybe, he is frightened of himself:

"He is in fact, searching for the good life, the ideal of the saints. He sets out after it, and the pattern of his search is most skilfully woven against the worldly design of the lives of his relations." (6)

Larry was so normal before war, but war has made him something, changing his character entirely. Larry's greatest friend in the air corps is killed while trying to save Larry's life. This event plays an important role in his life and in taking some decisions about his future.

Larry's situation is rather abnormal for Elliott because Larry is nearly against all social values. Elliott cannot understand what Larry is after. He thinks Larry is a thoroughly undesirable young man and it would be a great mistake for Isabel to marry him. Actually, Larry is looking for the meaning of life. "*This is the novel, it will be recalled, about the quest of a young American named Larry Darrell for the ultimate truths about the meaning of life.*" (7)

According to Larry, the 'meaning of life' does not mean the meaning of social relationships or social values. He should find the truth not in the society, but inside of him. As a matter of fact, it is hard to understand Larry. How can a person help someone who does not want any help, but wants to be left alone. He does not want to spend his time with Elliott and his corrupt social relationships. So, he decides to find his truth and meaning of life outside his society.

Larry begins to learn Greek in France. He only wants to be led to the acquisition of knowledge. It is meaningless for Isabel to learn Greek or French literature and whatever Larry says does not come very practical. Larry expresses his feelings in the following lines:

"But it's enormous fun. You can't imagine what a thrill it is to read the Odyssey in the original. It makes you feel as if you had only to get on tiptoe and stretch out your hands to touch the stars." (8)

Larry feels great excitement for reading gives him a great pleasure and he begins to find his lost soul among his books:

"I've been reading Spinoza the last month or two. I don't suppose I understand very much of it yet, but it feels me with exultation. It's like landing from your plane on a great plateau in the mountains. Solitude, and an air so pure that it goes to your head like wine and you feel like a million dollars." (9)

He does not think of going back to Chicago before finding the answers to his questions. He says that *"it would be death to me. It would be the betrayal of my soul."* (10) In The Moon and Sixpence, Charles Strickland feels the same things and he feels he should alienate himself from his environment to find the truth inside of him. From the very beginning he is aware that he must leave everything, his job, his family and his society which everybody admires. But Strickland is out of society. He is quite sure of

himself and leaves everything without any hesitation. Strickland is asked some questions when he goes off to paint suddenly, without a hint of warning:

*"You won't go back to your wife? I said at last.
'Never' !.... She'll never make you a single reproach.'
'She can go to hell.' 'You don't care if she and her
children have to beg their bread? 'Not a damn.'" (11)*

In the short story, The Fall of Edward Barnard we can see another alienation. Barnard goes to Tahiti, leaving his fiancée Isabel in Chicago and promises to come back, but later on he suddenly decides to stay there forever. He refuses to come back to Chicago like Larry does. Edward is aware of the social corruption in Chicago, and he chooses his society in another country which is pure and simple. Edward tries to explain what he wants and why he remains in Tahiti, but his friend Bateman cannot understand him:

*"I don't understand you', he said 'It came upon me
little by little. I came to like the life here with its ease
and its leisure and the people, with their good-
nature and their happy smiling faces. I began to
think I'd never had time to do that before. I began to
read.'" (12)*

Larry, Strickland and Barnard do what they want and insist on finding the thing or things they have lost. But their behaviour is not right according to social values. Society wants them to work and earn enough money to take care of their wives and children and of course to have a social standing in the society. Society wants them to live what social values require them do: Actually society, social values have already shaped their lives, but Larry, Strickland and Barnard are not ordinary people. The people around them have some difficulties to understand their point of view about life and the life-line of Larry, Strickland and Barnard are wrong according to their social values. Their friends and their family are moulded very strictly with the social values that they even force themselves to understand and to get some logical points out of their lifestyle, but they generally fail to understand.

It is very abnormal for Bateman, Edward's best friend, that Edward's reasons for not going to back to Chicago are not reasonable. Edward does not care for money and chooses a simple life without a great deal of money and great social relationships. Larry follows the same way. Edward tells his feelings in the following lines:

"I read for examinations. I read in order to be able to hold my own in conversation. I read for instruction. Here I learned to read for pleasure. I learnt to talk. Do you know that conversation is one of the greatest pleasures in life? But it wants leisure. I'd always been too busy before. And gradually all the life that had seemed so important to me began to seem rather trivial, vulgar. What is the use of all this hustle and this constant striving? I think of Chicago now and I see a dark, grey city, all stone. It is like a prison- and a ceaseless turmoil. And what does all that activity amount to? Does one get these the best out of life? Is that what we come into the world for, to hurry to an office, and work hour after hour till night... Is that how I must spend my youth? Youth lasts so short a time, Bateman. And when I'm old, what have I to look forward to? To hurry my home in the morning to my office?... That may be worth while if you make a fortune; I don't know, it depends on your nature; but if you don't is it worth while then? I want to make more out of my life than that."

(13)

Like Larry, Charles breaks with the society. Larry tries to acquire enough wisdom, and he is aware that he does not follow the normal course; he is not afraid of falling. Larry thinks he is right to spend a few years educating himself. He wants to learn as passionately as Gray, who, unlike him, wants to make lots of money. As a matter of fact

Isabel is not a person for Larry and she draws a very black picture of life without money and social standing. Larry explains how the life of spirit makes him feel happy:

"I wish I could make you see how much fuller the life I offer you is than anything you have a conception of. I wish I could make you see how exciting the life of the spirit is and how rich in experience. It's illimitable. It's such a happy life. There's only one thing like it, when you're up in a plane by yourself, high high and only infinity surrounds you. You're intoxicated by the boundless space. You feel such a sense of exhilaration that you wouldn't exchange it for all the power and glory in the world. I was reading Descartes the other day. The ease the grace the lucidity. Gosh!" (14)

Larry sacrifices everything, even himself for his dreams. Strickland in The Moon and Sixpence sacrifices his wife, his children and himself. Charles's real life consists of dreams and of hard work. But where are the dreams? Strickland gives no hint of them. He asks nothing from his friends and family except that they should leave him alone, because he only wants to paint and Larry only wants to read. *"Strickland was single hearted in his aim, and to pursue it he was willing to sacrifice not only himself- many can do that but others..." (15)* Others may think that Larry is wasting his time trying to find his lost soul and the answers to his questions. Now he feels himself in the point of no return and it is no good running. Isabel cannot understand his feelings and puts the blame on Larry for his nonsense thoughts which will affect their life.

According to Maugham, Larry's loafing seems to involve some very strenuous work. Larry can do everything to gain knowledge and cannot help doing so. He is ready to sacrifice the people who love him. This is very selfish to Isabel. On the other hand, she cannot understand the use of Larry's learning dead languages and he is never going to do anything. But according to Larry, it is a sufficient satisfaction merely to know, just as it is a sufficient satisfaction for an artist to produce a work of art, and maybe the

knowledge that he wants to gain is only a step towards something further. Larry has got a disinterested desire for knowledge. The surprising thing is that Larry does not want to go to school and learn all the knowledge he wants because he thinks that he can never find what he wants at a college. He has got a definite idea of what he wants, and he never cares for a degree as Elliott does for he feels that a degree would be of no use to him. Larry wants to follow his own way to learn. He is not a man of social relationships or social conventions. Larry, like Charles Strickland in The Moon and Sixpence wants to act alone in his life.

