BRITISH FICTION

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BRITISH FICTION

Objectives

British Fiction offers students with multiple ideas and common practice of literary technique which are widespread in the advent of modernism. It gives an overview of modern movement and exposes some of the most significant British fictions. The course provides interpretative tools and techniques to comprehend the fictions.

Unit I

Fielding	:	Tom Jones
Dickens	:	David Copperfield

Unit II

George Eliot	:	Adam Bede
Charlotte Bronte	:	Jane Eyre

Unit III

D.H. Lawrence	:	Sons and Lovers
James Joyce	:	A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

Unit IV

Golding	:	Lord of the Flies
Doris Lessing	:	The Golden Notebook

Unit V

Conrad	:	Tales of Hearsay
EM. Forster	:	The Celestial Omnibus
Grahan Greene	:	Shades of Greene

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Unit – I

TOM JONES

by HENRY FIELDING

INTRODUCTION

LIFE AND CAREER OF HENRY FIELDING

It is difficult for us to imagine living in a world without novels. In 1707, Henry Fielding was born into a society in which the novel was not yet an established literary genre. He was born on 22nd April 1707, at Shorpham Park in Somersetshire to well-placed, upper class parents. His father, Edward Fielding, fought against the forces of the French King, Louis XIV under the Duke of Marlborough. He eventually rose to the rank of Lieutenant general. Henry Fielding's mother was the granddaughter of Sir Henry Gold, Baron of the Exchequer. Like his hero Tom Jones, Henry Fielding received early education at home from a clergyman. He then studied at Eton, finally going on to the University of Leyden, which he attended in the years 1728 and 1729.

Fielding began his literary career before he entered the University of Leyden. He began not as a novelist but as a playwright. His first play, *Love in Several Masques* was performed in the early months of 1728. In due course he would become a celebrated pioneer of the novel, but he lived as a playwright for the fourteen years before his first novel was published. He wrote eight long plays and more than fifteen short plays. They are all comedies mostly with a satirical edge. Those most frequently read now are his final two plays, *Pasquin (1736)* and T*he Historical Register of 1736* (1737) both of which show Fielding's keen sense of his milieu, which he learnt during his career as a playwright. The hallmarks of Fielding's novels were -- a facility with dialogue, an ability to structure fiction, and an amazing ability to handle complicated plots.

In 1737, Fielding began to study law in the Middle Court and was admitted to the bar in 1740. For the remaining fourteen years of his life, Fielding wrote four novels, three volumes of *Miscellanies*, political pamphlets, besides publishing a biweekly newspaper, the *Covent Garden Journal.* He was active both in his law practice and in social causes generally. He was so successful in his practice of law that he was nominated Justice of the Peace for the West minister district of London and for the entire county of Middlesex in

1749. Fielding devoted the last five years of his life for social reform in both the courts and the streets of London. As a result of the strain of these endeavors his health suffered. In April 1754, he was finally forced to resign his position as magistrate. He then moved to Lisbon in Spain, where he died in October of the same year (1754).

NOVELS

Fielding's social concerns are reflected throughout his novels, which chronicle eighteenth century English social history and portray various social evils of the ere. His career as a novelist began at the same time as his law practice. He wrote S*hamela* in 1741 in order to parody [= mocking imitation] *Pamela* (1740), a novel written by his contemporary, Samuel Richardson. Both books are written as a series of letters from the heroine to various acquaintances. Fielding found both Richardson's attitude and his heroine Pamela's virtue, pretentious. Pamela was the innocent maiden in distress. But Fielding's Shamela is a clever woman, scheming to satisfy her lusty nature and to marry well.

Fielding wrote *Joseph Andrews*, a second, more significant parody of the same novel (*Pamela*) in 1742. Richardson's original is the story of the efforts of Pamela Andrews, a servant who tries to escape her master's amorous advances. In Fielding's parody, *Pamela*, Joseph Andrews, Pamela's brother tries to protect his virtue from attacks made by the mistress of the house and her lady attendant. More than being a mere parody of Samuel Richardson, the novel satirizes human foibles [=weakness of character] in general.

Joseph Andrews was the testing ground for many of the techniques that Fielding would employ so successfully in *Tom Jones*. There are structural parallels between two works. Both have a tightlyknit, complex, and rapidly moving plot. Both novels are narrated by a fully realized and always amazing narrator who stands outside the plot. The heroes of both novels are unjustly dismissed from their home and onto the road. Both novels are picaresque, based on the tradition of Cervantes's, *Don Quixote.* [In this novel by Cervantes, the plot concerns the travels of the hero and his companion and their various adventures/encounters on their journey]. But Tom Jones's journey is more than an account of his travels: it becomes symbolic of Everyman's experience of life itself. *Tom Jones* basically concerns the continuing battle between virtue and vice, good and evil. Both novels have the same circular movement form the country to the road, from the road to the city, and from the city back to the country.

TOM JONES

For Fielding who knew London intimately, the country is the home of ethical goodness. Being the natural world, the country is least affected by the coverings of civilization. For eg, it contains the Eden-like sanctuary [=place of shelter] of Squire Allworth's home. The city, with its crowded streets, its abundance of crime and prisons, is the nesting place of evil. The road which connects the two is the place of battle between the country and the city, the good and evil. Moreover, Tom's journey is much more significant on the symbolic level than on the literal. Tom's journey is representative of his process of maturation, the movement from innocence to experience. His return to the country marks the ultimate triumph of his basically good nature over his inclination towards rash and impudent action.

Finally, in *Tom Jones,* the resolution of the plot is brought about by a kind of *deus ex machina* [=god in the machine] which sets everything right. Tom's true parentage is disclosed. Virtue receives its reward. The conclusion of the novel illustrates a major motif [=recurring theme] of the novel: the quest a father-figure. The father is the prime figure of authority. With the return of this *true* authority, we move back into the security of impartial justice and the warmth of the paternal love. This is also the basic theme of "divine comedy" of the Christian worldview – man is born into the struggle of the temporal world, represented by the road in *Tom Jones.* If he is worthy, he is at last restored to the arms of benevolent God. In this sense, the novel is highly moral because it reflects the ethic of its social milieu [=social atmosphere].

Tom Jones is a pioneering English novel. However, *Tom Jones* (and *Joseph Andrews*) has a more significant relationship to the English novel. It is an articulation and execution of a new theory of writing. In his preface to *Joseph Andrew,* Fielding defines the genre of his work, as a "kind of writing which I do not remember to have seen hitherto attempted in our language. "It is a comic prose epic". Fielding's immediate source of inspiration was the Spanish classic, *Don Quixote,* but Fielding also refers to the inspiration of Homer and Aristotle, the former for practice, the latter for theory. Fielding's time, the Neo-Classical age (1700-50) was the period of literary history in which writers and critics based their views of literature on classical figures, most important of whom were Homer and Aristotle. Fielding calls his work a *comic* epic because in every way it follows the epic form as written by Homer. The difference lies in Fielding's presenting of actions which are light and ridiculous rather than highly serious. Besides, Fielding's novel also introduces characters of inferior rank. Its diction is mock-heroic and it is written in prose

rather than verse. Further, the work imitates nature. This means, it reproduces what is observable in the environment and presents a hero of great significance successfully tackling very difficult tasks. In *Tom Jones*, Fielding presents us a picture of a man maintaining his essential goodness and humanity in a world full of temptations and opportunists. Thus he presents the merely ordinary which is at the same time highly significant. But Fielding is ever able to see the ridiculous. He does not fail to see the humour of critical categorizing.

In the first chapter of Book V of *Tom Jones*, Fielding anticipates his literary critics. He answers the question of why he has provided a seemingly digressive preface [=deviating from the main argument] of the novel. He says he is not bound to assign any reason (for these digressions). He has laid it down as rule necessary to be observed in all 'prosai-comi-epic" writing. Though these are sound and good reasons at the bottom we cannot see it at once. Here, Fielding is ridiculing critics who would try to categorize his work based on the rules of genre.

Fielding also defines the central subject matter of his book: pretension and affectation unveiled [=exposing hyprocrisy]. In all the prefatory chapters of the eighteen books of *Tom Jones*, Fielding reasserts the theory of his new genre. In the first chapter of Book I, he reasserts the Aristotelian doctrine of imitation. [Aristotle found imitation at the heart of literature]. Using a well-known menu metaphor, Fielding states that the "Bill of Fare [=menu card] is human nature", from the lowly servant to the lordly squire. In Book IX, he reaffirms the necessity for an artist to keep nature always before him. In Books X and XI, he advises the critic to unchain himself from the dogmatic [=authoritative] rules and to consider the work as an organic piece of art, self-contained and self-justified. These prefatory chapters, taken together, are Fielding plea for freedom from the complete dependence on rules to judge literature. They are also a manifesto that his "new province" [the new genre of novel during Fielding's time] is worthy of being considered on its own merits: and not to be discarded because it does not fit into a prescribed mould.

These prefatory chapters are not merely restricted to literary discussion. There are also discourses on love, on the similarity between the world and the stage, and on virtue. Above all, they indicate Fielding's fine sense of humour and his insight into the human character.

LIST OF MAJOR CHARACTERS

SQUIRE ALLWORTHY

A worthy landowner and widower residing at Somersetshire, England. A wise magistrate and philanthropist. All his three children died in childbirth, and his wife too died later.

BRIDGET ALLWORTHY

The middle-aged sister of Squire Allworthy. She has no fine qualities to speak of other than her wealth. We learn, at the end of the novel, that she is Tom Jones's real mother.

TOM JONES

A foundling [=deserted infant of unknown parents]. Allworthy adopts him and treats him like his own son. It is assumed that he is the illegitimate child of Jenny Jones, a maid servant and Partridge, the school master of Somersetshire. That Tom is really Allworthy's own nephew, the illegitimate son of his sister Bridget, is revealed only at the end of the novel.

JENNY JONES

An intelligent servant in the house of the Somersetshire schoolmaster. She is accused of being Tom's mother after having had an affair with the schoolmaster, Mr. Partridge. Allworthy reprimands her and sends her out of the neighborhood for her own good. She takes another name, Mrs. Waters. Years later Tom Jones rescues her and has a brief affair with her at Upton Inn.

MR. PARTRIDGE

The schoolmaster. He is timid and superstitious. He is beset with a shrewish [= ill-tempered and domineering] wife. He is accused of being Tom Jones's father. Years later, he meets Tom on the road. Partridge decides to accompany Tom on the road.

MASTER BLIFIL

The villain. Son of Bridget and Captain Blifil. Allworthy being childless, he hopes to rule the entire Allworthy estate. Therefore he does everything in his power to see that Tom is disowned by Squire Allworthy.

MR. THWACKUM AND MR. SQUARE

Tutors to young Blifil and Tom. One is a parson and the latter is a philosopher. Allworthy brings them in to stay as tutors to the boys.

DOWLING

The lawyer whom Bridget Allworthy hires to handle her estate. He is with her when she dies. He is one of the three people in the novel who knows the secret of Tom Jones's birth. So, Captain Blifil ensures that he does not reveal it by accident.

SQUIRE WESTERN

All worthy's neighbour. Estate owner. His three great loves in life are – hunting, drinking, and his daughter.

SOPHIA WESTERN

The heroine. Squire Western's daughter. Lovely, intelligent and virtuous, she is in love with Tom Jones. Tom's attempt to win her hand forms the framework of the action of the novel.

MRS. WESTERN

Squire Western's sister. She is commanding, stubborn and pretentious. She has no husband or children of her own. She therefore throws all her energetic love onto Sophia and her father, Squire Western.

MRS. HONOUR

Sophia's servant. She helps Sophia to escape from her father's demand that she should marry Blifil. She accompanies Sophia to London.

"BLACK GEORGE" SEAGRIM

A poor father of a large family. He serves, now and then, as Squire Western's gamekeeper [= in charge of hunted animals like rabbits] and attendant. Tom Jones becomes a friend of George and gives him money and food to help sustain his family.

MOLLY SEAGRIM

George Seagrim's daughter. She is notorious for her loose morals. Tom Jones has an affair with her before he falls in love with Sophia. Mr. Square, the philosopher and tutor, also has an affair with her.

HARRIET FITZPATRICK

Sophia's cousin. They meet on their journey to London. Both are running away from home. Sophia is fleeing from her father. Harriet is escaping from a cruel husband. Once upon a time, they had lived together with their mutual aunt, Mrs. Western.

MR. FITZPATRICK

He woos and marries Harriet only for her money. Before the wedding he poses as a gentleman, but later turns out to be totally selfish.

MRS. MILLER

She runs a boarding house in London. She is the widow of a clergymen. Tom Jones stays at her home when he arrives in London. A friend of Squire Allworthy, she is a good and virtuous woman.

LADY BELLASTON

An extremely wealthy and debauched [=loose moralled] matron in London. She takes Tom Jones in and favours him with her gifts and herself.

LORD FELLAMAR

An English nobleman and friend of Lady Bellaston. He falls in love with Sophia. He tries various means, including rape (!), to get Sophia to marry him.

MR. SUMMER

Son of a clergyman. He is a friend of Squire Allworthy who lived at the Allworthy Estate for a year, but died about six months before Tom Jones is born. We learn, at the end of the novel that he is the real father of Tom Jones. Readers do not meet this character in the novel and his presence is only reported.

PLOT OUTLINE

BOOK I

Squire All worthy is one of the richest and most benevolent men in Englan. All his three children died in infancy followed by the death of his wife. He now lives with his unmarried sister, Bridget Allworthy. One day he arrives home after a lengthy business trip in London. He finds a new-born baby in his bed. He commands the elderly maidservant to look after it till morning. Next morning he announces his decision to keep the child and bring it up as his own. He also asks his maid servant to make enquires in the neighbourhood and find out the child's mother. Miss Bridget Allworthy is given the responsibility of attending to the child's needs.

The elderly maidservant of Allworthy says she has "succeeded" in her mission. She accuses Jerry Jones of being the mother of the illegitimate child. Though a servant in the house of the school master, Jenny acquired a good education far above her low social

rank. As a result, her equals (other servants of the area) envy and scorn her. This scorn turned to contempt when she appeared one Sunday in an expensive gown, one which she could not have bought with her little income. Also, she was recently in Allworthy's home as a nurse to Bridget. With this meagre evidence, she is accused of being the culprit. Jenny Jones confesses to being the mother of the child and is taken to Squire Allworthy.

Squire Allworthy is known for his kindness and benevolence. As a magistrate, he is lenient with Jenny Jones but reminds her of the consequences of sin. To help her escape the condemnation of the villagers, he decides to send her to a part of the country where she will be unknown. He only asks her to tell him the name of the child's father. Jenny expresses her gratitude to Allworthy but refuses to tell him who the child's father is. This is because she is bound by an oath to keep his name a secret.

The villagers expected that Allworthy would send Jenny to a house of correction. When they learn of Allworthy' decision to let her go unpunished, they accuse Allworthy of being the child's father. But these rumours do not harm Allworthy in any way because of his excellent reputation.

In chapter x, we learn of Captain Blifil who takes advantage of Ms. Bridget Allworthy's intention to get married. A hypocrite, he has come to know that since Squire Allworthy has no family of his own, his sister's [Bridget's] children will inherit his estate. After a brief courtship, Captain Blifil and Bridget get married.

BOOK II

A son is born to Bridget and Captain Blifil. The birth of this "true heir" in no way reduces Squire Allworthy's affection for his adopted foundling Tom Jones, (named after his mother, Jenny Jones). Bridget, although openly most kind to Tom Jones, privately criticizes him. Meanwhile, the elderly maidservant claims to have managed to find out Tom's true father – the schoolmaster Partridge.

Mrs. Partridge is a jealous, domineering, irritable woman. She hires only very homely plain-looking girls as household servants. Jenny Jones is one of them. She is however a woman of intelligence. Mr.Patridge gives her Latin education and soon she becomes a better scholar then her own teacher. This situation leads to an unfortunate incident. At dinner one evening, Mr. Partridge says something in Latin to Jenny. Partridge's Latin is defective which makes Jenny smile and blush. Seeing this, Mrs. Partridge is enraged because she does not know Latin. She picks up a dinner knife, chases

Jenny and later dismisses her from service. Partridge too is relieved at Jenny's dismissal because of the fact that Jenny's Latin was becoming better than his own.

For a while after Jenny's dismissal, there is some happiness in the Partridge home. One day Mrs. Partridge hears some gossip that Jenny Jones had delivered bastards. She immediately comes to the conclusion that her husband has been Jenny's lover. She goes home and begins to beat, bite and claw her poor, unsuspecting husband. She then continues to scream. Neighbours arrive, hearing her scream. They see her dishevelled clothes and bloody face (the blood is her husband's) and scold Partridge for beating his wife!.

This battle is reported to Squire Allworthy. As a magistrate, Allworthy sets a trial for Partridge. Partridge pleads innocence. His wife testifies against him and accuses him of drunkenness and lechery. She even makes a hysterical statement that she found him with Jenny together in bed. Allworthy now sends for Jenny but unfortunately she has just vacated her lodgings. Allworthy, based on the wife's testimony, pronounces Partridge guilty. Allworthy punishes Partridge by discontinuing his annuity [=annual allowance]. Partridge despairs, loses his teaching job, and he and his wife are reduced to poverty. Later, Mrs. Partridge dies of small pox and the poor schoolmaster leaves the area.

In spite of all these facts, Allworthy's affection for Tom Jones grows. Likewise, Captain Blifil's dislike for the young Tom Jones also grows, because every penny spent on Tom meant a decrease in his own wealth. Bridget, however, begins to love the little foundling like her own child. One day, Captain Blifil dies all of a sudden due to a heart attack.

BOOK III

Tom Jones is now about fourteen years old. He is a young man who seems prone to vice. Everyone in Allworthy's home wonder why Allworthy allows Tom Jones to remain in the same house as young Blifil. Blifil is as virtuous as Tom is dishonest. Tom has been convicted three times for robbery – stealing fruit from an orchard, a duck from a farm, and a ball from young Blifil's pocket. One day, Tom and the estate gamekeeper were hunting partridges. The birds flew into the neighbouring estate of Squire Western. They shot one of the birds. The owner came riding and the gamekeeper hid himself. Tom Jones was found with the dead bird and the matter was reported to Allworthy. He severely scolded the boy and wanted to know who was with him. Tom refused to tell knowing that it would

cause the gamekeeper to lose his job. Failing in his attempts, Allworthy turned the boy over to Mr. Thwackum.

Thwackum, the clergyman appointed as tutor to Tom and Blifil, was also unsuccessful in finding out Tom's partner. He gave the boy good whipping. Allworthy, now taking pity in the boy, gifted him a little horse.

A physical quarrel breaks out between the two boys and Blifil calls Tom "a beggarly bastard" and Tom Jones gives him a bloody nose. Blifil now informs Allworthy that it was Black George, the game keeper, who was shooting partridges with Tom Jones. Allworthy now asks Tom why he refused to tell. Tom Jones now relates the whole story and begs Allworthy to be merciful to George and his family who live in poverty. Allworthy now thinks that Tom deserves reward rather than punishment for his kind intentions. However he dismisses Black George from the job of gamekeeper.

In general, people approve young Blifil as a promising young man whereas Tom is lacking in manners and discipline. But, the widow Bridget, who has a distasteful memory of her husband, hates her son and prefers Tom Jones. By the time Tom is eighteen, Bridget's favouritisim of Tom becomes well-known. To counterbalance this, Allworthy begins to show preference for Blifil.

One day Allworthy comes to know that Tom sold the horse which he had given the boy. He privately questions the boy and discovers that Tom sold the horse in order to give the money to Black George, whose family is starving. Sometime later, Tom also sells his Bible for the same reason. This was also a gift from Allworthy. By now, Tom Jones has become a great friend of Squire Western, due to his riding and hunting skills. Through the daughter Sophia, Tom tries to persuade Western to hire Black George

BOOK IV

Miss Sophia Western, the only child of Squire Western, is a most charming lady. She is eighteen, very beautiful and equally intelligent. She has been brought up under the careful instructions of her aunt, for her mother died some time ago. Her father loves her deeply. Alloworthy and Western, being neighbours, are on friendly terms. So Blifil, Tom and Sophia, all of nearly the same age, have spent much time together since childhood. Sophia has always preferred Tom to Blifil. Though Blifil is resentful of this fact, he has never shown it.

One day, the Allworthy family was dining with the Westerns. The children were playing outside. Sophia was having a bird given to her by Tom, which she treasured much. Now, Blifil asks Sophia to let him hold the bird for a while. While holding it, Blifil deliberately let the bird fly away, giving vent to his hidden anger against Tom. Sophia, much distressed, began to scream. Tom, seeing the bird sitting in a tree, tried to recapture it. He climbed the tree when its branch broke and Tom fell into the pond below. This incident heightened Sophia's affection for Tom and dislike to Blifil. Later, Blifil lied to others that he pitied the poor bird and gave it freedom according to the principles of nature and religion.

From the time of this incident, Tom Jones and Squire Western became close friends. Western often invited Tom to his house. Through his "natural gallantry and good nature", Tom Jones won Sophia's love. Tom Jones now requests Sophia to ask her father to give black George the gamekeeper a job. Western would give anything to please Sophia. So poor George is given a position in the Western manor.

Though Sophia is in love with Tom, he is indifferent to her love. This is because Tom believes that he is in love with another girl – Molly Seagrim, the daughter of poor Black George. She is such a clever girl that she seduces Tom but convinces him that he has seduced her. Soon, Molly becomes pregnant. Allworthy immediately orders her to be sent to women's prison. Western declared that he is sure Tom is the father of the illegitimate child. On hearing this, Sophia is much troubled.

As Tom Jones enters Allworthy's house, he sees Molly being escorted out by a constable. He stops and embraces Molly. He orders the constable to wait while he speaks to Allworthy. Finding Allworthy, he confesses that he is father of Molly's child. He begs him to set her free because he is entirely to blame. Allworthy sets her free after giving Tom Jones a severe lecture, much like the one he gave Jenny Jones several years ago Allworthy is made to believe that all of Tom's generosity for Black George has been for the purpose of keeping Molly as his mistress. Though this is not true, Allworthy is convinced by this reasoning.

Sophia, shocked by this affair, wants to be indifferent to Tom. But on meeting him, she realizes that she cannot, for she loves him much. She then decides not to see him frequently. This too is not possible, for, one day when they are out hunting, Tom saves Sophia from her bucking [=jumping] horse. While doing this, he breaks his arm. Naturally, Sophia is very impressed. Tom stays at the Western manor while his arm is mending. Sophia is touched and Tom Jones recaptures her heart.

BOOK V

While Tom Jones is recovering in Squire Western's home, he has several visitors. Sophia, accompanied by her father, is a constant visitor. Tom sits and listens to Sophia play the harpsichord [= a musical instrument] for hours. Though Sophia carefully conceals her feelings, Tom notices in her signs of affection, but he makes no attempt to woo Sophia. One reason is that he has heard Squire Western declare often that he wants Sophia wedded to "one of the richest men in the country." Secondly, he knows that Allworthy would come to the conclusion that Tom has taken unfair advantage of Western's hospitality. More important is his consideration for Molly. He reasons that if he deserts her, she would be destroyed. So, Tom Jones is determined to forget Sophia. But soon an incident happens which melts his determination and makes him love Sophia.

Nevertheless, Tom is worried about what will happen to Molly. After much deliberation, he decides to offer her some money. He visits her, and during his visits, he discovers that Molly is not as innocent as she pretends to be. She now has and also had in the past other lovers besides Tom Jones. This leaves Tom's heart free to accept Sophia's love. Even after his arm has healed, Tom continues to stay with the Westerns, at the request of Squire Western who greatly enjoys his company. Tom and Sophia grow closer at heart.

During Tom's absence from his home, Allowrthy becomes quite ill with a fever. The doctor says that he may die. Allworthy decides to settle all his worldly affairs. He calls his family around his bed to inform them of his will. He leaves his entire estate to young Blifil with annuities to Tom Jones and his sister Bridget. Tom Jones is overwhelmed with emotion and speaks of his love and gratitude to Allworthy. Meanwhile, Blifil comes with the news that his mother Bridget has died of an illness while traveling from Salisbury.

That evening, the doctor says that Allworthy is out of danger. Tom is overjoyed by this news and celebrates the news with heavy drinking.

BOOK VI

Squire Western has a spinster sister. She is a learned woman and, above six foot tall, she is a formidable personality. She informs him that Sophia can be married to Blifil. Squire Western has long been thinking of combining his estate with Allowrthy's. Now much pleased, he decided to propose the match to Allworhy. Allworthy, in turn, informs young

Blifil about Western's proposal. Blifil, never felt any love for Sophia. But he has a lust for material gains and he has often thought of possessing the Western Estate. So, he readily agrees to the proposal. Allworthy then writes a letter of confirmation to Squire Western. Western is so pleased that without consulting Sophia, he sets a date for the courtship [= period of engagement] to begin.

Mrs. Western, Squire Western's sister, goes to Sophia's room to inform her of the happy news. During the conversation, she learns that it is Tom whom Sophia loves and that she hates Blifil. Mrs. Western asks how Sophia can love and marry a bastard. An angry encounter taken place. The two ladies reach a compromise: if Sophia will entertain Blifil, Mrs. Western will not inform the Squire of Sophia's love for Tom Jones.

The first courtship meeting between Sophia and Blifil is fixed. There is a 15 minute silence. Blifil begins the conversation by paying compliments to Sophia. Sophia answers with a lowered head and one-word responses. After a few minutes, she departs. Blifil, totally inexperienced in courtship, thinks that this is normal and he is quite happy. When leaving, he tells Squire Western of his "success" with Sophia. Overjoyed, Western goes to Sophia and pours out all his parental love on her. He states that his happiness is totally dependent on hers. Sophia takes this opportunity to tell her father that he can make her happy by *not* forcing her to marry Blifil. Enraged, Squire Western threatens to disinherit her if she does not agree to the match. On learning about Sophia's love for Tom, Western swears that he will destroy Tom Jones. He then informs Squire Alloworthy of Tom's unforgivable actions. He requests Allworthy to kindly keep the rascal away from his house. After Western leaves, Blifil also poisons the mind of Allworthy by informing him about "Tom's drunkenness and debauchery".

That evening, after dinner, Allworthy confronts Tom with the accusation of Blifil. Unless he clears himself of Blifil's charges, he will be punished forever. Tom Jones, with all his actions misinterpreted, can say nothing to defend himself. Allworthy at once dismisses him from the house with a parting allowance of five hundred pounds.

After leaving the house, Tom walks about a mile. He throws himself down by a river and falls into a fit of despair. When he recovers, he finds his wallet lost with all the money Allworthy gave him. On his way back to look for the money, Tom meets Black George who offers to help him search. They do not find the money. Black George himself, who passed that way earlier while Tom was unconscious, had pocketed the money.

Meanwhile, Squire Western has imprisoned his daughter in her room, setting Mrs. Honour as her guard. Honour, however secretly delivers Tom's letter to Sophia. Reading it, she bursts into tears of despair on learning about Tom's dismissal from the house of Allworthy and the loss of his money on his way out. She decides to send him all the money she has – sixteen guineas. Honour hands over the amount to Black George to deliver.

BOOK VII

After his dismissal from home, Tom Joes determines to leave the country. After many doubts, he decides to go to sea and heads for the port of Bristol. Meanwhile, Mrs. Western and her brother decide that the only solution to Sophia's stubbornness is the prompt marriage of Blifil and Sophia. The wedding is fixed for the next day. Blifil immediately agrees because he has several reasons for desiring Sophia – lust of the flesh, triumph over her spirit, revenge on Tom Jones, and of course, Mr. Western's estate. No one has thought of the feelings of Sophia. Asking Mrs. Honour to accompany her, Sophia runs away from home. She will go to London and stay with a female relative who has earlier invited her.

Meanwhile, Tom has some trouble on the road. He hires a guide to take him to Bristol. However, the guide has no knowledge of the country. Tom gets lost. He reaches a lodging where the landlord refuses to give him a bed after learning from the guide that he was a base-born fellow. Tom is forced to sleep in a chair. Later that evening, a band of soldiers come to the inn. They are on the march against rebel forces. Tom volunteers to join them for a while and thus serve the cause of the king and the Protestant religion. The next morning he marches off with the soldiers. At the end of the day's march, he is invited to dine with the officers. During the meal, a quarrel breaks out between Tom and one of the officers. Tom is injured in the scuffle and the doctor prescribes complete rest for Tom.

BOOK VIII

The soldiers depart. Tom Jones remains at the inn for a couple of days. There, a barber is called to dress his wound and becomes friendly with him. Tom invites him for drinks. Tom Jones narrates his story to the barber and likewise asks the barber to narrate his history. The barber is none other than Partridge, the former schoolmaster of

Somersetshire, accused of being Tom Jones's father. Partridge assures him that there is no truth in this charge. He then requests permission to accompany Tom Jones on his travels, and the two depart the next morning.

By accompanying Tom, Partridge hopes to get back to Allworthy. After a day's travel they arrive at an inn at Gloucester where they are warmly received. They have tea with the hostess and Dowling, a lawyer from Somersetshire. Tom and Partridge leave the inn that night itself. They travel some distance that night, Tom sighing and talking of Sophia, and Partridge complaining of the cold. They then spend the night at a house on top of the hill.

BOOKS IX & X

While talking a walk at the top of hill, they hear a woman screaming. Tom rescues the woman from her attacker, but the man escapes. The lady is quite dishevelled but otherwise unharmed, but has lost the upper half of her dress in the scuffle.

Tom Jones takes the lady to a nearby inn at Upton, where she can freshen herself and borrow some clothes. Seeing her half-naked, the landlady refuses to allow them in. An argument and a fight follows. About this time, a sergeant and a company of soldiers arrive at the inn. The sergeant recognizes her as the wife of the famous Captain Waters and pays respect to her. Now, the landlady asks the forgiveness of Lady Waters and welcomes her in. Lady Waters, who has fallen in love with young Tom, now seduces him in the inn. Mrs. Waters, we learn, is notorious for her affairs with men. Even to Captain Waters she was not formally married.

That evening, when everyone has retired, one Mr. Fitzpatrick, an Irish gentleman, arrives at Upton Inn. The man is in a state of anxiety and asks whether a lady is staying at the Inn. The maidservant at the inn directs him to Mrs. Waters's room. The gentleman breaks open the door and finds Mrs. Waters and Tom Jones in bed. A fight begins between the two men. Only then he realizes that the lady is not his wife, for whom he came searching. He realizes that he is mistaken and asks the lady's pardon.

Two more guests now arrive at the inn. They are none other than Sophia and her servant Mrs. Honour, running away from home. They learn that Tom is staying at the inn and Sophia wants to see him immediately. They request Partridge (Tom's companion) to call Tom. Partridge, who is fully drunk, says that Tom already has a woman in his bed. Sophia, full of anger, decides to leave the place at once. As punishment to Tom, she gives

her muff [=long woolen glove worn by women] with her name pinned to it, to be placed on Tom's unused bed. The next morning, Tom sees the muff, realizes what had happened and starts in search of her.

In the meantime, Squire Western, who is also pursuing Sophia, arrives at Upton Inn. He finds Tom Jones there still carrying Sophia's muff. Naturally, he assumes that Sophia is with him. He at once brings charges of abduction [=kidnapping] and stealing (of the muff). When the confusion is cleared, Squire Western leaves in pursuit of Sophia.

Tom and Partridge also go in search of her. Mrs. Water and Mr. Fitzpatrick, who have now become lovers, leave for the city of Bath. In this chapter, we learn that Sophia, her father and Tom Jones are traveling on the same route. We are now into the true picaresque narrative.

BOOKS XI & XII

Shortly after Sophia leaves Upton Inn, she meets two women on the road. They are Sophia's cousin Mrs. Fitzpatrick and her maid. Sophia and Harriet Fitzpatrick are now happy to meet each other. Long ago they lived together with her aunt Western. They soon stop at an inn and narrate to each other their reasons for being on the road.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick's story is that while on a holiday in the city of Bath, she became infatuated with an Irishman, Mr. Fitzpatrick and then married him. Only then she discovered that he was a rogue who married her for her money. He abused her verbally, kept a mistress and finally lost all of their money in gambling debts. When she refused to sell a small estate, he accused her of infidelity and locked her in her bedchamber. Luckily, she managed to escape.

Harriet and Sophia now set out from the inn, and arrive in the city of London. Harriet Fitzpatrick takes rooms in an inn; Sophia moves into the house of Lady Bellaston, a good and sympathetic friend of the Western family.

Squire Western, after leaving Upton Inn, continues his pursuit of Sophia. He is so fond of hunting that on the way he joins a pack of hunting dogs because it is such a fine hunting day. Next day, he gives up his pursuit of Sophia because he has no idea which way she went.

Meanwhile, Tom Jones also leaves Upton Inn, but does not know which way Sophia went. Since pursuit of Sophia is not possible he decides to join the army in pursuit of glory. At that time, there comes a beggar to whom Tom Jones promptly gives a shilling. The beggar offers to sell Tom Jones a book which he found lying on the road.

Tom inspects the notebook. It contains the signature of Sophia and a hundred pound note. Tom is overjoyed but at the same time is worried about Sophia because she will need the missing money. Luckily, on the way, he finds out that Sophia had passed that same way. Now Tom Jones is once again on her trail.

Tom and Patridge set out on their trail when they are overtaken by a rainstorm. They take shelter in an ale-house [=beer bar]. There they meet a boy who has recently been Sophia's guide. The boy escorts Tom to the inn where he left Sophia. But by the time Tom Jones arrives there, Sophia has departed from the place. However, he meets a friend there, Mr. Dowling. He is lawyer who has recently taken lodgings there. Tom and Dowling share a bottle of wine and Tom relates to him all that had happened. Tom ends his narration saying, " I feel my innocence, my friend; and I would not part with that feeling for the world."

Tom continues to travel, always close on the heels of Sophia but never catching up with her. They pass through many towns. At St. Albans, they stop at an inn and Tom finds that they have very little money left. But Tom's conscience does not allow him to touch Sophia's 100-pound note. The heroine and hero have travelled from Upton inn to London.

BOOK XIII

When Tom Jones arrives in London, he succeeds to find the lodging of Mrs. Fitzpatrick. She receives him well. But thinking that he has come from Squire Western on behalf of Blifil, she tells him that he does not know Sophia's whereabouts. After Tom leaves her, her maid tells her all about Tom Jones. Now, Mrs. Fitzpatrick thinks it is best to save Sophia from such a rake [=immoral man of fashion]. So she decided to introduce Lady Bellaston to Tom Jones in order to divert his attention from Sophia. (Sophia is lodging with Lady Bellaston). Lady Bellaston, who had heard so much about Tom Jones, is eager to meet him. She tells Mrs. Fitzpatrick that if she meets him, she would be able to prevent him from wooing Sophia. Mrs. Fitzpatrick agrees to arrange a meeting between lady Bellaston and Tom Jones.

Tom has taken rooms at the home of a clergyman's widow, Mrs. Miller of whom Squire Allworthy has always spoken highly. There, a porter delivers a package to Tom. It contains a ticket to a masquerade [= a party in which people take part wearing masks], a mask and a card which says it is an invitation from the "Queen of Fairies." Tom assumes that it is an invitation from Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

When Tom arrives at the masquerade he hopes to meet Sophia there. He speaks to every lady in the hope of recognizing Sophia's voice. One lady whispers him that if he keeps flirting like that, Miss Sophia Western will hear of it. Tom's heart leaps when he hears Sophia's name mentioned. He is sure that the lady-speaker is Mrs. Fitzpatrick, and begs her to tell him where Sophia is. She refuses to answer his question, but he gets a strong hint that the disguised lady is willing to take the place of Sophia (as Tom's beloved).

Tom follows the lady to an apartment where he discovers that the lady in the mask is not Mrs. Fitzpatrick. It is Lady Bellaston. Their meeting lasts most of the night. This is followed by many meetings in the following days but Tom learns nothing of Sophia's whereabouts. In fact, Lady Bellaston even refuses to mention Sophia's name. Because of her violent affection for him, Lady Bellaston gives him so much money Tom becomes very affluent. In other words, he has become "a kept man."

One evening, as he arrives at Lady Bellaston's house, she is not at home. Tom waits for her. While waiting, Sophia comes there after returning from a play. They meet in the drawing room and both are dumbfounded [=silenced by surprise]. Tom Jones returns Sophia's book and money and asks for her pardon. They soon find themselves well pleased with each other's company. At that time, Lady Bellaston walks into the room and is shocked to see Tom and Sophia together.

When she recovers from the shock, Lady Bellaston pretends not to know Tom Jones at all. Tom explains his presence by saying that he came only to return Sophia's book and money. Thus they escape from the predicament [= difficult situation] of explaining how they came to know each other. Tom asks Lady Bellaston for the pleasure of a second visit. Lady Bellaston agrees. On his way out, he meets. Honour, Sophia's servant, and gives her his address.

BOOK XIV

That same evening Tom Jones receives letters from Lady Bellaston. They express her extreme displeasure at Tom's meeting Sophia. One letter also expresses Bellaston's desire to see Tom again. Just as he finishes reading, the lady herself comes to his room and rages at him. She is immediately followed by Honour with a letter from Sophia.

At length, Tom pacifies Bellaston assuring her that his meeting with Sophia was quite accidental. Before she leaves, Lady Bellaston demands that Tom should now come to her house. Tom gladly agrees because he will be able to see Sophia.

Sophia's letter to Tom Jones requests him not to visit the house, lest they be found out. So, the next morning he sends a letter to Lady Bellaston saying he is ill and cannot keep the appointment.

BOOKS XV & XVI

Lord Fellamar, an English lord and friend of Lady Bellaston, has fallen deeply in love with Sophia and desires to marry her. Lady Bellaston arranges for Fellamar to rape Sophia. Her logic is that Sophia will end up marrying the person who has taken away her chastity. Thus Lady Bellaston will get rid of her rival for Tom's affection. She makes careful plans so that Lord Fellamar and Sophia are left entirely alone in the apartment.

Fortunately, Sophia is saved from attempted rape by the unexpected entrance of her father, Squire Western. He learnt of her whereabouts from Mrs. Fitzpatrick, Sophia's cousin who accompanied her from Upton Inn to London. As usual, Squire Western is fully drunk. As soon as he sees Sophia he chides her for her disobedience. He demands that she immediately return to Somersetshire and marry Blifil. Lady Bellaston comes in at this point. She too supports the squire's demand on Sophia, for that would be another way of getting rid of Sophia as her rival to Tom. The Squire then takes Sophia to his lodgings.

Sophia's servant Mrs. Honour rushes to Tom and informs him of this news. While she is there, Lady Bellaston arrives. Tom makes Mrs. Honour to hide behind a curtain. Lady Bellaston comes in and begins to make physical advances to him. Tom can say nothing since Honour is just a few feet away. After some time Lady Bellaston returns. The next morning, Tom Jones learns the history of Lady Bellaston consisting of her many affairs with a number of young men before Tom. Tom now decides to get rid of her.

That same day, Tom's landlady, Mrs. Miller, receives a letter from Squire Allworthy. He informs her that he and Blifil would shortly be arriving in London and lodging at her place.

After recapturing his daughter, Squire Western again forces her to marry Blifil. Sophia adamantly refuses and the Squire imprisons her in her apartment. That evening, when Black George, the servant, serves Sophia's dinner, he also serves her a letter from Tom. He has carefully hidden it into the chest cavity of a roasted bird. The letter contains Tom's declaration of love to Sophia. Sophia cannot reply because she has neither pen nor paper.

Sophia is soon released from imprisonment by the timely arrival of her aunt, Mrs. Western. She wants to take full charge of Sophia's affairs. The Squire has to agree because of his sister's wealthy estate. She frees Sophia's and takes her to an accommodation more suited for a lady of quality. Immediately Sophia writes a letter to Tom Jones.

During this time, Lady Bellaston has also been busy plotting. She tells Lord Fellamar that she will help him in his proposal to marry Sophia. So she requests Fellamar to get rid of "that vagabond Jones" by recruiting him to military service.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick asks Tom to pay her a visit. As he is leaving her house, Mr. Fitzpatrick comes in from Bath. He is of an extremely jealous nature. He immediately draws his sword and challenges the man who he thinks has cuckolded him [cuckold =husband of an unfaithful wife]. In the fight that follows, Tom inflicts a serious injury to Fitzpatrick. Immediately Tom is arrested and then sent to jail for attempted murder. In prison, he receives a note from Sophia. It says that she has learned of his affairs with Lady Bellaston and she is heart-broken. The letter ends: "all I desire is, that your name may never be mentioned to me.]

BOOK XVII

The next morning at breakfast, Mr. Blifil informs Squire Allworthy of the recent imprisonment of the "villainous" Tom. At that time, Squire Western comes rushing in. He is angered about the suit [=marriage proposal] of Lord Fellamar for Sophia. He wants an immediate and forced wedding ceremony between Blifil and Sophia. Allworthy will not allow this at all because he wants time to take its course. He believes Sophia will change her mind given time

The situation now is this. Mrs. Western wants Sophia to marry Lord Fellamar, while Mr. Western wants her to marry Blifil but Sophia wants to marry neither of them.

In the meantime, Tom's friends visit him in prison and cheers him up. They tell him that Fitzpatrick, though critically injured, is not dead. Now Tom receives a most unexpected visit from Mrs. Water, the lady whom he saved from an officer's attack and the lady with whom he spent an enjoyable night at Upton Inn. Mrs. Water has now become Mr. Fitzpatrick's mistress. She also gives the good news that Fitzpatrick will not die. Further more, Fitzpatrick has owned responsibility for starting the fight with Tom Jones.

Tom Jones is greatly pleased by all this good news that would secure him freedom. In this book, Tom is cleared of murder.

BOOK XVIII

As Mrs. Waters leaves the prison, Partridge rushed into Tom's cell, in a dishevelled state. With an expression of horror on his face, he asks if the lady who just left was the same Mrs. Waters at Upton. (When Partridge saw Mrs. Waters in Tom's cell, he recognized her as none other than Jerry Jones. Horrified, he revealed his knowledge to everyone including Allworthy). Tom says yes, it is the same one, the one with whom he had shared a bed. Partridge cries saying that he has been bed with his owned mother. Tom is shocked silent, but Partridge tells him that Mrs. Waters is none other than the former Jerry Jones.

Allworthy decides to visit Tom in jail. First, he wants to speak with Partridge in order to hear the whole story of Tom's travels. Partridge assures Allworthy that he is not Tom's father (as believed). He then tells Allworthy of Tom's act of incest. Before Allworthy has recovered from the shock, Mrs. Waters herself comes in. She then tells Allworthy the truth about Tom's parentage: TOM IS THE SON OF SQUIRE ALLWORTHY'S OWN SISTER BRIDGET, AND WAS FATHERED BY ONE MR. SUMMER, A CLEARGYMAN'S SON WHO LIVED AT ALLWORTHY HOME UNTIL HE DIED A FEW MONTHS BEFORE TOM JONES WAS BORN. Allworthy is convinced of the truth of Jenny Jones's (Mrs. Waters) story.

At that movement, the lawyer Dowling comes in and is startled to see Mrs. Waters. Allworthy questions Dowling and learns about the villainy: 1. it was Blifil who sent Dowling upon the mission to undo Jones, 2. he also bribed the officers who witnessed the fight between Jones and Fitzpatrick to testify that Tom started the fight. 3. while Alloworthy was ill, his sister instructed Dowling to deliver Allworthy a letter in which she explained the facts of Tom's parentage. This letter was received by Blifil who never showed it to Allworthy. Allworthy is at last convinced that Blifil is "the worst of villains".

As he promised, Allworthy pays a visit to Sophia. He tells her that he is very glad that she has escaped from a marriage to a villain. He begins to recommend her his nephew Tom, but Sophia refuses to see him. Squire Western comes him. Allworthy tells him all that he has recently learned. As soon as Squire Western comes to know that Tom is to be the heir to the Allworthy estate, he becomes eager that Sophia should marry Tom. Allworthy agrees to bring Tom to visit them the next day.

When Allworthy returns to his lodgings, Tom is already there. A very tender scene of union takes place between uncle and nephew. Tom realizes the errors of his rash action and says that he has received only the punishment which he deserved. Allworthy states that imprudence [= rash actions] may be corrected but not the villainy of Blifil's. Squire Western, who cannot wait to see Tom, calls at the house.

Blifil now comes in to see Allworthy. Allworthy is enraged at Blifil's villainy. But Tom intervenes and asks him to be merciful. Allworthy is astonished at the depth of Tom's goodness. Allworthy and party now pay a visit to the Westerns. The result of this visit in that Sophia agrees to marry Tom, after some hesitation. The nest morning, Sophia and Tom are married and happiness prevails.

