LITERATURE IN ENGLISH (1660-1798) - II

Code No. EN1007-II

M. A. English (Previous)
Semester-II

DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
MAHARSHI DAYANAND UNIVERSITY, ROHTAK
(A State University established under Haryana Act No. XXV of 1975)
NAAC 'A+' Grade Accredited University

Maharshi Dayanand University
ROHTAK – 124 001

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JOHN DRYDEN

All for Love

1. All for Love: An Introduction

All for Love is one of the most powerful dramas on the theme of illicit love. Here the persons who are in love with each other occupy the top most positions in their communities: Antony is one of the two rulers of the Roman empire and his partner Octavius Caesar as compared to him is just a boy, meaning thereby that Antony is the mightiest man in the establishment of the Roman empire; and Cleopatra the Queen of Egypt is as Serapion says the queen of several nations, and has so much gold that she gives gold-pieces to even messengers who bring welcome news to her. But since they are not husband and wife, their love for each other is illegitimate and it is this love that causes their ruin. The drama embodies the view that if such a mighty man as Antony and such a rich queen as Cleopatra have to lose their all on account of their illegitimate love, who else can escape utter ruin if he or she falls in illegitimate love?

Just as in Sophocleas' play *Oedipus Rex* there is no rain and the kingdom has become a desert because the king has committed the sin of marrying his own mother, in the same way in All for Love, since Cleopatra, the queen of the land, and Antony, one of the two rulers of the Roman empire, have developed illicit relations, the Supreme Being is communicating his disapproval of it by making unnatural things happen. The fact has been mentioned by Serapion, a priest of Iris in the opening lines of the drama :

Portent and prodigies are grown so frequent
That they have lost their name. Our fruitful Nile
Flowed ere the wonted season, with a torrent
So unexpected and so wondrous fierce
That the wild deluge overtook the haste
Even of the hinds that watched it : men and beasts
Were borne above the tops of trees that grew.

If the flowing of the river was unexpected so was its receding:

... with so swift an ebb the flood drove backward,
It slipped from underneath the scaly herd :
Here monstrous ***phocae*** *panted on the shore;*
Forsaken dolphins there with their broad tails
Lay lashing the departing waves; hard by 'em,
Sea-horses floundering in the slimy mud
Tossed up their heads and dashed the ooze about 'em.

Nay , there was, as he reports, an earthquake too:

Last night, between the hours of twelve and one,
In a lone aisle o' th' temple while I walked,
A whirlwind rose, that with a violent blast ,
Shook all the dome: the doors around me clapped;
The iron wicket that defends the vault
Where the long race of Ptolemies is laid
Burst open, and disclosed the mighty dead.
From out each monument, in order placed,
An armed ghost start up; the boy-king last
Reared his inglorious head. A peal of groans
Then followed, and a lamentable voice
Cried, 'Egypt is no more!'

Since Cleopatra is the boy-king's widow it sounds reasonable for his ghost and the ghosts of his forefathers to be offended by Cleopatra's illicit relations with Antony and to come out of their graves armed. And one can foresee the end: both Antony and Cleopatra will lose their lives for their misdeed.

Serapion's interpreting these incidents as "portents and prodigies" or the indications of the Supreme Being's disapproval of the illicit relations between Cleopatra and Antony makes it evident that there are at least some people who regard it as bad for Cleopatra to be false to her dead husband.

One's extra-marital love affair can result in misery owing to the beloved's not being faithful to the lover, or the lover's being cruel or evil-designed. Dryden's showing that Cleopatra is true to Antony and Antony is very kind-hearted and well-meaning signifies that according to him Antony and Cleopatra meet their doom not because there is anything wanting in their sincerity towards each other but sheerly because their love is illegitimate.

All for Love was first performed in December 1677 and had been perhaps written early that year. A play like this was needed in the Restoration age as it is said to be an age in which the people associated with the royal court delighted in having mistresses. Such people needed to be told the story of Antony and Cleopatra so that they might realize that if such a mighty emperor as Antony was ruined by illegitimate relations, such relations would very easily ruin smaller fries.

It was Plutarch who first told the story of the love of Antony in his book *Fifty Parallel Lives of Greece and* ***Rome*****.** This story was treated by William Shakespeare in his drama *Antony and Cleopatra.* It is this story that has been taken up for treatment in the drama *All for Love* by John Dryden. John Dryden's treatment of the story is in several respects different from Shakespeare's in *Antony and Cleopatra*. For instance, Dryden's Cleopatra is genuinely in love with Antony while Shakespeare's Cleopatra is often suspected to be faithless and frail. Dryden explicitly says that in his prologue.

> *I could name more : a wife and mistress too;*
> *Both (to be plain) too good for most of you:*
> *The wife well-natured, and the mistress true.*

2. The Restoration Age

The Restoration age was the period in which efforts were made to convert the psalm-singing England back into 'merry' England and what was happening disturbed not only the Puritans but also neutral citizens and John Milton was pained to find people behaving like the sons of Belial about whom he writes in *Paradise Lost:*

In Courts and Palaces he also Reigns
And in luxurious Cities, where the noise
Of riot ascend, above their loftiest Tow'rs,
And injury and outrage: And when night
Darkens the Streets, then wonder for the Sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.

(PL, I, ll. 497-502)

While discussing the Restoration atmosphere David Daiches writes in *A Critical History of English Literature* Vol. III: "The reaction against Puritan manners and morals was inevitable. It was all the more violent because many of the returned Cavaliers had spent their exile in France and become expert in French wit and French gallantry, and because the King himself, an indolent sensualist possessed of both wit and cunning, encouraged an atmosphere of hedonistic liveliness at Court. Charles set the tene for the Court Wits, and the Court Wits set the tone if not for all the literature of the period at least for a certain segment of it, notably dramatic comedy."[1]

One of the chief development of the period was the revival of the drama. The theatres had been closed by the Puritans in 1642 and for fourteen years there was no regular performance of drama. It was in 1656 that Sir William D' Avenant obtained permission to open for the public an "allegorical entertainment by declamation and music, after the manner of the Ancients". It was called *The First Day's Entertainment at Rutland House.* This first attempt was followed by his more ambitious show *The Seige of Rhodes* the same year. This play can be regarded as the germ of both the English opera and the English heroic Tragedy. This play was designed to recommend virtue "under the forms of valour and conjugal love." When monarchy was restored in 1660 D'Avenant was given the charge of one of the two companies of actors and one of the two theatres authorized by the royal command.

But since only two theatres were in operation in London, it is obvious that the number of theatre-goers was not as large as it was in the Renaissance period when there flourished a host of theatres in London and crowds thronged to view the plays of Ben Jonson and Shakespeare. It is believed that since the plays of this period depicted the life of the upper circle of society the people of the other sections of society kept themselves away from the theatres as they considered the wasy of the upper circle immoral. That means the drama of this period was not the drama of the masses. This applies especially to the species called the comedy of manners.

John Dryden is the most distinguished playwright of the Restoration Age. He wrote both comedies and tragedies but it was as a writer of heroic plays that he became popular. Dryden's chief heroic plays were *Tyrannic Love* (1669), *The Conquest of Granada* (1670), and *Aurung-Zebe* (1675). Of them *Aurung-Zebe* is considered to be the best one though *The Conqest of Granada* became very popular. The hero of a heroic play is a valiant fighter who can kill thousands of soldiers in a day in the battlefield, but when he is back home he is voraciously active in love. He also indulges in rantings and uses bombastic language. A heroic play is usually written in heroic couplet.

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[1] A Critical History of English Literature Vol. III (New Delhi : Allied, 2000 [1960]), pp. 537-38

The other dramatists who wrote heroic plays were Roger Boyle, Nathaniel Lee and Thomas Otway. Roger Boyle wrote six heroic plays of which *Mustapha, the Son of Solyman the Magnificent* is regarded as the best. In this play Roxolana, the empress, plots against her step-son Mustapha to secure the throne for her son Zauger. But the two boys are devoted friends. Even when they fall in love with the same girl, they are large-hearted enough not to become hostile to each other. However their father is prevailed upon to decree Mustapha's death. This pains Zauger so much that he too puts an end to his life saying:

But now over love I have the conquest got;
Though love divided us, yet death shall not.

Nathaniel Lee wrote *Nero* and *Sophonisba or Hannibal's Overthrow*. In *Sophonisba* he treats the theme of valour and love. Here we have two contrasted pairs of lovers and the despairing lover commits suicide. Otway wrote *Alcibiades* and *Don Carlos*.

Comedy of manners is another dramatic form that came into existence during the Restoration period. The people who wrote the comedies of this kind are Etherege, Wycherley, Congreve and Farquhar. In a comedy of manners the whole plot moves round a love intrigue. The hero or rather the protagonist of such a comedy is a gallant in the sense that he is loved by a number of ladies who vie with one another to win his heart and the lady who succeeds prides herself on her achievement. The ladies in such a comedy try to gain lovers. Those who agree to marry are realistic in their approach and surrender only a few of their privileges and remain independent in the rest. Faithfulness to the husband or to the wife does not exist here and usually the husband is regarded as a villain as he is an obstruction between the lover and the beloved. Even old ladies try to get husbands and regard singleness as a cause of ill-health.

3. *All for Love* as a Heroic Tragedy

The hero of a heroic tragedy is active in two fields, namely fighting and love. When this hero goes to a battle-field he is a matchless fighter and kills hundreds a day, nay even thousands a day, and when he is back from the battlefield he devotes himself whole-heartedly to his beloved. Dryden's Antony has a glorious past as a fighter. He and Ventidius recollect his heroic feats in the past. Antony once fought Cassius and cared a nought for a steepy hill between him and Cassius' camp:

.. I darted upward
To Cassius' Camp; in vain the steepy hill
Opposed my way, in vain a war of spears
Sung round my head, and planted all my shield:
I won the trenches while my foremost men
Lagged on the plain below.

(AL I, i, 441-46)

He also recollets his brave fight against the Parthians. At that time he was wearing an iron armour and was at the head of his troops which beat the Parthians (*AL.* II, i, 427-28). He recollects the days when he became the master of the empire:

Fortune came smiling to my youth, and wooed it,
And purple greatness met my ripened years.
When I first came to empire, I was borne
On tides of people crowding my triumphs
The wish of nations! And the willing world
Received me as its pledge of future peace: ....

(AL I, i, 297-302)

Dryden tries to justify the heroic tragedy in his *Essay on Heroic Plays*, which he wrote as a Preface to *The Conquest of Granada*, when he asserts that "an heroic poet is not tied to a bare representation of what is true, or exceeding probable; but... he might let himself loose to visionary objects, and to the representation of such things, as depending not on sense, and therefore not to be comprehended by knowledge, may give him a freer scope for imagination."

The play *All for Love* has several characteristics of a heroic tragedy even though many critics refuse to give it that title. It is like the hero of a heroic tragedy that Antony speaks when he is going to the field to attack Caesar and says:

Our men are armed.
Unbar the gate that looks to Caesar's Camp.
I would revenge the Treachery he meant me,
And long security makes conquest easy.

(AL, II, i, ll. 453 - 56)

His sentence "I would revenge the treachery he meant me" signifies that he is going to unleash terror in the battlefield. And he actually does that as on coming back victorious from the field he tells Cleopatra :

... I sprung forwards
And added all my strength to every blow.

(AL III, i, ll, 3 -4)

and

Suppose me come from the Phlegraean plains,
Where gasping giants lay, left by my sword,
And mountain tops pared off each other blow
To bury those I slew.

(AL III, i, ll. 13-16)

He likes to be treated like one who has, left giants who are lying in the battlefield and whom even mountains help in burying his enemies.He is so valiant that even such big objects of nature as the mountains come to become his tools!

It is like the hero of a heroic tragedy that Antonio rants when he says to Ventidius:

We'll not divide our stars, but side by side
Fight emulous, and with malicious eyes
Survey each other's acts; so every death
Thou giv'st, I'll take on me as a just debt,
And pay thee back a soul.

(AL V, i, 173-77)

and hopes

Who knows but we may pierce through all their troops,
And reach my veterans yet?' Tis worth the tempting
T' o'er leap this gulf of fate,
And leave our wondering destinies behind.

(AL V, i, 185-88)

Like the heroes of the heroic tragedies Antony kills thousands in the battlefield. For example, here is a description of one of his war-like accomplishments given by himself to Ventidius:

We can conquer,
You see, without your aid. We have dislodged their troops
They look on us at distance, and like curs
'Scaped from the lion's paws, they bay far off,
And lick their wounds, and faintly threaten war.
Five thousand Romans with their faces upward
Lie breathless on the plain.

(AL III, i, 51-57)

It is difficult to kill even five thousand flies. But Antony has, as he says, killed five thousand Romans!

It Antony is a Mars in the battlefield he is an Eros at home. When he is back with Cleopatra he is back with his "brighter Venus" (AL, III, i, 11) He declares to her that he fought in order to gain her and that she is his sole goal:

Receive me, goddess!
Let Caesar spread his subtle nets, like Vulcan:
In thy embraces I would be beheld
By heaven and earth at once,
And make their envy what they meant their sport.
Let those who look us blush; I would love on
With awful state, regardless of their frowns,
As their superior god.

(AL, III, i, ll. 16-23)

His appetite for love is never cloyed, as he says:

There's no satety of love in thee:
Enjoye, thou still art new; perpetual spring
Is in thy arms; the ripened fruit but falls,
And blossoms rise to fill its empty place,
And I grow rich by giving.

(AL III, i, ll. 24-28)

As a matter of fact it was his love for Cleopatra that took him to the battlefield as while going he told her

I'm eager to return before I go,
For all the pleasures I have known beat thick
On my remembrance - How I long for night!
That both the sweets of mutual love may try,
And once triumph o'er Caesar ere we die.

(AL, II, i, II. 457-61)

And even in the battle-field it was the thought of Cleopatra's embraces that made him fight as he reports to Cleopatra:

I thought how those white arms would fold me in,
And strain me close, and melt me into love;
So pleased with that sweet image, I sprung forwards, ...

At the same time Cleopatra also resembles the heroines of the heroic tragedies a great deal. Like the beloveds in heroic tragedies Cleopatra is warmly responsive to her lover's love: if Antony addresses her as " 'My brighter Venus!' (AL III, i, l. 11) she addresses him as " 'O my greater Mars!" (AL III, i, l.ll; if Antony requests her,. "Receive me,)

goddess' " (AL III, i, l. 16) she requests him:

Come to me, come, my soldier, to my arms!
You've been too long away from my embraces;
But when I have you fast, and all my own,
With broken murmurs and with amorous sighs
I'll say you were unkind, and punish you,
And mark you red with many an eager kiss.

(AL, III, i, ll. 5-10)

However, another fact that has to be taken in view is that Antony's chief interest in this play is ensuring that his beloved is faithful to him rather than fighting and ranting:he seems to be more interested in arousing pity for himself in people's hearts. The dramatist himself says in the 'Prologue'.

His hero, whom you wits his bully call,
Bates of his mettle, and scarce rants at all:
He's somewhat lewd; but a well-meaning mind;
Weeps much; fights little; but is wond'rous kind.

(Al, Prologue, 10-13)

When Antony appears before us for the first time, he is "walking with a disturbed motion" and announces that he will keep his birthday anniversary with "double pomp of sadness" (*AL* I, i, 204). In his own eyes he is like a meteor the fires of which have been spent and which has been "cast downward" (*AL* I, i, 206-08). Even Ventidius finds his condition "wondrous mournful". The same impression is conveyed by his throwing himself down on his shadow and asking himself:

Lie there, thou shadow of an emperor:
The place thou pressest on the mother earth
Is all thy empire now; now it contains thee:....

(AL I, i, 216-18)

Nay, his thinking is marked by morbidity and he is expecting his death in a few days as he says:

Some few days hence, and then 't will be too large,
when thou'rt contracted in thy narrow urn,
Shrunk to a few cold ashes.

(AL, I, i, 218-20)

There are several scenes in which Antony's sentiments find expression. One such scene is the scene in which the tears of Ventidius make him relinquish his toughness, become soft towards this old soldier of his and say:

By Heaven, he weeps, poor good old man, he weeps!
The big round drop course one another down
The furrows of his cheeks. Stop'em , Ventidius,
Or I shall blush to death: they set my shame,
That caused 'em, full before me.

(AL I, i, 266-70)

Nay he himself starts weeping as he says:

Sure there's contagion in the tears of friends:
See, I have caught it too. Believe me, 'tis not
For my own griefs, but thine. – Nay, father.

He becomes sentimental enough to call Ventidius "father". Another time the tears of Dollabella and Cleopatra make him relent and change his judgement about his friend and beloved when he says:

Good Heaven, they weep at parting!

Must I weep too? That calls 'em innocent
I must not weep; and yet I must, to think
That I must not forgive.

(AL IV, i, 586-89)

On hearing of Cleopatra's death he becomes so sentimental that he resolves to die and leave the empire for Caesar to own:

Then art thou innocent, my poor dear love?.....
I will not fight: there's no more work for war.
The business of my angry hours is done....
What should I fight for now? My Queen is dead....
For I'll convey my soul from Caesar's reach,
Any lay down life myself,

(AL V, i, 236-80)

That is the reason why *All forLove* should be regarded as a sentimentalized heroic tragedy. No doubt, some critics have described as a heroic tragedy while some others have called it a sentimental tragedy. But in view of the above given discussion the play deserves to be described as a sentimentalized heroic tragedy.

4. The Plot of *All for Love*

The incidents treated in *All for Love* have not been invented byJohn Dryden: they were first narrated by Plutarch in his 'Life of Antony' included in his famous book *Fifty Parallel Lives of Greece and Rome*, and then they were treated by William Shakespeare in his drama *Antony and Cleopatra*. Dryden himself admits that fact when he writes in the Prologue: "[He] brings a tale which often has been told; / As sad as Dido's ; and almost as old." so he is original not in inventing the tale but in modifying it so as to make it an embodiment of his view of the story.

In this drama Dryden observes the rule of the three unities. Here we are told in the first Act that it is Antony's birth-day aniversary and all the subsequent incidents included in the drama are the occurences of this very day. Thus we have the unity of time in this drama. Since all the scenes in the drama are the scenes of Alexandria, we have the unity of place here. The whole drama moves round the feeling of love between Antony and Cleopatra, and after a few ups and downs the two are united in death, we have the unity of action too. On this ground, it can be asserted that the plot of this drama, like those of the other neo-classical plays, has been designed in accordance with the rule of unities.

What is of primary importance in this play is that the whole plot moves round Antonio and all the chief characters try to pull him in one direction or the other with the result that he looks swinging like a pendulum. Ventidius and Octavia try to pull him away from Cleopatra while Cleopatra and Alexas try to neutralize the efforts of the two Romans. As a matter of fact, Antony's own heart has in it so much love for Cleopatra that sooner or later all the efforts of Ventidius and Octavia end in nothing.

There are two see-saw movements in the play. Where the play opens Antonio is refraining from meeting Cleopatra, in the second Act there is the restoration of the ties of love. Here ends the first sea-saw movement. Then comes the scene in which Cleopatra shows warmth for Dollabella, that results in Antonio's charging Cleopatra with infidelity and resolving to banish her from his company for ever, then comes Alexas' misreporting to Antonio that Cleopatra has killed herself with the belief that Cleopatra was never faithless, and when Cleopatra comes to him his belief is confirmed and the former love is restored the second time. Then follows Antonio's death followed by Cleopatra's suicide with the hope of meeting her lover in the next world. This is the second see-saw movement.

Antony's keeping away from Cleopatra after the battle of Actium has been reported by Serapion who says:

'Tis strange that Antony for some days past
Has not beheld the face of Cleopatra,
But here in Isis' temple lives retired,
And makes his heart a prey to black despair.

(AL I, i, 58-61)

This report brings to light the fact that Cleopatra's flight from Actium has brought about a crisis in the relations between the two lovers and that it is Antonio who has been offended. the complaints that Antonio harbours against Cleopatra come to light in the meeting that takes place between them and Antony says:

You called; my love obeyed the fatal summons:
This raised the Roman arms; the cause was yours.
I would have fought by land, where I was stronger;
You hindered it, yet when I fought at sea,
Forsook me fighting, and - Oh! stain to honour!

Oh, lasting shame! I knew not that I fled,
But fled to follow you.

(AL I, i, 306-12)

Cleopatra's expressing her helplessness and declaring that if she is forsaken she will die;

What is't for me, then,
A weak, forsaken woman, and a lover?-
Here let me breathe my last: envy me not
This minute in your arms; I'll die a pace,
As fast as e'er I can, and end your trouble.

(AL II, i, 419-23)

makes Antonio relent and embrace her saying, "My eyes, my soul, my all!" (*AL* II, i, 427).

Nay, he no longer harbours a desire to go to the battlefield, and when Ventidius asks him whether he will go or not, he replies:

Faith, honour, virtue, all good things forbid
That I should go from her who sets my love
Above the price of kingdoms.

(AL II, i, 440-42)

Here we have reached the end of the one crisis in the love story and the first restoration of love takes place.

The second crisis begins when Cleopatra pretends to be in love with Dollabella at the suggestion of Alexas who advises her to "try/to make [Antony] jealous" (*AL* IV, i, 70-71) while talking to Dollabella she makes him believe that she is in love with him by making the following remarks:

(i) *Of all your sex*
I soonest could forgive you, if you should [displease me]

(ii) *.....love may be expelled by other love,*
As poisons are by poisons

on the basis of these utterances of hers ventidius tries to convince Antony that Cleopatra has shifted her love to Dollabella. And then Antony declares to Cleopatra:

I can forgive
A foe, but not a mistress and a friend.
Treason is there in its most horrid shape
Where trust is greatest, and the soul resigned
Is stabbed by its own guards. i'll hear no more;
Hence from my sight forever.

(AL IV, i, 543-48)

Here the relations between Antony and Cleopatra have touched the lowest ebb as Antony seems to have lost all warmth for Cleopatra. And it seems that the former love has become a thing of the past. It is Alexas' false report that Cleopatra has died that revives Antony's love. The report runs thus:

She snatched her poniard,
And, ere we could prevent the fatal blow,
Plunged it within her breast, then turned to me:
'Go, bear my lord', said she, 'my last farewell,
And ask him if he yet suspect my faith.'

More she was saying, but death rushed betwixt.
She half pronounced your name with her last breath,
And buried half within her.

(AL, V, i, 228-35)

Antoy's rethinking on the issue begins with his questions: ""Then thou art innocent, my poor dear love?' "(*AL* V, i, 236) and the upward movement reaches its highest point when Antony says to Cleopatra: " ' This one kiss – more worth/Than all I leave to Caesar'" (*AL,* V, i, 401-02) and dies. This is the stage of the complete restoration of former love about which Antony said just before dying:

Ten years' love,
And not a moment lost, but all improved
To th' utmost joys: what ages have we lived!

(AL V, i, 391-93)

As a matter of fact John Dryden focuses his attention on the pendulum-like movements of Antonio: Ventidius pulls him from Cleopatra towards Octavia, Cleopatra pulls him back, Ventidius makes another attempt to make him a dutiful emperor and soldier but Alexas' disinformation makes him go back to Cleopatra. The play brings to focus how strong the bonds of love are and how difficult it is to break them. Duties as a husband, affection for children, attractions of power, war-like glory and the demands of honour are very strong forces but all of them even when put together are too weak to counter the pulls of love.

The success of a plot depends to a considerable extent on the dramatist's selecting incidents for presentation on the stage. If a dramatist wisely selects the incidents, his drama can become very moving. John Dryden has included in *All for Love* a number of moving scenes. The scene in which Octavia and her daughters meet Antonio is the most moving scene in the play. Here the wronged wife and her two daughters come to Antonio and come to claim him. Octavia's words are very appealing:

...Your Octavia, your much injured wife
Though banished from your bed, driven from your house,
Inspite of Caesar's sister, still is yours.
'Tis true, I have a heart disdains your coldness,
And prompts me not to seek what you should offer;
But a wife's virtue still surmounts that pride:
I come to claim you as my own; to show
My duty first, to ask, nay beg, your kindness;
Your hand, my Lord; 'tis mine, and I will have it.

(AL III, i, 258-66)

And so is her asking her daughters to go to their father and bring him to her:

Go to him, children, go;
Kneel to him, take him by the hand, speak to him,
For you may speak and he may own you,too,
Without a blush; and so he cannot all
His children. Go, I say, and pull him to me,
And pull him to yourselves from that bad woman,
Yor Agrippina, hang upon his arms,
And you Antonia, clasp about his waist:
And he will shake you off, it we will dash you
Against that pavement, you must bear it, children,
For you are mine, and I was born to suffer.

(AL III, i, 351-60)

The last part of the speech is absolutely disarming and even an iron-hearted father would feel melted to hear it.

Dryden's bringing Cleopatra and Octavia face to face and their justifying themselves is another wise decision of his.

Cleopatra regards herself as superior to Octavia because she has, what she calls, charms, and says with pride:

If bounteous Nature, if indulgent Heaven
Have given me charms to please the bravest man,
Should I not thank 'em ? Should I be ashamed,
And not be proud? I am, that he has loved me;
And when I love not him, Heaven change this face
For one like that.

(AL III, i, 445-50)

Octavia is proud of the fact that she is "a modest wife" (*AL* III, i, 442) faithful to her husband. Octavia charges Cleopatra with having caused Antony's ruin:

.....you have been his ruin.
Who made him cheap at Rome, but Cleopatra?
Who made him scorned abroad, but Cleopatra?
At Actium who betrayed him? Cleopatra.
Who made his children orphans, and poor me
A wretched widow? Only Cleopatra.

(AL IV, i, 452-57)

Cleopatra has equally appealing things to say:

.....she who loves him best is Cleopatra
If you have suffered, I have suffered more.
You bear the specious title of a wife
To gild your cause, and draw the pitying world
To favour it; the world contemns poor me;
For I have lost my honour, lost my fame,
And stained the glory of my royal house,
And all to bear the branded name of mistress

(AL III, i, 459-65)

Some critics hold that Octavia should not have brought face to face with Cleopatra because their coming face to face makes them say unpleasant things to each other and the sense of decency is hurt. But the scene is not without advantages: it enables the audience to see how much Cleopatra has deviated from the ethically acceptable path. If the two women had not been brought face to face there would have been no foil to highlight Cleopatra's offence as when she is with Antony, she tries to prove that she is faithful in her love and, hence she is virtuous. But the fact remains that since even her falling in love with Antony is an ethical offence, her remaining faithful to him is nothing but the perpetuation of that offence: it cannot be regarded as her being virtuous. No doubt, her shifting her love to somebody else like Dollabella will be a wicked step but her not becoming even more wicked does not vindicate her immoral love.

5. Cleopatra

Dryden's Cleopatra is a matchless beauty not only in the eyes of Antony but also in the eyes of many others, including Dollabella. Antony gives a very attractive description of hers when he says:

Her galley down the silver Cydnos rowed,
The tackling silk, the streamers waved with gold;
The gentle winds were lodged in purple sails:
Her nymphs, like Nereids, round her couch were placed,
Where she, another sea-born Venus, lay....

She lay, and leant her cheek upon her hand,
And cast a look so languishingly sweet
As if, secure of all beholders' hearts,
Neglecting she could take 'em. Boys like Cupids
Stood fanning with their painted wings the winds
That played about her face; but if she smiled,
A darting glory seemed to blaze abroad,
That men's desiring eyes were never wearied,
But hung upon the object.
.....she so charmed all hearts, that gazing crowds
Stood panting on the shore, and wanted breath
To give their welcome voice.

(AL III, i, 162-82)

The description makes it evident that in the first place, she is charming, and, in the second place, she presents herself, with the help of her maids, servants and beautified galley in an impressive and charming manner. About the historical Cleopatra a historian says that she was dark complexioned, but Dryden's Cleopatra is white-complexioned because through Antony he describes her arms as white when he makes Antony say to her: " 'I thought how those white arms would fold me in,. .....' " (*AL*, III, i, 1)

Even Ventidius appreciates her beauty when he tells Octavia:

...she's so charming
Age buds at sight of her, and swells to youth;
The holy priests gaze on her when she smiles,
And with heaved hands, forgetting gravity,
They bless her wanton eyes; even I, who hate her,
With a malignant joy behold such beauty,
And while I curse, desire it.

(AL IV, i, 238-244)

Even though she has charms and knows that she has charms she tries to beautify herself still further, especially when she goes to meet Antony. Even when Antony has died, and when she is going to commit suicide, she makes her maids further beautify her with all the ensigns of her pomp and royalty so that she may sparkle "like a goddess" and says to Charmion and Iras:

Why, 'tis to meet my love,
As when I saw him first, on Cyndnos' bank,

All sparkling like a goddess; so adorned
I'll find him once again; my second spousals
Shall match my first in glory. Haste, haste both
And dress the bride of Antony.

(AL V, i, 458-63)

Cleopatra not only has feelings but also is vocal about them and expresses them. For example, she not only loves Antony but also expresses her love and communicates it quite successfully. For example, when Antony asks her to go away from his sight forever, she says:

I cannot go one moment from your sight,
And must I go forever?
My joys, my only joys, are centred here:
What place have I to go to?.....
.....Oh, hear me, hear me,
With strictest justice, for I beg no favour,
And if I have offended you, then kill me,
But do not banish me.

(AL IV, i, 549-560)

She is different from Shakespeare's Viola who never told her love and like Patience on a monument sat smiling at grief.

Thus, Cleopatra is different from Octavia, as she is not cold, and also from Fulvia, as she is not "uneasy". She is responsive in her love: if Antony addresses her as his " 'brighter Venus' " she addreses him as her " ' greater Mars' "; if he requests her, " ' Receive me, goddess' " she with equal warmth receives him saying:

Come to me, come, my soldier, to my arms!
You've been too long away from my embaraces;
But when I have you fast, and all my own,
With broken mumurs and with amorous sighs
I'll say you were unkind, and punish you,
And mark you red with many an eager kiss

(AL III, i, ll. 5-10)

For Ventidius she may be a "light, worthless woman!'" (*All for Love* I, i, 372), for Antony " 'she deserves/more worlds than [he] can lose' " (*All for Love* I, i, 368-9). He regards her as his eyes, his soul his all when he says he will not let her die:

Die! Rather let me perish! Loosened Nature
Leap from its hinges; sink the props of heaven,
And fall the skies to crush the nether world!
My eyes, my soul, my all !-

(AL II, i, 424-27)

And he declares to Ventidius that Cleopatra outweighs fortune, honour and fame when he says: "It outweights ' em all ' (*AL* II, i, 429) He describes her as " 'all that's excellent' " (*AL* II, i, 439). For him Cleopatra is more valuable than the whole globe. He says to the goods:

Give, you gods,
Give to your boy, your Caesar,
This rattle of a globe to play with al,
This gewgaw world, and put him cheaply off:
I'll not be pleased with less than Cleopatra.

(AL II, i, 442-42)

Cleopatra is not a good judge of character and her estimates of people turn out to be wrong. We can take several examples to illustrate it. Since she choses to go to the battlefield of Actium, it is obvious she believed she would be able to fight well. But she found herself too timid to stay in the battle-field and ran away from there. Her flight has been reported by Ventidius in the following words:

What haste she made to hoist her purple sails!
And, to appear magnificent in flight,
Drew half our strength away.

(II, i, 313-15)

Secondly, she hoped her army to remain faithful to her and Antony but her hopes were belied when her soldiers shifted their loyalty and joined Caesar's forces. The fact has been reported by Serapion in the following words:

In few, we saw their caps
On either side thrown up; th' Egyptian galleys,
Received like friends, passed through and fell behind
The Roman rear; and now they all come forward,
And ride within the port.

(AL V, i, 91-94)

If she had been a good judge of character she would have judged herself as well as her soldiers correctly.

However, she may have committed mistakes in understanding her fleet, she understands Antony very correctly: She knows Antony loves her so intensely that he cannot outlive her and she fears that if Alexas tells Antony she has died Antony will kill himself. The fact comes to light when Antony has stabbed himself and on seeing him she exclaims:

My fears were prophets; I am come too late.
O that accursed Alexas!

(AL V, 357-58)

What she feared has come true! But the very fact that her fear that Antony would commit suicide on learning of her death has come true signifies that she knows Antony thoroughly.

Cleopatra is not a person who will use only fair means to achieve her end. On the contrary, she is willing to adopt even foul means to achieve her end. Shifting one's love from one person to another is regarded as the worst offence in love, but Cleopatra pretends even to have shifted her love from Antony to Dollabella so that Antony may feel jealous and may come back to her. She justifies her action on the ground that every woman who is in love will use even the foulest means to achieve her end:

Ah what will not a woman do who loves!
What means will she refuse to keep that heart
Where all her joys are placed! 'T was I encouraged
'T was I blew up the fire that scorched his soul,
To make you jealous, and by that regain you.

(AL, IV, i, 513-17)

Here she is trying to justify herself by attributing her weakness to every woman in love. But a weakness is a weakness. It does not become a strength even if it is universally possessed. And since she employs even the arts of falsehood and cunning to achieve her ends she incurs the condemnation of Ventidius who identifies her with cunning and arts of falsehood when he describes Alexas:

See Cleopatra stamped upon that face,
With all her cunning, all her arts of falsehood!
How she looks out through those dissembling eyes!

(AL V, i, 190-92)

Even though she is a Queen, she is not free from womanly weaknesses: She is jealous and wants to possess Antony exclusively. The fact comes to light when she says that she prefers Antony's dead body in her arms to living Antony in Octavia's Arms:

We 're now alone, in secrecy and silence,
And is not this like lovers? I may kiss
These pale, cold lips; Octavia does not see me,
And oh, 'tis better far to have him thus
Than see him in her arms!

(AL V, i, 446-50)

Thus she is different from that beloved who likes to keep her lover happy even at the cost of her own life. We become conscious of the fact when we contrast her with Shakespeare's Viola who goes to persuade Olivia to marry Duke. Orsino because she knows Orsino will be happy as Olivia's husband, though she herself is in the love with Orsino and if Orsino marries Olivia she (Viola) will not be able to marry the man of her liking.

Cleopatra does not refrain from deriving pleasure out of the fact that Antonio has deserted Octavia to come to her bed and takes a dig at Octavia when she tells her:

.....had you known
But half these charms, you had not lost his heart.

(AL III, i, 439-40)

She reminds me of what millamant says in congreve's drama *The way of the World:*

If there's delight in love 'tis when I see
that heart which others bleed for bleed for me

(The Way of the World III, i,339-40)

When Cleopatra is angry she can go to the extent of using abusive language and can fly at the person, who can offended her, to beat him. For instance, she call Alexas "imposter, traitor, monster devil" (AL V, i, 36), "base fawning wretch" (*AL* V, i, 110), and "slave" (*AL* V, i, 122), and tries to use violence against Alexas when she says:

Art thou there, traitor! - oh, let me go.
Oh, for a little breath, to vent my rage!
Give, give me way, and let me loose upon him.

(AL V, i, 17-19)

Her having been several persons' beloved has changed her mind-set so much that she has begun to regard herself as a person who people can approach for love and she can accept some and refuse others. This becomes evident from the way she is trying to prove that she is in love with only Antony:

How often have I wished some other Caesar,
Great as the first, and as the second young,
Would court my love, to be refused for you.

(AL II, i, 370-72)

A faithful wife would not like to be courted for love at all. A wish to be courted for love is sinful as a marriage is a secrament and on getting married one foregoes the right to wish to be courted for love.Cleopatra does not consider anything wrong in her often wishing to be courted for love by another Ceasar. As a matter of fact, she has ceased to think like a wife. This feature of her character is noted by Octavia, and when Cleopatra boasts of her charms and says: " '....had you known/but half these charms you had not lost his heart' " (*AL* III, i, 439-40),

Octavia chides her for this kind of thinking and says:

Far be their knowledge from a Roman lady,
Far from a modest wife. Shame of our sex,
Dost thou not blush to own those black endearments
That make sin pleasing.

(AL III, i, 441-44)

When Cleopatra says to Antony:

You seem grieved
(And therein you are kind, That Ceasar first
Enjoyed my love, though you deserved it better:
I grieve for that, my Lord, much more than you,
For had I first been yours, it would have saved
My second choice; I never had been his,
And ne'er had been but yours. But Caesar first,
You say, possessed my love. Not so, my Lord:
He first possessed my person, you my love;
Caesar loved me, but I loved Antony.
If I endured him after, 't was because
I judged it due to the first name of man,
And, half constrained, I gave, as to a tyrant,
What he would take by force.

(AL II, i, 346-59)

She admits Caesar possessed her person not because she was in love with him but because he was in a position to have her by force. No doubt, she gives a justification that will convince Antony. But what she does not mention at all is the fact that as Ptolemy's widow she is expected to be faithful to Ptolemy's memory. That she has not remained. A wife is expected to be faithful to the husband rather than to the lover, whether he is the first lover or the second one. So even if she has always been in love with Antony and she can satisfy Antony with that answer, she cannot satisfy the boy king whose armed ghost was seen by Serapion (*AL* I, i, 20-25). Nor can this answer satisfy the long race of Ptolemies whom Serapion saw rising from their tombs (*AL* I, i, 20-25).

Now we come to the issue whether she is faithful to Antony. Plutarch's Cleopatra may be actually frail and Shakespeare's Cleopatra may be suspected to be so but John Dryden's Cleopatra is Antony's faithful mistress. When Dryden writes in his prolgue:

....a wife, and a mistress too;
Both (to be plain) too good for most of you:
The wife well-natured, and the mistress true.