In the short story The Fall of Edward Barnard, Edward draws his life line like Larry does, while the other people think there is something wrong in their lives and they have already failed. Edward gives a satisfactory answer to their questions:

"I haven't failed I've succeeded You can't think with what zest I look forward to life, how full it seems to me and how significant.... I shall have created something. The years will pass insensibly, and when I am an old man I hope I shall be able to look back on a happy, simple peaceful life. In my small way I too shall have lived in beauty. Do you think it is so little to have enjoyed contentment? We know that it will profit a man little if he gains the whole world and loses his soul. I think I have won mine." (16)

Three of them, Larry, Charles and Edward run away from the materialistic features of life and social conventions and they manage to weave their lives according to their values, using different instruments, painting for instance, or reading or farming. In The Razor's Edge, Larry decides to loaf. He is different from his friends and is eager to go on walking in his way and wants to find his own way, his rights and wrongs on his own. Maugham explains in the following way:

"You know, in learning there's the lone wolf as well as the wolf who runs in the pack. I think Larry is one

of those persons who can go on other way than their own." (17)

Larry is in a long, arduous road, and he has already started to travel on this road. Maybe at the end of this road, he will find what he is looking for. It occurs to Maugham that what Larry is seeking is God that this has never occurred to Isabel. Maugham tries to explain and tries to help Isabel to understand Larry, giving such an example:

"There are people who are strangely constituted. There are criminals who work like beavers to contrive schemes that land them in prison and they no sooner get out than they start all over again and again, landing in prison. If they put as much industry, as much cleverness, resource, and patience into honest practices they could make a handsome living and occupy important positions. But they're just made that way. They like crime.... What I'm trying to tell you is that there are men who are possessed by an urge so strong to do some particular thing that they can't help themselves, they've got to do it. They're prepared to sacrifice everything to satisfy their yearning." (18)

Maugham feels something in Larry that strangely he is a loof. Larry has never taken root anywhere. He has been wandering for years. He has spent his last two years in India. He has spent his years with Yogies there. He is really attracted by the saintliness of his Yogi, and he says that he gains peace from his Yogi in India. Maugham observes a detachment in him. Larry has got something more than the other people. Maugham observes an aloofness in him. He says that:

"...When he's with us, easy as he is to get on with, friendly and sociable, one's conscious of a sort of detachment in him, as though he weren't giving all of himself, but withheld in some hidden part of his soul

*something, I don't know what it is a tension, a secret,
an aspiration, a knowledge that sets him apart?"*
(19)

Maybe there is a secret in his life and maybe he likes secrets and that's why he does not want to tell his dwelling place. Maybe, there is a queer instinct that urges him to carry over to his dwelling place some privacy of his spirit. Larry looks normal on the surface, but after a little while you discover something strange, different and a detachment in him. Isabel tells her observations about Larry in the following lines:

*"One's having fun, and one thinks he's just like one
of us, just like everybody else, and then suddenly you
have the feeling that he's escaped you like a smoke
ring that you try to catch in your hands." (20)*

Larry is alienated and finds what he wants. His alienation seems strange to others, but his alienation gives him a new social and moral point of view.

III. Moral Values in The Razor's Edge

a) The Analysis of The Characters in Terms of Moral Values:

In all kinds of human relationships that exist between human beings, moral notions can be found. moral notions are formed in order to be able to control things in our everyday life. Moral notions are not only formed by ourselves but they are also about ourselves because we are "*rule-following rational beings*." (1)

Moral notions not only have to be formed from the point of view of anyone, but they also have to be about the features of our lives that can be the feature of anyone's life. They provide not only the rules for our thinking about the world but also the rules for our behaviour. It is people who make and have moral values of a public.

These individual moral principles are made universal and they become moral values of a public. Most people become to perform the same act. The act may or may not be right is that its rightness or wrongness depends on the "*relevant facts*" (2) of the situation in which they are performed.

Human acts have been formed from the moral point of view. According to moral values our feelings and acts can be right or wrong; to have them or perform them at the right times, on the right occasions towards the right people, for the right motive and in the right way is what characterizes 'goodness'. Whether an act is right or wrong depends on what reason and in what situation it is performed. But it is generally right when the act is performed according to certain rules and conventions that exist in a society. People are forced to follow the rules from the moral point of view.

Moral notions do not reflect the needs, wants, aspirations or ideals of any one person or a group of individuals. We formulate our notions from the moral point of view of society because our "*language is public*." (3) This does not mean that people eliminate their personal decisions from their moral life, but public puts them into their proper place in their lives.

Moral values tell us what we should do and what we should not do. They are also quite important to develop a clear sense of what people can expect from each other and they help us prove ourselves in the eyes of the people of society.

In The Razor's Edge, Larry does not want to go to school and wants to find his way in life on his own. He does not want to have what other people want from life. When he wants to go to Paris to loaf and when he tells it to his family, and friends, they think he is crazy. Elliott thinks, on the other hand, Larry has a lack of respect for him and for the rest of the family. The truth is that Larry wants to have a different kind of relationship with the others.

Larry knows that his family and his friends will respect him when he has proved himself at school and at work. He does not want to have to prove himself anymore. Elliott compares him with Gray, Larry's friend, who always seems to do very well at school and work. So Larry feels he is disappointing his family because he has not done well enough but on the other hand, it is normal for his family to judge him by these standards of moral values.

Moral law can make us feel we are always trying to prove ourselves through living up to certain standards. Larry wants to identify the meaning and worth of his life with the struggle for salvation, but according to society he has to prove himself in terms of the moral laws so he has to repress and subordinate his needs, desires and feelings.

He wants people to accept him as he is, not to make him feel he has to prove himself. Our wants, needs, desires and feelings are not taken as having any worth. Larry feels he can only be respected by his family if he does well at school and at work, while at another point he cannot really be recognised by his family as a person in his own right at all, because he should not consider his individual feelings or what he wants and needs for himself.

Larry feels he is just not interested in doing well at school. He wants to loaf, so he wants to travel and find what he needs. This is the way he feels and he can express himself most fully and deeply.

Elliott thinks his loafing is just as a matter of self-indulgence. Morality helps Elliott and the other characters in the family feel that Larry should apply himself to his studies, even if he does not want to. This is the very way he can prove himself. Otherwise people may think he is a 'lazy good for nothing'. Isabel thinks Larry can do better for himself in life than he could ever do with his nonsense thoughts about discovering his own life. This leaves Larry feeling he has to become someone he is not, in order to win the respect of his family and his society. His society and family will not respect the choices he has made for himself. Larry thinks he knows what he wants to do with his life and that his family cannot know better than he does. Elliott thinks Larry is satisfying himself and that this kind of decision can have no moral worth since Larry is simply following his inclinations.