AFTER THE HAPPY ENDING

After thus concluding his narrative of Tom Jones, the author summarizes what has happened to his characters:

- Although Allworthy vows never to see Blifil again, Tom persuades his uncle to provide him a good sum of annuity. Tom even secretly increases it. Blifil has moved to a northern town. He has now turned a Methodist in the hopes of marrying a wealthy Methodist widow.
- Mrs. Fitzpatrick has obtained a separation from her husband with the help of Lord Fellamar. She is living well in London.
- Black George Seagrim disappears to unknown parts. Tom provides money to George's family, Molly Seagrim receiving most of it.
- Tom gives Partridge a 50 pound annuity. Partridge establishes a school. There is a proposal of marriage between him and Molly Seagrim.
- Squire Western gives his estate to Tom and Sophia and moves to better hunting country. He visits him and dotes on his two grand children. He declares, "he was never happy in his life till now".
- Tom's conversation with Allworthy and his marriage to "the lovely and virtuous Sophia" have brought about a great change in him. He overcomes his habits of vice and acquires good sense and caution in all his actions.

The narrative has come full circle. Everyone has returned to the country and once again leads a blissful life. Paradise has been regained. All evil has been removed. It

remains in the city with Fitzpatrick and others. The picaresque hero has fulfilled his quest. He has gained Sophia and has regained his true birthright as master of the land.

TOPICS

TOM JONES AS A COMIC EPIC

Henry Fielding, in a half-serious vein, has called *Tom Jones* a comic epic poem in prose. We must remember that, by associating his work with the epic, he was making a claim for the literary seriousness of the "new" genre – "the novel".

In many respects, *Tom Jones* may be called an epic. The novel has a kind of moral heroism reminiscent of Virgil. It has a tendency to universality. Fielding promises a large sweeping treatment of time which helps to create distance and perspective. And it consists of 18 books, an average number of the 24 books of Homer's *Odyssey* and the 12 books of Virgil's *Aeneid*. These features connote a large scale that "epic" signifies to us in modern use.

Fielding says in the novel that he intends to leave out long stretches of time when nothing important has happened. He sets out to record only the history of "those notable eras when the greatest scenes have been transacted on the human stage". Statements of such generalization are scattered everywhere in *Tom Jones*. They create an impression that the novel is about the human race at large, not the individual human being. This sense is also conveyed by Fielding's love of abstracts and generalizations. He often generalizes an incident or relationship. Thus an account of the friction between Captain Blifil and his wife Bridget leads to a discussion of "the married state". Particular incidents, therefore, are made to become examples of human conduct. It is as if the whole novel were a kind of a casebook of human nature. Added to this, a large and varied cast of characters populate a wide world so that the novel appears to be "a history of the world in general".

Critics see *Tom Jones* as a rather panoramic novel in its width and do not totally agree that it is an epic writing. In the first third of the novel, Fielding introduces some twenty characters and spread through twenty years. So, some critics see the remainder of the novel as Tom Jones's journey through life, to maturity, and to wisdom. The novel gives such a sense of expansiveness, in time and space.

In must be noted that Fielding indulges rather in mock-epic, but nowhere does he indulge in classical epic imitation. An epic would start *in medias res* [= in the middle] and

would consist of a series of narratives of past glories, well known to the listeners. But the historical arrangements of *Tom Jones* chronicles the lives of the hero from his obscure birth to his happy marriage. This structure is characteristics of romance, not epic.

Although Fielding occasionally imitates classical epics, he often celebrates comic writers – Aristophanes, Cervantes, Rabelais, Moliere, Swift and Shakespeare. Thus, he is armed with the traditions of comedy, satire and romance. Though he attempts an eighteenth century epic, he has actually written a comic-satiric romance.

By calling his work a comic epic in prose, Fielding tries to establish some relation between his novel and the epics of Homer and Virgil. Since Homer's comic epic never survived, neither Fielding nor any one else could have any idea of what a comic-epic was like. Fielding has no heroic deeds at his disposal: no ready-made history to exploit patriotically except the suppression of the Jacobite rebellion.

In Fielding's use of the term comic epic, 'comic' does not mean merely 'funny,' though it includes that idea. The term suggests a *realistic* rather than *heroic* treatment of subject-matter and characters of lesser rank than in epic literature.

TOM JONES AS PICARESQUE ROMANCE

A picaresque novel is the tale of a *picaro,* a rogue and a wanderer. The classical example of the picaresque is Cervantes's *Don Quixote.* The picaresque novel does not have a plot based on cause and effect. Instead it is a series of unconnected episodes happening to hero who is a picaro. Here, the role of the hero is that all this episodes and events happen to him. In fact, they may as well happen to anyone else. However, Tom Jones cannot be strictly categorized under picaresque novel. It is true that many incidents are truly episodic, bearing no relation to the plot of the novel, especially those that happen on the road such as the incident of the Man of the Hill. But various other incidents and happenings in the novel are connected by causal relationships. Therefore, to call *Tom Jones* a picaresque novel would only be partly true.

In a picaresque novel, personal relationships are relatively unimportant. Fielding's characters do not have a convincing inner life. He avoids the subjective dimension and external approach to character. At all events, Fielding refuses to go too deep into the minds of characters. He says very little about feelings while he goes at length to discuss rational reasoning. This emotional artificiality is very general in Tom Jones.

Scenes take place in the novel which do not arise from character and motive. And the characters themselves are not people in the fullest sense. They are almost all "flat" characters in the tradition of the comedy of humours. Though there is "life" in *Tom Jones*

it is not presented with any kind of any consistency. Some episodes are fully dramatic, like the scene where Sophia finds Tom in Lady Bellaston's room. Others, like the confusion in Upton inn, simply exploit a farcical moment, with no point beyond. The characters are also conceived at various levels – Allworthy is as an allegorical figure, scarcely individualized at all; Tom and Squire Western are fully rounded figures; Partridge is larger than life.

Yet, for all this picaresque elements, the novel has a unity and pattern. *Tom Jones* is a panoramic commentary on England in 1745 but it is also the story of Tom Jones and Sophia Western. Tom and Sophia are rebels, revolting against the accepted standards of eighteenth century society. By such standards Sophia should obey her father. Tom, as an illegitimate child, should be put in his place. But Tom and Sophia fight conventional society, embodied in the character of Blifil. The struggle of Tom and Sophia against Blifil and all that he stands for is at the very centre of the novel.

Tom and Sophia oppose the worldview of the eighteenth century ruling class. They assert the capacity of human nature to change itself and the world. The central story of Tom and Sophia best expresses the view of life which Fielding wishes to express in his novel.

THE PLOT OF *TOM JONES*

Early twentieth century critics of *Tom Jones* have underrated the importance of the plot of the novel. In their view, plot is an external and enveloping form when seen in relation in relation to the novel's content. They see plot as a means, a "framework" in which character is "set". Thus, plot is considered a device that is essentially "artificial", for bringing on the stage "real men and women" – it is a mere "mechanism".

While defending the plot of *Tom Jones,* the critic R.S. Crane attacks this view as a very limited and abstract definition of plot. According to him, any novel or drama is composed of three elements: 1. the things that are imitated, 2. the linguistic medium in which they are imitated, and 3. the manner or technique of imitation. Of these, the things that are imitated (or rendered) in the novel involve human beings interacting with one another. This is determined by their moral character and their states of mind -- that is, their reasonings, emotions and attitudes. In this context, the plot of a novel is a temporal synthesis effected by the writer among the elements of action, character and thought. Therefore plot is a synthesis of all three of these elements. The plot may differ in structure

according as one or the other of the three ingredients is taken as the synthesizing principle. There are thus plots of action, plots of character and plots of thought.

In the first, namely, plot of action, the synthesizing principle is a change in the fortunes of the protagonist,, determined and effected by character and thought. In the second, a change in the moral character is precipitated by action and made manifest in thought and feeling. In the third type a completed process of change in the thought of protagonist and his feelings, is conditioned and determined by character and action.

Most of the familiar, classic plots, including that of *Tom Jones* are of the first kind, the plot of action. So, critics have tended to reduce plot to action alone. In *Tom Jones,* plot has priority over character. Fielding achieves this by superimposing on the central action, a very complex series of autonomous sub plots and episodes. This extreme diversification made him not to dwell on any scene or character for long.

The unifying idea and essence of *Tom Jones* is this. A number of persons belonging to or related to the neighbouring families of Allworthys and Westerns, (assisted by fortune) cooperate to bring Tom into an incomplete and precarious union with Tom and Sophia: then separate him as completely possible from them through actions that reverse their opinion of Tom's character: and just an Tom is about to be hanged, to restore them unexpectedly to him to a more entire and stable union of both affection and fortune. The unity of *Tom Jones* lies in this formula.

THE STRUCTURE OF *TOM JONES*

The structure of *Tom Jones* has always been an object of wonder. Fielding has divided his narrative into six volumes, three books to each volume. This makes a total of eighteen books. The first six books describe life at Somersetshire in the country; the middle six deal with events on the road; the last six describe events in the city, London. To heighten the sense of regularity, Fielding introduces each book with an essay on the connection between art and life. In the first essay, he presents his work as if standing before a theatre curtain. In the last essay, he says goodbye to us as if we have all been travelling together, and are now separating, never to meet again. In the essays in between, he marks off the various stages. These are like sign posts by which he keeps us informed of our location along the route of the plot. Each book is headed with a statement of the amount of time it covers, from twelve hours to twelve years.

Even early critics have pointed out the "architecture" of *Tom Jones* in which every part has a counterpart. Also, a mathematical exactness is found in incidents in parallel,

and characters in contrast. The novel is certainly arranged with an ingenuity. This, elegant, proportional structure of the novel is its hallmark.

In determining relation of the part to the whole, Fielding makes a sequence of little incidents and circumstances rapidly grow large. His plot makes use of so many apparent trifles linked together to form his great plot-machine. In other words, every detail will have its part to play in the total design. For example, Sophia's muff [=long, woolen glove] is as important as Desdemona's handkerchief. In a lengthy explanation, Fielding warns his reader not to hastily condemn any of the incidents as irrelevant to the main design. Every apparent digression [=deviation from the main track], he affirms, is relevant to the main design. One critic comments, "Design is the matrix of plot in *Tom Jones,* it is the primary determining factor in the structure of the book".

"Design" is a venerable theory that nature reveals to us – evidence of pattern, structure, organization everywhere from the smallest creature to the planetary system. Each must have been deliberately created because chance or accident could not be responsible for such an order. Therefore, a designer created nature – God exists. In this theory God is seen as supreme architect and supreme artist. The author stands in the same relation to his writing as god is to his universe.

The structure of *Tom Jones* is an affirmation that Design determined the nature of the world. But Fielding's irony and lightness of treatment undermine the serious proposition that he is analogous to God, the creator. The novel is enjoyed not because it is an affirmation of a theory, but because it is a good-humoured, relaxed, funny affirmation that the good people are rewarded in a fictional world. The structure and design of the novel also satisfies our desire for completed, ordered, balanced things in life.

SATIRE AND IRONY IN *TOM JONES*

Fielding's usual stylization of characters tends to make them examples of types. Making characters types is primarily a satiric conception. Although *Tom Jones* is not a satiric novel, it contains many of Fielding's typical satiric subjects and satiric attitudes. For example, in his novel 1.servants can always be bribed by the lure of gold; 2. innkeepers with profit alone in mind, adjust their behaviour according to status of their customers; 3. surgeons exaggerate the seriousness of minor wounds; 4. lawyers dispute in a language which others cannot understand. Avarice and ambition, ingratitude and unkindness, recur in *Tom Jones.*

Fielding. mainly makes use of the satiric techniques of 1.the ironic commentary and 2. the contrast between what people say and what they do. For instance, with a combination of these techniques, he reveals the motive behind captain Blifil's desire to marry Bridget Allworthy – that the Captain was interested in marrying her wealth than herself. The final satiric deflation of Captain Blifil is a splendid piece of ironic comedy. When Allworthy falls ill, Captain Blifil makes plans involving alterations in Allworthy's house and garden. This is because captain Blifil assumes that he will get the property on Allworthy's death, Allworthy having no heir other than his sister who is Blifil's wife One day, he is in deep contemplation, meditating on the happiness that would happen him by Allworthy's death, when Captain Blifil himself dies suddenly of a stroke. This is classic satire that diminishes its subject to ridicule.

Tom Jones himself represents his countrymen because he bears two of the commonest names in England, Tom and Jones. The characters of Sohpia which means 'wisdom' and Allworthy are types that offer generality rather than individually.

There are, of course exceptions. All his characters are not stocks or mere types. Several of them have more individuality then generality. For instance, the characters of Thwackeum and Square and Western. Their names have some significance at the level of 'humour' theory. Some of Fielding's best comic creations are these secondary characters. They have both the vividness of caricature and its individuality. Although these characters have more individuality than, say, Sophia, Fielding hints that they too are satiric types.

Squire Western's definite presence brings life and colour to the narrative, yet, he is only a variation of a stock theme. He is an amiable buffoon until he becomes a tyrant when someone opposes his will. But he is the archetypal Boorish [= unrefined peasant] Jacobite country squire, devoted to hunting, drinking and simple country life.

Partridge is eccentric, superstitious, quarrelsome, but barely rises above caricature. The figure of Squire Allworthy is really lifeless. Fielding does not even tell us what he looks like, but is telling us all the time how good he is.

Although many of the characters in Tom Jones are highly entertaining, they are not especially varied in themselves. Nor are they particularly interesting as people. Rather, they are representatives, or examples of moral traits and temperaments. Each character is thus self-consistent but not necessarily complex.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree with the view that *Tom Jones* is a comic epic? Give reasons.
2. What features of the picaresque are to be found in *Tom Jones*?
3. Discuss the novel *Tom Jones* as a romance.
4. Write a note on the plot of *Tom Jones*.
5. Write a note on the elements of satire and irony in *Tom Jones*.
6. Comment on the structure of *Tom Jones*.

FOR FURTHER READING

1. Simon Varey. *Henry Fielding*. Cambridge University press
2. Ronald Paulson, ed. Fielding : *A Collection of Critical Essays.* Twentieth Century Views Series. Prentice Hall, India.
3. C.J.Rawson. *Henry Fielding*. Profiles in Literature. Routledge.
4. Irvin Ehrenpreis. *Fielding: Tom Jones*. Studies in English Literature 23. Edward Arnold.
5. Elizabeth Jenkins. *Henry Fielding*. The European Novelists Series, Arthur Barker.
6. Clive T. Probin. *English Fiction of the Eighteenth Century 1700-1789.*

Part – II –British Fiction

INTRODUCTION

The reputation of Charles Dickens seems to be perennial. His books have headed the list of best sellers for more than a Century and a half. Among popular classics he ranks after only the King James Bible and Shakspeare. He is one of the most widely translated of the authors, and the one most read across the nation of the world. His works have been edited, Criticized, Interpreted, re-interpreted and researched into. He is the centre of an academic industry.

The foundations of moderns realism in "the serious treatment of everyday reality; the rise of more extensive and socially inferior groups to the position of subject matter for problematical existential representation; the embedding of random persons and events in the general course of contemporary history; the third historical background.

Charles Dickens is the greatest of all English novelists because he manages to be more mimetic [= imitating real life] than any other. He seen more deeply and renders more finely and completely social and human probabilities than other novelists. Dickens belongs to the developing nation of realism in the nineteenth century novel.

LIFE AND WORKS

Charles Dickens was born in 1982 at Portsmouth, the son of John Dickens, a clerk in the navy. He received his early education at Chatham. His father was always short of money and by the time Charles was eleven year old, the family was in serious financial trouble. His mother started a small school to make money and fixed a brass plate on the door: ***Mrs Dickens's Establishment.*** No student appeared.

Books were sold, household possessions were pawned. Charles Dickens, at the age of twelve, was sent to work in a blacking [Shoe Polish] factory for seven shillings a week. In ***David Copperfield,*** the episodes of Mudstone and Grinby the miserable existence of Charles as a child labour.

Dickneys's father was arrested for debt and put in the debtor's prison. Charles Dickens lived in lodgings but had to take food with his family in the prison. When his father was released from prison, he decided to send Charles to school. At the age of fifteen, Charles left school and for a time worked as a lawyer's clerk. He learnt shorthand and after a time became a successful reporter. At that time he met the pretty daughter of a bank manager, Maria Beadnell. The character of Dora in ***David Copper field*** in probably modeled on Maria.

Dickens began to write articles which were later published on ***Sketches By Boz***. He married Catherine Hogarth in 1836 and they had a large family of seven sons and three daughters. Later, Dickens and his wife separated. In 1836, his ***Pickwick Papers*** started appearing in serial form. It was a great success and Dickens became famous. This was followed by ***Oliver Twist*** which also appeared as a serial. Other important works of Dickens are: ***Nicholas Nickleby, The old Curiosity Shop, Barnaby Rudge, David Copperfield*** (1850), ***A Tale of Two Cities, Great Expectations, Bleak House*** and ***Our Mutual Friend.***

Dickens died at Gad's Hill in 1870 and was buried in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey. ***The Mystery of Edwin Drood***, which he was writing at the time of his death, remains unfinished.

Charles Dickens is "the first great story teller of the lives of common people. " His fiction shows great creative energy, abundant variety and irresistible humour. Dickens is not a great psychologist, his characters are often caricatures; yet they are full of life.

Dickens portrays London scenes vividly; he has great dramatic power and the dialogues in his novels are always excellent. His shortcomings are melodrama. At times, his novels become sentimental and full of pathos.

Humanitarianism is the keynote of Dickens novels. In almost all his novels, he reveals some social abuse and advocates reform. For example, David ***Copperfield*** depicts the evils of imprisonment for debt.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

David Copperfield

The affectionate, honest, talented hero of the novel.

Clara Copperfield

Davids young mother. She is pretty, irresponsible but very affectionate. She was heart-broken by the coldness of her second husband, Mr. Murdstone.

Miss. Betty Tnotswood

Davids great-aunt [fathers aunt] who adopted him when he had run away from the warehouse of Mr. Murdstone.

Miss. Peggothy

The faithful nurse to David. She has red cheeks, dark eyes and is plumpy.

Mr. Peggotty

Her brother. A generous and kind-hearted person. He adopted Ham and Emily.

Emily Peggotty

An orphan, cousin of Ham. She too is adopted by her kindhearted uncle, Mr. Peggotty, whom she loved very much. After her tragic love affair with steer-worth, she went to Australia with her uncle.

James Steerforth

David's handsome, clever, charming friend. He was a spoiled child of wealthy mother. After attracting Emily, he deserted her. He was drowned when his ship was wrecked at yarmouth.

Ham Peggotty

Also an orphan, adopted by Mr. Peggotty. He was in love with his cousin Emily. Her elopement with steerforth broke his heart. He died while trying to save steerforth during a shipwreck.

Mr. Murdstone

Davids stepfather. He is a cold, calculating, cruel tortured David and his mother.

Miss. Jane Murdstone

Mr. Murdstone's equally cruel sister. She severely tortured David and his mother.

Mr. Micawber

The stout, talkative gentleman with whom David stayed in London. A man in serious financial difficulties, he was always hoping for something to turn up. Eventually, he prospered in Australia.

Mr. Wickfield

Ms. Betsey Trotwoods [Dickens's Great Aunt] lawyer.

Agnes Wickfield

His daughter, whom David loved and took as his wife, after the death of his first wife, Dora.

Uriah Heep

Mr. Wickfield's villainous clerk. He took every advantage of Mr. Wickfield's weekness for drinks.

Mr. Spenpow

A proctor [Court Official] and a partner in a low firm. David studied law under him. He refused to consent to David engagement and marriage to his daughter Dora, but died suddenly.

Dora Spenlow

His daughter, later David's wife. She was charming but silly and inefficient. When Dora died, David was heartbroken.

CHAPTER – 1

PLOT OUTLINE

David Copperfield was born six months after his father's death. Miss Betsey Trotswood, an eccentric great-aunt, was present on the night of his birth. She had been sure that a girl would be born. She wanted to be he Child's godmother and wanted the child to be named after her (Betsey Trotwood Copperfield]. When she learnt that the child was a boy (David), the walked out in anger and never came back.

CHAPTER – 2

David spent his early childhood with his pretty young mother, Clara copperfield and a devoted servant named (Miss) Peggotty. Peggotty was plain and plump. She was so fat that when she walked about the house, her buttons popped off her dress.

One day, David's mother brought in Mr. Murdstone, a gentleman with black hair and side Whiskers. David disliked him and so did peggotty, the servant. Soon, the young widow was courted by Mr. Murdsone.

CHAPTER – 3

At the time of his mother's second wedding [with Murdstone], David was packed off with peggotty to visit her relatives at yarmouth, a seaside town. There, mr. Peggotty, Miss Peggotty's brother lived with his nieces Little Emily and her strony, and young nephew, Ham. They were David's first playmates.

Danicl Peggotty was a hairy man with a good-natured face. He was a bachelor. Emily and Ham were cousin both orphans, adopted by their uncle, Dan Peggotty. David spent a fortnight at yarmouth, a visit which remained a happy memory in his otherwise lonely and unhappy childhood. When Peggotty and David returned home, David was informed that he had a new father, Mr. Murdstone. David's bedroom was changed.

CHAPTER – 4

David went to his new bed room and cried himself to sleep. The next morning, he refused to come out. Mr. Murdstone came in looking harsh. Speaking harshly, he ordered David to wash his face.

Some time later, Miss Murdstone (Mr. Murdstone's Sister) came to live with them. David disliked here as much as he disliked her brother. She came with the pretension to "help" Davids mother but she soon became the boss of the house and a tyrant.

David was all might with his lessons when his mother taught him. Now, when Mr. Murdstone taught him, the boy was confused and frightened. His mistakes angered Mr. Murdstone who often threw his book at his head or punched his ears. When he could not answer the sums David was deprived of dinner. His only comfort was reading the collection of novels left by his dead father. While other boys wee at play on summer evenings, David was reading novels in bed.

One morning, David had prepared his lessons. But all his knowledge slipped when he saw Mr. Murdstone with a cane. He held little David's head tight like a vice. He then began to thrash the boy with the cane. Unable to bear the beating, David bit his stepfather's hand.

Mr. Murdstone continued to beat him severely and then locked him up. He was imprisoned in his room for five days, and allowed to see no one except Miss. Murdstone. His mother watched helplessly. On the last night of his imprisonment, Peggotty called him through the boy hole and whispered to him. She told him that the next day he was to be sent away to a school near London. She said that David must never forget her. She also peromised to look after Davids mother and to write to him. The next morning, Miss. Mardstone took him out to the cart. David bade an emotional farewell to his mother. His mother was pale, with red eyes.

CHAPTER – 5

David had gone about half a mile. His handkerchief was wet with tears. Suddenly, Peggotty jumped out of a fence, climbed into the cart and took David in her arms. She then handed over a bag of cakes, a purse with three shillings and a folded paper on which his mother had written, "For Davy, with my love." Inside the paper were two half-crown coins. Peggotty did not speak a word. She gave him a final hug, got down from the cart and ran off.

The next day, David reached "Salem House" School. It was enclosed by a high wall and looked very dull. It was holiday time, so there were no other boys at school. David was sent there during vacation as a punishment for his misdeed. There was a placard [small poster] on which was written: "Take care of him. He bites." David was to carry the placard on his back wherever he went.

CHAPTER – 6 & 7

After about a month, Mr. Creakle, the cruel proprietor of Salem House, arrived. He was stout, nearby bald with a fiery face and thick veins on his forehead. David was terrified of him.

David became friendly with James Steerforth, six years senior to him. Steerforth was the only boy in school whom the merciless Creakle did not dare to touch. David now had the protection of Steerforth. At last, the next holidays came and David's sufferings came to an end.

CHAPTER – 8

When David reached home, he found his mother sitting in front of a fire, nursing a baby and singing. The baby was her stepbrother. David's mother kissed David and put the child's hand to his lips. Peggotty joined them. David sat embracing his mother, feeling very happy. The next day, David saw Mr. Murdstone. He showed no sign of recognition of the boy. David told him that he was sorry for what he had done. This seemed to please Mr. Murdstone.

David felt very uncomfortable at home. His mother lived in permanent fear of offending Miss or Mr. Murdstone. Mr. Mudstone scolded him severely. Therefore, David was not sorry when the holidays came to an end. School was better than home, he felt.

CHAPTER – 9

Back in school, David's birthday came in the month of March. It was a cold, foggy morning. Mrs. Creakle had an open letter in her hand. She informed him gently that his mother had died and that the baby was crying for the mother. David too cried and cried. On his way home he learnt that his baby brother had also died. David attended his mother's funeral along with others. Peggotty told him that his mother had become weaker and more timed. At last she faded away. Before her death she told Peggotty to tell David that she blessed him a thousand times. After the funeral Peggotty was dismissed from the house. David was not sent back to school.

CHAPTER – 10

David was lucky enough to go on a fortnight's holiday with Peggotty. She was now married and became Mrs. Barking. When David returned from this enjoyable trip, he was utterly neglected in the Murdstone household. David was now left friendless in the home of his cruel stepfather.

One day, Mr. Murdstone told David that he had found employment for the boy. David was to go to Murdstone and Grinby Company, a wine business in which Murdstone had a

share. David would earn enough for his food and spending money, while Mr. Murdstone would pay for his lodging and laundry.

CHAPTER – 11 & 12

David was put to work in the export warehouse of Murdstone and Grinby Company. It was a dilapidated building infested with rats. At the age of ten David was one of the boys employed tom wash empty bottles and to help label, cork and pack the filled bottles. His salary was a meager six shillings a week. He felt very degraded. He was overworked and half-starved. He hated his job.

However, he met another person there with whom he was to associate in later life. This was Mr. Micawber in whose house David was to lodge. Micawber had a large family and beset with financial difficulties. The only visitors to the house were creditors who came at all hours demanding payment. Mrs. And Mr. Micawber often fell into a mood of grief but their spirits soon recovered.

One day, Mr. Micawber was arrested and imprisoned for debt. Most of the household furniture was soon sold. So, Mrs. Micawber decided to move into the prison and live with her husband. David took lodgings in a quiet back garret [= attic]. David spent evenings with the Miawbers in prison. When Mr. Micawber was released from prison, he decided to leave London with his family and move to the Country. They decided to move to Plymouth.

Without the Micawbers, David realized that he would be friendlier. So he decided to run away to his great-aunt, Miss. Betsey Trotwood who now lived in the city of Dover. He set out with half a guinea and box containing his clothes and belongings. A certain robbed David of his money and her box.

CHAPETER 13 & 14

Young David was resolved not to turn back. He set out for Dover on foot. On the way, he sold his waistcoat and then his jacket. He spent the night sleeping on haystacks. Walking many miles a day and sleeping outdoors at night. David journeyed for six days and finally arrived at Miss. Betsey's house. There, he was washed, bathed, dressed and given food. He was then taken to a pleasant bedroom and locked up where he slept well.

Next morning, his aunt wrote to Murdstone. After some days a reply came from him that he was coming the next day. On hearing his name, David was struck with terror. Mr. Murdstone arrived with his sister. He complained to Betsey about David. The boy was rebellious and violet-tempered, he said. Mr. Murdstone had placed David in a respectable

business, but David had run away and became a vagabond. Betsey raised question doubting Murdstone's questions and an argument followed. Betsey asked the boy whether he wanted to go with his stepfather. David begged and prayed her not to send him away. Murdstone returned without David and the boy kissed his aunt and shook her hands with joy. She agreed to be his guardian thereafter.

CHAPTER 15

One day, Aunt Betsey told David that she was sending him to a school in Canterbury. David was overjoyed and they reached Canterbury the next day. There, they visited Mr. Wickfield, a lawyer and his clerk, Uriah Heep, a lad of about fifteen. Mr. Wickfield managed Aunt Betsays legal matters.

Mr. Wickfield recommended a good school for David but Aunt Betsey did not like the school's boarding-house. So, David was allowed to remain in Mr. Wickfields house and attend school. He also met Agnes, he motherless daughter of Mr. Wickfield. She was about David's age with a bright, happy and peaceful face.

Leaving the boy in Canterbury, Betsey returned to Dover. Her parting advice to David was: "Never be mean; never be false; never be cruel". David promised not to forget her warnings and her kindness.

CHAPTER – 16

The next day, David was taken to his new school. He was taken to his classroom where some twenty five boys were at study. It was so long since David had been with schoolmates, and David was ashamed of his life in the London wine warehouse. He was placed in the lowest class since he knew very little. At home, Agnes, Mr. Wickfields daughter taught him how to study and understand the text books. The school was run by one Dr. Strong. It was an excellent school and strong was a fine headmaster. Soon David was at home there.

CHAPTER – 17 & 18

One day, while David was having tea with Uriah Heep. Mr. Micawber arrived there. He and his wife were on their way back to London from Plymouth. They were now staying at an inn. Micawber and Uriah were great friends. Micawber praised Uriah as a young fellow who would be Attorney-General one day. They had an enjoyable dinner. But, the next day, David was surprised to receive a note from Micawber which said he could not pay the hotel bill. Davids school days at Canterbury were the finest and most enjoyable time of his life. There, from a boy he grew into a lad.

CHAPTER 19-22

It was time for David to leave school. Miss. Betsey advised him to travel for a time and see the world before deciding on a profession. Hence, David departed for London. There he met his old school friend (of Salem House School) Steerforth. The two lads were happy to see each other after an interval of many years. Steerforth was now a student at Oxford University. David moved into a room next to Steerforth.

A week later, Steerforth and David visited his old nurse Peggotty and made a trip to yarmouth. They were so happy to each other that they were lacked in each other's arms. There, David and Steerforth learnt that Little Emily an Ham were engaged to be married. In spite of this fact, she and Steerforth were immediately attracted to each other.

The two lads stayed for more than two weeks at yarmouth. They often went boating with Mr. Peggotty who was a good sailor. He also visited his childhood home of Blunderstone. The garden had run wild and most of the windows were shuttered up. The house, long ago vacated by Murdstone, was now occupied by a roadman. Steerforth bought a boo new boat and named it ***Little Emily***.

CHAPTER 23

David and Steerforth returned to London. At the suggestion of Aunt Betsey, David decided to become a proctor, a kind of attorney. She had written a will in Davids favour. She also agreed to pay the thousand pounds required to send him for an apprenticeship in law. All she expected from David in return was love in here old age. Accordingly, David jointed the law firm of Spenlow and Jenkins. He took up residence in a furnished apartment with a view of the river Thames. Leaving him there, her aunt returned home to Dover.

CHAPTER 24

David once met Agnes Wickfield who was at that time staying in London. She told him she feared Steerforth and asked David to stay away from him. She also expressed to fear of Uriah Heep, her father's clerk. She said Uriah was about to enter into partnership with her senile father. Uriah, the scheming villain, had taken advantage of Mr. Wickfield's weakness for drinks and made himself indispensable. Mr. Wickfield himself was afraid of Uriah who forced him to enter into partnership.

Agnes invited David to dinner and there he met Uriah himself. David at once disliked him but was nice to him at Agnes's request. When David encountered Uriah, Uriah confessed that he loved Agnes so much and wanted to marry her. On hearing this, David felt so disgusted he wanted to murder Uriah. But he somehow managed to control himself and asked whether Agnes knew about his feelings of love for her. He said not yet, but he was

sure that she will have to accept him on account of his usefulness to her father. David felt utter repulsion for this scheming villain.

CHAPTER 25-27

David joined as a trainee in the law firm of Spenlow and Jenkins. Once, Mr. Spnlow invited David to his house as a weekend guest. He was a widower with a daughter who had recently returned from Paris after finishing her education. The moment David saw Dora Spenlow he felt hopelessly in love with this pretty and childish girl. In her presence he forgot everything else – what he spoke, what he ate, or who was there.

Miss. Murdstone (the sister of David's stepfather) was employed to look after Dora. Dora hold David that Miss. Murdstone was a tiresome protector. After leaving, week after week David dreamed of Dora. He walked miles daily in the hope of seeing her somewhere on the way.

CHAPTER 28-29

In London, David met Mr. and Mrs. Micawber. He invited them to dinner. It was a thoroughly enjoyable party. But while leaving, Micawber gave him a note which he later opened and read. Micawber had written that he was crushed and hopeless: a pown-broker was in legal possession of his house and belongings.

CHAPTER 30-32

Little Emily had eloped with Steerforth, leaving a letter to her cousin. Ham to whom she was engaged to marry. The letter said that her heart was filled with grief for leaving her home and for her wicked act of running away with Steerforth Miss. Peggotty and Mr. Peggotty arrived in London to look for Emily.

CHAPTER 33

Mr. Spenlow invited David for a picnic on Dora's birthday. David was delighted, for he was so madly in love with her. At the picnic, David kissed Dora's hand. The next day he took her in his arms and told her that he loved her and worshipped her. They became secretly engaged. He gave her a ring with forget-me-not flowers, a pretty ring with blue stones.

CHAPTER 34-36

Shortly after his engagement, David learnt from his aunt that she had lost all here money. She was totally ruined and did not possess even a home to stay. So, taking her few possessions, she came to live with David in his London apartment.

David was depressed because his changed position will affect his chances of marrying Dora. The next day he met Spenlow and Jenkins and stated his case. He requested them to cancel his apprenticeship and return the thousands pounds of Aunt Betsey, which she had earlier paid. But they refused.

David was now determined to earn some money and show his aunt he would repay her for her part sacrifice, even in a small way. He took a part-time job an secretary to Dr. Strong, his former schoolmaster at Canterbury who was now retired and living in London. The lob paid very little – about seventy pounds a year. David also learnt that Uriah made careful plans. Taking advantage of Mr. Wickfield's dependence on him he managed to become Mr. Wickfield's partner.

CHAPTER 37-39

Dora did not yet know of David's misfortunes. One Saturday evening he set out to break the news to her. Abruptly, he asked her if she would love a beggar. Dora was very upset and terrified. She wept bitterly. He then explained to her that she was engaged to a very poor man. He advised her to learn housekeeping accounts and cookery. He continued to love her deeply and completely.

Since, the job with Mr. Strong paid very little, David started learning short hand. He also started studying for a position as a reporter of parliamentary affairs.

One morning, Mr. Spenlow called David. He had a serious look on his face. He held in his hands the secret love letters written to Dora by David. He accused David of stealthy and unbecoming acts. David replied that he seriously loved Dora. Mr. Spenlow refused to agree to an engagement – considering Dora's young age and David's social position. He wanted to put an end to the "Nonsense".

The next day, Mr. Spenlow most unexpectedly died of a fit. His body was found on the roadside a mile away from her home. Dora was overcome with grief and was always crying. It soon came out that Mr. Spenlow had been spending much more than his income. After the sale of all his assets, only less than a thousand pounds was left. Spenlow had died almost penniless. After the funeral, Dora went to live with her two elderly aunts at Putney.

CHAPTER 40 & 41

Agnes Wickfield advised David to write to Dora's aunts. He wrote and waited and at last an answer came from them, calling him to appear for an interview. David met them. He assured them that he loved Dora as nobody had ever loved anybody else. They permitted him three visits a week. Dora cried at first on seeing David but soon they were very happy.

She wanted a cookery book and wanted to learn account-keeping. But being childlike, she could not learn anything. So, she started drawing pictures instead.

CHAPTER 42 -45

With much study on his part, Dora became a news reporter. At the age of twenty one he married Dora. It was a very happy affair and everyone was at his or her best. The wedding was so wonderful it seemed like a dream to David. Dora knew no housekeeping and could never learn it. Nor could she learn cookery or housekeeping. In fact she was incapable of learning anything. She was a "Little Blossom," a "Child-Wife" who was incapable of growing up. Though they quarreled, they were very happy. Dora and Aunt Betsey got on very well together.

CHAPTER - 46

One evening, David visited Steerforths house and learnt of what had happened. It turned out that Emily had run away from her husband and could not be traced. After their elopement, Steerforth and Emily had gone abroad, visiting France, Switzerland, Italy and other Countries. Emily learnt to speak European languages and was admired wherever she went.

After some time, however, they began quarrelling. One day Steerforth simply went off, leaving Emily with his unscrupulous manservant. She reacted violently to this news and almost went mad. It became necessary to shut her up in a room. That night, she managed to get out through the window. She could not be traced. Steerforth was wandering somewhere in Spain.

CHAPTER – 47

David returned home at midnight after leaving the story of Emily. He found a man eating and drinking in Betsay's cottage at that hour. She then gave the man some money. After he left Aunt Betsey explained to David that the man was none other than husband. Long ago, she had loved him dearly but the man had at broken both her fortune and her heart. She then separated him after generously providing for him. But he had wasted it all.

CHAPTER – 48

David wrote a book which was published. It became a success. He no longer had to report dull parliament debates. David and Dora had been married one and a half years. Dora still could not learn anything. David decided to be happy with her "Child-Wife". He learnt to adapt himself to Dora. They had a baby which died at childbirth. Dora began to lose strength.

CHAPTER 49-52

During these events, David remained in touch with Mr. Micawber. He now worked as Uriah Heep's confidential secretary. One morning David received a letter from Micawber. He went to meet Micawber who was in very low spirits.

Suddenly, Micawber burst out of his silence. He was no longer unable to silence his conscience. In the presence of Uriah Heep, before a company of people, Micawber burst out. He said that for many years, Uriah Heep had been robbing and cheating his employer, Mr. Wickfield, exploiting his weakness for liquor. It was found out that Uriah Heep was also responsible for Aunt Betsey's financial ruin. Thus Uriah's villainy was exposed by Micawber. There was now hope for at least a partial recovery of Mr. Wickfield's and Betsey's losses.

Mr. Micawber asked everyone to assemble at Mr. Wickfield's house. There, he publicity denounced Uriah as a scoundrel. He read out the denunciation which showed Uriah as a forger and a cheat. Uriah had obtained. Mr. Wickfield's signature and drew out large sums of trust money. He made it appear that Mr. Wickfield was the dishonest party. He then used this to torture and blackmail Wickfield. Micawber was able to prove his charges.

Uriah now dropped his mask of slavishness and revealed his malice and hatred. He was then made to return the partnership which Mr. Wickfield was forced to sign. Uriah was then confined to his room.

Micawber's conscience was now cleared by his exposure of Uriah's Villainy. He proposed to take his family to Australia and find his fortunes there.

CHAPTER 50 & 51

Some months passed. David now believed that Emily was dead. But Emily was one day found imprisoned in an attic. When Mr. Peggotty went there. She called "Uncle" and fainted in his arms. After recovering, she narrated her story. Deserted by Steerforth, Emily escaped from his manservant. She ran along the beach. A fisherman's wife found her lying on the shore. She took Emily to her cottage. Emily was ill for some time. When she became stronger, the fisher couple put her on a boat to France. She then came to London where Martha (her friend) found her and saved her.

Mr. Peggotty too intended to emigrate to Australia with Emily and begin a new life there. Thus Emily turned to her uncle in sorrow and shame after being deserted by her lover.

CHAPTER - 53

David's happy life was clouded by his wife's delicate health. Day by day her health failed in spite of his tender care. On the night of Dora's death, Agnes wickfield was with him.

She had always been a true friend of David. In the days that followed, he found comfort in her sympathy and understanding.

CHAPTER - 54

Aunt Betsey's husband died after thirty six years of marriage. When he knew he was dying, he sent for her and expressed regret for all his misdeed.

CHAPTER - 55-57

David made a visit to Yarmouth. A storm broke out and huge waver battered a ship in distress. Ham went into the sea to rescue a survivor in the broken ship. A huge wall of water crashed shoreward. Two died bodies were washed ashore. The bodies were of the loyal Ham and the fake Steerforth.

Mt. Peggotty, Emily and party were emigrating to Australia. David went on board the ship to bid them farewell. He found that the Micawbers were also passengers in the same ship sailing to Australia to seek their fortune.

CHAPTER - 58-61

David lost his wife and his other friends were dead or emigrated. He was desolate. He left England and spent months wandering aimlessly in Europe. At last, a letter from Agnes Wickfield made him realize his responsibilities. She advised him to work hard at his writing. Now David realized that he had ignored the treasures of her love in his boyhood. After an absence of three years he reached home. He went by Coach to Dover and burst into Aunt Betsey's parlour. She received David with open arms and tears of joy. The next day he visited Agnes Wickfield. David learnt that Uriah Heep was in prison where he deserved to be.

CHAPTER - 62

One day, Aunt Betsey innocently told David that Agnes Wickfield might soon get married. With a heavy heart, David went off to give her his good wishes. When she burst into tears, David realized that her heart was already his. David and Agnes were married within a fortnight, to Aunt Betsey's Great delight. After the wedding, Agnes told him that Dora's dying wish was that Agnes should occupy her place.

CHATER - 63 & 64

Agnes and David were now married for ten years. They had three children. David was wealthy and famous. One day, Mr. Peggotty came to England for a few weeks from Australia to see his friends. He reported to David that they were all doing well in Australia. Mr. Micawber had become a magistrate.

David was settling down in life to begin his career as a successful novelist.

TOPICS

1. AUTO BIOGRAPHICAL ELEMENTS IN DAVID *COPPERFIELD*.

The whole family of Dickens lived in object poverty in London. Charles's father, John Dickens was thrown into debtor's prison. A relative got a job for young Charles Dickens in a blacking [=shoe polish] factory. For nearby six months, he washed and labelled bottles twelve hours a day, six days a week. This was the dark night of his soul. He was much penetrated by grief and humiliation. Even after becoming a man, a successful writer with a wife and children, he was haunted by the bitter memories of boyhood.

Dickens's entire career was an attempt to make sure that no one was going to put him back into the blacking factory of his nightmares. So much so, that he first sat down to write an autobiography. But on afterthoughts, he wanted to find a means of redeeming his lamentation. So he abandoned his autobiography and took up writing a fiction which would allow him to find an adequate correlative [=equivalent] for his pain. Thus was born ***David Copperfield.***

The first fourteen chapter of the novel are a dramatization of the author's abandoned autobiography and the sense of desolation of Dickens's early life. They dramatize 1. Staving off of bad fathers, 2. relying temporarily on boon companions [=jolly, merry-making friends] 3. but seeking a satisfactory mother. Submerged beneath in Dickens's anger against the weakness of his father for ***David Copperfield*** and in many other novels, this anger is reflected in a condemnation of father images. Beyond that, is to be found a condemnation of social institutions for their failure to come to the need of those suffering. The ills of society, can be remedied by private charity, Dickens felt. The interference of the strong on behalf of the weak was Dicken's panacea [=universal remedy] for the ills of society.

2. DICKENS'S SUCCESS IN TRANSFORMING AUTOBIOGRAPHY INTO FICTION

David Copperfield did not suddenly spring un fare known from the novelist's head. Earlier, Charles Dickens started writing an autobiography but quickly gate it up because he was unable to write about the dramatic [=mentally disturbing] experiences of his childhood and youth. He then fed much of this material into the writing of ***David Copperfield.*** The novel is a complicated interweaving of fact and fiction. Dickens's self pity found in her autobiography strays into the novel. For example, in Chapter 11 of the novel, David recalls

with self-pity how as a child he was left uncared for. He remembers that no one paid any attention to his excellent abilities and strong power of observation as a boy.

The parent figures in the novel are the Peggottys, the Micawbers and Mr. Murdstone. They all present different aspects of Dickens's own parents, but this do not explain their importance is, we have to ignore biographical speculation. For, in many ways, Davids' early happiness with his mother and Peggotty is the story of Everyman. It is psychologically true. Also true is David's recognition of the intrusive father-figure, one who threatens to come between the undivided happiness of mother and child.

E.M. Forester warns readers that the resemblance of the facts of Dickens's experiences should not lead us to fully identify Dickens with David. Nor should we assume that Dickens's own character and career has been expressed in the narrative. It would be the greatest mistake to imagine anything like a complete identify of the fictitious hero with the real novelist. The character of David, the hero is remarkable for its unlikeness rather than for its likeness to Dickens.

It is true that some of Dickens's experiences were made use of in the history of his hero. For example, David Copperfield's boyhood in the wine warehouse and London low-life are drawn from Dickens's own boyhood experience, but David does not get mixed up in Dickens's own biography. We must remember that David is ***not*** his author.

It is true that Dickens had started to write his autobiography but abandoned the project and decided to write a novel (***David Copperfield***) instead. This may be ***because_*** he wanted to examine ***impersonally*** the experience of growing up on the first half of the nineteenth century - the problems that a young man of that generation faced. In fact, the real issues raised in the novel were ***not*** personnel to Charles Dickens. Dickens used memories of his childhood in his novels, with the firms objectivity of the creative mind in control of its material.