(All for Love, Prologue ll.. 16-18)

he explicitly says that his cleopatra is absolutely faithful to Antony. Cleopratra is Ptolemy's widow and has been Julius Caeser's mistress, yet she has loved and is still in love with none but Antony. By describing her as true in the lines quoted above Dryden seems to be sweeping away all question-marks on the historical Cleopatra's fidelity to the historical Antony.

A faithless beloved is only a fair-weather friend. One who remains a beloved even in one's bad days is a true mistress. Cleopatra, as Alexas reports, dotes on Antony even when he has been defeated:

She dotes, Serapion, on this vanquished man,
And winds herself about his mighty ruins,....

(All for Love I, i, 76-77)

If Cleopatra had not been faithful to Antony, she would have deserted Antony at his defeat at Actium and would have shifted her loyalty to Caesar. One who remains faithful even to a vanquished man is definitely faithful.

Cleopatra is so intensely in love with Antonio that she becomes uneasy even by the thought of separation from him. Once when she learns that Ventidius is taking him to the battlefield she is terribly upset and starts behaving like a small girl going to be separated from her dear friend:

What shall I do, or whither I shall turn?
Ventidius has o'ercome, and he will go.

(AL II, i, 1-2)

This is weak passion that does not suit a mighty queen, but when one is in love one is only a lover rather than a king or a queen. Nay, when she finds Antony has stabbed himself on being told she has died, she makes a promise to him:

'T is now too late
To say I'm true: I'll prove it, and die with you.

(AL, V, 374-75)

And after his death she asks her maid-servants to adorn her so that she can meet Antony as gloriously as she met him first:

Why, 'tis to meet my love,
As when I saw him first, on Cyndnos' bank,
All sparkling like a goddess; so adorned,
I' ll find him once again; my second spousals
Shall match my first in glory. Haste, haste both,
And dress the bride of Antony.

(AL, V, i, 458-63)

She calls herself "the bride of Antony" after Antony's death. If there had been anything lacking in her fidelity to her lover Antony she would not have called herself "the bride of Antony" after his death. One has to pretend to be a faithful beloved only so long as the lover is alive and present. Why should one pretend to be a faithful beloved after the lover has died?

Cleopatra describes her love for Antony as a transcendent passion and a noble madness when she says:

....I have loved with such transcendent passion,
I soared at first quite out of reason's view,
And now am lost above it. No, I'm proud
'Tis thus;....

(AL II, i, 20-23)

She suffers much for this love, nay she dies for Antony. She is not wrong when she says to Octavia:

If you have suffered, I have suffered more.
You bear the specious title of a wife
To gild your cause, and draw the pitying world
To favour it; the world contemns poor me;
For I have lost my honour, lost my fame,
And stained the glory of my royal house,
And all to bear the branded name of mistress.
Thesre wants but life, and that too I would lose
For him I love.

(AL III, i, 459-67)

And a moment actually comes when she dies for love and has no regrets.

Somebody may say that Cleopatra resolves to die in order to escape humiliation at Caesar's hands as after Antony's death there is nobody to prevent Caesar from taking her to Rome as a spectacle. They may quote the following speech of Cleopatra in support of their view:

Yield me to Caesar's pride?
What! to be led in truimph through the streets,
A spectacle to base plebian eyes,
While some defected friend of Antony's,
Close in a corner, shakes his head and mutters
A secret curse on her who ruined him?

(AL V, i, 423-28)

But the fact remains that she loves Antony so much that she cannot live without him and dies because Antony has died. It is one of her subsequent speeches that makes the fact clear:

My lord looks down concerned, and fears my stay,
Lest I should be surprised;
Keep him not waiting for his love too long.
You Charmion, bring my crown and richest jewels;
(Vain augury!) for him who now lies dead.

(AL V, i, 434-39)

Her words here make it evident that she dies because she does not want to keep Antony waiting for her in the world after death. This implies that according to her Antony is waiting for her in the world after death and that his existence has not come to its end. Her statement about the possibility of Caesar's leading her in triumph simply shows that she is not blind to facts and knows what humiliation she may have to undergo in case she chooses to live on.

Dryden gives a series of proofs to show that Cleopatra's love for Antony is true. One of them is that she rejects Caesar's offer that she will get both Egypt and Syria if she deserts Antony and joins him (Caesar). On reading Caesar's report Antony says:

See, see, Ventidius! Here he offers Egypt,
And joins all Syria to it as a present.
So, in requital, she forsake my fortunes,
And join her arms with his.

(AL, II, i, 397-400)

Cleopatra not only rejects this temptation but says she can do much more. She says:

I have refused a kingdom;
That's trifle:
For I could part with life, with anything
But only you.Oh let me die but with you!

(AL II, i, 402-05)

Her impassioned self-justification before Octavia that she loves Antony more than anybody else: *Yet she who loves him best is Cleopatra.*

Is a very forceful plea in defence of her fidelity. In claiming that she loves Antony more than anybody else can, she is not wrong. The only thing that binds her with Antony is love. And since she cannot tolerate him absence it is obvious that she loves his very intensely. As a matter of fact, in other relations there are other binding factors too, but the only thing that binds a lover with his beloved is love. A husband and his wife live together not only because they love each other, but also because duty expects them to do so, religion wants them to live together,

and the social rules expect them to live together. But so far as a lover and his beloved are concerned, the whole world tries to keep them away from each other and if they refuse to be separated and sacrifice themselves at the alter of love, they are genuine lovers.

But what Cleopatra does not pay attention to is the fact that her love for Antony is unethical as it is in violation of the social rule that one has to remain faithful to one's husband. Since she is Ptolemy's widow she is not expected to be faithless to Ptolemy. Since she flouts a social rule, the society punishes her for that with the result that finally she is completely ruined. For her love for Antony she is described by Ventidius as a "light woman". In our society, as Arundhati Roy says in her novel *The God of Small Things* there are rules to decide who is to be loved and how much. One cannot love each and everybody in the same way. A fellow ruler is to be loved but not in the way one's husband is to be loved.

Since her love for Antony is illegitimate and is in violation of the rules of the institution of marriage, it is not acceptable to the society and becomes a cause of Antonio's ruin. Octavia is not wrong when she tells Cleopatra:

'you have been his ruin.
Who made him cheap at Rome, but Cleopatra?.....
Who made his children orphans, and poor me
A wretched widow? Only Cleopatra.

(AL III, i, 452-59)

Being the queen of Egypt, Cleopatra is expected to take it upon herself to protect the social institutions of her country and to see to it that nobody in her country undermines them. But she herself violates the rules of the institution of marriage and undermines this social institution. Thus she becomes a traitor to herself. So there is nothing surprising if her own fleet betrays her and joins the navy of Caesar, as Serapion reports to her:

I saw
With Antony, your well-appointed fleet
Row out; and thrice he waved his hand on high
And thrice with cheerful cries they shouted back:
'Twas then false fortune, like fawning strumpet
About to leave the bankrupt prodigal.
With a dissembled smile would kiss at parting
And flatter to the last. The well-timed oars
Now dipped from every bank, now smoothly run
To meet the foe; and soon indeed they met
But not as foes.

(AL, V, i, 82-91)

Cleopatra is not wrong when she regards all this as god's doing, rather than something accidental, as she says:

This needed not, you gods
When I lost Antony your work was done;
'Tis but superfluous malice.

(AL V, i, 96-98)

She feels she is reaping the consequences of her needs. One is, no doubt, free to do what one likes, the consequences which follow one's deeds cannot be avoided.

6. Antony

John Dryden's Antony, the hero of *All for Love*, is different from Plutarch's as well as from Shakespeare's in some respects as he himself states in his Prologue:

His hero, whom you wits his bully call,
Bates of his mettle, and scarce rants at all:
He's somewhat lewd; but a well-meaning mind;
Weeps much, fights little; but is wond'rous kind
In short a pattern, and companion fit,
For all the keeping Tonies, of the pit.

Plutarch's Antony is a matchless commander and Shakespare's Antony has Hercules in his arms. But Dryden's Antony, in spite of being "somewhat lewd" is a well-meaning kind-hearted man who "weeps much".

Dryden also employees the direct method of characterization and makes Ventidius analyse Antony's character in the following words:

Virtue's his path; but sometimes 'tis too narrow
For his vast soul, and then he starts out wide
And bounds into a vice that bears him far
From his first course, and plunges him in ills:
But when his danger makes him find his fault,
Quick to observe and full of sharp remorse,
He censures eagerly his own misdeads,
Judging himself will malice to himself,
And not forgiving what as man he did
Because his other parts are more than man.

(All for Love I, i, 124-33)

All this amounts to saying that Antono is basically a virtuous man and commits ills unknowingly but the moment he the detects his falut, he not only repents but also punishes himself.

Several virtues of Antony have been mentioned categorically in the play: he is the bravest of the soldiers, as bounteous as nature and as pitiful as girls praying to God. It is Ventidius who mentions them when he says:

O Antony
Thou bravest soldier, and thou best of friends!
Bounteous as Nature; next to Nature's God!
Couldst thou but make new worlds, so wouldst
thou give 'em,
As bounty were thy being. Rough in battle
As the first Romans when they went to war;
Yet after victory, more pitiful
Than all their praying virgins left at home!

(All for Love I, i, 180-87)

And when he falls in love with Cleopatra he remains true to her. It is Alexas who mentions this in his observation:

Would you could add to those more shining virtues
His truth to her who loves him.

(All for Love I, i, 188-89)

He is such a valiant soldier that one day he makes his fellow emperor Caesar's soldiers run away from the battlefield to escape death and leaves five thousand Romans dead in the battlefield, as he reports:

We have dislodged their troops
They look on us at distance, and like curs
'scaped from the lion's paws, they bay far off,
And lick their wounds, and faintly threaten war.
Five thousand Romans with their faces upward
Lie breathless on the plain.

(AL III, i, 51-57)

It must have been on account of his virtues, capabilities and behaviour that in his prosperous days even kings were willing to serve him as his slaves, as is evident from his report:

Hast thou not seen my morning chambers filled
With sceptred slaves who waited to salute me,
With eastern monarchs who forgot the sun
To worship my uprising? Menial kings
Ran coursing up and down my palace-yard,
Stood silent in my presence, watched my eyes,
And at my least command all started out
Like racers to the goal.

(AL III, i, 141-48)

He is not a man with a closed mind: when somebody gives a convincing argument in support of something that he does not hold, he readily accepts that view-point. For example, when he tells Ventidius that Dollabella has become his enemy now because when he went away he did not take leave of him, Ventidius gives an argument to prove that Dollabella still loves him:

It argues that he loved you more than her,
Else he had stayed; but he perceived you jealous,
And would not grieve his friend: I know he loves you.

(AL III, i, 108-10)

At this Antony readily accepts Ventidius, opinion and says: " ' I should have seen him, then, ere now' " (*AL* III, i, l.lll).

Antony is so self-respectful that he will not beg anything for him, nor will accept a thing if it has been for him. The following exchange of remarks between him and his wife makes it evident:

Antony: I Fear, Octavia, you have begged my life.

Octavia: Begged it, my Lord?

Antony: Yes, begged it, my ambassadress,
Poorly and basely begged it of your brother.

Octavia: Poorly and basely I could never beg,
Nor could my brother grant.

Antony: Shall I, who to my kneeling slave could say
'Rise up, and be a king' , shall I fall down
And cry, 'Forgive me, Caesar'? Shall I set
A man, my equal, in the place of Jove,
As he could give me being? No; that word
'Forgive' would choke me up,
And die upon my tongue.

(AL III, i, 271-82)

Antony has the gift of the gab: when he chooses he argues his viewpoint very well. For instance, when he argues in order to prove that Cleopatra has ruined him he is very convincing:

When I beheld you first, it was in Egypt,
Ere Caesar saw your eyes. You gave me love,
And were too young to know it: that I settled
Your father in his throne was for your sake;
I left the acknowledgement for time to ripen
Caesar stept in, and with a greedy hand
Plucked the green fruit ere the first blush of red,
Yet cleaving to the bough.

(AL II, i, 262-69)

He chooses the incidents which support the point he is trying to bring home to Cleopatra: He has been in love with her and has done much for her, but she has not been faithful to him and has caused his ruin. Ventidius appreciates his arguments when he says: " ' Well pushed that last was home' " (*AL* , II, i, 98)

Antony is poetic in his speech quite often and employs images of various kinds to describe persons and situations. For instance, he likens himself to a merchant whose vessel is sinking, Cleopatra to a swallow who has deserted one benefactor and gone to another, and his whole life to a dream of love and friendship:

My whole life
Has been a golden dream of love and friendship.
But now I wake, I'm like a merchant roused
From soft repose to see his vessel sinking,
And all his wealth cast o'er. Ingrateful woman!
Who followed me but as the swallow summer,
Hatching her young one in my kindly beams,
Singing her flatteries to my morning wake;
But now my winter comes, she spreads her wings
And seeks the spring of Caesar.

(AL, V, i, 204-13)

When he describes himself to Cleopatra he uses the image of a man going away bag and baggage and says:

'Tis as with a man
Removing in a hurry, all packed up
But one dear jewel that his haste forgot,
And he, for that, return upon the spur:
So I come back for thee.

(AL V, i, 365-69)

He personifies death while describing the way Ventidius has died:

Is Death no more? He used him carelessly,
With a familiar kindness; ere he knocked,
Ran to the door and took him in his arms,
As who should say, 'Y'are welcome at all hours;
A friend need give no warning;

(AL V, i 338-42)

Another image that he employs to describe his condition is that of a meteor when he asks himself:

Why was I raised the meteor of the world
Hung in the skies, and blazing as I travelled,

Till all my fires were spent, and then cast downward
To be trod out by Caesar?

(AL I, i, 206-09)

Ventidius is right when he tells Antony that before he had fallen in love with Cleopatra he was so worthy that even the Gods envied him:

....you, ere love misled your wandering eyes,
Were sure the chief and best of human race,
Framed in the very pride and boast of Nature,
So perfect that the gods who formed you wondered
At their own skill, and cried, 'A lucky hit
Has mended our design'. Their envy hindered,
Else you had been immortal, and a pattern,
When Heaven would work for ostentation sake,
To copy out again.

(AL I, i, 403-11)

He tends to develop very intimate relations with the persons he likes. For instance, when he had friendly relations with Dollabella, they, as Antony reports, were very close to each other:

We were so closed within each other's breasts,
The rivets were not found that joined up first
That does not reach us yet: we were so mixed
As meeting streams, both to ourselves were lost;
We were one mass; we could not give or take
But from the same, for he was I, I he.

(AL, III, i, 11. 92-97)

But there is something unnatural with such a relationship as no two persons can have identical views on every thing. A.N. white head draws attention to the fact of individual differences between people when he says: "We are like the inhabitants of islands surrounded by an impassable sea where you are for ever you and I, I,". D.H. Lawrence also refers to it when he says that the otherness of the other also has to be kept in mind. But the very fact that people tend to like him very intimately (Ventidius not only serves him but also dies for him; Cleopatra is not only in love with him but also dies at his death) evidences the fact that people regard him a very lovable person.

Antonio is not a good judge of character. Though he frequently judges people yet he has to revise his views with the same frequency. Once Caesar was his fellow emperor, but now he is his enemy and Antony is right when he says:

The boy pursues my ruin, he'll no peace;
His malice is considerate in advantage;
Oh, he's the coolest murderer! So staunch,
He kill, and keep his temper

(AL III, i, 62-65)

He sends Dollabella to Cleopatra under the impression that the man is his friend and will break to her the news of his departure in a soft manner, as he says: " 'Therefore, therefore'/ Thou, only thou art fit' " (*AL* IV, i, 17-18) but Dollabella cheats him and tries to win Cleopatra for himself when he misreports Antony's message to her:

With fiery eyes and with contracted brows,
He coined his face in the severest stamp,
And fury shook his fabric like an earthquake:
He heaved for vent, and burst like bellowing Etna

In sounds scarce human, 'Hence, away forever;
Let her begone, the blot of my renown,
And bane of all my hopes."

(AL IV, i, 160-66)

And he is not able to decide whether Cleopatra is true to him or false to him. Once he says

....Cleopatra's false; both false and faithless.

(AL IV, i, 467)

And a little later he says:

Good Heaven, they weep at parting!
Must I weep too? That calls 'em innocent.

(AL IV, i, 586-87)

Antony may not be wise in some other respects, he is wise enough to read the character of Ventidius correctly

....he loves me, truly loves me:
He never flattered me in any vice,
But awes me with his virtue. Even this minute
Methinks he has a right of chiding me.

(AL III, i, ll, 33-36)

Antony is a man of strong passions: if he is offended by somebody he can go to the extent of killing him, and if he is in love with a person he can give his life for him/her. When he is keeping himself in seclusion after his defeat at Actium, he is very close to committing suicide as is evident from what a gentleman tells Ventidius:

He eats not, drinks not, sleeps not, has no use
Of anything but thought;....

(All for Love I, i, 116-17)

When he is in a state of passion he cannot exercise any restraint and says and does things for which he repents later on. For example, when Ventidius calls him wasteful for his practice of giving kingdoms to Cleopatra, he is offended so much that he calls Ventidius "an envious traitor" (*AL*, I, i, 378) but later on when he realizes his mistake he tenders his apology in the following words:

"I did not think so;
I said it in my rage; prithee forgive me".

(AL, I, i, .397-98)

This implies that he does not always weigh what he says and does not restrain himself when he should.

The fatal flaw of Antony is that he falls in love with Cleopatra in violation of the rule of the institution of marriage that he will remain faithful to his wife. His love for Cleopatra is so intense that he considers her to be more valuable than several worlds as he says to Ventidius: " '[Cleopatra] deserves/More worlds than I can lose' " (*All for Love*, I, i, 368-69). Another time he says that he loves her.

Beyond life, conquest, empire, all but honour;....

(AL, I, i, 423)

Love for Cleopatra has made Antony forget everything other than her. He himself admits that:

How I loved,
Witness, ye days and nights and all your hours
That danced away with down upon your feet,
As all your business were to count my passion.
One day passed by, and nothing saw but love;
Another came, and still 'twas only love;

The suns were wearied out with looking on,
And I untired with loving.
I saw you every day and all the day.

(AL II, i, 282-90)

He is also conscious of the fact that his love made him neglect and, consequently, lose the world, as he says:

While within you arms I lay the world fell mouldering from my hands each hours,
And left me scarce a grasp; I thank your love for 't.

(AL II, i, 295-97)

The problem that worries him most is whether Cleopatra is faithful to him or not. Or rather what he fears most is that Cleopatra is false to him. Once he says to her:

[I] Took you into my bosom, stained, by Caesar,
And not half mine.

(AL II, i, 276-77)

Another time he says to her:

O Cleopatra!
O Dollabella! How could you betray
This tender heart, which with an infant fondness
Lay lulled betwixt you bosoms, and there slept
Secure of injured faith?

(AL IV, i, 47-91)

A little later he describes her to Alexas:

Ingrateful woman!
Who followed me but as the swallow summer,
Hatching her young one in my kindly beams,
Singing her flatteries to my morning wake;
But now my winter comes, she spreads her wings,
And seeks the spring of Caesar.

(AL V, i, 208-13)

A few seconds before his death he says to her:

Say but thou art not false.

(AL V, i, 374)

And he does this even though Cleopatra is not his wife and even though he has been false to both Fulvia and Octavia!

What Antonio turns his blind eye to is the fact that he is Octavia's husband and he is faithless to her. One's marrying a lady makes it an imperative for one to remain faithful to her. By that logic Antony has no right to fall in love with Cleopatra or seeking her love, let alone expecting her to be faithful to him. Ventidius, who is trying to be Antonio's conscience-keeper is making an attempt to bring home this fact to him when he brings Octavia and her children to him and asks, on finding him starting back:

What, is she poison to you? A disease?
Look on her, view her well, and those she brings:
Are they all strangers to your eyes? Has Nature
No secret call, no whisper they are yours?

(AL, III, i, 239-42)

Antony's is a partly split personality: love pulls him to Cleopatra and duty pulls him to Octavia. But love is definitely stranger of the two with the result that he is attached to Cleopatra much more than to Octavia. That he is being pulled in two different directions has been accepted by him when he tells Cleopatra:

I have a fool within me takes your part,
But honour stops my ears.

(AL IV, I, 561-62)

If the two pulls had been equal he might have been lost only fifty per cent on himself and would not have been driven to a complete ruin. But since the pull of love is much stronger than that of duty or honour, his losing honour and rushing to his ruin is quite fast. If one lets oneself be pulled towards what is undesirable and turns to the desirable only off and on, one is definitely heading towards one's ruin. And this is what Antony does with the result that he reaps its consequeces.

The moment he is told Cleopatra has died, he resolves not to fight any more and resolves to leave the empire for Caesar to own, as his empire, and his power were his merchandise to buy Cleopatra's love. His telling Ventidius:

What should I fight for now? my queen is dead
I was but great for her; my power, my empire
Were but my merchandise to buy her love,
And conquered kings, my factors. Now she's dead,
Let Caesar take the world
An empty circle, since the jewel's gone
Which made it worth my strife; my being's nauseous,
For all the bribes of life are gone away.

(AL, V, i, 269-76)

signifies that he ranks Cleopatra above the empire and regards her as the only valuable thing in the world.

John Dryden tries to give the impression that is is Antonio's sense of honour, along with his grief at the reported news of Cleopatra's death, that makes him attempt *harakiri* as he tells Ventidius:

Yes, I would be taken,
But as a Roman ought – dead, my Ventidius;
For I'll convey my soul from Caesar's reach ,
And lay down life myself.

(AL V, i, 278-81)

But if we examine Antonio's mind we shall find that nothing other than love for Cleopatra makes him attempt *harakiri*, as his own words

Since I have heard of Cleopatra's death,
My reason bears no rule upon my tongue,
But lets my thought break all at random out.

make it evident. As a matter of fact after he has learnt Cleopatra has died there is nothing in the world to catch his attention.

Ventidius considers Antony's love for Cleopatra unjustifiable on the ground that when he fell in love with her he was not young, but had reached his declining age as he tells him:

Yours....in your declining age,
When no more heat was left but what you forced,
When all the sap was needful for the trunk,
When it went down, then you constrained the course,
And robbed from Nature to supply desire;

In you, I would not use so harsh a word
But 'tis plain dotage.

(AL III, i, 192-98)

He means to say that a young man's folly is not as serious a folly as an old man's folly. If a man commits follies even when he has attained old age, he is a real fool.

Antony's love for Cleopatra has offended even Romans and the soldiers who are ready to fight for him. We learn this from Ventidius who tells Antony:

They said they would not fight for Cleopatra.
Why should they fight, indeed, to make her conquer,
And make you more a slave? To gain your kingdoms
Which for a kiss at your next midnight feast,
You'll sell to her?

(All for Love I, l, 359-63)

Ventidius holds Cleopatra responsible for his ruin when he says:

Oh, [Cleopatra] has decked his ruin with her love,
Let him in golden bands to gaudy slaughter,
And made perdition pleasing: she has left him
The blank of what he was.

(All for Love I, I, 170-173)

But the fact remains that he himself is responsible for it. If he is in love with Cleopatra, who but he is to blame? One may say that if Cleopatra had not been there, there would have been none for him to fall in love with. But that argument is erroneous because the weakness to fall in love outside marriage is his. There are people who refuse to submit even when strong tempatations are there. For instance Valmiki's Ram refused to be tempted by Supanakha when she fell in love with him. If Antony had been a firm hearted man he would have rejected every temptation and would have remained true to his wife.

The fact of the matter is that since the global society has accepted marriage as an ideal institution, all the efforts to undermine it are resented and discouraged by the whole society in both organised and unorgnaised ways. So any extra-marital love-affair is taken by the society as a challenge and the fight between the society and the individual often continues to the finish. In *All for Love* too Antonio's love for Cleopatra is being resented by the global society the respesentatives of which in the drama are Caesar, Ventidius, the soldiers willing to fight for Antony (but not until he ceases to be Cleopatra's lover), Serapion, Octavia and the like. Caesar must be look upon as the head of the Roamn empire having been entrusted by his community to see to it, even with the help of force, that ethical rules are not flouted. The situation has come to such a pass that. Antony is being supported by Egyptians and one single town outside Egypt, while Ceasar has the rest of the world to support him, as is evident from Ventidius' report:

...still you draw supplies from one poor town
And of Egyptians; he has all the world,
And at his back nations come pouring in
To fill the gaps you make.

(AL III, i, 75-79)

As the head of the Roman empire he is expected to make people honour the social institutions including the institution of marriage. But instead of doing that he himself violates the rules of the institution of marriage. In such a situation the society is bound to react and either make him change his ways or to remove him from the scene altogether. Since by doing what is unbecoming of him he has behaved like a traitor to his position, a large number of persons become traitors to him.

If we study just Antony' utterances we learn that it is Antony's infidelity to his wives that lies at the root of the troubles he is facing. When he fell in love with Cleopatra and, thus, was false to Fulvia She started a war, as Antony himself reports:

Fulvia, my wife, grew jealous,
As she indeed had reason; raised a war
In Italy, to call me back.

(AL II, i, 292-94)

When he left Octavia again for the embaraces of Cleopatra he became false to Octavia with the result that, as he reports: " 'This raised the Roman arms; ..." (*AL*, II, i, 307). But instead of repenting over his errors of commission and omission he persists in remaining in love with Cleopatra and continues remaining faithless to Fulvia first and Octavia afterwards. That is the reason why his troubles go on increasing and crush him completely when he turns to such errors of his as fighting at sea:

I would have fought by land, where I was stranger;
You hindered it, yet when I fought at sea,
Forsook me fighting

he makes it clear they too were caused by his illicit love affair with Cleopatra.

When Antony is charging her with giving herself to Caesar before giving her to him and says:

When I beheld you first, it was in Egypt,
Ere caesar saw your eyes. You gave me love,
And were too young to know it: that I settled
Your father in his throne was for your sake;
I left th' acknowledgement for time to ripen.
Caesar stept in, and with a greedy hand
Plucked the green fruit ere the first blush of red,
Yet cleaving to the bough

(AL, II, i, 262-69)

He has taken for granted that he has a right to make Cleopatra remain faithful to him. But Cleopatra is not his wedded wife; she is Ptolemy's widow and if anybody has a right to expect her to be faithful to him it is this boy king who has died but whose ghost, as Serapion reports, is now in arms. Secondly, Antonio himself has not been faithful to Cleopatra: he was once Fulvia's husband, and now he is Octavia's husband. And he married Octavia when he had started living with Cleopatra as her lover. So even if his love for Cleopatra has given him a right to expect Cleopatra to remain faithful to him, he should have remained faithful to her. One's not remaining faithful to the beloved and expecting her to be faithful to him is domination rather than love. No doubt Cleopatra does not give such argument but these arguments are valid in this context.

Antony may be mighty enough to defeat Cassus, he may be mighty enough to spring forwards against Ceasar and defeat him in one battle, but he with his unethical ways, is not mighty enough to fight almost the whole global society represented by Caesar, Octavia, Ventidius, the Roman soldiers (who are loyal to him but want him to cease to be in love with Cleopatra), Serapion and the supernatural forces which make the ghosts of the long race of dead Ptolemies come out of their graves. What Dryden's play seems to embody is the view that the violation of ethics offends not only human being, but also the supernatural powers and causes one's utter ruin.

Long-Answer Type Questions

1. In Antony we find a conflict between love and duty. Discuss.
2. Discuss Antony as a Tragic hero.
3. John Dryden's Cleopatra is a faithful mistress. Justify.
4. Discuss **All for Love** as a classical Tragedy.
5. **All for Love** is a sentimentalized heroic tragedy. Do you agree with this view? Give a reasoned answer.
6. One who has a friend like Ventidius must be really lucky. Discuss.
7. Write a note on the scene in which Antonio and Octavia are reconciled.
8. Comment on the scence in which there is an encounter between Octavia and Cleopatra.
9. Write a note on Dryden's use of blank verse in **All for Love.**

Short Answer Type Questions

1. What do you mean by blank verse? In what way is it different from heroic couplet?
2. What are three unities? Which of them have been observed in **All for Love?**
3. Discuss the reconciliation of Antony and Octavia.
4. What is the role of Alexas in **All for Love?**

ROBERT BURNS

The Cottar's Saturday Night
Holy Willie's Prayer
The Jolly Beggars

THOMAS GRAY

Elegy Written in the Country Churchyard
Odes: The Progress of Poesy
Ode for Music
Ode on the Spring
Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College

Robert Burns (1759-1796)

Burns and His Times

By 1780 the mid-century poets, like Thomas Gray and William Collins, were mostly gone. A new generation of poets could now be seen rising. Among the most distinguished of these new poets were William Cowper, Robert Burns, William Blake, etc. Cowper and Burns have similarities, which others do not share with each other in the same measure. These two mark alike a tendency to use subjective, autobiographical material and to write of rural domesticity. They can be considered among the latest flowerings in the eighteenth century of the cult of simplicity. Since it chances that Cowper's dates (1731 – 1800) are exactly a century later than Dryden's, it seems useful to compare these last voices in the neoclassic choir (if indeed they belong there) with the tones of Dryden and Pope, the actual founders of the neoclassical tradition in English poetry. Obviously the century elapsed has grown tender; Burns and Cowper both write satires, but their satires are relatively good-humoured, perhaps a little too much good-humoured. Cowper's satire in particular lacks hardness, flash and cutting edge. Burns, like Dryden and Pope, has sympathetic generalized observations to make about man; but like Blake and Cowper, he is most aroused concerning underprivileged man. Burns and Blake show faith in progress and in the ability of man to achieve his own destiny. Like Dryden and Pope, Cowper shows a sense of man's limitations. But Cowper would have man rely on God's help, on a divine plan, whereas Pope fitted man into a philosophical chain of being, in which duty urges him to be a competent link or a submerged atom. However, there is little in the observations of these later poets about man that would revolt Dryden or Pope. In fact, both Burns and Cowper echo in their poetry Pope's *Essay on Man* with impersonal material "What oft was thought." Cowper and Burns stressed what they thought and felt, though they did continue to value impersonal aphoristic wisdom. Burns, Cowper and Blake tend to talk to themselves or to a small audience. They lack, for sure, the loud and noble eloquence of the earlier poets. The tendency now is increasingly subjective and lyrical. It expresses not so eagerly an acquired wisdom of life as it does a personal experience of life. The later poets are not learned in the sense in which Dryden, Pope, Gray and Johnson were. On the contrary, they are more intimately emotional than their predecessors. Cowper and Burns, more than Gray and Collins, are transitional poets. Let us take up Burns and see how he shaped himself as a poet and what contribution he made to the progress of English poetry.

Robert Burns was born in 1759 at Alloway in Ayrshire, a county in which most of his life was spent. His father, William Burnes, as he spelled it, was a tenant farmer in a region where rentals were so high as to make certain the poverty of the tenant. In 1781 Burns spent some months in Irvine learning to dress fax, but that work proving unattractive, he returned to the farm. Upon the death of their father (1784), Robert and his younger brothers moved the family to Mossgiel in Mauchline parish. Before this time Robert had commenced writing verses and making love. His sexual activities were promiscuous as well as fruitful. Jean Armour of Mauchline, whom Burns married in 1788, if not earlier, bore him twins in 1786 and again in 1788. Mary Campbell ("Highland Mary") apparently died in childbirth in 1786. There were several other women also in his life of youth. Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, were printed at neighbouring Kilmarnock. This brought Burns local fame. During the following winter Burns was in Edinburgh, where he conducted himself with dignity even though in more intellectual or aristocratic society than he had hither to seen. In 1787 in Edinburgh came out two reprinting of his poems, with some additions. A second winter in Edinburgh was devoted in part to adjusting financial returns, which were considerable. The volume of Burns's poems was also brought out in London. Within the next two years appeared the piracies of his poems in Dublin, Belfast, Philadelphia, and New York. After his brief vocation tours in the summer of 1787, Burns once again decided

to return to the farm. He also decided presently to marry Jean Armour. The wedded couple settled at Ellisland, near Dumfries. After making a last unsatisfactory attempt to make a rented farm pay, Burns moved to Dumfries itself in 1791, where he got a place as an officer in the excise. In spite of gossip to the contrary, and despite ill health, it is said to be certain that the last five years of Burns's life were those of valued and respected citizen, of a well-known poet, who until the last was busy in his effort to aid George Thomson in his projected *Select Scottish Airs,* designed to glorify Scots song-writing.

Like William Cowper, Burns is also known to be largely a poet of emotion. But whereas Cowper had liking for environment for its own sake, Burns loved it for the human relationship implied in it. His poem, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, is an obvious illustration. Burns also found his local background a grim stimulus towards an escape to a larger life. In his view, this life was the just destiny of all men in a state of freedom. Here lies the great difference between Burns and Cowper. While Cowper came of a distinguished family of notable ability and of rich culture opportunity, Burns was a "sport" in a family of humble uprightness and poverty-striken integrity, but without a spark of genius except in Robert. In a way, Burns was an untaught genius. He could also be called, in his own words he used for Fergusson, "Heaven-taught." As such, he was the realization of an eighteenth-century dream that went back even further than Spectator No 160. Alexander Pope was assured, at the beginning of his poetic career, by a hostile critic, "You have not the sufficient learning necessary to make a poet." The idea of learning as essential to a poet perished in the eighteenth century. There came up a crop of poets contrary to this belief in the Augustan age. We can recall here Stephen Duck, who was the thresher poet; Ann Yearsley, who was the milkmaid; and Thomas Chatterton, who also aspired to the role of natural genius – and all to the grief of possible sponsors seemed deficient in quality. Robert Burns consciously attempted the part, and succeeded beyond all rivals. His outcry against such learned, or college, or university, wits as "Think to climb Parnassus/By dint O' Greek" would have annoyed Pope's critic:

Gie me ae spark O' Nature's fire,
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then, tho' I drudge thro' dub an' mire
At plengh or cart,
My Muse, tho' hamenly in attire,
May touch the heart.

Burns was by no means so untaught as this quoted stanza would seem to say. But this stanza constitutes at least a declaration of poetical independence of learning. On the other hand, it is an implicit reaffirmation of the favourite dogma of the century, "Nature is nature wherever placed." The ability of "the force of Nature" to reach the heights, if unhindered, or even to reach despite hindrance, had been a cherished notion throughout the Augustan age. Burns can be said to be a complete demonstration of this idea. It may also be noted that, later, in the nineteenth century, natural genius will be regarded as "spontaneity" rather than untaught. But Burns was not all for spontaneity; he always felt proud of his careful revision of his poems. No doubt, his poems came from the heart rather than head, but they are no "profuse strains of unpremeditated art." However, his career, as well as the idea of spontaneity, encouraged the romantic heresy that a true genius could bloom into a finished poet in no time. An untaught genius naturally had to be proletarian – a thresher, a milkmaid, a farmer. Burns was proud of his humble origin, which was not a self-conscious literary pose with him. It only fitted into a tradition glorifying the farmer that went back to the days (1728) when Lord Bolingbroke had rakes, hoes, and other farm implements painted on the walls of the entrance hall of his house, had his eye on the role of Cincinnatus. The tradition got a boost in the hands of the later physiocrats. For example, it echoes in the "Advertisement" in Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield,* where Dr Primrose is said to unite in himself "the three greatest characters upon earth" – the priest, the farmer, and the father of a family. The world was ready for a genius like Burns who should be a farmer, a family man, and a great poet.

Burns as A Farmer Poet

FOR Burns, the farming was inevitable. His father and his grandfather had both struggled to wrest a livelihood from the farms of Ayrshire. Burns followed the family tradition. No doubt, it was a hard life, and was decidedly a losing battle. The boy Robert at the Mount Oliphant, overworking and thus undermining his health, as well as the married poet with children later in life, continued the family struggle of wresting livelihood from the occupation of farming. Almost from the start of Burns's life there can be said to be three worlds closing and opening on the poet bewilderingly. The first was the hard life of physical labour, for farm life to Burns was never sincerely idyllic. The second was the world of books; for his father as well as many more of Ayrshire men were "reading people." Burns grew fond of books quite early in his life. He developed special liking for a schoolbook, Arthur Masson's *Collection of Prose and Verse.* This book gave Burns his first knowledge of bits of Shakespeare, Dryden, Addison, and others. Later, he came to know well the work of Milton, Pope, Thomson, Gray, Stenstone, Beattie, and Goldsmith. His bias to sentiment can be seen in his love for Sterne's and Mackenzie's novels. Most important was, of course, his love for his Scottish predecessors. Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson were his special interests. His long and deep passion for Scots song books encouraged his great lyric gift. In various other disciplines of knowledge Burns was widely read, such as theology, philosophy, and even agriculture. From his readings in prose and poetry, as well as from the contemporary controversies between the "Auld Lichts" and the "New Lichts" so hotly debated in the Scotland of his day, quite violently in the more rustic parishes, Burns very likely acquired his anti-Calvinistic belief in the natural goodness of man. This belief did much to develop a sense of the injustice of the poor farmer's lot to make him what he speedily became – a social rebel.

