**ETHAN'S CHARACTERISATION**

**Physical appearance**: He's described from the beginning of the novel. The narrator is immediately struck by Ethan, due to his lameness and his look. He appears as a mysterious person who had to face many difficulties. Through the physical

description the reader realizes also Ethan's strong moral values ("great height").

**Background**: His growth is influenced by the dependence to sickness. First of all he has to drop out from school because of his father's incident and later he has to face his mother's sickness. Furthermore he's submitted by faith and by the puritan society.

**Profession**: Ethan works in a farm, job which is in contrast with his personality. He's an IDEALIST (scene where Ethan and Mattie are looking at the stars), but gives up his nature on the basis of circumstances. Furthermore Ethan is both a FLAT and a ROUND character, because he wants to change his life but he doesn't succeed.

**Actions and interactions**: He's a strongly UNDECIDED person, reason why his life seems to repeat always in the same terms. He is a WEAK who doesn't have the strength to go over the boundaries of society because:

* He's affected by other people's opinion.
* Since he was born the situation where he lives put him in the position of a subjected who has to work for the others.

-> From chapter 4: His shy and reserved personality influences negatively his relationships, so he admires others' gayety which allows them to express their feelings (SPEECH SEMANTIC FIELD). However when he was at the Worcester school he feels part of the community ("Old Ethan", "old stiff"). Instead when he leaves the college he becomes year by year more reserved: at home he has so many trouble he can't interact with other people. So in a deep solitude he meets Zeena, who finally brings vitality in the house, where his mother, usually a great talker doesn't speak anymore. So the atmosphere is grave, message conveyed by some important words such as "burden", "SOLITUDE" and "CHILL".

SOLITUDE: is the reason why Ethan decides to marry Zeena, so he is afraid to be alone. This feeling, his personality and stereotypes of society push him to a unhappy life. For the same reason he falls in love with Mattie, so when he understands his marriage is a failure he feels alone again. Mattie, differently from Zeena, makes him feel useful and shares his idealism, but at the same time Mattie is another way to escape from the solitude where he lives.

"*The undercover country from whose bourn no traveler returns*" --> In the Hamlet’s monologue Shakespeare tells the reader that death makes people coward: men don't commit suicide because of their ignorance about death. Also Ethan fears what he doesn't know and never make a decision which would change his life, so he prefers to live a unhappy but known life instead of a possible better, but unknown life.

CHILL: it refers to the landscape who reflects Ethan's life. The oppressive winters are a metaphor of Ethan's difficulty to go over boundaries of society.