• What is the major theme of the novel? Can you identify minor themes?

• What were similarities and differences about how the author demonstrates the treatment of women in France and England?

• Pierre and Ned held similar positions in France and England. What were similarities and differences in their actions?

• Was the violence gratuitous or do you think it reflected the times? Why?

• Why was Queen Elizabeth reluctant to execute Mary?

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Generic Questions

1.How did you experience the book? Were you immediately drawn into the story--or did it take you a while? Did the book intrigue, amuse, disturb, alienate, irritate, or frighten you?

2.Do you find the characters convincing? Are they believable? Compelling? Are they fully developed as complex, emotional human beings--or are they one-dimensional?

3.Which characters do you particularly admire or dislike? What are their primary characteristics?

4.What motivates a given character’s actions? Do you think those actions are justified or ethical?

5.Do any characters grow or change during the course of the novel? If so, in what way?

6.Who in this book would you most like to meet? What would you ask—or say?

7.If you could insert yourself as a character in the book, what role would you play? You might be a new character or take the place of an existing one.

8.Is the plot well-developed? Is it believable? Do you feel manipulated along the way, or do plot events unfold naturally, organically?

9.Is the story plot or character driven? In other words, do events unfold quickly? Or is more time spent developing characters' inner lives? Does it make a difference to your enjoyment?

10.If you were to talk with the author, what would you want to know?

11.Have you read the author’s other books? Can you discern a similarity—in theme, writing style, structure—between them? Or are they completely different?