Moral laws separate us from our very emotions, desires and needs. They help us recognize the ways in the clarification and expression of identity and self and teach us to subordinate our desires, emotions and needs in our search to identify ourselves with what are ought to do. Morality makes life difficult and life can become very much a matter of proving ourselves. In a kind of society in which children are supposed to give automatic respect to their parents and where it is a sign of disobedience to question a parent, Larry finds himself up against a set of patriarchal relationships.

Larry plays his role very well. Maybe, this is a very simple and very common thing which does not strike the other people around him. On the other hand, Larry has always been a really good person. He always tries to help people and his friends. Larry does favours and does not want anybody do him a favour. He is so good that everybody begins to think he is a strange man. Maugham gives his feelings about Larry at the end of the chapter iv in the following lines:

"Well, Larry is I think, the only person I've ever meet who's completely disinterested. It makes his actions seem peculiar. We're not used to persons who do things simply for the love of God whom they don't believe in." (4)

Something makes him so queer. It may be something so commonplace that a person cannot notice it easily. According to Maugham, this may be goodness. Larry is a

man of saintly character. He obviously represents goodness. Edward, in The Fall of Edward Barnard like Larry values goodness and truth. When he is asked the question "*What do you value in life then?*" and he replies in the following way that "*beauty, truth and goodness.*" (5)

'Goodness' means nothing to Isabel, but she still loves Larry and suffers an agony at the bottom of her heart because she had a chance to marry Larry once, but she chose Gray. Her heart has always belonged to Larry. On the other hand, Gray has always been with Isabel. He is not like Larry.

Gray and Larry are quite different from each other. Isabel can hold Gray in her hand all the time, but she could not do the same thing to Larry. He has always escaped her. Larry is like shadow. He vanishes all the time and he was in love with Isabel after a fashion. Gray is a nice person who has never had an awful temper.

Gray is a great symbol of the American man who has got a good faculty of love. He loves his children more than Isabel does. He shows them a great affection, but Isabel is not wrapped up in children as Gray is. She does not want to spend all her time with her children. She thinks that it is wrong to make children the only concern of life. Their children worship Isabel, but they love their father.

Isabel feels that he loves Gray and wants to live with him forever, but the strange thing is that he married Gray not to love him but for money, but now she has got neither money nor love. She still admits that money plays an important role in her life:

"You know what I am. I'm never really happy unless I fell the cement of a sidewalk under my feet and there are large plate glass windows all along the street with hats to look at and fur coats and gold-mounted dressing cases." (6)

Isabel is a very possessive woman. Gray has got a poetic feeling and he is an ardent lover. Both of them are very important for Isabel. They mean a lot to her, but there must be something more which means more to Isabel than both of them put together.

Maugham and Isabel argue about love and passion and men's and women's attitude towards them. According to Maugham, there can be love without passion. Habitually two people can go on having sexual intercourse like they grow hungry and there can be desire without love. Desire is not passion and desire is the natural consequence of the sexual instinct. If love is not passion, it is not love, but something else. Maugham thinks that passion did not enter Isabel's and Larry's love. So it is actually not love. Their love was so natural and simple as the love of Romeo and Juliet. But their love had not a bad end. Because Isabel made a rich marriage as she wanted and Larry travelled the world to find what he lost.

Larry's love for Isabel could not help him give up his dreams and Isabel's love for Larry was not worth leaving the life of rich and important people, but love is worth everything. Love is not plausible. You can never explain it logically. Maugham gives very good examples for it and explains love and passion in the following lines:

"Passion doesn't count the cost. Pascal said that the heart has its reason that reason takes no account of. If he meant what I think, he meant that when passion seizes the heart it invents reasons that seem not only plausible but conclusive to prove that the world is well sacrificed and that shame is a cheap price to pay. Passion is destructive. It destroyed Antony and Cleopatra, Tristan and Isolde, Parnell and Kitty O'Shea. And if it doesn't destroy it dies. It may be then that one is faced with the desolation of knowing that one has wasted the years of one's life, that one's brought disgrace upon oneself, endured the frightful pang of jealousy, swallowed every bitter morification, that one's expended all one's tenderness, poured out all the riches of one's soul on a poor drab, a fool, a peg on which one hung one's dreams, who wasn't worth a stick of chewing gum."(7)

In Chapter IV, Maugham deals with Suzanne Rouviev that he has already mentioned at the beginning of the book. He has known her for about twelve years. Suzanne is not a very beautiful woman. She works as a model and actually she is a prostitute. She is a good and proud person. Suzanne represents common sense and the charm, the fundamentally worthwhile values of the French civilization, contrasted with the savage Isabel, the worldly Elliott, the nymphomaniac Sophie, and the money-making Gray. Representing the feminine cult of social security, Suzanne is different from Sophie and Rosie, the other whore in The Cakes and Ale. Rosie is selfish and dishonest.

In Chapter V, Maugham meets Sophie, the other woman character. She looks so slut. She is not only drunk but also doped. Her in-laws have kicked her out of Chicago because she is notorious. She flung herself into the terrible degradation of drink and promiscuous copulation to get even with life that had treated her so cruelly. She lost her husband and her child. She could not put up with the common earth of common men.

Moral notions play in our moral judgements. People generally evaluate things from the moral point of view. Isabel humiliates Sophie while the others cannot help feeling sorry for her. She is so cool about Sophie. Isabel thinks Sophie is naturally bad and that is why she is in that position. Isabel sees no reason to be sentimental about Sophie. Actually Isabel does not feel sympathy for Sophie. Isabel thinks that Sophie has got an evil inside of her. It aroused when her husband and her baby died. The death of her husband and her baby should not have made a prostitute. Isabel tells her feelings about Sophie and she never agrees with Maugham about her:

"Sophie wallows in the gutter because she likes it. Other women have lost their husbands and children. It wasn't that made her evil. Evil doesn't spiring from good. The evil was there always. When that motor accident broke her defences it set her free to be herself. Don't waste your pity on her; she's now what at heart she always was." (8)

Isabel shows no respect for Sophie. But respect is not a sufficient guide in our relations with others. A person who wants to achieve his goal might do his best to relate

to others as equals whenever he happens to cross his path, but he does not love his friends or the people around him. Isabel shows respect to Sophie in order to achieve her end. She wants to make Larry and Sophie apart and she plays a game. To be successful in her game she is aware that she has to show respect to Sophie, but she does not love Sophie at all. Kierkegaard expresses in the following way:

"But the one who in cowardice would only exist within the partition walls of association where he would accomplish so very much and gain so many advantages; the one who in cowardice dared not attract the attention of men, the poor, the rich, because he suspected that the attention of men was a dubious good. If one has something true to communicate; the one who in cowardice carried out his favoured activities within the security of the respect for persons: he bears the responsibility- that he does not love his neighbour." (9)

Sophie is disappointed and she is resented. As a matter of fact she does not want to live without her husband and her baby. The critic Cyril Connolly explains about Sophie that *"Sophie Macdonald, the type of American girl gone to the bad-drinks, drugs, sailors out of the violence of her disappointment with life."* (10) People can be made to suffer and be damaged by the social relations they live out in their everyday lives. Sophie is a prostitute. The most important thing is not that she is a prostitute, but that why she is made to be a prostitute in a society which is so technologically advanced. This is a role she has chosen, but society is somehow responsible for the conditions of her life. Sophie was capable of a great deal. She was so pure. She always gives the impression of loftiness of the soul, but she cannot adopt herself to the conditions of social and moral life.