3. DAVID COPPERFIELD AS A NOVEL ABOUT GROWTH / MATURITY

Though David Copperfield's childhood days are wonderfully portrayed by Dickens, the novel is about growth and the process of growth. David's process of growth has three very natural overlapping stages: 1. Parents; 2. Schooling and Friendship ; and 3. Marriage. As narrator, David is always trying to make sense of experiences that have contributed in shaping his identity.

PARENTS

One way in which David ***Copperfield*** builds up its slow, steady sense of growth in through a series of expulsions and partings. David's first expulsion is from the "Timeless"

idyll [=innocent happy experiences], the returns from this wonderful holiday to the news of his mother's remarriage. He feels a prison-house that begins to grow about him. With the arrival of the Murdstones, he feels he has lost his mother. Now there can be no return to the safe world of his mother's love.

Miss. Murdstone (Murdstone's Sisters) is the next mother-figure in the novel. She becomes the mistress of the house, possessor of the household keys and responsible for David's education. But the Murdstones do not operate by love. They operate by a cold and frightening tyranny. David runs away to Aunt Betsey but the Murdstones come after him. Dickens communicates very intensely the horror of David's childhood under the Murdstones. But he survives their depressing effect on him and coolly dismisses the Murdstones' firmness. This is an evidence of David's attaining growth.

In contrast with the Murdstones, David recalls the Micawbers with amusement and tolerance. The Micawbers are clearly modeled on Dickens's on own good intentioned but ineffectual parents. They are important to David's development because they are unable to offer any help or comfort to his life at the wine warehouse. On the other hand, it is he who offers them help. He recalls how he had been of use to them. He pawns their goods and books after their household affairs.

In other words, David learns a tough independence through a reversal of the normal parent-child relationship. Yet, David does not show any bitterness in his attitude to the Micawbers. In adult life, when he meets them again, he is affectionate to them. It is one more proof of his achieved maturity.

Peggotty and Betsey Trotwood are images of the good surrogate [=substitute] parents. They are full of selfless devotion and warmth. But in David's life, he must learn to grow away from them. Both their houses are destroyed by misfortune. His "safe" childhood paradise in finally wrecked. His childhood refuge in lost – David like them, must learn to cope with personal disaster and to survive it. The theme of child-parent relationship and the growth of the disciplined heart forms the moral pattern of ***David Copperfield***.

SCHOOL

Schooling also relates to the growth of David – from the bullying of Salem House to the excellent school of Dr. Strong. But the real schooling that David undergoes at both schools in the experience of personal relationships. David's friendship with Steerforth and Traddles, his schoolmates are paradigms [=models] of the undisciplined and disciplined hearts.

Traddles in a paragon of selflessness and has a keen sense of duty. He emerges as an attractive character.

But the young David is much more attracted to Steerforth. Steerforth is one of the novels finest achievements. He represents a kind of masculinity to which Dickens was himself attracted. So, much of Dickens is present in Steerforth; his desire to be a gentleman, desire for social accomplishment etc., Steerforth has an undisciplined life, but there is a power and vitality in him that David admires much, Steerforth is a warning of the damaging effect of the values to which David is attracted. Steerforth's life is one of tragic waste. * (see below)

In clear contrast to Steerforth's ruined life is the successful life of Traddles. He becomes a judge. His achievement comes from discipline. It gives him a sureness of identity. Traddle's commitment is total – to work, to personal relationships, to marriage. His marriage to Sophy is a triumph of loyal devotion. Theirs is a successful marriage. The become an ideal couple.

MARRIAGE

There is something of Dicken's own marriage in David and Dora's. Davids marriage is without a basis for success, because Dora is in no position to help her husband. Their marriage in failing and there is a growing sense of separateness between the two.

Agnes Wickfield stands for fresh beginnings. She is the prize for the disciplined heart, the woman for whom Dora must die. She is an example of courage and resilience. She is able to survive the evil of Uriah Heep and the misfortune of her father's disease. She is able to make men grow by leading them to higher things. However, she represents an impossible ideal.

Agnes's relevance lies in her earnestness, a commitment to work and to personal relationships. Dicken's highest praise is always extended to those who have the courage to endure, to remain true to commitment, to personal relationship and work. The novelist shown how David grows through various stages of self-deception towards a nature experience of love.

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* Steerforth's death is most extensively treated by Dickens. His death becomes a fitting token of David's final recognition and abandonment of his undisciplined heart.

4. **THE THEMES OF INNOCENCE & HAPPINESS IN *DAVID COPPERFIELD*:**

Aspects of social criticism in the Novel.

In ***David Copperfield*** **,** Dickens taken up some of the prevailing beliefs of his era for investigation. One theme of the novel is an enquiry into the Romantic-Victorian belief in the value of innocence. Innocence, Dickens feels, is only moral simplicity and ignorance of what people are really like. It is David's "innocence" that makes him a victim of the idea of love. This ideal of love has been inculcated in him with other idealisms. The romantic tradition has given him to understand that love at first sight is right and proper.

Dickens presents the idealization of innocence as a menace to childhood. Yet the Victorians, heirs to the romanties, felt innocence to be the true characteristic of the child. The child David's innocence and trustfulness is constantly taken advantage of.

Ideally, Victorian adults were to be thought of as parents, natural protectors. They are to be trustfully accepted as guides. Even if actuality failed to match the theory, children were still taught that it is true. Even though this left them to be exploited, hurt and confused.

Even as he grown up, David fails to "Change his simple confidence for worldly wisdom". We feel that David is no longer simply young, but very young for his age. Such a person, we feel, would grow up to be "a most unworldly, most unfortunate being". We only recall his aunt's words about David- "Blind, blind, blind". His sheltered life and idealistic education at Dr. Strong's school have put him in blinkers. Here, Dickens provides a subtle criticism of the theory of the Victorian moral code.

Mr. Micawber has no place in the plot of or in the action of the novel. But readers remember him as a leading figure in the novel. We feel that Micawber is a major contributor to the meaning of the book. Wherever he is present, in prison, miserably in debt, in poor lodgings, there is life and joy. Micawber is Dickens's tribute to the life-style of his father. Dickens created Micawber to register his affections for his father. The significance of Micawber is his Micawberism.

In the novel, Dickens gives an account of how David was saved, like Oliver Twist, from falling into the life of crime. Such a life of crime seemed the inevitable fate of an unprotected child in London. It was not David's own efforts but only Providence that saved him. For all its dangers, innocence had a certain survival value.

Dickens place David and Steerforth at opposite poles. One is the innocently good and the other, selfishly vicious forms of young manhood in Dickens's age.

Towards the end of the novel, David goes abroad to Europe to recover from the two blows he has suffered – the loss of Dora, his child-wife and the loss of Steerforth – his father-friend. They represent the loss of first love and first friendship. Now, David faces the fact that he was misguided in both. He realizes that he has to come to terms with his two disillusions. He does this by writing a story about them. David's return to England is quite refreshing. His reunion with the real friend. Traddles, and the right wife Agnes, round off the theme of the novel.

5. A CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE NOVEL

David Copperfield is the last novels of Dickens's apprenticeship. It is preceded by seven apprenticeship novels and followed by seven and than has a central place in Dickens's achievement; in more ways than one. One quality that distinguishes ***David Copperfield*** from more modern and sophisticated novels is its eternal freshness. It is a work that can be read and reread. It has an interesting gallery of characters (more than sixty) immortalized by Dickens. Its first person narration adds much to realistic effects and sympathetic treatment of characters. ***David Copperfield*** is hailed as the most loved piece of fiction in the English language.

The novel's power and truth lies in its selection of experience as a child's, boys and youths in nineteenth century society. E.M. Forster says that the reason for great popularity of the novel is the every reader of the novel discovers that he was something of a copperfield himself.

Dickens shows an imaginative understanding of how a child feels and thinks and acquires ideas. David is the incarnation of the kind of youth Dickens's age demanded, sensitive, modest, upright, affectionate, but also resourceful, industries and successful in rising in the world.

David's history is a model in that era that every man can achieve comfort and respectability, riches and distinction, and happiness if he chooser the path of thrift, hard work and self-improvement. This David does, in this respect, David is a type. It is a novel written in autobiography form and not to be confused with an autobiography or even fake autobiography.

QUESTIONS:

1. How does Charles Dickens succeed in transforming autobiography into art in ***David Copperfield*** ?

2. What aspects of social criticism do you find in David ***Copperfield*** ?

3. Discuss ***David Copperfield*** as a novel of growth from childhood to youth and to maturity of its hero ?

4. Write a critical appreciation of ***David Copperfield*** ?

5. Write a note on the autobiographical elements found in ***David Copperfield*** ?

FOR FURTHER READINGS

1 Philip Hobsbaum. ***A Reader' Guide to Charles Dickens*** Thames and Hudson.
2 F.R. Leavis and Q.D. Leavis. ***Dickens: The Novelist*** Chatto and Windus
3 John Lucas. ***The Melancholy Man: A Study of Dickens's Novels***. Methuen
4 Marvey Peter Suckersmith. ***The Narrative Art of Charles Dickens: The Rhetoric of Sympathy and Irony in His Novels***. Oxford.
5 Martin Price, ed. ***Dickens: A Collection of Essays***. Twentieth Century Views, Prentice Hall.

UNIT - II

GEORGE ELIOT: ADAM BEDE

ADAM BEDE The Victorian Age

The Victorian age is regarded as the age of material prosperity, intellectual development, the rise of democracy and the triumph of Science. It was also an age of spectacular reforms. At no stage of human history did science and intellect alter manners and ideas so rapidly as the Victorian age. Man appeared to have conquered nature. Steam became a force to reckon with.

Science substantially contributed to this material prosperity. The Industrial Revolution and the scientific advancement went hand in hand. While a very large number of people loudly acclaimed the expansion of science and commerce, there were writers like Dickens, who gave a lurid picture of the evils of the Industrial Revolution.

The whigs surrendered the aristocratic citadel to the Middle Class. The Whigs and the Middle class were in alliance, and a new force appeared on the political stage. The rich people, atleast most of them sprang from the Nonconformist stock. The Nonconformists had puritanic and moral strictness.

The `Glorious Revolution´ of the Middle Class became an accomplished fact in the sixties of the Victorian age. The reform Act of 1832 ensured the Victory of the Middle Class. Completely replacing the Aristocracy, they assumed the intellectual aristocracy in the Universities and different professions. The Nonconformists were extremely serious. Melbourne complained: "This dammed morality will end by spoiling everything".

The Victorian age was eminently dynamic. In a sense it was like the Renaissance, and the intellectuals were explaining in various directions. They were George breaking new grounds in spheres, physical, historical, scientific, religious, and philosophical. The Victorian age paved the way for the twentieth century, which came to be known as the Age of Interrogation. The Victorian had, however, one very grave fault. They claimed infallibility, and asserted everything with pontifical solemnity. As Massingham says: "The era consequently tended to become one of capital dogmas in capital letters".

The Middle-class enjoyed a privileged position and chose to live in a secure world of smugness and self complacency. They were priding themselves on commerce and machinery and felt that they were beyond cavil.

But there were men, who refused to be complacent. They were men of ideas, which shook the empire.

The Victorians, specially the men, tended to be overburdened with opinions and ideas about revelation, evolution, determination, nature, and other large public themes. Mill´s Autobiography records one form of this mental imprisonment.

The novelists were more free, mainly because their aims were more limited and allowed a pragmatic approach. They did not need to feel that they had to solve the mystery of life or come to terms with history before they could put pen to paper. There was an obvious demand for their work, for entertainment and edification. There were tasks to be done, causes to be championed. "In all my writings", Dickens wrote in the preface to Martin Chuzzlewit, "I Hope I have taken every available opportunity of showing the want of sanitary improvements in the neglected dwellings of the poor". The age demanded reassuring patriarchs and matriarchs, and writers vied with preachers and statesmen in providing this reassurance.

Women novelists, who had played a considerable part in the evolution of the eighteenth-century novel, now found more abundant opportunities.

The novel, like the Elizabethan drama, served a popular need; in this case, for influences which would soften and make intelligible the harsh conditions of Victorian life. George Eliot´s testimony is representative—"The only effect I ardently long to produce by my writings is that those who read them should be better able to imagine and to feel the pains and the joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling, erring human creatures". And again: "My artistic bent is directed not at all to the presentation of eminently irreproachable characters, but to the presentation of mixed human beings in such a way as to call forth coherent judgement, pity and sympathy." Only the influence of Dickens is comparable with that of the women novelists in deciding the special qualities of the English novel. They helped to give it a bias away from the intellectual comedy of moral paradox which we find in Fielding, and towards a more profound portrayal of the variety and pathos of common experience. By the end of the

eighteenth century the novel had begun to be a considerable influence on the moral perceptiveness of the reading public, exemplifying, as no ethical treatise could do and so no other form of literature since the Elizabethan drama had done, the reality of the feelings and moral issues involved in given situations.

George Eliot: her life and works

George Eliot was the pen name of Mary Ann Evans, who was born in Warwickshire on November 22, 1819. Her father was an estate agent of somewhat conventional religious and social views which Mary Ann rebelled against. At an age she had come under the influence of a Coventry manufacturer named Charles Bray.

Characteristically, the first work of this gentle, intensely serious and intellectual girl was a translation of the controversially rationalistic Life of Jesus by the German scholar, D. F. Strauss. Her father died in 1849, unreconciled to his daughter´s views of religion.

Between 1851 and 1853, she was assistant editor of the Westminster Review and did further translations of significant German works. As an editor of this important liberal publication, she met the leading intellectual and artistic lights of her day, including the philosopher Herbert Spencer and the author of a standard biography of Goethe, George Henry Lewes. She fell in love with Lewes who was separated from his wife but could not obtain a divorce.

From 1854 until Lewes´ death in 1878, George Eliot lived unconventionally with him. They never married. Although this step was initially shocking to Victorian morality, the rectitude and high moral tone of the match soon silenced most scandal, but the ambiguous social position George Eliot occupied shaped her later thinking about morality in the novels she began to write, of which Adam Bede was the first.

She followed this success with The Mill on the Floss (1860) and Silas Marner (1861). During the composition of these works, George Eliot visited Florence, where she did research in Renaissance life for her historical novel, the vast, somewhat inchoate Romola (1863). She returned to England for the subject matter of Felix Holt (1866) and her masterpiece, Middlemarch (1871-1872), the most complex and artistically successful of her novels.

After Middlemarch, George Eliot´s talents seemed exhausted. Her final novel, Daniel Deronda (1876), is more noteworthy for its moral philosophy and for its prophetic treatment of Zionism (the hero, unique in Victorian fiction, is a Jew) than for any unusual qualities as fiction.

In May 1880, George Eliot married John Walter Cross. She died on December 22 of the same year. At the time of her death she was widely recognized as one of the outstanding novelists of the day, but her reputation underwent an eclipse from which it only recently has begun to emerge.

Her other major novels

Silas Marner: Silas Marner is a brief tale, told in simple style, of the redemption of an embittered miser through love. Falsely accused of theft in a small religious community, Silas Marner, a linen weaver, settles in Raveloe, where he lives for a while only to accumulate wealth. After fifteen years of loneliness, Marner is accused of a new theft, but his troubles begin to disappear when he discovers and adopts a pretty stray child named Eppie. As Eppie grows up, her selfless, unquestioning love for the old man purges his soul of the crabbed suspicion of his fellow beings which had formerly consumed it. The real culprit is discovered eventually, and Silas is allowed to live out the rest of his days with Eppie in peace and contentment.

This, the most complex and richest of George: Eliot´s novels, was once cited by Virginia Woolf as one of the few English novels written for adults. Several stories are interwined in it, the central "hero" really being the outwardly placid small English town of Middlemarch. In it Dorothea Brooke, an idealistic young woman, makes a bad marriage with the dry pedant Casaubon and later falls in love with his charming, irresponsible cousin, Will Ladislaw. At the same time, an idealistic young doctor, Lydgate, marries the shallow, spendthrift beauty, Rosamond Vincy, whose unceasing demands for a more luxurious life destroy him as a pure scientist. Out of these unhappy marriages, George Eliot weaves an immense tapestry in which the material life is seen in constant battle with the life of the spirit, and in which the social fabric of a town is scrupulously but compassionately analyzed.

Main Characters

Adam Bede—A Strong and upright young carpenter.

Seth Bede —Adam´s brother, in love with Dinah Morris.

Dinah Morris —A Serious-minded Methodist preacher.

Martin Poyser —A Neighborhood landowner who runs prosperous Hall Farm.

Mrs. Poyser —His voluble wife, Dinah´s aunt, filled withfolk wisdom and a sense of her own importance.

Hetty Sorrel —Another niece of Mrs. Poyser´s, a vivacious, curly-haired girl of seventeen.

Arthur Donnithorne—The selfish, aristocratic grandsonof the local squire.

Jonathan Burge—The master builder and carpenter who employs Adam Bede.

Adam Bede: the story in outline

Adam Bede, a stalwart, dark-eyed young man with jet black hair and nearly six feet in height was a carpenter and worked in the workshop of Mr. Jonathan Burge, carpenter and builder in the village of Hayslope. His brother, Seth Bede, a Methodist, also worked with him. The brothers were very much attached to each other.

One day there was an unusual activity in Hayslope, since a young Methodist, Dinah Morris, had come down to the village to preach on the green. The lands surrounding the green belonged to Suire Donnithorne, whose grandson and heir, young Captain Arthur Donnithorne would be coming of age shortly. Both lived at Donnithorne Chase in the valley.

Presently Dinah Morris appeared. She was dressed in black. She was simple and charming and delicately feminine in her appearance. When she began to preach, it was evident that she was no at all self-conscious and could capture the attention of the audience, by her clarity of exposition. She seemed to be speaking directly from her own

emotions inspired by her simple faith. She urged her listeners to cast off their follies, turn to God and repent their sins. Bessy Cranage, a vain and naughty girl was moved and, overcome with terror and awe, threw off her glittering ear-rings and began to sob.

After the lecture, Seth Bede accompanied Dinah Morris to Hall Farm, where she was staying with her aunt Mrs. Poyser Seth yearned to talk about his love for Dinah, but felt that she was "too holy for any man". Dinah had to leave for Snowfield and she was sad to leave her aunt and children and especially "that poor, wandering lamb, Hetty Sorre", another niece to Mrs. Poyser. Seth told her about Adam´s George love for Dinah, who thanked him for that and said that her heart was not set on marriage. Seth, though disappointed, consoled himself that the strong love for her bestowed on him by God was only meant to be a trial for him.

Mathias Bede, the father of Adam and Seth had fallen a victim to heavy drinking. Adam´s professional honesty could not tolerate the lethargy of his father, who often left his work only to frequent the inns. On one such occasion, Adam worked furiously on an unfinished coffin and on the next day, both the brothers carried it to Broxton. On their way home they found their father's body in a brook nearby.

Reverend Adolphus Irwine, Rector of Broxton and Vicar of Hayslope was informed of the Methodist's violation of the sanctity of the village. Mr. Irwine was quite undisturbed. Just then, his godson Arthur Donnithorne visited him and both of them decided to ride over to see Adam. On the way, Arthur wished to drop at Hall Farm to look at some whelps. It was only his pretext to visit Hall Farm; his main attraction was the pretty and petite, Hetty, who was under the care of Mrs. Poyser. Mrs. Poyser was a fair and good-looking woman of thirty-eight with a keen eye and a keener tongue. Mr. Irwine too wanted to see Dinah Morris. "What a well-formed countenance" — this was the first thought that crossed the mind of Mr. Irwine. His talk with him confirmed this opinion. Dinah´s response was immediate, when she heard about the death of Thias Bede. Her services were essential to the poor widow, to lift the heavy and sorrowful burden from her mind. In the meanwhile, Arthur spent a pleasant time in the dairy by having a t'ete-'a-t'ete with Hetty. He was surprised to hear that she passed Chase quite often. Arthur´s thoughts ran riot and in spite of his wish, he met Hetty at the Hermitage. Thereafter the place became the favourite and secret rendezvous for this pair. Arthur won her very easily, by

capturing her woman´s fancies with small presents. From time to time he reproved himself for having fallen in love with Hetty. Meanwhile Hetty, was living in a world of dreams.

On his twenty-first birthday, Arthur had arranged for a grand dinner and dance. During the dance, Hetty´s string of beads broke and revealed a beautiful locket, a present from Arthur. Adam was troubled and wondered if Hetty had a lover.

Now Adam was appointed Manager of Donnithorne woods. Three weeks after the birthday celebration, when Adam was returning home, he saw two figures in intimate embrace. They were Arthur and Hetty. Arthur tried to laugh the incident off lightly. Knowing that the young aristocrat was only flirting with Hetty and had no intention of marrying her, Adam called him a coward and scoundrel. A fierce fight followed in which Arthur was knocked down. Adam made write a letter to Hetty calling off the affair.

Hetty was plunged in despair when she saw the letter from Arthur. Her dream-world was shattered. Now Mr. Burge offered Adam a share in his business, and Adam thought he could renew his proposal to Hetty. She accepted his offer and their wedding was put off for a while so that the Bede house could be enlarged to receive the newly weds. Adam was perturbed to see that Hetty was sometimes unhappy. The desire to see Arthur raged in her and on the pretext of inviting Dinah Morris to the wedding Hetty left Hayslope impulsively in search of Donnithorne. She never knew that the journey was going to bring her new miseries. She wanted to commit suicide, but did not have enough courage to do it.

Adam was restless and agitated; he understood that Hetty had run away. Mr. Irwine added to his misery by breaking the dreadful news to him that Hetty was in prison at Stoniton, for the crime of murdering her child. Adam was in a frenzy and wanted to wreak vengeance on Arthur. Bartle Massey closed his school and accompanied Adam to Stoniton. Though Adam shrank from seeing Hetty, he could not remain away from her. At the trial Hetty was sentenced to death.

When Arthur returned to Chase to take charge of the affairs, since his grandfather was dead, he learnt about Hetty´s trail. He tried desperately to get a release for her but to no avail. Dinah visited the condemned girl, tried to comfort her and got her to make her a full confession. Hetty broke down and confessed that she had not intended to murder the baby.

She could not forget the cry of the infant. At the last moment Arthur had somehow won a reprieve for the girl. Instead of the death sentence, the court ordered that she should be exiled to the colonies. Donnithorne left for Spain and later came to know that Hetty had died after serving her sentence.

Adam Bede found solace in his work. Dinah had come to Poyser farm and one day while he was accompanying her, he confided to her that they could be together always, as a brother and sister. Dinah did not reply, but only blushed. Adam's mother hinted that Adam could as well marry her. Adam consulted his brother Seth, who he felt had a prior claim to Dinah's hand. Seth assured him that Dinah did not have that sort of feeling for him. When Adam proposed to Dinah, she replied that although she was strongly attracted to him, she must wait for divine guidance, But finally, Adam and dinah got married. Adam Bede: a critique George Eliot´s fiction falls into two parts. ***Scenes of Cleri- cal Life***, ***Adam Bede***, ***The Mill on the Floss*** and ***Silas Marner*** were all published between 1858 and 1861. The fiction of her second period was in some respects more ambitious; it opened with ***Romola*** (1864), which was followed by Felix Holt, ***The Radical*** (1866), ***Middlemarch*** (1871-1872) and ***Daniel Deronda*** (1876).
This is how the novel starts:

> With a single drop of ink for a mirror, the Egyptian sorcerer undertakes to reveal to any chance comer far-reaching visions of the past. This is what I undertake to do for you, reader. With this drop of ink at the end of my pen, I will show you the roomy workshop of Mr. Jonathan Burge, carpenter and builder, in the village of Hayslope, as it appeared on the eighteenth of June, in the year our Lord 1799. (7)

The novelist seems to be telling us that writing a novel, making real and present to us a past that is otherwise inaccessible, is a mysterious craft. George Eliot has served her apprenticeship in the craft of fiction by writing Scenes of Clerical Life, and can say "I will show you" with confidence; but her confidence strikes us as an acknowledgement of the power of fiction rather than as expressing any arrogance about her own ability.

The paragraph that follows gives us more than a `vision´: it is a remarkably full communication of the experience of being in the workshop, involving scent and touch as well as sight.

The afternoon sun was warm on the five workmen there, busy upon doors and window-frames and wainscoting. A scent of pine-wood from a tent-like pile of planks outside the open door mingled itself with the scent of the elder-bushes which were spreading their summer snow close to the open window opposite; the slanting sunbeams shone through the transparent shavings that flew before the steady plane, and lit up the fine grain of the oak panelling which stood propped against the wall. On a heap of those soft shavings a rough grey shepherd-dog had made himself a pleasant bed, and was lying with his nose between his fore-paws, occasionally wrinkling his brows to cast a glance at the tallest of the five workmen, who was carving a shield in the centre of a wooden mantelpiece. (7)

Each element of this description is an achievement of remembered observation and sensuous response. The way in which a dog with its head at rest wrinkles its brows to look upwards, the transparency of flying wood shavings in sunlight, and the arrangement of planks stacked at the door of a carpenter´s workshop—as well as their scent—must have been appreciatively observed and carefully recalled. But the whole scene is fictitious; the synthesis of the impressions remembered from various times and places into the wholeness of a place, an environment, a texture of life, is a triumph not of recollection but of creative imagination.

Sympathy is one of the great moral positives in George Eliot´s novels, and we must look more closely at her way of leading the reader into sympathetic understanding of people. Here, as an example, is Lisbeth Bede after her husband's death: as sight.

> Lisbeth had even mended a long-neglected and unnoticeable rent in the checkered bit of bed-curtain; for the moments were few and precious now in which she would be able to do the smallest office of respect or love for the still corpse, to which in all her thoughts she attributed some consciousness. Our dead are never dead to us until we have forgotten them: they can be injured by us, they can be wounded; they know all our penitence, all our aching sense that their place is empty, all the kisses we bestow on the smallest relic of their presence. And the aged peasant-woman most of all believes that her dead are conscious. (102)

The first sentence describes an action, a motive and a belief, noted, as it were, from outside; and, presented in this objective way, the attribution of consciousness to the corpse

strikes us as a superstition remote from our own experience—it is an anthropologist´s observation. The second sentence surprises us by being about us, and invites us to recognize in ourselves a tendency that is fundamentally the same as the one we had been observing, as if from a safe distance, in Lisbeth Bede. It may, in us, manifest itself in different actions, but we can no longer see Lisbeth as holding a superstitious belief that we are enlightened enough to call absurd. Our common humanity with her is established. But the fact remains that we are not just like her; she is a peasant woman and we are readers of George Eliot's novels. So the next sentence takes up the difference; the tendency to attribute some consciousness to the dead, which at first seemed to separate Lisbeth from us, then united her with us, at last differentiates her from us in degree—but the sympathy remains. George Eliot is careful to remind us that sympathetic understanding does not consist in a readiness to suppose that other people are just like us, or just as we should be if we were in their place; but an attempt to understand our own behaviour and to see it in a new light is often a necessary beginning of an attempt to understand other people.

In the early chapters of the novel, the novelist sometimes seems intent on imposing a moral structure on the world. She seems to need Hetty to be, if not positively wicked; at least in some perceptible degree blameworthy, so that the consequences of her relationship with Arthur can be regarded as having been brought on by her. But when those consequences do come, they are seen as they really would be, not as they ought to be by any criterion of morality or justice. Hetty´s sufferings on her journeys—first in search of Arthur, then, in despair, in search of Dinah—are presented with undistracted sympathy, and George Eliot enters into Hetty´s agony with an intensity that leaves considerations of guilt or folly far behind.

> There it was, black under the darkening sky: no motion, no sound near. She set down her basket, and then sank down herself on the grass, trembling. The pool had its wintry depth now: by the time it got shallow, as she remembered the pools did at Hayslope, in the summer, no one could find out that it was her body. But then there was her basket—she must hide that too: she must throw it into the water—make it heavy with stones first, and then throw it in. She got up to look about for stones, and soon brought five or six, which she laid down beside her basket, and then sat down again. There was no need to hurry—there was all the night to drown herself in. She sat leaning her elbow on the basket. She was weary, hungry. (370)

No brief sample can adequately suggest the creative achievement of these chapters: it is the sustained steadiness, through many pages, of the novelist´s undeviating concern with Hetty´s experience that makes them so impressive. It is here that George Eliot is solely and supremely a novelist—that she lays aside all notions, theories, consciously formulated themes, and enters with a whole and awakened imagination into the being of the fictitious character in its fictitious situation.

There is a voice in the novel Adam Bede. It is the voice of George Eliot herself, and it suggests a kind of innocence that is allied with a flexible intelligence engaged in the pursuit of illuminating knowledge. Her novel not only demonstrates the need for self-forgetting sympathy and critical understanding: it also shows, in the way she writes, a mind in which these qualities are highly developed.

The words that George Eliot uses and the movements of her sentences will never let one ignore the fact that the central concern of the novel is a moral one: it deals with a group of questions concerning how people ought to live.

George Eliot´s novels seem to speak to the modern reader with startling directness and relevance. Perhaps it is because our impatience with rules has left us with the necessity of deciding for ourselves most of the questions that used to be decided in advance by generally accepted rules of social morality, of Christianity, of etiquette, and of what was proper to one´s station. The rules rested on the authority of tradition, of the Church, of parents, teachers, and social superiors. With the decline of authority we find ourselves having to make innumerable decisions, in our relationships with other people, with no authority to lean on or shelter behind: we can rely only on our own sense of what is right.

George Eliot is not concerned with rules, except as one element in a complex situation; when Arthur Donnithorne seduces Hetty, it is not the breach of a commandment that leads to deserved punishment that the novelist describes, but `an offence against his own sentiment of right´ that has `a vitiating effect´ in the same way that any event in the natural world has inevitable consequences.

Although the novel attempts to trace some laws of cause and effect in the individual character and in relationships between people, it does not set up rules of conduct. It does reach some tentative conclusions, but it would be very difficult, and hardly useful, to

summarise them, because the meaning of the novel is the whole novel.

The novel values a strenuous life and an acceptance of duty—especially the duty to sympathise, to acquire a sense of the seperate reality of other people, to be steadfast for such right as one is sure of, to be aware of the limitations of one´s understanding, to try to see things as they really are, and to try to leave the world a little better than one found it. All these are duties that are not only shown to be necessary in people in the novel, but demonstrated by George Eliot herself in the act of writing the novel.

Adam Bede as a Psychological Novel

A psychological novel is concerned primarily with the mental and emotional states of its characters. Shakespeare´s Hamlet and Henry Fielding´s Mr Blifil in Tom Jones may be cited as examples. The psychological studies by Freud and his successors have led to a better understanding and presentation of characters. Many modern writers place their emphasis not so much on ethical consequences of an action, as on the motives behind the action. The term `Psychological Novel´ is descriptive of content rather than of formal technique.

Psychology is that element in the narrative art that explores the subjective aspect of experience. Psychology in some form is essential to any but the simplest type of story. A serious writer finds ordinary exposition, or description, and characterization quite inadequate. His reader wishes to know how the character feels in a given situation, or in general how his mind works. Richardson and Fielding began the `psychological´ trend in novel-writing followed by other writers like George Eliot and George Meredith.

George Eliot employs "psychological realism" (to use her own words) in her novels. She says that she has tried "to represent the inner struggle of a soul and to reveal the motives, impulses and hereditary influences which govern human action". She succeeds so well in this that critics call Adam Bede, "the first psychological novel".

What makes Adam Bede the fore-runner of the type of psychological novel, as later developed, by James Joyce and Virginia Woolf and many others is the emphasis placed on the mental processes of characters, like Adam, Seth, Hetty, Dinah, Arthur and the Poysers. For instance, in Chapter XXXVI; entitled "A Journey in Hope", the novelist deals at length

with the mental reactions of Hetty, but sketches in brief the particulars of Hetty´s search for her lover.

"A long lonely journey, with sadness in the heart; away from the familiar to the strange; that is a hard and dreary thing even to the rich, the strong, the instructed, a hard thing, even when we are called by duty, not urged by dread.

What was it then to Hetty? With her poor narrow thoughts, no longer melting into vague hopes, but pressed upon the chill of definite fear; repeating again and again the same small round of memories shaping again and again the same childish, doubtful images of what was to come — seeing nothing in this wide world but the little history of her own pleasure and pains".

This "little puss", whose world is limited to Mrs. Poyser´s dairy, learns, by bitter experience that the task she has undertaken is not so simple as she thought. The late realization makes her long for her snug home and her easy life of the past. The bleak and unpredictable future yawns before her, as though to devour her. The author here presents a study of Hetty's pathetic inner self:

"...She saw the journey stretch hit by bit before her now; even to get to Ashby seemed a hard thing: it might take the day, for what she knew, and that was nothing to the rest the journey. But it must be done-she must get to Arthur: Oh, how she yearned to be again with somebody who would care for her! She who had never got up in the morning without the certainty of seeing familiar faces, people on whom she had an a knowledged claim; whose farthest journey had been to Rosseter on the pillion with her uncle; whose thoughts had always been taking holiday in dreams of pleasure, because all the business of her life was managed for her: this kittenlike Hetty, who till a few months ago had never felt any other grief than that envying Mary Burge a new ribbon, or being girded at by her aunt for neglecting Totty, must now make her toilsome way loneliness, her peaceful home left behind for ever, and nothing but a tremulous hope of distant refuge before her. Now for the first time, as she lay down tonight in the strange hard bed, She felt that her home had been a happy one, that her uncle had been very good to her that quiet lot at Hayslope among the things and people she knew, with her little pride in her one best gown and bonnet, and nothing to hide from anyone, was what she would like to wake up to as a reality, and Find that all the Feverish life she had known besides was a short nightmare. She thought of all

she had left behind with yearning regret for her own sake; her own misery filled her heart; there was no room in it for other people´s sorrow”.

The novelist succeeds in evoking pity, as she gradually unfolds the thoughts of Hetty. The readers realise that it is after all Hetty´s self-love that turns into self-pity. As T. S. Eliot says of Beatrice-Joanna of The Changeling, "she becomes moral only by becoming damned". Hetty always thinks of herself first. This kitten-like, but stony-hearted Hetty confesses rightly in a stone cell.

Another typical example of a "psychological" character is Arthur Donnithorne. In chapter XXIX, after his unfortunate encounter with Adam in the woods, he realises that he has wronged Adam. He has been in the habit of making amends for his wrong-doings, in kind, thereby purchasing the sympathy of the other person. For the first time. Arthur understands that the error he has committed cannot be revoked, and feels hurt that Adam should have knocked him down. He suffers from a sense of mortified pride.

"Arthur´s as you know, was a loving nature. Deeds of kindness were as easy to him as a bad habit: they were the common issue of his weaknesses and good qualities, of his egoism and his sympathy. He didn’t like to witness pain, and he liked to have grateful eyes beaming on him as the giver of pleasure. When he was a lad of seven, he one day kicked down an old gardener´s pitcher of broth, from no motive hut a kicking impulse not reflecting that it was the old man´s dinner; But on learning the sad fact, he took his favourite pencil-case and a silver-crafted knife out of his pocket and offered them as compensation. He had been the same Arthur ever since trying to make all offences forgotten in benefits. If there were any bitterness in his nature, it could only show itself against the man who refused to be conciliated by him. And perhaps the time was come for some of that bitterness to rise. At the first moment, Arthur had felt pure distress and self reproach at discovering that Adam´s happiness was involved in his relation to Hetty: if there had been a possibility of making Adam tenfold amends—if deeds of gift, or any other deeds, could have restored Adam´s contentment and regard for him as a benefactor, Arthur would not only have executed them without hesitation, but would have felt bound all the more closely to Adam and would never have been weary of making retribution. But Adam could receive no amends, his suffering could not be cancelled; his respect and affection could not be recovered by any prompt deeds of atonement. He stood like an

immovable obstacle against which no pressure could avail; an embodiment of what Arthur most shrank from believing in—the irrevocableness of his own wrong doing".

George Eliot employs a great deal of `asides´ as part of her narrative technique. Though the author´s `asides´ are often irritating they help reveal the mental states of her characters. Arthur, for instance, is only very eager to put an end to his unfortunate affair with Hetty and he seemingly justifies his a proposed action by thinking "perhaps hereafter he might be able to do a great deal for her, and make up to her for all the tears she would shed about him". George Eliot now intrudes to give her own comments: "Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds and until we know what has been or will be the peculiar combination of outward with inward facts which constitutes a man´s critical actions..... There is a terrible coercion in our deeds which may first turn the honest man into a deceiver and then reconcile him to the change; for this reason — that the second wrong presents itself to him in the guise of the only practicable right ...Europe adjusts itself to a fait accompli, and so does an individual character, — until the placid adjustment is disturbed by a convulsive retribution".

This particular procedure is characteristic of a psychological novelist. The author explains the motives determining the character´s actions at a given moment, particularly when the motives are complicated or obscure. For instance, Arthur is miserable for his own sake; miserable about Hetty; miserable about the letter, he bad promised to write. It seems to him at once a gross barbarity and the greatest kindness. He is caught in the labyrinth of so many issues. Immature and inexperienced as he is, he invents causes to case his conscience and ego. George Eliot presents in detail the conflicting trends in Arthurs´ thinking. To quote another instance, shortly after the death of Matthias Bede, his wife Lisbeth, alone with the body, slumps into a chair in the kitchen and contemplates her grief!

"At another time Lisheth´s first thought would have been, `where is Adam?´ but the sudden death of her husband had restored him in these hours to that first place in her affections that he bad held six-and-twenty years ago; she had forgotten his faults as we forget the sorrows of our departed childhood, and thought of nothing but the young husband´s kindness and the old man´s patience". The words are a brilliant example of the novelist´s psychological insight.

The novel reveals in many places the novelist´s analytical insight. Although there is sufficient activity to keep the story moving, the emphasis is more on "inner" activity. This

analytic approach is a mark of maturity and sensitivity in a writer; and in Eliot´s time, it found a ready audience.

Lettice Cooper comments on George Eliot´s analytical thinking: "Her analysis of motive is penetrating and she has more understanding than any English novelist writing before Freud of the undercurrents of mind and heart. Because her human beings are more complicated and more mixed than those of the novelists who preceded her, they are nearer to the truth of human nature. This penetration is not only of the intellect, it is born of a harmony between mind and feeling illuminated by compassion and love for humanity".

Adam Bede as a Realistic Novel

V. de Sola Pinto defines realism as that element in art "which is concerned with giving a truthful impression of a actuality as it appears to the normal human conscious". An artist shapes the materials of his art into a form which derives from his personal vision of reality. As a technique, realism is generally concerned with the commonplaces of everyday life and the middle and lower social classes.

During the earlier part of the nineteenth century, Dickens and Thackeray reigned supreme in the field of realistic fiction. There was a strong tendency towards psychological realism in the Victorian novels. In Jane Eyre, there is a successful union of romance and realism. Emily Bronte, by creating her dynamic Heathcliff probes into the mysterious world of elemental passion. In the English fiction of the period 1850 to 1880 most of the writers tried to combine Realism and Idealism. George Eliot became popular because she succeeded in effecting such a reconciliation. In her earliest fiction, Scenes from Clerical Life, she portrays, with a sense of realism, man´s implicit faith in the dignity of human nature.

George Eliot continued to develop her ideas of realistic fiction. In Adam Bede, she declares, "All honour and reverence to the divine beauty of form! ... but let us love that other beauty too, which lies in no secret of proportion, but in the secret of deep human sympathy" — she defines thus the realistic fiction. In her first, full novel, Adam Bede, while presenting events realistically, she portrays also the mental processes of each character thus combining realism and psychological study.

George Eliot wrote to her publisher regarding Adam Bede thus: "My new story haunts me a good deal, and I shall set about it without delay. It will be a country story — full of the breath of cows and the scent of hay". That is how a novel, a work of art, begins to exist in the mind of its creator: not as a plot, but rather as a feeling, an atmosphere. And reading Adam Bede, we get that sense of country things and country people.

For example, in the opening chapter the novelist makes us "see" the shop of Mr. Jonathan Burge, the carpentry, by sketching every detail—the aroma of different types of wood, the heap of soft shavings, the duty-minded Adam and the forgetful Seth, etc. We are also told how easily Adam could be irritated.

Another example occurs in the next chapter when George Eliot sets the stage for the Methodist´s preaching. "The Green lay at the extremity of the village, and from it the road branched off in two directions, one leading farther up the hill by the church, and the other winding gently down towards the valley. On the side of the Green, that led towards the church, the broken line of thatched cottages was continued nearly to the churchyard gate; but on the opposite, north-western side, there was nothing to obstruct the view of gently-swelling meadow, and wooded valley, and dark masses of distant hill. That rich undulating district of Loamshire to which Hayslope belonged lies close to a grim outskirt of Stonyshire, overlooked by its barren bills, as a pretty blooming sister may sometimes be seen linked in the arm of a rugged, tall, swarthy brother...".

Eliot contrasts the two countrysides, Loamshire, and Stonyshire, with their opulent and barren look respectively. The description is undoubtedly realistic; the novelist then turns our attention to the villages of Hayslope, who are obviously barren spiritually. They are drawn to the edge of the Green, only because of their curiosity to "examine more closely the Quaker-like costume and odd deportment of the female Methodists". Such is the world where Hetty Sorrel lives and loves!

It is a commonplace criticism that a novelist´s imagination is most at home and his art most persuasive, when he writes of scenes known to him and unconsciously assimilated in early life. England is most English in those midland shires and George Eliot knew their essential features—the farms, the brown canals, the rattle of cottage looms and above all the racy speech of Yeoman and peasant—as only a child could. Her descriptions of

country things and her characterization of country people are shaped by her memory and imagination.

The novel abounds in `living´ characters. Who can ever forget Mrs. Poyser? Her dairy is really the centre of activity. It is where the "kitten-like" Hetty and Arthur meet But Mrs. Poyser is the presiding genius and she represents the very spirit of the place. The dairy is not a sordid place: but "certainly worth looking at ... such coolness, such purity, such fresh fragrance of new-pressed cheese, of firm butter, of wooden vessels perpetually bathed in pure water; such soft colouring of red earthernware and creamy surfaces, brown wood and polished tin, gray limestone and rich orange-red rust on the iron weights and hooks and hinges”. While writing the dialogue for Mrs. Poyser, George Eliot must have done it with obvious enjoyment and vigour. Poor Molly breaks a jug and is driven to tears by Mrs. Poyser´s sharp eloquence, condemning her unparalleled clumsiness; Mrs. Poyser repeats the same feat by breaking another jug, much to the amusement of her husband and kids. She retorts´:

> It´s all very fine to look on and grin, but there´s times when the crockery seems alive, an´ flies out o´ your hand like a bird. It´s like the glass sometimes´, all crack as it stands. What is to be broke will be broke, for I never dropped a thing i´ my life for want o´ holding it, else I should never ha´ kept the crockery all these ´ears as I bought at my own wedding".

Mrs. Poyser tries to justify her breaking the jug, for "what is to be broke will be broke." Her charm lies in the delicious contrast she presents between her shrewdness and strong affection. Her quick temper, and vivacity with which she snatches opportunities throw her antagonists into bewilderment. Her affection for her child Totty, and her love for her husband and even for Hetty, though she sees through her stupidity and vanity, remain impressive.

The great charm of the novel is in the characters more than in the action. All the characters are so true, natural and racy that we love to hear them talk.

The centre of interest is the story of Hetty, so honestly told with a wealth of psychological insight; George Eliot´s narrative strength is clearly seen in the Hall Farm scene and in the description of the Broxton Vicarage, with their realistic details. Gerald Bullett aptly

remarks: "George Eliot´s power of investing the commonplace with significance of evoking for our enchantment the rich humanity and serene bustle of everyday country life and this and her warm sense of rural comedy are hardly matched in English fiction, unless in the work of Thomas Hardy, which at these points closely resembles hers, though in general she has a more confiding and moralizing manner than he".

George Lewes gives a definition for the phrase "Idealism in Art": "Suppose two men equally gifted with the perceptive powers and technical skill necessary to the accurate representation of a village group, but the one to be gifted, over and above these qualities, with an emotional sensibility which leads him to sympathise intensely with the emotions playing amid the village group ... ... Without once departing from strict reality, he (the second artist) will have thrown a sentiment into his group which every spectator will recognise as poetry." George Eliot belongs to the second group of artists. Her fundamental assumption is that life as well as art becomes meaningful by virtue of the emotions, refined to moral feelings. "Art is a Representation of reality ..... Realism is thus the basis of all Art, its antithesis is not Idealism but Falsism".