The themes, the landscapes, the environment, and the attitudes in majority of Burns's poems are typical of the rural Scotland. His adoption of the Scottish dialect as the diction of his poetry gave to his compositions an earthy touch. Since he wrote about life he actually lived, there is greater authenticity of tone and mood in his poems than elsewhere in the eighteenth century. While his contemporaries wrote about rural life from the distant abodes in urban centres, he alone wrote about it from within. Writing as an insider to rural Scotland, Burns gives to his poetry a feel and a weight missing in most poems of the age on the rural themes. While Pope, Johnson, and even Gray and Collins, wrote about rural life just as a matter of convention, Burns alone wrote about it out of compulsion from within, out of felt experience. His emphasis on the Scottish dialect and the folk life of his country must also be seen as an assertion of his Scottish nationalism. It should not be forgotten that Burns lived during a period when the nationalism and self-pride of the Scottish people was at stake. Walter Scott's writings both in prose and poetry, too, offer a similar illustration of that sentiment. It is all right to treat Burns as a mere composer of rural songs, but it also amounts to ignoring the more significant side of his revolutionary contribution to the poetry in English. Also significant is the phenomenon of the regional novel in English that emerged around the same time, especially in the novels of Maria Edgeworth. Burns' poetry should also be seen as an attempt to create poetry of regional character. Compared to the "general" poetry of the Augustans, who dominated the scene, Burns's poetry is highly particular and specific," with a very strong regional odor and taste. Call it untutored, but it is this poetry which truly reflects the life of the people, holds mirror to what was there around the poet in his times in Scotland.

Burns as Love Poet

Burns's attitude of a social rebel was stimulated not merely by philosophy and by exhaustion from "the thresher's weary flinging – tree," but also through influence of the third world that opened so maddeningly upon the high – strong youth, when, as his Muse in *The Vision* says –

Youthful Love, warm – blushing, strong,
Keen – shivering, shot thy nerves along.
……
I saw thy pulse's maddening play,

Wild send thee Pleasure's devious way,
Misled by Fancy's meteor – ray,
By passion driven;
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from Heaven

In the concluding lines cited here, the young poet, rebelliously guilty, disclaims moral responsibility. But his whole psychology belies such fatalism. Burns's love was consciously sinful. He rationalizes excuses by blaming Heaven or by such brilliant satire on the faults of others as is found in *The Holy Fair.* Burns represents himself to this fair as accompanied by the hizzie Fun, to keep an eye on Superstition and Hypocrisy. He concludes:

There's some are fou o' love divine;
There's some are fou o' "brandy";
An' monie jobs that day begin
May end in houghmanandine
Some ither day.

Here, we are made to feel the comedy of the sinful hypocrites. Open sin seems thus the less reprehensible. His amours have quite obvious if inadequate excuse in the darkness of life to which he seemed unjustly condemned.

There's nonght but care on ev'ry han',
In every hour that passes, O:
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 'twere nae for the lasses, O.

Burns thus begins his career with an apologetic and allegedly heaven-authorized defiance of convention. The defiance is, at least partly, due to the rigorous morality his father had attempted to instil. It is also in part due to his conscious rationalizing of his own follies, and in part to his growing class-consciousness. It is ultimately to his political heterodoxy, which had become after 1788 somewhat notorious on his becoming an excise man in the employ of His Majesty the King. By this time class-consciousness was reinforced by a rational love of freedom, a sympathy first with the American colonies and later with the French revolutionaries. It was natural for a Scot, a not too serious nation, that Charles III or his daughter "the bonie lass of Albanie" would fill the throne of England with more grace than a mad Hanoverian. Burns's Jacobitism is negligible, but his anger at political or social injustice is true, eloquent, and pervasive. It can be clearly seen in *The Tea Dogs, A Dream, Is there for Honest Poverty,* and in the romantic anarchy of the last chorus of *The Jolly Beggars.*

From the world of love, work, and books, then, there was this other opening that Burns had found: the world of poetry. As he records in his letter to his friend, Richard Brown, the following episode that occurred in 1781 reveals it all:

> Do you recollect a Sunday we spent in Eglinton Woods? you told me, on my repeating some verses to you, that you wondered I could resist the temptation of sending verses of such merit to a magazine: 'twas actually this that gave me an idea of my own pieces which encouraged me to the character of a Poet.

Burns' first volume assured his fame. It indicated fully the nature of that fame as well. Like his contemporary Cowper, he was to be a poet of rural, daily life. He aimed humbly "at the character of a Poet." His notion of that character was thoroughly of his time:

…. Manners-painting strains,
The loves, the ways of simple swains –

These were to be the subjects of his poetry. One might also add to them the portrayal of the hypocrisies of the townsfolk of Ayrshire and, occasionally, the injustices of the larger world of statecraft. But Burns focused chiefly on men and their interrelations – their loves, their labours, and their sorrows.

In Burns's poetry, landscape is only incidental. As in *The Holy Fair,* he frequently commences with a bit of description. He uses imagery with less poignant effect, but almost unawares:

The wan moon sets behind the white wave,
And Time is setting with me, O.

If he writes of animals or flowers, they are companions – the farmer's mare, Maggie, the child's pet sheep, Mailie, or the Mouse, or the Mountain Dairy – to all of whom he ascribes human traits, a human lot. The focus is on Man still. Put together his smaller pieces, seemingly on inconsequential subjects, and they come to constitute his "essay on man." The final injunction in his The vision is:

Preserve the dignity of man
With soul erect;
And trust the universal plan
Will all protect.

Burns's subject matter, then, is what one might expect: love songs, drinking songs, humorous satires on the religious hypocrites of the Mauchline region. There is glowing eloquence on the theme of the right of man, and the pervading incidental use of bits of rural life that becomes only slightly artificial, even when self-consciously idyllic, as in *The Cotter's Saturday Night***.** Burns is never far from the soil, and never fails in a human sympathy for whatever subject he treats.

Burns's lyrics, though diverse in mood and method, are chiefly focused on the theme of love. His songs of wooing range from the reader in *Mary Morrison* to archness in *Tam Glen*, to a jocose treatment of bashfulness in *Duncan Gray*, and to uproarious delight in the story of *Last May a Braw Wooer*. There are happy songs of married life, such as *Contented wi' Little* and the salvaged treasure of *John Anderson my Jo*, among others. Although not his common theme, Burns has also treated absence with sweetness in *Of a' the Airts*, and the elegiac tone of *Banks o' Doon* and *Highland Mary* expresses beautifully the tragedy of lost love. Tam o's Shanter alone would prove that Burns had the gifts in poetic narrative, but in his songs he seldom relies on story for substance. *In Auld Rob Morris*, *Open the Door*, and Tam Glen, however, story is exquisitely implied. The lover protests at parting perhaps too much in *Ae Fond Kiss*, but in the fervidly hyperbolic *Red, Red Rose* we surely have authentic passion if ever words conveyed it.

Burns's high and individual achievement depended largely on his intense and tender insight into social relations. In these his scope was wide: They might be as private as love or as public as monarchy. But at his best he drew from the social problems, keenly felt in the laborious farm life that was his lot. His literary ambitions were twofold: he hoped to be a poet like Thomson and Gray, but he distrusted his abilities; he hoped more confidently to be a local poet following a Scottish muse and singing the scenes from which "Old Scotia's grandeur springs". The two ambitions get mixed. To be a universal poet, he thought, required the ability to strike out aphoristic reflections; but this art had perished, and in such lines as.

Anticipation forward points the view,

Burns showed that he could not recapture it. No more could Byron, of whom Goethe remarked, "The minute he reflects, he is childish." It is not that Burns could not write well in English. His letters would do credit to any writer of English, and show conclusively that it was as natural for him to write English as it was to speak Scots. But to Burns poetry was rhythm and sound as well as meaning; and the sound of his native Scots gave him courage and gave his writing life, vigour, and savour. His "ain countree" gave him courage to be himself and integrity to win, in spite of his moral flaws, the respect of the best people with whom he came in contact.

Burns as Scottish Poet

The growing tendency of Scottish writers to write in English, while continuing to talk (and in a sense to feel) in Scots, in the seventeenth century, led to an almost disappearance of the Scots literary language. Consequently, it led to the survival of Scots only as a series of regional dialects. Several historical events went into the

making of English the more attractive option for the writers of Scotland. The Reformation, the Union of the Crowns in 1603, and the prestige and influence of the Elizabethan writers, all helped in the rise of this phenomenon. The Union of Parliaments in 1707, when the Scottish Parliament ceased to exist and Scotland ceased to be a political entity to become only the northern part of Great Britain, marked a further stage in the assimilation of Scottish culture to English. Its short run influence was, however, in the opposite direction. Feeling frustrated in their national hopes, Scotsmen turned to their literary past for consolation. As a result, the antiquarian interest in Old Scottish literature steadily grew throughout the eighteenth century. At the same time, attempts were made to imitate and perpetuate, in whatever limited a way, some of the older Scottish literary traditions.

In the given circumstances of the eighteenth century it was inevitable that English speech and English literary forms should be looked upon as the proper medium for Scottish writers who wished to succeed in the larger world. No doubt, there was a revival of Scots verse, but it was a dialect verse used for the most part for humorous or sentimental purposes, in a patronizing, exhibitionist, or nostalgic manner. In the eventful year of 1706, the year before the Union of Parliaments was finally effected, an Edinburgh printer named James Watson brought out the first of the three volumes of *A Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems both Ancient and Modern*, with two further volumes in 1709 and 1711. It need to be recalled here that throughout the seventeenth century the line between folk poem and song and "art" poem was quite often obscured in Scotland. Poems even by courtly poets found their way to popular singers and printers of broadsides, as well as to private collectors. In such a situation, changes in text, corruptions of diction, amendments of lines and phrases, even additions and adaptations were the natural consequences. What James Watson printed seemed to represent things that were still going on in Scotland, though often not so much on the surface. In bringing them to the surface, James Watson prevented them from being obscured by the new face of Scottish culture. At the same time, he helped to divert patriotic attention from politics to literature. Scotland became concerned about its literary past and about the possibilities of continuity with that past. It is true that this concern was soon to become mixed up with confused ideas about the vernacular and primitive poetry and the natural man. This confusion was finally to become a problem of serious difficulties for Robert Burns. At the same time, it cannot be ignored that this also produced an environment which encouraged the production of certain kinds of vernacular poetry. This encouragement proved decisive for the course of eighteenth century Scottish poetry from Ramsay to Burns.

Robert Burns is said to have brought to a brilliant close the chapter in the history of the Scottish poetry that had been begun by Allan Ramsay. Burns had begun in early 1783 to keep a Commonplace Book in which he entered his poems and his comments on poetry and song. As he revealed, "I never had the least thought or inclination of turning Poet till I got once heartily in love, and then rhyme and song were, in a manner, the spontaneous language of my heart." This observation accompanied an unpretentious, lilting song-poem, written in English tipped with Scots, but turning to pure neoclassical English in the final stanza. Burns entered in the Commonplace Book, shortly afterwards, sentimental, melodramatic, or melancholy pieces whose thought reflected the family misfortunes of the time and vocabulary and manner derived from minor eighteenth century English poets. He was reading Gray, Thomson, *The Man of Feeling, Tristram Shandy*, etc., cultivating a gloomy sensibility. But suddenly one comes across a lively, swinging piece deriving from Scottish folk tradition rather than from contemporary English sentimentalism. Burns learned to appreciate economy, cogency, and variety in the work of Pope and others. But even more important than this learning was the one from the old Scots literature to handle traditional Scottish literary forms and stanza-patterns, particularly in descriptive and satirical verse, with assurance and cunning. He equally learned from the oral folk tradition about song rhythms and fitting of words to music. And out of his reading in standard English, he fashioned a Scots-English idiom which, though hardly a literary language in the sense that Henryson's or Dunbar's language was, proved over and over again to be an effective medium for Burns's kind of Scottish poetry.

Although he never pretended to write anything beyond his own amusement, Burns remained restless and dissatisfied. His work on the farm did not bring dividends. He remained harassed by problems both emotional and economic, so much so that he even entertained the idea of emigrating to Jamaica. But before anything else Burns wanted to prove to his countrymen what he was capable of doing. Hence, despite his troubles, he went ahead with his plans for publishing a volume of his poems at the nearby town of Kilmarnock – *Poems chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, 1786. The volume met with instant success. It drove Burns to Edinburgh to be lionized, patronized, and showered with well-meant but dangerous advice. The Kilmarnock volume was an extraordinary mixture of a handful of first-rate Scots poems and some others including a number of verse letters addressed to various friends. There were also a few Scots poems in which Burns seemed unable to sustain his inspiration or which got spoiled by a confused purpose. Poems like *Hallowe'en* were too self-consciously rustic in their dogged descriptions of country customs and rituals and their almost exhibitionist use of archaic rural terms. One of the finest poems in the volume is, of course, *The Holy Fair*. Written in the old Scottish tradition of proems describing popular festivities, and adopting an old Scottish stanza form which came down to him through Fergusson, the poem gives description with ironic humour of the goings-on at one of the great outdoor "tent preachings" that were annually held relating to the communion service. There is no moral indignation in the poem. There is only an ironic amusement to the thought that human nature will always have its way even in the midst of Calvinist thunderings on the one hand and the unorthodox "moderate" pleading for noble works on the other. Burns sums up the poem's meaning in the concluding stanza:

How monie hearts this day converts
O'Sinners and o' lasses!
Their hearts o' stane gin night are gane,
As saft as only flesh is.
There's some are fou o' love divine;
There's some are fou o' brandy;
An' monie jobs that day begin
May end in Houghmagandie, …

Here, Burns deliberately creates, just as Pope does in *The Rape of the Lock*, a confusion of theological, biblical, and amorous imagery to underline the hard fact of impure (or ignoble) human nature.

Burns's native genius showed, more than elsewhere, in his Scottish songs. He is said to be the greatest song writer ever born in great Britain, of which Scotland of Burns had become a part. He refurnished old songs, and made new ones out of fragmentary remains. He generally used an old chorus as a foundation for a new song, sometimes simply tonching up a set of character less old words. At times, he also provided entirely new words to traditional airs and dance tunes. He did, of course, so much beyond the editorial and improving tasks he undertook for Jonson and Thomson. If he had not been an exceptionally original poet himself, if he had remained uncannily in tune with the folk tradition, he would have been execrated by later scholars for spoiling original material with false improvement. His work as a song writer was a unique blend of the antiquarian and the creative. In a passion of enthusiasm for his native Scottish culture, he took the whole body of Scottish folk song and put it together, preserved it, reshaped it, and gave it new life and spirit. He spoke with the great anonymous voice of the Scottish people. He uttered that voice with great assurance. And in doing this he showed a technical skill, and a poetic splendour unmatched by any other song writer.

Song or lyric, satire or self-expression, Burns wrote with a distinct advantage of a vernacular Scottish poet. The very character of his environment gave him a certain advantage over both Ramsay and Fergusson. Although in the eighteenth century, the vernacular was in fuller, and more general, use in conversation, even by the educated classes in Scotland, than thereafter. Both these poets made a literary use of it with a certain air of condescension, and as the specially appropriate medium of lowly themes. In the case of Burns, the use

is more various, and often with a more serious and higher intent, than in the case of the other two. Burns was also in closer and more perpetual contact with humble life than was either of them. As Burns himself claimed, vernacular was his "native language." He seems clearly to revel, in his verse, in the appropriation of its direct and graphic phraseology.

Burns as A Regional Poet

Burns was one of those who are deeply rooted in the soil of the region in which they happen to have been born, so deeply rooted that they become the soil, the air, the feel of that region. Wherever they might go, or be transplated, they carry the smells and sounds of their regions with them. Born and brought up in Scotland, Burns identified himself with his native place and became a voice of his place. For him, the past of his place was also the present. He found in full life the native verse, with its ancestral forms and themes. He became the sovereign artist of the same. His inheritance was four hundred unbroken years. He schooled himself, deeply and devotedly, in the inherited art of his country. He left it higher than it had ever been. He became so puissant a representative of it that he generally blotted out the figures both of his creditors and his debtors. He owned nothing to Cowper or Crabbe, although he read the former with admiration. He was brought up on his native song and legend. He lived nearer to the brown earth, upturned for sowing and crowded with life, than any other of the poets in Great Britain. But he never portrays in his poetry any scenery for its own sake, though he can do so brilliantly. The scenery in his poetry is always a habitation for men and mice. It always provides a background, a chorus, a thing subordinate to the life that swarms in it. The background, no doubt, is alive in itself, not in any pantheistic way after the manner of Wordsworth or Shelley. It offers to Burns no religion and no instruction. Sometimes, certainly, it becomes an occasion for something a little declamatory or half-sincere. Carlyle noted the painting of the torrent in *The Brigs of Ayr*; where "haunted Garpel" is

Arous'd by blust'ring winds an' spotting thowes;
In mony a torrent down the snow-broo rowes;
While crashing ice, borne on the roaring spate,
Sweep dams, an' mills, an' brigs, a' to the gate;
And from Glenbuck, down to the Ratton-key,
Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd, tumbling sea;
Then down ye'll hurl, deil nor ye never rise!
And dash the gumile jaups up to the pouring skies.

This passage is just one out of many. Burns is not without sensitiveness to the happiness of rapid and yet peaceful water. He sees the burn "wimpling" through the glen, staying round a rocky scaur, and gives us all its glitter and musical motion:

Whyles gliller'd to the nightly rays,
Wi' bickerin, dancin dazzle;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes
Below the spreading hazel
Unseen that night.

However, Burns does not speak of mountains or of solitudes, which he does not visit. His country is low and rolling and flat – Ayrshire and thereabouts. It is not thickly peopled, except with wild creatures, and of these he knows all the sounds. He hears the curlews call and the paitricks whir and the bitternes roar and the corncrakes clamour. He also knows the colour of the holiday dresses. He catches the glitter of the silks and scarlets on the women "Skelping barefoot" to the Holy Fair. Even transient lights do not enscape his eye. The greedy glower of the elder at his twopence in the plate, or the moonbeams glancing through every chink in Alloway Kirk. Everything is seen in movement in the poetic world of Burns. He has very few pictures of still life. Things flash by, or the winds sweep the voices along. The pace of excited actual existence, jovial or angry or rueful, is given by him as by few other poets. This swift method goes back a in Scottish verse, and is found again and again from Dunbar to Fergusson. In Burns it is most outstanding.

The same gift can be seen in Burns's representation of animals. He does not merely love them, but knows them intimately. He does not merely feel wrath for them, or see them in a kind of splendour. His sheep are persons. He is a farmer. He knows them by their faces. His old ewe, his old mare, are not mere types. Maggie is a classic old mare, with as definite traits as that of a human being:

Tho' ye was trickie, slee, an' funnie,
Ye ne'er was donsie;
But hamely, tawie, quite, an' cannie,

Burns also has the hard sense of the farmer. He never takes the brutes too seriously, unless we except his sentimentalizing over the field-mouse, where he is thinking of himself more than of that other plaything of fortune. But even there he is saved by his banter. In The Twa Dogs, for instance, Caesar and Luath are not so much dogs as shrewd men, a traveled valet and a cotter, comparing notes. But they are also admirably drawn as dogs. He is thus, as it were, an artist of the animals. He applies the same gift to his friends, enemies, and acquaintances. It came to him from native Scots tradition. He has the "devouring eye and portraying hand" that Emerson remarked in Carlyle. His personages come out clear in a line or phrase, which tells all that need be known, or was ever to tell, of

Rough, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
The Wale o' cocks for fun an' drinkin!

Or of Matthew Henderson the sportsman. This worthy is described indirectly. We know from the kindly jesting artifice of the elegy, what he was like:

Mourn, sooty coots, and speckled teals,
Ye fisher herons, watching eels;

and from the ending:

But by thy honest turf I'll wait,
Thou man of worth!
And mourn the ae best fellow's fate
E'er lay in earth!

Burns's art of description, very much like that of a novelist, can as well be seen in his pictures of places. They bear real names in his poems. He is often as much a "local poet" as Cowper or Wordsworth. Glaston Moor and Mossgiel and the "Brigs of Ayr" are there with their physiognomies, like Weston Underwood or Loughrigg Fell. They are always peopled and alive, for Burns, unlike wordsworth, is seldom alone with them. He is part of them, rather than they of him as in Wordsworth. They are drawn rapidly, but the pace does not blur the sharpness of the imagery.

Burns as A Song Writer

To pass from Burns's poems – his epistles, satires, and narratives – to his songs is to pass to something purer and more piercing and aerial, less tied to traditional tales, real persons, known legends, local incidents, and all the harsh, tough fibers of Scottish character and the oddities of country physiognomy. It is to pass from the earth to the air or the fire. For even when the matter of the songs is actually of that familiar sort, rank or homely, it has wandered wider on the lips of the people. It is the poet who makes it universal by his treatment. He sublimates the earthly material. He captures the breath and finer spirit "of his people, which, more than all others, is inconceivable without songs. No one has ever done this for England, where there is no such material to work upon. No one has done it for Ireland, where the material is far more abundant. Burns, and Burns alone, has done it for Scotland. He really became the singing soul of his people.

Nearly two hundred songs were sent by Burns to his employers. He sent some in 1787 to the unlettered engraver James Johnson for his *Musical Museum.* Others, in 1792 he sent for the *Scottish Airs*, of George Thomson. He scattered many more in broadcast. He had freedom in the Museum to virtually edit his songs,

and he was then at his best. When he contributed to *Scottish Airs*, *his finer hour seems to have passed. Nearly all the pieces he treated are by nameless and untraceable authors.* He claimed to have taken "old songs of olden times", and how much he added to them, we shall perhaps never know. However, we can be sure that he stripped away all lusterless patches and substituted his own silver and gold. *The "old man"* may have had purer versions than those available to us. They may have been just an invention of our poet. That, too, we shall perhaps never know.

Whatever be the case, his songs are enchanting. Think of his world famous "O, my luve is like a red, red rose". This, too, he picked up from the old stock, mended and amended, softened and sweetened, and made it a haunting piece. Such ways of working could be shown at endless length in the case of Burns. He took whatever served him, and did what he would with it, with unfailing instinct. Also, as his manuscripts often show, he gave to it a ceaseless care and revision, which is most striking in some of the most artless-seeming and reeled-off ditties. "O saw ye home Lesley" is a piece of gallantery of his own, in honour of a real Miss Leslie Baillie, when he accompanied her, with her father, on a ride southward. The song is, in his own phrase, a parody of an old one, *Bonnie lizzie Baillie*, so that the surname and the tune were really all he had to work upon.

It is very difficult to classify Burns's songs, even the best of them, as much as to classify the airs that go with them. In dozens of these songs the Northern Pan is evoked, with his extraordinary leer. He puts his face so close to yours that your dignity is gone and you feel his breath. He is chucklingly familiar. He measures your tolerance at the moment. He even delights to go beyond it. Then, he dances back, singing, to watch the effects of it all. In pure mischief, he will provide a drawing-room version which is still roguish, but presentable. The two forms of *Duncan Gray* can be consulted for this device. Suddenly he vanishes, and a woman's voice is heard piercingly:

Near me, near me,
Laddie, lie near me!
Lang hae I lain my lave
Laddie, lie near me!

This feminine long-drawn call is heard often enough: "Here awa, there awa, wandering Willie!", "Wilt thou be my dearie?" Or the male voice is heard in reply, in a bass:

O, this is no my aim lassie,
Fair tho' the lassie be:
Weel Kan I my aim lassie
Kind love is in her e'er.

Or Burns' own voice is raised, in honour of his wife: "of a' the airts the wind can blaw" was written on his honeymoon, with only a melody to work upon.

There is also another group of songs, the convivial, which is the lyric counterpart of *Scotch Drink* and the like. There songs are, in fact, formal poems not meant for singing but for saying: "O, quid ale comes," and "the Deil's away wi' tho' exciseman" are of this chanted order. But they are not so numerous as other kinds. Of the Jacobite songs the greatest have been "Awa, Whigs, awa!" "O'er the water to Charlie," "Carl an the King come"; and Ye Jacobites by name." At the other extreme from the scurril stands the literary, historial muse, with "Turn again, thou fair Eliza," and "thickest Night, surround my dwelling." All these types that Burns practiced complete the picture of his moods and concerns. They also represents an artificial but actual element in Scottish song. The commonplace view of his songs, that those in Scots are good and those in English not so good, is too simplistic. No doubt, there are instances of his not so good songs in English, but there are others which come up as well as his Scots songs. As Burns himself saw, "Scots wha Hae" is rhetoric too (if good rhetoric), though the tune is northern.

But in which language, one would like to ask, does he write *To the Toothache?*

When fevers burn, or agne freezes,
Rheumatics gnaw, or colic squeezes,
Our neebors sympathise to ease us
Wi' pitying moan;
But thee!-thou hell o' a' diseases,
They mock our groan!

This is not southern, eighteenth century "poetics diction" at all. And yet, it is truly English, with a few northern vowels and curtailments, in a northern metric and temper. Here again is another stanza which is no worse:

Hear how he clears the points o' Faith
Wi' rattlin and wi' thumpin;
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
He's stampin, an' he's jumpin!

It all seems to depend, more still, on our mental image of the speaker and his Doric sounds and the faces of the cronies around him. The English speech, the Scot might say, is only a fainter form of the Scots, aspiring to be like it. To appease the Scot the Englishman may accept that view. These elementary reflections help us reach a truer judgment upon Burns' prowess in the two languages. The bisection, that is customarily made, of his talent into that which uses the "Doric" well, and that which misuses the English, need to be qualified. Some of his songs, and some of the best, the most indigenous, the most peaty, and some of those that go nearest home, contain no diction that demands translation. At most, one can say, they contain words in the alternative northern sound and orthography. His noblest lines, "Had we never loved sae blindly," are of this kind. "It was a' for our rightfu' King" is another instance. It can only be called something like high English, of the old Cavalier style. The truth is that when Burns starts in the right mood, and in the right key of language, he can be almost equally good whatever proportion of the vernacular he may use. All that can be said is, that he is always safe in Scots, that the very best of his pieces have a large dash of it, and that a single vivid, unforgettable, puzzling word in a stanza is enough to give it colouring. This view brings Burns nearer the main English tradition. The very freedom and intensity of his natural genius serves to lower, not to stiffen, those barriers of bent and feeling which history and religions have raised harness over-high between the two branches of the Great Britain.

We also need to notice about Burns that he has been one of those very few poets who could sing the songs of either sex. No one else has ever captured the feminine delight in prospective motherhood combined with the feminine joy in sexual surrender as Burns has done in the song he wrote for Jean when she was about to bear his child:

O wha my babie-clouts will buy,
O wha will tent me when I cry;
Wha will kiss me where I lie..
The rantin dog, the dad die o' it…..

Nor has any one else so simply and yet powerfully expressed the combination of tenderness and swagger, which is a purely male attitude towards love, as Burns did in "A Red, Red Rose." Nor still has the note of male protectiveness sounded so poignantly as in the poem that Burns wrote for Jessie Lewars, the girl who helped to nurse him in his final illness. With an outstanding effort of the imagination Burns, as he lay dying, reversed their roles and wrote, to one of Jessie's favourite old Scottish airs,

Oh wert thou in the could blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea;
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee….

The note of remembered friendship has also perhaps not been so movingly expressed by any one else as in "Auld lang syne" - Burns's rewriting of an older song, which he never claimed as his own. It must always be remembered, however, and never forgotten, that these are songs. As such, they should never be judged without their tunes. Burns himself thought of words as part of a single whole.

Burns' influence on Scottish poetry has not been a happy one, for he was lionized partly for wrong reasons. His weaknesses, rather than his virtues, came to be imitated. Hence the modern Scottish poets had to return to Dunbar rather than to Burns. A coyly self-conscious emphasis on sensibility as such, a cloying coziness of tone, a false sugaring over of the realities of experience, with stock sentimental situations, all done in a vernacular whose main feature is the adding of diminutive endings in "ie" to as many words as possible, became, as David Daichies has remarked, the favourite imitations of the followers of Burns. Thus, his faults rather than his virtues were profusely imitated. This came all the easier to them because Burns was a rustic poet who wrote when Scotland was on the verge of the Industrial Revolution, after which the temptation to sentimentalize over an idealized country life was irresistible. Burns could not have been Scottish expected to, nor did he actually do anything to help Scottish literature to come to terms with the Industrial Revolution.

This much said in detail about the general features of Burns's poetry, we can now turn to the three poems that are meant for our special reading. These poems are The Cotter's Saturday Night*,* Holy Willie's Prayer*, and* The Jolly Beggars*. These poems need to be analyzed in some detail to see how Burns's genius worked, and how, as poet, he shaped his compositions.*

(i) The Cotter's Saturday Night

This poem has been considered by critics as a sort of hybrid. It is, for one thing, written in the Spenserian stanza, which Burns borrowed, not directly from Spenser, but indirectly from Beattie. It remains of purely English descent, never before used by any Scottish vernacular poet. Although said partly to have been suggested by Fergusson's Farmer's Ingle, and professedly descriptive of a lowly Scottish interior, and of "the sentiments and manners" of the Scottish peasants in their more hallowed relations, Burns's poem is not, like Fergusson's written "in their native language". It is written, on the contrary, substantially in modern English, with, here and there, a sparse sprinkling of Scottish, or Scoto English, terms. It is for this reason that it has been called a hybrid, for it mixes the English and the Scottish traits together. Much of this poem's tone, many of its sentiments and portions of its phraseology are reminiscent of those of the English poets whom Burns knew. These poets are Milton, Gray, Pope, Thomson and Goldsmith. The poem comes out as a kind of medley of ideas and phrases partly borrowed from them, very much in the manner of Gray's poetry. Burns mixes these borrowings with reflections of his own and descriptions partly in their manner but derived from his own experience. It may in fact be termed a splendidly specious adaptation rather than quite an original composition. On the whole, the artistic genius and the afflatus of the poet prevail, although in a somewhat shackled, mannered, and restrained form. Its shackled manner becomes manifest when it is compared with the spontaneous brilliancy of the best of his more vernacular verses in old traditional staves.

However, in The Coller's *Saturday Night* there is a genuine pulse of poetry under an occasionally unreal, or rather uncongenial phraseology. As Burns himself tells us, he had "greeted by his father's fireside" whilst composing it. The workmanship of the English parts of the poem has been, quite often, underestimated. But at other times, he would turn out, in uncomfortable poetical or rhetorical diction, his utterances of revulsion and repentance. The poet's devotion though honest enough, has gone rather hectic. But all these moods are only moods. Actually, he never turns any one fact towards us for long. Burns shares many traits with the romantic poets, such as his love of colour, his eye for nature, his care for common humanity, as is evident from The Cotter's Saturday Night. But we can also note, on the other hand, that he also shows a temper which is more anti-romantic than romantic. But wherefrom, if not from the English romantics like Blake, did he get these traits. An obvious answer is that he got these "romantic" traits from the Scottish tradition. These traits were not new at all in Scotland, or in Scottish verse. They had already found lovely vernacular expression, and much before the Romantic Movement found an expression in England.

It has now become an accepted fact that Burns never struck a chord that had not been sounded sometime or other on the Scottish lyre or pipes. Some chords, indeed, he seldom sounded at all. For instance, the recovery of the folk ballad he left to Scott. But the vivid passion for natural things had been present in northern verse (Scottish verse), with long enfeeblings and intermissions, ever since the fifteenth century. The tenderly satiric fashion of addressing beasts and men was familiar to Burns. It was familiar, not only from older native verse, but from that of his immediate forerunner, Robert Fergusson, who died in 1744, when Burns was just a boy, and to whom Burns inscribed the memorial stone in the Canongate burying-place. An instance of Burns's debt to Fergusson can be seen in the very framework of *The Cotter's Saturday Night,* which was suggested by Fergusson's *The Farmer's Ingle*. Of course, so far as the poem's sentiment is concerned, it is much more deeply felt in Burns than in Fergusson.

The poetic form of the friendly or derisive epistle in verse was a long-standing form, which Burns took over, expanded, varied, and made into an instrument of widest compass, for the expression of insolent, button-holing colloquy, or of stentorian abuse, or of chaff, or of confidential gentle talk. Metrical scholars have traced with care the origin and descent of Burn's favourite staves. The chief of them, the six-lined verse built in two rhymes goes back to Old French and Provencal, through a long intervening history of Scots, and is also abundantly found in medieval English poetry. By choice, Burns thinks in this measure. He describes, muses, sneers, reviles, toasts, and even maunders in it. Its commonest movement is a farward rush on the tripple and repeated rhyme, stopped and clinched by the short line introducing the new rhyme. Then the other two lines, long and short, on the same two rhymes, face round and give the answer or complete the idea, with a fling-up of the heels, or those two lines are an afterthought, or there is no turn, or "break" at all, and the whole runs in a single breath. Such changes are rung without end. But the requickening of the rhythmical pulse in the fifth line, and the clanging finished in the sixth, are everywhere. The longer measures, also historic, and either borrowed directly, as here in *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, from Spenser, or adapted show an almost insolent ease and mastery of technique, like that of a champion jig-dancer. The clap of the sandal on the ground at the close is irresistibly suggested. For quick, striding narrative, or satiric enumeration, Burns often uses and reinvigorates the old rhyming octosyllabic, and the long heroic couplet yields a piquant mixture of Pope-like balance and vernacular freedom.

However, we must not forget that no such legacy of form can be one of form alone. We know how the soul of Burns was itself an inheritance. That tone of fatel familiarity, for one thing, before which everything goes down, is deep in the Scottish character. It is a feature, it will not be too much to say, even of its religious history. If Burns emerges a free-loving peasant amorist, as he does in *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, living at first by semi-polygamous country custom, full of passion, blatancy, fickleness, tenderness, fun, true and untrue sentiment, unchivlary, repentances, and domestic feeling, and if he enjoys and struggles accordingly, well, it is idle to pity him alone. We must take generations of his peasant forbears under the wing of our patronage or condonation, and praise nor does he show us every kind. But, on the whole, Burns is a far more superb figure, and represents a richer type, than any which it lay within the plan or perhaps the ability of Scott to portray. Finally, in *The Cotter's Saturday Night* Burns affects for a time the slow pensive movement of his Spenserian model (whom, rather than Spenser, he is studying). But Burns soon gets impatient and breaks away. It is just like Keats working at his Hyperion in the Miltonic melody, but soon realizing that it could not be possible to work against one's own grain. Burns, like Keats, even more than Keats, was not cut-out for the heavy and loaded verse of Spenser or Milton. Hence, a conflict of interests, of spirit and form, leading to a hybrid, which cannot be counted among the successful attempts of Burns.

(ii) Holy Willie's Prayer

*T*he real Burns is said to be revealed in his satires and humorous poems and in the abandonment to the moment of experience. We find this abandonment celebrated in many of his best songs as well. Burns the song writer was not represented in the Kilmarnock edition. Most of his songs were, in fact, still unwritten. Also, the Edinburg poetry readers did not consider song among the highest kinds of poetry. Burns the satirist

in some degree was revealed, but the greatest of his satiric poems he deliberately omitted from the Kilmarnock volume in order not to shock his genteel audience. Among the many of his satiric poems left out of the volume was also *Holy Willie's Prayer,* considered the greatest of all his satiric poems and one of the great verse satires of all times. In this poem, Burns is concerned to attack the Calvinist view of predestination, and of salvation by predestined grace regardless of "good works." According to this view, no work of fallen men (and all men are born fallen after the fall of Adam and Eve) can possibly be good in God's sight. Burns makes the attack by putting a prayer in the mouth of a strict Calvinist who is convinced that he is predestined to salvation by the grace of God. Burns maintains in the poem a solemn and liturgical note. The creed damns itself in the process of its expression. The poem opens with a calmly expressive statement of the view that man's salvation or damnation is decreed by God without any reference to man's behaviour. It is the very quietness and assurance of the statement that, at first, conceals its preposterousness. Then, suddenly, it reveals it when we least expect it:

O thou that in the heavens does dwell!
Wha, as it pleases best Thysel,
Sends one to heaven and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory!
And no for ony gude or ill
They've done before thee.
I bless and praise Thy matchless might,
When thousands Thou has left in night,
That I am here before Thy sight
For gifts and grace,
A burning and a shining light
To a' this place.

As the poem progresses in the above-quoted liturgical manner, the speaker's appalling complacency and egotism, even to the speaker himself, as humility, are cumulatively revealed. Burns does not portray Holy Willie a conscious hypocrite. When he attributes his lust to God's protective desire to remind him that, however gifted and elect, he is still a man. Thus, he is revealing the moral horrors that, for Burns, lay beneath any claim by any individual that he had inner assurance of predestined salvation: when he asks God's vengeance for his enemies, he really believes that his will and God's cause are one and the same. And, then, when he asks for economic prosperity in this world in addition to his assured reward in the next, it is done with a view to demonstrate to the heathen that God protects and favours those whom He has elected. As the poem goes on, it becomes increasingly impossible to disentangle godliness from the most abandoned self-indulgence. Also, in the confusion the creed of protection and predestination becomes monstrous. The poem ends in the same stately organ tones with which it began:

But Lord, remember me and mine
Wi' mercies temporal an' divine!
That I for grace an' gear may shine,
Excell'd by nane!
And a' the glory shall be thine!
Amen! Amen!