Isabel and Elliott treat people equally who have social ranks in the society. But if they see a person in a bad condition they feel he or she is extremely bad and does not deserve to be treated as equals. The idea of existing equally for all people, regardless of the inequalities of power and wealth that divide us, has a powerful influence within

moral culture. This can help us to a sense that we can individually choose what kind of relationship to have with others, since it makes us confident we can always abstract from the social relations of power and subordination that threaten to separate people. So it makes us feel that the fact that someone is rich and someone else is poor does not have to make a difference to the relationship they have with each other. This relationship simply depends on the qualities we have as individuals. If this makes it difficult to understand how issues of class relations of power enter into the tensions, anxieties and fears of this relationship, it gives people the strength and confidence to know they can struggle against power or wealth. This can help us relate equally to others whatever their situation in life happens to be.

If people live differently, or are engaged in different kinds of work, or are poor, this should not have to make a difference to the ways we relate to them. Larry is a person who never cares for individual differences, the kind of work of the people or the moral values which are sometimes quite unnecessary and not valid in terms of humanity. Larry lives in a social world and is never apt not to catch sight of people around him. On the contrary he feels a responsibility towards them. We share the equality with others in our "*common humanity*." (11) This sharing should not be done through withdrawing us from the social world. This escape from the social world in which our experience is formed and our lives are lived is another attempt to "*reject the human*." (12)

Larry never humiliates people, but Isabel does it all the time. Larry only tries to help people. Sophie also tried to help people like Larry does now. She was a nice person. Larry talks highly about Sophie, and this makes Isabel crazy.

Larry wants to teach people to love their friends and the people around them even if this brings people into conflict with morality. Larry has got a critical eye for the conventional morality. He thinks the deeper meaning of life lies in 'goodness'.

In the novel the two prostitutes draw different lines. Sophie is so weak that she even decides to stop living. Suzanne, on the other hand, is strong enough and wants to live in all kinds of circumstances. She is a prostitute, but she is very proud. She takes care of herself very well, but Sophie drinks a lot to give harm to her body and to try to

forget her terrible experience. When Suzanne is ready for the ups and downs of life, Sophie sacrifices her life for her dead husband and child.

Suzanne is so proud and romantic, and never unfaithful; Sophie is so weak and leads a life which is harmful for her, but Rosie, another prostitute in Maugham's one of the best novels Cakes and Ale, is unvirtuous and plump. Rosie is an ex-barmaid. She is rosy and unvirtuous. She is unfaithful to her husband with most of his male friends.

Sophie and Larry are similiar in many ways. Both of them sacrifice their lives for something:

"There is Sophie Macdonald, a spirit akin to Larry's, whose vision of evil is too much for her, and drives her the way of sin and death where Larry goes the way of life and sanctity." (13)

Larry helps Sophie, and this makes Isabel angry. Isabel thinks that Sophie is a drunken slut, is so bad and disgusting and her relationship is not logical and valid in terms of moral values. Maugham does not agree with her. It is true that Sophie is soused all day and night long and goes to bed with everybody who asks her, but according to Maugham this does not mean that she is bad. Those are bad habits, like biting nails. He thinks he can call a person who lies and cheats bad. *"Moral principles come to exist over and above social life."* (14) Morality is not a matter of living up to abstract principles that we come to know as correct because of the workings of our reason. Morality very much concerns the quality of our human relationships with others. Isabel thinks that Larry is sacrificing himself for that girl and somebody should stop him, but Maugham knows that nobody can stop Larry because it is not love that he feels for Sophie, but more than that so Maugham thinks that Isabel can do nothing for him.

Isabel does not want to give Larry into the hands of a prostitute. She calls Sophie a 'raging nymphomaniac'. Isabel relates her feelings in the following lines:

"I suppose it was the end of the world for her when her husband and her baby were killed. I suppose she didn't care what became of her and flung herself into the horrible degradation of drink and promiscuous

copulation to get even with life that had treated her so cruelly. She'd lived in heaven and when she lost it she couldn't put up with the common earth of common men, but in despair plunged headlong into hell. I can imagine that if she couldn't drink the nectar of the gods any more she thought she might as well drink bathroom gin." (15)

Maugham and Larry believe that despite the distinctions in the everyday conditions and relations of people's lives, people share a "*fundamental humanity*." (16) Maugham expresses his sense of morality about Sophie in the following way:

"That doesn't mean she's bad. Quite a number of highly respected citizens get drunk and have a liking for rough trade. They're bad habits, like biting one's nails, but I don't know that they're worse than that. I call a person bad who lies and cheats and is unkind." (17)

Isabel thinks that she is giving up Larry because she does not want to stand in his way and this is the only reason, but Maugham does not believe her. Maugham says that "*come off it, Isabel. You gave him up for a square cut diamond and a sable coat.*" (18)

Maugham tries to say that self confidence is a passion. It is such a passion that it is stronger than lust and hunger, and Larry has got self confidence. Maugham explains in the following lines:

"I only wanted to suggest to you that self confidence is a passion so overwhelming that beside it even lust and hunger are trifling. It whirls its victim to destruction in the highest affirmation of his personality. The object doesn't matter; it may be worth while or it may be worthless. No wine is so intoxicating, no love so shattering, no vice so compelling. When he sacrifices himself man for a moment is greater than God, for how can God,

infinite and omnipotent, sacrifice himself? At best he can only sacrifice his only begotten son." (19)

When Larry is in the grip of passion, nothing would affect him, neither common sense nor prudence. He does not care if Sophie is a slut or a prostitute, or he does not care what other people think of him if he marries her. Nobody knows what he has been seeking all these years. All years of experience and labour weigh nothing in the balance when they are set against his desire. Actually this is more than desire. This is stronger than desire to save soul of a wanton woman he has known or an innocent child. Because of this, he would suffer a lot for he is oversensitive. His life's work, his aim will be undone. Larry is so good that he can sacrifice himself for saving the soul of a prostitute and he does it eagerly. Maugham expresses that "*Larry lacks just that touch of ruthlessness that even the saint must have to win his halo.*" (20)

When Larry was in India, he read a lot and meditated most of the time. He thought and thought. He got lost in his thoughts. According to Larry, meditation and thinking are very hard to do. Larry is so friendly, so easy as Larry used to be but Isabel feels something different in him. Isabel knows that she lost him years ago, that she still loves him. She cares for him all the time. She loves him with her motherly instincts that she has never felt in her relation with her children. The circumstances have been altered, but Larry is still hers. When she is with him she forgets everything, even her children.