Adam Bede as a Moralistic Novel

The religious background of Adam Bede is largely that of Methodism and its counterpart, Evangelism. Mr. Irwine is the worthy but meek representative of the Church of England.

The beginnings of Methodism lie in the evangelic conversion of the two brothers John and Charles Wesley. They sought to live the Christian life through methodical study and devotion (Hence the nickname "Methodists", sometimes used with derision). When they were prevented from occupying the pulpits, they continued their work in the open air. Field preaching by travelling preachers became an important medium for spreading the gospel. The Methodists emphasise the doctrine of perfect love and they believe in Christian perfection essential for a Christian. They hold that faith, repentance and confession are important for a Christian to secure divine Grace.

The novel Adam Bede is intimately connected with the Methodist doctrines. Dinah is a sincere Methodist, whose aim was to feel and know the will of God. The Methodists "believed in present miracles, in instantaneous conversion, in revelations by dreams and visions; they drew lots and sought for Divine Guidance by opening the Bible at hazard".

Dinah´s sermon on the village green is characteristic, which occupies the whole of the second chapter. She emphasizes the doctrines of Methodism, quoting from John Wesley´s sermons.

But Methodism alone is not the only religious trend in Adam Bede. George Eliot had translated Ludwig Feuerbach´s book under the caption Essence of Christianity. She was attracted by Feuerbach´s daring conception of love: "Love is God Himself, and apart from it there is no God ..... not a visionary, imaginary love—no! a real love, a love which has flesh and blood, which vibrates as an almighty force through all living". She agreed wholeheartedly with Feuerbach´s distinction between `self-interested love´, and `the true human love´, which impels the sacrifice of self to another. The deep-rooted belief of this creed left her with a clear conscience when she lived with a married man. She says, "But marriage—we mean, of course, marriage as a free bond of love—is sacred in itself, by the very nature of the union which is therein effected. That alone is a religious marriage which is a true marriage, which corresponds to the essence of marriage - of love .....'. In Adam Bede, she illustrates the two types of love - the `self-interested love´ of Hetty and Arthur and 'the true human love" of Dinah and Adam.

In Adam Bede, George Eliot depicts the "mental and moral" education of her protagonist through a series of symbolic suppers, which ultimately lead to his conversion to a Feuerbachian "religion of suffering". Feuerbach says,

> "Water, as a universal element of life, reminds us of our origin from Nature, an origin which we have in common with plants and animals ... Bread and wine are, as to their materials, products of Nature; as to their form, products of man. If in water we declare, Man can do nothing without nature; by bread and wine we declare Nature needs man, as man needs Nature. In water human mental activity is nullified; in bread and wine it attains self-satisfaction ... Hence this sacrament is only for man matured into consciousness; while baptism is imported to infants'.

Adam must mature and grow into a full man. He must learn suffering; then only he will give a truly `religious import´ to his life. In the first supper scene, the self-righteous Adam finishes a coffin that his father has failed to deliver. He becomes thirsty and drinks water only and rejects food. It is however ironic that his father, to whom he feels so superior, has died a watery-death´.

The second supper is the luxurious birthday feast, when he no longer drinks water, but the rich Loamshire ale. He is proud in his new capacity as keeper of the woods. The irony is obvious; the `dark and lovely woods´ will teach him `humanity´, when Arthur and Hetty will emerge as the products of Nature. If the woods crown him with pride, the same should teach him suffering too. "No wonder man´s religion has so much sorrow in it; no wonder he needs a suffering God".

The third and most significant supper marks the attainment of Adam´s matured `consciousness´. Bartle Massey offers `a bit of the loaf and some of that wine Mr. Irwine sent´ to Adam. This simple ritual makes him look like the Adam Bede of former days´. Adam´s conversion to that `new awe and new pity' that lie at the core of the novelist´s and Feuerbach´s religion of humanity is thus completed.

Lord David Cecil called George Eliot `not religious´. But Basil Willy refutes this statement: She was not, of course, a `practising christian´ but in her estrangement from the `religion about Jesus´ she was none the farther from the religion of Jesus´. She knew the hunger and thirst after righteousness and the need for renunciation—the need to loose one´s life in order to gain it´.

Imagery in Adam Bede

George Eliot´s last two novels Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda are the most complex of her novels. They abound in images´ Her early novels too have images but the images are seldom repeated and even if there is a sustained use of imagery, it is of the naive kind found in Adam Bede. Adam thinks in terms of images drawn from the carpenter´s shop. But it is difficult to know when he is generalising in terms of life and when he is making an attempt to look at life in terms of good carpentry.

Solidity and ease are found in the carpentry images in Adam Bede and the river images in The Mill on the Floss. For instance, Mr. Jonathan Burge´s carpentry is the work-place of both the brothers, Adam and Seth. Beautifully the author differentiates the characters of the brothers, by the work they do. Adam Bede, is the prominent figure. He is shown to us in relation to solid things, before he is named. He is "the tallest of the five workmen, who was carving a shield in the centre of a wooden mantelpiece". He is superior to others both in stature and skill. He has command over his fellows and materials. He is confident in the exercise of his skill and the joy is expressed through the song he sing; the song indicates

his professional honesty:

Awake, my soul, and with the sun

Thy daily stage of duty run;

Shake off dull sloth .....

Let all thy converse be sincere,

Thy conscience as the noon day deal".

Another striking example of the novelist´s use of solid imagery is Mrs. Poyser´s dairy. The dairy of Hall farm is undoubtedly a delightful place, but under, the supervision of "suspicious" Mrs. Poyser, it can be a place of drudgery too! The author stresses its coolness and freshness; it is also the place of Hetty´s activity.

George Eliot describes both the dairy by giving us a series of sense-impressions. It can be seen that Hetty is always associated with animal imageries. She is, "distracting kitten-like maiden" "a young star-browed calf" "a tropic bird", "the little puss".

The world created in Adam Bede has two major divisions: the counties of Loamshire and Stonyshire, with their villages Hayslope and Snowfield. That they are not merely literal creations of Staffordshire and Derbyshire and that they stand in complete antithesis `is suggested by their quasi-symbolic names´. Hayslope village is depicted as a kind of later-day Eden—a land of Goshen. In this setting the name Adam in the novel suggests the original Adam of the Bible. Exile from this prosperous world is regarded by its inhabitants as the worst evil. Throughout the novel, Stonyshire presents a complete contrast. It is naked under the sky, barren and "where the trees are few, so that a child might count them, and there´s a very hard living for the poor in the winter´. The inhabitants of Stonyshire have to earn their livelihood, not by tilling the fertile soil as in Loamshire, but by digging deep beneath the earth’s surface in rocky mines. The novelist has handled the images in such a manner that they even suggest an inversion of their conventional values.

It is obvious that there is an ugly aspect to the green and fertile Loamshire world; and in spite of the sterility of Stonyshire there is "a sound of water over the rock´; it is not a hopeless wasteland. When Dinah talks to Mr. Irwine, Rector of Hayslope, she comments, “in these villages where the people lead a quiet life... there’s a strange deadness to the Word ...It’s wonderful how rich Is the harvest of souls up those high-walled streets, where

you seemed to walk as in a prison-yard. ...I think may be it is because the promise is sweeter when this life is so dark and weary, and the soul gets more hungry when the body is ill at ease´. Mrs. Lisbeth Bede and Adam are at a loss to understand Dinah´s attachment to the rocky Stonyshire; only Seth, himself a Methodist, sympathizes with her love for the hill country. Mrs. Bede urges Dinah never to go back to Stonyshire. Her husband, who was born there did well to leave the place because `a treeless country would be a poor place for a carpenter´. Adam Bede is contented with the Loamshire life and calls Stonyshire a "hungry land". Obviously George Eliot is using Dinah, Mrs. Poyser and the Bedes as a means of defining the relationship of Loamshire and Stonyshire. From Dinah´s point of view Loamshire in spiritually stultifying. Hunger may be physical, as well as spiritual and hence Loamshire too is a hungry land and some of its people having never known privation and suffering, cannot therefore sympathize with want, poverty and ugliness. Like Loamshire itself, they present a pretty and vital exterior, but conceal a cruel hardness at the core. Such characters in the book are Mrs. Irwine (mother of the rector) Squire Donnithorne and Martin Poyser, the unrelenting, and unyielding individuals. It would have been good for them, if only they had lived in Stonyshire, to know what suffering was. It would have made them human.

Bartle Massey, Mrs. Poyser and Mr. Irwine are portrayed as mature characters. Bartle Massey is lame. Mrs. Poyser is not healthy and Mr. Irwine has experienced a good deal of misery, because of his sickly sisters. All these three characters know suffering and therefore are so compassionate. Their knowledge and intelligence arc tempered by sympathy and love. We agree with Mr. Irwine when he says about Mrs. Poyser that "her tongue is like a new set razor", but at the same time we are never allowed to forget the other aspect of her personality: Adam says that if "her tongue’s keen, her heart´s tender". Even major characters like Hetty, Dinah and Adam turn "mature" after either experiencing or seeing a good deal of suffering.

Hetty Sorrel, is the representative of the Loamshire world fertile and beautiful, but essentially hard inwardly. She is associated with the Hall Farm Dairy, its garden and the grove, suggestive of fertility and growth. Her beauty is a false beauty. When Mrs. Irwine laments that her beauty "should be thrown away among the farmers", Mrs. Poyser cannot be deceived and makes a caustic remark that she is no better "than a peacock, as `ud strut about on the wall, and spread its tail when the sun shone if all the folks i´ the parish was

dying". Indeed, Hetty is indifferent when she hears about Thias Bede´s death. Her narcissism is clearly seen; she is a "devout-worshipper" before the mirror. Even her love for Arthur is only "the objectification of her day-dreaming desires". `It is only the projection in fantasy of her own ego. What she loves in him is not so much Arthur as her own self—as she wishes it might be". Her emotional life is a continuous fantasy and George Eliot suggests it with the recurrent dream and day-dream imagery.

As already stated, Loamshire is almost an "earthly paradise", where the inhabitants, inevitably sin and learn the truth later. In a sense Hetty is the victim as well as representative of the Loamshire world. She remains dead to Dinah´s advice, simply because she has no experience of suffering. Her suffering begins with the knowledge that she is pregnant. Dread of disgrace and censure forces her to runaway from Loamshire. By doing so, for the first time, she leaves the garden world of Hayslope to enter the wasteland. The Loamshire world is appalled with the action of Hetty and none comes forward to help her, since they themselves do not know what suffering is. Only Dinah, an outsider from Stonyshire where forgiving love can exist because suffering is known, is able to console Hetty.

George Eliot presents the prison — the small stony cell in which Hetty is imprisoned — as an "objective correlative" of Hetty´s mind. The two dominant images, hardness and darkness recur in this chapter. Dinah prays to the Lord to lift the darkness surrounding Hetty´s soul and to melt the hardness of her heart. When Hetty confesses she BedeAdam moves towards regeneration. Dinah treats her with love and sympathy, quite unlike the dwellers of Loamshire.

Likewise, Adam´s `hardness´ is seen in his attitude towards his father, and Arthur. Repeatedly in the opening chapters of the book we see Adam, proud and impatient. He feels superior to others. Adam, is in need of `purification through suffering´ like Hetty. Hetty is selfish, and Adam is proud and both stand in need of correction. Adam´s regeneration is possible only through the power of love. Bartle Massey awakens him into "full consciousness", by making him participate in a kind of Lord´s supper—(of taking a loaf of bread and some wine) a symbolic one of the kind described by Feuerbach in The Essence of Christianity: "The sacrament of Faith is Baptism, the sacrament of Love is the Lord´s Supper". When Adam decides to stand by Hetty during her trial, it is not only because of his old love for her, but also because he has learnt to sympathise with the

sufferings of others. It leads to his forgiving Arthur and it makes him capable of a new sort of love.

The marriage of Adam and Dinah seems an anti-climax and an "artistic weakness" to Henry James. But George R. Creeger vehemently refutes this and argues that, "...without it one is left with two of the principal figures — Adam and Dinah — still incomplete human beings. That this is so with Adam is clearly demonstrable; by suffering he has become compassionate and therefore capable of loving; but he does not yet love. Without love there can be no fulfilment of personality".

U. C. Knoepflmacher in his essay "On Adam Bede" draws an interesting parallel between Milton´s Eve and Hetty. He says that, "in Adam Bede the past imparts meaning to the uncertainties of the present and the future". Like Milton´s Eve, Hetty wants to reject her past life; her "narrow bit of an imagination" only leads her to make "ill-defined pictures" of the future, in Paradise Lost, Eve´s appetite is aroused "by the smell/so savory of that Fruit", as she comes near the Tree of Knowledge, where Satan is waiting to dupe her. Similarly, Hetty is stimulated by the "sweet languid odours of the garden at the Chase", where she is going to lose her innocence and virginity. Eve wants to rise in station and fancies herself heightened "through expectation high/of knowledge nor was God-head from her thought". Hetty too flutters between "memory and dubious expectation", as she crosses the gates of the forbidden Fir-Tree-Grove.

> "How relieved she was when she had got safely under the oaks and among the fern of the Chase! Even then she was as ready to be started as the deer that leaped away at her approach. She thought nothing of the evening light that lay gently in the grassy alleys between the fern, and made the beauty of their living green more visible than it had been in the overpowering flood of noon: she thought of nothing that was present. She only saw something that was possible´. Mr. Arthur Donnithorne coming to meet her again along the Fir tree Grove. That was the foreground of Hetty´s picture behind it lay a bright hazy something—days that were not to be as the other days of her life had been. It was as if she had been wooed by a river-god, who might any time take her to his wondrous halls below a watery heaven".

Loamshire world can be regarded as the later-day Eden. In Paradise Lost, the loss of

innocence is momentous. Nature trembles and earth groans. In Adam Bede, the repercussions are less intense but still, the sin will alter its world. The bonds that unite the family and friends are disrupted and cut. The Poysers are disgraced and the rector regrets his blind trust of Arthur. Shame and sorrow start reigning over the beautiful Hayslope. "The microcosm George Eliot has created becomes as disturbed as Milton's gigantic universe".

Adam and Dinah must be united in the end, because both of them have a sense of duty to God and man. Adam says that he likes to read about Moses in the Old Testament:

> "He carried a hard business well through and died when other folks were going to reap the fruits: a man must have courage to look at life so, and think what´ll come of it after he´s dead and gone".

This is from a man who has learnt sympathy through pain. In Adam Bede, it is left to the man, whose heart is "full of sorrow, of unspoken sadness, and seriousness", to regenerate the world, where people like Arthur who practice idleness, have no place. Adam and Dinah must bear the joke with unflinching patience. They learn "to strengthen each other in all labour, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting". Adam and Dinah will retain their earthly paradise with its labour, sorrow, pain and death.

George Eliot as a Novelist

George Eliot inherited the convention of the omniscient narrator telling his story in his own voice and allowing himself whatever comments, digressions and asides he cares to make. She remained faithful to it until the end. But after The Mill on the Floss, her digressions were much more curbed, her asides much less flagrant and her comment much more closely woven into the texture of her narrative. After Adam Bede there is nothing quite so obstrusive as the paragraphs quoted above, and when one turns from The Mill on the Floss to Felix Holt, written seven years later, one is conscious immediately of a sharp increase in dramatization; the action is allowed much more to speak for itself.

Once she had learnt how to control them, they are much more acceptable, partly because of the very amplitude of her novels and the leisurely pace at which they are narrated. Within the convention she followed, she was an innovation in the high seriousness which she claimed for herself as a novelist. In this respect she may be seen as the watershed between the traditional novel and the modern; after her come Hardy, James and Lawrence, who

were all in one way or another indebted to her. But she was an innovator in another sense also; in her insistence upon the evolutionary forces that shape society.

George Eliot's novels are not famous and popular as they were in her own times. In this respect her fate is that of all women novelists. Her melancholy view of life, her attempts again and again to analyse the working of the mind and motives of her characters, her theories of morals and philosophy and her inability to create truly great heroic figures—these were her limitations as a story-teller. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that she is one of the greatest of English novelists. To have lived in the age of Dickens, Thackeray and Carlyle and earned their praise is in itself a sufficient testimony to her greatness as a novelist. Adam Bede, her greatest novel, has been praised as "a story of terrible simplicity", and "unsurpassed in original power". It was a great tribute to her genius that even in her second novel she should have satisfied "so many demands of the novelist's art". Her aunt, a methodist preacher, told her a real story of a confession made to her by a girl in prison who had been convicted of the murder of her child and who refused to confess the crime before. Out of this story George Eliot created the novel where the criminal was Hester Sorrel. Adam Bede, the working man who taught himself the duty of self-sacrifice, is taken to be a close portrait of the father of George Eliot. Mrs. Poyser with her `proverbs´ is one of the most humorous characters of the world of English fiction.

It is thus evident that the fame of George Eliot as a novelist rests on her portrayal of the English society and men and women who lived in it as members of the middle class. It was her own society, the society of the Victorian age. She observed it closely and studied carefully its strength and weakness. In writing about it in her novels she did not faithfully reproduce it in them. The Victorian society as seen in them is a picture, not a photograph. To what she had observed in it and of its men and women she added her own colour and originality. This was true at least of her earlier novels.

Thus the characters of the novelist are coloured and not dominated by personal memories. "Novels should be", observes Leslie Stephen, "transfigured experience; they should be based upon the direct observation and the genuine emotions which it has inspired". Viewed so George Eliot produced real novels. This habit of George Eliot of looking at the world with a certain aloofness helped her to satirise the Victorian age successfully and moralise on it usefully. She lays bare all the drawbacks and evils of the ways of life of the families

and of the people living in the towns and villages, around her. By aphorisms, sayings and generalisations she reveals the currents and cross-currents of life in which they are caught. She does these with a tolerant mind, roving nature and boundless sympathy. She pleads for reform, not rebellion and correction, not destruction. Her role as a novelist is that of a preacher, not a soldier.

Two other traits of George Eliot were her ability to narrate a story well and interestingly and her sense of humour. There is not a dull page in any of her novels. Her style is simple but elegant, and it helps the reader to live with the characters and their situations and become part of them. She has talent for portraying humorous characters, like the Dodson sisters and Bob Jakin in The Mill on the Floss, and when they are put in humorous settings we begin to wonder how a serious writer like her could joke and laugh as well. George Eliot was truly a complete novelist.

A. W. Ward rightly remarks that George Eliot´s novels "speak to us of her comprehensive wisdom, nurtured by assiduously acquired learning, of her penetrating and luminous wit, furnished with its material by a power of observation to which all the pathetic and all the humorous aspects of human character lay open and of her profound religious conviction of the significance of life and its changes as helping to better the human soul brave and unselfish enough not to sink before them".

SELECT QUESTIONS

1) Attempt a critical appreciation of the novel ***Adam Bede***. .

2) Discuss George Eliot´s religious views in ***Adam Bede***. .

3) "Hetty Sorrel has been described as the `central figure´ of the novel" - Justify.

4) Discuss ***Adam Bede*** as a modern novel.

5) Write about the use of images in ***Adam Bede***. .

6) The wedding of Dinah and Adam in considered an "artistic flaw" by Henry James. Do you agree with him?

7) "The realism of the novel lies in its characterization"— Comment.

8) ***Adam Bede*** is the earliest and simplest example of the typical George Eliot novel— elucidate.

9) Discuss ***Adam Bede*** as a psychological novel.

10) Mrs. Poyser and Bartle Massey are indispensable for the interesting study of the novel. How far do you agree with this?

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CHARLOTTE BRONTË: JANE EYRE

CHARLOTTE BRONTË: her Life and works

Charlotte Brontë was born on April 21, 1816, shortly before her family moved to bleak Haworth Parsonage in Yorkshire. Her father, Patrick Brontë, was a highly eccentric Irish clergyman. Her mother died when Charlotte was five, after bearing six children in all—three of whom, Charlotte and her sisters Emily and Anne, were to become famous novelists. The Only son in the family, Patrick Branwell, showed considerable artistic gifts which he dissipated in drink.

In 1824 all the girls except Anne were sent to a school rather like the Lowood School in Jane Eyre. Here the two older daughters died, probably of tuberculosis. Charlotte and Emily then returned to Haworth where they were left on their own to roam the wild moors and make up stories for their own entertainment. Out of these tales and poems about a mythical northern kingdom called Angria came the Gondal Chronicle, an immature but fascinating saga in prose and verse on which the girls collaborated.

In 1831 Charlotte was sent to a boarding school where she was trained, like Jane Eyre, to become a governess. She hoped to open a school with Emily. In order to perfect their

French, the two sisters traveled to Brussels, where they studied at the Pensionnat Héger. They were called back to England in 1842 by the death of their aunt. Shortly thereafter Charlotte returned to Brussels alone, spending a year as a teacher there and falling hopelessly in love with Constantin Héger, the married master of the establishment.

Discovering that her sisters Emily and Anne had been writing poems, Charlotte added some of her own. These poems were published in 1846 as Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell, the pseudonyms the three girls used. The volume attracted no attention, but soon the three were writing novels. Although Charlotte's first effort, The Professor, was rejected, she was encouraged by a sympathetic publisher's reader. Her second work, Jane Eyre, because a great success on its publication in 1847.

Shaken by the deaths of Emily and Branwell and forced to care for her now blind father, Charlotte nevertheless managed to write two other novels, Shirely (1849) and Villette (1853). Shirely solidified her success. It was with the publication of that novel that she revealed the true identify of "Currer Bell". In London she met such literary lights of the day as Thackeray, Matthew Arnold, and Mrs. Gaskell, who was later to be her friend and biographer.

In 1854 she married her father's curate, the Reverend Arthur Bell Nichols. The Marriage was tragically brief. Charlotte died on March 31 of the following year.

Brontë's other Novels

Shirely: Shirley is a generally successful attempt to treat something Charlotte Brontë had only read about—the strife between the workers and the mill owners in Yorkshire in 1807—1812. Shirely Keeldar, its heroine, is concerned with the social changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution. She is a lively heiress whose character is partly modeled on Emily Brontë's. Shirely marries a man with a spirit like her own, Louis Moore, brother of a mill owner whose newly installed machinery provokes the labourers to riot. The novel is filled with keenly observed and sharply satirized clergymen whose moral rigidity in the face of changing times draws Charlotte Brontë's scornful fire.

Villette:: This is a semi-autobiographical account of: Charlotte Brontë's lovesick years as a teacher in the Pensionnat Héger in Brussels. The loneliness and despair she felt in her love for the married Constantin Héger is transmuted into the yearning of Lucy Snowe for Paul Emmanuel. Written after her brother and sisters had died, and while she herself was

in ill health, the prevailing mood of Villette is the darkest of Charlotte Brontë's novels.

The Victorian Woman

"Jane seemed to her time so much the modern woman that even Mrs. Gaskell, herself a pioneer in writing, was a little shocked by what may be called the positiveness of her love. Jane Eyre is a unique Victorian book because in it purity becomes passionate and outspoken. Gone is the "man's woman"; here is woman herself, comforting man on equal terms. In a sense, Jane Eyre is the first modern novel, the first to envelop the life of a plain, ordinary woman with romance. The voice of free insurgent woman, free to feel and to speak as she feels, first comes clearly into modern literature out of the remote Haworth personage" (Sampson 639)

In the Victorian age, the middle classes began in the middle of the eighteenth century to assert a claim to cultural power they did not yet have; through the nineteenth century they worked to consolidate and justify their ascendancy. Among the means through which they did so were their representations of women, and much of this ideological work was performed by that relatively new literary form associated with the rise of the middle classes in the eighteenth century: the novel. This evolving form responded to (and contributed to) social forces that were redefining relations between men and women. As urban industrial centers become more important economically and forms of productive labour once the province of women (such as spinning, weaving, dairy work) were industrialized or otherwise brought out of the home, traditional ideas about the "proper duties" of women rigidified. This was especially true among the middle classes, for whom the social and economic divide between the sexes split the world into the "separate spheres" of domesticity and paid labour. Domestic fiction—novels representing the home as the sphere over which the women presides—was an important role in shaping nineteenth-century ideas not only about women, but more generally about gender, class, and the nature of subjectivity (that is, what it means to be a thinking, speaking being).

In the words of Virginia Woolf "She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily. If there was chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draught she sat in it—in short . . . she never had a mind or wish of her own. . . . Above all—I need not say it—she was pure" (Woolf 285).

Moreover, in creating the domestic angel the Victorians were engaging in significant cultural work. The idealization of feminine figure whose special task was to make the home a place of order, tranquillity, pristine cleanliness, and moral purity accomplished two ends simultaneously. First, it reassured middle-class men participating in the harshly competitive sphere of paid work in industrial capitalism that there was an alternative to that morally corrupting, physically dirty world—and that the alternative would be there for them at the end of the day to purify them.

Second, it gave the middle classes as a whole a claim to moral superiority over the classes both beneath and above them, thereby justifying their political power and cultural dominance.

The unstated implication is that aristocratic women (and men) were on the whole decadent, dissolute, and self-indulgent, while those of the whole working class at best lacked refinement and at worst were slaves to their appetites. The idealized middle-class woman, by contrast, was a refined, selfless (and frequently self-effacing), morally upright, sometimes almost ethereal being whose moral guidance and exemplary behaviour ensured that she would be capable of keeping not only her children but also her husband in line morally.

Jayne Eyre responds in complex and often subtle ways to this ongoing discourse through which nineteenth-century English society busily constructed its ideal woman. It rejects much of the domestic feminine ideal but by no means repudiates it entirely. It seems at times to be explicitly and pointedly debunking the conventions of ideal femininity—for example, in Jane's exasperated "I am not an angel . . . and will not be one till I die" (258) and in her insistence on her right to passion in many senses of the word. Nevertheless the novel implicitly participates in the cultural discourse that sought to define the ideal woman for middle-class readers, thereby accepting the validity of the discussion and even agreeing to many of its terms. One can consider Jane Eyre as a contribution to the discourse of the middle-class feminine ideal and ask oneself to what degree Brontë's novel accepts, rejects, or redefines that ideal.

Main Characters

Jane Eyre—An orphan who grows up to be a resourceful, self-reliant school-mistress. She is brought up in hard and grim circumstances. She is one of the most unconventional heroines in English fiction. She has a clear head linked to a soft heart. This rare

combination gives a peculiar piquancy to her personality. Her ethical correctness, sound logic and sense of reality blended with deep feelings make her an unforgettable character.

Mrs. Reed —Jane´s cold - hearted aunt, mistress of Thornfield Manor. Jane´s aunt who promises to take care of her, but later considers Jane an unnecessary burden and ill-treats her.

Edward Fairfax Rochester —The brooding master of Thornfield Manor, the hero of the novel. He is a powerful personality. He has been tricked into marrying the mad Bertha. So he is greatly frustrated. He tries to drown his depressed feelings by living fast and loose. He is taken for a bad bold baron. It is left to Jane Eyre to discover that this is far from the true picture of Rochester.

Adele Varens —Rochester´s beautiful, precocious, half-French ward. The Daughter of Celin Varens, a French dancer. Rochester makes all possible arrangements for her upbringing in Thornfield Hall. Jane Eyre is employed to be her governess. The girl is at first shy, but gradually she shows herself a chatterbox. She is good-looking and intelligent.

Mrs. Fairfax —A relative of Rochester and chief housekeeper in Thornfield Hall. She is a willing accomplice to Rochester in keeping the mystery of Thornfield Hall a top secret.

Grace Poole —A woman-attendant under Mrs. Fairfax in Thornfield Hall. She is fully aware of Berth, the mad wife of Rochester, the master of the house, having been locked up in a secret room. Bertha´s low, grim laughter, sometimes ending in wild shrieks, is attributed to Grace Poole who is, in reality, as sane as anybody else.

Miss Blanche Ingram —She fancies herself in lone with Rochester. A lovely rich lady, Beautiful, snobbish, and self-assured. Jane is piqued that Miss Ingram is coming with Rochester to Thornfield Hall. After her arrival, Rochester often goes riding with her. Jane´s heart grows tense whenever she watches the two riding together. Jane is jealous of her. Jane comes to realise how strong her feelings are for Rochester. This is a clear proof of her deep love for him. Rochester has introduced the beautiful Miss Ingram only to provoke jealousy in Jane. He is glad to note that his treatment has taken effect. She is like a cocktail to whet the appetite.

Mr. Mason —A mysterious visitor to Thornfield from the West Indies. Brother of

Bertha, the mad wife of Rochester. He is a native of Jamaica. His sudden visit to Thornfield Hall upsets Rochester. At dead of night, he enters his mad sister´s room and is badly bitten and mauled by her. Rochester secretly solicits Jane´s help to render first-aid to Mason. Rochester is, thus, drawn closer to Jane by this incident.

St. Iohn Rivers —A clergyman of the parish of Morton who owns Moor House. Jane Eyre finds refuge in his house for some time after her flight from Thornfield Hall. Later, it comes to light that St. John Rivers and his two sisters are cousins to Jane. Jane gets a legacy of twenty thousand pounds which she gladly shares with them.

Jane Eyre: the story in outline

Orphaned as a baby, Jane Eyre is placed in the care of a cold hearted aunt, Mrs. Reed of Gateshead Hall. Mrs. Reed's husband, a brother of Jane's mother, instructs his wife on his deathbed to care as tenderly for Jane as for her own three children. But Mrs. Reed, a somber and severe woman, ignores this request for the ten miserable years that Jane spends under her roof. She pampers her own spoiled children and brings Jane up as little better than a servant. One day, as punishment for a bit of childish willfulness, she puts Jane into the room in which Mr. Reed died. The highly imaginative child falls into a faint and becomes very ill.

After being nursed back to health by Bessie Leaven, a sympathetic nurse at Gateshead, Jane is sent to the Lowood School, fifty miles away. Although life in this school is very austere, it is generally a relief after Gateshead Hall. Jane is befriended by a Miss Temple and learns her lessons rapidly. Tragedy strikes when an epidemic kills some of the girls a Lowood. This leads to an investigation into conditions at the school and some subsequent improvements.

Jane becomes a teacher at the school, but leaves at eighteen to become governess to the precocious Adele Varens who lives in isolated Thornfield Manor near Millcote.

Jane does not at first meet Edward Rochester, the girl’s guardian. She is engaged by the kindly, capable Mrs. Fair fax, chief housekeeper and relative of the lord of the manor. Jane finds contentment in the quiet, rustic life at the manor and in her imaginative young charge, but she is puzzled when Mrs. Fairfax warns her that she is never to enter a mysterious, locked room on the third floor. One day, Jane hears a shrill, blood-curdling laugh coming from the room, but Mrs, Fair fax pretends that the maniacal noise was made

by Grace Poole, a rather dumpy, unprepossessing servant.

One January afternoon, while out walking, Jane meets her employer, Mr. Rochester. Rochester has been thrown by his horse, and his dog comes to Jane seeking help. But the gruff, surly Rochester insists on getting home unaided although he is in great pain. He questions Jane and learns she is the new governess. Rochester's manner to her becomes more gracious when she is obviously not cowed by his overbearing manner. In confidence, he tells her that little Adele is his daughter by a French ballerina who deserted both father and child long ago.

One night Jane is awakened by the same shrill scream she had heard before. Opening her door, she sees smoke billowing from Rochester's room. His bed on fire, Rochester is awakened just in time by Jane. He refuses to allow her to awaken the household, telling her the fire may have been set by Grace Poole, who has periodic fits of insanity. The rest of the servants are told the fire was accidentally caused by a candle falling.

Jane, sensing that her employer is suffering from the consequences of some mysterious sin of the past, gives him all her sympathy and gradually finds herself falling in love with him. But her hopes are thwarted when Rochester begins going to parties in the neighborhood where he is courting the beautiful, frivolous Blanche Ingram. At a party Rochester gives in Thornfield Manor, the aristocratic Blanche and her friends treat Jane with haughty condescension. Jane feels she can never compete with these snobbish, elegant people. While the house guests are staying at Thornfield, Rochester receives a mysterious caller—a Mr. Mason from the West Indies. That night Jane hears a scuffle and a cry for help in the room just above hers. Rochester quiets the household's alarm but asks Jane privately to help nurse Mr. Mason who is bleeding and unconscious. Before dawn the wounded man is spirited away from the house.

One day soon after, Jane is enjoying the lovely midsummer evening in an orchard when Rochester comes upon her and informs her he is shortly to be married. Jane, miserable, assumes he intends to marry Blanche Ingram. She asks him tearfully how he can expect her to remain on at Thornfield under the circumstances. Rochester kisses her and tells her it is she whom he wishes to marry.

Jane's happy excitement before the wedding is interrupted one night when she awakens in horror to see a strange, ugly woman trying on her bridal veil and then tearing it to pieces. Rochester assures her it is only a bad dream, but in the morning Jane finds the

ripped fragments of the veil.

On the wedding day the service is interrupted by Mr. Mason who has slipped into the church to announce that the marriage is illegal because Rochester still has a living wife. Forced to reveal the truth at last, Rochester takes Jane to the forbidden chamber on the third floor where Jane sees a hideous creature, crawling on all fours in her madness. It was she who had attacked Mason and torn Jane's wedding veil. Rochester explains that the creature is Mason's sister Bertha whom he had been tricked into marrying fifteen years before in Jamaica and who comes from a family of lunatics and degenerates. His married life has been an unmitigated hell, with the insane Mrs. Rochester kept under lock and key in the care of Grace Poole.

Jane is filled with sympathy for the misanthropic Rochester. Nevertheless, she realizes she must now depart. Taking just a little money with her, she wanders about the Midland moors, vainly seeking employment. Close to starvation, she is finally befriended and nursed back to health by a clergyman named St. John Rivers and his two sisters, Mary and Diana. Under the new name of Jane Elliott, she finds a job as village school-mistress and tries to forget her seemingly hopeless love for Rochester.

One day Rivers learns that an uncle of Jane's, John Eyre, has recently died ill Madeira and has left Jane £ 20,000. Jane insists on sharing this legacy with Rivers and his sisters who, a lawyer discovers, are really her cousins. St. John Rivers asks Jane to be his wife and to go with him to India where he plans to become a missionary. Although he is not in love with her, he feels she would make an admirable assistant in his mission.

While Jane is considering the offer, she has a dream that Rochester is calling for her. Failing to find him in the neighborhood the next morning, she journeys back to Thornfield where she is shocked to find the great manor house gutted by fire and completely in ruins. Making inquiries at the local inn, she discovers that Mrs. Rochester one night succeeded in setting the house on fire. Rochester managed to lead the servants to safety and then went back into the burning mansion to rescue his wife. She eluded him, was able to climb to the roof, and was then killed in a plunge to the ground.

Rochester barely managed to get out of the burning house alive himself. A flaming staircase had fallen, blinding him and crushing one arm so badly it had to be amputated. Rochester is now living in morose solitude at the lonely nearby manor of Ferndean. Jane hurries to see him.

Overjoyed that she has come to him, Rochester asks her to become his wife. She happily accepts and they are married. They soon have a child. Two years later, Rochester regains the sight of one eye.

Jane Eyre: a critical appreciation

Unlike her great predecessor, Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë never possessed the ironic aloofness from the world that distinguishes such works as Pride and Prejudice or Emma. Instead, Jane Eyre is infused with passionate involvement and poetic imagination, sometimes bordering on the melodramatic. While Charlotte Brontë's hopeless love for M. Héger is undoubtedly the basis for Jane's love for Rochester, the figure of Rochester is larger than life; his sorrows and furies are titanic.

Rochester is a typical romantic hero, sharing some significant traits with the doomed heroes of Byron and with Heatcliff in Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights. A man of great sorrow and great passion, a man too noble to be seduced by the superficialities of society, he is at the same time tormented and tormenting, tender and ruthless, and very much the figment of a lonely, romantic girl's imagination.

Although much of Jane Eyre is autobiographical, especially the scenes in the Lowood School, much is taken from the tradition of gothic romance popularized in the late eighteenth century by such shockers as Walpole's Castle of Otranto and Ann Radcliffe's Mysteries of Udolpho. Such elements in Jane Eyre as the lord of the manor haunted by a mystery from the past, the isolated, ghost-ridden mansion hiding its guilty secret, and the innocent but self-reliant girl trying to unfathom the mystery, are stock devices of the gothic novel.

Jane Eyre triumphs by giving these melodramatic devices a new lease on life and by investing them with unique personal passion and energy. They are no longer fictional cliches, but living facts in Charlotte Brontë's treatment. Because the Brontës' actual lives in lonely, haunted Haworth Parsonage really contained much of the "gothic," Jane Eyre is more convincing than most of its predecessors.

Rochester may divert attention from the book's modest unassuming heroine; but the novel really centres on Jane's moral growth from the impudent, unhappy girl rebelling against her aunt's oppressive religiosity to the woman of delicate sensibility and strong character

who eventually marries the crippled Rochester. Such experiences as those in the Lowood School (very Dickensian in tone), the teaching of the spoiled but adorable Adele, and the interrupted first marriage to Rochester give Jane strength to endure the blows of fate that eventually bring her to serene womanhood. Jane Eyre is in some respects a Cindrella-like fantasy of wish fulfillment, but one infused with an original and powerful romantic genius.

Setting

One way in which Jane Eyre differs markedly from Wuthering Heights is in its chronological setting. Whereas one can date most of the events of Wuthering Heights from internal evidence. Jane Eyre is set in an ambiguous time frame. But from the extensive journeys Jane takes by stage coach, we can conclude that the novel is set in a pre-railway age, therefore before the 1830s.

Structure and Theme

Jane Eyre functions on one level as a Bildungsroman or education novel. The heroine's education takes place in five stages, corresponding with five houses; Gateshead, Lowood, Thornfield, Moor House and Ferndean. Each stage of development is overseen by a dominant patriarchal male figure and each home is experienced as an enclosed world from which Jane must break out as, in each case, the promise of protection gives way to the desire for growth and liberty. Jane, an orphan, may be seen as engaged in a quest for her real home. But her story is not a simple progression. She does not merely move from stage to stage as on a chess board, she can also be thought of as oscillating between Romantic feeling and Christian duty and reason.

Mr. Reed, who initially gave Jane a home, represents the legitimate authority of the house. Yet Mr. Reed is equally a figure of dread; brooding on him when locked in the Red Room, Jane 'sees' his ghost and gives way to nervous terrors. In the context of the novel's theme of spiritual progress, this scene may be interpreted as the equivalent of a trance, the Romantic path to transcendence.

Nevertheless, the story remains within the limits of the probable. Bessie, the family nurse, provides an account of what Jane claims to have seen. ‘Something passed her, all dressed in white and vanished’ - ‘a great black dog behind him’ - ‘Three loud raps on the chamber door’ — ‘a light in the churchyard just over his grave’ (Ch. 3). Although Jane’s ghostly vision is accounted for naturalistically, as the overwrought imagination of a sensitive child,

the atmosphere of the supernatural is established early in the novel. Mr. Reed represents Jane's belief in a kindly father figure who, if he were alive, would shelter and love her; he is in short, a loving God or patriarch, hut absent:

> I thought Mr. Reed's spirit, harassed by the wrongs of his sister's child, might quit its abode — whether in the church vault or in the unknown world of the departed — and rise before me in this chamber. I wiped my tears and hushed my sobs, fearful lest any sign of violent grief might waken a preternatural voice to comfort me, or elicit from the gloom some haloed face, bending over me in strange pity.
>
> (Ch. 2)

Mr. Brocklehurst, the headmaster of Lowood School, succeeds Mr. Reed as the second example of quasi-paternal authority. Jane's first glimpse of him captures the child's view of a terrifying patriarch, a phallic column:

> I looked up at-a black pillar! - such, at least, appeared to me, at first sight, the straight, narrow, sable-clad shape standing erect on the rug; the grim face at the top was like a carved mask, placed above the shaft by way of capital.
>
> (Ch. 4)

Facing up to Mr. Brocklehurst, and overcoming his moral blackmail, is Jane's second instinctive act of rebellion, her first being her refusal to submit to John Reed. At Lowood, Mr. Brocklehurst unscrupulously employs the language of religion to humiliate his charges. His unctuous speeches betray a fine tinge of sadism:

> I have a Master to serve whose kingdom is not of this world: my mission is to mortify in these girls the lusts of the flesh, to teach them to clothe themselves with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with braided hair and costly apparel; and each of the young persons before us has a string of hair twisted in plaits which vanity itself might have woven: these, I repeat, must be cut off.
>
> (Ch. 7)

Mr. Brocklehurst is a debased parental figure, his authority little more than sexual tyranny. The symbolic meaning of wishing to cut off the girls' hair, cropping their one ornament to curtail their sexual nature, is evident. Intellectually if not emotionally, it is relatively easy for Jane to see through the 'black oillar'. And in spite of her first ominous meeting with

Mr. Brocklehurst at Gateshead (whose opening conversational gambit is to ask Jane whether she knows where the wicked go after death), Jane looks forward to Lowood as freeing her from the tyranny of her Reed cousins.

Lowood School for all its horrors, is, in many respects, preferable to Jane's first home. So much emphasis has been placed on the historical basis for Lowood (Cowan Bridge) and the identification of (the sanctimonious Brocklehurst with the Reverend Carus Wilson, that we risk forgetting that Lowood is also portrayed positively. Mr. Brocklehurst's Evangelical reign of terror is mitigated to a great extent by Miss Temple's mildness and reasonableness. At Lowood, Jane finds two moral guides, who have a profound effect on her development. Miss Temple, the headmistress, teaches Jane self-control; Helen Burns, the friend who dies, holds up a model of resignation and forgiveness. Helen is like Bunyan's Faithful, who goes before, to show us the way. Yet another important aspect of Lowood is that in this unprepossessing environment, Jane discovers that she loves study. Her intellectual enthusiasms make even the inadequate food of Lowood irrelevant. 'I would not now have exchanged Lowood with all its privations for Gateshead and its daily luxuries' (Ch. 8).

Jane spends ten years at Lowood, under the benign discipline of Miss Temple. After the latter's marriage, however, Jane finds that a transformation has taken place within herself:

> My world had for some years been in Lowood: my experience had been of its rules and systems; now I remembered that the real world was wide, and that a varied field of hopes and fears, of sensations and excitements, awaited those who had courage to go forth into its expanse, to seek real knowledge of life amidst its perils.
>
> (Ch. 10)

Her decision to leave Lowood is motivated by a desire to 'seek real knowledge of life amidst its perils'. She sets forth on her pilgrimage again, by advertising for a post as governess, and receives a favourable reply from a Mrs. Fairfax at Thornfield.

Thus Jane goes to her third 'home' with a profound desire for change; even a new servitude, she feels, is better than a life of inaction. But Thornfield, too, is little more than a peaceful backwater until transformed by the arrival of Mr. Rochester (see context

passage, pp. 152-5). At Thornfield she discovers Romantic passion, something quite foreign to her experience hitherto. Whereas Jane had rebelled against authority at Gateshead, saying of John Reed, ‘Master! How is he my master? Am I a servant?’ (Ch. 2), she willingly calls Mr. Rochester master and accepts peremptory treatment from him. Jane enjoys Rochester’s eccentric manners, a mixture of frankness and authoritarian command. With Rochester, Jane too, is frank. To Rochester’s leading question, ‘Do you think me handsome?’ She replies with an abrupt, indeed tactless, ‘No, sir!’ (Ch. 14). Like Jane, Mr. Rochester is unconventional in both manners and looks. So entirely do Thornfield and its owner appear to he the home and master for which Jane had always longed, that the discovery of his bigamous intentions and he decision to flee represent an emotional uprooting, as much as: disappointment in love. As Jane declares to Rochester, ‘Wherever you are is my home - my only home’ (Ch. 22).

The problem of mastery, which tormented Jane as a child a Gateshead, is relevant here. On the one hand, she yearns for authority, a master, a legitimizing and caring principle; on the other authority proves to be arbitrary, unreliable or tyrannical (Mr. Brocklehurst, Mrs. Reed, John Reed, Mr. Rochester, St. John Rivers). Though Jane feels her physical inferiority, she is also convinced of her intellectual capacities and spiritual worth. The moral law to which she appeals when she leaves Rochester is not merely a question of obedience to God. By following, no matter how painfully, her inner prompting of conscience, she can attain self-respect and integrity:

> I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unslained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God; sanctioned by man. I will hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad — as I am now.
>
> (Ch. 27)

Immediately after her trial of strength with Mr. Rochester, when he pleads with her to live with him as his mistress, Jane has: dream, which resembles one of her own eerie paintings:

> then, not a moon, but a white human form shone in the azure inclining a glorious brow eastward. It gazed and gazed on me. It spoke to my spirit.... ‘My daughter, flee temptation.' ‘Mother, I will.’ So I answered after I had waked from the trance-like dream.