Thus, *Holy Willie's Prayer* is wholly satirical in tone. The poem can be considered a mere metrical chain of brilliantly relentless mockery. Burns makes this mockery serve both a general and a special purpose. By a skilful series of burlesque parodies, the poem exposes, with deadly effect, the hypocritical self-righteousness of an ignorantly opinionated ruling elder in Mauchline. This worthy had a prominent part in an unsuccessful prosecution of the poet's friend and landlord, Gavin Hamilton. The poem also lampoons the narrow puritanic Calvinism of the "Auld Licht" party in the Kirk. Being what he was, Burns was bound to cherish against this

party an almost unmeasured antipathy. The antipathy manifested itself in the form of uproarious derision. In his later years, Burns had become something of a social democrat. And from his early manhood, he had cherished a certain jealousy of those above him in station. He was also easily offended by airs of condescension towards him. Despite all these, his antipathy to the "Auld Licht" clergy, the favourite of the people, made him a strong opponent of the anti-patronage movement. He contemptuously scouted this movement as an attempt to "get the brutes them-selves the power to choose their herds." The proposal is ridiculed with the mock-seriousness, polished innuendo, withering irony, and placid scorn in *Holy Willie's Prayer.*

(iii) The Jolly Beggars

Like his *Holy Willie's Prayer,* Burns also excluded from his Kilmarnock volume his remarkable anarchist cantata*, The Jolly Beggars.* In this poem, Burns assembled a group of social outcasts and put into their mouths roaring songs of social defiance and swaggering independence. In Burns, there always seemed a streak of anarchism. But in the poem, he associates it with conviviality in a characteristic way. Here are abandoned in roaring professions of antisocial independence all institutions, all conventions, anything that limits the freely chosen association of friends and lovers with one another. The attitude manifested in the poem may not be mature or complex, but it does touch a fundamental human drive. *The Jolly Beggars* gives a brilliant expression to man as outcast and vagabond. Complete independence of social order implies poverty, squalor, and vice, but Burns does not shrink from that prospect. He refuses to romanticize independence from society. He only bodies it forth, motivated less by doctrinaire anarchism than by sheer high spirits.

Burns does not seem to have been acquainted with the old English plays, treatises and songs dealing with the fortunes of beggars, vagabonds and outlaws. But he must have read, one can legitimately presume, Gray's *The Beggar's Opera.* He decidedly knew the clever Scottish ballads *The Gaberlunzie Man* and *The Jolly Beggar*. He evidently got faint hints from *The Happy Beggars* – an excerpt from Charles Coffey's ballad opera*, The Beggars' Wedding, The Merry Beggars* of Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany,* and the song books. Burns' poem also seems to have been modeled on the burlesque odes and cantatas of the period. But the wonder is that, such being the case, the curious metrical medley should emerge such a captivating masterpiece of Burns. The poem, no doubt, has an advantage, even in its complete singularity, as an assortment of old Scottish staves, interlaced with songs characteristically Scots or Anglo–Scots in their style and manner. All this goes to enrich the vivid picturesqueness of the poem's presentation. But it does so only owing to the fact that the subject appealed, in a very special way, to the peculiarities of the poet's temperament and genius. This plausibly accounts for the striking character of his artistic triumph.

Carlyle was the first to claim for *The Jolly Beggars* a superiority over *Tam o' Shanter.* Not many will, perhaps, admit so complete a superiority as he asserts. But the value of the criticism, so far as regards the praise of *The Jolly Beggars*, even though originally only faintly tolerated, is now frankly admitted. Here, it is admitted, there is more varied and more intimate and vital presentation of certain types of human nature than in *Tam a' Shanter*. The detailed record of the vagabonds' high festival affords wider scope for picturesque effects than does the comparatively conventional and respectable carousal in the village alehouse. On the other hand, it seems a strange belittlement or misjudgment of *Tam a' Shanter* to describe it as less a poem than "a piece of sparkling rhetoric". It sounds a still more questionable statement that the poem "might have been written all but quite as well by a man who, in place of genius, had only possessed talent". Most critics other than Carlyle are still convinced that here, as in *The Jolly Beggars,* there is a superbly characteristic example of the rare genius of Burns. His genius was developed by his special environment and his peculiarly mingled poetic training.

One important assertion, contrary to that made by Carlyle, comes from Walter Scott, who says: "I verily believe *Tam o' Shanter* to be inimitable, both in the serious and ludicrous parts, as well as in the happy combination of both. In term of the relative merits of the two poems*, Tam o' Shanter* is the more studied and mature composition. When Burns composed this poem, he was a more fully experienced, a better read, and a more highly trained artist, than when, in a bit of fine inspiration, he dashed off *The Jolly Beggars*. As Burns

himself said about *Tam o' Shanter*, it "shewed a finishing polish", which he "despaired of ever excelling". The felicity and terse compactness and vividness of its phrasing are unsurpassable. Of course, there is an occasional looseness in riming, as was rather customary with Burns. As for the alehouse fellowship of Tam o' Souter Johnie, and the skelping ride of the primed farmer through the eerie region in the wild night, genius could hardly better these. Also, the thunder and lightening storm, and the witches' hornpipes and reels at haunted Alloway, with Auld Nick himself as musician, are certainly more strictly poetical and more thrilling than the presentation of squalid revelry in the low Mauchline lodging house. But these two poems are really so dissimilar in theme and method that a comparison of their respective merits seems rather difficult, and even uncalled for. In both, Burns affords us a more splendid glimpse than elsewhere in his poetic possibilities, had fortune favoured their full development.

Notwithstanding Carlyle's description of Burns as the "illiterate Ploughman of Ayrshire," when we consider the fact that *The Jolly Beggars* was only a random product of his early and untutored years, one wonders what he might not have accomplished as a writer of, at least, a certain type of comedy– opera libretto. Burns' genius, one would admit, was for short poems. He wrote only a few poems which are of middle length, like *Tam o' Shanter* and *The Vision*. His longest poem*, The Jolly Beggars*, is barely three hundred lines. His narrative and descriptive poems are often under a hundred lines. But even in the matter of length Burns is an artist; he knows just how much he can do without loss of power or inspiration. He does go diffuse at times, when he falls into the wrong sort of southern English. *The Vision* suffers in this way as it goes along. Using Scots, he never seems to halt. When he is in the vein, he seems neither long nor short, because both the ear and the mind of the reader are alive and at the stretch and lose count of time. No one infuses so much life into so little room. Only Burns does it.

Burns' poetic method is different in different kinds of poetry. For instance, his Epistles do not go straight forward, but chat rapidly, and circle round the subject. They end when they please, like an actual letter. On the other hand, the satiric and bitter poems, like *Holy Willie's Prayer,* are deliberately concentrated for effect. Burns leaves off, in these poems, while he is still angry. He never waits till he is placable. *Tam o' Shanter* is Burns's masterpiece composition in a single metric, perfectly begun and conducted and rounded off. *The Jolly Beggars* is his masterpiece in a combination of metres, alternately descriptive and lyrical, a roaring and yet accordant clamour of changing voices. In this poem, the passion runs so high that a longer poem at the same tension would be physically impossible. Burns seems to feel that, and leaves off before there is danger of an ebb. This quality is called classical. Several sayings of Burns himself explain his method as an artist, which we find exemplified in *The Jolly Beggars*:

> I have two or three times in my life composed from the wish rather than the impulse, but I never succeeded to any purpose….All my poetry is the effect of easy composition, but of laborious correction…. The rough material of fine writing is certainly the gift of genius; but I as firmly believe that the workmanship is the united effort of pains, attentions, and repeated trial.

Burns's manuscripts, as well as his comments to Johnson, show his fidelity to this creed. One can connect it, on one side, with his study of Pope and Addison. On the other, it recalls that of his contemporary Blake, who preached gospel of execution, or of firm determinate outline. Burns's thrift and precision are among his greater attributes as a poet.

It does not at all seem fair to read *The Jolly Beggars* immediately before passing to the humours of the middle-class topers in *Guy Mannering*. *The Jolly Beggars* is Burns's longest, best harmonized, and most magnificent production, perfectly harmonious in its uproar. It is without even one flagging moment in its ever-varying *bravura.* We see in the poem Pleydell and his companions ready to go back to their offices, and make money next morning, and litigate. They never "whistle owre the lave o't." They respect the main chance too religiously. Claret is their interlude. An unruffled conscience helps them through the day. The jolly beggars entertain no such afterthought. They have no choice but to pad the roads, and no choice but to sleep

under the hedge. And they have to do all this till the next orgy. Their whole real life lies in that evening chorus. It does not seem possible that Edie Ochiltree will he among them, although it is not an impossibility either. The songs of these beggars, which Scott praised profusely, are the most splendid literature possible of its own order. Burns sees them, as Will Waterproof saw London, in " a kind of glory." And it is thus that they see themselves. This is very different from the tolerant light of Scott's comedy of humours, with its easy cunning gradations.

Burns as A Poet of Freedom

The three poems we have discussed here are, more or less, satires. But they are not the type of satires Dryden and Pope and Johnson wrote. Burns, unlike these three, did not make any attempt to master the classics. He never thought of imitating Horace or Juvenal. In that sense of a learned poet, Burns was not a classic. And yet he practiced some of the finest qualities of classical art. Similarly, he shared a good deal with the romantics, and yet he was not a romantic in the formal sense in which Blake and wordsworth were. Hence, he is a classic and not a classic; a romantic and not a romantic. As is clear from these three poems, his satire is as distinctively Burnsian as anything else he wrote. He is too individualistic to be easily grouped with any literary movement or style. He does seem to be as unique as Blake was, or Byron was. But behind all the variety of subject and style, mode and method, there is an essence of the life and temper of his country which Burns represents, and this essence can be described as the *freedom of the natural soul.* The special thing about Burns is the wholeness of this freedom, and the perfection with which it is expressed. In general, the eighteenth century poet, especially the first founders of the new verse, Crabbe and Cowper, and even their great successors, Wordsworth and Coleridge, could not claim this wholeness and perfection. They did, of course, win freedom, but it is not of the kind we come across in Burns. Blake, for sure, has it, and Byron and Shelley have it afterwards.

The kind of freedom we are talking about need not imply revolutionary or explosive tenets, though it often accompanies them. The Scottish nature has it except where artificially bound down or cramped in some fashion. But the English writers, whom Burns read in his youth, have it not. They are highly limited and controlled. These writers, namely Thomson and Gray, admirable as they are, have around them all kinds of abstractions– Reason, Decorum, Custom, Virtue, standing in arms on all the four sides of their field. Social ordinance governs the outlook of Crabbe and Cowper. In Wordsworth, life is everywhere regulated by a lofty self-prescription, often with supreme success, but never without the borders of that self-prescription. Even Coleridge, otherwise the freest mind of his age, is haunted by the phantom of that order and self-possession which he could not in his life attain. On the other hand, Blake likes to think that these old sentinels go over as nine pins at his thrust. He seems stronger here than Burns, because he is quite happy in his freedom. He never repents, having no cause for headaches. Burns, on his side, has many headaches, having courted nature's slap in the face. He versifies them in moderately good lines. He is indeed all the more a Scot for that. Finally, Burns achieves his poetic superiority over Blake, not only by his constantly perfect poetic form, but because he demonstrates more of plain humanity in him. For sure, he shows in him more earth, of the faun, of the orgiast, and he gives us their poetry. Blake is, no doubt, far more moral than Burns. The only thing is that his morality is high and imaginative, not that of custom and sentinels. Instead, Burns has the right "goat foot Music" in his blood and in his verse. We can see it in Tam o' Shanter, in *The Jolly Beggars,* in the lines *To a Louse*, in *Death and Doctor Hornbook* – these are among the best things that Burns did.

At the same time, that is not to say that these poems of Burns are of the highest kind. The only thing is thast in reading them one forgets the distinction of high and low in the sense of their perfection. These poems show us not only the "freedom," but the "natural soul" itself. They show us the soul of dirt, and drink, and careless roaring laughter, and of the sudden lust, and the sweating frenzied quickening dance, and the drunken chorus, and the profane and greasy and unseemly catch. But if this were all, we should hardly talk of "freedom." It is in the power of Burns to escape from these things, and then to return to them, that the "freedom" consists.

Burns the poet is at times a servant of Pan. But he is also, at the same time, an observer, an arch- friend and caurade, and a hater of hypocrisy. Burns is also a moralist, and in no dry way. He is the one who sees how "illicit love" may "petrify the feeling." He celebrates the piety of the fireside. It is not that he pulls up in the middle of a wild dance, and corrects himself, and tries to exorcise Pan; but that he feels different things at different times, and thoroughly expresses each one of them. That one man, in the course of time, should arise to give full utterance to all these feelings, and that too in song, is surely no immoderate allowance. But for Burns, they would not have been sung, or not sung thus, and that complex tune would have been missing from the endless *opera omnia* of the poets. That the life of the singer should be broken up and cut short was likely enough. But we are talking of poetry, and not of such consequences. Nor are we here deploring the weakness of human will or nature's want of scruple in shattering her instruments.

Burns's Excellence as Poet

We may begin by saying that there is nothing new or mysterious in Burns, except his excellence, his perfection. Even here the secret is an open one. It is his power to represent all things of life, all feelings as they come. As these things and feelings come, his attempt is to have done with them. When we say that he is a classic, we do not mean merely that he has left behind poetry that would endure, though that, too, is true. Nor do we mean to say that he owes something to the narrowly classical school of Pope, though that is true also. We mean to say rather that he reminds us of the antique, that he represents real life and life with the clearness, rightness, and beauty of the antique. It can be said that it is the characteristic of Burns. It is why he is so deeply satisfactory, and why we come back to him again and again, and why we feel that when he is as remote as Theocritus is today, people will take the trouble to learn his language, and will treat him as an ancient writer who perennially gives pleasure and entertainment. And all this is there because of his form. During the period of more than a century that has lapsed after Burns, his perfection, his power of survival, have asserted themselves continuously.

Carlyle had set the tone early in the nineteenth century, when he asserted in his lively, elegiac prose the following:

> While the Shakespears and Miltons roll on like mighty rivers through the country of thought, bearing fleets of traffickers and assiduous pearl-fishers on their waves, this little Valclusa fountain will also arrest our eye, for this also is of Nature's own and most cunning workmanship; bursts from the depths of the earth, with a full gushing current, into the light of day; and often will the traveler turn aside to drink of its clear waters and muse among its rocks and pines!

Carlyle's imagery need not distract us. The message here is clearer through imagery, vivid and visual. "Valclusa fountain" suggests Petrarch, who can be considered the earliest modern equivalent to antique rightness and beauty of form. But Petrarch does not represent life the way Burns does it, the real life of men. For all his pains, Petrarch does not represent real life of his own. It is Wordsworth who seems closer to Burns in such qualities. But not when he deliberately tries to be antique as in *Laodamia*, but when he tells the tale of *Michael* or *The Brothers.* There, indeed, he is perfect, right, simple, and enduring, although he always, and habitually, steeps his story in reflection and theory. It may sound a little exaggerated, but it is a fact that Burns at his best writes in a style that answers better than Wordsworth's own to the description of poetry that Wordsworth himself put forth, namely, that it should be written in "the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation," and be "purified of all rational causes of disgust and dislike." Burns, more than Wordsworth, uses such a language, although only when he is himself and is not practicing the eighteenth – century English diction. But he unites it with clearness, and beauty and rightness, and blithe humour. It comes naturally, easily, to him, as he narrates us in lines which themselves show his command of it. He has just named Jean, his wife:

> *O, how that Name inspires my style!*
> *The words come skelpin, rank an' file,*
> *Amaist before I ken!*

The ready measure rins as fine,
As Phoebus and the famous Nine
Were glowrin owre my pen.
My spaviet Pegasus will limp,
Till ance he's fairly het;
And then he'll hilch, an' stilt, an' jimp,
And rin an unco fit;
But least then, the beast then
Should me this hasty ride,
I'll light now, and dight now
His sweaty, wizen'd hide.

It is also wonderful that these powers of Burns's poetry come out when he seems most slapdash and spontaneous. Note, for example, the lines to James Smith, which express his real, and habitual, mood:

Some rhyme a neebor's name to lash;
Some rhyme (vain thought!) for needfu' cash:
Some rhyme to court the countra clash,
An' raise a din;
For me, an aim I never fash;
I rhyme for fun.

We need not, of course, talk loosely or vaguely about the "antique" status of Burns. There is no Greek or Latin Burns. To come nearest to some poet, we shall have to seek some poets who write like Burns. We shall have to seek someone who writes in dialect, and writes for a homely purpose, to present real life, the life of homely people. We have to look for some one whose form is rapid, passionate, beautiful, seemingly unstudied, and yet quite right. A poet like Burns, we look for, who is not afraid of telling us of his own loves and hatreds, who let his dignity take care of itself, who is himself a piece of nature, a force, who does not talk about being an artist, or writing self-consciously. One thinks of Catullus, an ancient Greek poet, who has some of these qualities. One also thinks of Theocritus, who has some of the others. While the former has the speed, the passion, the lack of dignity, the personal tinge, the monumental form, the latter has the dialect, the gentle, vivacious play of homely life, the love of nature and fun. Burns seems something of a compound of these two ancient poets. He came to achieve their qualities, not at all by knowing the ancients, by only by his native gift, and also but inheriting the long tradition of Scottish poetry, which he took up, crowned and eclipsed – the tradition of Dunbar, Ramsay, and Fergusson, and a hundred nameless poets; so that he is not only a classic, but the classic of his country.

Books for Further Reading

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6. A.L.Reed. *The Background of Gray's Elegy*: *A Study in the Taste For Melancholy Poetry, 1700 – 1751*. New York, 1924.
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8. David Cecil. *Poetand Storytellers*. Cambridge, 1942.
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10. David Daiches. *A Critical History of English Literature.* Martin and Warburg Ltd. London, 1960.
11. Andrew Sanders. *Oxford Short History of English Literature*. Oxford, 2000.

Question Bank

1. Discuss Gray as a poet of nature.
2. Examine Gray's *Elegy* in the context of English elegies.
3. Discuss Gray's *Odes* in terms of their form and content.
4. Write a note on the classical and romantic elements in Gray's poetry.
5. Discuss Burns as a Scottish poet.
6. Examine the case of Burns as a satirist.
7. Is Burns provincial or universal? Discuss.
8. Discuss Burns as a song writer.
9. Write a note on Burns as a poet of freedom.
10. Compare Gray and Burns as eighteenth-century poets.
11. Discuss Gray and Burns as "rural" poets.

THOMAS GRAY (1716 - 1771)

GRAY'S LIFE AND TIMES

From the middle of the eighteenth century onward there appeared in English poetry certain trends which constituted a departure from the neoclassical tradition that had been in vogue since the time of John Dryden. The famous volume of poems, *Collection of Poems by Several Hands,* better known as *Dodsley's Collection,* gave representation to these poets who showed a marked change of poetic style, moving away from the neoclassical. Among these poets one of the most prominent figures was Thomas Gray. Another prominent poet in the anthology was William Collins. When we speak of the pre-romantic poets of the eighteenth century, the names of Gray and Collins always figure together, just as do the names of Dryden and Pope, of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Cray became more famous than Collins on the basis of his greatly popular "Elegy", better known as "Gray's Elegy." Let us acquaint ourselves with his life and times before we look into the poems which are representative of his work!

Thomas Gray was the son of a London exchange broker. He entered the famous Eton school in 1725, where he formed a friendly "quadrumvirate" with Horace Walpole, Richard West and Thomas Ashton. In 1734, he went to Peter-house, Cambridge, but left in 1738 without a degree. In 1739, he accompanied Horace Walpole on a tour of France and Italy. But as a result of a quarrel he returned to England alone in 1741. He rejoined Cambridge in 1742 to study law. Most of the rest of his career is associated with this very place. His friendship with Walpole was renewed in 1745. Walpole published some of Gray's poems on his Strawberry Hill press. During the years 1759–61, he settled in London so that he could study in the newly opened British Museum. He was appointed in 1768 Professor of Modern History at Cambridge. In 1771 he was contemplating a journey to Switzerland to visit his young friend Charles Victor, but death thwarted his plans.

As his biography would bear it out, Gray was among the most learned of the English poets. He was widely read in the Romans, in the Greeks, in his great English predecessors, and in the English versions of Old Norse and Welsh poems. Coming as he does in the last phase of the neoclassical period and just before the beginning of the romantic period, Gray typifies the transitional poet who loved

tradition and yet courted novelty. He excelled all his contemporaries in meticulous workmanship as well as in ability to use new materials – medieval Welsh or Scandinavian – with imaginative power and dramatic effect. He sought sublime moods, *sensation fortes*, and elevated, including primitive materials, to noble Roman or heroic levels. But Gray's poetic production is not so much as one would expect from a poet of his status. As Gray's friend, James Brown, said, "he never spoke out". Just a few pages hold all his poetry. Still the reputation which he has received by his few pages is extremely high. The predominance of Pope and his style of poetry in the eighteenth century prevented at that time the frank reception of Gray by the readers of poetry. His *Elegy*, of course, pleased all its readers; it could not but please. But his poetry, on the whole, astonished his contemporaries more than it pleased them. They found it rather unfamiliar, so unlike the poetry of Pope and his imitators. However, Gray's poetry made its way after his death. As his second biographer, Mitford, recorded, "the works which were either neglected or ridiculed by their contemporaries have now raised Gray and Collins to the rank of our two greatest lyric poets."

Critics have offered various explanations for the quantitative limitations of Gray's poetic production. One of these is that perhaps he felt that devotion of all his leisure time to writing alone would annul his position of genteel amateur. He seemed inclined, it is said, to savour his refined sensations without the urge to share them with strangers. For instance, his delight in Alpine scenery did not lead to Coleridgean *Hymne before Sunrise*, nor would his pleasure in the English lake have made him a Wordsworth, had he lived longer. He did not, so to say, "pour himself out". He was, no doubt, receptive and perceptive, but he was not intellectually very creative. Very much unlike Walpole or Fielding or any typical poet of his day, he was rather shy. Both his personality and poetry were somberly affected by sorrows. For example, the death of his closest friend, Richard West, made him quite melancholic. No wonder Matlhew Arnold liked him immensely, both being melancholic by temprament. Above all, he perceived and delighted in beauty. He worked overtime, as no other contemporary of his did, over the exacting expression of beauty in poetry. For example, his famous *Elegy*, which is neither very long nor very complex, occupied his creative hours during perhaps six years. Walpole rightly remarked about Gray's projected but never written history of English poetry, "If he rides Pegasus at his usual foot-pace, [he] will finish the first page two years hence."

Despite his being slow, stately, and impersonal, however, quite a few of Gray's earlier poems are nevertheless derived from his personal experience of life. Like the familiar productions of his day, these poems were actually written for "several occasions." A distant prospect of Eton College, where ten years ago, he had been a schoolboy, led in 1742 the composition of an ode on the subject that

involved apparently his personal reflections on the hidden future sorrows awaiting the happy youngsters seen at play. Here, in this poem, as in his *Ode on the Spring,* the diction is still ornately Augustan. Wordsworth found his diction ornate also in the *Sonnet on the Death of Richard West*. Gray's *Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat* (belonging to Horace Walpole) is a neat and laughing *jeu d'sprit* that he could approve. Another poem of the period, *The Long Story* (1753), was less pointed and finished. Gray excluded it, significantly, from the 1768 edition of his poems. His contemporary William Cowper, knew this time better. There was little of the *riant* in the genius of Gray as poet.

The greatest of Gray's poems – in fact, the greatest of the eighteenth century – is his *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. Though perhaps motivated in part by sorrow over the death of his greatest friend, West, the poem is not yet "particular" in any sense. It is, on the contrary, an Elegy for Man or at least for all "average" and obscure men. The poem works all along in universal terms. It also has universal purity. Its propriety and harmony of diction is a great realization of the ideals of the eighteenth century. In its placid melancholy and its rustic setting the poem can be considered romantic. But in its treatment of the common man it is heroic, and even majestic. However, it does not have the tone of Wordsworth. The poem is compact of what Tennyson called "divine truisms." These truisms are universally, if decorously, affecting. Among poems embodying the ideal of (Pope's definition of wit) "what oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed," this elegy will always rank very high in the poetic scale. Critics like T.S. Eliot, with an aversion to reflective common-places in poetry may question the subtlety of the *Elegy*, but those admirers of both clarity and subtlety as merit will be content with the noble and finished transparency of this poem. The poem's achievement is, of its very nature, the opposite of facile. In any case, the divine truisms are not so easy to come by!

Gray's next phase as poet can be said to begin from 1751. As against the early phase, when he derived inspiration from personal experience, the second phase derived its poetic stimulus from the poet's reading of books rather than from life. After his famous *Elegy* followed his two regular Pindaric odes, namely, *The Bard* and *The Progress of Poesy*. Although Gray's contemporaries appreciated the clarity and reflective moralizing of the *Elegy*, they found the energetic and rhapsodical qualities of the later odes rather difficult to digest. The imagery of *The Progress of Poesy* dazzled more readers than Dr. Johnson. The smattering of classical allusions in the poem reminded the readers of his age of the Miltonic manner; it recalled them the schoolroom rather than the glory and grandeur of Greece and Rome. The management of persons in *The Bard*, too, requires a sort of study familiar to the readers of Browning, but quite unfamiliar in Gray's time. At the same time, neither of the two odes is so obscure as it seemed at first sight.

Actually, both the poems display unusual energy and imaginative shimmer. The medieval fable used in *The Bard* shows dramatic powers not equalled by any English poet between Milton and Byron. These odes of Gray's approached the sublime as is done by very few others in the eighteenth century that adored Milton and Longinus. Though the rhythms in these poems sound, at first, dithyrambic, they are rigidly correct within the true Pindaric form.

Gray, significantly, published no poem in his life time written in the heroic couplet. He did use the heroic couplet in a few translations of brief length. He had also begun in heroic couplet his didactic poem, *Education and Government*. Yet Gray's achievement in other metres and his critical interest in them have earned him great importance in the history of English metrics. His metrical range from the somewhat cold pomp of the heroic quatrains in his *Elegy* to the energetic outburst of his Pindarics and the later primitive chants is unparalleled in the eighteenth century. His interest in the technical aspect of poetry went, in fact, beyond metres. He was, besides being a poet, also a historian and antiquarian. He had long been interested in the early verse form and medieval poetic materials. He was deeply drawn to Norse antiquities and poetry. He translated two Norse poems as *The Fatal Sisters* and *The Descent of Odin*. He also drew upon ancient Welsh poetry, which furnished materials for his *The Triumphs of Owen* and *The death of Hoel*. Gray and others significantly turned, as Gibbon did not, from the Greeco-Roman tradition to Northern antiquities, from classically correct elegies and Pindarics to the Primitive minstrelsy of the North. When Gray edited his poems for the last time in 1768, he also became Professor of Modern History at Cambridge. It is highly remarkable that learning and poetry combine so perfectly in the wild "runic" chants of these last products of his muse.

CRITICAL OPINIONS

Thomas Gray is one those few English poets who have the honour of having been recognized as great right at the time they wrote. All of his contemporaries, except those blindly committed to neoclassicism, lavished praise on Gray's poetry. It is only a critic like Dr Johnson who could be cold in his appreciation of Gray's genius. No wonder Gray himself disliked Johnson, so much so that he refused to make his acquaintance. It may be for this very reason that Johnson wrote with some irritation. Even otherwise, Johnson was not fitted by nature to do justice to Gray and his poetry. In his Lives of Poets Johnson does, of course, add the life of Gray. Decidedly, Johnson did injustice to Gray, whose life he had to write, but even his domineering authority failed to make injustice prevail. Lord Macaulay rightly calls Johnson's life of Gray the worst of his *Lives*. Even before Macaulay, it had received many censures. Gray's poetical reputation grew and flourished despite what Johnson chose to say about his poetry. Gray's first biographer,

Mason, who himself was a poet, compared him with Pindar. Britain has known, says Mason in his epitaph for gray,

…. a Homer's fire in Milton's strains,
A Pindar's rapture in the lyre of Gray.

Johnson's disparagement of Gray was called petulant and was severely blamed. The very controversy it raised proves its being rather unfair.

At the end of the eighteenth century, Beattie wrote to Sir William Forbes, saying, "Of all the English poets of this age Mr. Gray is most admired, and I think with justice." William Cowper, a contemporary of Gray, wrote, "I have been reading Gray's works and think him the only poet since Shakespeare entitled to the character of sublime." Adam smith, the famous classical economist and a contemporary of Gray, also said, "Gray joins to the sublimity of Milton the elegance and harmony of Pope; and nothing is wanting to render him, perhaps, the first poet in the English language, but to have written a little more." In the nineteenth century, Sir James Mackintosh said of Gray: "Of all English poets he was the most finished artist. He attained the highest degree of splendour of which poetical style seemed to be capable." Although he himself did not share the general praise showered on his *Elegy*, Gray has been remembered all these years by that one poem more than any other. No less critical praise has been hastowed upon Gray as a learned man of letters. He has reveived as much praise for his learning as he has received for his poetry.

Speaking of Gray's learning, his friend Temple wrote, "Mr Gray was perhaps the most learned man in Europe. He knew every branch of histiry both natural and civil; had read all the original historians of England, France and Italy; and was a great antiquarian. Criticism, mataphysics, morals, politics, made a principal part of his study. Voyages and travels of all sorts were his favourite qmusements; and he had a fine taste of painting, paints, architecture, and gardening." Versatile genius as Gray was, his interest extended in all areas of knowledge. But as poet, he was as much concerned with the theory of poetry as he was with its practice. No doubt, he did not write any formal treatise on the theory of poetry, nor did he leave behind any formal criticism of poetry or poets. But his scattered critical comments in his latters to friends clearly show that he was a concious craftsman of poetry and a keen observer of matters aesthetic. Let us have a look at some of his critical comments aviliable to us in his non-poetical writings.

One of Grays critical comments appears on the first theoritician of literature, Aristitle: "In the first place he is the hardest author by far I ever meddled with. Then he has a dry conciseness that makes one imagine one is pursuing a table of contents rather than a book; it tastes far all the world like chopped hay, or rather like chopped logic; far he has a violent affection to that art, being in some sort his own invention; so that he often loses himself in little trifling distinctions and verbal

niceties, and what is worse, leaves you to extricate yourself as you can. Thirdly, he has suffered vastly by his transcribers, as all authors of great brevity necessarily must. Fourthly and lastly, which makes him well worth the pains he gives one. You see what you have to expect." Gray's comments on Froissart are equally perceptive, and more interesting since they are related to literature rather than logic. He says the following: "I rejoice you have met with Froissart, he is the Herodotus of a harbarons age; had he but had the luck of writing in as good a language, he might have been immortal …. When you have *tant chevauche'* as to get to the end of him, there Monstrelet waits to take you up, and will set you down at Philip de Commines; but previous to all these, you should have read Villehardouin and Joinville." These are certainly critical comments on unfamiliar subjects, not very well known to the average student of English. But Gray has left behind even more elaborate comments than these on the English Writers and their works. Let us have a look at some of those comments!

Like any other English poet, Gray also comment avoid speaking on Shakespeare. The context of his comment is necessary to consider before a proper appreciation of what he says can be made. The context is that Gray's friend, West, had praised Racine, the Latin dramatist, for using in his plays "the language of the times and that of the purest sort." West had also added, "I will not decide what style is fit for our English stage, but I should rather choose one that bordered upon *Cato*, than upon Shakespeare." It may be noted that West makes a reference here to *Cato*, a tragedy on the Greek model written by Addison. To the remarks made by West, Gray responded in the following words:

> As to matter of style, I have this to say: the longuage of the age is never the language of poetry; except among the French, whose verse, where the thought does not support it, differs in nothing from prose. Our poetry, on the contrary, has a language peculiar to itself, to which almost every one that has written has added something. In truth, Shakespeare's language is one of his principal beauties; and he has no less advantage over your Addisons and Rowes in this, than in those other great excellences you mention. Every word in him is a picture. Pray put me the following lines into the tongue of our modern dramatist –
>
> But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
>
> Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass'-and what follows? To me they appear untranslatable; and if this be the case, our language is greatly degenerated.

As Arnold has remarked, "it is impossible for a poet to lay down the rules of his own art with more insight, soundness and certainty. Yet at the moment in England

there was perhaps not one other man, besides Gray, capable of writing the passage just quoted."

Returning to Gray's Poetry, it can be said with Arnold that his poetry not only got stinted in quantity by reason of the age wherein he lived, it somewhat suffered in quality also. It was under pressure of the age, for example, that he had to profess himself to be under obligation to Dryden. "If there was any excellence in his numbers, he had learned it wholly from that great poet." He came at a time when Dryden had, in the words of Dr Johnson, "embellished" English poetry; had "found it brick and left it marble." He came at a time when, to use Dr Johnson's words once again, "The English ear had been accustomed to the mellifluence of Pope's numbers, and the diction of poetry had grown more splendid." Gray could not have remained unaffected by these strong winds of his age. He came under the influence of these winds, and caught the intellectualities, ingenuities, personifications, of the movement and diction of Dryden and Pope. Gray's natural genius, in all diction of Dryden and Pope. Gray's natural genius, in all probability, got curbed under these heavy winds of neoclassicism. Whatever little he did produce, his age. In the language of Malthew Arnold, while the verse that Gray wrote consitituted "genuine poetry," the poetry of Dryden and Pope, and all their school, was conceived in their wits. In Arnold's view, genuine poetry is conceived and composed in the soul. The difference between the two kinds of poetry, in his view, is immense.

The difference between genuine poetry, of which Gray was highly capable to compose, and the poetry of wit, of which Dryden and Pope were perfect models, is remarkably made out by Arnold in the following passage, which it is necessary to cite in full:

> The difference between two kinds of poetry is immence. They differ profoundly in their modes of language, they differ profoundly in their modes of evoluation. The poetic language of our eighteenth century in general is the language of men composing without their eye on the object, as Wodsworth excellently said of Dryden; language merely recalling the object, as the common language of prose does, and then dressing it out with a certain smartness and brilliancy for the fancy and understanding. This is called "splendid diction."The evoluation of the poetry of our eighteenth century is likewise intellectual; it proceeds by ratiocination, antithesis, ingenious turns and conceits. This poetry os often eloquent, and always, in the hands of such masters as Dryden and Pope, clever; but it does not take us much below the surface of things in their truth and beauty. The language of genuine poetry, on the other hand, is the language of one composing with his eye on the object; its evolution is that of a thing which has

> been plunged in the poet's soul until it comes forth naturally and necessarily. This sort of evolution is infinitely simpler than the other, and infinitely more satisfying; the same thing is true of the genuine poetic language likewise. But they are both of them also infinitely harder of attainment; they come only from those who, as Emerson says, "live from a great depth of being."

No doubt, Gray's prodiction, as said earlier, was scanty, and scanty, as argued earlier, it could not but be. Also, even what he produced is not always pure in diction, true in evolution. And yet, despite all the drawbacks it embraced from its age, Gray's poetry alone can be considered a case of genuine poetry in the eighteenth century. As Gray himself remarked, "the style he aimed at was extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, peropicuous, and musical." If compared, not with the poetry of the great masters such as Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, etc., but with the poetry of his own contemporaries in general, Gray's may be said to have reached, as Arnold insists, in style, the excellence at which he aimed.

GRAY'S BORROWINGS

Gray's poetry is often a remarkable tissue of the phrases he borrows from other poets. These borrowings cannot be ignored by those familiar with the works of the English poets. Gray was not unmindful of this aspect of his poetry. After making a confession of some borrowings in his Pindaric *Odes*, he wrote to Bedingfield on 27 August 1756, "do not wonder therefore, if some Magazine or Review call me Plagiary: I could show them a hundred more instances, which they never will discover themselves." Norton Nicholls recorded in his "Reminiscences" of the poet that Gray "congratulated himself on not having a good verbal memory; for, without it he said he had initated too much; and if he had possessed such a memory all that he wrote would have been initation, from his having read so much." Gray's friend, Richard Hurd, wrote his *Discourse concerning Poetic Imitation* (1751) and the *Letter to Mr Mason on the Marks of Imilation* (1757), which perhaps disturbed Gray rather strongly. Consequently, considering Hurd's distinction between legitimate imitation and mere plagiarism, Gray acknowledged some of his borrowings in his collected *Poems* in 1768. The measure turned borrowings into acceptable imitations. After Gray's death, his editors have stesdily added to the number of such debts. Critics of his poetry were thus able to point to a lack of originality or even to accuse him of plagiarism. On the other hand, his admirers appealed to the older concept of legitimate imitation of early poets. They emphasized Gray's skill in blending and improving what he borrowed.

In dealing with the "borrowing" aspect of Gray's (or, for that matter, any poet's) work, one is frequently surprised by the lack of caution and discrimination of those who produce or discuss the significance of such echoes or borrowings. We

must always bear in mind the possibility of concidence unless the parallels are striking; mere parallels or echoes need not be taken into account. Some parallels do verge upon "imitation," in the sense acceptable to the eighteenth century, where the reader was expected to appreciate the parallel as a virtual allusion to another poet. Among Gray's, or anyone eles's, borrowings, those making sustained patterns found in his poetry are perhaps of the greatest interests. And it is these which have siginificance for the literary historian in indicating new and important areas of influence on Gray. Most borrowings in his case seem to have come from Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. These borrowings reveal the reorientation of much mid-eighteenth-century poetry towards the earlier English tradition. They also account for Gra's conscious archaic effects in his poetry. It is important to note that Gray once told Nicholls that "he never sat down to compose poetry without reading Spenser for a considerable time previously."