Sophie's death makes Larry and Maugham so sorry. When Maugham says that Sophie is dead, Isabel does not even pretend to be sorry. She supposes Sophie died of heavy drink and dope. She thinks she deserved such a bad end because living the life of a prostitute, she was bound to come to a bad end. Yet, Isabel still does not care about Sophie and is not miserable about what she did. She still says that "*she was bad, bad, bad. I'm glad she's dead.*" (21) Maugham thinks that Isabel is a nice and good person, but there is something missing in her character. She lacks compassion and tenderness. Desmond MacCarthy expresses about Maugham's women characters in the following lines:

"In a sense he approves of selfishness. He sees it masquerading everywhere, and he has come to prefer it naked and unashamed. But really, we seem

to hear him say, some women carry selfishness too far! They are such bilkers too, taking without giving, and without a notion of fair play." (22)

Isabel asks Maugham if anybody knows her murderer. Maugham replies that nobody knows it, but he knows certainly that Isabel killed Sophie. Isabel becomes very angry when she hears such things from Maugham. Maugham thinks that there is something fishy about Sophie's event and the only person who is responsible for Sophie's death is Isabel.

In time people cannot question or challenge moral values and they are forced to adopt the certain moral principle of society. Sophie cannot adopt moral principles and is condemned to death by due process of moral values. In this case it is hard to accept the validity of moral principles or the force of moral notions. Isabel is who far from knowing the meaning of 'good' judges Sophie. Sophie is judged by lots of people because her way of life is not right in terms of moral values of society, but leading a life which others do not approve should not be the only way of being vicious and bad.

According to Maugham's moral values society should put the blame on Isabel not on Sophie. Isabel seems to have strong moral values, but actually she has not got high moral values. She thinks she is right while playing with the lives of other people for her own interests. She is so greedy and merciless that in the character Isabel it would not be plausible to talk about morality.

To make a particular human act which is bad into one which is good we have to make a special effort or we have to use some means to change it. But people generally do not exert some special effort in the performance of the act to make it better, instead we judge it and do not provide the things that are missing in it. Isabel does nothing to help Sophie. She does not even lead Sophie into a kind of life with society can approve. She only criticises Sophie in all possible ways and shows no desire to make her good. What Sophie does is always wrong according to Isabel.

Sophie has been the only girl whom Larry could have married in all his life. She had the seed of spiritual beauty. She had a spirit for the secret mystical beauty of life and had a soft and rich heart. Larry tells Maugham his feelings about Sophie "*she had a*

lovely soul fervid, aspiring and generous. Her ideals were great hearted. There was even at the end a tragic nobility in the way she sought destruction." (23)

On the other hand, Isabel and Sophie are quite different characters. While Isabel is fond of the luxuries of life, Sophie would not in the least mind about it. Maugham thinks that Isabel cut Sophie's throat as surely as if she would use the knife across it with her own hands.

Judgements in the social life are made by the use of moral notions. Without moral notions there would be nothing to express an attitude to, nothing to make a decision about and nothing to evaluate.

Sophie's death can help us understand the viciousness that "*lie hidden in a man*" (24) and that is a "*secret envy*." (25) Isabel gets this power of feeling over herself. Isabel places the responsibility of Sophie's death upon the shoulders of poor Sophie and her bad relationships. The viciousness that lies hidden in Isabel is something that Sophie can have only herself to blame for. The anger and resentment of Sophie against the organisation of society is never justified.

It is true that the general picture of society can be drawn within "*moral theory*." (26) The social and moral world is so difficult to live in. It is full of the responsibilities we share, the inequalities we are face to face and the burden of moral principles which shape our lives. Despite all the difficulties, we should situate ourselves more firmly within the social world rather than abstract ourselves from it. The search for more equal human relationships becomes more reliable and logical with a struggle for social and moral justice.

Religion and Moral Life:

The relation between religious faith and moral life is quite strong. Morality is a central feature of all religion. The true things to the things which are morally right and acceptable are vitally affected by the possession of a religious faith and by the quality of that faith. People need an object of religious faith grows out of an experience which is both moral and mystical. Faith is a product of the moral life which both sustains it and is sustained by it. Moral life is supported by faith. Religion is the essential basis of true morality in a social life.

The Razor's Edge is not a religious novel. It is the story of a man who found a faith, but this is not even a mystical novel. In The Razor's Edge religion can be regarded in terms of morality and moral developments of the characters, especially Larry. Here Maugham uses faith as an instrument which leads his character Larry Darrell into a mature point of view. Maugham gives Larry's moral development while he is searching for a philosophy or a religion.

Larry tries to look for a lifestyle which will satisfy both his head and his heart. He wants to be a redeemer. Larry travels a lot to find this faith. Larry sees a dead man in the war and shame. There he begins to think about life and death. He feels shame because he is so young and so energetic and the death body looks as if it has never been alive to Larry. This event affected him very much for he is so sensitive when the war is over he has time to think.

Larry has been looking for a philosophy or maybe a religion. He has tried to look for a religion. He has tried to look for a lifestyle which will satisfy both his head and his heart. He tries to teach the rule of life or the philosophy of life he has already taught to Sophie. He wants to be Sophie's redeemer. Isabel, on the other hand, has always tried to learn how to live to best advantage.

Larry sees a dead man in the war and feels shame. There he begins to think about life and death. He feels shame because he is so young and so energetic and the death body looks as if it has never been alive to Larry. This event affected him very much for

he is so sensitive. When the war is over, he has time to think. He asks himself what life is for and he is alive luckily that he might have been dead like his friend. This event is the turning point of his life because so many things have changed in his life. He wants to do something for himself, but he cannot name it. He does not know what it is. Until now, he has not thought of God, heaven or hell, but now he begins to think about them. He was very ignorant about it. He wants to learn lots of things to give a meaning to his life so he begins to read at haphazard. Then he decides his place is not in the society, among people who take life, death, the most important of all the meaning of life, for granted.

Larry stays in the monastery for three months. He is so happy there. He reads in the library a lot. Fathers in the monastery do not want to influence him but talk about the subjects he wants. The monks tell him that God had created the world for his glorification. It is not very logical for Larry.

Larry cannot understand that monks pray to God since He gives them bread. He thinks He should do it if He created us. We should not feel gratitude to Him for giving us what we need:

"Do children beseech their earthly father to give them sustenance? They expect him to do it, they neither feel nor need to feel gratitude to him for doing it, and we have only blame for a man who brings children into the world that he can't or Won't provide for. It seemed to me that if an omnipotent creator was not prepared to provide his creatures with the necessities of existence, material and spiritual he'd have done better not to create them."