(Ch. 27)

The border between dream, trance and reality are deliberately blurred, as when Jane hears Rochester calling her at Moor House. But here her unknown mother speaks to re-establish moral authority over the wavering Jane. She is, then, able to defy the third patriarchal authority whom she loves, rather than fears. And like Bunyan's Pilgrim, she sets out on the next stage of her journey, 'a new Road; one I had never travelled'. In effect, St. John Rivers offers Jane a chance to follow a reliable moral and spiritual guide. What she understands, in spite of her veneration for his calling, is the arrogance of his belief that he is God's interpreter. Applying what he believes is God's purpose to himself is one thing; to impose his law on another person has a flavour of tyranny about it. The power of the religious patriarch satirized in Mr. Brocklehurst genuinely terrifies Jane in Rivers, because both her duty and her religious belief seem to urge her to follow him.

Jane's final home or resting place, Ferndean, lies in the heart of a forest, a Romantic labyrinth, which like the similar image in Dante implies the doubts and difficulties surrounding her quest for Rochester:

> I looked round in search of another road. There was
> none: all was interwoven stem, columnar trunk, dense
> summer foliage — no opening anywhere.
>
> (Ch. 37)

Moor House, by contrast, where Jane found her independence, is set in bracing hilly country. Ferndean, its physical antithesis, shrouded in a deep wood, is a shelter from the world. Perhaps the least satisfying aspect of the novel's happy ending is that the marriage with Rochester is depicted as a relationship of almost suffocating harmony, prefigured by the environment. Certainly the dense wood, the close vegetation, is a favourite Romantic image, and symbolizes Jane's safe return to her Romantic self, though with the sanction of reason and duty.

The five 'homes' in Jane Eyre, as a structural and thematic device, mark clear stages in Jane's development. From her turbulent and loveless childhood, she goes in quest of justice, love and religious consolation. True and false guides lead her: Miss Temple, Helen Burns, Mr. Brocklehurst, and Rochester himself, who can be both false and true. Jane's rejection of St. John Rivers is an acknowledgement that she must be her own guide; that her strength is in herself. She is then free to help Rochester. The novel's conclusion

suggests that there is no authority save one's own integrity founded on religious principle. The theme of religion fittingly closes the novel. St. John Rivers' single-minded dedication lo God, though inhuman in its intensity, remains a troubling instance of the human desire to transcend the world. He is compared to Bunyan's Greatheart, 'who guards his pilgrim convoy from the onslaught of Apollyon' (Ch. 38). Jane, however, chooses the world of flesh and blood. Ferndean attains an Edenic status, as is clear from the Miltonic echo at the close of Chapter 37, reversing, as it were, the expulsion from Paradise. Whereas Milton's Adam and Eve 'through Eden took their solitary way' into the world of sin and death, Charlotte's closes her chapter with the sentence: 'We entered the wood and wended homeward'. The novel's quest is as much for the true home as for romantic love.

Treatment of Religion and the supernatural

Religious questions are central to Jane Eyre. Broadly speaking, the rigidities of institutionalized religion, in the persons of Brocklehurst or even the admirable Rivers, contrast with a kind of non-institutionalized Wordsworthian version of Protestantism. The moral rigours of the Protestant individual conscience are mitigated by the healing influence of nature. The novel contrasts lived religious experience, linked to nature, mysticism and even the supernatural, with established religion. Mr. Brocklehurst is, of course, the primary exemplar of Evangelical hypocrisy masquerading as religious authority. His religion is fundamentally a form of social control. The girls at Lowood School are to be taught humility and self-sacrifice for the good of their souls and the convenience of society. On one occasion, in a scene reminiscent of Oliver Twist, he remonstrates with Miss Temple for supplementing the children's inedible breakfast with bread and cheese:

> Oh, madam, when you put bread and cheese, instead of burnt porridge, into these children's mouths, you may indeed feed their vile bodies, but you little think how you starve their immortal souls!
>
> (Ch. 7)

Jane's religion at this juncture is entirely pragmatic. When asked by Mr. Brocklehurst how she hopes to avoid going to hell, she replies: 'I must keep in good health and not die' (Ch.

4). In contrast to Mr. Brocklehurst, Helen Burns teaches Jane a religion of forgiveness and acceptance, a New Testament conception:

> I hold another creed, which no one ever taught me, and which I seldom mention, but in which I delight, and to which I cling, for it extends hope to all; it makes eternity a rest — a mighty home — not a terror and an abyss. Besides, with this creed, I can so clearly distinguish between the criminal and his crime, I can so sincerely forgive the first while I abhor the last; with this creed, revenge never worries my heart, degradation never too deeply disgusts me, injustice never crushes me too low; I live in calm, looking to the end.
>
> (Ch. 6)

Helen's religious belief gives her hope for the after-life, but it is insufficient for Jane, who also demands justice in this world. (We see why Mrs. Oliphant thought she was a dangerous radical.) On the other hand, Helen's lesson is not lost. Jane is capable, as an adult, of forgiving Mrs. Reed, for her treatment of her as a child. The novel's moral toughness is perhaps nowhere better displayed than at Mrs. Reed's deathbed. Charlotte eschews the temptation to allow Mrs. Reed's remorse for having deprived Jane of her inheritance to transform her suddenly into a kindly person. She has never loved Jane; she will not do so now:

> 'Love me, then, or hate me, as you will,' I said at last,
> 'you have my full and free forgiveness: ask now for
> God's and be at peace.'
>
> Poor suffering woman! it was too late for her to make
> now the effort to change her habitual frame of mind:
> living, she had ever hated me — dying, she must
> hate me still.
>
> (Ch. 21)

Jane exercises Helen's forgiveness, without expecting anything in return. In Mrs Reed's death, we see the way the novel weaves its themes together. Helen Burns' legacy lives on in Jane, tempered by a moral realism.

Part of the significance of Helen Burns' 'creed', 'which no one ever taught me', reflects a

pervasive feeling in the novel, that spiritual truth and organized religion are incompatible. Religion is powerfully associated with Nature. Where Jane differs from Mr. Brocklehurst, Helen and St. John Rivers is in not seeing religion as the antithesis of life. Rivers, for example, represses his natural instincts, his love for Rosamond Oliver, because he believes that religion and instinct are necessarily at odds. Jane describes in one of St. John's sermons the essential morbidity, as she conceives it, of his views:

> The heart was thrilled, the mind astonished, by the power of the preacher: neither were softened. Throughout there was a strange bitterness; an absence of consolatory gentleness; stern allusions to Calvinistic doctrines — election, predestination, reprobation — were frequent; and each reference to these points sounded like a sentence pronounced for doom. When he had done, instead of feeling better, calmer, more enlightened by his discourse, I experienced an inexpressible sadness.
>
> (Ch. 30)

In contrast to this doom-laden religion, Helen's creed, which 'extends hope to all', runs like a silver thread through the novel. Jane, who by no means blindly follows her instincts, as we see from the (act that she flees Thornfield, nevertheless finds legitimacy in spontaneous feeling. It is left to the reformed rake, Rochester, however, to express the novel's conclusion on the religious and moral law. Recognizing God's punishment in the burning of Thornfield, Rochester, like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, learns to pray:

> Of late, Jane — only — only of late — I began to see and acknowledge the hand of God in my doom. I began to experience remorse, repentance, the wish for reconcilement to my Maker. I began sometimes to pray.
>
> (Ch. 37)

When Jane had first met Rochester at Thornfield, he had lived on a principle similar to Jane's as a child; he was obsessed with the wrongs done to him by others, by his father, brother, wife or mistress. In the end, his Byronic cynicism gives way to religious acceptance and to an acknowledgement of his individual responsibility for his troubles. In Jane Eyre the genuinely religious life is not incompatible with whatever human happiness can be attained by our efforts. Nevertheless, the trace of mystical experience,
things 'too awful to be communicated or discussed', can be felt throughout. This may explain why the novel ends with a valedictory passage to the problematic St. John Rivers.

He represents both Bunyan's Pilgrim and, in his missionary work, the nineteenth-century zeal for improvement:

> Firm, faithful, and devoted, full of energy and zeal, and truth . . . he hews down like a giant the prejudices of creed and caste that encumber it. He may be stern; he may be exacting; he may be ambitious yet; but his is the sternness of the warrior Great-heart, who guards his pilgrim convoy from the onslaught of Apollyon.
>
> (Ch. 38)

Rivers offers an uncanny echo of Mr. Brocklehurst, in his belief that he is divinely inspired:

> I am the servant of an infallible Master. I am not going out under human guidance, subject to the defective laws and erring control of my feeble fellow-worms: my king, my lawgiver, my captain, is the all perfect.
>
> (Ch. 34)

Rivers, in short, has the inhuman satisfaction of believing he is ways right. The narrator records admiration for his faith and purpose, but no love. A religion which excludes human affections shown as, perhaps, fit for heroes, but it is not, in Jane Eyre, a creed to live by. Indeed such a faith kills its adherents.

Narrative Technique

As a first-person narration, Jane Eyre conveys a tone of passionate engagement. One may pick out three characteristic aspects of the narrational stance. First, the early chapters powerfully convey the child's point of view. I have already mentioned Jane's meeting with Brocklehurst, when from her diminutive perspective she sees him as an elongated pillar. Though the emphasis on the child's perceptions is Romantic in origin, Jane is not portrayed as a Wordsworthian infant, 'seer blest', 'six year darling of a pygmy size'. She is an angry and difficult little girl. The narrative stresses both Jane's sense of outrage and the intensity other perceptions. Secondly, Jane, in her role as adult governess, observes character and physiognomy. We notice how she 'draws' Rochester or the Ingram ladies. As an observer she is a social satirist, her vision strongly ironic; we note, for example, her narrational treatment of the Miss Reeds, or more kindly, of Miss Oliver. Thirdly, Jane is an acute recorder of natural phenomena. The novel contains more detailed of natural scription

than Wuthering Heights, which one often thinks of as being attuned to the elemental. Sensitivity to nature is an important index of character in the novel. In Chapter 34, for example, Jane describes a walk with Rivers during which he is oblivious to his natural surroundings, but which she observes:

> a soft turf, mossy fine and emerald green, minutely
> enamelled with a tiny white flower . . .

Jane responds to the beauty of the natural world in the present, whereas Rivers, obsessed with his vision of the future, seems to see nothing. Overall, the persona that emerges from the first-person narration is varied: ironic, distanced; passionate or angry; observant and sensitive to natural stimulus, the different narrative voices contribute to our perception of Jane as a complex individual.

Charlotte Brontë as a Novelist: criticism through ages

Thackeray, once said that he was unable to put the book down once he had started it. Many of Charlotte's contemporaries responded to the novel with the same fascinated enthusiasm. Twentieth-century reader, on the other hand, have tended to reverse the process, seeing melodrama and self-indulgence in Jane Eyre and masterly artistic control in Wuthering Heights.

Jane Eyre burst onto the literary scene in October 1847, an immediate popular success by an author virtually unknown. Six months after its publication one English reviewer referred to the great “sensation” the novel had created; an American reviewer claimed more fancifully that “Jane Eyre fever” had infected many of his compatriots (qtd. in Allott 88, 97). The novel was reviewed widely in the newspapers, magazines, and journals of the day and was almost as successful with professional critics as it was with ordinary readers. Reviewers were struck by its refreshing unconventionalities, by its departure from the formulas of much other contemporary fiction, and by the new, different, and powerful voice of its author. They described the novel as “bold,” “fresh,” and “striking” and praised the novel’s “vigor,” “shrewdness,” “power,” and “originality.” Nor was this success short-lived: throughout the nineteenth century, as it has for the whole of the twentieth, Jane Eyre continued to occupy the minds and busy the pens of people who love a good book.

Such enthusiasm, however, has never been unanimous or unreserved. A little over a year after Jane Eyre was published, the Quarterly Review, an influential nineteenth century jo

ournal. Vilified the novel as “anti-Christian.” Elizabeth Rigby saw Jane as a social climber and an upstart — as “a decidedly vulgar-minded woman” whom “we should not care for as an acquaintance, whom we should not seek as a friend, whom we should not desire for a relation, and whom we should scrupulously avoid for a governess” (qtd. in Allott 110). She was offended by the novel’s “murmuring against the comforts of the rich and against the privations of the poor, which . . . is a murmuring against God’s appointment”.

Reservations about the novel’s “coarseness” appear repeatedly in early reviews of Jane Eyre. Critics were responding to perceived breaches of decorum, whether stylistic or moral. Perhaps, indeed, the two cannot easily be separated. For example, the characters speak with unusual directness and sometimes use language (provincialisms and even, some critics complained, slang) that would have seemed ungentle to Brontë’s contemporaries. Moreover, what they speak about is itself unconventional and sometimes scandalous. Both Jane and Rochester speak openly about the strength of their passions; Rochester confesses his sexual transgressions to (of all people) a young unmarried woman; Jane voices her distaste for certain kinds of religious piety and heaps contempt upon her social superiors. The qualities that gave the novel what one early reviewer described as “masculine power, breadth, and shrewdness” (qtd. in Allott 89) are the very things that made it seem “coarse.” Such coarseness could be disconcerting, especially (but not only) to critics who suspected that the author of Jane Eyre was a woman.

The sex of the author was a matter of much speculation because Brontë, like many earlier women novelists and some later ones (especially unmarried ones), did not publish under her own name, using instead the deliberately ambiguous pseudonym Currer Bell.

> Averse to personal publicity, we veiled our own names under those of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell; the ambiguous choice being dictated by a sort of conscientious scruple at assuming Christian names, positively masculine, while we did not like to declare ourselves women, because — without at the time suspecting that our mode of writing and thinking was not what is called “feminine,” — we had a vague impression that authoresses are liable to be looked on with prejudice. . . . (Bell, “Biographical Notice” 16)

Nineteenth-century ideas of feminine modesty and of separate spheres for men and women dictated that women should stay within the domestic sphere and keep out of the public one.

The participation of women in the marketplace, even the literary marketplace in which women were becoming increasingly visible, still had unsavory connotations; in polite society (it was believed), the "proper lady" does not permit her name to be freely circulated and does not put herself, or the expression of her (supposedly) special capacity for feeling, up for sale. Unmarried women who regarded literature as a profession rather than as a polite accomplishment were frowned upon, especially if they seemed genuinely ambitious. Moreover, the Brontës lived in remote Yorkshire and did not mix much in "society"; they were private, reserved women who struck outsiders as shy and even aloof. In tandem with the prevailing cultural attitudes toward women writers, this reserve fed the Brontës' aversion to what Charlotte Brontë calls "personal publicity"; hence the pseudonyms.

But another motive lay behind the ambiguity of the names they chose. Charlotte Brontë (the sister who undertook the initial correspondence with publishers) wished her writing and that of her sisters to be judged on its merits. She feared that the work of women writers was likely to be judged indulgently but condescendingly if it conformed to certain notions of what was proper and ladylike, and condemned if it did not.

One of the most powerful aspects of Brontë's fiction is also what compelled critics to question her conscious artistry: the raw emotional energy of her first-person narrators. In the context of stereotypical notions about the "primitiveness" of the Yorkshire moors, Brontë's adeptness at creating impassioned accounts in the first person makes it tempting to conflate the narrator's I with Brontë's and so to regard her writings as the products of naive genius unaided by craft.

Another recurrent issue in the criticism of Jane Eyre has been the question of the novel's political implications. While some regard Jane Eyre as "anti-Christian" and dangerously hostile toward the privileges of rank. Many critics argue that Jane Eyre is politically conservative, accepting of Victorian values and attitudes toward class, race, and even gender rather than critical of them.

Objecting to the common conception of the Brontës as socially rebellious Romantics in the Victorian age, Richard Chase argued that the Brontës were instead "true-blue Victorians" (488) who "domesticated" the subversive elements in the mythic stories they created — taming them and rendering them fit for hearth and home, those ideologically freighted

spaces of Victorian life. In Jane Eyre, according to Chase, Brontë creates a heroine who cannot allow herself to give in to her powerful attraction toward the hero, an incarnation of sexual and intellectual energy, until he has been chastened by the catastrophe at Thornfield.

Drawing upon psychoanalytic concepts, Chase was the first critic to suggest what has become a commonplace: that Rochester's blinding and maiming constitute a "symbolic castration"—that his injuries metaphorically represent a reduction of Rochester's attractive but dangerous phallic power over Jane. Once Rochester loses some of that power, Jane is transformed into the Victorian domestic angel and the novel's rebellious energies vanish, leaving us with "the triumph of the moderate, secular, naturalistic, liberal, sentimental point of view" (Chase 505)—in other words, the Victorian status quo. Two related but separable aspects of Jane Eyre have shaped the way later critics have approached its political implications. One is the novel's embrace of individualism, which it endorses through Jane's self-assertive rise from social obscurity, her insistence upon her rights to self-creation and self-fulfillment, and her desire for personal and economic independence. The other is its exploration of Jane's plight specifically as a woman, which has made the novel what we might call a feminist classic. Much feminist work on Jane Eyre in the 1970s grew out of liberal feminism, which emphasizes women's right to equality with men, and inherits from nineteenth-century liberalism abeliefin the primacy of the individual and his—or her—claims.

In the 1970s Jane Eyre resented itself as a key text for the new feminist criticism conceived largely in the context of the women's liberation movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1973 the poet Adrienne Rich published "Jane Eyre: The Temptations of a Motherless Woman" in Ms., the (then) new popular magazine of the women's movement; essays and articles on the novel followed in more academic journals and books. Gilbert, Elaine Showalter, and other feminist critics writing about Jane Eyre in the 1970s placed Jane Eyre in the context of specifically female experience. They discussed its themes in terms of significant stages in the lives of girls and women, interpreted its imagery in terms of "the sexual experiences of the female body" to quote Showalter, and sought to place the novel within a tradition of female authors that runs parallel to the mainstream male literary tradition that has largely obscured it. They admired Jane's youthful rebelliousness, her quest for independence, her desire for and (possibly qualified) achievement of equality in

marriage. These critics tended to assume a uniformity of “female experience” in England and America (and perhaps universally) and to stress the continuity of that experience over two or three centuries.

SELECT QUESTIONS

1) Jane Eyre is an unconventional novel from the Victorian point of view — Discuss.
2) Comment on the structure of Jane Eyre.
3) Jane Eyre is one of the most unconventional heroines in English fiction. Elucidate.
4) Religious questions are central to Jane Eyre — Discuss.
5) Jane Eyre as an autobiographical novel.
6) Jane Eyre is a "gothic" novel, however, it is more convincing than most of its predecessors—Comment.
7) Discuss Jane Eyre as a feminist novel.
8) Charlotte Brontë as a Victorian novelist.

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Unit – III

Modern British Fiction

The Modern Period

The first three decades of the twentieth century have tentatively been ascribed to be the modern period. Though some hold it to begin with the Great War of 1914, some others indicate the end of the Edwardian era by 1910 to be the beginning of the modern age. The Edwardian age is a transitional phase and, considering the shortness of the span of ten years and the absence of any prominent feature, can be quite conveniently appended to either the Victorian age or the modern age. Thus, the end of the Victorian age is taken to begin the modern period.

As no era is independent of history and time, the modern age also cannot be precisely marked. And it is worth noting that some writers have been uninfluenced by the modern movement and have continued to write the same way they have been doing and have remained thus unaffected for the most part. It is not surprising to learn, hence, that Stephen Spender resorted to differentiate between the writers of this period by using the term 'modern' for a specific group and reserving the term 'contemporary' for the others of the same period.

The publication of Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity, Sigmund Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, Cubism and Dadaism, and the Imagist Movement in poetry have contributed significantly to the phenomenon that was modernism. The proliferation of new ideas had such an impact upon the literary scene that everything traditional and conservative became suspect. Thus, the Oxford Anthology of English Literature identifies a decisively marked break from the past as far as literature was concerned to be the predominant feature of modernism. The traditional forms of literature were somehow found either inadequate or unsuitable to express the emotional nuances of the times. And this urgent need to find new ways to express reached an explosive pitch in the nineteen twenties. The 1920s saw: in fiction, the publication of Forster's *A Passage to India*, D.H. Lawrence's *St. Mawr* and other works, Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*; in poetry, Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Pound's *Cantos* and Yeats' *Later Poems*; and in literary criticism, I.A. Richards' *Principles of Literary Criticism* and Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American*

Literature. Perhaps, it was not a coincidence that the Harlem Renaissance of the U.S. too belongs to this same decade.

And writing about modernism now has the advantage of retrospection. And a juxtaposition with the present day postmodernism complementarily illuminates modernism and its limits. If self and subjectivism were foregrounded by the modernist writing, postmodernist writing foregrounds language as a medium devoid of a referential, external reality.

The Modern British Novel

The modernist movement could be traced to have its roots in the nineteenth-century; significantly from Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal*, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, and Darwin's *Origin of Species*. However 1899, being the year of publication of Arthur Symons's *The Symbolist Movement in France* is considered crucial for the modern British novel. The British novel became totally different from what it was in the hands of Jane Austen or George Eliot or Charles Dickens. Owing perhaps to the discovery of the unconscious by Freud, the novel turned out to be an exploration into the self. The novel became subjectivist as never before. The modern novelists like Lawrence and Virginia Woolf expressed openly their dissatisfaction with the social realism of Arnold Bennet and John Galsworthy. It was felt that the potential and possibilities of the novel as an art-form were largely ignored by the so-called realistic novel. The realism achieved by Bennett or Galsworthy is found to be devoid of vital truth, if not shallow. The themes and techniques used by the traditional novelists were found to be wearyingly monotonous. Hence, impatient with the existing trend, Lawrence and Virginia Woolf have declared that the scope of the novel to be unlimited: Lawrence writes that "You can put anything you like in a novel. . . . why do people *always* go on putting the same thing? Why is the *vol au vent* always chicken!"; and Virginia Woolf stoutly declares that there is no "proper stuff of fiction" and that "everything is the proper stuff of fiction, every feeling, every thought; every quality of brain and spirit is drawn upon; no perception comes amiss". Thus, with the modernist writers the novel became an instrument to examine the individual. The omniscient narrator was abandoned, or replaced by a more intense and singularly subjective focus. While Lawrence produced novels that identify and emphasize aspects of human life that are acerebral or non-mental, Woolf and Joyce resorted to write novels of stream-of-consciousness.

Virginia Woolf's essay entitled "Modern Fiction" is very important for the simple reason that it provides us with a starting point as to how modern fiction was defined by her

although she defines it for the most part by saying what it is not. She labels three of her contemporary novelists—Arnold Bennett, H.G. Wells and John Galsworthy—to be "materialists" as they have been emphasizing the externalities and have been sacrificing the more vital aspect of the novel, namely its "spirit" or "soul":

> It is because they are concerned not with the spirit but with the body that they have disappointed us, and left us with the feeling that the sooner English fiction turns its back upon them, as politely as may be, and marches, if only into the desert, the better for its soul" (87).

Her conjecture, on the other hand, is that the area of interest, for the modern novelists, "lies very likely in the dark places of psychology" (90). It becomes evident then that the quarrel between the modernists and their contemporaries was over 'technique' in the sense Mark Schorer uses the word in his essay; the mode or method that is used by the writer to discover or uncover his subject-matter. H.G. Wells's conviction that the "business of the novelist is not ethical principle, but facts" and his vehement assertion that "I had rather be called a journalist than an artist" are sufficient clues for an understanding of the point of contention: while the non-modernist contemporaries emphasized and relied on verifiable facts resulting in an objective and social-realist narration, the modernists preferred psychological depth and single protagonist concentration, producing an intensely subjectivist narration.

The 'psychology of the free human individual' that became the vital concern of the modernists, brought with it two other concomitant, if not inevitable, features into the writing of the novel. As the conception of time and consciousness became revolutionized by the French philosopher Henri Bergson who first voiced the understanding that time and consciousness are a continuous and homogeneous flux that is artificially ordered by clock and calendar, the traditional, historical sequence of action and episodes in the novel underwent a change also. Chronological development in narration was forsaken and narratives that oscillate backwards and forwards in time with jolting discontinuity, believed to be closely representing the movement of human consciousness itself, came to stay.

In addition to the jumbled narrative sequence that kept close to the dynamics of consciousness, the writer being confronted with the need to represent the apparently unreasonable sequence of human thought process, the novelist was compelled to find suitable technical or formal outfit for representation. The writer became conscious of the problem of linguistic conventions and started experimenting with language and

innovations in punctuation. Novelists became self-conscious as novelists and exhibited a heightened awareness as to the art of writing. The stream-of-consciousness technique adopted by Dorothy Richardson (*Pilgrimage*) and Ford Madox Ford (*Parade's End*) had elliptical marks to illustrate the way in which mind skips and jumps from one thought to another without obvious connections. And Virginia Woolf used what came to be called the free indirect speech where the narrator's consciousness is left to merge with that of a character's in order to avoid the ruptures in the flow of consciousness. Joyce in his *Ulysses* has eliminated punctuation for forty pages altogether so as to represent the seamlessness of the consciousness of Leopold Bloom's wife, Molly.

While these modernist features could be seen to continue in modified and extended ways into the fiction of the later half of the twentieth century, modernism as a movement has been perceived to inhere a contradiction in the light of the present trends in literature and the proliferation of innumerable theories. Ezra Pound is said to have claimed that Joyce's *Ulysses* is as unrepeatable as *Tristram Shandy*. Ironically, such ambitiousness of the modernists has been symptomatic, perhaps, for Terry Eagleton to perceive the whole modernist ideology to be caught in a deadlock. He finds modernism to be a strategy that resists commodification and instant consumability. He explains that modernist writing, resisting the fate of becoming a commodity of exchange, has become a commodity of fetish.

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D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*

Introduction

David Herbert Lawrence was born as the fourth child and third son of Lydia and Arthur Lawrence on September 11, 1885. His father was working in the coal mine in Nottingham and his mother was an ex-schoolmistress. Lawrence was a sickly child and was effeminate due to the values and grooming of Lydia. For, the mother disapproved of her miner-husband's low social standing and easy camaraderie with fellow colliers. And as she was educated, she wanted her sons to educate themselves and thereby escape getting into the pit and becoming a collier like their father.

The fact that Lawrence belonged to the working-class, however, prejudiced the class-conscious critics at least to the point of sounding concessional, if not condescending. Lawrence was not undereducated as it was sometimes implied by accounts marveling at his creative output. Lawrence wrote the King's Scholarship examination in 1904 and passed with such distinction that he won a free place at a teacher training college. But the formal system of education, when he entered college, was an utter disillusionment for Lawrence. He found the experience disappointing because college education for him lacked "the living contact of men".

Lawrence's first attempt at writing a novel was largely inspired by his reading of George Eliot; for, *The White Peacock*, his first novel, features two pairs and an interwoven plot as George Eliot would do. And his second novel, *The Trespasser* was based on the tragic experience of Helen Corke whose diary was borrowed by Lawrence and the personal account therein became the plot and theme. It is clear that these two novels have proved to be second-handed, though the sensitivity and keen understanding of Lawrence are not to be underestimated at any event. A more subjective and intensely personal novel as *Sons and Lovers* was needed to bring him to light. The positive and excited reviews for the novel attest to this fact.

He started the writing of the present *Sons and Lovers* in the year 1910 with the working title of *Paul Morel*. The writing of it was laboured and Lawrence was not happy with it. And at about the time of his mother's terminal illness, Lawrence rewrote the novel perhaps with a strong conviction and urgency to pay his tribute to his mother through the novel. However, the novel was to be completed finally with Frieda's comments and suggestions transforming the narrative; Frieda's teasing of Lawrence over the theme of the novel with her own writing of a skit called "Paul Morel, or His Mother's Darling" could have given him the cue for the title *Sons and Lovers* in place of the prosaic and eponymous *Paul Morel*. Though he had written two novels already—the first being *The White Peacock* and the second *The Trespasser*—his third brought him greater recognition. Almost all the reviews for *Sons and Lovers* on publication were appreciative and congratulatory that Lawrence was overwhelmed by a sense of gratitude to Edward Garnett for getting him successfully into a writing career.

Before the publication of *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence happens to have developed a friendship with the German Professor Weekley's wife, Frieda. The friendship evolved into love and Lawrence eloped with her who was already the mother of three children. Returning to Nottingham, after two years, they got married as Prof. Weekley had divorced Frieda by then.

Lawrence, who was not able to bring himself to marry Jessie or Helen Corke or Louie Burrows, had finally married Frieda and it became one lasting relationship for him. With the publication of *Sons and Lovers* Lawrence's writing career assumed a definitive path. His next novel *The Rainbow* triggered off a controversy and the book was burnt and confiscated. However, Lawrence proved to be one of the most prolific writers: he wrote about thirteen novels (including *The Boy in the Bush*—he collaboratively produced with Molly Skinner—the two previous versions of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and the posthumously published *Mr. Noon*); about sixty-five short stories; seven short novels; ten plays (though some unfinished); an astounding collection each of essays and poetry; and, four short pieces of travel literature. Living a life of constant mobility and restless search, he was undefeatable. In addition to his writing, he also tried his hand at painting and had a moderately good collection to stage an exhibition.

Owing to his original frail health and the extremely busy life of literary productivity, he suffered another attack of pneumonia which proved to be fatal and he died in the year 1930.

Summary of *Sons and Lovers*

Gertrude Coppard's grandfather was a lace merchant who went bankrupt when the trade underwent a slump and was ruined in Nottingham. Gertrude's father, George Coppard, was an engineer in the dockyard at Sheerness. Despite the poverty, Gertrude was defiantly looking forward to a future of higher social status. She enjoyed conversations that discussed meticulous points in religion and philosophy. That is, she was high-minded.

Gertrude happens to meet the young collier, Walter Morel, in a party and is very much thrilled by the warm and easy nature of him. As she herself comes from a puritanic family, Gertrude's attraction for Walter is understandable. The miner's agility and his unself-conscious dancing draw Gertrude towards him. And they both get married.

Within the next six months, Gertrude comes to know that Walter had lied to her about his position in the mines and also deceived her saying that the house they lived in was his own. Walter had deliberately used the word "contractor" (instead of the common, colliery term "butty") while describing his job to Gertrude, as the term would win him some respectability in her eyes. Walter had also hidden the truth from Gertrude that the house was owned by his mother and he has been paying rent for it. In addition to all these, he could not abstain from drinking for long and resumed his drinking and visiting the pubs after his shift was over. Gertrude tried to make a teetotaler of him, but could not.

On the other hand, the sense of superiority assumed by Gertrude because of her moral righteousness and her high-mindedness became too much for Walter Morel. He felt constantly accused and humiliated by her. And Gertrude, by instilling her own puritan values in the children, had them on her side. Walter was increasing alienated in his own house and Gertrude's indifference to him becomes complete with the birth of their third son, Paul. And Lawrence describes the tension and conflict between the parents as follows:

> There began a battle between the husband and wife—a fearful, bloody battle that ended only with the death of one. She fought to make him undertake his own responsibilities, to make him fulfil his obligations. But he was too different from her. His nature was purely sensuous, and she strove to make him moral, religious. She tried to force him to face things. He could not endure it—it drove him out of his mind (49).

And later again, Lawrence writes:

> The pity was, she was too much his opposite. She could not be content with the little that he might be; she would have him the much that he ought to be. So, in seeking to make him nobler than he could be, she destroyed him. She injured and hurt and scarred herself, but she lost none of her worth. She also had the children (51).

A permanent rift occurs between the husband and wife and, as a result, Gertrude begins to depend heavily on her children. She brings up her eldest son William to occupy a very decent position in London. With his earning a good deal in London, the mother hopes to have some peace in the house. Meanwhile, her third child and second son, Paul also finds a job with a surgical appliances manufacturing company at Nottingham. The daughter Annie is teaching in a local school and manages to earn a little. The last child of the Morels, Arthur, has grown unmanageable and hence is left to continue his education from Gertrude's sister's house in Nottingham and comes home only for the weekends. With William in London and Paul in Nottingham, Mrs Morel "could think of two places, great centres of industry, and feel that she had put a man into each of them, that these men would work out what *she* wanted; they were derived from her, they were of her, and their works also would be hers" (143-4). But Mrs. Morel's pride that she has placed two of her sons in the world is short-lived, as William lets himself be lured by Lily and gets engaged to her. It was a hasty decision on the part of William for he realizes that Lily is very careless and incapable of any seriousness. Even before their marriage, he spends a lot of money on her. Mrs. Morel sarcastically comments that his spending so much on her is in one way good because he will have no money left at any time to actually marry her. Though William grows gradually disillusioned with Lily and feels that she is unthinking and shallow and irresponsible, he is unable to break the engagement. Finally, what developed as an inflammation under his chin leads to pneumonia. He becomes unconscious and delirious and dies in London. The first part of the novel, thus, comes to a close with William's death. It was a severe blow to Gertrude and she becomes abstracted by grief over the death of her eldest son.

The next part begins with Paul Morel getting an attack of pneumonia as he was neglected by his mother. Paul's sickness would have been fatal but for the timely realization of Gertrude that she should be thinking of the living instead of the dead. She gives her undivided attention and love to Paul and that at last saves him.

Paul's visit with his mother to the Willey Farm, run by the Leivers, expands the world of Paul which was otherwise very much limited and confined to his own work and family.

Paul is thrilled by the activities at the farm and is very much drawn to the Leivers' household. He develops a warm friendship with the Leivers' eldest son Edgar and their only daughter Miriam. Intrigued by the shy and defiant Miriam, Paul offers to teach her algebra and French. In the process, Paul gets drawn to the peculiar intensity and spiritual bearing of Miriam and is torn between her and his mother as the latter disapproves of their relationship. Gertrude remonstrates against their relationship saying that "it is disgusting [. . . to find] bits of lads and girls courting" (211).

Paul's younger brother Arthur has become an electrician and is working in Nottingham. Arthur is handsome and physically strong but is prone to sudden flights of temper and whimsicality. In one such whimsical moment, he enlists himself in the army without even consulting anyone at home. Mrs. Morel becomes worried about him as she knows very well that an army life with its strict regimentation will not suit him.

By managing to save some money and taking some from the amount that came from the sale of Paul's painting, Gertrude Morel buys her son Arthur out from the army. Meanwhile, her daughter Annie who has been courting Leonard gets married and leaves. Now that she is married, she visits her home mostly for holidaying. And Arthur also hardly stays at home except for brief periods of time.

Mrs. Morel begins to feel lonely and, as a result, leans more heavily on Paul. The bond between the mother and son becomes stronger. However, Paul gets annoyed at his mother's growing old and weak. He wishes that he were the eldest son; for, Paul believes that that way he would have had the chance of having a young mother for a longer period of his life.

Frustrated and sad, Paul is once again drawn to Miriam. He is unable to forget her. He feels that he actually belongs to her and wants to give himself to her. He seeks to find peace and solace through her. But, ironically, the presence of Miriam strangely effaces passion and sex. There is an intense spiritual purity that Miriam brings to their relationship. He can share his thoughts with her and she brings the best in him intellectually. Yet he cannot approach her sexually, physically. Paul withdraws from her in anger and avoids seeing her thereafter.

Clara Dawes is a young, modern and revolutionary woman who is involved in the suffragette movement and attends meetings. She is thirty years old—nearly seven years older than Paul Morel. She is separated from her husband, Baxter Dawes, and lives with her mother. Paul had known Baxter Dawes at Jordan's but he never took to him as Baxter was invariably nasty and intimidating.

Though Clara too had worked at Jordan's Surgical Appliances once, Paul gets to know her through Miriam. Initially repelled by the cynicism of Clara, Paul slowly becomes aware of her loneliness. He grows sympathetic towards her and gradually gets drawn towards her sensuousness and physical charm. While Miriam's spiritual intensity and self-sacrificing love drives Paul away from her, his failure with Miriam impels him towards Clara quickly. But soon he discovers that despite all his physical intimacy and passion for Clara he is unable to give himself to her. Clara too feels cheated for she realizes that Paul Morel takes the woman in her and does not need the individual in her. She senses that her personal self is untouched and left out in their relationship.

After an encounter and a nasty physical fight with Clara's husband, Baxter Dawes, Paul's passion for Clara gradually wanes. In the fight between Paul Morel and Baxter Dawes, in the dark, both of them get bruised severely. And it was the arrival of a train and the movement of the passengers put an end to their fight. However, the bitterness against each other continues at the workplace and Baxter's boorishness gets him into trouble with the proprietor of Jordan's Surgical Appliances. He is dismissed and falls sick. Paul pities him and ventures out to help him and finally, unites him with his wife Clara.

Gertrude Morel shows signs of weariness and is at this point discovered to have a tumour that cannot be cured anymore. The deterioration of her health is a tormenting factor for the young Paul who feels helpless and grief-stricken. He cannot concentrate in his work and loses his grasp of things. He becomes aware of the fact that his mother is dying.

A final meeting with Miriam also brings no relief for Paul. He finds that he cannot accept the self-sacrificing offer of love from Miriam. Paul tells her that he will soon go abroad, though he has lost his hold over life and is merely drifting towards death.

Plot and Theme

The avowed theme of *Sons and Lovers* by its author is the perpetuation of the vicious Oedipus complex or the mother fixation among generations of men. The novel is written by Lawrence to illustrate how a woman, denied of love in marriage hopes to be fulfilled by the love of her sons, turns them into her lovers and thereby renders them unfit to love a woman. Explaining the theme of the novel, Lawrence had written the following synopsis to the publisher Garnett:

> [The novel] follows this idea: a woman of character and refinement goes into the lower class, and has no satisfaction in her life. She has had a passion for her husband, so the children are born of passion, and have heaps of vitality. But as her sons grow up, she selects them as lovers – first the

> eldest, then the second. These sons are urged into life by their reciprocal love of their mother – urged on and on. But when they come into manhood, they can't love, because their mother is the strongest power in their lives, and holds them. As soon as the young men come into contact with women, there's a split. William gives his sex to a fribble, and his mother holds his soul. But the split kills him, because he doesn't know where he is. The next son gets a woman who fights for his soul – fights his mother. The son loves the mother – all the sons hate and are jealous of the father. The battle goes on between the mother and the girl, with the son as object. The mother gradually proves the stronger, because of the tie of blood. The son decides to leave his soul in his mother's hands and, like his elder brother, go for passion. He gets passion. Then the split begins to tell again. But, almost unconsciously, the mother realizes what is the matter, and begins to die. The son casts off his mistress to attend to his mother dying. He is left at the end naked of everything, with the drift towards death.

Thus, the synopsis of the novel given by Lawrence himself discloses the theme of the novel to be the Freudian Oedipus complex. He later wrote in a letter even more concisely what he had attempted to convey through *Sons and Lovers*:

> The old son-lover was Oedipus. The name of the new one is legion. And if a son-lover take a wife, she is only his bed. And his life will be torn in twain, and his wife in her despair shall hope for sons, that she may have her lover in her hour.

To an extent Lawrence was, by writing about his early life, shedding his sickness in his book. *Sons and Lovers* is the most overtly autobiographical of Lawrence's novels.

However, the change of title from its original *Paul Morel* to the present *Sons and Lovers* is a pretentious gesture on the part of the author to elevate the personal story to a universal plane. While most other novels of the kind carry such eponymous titles like *Wilhelm Meister* or *David Copperfield* or *Madame Bovary* (titles that are actually the name of the central protagonist), Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* is overtly ambitious and didactic with its generalized title and heightens the clinical aura that pervades the latter half of the novel.

The theme of Oedipus complex has been treated by Lawrence with a keen psychological understanding. While Paul Morel's intense love for his mother is evident in the novel, the attendant antagonism towards and rivalry with the father are absent in the novel.

However, Lawrence enacts the Freudian theory instead by Paul's open physical fight with Baxter Dawes, who is the actual husband of Clara and an older man than Paul.

On the other hand, psychoanalystic theory holds that the Oedipus complex, when surfaces into consciousness, may take an 'S' curve to culminate in homosexuality. Perhaps that explains the latent homosexuality detected in Lawrence's writing in general.

Sons and Lovers is a very significant work for the simple reason that this novel foreshadows the major thematic preoccupations of Lawrence that were to engage him for nearly the rest of his writing career. The dichotomy between the mind and body, the unfixed and dynamic shimmeriness that life is, the evils of industrialization and the relationship between man and the circumambient universe are some of the major themes that recur in the whole corpus of Lawrence's works.

Characterization

Lawrence was one of the foremost emotional realists of the century. However, with the completion of *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence vowed to write differently in future. With their intensity akin to that of Van Gogh's painting of the sunflower, the photographic descriptions of details in *Sons and Lovers* was somehow vulnerable and out of taste for Lawrence.

> I shan't write in the same manner as *Sons and Lovers* again, I think – in that hard, violent style full of sensation and presentation.

And commenting on the style of his next novel, Lawrence states,

> I have no longer the joy in creating vivid scenes, that I had in *Sons and Lovers*, I don't care much more about accumulating objects in the powerful light of emotion, and making a scene of them. I have to write differently (Salgado, *Preface to Lawrence*: 108 & 112).

While *Sons and Lovers* has been criticized so severely by Lawrence, it is a curious fact that the novel quite definitely has a unique place among all his novels: his first two novels had in them something second-hand, unlike the passionately autobiographical and original *Sons and Lovers*; and the novels that came after *Sons and Lovers* had somehow been too much on the side of his pseudo-philosophy.

From *The Rainbow*, Lawrence's conception of character underwent a serious change. He decided to write his novels thereafter with characters that would not have identifiable and stable egos. That is, he proposed to follow a different mode of characterization from *The Rainbow* onwards:

> You mustn't look in my novel for the old stable *ego* – of the character. There is another *ego*, according to whose action the individual is unrecognizable, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense than any we've been used to exercise, to discover are states of the same single radically unchanged element. (Like as diamond and coal are the same pure single element of carbon. The ordinary novel would trace the history of the diamond – but I say, 'Diamond, what! This is carbon'. And my diamond might be coal or soot, and my theme is carbon.) (Salgado, *Preface to Lawrence*: 114)

Thus, unlike the more sensational and controversial *Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, Lawrence is found to be at his utmost and never-again passionate sincerity in *Sons and Lovers*.

In addition to his characteristic vivid description of nature, Lawrence's depiction of the collieries and the life of the mining community is quite realistic. The gap in the social status between Gertrude and Walter Morel and the resultant discord in their marital life are portrayed by Lawrence with an astonishing sensitivity. Though it has been widely observed that Lawrence's judgement as to the cause of the their marital failure is largely biased, and that he takes sides with the mother, Gertrude, in condemning the father, Lawrence does have some very warm and affectionate scenes to bring out the generally good-humoured nature of Walter Morel.

Autobiographicality

Lawrence had not made much progress with *Sons and Lovers* until 1910 or early 1911, when he could get some notes from Jessie Chambers (the real-life Miriam of *Sons and Lovers*), as to the reality of their early friendship and the daily round of events of their two families, to develop the novel with the spontaneity that was lacking in the earlier version. His early work was thus encouraged and inspired by Jessie Chambers as much as by his mother. And moreover, it was Jessie Chambers who sent some of Lawrence's poems for publication without his knowledge and launched him as a writer/poet in the first place. It is no wonder perhaps, hence, Lawrence's gratitude to Jessie gets expressed through the point of view of Paul Morel, towards the end of the novel, that Miriam will have to go on forgiving him.

Perhaps George Borrow's *Lavengro* was an inspiration for Lawrence to fuse autobiography with fiction inextricably. It is very difficult to pinpoint, in *Sons and Lovers*, where fiction ends or where autobiography begins. Even the sense of betrayal experienced by Jessie Chambers, the real-life counterpart of the fictional Miriam Leivers of Willey Farm, by Lawrence's portrayal of their love-affair becomes quite unjustified and pointless. Overwhelmed and outraged by the depiction of Miriam in the novel, Jessie Chamber wrote *D.H. Lawrence: A Personal Record* to set right what she perceived to be the distortion of truth in the novel. But she was not able to understand that Lawrence has been writing fiction by drawing his material from real life; that while writing Lawrence brings his own artistic and imaginative perceptions to the events or experiences he comes to know of in life. If truth is 'distorted' by him, it is only for expressing himself and to bring form to his work. And, although he needs no defense, it is undeniable that he was not actually writing 'true story' or autobiography.

It has been a strange strategy with Lawrence, however, to combine characteristics of one or more number of real-life personalities and friends he has come across to depict a character. And in this regard Keith Sagar has made the following observation:

> Many of his characters are amalgams of two or three real people, and also aspects of himself. [. . .] Lawrence could create his fictional characters in no other way than by adaptation from life. Usually he refused to accept that his characters were 'portraits', insisting that, though certain immediately recognizable features of real people might have been incorporated into his characters, their inner significance was quite different from his real-life judgement of those people (87-8).

