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The Tallis family's dilapidated island temple symbolizes a warning to the importance of internal maintenance within the Tallis family, British government and royal family. Where the island temple may have had some religious significance to the original owners of the estate, its neoclassical aesthetic has devolved into "a point of interest" (McEwan, 68) that the current family tolerates from afar. The temple originally was built to mirror the "Adam-style house" (McEwan, 18) which burned down and was replaced with the current ugly but functional house. Ian McEwan unveils how the family uses the religion of the temple as a tool for purifying their outwards appearance to their high-class friends but loses interest when it requires further maintenance. Similar to the temple decaying from normal natural forces like mold and weather, the family fails to act upon normal natural familial issues like Briony's need to be noticed, or Leon's lack of responsibility. Issues that could be solved by normal parental involvement fall into deep disrepair and rot the family from within. Therefore, the temple stands as a symbol for Emily and Jack Tallis's lack of involvement in the lives of their children, stressing the importance of taking care of relationships over maintaining a facade. A more contextual interpretation of the facade is the author's discontent with the previous and modern British government. McEwan utilizes the decay of the Tallis temple from lack of action to allude to the British royal family, who devolved from the monarchs behind the world power, to a performative facade of tradition. Employing techniques similar to Maxim Gorky, whose fiction writing stood as symbols for his beliefs, McEwan utilizes metaphors and symbols in his novel to secretly criticize the British parliament and royal family. Through the temple, he laments the shabby condition of the Tallis household as well as his country and uses it to communicate his personal political opinions.