(1)

People pray without misgiving. According to Larry God does not want us to pray for him. Larry expresses in the following way:

"It was hard for me to believe that God thought much of a man who tried to wangle salvation by fulsome flattery. I should have thought the worship most pleasing to him was to do your best according to your lights." (2)

But the most important thing which preoccupied his mind was sin which was not absent even from the monks. Larry has got a deep love for human beings and does not put the blame on them if they do something wrong because it is not completely their fault, and the most part of badness is due to heredity and to their environment which they do not choose. He says that *"If I'd been God I couldn't have brought myself to condemn one of them, not even the worst. to eternal damnation."* (3)

Larry could not understand the meaning of hell either. Father Ensheim says that hell was the deprivation of God's existence. God created men and sin was expected because he wanted so, but punishment was nonsense in this case. The monks, on the other hand, think that if a person wants to receive God's grace, he ought to conquer the wickedness in him, to accept the coming sorrow and pain and misfortune and to resist temptation. Larry does not think so. Larry did not decide whether he should have believed in God or not because he was so strong and created human beings and the world or the universe. He tells Maugham:

"I didn't see why you shouldn't believe in a God who hadn't created the world, but had to make the best of the bad job he'd found, a being enormously better, wise and greater than man, who strove with the evil he hadn't made and who you hoped might in the end overcome it. But on the other hand, I didn't see why you should." (4)

Later on Larry goes to India. He learns lots of things about God there. He learns the three manifestations of the Ultimate reality, Brahma, the Creator, Siva, the Destroyer and Vishnu, the Preserver. Larry says that *"A God that can be understood is no God who can explain the Infinite in words."* (5)

Larry suddenly realizes that India could teach him much and India could give him what he has wanted. He makes up his mind to stay there. Hindus think about the endless recurrence which is the nature of Absolute and Larry begins to think about it deeply. Hindus believe that the purpose of the creation is to serve a place for the reward and the punishment of the deeds of the soul's earlier existence which is the transmigration of souls. In the transmigration of souls, the soul passes from body to body endlessly into a course of experience occasioned by the merit or demerit of previous work. Indians believe that the soul is determined by the actions in the previous lives to inhabit an imperfect body. They do not talk of an accident.

According to Larry transmigration is the explanation and justification of the evil of the world. We committed sins in our past lives and we suffer from evils now and we can bear them with resignation, and if we strive towards virtue, our future lives will be less afflicted. We can bear up our own evils and it is easy to do so, but we need manliness for it but actually, that which is unmerited in appearance is intolerable.

Evil is the inevitable result of the past. Maugham wants to learn why God did create the suffering world as the result of sins and evil at the beginning when there was no merit and demerit in the individual to determine his actions. The Hindus think that there is no beginning. And the individual soul has existed from the eternity and the soul belongs to the prior existence. Larry neither believes in the transmigration of souls nor disbelieve in it.

Larry tells Maugham a strange experience of him which he once had. While he was practising meditation one night at the Ashrama, he lit a candle and then he saw a long line of figures behind the other. The first one was an old woman, dressed in the seventies. Behind her, he saw a jew, and behind him a young Englishman of the sixteenth century stood; behind him there was a long queue. Then, they faded slowly into the darkness. Larry is not sure, but he thinks that the endless chain of figures that he has seen were himself in past lives.

According to Hindus (Vedantists) the soul is distinct from the body, and the senses are distinct from the mind and intelligence. The soul is not a part of the Absolute

is infinite and has no parts, but the Absolute. It is not created. It has always existed
Larry explains that:

"It is like a drop of water that has arisen from the sea and in a shower has fallen into a puddle, then drifts into a brook, finds its way into a stream, after that into a river, passing through mountain gorges and wide plains, winding this way and that, obstructed by rocks and fallen trees, till at last it reaches the boundless sea from which it rose." (6)

Larry thinks that individuality is a big handicap to become one with the Absolute. Individuality is an expression of our egoism. The Absolute signifies reality to Larry. A person cannot say what the Absolute is, but only can say what it is not. It is inexpressible. The Indians call it Brahman. Everything in the world depends on it. It is nowhere and everywhere. It is, in fact not a person or a thing or an event or a cause and it has no qualities. It is permanent, but it changes. It is a whole and a part, finite and infinite at the same time. It does not depend on time, so it is eternal. It is perfect. It is everything. Thus, it means freedom to Larry.

According to Larry men have created their own God for themselves from the beginning because they needed Him. They have always wanted a personal God to recover from their agony and for comfort and encouragement. Larry thinks that someday men will look for comfort and encouragement in their own souls. Larry thinks that to worship is no more than the feeling to adore their cruel Gods in the past and primitive lives. He passionately believes that God is within the man or nowhere. So what should he do and whom should he worship?

Men are on different levels of spiritual development and Indians have wanted to see the Absolute in different manifestations called Brahma, Vishnu or Siva and many other names. Isvara is the creator and ruler of the world, and the Absolute is in Isvara. There are gods in India which represent the realization of the self.

Larry is very much attracted by this faith. This faith is more special and logical than the others because he believes in them. This has been the condition of their salvation. They seemed they needed your faith to have faith in themselves. They were just like pagan gods. On the other hand, Advaita does not want you or force you to trust something, but you should have a passionate desire to know "Reality" which is the meaning of life. Advaita says that you can experience God as you experience pain or joy. There are so many people in India who declare that they know God.

Larry says that a person can attain 'Reality' by knowledge. The sages of India admit that salvation may be won by the way of love and the way of works, but according to Larry the noblest way is the way of works and it needs "reason" which is the most precious faculty of man.

Larry goes to Travancore to see Shri Ganesha, a yogi, who lives in a cave in the hills for many years then comes to the plain where he has a little house. When Larry first sees him he realizes that he is the man he has been seeking. Larry wants to be his guru. While they are talking, Shri Ganesha falls into trance that Indians call "Samadhi". During "Samadhi" the duality of the subject and the object vanishes and you become "Knowledge of Absolute". Shri Ganesha lets Larry stay there with him. Larry reads a good deal there. He meditates. He asks so many questions to Shri and listens to him. His voice is just like a music in Larry's ears.

Larry tries to rescue himself from the slavery of selfhood, passion, and sense by the help of Shri Ganesha. He tries to acquire resignation, renunciation, restraint by the steadfastness of mind and a strong desire for freedom. People come to see Shri from the nearby towns to ask him advice, to listen to his teaching.

At last Larry has found what he wants. What Shri has taught is very simple. Actually men are greater than they know. Freedom is the goal of life and wisdom is the means to freedom. If you want salvation, you do not need to retire from the world entirely but only to renounce the self. Without a selfish interest, work purifies the mind. Larry wants to receive illumination. He says:

"...the state when you have at last burst the bonds of ignorance, and know with a certainty there is no disputing that you and the Absolute are one." "And then?" "Then, if what they say is true, there is nothing more. The soul's course on earth is ended and it will return no more." (7)

Happiness can be given only by the 'Infinite' and the satisfactions of the world are transitory. But the endless duration makes good no better. Larry explains what he thinks about it:

"If the rose at noon has lost the beauty it had at dawn, the beauty it had then was real. Nothing in the world is permanent and we're foolish when we ask anything to last, but surely we're still more foolish not to take delight in it while we have it. If change is of the essence of existence one would have thought it only sensible to make it the premiss of our philosophy. We can none of us step into the same river twice, but the river flows on and the other river we step into is cool and refreshing too." (8)

According to Larry the spirit of life is strong in us. He feels a great energy to live. He does not want to leave the world, but to live in it and taste its beauty, love the objects of the world, not for themselves, but for the Infinite inside them.

If he was one with the 'Absolute' and if it is the ecstasy of it nothing in the world can give him a great satisfaction anymore, and after death he will not return their world anymore, but Larry wants to live again and again. He could accept all sorts of life with its sorrow, pain and joy. He feels that only life after life could satisfy his eagerness, his curiosity. The next morning he goes back to Ashrama. Then he decides to go back to America. Larry thinks he has done long enough in India to satisfy his questions.

