but Fanny, diffident and meek, who offers this daring defiance. Mary Crawford does not defy the opinions of the world; she exemplifies them. In the last chapter the narrative completes its curve; all the ironies stand revealed and take us back to the opening chapter: the reversal of accepted values is complete. If the encompassing irony of the novel is that Fanny alone is free, the stress is always on the difficulty of achieving such freedom against the formidable pressures of time and place and circumstance.

Below the Ghat

Below the ghat where the bodies are burnt on the funeral pyres the turtles slowly glide and dream lazily beneath the water, replete with remnants of flesh not consumed by the flames.

Inside the Tower of Silence the gluttonous vultures savagely tear at their prey, while high above them eagles, kites and buzzards wheel, anxiously waiting to seize the meagre leavings of the feast.

Under the churchyard the worms softly perform in the darkness the same service as turtles and birds. For one expecting a Christian burial their blind insidious infiltration seems the most disquieting of all.

RAYMOND TONG