Gray's borrowings are also not limited to those taken from Spensor, Shakespeare and Milton. It should not be forgotten that the minds and ears of mid-eighteenth-century poets were still saturated with the poetry of Dryden and Pope. Other parallels indicate that certain words and phrases were the common poetic property of the age. They do not propose any particular source. Certain parallels can also emphasize new poetic vogues or preoccupations of the period, as they do in the case of Gray (and Collins). For example, the influence of james Thonison on both Gray and Collins becomes more than ever clear. Other parallels indicate Gray's relationship to the "melancholy" poetry popular in the 1740's. the final inteest of the parallels is perhaps a matter of literary personality or the creative process. In the case of Gray, one is at times confronted with a kind of literary kleptomania, such is his dependeance on the phrasing and thoughts of other poets. In the context of the eighteenth-century, the question of borrowings may not be a great literary sin. We know how "learning" was valued by the neoclassical critical credo, how it was the first step of learning to initate the great masters, and how it was a great mark of excellence to come up with similar, parallel, or improved construction of phrases and clauses, echoing the earlier poets. From Chaucer to Spensor to Dryden to Pope, the tradition is seen enriched by these "borrowings" and imitations of the Greek, Latin, and French masters. By the time Gray came on the scence, masters like Spensor, Shakespeare and Milton had emerged in the native English tradition as well. Hence, we need not make much of Gray's "borrowings," except taking note of them for the useful awareness of his affinities and relationships with the neoclassical, and its opposite, tradition in English Poetry.

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

With this much background knowledge about Gray as man and poet, about his age and tradition, we can now take up his individual poems meant for our special consideration. His best known poem, also considered his greatest, is the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. This poem, it is generally belived, may have been begun in August 1742, after the death of Gray's dearest friend, Richard West, who died on June, 1742. Gray also wrote about the same time his *Eton College Ode* and *Sonnet on the Death of Richard West*. As usual with Gray, he took very long to finish his *Elegy*. Actively engaged since 1746, he completed the poem in 1750, when on June 12 that year he sent its finished manskript to Horace Walpole. Gray was known for his patience as poet, for he never rushed into prints, and took time to always revise and reconsider his compositions. There are, in fact, two versions of the *Elegy*, with substantial differences between them. The endings of the two versions are altogether different. Gray was shocked to see the several manuscript copies of the poem in circulation, especially on receving an offer of its publication by the *Magazine of Magazinea*. His prompt response was to write to Walpole, asking him to urgently get the poem published by Dodsley, a wellknown and prestigious publisher of poetry, keeping his authorship a secret. Dodsley finally brought out the poem on 15 February 1751 as a quarto pamphlet, and without the author's name. In this edition, the poem is not divided into stanzas of rythyning quatrains. The very next day of the poem's publication by Dodsley appeared another version of the poem in the Magazine of Magazines, with the name of the author appended to the poem. Four more editions followed in the next two months, and many more soon after. The poem became so popular that it was translated into several Europeans languages.

Gray's famous *Elegy* contains many "borrowings" from earlier poets, in particular such classical poets as Virgil, Lucretius, Horace, etc. The poem also echoes Dryden's translation of Virgil, and Milton's early poetry. Even lines from contemporary poets can be seen copied in modified forms. Of special interest in this regard are Thomas Waston, Akenside, Young Thomson, Collins, Parnell and many more. The poem runs into 128 lines, consisting of 32 stanzas of 4 lines each called quatrain, with the rythme scheme of a b a b. The popular balland stanza form has a charm of its own, as it can be easily to music. Let us analyse the poem in terms of its theme, mood, and atmosphere, noting how the poet arrives at certain effects through the use of several poetic devices.

Much against the temperament of Gray, an introvert academic always busy with his books, his *Elegy* struck a note in every heart and earned popular acclaim, which was unprecedented. Although not an admirer of Gray, Dr. Johnson gives the most convincing reason for the poem's popularity. "The Church–yard abounds

with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bossom returns an echo…. Had Gray written often thus, it had been vain to blame and useless to praise him." Generations of readers since then have endorsed Johnson's judgment. Another reason, though not as powerful, is the poem's wealth of quotable lines and phrases, which no other single poem of similar size has ever made available to mankind. Some of these quotable lines and phrases are – "The paths of glory lead but to the grave"; "Full many a gem of purest ray serene"; "Some mute inglorious Milton"; "Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife"; "Some village Hampden that with dauntless breast"; etc.

We need to know how Gray has managed to catch the ear of the common readers, captivate the hearts of generations, and what did the *Elegy* mean to them? As usual with any work of art, Gray's poem has not meant the same to all generations. Each age tends to interpret the poem in terms of its own interests and ideals. In Gray's own time, what appealed most to the common reader was the sententious moralizing of the poems' opening part. Another aspect of the poem that the eighteenth century readers liked was its Miltonic diction. It may sound a stumbling block today, but it carried prestige in an age in which Milton was idolized. Not less popular in Gray's time was the poem's macabre tone produced by the graveyard scenery and the moping owl. The theme of the poem was also in consonance with the commandment of the age that Pope issued for poetry to be "what oft was thought but never so well expressed." All these factors combined to give the poem the greatest popularity never enjoyed by any other poem of the age. Although nineteenth century did not take kindly to the style of poetry represented by Dryden and Pope, it made an exception for Gray's *Elegy*, which continued to be popular as before. It was read by the Romantics and the Victorious as a preromantic poem – one that glorified the common man, the rural folk, who represented simplicity and purity of life. The shift in emphasis could also be seen in their reading of the line like "The paths of glory lead but to the grave." It no longer meant as inevitability of death; rather, it meant a strong warning to the upper classes. The great and the proud need to know the end of the pursuits, which was the burial ground. Matthew Arnold made the representative statement for the nineteenth century when he declared Gray a minor among the major English poets but still greater than all the poets between Dryden and Johnson. Arnold viewed Gray as a genuine poet, not a poet of wit, and his poetry, poetry of soul. So the meaning of Gray's poem underwent a radical change.

In the twentieth century, neither of the two meanings of the poem is taken altogether wrong or right. Both the approaches to the poem, in fact, stand discarded, since we find critics looking for new concerns, such as obscurities and incoherences in the poem's text, looking for plausible explanations for them. Questions have also been raised about the coherence between the two parts of the

poem, since they seem rather unrelated in terms of the subject matter. Biographical explanations for Gray's melancholy in the poem have also been a favourite hunting ground for critics. Rhetorical ironies have also been attributed to Gray, which, it is argued, construct the structure of the poem. All the shades of critical approach to the poem in our time concern the technical, more than the thematic, side. Consequently, the popular-appeal side of the poem is altogether obliterated.

Returning to the question of the poem's meaning, we see that on the face of it the poet seems to glorify rural life and undermine the urban life of pomp and show. Biographical critics have drawn our attention to the fact that in real life Gray was never credited with any fascination for the rural life, much less for its poor folk. He had, we are told, strong antipathy for life of labour, and prefered to live on patronage. Whatever be the individual case of Gray as man, as poet, we find in his *Elegy*, he does show great sympathy for the disadvantaged lot of the rural masses. Also, in making a plea for the honest and simple life of the village and glorifying the virtues of village life was nothing unusual in the eighteenth century. One can recall here Pope's *Ode on Solitude*, Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village*, Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes,* to see the vogue of such a theme in Gray's time. Of course, this glorification is done from a distance; it is the urban dweller's distant view of a less than civilized life. There is, no doubt, sympathy for the poor rural folk in general in these poems, but there is also an element of patronage as well as of inverted snobbery. Not that they would bargain their urban comforts for the hard rural life. They would only entertain such a thought because it gives you a pleasing feeling. And yet, in Gray's poem, more than in the poem of any other poet of his age on the same theme, there is a ring and resonance of an honest concern for those who come and go unnoticed in the pageantry of life. And it is this ring and resonance which has kept the poem alive through the ages. As Johnson said in the context of Shakespeare, nothing can please many and please long but the just representation of nature. It is this just representation of nature in Gray's *Elegy* which distinguishes it from the conventional lot by his contemporaries on the subject of rural life.

Whatever else may invite disagreement among critics, the poem's pastoral character and melancholic note have always been affirmed. The tone is set, the mood measured, and the atmosphere created, by the very opening stanza of the poem:

> The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
> The lowing herd wind slowly o'ver the lea,
> The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
> And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Note how the atmosphere of retreat into the rural life is built up through a set of simple images of village life. The last line inducts the note of darkness, death, and

personal loss, or grief to the poet. The next stanza further carries the task by adding to the retreat the element of solitude:

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Here are typical romantic strokes of the twilight atmosphere, of solemn stillness, of natural sounds filling the solitude, of drowsy and lulling tinklings. In a romantic poem, imagery plays always an important part in creating atmosphere appropriate to the subject or theme, in striking an equally appropriate mood.

The contrast between the rural and the urban, the simple and the sophisticated, the poor and the powerful, the sincere and the showy, is set up in the poem for emphasizing the virtues of the rural, and for exposing the emptiness of the urban. Here are the key stanzas that bring out the contrast very clearly and effectively:

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Here, in these two stanzas, the mode changes from the romantic mood–making to the neoclassical sententious observation. These lines remind us of the reflective poem so typical of the period between Pope and Johnson. The latter's *Vanity of Human Wishes* automatically comes to mind. Observation and reflection were central to the eighteenth century, just as meditation and imagination were to the nineteenth. Thus, we can see how Gray, being a transitional poet, combines in his poetry, even in this single poem of his, the dominant qualities of both the romantic, as well as the neoclassical, style of poetry.

Whenever the Restoration and Augustan poets came to write upon the theme of vanity of human wishes, and they did that quite often, Cromwell always came handy as an example of inordinate ambition meeting with the inevitable fall. Gray follows the same convention of his age. The anti–Cromwelbain Restoration and, later, The Augustan readers would be very receptive to such an example. The satire on Cromwell, here, is more indirect than direct. We are told how the rural folk is not like Cromwell, "guiltless of his country's blood":

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone

Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind.

The manner, as well as the subject, is typically neoclassical. One cannot miss the Restorational and Augustan punch at the Puritans, especially the leader of the round–heads. The poem proceeds logically through the binary oppositions drawn from the antithesis of rural–urban theme. But it runs into trouble when it comes to conclude the matter of the poem. The trouble can be seen in the fact that the poem has, not one, but two endings.

Thus, the crucial fact about the poem is that we possess two distinct versions of it. All discussions of the poem have naturally taken account of this crucial fact. One of the versions originally ends with the four rejected stanzas in what is called the Eton manuscript. The other is the more familiar, revised and expanded version. In the absence of these four concluding stanzas of the expanded version the poem is a very well contructed piece. In more than one way, it is more balanced and lucid than the poem in its expanded version. The three opening stanzas solidly setting the poem and the poet in the churchyard, are followed by four balanced sections each consisting of four stanzas, dealing alternately with the lives of the humble village folk; by contrast, with the lives of the great; with the way the villagers are deprived of the opportunities of gaining greatness; and by contrast, with the crimes inextricably involved in success as the "thoughtless world" knows it, from which the villagers are protected. The last three stanzas, balancing the opening three, return to the poet himself in the churchyard, making clear that the whole poem has been a debate within the poet's own mind as he meditates in the darkness. At the end of this meditation the poet makes his own choice about the preferability of the obscure innocence to the dangers of the "great world".

One cannot miss here the echoes of two great classical poems in praise of rural retirement from the corruption of the court and city; that is, Virgil's *Georgics* and Horace's second *Epode*. The echoes are in keeping with the pervasive influence of these poems on the neoclassical poetry. In the concluding "rejected" stanzas of the first version of Gray's *Elegy* the classical praise of retirement is successfully blended with the Christian consolation, that this world is nothing but vanity and that comfort for the afflicted will come in the next. Gray's handling of this religious aspect is very restrained. In fact, it is so restrained that only the highly motivated Christian reader would insist upon the poem's massage being Christian. As a matter of fact, the poem's appeal lies in its being precisely not narrowly Christian but broadly humanitarian and humanist. What emerges as a virtue of the poem is its classical or Augustan restraint and balance which preserve the poem from the romantic excesses of emotion and idealism. This virtue is also

manifested in the balanced structure of the poem as a whole, as well as in the balancing effect of the basic quatrain unit.

The conclusion of the first version of the *Elegy,* it seems, failed to satisfy Gray. It may be partly due to its being too overtly personal. It may also be because its very symmetry and order represented an oversimplification of his own predicament, of the way he saw his own life and wished it to be seen by society. A simple identification with the innocent but uneducated rural people was mere self–deception. Gray's continuation of the poem may lack some of the clarity, control and authority of the earlier stanzas. At the same time, it also represents a genuine attempt to redefine and justify his actual relationship with society more accurately by merging it with a dramatization of the social role played by poetry or the poet. As Gray starts to rewrite the poem, the simple antithesis of rich and poor, of vice and virtue, of life and death, which underlay the first version, get replaced by a preoccupation with the desire to be remembered after death. Now, here comes into play a concern which combines both rich and poor, making the "splendid monuments" and the "frail memorials' equally pathetic. The revised concern or theme runs contrary to the earlier resignation to obscurity. The present expectation of "eternal peace" hereafter leads Gray to contemplate the sort of ways in which he himself, or the poet into whom Gray projects himself, may be remembered after his death. The assessment that Gray finally gives in the words of the "hoary–headed swan" and of the Epitaph (not necessarily meant to be identical) also evaluate the poet's role in society. Unlike the poet in the poetry of Pope and Johnson, in Gray the figure is no longer urban, urbane, worldly, rational Augustan man among men, with his own place in society. What Gray's poem dramatizes is the poet as outsider, with an uneasy consciousness of a sensibility and imagination at once unique and burdensome.

The lack of social function, so apparent in the poetry of the pre–romantics, is constantly betrayed by its search for inspiration in the past. It is very significant that Gray's description of the lonely, melancholy poet is riddled with phrases and diction borrowed from Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton. The texture of these stanzas is fanciful, consciously "poetic," archaic in tone. If the swain's picture of the lonely poet is respectful but confused, stressing the unique and valuable sensibility characterizing him, the "Epitaph", from a different standpoint, assesses that sensibility as the source of such social virtues as pity and benevolence. One can recall here Gray's Pindaric *Odes* of the 1750's where he is continuously preoccupied with the subject of the function of poetry in society. Although Gray asserts the value of poetry, the deliberate obscurity of the *Odes* betrays Gray's own conviction that poetry could not, and perhaps should not, attempt any longer to communicate with society as a whole. The central figure of *The Bard* himself is not an unpredictable development of the poet at the end of the *Elegy*, which is more

defiant in its belief that poetry and liberty in society are in reparably involved with each other. His awareness of the forces hostile to poetry as well as his awareness that poetry is equally isolated and doomed becomes quite clear in the poem.

(ii) THE PROGRESS OF POESY: A PINDARIC ODE

Gray wrote this poem in Sept. 1751 and Dec. 1754. He wrote to Walpole saying, "I don't know I may send him [Dodsley] very soon (by your hands) an ode to his own tooth, a high Pindarick upon stilts, which one must be a better scholar than he is to understand but a little matter here and there. It was but seventeen lines of having an end, I don't say of being finished. As it is so unfortunate to come too late for Mr. Bentley, it may appear in the fourth volume of the Miscellanies, provided you don't think it execrable, and suppress it." The poem was written, as Gray said, "by fits and starts," and it was not really finished. As William Mason, a friend of Gray, revealed, "though I admired it greatly, and thought that it breathed the very spirit of Pindar, yet I suspected it would by no means hit the public taste." This opinion of Mason had an adverse effect on the poem. Gray lost enthusiasm for it, and never finished it the way he had planned. When asked by Mason about the poem's completion, Gray always replied, "No, you have thrown cold water upon it." When published it finally in 1757, the poem was entitled merely *Ode,* and it was only in 1768 that it received its full title. Gray prefixed a motto to the two *Odes* he published in 1757 – *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard* – which he himself translated from Pindar. The motto reads as "*Vocal to the Intelligent alone.*" He then amplified the quotation in 1768. Horace Walpole tried to persuade Gray to add more notes to the poems to help the reader, but he would not agree and would only say, "Whatever wants to be explained, don't deserve to be." Gray's belief was, as he told Walpole, "I do not love notes …. They are signs of weakness and obscurity. If a thing cannot be understood without them, it had better be not understood at all."

AS AN ODE

Confronted with the confusions and misunderstandings the poems caused the readers, Gray finally decided, in 1768, to provide an extinsive prose commentary on the poem. However, the *Odes* come to be admired eventually as only next to his *Elegy*. Like *The Bard, The Progress of Poesy* is a Pindaric Ode. The effective introduction of the Pindaric Ode in English has generally been attributed to Cowley, whose *Pindarique Odes* were published in 1656, although he was unaware of the metrical and structural principles of Pinder's poetry. The irregular stanzaic forms of his imitations contributed a good deal to what became a common misconception of Pindar as an impassioned poet, whose genius was unrestrained

by normal rules. This misconception, as well as the popularity of the Pindaric ode itself, was fostered by Dryden's masterly use of the irregular stanza in his *Song for St. Cecelia's Day* and Alexander's Feast. As an effective vehicle for enthusiastic religious and patriotic poetry, the Pindaric ode became a popular form, permitting, presumably, any kind of metrical and thematic inconsequentiality, providing an attractively emancipated alternative to the logical and metrical demands of stricter verse forms. William Congreve, as early as 1706, had raised a protest against this misconception of Pindar. In his preface to his *Pindarique Ode to the Queen*, he objected that most of the supposed imitations of Pindar were merely "a Bundle of rambling incoherent thoughts, expressed in a like parcel of irregular stanzas, which also consist of such another complication of disproportioned, uncertain and perplexed verses and Rymes."

Congreve not only objected to the general misunderstanding of the Pindric Ode, he also expounded the true principles of Pindar's odes in order to show that there is nothing more regular than the Odes of Pinder, both as to the exact observation of the Measures and Numbers of his stanzas and verses, and the perpetual coherence of his thoughts. As Congreve explained, the Pindaric ode usually (but by no means inevitably) consisted of three stanzas – the strophe, antistrophe and epode. The poet fixed the metric and the stanzaic form of the strophe (which varied from ode to ode), which had to be duplicated precisely in the antistrophe. In the epode the poet devised another, usually contrasting, stanzaic form. The ode could consist of several sets of three stanzas, but the stanzaic form established in the first set had to be duplicated exactly thereafter. Pindar himself varies this basic form, which however is followed meticulously by Gray. Although it gave enough scope for metrical variation within the symmetrical pattern, it was never irregular as it was misconceived to be.

Highly learned as he was, Gray did not require the guidence of Congreve to know what Pindaric ode was like. In his notes on Pindar, Gray transcribed several of the passages from the Greek poet which he was later to imitate in *The Progress of Poesy*. It is not surprising, therefore, that Gray closely observed the principles of Pindar's ode, more faithfully than was done by any other English poet. Gray also tried to capture the manner of Pindar's odes by imitating the highly allusive and concise narrative technique and the swift transitions from one topic to another which characterize them. Gray's repeated emphasis on the learned character of his Pindaric odes indicates his desire to dissociate himself from the debased, irregular form, which had, in any case, lost much of its popularity by the middle of the eighteenth century. Gray's own preference for the length of stanza desirable in the strophe and antistrophe is expressed in the following words: "If it is too great, it has little or no effect upon the ear, which scarce perceives the regular return of

Metres at so great a distance from one another, to make it succeed, I am persuaded the stanzas must not consist of above 9 lines each at the most."

AS A PROGRESS POEM

Gray's The Progress of Poesy, as the litle itself suggests, is a "progress poem." As such it belongs to the most popular poetic genres of the neoclassical period. The genre of the progress poem flurished as the Augustans developed a historical pesspective establishing them as heirs to the ancient civilization of Greece and Rome. The purpose of the progress poem was to expound this genealogy, tracing back their arts and virtues to greece and then describing the continuous historical and geographical progress westward to Britain. The route could show minor varitions, but usually proceeded through Rome and medieval Italy. As Gray's own *The Progress of Poesy* reveals, the reason for the steady progress of the arts to Britain was the decline of liberty in the earlier cultural centres of the world. As the Augustans sincerely believed, true liberty was to be found only in Britain making it inevitable for the arts to settle there. One can recall here the explicit descriptions of the route followed by liberty herself to Britain in such progress poems as Thomson's *Liberty* and Collins's *Ode to Liberty*. By the time we reach the mid-eighteenth century, the patriotic conviction, that the classical arts and virtues had not merely been transmitted to Britain but had thrived there as never before was already losing some of its confidence. It was out of the sense of the past that the progress poem sprang. This very sense produced in this new generation a sense of inferiority rather than simple complacency. As an example of such a sense is the conclusion of Gray's *Progress of Poesy*, as well as Collins' *Ode on the Poetical Character.*

The poem opens with the following lines, which state the very theme:

Awake, Aeolian lyre, awake,
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.
From Helicon's harmonious springs
A thousand rills their mazy progress take:

Since Pindar styled his own poetry with its musical accompanyments, Gray begins his poem with that association. The subject and simile, as usual with Pindar, are united. The various sources of poetry, which imparts life and lustre to all it touches, are here described. Its quiet majestic progress enriches every subject (otherwise dry and barren) with a pomp of diction and luxuriant harmony of when swollen and burried away by the conflict of more than clear that Gray is imitating the Pythian *Odes* of Pindar, which celebrate the power of the lyre:

Oh! Sovereign of the willing soul,
Parent of sweet and solemn – breathing airs,
Enchantingphell! The sullen cares

And frantic Passions hear thy soft control.

The firt lyre was conventionally supposed to have been invented by goddess hermes from strings stretched across a tortoise shell. The long from lavish praise of the lyre over, Gray returns to the familiar Augustan theme of discoursing on the status of man.

Man's feeble race what ills await,
Labour, and penury, the racks of pain,
Disease, and sorrow's weeping train,
And death, and refuge from the storms of fate!

The picture these lines draw of man's life on earth is familiar enough to an eighteenth-century reader. Pope's *Essay on Man* instantly comes to mind. It was to compensate the real and imaginary ills of man's life that the muse was given, in the classical belief, to mankind by the same providence that sends the Day by its cheerful presence to dispel the gloom and terror of the Night. Like Milton, Gray's poem is full of classical allusions, and traces the progress of poesy from greece to Rome to Britain through a maze of imagery evoking the classical antiquity and its stream of lineage that comes down to the chosen britain.

Gray's poem ends with a repeated tribute to the lyre, describing its latest abode in britain:

Oh! lyre divine, what daring spirit
Wakes thee now? Though he inherit
Nor the pride nor ample pinion,
That the theban eagle bear
Sailing with supreme dominion
Through the azure deep of air:

As Gray explained in his 1768 notes to the poem, "Pindar compares himself to that bird, and his enemies to ravens that croak and clamour in vain below while it pursnes its flight, regardless of their noise." Gray's epigraph to the poem comes from the same passage: "Full many a swift arrow have I beneath mine arm, within my quiver, many an arrow that is vocal to the wise; but for the crowd thay need interpreters. The true poet is he who knoweth much by gift of nature, but they that only learnt the lore of song, and are turbulent and intemperate of tongue, like a pair of crows, chatter in vain against the godlike bird of Zeus."

ODE ON THE SPRING

This poem, *Ode on the Spring*, is one of the early odes of Gray. He wrote it in 1742. Richard West, the dearest friend of Gray, had sent him his *Ode on May*, in reply to which Gray wrote his *Ode on Spring*. It was composed during a visit to his uncle and aunt, Mr and Mrs Rogers. West died on June 1742. Gray's letter containg this poem came back unopened since his friend was no longer in this

world. Gray came to know of his death several days later when he read the news in a newspaper (on 17th Jume). Gray sent a copy of the poem to Walpole in October 1746. it was quite evidently through Walpole that Gray's Ode was first printed anonymously in Dodsley's *Collection* in 1748. Gray's original title of the poem suggested to Mason that "probably he then meant to write two more, descriptive of Morning and Evening."

Dr Samuel Johnson, in his *Lives of the Poets*, thought that the *Ode* "has something poetical, both in the language and the thought; but the language is too luxuriant, and the thoughts have nothing new. The morality is natural, but too stale; the conclusion is pretty." It is often pointed out that Gray's poem is of desivative nature, pointing out a number of borrowings from other poets. Partly, the richness of effect at which Gray aimed could be achieved only by the deliberate echoing and evocation of earlier classical and native descriptions of the Spring. We can see how the poem embodies, both in details of phrasing and in the basic situation of the retired poet contemplating the trivolity of the world as represented by the "insect youth", the echoes of great masters of the past. It must also be recognised that Gray's use of this "stale" morality is self-conscious and ultimately dramatic in effect. For Gray, the point of the poem lay in the final stanza, in which he moralizes on the moralistic touch of self-derision in his own apparent complacency. The juxtaposition of the busy world and the contemplative life was to be dramatize again, more seriously and powerfully, in the Elegy, as was the poet's uneasiness about the choice he attempted to make between them.

The poem's opening lines show a deliberate attempt to echo earlier descriptions of spring, particularly those in classical literature:

Lo! Where the rosy – bosomed Hours,
Fair Venus' train, appear,
Disclose the long expecting flowers,
And wake the purple year!
The Attic warbler pours her throat,
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,
The untought harmony of Spring:

Here echoes of Homer, Horace, Ovid, and Anacreon are too apparent to be missed by any learned reader. Obviously, Gray is aiming here at a general richness of allusion rather than imitation of any particular model. The effect is a great richness of texture and dramatisation of the season.

The poem shows remarkable richness of imagery woven into a texture we generally associate with Keats. The clourful and the mucical combine to create an effect not easy to be achieved by an ordinary talent. Note, for instance, the following:

Where'er the oak's thich branches stretch

A broader browner shade;
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
O'er-canopies the glade,
Besides some water's rushy brink
With me the Muse shall sit, and think
(At ease reclined in rustic state)
How vain the ardour of the crowd,
How low, how little are the proud,
How indignent the great!

It is not less remarkable that the colour and mucic combine smoothly slips into the reflection on the busy woold, making a sharp contrast to the leisure of the poet. The fact that the picture of the poet reclining in the heat of mid-day beneath a tree and beside a stream has occurred frequently in classical poetry does not in any way undermine the picture Gray presents in these lines. On the contrary, it enriches the presents discription and sets up a continuity between the past and the present. Gray acknowledged his borrowings to Walpole, explaining how he attempts to use allusious to the great masters.

The poem, as did most Augustan poems, inevitably reverts to the condition of man on earth:

To Contemplation's sober eye
Such is the race of man:
And they that creep, and they that fly,
Shall end where they began.
Alike the busy and the gay
But flutter through life's little day,
In fortune's varying colours dressed:
Brushed by the hand of rough Mischance,
Or chilled by age, their airy dance
They leave, in dust to rest.

"Vanity of human wishes" is what it is, asserting once again the dictum that paths of glory lead only to the grave. The great Augustan theme of "death the leveler," of the futility of human pursuits, reappears here, as elsewhere in Gray, with an exceptional freshness.

The poem ends with the tables turned on the moralist recluse, in effect saying, well, it is all right to maralise on the meaningless march of mankind, but how about your own manner of living? The beauty of the ending is that this question about the maralist's own life is not raised by any other presence in the poem; it is the poet himself who hears the question raised in his own mind:

Methanks I hear in accents low
The sportive kind reply:

Poor moralist! And what art thou?
A solitary fly!
Thy joys no glittering female meets,
No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,
No painted plumage to display:
On hasty wings thy youth is flown;
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone –
We frolic, while 'tis May.

Thus, the poem is not without the ironic overturning of moralising itself. One also wonders at the appropriateness of the title, for the *Ode* is not so much about the season of spring as the season of man's life, where spring and summer alike end in autumn and winter. The Augustan device of antithesis is the main vehicle in the poem that binds the disparate material together into a tight texture of meaning. Reflection, as ever, remains the main stay of gray's *Ode*.

(iv) ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE

Gray's transcript of the poem in his Commonplace Book is dated "at Stroke August: 1742." When Gray sent Walpole his *Ode on the Spring* in October 1746, he refered to another Ode already in Walpole's possession, which was presumably the present poem. The present poem was the first of Gray's English poems to appear in print. Gray described the poem's reception at Cambridge to Walpole: "I promise you, few take to it here at all, which is good sign (for I never know anything liked here, that ever proved to be so anywhere else,). It is said to be mine, but I strenuously deny it, and so do all that are in the secret, so that no body knows what to think; a few only of King's College gave me the lie, but I hope to demolish them; for if I don't know, who should?" the manuscript of the poem carried a motto from Menander but was not printed with the poem until 1768. The motto has been translated, "I am a man; a sufficient cause for being unhappy." A letter from Gray to his friend Richard West (27 May 1742) throws some light on the poet's attitude to some of his contemporaries at Eton. The letter was written three months before the *Ode* was composed, so its significance can not be slighted. The letter says the following:

> It is not odd to consider one's contemporaries in the grave light of Husband and Father? There is my Lords [Sandwich] and [Halifax], they are statesmen: Do not you remember them dirty boys playing at cricket? As for me, I am never a bit the older, nor the bigger, nor the wiser than I was then: No, not for having been beyond sea.

Jacob Bryant, a contemporary of Gray at Eton, offers an illuminating explanation of Gray's distaste for outdoor life, or any life involving physical activity: "both Mr. Gray and his friend [Walpole] were looked upon as too delicate, upon which

account they had few associates, and never engaged in any exercise, nor partook any boyish amusement. Hence they seldom were in the fields, at least they took only a distant view of those who pursued their different diversions. Some, therefore, who were severe, treated them as feminine characters, on account of their too great delicacy, and sometimes a too fastidious behaviour. Mr. Walpole long time afterwards used to say that *Gray was never a boy*…. Mr. Gray was so averse to all rough exercise, that I am confident he was never on horseback."

Gray's dislike for boyish games is amply betrayed by the self-conscious and ponderous diction he uses to describe them. On his side, these descriptions are meant to be gently humorous. But by August 1742, Eton had acquired for Gray a more profound significance than seems apparent from the studied immaturity of his letter to West three months earlier. The death of West himself only a few days after the date of that letter had widened the gulf separating Gray from his schooldays. The gulf had been opened by Gray's quarrel in Italy with Horace Walpole in the previous year. Whatever his feelings for Walpole, Gray was not able to forget the fall from power of his friend's father, Robert Walpole, the Prime Minister, early in 1742. Gray's own father had died in November 1741. His future at the time was rather uncertain, his financial position insecure. All these considerations must be behind the poems he composed during the summer of 1742, in particular the Ode on Eton. In this state of mind Gray was bound to idealize his schooldays. The poem is built on a stark contrast between the joys of childhood and the evils that maturity brings. Eton requires a prelapsarian innocence, which is enforced by the echoes of Milton's description of Eden and other accounts of man in the Golden Age, before the outset of evil passions, by Pope and Thompson. Gray may have also remembered the *Ode to Mary Magdalene* which Richard West had written while exiled to Oxford. The poem is dated August 1736, and was sent to Walpole. The following stanzas from West's poem are pertinent:

Lost and enwrapt in thought profound,
Absent I tread Etonain ground;
Then starting from the dear mistake,
As disenchanted, wake ….
Oh! How I long again with those,
Whom first my boyish heart had chose,
Together through the friendly shade
To stray, as once I strayed!

Their presence would the scene endear,
Like paradise would all appear,
More sweet around the flowers would blow,
More soft the waters flow.

The spirit of these lines is just the same that we find reflected in the *Eton Ode* of Gray. West's poem must have inspired Gray to outdo his friend's composition. Decidedly, Gray's poem is far superior. The surviving poet does excel the dying. We get in Gray's poem a greater feel of life and a deeper tone of contemplation.

In his letter Jocab Bryant gives an implausible account of the composition of Gray's Ode, which describes the poet crossing the play-fields of Eton on his way to Windsor to see Horace Walpole who had offered reconciliation. Bryant's story does not stand the test of known facts, but there is some basis to his story which does make sense. The poem seems to support Bryant's assertion that "The poet saw and experimentally felt what he so masterly describes", and that Gray's title is no mere formula. The Grounds of West End House at Stoke Poges, where Gray was staying with his uncle Jonathan Rogers, had a summer-house overlooking the Thames Valley, where the poet could see Eton and Windsor. Thus, for Gray there was a literal "prospect' wherefrom he could literally feel the winds blowing from Eton. The part of the point is that the prospect was distant in time with the winds blowing across years which separated him from his schooldays. The poem's title also points to a relationship with the genre of the topographical poem, a number of features of which appear in miniature in it. Like any other "topographical poem" of the period, say Pope's *Windsor Forest*, Gray's *Ode* includes all the familiar features of the genre, such as the founder of Eton, the genre sketch of the children at play, the presence of abstractions and moralizing. The crucial innovation in Gray's poem is the development of the nostalgic associations of the landscape described. As the poem's title indicates, in effect he was combining the typographical poem with the subjective ode to produce a new form. It is characterized by that interplay of the subjective and the objective which distinguishes Gray's poetry in general.

Gray's *Eton Ode* is, therefore, to be read in the light of this background material. Its conventional characters as an ode and a typographical poem are made to combine with its unconventional character as a personal reminiscence and a rumination. Note how the two strands play each other, placed as they are side by side in an alternating movement of the poem:

> Ye distant Spires, ye unique towers,
> That crown the watery glade,
> Where grateful Science still odores
> Her Henry's holy shade;
> And ye that from the stately brow
> Of Windsor's heights the expanse below
> Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
> Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
> Wanders the hoary Thames along

His silver-winding way.

Ah, happy hills, ah, pleasing shade,
Ah, fields beloved in vain,
Where once my careless childhood strayed,
A stranger yet to pain!
I feel the gales, that from ye blow,
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring.

These two opening stanzas, making the strophe and the antistrophe of the Pindaric Ode, combine also the topographical poem's feature of the first stanza with the reminiscence poem's element of the second. Thus, the objective and the subjective, the surrounding and the self, get amalgamated into a unified whole, both interacting to add depth of reflection to the poem. The reference to King Henry the Sixth, the founder of the Eton College, makes the poem solidly specific, giving it a historical touch. The concrete landscape, evoked through a cluster of images, comes alive as the poet's brush moves from stroke to stroke.

Gray's ode, like most of his major poems, inevitably returns to his perennial theme of man's mortality, his miseries and pains, his ill fate and helplessness:

Alas, regardless of their doom,
The little victims play!
No sense have they of ills to come,
Nor care beyond today:
Yet see how all around them wait
The ministers of human fate,
And block Misfortune's baleful stand
Ah, show them where in ambush train!
To seize their prey the murtherous band!
Ah, tell them, they are men!

Man's limited life as well as limited powers are repeatedly hammered by the Augustan poets, including Gray, Pope, and Johnson. Man is presented in the poetry of the period no better than a victim, but more a victim of his own vain pursuits. The poem proceeds, very much like most other poems of Gray, towards the inevitable end of moralizing on man and his destiny. Reflection is as necessary a part of Gray's poetic composition as description or reminiscence.

Gray's *Eton Ode* is, in fact, sadder in its ending than any other of his poems. Perhaps the deaths and other sorrowful events we mentioned in the beginning deepened the darker mood of the poet. Note the concluding stanza of the poem:

> To each his sufferings: all are men,
> Condemned alike to groan;
> The tender for another's pain,
> The unfeeling for his own.
> Yet ah! Why should they know their fate?
> Since sorrow never comes too late,
> And happiness too swiftly flies.
> Thought would destroy their paradise.
> No more; where ignorance is bliss,
> 'Tis folly to be wise.

Not that there are no precedents and parallels to these lines; there are plenty of them in the classical as well as native tradition of poetry. And yet, the concluding stanza of Gray's poem carries a force of conviction as well as authenticity of experience. Technically also, the poem remains true to its Pindaric form following closely the perfect pattern of strophe-antistrophe-epode. And yet nowhere are we made to feel that the observance of the form is only a formality. On the contrary, the verse moves with an ease and a freedom familiar to us about Gray's poetry, although not without an element of self-consciousness.

(v) ODE FOR MUSIC

Gray wrote his *Ode for Music* between February and April 1769. the poem is an occasional piece, written for the ceremonious occasion of the Chancellor of Cambridge's Installation ceremony. The Duke of Grafton, who as Prime Minister had been directly responsible for Gray's appointment as Regius Professor of History at Cambridge in July 1768, was elected Chancellor of the University on 29 November 1768. as was done in 1749, when the Duke of Newcastle became Chancellor, a special ode, set to music by a well-known composer, was to be performed at the Installation ceremony on 1 July 1769. Gray confirmed the occasional status of the poem in his letter to James Beattie not long after the ceremony: "I thought myself bound in gratitude to his Grace unmasked to take upon me the task of writing those verses that are usually set to musick on this occasion." In his "Reminiscences of Gray," Norton Nicholls recalled the mingled distaste and sense of duty with which Gray set about the task of writing this occasional poem:

> After I had quitted the University I always paid Mr. Gray an annual visit; during one of these visits it was revealed that he was determined as he said to offer with a good grace what he could not have refused if

> it had been asked of him viz., to write the Installation Ode for the Duke of Grafton. This however he considered as a sort of task to which he submitted with great reluctance; & it was long after he first mentioned it to me, before he could prevail with himself to begin the composition. One morning when I went to him as usual after breakfast, I knocked at his door, which he threw open, & exclaimed with a loud voice
>
> "Hence! avaunt, 'tis holy ground."
>
> I was so astonished, that I almost feared he was out of his senses; but this was the beginning of the Ode which he had just composed.

Gray had composed the *Ode* by 20 April 1769, when he wrote to Wharton, "I must comfort myself with the intention: for I know it will bring abuse enough on me. However it is done, & given to V: Chancellor, & there is an end." As he wrote at about the same time to James Brown, his friend Delaval had recently "told me of the obloquy that waits for me; and said everything to deter me from doing a thing that is already done." The abuse of Gray's political flattery of Grafton duly came from the Duke's political enemies. Gray had actually anticipated it in a letter to his friend Stonhewer, Grafton's secretary, when he sent the *Ode* for the Duk's perusal:

> I did not intend the Duke should have heard me till he could not help it. You are desired to make the best excuse you can to his Grace for the liberty I have taken of praising him to his face; but as somebody was necessarily to do this, I did not see why Gratitude should sit silent and leave it to Expectation to sing, who certainly would have sung, and that *á gorge deployée* upon such an occasion.