Lawrence was so overwhelmed by the richness of life that he could not escape quite as much into an imaginative world to leave it outside his creative works. The reality is more important and substantial for Lawrence and he stressed throughout his life the significance of the 'here and now'.

Lawrence's statement that a writer sheds his sicknesses in books has received undue attention and it has been taken quite literally, to the extent of seeking a one-to-one parallel between the novel's protagonist and the author. Consequently, such critical studies are likely to take sides with Jessie Chambers or to write different 'personal records' from that which they assume the novel to be the author's. It has to be remembered that after all Lawrence's work is primarily fiction and it does require a certain artistic form, though the

aesthetic form in itself may inhere an artificiality in presenting the story well rounded off with all the loose-ends neatly tied.

Bildungsroman

The German term *Bildungsroman* has no satisfactory English equivalent. This particular variety of the novel is, hence, variously referred to in English as the 'novel of youth' or 'novel of education' or 'novel of apprenticeship' or 'novel of initiation' or 'novel of growth'. This sub-genre of the novel delineates the growth of the protagonist from childhood to maturity. Quite specifically speaking, a *Bildungsroman* details the formative years of the hero or heroine—that is, the adolescent period when one gets awakened sexually and intellectually. Much like Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* or Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* or Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* too is a good example for the English *Bildungsroman*. The fact that the protagonist happens to be a painter here may further classify Lawrence's novel, like Joyce's *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, as *Kunstlerroman*. However, as Lawrence's protagonist does not foreground the art of painting as much as Joyce does, through Dedalus in his *Portrait*, his convictions about writing, or as much as the theme of the Oedipus complex, the characteristics of a *Kunstlerroman* may hardly be found.

However, the *Bildungsroman* in English has gone through as many changes as there have been writers experimenting with it since its origin. And needless to say, the novel's emphasis and/or perspective have/has shifted constantly. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* displays an unprecedented and passionate subjectivity. The abnormal attachment of a son to his mother and the resultant emotional and sexual aberration that is exhibited by him when he becomes mature happens to be the focus of this novel.

Paul Morel finds his mother to be the pivot and pole of his life. He loves her as his sweetheart. He is angry that his mother should get old and supercede him so much. He realizes in his affairs with women that cannot ever give himself wholly to any of them, as his very soul is with his mother. While Miriam sought a soul-union with him and was pathetically denied and defeated, Clara finds her love for Paul peculiarly unfulfilling. Thus Paul Morel can neither surrender himself to Miriam's spirituality nor be content with his carnal union with Clara. He experiences a split within himself. His decision to go alone in life, at the end of the novel, apparently amounts to self-realization.

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James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

Introduction

James Joyce was born on 2 February 1882. He was the eldest in a family of ten children. His father John Joyce was a staunch supporter of Parnell, the nationalist leader of the Liberal Party of Ireland, and was a Minister during the latter's term in office. However, the adulterous affair that Parnell got into with Kitty O'Shea ended his popularity and put an end to his office. Joyce's father, in turn, also lost his social status and had to struggle thereafter to maintain his family.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, by Joyce, records the dispute between his father and mother over the latter's attitude of 'serves-him-right' to Parnell's catastrophe. The mother was more religious and also sensitive about discussing sexual scandal in the presence of her children. As Joyce's protagonist describes towards the end of the novel, his father John Joyce was "a medical student, an oarsman, a tenor, an amateur actor, a shouting politician, a small landlord, a small investor, a drinker, a good fellow, a storyteller, somebody's secretary, something in a distillery, a taxgatherer, a bankrupt and at present a praiser of his own past" (217). Despite his reduced circumstances, John Joyce always considered himself a gentlemen and his financial crisis never made him cringe. Perhaps such haughtiness explains James Joyce's own pride and aloofness to some extent.

Though Joyce was intellectually superior to his peers in school and college and was often admired, he was a person sought after, nonetheless, in parties for his ability to entertain with songs and mimicry. That Ireland was largely conservative in its nationalist and

Catholic aspects could have been a serious disappointment for the cosmopolitan Joyce. The past glory of Ireland and its myths and folklore did not attract Joyce for he believed that an involvement in such areas would drag a person backwards. He was too progressive and revolutionary to be lured by such conventional patriotism or nationalistic interest. The choice of a writing career became increasingly interesting for Joyce while he was in college. He started reading lesser known modern writers and some of the obscure ancient writers then. Gradually he came to evolve his own theory of art.

Choosing to be a writer was not in any sense a responsible act in the light of his family. Being the eldest son Joyce was expected to opt for a conventional employment and thereby help reduce the burden of his father who was struggling to fend for the big family all alone. By the year 1902 Joyce left for Paris as it was the ultimate destination for artists and writers then. After that he returned to Ireland only thrice and stayed for brief periods only. Until 1914, Joyce was not very much pleased with his accomplishment as a writer for he had published only *Chamber Music* by then. It was after he started the writing of *Ulysses*, and after the publication of *Dubliners* and the serial publishing of *Portrait* Joyce grew financially comfortable. His hardships were coming to an end, with money pouring in from several sources—his wife Nora's uncle had left some money for her and the editor of *The Egoist*, Harriet Weaver had also taken kindly to Joyce's work. Until then, his income had been through private language teaching sessions.

As the war broke out in 1914, Joyce with the British passport was considered in Zurich to be on the enemies' side and was asked to move to neutral Switzerland with a warning not to have any involvement in war activities. At the same time, the strong-minded Stanislaus, Joyce's brother, was imprisoned.

When he left Ireland he took a country girl, Nora Barnacle, along with him and lived with her and fathered her two children. It was the patience and relentlessness of Nora that made Joyce much of a man. For, neither professing to love her nor proposing to marry her, Joyce lived with Nora until their two children—a son and a daughter—grew up and, at last in 1931, for the sake of the children he married her.

By the time *Ulysses* was started in a serial form, in 1918, Joyce had already published his *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist of a Young Man*. He became acquainted with Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot and other up-coming modern literary figures with the serialization of the *Portrait* in 1915. He grew famous and was something of a celebrity by 1920.

During the span of writing of *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce underwent nearly ten operations and suffered partial blindness. In addition to his physical ailments, his daughter Lucia's mental

illness and confinement in a hospital affected the general temperament of Joyce. *Finnegans Wake*, however, was not favourably viewed by Ezra Pound. The residual dissatisfaction over the last sections of *Ulysses* had prejudiced Pound against the last novel of Joyce.

As he refused to exchange his British passport for an Irish one even in 1940, Joyce finally had to move to Zurich where, in January 1941, he died.

Summary

The realistic novel naturally culminated in the semi-autobiographical *Bildungsroman* with a single central protagonist: the observation of the external world and reality that preoccupied the social realist novels matured into the single protagonist novels where the observing eye turns inward and presents the individual's mind with intensity. Thus, Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* belongs to the category of the *Bildungsroman*, the German term approximately meaning in English the novel of adolescence or the novel of development. Precisely speaking, Joyce's novel is a *Kunstlerroman*, a sub-genre of the *Bildungsroman*, wherein the central protagonist is an artist.

Joyce's *Portrait* traces the development of Stephen Dedalus from his childhood to maturity in five chapters. But any attempt to produce a coherent summary of the novel is bound to run into difficulties as Joyce has used a very challenging mode of narration. In his narrative there is no identifiable narrator (an omniscient narrator) and the novel exhibits a clever illusion of evolving on its own. This is perhaps why the novel has been described by critics to be 'authorless'. While the purpose of such a technique by Joyce being the elimination of a subjective, overall perspective, an attempt to summarise the novel will involve an invariably biased and distorted rendering of the happenings in the text.

Attempts by critics and scholars to read implications or to detect irony in the novel's episodes have largely been extraneous and were made with the help of the so-called previous version of the novel, available now as *Stephen Hero*. However, an attempt has been made to produce a skeletal frame of the 'story' of the novel here.

CHAPTER ONE describes how Dedalus, as a baby, becomes aware that when he wets in bed how it is initially warm and then after some minutes the sheets get cold. Then, as he is a little older, how Stephen becomes a baffled presence in the midst of the heated and emotionally high-pitched argument between the elders at home over the fate of Parnell; the mother being quite religious and moralistic in condemning the adultery of Parnell while

the father vehemently supporting the nationalist leader Parnell on the grounds that he was a genius and that the question of individual moral uprightness was less relevant to the welfare of the state. These conflicting views with regard to religious norms disturb the young Stephen.

On the other hand, he encounters in school the more disturbing innuendoes of the older boys with suggestive references to sex. The hostelmates laugh and tease Stephen for affirming that he kisses his mother goodnight before going to bed. This is the first instance when Stephen is made to ponder the implications of the older boys. He is forcibly made aware, although still mostly vague, of sex. And then the talk about five boys getting punished for their getting caught 'smugging' with the effeminate Simon Moonan and Tusker Boyle puzzles Stephen as he could not understand the meaning for the word 'smugging'.

Stephen is also harassed and pushed into the gutter for not obeying the senior boys. And, as a result, he catches a fever and lies sick in the school imagining that he might die. The main emphasis in this chapter seems to be on the physical sensations experienced or imagined by Stephen.

Later when he has broken his glasses and could not do his homework, Father Dolan beats him with a cane. Stephen's pleading that he had written home for a new pair of glasses was of no avail. Shocked by such cruelty and unfairness he goes and complains to the rector. The sympathy of the rector and his assurance that he would talk to Father Dolan, restores peace and a sense of fairness for Stephen.

CHAPTER TWO begins with the description of Stephen going for a walk with his uncle Charles and the latter becomes his constant companion. Stephen grows more and more restless and is unable to relate to his neighbourhood. "The noise of children at play annoyed him and their silly voices made him feel even more keenly than he had felt at Clongowes, that he was different from others. He did not want to play" (60).

Soon the Dedaluses undergo another shift due to a slump in their financial status. Stephen is taken away from the Clongowes Wood College and put in a less prestigious institution. "In a vague way he understood that his father was in trouble and that this was the reason why he himself had not been sent back to Clongowes" (59-60).

Literature begins to have an influence on him. He admires Lord Byron and an assignment submitted by Stephen to the English master Mr. Tate has been pointed out to be heretic, making him a victim for his classmates to tease and bully him. This event hints at the ongoing inner debate and conflict within Stephen as to the irreconcilability of the sensuous

and physical life with the ascetism that is traditionally associated with a spiritual, religious life.

He becomes aware of the squalid surrounding and tries to accommodate himself to the new setting. He fantasizes often about Mercedes, a dream girl. He searches for the physical, material world that corresponds to his ideal, inner vision. He narrowly misses the opportunity of making friends with a young girl Emma, who appeared to extend an invitation for a love-relationship with Stephen while traveling in a tram. Her attempts at striking a conversation with him were evaded by Stephen.

However, Stephen is carried away by his cold and loveless lust to find himself in the embrace of a prostitute at the age of sixteen. As for home, he is trying to gain respectability by spending his scholarship money to take the family out for a dinner.

CHAPTER THREE details the torment experienced by Stephen during a religious retreat. The sermons during the retreat stress so emphatically the four last things in life—namely death, Judgement Day, heaven and hell—that Stephen becomes worried about his unrepentant self and the carnal sin he has committed. Intellectual pride, which is the sin of Lucifer and the cause of his damnation, is preached against and Stephen becomes remorseful. He is haunted by thoughts of endless infernal punishment and is frightened by the thought of eternal damnation. He is aware of his sin and feels guilty but could not somehow bring himself to confess and repent. Thus, the sermons during the retreat detailing the infernal punishment that awaits the sinful and unrepentant make Stephen feverish and worried. Overcome by remorse, Stephen makes the confession despite his sense of shame and self-consciousness. And it is followed by a prayer by him and now he feels purified and relieved that at last his prayer ascends towards god in heaven. He decides to turn a new leaf and live his life thereafter in all goodness and Christian virtues.

CHAPTER FOUR begins with Stephen adhering quite humbly and thoroughly to a devotional routine. Each day of the week is observed for its religious relevance:

> Sunday was dedicated to the mystery of the Holy Trinity, Monday to the Holy Ghost, Tuesday to the Guardian Angels, Wednesday to saint Joseph, Thursday to the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, Friday to the Suffering Jesus, Saturday to the Blessed Virgin Mary (134).

Stephen tries hard to control his senses. To mortify his sense of sight, he tries to walk the streets with downcast eyes and avoid thereby any sinful temptations to his sight. It was the restraint over his sense of smell that needed greater alertness on his part as he had no natural repulsion towards dirty, ugly odours. Thus, Stephen attempts a life of renunciation

and strict discipline. But Stephen's devotion does not last long as he perceives the mirthlessness of the priestly community. A life-long dedication to spiritual service does not warrant any satisfaction for Stephen. The cold and ordered life-style of the religious brethren seems repulsive to him as it stoutly negates a life of the senses.

CHAPTER FIVE shows that the dean, an English convert, who does not seem to know the use of the word 'tundish' but uses instead 'funnel', does not command any respect or admiration from Stephen. And Stephen mercilessly yet subtly adds insult to injury, when the dean asks if the word tundish is commonly used in Ireland, by replying that the word is from "Lower Drumcondra [. . .] where they speak the best English" (171).

Needless to say, Stephen is able to see the false politeness of the clergy and, as a result of his intellectual arrogance, spurns the choice of a cloistered, spiritual life. He declines the offer to enter the Jesuit order. Stephen refuses to pledge himself to an artificial existence.

He composes a poem, a villanelle, and feels excited about the lyrical refrain that he has managed. And, in this same chapter, he is found to evolve his own theory of aesthetics based on the one given by Saint Thomas Aquinas. Most of all, Stephen chooses to be free even if it means exile. Instead of the priestly profession, he opts to become a writer and take life with all its contradictions. He seeks to free himself from the petty demands of his family, from Ireland and from Catholicism. He decides to find his escape through exile, silence and cunning.

As almost all modernist novels, Joyce's *Portrait* is also open-ended. And the exiled Stephen is taken up once again by the author in his next novel *Ulysses*.

Critical Interpretations

The realistic novel has gradually tended towards autobiography as manifested by the sudden spurt of the artist-novels like H.G. Wells's *Tono Bungay* or D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*. Authentic realism inevitably leads to such self-portraits, for storytelling is more than still-life drawing and hence involves a more complicated venture into psychology and societal conventions.

Harry Levin in his article on the *Portrait*, discusses the art of Joyce's novel. He perceives Joyce's narratives to be somewhat progressive in their chronological order. According to Levin, Joyce's *Chamber Music* and *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* could be seen in terms of his own classification of narratives into lyrical, epical and dramatic respectively. The lyrical cry that becomes a cadence in *Chamber Music* lays emphasis on the emotion that is expressed, utterly oblivious of the subject; the shift from the subjectivity of the lyric to the neutrality of the epic happens in *Ulysses*—the center of emotional gravity is equidistant

from the artist and from others here; and with *Finnegans Wake* the artist has retired within or behind or beyond the work like God himself.

By refining the original version of the *Portrait* (perhaps, more than the rejected *Stephen Hero*), Joyce has rendered discussions into meditations and scenes into *tableaux*. Levin holds that evasion and indirection are ingrained in Joyce's narrative technique and his prose registers the gap between intellect and emotion. In conclusion, Harry Levin finds Stephen Dedalus appealing to his namesake—the mythical and priestly figure of Dedalus—for a pair of wings and a labyrinth. Abandoning his natural father and the spiritual Jesuit father, the protagonist exiles himself to seek life in art.

Questioning the naïve acceptance of Harry Levin's reading of the ending of Joyce's *Portrait*, Wayne C. Booth brings to focus the subtle contradictions that Joyce seems to have planted in the novel deliberately to thwart any such 'unified' reading of the protagonist's development. Booth discusses the distance that the author has managed between himself and his protagonist in the light of Joyce's careful removal of a mediating narrator. The observation that the novel is 'authorless' has been reiterated to drive home the point that the novel has been conceived with a pervasive irony.

Wayne Booth argues that the three major instances in the last chapter of the novel pose a problem for the reader. The three instances where Stephen Dedalus is seen (i) to reject the option, offered by the Jesuit father, of a religious vocation, (ii) to evolve his own understanding of the aesthetic theory of Saint Thomas Aquinas, and (iii) to be elated by the composing of a villanelle, according to Booth, do not help the reader to arrive at any authentic reading of the ending of the novel. For, the amount of distance that Joyce finally achieved from his protagonist cannot be gauged and hence the extent to which he is ironic also cannot be ascertained.

As such Booth feels that any conclusive reading of the novel as to the fate of Stephen is bound to run into difficulty as Joyce has carefully eliminated all traces of an identifiable narrator or a narrative voice. And relying upon the more subjective rendering of *Portrait* by Joyce in the available earlier version *Stephen Hero*, has been looked upon with doubt by Wayne Booth. Such explications of the text can be of use for an understanding of Joyce in the academic world, but does not solve the question of artistic distance that Joyce aimed at for the novel. The fact that *Stephen Hero* is extraneous to *Portrait* and Joyce himself rejected that earlier version, implies that Joyce desired his *Portrait* to be the final and finished (self-contained) version. Hence, reading implications in the episodes narrated

in the *Portrait* in the light of *Stephen Hero* is evading and overlooking the problem of inconsistencies and contradictions inherent in the *Portrait*.

Maurice Beebe has written a full-length article on Joyce's use of Saint Thomas Aquinas's aesthetic theory. "Joyce and Aquinas: The Theory of Aesthetics" explores the extent to which Joyce has been faithful to the theory of aesthetics expounded by Aquinas. Stephen in *Portrait* claims that what he proposes is 'applied Aquinas': for, the idea of *stasis*, advanced by Aquinas, as describing the condition of beholder in the presence of beauty, has been transported by Stephen to the context of pity and terror discussed by Aristotle in connection with drama. Joyce uses the word 'arrest' to connote the sense of Aquinas's *stasis*, in an effort to avoid its spiritual sense of 'rest'. As Joyce's proposition of applied Aquinas is quite cleverly devoid of the spiritualism of Thomist aesthetics, Francis Fergusson has declared Joyce's theory to be godless.

Beebe unfolds how Joyce has secularized the Thomist explanation of beauty by divesting it of its spiritual dimension. Aquinas holds that a thing of beauty has three aspects, namely *integritas*, *consonantia* and *claritas*. Joyce in his *Portrait*, through Stephen explains the three terms to mean wholeness, proportion and essence respectively. Beebe argues that Joyce has cunningly preferred wholeness for *integritas*, instead of perfection, and essence for *claritas*, instead of divine brightness, as Aquinas intends. Even the use of the term 'epiphany', used by Joyce in his *Stephen Hero* has carefully been removed by him in the *Portrait* to render his aesthetics secular. Joyce's attempt at impersonalizing his art brought him closer to Henry James and made his work devoid of moral signification.

Mark Schorer, in his "Technique as Discovery", praises Joyce's *Portrait* to be artistically the best novel of the modern era. He holds that, much like the Keatsian binary 'beauty' and 'truth', form and content in a work of art are inseparable. And according to him, form is the equivalent of technique while content or the subject-matter is the raw experience, especially in fiction. Therefore, art lies in the objectification and evaluation of the raw experience through technique. In order to emphasize the importance of technique in fiction, he sums up his dictum that the "difference between content, or experience, and achieved content, or art, is technique" (387).

Schorer compares Joyce's *Portrait* with H.G. Wells's *Tono Bungay* and D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, as they share the common element of being autobiographical and as all the three could be brought under the genre of *bildungsroman*. Schorer establishes how Wells's novel has failed to be art because the novelist eschewed technique contemptuously. H.G. Wells was under the misconception that a preoccupation with

technique would be fatal to the career of a novelist, and he saw the later works of Henry James to be the evidence. And ironically, his best work *Tono Bungay* has become, in consequence, mere social history, and Wells has disappeared from literature into the annals of history.

Analysing Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, Schorer feels that the novelist has failed to exploit adequately the technique to evaluate his experience. While Lawrence was expecting the writing of a novel to be of therapeutic value, the importance of technique becomes even more imperative. Lawrence's words that "One sheds one's sicknesses in books, repeats and presents again one's emotions to be master of them" have become almost notorious with regard to his *Sons and Lovers*. Merely repeating one's emotions cannot by itself have any remedial value. "If our books are to be exercises in self-analysis, then technique must—and alone can—take the place of the absent analyst" (392).

Unlike Lawrence or Wells, Joyce's *Portrait* "analyses its material rigorously, and it defines the value and the quality of its experience not by appended comment or moral epithet, but by the texture of the style" (394). The progressive alienation of Stephen Dedalus in the *Portrait* is brought out so objectively by Joyce that the style itself comments on the conclusion of the novel. Stephen's decision to choose exile in order to 'forge in the smithy of his soul the uncreated conscience of his race' sounds as yet another unrealistic, though youthful and romantic, wish.

Most critics interpret the novel *Portrait* by supplementing its reading with that of Joyce's *Stephen Hero*, though it has also been observed that *Stephen Hero* was rejected by the author for its emotionally strong narration, unlike the more impersonal *Portrait*. The term *epiphany*, used by Joyce in *Stephen Hero*, has been borrowed to describe the revelations that certain moments bring to Stephen in *Portrait*. It has been conjectured that the novel's chapters begin with a dull, mundane fashion only to culminate with an epiphanic vision for the protagonist at the end; thus, the structure of the novel seems to operate in a wave-like movement of advancing and receding. It is doubtful whether Joyce would sanction such an importation of the term 'epiphany' from his rejected version of *Stephen Hero*. For, the question of stasis—implied by Joyce with his usage of the word 'arrest'—as a quality in the Thomist esthetics advanced by Stephen Dedalus in *Portrait* gets seriously thrown into jeopardy if the narrative is composed to have a wave-like or oscillating movement. Did Joyce deliberately remove the term and, thereby, the idea of epiphany from the *Portrait*, as he found it to be at loggerheads with the theory of stasis?

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UNIT – IV

WILLIAM GOLDING: LORD OF THE FLIES

The Modern Fiction: an introduction

The twentieth century is the age of novel. Even since the days of Richardson and Fielding, the novel has been gaining popularity, but in the twentieth century it has eclipsed and outgrown all other forms of literature. The twentieth century ushered in an era of moral perplexity and uncertainly. The rise of the scientific spirit and rationalism led to a questioning of accepted social beliefs, conversions and traditions. Novelists like Conrad, Lawrence and Joyce had to discover new terms of artistic exploration. They allowed a good deal of literary experimentation. They subjected their tradition to a close scrutiny, rejected whatever they found obstructive to progress, assimilated the acceptable and thus gave a happy blending of tradition and experiment. The Modern fiction is pre-occupied with the problem of objective reality. The various experiments in the twentieth century novel are a result of the novelists' desire to portray the reality as sincerely as possible. An important aspect of realism in the modern novel is the free, uninhibited treatment of the sex theme. After Freud declared sex to be the basic human instinct, they felt free to discuss it fully and to reinterpret human relationship in the light of his discoveries. D. H. Lawrence regarded sex as a great spiritual passion that could lead one even to the realisation of God.

As a result of the Freudism impact, novelists like Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce introduced the stream-of-consciousness technique in their novels in order to portray the reality of character and incident more faithfully. For the Victorian novelist, life easily fell into the mould of a story but for the modern novelist it refuses to do so. Story has a pattern, a formula whereas it is impossible to reduce life to a well-defined, neatly drawn pattern. Mrs. Dalloway and Ulyness are the two great novels of the last century. The story in these novels is rather flimsy and free from the usual cliches and refuses to conform to any set pattern. The modern novelist's main purpose is to portray the reality of life in the most authentic manner, and if he discovers a well-defined plot to be a hindrance, he does not hesitate to dispense with it.

The World Wars and the post-war period witnessed increased tensions, frustrations and neurosis. The temper of the age is "anti-heroic" and "action" and "success" in a worldly

sense have became questionable values. Interest has shifted from the "extrovert" to the "introvert", from the "order" to the "inner". The French symbolist movement spread from poetry to novel also. But the novelists resort to a very private system of symbols that only baffle and perplex the readers. Moral and ethical values are no longer regarded as absolute. To Freud, man is a biological phenomenon, a creature of instincts and impulses, to the Marxist he is an outcome of economic and social forces. The same perplexity and uncertainty is to be seen in the field of political theory. The entire gamut of imperial relations has undergone a revolutionary change. There has been an increase in vulgarity, brutality and coarseness. Human relationships have been coarsened and cheapened. Man has become incapable of fine and subtle emotional responses. The cinema, the television and the cheap novel have fostered a kind of day-dreaming and a proportionate weakened grasp of reality. All this gave rise to the modern novel's diversity of themes and complexity of treatments.

William Golding: his life and works

William Golding, one of the most challenging British novelists to emerge since World War, was born in Cornwall in 1911, and descended from a long line of schoolmasters. Destined to be a scientist, he changed his course after two years at Oxford and studied English Literature instead, specializing in Anglo-Saxon poetry. He published a book of poems in 1934 and wrote three unpublished novels.

“The War produced one notable effect on me,” Golding is quoted as having said. It did that in more ways than one. “It was the turning point for me” Golding has commented. “I began to see what people were capable of doing. Where did the Second World War come from? Was it made by something inhuman and alien - or was it made by chaps with eyes and legs and hearts?”. The vision of evil inherent in the human heart that Golding found in the war was the basic of his first published novel, Lord of the Flies in 1954.

In 1955 Golding published The Inheritors, a strange tale about man’s ancestors on earth, the peaceful “people” who were ruthlessly supplanted by homosapiens. This was followed in 1956 by Pincher Martin and in 1959 by Free Fall. Golding’s later novel. The Spire (1964), is again about guilt and redemption, a story of the building of a mighty but flawed English cathedral during the Middle Ages.

Following the publication of his best-known work. ***Lord of the Flies,*** Golding was granted membership in the Royal Society of Literature in 1955. Ten years later, he received the honorary designation, Commander of the British Empire (CBE) and was knighted in 1988. His 1980 novel Rites of Passage won the Booker Prize, a prestigious British award. Golding's greatest honour was being awarded the 1983 Nobel Prize for Literature.

Lord of the Flies: the story in outline

Main Characters

Ralph —The sensible, good-natured leader of the stranded boys.

Piggy —Ralph's fat, intelligent, asthmatic, and bespectacled sidekick.

Jack Merridew —Leader of the choir boys, carrot-haired and given to violent emotion.

Simon —A Short boy, quiet and imaginative.

"Samneric" —The inseparable twins, Sam and Eric.

The novel opens in a terrifying atmosphere. We are told that a plane was shot down in an atomic war carrying boys from a boarding school on their way home. Ralph and Piggy are introduced, they meet in the lagoon. Piggy finds a conch shell and shows Ralph how to make a noise with it. Ralph uses this to call the other boys and have a meeting, setting down rules that they will live by for the remainder of their stay on the island. Ralph is declared as the ruler and Jack and other choirboys go hunting for something to eat. This reflects their priorities. Jack hunting, while Ralph thinks more rationally about ruling the boys on the island, trying to maintain some remnants of civilization.

Some of the younger children believe that they saw a "beastie" on the island. This beast scares all of the younger children and most of the older children as well. They have many fears on this island, but need to remember that they cannot let them get in the way of what is important to them. They all decide that they need a fire to survive on the island and come to the conclusion to use Piggy's glasses as a means of starting it. They get the fire going, but their carelessness in containing this fire has burnt half of the island. This reflects their inexperience and immaturity when dealing with this serious situation that they are put into. Even though they mean well, their actions ultimately have a bad outcome.

Jack has focused on the hunting aspect of survival, while Ralph concentrates on building shelter so that they can be safe from nature. So later on, Jack goes to hunt a pig while

Simon and Ralph are busy building huts. Ralph and Jack argue over the importance and priorities of what have to be done. This issue begins the feud that will follow throughout the novel between Ralph and Jack. While Simon is picking fruit for the younger children, he comes across a place in the jungle that he finds very tranquil, where Simon's character will develop later.

A ship passes by the island one day when the signal fire is out. This carelessness is due to Jack's irresponsibility. He argues with Ralph, not he is to blame for the mishap. He says that hunting is more important, and that it was not his fault that the fire had gone out. In doing this, he demonstrates his immaturity and lack of responsibility, arguing with Ralph, because of the jealousy he has for his authority. A fight breaks out and Piggy's glasses are accidentally broken by Jack. The hunters have killed a pig, and so the boys roast it and feast on it.

The next day, a meeting is held where many important issues are discussed. One of these is the validity of the beastie's existence. The point is brought up that the beastie is in fact only themselves. At this meeting, Ralph emphasizes the importance of the signal fire. After this, Jack becomes even more troublesome, declaring Ralph a bad leader. Later, he will do something regarding these feelings. A dead pilot parachutes down to the island one day. The parachutist lands on the rocks and his parachute gets caught. He is spotted and labelled the "beast from air" by the little children. In response to this, Jack, Ralph and the others set out to hunt this "beast". While travelling, Jack finds a place that, he thinks, would be a good place for a fort, so they begin preparations by clearing off the ledge. Eventually, Ralph gets them back on their mission and they continue on in search of the "beast".

After the excitement of the pig hunt, the boys gather and perform a strange tribal dance. Meanwhile, Simon and Ralph discuss the prospects of being rescued. Simon assures Ralph that he will leave the island alive. Later, the hunters decide to go on another hunt. On this occasion, the pig wounds Jack and is able to get away. Despite the loss, all remain happy and are caught up in mass hysteria as they re-enact their savage rituals. In doing so, they almost kill Roger, who is playing the part of the pig. The leaders decide to go up the mountain to start another fire but they see the "beastie" and run back down.

Soon after, a major confrontation between Jack and Ralph occurs on the beach. Ralph is accused of cowardice by Jack and Jack moves to remove Ralph from leader of the group of boys. He is humiliated though, as none of the boys votes for his take-over. He begins to

cry and runs away into the forest. He is followed by Roger and the rest of his hunters. Realizing that they cant go up the mountain because of the “beastie”. Piggy suggests that the remaining boys make a fire on the beach.

The story picks up with Jack and his tribe at their new hideout at Castie Rock. They decide to have yet another hunt and kill a large sow. They cut off the pig’s head as a sacrifice for the beast and paint themselves in the pig’s blood. Simon, alone in the woods, hallucinates and thinks the head is the Lord of the Flies, who proceeds to insult his bravery in regard to the “beastie”.

Back on the beach. Jack invites the twins, Sam and Eric, Ralph, Piggy and the littiuns to feast with them. After eating, all succumb to the mass hysteria of the tribal dance and kill Simon, thinking he is the beast. Simon was actually coming to bring news that the “beastie” was a dead parachutist. Now Ralph, Piggy, Sam and Eric and the littiuns remain alone with their hunts on the beach.
Jack turns his tribe against Ralph and tells the hunters that the beast was only using Simon as a disguise. During that night, Roger and Jack invade Ralph’s hut and steals Piggy’s glasses to create a fire. The ensuing fight does hurt both Jack and Roger, and they fail to take the conch. Piggy, much angered by this incident desires to go to Castle Rock and makes Jack give him his glasses back. As they approach the neck, Ralph calls an assembly of all the children and tries to reason with jack. Despite this, Jack insults Ralph again and a fight is the result. In his haste, Roger tries to hit Ralph with a large boulder and instead knocks Piggy off the cliff. In the confusion that results, Ralph is able to escape into the woods.

The entire tribe then searches to eliminate their last opposition. Ralph is forced to hide in the bushes for a long time. He is found by the others and is then closely pursued on throughout the island. He is wounded by a spear in the process. As Ralph runs onto the beach a rescue ship is sighted and the boys seemingly revert to their former behavior.

Lord of the Flies: a critical appreciation

Lord of the Flies is a novel of boyish adventure. As a story, its outline is familiar. Vivid accounts of the adventures of a group of boys, trying to organise life on an island where they are marooned, are given in classical works like R. M. Ballantyne’s The Coral Island and J. R. Wyss’s Swiss Family Robinson.

What impresses the reader very much is Golding's understanding of boyish character. He introduces a motley group and some of them are well-defined figures. We meet the familiar types—the fair, sporting, assured Ralph, the scheming, cruel and vengeful Jack, the callous Roger, the simple intelligent, half-blind Piggy, born to be ridiculed, the sober twins, Sam and Eric, and the philosophic. Simon. His experience as a schoolmaster must have given Golding such special knowledge of the psychology of the young Britisher.

Golding is also a fine portrayer of Nature. The Pacific Coral Island lives before our imagination, sketched by many a brilliant touch. We see it during the changing light of the day and in the light of the stars and the silvery moon. The beach, with the blue ocean constantly striking against it, the palms and the fruit trees, all live in our imagination vividly.

But Lord of the Flies is not merely a story of boyish adventure. The theme of Lord of the Flies, according to Golding, "is an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defect of human nature. The moral is that the shape of a society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual and not on any political system however apparently logical or respectable".

Rejecting as unreal and sentimental the myth of the "novel savage", Golding shows how the removal of civilized restraints results not in the creation of a more innocent, healthier society, but in a complete regression to savagery and brutality, the seeds of which are lodged deep in every human heart.'

In a sense then, Lord of the Files is a parable much like Heart of Darkness, (the last lines of the novel even paraphrase Conrad's title) in which the boys who, somewhat like Kurtz, start off with high hopes of creating their own Utopian society, to free from all adult restrictions, gradually become murderous brutes, rescued from themselves just in the nick of time. Lord of the Fifes is a translation of the Hebrew word, Ba'alzevuu (Beelzebub in Greek), a name for the devil, who is ultimately the central figure in the novel. When jack's hunters slay the harmless sow and cut her head off as propitiation to the 'beastie' the head, decaying on a stake in the hot sun, seems to tell Simon that "everything was a bad business". But when Simon tries to communicate this idea, he is murdered in a savage ritual dance.

Lord of the Files is thus a parable, like one of the first English novels, The Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan. The intervening centuries, however have changed the religious

message from hope for salvation to fear of damnation and knowledge of original sin. The grim tale it unfolds has a higher meaning. It shows the different stages through which human society passed before it achieved the present state of sanity and civilization. The boys on the island become savages once more; they feel the blood-lust that their primeval ancestors left. They become victims of primary passions like anger, revenge and fear. It is also a frightening picture of the savagery into which civilized man can descend as soon as the inducements of civilization are withdrawn. All this gives the book a profound meaning.

Aspects of Golding's fiction

Variously hailed as a fabulist, "marginal" anti-realist, philosophical novelist, and anthropologist of the imagination, William Golding, who moved into the hallowed precincts of fiction relatively late in life, has come to occupy a unique place defying classification and categorization. A section of the critics tend to overemphasize some of Golding's limitations which could in fact be seen as the self-imposed limits within which he chooses to operate. However, no one can deny the originality, vitality, and seriousness of his work. He may not be prolific or versatile, but he displays a rare technical virtuosity and remarkable imaginative power.

Golding draws upon the rich literary tradition only to assert his unique artistic identity.

It is rightly said that "his originality in prose is much like that of Eliot's in verse. Tradition ... leaves its mark on his work, but his work leaves its individual mark, and sometimes excoriatingly on tradition."' Golding would use the original texts only to violate them. And whether it is de-romanticizing Ballantyne, inverting Wells, subverting Dante, or "de-constructing" Coleridge, Golding's work presents the subject in a startlingly new light, giving it yet another dimension. Invariably in this process he raises disturbing questions relating to the human predicament.

Golding's work is not just a powerful refutation of the naive optimism of Wells or shallow progressivism of Ballantyne. He would rather question a whole tradition embodying man's simplistic and optimistic formulations about himself. His work, mainly based on his own painful observation of the cult of the irrational and on his own war-time experiences, seems a counterblast to the eighteenth century rationalists Herder, Kant, and Schiller, the nineteenth century biologists like lames G. Frazer and Edward B. Taylor, and such liberal

thinkers in modern times as H.G. Wells and Sir Julian Huxley. Actively opposed as he is to the behaviorist assumption that human ills are related to the environment, Golding puts the locus of all evil in the 'will' of man." His work demonstrates the limitations of order envisaged by the rational consciousness of man. Golding visualizes the universe as "cosmic chaos." Golding's fiction focuses on this significant aspect of man questing for order on various levels and encountering in the process chaos "within and without. In Golding's world chaos manifests itself in various forms. On the social level it is seen in the form of violence resulting from the clash between different types of order (Lord of the Flies). It is also experienced in the form of moral evil and seen as resulting from not only over-assertion of the ego (Pincher Martin) but irrational faith (The Spire).

Golding has applied the terms 'myths' to his novels. Rather than dealing with everyday incidents of life, these novels possess a limitless quality and are concerned with the eternal issues of human life. The one remarkable fact about his novel, in the modern world, is their concern for man's religious self. By setting his novel in remote places, the author tries to get nearer to the truth about the human nature. From his novels one can decipher his interest in subjects like Greek literature, archaeology, music and the sea.

Golding's novels are characterised by sensuous richness and graphic imagination. They usually have isolated settings like an island, a rock in the sea or a ship. In these settings the novelist can portray human nature in all its nakedness, without the intrusion of any social paraphernalia. The actions of the novels lend themselves to varying interpretations because they have multiple layers of meaning. They are interpreted in terms of symbol, myth, fable or allegory. At the same time Golding's novels have surprise endings, called "gimmicks" by some critics. This happens when, after having viewed the actions through the eyes of one character, we are suddenly made to look at them from the point of view of another character.

Golding's preoccupation in his novels has been to find out what man is: "what man is, whatever man is under the eye of heaven, that I burn to know and that I would endure knowing. The themes closest to my purpose, to my imagination have stemmed from that preoccupation, have been of such a sort that they might move me a little nearer that knowledge. They have been themes of man at an extremity, man tested like building material, taken into the laboratory and used to destruction; man isolated, man obsessed,

man drowned in a literal sea or in the sea of his own ignorance" (A Moving Target, Faber, 1982). His conception of man changed completely after having gone through the experiences of the war. He has said, "Before the Second World War I believed in the perfectibility of social man: that a correct structure of society would produce good will; and therefore you could remove all social ills by a reorganisation of society" (The HotGates, Faber, 1965). After the war experiences, he began to believe that all the chaos and confusion in the world is created by the evil, man. He told Owen Webster, "Evil enters the world through humanity, and through no other creature" *{Books and Arts,* March 1958). Thus he more or less believes in original sin but he also believes man can try to change his nature through love. In an interview with John Carey he said, "But I still think that the root of our sin is there, in the child. As soon as it has any capacity for acting on the world outside, it will be selfish; and, of course, original sin and selfishness - the words could be interchangeable.... you can only learn unselfishness by linking and by loving" (William Golding: The Man and His Books, Faber, 1986).Golding visualizes a state in which man lived in perfect harmony with the universe (The Inheritors). Man was a perfect microcosm of the macrocosm. Being unself-conscious, he was never aware of nature as other, and was absolutely free of the tension between order and chaos. Golding also depicts man's loss of the sense of unity with the universe with the fragmentation of his undifferentiated consciousness. Man's rise to consciousness is seen by Golding as a fall.

Golding says that he would rather trace his literary lineage to the great Greek writers. Euripides and Aeschylus are the obvious influences. While, on the one hand, he is akin to the great Greek tragedians in his preoccupation with the human tragedy, he resembles, on the other, such masters of fiction as Melville and Conrad in his emphasis on the natural chaos of existence. In his thematic preoccupations—man's alienation, free will, guilt, primacy and universality of evil—Golding comes close to writers like Melville, Conrad, and Graham Greene. In both the imaginations of Melville and Golding, we recognize the "great power of blackness" and a Calvinistic sense of Inner Depravity and Original Sin. Like Greene's work, Golding's has a touch of the Jansenist heresy concerning itself more with evil than good. Both the writers explore the anomalies and paradoxes of human existence. Critics like Frank Kermode and William Boyd have recognized Golding's resemblance to Conrad: "... an isolated, indeed, exiled sensibility, a preoccupation with guilt, desperate technical resource."

Like Melville and Conrad, Golding presents his themes through myth and fable, symbol and metaphor. While John Peter's evaluation of Lord of the Flies, The Inheritors, and Pincher Martin as fables has been generally accepted and has, in fact, set the trend for the analysis of Golding's forms and themes," Golding himself said that he would prefer the description 'myths of total explanation' for his works. Golding seeks to transcend the limitations inherent in tabulation by giving it a mythic dimension as well as by expressing his meaning through symbol and metaphor. He may not have outlined his narrative strategy," as Henry James, for instance, did through his prefaces and notebooks. However, his novels themselves are enough evidence to suggest that he believes in the worth of the symbolist method in fiction. He has assimilated the lessons of his great predecessors like Joyce, Proust, Woolf and Conrad whose aesthetics and techniques form the symbolist roots of the contemporary novel. Working essentially in a realistic tradition, he employs a formal strategy that approaches the lyrical mode. In Golding the situations, significant as they are, recede into the background as the book's metaphors and symbols capture the reader's imagination, revealing the range and intensity of the writer's vision. His novels are symbolist in their settings and actions so that reading Golding becomes an act of journeying by symbolic sea, or exploring the "cathedral of the mind" or the rock of the "ravenous ego."

Golding's novels are presented as fables expressing his grim view of the world. To him evil is omnipresent in life and it is a battle for survival. His experiences in the World War and the years spent in teaching have helped to shape this attitude to life. His works are characteristic of mythological and religious allusions and the use of symbols.

Golding's preoccupation with sin or evil is evident in all his novels. Evil is present in the mind, and it produces fear and the lust for power. This distorts our mental vision, and the images we create in our mind of men and things are thus highly coloured. Instead of responding innocently to the things around us, we create distorted images of them and then make them objects of hatred or mere symbols. As Kinkead-Weekes and lan Gregor point out, this is already present in Lord of the Flies. Piggy and Jack try to press their patterns of human nature into action, but neither can fear to see man as he is. Only Simon achieves a vision more inclusive and accepting, but he is destroyed by the excluders who translate the boy into the Beast (*William Golding: A Critical Study,* Faber, 1984).

Lord of the Flies and boyish psychology

Golding makes use of his experience as a school teacher in this novel where he plants a party of schoolboys in ideal surroundings on a coral island, without any grown-up person to help them and then describes the life there, with its early happiness and later complications.

The boys imagine that it must be fun to organise themselves like the boys in the novels. Coral Island end Swiss Family Robinson. They can have their own society with its chief and its laws and regulations. All questions of dispute can be discussed in assembly. Fear is part of a boy's life. Walking and dreaming, he thinks of monsters. The fear of the unknown and the inscrutable plays a great part in his life. So Golding fills the atmosphere on the island with the fear of an unknown beast. Everyone is frightened including jack and Ralph; and nobody, except Simon, considers the questions rationally.
Though Jack's activities is revealed a keen knowledge of boy's psychology. It is easy to attract them by a promise of a life of fun and adventure. Jack's tribe, with painted bodies and spears, dances and songs, seem to live such an interesting life that many boys go over to them. More irresistible proves the attraction of roast meat. It is such a relieving change from a diet of fruits that even Ralph is disposed to accept Jack's invitation.

In these and many other ways Golding reveals a keen, sympathetic understanding of boyish psychology. His boys are a credible likeable group so lifelike and so interesting.
Lord of the Flies as a horrible parody of a civilizedsociety.
Lord of the Flies tells the gripping story of a group of British schoolboys, marooned on a coral island, trying to organize themselves and live on their own. The story of the boys is almost the story of Man in miniature. On the island is enacted, within a short scope, the whole dramatic story of human civilization. It is in a sense a whole passage of human history that is revealed before us. In our island the story is reversed. The boys pass from a state of civilization to one of savagery (Hunter 132-33).

Barbaric passions take hold of them. They come to place less and less value upon life. Hence they easily turn from killing pigs to killing boys. Jack easily speaks of using one of the little ones as the target for their games. They kill Simon without a thought never caring to find out what is crawling down to them. More deliberate is the murder of Piggy. They

descend still one more step when they hunt Ralph relentlessly. They have become prey to wild passions, to anger, fear and the thirst for blood. We feel as if they had shed all the refinements of civilization and lapsed into the early days of savagery.

All this almost seems to tell us that what we call civilization is after all only an external growth and an influence, that fundamentally man is still a creature of wild passions and irrepressible desires. All the centuries of civilized life have not changed him basically. He is apt to descend into his original wild state once the inducements of civilization are withdrawn. Hidden lusts and concealed passion then easily assert themselves. The cloak of civilization is shed and man becomes once again a savage. This is the grim inner significance that this simple story of boyish adventure carries with it.