As a matter of fact, he could not find a satisfactory solution to the problem of evil. Actually it was the problem of evil that urged Larry on. Larry accepts the existence and the necessity of evil. The world is the sport of God and Ramakrishna. Life is like a game. In this game there is everything... sorrow, pain, joy, happiness, vice and virtue, good and evil. If sin and evil are eliminated from the creation, the game cannot go on. This is not what Larry believes with all his heart, but he says when the 'Absolute' manifested itself in the world evil comes as the correlation of good. So evil is the necessity of good. Larry gives examples for it:

"You could never have had the stupendous beauty of the Himalayas without the unimaginable horror of a convulsion of the earth's crust. The Chinese craftsman who makes a vase in what they call eggshell porcelain can give it a lovely shape, ornament it with a beautiful design, stain it a ravishing colour, and give it a perfect glaze, but from its very nature he can't make it anything but fragile. If you drop it on the floor it will break into a dozen fragments. Isn't it possible in the same way that the values we cherish in the world can only exist in combination with evil? "It is an ingenious notion. The best to be said for it is that when you've come to the conclusion that something is inevitable all you can do is to make the best of it." (9)

After all these experiences Larry decides to live with calmness, forbearance, selflessness, compassion and continence. He thinks that sexual indulgence is a pleasure for him rather than a need. He believes that chastity gives power to the spirit.

Larry thinks that in the West people are so materialist with their factories, machines and lots of inventions. People in the West try to find happiness in materialistic things, but on the contrary happiness rests in spiritual things. They can never find it in a

money-making world. Indians think that the way that the Western people have chosen is wrong and it can only lead them to destruction.

According to Indians 'materialism' means nothing, and Larry thinks that America is a great country and Americans are the greatest idealists in the world, but they are in the wrong way. Self-perfection must be Man's greatest ideal and it is worthwhile to try to live up to it.

According to Larry, Indians do not lead a useless life. They represent an ideal life. They are so pure and perfect that they influence others, and when a man becomes pure and perfect, the influence of his character spreads so that a man who seeks truth may be helped. Therefore, Larry wants to lead a life he has planned for himself, and he will try to help the other people who want help. Maybe, a few people will see the way of his life and will see that his life gives him a great satisfaction and peace so they would teach what they have learnt to others. Larry wants to be useful to other people. He is completely selfless and modest. Here is Maugham's final judgement on Larry:

"Larry has been absorbed, as he wished, into that tumultuous conglomeration of humanity, distracted by so many conflicting interests, so lost in the world's confusion, so wishful of good, so cocksure on the outside, so diffident within, so kind, so hard, so truthful and so cagey, so mean and so generous, which is the people of the United States." (10)

Larry believes that his apprenticeship is over and his private income can only be a burden to him. It has been a great use up to now, but from now on, he thinks, he does not need it. Maugham tries to advise Larry about it that his decision is so wrong and financial independence is so important to achieve one's purpose of life. On the contrary, Larry thinks that financial independence would make his life meaningless. Money may mean freedom to everybody, but for Larry money means bondage, so he wants to rid himself of his money.

Larry decides to work when he goes to America. He will try to get a job in a garage. Then, he will buy a taxi and become a taxi driver. That taxi would be his labour. He likes manual labour, and he thinks that his mind will be free while he is washing a car. He wants to settle in New York because of its libraries. He does not care where he sleeps and what he eats and thinks that he can live on little money. Meanwhile he decides to write a book and his material is ready for it. He does not care if his material is reviewed or not and he does not expect it to sell. He only wants to send some copies to his friends.

Maugham hears nothing of Larry. The war breaks out. Maugham thinks Larry is writing about which he is trying to set forth whatever life has taught him. Maybe he is trying to help someone to find the right way. Larry has had great ambitions and he has never had a great desire neither for love nor for work or fame. He wants to be an example to the others and he may sacrifice his whole life for helping others. Such a great experience of faith helps Larry to gain salvation and makes him lead a moral life according to that religion. His moral discipline has been provided by religious faith. In this case religion has been the adequate answer to his need of a moral discipline.

Larry tries to help Sophie, but Sophie cannot adapt herself to the rules of moral life apart from society, society cannot exist without a social order; a social order requires a general recognition and enforcement of a body of laws or customs and of course these things must be approved of as right by at least the section of a society. Generally these rules and customs come out of a religion. Sophie cannot live according to these rules and customs, in other words, she cannot live the rules of religion which determines these rules of a particular society. Sophie and her way of life seems abnormal according to religion and moral life and she is condemned to death. This shows that how strong and acceptable these rules are. According to Maugham's moral feelings and ideas Sophie is not bad. Everybody especially Isabel feels that Sophie is bad because society, moral life and religion do not approve her way of life. On the contrary Maugham thinks that Sophie is not a dangerous person in a society rather than a person who lies or cheats. Maugham thinks that Isabel's moral judgement is not a basic and satisfactory criterion.

Isabel and Elliott try to live according to religious and moral values. Elliott is a strict follower of these rules, but he lives a useless life. Isabel, on the other hand expresses her opposition to certain types of a action. She feels the moral and social gap and its pressure on her shoulders when social and moral values do not approve Larry's way of life. Because of these rules she loses Larry. But Isabel both feels this pressure upon herself and joins in exercising it on Sophie.

In The Razor's Edge Larry tries to look for the roots of faith in human soul and The Razor's Edge considers the relations of faith and morality. Faith can be seen to be a product of the moral life in The Razor's Edge. Religion and morality can be a light in understanding the psychological developments of the characters in The Razor's Edge.



IV. Conclusion

The Razor's Edge is a vivid and spiritual novel with its lovely Isabels, the good Larrys, and the exquisite Elliot Templetons. In the course of the novel we are taken from the gravel roads of Cap Ferrat streets to the different atmosphere of the Ritz bar in Paris and from the high peaks, holy waters and sanctuary temples of India to the materialistic world of Chicago by means of Maugham's efficient and fluent writing.

The Razor's Edge displays a great technical study. The importance of Maugham's narrative style lies in his use of words "*not as instruments written and read, but as spoken and heard.*" (1) His writing in The Razor's Edge is flexible, easy and vivid. The Razor's Edge is written gracefully and sympathetically. Maugham, a prolific writer of fiction, writes with deliberate simplicity and homeliness of language. In The Razor's Edge we are face to face with Maugham's direct and idiomatic writing. The brilliant fluency of his writing gives a breathless, non-stop reading from the first page to the last.

Since Maugham knows that "*his charm lies in his candor*" (2) he does two things at the beginning of the story in The Razor's Edge. Firstly, he expresses himself honestly on subjects and at the same time he tries to be detached from the incidents. The leisureliness of the opening of the novel is quite deliberate. This absolutely makes the reader feel confident for what is to follow. Maugham has no hurry to rush the action. He is aware that "*the introduction is interesting increases the sense of anticipatory pleasure.*" (3)

The Razor's Edge with Maugham's character drawing and plot working, is one of the most famous novels. Real persons among Maugham's acquaintances are used to create portraits in The Razor's Edge. Portraying certain characters so exactly Maugham makes it impossible not to know them. In other words, Maugham paints the "*word-portraits*" (4) of real people in The Razor's Edge.