Very rightly, Gray was never anything but deprecating about the *Ode*. As he told Nicholls, "*Odicle* has been rehearsed again & again, & the boys have got scraps by heart: I expect to see it torn piece-meal in the North-Briton, before it is born. The musick is as good as the words: the former might be taken for mine, & the latter for Dr. Randal's." The critical response to the poem started pouring in right away from foes as well as friends. For instance, Richard Gaugh, a contemporary of Gray, thought the *Ode* was "well set and performed, but charged with obsecurity." Another contemporary, Joseph Cockfield, considered the *Ode* a recent instance of flattery bestowed indiscriminately on the great," and that it would "do no credit to that celebrated writer." Significantly, when the *Ode* was published, Gray's name did not appear on the title page. He perhaps did it to indicate that he was not particularly proud of the piece, for the authorship had been so well known that the poet would not have hoped any anonymity at that stage. From the very beginning of the event, we have seen, Gray always regarded the writing of the *Ode* more as a duty than a genuine expression.

Gray's own opinion of the *Ode* is clearly stated in his letter to James Beattie: "I do not think them [those verses] worth sending you, because they are by nature doomed to live but a single day, or if their existence is prolonged beyond that date, it is only by means of news-paper parodies, & witless criticism. This sort of abuse I had reason to expect, but did not think it worthwhile to avoid it." As expected, one parody of the *Ode* appeared almost immediately in the *St. James's Chronicle*, beginning "Hence! avaunt! 'tis venal ground,/Let pallid Freedom ever fly." The *London Chronicle* also published a parody of the epitaph of the *Elegy*, which contained such lines as "And smooth-tongued flatt'ry mark'd him for her own." Beattie assured Gray that his *Ode* was "the finest panegyrical poem in the world." Mason, Gray's biographer, when he published the poem in 1775, considered that the fact that it was "irregular" was a serious defect, but otherwise thought it, "in point of lyrical arrangement and expression, to be equal to most of his other *Odes*." An entirely unexpected admirer of the poem was S.T. Coleridge, who thought that "there is something very majestic in Gray's installation Ode; but as to The Bard and the rest of his lyrics, I must say I think them frigid and artificial."

The poem opens on an impressive note, with a series of warnings echoing Virgil, Milton, Shakespeare and the rest in the studied structure of the stanza:

Air

'Hence, avaunt, ('tis holy ground)
'Comus and his mid-night crew,
'And Ignorance with looks profound,
'And Dreaming Sloth of Pallid hue,
'Mad Sedition's cry profane,
'Servitude that hugs her chain,
'Nor in these consecrated bowers
'Let painted Flattery hide her serpent-train in flowers.

Chorus

'Nor Envy base nor creeping Gain
'Dare the Muse's walk to stain,
'While bright-eyed Science watches round,
'Hence, away, 'tis holy ground!'

like any other *Ode* of Gray, this one, too, is highly learned, carrying in each phrase a reference to earlier masters of poetry. Beginning with *Anied* of Virgil, *Henry IV*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *A Mid summer Night's Dream* of Shakespeare, *Comus* of Milton, *Essay on Criticism* of Pope, *Ode to Liberty* of Wharton, *Hymn to Light* of Cowley, the very first stanza indicates the wealth of allusions the poem is going to incorporate within its fold. Indeed, only the very learned reader can admire the allusive verse.

As usual with Gray, he also adds here a personal touch to the panegyric:

‘Oft at the blush of dawn
‘I trod your level lawn,
‘Oft wooed the gleam of Cynthia silver-bright
‘In cloisters dim, far from the haunts of Folly,
‘With freedom by my side, and soft-eyed Melancholy.’

There lines are a deliberate pastiche of Milton’s *Il Penseroso* 61-7:

Sweet bird that shunn’st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee Chauntress oft the Woods among,
I woo to hear thy eeven Song;
And missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven Green,
To behold the wandering Moon.

Gray’s aptitude for pastiche always invited the charge of borrowings. But he had the ability to make the borrowings his own. The present instance proves it beyond doubt. In fact, while Milton’s verses, with their incorrigible inversions, sound rather rough, compared to the smooth run of Gray’s verses. At times, though not always, Gray, like Shakespeare, improves his sources. The subsequent lines, listing the founders of the various colleges at Cambridge, are rather tedious, not very interesting except as history.

The poem concludes on an optimistic note, foretelling a glorious future for the new king and Chancellor of the University of Cambridge:

‘With modest pride to grace thy youthful brow
‘The laureate wreath, that Cecil wore, she brings,
‘And to thy just, thy gentle hand
‘Submits the fasces of her sway,
‘While Spirits blest above and men below
‘Join with glad voice the loud symphonious lay.
Grand Chorus
‘Through the wild waves as they roar
‘With watchful eye and dauntless mien
‘Thy steady course of honour keep,
‘Nor fear the rocks nor seek the shore:
‘The star of Brunswick smiles serene,
‘And gils the horrors of the deep.’

Making a lavish use of Milton along with an additional borrowing from Dryden, Gray weaves here a piece of hope and prayer, giving an appropriate conclusion to the praise of his patron. It is always easy to condemn the known panegyrical attempts, but the deliberate purpose does not necessarily always undermine the

quality of the poetic composition. If the occasion of the *Ode* could be forgotten for a moment, the poem does not compare poorly with any other similar attempt by Gray, or any other poet, for that matter. The poem's erudition apart, its melodious movement, its stately march, and its classical restraint call for an appreciation.

Thus, we can conclude our discussion of Gray by remarking that his poetry has a charm of its own. Although firmly grounded in classical learning, he never remained a solitude, he never became confessional like the romantics. In a way, we come across in his poetry the virtues of both classical restraint and romantic individualism. No doubt, a highly learned poet, relying on the wealth of allusions, but reading his poems like the Elegy one does not feel handicapped by one's lack of his level of learning.

Unit III: *Voltaire's Candide*

VOLTAIRE'S LIFE AND WORK

Voltaire was born in 1694 of sturdy middle class stock in Paris. His father was a well-established notary. Educated by the Jesuits, at the celebrated Louis-le-Grand College in his native city, he developed considerable skill as a boy in the art of controversy. He also had deep-rooted enthusiasm for literature, which made him view with distaste his father's determination to have him practice law. Voltaire's actual name was Francois Marie Arouet. It was only as a writer that he adopted the name of Voltaire. This, too, shows how deeply he had committed himself to the literary world. However, to please his father, the elder Arouet, Francois as a young man did go for a time to The Hague as a secretary to the Ambassador there. Back in Paris as a law-clerk, young Arouet began to write satirical verse. He also started writing his earliest works, the epic *La Henriad* and the tragedy *Oedipus*. A lampoon against the Regent, however, earned him exile for a while. Soon thereafter, he wrote another satire on the region of Louis XIV. This earned him imprisonment in the Bastille for eleven months in 1717.

The reign of Louis XIV was rather inglorious in the history of France. It ended with the king's death in 1715. The bigotry and somberness of his last years alienated the devotion of the public. What followed was no better. The Regency of the Duke of Orleans (1715-1723) was a period of reaction against the moral ostentation of Louis XIV's court – a period of licence and frivolity, even, some would say, of libertinism. The Regency was replaced by a long span of the reign of Louis XV (1715-1774). This new king showed little aptitude for and less interest in ruling the country. The destinies of the nation were settled according to the whim and caprice of a succession of his mistresses. The extravagance and expenditures of the court were steadily runing the country. Louis XV was not unaware that his successor would have to pay the penalty. "After me, the deluge," he said prophetically.

The eighteenth century during the region of Louis XV was a period of neoclassicism, just as it was in England. The century retained the basic bias of the seventeenth in favour of a rationalistic approach to life. It was equally concerned with achieving clarity, simplicity, wit, elegance, perfection of form, and it was equally didactic in its intentions. But in France (just as in England) one important change did take place in the eighteenth century. The splendour and absolutism of the Court had made the royal house and its retainers the focus of interest in the seventeenth century literature. In the eighteenth century the audience

became instead the general reading public. Learning, science, philosophy, and wit became the properties for the well-to-do citizen with the leisure to develop his taste and knowledge. It was the time when a series of brilliant women made their homes the centers of truly philosophic and literary conversation. In these *salons* writers and cultivated readers met on an equal footing. The elegant ladies who were queens over their coteries afforded real help, politically, financially and intellectually, to writers. The general effect of these gatherings on literature was to make it witty, polished, and agreeable. The sciences were deprived of technicality; knowledge became lucid and impersonal.

The eighteenth century in France was the period when the admiration of England and English literature developed almost into a mania. Voltair, who acquired this name around the time his *Oedipus* was performed, in 1718, discovered Shakespeare, the philosopher Locke and the Deists, and the poet Pope. Voltair and some other contemporaries of his were powerfully influenced by their visit to England. Rousseau was indebted to Locke, to Richardson and to many other English writers. Many translations from the English were made, during this period, into the French. The force of this Anglomania, so to say, was to augment the growing restlessness in French political affairs, while half of France was living in starvation and political oppression, England seemed to liberal Frenchman to be holding aloft the beacon of liberty. The period of Louis XV was, therefore, a period of contradictions. The Court continued its parade of splendour, but actually was losing hold over the people. Outwardly life in Paris and Versailles was more charming and attractive than ever. But the lower classes, of whom literature for a while took little cognizance, were becoming tired of all this pretty gallantry and the artifices which made vice appear graceful. The reign of Louis XVI (1774-1792) and his queen Marie Antoinette saw the final dissolution of this world of charming artificiality. The French Revolution of 1789, which Voltair, Rousseau, and Diderot had unknowingly done much to prepare, was destined to alter the political life not only of France, but the whole of the western world.

Unlike their predecessors in Neoclassicism, the leading writers of the eighteenth century, instead of placing themselves under the sheltering favour of the Court, became increasingly concerned over the issues of justice, equality, and “the rights of man.” Their social idealism, indeed, brought them into conflict with the government. We can recall here Voltaire’s being sent to prison more than once for writing satires on political, social, and religious life of his time. The arguments in the writings of Voltair and Rousseau were profoundly disruptive of the *status quo*. Voltair illustrates the tendency more than any other writer of his age. Because of his tone of bantering disillusionment he has often been charged of cynicism. Perhaps not very justly. He penned almost a library of books with the sole purpose of improving social conditions. He and his fellow writers fervently believed that

their literary labours could bring about a more decent life for posterity, and in that faith alone they wrote. With almost religious reliance on the curative power of reason, so characteristic of the neoclassical era, they were convinced that an untiring criticism of social evils must cause a gradual improvement in society. Some of these men actually believed that the exercise of reason would make society perfect eventually.

Returning to the particular case of Voltaire, we find that for next seven years after the performance of his *Oedipus* tragedy in 1718 at the *Theatre Francais*, which received much applause, Voltaire was much petted and admired by the Court for his witticism light pieces. It was a lucky catastrophe that changed the whole course of his life. Without it, he might have been satisfied to be a minor versifier for Court circles. It chanced, however, that because of a gibe he made at the Opera at the expense of the stupid Chevalier de Rohan, he was beaten by the Chevalier's lackeys. Enraged by the event, Voltaire challenged the noble man to a duel, and for his insolence he was again sent to prison in the Bastille. To save appearances for the Chevalier, Voltaire was released on his promise to leave for England in 1726. At the age of thirty two, therefore, Voltaire found himself in England. He had been a sincere admirer of England because of its achievements in science and in political liberty. He had already mastered English while incarcerated in the Bastille. By now he was fully equipped to make the most of his exile.

Indeed, Voltaire reveled in his exile in England. These three years of his life proved to be the most formative years of his career as a writer. With Bolingbroke, who at that time had the reputation of being a great philosopher, Voltaire already had made some acquaintance. He now became an intimate friend of Bolingbroke. The exile was also frequently to be seen at the homes of Walpole, Lord Hervey, the Duke of Newcastle, and the Prince of Wales. He met Congreve, attended Newton's funeral, visited Pope at Twickenham, and was elected a member of the great English scientific body, the Royal Society. He saw performances of the plays of Shakespeare and Dryden. He read Bacon and Locke. And he came to know the English language well enough to think and write in it. Above all, he became saturated with a devotion to that religious and political freedom which he saw Englishmen enjoying. This made him resolve to be the champion of this freedom in France. As Lord Morley has put it, "He left France a poet, he returned to it a sage." After his exile for three years he returned to France, and produced several plays showing the influence of Shakespeare, notably *Brutus* (1730), *Zaire* (1732), and *The Death of Caesar* (1732).

The chief fruit of Voltaire's exile in England, however, was the publication of his *English Letters* (*Letters Anglaises*) in 1734. These letters are also known as *The Philosophic Letters*. As an earliest adventure into philosophy, the *Letters* contains the germs of all his important ideas, later to be exploited in many volumes.

The *Letters* is also written in that gay, ironic style which is most associated with Voltaire's name. Here, in this work Voltaire makes a series of comparisons between the tolerance and liberties which Englishmen knew and the arbitrary oppression to which Frenchmen were subjected. The most important chapters of the work that deserve attention are those on *Parliament,* on *Commerce*, on *Vaccine,* on *Locke*, on *Descartes and Newton, on Tragedy*, on *Comedy*, and, a kind of supplement, on *The Pensees of Pascal.* The work was published without Voltaire's name as author. It was condemned, as expected, by the government, seized, and burned. Nevertheless, five editions of it were sold the year of its appearance. The publisher was imprisoned in the Bastille. Voltaire thought it wise to leave Paris for Cirey, where a fellow Newtonian, Mme de chatlet, invited him to stay at her Chateu.

Later in the eighteenth century Condorcet wrote of the *English Letters* that it was the work which must be considered "the starting-point of a revolution; it began to call into existence the taste for English philosophy of literature, to give us an interest in the manners, politics, and the commercial knowledge of the English people." It must be remembered that for Frenchmen an interest in the things English mean an interest in achieving liberties comparable with theirs. Another historian, Texte, finds *The English Letters* important in another respect. He dates from it "the commencement of that open campaign against the Christian religion which was destined to occupy the whole of the century." He also finds that with this work of Voltaire begins "that new spirit … critical, eager for reform, combative and practical, which concerned itself rather with political and natural science than with poetry and eloquence."

At Cirey, a kind of second exile for Voltair, under the sympathetic care of his hostess, Mme de Chatlet, he wrote busily between 1734 and 1749. But living away from his home in Paris he was by no means a recluse. He made a number of flying visits to Paris. He also traveled in the company of her hostess to Brussels, Lille, Luneville and other places. Of the many works of this period that Voltair produced, one has been regarded almost universally as a blot upon his career. This work is *La Pucelle*, which is a scurrilous mock-heroic poem ridiculing the legend of Joan of Arc. His *Mondain* (1736) is a very witty poem defending a theory that he never abandoned: that there is progress in human affairs when the latter are viewed in perspective. However, Voltaire had to fled to Holland for a while because of this work. He had to do it to escape the police. *Alzire* (1736) is a tragedy laid in Peru, which was performed with great success. Another work of the period, *Mahomet, or Fanaticism* (1740) is a philosophical tragedy which attacks religion. He makes Mohammed typical of the founders of all religions, an imposter and fanatic, who causes much evil in the world. The play became the source of much unpleasantness to its author. When produced in Paris in 1742 it was

enthusiastically applauded. But Voltaire's enemies lost no time in charging him with "infamous blasphemy." To avoid the wrath of the government Voltaire had to quit Paris yet another time. He had the audacity to dedicate this piece to the Pope, none the less, and the Pontiff, not lacking a sense of humour.

Another famous work that Voltair produced during this period is *Merope* (1743), which has been acclaimed his most classical tragedy. It is based on a story similar to that of Racine's *Andromache*. At the instance of Richelieu, Voltaire also wrote a comedy bellet for Court performance, named *The Princess of Navarre* (*La Princesse de Navarre*) in 1745. In addition to other works, of a minor nature, during this period Voltaire also wrote his *Elements of Newton's Philosophy* (1738), and a treatise *On the Nature of Fire* (*Sur la Nature du Feu*). At this time, too, he began his monumental work *The Epoch of Louis XIV* (*Siecle de Louis XIV*). Voltaire's celebrated correspondence with Frederick the Great, who at the beginning accepted the role of a humble disciple, commenced in 1736. The two came to admire each other genunily. Their meeting in 1740 was by all means satisfying to both of them. During the ensuing decade Voltaire several times took on the responsibility of diplomatic missions to Frederick from the French Court. Each time Frederick urged Voltaire to remain as his guest, but he would not agree to this request.

Touching upon Voltaire's correspondence one discovers that there are in existence some ten thousand of his letters. In fact, these are said to be not even half of what he wrote. It seems most of the notable people in Europe at the time corresponded with him. The list of personal friends, literary colleagues, fellow philosophers, etc., is so large that it would require pages merely to mention the names. Of course, the letters are well worth the reading at any time. They reveal their author in all his charm, enthusiasm, and anger of which he was capable. Some of his most hastily composed letters, interestingly, are among the best pieces of prose. All of the letters and other writings he did at Cirey put together constitute a valuable stock. One can see how the "Cirey period" of Voltaire's life was one of accomplishment, intellectual stimulation, and great annoyance. *Mondain*, as we have noted, had sent him off in flight from the police; *Mahomet* had caused him to leave Paris hastily because of the authorities; his election to the French Academy in 1746 re-awakened the zeal of his enemies, and he had to flee Paris again. Moreover, during these years Voltaire was the victim of unremitting health. Finally, the greatest below he ever sustained terminated the days at Cirey: Mme de Chatlet died in the late summer of 1749.

For nearly a year Voltaire tried his fortunes in Paris once more. He tried to run his own theatre, and began to circulate, to the delight of the literary world, a number of his Tales. Every one of these racily written stories has a purpose – moral, social, political, or religious. Of these, the best-known Tales have been

Badouc (1746), *Memmon* (1747), *Zadig* (1748), and *Micromegas* (1752). *Zadiag*, crowded with incidents and conversations, illustrates the uncertainty of human experiences. *Micromegas* has as its hero inhabitant of the star Sirius who travels through our world, and proves that all values are merely relative.

Frederick, as maintained earlier, had been intent in his invitations to Voltaire that the latter should stay at his Court (1750-1753).Facing all sorts of disappointments in Paris or at Versailles, Voltaire at last procured the permission of Louis XV to go to Prussia. He arrived in Berlin in July 1750. At first-Frederick was delighted with his distinguished guest. He lodged him near his palace at Potsdam. Voltaire, too, took great pleasure in his conversations with the king. He gave Frederick the title of the "Solomon of the North." Frederick made the mistake of making an indiscrete remark about Voltaire. He is reported to have told his physicist, La Mettrie, "I shall need him [Voltaire] a year more at the most, one squeezes the orange and then throws away the skin." La Mettrie did not fail to report the remark to Voltaire. Meanwhile, Voltaire also wrote an attack on the king's favorite Maupertiu, president of the Berlin Academy. All this led to the end of their friendship, forcing Voltaire to leave Prussia. The matter did not end here. When he was leaving Prussia, Voltaire was arrested and forced to give up a poetical effusion of Frederick's which he was smuggling out of the country. His intention was to present Frederick as the laughing-stock in the world of letters in Europe. At the age of sixty, he was not welcome in any kingdom of the western continent.

The most important work that Voltaire wrote while in Prussia is *The Epoch of Louis XIV* (1751). It is a history of thought during one of the periods of great intellectual enlightenment and almost equal intolerance. Beginning with a description of "the state of Europe before Louis XIV," he discusses the foreign policies of the monarch as well as the monarch's ministers and their plans of military operations. The first part of the book concludes with a picture of Europe. The next chapters are devoted to the state of commerce, justice, the police, and public finances. Then follows a discussion of science, painting, sculpture, and music in the Europe of Louis XIV's time. One chapter contains Voltaire's judgements on all the great seventeenth-century writers. The work concludes with a discourse on the condition of religious affairs during the reign of Louis XIV. Here, the author expresses his disgust with narrow theological disputation. His comments on the seventeenth-century religious fanaticism implies everywhere the superiority of his own era. The importance of the work lies in its being the first attempt at writing a history of civilization. Voltaire's emphasis is that reason, not religion, is the true guide to civilized values. But he also recognizes throughout, the power of chance as often playing decisive role in the affairs of men and women.

Besides being the most finished historical work of its time, it has an added charm of its author's witty, graceful, and direct style.

After saying goodbye to Germany, Voltaire went to Geneva. There he bought a summer house, which he called "Les Delices." There he also presented plays at his own little theatre. But the Council of Geneva objected to them on religious ground. Then Rousseau also attacked the performances. That compelled him to shift his home just across the Swiss border on French soil. He bought the estate of Fernex, which he spelled *Ferney*. This became his favourite residence. He built a chateu and converted it into a kind of court where men of letters and great noblemen came to pay their respect to the veteran of letters and to take part in his endless theatricals. It is said that he often entertained as many as fifty guests at a time. Luckily, his income now was large enough to afford his grand style of living. Although over sixty when he started living at Ferney, it was here (1754 – 1778) that he worked harder than ever. It was these last years of his life that saw the production of some of his greatest works, notably the one book by which he is best known to the world, *Candide* (1759). He wrote several plays, including one of his best tragedies, *Tancred* (1760). He continued his historical work, produced two more books. However, the crowning glory of this period were his philosophical writings, which include *The Essay on the Manners and the Spirit of Nations* (1756), *The Treatise on Tolerance* (1763), *The Philosophic Dictionary* (1764), and, of course, *Candide* (1759). *The Essay on the Manners and the Spirit of Nations* is sort of universal history. He shows here his contempt for the Dark Ages, but does them some justice at the end when he finds religion acting as a civilizing force at certain epochs. His description of Mohammadan culture in Spain, his account of late medieval manners and commerce, his discussion of Renaissance art, and his review of the reign of Louis XIII – these are the high points of the book. The unifying theme of the work is progress – progress in the arts and sciences, and progress in human well-being. Voltaire's style in this work is at its most energetic. His *The Treatise on Tolerance* will always remain a monument to the nobility of Voltaire's ideals. It was the product of a series of interventions on the part of Voltaire in behalf of the politically maltreated. To Voltaire, tolerance "is the consequence of humanity. We are all formed of frailty and error; let us pardon reciprocally each other's folly…. It is clear that the individual who persecutes a man, his brother, because he is not of the same opinion, is a monster." These remarks are made in the article on Tolerance in *The Philosophic Dictionary*, one of his most characteristic work, containing a series of such articles arranged in alphabetical order. Here, there are essays on Soul, Beauty, Glory, War, etc. Most of the articles are attacks on Catholicism, particularly catholic dogma – questions of ritual, prerogatives of the clergy, etc. Orthodox catholic dogma he finds irrational, and often immoral and inhuman. He is equally disdainful on the subjects

of miracles and visions. He always dismissed the possibility of supernatural manifestations. The target of his attack everywhere is the monster of intolerance. He shows how all religions have common beliefs; these alone are the credible, and hence the valuable, portions of all religions.

Although Voltaire was no friend of the Revolution, *The Philosophic Dictionary* became a kind revolutionaries' guide. By the time it appeared, Voltaire's reputation had grown universal. No man of letters in Europe was more vastly admired. At Ferney he would always be busy dictating twenty letters a day. Of all the several dozen volumes of Voltaire's work *Candide* (1759) still remains the most favourite of his readers. One cannot think of any other book which contains within the same number of pages so much devastating wit. It is rightly called the world's masterpiece of scepticism. At the same time, it is unfair to accuse it of being a work of easy cynicism. Not only its never-failing laughter, but also the moral earnestness of its conclusion, make such a charge look utterly absurd. No doubt, it satirizes many things. And the chief object of ridicule is philosophic optimism – "this is the best of all possible worlds," as Leibniz puts it. A man who believed, as much as Voltaire did, in the need for social reforms could hardly endorse any doctrine which encouraged satisfaction with the way things are. The dogged optimism of Pangloss in *Candide* is painted as merely idiotic. Voltaire also attacks in this work the follies of war, the injustices of religious persecution, the stupidity of ambition, the avarice of men. He condemns, above all, all those who expect to find great happiness in life, for such a search is in vain. The best answer he can give to the quest for contentment is, "Cultivate your garden." In the end, those characters in *Candide* who are able to lose themselves in useful work, such as is ever ready at hand, no matter what their earlier errors and misfortunes have been, find a measure of peace.

VOLTAIRE'S SCEPTICISM:

The question whether one is sceptic or not relates to one's belief or dis-belief in God. If you believe in God, you are not a sceptic. But if you say you don't know if there is such an authority in the universe, you are called a sceptic. Voltaire addresses this question in the *Trait de metaphysique* (The Treatise of Metaphysics) which, fortunately, was not published in his life time. Otherwise, he would have been sent to jail once again, this time perhaps for a much longer period than ever before. Is there a god? And if so, what are his relations with man? This is a subject to which Voltaire returned in his writings over and over again. While arguing against atheism in his *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, Voltaire wrote that "most of the great ones of this earth live as if they were atheists." He adds that everyone who has experience of this world knows that belief in god has not the slightest influence on war and ambition, interests and pleasures.

We need not have any misgiving about the fact that Voltaire was not a man obsessed with the idea of god. His references to the subject are comparatively few, far fewer than to may other subjects in which he was more actively interested. Of course, like any sensitive person, Voltaire could not help asking himself unanswerable questions. However, he was far less interested in philosophic abstractions than in the immediate need to destroy fanaticism and superstition, and to bring about the reign of law and justice. Still, he did not escape the questions and tried to answer them as best as he could. Also, there is very little formally systematic about Voltaire's presentation of his views. However, if he did not design a system of philosophy, it was not because he was not capable of doing this. His *Trait de metaphysique* shows this well enough. It was rather because he thought it foolish to do so. "Systems," as he once said, "offend my reason." He also said, "so fat as systems are concerned, one must always reserve to oneself the right to laugh in the morning at the ideas one had the previous day." In short, Voltaire's methods were scientific rather than technically philosophic. Also, there is nothing monolithic about his thinking. It developed, and even changed in some important respects. Thus, it is possible to say without qualification that Voltaire preferred Racine to Corneille, or that he was against intolerance. But it is not possible to make a categorical statement about his views on god.

On the subject of god, we need to remember that Voltaire never considered it solely in terms of Christian polemics. For him, the problem of god was nothing if not universal, because it existed long before Christianity, and, therefore, must necessarily exist independently of this or that faith. Voltaire also did not make any distinction between "theist" and "deist". If we look into his writings, we find that at first he tends to use the word "theist", and later "deist", but only for prudential reasons, since churchmen had sought to discredit the word "deist" by using it synonymously with "atheist". Thus, in 1765 Voltaire wrote of a theist as "a man firmly convinced of the existence of a supreme being as good as he is powerful, who has created all beings… who perpetuates their species, who punishes crimes without cruelty, and rewards virtuous actions with goodness." We find that Voltaire tends to use interchangeably the words "theism" and "deism", or "theist" and "deist". He also insisted that there are lot of people who would not share the belief of theism or deism. In the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, he says, "In England, like everywhere else, there have been and there still are many men who are atheists on principle: for only young and inexperienced preachers, very ill-informed of what happens in the world, maintain that there cannot be any atheists." The implication is obvious, that in all probability Voltaire is also one of those "who are atheists on principle."

So far as deism (theism) is concerned, Voltaire explained that there were two kinds of deists: 1. Those who think that god created the world without providing

men with a moral law; those deists, he considered, should be called only 'philosophers.' 2. Those who believed that god endowed men with a natural law; these deists have a religion. He also makes it clear that he regards "any belief beyond these two forms of deism as an evil." From these definitions it seems that Voltaire's sympathies lay with the first kind of deism, obviously, since he himself remained the leader and symbol of the *philosophers*. A further examination of the issue confirms this conclusion. What does Voltaire man, for example, by natural law? He does not seem to mean by it anything resembling human law, continuously interpreted and modified by a higher power, which employs sanctions and rewards. He seems to mean, broadly, an innate ethic implanted once and for all by the creator, who then has no further power over it. In the ultimate analysis, Voltaire does not seem to mean even this, for his historical work is based on the notion of ethical relativism. As early as 1741 he echoed with approval Pascal's "What is true on this side of the Pyrenees is false on the other."

By far the most carefully developed examination of this problem of the existence of a god occurs in Voltaire's *Trait de metaphysique*. He seems to have reached his conclusion in this work from which he never departed later. Also, the conclusion stated here is rather cool, devoid of enthusiasm, whereas the same conclusion is later obscured by the passions of polemic and propaganda. His conclusion in the *Trait* is: "The opinion that there is a god presents difficulties; but there are absurdities in the contrary opinion." This is, at the highest, to regard the belief in god as a philosophic convenience (not to be confused with political expediency), and it is the tiniest possible step away from atheism. In his play *Socrate* Voltaire puts these words into the mouth of the philosopher: "There is only one god… his nature is to be infinite; no being can share the infinite with him. Lift your eyes to the celestial globes, turn them to the earth and the seas, everything corresponds, each is made for the other; each being is intimately related to the other things; everything forms part of the same design: therefore there is one architect, one sole master, one sole preserver." A few years later, in the guise of a preacher, Voltaire exclaims, "What is this being? Does he exist in immensity? Is space one of his attributes? Is he in a place or all places? May I be for ever preserved from entering into these metaphysical subtleties? I should too much abuse my feeble reason if I tried fully to understand the being, who, by his nature and mine, must be incomprehensible to me?"

Here, it seems, is the dilemma put forth from which Voltaire could never manage to escape, because it is inescapable. As the idea of god is stripped step by step of its traditional vestments, nothing finally remains to the theist except an indefinable design, that is, a notion intrinsically contradictory and humanly incomprehensible. Voltaire makes his position all the more clear, when, in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, he explains, "we merely drag ourselves from

supposition to supposition, from possibilities to possibilities. We arrive at a very small number of certainties. Something exists, therefore there is something eternal, for nothing is produced from nothing. This is a sure truth on which our minds rest. Every construction which displays means and an end, announces an artisan; therefore this universe, composed of mechanisms, of means, each of which has its end, reveals a very powerful, very intelligent artisan. Here we have a probability which approaches the greatest certitude; but is this supreme workman infinite? Is he everywhere? Has he a place? How can we answer this question with our limited intelligence and our feeble knowledge?" Thus, as a man of reason Voltaire expresses his scepticism. In a letter of 1737 to Frederick he concludes for ontological reasons that the existence of a supreme being is a strong probability. But he immediately adds that he himself does not believe that there is any proof of the existence of this being. More than thirty years later, Voltaire tells with evident sympathy the story of the Swiss captain who, before a battle, prays: "O God, if there is one, take pity on my soul if I have one."

Decidedly, Voltaire always believed that the existence of god cannot be proved scientifically. In fact, he considered the very attempt to do so as absurd. As he says in English in one of his earliest notebooks, "God cannot be proved, nor denied, by the mere force of our reason." Such examples are numerous, and they could be multiplied indefinitely. Voltaire himself was aware of this fact, so he said with ultimate frankness: "For the rest, I think that it is always a very good thing to maintain the doctrine of the existence of a god. Society needs this opinion." And he goes on to quote his own famous line, the meaning of which, so often and so needlessly debated, was thus established once and for all: "If god did not exist, he would have to be invented." The argument about god finally leads to the existence or otherwise of man's free will. In a letter to Frederick, he argues that men possess free will because there is a god, but he also insists that there is a god because we have free will. Here again, he is not free from doubt. He asks Frederick why the author of nature gave men the feeling that they are free if in fact they are not.

Confronted with the unlimited number of statements in the volumes of Voltaire's work one cannot but be arbitrary in putting an end to citations and arrive at some conclusion about his ticklish view on the subject. Our conclusion would be, even if tentative, as under: If by design he understood the adoption of a belief having the nature of a law devised by men for their own governance, then Voltaire seems convinced that men should be deists. Of course, such a conviction has nothing to do with philosophy and theology: it belongs to the domain of political science. In other words, if by deism be understood the recognition of any kind of personal, finite or definable divinity, then Voltaire was not a deist. Finally, if by deism be understood one of the following propositions: being is infinite, infinity is inconceivable in human terms, it is therefore superhuman, and may for

convenience be called god; or alternatively, being is finite and must therefore have a first cause beyond itself, and this first cause may for convenience be called god; then on either of these assumptions Voltaire was a deist.

Even though the positions proposed above are deduced from the various statements of Voltaire himself, they add up to nothing so far as his actual response to the existence of god is concerned. For theoretical reasons, or for reasons of expediency, he may work out a position in abstract philosophical terms, which does not convey the shock of a plain statement of his being a sceptic or agnostic. The fact of the matter is that he was a thorough rationalist, who would accept nothing without its admission through the test of reason. Let us be straight about his real position and say that like a true agnostic, he neither asserted nor denied the existence of god because he found no rational evidence on either side. Hence he neither affirmed nor denied the divinity, and remained, despite all kinds of pulls and pressures on him, non-committ to any position so far as the question of god was concerned. As for the followers of formalized religion, he had nothing but contempt for these so-called believers, finding them fanatical without faith.

DEATH OF OPTIMISM:

In the age of Voltaire man's confidence in his destiny was at its highest point. Optimism seemed a universal phenomenon. The belief in progress had become almost instinctive. When man is convinced that everything is getting better everyday, it is very much human to conclude that everything is for the best. This idea had recently been powerfully sustained by Leibniz, who in his *Theodicee* (1710) had given its most compact expression. Then, in his epigrammatic expression in *Essay on Man* (1733) Pope had uttered it most lucidly and eloquently

> Submit: in this, or any other sphere,
> Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear:
> Safe in the hand of one disposing Power,
> Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
> All nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
> All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see;
> All Discord, Harmony not understood;
> All partial Evil, universal Good;
> And, spite of Pride, erring Reason's spite,
> One truth is clear, whatever is, is right.

In the midst of this euphoria of a world which regarded itself as the centre of creation there occurred on the Feast of All Saints Day (November I) in 1755 an event which indirectly changed men's thinking about their own place in nature. The event was the Lisbon earthquake, which was a terrible catastrophe. It made

tremendous impression on the minds of many sensitive thinkers and writers. One of these was Voltaire who had recently come to live on the outskirts of Geneva.

> Voltaire got the news from Portugal and reacted to the calamity as under: My dear sir, nature is very cruel. One would find it hard to imagine how the laws of movement cause such frightful disasters in the *best of possible worlds*. A hundred thousand ants, our fellows crushed all at once in our ant-hill, and half of them perishing, no doubt in unspeakable agony, beneath the wreckage from which they cannot be drawn. Families ruined all over Europe, the fortunes of a hundred businessmen, your compatriots, swallowed up in the ruins of Lisbon. What a wretched gamble is the game of human life! What will the preachers say, especially if the palace of the Inquisition is still standing? I flatter myself that at least the reverend fathers inquisitors have been crushed like the others. That ought to teach men not to persecute each other, for while a few holy scoundrels burn a few fanatics, the earth swallows up one and all.

As is clear from this, for Voltaire the Lisbon calamity was the last straw, not the first cause, in the shaping of his ideas on god and men. He had already been opposed, for a long time, to the ideas of Leibniz and Pope. He was in the process of reaching his own conclusions about man and nature. In the year following the one in which Pope's *Essay* was published, Voltaire wrote his *Trait de metaphysique*, where he concluded: "It is just as absurd to say of God in this conexion that God is just or unjust as to say God is blue or square." Voltaire also soon completed his *Metaphysique de Newton*, which again was anti-Leibnizian by implication. His intellectual activity reached a temporary culmination when Voltaire replied a critic: "Just show me… why so many men slit each other's throats in the best of all possible worlds, and I shall be greatly obliged to you."

Combined with this intellectual anguish was Voltaire's own experience with the religious and political governors of people. Whatever he wrote provoked protest and persecution. Even his eloquent hymn to liberty and friendship brought trouble. The persecutions began yet again. To cap it all followed the Lisbon disaster. In the intellectual and emotional situation in which Voltaire was going through at this time, its effect on his outlook on life was decisive. In fact, evidence suggests that from the time the disaster took place Voltaire's mind remained for ever haunted by the event and its cosmic and human implications. All this gets expressed in his famous poem, *Poeme sur le desastre de Lisbonne*, where Voltaire invites those who claim that "all is for the best" to consider Lisbon, ruined indiscriminately: "… was she more vicious than London, than Paris, plunged in pleasures? Lisbon is shattered, and Paris dances." Raising the pertinent question to the general belief of the time that whatever happens is both necessary and good, he

rhetorically asks, "What! would the entire universe have been worse without this hellish abyss, without swallowing up Lisbon? Are you sure that the eternal cause that makes all, knows all, created all, could not plunge us into this wretched world without placing flaming volcanoes beneath our feet? Would you limit thus the supreme power? Would you forbid it to show mercy?" he goes on to insist on the existence of evil. He examines the issue without reaching a solution.