Religious persecution as an underlying theme in Lord of the Flies

It is also possible to read the book as an indictment of the nature of man as being pure evil without society's boundaries. The novel has many references to religious persecution throughout history. Golding uses many religious elements along with metaphors representing the death of Jesus, the torture of Jews in the Holocaust, and the ascent and reign of Hitler in Nazi Germany to present an underlying theme of religious persecution that proves his grim outlook on the nature of man.

Golding's use of religious elements allows for the plausibility of the religious persecution theme. The island the boys find themselves on is pristine and untouched - like the Garden of Eden - until they arrive. However, once the boys arrived, they left a scar on the island, in much the same way Adam and Eve left a scar in the Garden of Eden. Another religious element Golding uses is in the title of the book. Lord of the Flies translates into 'Beelzebub' in Greek a name for the Devil. This suggests the entire book is about the epitome of religious evil -the Devil himself. A final religious element is well hidden. The "Stick sharpened at both ends" exists not only in Golding's description of the killing of the sow, but also in the Bible in the story of David and Goliath. After David kills Goliath, the giant's head is cut off and placed on a "stick sharpened at both ends" and is used to frighten enemies. The similar usage of the stick in this novel (in which the beast's head is used to frighten the enemies of Jack's clan), alludes to the fact that the book has a religious undertone. The combination of these religious elements makes it easier for the reader to think of clues found later in the book as descriptions of religious events.

If it is accepted that religion is a part of this book, it becomes possible to see the tailing of Simon as metaphorical of the killing of Jesus. Both Jesus and Simon spent their final night on top of mountain (Jesus on top of the Mount of Olives) and see visions of man's sin. Also, both Jesus and Simon were philosophers and lovers of beauty, able to see good even when all seemed bad. Like Jesus, Simon was able to take himself away from evil. He "turned away from them and went where the just perceptible path led him... he came to a place where more sunshine fell". Finally, both were persecuted for their belief. Simon and Jesus tried to tell everyone else about their sin and their capacity to be redeemed. Instead both were killed because of the sin of others.

From the study of the novel, we come to know that the adult world, then, is no better, only more sophisticated in its savagery, than the world the boys have built on the island. More fittingly Golding once said, in view of his bleak vision of children in Lord of the Flies, "I try to treat my family with affection and I suppose if that added up all around, we might have a better society" (Lass 356). It seems that mankind is yet to listen to him in its all seriousness.

Symbolism in Lord of the Flies

Physical realities come first for Golding and should stay first for his readers. Other meanings are found in and through them, as the man-breath passes through the shell's spiral to emerge as signal. But we must not translate the shell into the signal. What comes out is far from simple; and the human beings will be as taken aback as the animals and for the same reason. If we really look and listen, what we shall see and hear will be the harshness of human self-assertion as well as the signal of human sociability; will be the sound of irresponsibility and childishness as well as of forethought and intelligence; will be the fragility of order as well as the impulse towards it. As the sound penetrates the densest thickets, while clouds of birds fly and 'something squealed and ran in the undergrowth', man-sound prefigures stuck pig and stuck Ralph squealing and running for their life, as well as the assembly and the rules. Golding's symbols are not in fact clear, or wholly articulate, they are always an incarnation of more than can' be extracted or translated from them. Even at this early stage, when the fiction seems to offer itself so alluringly for conceptual analysis, it is always richer and more profound than the thesis we maybe tempted to substitute for the experience. It is not a question of rejecting such

meanings, so much as developing a delicacy and tact in handling them; a sense of how limited they are in themselves and how far they fall short of accounting for the density of the fiction. We need similar tact with the characters. Even from the finding of the shell for example, it is easy to see how one could extend Piggy's point of view until he came to stand for something like 'rational humanism'; and many of his physical deficiencies might seem to express Golding 's critique of the humanist. We certainly cannot see him as simply a fat boy. Yet he is much more complex than such a formulation could account for, and often inconsistent with it; we would have to mutilate Golding's boy to fit him to so Procrustean a bed. If we respond to what is on the page we shall find in the novel less the pummeling of humanism than the growth in stature, in credibly boyish terms, of the 'true wise friend' who on the last page is almost the tragic hero.

Like the other characters, Piggy does embody meaning of various kinds, so that we become aware through our imaginative response to the boy of wider horizons and deeper problems beyond him. On the other hand, he is too diminutive to support an acceptable representative significance, just as Jack cannot be Satan or the Power Urge, though he may reveal truths about both to us, and Simon is both less and more than the Saint. Indeed, if we became less eager to confine. Golding's creations to a crystalline structure of meaning, we might be rather less worried about the ability of the island and the boys to sustain the weight of a full statement about 'the human condition'. We ought to admit more readily the limitations of the insights Golding can legitimately embody in so select a situation, while at the same time pointing to the fact that his fiction is far richer and more ambiguous, even in Lord of the Flies, than it looks. Both too much and too little has been claimed for Golding's first novel. That is why it is often so difficult to be fair to it.

Finally, and on the deepest level, it is now possible to see that there is a sharp irony in the temptation to translate the fiction into an unambiguous emblem: this does worse than simplify, it subverts. It is exactly the tendency to convert and reduce complexity into simplicity which Golding sees as the root of evil. This was not perhaps easy to see when the novel appeared, though it was not always there, and there is no missing it now. For in novel after novel Golding has attacked on the same front: the way that 'homo sapiens' makes Neanderthal man the image of his own evil; the way that Christopher Martin and Sammy Mountjoy recreate real people into the shapes of their own need and lust; the set of emblems that must be cleared from Jocelin's mind at the moment of death and replaced by

the vivid and complex physical truth of the Spire itself. For Golding, the Evil Tree grows in the human brain, in human consciousness, and emblematic and conceptual reduction are dangerous manifestations of the Fall. So, in Lord of the Flies, it is the way in which the children look for an external manifestation of what is really in themselves that releases the sin of Cain. Evil exists, but not as a Beast. There is an analogous truth about the conch. What the Sound of the Shell really is . . . is a sound. Like the whole island, the shell is a unique, physical existence whose being is its meaning. Yet it can reveal man, as the shell shows forth all the implications for good or evil of the human breath that resounds through it. Only it is fatal to forget, as the children and many readers do, that the meaning is in the boys, not the shell. The conch's symbolic meaning depends on the state of the children's minds. Once power becomes more real to Jack. than the rules, the conch is meaningless; but when he raids the camp for fire. Piggy thinks he has come for the shell. Though Piggy reaches his greatest stature at the moment of his death, it is also the moment of his greatest blindness, rendered for us at a level far deeper than his lost spectacles. For he holds out as a magic talisman what is, literally, an empty shell. It had a more inclusive sound, and if the boys had been able to understand that sound fully instead of reducing its complexities there would have been no tragedy.

Golding's limitations

Golding's technique is mostly traditional: he is a master of precise physical description and clear, balanced prose. What distinguishes Lord of the Flies is its powerful and exciting qualities as narrative, and its appearance of extreme clarity of meaning; his later works are most difficult both to read and to understand. Lord of the Flies fulfils most effectively the novelist's basic task of telling a good story (Kinkead-Weekes 15).

However the novel suffers from certain limitations. The limitation of his work so far perhaps lies in its very neatness. Lord of the Flies seems as near perfect as could be; and the more difficult later books offer similar evidence of scrupulous planning by a discriminating mind. What we may miss is any sense of that controlling mind ever being baffled: We may miss the more urgent philosophical groping of, say Tolstoy, or Dostoevsky. Even in an allegorical novel, it is not quit plausible that everything should fit; one feels the symbols are being manoeuvred rather too ruthlessly. In this one respect Golding's works may suffer (Hunter 133).

SELECT QUESTIONS

1) "Lord of the Flies fulfils most effectively the novelist's basic task of telling a good story." — Discuss.

2) "Golding seeks to transcend the limitations inherent in fabulation by giving it a mythic dimension as well as expressing his meaning through symbol and metaphor."
— Comment.

3) "Lord of the Flies depicts a clash, on the societal level, between law-makers and law-breakers, between the champions of order and the forces of anarchy." — Discuss.

4) "In Lord of the Flies, Golding traces the defects of society back to the defects of human nature." — Comment.

5) "Golding's fiction has been too complex and many-sided to be reducible to a thesis and a conclusion." — Elucidate.

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DORIS LESSING: *THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK*

Doris Lessing: her life and career

Doris Lessing was born Doris May Tayler in Persia (now Iran) on October 22, 1919. Both of her parents were British: her father, who had been crippled in World War I, was a clerk in the Imperial Bank of Persia; her mother had been a nurse. In 1925, lured by the promise of getting rich through maize farming, the family moved to the British colony in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Doris's mother adapted to the rough life in the settlement, energetically trying to reproduce what was, in her view, a civilized, Edwardian life among savages; but her father did not, and the thousand-odd acres of bush he had bought failed to yield the promised wealth.

Lessing has described her childhood as an uneven mix of some pleasure and much pain. The natural world, which she explored with her brother, Harry, was one retreat from an otherwise miserable existence. Her mother, obsessed with raising a proper daughter, enforced a rigid system of rules and hygiene at home, then installed Doris in a convent school, where nuns terrified their charges with stories of hell and damnation. Lessing was later sent to an all-girls high school in the capital of Salisbury, from which she soon dropped out. She was thirteen; and it was the end of her formal education.

But like other women writers from southern Africa who did not graduate from high school (such as Olive Schreiner and Nadine Gordimer), Lessing made herself into a self-educated intellectual. She recently commented that unhappy childhoods seem to produce fiction writers. "Yes, I think that is true. Though it wasn't apparent to me then. Of course, I wasn't thinking in terms of being a writer then—I was just thinking about how to escape, all the time." The parcels of books ordered from London fed her imagination, laying out other worlds to escape into. Lessing"s early reading included Dickens, Scott, Stevenson, Kipling; later she discovered D. H. Lawrence, Stendhal, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky. Bedtime stories also nurtured her youth: her mother told them to the children and Doris herself kept her younger brother awake, spinning out tales. Doris's early years were also spent absorbing her father's bitter memories of World War I, taking them in as a kind of "poison." "We are all of us made by war," Lessing has written, "twisted and warped by war, but we seem to forget it."

Doris Lessing:*The Golden Notebook*

In flight from her mother, Lessing left home when she was fifteen and took a job as a nursemaid. Her employer gave her books on politics and sociology to read, while his brother-in-law crept into her bed at night and gave her inept kisses. During that time she was, Lessing has written, “in a fever of erotic longing.” Frustrated by her backward suitor, she indulged in elaborate romantic fantasies. She was also writing stories, and sold two to magazines in South Africa.

Lessing's life has been a challenge to her belief that people cannot resist the currents of their time, as she fought against the biological and cultural imperatives that fated her to sink without a murmur into marriage and motherhood. “There is a whole generation of women,” she has said, speaking of her mother's era, “and it was as if their lives came to a stop when they had children. Most of them got pretty neurotic—because, I think, of the contrast between what they were taught at school they were capable of being and what actually happened to them.” Lessing believes that she was freer than most people because she became a writer. For her, writings is a process of "setting at a distance," taking the "raw, the individual, the uncriticized, the unexamined, into the realm of the general."

In 1937 she moved to Salisbury, where she worked as a telephone operator for a year. At nineteen, she married Frank Wisdom, and had two children. A few years later, feeling trapped in a persona that she feared would destroy her, she left her family, remaining in Salisbury. Soon she was drawn to the like-minded members of the Left Book Club, a group of Communists “who read everything, and who did not think it remarkable to read." Gottfried Lessing was a central member of the group; shortly after she joined, they married and had a son.

During the postwar years, Lessing became increasingly disillusioned with the Communist movement, which she left altogether in 1954. By 1949, Lessing had moved to London with her young son. That year, she also published her novel, The Grass Is Singing, and began her career as a professional writer.

Lessing’s fiction is deeply autobiographical, much of it emerging out of her experiences in Africa. Drawing upon her childhood memories and her serious engagement with politics and social concerns, Lessing has written about the clash of cultures, the gross injustices of racial inequality, the struggle among opposing elements within an individual's own personality, and the conflict between the individual conscience and the collective good.

Her stories and novellas set in Africa, published during the fifties and early sixties, decry the dispossession of black Africans by white colonials, and expose the sterility of the of the white culture in southern Africa. In 1956, in response to Lessing's courageous outspokenness, she was declared a prohibited alien in both Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.

Over the years, Lessing has attempted to accommodate what she admires in the novels of the nineteenth century—their "climate of ethical judgement"—to the demands of twentieth century ideas about consciousness and time. After writing the Children of Violence series (1951-1959), a formally conventional bildungsroman (novel of education) about the growth in consciousness of her heroine, Martha Quest, Lessing broke new ground with The Golden Notebook (1962), a daring narrative experiment, in which the multiple selves of a contemporary woman are rendered in astonishing depth and detail. Anna Wulf like Lessing herself strives for ruthless honesty as she aims to free herself from the chaos, emotional numbness, and hypocrisy afflicting her generation.

Attacked for being "unfeminine" in her depiction of female anger and aggression, Lessing responded, "Apparently what many women were thinking, feeling, experiencing came as a great surprise." As at least one early critic noticed, Anna Wulf “tries to live with the freedom of a man"—a point Lessing seems to confirm: “These attitudes in male writers were taken for granted, accepted as sound philosophical bases, as quite normal, certainly not as a woman-hating, aggressive, or neurotic."

In the 1970s and 1980s, Lessing began to explore more fully the quasi-mystical insight Anna Wulf seems to reach by the end of The Golden Notebook. Her “inner-space fiction” deals with cosmic fantasies (Briefing for a Descent into Hell, 1971), dreamscapes and other dimensions (Memoirs of a Survivor, 1974), and science fiction probings of higher planes of existence (Canopus in Argos: Archives, 1979-1983). These reflect **L**essing’s interest, since the 1960s, in ldries Shah, whose writings on Sufi mysticism stress the evolution of consciousness and the belief that individual liberation can come about only if people understand the link between their own fates and the fate of society.

Lessing’s other novels include The Good Terrorist (1985) and The Fifth Child (1988); she also published two novels under the pseudonym Jane Somers (The Diary of a Good Neighbour, 1983 and If the Old Could.... 1984). In addition, she has written several

nonfiction works, including books about cats, a love since childhood.

Under My Skin: Volume One of My Autobioraphy, to 1949 appeared in 1995 and received the James Tait Black Prize for best biography. And the honours kept on coming: she was on the list of nominees for the Nobel Prize for Literature and Britain's Writer's Guild Award for Fiction in 1996.

Walking in the Shade, the anxiously awaited second volume of her autobiography, was published in October and was nominated for the 1997 National Book Critics Circle Award in the biography/ autobiography category. This volume documents her arrival in England in 1949 and takes us up to the publication of The Golden Notebook. This is the final volume of her autobiography, she will not be writing a third volume.

On December 31 1**9**99, in the U.K.'s last Honours List before the new Millennium, Doris Lessing was appointed a Companion of Honour, an exclusive order for those who have done "conspicuous national service." She revealed she had turned down the offer of becoming a Dame of the British Empire because there is no British Empire. Being a Companion of Honour, she explained, means "you're not called anything - and it's not demanding. I like that". Being a Dame was "a bit pantomimey". The list was selected by the Labour Party government to honour people in all walks of life for their contributions to their professions and to charity. It was officially bestowed by Queen Elizabeth II.
In January, 2000 the National Portrait Gallery in London unveiled Leonard McComb's portrait of Doris Lessing. Ben, in the World, the sequel to The Fifth Child was published in Spring 2000 (U.K.) and Summer 2000 (U.S.). In 2001 she was awarded the **Prince of Asturias Prize in Literature**, one of Spain's most important distinctions, for her brilliant literary works in defense of freedom and Third World causes. She also received the **David Cohen British Literatare Prize**. In 2005 she was on the shortlist for the first **Man Booker International Prize**. Her most recent novel is The Story of General Dann and Mara's Daughter, Griot and the snow dog.

The Golden Notebook: its shape and theme

Lessing says about the shape of the novel, The Golden Notebook in her Introduction to it. The contents of the novel are given in the following manner.

FREE WOMEN: 1 Anna meets her friend Molly in the summer of 1957 after a separation.

The Notebooks

FREE WOMEN: 2 Two visits, some telephone calls and a tragedy.

The Notebooks

FREE WOMEN: 3 Tommy adjusts himself to being blind while the older people try to help him.

The Notebooks

FREE WOMEN: 4 Anna and Molly influence Tommy, for the better. Marion leaves Richard. Anna does not feel herself.

The Notebooks

THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK

FREE WOMEN: 5 Molly gets married and Anna has an affair.

"The shape of this novel is as follows:

There is a skeleton, or frame, called Free Women, which is a conventional short novel, about 60,000 words long, and which could stand by itself. But it is divided into five sections and separated by stages of the four Notebooks, Black, Red, Yellow and Blue. The Notebooks are kept by Anna Wulf, a central character of Free Women. She keeps four, and not one because, as she recognises, she has to separate things off from each other, out of fear of chaos, of formlessness—of breakdown. Pressures, inner and outer, end the Notebooks; a heavy black line is drawn across the page of one after another. But now that they are finished, from their fragments can come something new, The Golden Notebook.

Throughout the Notebooks people have discussed, theorised, dogmatised, labelled, compartmented— sometimes in voices so general and representative of the time that they are anonymous, you could put names to them like those in the old Morality Plays, Mr. Dogma and Mr. I-am-Free-Because-I-Belong-Nowhere, Miss-I-Must-Have-Love-and-Happiness and Mrs. I-Have-to-be-Good-At-Everything-I do, Mr. Where-is-a-Real-Woman?, and Miss. Where-is-a-Real-Man?, Mr. I'm-Mad-Because-They-Say-I-Am, and Miss Life-through-Experiencing-Everything, Mr. I-make-Revolution-and-Therefore-I-Am, and Mr. and Mrs. If-We-Deal-Very-Well-with-This-Small-Problem-Then-Perhaps-We-Can-Forget-We-Daren't-Look-at-The-Big-Ones. But they have also reflected each other, been aspects of each other, given birth to each other's thoughts and behaviour—are each

other, form wholes. In the inner Golden Notebook, things have come together, the divisions broken down, there is formlessness with the end of fragmentation—the triumph of the second theme, which is that of unity. Anna and Saul Green the American "break down." They are crazy, lunatic, mad—what you will. They "break down" into each other, into other people, break through the false patterns they have made of their pasts, the patterns and formulas they have made to shore up themselves and each other, dissolve. They hear each other's thoughts, recognise each other in themselves. Saul Green, the man who has been envious and destructive of Anna, now supports her, advises her, gives her the theme for her next book, Free Women—an ironical title, which begins: "The two women were alone in the London flat." And Anna, who has been jealous of Saul to the point of insanity, possessive and demanding, gives Saul the pretty new notebook, The Golden Notebook, which she has previously refused to do, gives him the theme for his next book, writing in it the first sentence: "On a dry hillside in Algeria a soldier watched the moonlight glinting on his rifle." In the inner Golden Notebook, which is written by both of them, you can no longer distinguish between what is Saul and what is Anna, and between them and the other people in the book.

This theme of "breakdown", that sometimes when people "crack up" it is a way of self-healing, of the inner self's dismissing false dichotomies and divisions, has of course been written about by other people as well as by me, since then. But this is where, apart from the odd short story, I first wrote about it. Here it is rougher, more close to experience, before experience has shaped itself into thought and pattern—more valuable perhaps because it is rawer material" (viii).

The Golden Notebook: an assessment

Elizabeth Hardwick in The New York Times Book Review says that "The Golden Notebook . . . has left its mark upon the ideas and feelings of a whole generation of young women." The Golden Notebook is a post-modern novel about free women searching for themselves through the political, sexual and psychological revolutions of our time. Irving Hope in The New Republic observes that The Golden Notebook is "a work of high seriousness . . . it moves with the beat of our time, and it is true."

Washington Post comments that "Doris Lessing writes about her own sex with the unrelenting intensity of Simon de Beauvoir, and about sex itself with the frankness and

detail of John O'Hara." It is a long and complex novel which draws on all the talents and in-sights of Doris Lessing. She "looks deeply into the prob-lem of a sensitive and disillusioned modern woman.

Seldom are the troubled recesses of a soul probed as ruthlessly as Lessing has done here. In the words of Baltimore Sun, "this exciting writer has tried much, has aimed high, has paraded a dazzling galaxy of gifts."

How many novels can be said to have an impact on readers almost 45 years after their publication? Doris Lessing's The Golden Notebook is one of them; her words have resonated through the years and continue to illuminate and enlighten the lives of men and women all over the world. The words which comprise The Golden Notebook have breath even after the book is closed. The human issues are clear; the life of Lessing's main character, told in quiet prose through the four notebooks, offers an understanding of issues such as political repression, sexual abuse, single parenthood, writer's block, and the women's movement. These problems, presented with a quiet virility, give strength to readers even today.

"Knowing was an illumination. During the last few weeks of craziness and timelessness I've had those moments of knowing one after the other, yet there is no way of putting this sort of knowledge into words. Yet, these moments have been so powerful, like the rapid illuminations of a dream that remain with one during waking, that what I have learned will be part of how I experience life until I die."

It's lines like this that give substance and meaning to the life-driven chaos felt by all people at some time in their lives. Anna Wulf, the protagonist in the story, is a writer, a single mother—and more than she had imagined. She uncovers and dissects the pages of notebooks that sit side-by-side on a simple desk, a quiet retreat in a dark room in her flat. She lives alone with her young daughter, occasionally renting out a room; this is the way to fill some of the empty space around her and to keep the empty walls of her home from closing in on her. It's the warm pitter-patter of feet up above that keep her from feeling the loneliness she has denied for most of her life.

Writer's block has taken her over and choked the love for writing and searching she once had. Her first novel, an autobiographical story about a group of Communists in colonial

Africa, was immensely successful. Though, as she says, “It’s almost as if someone else wrote it…”

Now, the four notebooks contain the moments of Anna’s life. Each of the coloured books presents a facet of her existence. A part of her self is contained within their pages. The black notebook contains her experiences in Africa; red her thoughts on the currents politics in England. The yellow notebook is for her fictionalized version of herself and a blue notebook is her diary, her release, her intimate message to the world.

Anna, the writer, the single woman, the political activist, struggles to find a way to integrate her multiple selves, a way to make her life seem less painful and to pick up the broken pieces that surround her. She’s motivated to keep these four notebooks out of “fear of chaos, formlessness—of breakdown.” Although framed by a conventional novel called Free Women, the point of the novel, according to Lessing, is the “relation of its parts to each other.”

By separating the parts of her life, Anna carefully probes each layer of her consciousness and is eventually able to bring it all together in one notebook, The Golden Notebook. She unifies her existence and identity into one. By going over her experiences, her responses to life, she eventually comes to terms with her growing disillusionment, her self-induced sexual betrayal, and her feelings of social and emotional rejection.

In 640 pages of well-written prose, Doris Lessing tries to come to terms with all that she has or hasn’t created in life. She’s up against the same choices many of us have to make: deciding what’s important in her life and what isn’t. The main character, Anna, is in the midst of a breakdown and a breakthrough which are evident through the plot elements presented in each notebook.

Ms. Lessing’s novel broke the mould in 1962 when it was first published. Even now, it’s hard to imagine another piece of work that fuses sex, politics, and emotional breakdown so completely and with such honesty and frankness. What is most astonishing and intriguing about this novel is how it takes the reader through the essence of a true emotional breakdown. The very form of this novel is what provides such an intimate glimpse of something to which almost any reader can relate at some point in this novel. And it isn’t even recognizably a novel at all. Instead, the reader is shown fragments, memories, emotions, and opinions thrown together—but the relationship they all eventually form

together is what the reader is forced to figure out and learn from.

Even with the nontraditional form that Ms. Lessing chose, the novel is not difficult to understand or follow. The author finds a quiet beauty in the simple language. It's not hard for the reader to find himself or herself settled neatly in the midst of Anna's troubles. Ms. Lessing exposes her character in such a way that it's much like looking through a pane of glass at a character and her plight for emotional balance.

When she becomes aware that these four books fail to capture her whole self, Anna attempts to convey the totality of her experience in a new (golden) notebook. Bewilderingly, the reader now discovers that he or she has been reading this novel all along—a glimpse of what Ms. Lessing presented at the beginning, Free Women. This new novel, or rather the one that has been hidden beneath it all, is a realistic one in which Anna Wulf appears as a relatively sane, whole human being. Free Women forces the reader to abandon their preconceptions. Though almost forty five years old, this book is contemporary in its concerns.

Doris Lessing wrote once that she considered this novel something of a failure because it only names the issues, exploring briefly, but not solving. But The Golden Notebook, if read carefully, soulfully, and with introspection, will force the reader to struggle right along with Ms. Lessing's Anna Wulf in search of the real self. If you let it, this book will change you.

The Golden Notebook as a post-modern novel

"The two women were alone in the London flat."

So begins Doris Lessing's most famous novel, The Golden Notebook, now considered one of the major works of twentieth-century literature. It is the story of Anna Wulf, a writer and single woman, who lives with her young daughter, Janet in a flat, occasionally renting out a room, less for the income than out of a reflex of social obligation. Labouring against a writing block, following the im-mense success of her autobiographical debut novel about a group of Communists in colonial Africa, Anna struggles to find a way to integrate the multiple selves that fragment her personality and make her life unbear-ably painful. Out of "fear of chaos, formlessness—of breakdown," she decides to keep four notebooks, one for each component of her life—black for her experiences in Africa, red for current politics,

yellow for a fictionalized version of herself, and blue for a diary. Although framed by a conventional novel called Free Women, the point of the novel, according to Lessing, is the “relation of its parts to each other.” By viewing her life from these dif-ferent angles, going over her experiences, gauging her re-sponses, and carefully probing her intertwined layers of consciousness, Anna eventually manages to unify her identify in one notebook. As she does so, she comes to terms with her growing disillusionment with commu-nism, the trauma of emotional rejection and sexual be-trayal, professional anxieties, and the tensions of friend-ship and family.

In 1966, in an interview with Florence Howe, Doris Lessing said: "The Golden Notebook is more truthful because it is more complex the same people occur again and again in our lives. Siruations do. And any moment of time is so complicated and the ideas we live with are complex."

The structural complexity, the intricate content, the thin line between art and reality, and the startling use of persona in Doris Lessing's novel The Golden Notebook often leave readers puzzled and perplexed. Yet, these charecteristics also make Lessing unique and awe-inspiring as her book opens avenues for new insights, interpretations, and understanding of the novel.

The dominant theme of The Golden Notebook is the frag-mentation of life and consciousness, and its excruciating consequences. Anna Wulf, the protagonist, is a novelist who experiences alienation and fragmentation of her consciousness in the disintegrated world. The highlight of the novel is—the structure of the narrative reflects the theme and content of the book, the theme of division of self.

The novel consists of four notebooks, shich symbolize the four aspects of Anna Wulf. We see her diverse representations as a novelist (Black Notebook), political activist (Red notebook), "her efforts of imagination" in the Yellow notebook, and quest for identity as a writer in the Blue notebook. The Blue Notebook has a structure of a diary where she "attempts" to keep a factual account of her life.

The fifth notebook called the "Golden Notebook" is about the successful self-healing from fragmentation and blocked creativity, and this book enables Anna Wulf the writer to begin her new book called "Free Women". It is a story of an artist, Anna Wulf, and her loss of creative power. We, thus, are faced with a protagonist Anna Wulf that Doris Lessing

creates in The Golden Notebook, who in turn creates another Anna Wulf in the chapter "Free Women" in a Golden notebook section of the novel.

This novel by Doris Lessing evoked significant responses in the area of criticism. The philosophical, modernist, feminist, psychological, postmodern, formal, and historical-political approaches provide varied perspectives to the book. Jean Pickering offers a unique perspective of Existentialism to the book and views that "Anna, like Sisyphus, engages in an "unceasing struggle" to confront the absurd where this mind and this world straining against each other without being able to embrace each other."

The novel thus exemplifies the fragmentation of Anna's mind and personally, the problem of her blocked creativity, and the final psychic integration that restores the creative power in the protagonist. Anna Wulf recognises this:

> “Knowing was an illumination. During the last few weeks of craziness and timelessness I’ve had those moments of knowing one after the other, yet there is no way of putting this sort of knowledge into words. Yet, these moments have been so powerful, like the rapid illuminations of a dream that remain with one during waking, that what I have learned will be part of how I experience life until I die.”

The Golden Notebook as a feminist novel

Lessing’s fiction is commonly divided into three distinct phases: The Communist theme 1944-1956 when she was writing radically on social issues, The psychological theme 1956-1969 and after that The Sufi theme which was explored in the Canopus series. After the sufist themes Lessing has worked in all three areas.

Her novel The Golden Notebook is considered a feminist classic among many scholars, but notably not by the author herself. This novel also allegedly made Lessing a candidate for the Nobel prize, but her later science fiction books (The Canopus series) may have discredited her, so that she was removed from the unofficial list of those under consideration. Lessing does not like the idea of being recognized as a feminist author. When asked why, Lessing replies:

"What the feminists want of me is something they haven’t examined because it comes from religion. They want me to bear witness. What they would really like me to say is,

‘Ha, sisters, I stand with you side by side in your struggle toward the golden dawn where all those beastly men are no more.’ Do they really want people to make oversimplified statements about men and women? In fact, they do. I’ve come with great regret to this conclusion." (The New York Times, 25 July 1982).

In Free Women "we meet two women who are alone in the London flat on the first floor, overlooking a nar-row side street, whose windows had flower boxes and painted shutters. Anna meets her friend Molly in the summer of 1957 after a separation. Molly was a tallish woman, and big-boned, but she appeared slight, and even boyish. This was because of how she did her hair, which was a rough, streaky gold, cut like a boy's; and because of her clothes, for which she had a great natural talent. She took pleasure in the various guises she could use: for instance, being a hoyden in lean trousers and sweaters, and then a siren, her large green eyes made up, her cheekbones prominent, wearing a dress which made the most of her full breasts" (9).

But Anna was small, thin, dark, brittle, with large black always-on-guard eyes, and a fluffy haircut. She was, on the whole, satisfied with herself, buy she was always the same. She envied Molly's capacity to project her own changes of mood. Anna wore neat, delicate clothes, which tended to be either prim, or perhaps a little odd; and relied upon her delicate white hands, and her small pointed white face to make an impression. But she was shy, unable to assert herself, and, she was convinced, easily overlooked (9).
When the two women went out together, Anna de-liberately effaced herself and played to the dramatic Molly. When they were alone, she tended to take the lead. But this had by no means been true at the beginning of their friendship. Molly, abrupt, straightforward, tactless, had frankly domineered Anna. Slowly, Anna, encouraged by Mother Sugar, learned to stand up for herself. She admitted to herself she was a coward; she would always give in rather than have fights or scenes. A quarrel would lay Anna low for days, whereas Molly thrived on them. She would burst into exuberant tears, say unforgivable things, and have forgotten all about it half a day later. Meanwhile Anna would be limply recovering in her flat. They both freely acknowledged that they were both "insecure" and "unrooted" (10).

There was perfect understanding between them. Both the women were bringing up children without men.

"Neither of us," says Anna, "were prepared to get married simply to give our children fathers, so now we must take the consequences. In their chit-chat, they often talked about one Robert. Now Robert made his presence in the room. Robert Portmain was a shortish, dark, compact man, almost fleshy. His round face, attractive when he smiled, was obstinate to the point of sullenness when he was not smiling. His whole solid person—head poked out forward, eyes unblinking, had this look of dogged determination. He was a member of various suitable golf and tennis clubs, but never played unless for business reasons. He had a cottage in the country for years, but sent his family to it alone, unless it was advisable to entertain business friends for a weekend. He was by every instinct urban. He spent his weekends dropping from one club, one pub, one bar, to the nest (14).

Molly and Richard met 1935. Molly was deeply involved with the cause of Republican Spain like Richard Portmain. The Portmains, a rich family, had cut off his allowance because of his professed communist leanings. Richard who had a talent for nothing but making money was kept by Molly for two years. In the meantime, Richard was preparing himself to be a writer. Richard suddenly developed revulsion against left-wing politics and it coincided with his decision that Molly was immoral, sloppy and bohemian.

They had a son called Tommy. Since Robert had already contracted a liaison with some girl, he dropped his plan of divorcing Molly and gaining custody of Tommy, which he was threatening to do. He was then readmitted into the Portmain family and accepted "a job in the city" (16) Richard then married Marion who was a very young, warm, pleasant, quiet girl and daughter of a moderately distinguished family. They had three sons (17).

Meanwhile Molly, talented in so many directions, danced a little and decided it was frivolous; then took drawing lessons, and gave them up when the war started when she worked as a journalist; gave up journalism to work in one of the cultural outworks of the Communist party and left for she could not stand the deadly boredom of it. She then became a minor ac-tress, and had reconciled herself, after much unhappi-ness, to the fact that she was essentially a dilettante. She had fought a year-long battle with Richard for the sake of Tommy. Later Richard married Marion and had children by her.

Anna too was a divorcee. She lived with Michael for five years. This affair had broken up three years ago, against her will. She had been his mistress. Anna and Molly felt that they might have made mistakes. But they were not upset and they took such twists in life with a

certain coolness. As Anna says, "Marriage breaks up, well, we say, our marriage was a failure, too bad. A man ditches us—too bad we say, it's not important. We bring up kids without men—nothing to it, we say, we can cope. We spend years in the Communist party and we say, well, well. We made a mistake, too bad" (53).

Michael felt that it was bad for Anna to live in Molly's house, always under the wing of the big sister. Anna moved into her flat for some time. She had a daughter, Janet. She had written a novel, Frontiers of War that brought her some money. In this novel Anna portrays women who are searching for themselves through the political, sexual and psychological revolutions of our time.

Through the narration of the novel, which is none other than her own autobiography, Anna is gradually getting sucked in and at last the incidents in the novel and the personal experiences of Anna get merged indistinguishably. The Golden Notebook has two novels, one has got embedded into the other. The imaginary and the real overlap and the boundary collapses. This is a post-modern technique by which the subjective and the objective aspects of one's consciousness are skillfully explored and ex-ploited for a fictional presentation.

Experiences in life have disciplined Anna's thinking and opened yet another channel through which she could feel "a new sensation, like a hallucination, a new and hitterto not understood picture of the world." To her "this understanding was altogether ter-rible a reality different from anything she had known before as reality, and it came from a country of feel-ing she had never visited. It was not being 'depressed'; or being 'unhappy'; of feeling 'discouraged'; the essence of the experience was that such words, like joy or hap-piness, were meaningless. Coming around from this illumination—which was timeless; . . . she knew she had an experience for which there were no words— it was beyond the region where words could be made to have sense" (652).

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SELECT QUESTIONS

1) Lessing has written that the central theme of **The Golden Notebook** is of "'breakdown', that sometimes when people 'crack up' it is a way of self-healing." In what ways does this theme find expression in the novel?

2) By embedding Anna Wulf's psyche in the social and political movements of her time, Lessing suggests that the individual is inevitably shaped by history. In what ways is Anna Wulf a creation of the culture in which she lives— personally, politically?

3) Many women consider **The Golden Notebook** to be the founding novel of the women's movement. Does the novel offer any vision of freedom for women, and if so, what is it?

4) What are the inner and outer pressures that seem to inhibit Anna as an artist?

5) Do you think that the novel takes an unrelentingly bleak view of relations between the sexes? Or is there the suggestion of an alternative to the cruelty, betrayal, and emotional numbness that seem to characterize sexual relations in the novel?

6) What does the form of the novel suggest about an individual's layers of consciousness? What is the significance and effect of filtering the world through a woman's point of view ?

7) Do you agree with Victoria Brittain that **The Golden Notebook** is as illuminating today as it was when it appeared forty years ago? Or do you find the novel dated in any way?

8) Discuss **The Golden Notebook** as a post -modern novel.

9) Discuss **The Golden Notebook** as a feminist novel.

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Unit V

Joseph Conrad's "*Tales of Hearsay*"

Life and Works:

Joseph Theodor Konrad Korzeniowski was born on December 3, 1857, in a little village near Berdyczow, a Russian raided Polish province. He was the only child of Appollo Korzeniowski and Evelina. Appollo Korzeniowski was a scholar, an intellectual and an idealist who dreamed of a revolution to free Poland from the Russian rule. He was also a learned man, good in French and English, and translated the works of Shakespeare, Hugo, Dickens, Alfred de Vigney and others into the Polish language.

He was also a poet and a national political figure. He actively took part in the nationalist insurrectionary movements which sprung up since 1795 partition and colonizing of Poland by Russia, Prussia and Austria. His interest lay in encouraging political resistance to the Russian oppression with the final aim of winning independence for Poland. In 1862, Appollo was arrested for his insurrectionary activism and his family was sent into exile to Volgoda in Northern Russia.

Evelina, being a well-educated sensitive woman, suffered from ill health and died in exile within three years. Thus Conrad's early upbringing was in a fervent patriotic household, which suffered greatly for its nation.

Appollo, after his wife's death, became melancholic and gloomy, but spent his days in teaching his son, and in concentrating in his translation works. Life was equally bad for little Conrad since he spent his childhood days with the co-prisoners of his father. But he read proofs of his father's translations, which left an indelible impression on him. He passed on his time by reading all the available books, especially the stories of adventure and heroism that were responsible for his choosing the sea-career later.

He continued to read heroic epics of the Polish nationalist writers and composed patriotic plays. When he was eleven years old, which is in 1869, his father passed away leaving him under the care of his uncle Tadeusz Bobrowski. Tadeusz remained an abiding influence to him for another twenty-five years.

Conrad loved travelling and when he was fifteen, he expressed his wish to go to the sea. His uncle tried to dissuade him from going to the sea but failed in his attempt. Conrad was obstinate in his desire to start as a professional sailor because of two main reasons. He met two powerful personalities – both of whom stood for masculine strength like Ulysses

to Conrad who was hesitant and sickly Polish orphan. At last with his uncle's permission he left for Marseilles for a long career at sea. His first sea journey was on French ships and ended upon an English steamer, which eventually brought him to England. He was nearly twenty years now and did not know a word of English.

He had spent ten years on the English steamer during which time he had not only trained himself to be mate and master of the ship but also began his literary career in English. In 1886, he became a naturalized British subject. Conrad's British 'sea years', provided him not only with adventures, locations and characters, but also with great human experiences of fear and endurance, isolation and solidarity, idealism and disillusion and so on which form the subject matter of his later literary works. His works also exhibit the themes of loyalty and betrayal, isolation and exile, duty and freedom, which was a result of having grown amidst fervent patriotic elders.

In 1889, he met John Galsworthy, the great dramatist who inspired and encouraged him to write. It was at this time that he started his first novel ***Almayer's Folly***. Although he started his literary career it was not until 1894 that his career at sea came to an end.

He was not a dedicated writer during the 1890s but it was his Congo voyage which became the source of his future book ***Heart of Darkness*** (1902). It is this book that turned him from sea to a literary career. For the next thirteen years he wrote one novel each year, and between 1895 and 1924 he wrote 31 volumes containing novels, short stories, essays, plays and letters. He enjoyed strong and abiding friendships with some of the most influential literary figures of the age like Galsworthy, Garnett, R.Cunninghame, Ford Madox Ford, H.G.Wells, Henry James, Stephen Crane, Arthur Symons, Bertrand Russell and so on.

His major works are ***Almayer's Folly (1895), Outcast of Islands (1896), Nigger of the 'Narcissus' (1897), Tales of Unrest (1898), Lord Jim (1900), Heart of Darkness (1902), Youth (1902), Romance (1903), Nostromo(1904), The Mirror of the Sea(1906), The Secret Agent(1907), Under WesternEyes(1911), A Personal Record, 'Twixt Land and Sea (1913), Chance(1915), The Shadow Line(1917), The Rover(1923), A Set of Six(1908), Within the Tides(1915), Victory(1915), Typhoon and Other Stories(1903).*** He also had some unfinished works like ***Suspense (1925)*** and ***Tales of Hearsay (1925)*** published posthumously to his credit.

Conrad went to sea because he could not stay in Poland that was full of sorrow and sufferings. The life of sea provided him with different kinds of men and adventure. Sea-

life saved him from going mad in the midst of misery in Poland. But Conrad who went to sea to fulfill his dreams shot himself to death on 3rd August, 1924.

At his death he was established as one of the leading early generation of Modernists. His critical reputation, after a brief eclipse by the younger generation of writers like Lawrence, Woolf and Joyce was reasserted by great critics like F.R.Leavis, T.S.Eliot and so on. His 'Moral Realism' was highly appreciated and he was pronounced as one of the very greatest novelists of the language.

More recent criticism emphasizes on Postcolonial and gender approaches to his work, apart from the psychological and moral readings.

Tales of Hearsay (1925)

"Tales of Hearsay", Conrad's seventh and last collection of short stories was published posthumously in 1925. It contains four stories; all published a number of years earlier in magazines. The first tale in the book ***"The Warrior's Soul"*** was written in 1916 and concerns with the French invasion of Russia under Napolean in 1812.

The second story ***"Prince Roman"*** was written somewhat earlier, towards the end of 1910 and is about the Polish uprising against the Russians in 1831. Both these stories draw on Conrad**'s** own family history and are somewhat autobiographical.

"*The Tale"* appears third in the collection and was finished in 1916. It is a story of the Great War and hence is related and complimentary to ***"The Warrior's Soul"***.

The final story ***"The Black Mate"*** is probably one of the wittiest of all Conrad's stories and is full of twists and turns.

All these stories are vivid and self-contained with a strong sense of place and of character. They also show Conrad to be a versatile writer and his concern with the moral dilemmas which life sometimes places in.

The book opens with "***The Warrior's Soul***" (1917), a story written during Conrad's creative decline. It is a wartime story, the source of which was found in a book of French memoirs. The story is set a hundred years back, in the Napoleonic period, which Conrad found fascinating. The famous critic Baines describes it as 'a dramatic story and far from negligible'.

The story is about Tomassov, a young Russian officer who spends some time in Paris as an attaché at the Russian Embassy before the French invasion of Russia by Napoleon.

Like all other Conrad's stories, this story too is psychological and deals with a moral dilemma of an individual who is struggling to make a terrible choice between right and wrong - a situation that demands to choose between honour and friendship.

The story opens with an Old Russian officer expressing his indignation for the youngsters who have little concern for the suffering poor stragglers of his generation. He talks of the horror and difficulty that they face during their attack of the French. He glorifies the 'Russian strength' but at the same time disillusions the glory of war. He brings out the sufferings of war as is typical of modern sentiments and describes his regiment getting closer on to the main line of the French invasion. Interspersed with the narration of his war experiences is the story of Tomassov, the subaltern of his troop.

Tommassov is a young romantic innocent officer who served as an attaché in the Russian Embassy at Paris the year before the war. Not having much to do at Paris, he fell in love with a beautiful French woman who had a distinguished salon. Tomassov's love for this woman was above physical impressions and he became her unconditionally devoted slave.

This young poet warrior managed to win the intimacy of the woman, among few other sophisticated men. Enjoying the privilege of visiting her without regard for official reception hours, he, one afternoon called on the mistress of his thoughts as usual. There he meets a French officer named De Castel. He is another privileged intimate of the lady and he had the courteous self-possession of a man of the world.

Tomassov befriends De Castel and their friendship strengthens in the very first meeting itself, when De Castle with the instigation of the lady warns Tomassov of the arrest of the Russian envoy who had obtained some very important confidential documents from the Emperor's Ministry of War. De Castel, asked Tomassov who according to him possessed the soul of a warrior to escape from France and its imprisonment along with his entire official household.

Tommasov's gratitude and admiration for De Castel and the Lady, and to the French in general, grew from then on. Even in the war - front when he is fighting and charging against the French invasion he remembers this.

He felt indebted to De Castel and used to shudder at the mere thought of the moral torture he had escaped. He nursed a boundless gratitude to the two people who saved him from that cruel ordeal. He regarded love and friendship as two aspects of exalted perfection.

Although as a patriot he was indignant at the invasion of his country, he had no personal animosity towards the French. He was full of compassion for all forms of mankind's misery and was grieved at the appalling amount of human suffering he saw around him. He was nicknamed as Humane Tomassov. He was not offended by it and laid himself open to banter, since he believed that 'there is nothing incompatible between humanity and a warrior's soul'.

He was even seen sheathing his sword deliberately right in the middle of the charge by the Old Russian warrior. But this did not surprise the ancient warrior, since he understood that Tomassov was deeply affected by the close view of the Grand Army. Tomassov was frustrated at the butchery that took place during the charge of the main column of Napoleon's Grand Army.