In The Razor's Edge Maugham tries to give moral values, the materialistic features of life, corruption and its results through his characters. Corruption in every aspect of life is given and Maugham studies especially the corrupt world of Paris and the Riviera. The empty social success and the corrupt world which are moulded with a

money making life lead Maugham's characters nowhere. Maugham gives the message to his readers directly and draws a wonderful death scene which is a kind of farewell to Elliott's old corrupt world of Paris and the Riviera.

The social world is a world of appearances in the novel. People hide behind the differences and distinctions that social life maintains. This encourages characters who have power to feel superior to others. Society judges, society gives and society takes in The Razor's Edge. The society of The Razor's Edge teaches nothing if you do not want to learn something from it, but the society teaches life style and the social morals if you want to get something out of it. The artificial social relationships in The Razor's Edge give nothing to the characters of the novel. In The Razor's Edge we can see the lives of the characters through the masks of social life. Social life is a play which characters are acting their parts. In The Razor's Edge Maugham gives the picture of money making, American and Parisian lives with their social and moral values through his worldly, materialist, greedy and, in a way, heartless characters.

In The Razor's Edge Maugham gives the very opposite characters. On the one hand Elliott Templeton, a snob of rich people who gains a highly respected position in society. The artificial social relationships give nothing to Elliott, but an empty social success. Maugham summarizes Elliott Templeton's short and empty life in the following lines:

"It made me sad to think how silly, useless and trivial his life had been. It mattered very little now that he had gone to so many parties and had hobnobbed with all those princes, dukes, and counts, they had forgotten him already." (5)

Elliott leads a useless life because his social relationships, parties and society are the only concern of his life, but he gains nothing. On the other hand there is Larry Darrell, the American youth who wants to lead a saint-like life and who clears himself from corruption and materialism of the society. Larry alienates himself from society and social life. He tries to find different social and moral values and looks for another environment to live in. In the end he achieves his goal. In a sense, Larry is a beautiful symbol of calmness, forbearance, selflessness, continence and compassion. Larry is

against materialism and worldliness of Elliott Templeton. Larry merely represents 'goodness'. Larry should be in many ways very like everybody else. He is a "*delightful, simple-minded, Krishnamusti from the Middle West.*" (6) Larry discovers the truth at the end of the novel. He believes in the transmigration of souls in Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, but in spite of this, The Razor's Edge is not a religious novel. It is true that it is subtitled the story of a man who found a faith but this is not even a mystical novel. Maugham uses faith as an instrument which leads his character into a new point of view. The Razor's Edge considers the roots of faith and morality. Faith can be seen to be a product of moral life. In the novel religion and morality can be a light in understanding the psychological developments of the characters. In The Razor's Edge the female characters build up the flesh. Isabel is a sensitive girl at first, but later on she is moulded by the conditions of money making American life. She represents the greedy, heartless typical American woman. Sophie, the other woman character whose fall and disappointment with life is drawn efficiently by Maugham finds what she wants. Suzanne Rouvier, on the other hand represents the charm and common sense.

Maugham studies social and moral values actively in The Razor's Edge. Society and social relationships are everywhere in his novel. In a sense, if society and social conventions are in question, it is so natural to talk about moral values as well. Moral principles come to exist in a social life. Morality is not a matter of living up to abstract principles that we come to know as correct because of the workings of our reason. Morality very much concerns the quality of human relationships with each other. In Maugham's The Razor's Edge it can be learnt that the person who is called bad because he or she leads a life which society does not approve is not bad. The character Sophie Macdonald, for instance, a woman who is called bad is not bad according to Maugham. Society judges her, but she only wants to forget her disappointment with life in a way which she has chosen, but again moral values force people to lead a standard moral life. Maugham expresses in the following way:

"That doesn't mean she's bad. Quite a number of highly respected citizens get drunk and have a liking for rough trade. They're bad habits, like biting one's nails, but I don't know that they're worse than that. I

call a person bad who lies and cheats and is unkind.” (7)

Judgements in the social life are made by the use of moral notions. Without moral notions there would be nothing to express an attitude to, nothing to make a decision about and nothing to evaluate. We are judged by lots of people because our way of life is not right in terms of moral values of society, but leading a life which others do not approve should not be the only way of being vicious and bad. To make a particular human act which is bad into one which is good we have to make a special effort or we have to use some means to change it. But people generally do not exert some special effort in the performance of the act to make it better, instead we judge it and do not provide the things that are missing in it.

We formulate our notions from the moral point of view of society, but this does not mean that we should eliminate our personal decisions from moral life, but public puts them into their proper place in our lives. In The Razor's Edge moral and social laws separate people from their emotions, desires and needs. Moral laws make life difficult and life becomes very much a matter of proving something in a social life.

The social and moral world is so difficult to live in. It is full of the responsibilities we share, the inequalities we are face to face and the burden of moral principles which shape our lives. Despite all the difficulties, we should situate ourselves more firmly within the social world rather than abstract ourselves from it. The search for more equal human relationships becomes more reliable and logical with a struggle for social and moral justice.

To find out the answers to the questions how and in which ways these values affect people's lives in order to understand the nature of human beings, some responsibilities should be taken. These substantial problems operate within arrange of possible moral and social corruptions.

In this novel Maugham's voice comes to us in a philosophical novel. Maugham is a character in the novel while handling his five characters to perfection. As a real character right inside his novel he does not direct or interfere the incidents or the other characters and their relationships. He is always cool and aloof and detached. He lets

them go their own ways without any interference. Maugham knows what he is talking about and gives us messages using his characters. Presenting the victims of social corruption and moral values Maugham has achieved his end.



V -_NOTES

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- 38- Seymour Krim, 'Maugham the Artist' in The Chelsea House Library of Literary Criticism Twentieth Century British Literature, New York, p.1904.
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Society and Social Relationships

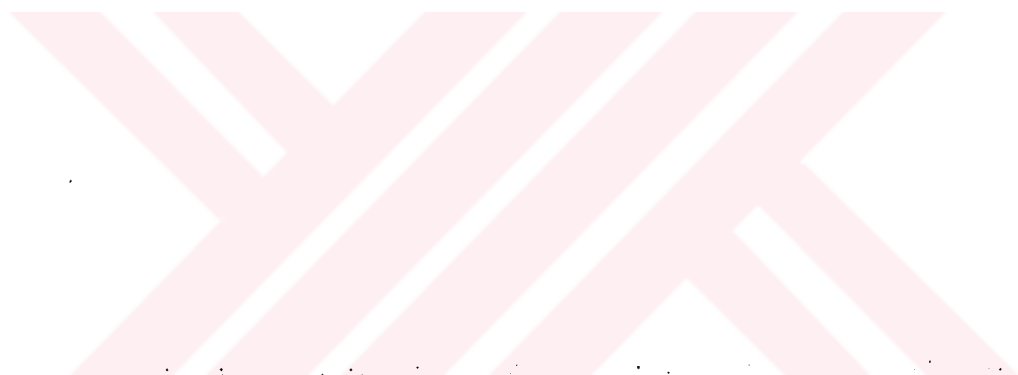
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