Voltaire questions Pope who, piling up his epigrams, failed to notice that optimism necessarily entails fatalism, a doctrine hardly less flattering to the supreme being than to man. Voltaire may not be as good a poet as Pope, but he reasons better. He decidedly understands more clearly the implications of the philosophy he chooses to attack. Voltaire's poem gained greater appreciation from the subsequent generations in Europe than did the poem of Pope or the philosophy of Leibniz. This poem makes Voltaire yet again a legislator of mankind. The stir caused by his Lisbon poem was enormous. Comments and pamphlets poured out. Theological, philosophical, and scientific volumes followed, including that of the young Immanuel Kant. Reading this mountain of response one can see how the particular event struck so many imaginations by the impetus that Voltaire's poem provided. Writers like Rousseau responded only emotionally to the poem, without making any philosophic response to the poem's argument. Rousseau holds men responsible for their own misfortunes because the earthquake would not have killed so many had they not gathered together in a big city. As for Voltaire himself, the years that followed only increased his pessimism. Immediately after the catastrophe he expressed in anguish that men "do themselves more harm on their little mle-hill than does nature. More men are slaughtered in our wars than are swallowed up by earthquakes." As he grew old, his disgust with religion and politics and with humanity in general became more and more bitter. Every time he gave expression to this disgust, sad and sarcastic epithets and allusions studded his sentences. Sarcastic expressions such as "all for the best", "the best of all possible worlds," the world is "certainly ugly enough", the "earth is steeped in evil, moral and physical" became rather habitual with him. Obviously, the optimism was dead. He found himself at great odds with the spirit of the age. He could say in all bitterness, "happy the man who can look with a tranquil eye on all the great events in this best of all possible worlds."

To conclude, one can say that Voltaire ends up as a man greatly obsessed and tormented by the spectacle of a humanity that suffered and was resigned to suffering. As Theodore Besterman has rightly observed, "But if he was obsessed, he was also a genius, a creator: it was inevitable that this preoccupation should work upon every level of his consciousness, develop, form, crystallize, take on an independent life, and be born in the shape of a work of art: and so *Candide* was written." If his poem on the Lisbon earthquake opened his tirade against optimism,

his *Candide* closed it with a sentence of death. If the Lisbon poem had stirred thinking people to questioning the contemporary mood of optimism, *Candide* converted them permanently to Voltairian creed of scepticism with its powerful weapon of furious laughter. In the novel, he had substituted irony for argument. His greatest work left no room for any doubt about the author's conviction that belief in optimism was a mere straw to which humanity clung only to avoid drowning in the sea of misfortunes. The only reference one has to draw from Voltaire's writings on the subject of optimism is that, in his view, all is not for the best in the world; whatever is good does not make up for whatever is evil; the good will not increase, nor will evil decrease, on their own; it is for humanity to haul itself out of the slough of despondence; men must act; they must cultivate their garden.

BACKGROUND TO CANDIDE:

Voltaire's most famous (considered his greatest) work is a novel of ideas as well as an autobiographical fiction. The writer has distilled into this short novel, in a highly condensed form, his response to the eighteenth-century philosophical background and the entire history of theological debate behind it. He has also distilled simultaneously his personal history, including his experiments, his enmities, his learning, his desires, his anguish. It is therefore imperative to understand this intellectual background that prompted the creation of the book, for otherwise it is most likely to be misunderstood. In a way, Voltaire's novel can be compared to Eliot's *The Waste Land*, or Joyce's *Ulysses*, in which the work's every episode, even every line, is dependent on corresponding episode or line in earlier classics. As Eliot's poem demands a knowledge of western thought as well as eastern, so does Voltaire's a knowledge of the theological debate about man and god and the relation between the two. Besides, it demands a knowledge of Voltaire's own life, especially his running intellectual feud with his contemporaries all over Europe. This work is, therefore, as complex to comprehend as *The Waste Land* or *Ulysses*, even more. Let us, therefore, acquaint ourselves with the essential intellectual and biographical background to *Candide*.

There may not be an ultimate answer to the existence and benevolence of God, nor to the existence of evil in the world created by a benevolent God; but mankind has also found it equally difficult to set aside these questions. These questions were there in human consciousness much before the eighteenth century, and even before the birth of Christianity. The religious myths, the stories about god or gods, are meant to answer these very questions. Each story has tried to answer these questions in the most satisfactory manner possible. The idea is to make man accept his "going hence even as his coming hither" without raising any inconvenient questions. The Christian myth of the fall of Satan, and the linked fall

of the human race, is, too, a narrative framed to answer the same questions. But when we take recourse to reason that human mind is endowed with, even the answers provided by the mythical tales become questionable. How did god, omnipotent, omniscient, and good, shape man in such a way that he would fall – without Himself being responsible for the fall of his creation? If he had the making of all things, including Satan, and knew when He framed him that immense evil would result – how can He be absolved of the charge of deliberate malice towards His creatures? These questions have come up in every thoughtful Christian's mind ever since the birth of Christianity. These very questions constitute the core of the Book of Job, in which man challenges God's apparent injustice most directly and audaciously.

The conventional response to the problem of evil is to assert freedom of will in the human species created by God. The contention is that God made Satan as well as Adam, capable to stand as well as to fall. And if they fall, the fault is of the creatures, not of their Creator. But a belief in original sin requires a complementary belief, Christ's role as redeemer, atoning for their sins. A classic expression of this view is Milton's *Paradise Lost*. It is perfectly in consonance with the view expressed in Saint Augustine's *City of God*. In the later seventeenth and early eighteenth century – the neoclassical age – another doctrine came to be heard, called variously as "deism", "rational Christianity", or "natural religion". This doctrine had close links with "philosophical optimism" and "systematic idealism." Although differently expressed in each of these formulations, the new assumption which lay behind all of them consisted essentially of a tendency not to conform to the idea of the fall of man. In terms of theology, it resembled modern Unitarianism; in terms of its social application, it remained highly conservative. The new doctrine aimed at a secular, social ethic which could be defended "by reason", without taking recourse to any supernatural revelation. Thus, the myth would become secular and universal. The doctrine got easy sanction, without much resistance from the church. Perhaps the new mood in philosophy drew tacit support from the forces of new psychology and physics represented by John Locke and Isaac Newton. The way for optimism had also been cleared partly by the great war of sects that followed the Reformation. With fifty sects, all swearing by the Bible, all interpreting it differently, and all denouncing one another as heretical, a civilized man could be excused for doubting if any of them knew a safe way to salvation – and if none of them knew, why bother? Under such circumstances, the separation of ethics from its previous reliance on theology seems to have appeared a thoroughly prudent and conservative step.

Thus, we find in the eighteenth-century Europe increasing tendency to doubt man's fallen condition and to question the absolute need of supernatural revelation or inspired faith. In a familiar analogy, God is now a remote clock-maker; the

natural world is his masterpiece; and man best fulfils the divine purpose by accepting the role assigned to him. He should not act as judge of social forms, or seek individual salvation. Such a philosophy of social optimism and rational faith inevitably raised afresh the old subject of evil. If the universal order was divinely designed, with an overriding concern for the welfare of the society or universe, one had to be sure it was not disorderly. But everyday experience showed that there was disorder. There were wars, diseases, calamities, misery, and injustice. What to think of the designer then? It is this central question with which Voltaire's *Candide* is concerned. In fact, much of Voltaire's intellectual life remained exercised by this overwhelming question. Almost all the classic positions in the immoral debate over the origins of evil are represented in this short novel. For a proper understanding of the book, therefore, in terms of its counterpointed ideas, we need to know chronologically these various classic positions and their respective exponents. Here are those positions in the historical order:

1. *THE MACHINESS* were a sect of heretic Christians, of Near-Eastern origin, with deep pre-Christian roots. This sect flourished between third to fifth century A.D. They divided the universe into two, with one half governed by God, the other by the Devil. Thus, the problem of the origin of evil was solved, because evil had always been there just as God has been.

2. *SAINT AUGUATINE*, whose *City of God* was completed in 426 A.D., is viewed in Voltaire's book as the representative of orthodox Catholic Christianity. In his view, God's creation of the universe was entirely good, but owing to a spontaneous act of Satan's will evil entered in it. God can and will destroy Satan someday. Meanwhile, man with the aid of Christ and His church is to struggle in the dubious battle with the forces of evil or darkness, and to earn, as a result of his good or evil service, salvation or damnation, heaven or hell.

3. *BLAISE PASCAL*, whose *Pensees* were first published in 1670, eight years after his death, saw the presence of evil in the world as an evidence of man's flawed nature. Being faulty, limited, corrupt, man is unable to perceive God's justice. He must therefore believe in an afterlife, where justice will be done and the nature of God's justice on earth will be understood. Hence evil is a matter of man's flawed perception, and therefore his own creation.

4. *PIERRE BAYLE* in his *Dictionnare historique et critique* (1697) argued for religious toleration by showing disagreement among theologians. He shows how the question of the origin of evil is unable to receive consensus. So he endorsed the Manichees.

5. *GOTTFRIED WILHELM VON LEIBNIZ* published his *Theodicee* in 1710, describing the world as organized in a series of ascending unities of which the highest was God. This system, created by the most benevolent mind, must be the best of all possible systems. Within the system, all events are linked by a chain of cause and effect. What looks to our limited view like evil and injustice will be found to cause greater compensating goods, once the grand system is revealed. When Leibniz died in 1716, his disciple Christian Wolf (1679 – 1754) did much to popularize his master's ideas.

6. *ANTHONY ASHLEY COOPER, THIRD EARL OF SHAFTESBURY*, whose *Characteristics of Man, Manners, Opinions, and Societies* (1711), discounted all metaphysical and supernatural dogmas, but also dismissed the cold and selfish pursuit of interest inculcated by Hobbes and Locke. He elaborated a system of virtue founded on natural principles and dedicated to benevolence. Suspicious of religious enthusiasts, he invoked an earnest but somewhat vague optimism regarding the power of man to derive a "moral sense" from his natural instincts. He saw human nature as naturally good and naturally attuned to God. Therefore, for him the world is "governed, ordered, or regulated for the best by a designing principle or mind necessarily good and permanent."

7. *BERNARD MANDEVILLE* published in 1704 and 1715 a *Fable of the Bees* in rough, witty doggerel verse. In the second edition he added a prose commentary, attacking Shaftsbury's doctrine of the "Moral sense," arguing instead that man is inherently vicious and selfish, and that most virtues are simply well-disguised and publicly-approved vices.
8. *HENRY ST. JOHN VISCOUNT BOLINBROKE* was an English grandee and statesman who during the 1720's, after his return from exile in France, philosophized in the manner of Shaftsbury, somewhat toughened by reading Mandeville. He is best known for his influence on Pope's *Essay on Man*, much of which was written in consultation with him. Too scepticle to raise a system, he believed sensible men could reach all the truth they needed by studying natural religion without the help of the clergy. They would thus arrive at the religious view which all sensible men share (total scepticism) and which they are too sensible to admit.

9. *ALEXANDER POPE*, in his poem *Essay on Man* (1733-34), said the duty of man was to "submit" because "whatever is is right" and everything which seems like "partial evil" is really "universal good." In asking that things be differently arranged, man reveals himself a creature of madness, pride, and impiety. In his view, given man's necessary degrees of blindness and weakness, things in general are quite as good as they can be.

10. *JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU* addressed his "Letter on Providence" to Voltaire (August 18, 1756) in response to the latter's poem on the Lisbon earthquake. Rousseau argued that God was not to blame for natural disasters, or for the presence of evil in the world. Man has brought many misfortunes on himself by crowding into cities when he should have been living naturally and safely in the country. Providence, in his view, works, not for the benefit for any individual, but through general laws to which we must reverentially submit.

11. *THE MARQUIS DE SADE* appears too late in the history to influence Voltaire. Most of his work was published in the 1790's. But there is, in his thought, one clear terminus of the argument over evil. He accepts the two fundamental dogmas of his day, that evil exists in the world and that God is all powerful. But he draws the unwelcome conclusion, that God is malignant and brutish, the way to serve him is to imitate him by being as natural, as cruel, and as vicious as possible.

VOLTAIRE'S RESPONSE

To the debate on the origin of evil that we have briefly summed up here Voltaire responded actively, with great involvement. His very first reaction to the dogma, "well, everything is well," is: "I beg of you, gentlemen, explain for me this phrase, *all is well*, I don't understand it." He asks searching questions: "Does it mean, everything is arranged, everything is ordered, according to the laws of moving bodies? I understand, I agree." "Or do you mean by it that everyone is well off, that he has the means of living well, that nobody suffers? You know how false that is." "Is it your idea that the lamentable calamities which afflict the earth are good, in relation to God, and please him? I don't believe this horrible idea, nor do you."

Going into the source of this Christian dogma of believing that "all is well," Voltaire goes back to Plato. He shows how Plato designed to allow God the freedom of creating five worlds. Plato's reason for doing so was that there are only five regular bodies in geometry. It does not sound very reasonable or logical to Voltaire. He questions, "But why restrict divine power in this way? Why not allow him the sphere, which is even more regular, and even the cone, the pyramid with various faces, the cylinder, and so on?" According to Plato, God chooses the best of possible worlds. As Voltaire observes, "The concept has been embraced by various Christian philosophers, though it seems repugnant to the doctrine of original sin." He then takes on Leibniz who, in his *Theodicee*, endorses Plato. He points out various contradictions in the philosophic system of Leibniz, which accepts both the idea of the original sin as well as the idea of the best of the worlds. Voltaire had no patience with any such falsification of the facts of life. He was too much committed to fact and reason to accept any assertion contrary to his measures:

> What! To be driven out of a delightful garden where one could have lived for ever if one hadn't eaten an apple! What! To give birth in anguish to miserable and sinful children, who will suffer everything themselves and make everyone suffer! What! To experience every sickness, feel every grief, die in anguish, and then in recompense to be roasted for eternity! This fate is really the best thing possible? It's not too good for us; and how can it be good for God?

The passage shows Voltaire's shock and anger at such arguments as he finds in Plato and Leibniz. To say the least, he finds the whole system flimsy, which cannot stand the test of reason and reality. Hence his angry observation on Leibniz: "Leibniz soused there was nothing to be said in reply [to the questions raised in the above-cited passage]; and so he made big fat book in which he confused himself."

Voltaire is most disturbed by those who deny the existence of evil in this world. To him, this amounts to closing one's eyes to what is standing right before you, and standing in all its ugly forms. Of all lies, this he finds utterly unpalatable: "A denial that evil exists: it can be made in jest, by a Lucullus in good health, who is eating a fine dinner with his friends and his mistress in the hall of Apollo; but let him stick his head out of the window, he'll see miserable people; let him catch a fever, he'll be miserable himself." Expressing his disinclination to quote out of context, for it's a quickly job at best, for one leaves out what precedes and follows one's chosen passages and thus lies exposed to a thousand complaints; with these caustious remarks he cites Lactanius, father of church, who in Chapter XIII of his treatise *On the Wrath of God* makes Epicurus talk in this fashion:

> Either God wants to remove evil from the world and cannot; or he can and does not want to; or he cannot and does not want to, either one; or else, finally, he wants to and can. If he wants to and cannot, that is impotence, which is contrary to the nature of God; if he can and does not want to, that is malice, which is equally contrary to his nature; if he neither wants to nor can, that is malice and impotence at the same time; if he wants to and can (and this is the only one of the alternative that is consistent with all the attributes of God), then where does all the evil of the world come from?

Voltaire is very much one with Epicurus, having the same questions to raise whenever he finds anyone defending or explaining the presence of evil in the world. He finds the position of God indefensible on the subject of evil and is therefore unable to commit himself in clear terms to the religious faith of Christianity in any of its numerous hues. He dismisses the answer given by Lactantius. In Voltaire's view, to say "that God wishes the evil but that he has given us the wisdom to acquire good" is only to put up an absurd answer, "for it supposes that God could give wisdom only by producing evil; and thus, what a pleasant wisdom we have!"

Voltaire also ridicules the Basilides who, after the Platonists, pretended in the early phase of the church that God had allotted the making of our world to his latest angles and that they, not being very skilful, made things as we see them. In our author's view, this theological fable also "crumbles to dust before the terrible objection that it is not in the nature of an omnipotent, omniscient Deity to have a world built by architects who don't know their trade." Voltaire is equally unconvinced by the explanation embodied in the Greek story of Pandora. "The box in which all the evils are hidden, and at the bottom of which rests hope, is a charming allegory," says Voltaire, "by this Pandora was made by Vulcan only to be revenged on Prometheus, who had formed a man from clay." In his all-out challenge to world theologians, Voltaire finds that even the Indian attempt to answer for the presence of evil in the world has not been successful. He narrates the Indian fable which offers an explanation for the existence of evil on earth. It says that God, having created man, gave him a drug to keep him healthy for ever; the man loaded the drink on his donkey, the donkey got thirsty, the serpent told him of a spring and while he was drinking, the serpent took the drug for himself. Voltaire finds the Serians no better in their answer to the riddle of the evil. They imagined, he tells us, that when man and woman were created in the fourth heaven, they decided to eat a cake instead of the ambrosia which was the natural diet. The ambrosia they could exhale through their pores; but after eating the cake, they had to go to the toilet. Man and woman together asked an angle where the facilities were. They were directed to reach this tiny planet of earth. Hence, that's why ever since, our world has been what it is.

Thus covering quickly the ancient answers to the problem of evil, Voltaire addresses his immediate predecessors who tried to offer even more ingenious explanations to the problem. First, he takes up Lord Bolingbroke, whose genius he acknowledges, who "gave the celebrated Pope his idea for all is well." Considering Bolingbroke, Shaftsbury and Pope of the same view, Voltaire contends, "their *all is well* means nothing but that all is directed by unchangeable law. Who does not know that? You teach us nothing when you tell us, what every little child knows, that flies are born to be eaten by spiders, spiders by swallows, swallows by shrikes, shrikes by eagles, eagles to be killed by men, men to kill one another and to be eaten by worms and then by devils – at least a thousand of them for every one who meets another fate." Here, Voltaire's question is pertinent. He says that the kind of order that is pictured of this world, by these thinkers, is mechanical, for "it is all the consequence of unalterable physical principles." If men were insentient beings, he says, there would be nothing to say to this physics. But the question is, he asks, "are there not sensible evils, and if there are, where they come from." Citing Pope from his Fourth Epistl, *There are no evils; if there are private evils, they compose the universal good,* Voltaire observes, "This implies a remarkable definition of

private, including the stone, the gout, all the crimes, all the sufferings of mankind, death and damnation." Voltaire sees a good deal of illogicality in this view. He finds that most apologists of Christian theology put the fall of man as plaster on all these individual maladies we encounter in life. In his view, Shaftsbury and Bolingbroke did at least dare attack directly the original sin, Pope didn't even talk about it. The individual differences notwithstanding, they do agree to a common system which, in Voltaire's view, "undermines the very foundations of the Christian religion, and explains nothing at all."

What is disturbing to Voltaire is the acceptance of the system of "several theologians who cheerfully accept contradictions." He may grant to the "desperately sick [to] eat whatever they want." He can see through their pretension when they declare that the system is consoling, such as Pope's, that God

> Sees with equal eye, as God of all,
> A hero perish, or a sparrow fall;
> Atoms or systems into ruins hurled,
> And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

Against such consolation Voltaire only asks for the "miserable little animal" [Shastesbury's description of man] to be given the "right to explain humbly and to seek, as he exclaims, why these eternal laws are not made for the well-being of each individual." For Voltaire, an obvious conclusion from such a system as Bolingbroke and his associates have offered is that God is nothing but a "potent, malicious king, who never worries if his designs mean death for four or five hundred thousand of his subjects, and poverty and tears for the rest, as long as they gratify him." To his rational mind, this system is far from consoling; rather, it is "a doctrine of despair for those who embrace it." To Voltaire and all others like him, "the question of good and evil remains an insoluble chaos." For all those like him who seek in good faith for an answer, it remains a riddle that causes continuous anguish. It is a "joke only for those who debate over it, and are no better than slave labourers who play with their chains." He spares none of those that follow the man-made fiction of religious faith: "As for thoughtless people, they are like fish carried from a river to a tank; they don't suspect that they are there only to be eaten next Friday. Just so, we too know nothing at all, by our unaided powers, of the cause of our destiny."

Concluding his responses to the debate about evil, Voltaire proposes that we should "put, at the end of almost all these chapters of metaphysics, the two letters that Roman judges used when they couldn't understand a case: NL, *non liquet*, it's not clear." Thus, in uncertain words, Voltaire affirms his scepticism or agnosticism. He neither denies nor affirms God and his order. He only finds that all its explanations or apologies are unconvincing to a man of reason.

THE STORY OF CANDIDE

Candide remains the most popular of Voltaire's work. It is a masterful satire on the vices and follies of men. Everything which permeates and controls the lives of men is made the object of satire. Subjects, such as, romance, science, philosophy, religion, and government are ridiculed for failing to satisfy the searching demands of reason. As a general commentary on the affairs of men *Candide* remains as fresh as ever, never sounding dated. The story of the novel runs as under:

Candide is the name of the novel's central character, conventionally called the hero. He was born in Westphalia. He is the illegitimate son of the sister of Baron Thunder-ten-Tronckh. He is attached to a tutor named Dr Pangloss, who is a devout follower of Leibniz. Dr Pangloss had taught Candide metaphysico-theologo-cosmolonigology, assuring him that the world in which they are living is the best of all possible worlds. One day, the Baron's daughter, named Cunegonde, kisses Candide behind a screen. The love between the two could not be tolerated. The boy Candide is expelled from the baron's castle when found in innocent love making with the Baron's daughter. He is seized by two men, bound, and forced into military service for the king of Bulgaria.

Candide manages to escape from the army and reaches Holland, where he is succored by an intelligent and noble-hearted Anabaptist. Here Candide comes upon his old teacher, Dr Pangloss. He was now covered with scabs, his nose half eaten-away. He gives Candide the news that Cunegonde and all other members of Baron's family have been murdered by the invading Bulgarian army, although in the process he had to lose one of his eyes and one of his ears. Considering the gravity of the dangerous disease, this loss is not considered much. All along, Pangloss keeps insisting, despite all that has happened to him and to the family of Baron and to Candide, that this is the best of all possible worlds.

The good Anabaptist takes them both on a voyage to Lisbon. During the journey Anabaptist loses his life while trying to save the life of a brutal sailor on the sea. The ship by which they were traveling is wrecked and all on board drown except the brutal sailor, Candide and Pangloss. The boy Candide and his philosopher teacher, Pangloss, arrive in Lisbon just in time for a great earthquake which causes general ruin. After the natural calamity Pangloss tries to prove that all their misfortunes are actually blessings, for which the philosopher and his pupil are both handed over to the Inquisition as heretics. As a punishment, Pangloss is hanged, and Candide only whipped, being only a companion, that too a minor, of the philosopher. Other unfortunates at Lisbon are burned at the stake for their errors. Candide escapes such a severe punishment because an old woman comes to her rescue. She leads him to a secret house, where, to his tremendous surprise, he finds his Cunegonde. She was not killed after all. His philosopher teache did not

have correct information on his heart-beat. When the Bulgarian army invaded, Baron's family was murdered. Only this girl was taken away by a Bulgarian captain, who sold her to a Jew. The Jew brought her to Portugal, where her person is shared between Candide and the Grand Inquisitor. She was present at the *auto-da-fe* when Candide was whipped. It was her servent who has now brought Candide to her home. At this juncture the Jew enters the scene. seeing Cunegonde and Candide together, he flies into a jealous rage, attacks Candide, and in the encounter gets killed. Meanwhile, the Grand Inquisitor also arrives, and Candide kills him too.

Now, Candide, Cunegonde and the old woman escape to Cadiz, where Candide enlists in the army going to Paraguay. They all cross the ocean. Enroute, the old woman narrates her story, which proves that she, once a Princess, and the daughter of a Pope, has seen much wore misfortunes than those experienced by Candide and Cunegonde. At Buenos Aires the Governor has designs on Cunegonde. Since the constabulary arrives from Europe to arrest the murderer of Grand Inquisitor, Candide is forced to flee, leaving Cunegonde behind. He goes to Paraguay with his faithful negro valet, Cacambo, to fight for the Jesuits. There he finds that the Commandent is none other than his boyhood friend, Canegonde's brother, another of Baron's family alive. They are deeply moved at seeing each other until Candide announces his intention to marry Cunegonde. Outraged at the insult that a plebian like Candide should dare aspire so high as to marry a Baron's daughter, the Jesuit attacks Candide, who kills the Jesuit in self-defence. Now, Candide, our hero reflects sadly that for a peace-loving young man he had to kill an astonishing number of men. Cacambo helps him to escape in the garb of the dead Jesuit.

Now, Candide and Cacambo fall into the hands of savages, who are about to eat them until it is proved that Candide is not a Jesuit. They now visit the wonderful country of El Dorado, where the pebbles on the road are precious gems. There they are significantly entertained in a land where there exist no priests, monks, nor Churches or prisons, no court of justice – for none of these is needed. But no beauties of the land nor peace and comfort of the place can make Candide forget his Cunegonde. He greatly yearns for her, and departs from this land of felicity, laden with treasures. In Dutch Guiana he and Cacambo witness the misery of Negro slaves. Cacambo, it is decided, is to go off alone to Buenos Aires to rescue Cunegonde, while Candide makes for Venice, where they have planned to meet all again. But Candide is cheated of a good portion of his fortune by the treachery of a Dutch captain.

Finally, Candide sets for Europe again in the company of one Martin, an impoverished philosopher whose beliefs are exactly opposite to those of Pangloss. Martin is a complete pessimist. He is convinced that evil is the ruling principle in

the world. They land in France and go to Paris. Here they attend the *Comedie Francaise*, the famous theatre, and listen to the criticisms of the audience. Candide next vists a gambling house run by a Marchioness, who seduces him. The Abbe who is conducting Candide around Paris, annoyed that he hasn't been able to appropriate any of the young man's treasure, has him arrested on a trumped-up charge, and then gets him off for a large fee. Paris, for Candide, has turned out to be a city of monkeys who behave like tigers.

Now Candide and Martin coast by England, and then make for Venice by way of the Mediterranean. There Candide finds a girl, once a servent of the Baron's, who is now living as a prostitute. Her current lover is a friar who loathes his calling into which he was forced by his parents. They visit a Venetian senator who despises all art and literature, although he has a large collection of both. Milton is his special hate. Candide next dines at an inn with six deposed monarchs. Cacambo at last turns up with the information that Cunegonde, no longer beautiful, is in Constantinople. They set out at once for this ancient city of Byzantine now called Constantinople. On the banks of the Propontis they see two galley-slaves who turn out to be Pangloss and Cunegonde's brother, both still alive as if by miracle. Both explain how their lives were saved by chance. Candide ransoms them. They now trace Cunegonde and the old woman, and ransom them too. Cunegonde is now ugly and wrinkled, no longer the beauty she once was when Candide fell in love with her. However, Candide is still ready to marry her because of his old promise. But her brother, the Baron's son, still objects to the proposal on the grounds of rank. They therefore arrange secretly to send the Baron's son back to the Jesuits in Rome. That accomplished, Candide has nothing left of his money now except just enough to buy a little farm.

Cunegonde grows uglier and more unbearable everyday. One day they meet an old farmer who is living in great contentment with his family. The secret of his peace seems to be that he works hard and never troubles his head over the world's problems or metaphysical questions. Thus, it is in work that his family has found salvation. Candide, now joined by the friar and the former prostitute, as also by Cunegonde, Cacambo, Martin and the old woman, all take the cue from the farmer. They start applying themselves to the tasks proposed by their little farm. Despite individual shortcomings, each discovers redeeming traits by persevering in his or her chosen work. Thus in cultivating their farm they find happiness at last.

MORAL OF THE STORY

An obvious moral of Voltaire's novel, *Candide*, is that the human wishes are a vain pursuit, which involve mankind into all sorts of follies and vices and crimes, and that the only salvation is in simple pastoral life of peace and contentment. Here, one can see the familiar eighteenth-century theme of the "Vanity of Human

Wishes", as well as the familiar remedy of rural life as model of peace. Voltaire may have had serious differences with Pope on the question of metaphysic or theology, his model of peace is not different from the one Pope offers in his "Ode on Solitude":

Happy the man, whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.
Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire,
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.
Blest, who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day,
Sound sleep by might; study and ease,
Together mixt; sweet recreation:
And innocence, which most does please
With meditation.
Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,
Thus unlamented let me die,
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie.

IMPORTANCE OF VOLTAIRE

A few years before his death a statue of Voltaire was erected in Paris, the city of his great triumphs as also of his greatest frustrations. Moved by a great desire to see Paris again, his native city, the old Voltaire left Ferney in 1778 and came to the metropolis. Louis XVI was on the throne of France at the time. Many reforms had been instituted, certain liberal forces had come to power. Voltaire's play *Irene*, a tragedy, was being performed at the *Theatre Francaise*. The moment seemed propitious for a visit. And the visit proved an endless triumph. Every distinguished person in town, Frenchman or foreigner, hurried to see the patriarch at his lodgings. At the Academy he was elected Director, and outlined a plan for a new Dictionary, for which he undertook to write the letter A. Then, he attended the theatre to see his own play performed. An actor entered his box and placed a wreath of laurel on his head. During the intermission Voltaire's bust was placed upon the stage and crowned by all the actors in turn, while the audience cheered. The joy of this triumphant visit to Paris was too much for the feeble old man, and

within a few weeks he died – it is said from an excess of emotion. In 1791, the Revolutionists transferred his ashes to the Pantheon.

Voltaire's shortcomings are apparent. Though quick and sharp, his mind was not very profound. As an historian, he was not careful of his facts. As a philosopher, he was rather impatient to be logical. As a theologian, he was sceptical of all religions. He had, in fact, a downright prejudice against them all. In political speculation he was limited. Perhaps it would have surprised him, even shocked him, to learn that his writings were to be regarded by the French Revolutionists in 1789 as having done much to prepare the way for the revolution. He may not have intended a revolution, but his ideas did inspire one of the greatest revolutions in the European history. He was not a political thinker like Rousseau to offer a consistent and coherent philosophy. For him, political reform, not political revolution, was needed in France. Also, for him, reform only meant largely the extension of private rights.

In the field of literature, Voltaire was decidedly the leading figure in the entire Europe. No other writer in the eighteenth century was able to show such a versatility as he did. He was an untiring playwright, novelist, short-story writer, literary critic, historian, and populariser of science and philosophy. In all of these departments, he achieved the highest rank of his day. The incomparable ease and wit of his style has made him readable in philosophy and history, science and metaphysics when profounder writers have been ignored. His instant humour removes the sting of his bitterness as a satirist. His stories still interest the readers because of these same qualities and the pace of events. Voltaire's prose exhibits the critical spirit so native to France in all its attractiveness and racy intelligence. What has kept Voltaire alive, above all, is the spirit of his writings. It is this spirit which has left the deepest mark on the generations of readers. "Crush the infamous thing" was his watchword. And the most infamous things for him were superstition and intolerance, both fostered more by religions than by any other social institution. The more than seventy volumes of his writings were aimed at, above all, freedom of thought. It was a life-long war he fought, and fought almost single-handedly. And it was this very spirit of freedom which forsook the foundations of the old dilapidated religio-political structure, and led to the famous French Revolution. His fundamental faith has been popularly summarized in his attributed remark to his fellow-philosopher Helvetius: "I entirely disapprove of your opinions and will fight to the death for your right to express them." It may be perhaps too much to agree with Egon Friedell's tribute to Voltaire: "If our world today consists of no more than two-fifth villains and three eighth idiots, we have largely Voltaire to thank for it." But it is decidedly not too much to say that no one contributed more generously than Voltaire toward the emancipation of the human spirit from the barriers of authority and ignorance. For a generation his figure dominated Europe,

and his restless mind kept Europe alert to every issue of independence and bigotry that crossed his horizon.

IS CANDIDE SERIOUS OR COMIC?

In literary works which tend to be deliberately unconventional it is at times perplexing to be certain of the mode intended by the author. One such classic case has been of Joyces's *Ulyssis* which for a long time was considered by even the top-ranking critics as a serious book. It was only after the author himself revealed his intention and explained its mock-heroic mode that the critics were able to appreciate its comedy. Another case of a similar sort has been that of Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. The major critics like Philip Young and Carlos Baker misunderstood the novel's tone, took it seriously, and pronounced that it was the prose counterpart of Eliot's *The Wasteland*, which it is not. *Candide* has also been subjected to antithetical interpretations, viewed by some a serious book, by others a comic book. Quite often, the problem arises when we subject every literary work to the rigid classification of genres as drawn up by Aristotle and Horace. All literary works would not, cannot, subscribe to the norms of different genres laid down by the classicists. Some literary works are composed in deliberate defiance of the classical theory of genres. Voltaire's *Candide,* too, is such a work. Therefore, we must put aside the classical eyeglasses, and look at the work without those eyelashes. We know how Voltaire defied creeds and conventions because they become dogmas and enslave mankind. He always pleaded for the freedom of the writer as well as of the man in general. Let us, therefore, consider the case of *Candide* in terms of its own tone and tenor, not in those prescribed by the classical authority.

The *Journal Encyclopedique*, as late as 1959, that is after almost two hundred years of its publication, reviewed *Candide* in highly ambiguous terms, which has been characteristic of most critical pieces of the work down to the present day. For its being typical, the review article certainly merits our immediate attention. A significant paragraph of the article reads as under:

> How to pass judgment on this novel? Those who have been amused by it will be furious at a serious criticism, those who have read it with critical eye will consider our levity a crime. The partisans of Leibniz, far from considering it a refutation of optimism, will consider it a joke from one end to the other, a joke which may be good for a laugh but proves nothing; the opponents of Leibniz will maintain that the refutation is complete, because Leibniz's system, being nothing but a fable, can only be attacked effectively by another fable. Those who seek in fiction only a portrayal of the manners and customs of the age will find its touches too licentious and too monotonous. In short, it is a freak of wit which, in order to please a wide

> public, needs a bit of decency and some more circumspection. We wish the author had spoken more respectfully concerning religions and the clergy, and that he had not made use of the miserable story of Paraguay, which as it appears here contributes nothing new or amusing …

Thus, the author of this critical piece seems to assume that if the *conte* were intended to refute Leibniz, its success seems doubtful. And even if it were an effective refutation, it did not qualify to be a work of art because it is full of indecencies and exaggeration. In general, the critical review gives the impression that *Candide* can neither be taken seriously nor dismissed lightly. Decidedly, it is an equivocal or ambiguous judgment.

One explanation of the novel's ambiguity has come forth from I.O. Wade. In his view, "Voltaire found present in his period this same peculiar ambiguity noted by the *Journal Encyclopedique* in its review. At the time he was writing the *conte*, he commented again and again that Paris 'which signs and dances' had abandoned its frivolous air for the serious air of the English …. His attitude towards this situation is not the important thing, however, the author's attitude never is, in a work of art. What is really significant is that the *conte* has absorbed the ambiguity of its time and of its author. *Candide* is the product of those "monkeys performing monkey-business", but also of the "bears debating and prattling about serious things". And it is difficult to know which is the real, authentic *Candide*". Another critical review, in the *Correspondence Litteraitre*, was still less favourable than the one in the *Journal*. Renouncing any attempt to treat the work seriously, Grimm insisted that the only way to handle Voltaire's novel was to take it lightly. He considered the second half of the novel superior to the first half, condemned the chapter on Paris, denied the work every serious literary and philosophic quality. However, he did find the novel's gaiety praiseworthy:

> Gaiety is one of the rarest qualities to be found among wits. It is a long time since we read anything joyous in literature; M. de Voltaire has just delighted … us with a little novel called *Candide*, *or Optimism*, translated from the German of Dr Ralph. There is no need to judge this performance by high standards; it would never stand up to serious criticism. There is in *Candide* neither arrangement nor plan nor wisdom nor any of those happy strokes which one sometimes finds in English novels of the same sort; instead, you will find it in plenty of things in bad taste, low touches, smut and filth deprived of that discreet veil which renders them supportable; but gaiety and facility never abandon M. de Voltaire, who banishes from his more frivolous as from his most carefully worked writings that air of pretension which spoils everything. The fine touches and gay sallies which he gives off at every moment makes the reading of *Candide* a very amusing experience.

Thus, Grimm finds the novel what Voltaire often called it, a "jest".

But there are other critics, most notably Mme.de Stael, who take a position very opposite of Grimm's. She willingly acknowledges that the book abounds in laughter, but considers it in no way a "plaisanterie" as its laughter contains something inhumanly diabolical. She concedes that *Candide* was basically directed against Leibniz, but emphasizes that it was aimed against the basic assumptions that preoccupy mankind, especially philosophical propositions which elevate the spirit of man. Nothing could be more serious:

> Voltaire had so clear a sense of the influence which metaphysical systems exert on the direction of our thinking, that he composed *Candide* to combat Leibniz. He took a curious attitude of hostility toward final causes, optimism, free will, and in short against man; and he created *Candide*, that work of diabolic gaiety. For it seems to have been written by a creature of a nature wholly different from our own, indifferent to our lot, rejoicing in our sufferings, and laughing like a demon or an ape at the misery of this human race with which he has nothing in common.

This sort of criticism, as well as the preceding, are highly "conventional" in that they only express beliefs which are conventional, and express them in a language which again is conventional. Both ways, there is a clear tendency to evade the stark reality of life, which, in Voltaire, is used as a bedrock for exposing the falsities of both the conventional beliefs and attitudes as well as conventional vocabulary and expression.