That night at the bivouvac, the old officer saw Tomassov advancing with a wounded French officer. The French officer was none other than De Castel, who once saved Tomassov's life. De Castel was terribly wounded in the war. Recognizing Tomassov, he pleaded him to pay back his debt by killing him. He provoked him to act like a man who possesses the 'soul of a warrior' and kill him. He pleaded him to relieve him of his present agony that he was suffering from.

Tomassov torn between honour and friendship was caught then in a moral dilemma. He was set against the conventional notions of right and wrong, and was expected to make a terrible choice between the two. Finally he shoots at De Castel and relieves him of his pain of loss of all faith and courage, and released him from a fate worse than death.

Paying his debt in a horrible way led him to be guilty throughout his life and this dark deed clung to him for years.

The next story ***"Prince Roman" (1911)*** is autobiographical too and it had its source in Conrad's early years in Poland – partly on his meeting, during his childhood, with a certain Prince Sanguszko, and partly on the memoirs of his uncle Tadeusz Bobrowski published in 1900.

The story is about Prince Roman Sanguszko, an old Polish aristocrat and military man. He belongs to Russian nobility. He again, like Tomassov in "***The Warrior's Soul"*** faces a moral choice.

The narrator, an admirer of the Prince, begins the story with a mention of the Polish uprising in 1831, a significant event, which has an important role to play in the story.

The narrator met Prince Roman at the age of eight. Prince Roman at that time was completely old, deaf, bald, and meager and was so utterly unlike a prince in a fairy tale.

The Prince suffered a lot in his lifetime because of his 'conviction'. Born in a noble, aristocratic Polish family, he was an officer in the Guards at St.Petersburg. He married a young and beautiful orphan heiress of a great name and fortune and was highly devoted to her. His happiness crumbled down when she died leaving behind her two year old daughter and her beloved husband.

Unable to bear the pain of his wife's demise, the Prince became self-absorbed in his grief. He was totally cut-off from the rest of the world and his family. He roamed about the country aimlessly. Days later he learnt from a Polish patriot, the Jew Yankel, about the Polish uprising. Deciding to sacrifice his personal emotions to a higher ideal, he resigned his job as an ordnance officer to the Emperor. He enlisted himself in the main Polish army facing the Russians on the borders of Lithuania. He called himself Peter, the name being the name of his dead companion.

Prince Roman surpassed the colonel's expectations as a non-commissioned officer and became famous for his resourcefulness and courage. Later he was captivated when he was lost in the miserable crowd of prisoners packed in the casemate of the citadel in which they sought refuge. He was presented before a Commission, which wished him to defend himself.

He was left with a choice of escaping punishment by telling the officers that he joined the rebels on a sudden impulse, after his wife's death, without realizing the highly reprehensible nature of the act, its danger and its dishonour. But Prince Roman indifferent to his retribution chooses to tell the truth that he 'joined the national rising from conviction'. This pronunciation lead to his exile as a convict to the Siberian mines.

Later by way of exceptional grace, he was allowed to serve as common soldier in the Caucasus. He had no civil rights and all communication with him was forbidden. He was literally thrown to a death-in-life situation, and all his fortune after Prince John's (his father's) death was inherited by his daughter.

His later days saw him in ruined health but he was always helpful to his fellow citizens. His own daughter and his aristocratic son-in-law neglected him and failed to believe his good naturedness.

Thus Prince Roman left with a choice of choosing between Russia and Poland chose the side of the Poles, and suffered terribly the fate of a traitor after the uprising failed.

The third story ***"The Tale" (1916)*** bears a significant relationship to Conrad's short novel ***The Shadow - Line***, written in the previous year. But its story is, in the words of a critic, 'almost an exact antithesis' to the novel in its moral theme.

Like the first two stories, this story too deals with moral choices, although it is altogether of a different character. ***"The Tale"*** is a story within a story. A woman asks her husband to tell her one of his simple and professional tales. Responding to her plea the English man tells the tale of a Captain and a Merchant who meet at the sea in two different ships.

He narrates his own story where he, the Captain of a ship, in a fictional war, stops a merchant ship from a neutral country which he suspects of running supplies for the enemy's submarine fleet. The Captain, being sincere, frank and passionate was in strong revolt against the murderous stealthiness and the atrocious callousness of complicities that taint the very source of men's deep emotions and noblest activities. He strongly suspects the activities of the merchant ship, but knows very well that he cannot prove it.

He was then caught in a moral dilemma of whether to allow the merchant ship to go Scott-free or to punish it due to its guilt and falsehood. He was caught in a bewilderment of the action he is to take, for on his judgement hang the lives of many men. If his intuition about the Northman's (the merchant) ship is correct and he let his ship go, countless lives of his countrymen may be lost due to the actions of the enemy's submarines. However, if he is wrong and he sinks the merchant's ship, he will have killed an innocent crew himself. This moral dilemma makes him conduct an interview with the master of the merchant ship but still he is unable to come to a conclusion.

Finally he leads the merchant ship to a deadly ledge of a rock, and thereby brings about the annihilation of the ship. But still he is perplexed if he had attempted at stern retribution or murder and he is extremely anguished at his eventual decision.

The last story in the volume, ***"The Black Mate"*** (1884), is perhaps the most enjoyable and the most puzzling of all Conrad's stories. It is a slender and light-hearted anecdote, which is full of twists and turns.

It is a simple tale of an old seaman called Winston Bunter who was a first mate of a ship called 'Sapphire'. The 'Sapphire' was bound to move from London to Calcutta and Mr.Bunter leaves behind his wife Anne and goes on his vocation.

His companions because of his jet-black hair and black beard called him as the black mate. Captain Johns, the captain of 'Sapphire' was strongly against recruiting elderly men and believed in ghosts and supernatural apparitions to a great extent.

The sensitive Bunter regarded him as snobbish and mean-minded because of his frequent impudent intrusions and his credulity in ghosts. He disliked working with such a fool of a man. In the beginning the narrator, a friend of the Bunters teases the readers about Bunter holding a secret in him. After a huge suspense, which encourages the readers to think Bunter to be a guilty person, he discloses it through Captain Johns that 'Bunter had a command of a ship but lost her in the Indian Ocean, and has not been able to get another ship to command'.

The story is full of slender suspense and the description to Bunter's hair is given undue importance by both the narrator and the other characters.

Once the ship they were travelling had a terrible lurch, due to which Bunter lost some of his valuable articles, which included some bottles, kept unlocked in his drawer. Terribly worried about this loss, Bunter accidentally fell slipping backwards on the brass plates on the steps of the poop-ladders.

In this accident, Bunter lost his raven black hair. On the fourth day of this accident, he looked better and was asked by Captain Johns to give an account of his accident.

To the extreme surprise of everyone the incredulous Bunter who was strongly against supernatural stories pronounced that it was all the work of the spirits in which the Captain believed. He said that he felt the supernatural at the time of his fall. He told this with extreme reluctance, shame and disgust, which of course was not visible to the others. Captain Johns was happy that at last through his own experience Bunter has come to believe about supernatural apparitions. He took great care of Mr.Bunter and was happy at his conversion.

Mr.Bunter one day saw his cropped hair and short beard growing white instead of black. He ascribed this change in him to the workings of the ghost of his supposed victim. Later when the ship arrived at Calcutta he met his wife and his 'ingenious friend', the narrator. He, in a very humorous way told them about how he escaped from the wrath of Captain Johns, after having lost his hair dye in the terrible reeling of the ship. Taking advantage of his accident, he deceived the captain by attributing the change of colour of his hair to the supernatural apparitions. After this he never returned to 'Sapphire' and he left Captain Johns wondering about the mysterious disappearance of his chief mate.

As is typical of Conrad, "***Tales of Hearsay"*** deals with psychological situations of its protagonists. All the four stories in it present before us the principal characters' moral dilemma. The volume of stories is also autobiographical and some of the characters aptly get fixed with Conrad's own life. The protagonists in each of the stories are presented with a moral choice. The characters face moral problems, but are able to solve those in their own way.

The problem of loneliness or of spiritual isolation seems to be an obsession with Conrad. Conrad through his stories seem to say that man is a total master of himself and he can choose between the right and the wrong, the good and the evil, the true and the false if he merely listens to the voice of his conscience. If one chooses the right or the good he does no harm to the world at large; but if he chooses the wrong or the evil, he may be doing good to himself temporarily and from the material point of view only but he would be positively doing some wrong to many others in the world. In "***The Warrior's Soul",*** Tomassov is presented with the difficulty of choosing between honour and friendship. Honour demands him to ignore his personal friend and political enemy De Castel and leave him to his fate to suffer in the snow. But his love for him provokes him to kill him and live the rest of his life with guilt.

Prince Roman is accused of deserting and betraying Russia in choosing to join the Polish uprising. In doing so he not only fails to live up to the expectations of his parents but also faces the terrible consequences of his decision.

The Captain of the ship in "***The Tale"*** is highly baffled and without even bothering to confirm his suspicions, decides to dissolve the supposed enemy's ship. But the uncertainty of the case and his eventual decision haunts him throughout his life and makes him lose his mental peace.

"The Black Mate" although at the superficial level seems quite light-hearted and cheerful, at a deeper level it seems to parody some of the central themes and situations of Conrad's fiction. To come to think of parody in it, it is exciting to think that Bunter is the only mischievous hero of Conrad.

Conrad never failed to deal with moral questions in his fiction and he himself admitted of the moral responsibility that he had when he was involved in his creative writings. Conrad's typical theme is life at sea which he selects as a compensation for the lack of his own freedom and adventure which feeling he absorbed from the tales he had read. His leaving Poland created a lasting contradiction to his patriotic feelings. His recurring theme of desertion, betrayal and remorse, to some extent appears in "***Prince***

Roman" too. The tale also indicates the desertion of his native soil and his failure to live up to the expectations of his parents.

E.M.Forster's "The Celestial Omnibus"

Life and works:

Edward Morgan Forster (1879 – 1970) is a noted English novelist, essayist, critic and short story writer. He was a member of Bloomsbury Group and a good friend of Virginia Woolf.

He was born in London on January 1, 1871 as the son of a cultured family and was educated at Tornbridge. Having lost his father, an architect, at the age of two, his childhood and much of his adult life was dominated by his mother and aunts. It was during his days at King's College, Cambridge that he met members of the later formed Bloomsbury Group. After graduating he travelled in Italy and Greece with his mother and on his return began to write essays and short stories for the liberal *Independent Review.* In 1905 Forster spent several months in Germany as tutor to the children of the Countess Von Armin.

Forster has five novels to his credit and of these five novels four were published before World War I. The first novel ***Where Angels Fear to Tread*** appeared in 1905. This novel, a comedy, with its well - drawn characters and its typical concern with the conflict between two different cultures was well received. In 1906 he lectured on Italian art and history for the Cambridge Local Lectures Board. Then came in 1907, his less attractive work, ***The Longest Journey. A Room With a View,*** set in Italy came out in 1908. It was based partly on the material from extended holidays in Italy with his mother. It is a comic novel, which is about the experience of a young British woman, Lucy Honeychurch in Italy.

Then came his two masterpieces ***Howards End*** (1910) and ***A Passage to India*** (1924). Forster's first major success, however, was ***Howards End***, written in 1910. It is a novel, which centered on an English country house and dealt with the clash between two families, one interested in art and literature, and the other only in business. The book

brought together the themes of money, business and culture. The novel established Forster's reputation, and he embarked upon a new novel with an overtly homosexual theme, ***Maurice,*** and this was published posthumously in 1971 after several revisions.

A Passage to India was the latest of his novels and is unrivalled in English fiction in its presentation of the complex problems which were to be found in relationships between English and native people in India and its portrayal of the Indian scene in all its magic and all its wretchedness.

While at Cambridge, Forster had a close friendship with many great literary personalities who influenced him and sustained him personally and intellectually for most of his life. Some such figures, apart from Virginia Woolf included Bertrand Russell, Lytton Strachey, Leonard Woolf, Mac Carthy, Hugh Meredith, G.M.Trevelyan and so on. Having been an active member of the Bloomsbury group, he contributed reviews and essays to numerous journals, most notably to the *Listener.*

Although Forster published no novels after ***A Passage to India,*** he continued to write short stories and essays until his death in 1970. He published three Collections of short stories, ***The Celestial Omnibus*** (1911), ***The Story of the Siren*** (1920) and ***The Eternal Moment*** (1928), and two critical works, ***Aspects of the Novel*** (1927) and ***Abinger Harvest*** (1936). A Collection of miscellaneous essays, lectures, and talks, some on political and others on artistic themes, appeared in 1951 under the title, ***Two Cheers for Democracy.***

Forster was basically a moralist, concerned with the importance of individual personality, the adjustments it must make with society and the problems it must solve when it comes into contact with a set of values from its own. His views are often as that of a secular humanist's and his work often features characters attempting to understand one other. His humanist views are expressed in his non-fictional essay ***What I Believe.*** His fiction is conservative in form and is in the English tradition of novel of manners. He portrays the emotional deficiencies of the English middle class. In his most noted works, ***A Passage to India*** and ***Howards End*** he explores the irreconcilability of class differences**.** His writings frequently show his repugnance of public schools, imperialism and the subjugation of civil liberties.

The theme of sexuality pervades in some of his novels and it has been argued that his writing can be characterized as moving from heterosexual love to homosexual love. In several volumes of homosexual-themed short stories, Forster explores the theme of homosexuality. This may be attributed to his own homosexual leaning, which was why he refrained from publishing his posthumously published novel ***Maurice*** that had homosexuality as its theme**.**

Forster was however, a writer whose craftsmanship was of the highest order. He advocated culture, tolerance and civilization against barbarity and provincialism. He had great gifts for telling a story in a subtle manner without much regard for conventional plot construction. He often introduces startling unexpected incidents. He presented complex problems to the readers with a cool and often an ironic detachment and developed his themes by means of irony, wit and symbolism. With his discerning mind, he studied the complexities of his characters with a subtle insight and his characters are rounded and vital. His style is often easy and cool and he has gift for good dialogue. Five of his six novels had been filmatised.

Although Forster's literary output was small, the quality of his work was such as to place him among the great writers of his period.

"The Celestial Omnibus" (1914)

"The Celestial Omnibus", E.M.Forster's first Collection of short stories was published in the year 1911. It contains six stories, all written over the previous ten years, and together with the Collection ***The Eternal Moment*** (1928) forms part of Forster's ***Collected Short Stories*** (1947).

The stories included in this collection are: ***"The Story of a Panic", The Other Side of the Edge", "The Celestial Omnibus", "Other Kingdom", "The Curate's Friend" and "The Road from Colonus".***

All these stories exhibit a certain kind of spirituality and the characters seem to be enlightened with their epiphanous moments. The stories also adapt themes form classics and most of these stories are symbolic fantasies or fables.

The first story in the collection ***"The Story of a Panic"*** published in the year 1904 is the first story that Forster ever wrote. It has a commingling of the realistic and the supernatural. The ordinary routine life of the humans is connected with that of the extraordinary incredible happenings. The story is out and out a fantasy and has the entrance of the supernatural in it.

The story opens with Eustace, a 14-year-old English boy holidaymaking with a party of dull people. They go on a picnic to a secluded valley near Ravello, in Italy.
The party consists of two Miss Robinsons, along with their nephew Eustace, Mr.Sandbach, the curate, Mr.Leyland, an artist and the respectable narrator Mr.Tytler and his wife.

Here they encounter the spirit of Pan, a great God who was long presumed to be dead. Pan appears before them as a mysterious 'catspaw of wind' and the entire party are filled with a bestial fear. Everybody, except Eustace flee away madly. Eustace, a repressed and moody boy alone is thrilled at the appearance of Pan. His meeting with the Pan's spirit transforms him permanently. Later on he is seen lying on his back and playing with a lizard. He behaves in a strange manner, talking with every stranger that he comes across in a familiar manner.

He talks uninhibitedly with the ragged old peasant women, throws his arms round the impertinent fisher-lad Gennaro, who is also a waiter at the boarding house. His strange behaviour increases at nightfall. He talks a great deal on 'the great forces and manifestations' of nature. He escapes from his bedroom to the garden to commune with nature. He experiences an epiphanous moment, when the astonished adults force him to return to his room. But the boy easily eludes his relatives and friends and escapes once again with the help of the sympathetic, young waiter. Together they leap from a second-floor window into the courtyard. This jump leads to the death of the waiter but Eustace escapes uninjured. He is also seen leaping down the hillside, laughing and shouting in an inhuman voice.

Thus we see that it is only Eustace who is capable of coping up with the spirit of Pan and he is moved to worship Pan as an all-embracing power. He escapes humanity and enters into the spiritual world. The fear and the anxiety of the adults only show their

spiritual failure. The story, with all its incredibility narrated by the confused narrator shows how the modern people are spiritually ill equipped to face God.

The second story "***The Other Side of the Hedge"*** was first published in 1904. It is a tale, which concerns about life after death. It is highly symbolic and spiritual and describes a man's journey to Heaven. It is an anecdote that is incredible to the ears but a fantasy highly enjoyable.

The tale is about a man who struggles to reach his ultimate goal of heaven. In this process he is being helped by his brother whom he recognizes only at a later stage. Forster uses the symbol of the hedge and water to represent the narrator's passage to an afterlife.

The narrator, when the story opens sits down on a milestone to take rest after jogging in his neighbourhood. He contemplates on the memories of his brother who left him years ago and never met him since then. He gets up to see a light coming from a hedge and suddenly falls into a swimming pool.

Luckily he is rescued from the pool by a man of about 50 years. But his voice is as that of a young man's. The narrator thanks his rescuer and asks about the other side of the hedge. The hedge actually divides the road that is used by mortals from the earthly paradise.

The narrator understands that he was using a different road after his fall and is puzzled about the present place, which has an idyllic setting. Although the place is like a garden with a pleasant blue sky, hills, beech trees and meadows, the man feels it to be a prison. Despite the beauty of the place and the happy people he meets on the way, he is unhappy with it. He asks his rescuer where this place leads to and learns that it leads to nowhere.

Later they come near a gate and from there the narrator sees the road on which he has been several minutes ago. He shouts that he wants to go back to his road but the present gate closes on him. The narrator sees the inhabitants of this new country to be agricultural and unprogressive. He understands that it is a timeless world and that the people there are not bound by time. He shouts that he wants to have a normal life with its

success and failures, happiness and sorrow, love and hatred and his deep moral meaning and its unknown goal.

As the man walks with his companion and guide, he has a desire to compete with him and surpass him. This competitive spirit enables him to continue his journey on the same road, without the realization of its outcome. He persistently tries to find the end of the road, not knowing that the road has no end but only death.

The narrator's inner desire for competition drives him to achieve his goal of happiness, through death. Death comes to him when he drinks a can of beer that was stolen from a passer-by. Drinking the beer, he falls into oblivion. It is at that instant that he recognizes his brother who helped him to reach his ultimate goal of happiness.

Thus Forster uses the hedge and water to illustrate the inception of a new beginning. The man was able to attain total happiness only after his complete submersion with the after life.

The cover story ***"The Celestial Omnibus"*** is an escapist fantasy. It is similar to "***The Other Side of the Hedge"*** in its characters' flight to heaven. Here the vehicle used to go to paradise is a celestial omnibus. It takes a boy and a well-read but emotionally mutilated man to heaven.

A boy who is young and energetic escapes from his dull parents who are facetious and superficial. He also escapes from his suburb, which again is dull and dreary due to its monotony. Mr.Bons, a friend of the boy's parents is actually a litterateur, who collects books for the sake of collecting. He is a pompous fraud who patronizes the boy. The boy being young is nearer the celestial light than his elders. Hence he ascends to heaven in the celestial omnibus. The bus is piloted by Sir Thomas Browne, Jane Austen and Dante on three separate occasions.

He is accompanied by Mr.Bons and on their strange journey, the two meet characters from mythology and literature. Their journey is a romantic fantasy of "heights and depths, swirling clouds, Rhine Maidens and eminent authors". The boy experiences them with his heart, whereas Mr.Bons recognizes them with his mind. He quotes poetry

without having proved it upon his pulses. The boy having felt with his heart remains in heaven.

This story is an allegory and is more than a fable. It is a parable about reading and feeling and is "saved from its sentimentality only by Forster's wit and lightness of touch." (Martin:1976)

"***Other Kingdom"*** published in 1909 is another escapist fantasy. It is a short but highly complex story and it is one of the best stories of Forster. It reminds one of the Greek stories of Daphne and Apollo. Daphne escaped from Apollo's lustful advances by transforming herself into a tree.

Remodelling his story based on this myth in Ovid's ***Metamorphoses,*** Forster relates it through the story's odious narrator Mr.Inskip. Mr.Inskip is the tutor of Harcourt Worters' young ward Jack Ford. The story shows the conflict between Harcourt Worters and his finance Evelyn Beaumont, who runs away from him and turns into a tree.

Harcourt is a wealthy entrepreneur who owns an estate in Hertfordshire. He lives with his large family which includes his mother, two maiden sisters, a cynical but talented ward Jack Ford, Mr.Inskip, his ward's tutor and a retinue of servants. Being a successful businessman he wishes to possess everything including his wife.

He is engaged to be married to a simple, unsophisticated and beautiful woman Evelyn Beaumont. She is psychologically a free sprit. Her inexperience and innocence leads her to be engaged to Harcourt, who is not suitable for her.

As wedding gift Harcourt buys her Other Kingdom Copse, a small beech wood adjacent to his own property. He wants to fence it off from the out side world and build an asphalt path between it and his house. But Evelyn is strongly against this idea. "I don't want to be fenced in… I hate fences. And bridges. And all paths". Furthermore she feels that boys and girls of the village should be let in to visit the copse and carve their initials as usual in the barks of the trees. But as is typical of the rich man, Harcourt determinedly builds the fence and cuts off the outside world from theirs. This seclusion makes Evelyn feel dejected and their conflict comes to a head when Harcourt gets hold of Ford's 'practically private notebook'. He reads Ford's love poems to Evelyn in it and expels him for the piece of treachery. He considers Evelyn to be his property and Evelyn for her part

is shocked at this revelation. She also dislikes Harcourt's aristocratic treatment and finally manages to escape. The climax of the story shows Evelyn running towards Other Kingdom and Harcourt chasing her. This image brings to our minds the chase made by Apollo after Daphne. The story in fact parodies this legend. The escaped Evelyn like Daphne becomes a dryad of her own wood.

The story ends with Harcourt suspecting Evelyn of having run away with Ford. He finally meets Jack Ford who is in exile along with Inskip. Ford is ironically seen reading Sophocles' 'Oedipus Coloneus'. Ford is able to understand the free and impulsive spirit of Evelyn which had actually made her escape from Harcourt's possession.

The story carefully dramatizes the confrontation that takes place between Evelyn and Harcourt and it also dramatizes the confrontation of opposites like the true and the sham, the ugly and the beautiful, the civilized and the natural, the dead and the vital and so on.

The story "***The Curate's Friend"*** was written in 1907. It is a tale of a young curate's encounter with a Pan-like faun. This encounter transforms him and he rises beyond such concepts of guilt, sin and conformity.

The curate meets the faun while he was picnicking with his fiancée Emily, her mother and another young man. The faun offers to make him wealthy. Scorning the offer, the curate asks the faun to make others happy. He challenges the faun to tempt his ladylove. The faun challenged this not-too-humble curate and makes Emily practice infidelity. Emily forgetting her love for the curate falls for the young man.

The curate finds Emily and the young man locked in each other's arms. Although he knew it was not the fault of his ladylove, he scorns her and decides to stay a respected bachelor, the rest of his life. His encounter with the pagan nature helped him to serve his Christian parishioners, who in turn reward him materially and spiritually.

The story has homosexual overtones although a superficial reading suggests the temptation that mankind is often left with.

"***The Road from Colonus"*** is the last story in the collection. It was published in 1903 and it ironically recalls Sophocles' "***Oedipus at Colonus".*** The tale is a variation of its theme and best brings out the similarity between Oedipus and Mr.Lucas, and between their daughters Antigone and Ethel.

Mr.Lucas is an aging querulous English man who has a lifetime wish of visiting Greece. He is impatient with his old age and wants to do everything independently without anyone's assistance. But the young people especially his youngest daughter Ethel who is unselfish and affectionate is very anxious about him.

It was generally understood that Ethel would devote her life to her father and be the comfort of his old age. Mrs. Forman and the others reffered to her as Antigone and Mr.Lucas too was happy enough to play the role of Oedipus.

Visiting Greece, accompanied by his daughter Ethel, a young Mr.Arthur Graham and a garrulous middle-aged Mrs.Forman, Mr.Lucas is highly thrilled and excited. He becomes restless and resistant to the idea of an expected passive, peaceful death from old age. He is possessed by a strange desire to "die fighting". It is at this time that something mysterious happens in Greece. He finds a great old hollow tree from which a spring of water flows. He climbs into the tree and suddenly sees all the things as "intelligible and good". Although the surrounding country is hot and dry, here there is shade and a spring – a spring that pours water in a mysterious way.

Mr.Lucas, much away from his party members, steps inside the trunk and tastes the sweet waters of the tree. At this time he felt that the world of time was invaded by eternity. But when the rest of the party finds him he is oddly repelled by them. He found them "intolerable, superficial, commonplace and spasmodic". He feels that none could ever share the revelation that he experienced. He is afraid that he will lose this wonderful feeling and therefore decides not to leave this place. He tells the others of his plans to stay at an inn near the old tree, but the others are horrified and force him to leave with them.

Back in England, sometime later, Ethel is now about to be married. Mr. Lucas, old and fretful, has nothing to look forward to but the arrival of his sister Julia, whom he both feared and hated. She is to take care of him after Ethel's marriage. He complains about

everything. He says, “there’s nothing I dislike more than running water.” This is due to the annoyance of his disappointment with the mystical Greek Spring.

That morning a gift arrives from Mrs.Forman in Greece wrapped in a Greek newspaper. Ethel unwrapping the asphodel bulbs from the newspaper reads the news of ‘a rural disaster” in it. She reads aloud the news of a tree that was blown down at Plataniste, crushing to death the five occupants of the Khan (inn). And from the date of the paper, she clearly understood that the accident occurred on the day that Mr.Lucas and his companions left. Ethel was aghast at the narrowness of the escape, and for a long time is silent. She at last said: “Such a marvellous deliverance does make one believe in Providence”.

Her shock and distress does not touch Mr.Lucas who no longer cares about anything and who is only bothered about the present. Without replying he proceeds to write a letter of complaint to his landlord. He is not affected by this incident because his relatives and friends have robbed him of his dramatic death and have crushed his desire to “die fighting”. They made him return to England, to be abandoned by his Antigone, and to age and die slowly without much dignity. His relatives think that they have rescued him but instead he has been fatally diminished. They have damaged his spiritual well being by rescuing his physical.

Thus we see that some of Forster’s stories in the collection ***“The Celestial Omnibus”*** are preoccupied with the theme of spirituality. The inner life of the protagonists of the stories and their spiritual inclinations, however superficial is given to us. Along with spirituality, creeps up the moral leanings of Forster. He believes in qualities like tolerance, sympathy and good temper. He gives importance to personal relationships. His stories are sometimes allegorical as is the case of ***“The Story of a Panic”*** and “***The Other Side of the Hedge”.***

Travel, forms another theme of Forster’s stories. Through travel the characters come to a kind of new experience – an experience that lead them to spiritual realization. In “***The Story of Panic”,*** Eustace and his party, travel to Italy where they encounter the great Greek God Pan. A small boy goes to Heaven in the Celestial Omnibus. An elderly Englishman experiences an epiphanies in a grove of plane trees in Greece. Another English man reaches his ultimate goal of Heaven through his travel.

Most of these stories are fantastic and are far removed from reality. They are sometimes elusive. There is a mixture of the ordinary with the extraordinary. Supernatural elements and mysterious happenings take the readers to a world of fantasy. The theme of homosexuality also surfaces in these stories when an in-depth reading is given.

Forster is also fond of introducing classical characters to English readers. Most of the stories in this collection has themes from the classics or has characters, which appear verisimilitude to the classical characters made suitable to the modern condition.

Above all Forster's stories enchant us and take us to a world of adventure. The characters seek for a salvation through their adventurous attempts.

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Graham Greene : The Shades of Greene

Introduction

One of the most prolific and widely read English novelists of the twentieth century, Greene is known for both his best-selling suspense novels and for his more serious works of fiction, particularly the novels *Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory,* and *The Heart of the Matter*. Greene has also been lauded for such short stories as "The Basement Room," "The Destructors," and "Under the Garden," all of which are generally considered classics in the genre. The protagonists of Greene's fiction are typically people torn by personal struggles with Roman Catholic concepts of sin and salvation, reflecting the author's concern with religious and moral questions. Greene also frequently addressed such themes as

lost childhood, dreams, literature and art, and politics. In addition to writing fiction, Greene experimented with many other genres, including drama, film criticism, and travel writing. Grahame Smith has written that Greene's diverse writing career testifies "to a creative energy that… sought to explore the forms open to literary imagination, and to the fact that Greene [was] a writer in the deepest, as well as the widest, sense of the term." *The Shades of Greene* is the televised stories of Greene published by Penguin Books in 1977.

Biographical Information

Born in Berkhamsted, a village northwest of London, Greene was one of six children. His father was the headmaster at Berkhamsted school, where Greene was educated. The regimented life and lack of privacy at the school, along with his father's constant moralizing on the sinfulness of sex, deeply affected Greene. A withdrawn child, he complained of terrible boredom, attempted suicide several times as a youth, and suffered a nervous breakdown at the age of sixteen. Despite a period of psychoanalysis in 1921, Greene attempted suicide six more times during his years as a student at Balliol College, Oxford. After graduating from Balliol in 1925, Greene worked as a subeditor on the Nottingham *Journal* and the London *Times*, later serving as a film critic and then literary editor for the *Spectator*. He married Vivien Dayrell-Browning in 1927, and the couple later had two children. While in Nottingham, Greene converted to Roman Catholicism. In his memoirs, he explains he did so partly to satisfy his wife and partly "to kill the time," but the Roman Catholic religion would later become a powerful force in both his life and literary works. Greene published his first novel, *The Man Within*, in 1929; he achieved popular success with his fourth novel, *Stamboul Train*, published as *Orient Express* in the United States. Greene separated from his wife in 1966, and shortly, after he established permanent residence in Antibes on the French Riviera. Over the rest of his long and prolific career, Greene would continue to produce almost one book per year. He also traveled to such places as the Tabasco and Chiapas regions of Mexico, French Indochina, the Belgian Congo, Haiti, and Cuba during periods of social and political unrest to gather details for his works. Greene died in 1991 in Vevey, Switzerland of Leukemia.

An Assessment of his writings :

Greene's first published books was BABBLING APRIL (1925), a collection of poetry. It was followed by two novels in the style of Joseph Conrad. The title for THE MAN WITHIN (1929) was taken from Sir Thomas Browne's (1605-1682) "There's another man within me that's angry with me." Greene started to write it after an operation for appending on his sick leave from *The Times*. The film version of the book, starring Michael Redgrave and Richard Attenborough, was made in 1947. Greene received a letter from Istanbul in which the film was praised for its daring homosexuality.

"In Stamboul Train for the first and last time in my life I deliberately set out to write a book to please, one which with luck might be made into a film. The devil looks after his own and I succeeded in both aims, though the film rights seemed at the time an unlikely dream, for before I had completed the book, Marlene Dietrich had appeared in Shanghai *Express*, the English had made *Rome Express*, and even the Russians had produced their railway film, *Turksib*. My film came last and was far and away the worst, though not so bad as a later television production by the BBC." (from Introduction, in *Stamboul Train*, 1974).

After the unsuccessful attempts as a novelist, Greene was about to abandon writing. His first popular success was STAMBOUL TRAIN (1932), a thriller with a topical and political flavour. Greene wrote it deliberately to please his readers and to attract filmmakers. One of its characters, Quin Savory, was said to be a parody of J.B. Priestley-Greene depicted nastily the writer as a sex offender. Priestley had just published a novel, which led some reviewers to compare him with Dickens. In Greene's story Savory was a popular novelist in the manner of Dickens. Next year he attacked another well-loved writer, Beatric Potter, in an article called 'Beatrix Potter : A Critical Estimate'. Also the American actress, Shirley Temple, aged nine, got her share when Greene wrote in the magazine *Night and Day* that "her admirers-middle-aged men and clergymen-respond to her dubious coquetry, to the sight of her well-shaped and desirable little body, packed with enormous vitaity…" This time Greene had to pay for his remark.

THE CONFIDENTIAL AGENT (1939) is a problematic work. In it the mysterious Forbes/Furstein, a rich Jew, plans to destroy traditional English culture from within. However, in 1981 the author was invited to Israel and awarded the Jerusalem Prize. He had visited Israel in 1967 for the first time, and spent some of the time lying against a sand dune under Egyptian fire, and thinking that the Six Day War "was a bit of misnomer. The war was too evidently still in progress." Greene's religious convictions did not become overtly apparent in his fiction until THE BRIGHTON ROCK (1938), which depicted a teenage gangster Pinkie with a kind of demonic spirituality. Religious themes were explicit in the novels THE POWER AND THE GLORY (1940), THE HEART OF THE MATTER (1948), which Greene characterized as "a success in the great vulgar sense of that term," and THE END OF THE AFFAIR (1915), which established Greene's international reputation. The story, partly based on Greene's own experiences, was about a lover, who is afraid of loving and being loved. These novels were compared with the works of such French Catholic writers as Georges Bernanos and Francois Mauriac. "At a stroke I found myself regarded as a Catholic author in England, Europe and America- the last title to which I had ever aspired," Greene later complained.

Greene returned constantly to the problem of grace. In his review of *The Heart of the Matter* George Orwell attacked Greene's concept of 'the sanctified sinner': "He appears to share the idea, which has been floating around ever since Baudelaire, that there is something rather *distingue* in being damned; Hell is a sort of high-class nightclub, entry to which is reserved for Catholics only." The novel was set in Sierra Leone where the author had spent a miserable period during the war. Major Scobie, the hero of the story, dies saying: 'Dear God, I love…' The rest is silence.

The End of the Affair was drew partly on Greene's affair with Catherine Walston, whom he had met in 1946. She was married to one of the richest men in England, Henry Walston, a prominent supporter of the Labour Party. Catherine was the mother of five children. Greene's relationship with Walston continued over ten years and produced another book, AFTER TWO YEARS (1949), which was printed 25 copies. Most of them were later destroyed. In *The End of the Affair*

Catherine was 'Sarah Miles' and the writer himself the popular novelist 'Maurice Bendix', who narrates the story and tries to understand why Sarah left him. Maurice discovers that when he was injured in a bomb blast during the war, Sarah promised God that she would end the affair if Maurice is saved. Sarah dies of a pneumonia. Maurice's response to his divine rival is: "I hate you as though You existed."

The Third Man is among Greene's most popular books. The story about corruption and betrayal gave basis for the film classic under the same title. Successful partners on *The Fallen Idol* (1948) and, *Our Man in Havanna* (1960), Graham Greene and the director Carol Reed achieved the peak of their collaboration on this film. "I am getting terribly bored with… everybody except Carol who gets nicer and nicer on acquaintance, "Greene wrote to Catherine Walston from Vienna in 1948. In The *Third Man* Holly Martin (Joseph Cotton) arrives in Vienna to discover that his friend Harry Lime (Orson Welles) has died in a car accident. It turns out that Lime was involved in criminal activities, and Lime's girlfriend Anna Schmidt (Alida Valli) suspects that his death may not have been accidental. A porter recalls a mysterious third man at the scene of the death. One evening Martins sees a man obscured by the shadows, who suddenly disappears-he is Lime. They meet and Lime rationalizes his villainy in a speech at a fairground Ferris wheel: "In Italy for 30 years the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder, bloodshed. They produced Michelangelo, Leonardo Da Vinci and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they had brotherly love, five hundred years of democracy and peace. And what did that produce. The cuckoo clock." Major Calloway (Trevor Howard) threatens to deport Anna and Martins betrays Lime to secure her freedom. In a chase through the sewers Martins kills Lime, and Anna leaves him after the funeral. – Music, composed by Anton Karas, became highly popular. "The reader will notice many differences between the story and the film, and he should not imagine these changes were forced on an unwilling author: as likely as not they were suggested by the author. The film in fact is better than the story because it is in this case the finished state of the story." (Greene in *Ways of Escape*) The character of Harry Lime inspired later a series on American radio, performed by Welles, short stories published by the *News of the World*, and the TV series of *The Third Man*, starring Michael Rennie. And in Peter Jackson's *Heavenly Creatures* (1994) Kate Winslet fantasized about Harry.

Greene's ability to create debate and his practical jokes brought him often into headlines. He recommended Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* as his 'Book of the Year' in the *Sunday Times* and praised the men involved in the Great Train Robbery. In a letter to the *Spectator* he proposed a scheme to bankrupt the British postal system. In the 1950s Greene's emphasis switched from religion to politics. He lived at the Majestic hotel in Saigon and made trips to Hong Kong and Singapore. In 1953 he was in Kenya, reporting the Man Mau upraising, and in 1956 he spent a few weeks in Stalinist Poland, and tried to help a musician to escape to the West. In *Ways of Escape* Greene told a story about the Other, who called himself Graham Greene, but whose real name was perhaps John Skinner or Meredith de Varg. In the 1950s the Other lost his passport in India, and was sentenced to two years rigorous imprisonment. A decade later he was photographed in a Jamaican paper with "Missus drink," an attractive woman. "Some years ago in Chile, after I had been entertained at lunch by President Allende, a right-wing paper in Santiago announced to its readers that the President had been deceived by an impostor. I found myself shaken by a metaphysical doubt. Had *I* been the impostor all the time? Was I the other? Was I Skinner? Was it even possible that I might be Meredith de Varg?"

The Asian setting stimulated Greene's THE QUIET AMERICAN (1955), which was about American involvement in Indochina. The story focuses on the murder of Alden Pyle (the American of the title). The narrator, Thomas Fowler, a tough-minded, opium-smoking journalist, arranges to have Pyle killed by the local rebels. Pyle has stolen Fowler's girl friend, Phuong, and he is connected to a terrorist act, a bomb explosion in a local café. *The Quit American* was considered sympathetic to Communism in the Soviet Union and a play version of the novel was produced in Moscow. OUR MAN IN HAVANNA (1958) was born after a journey to Cuba, but Greene had the story sketched already much earlier. On one trip he asked a taxi driver to buy him a little cocaine and got boracic powder. The novel was made into a film in 1959, directed by Carol Reed. During the filming Greene met Ernest Hemingway, and was invited to his house for drinks. THE COMEDIANS (1966) depicted Papa Doc Duvalier's repressive rule in Haiti, and THE NONORARY CONSUL (1973) was a hostage drama set in Paraguay. THE HUMAN FACTOR (1978) stayed on the *New York Times* bestseller list for six months. In the story an agent falls in love with a black woman during an assignment in South Africa. The book did not satisfy Greene and he planned to leave it in a drawer-it hung "like a dead albatross" around his neck. Interested to hear what his friend Kim Philby thought of it he sent a copy

to Moscow, but denied that his double agent Maurice Castle was based on Philby. TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT (1969), which was filmed by George Cukor, took the reader on on journey round the world with an odd couple, a retired short-sighted bank manager and his temperamental Aunt Augusta, whose two big front teeth gives her "a vital Neanderthal air."

Major Works of Short Fiction

Greene's first short story collection, *The Basement Room*, was published in 1935, but the did not receive critical attention for his short fiction until *Nineteen Stories* appeared in 1947. The pieces in this work were written between 1929 and 1948 and many originally appeared in such journals as the *New Yorker, Harper's,* and the *Commonweal*. In the preface to this collection, Greene noted: "I am only too conscious of the defects of these stories… The short story is an exacting form which I have not properly practiced: I present these tales merely as the byproducts of a novelist's career." Although at the time Greene was somewhat unsure about his talents as a short story writer, this volume contains some of his best-known stories, including "The Basement Room" and "The Hint of an Explanation." "The Basement Room" centers on a seven-year-old boy, Philip Lane, who is left by his parents with Mr. and Mrs. Baines, the butler and the housekeeper. Philip comes to learn that Mr. Baines is having an affair with a young woman, and this knowledge inadvertently causes the accidental death of Mrs. Baines. Narrated by Philip sixty years after the event, "The Basement Room" addresses such themes as childhood innocence, betrayal, trust, and the nature of evil. "The Hint of an Explanation," which first appeared in the American edition of *Nineteen Stories* and was later included in *Twenty-One Stories*, is often called a moral drama because of its focus on such religious concerns as temptation, compassion, and the origins of faith. The story begins when two men meet on a train. One of the men, David, relates to the narrator of the story a childhood experience that caused him to enter the priesthood. As a young altar boy, David was persuaded by the village baker, Blacker, an atheist, to steal a consecrated common host from his church. In return, Blacker would give him an electric train set. Although David does steal the host, he foils Blacker at the last minute by swallowing it. Another of Greene's most highly acclaimed works of short fiction, "The Destructors," appeared in *Twenty-One Stories*. Set in London's Wormsley Common, much of which was destroyed or damaged during the German bombing of World War II, this story centers on a local

gang of boys. After two of its members, Trevor and Blackie, struggle for leadership of the group, the boys decide to systematically gut one of the last standing houses in the neighborhood, a building designed by famed English architect Christopher Wren. Exploring such themes as class structure, politics, creation, innocence, and depravity, "The Destructors" is considered one of Greene's most disturbing short stories. *A Sense of Reality* contains only four stories, with "Under the Garden" comprising more than half of the book. This story focuses on William Wilditch, who, suffering from lung cancer, returns to the house where he spent his boyhood holidays in order to confront a childhood memory that has obsessed him throughout his life. In this work, Greene examines lost childhood, memory, innocence, dreams, and the art of fiction writing. This collection also contains the story "A Visit to Morin," which relates the story of a man who meets a French Catholic writer whose works he admires. After their accidental meeting during mass in a village church, the two man share a drink and discuss faith and belief. *May We Borrow Your Husband?* contains twelve stories, many of which are set in the south of France focus on marital relationships. The pieces in this collection are often described as being more humorous and playful than Greene's other short stories; Greene himself once noted they were written "in a single mood of sad hilarity." "Cheap in August," for example, relates the experiences of an English-born woman, Mary Watson, who is no vacation in Jamaica while her husband is conducting research in London for his book on James Thompson's *The Seasons*. Mary, looking for sexual adventure, has an affaire with an older, overweight, and uncouth American men. "May We Borrow Your Husband?" tells the story of two homosexual interior designers, Tony and Stephen, who attempt to seduce a young husband from his wife while the couple is honey morning in Antibes. *The Last Word*, which appeared in Britain and the United States a few weeks before Greene's death, collects works written from 1923 to 1989, with only four of the stories previously appearing in book form. This work varies greatly in subject matter and addresses such themes as corruption, disillusionment, failures of communication, and death.

Critical Response

Greene has been the source of much contention among critics. He has been lauded as a master novelist who examined the place of religion and morality in twentieth-century society; he has also been decried as a melodramatist who relied too heavily on coincidence and metaphor. Although the majority of critics agree that Greene was an able storyteller, particularly in his delineation of setting and his skillful plot constructions, opinions vary

widely concerning his ability to create believable characters and artfully communicate themes. Some of the most contentious critical debate has centered on Greene's depiction of Catholic concerns, even though Greene noted that Catholicism marked only "one period" of his career. Reaction to Greene's short fiction, which has critical ambivalence toward Greene's work, with some reviewers dismissing his stories as mere preparatory sketches for his novels or simple burlesque pieces. Some have also stated that Greene used his short stories only as vehicles to work out traumatic events from his childhood or to didactically present a single theme or idea. Others, however, have called some of his short stories genuine masterpieces, and such works as "The Basement Room" and "The Destructors" have been widely anthologized and studied. Greene himself stated in the introduction to his *Collected Stories*: "I believe I have never written anything better than 'The Destructors,' 'A Chance for Mr. Lever,' 'Under the Garden,' and 'Cheap in August.' "Although earlier critics tended to focus on moral themes in Greene's works and characterized him as a "Catholic writer," more recent scholars have command on his political, social, and aesthetic themes and his use of myth, psychology, and symbolism. Recent critics have also placed more emphasis on Greene's short stories, underscoring the important role they played in the development of his writing, and have suggested they will garner wider and more serious scholarly attention in the future. Richard Kelly has concluded that Greene's short stories, "when reviewed in their entirety,… reveal a lifelong psychodrama that reflects his addiction to excitement, travel, and writing itself. Further, these tales reveal his persistent battle with the demons of his youth and his ability to transform them into characters and themes and later to shape them into religious, political, and social issues."