Still another critical opinion comes from Linguet, who notes the dual character of Voltaire's novel; that is the glee with which Voltaire destroys the philosophy of optimism by graphically describing the tragic miseries of humanity. In the opinion of Linguet,

> *Candide* offers us the saddest of themes disguised under the merriest of jokes, the joking being of that philosophic variety which is peculiar to M.de Voltaire, and which, I repeat, seems like the equipment of an excellent comedian. He makes the *all's well* system, upheld by so many philosophers, look completely ridiculous, and cracks a thousand jests even as he holds before our eyes every instant of the miseries of society and portrays them with a very energetic pencil.

Without any prejudice one can fairly assert that these four critical opinions on *Candide*, all of which are fundamentally based on the ambiguous assumptions, are widely divergent and represent the cardinal points of all the *Candide* criticism. The obvious fact about Voltaire's novel is that the double quality of gaiety and seriousness is its principal characteristic feature. It is apparent at every turn throughput the conte. But the deep ambiguity that lies behind this duality is not simple as the duality itself. As Wade has observed, "when the reader is ready to

revolt in horror, a sudden reflection, a quick turn in events, an unexpected quip, or the mere insertion of a remark brings him back to normal. When he is inclined to levity, an incident, an observation, or an injustice brings him back to consider the deadly earnest attack which is being made on all aspects of life."

On the face of it, *Candide* may look confusion worse confounded. Actually, it is only the confusion of a universe which is clearly and distinctly controlled. Whatever happens in the novel may look terribly and devastatingly irrational. But once the event has been sifted through the writer's imagination, it gets ordered by the keenest kind of criticism into a created form which is not different from the form of life itself. *Candide* embraces, as has been acknowledged by several sensitive critics, everything that had occurred in its age, the eighteenth century. It is astounding in its comprehensiveness, and quite as remarkable in other aspects. It is for this very reason – its comprehensiveness – that every judgment of *Candide* is invariably partial, one-sided, vague, even contradictory. It is, in fact, Voltaire's view of man and of life that poses a problem when we come to judge his characters or the novel's world. For his view being based on the essentiality of contradiction both in the nature of man as well as life, the partial or one-sided judgment fails to comprehend the radically different representation of reality. In Voltaire's view, man is neither optimist nor pessimist, rebellious nor submissive, free nor enslaved, real nor unreal. He must make a reality of these necessary contradictions. In the terminology of Derrida, the trouble with these critical judgment is their thinking through binaries – one is optimist or pessimist, either rebellious or submissive. Well, in real life one can be both as well as neither. There are contradictions in man as well as life. Neither is shaped after an abstract idea.

There have been sweeping judgments on the novel and most dismissive comments, characterizing it as "full of filth", "most impious and pernicious," "obscene and abominable", etc, etc. But to understand that Voltaire's novel is at the same time a revolt and a submission, an attack and a defence, a joy and a suffering, a destruction and a creation requires more than ordinary insight, patience, and serenity. There is, indeed, the temptation to discuss it as only one thing, as too simple, too superficial. What is actually troublesome in *Candide* is not its simplicity, but its duplicity. To quote Wade once again, "*Candide* is always deceptively two. Its unremitting ambiguity leads inevitably to a puzzling clandestinity, and the reader, beset with difficulties in forming a well-considered opinion, settles for trite commonplaces. The work actually encourages him in this. Let us take as an example the oft-repeated remark that Voltaire attacked Leibniz. Though true, the statement adds nothing to the comprehension of *Candide's* reality. However, as has now been recognized by critics, Voltaire satirized, not Leibniz, but Leibnizean terminology. In fact, the truth of the matter is that Voltaire, like his age, needed to integrate Descartes, Pascal, Leibniz, Spinoza, Locke, and Newton

so that a philosophy of enlightenment could be created. What we can say safely in the context of *Candide* is that Voltaire definitely aimed his attack, not against Leibniz or Pope, but against a system of philosophy to which Leibniz, Pope, and many others had contributed, which came to be called optimism. Since the writer himself entitled his work *Candide or Optimism*, it is not easy to deny that he directed his satire at this way of looking at life."

At the same time, it has to be admitted that Voltaire's attitude towards optimism is difficult to trace because of the ambiguity of his position. He was congenitally opposed to any attitude which despairingly asserted that "*tout est* mal," chiefly because such a standpoint also limited human effort. What seems most convincing about *Candide* is its balancing of good and evil. There is in the novel a compensatory quality. In fact, it is common to all his works, and, in fact, common to the eighteenth century in general. The compensatory quality is that good is counterbalanced by evil. In its inner substance, therefore, *Candide* is not wholly optimistic, or pessimistic, or sceptical, or cynical. It is all of these things at the same time. Another thing we must also remember about *Candide* is that though it attacks, and attacks many things, it does not ultimately destroy them. The reason for this is not far to see: life is full of miseries, but it is also not without pleasures. It may be true that few people would like to relive life on earth, but it is also true that few would voluntarily renounce it. And Voltaire was certainly not one to abdicate.

Candide as a Parable

As H.N. Brailsford has rightly observed, *Candide* "ranks in its own way with *Don Quixote* and *Faust*," and the reason is that, like the other two, it is a parable of an aspect of the human plight. It is a pilgrim's progress. The only difference is that Voltaire's pilgrim can find no meaning in life nor establish any relationship with the transcendent. We can see that *Candide* has a clear literary ancestory. And so has its hero. He is adapted from the hero of the picaresque novel of adventure, who could so conveniently represent the post-Renaissance displaced individual engaged on some purposeful journey. More immediately, Candide can be said to be Voltaire himself, who was a "social outcast" like the picaresque hero, had been beaten and snubbed, trembled like a philosopher, and had been frequently on the move. Also, like Don Quixote or Christian or Faust, he is a symbol of an essential part of human nature which never loses its original innocence and always goes on expecting that good will be done to it rather than evil. And again, Candide is the outsider, a fatherless bastard whose cosy sense of belonging to a coherent society and a comprehensible universe is a childhood illusion. This illusion is soon to be shattered at the onset of puberty.

Cunegonde is at first Eve who tempts Candide. As a result, he is driven out of the early paradise by the irate master of his little world. Then Cunegonde becomes the symbol of lost happiness (or paradise lost) which will be recovered in the future (paradise regained). But gradually it is made clear to the reader that the world has no pattern, that all human communities are in a state of flux and strife, and that the best Candide can do is to reconstitute the battered Westphalian society of his childhood as a refugee colony on the borders of barbarism. To strengthen the novel's claim to a parable, Voltaire adds to the story of Candide more parallel stories, giving his journey a universal character. Thus, the novel's structure also becomes much more complex and much better balanced than that of the other *contes*. The novel does not confine itself to just one story. He interweaves several different stories, which are linked and knotted and contrasted in an almost musical way. As Dorothy McGhee has pointed out, *Candide* depicts a series of oscillations between Candide's "mental path of optimism" and the "level of reality" to which he is always being brought back by disaster. Actually, there is much more to it than this. Besides the up-and-down movement, there are complexities in the linear movement. The stories of Candide, Cunegonde and La Vieille [the old women] follow each other like three variations on the same theme. Of course, each of these stories is slightly more preposterous than the previous one and with an increasing urbanity of tone as the events become more shocking.

The Pope's daughter, whose exquisite breeding has remained unaffected by the excision of a buttock, gives her account while the scene of action is shifting from Europe to America. In the new world, the figure is repeated once again with a final flourish in the Jesuit story, which leads into the El Dorado episode. It acts as an interlude of calm. It comes in chapter XVII, almost exactly in the middle of the novel. Candide is now as far away as he ever will be from Europe and from the realities of ordinary life. Also since the beatific vision can only be a fleeting experience, he begins on his long return journey, picking up the threads in the reverse order. The second half of *Candide* is, however, different from the first in two important ways. Now, Candide is no longer an underdog; he has acquired money and he sees the world from a new angle, he has also lost his initial freshness, his innocence. Now, Martin has replaced Pangloss as the companion of Candide. The accumulated experience of horror has added a permanent sob to the gaiety of the music. In a small measure, the hero has mastered life. Now the terrible accidents do not happen so often to him. But it is a hollow achievement since it leaves him freer to meditate over the sufferings of others. Artistically, the second half of the book may sound weaker, for the very reason that the hero has become only a spectator. But it is psychologically true in the sense that adulthood involves awareness of general evil.

There are also other aspects of the musical dance of characters, which make the parable's pattern all the more refined. Each gets killed once or twice but bobs up again with welcome inconsequentiality. The novelist shows the strength of man's unconquerable soul by making Pangloss and the Baron step out of the galley and begin at once behaving with characteristic foolishness, as if they had never been hanged, stabbed or beaten. He also balances the horror of evil by never leaving the hero in solitude for very long. *Candide* is always in a group of two or more, and he is always shown assuming solidarity until it is proved illusory. A small group of people, like the hero himself, is shown to be decent and well-meaning. Of course, the larger number of people are selfish and stupid. However, the implication is that all, good as well as bad, are involved in evil in more or less the same way. In this respect, *Candide* is both fiercely critical of human nature and curiously, tolerant. The Grand Inquisitor, the brutal sailor, and the *levanti patron* are carried along on the same inevitable melody as Maitre Jacques or Martin.

The novel's parallel with music can be carried further. *Candide* is written in such a way that the reader is made to perform it mentally at a certain speed. Voltaire has written in the familiar style of the eighteenth century, which is marked by *allegro vivace* (quick and lively). Its essential features are an overall rhythm, a euphemistically noble vocabulary and an ability always to imply more than is actually stated. But Voltaire goes beyond the familiar style of his age and uses repetition and recapitulation very effectively to produce a constant impression of the welter of chance events. It is remarkable that in such a short work as *Candide* Voltaire should be able to create a vision of the teeming multifariousness of incomprehensible necessity. His elliptical expressions are more frequent than those to be found in the prose of his contemporaries. Through these expressions he jerks the reader again and again into awareness of a metaphysical perspective behind his apparently innocent recital of events. Each important character is given his or her *motif* which sounds at appropriate intervals. For example, Candide's simplicity, Pangloss's silliness, Cunegonde's sensibility and Cacambo's good sense. As Weightman has remarked, "the mixture of rapidity, irony, allusion, ellipsis, merciless satire of human nature and affectionate understanding of the human plight produces an unmistakable, singing, heartrending lilt, of which only Voltaire is capable in prose."

It is said to be one of the mysteries of literary composition that while Voltaire's poem on Lisbon earthquake is so flat and unpoetical, his *Candide* in prose is so rich and deeply moving. The reason that is held responsible for the latter's richness is that there is in this work a philosophical ambiguity in addition to the contrast between vitality and awareness of evil. To quote Weightman again, "*Candide* throbs from end to end with a paradoxical quality which might be described as a despairing hope or a relentless charity, and which comes from

seeing the worst steadily, without either capitulating to it or sentimentalizing its impact. Although, as Delattre says, "no great writer more often wrote below his best than Voltaire did, in this short tale he managed to hold fundamental opposites in suspense and so produced, from the heart of a century that wished to deny evil, an allegorical prose poem about evil, which is still perfectly apt, exactly two hundred years later." Thus, this prose poem, through its subtlety of style and structure, converts all characters and incidents into representative ones. The entire journey of the hero, along with other parallel and subsidiary journeys, becomes representative of every man's journey through life, from innocence to experience, from ignorance to awareness, from pleasure to pain, from hope to despair, etc. Like Hemingway's *The old Man and the Sea*, a still shorter work, *Candide* becomes a parable of life. Both are prose poems, short but sweet, stories of loss, of encountering evil, and yet stories of gain of awareness, of keeping spirit alive even through the losing battle of life.

THEME OF CANDIDE

Someone significantly remarked, "Pascal tormented Voltaire, as Montaigue had tormented Pascal." At first glance, the epigram seems to bristle with problems. While Pascal was born thirty-one years after the death of Montaigue, Voltaire was born thirty-two years after the death of Pascal. How and why did these Frenchmen torment one another from beyond the grave? One has to understand the epigram in terms of mental or philosophical torture. For to a remarkable degree, all the three were preoccupied with a single problem, that is, the relation between faith and reason, which is in effect the question of original sin. This problem remained a preoccupation of philosophers in the Christian world right from the advent of Renaissance, if not before. This had been the controversy between Erasmus and Luther, between Calvinists and Armenians, between Jansenists and Jesuits. Voltaire followed Montaigue and Pascal, in remaining preoccupied with the perennial theme. More than in any other work of Voltaire, *Candide* is concerned deeply with the problem of faith and reason. But before we see how Voltaire handles it in his famous novel, we need to know the background to which he is responding in his work. We did trace the essentials of this history earlier. But here we need to focus a little more, even at the risk of some repetition, on certain aspects of the problem.

As the problem appears in the intellectual history of France, we may go back to the seventeenth century that preceded Voltaire's own age. With an exceptional vigour and with the greatest clarity of presentation the problem makes its first appearance in that century in Pascal's thoughts (*Pensees*). Pascal's contention is that reason is powerless and incapable of certainty by its own efforts, and that it can arrive at the truth only by means of an unconditional surrender to faith.

Pursuing his philosophy of "common sense" Voltaire concedes very little to Pascal's method of hypothetical solutions. The riddle of theodicy remains alive for Voltaire also, since he looks upon the existence of God as a strictly demonstrable truth. The proposition: "I exist; therefore a necessary and eternal being exists," has not lost its force for Voltaire. But if this riddle of theodicy remains unresolved, then how can anyone escape Pascal's conclusion that the coils of this knot lead us back to the "abyss" of faith? The philosophic solution of optimism to the riddle, as offered by Leibniz and Shaftsbury, was always rejected by Voltaire. In fact, he did not consider optimism as a philosophical doctrine. For him it was something on a par with mythical phantasies and romances. In his view, those who maintain that all is well with the world are mere charltans. His argument is that man must accept the existence of evil. He should not add to the horrors of life the absurd bigotry of denying the horrors of the evil. Since on the problem of the origin of evil Voltaire deprived himself of all the weapons against scepticism, henceforth he finds himself caught up in the whirlpool of scepticism, a sort of no-exit room. He tries to embrace various solutions, but he rejects them all.

Schopenhauer often made reference to Voltaire's *Candide*. He always used it as his most powerful weapon against optimism. But in the philosophic sense, Voltaire was neither a pessimist nor an optimist. His position on the problem of evil cannot be considered the upshot of a sound doctrine. It does not pretend to be more than a mere expression of the transient mood in which he contemplates man and the world. Of course, this mood is rich enough to be capable of all nuances. And Voltaire loves to indulge in the play of different nuances. In his youth Voltaire knew no pessimistic moments. At that time he advocated a purely hedonistic philosophy whose justification consisted in the maximum enjoyment of all the pleasures of life. To pursue any other wisdom seemed to him as different as it was useless: "True wisdom lies in knowing how to flee sadness in the arms of pleasure." Later on, however, as a result of the earthquake in Lisbon, Voltaire expressly retracted his glorification of pleasure. The axiom "All is well" was absolutely rejected as a doctrine. In his view, during this period, it is only a self deception to close our eyes to the evils which everywhere confront us. All that can be done is to turn our eyes to the future hoping it will bring the solution of the riddle which now looks insoluble: "*Some day all will be well*, is our hope; *all is well today*, is illusion." Here, Voltaire seems to accept a compromise both in the theoretical and in the ethical sphere. Moral evil, too, is undeniable but its justification consists in the fact that it is invisible to human nature as it is. For if it was not for our weakness, life would have been condemned to stagnation. After all, our strongest impulses arise from our appetites and passions. If ethically considered, these impulses arise from our shortcomings.

In *Candide*, too, in which Voltaire pours out all his contempt for optimism, he does not deviate from his basic attitude: "if all is not well, all is tolerable." As he puts it, "Would you destroy this pretty statue because it is not composed entirely of gold or diamonds?" His position in this novel, too, is quite clear: We cannot eradicate evil and therefore we cannot avoid evil. Therefore, we should let the physical and moral worlds take their course and so adjust ourselves that we can keep up a constant struggle against these worlds; because from this very struggle arises that happiness of which man alone is capable. The novel, no doubt, deals with the theme of reason and faith. But the metaphysical problem is handled through a seemingly funny story, which is turned into a fable to embody the moral theme. To serve his special purpose (of dealing with metaphysical or theological problem through the medium of fiction) Voltaire devised a new form which has come to be called *Conte*. As a literary term it needs to be understood, for otherwise *Candide* remains inexplicable as a fictional narrative. Hence, first the term *Conte*.

A *Conte*, as a formal term, is an account of an anecdote or adventure, marvelous or otherwise. It is narrated for the purpose of amusement. A *Conte* can be what in English is called a shorty story, but it can also be a very short parable, a fable, or a novelette. *Candide* is a *Conte* as it is designed to be a parable or fable, and is as short as a novelette. As they grow longer, more substantial in their social renderings, and more serious in their moral tonality, *Contes* tend to be called *nouvelles*, as *nouvelles*, by heightening these qualities still further, turn into *romans*. *Contes* are the lightest, slightest, and least pretentious of prose narratives. At the beginning of his career, when he was committed to the "noble" genres of epic and tragedy, Voltaire himself despised these trivialities of fiction. But in the course of his philosophic argument he always took recourse to illustrative anecdotes and sketched dramatic vignettes. While living at Cirey in the deep country with Madame du Chatlet (1734-45), he often entertained the household and their visitors with comic stories and one-man sketches. Thus, gradually, he came to realise that serious thoughts could be mixed with the funny business. And so was born the special Voltairean form of the *Conte* – which, in familiar words, floats like a butterfly and stings like a bee.

That *Candide* is an attack on "optimism", as it prevailed in the eighteenth century, is a widely accepted critical opinion. But whether it also seriously explores the antagonism of faith and reason has been a debatable issue all along. It is well known, however, that Voltaire was greatly exercised by the problem of evil and the existence of God. How could God have willed evil since Voltaire, like any decent person, fount it intolerable? Yet evil existed, and God must be good. But how could a good God … etc. It seems evidenced from his biography that he composed *Candide* at a time when his awareness of evil was at its most violent and his vitality at its strongest. The novel or *Conte* combines, therefore, the horror of

evil and the jest for life. While the former is rooted in the consciousness, the latter springs from instinct. The two are not only equally matched, but the contrast between them informs every character and every incident, every conversation and every episode, imparting the work a unique vibration of tragicomedy. The moral in the fable of *Candide* seems to be that there is no rational (to be provided by reason) solution to the problem of evil, and that even when we think we have no faith (in God or goodness) we go on living and do not wish to lose life.

If we go into the moral behind the fable, it becomes clear that *Candide* is a transposition of its author's inner debate. We begin to see then that his rapid jokes are valid against the more elaborate explanations of evil. They are genuine caricatures. At the same, we need not be sentimental about the ending of the novel. It does not necessarily mean what Morize misconstrues, when he spells out the book's message as

> The world is in shambles, blood flows, Jesuits and Molinists rage, innocents are slaughtered and dupes exploited, but there are in the world delicious asylums, where life remains possible, joyous, and sweet: let us cultivate our garden.

This is too rosy a conclusion to fit into the tone and tenor of Voltaire's work. It suggests an ability to shut out the spectacle of the world which Voltaire never possessed. It does not really correspond to the tone of dogged persistence in the final chapter of *Candide*. There seems no evidence in the novel, and very little in Voltaire's life, that he had such a strong belief in the value of activity. He did, of course, believe in man's need for activity and he himself showed an urge to be active. But these can always be independent of any conviction of value. It seems more plausible to say that his feverish busyness was perhaps the only relief he could find for his acute awareness of evil. No doubt, Voltaire borrowed the image of the garden from Epicurus. But he does not display any trace of Epicurean serenity or moderation.

On the contrary, there seems ample-evidence of the dark side of Voltaire's mind or thought coming out so clearly in *Candide*. As Andre' Delattre has observed, "It is only when, in *Candide*, he accepts certain perspectives of Pascal's it is only when he ceases to strain against a dark and healthy pessimism, and ceases to hold open the empty sack of his optimism, that he finally creates, after his sixtieth year, his real masterpiece." This seems to be a more convincing pointer to the quality of *Candide*. The novel is not a straight attack on religious faith and a plea for reason. No doubt, it is an attack on certain beliefs and attitudes, on a certain way of life, on a certain philosophy about man and God and their relationship. But, at the same time, it cannot be said that it is utterly devoid of all forms of faith. Nor can we say with certainty that it is an advocacy for reason, and reason alone. *Candide* is decidedly a work in which an unappeasable sense of the

mystery and horror of life is accompanied, at every step, by an instinctive animal resilience. Thus, negative and positive are juxtaposed with no satisfactory ratiocinative bridge between them. Voltaire is not without a faith here. He does have one. But it is not a political faith, nor an easily definable religious faith. It is the kind of faith that keeps the severed fractions of a worm still wriggling, or produces laughter at a funeral. In this sense, Voltaire's humanism is a very basic and simple characteristic, exceptional only in that it has at its service an extraordinary intelligence and wit.

We can say, in a way *Candide* is not an intellectual work. What we have instead is an intellectual bewilderment acting as the driving force of the work. It is felt, not as a philosophy or system, but as a strong emotion. The chronological irregularity in the novel's composition can be viewed as an evidence of its having sprung from a level well below the novelist's ever active, normal consciousness. One can surmise that in this novel a deeper self of the author found an outlet, which does not get expressed everyday. Among Voltaire's *Contes* it is the only one which shows an overall pattern, a major theme worked out with a variety of incidental effects, a full complement of significant characters and an almost constant felicity of style. And yet, when all this is said, there remains encompassing the entire work, its every aspect, a sense of ambiguity, leaving the world as well as man an appalling mystery with incorrigible intertwining of good and evil.

PLOT OF CANDIDE

Considering in terms of the conventional principles of three unites, Voltaire's novel, *Candide*, defies all of them without any exception. The story opens at one place, ends at another far removed by sea. The characters are almost travelers who move across land and sea, through different countries and on different continents. The continents of Europe and America are covered touching in between several countries and numerous towns. A quick look at the trail would show how the hero, Candide, travels from Westphalia to Bulgaria to Lisbon to Cadiz to Paraguay to Buenos Aires to Eldorado to Venice to Bordeaux to Paris to Portmouth to Venice and finally to Constantinople. Thus, these travels, mostly by sea, take the hero from France to Bulgaria to Portugal to Holland to England to South America to Italy and finally to Greece. No English novel of the eighteenth century would be that footloose. Although the novels by Defoe and Fielding are episodic, they still show a sense of structure. Of course, in Defoe's novels, unities are as much of a casualty as they are in the novel's of Voltaire. However, Defoe binds together the various episodes spread over far off places by giving his narrative the form of biography. Robinson Crusoe as well as Moll Flanders travel to different countries, but the interest of the reader remains highly focused on the

protagonist. Here, in *Candide* there is no such focus provided by any single character. Although Candide is common to most incidents at different places in different countries and continents, the novel cannot be considered the biography of its hero. The hero, at best, remains just one of the figures that occupy the centre stage; he is one among four or five who provide different threads for the novel's fabric. Thus, in terms of the principle of the unity of place, it is much more diffuse than *Robinson Crusoe* or *Moll Flanders.*

Considering the unity of time, *Candida's* case is as bad as in the case of the unity of place. The novel begins when the hero and his girl, Candide and Cunegonde, are adolescents. When the novel ends, they have not only grown quite aged, they have even lost their looks. The girl has become ugly. The boy now man looks horrible. Pangloss, the third important character looks ugliest of all. They have undergone a sea change so far as their bodily healths are concerned. The very fact that they have to travel by sea to different countries, in an age (eighteenth century) when there were no steam-boats or motor-engines, the time span would spread over many, many years, which it is. Over twenty five years time lapses between the beginning and ending of *Robinson Csusoe* and much more between the opening and ending of *Moll Flauders*, but Defoe's novels are held together by strong links of the central character. Time is of no consequence; we remain interested and highly curious as to what would happen next to the protagonist. Since growth in itself is the subject matter of the two novels, we do not mind the time span. We are absorbed in the fortunes of a single character. Here, in the case of *Candide*, it cannot be said that Candide's growth is at the center of the novel. In fact, as will be discussed later, characters in Voltaire are not meant to grow. They are there to serve a different purpose altogether.

The third unity, that of action, is all the more problematic, for the various incidents, rather episodes, do not grow out of each other. Put together, they do not really constitute what Aristotle calls sequence. They do not form the "chain" of Aristotle's concept, in which incidents are linked by the principle of causality. It is the cause-and-effect sequence that binds them together, in fact, links them into a chain, where each single incident has its definite place and is irreplaceable. Here, in *Candide,* incidents hang loose. They do not make a chain. They do not follow the logic of cause and effect. They can be reshuffled into different positions. Hence, in the Aristotelian terms, its plot is truly episodic, which, in the Greek theorist's view, is the worst. What is worse about *Candide* is its violation of the law of probability. Aristotle insisted that whatever happens in a literary work must sound plausible, as natural as things happen in real life. Here, in *Candide*, lot of things happen to our utter surprise. Characters disappear and reappear, get killed and then found surviving, get lost at one place, are found at author. Then explanations are offered for their surprise reappearance, which are highly unconvincing. For

example, in the Venetian galley which carries Candide and Cacamho to Constantinople, Candide finds Pangloss and Cunegonde's brother among the galley slaves. Pangloss's explanation for having been alive is that he had miraculously escaped from his hanging in Lisbon because the bungling hangman had not been able to tie a proper knot. Similarly, Cunegonde's brother narrates an equally impossible story as to how he had survived the wound which Candide had thought fatal. Such escapes are very common in the novel. Almost every character faces extinction, murder or hanging, and every character is later found alive with an impossible story of "miraculous" escape.

There are most unnatural things that happen in the novel, even absurd, if viewed from the viewpoint of realism or naturalism. For instance, the two girls, when Candide and Cacamho spy while camped on the border of the Biglug territory. The two girls serve a story function in discovering the travelers and complaining of them to the Biglugs. But why have they taken monkeys as lovers? Why, when Candide sees them, are they running away from their lovers in such evident distress that Candide shoots the monkeys? Voltaire may be satirizing the behaviour of women, who (it was traditional to say) like to be chased but not caught. But why have they taken monkeys as lovers in the first place? The monkeys are shown leaping about the girls and snap at their buttocks, but that could be play as well as foreplay. There are several other equally unwarranted and unadjusted scenes or situations in *Candide*. To mention only two more, there is that incident of the six deposed kings, and then the kingdom of Eldorado in South America, which closely resembles More's Kingdom of Utopia, also in South America. One is left wondering at the kinds of things that one is served in the narrations of these two incidents. Above all, the novel's hero is one of the novel's improbabilities. He is indestructible. Like one of those toy soldiers with a lead weight in his round foot, he pops upright no matter how many times he is knocked down. Moreover, he remains utterly static in the course of the narrative. From the jungles of Brazil to the boulevards of Paris, the canals of Venice, and the mosques of Constantinople, whether opulent or beggarly, he remains the same modest trim little figure, unmarked and untouched. The little family he gathers round him at the farm outside Constantinople consists of derelicts of one sort or another.

Despite all these faults of plotting or structuring, however, *Candide* has been almost unanimously considered Voltaire's masterpiece. The reason is that it has to be considered on its own terms, not on the terms of Aristotle laid down for tragedy or epic. Voltaire's novel is not a work of realistic fiction. It is not a novel of morals and manners, nor is it a novel of adventure. The closest in form to *Candide* are works like Swift's *Guliver's Travels* and Dickens's *Hard Times.* The common feature of all the three are; One, they are deliberate satires on contemporary philosophies, social or metaphysical ; two, they have some sort of

stories, but their primary interest is neither incident nor character; three, their satirical purpose requires the use of fantasy, making both characters and incidents not only funny but grotesque. Hence, we cannot apply to these works the principle of three unities. Here, the unity is to be found in the moral purpose, not in the fable of incidents and characters. The structure raised in these works, or the pattern woven, is not through a chain of incidents or interrelations of characters, but through the attitudes and beliefs which are the target of satirical attack. Characters and incidents are used in these works only as means; they are not ends in themselves. They only represent each an attitude or a belief of the system of philosophy under attack. Hence the characters as well as incidents tend to acquire symbolic or allegorical significance. Our pleasure in reading about these incidents and characters lies not in their being life-like, but in their being fantastic, unlike the real persons and incidents. Our pleasure lies in recognising the absurdity of the idea, attitude or belief being ridiculed, not in taking them as imitations of real people and incidents. The fantastic exaggerations act in such a work only like the flash or search-light under which hidden thief is brought into focus. Without much fantastic exaggerations we are likely to miss what is wrong with the object of satire. Once we view *Candide* from this angle, view it as a satire on the eighteenth century philosophy of "God is in Heaven and all's well the world," then all characters and incidents get illuminated to illustrate that philosophy under the critical search light of the satirist. Everything then falls into a pattern, and we not only see the spectacle of the motley figures, but we also get to see what actually they stand for.

CHARACTERISATION AND CHARCATERS

It is often alleged that for all their beauties Voltaire's *Contes* (Stories) are deficient in characterization. In one sense, it is true, because Voltaire never pretended to present portrait galleries as Chaucer did, or as Dickens did. He was not like the English novelists from Henry Fielding to George Ehiot who represented contemporary social scene through a set of characters. They depicted these characters in terms of their physionomical, social, cultural and professional traits with their individual as well as class idiosyncracies. Nor does Voltaire pretend to draw portrait of any lady or gentleman as Henry James did. His purpose, as made clear earlier, is, like Swift, that of a satirist, and it is in accordance with his requirements as satirist that he has to create or invent characters as well as incidents. In fact, quite often, they may not be characters properly speaking, and may only be symbolic or allegorical figures. Thus, we cannot, and should not, apply the same norm of characterization to different books with different purposes. It is therefore not correct to make a general observation that all his *Contes* are

deficient in characterization. We must make distinction between one and another piece, and examine each case in the light of the individual purpose of the story or the novel.

The observation cited above is, therefore, to be termed rather hasty, and the verdict rather simplified. First of all, it is necessary to distinguish between story and story, say *L'Ingenu*, which is to all intents and purposes a novel, and one like *Zadig,* which is strictly a *Conte philosophique.* Voltaire was far too fine a craftsman to use the same method of characterization in all kinds of work. For example, science fiction written in the spirit of a novelette would be intolerable. It is true, and it could not be otherwise, that in the *Conte philosophique* the personages are not closely described or characterized, though the description of Cunegonde, in *Candide*, as "rosy, fresh, plump, appetizing" is pretty graphic. What is more relevant is that all the personages, and not merely the principal ones, display themselves in action, which cannot be stigmatized as a deficiency. We may not know the colour of Candide's eyes, but we do know that "his soul could be read on his face," and as we could hardly know his "soul" more intimately, the "face" can be supplied to each reader's taste.

Voltaire's tales, such as *Candide,* are read for pleasure. But their greater merit or significance lies in the ideas they embody. Any discussion, therefore, of his characterization or characters should not be detached from their express purpose. The discussion must point to the role they have played, and are meant to play, in changing man's ideas about their place in the nation, the world, and the universe. Since Voltaire's subject in the work is a system of beliefs and the social order of his time, the stress in his narrative naturally falls on the representation of those ideas and beliefs, not on the characters as such, or for their own sake. Here is an example which will illustrate the essentials of his method of characterization:

> The Baroness, who weighed in the neighborhood of three hundred and fifty pounds, was greatly respected for that reason, and did the honours of the house with a dignity which rendered her even more imposing. Her daughter Cunegonde, aged seventeen, was a ruddy-checked girl, fresh, plump, and desirable. The Baron's son seemed in every way worthy of his father. The tutor Pangloss was the oracle of the household, and little Candide listened to his lectures with all the good faith of his age and character.

Here, in this short paragraph of just seven lines, Voltaire hurriedly touches upon five characters, each one of whom is disposed of with one or two strokes of the brush. But every stroke is sufficient to define, not describe, a character. The weighty Baroness, the ruddy-checked Cunegonde, the Barons' son worthy of his father, the oracular Pangloss, and the little Candide, all stand defined with one stroke of the master artist's brush. We do not wish to know more about their "character;" our only curiosity is to know what happens to them in future.

That Voltaire's mode in *Candide* is satirical (there hardly can be satire without humour) becomes very clear in the opening paragraphs of the novel. Read, for instance, the following:

> One day while Cunegonde was walking near the castle in the little woods that they called a park, she saw Dr Panlgoss in the underbrush; he was giving a lesson in experimental physics to her mother's maid, a very attractive and obedient brunette. As miss Cunegonde had a natural bent for the sciences, she watched breathlessly the repeated experiments which were going on; she saw clearly the doctor's sufficient reason, observed both cause and effect, and returned to the house in a distracted and pensive frame of mind, yearning for knowledge and dreaming that she might be the sufficient reason of young Candide – who might also be hers.
>
> As she was returning to the castle, she met Candide, and blushed; Candide blushed too. She greeted him in a faltering tone of voice; and Candide talked to her without knowing what he was saying. Next day, as everyone was rising from the dining table, Cunegonde and Candide found themselves behind a screen; Cunegonde dropped her handkerchief, Candide picked it up; she held his hand quite innocently, he kissed her hand quite innocently with remarkable vivacity, grace, and emotion; their lips met, their eyes lit up, their knees trembled, their hands wandered. The Baron of Thunder-Ten-Tronckh passed by the screen, taking note of this cause and this effect, drove Candide out of the castle by kicking him rigorously on the backside. Cunegonde fainted; as soon as she recovered, the Baroness slapped her face; and everything was confusion in the most beautiful and agreeable of all possible castles.

Here, the satire is unmistakable. We know where the arrow of satire goes. Pangloss, the "oracle of the household," who "gave instructions in metaphysico – theologico – cosmoloonigology," who proved admirably that there cannot possibly be an effect without a cause and that in this best of all possible worlds the Baron's castle was the most beautiful of all castles and his Baroness the best of all possible Baronesses." The repetition of the key words and phrases of Pangloss's philosophy of the world – actually that of Leibniz whom Panglos represents as a discipline – in a situation of an innocent's seduction by the oracular instructor creates a mock-heroic effect. The sting of satire could not be sharper than this. The ridicule of the philosophy comes from its utter collapse in an encounter with concrete reality of life. Here, the juxtaposition of abstract philosophy and concrete life, of innocence and experience, of youth and age, of Eve and Satan, and then of Eve and Adam, all work very well in the passage to create a strong impact of the writer's satirical intent. There is also the juxtaposition of the sensual ecstasy of lovers on the one hand and on the other the subsequent pain of being kicked out of the paradise.

The two passages make clear the writer's method, showing how characterization in the conventional sense will remain subsidiary to what the characters do, and they do only to represent one or another attitude or belief of the age that the author wishes to ridicule only to underline its inadequacy in the face of real life-challenges. However, the characters are not entirely deficient in appearing real flesh-and-blood figures. Through rapid sketches as well as through quick actions the characters do come to life. They do not remain wooden as characters in allegory are. Candide and Cunegonde, Pangloss and Martin, even Baron and Baroness, all come alive in their respective roles. Thus, however deeply Voltaire may be obsessed with his satirical agenda, he does not weaken the surface narrative to the extent that the reader would lose interest in the story line. As a story of certain individuals placed in the concrete social context of the eighteenth century Europe, *Candide* still remains a very interesting story which one enjoys even without knowing much of the philosophic background to the work. Of course one enjoys the work more if one were conversant with what Voltaire was reacting against. Some of the characters do stick in our memory. Candide and Cunegonde, Pangloss and Martin, and several others are made memorable by the touches of Voltaire's art.

CANDIDE AS CHARACTER

Candide rightly opens with the introduction of the hero, Candide. He is a young man "as when nature had bestowed the perfection of gentle manners." His features "admirably expressed his soul." He combined "an honest mind with great simplicity of heart." The narrator then comments that it was for this reason (for his qualities of honest mind and simple heart) that "they called him Candide." He is suspected to be an illegitienate son of the Baron's sister, "by a respectable, honest gentleman of the neighbourhood, when she had refused to marry because he could prove only seventy one quarterings." He is called "little Candide" who "listened to his [Pangloss's] lectures with all good faith of his age and character." He and the Baron's daughter, Cunegonde, fall in love with each other. But they are soon discovered by the girl's father, who kicks Candide out of his castle, making him homeless and no better than a beggar. While outdoor he is drafted for Bulgarian army, which he deserts during the war against Abares. In the company of one James and Pangloss (rediscovered), he reaches Lisbon. He faces a shipwreck in which James gets drowned, but himself along with Pangloss swims to shore just when the city is being shaken by an earthquake. As we see, from the start Candide is destined to face man-made misfortunes as well as natural calamities. All come rushing upon him. And he quietly, patiently, without any grumbling or grouse just goes on, seeking shelter wherever he finds it, befriending anyone and everyone that

falls to his lot. Obviously, he is true to his name. He is candide, good to all, bad to none, not even to those who have wronged him. Since the earthquake is considered the result of man's wickedness, both Pangloss and Candide are made accused by the authorities of Lisbon. Pangloss gets hanging, Candide whipping.

While sheltered by an old woman Candide meets, in utter surprise, his heartbeat, Cunegonde. He had been told by Pangloss that she was dead. When her oppressors, the Jew and the Inquisitor, come to see her, Candide kills them. In the world of *Candide,* killing a foe, real or perceived, is no crime or sin. The characters do not carry bad conscience on that count. Here, Candide is not different from Hamlet, whom Voltaire criticizes for killing Polonius and his own friends. Now the lovers flee to Cadiz. Here, robbery take place. In despair, he sails to Paraguay, along with his girl and the old woman. Now in Spain, the governor of Buenos Aires develops fancy for Cunegonde, so he accuses Candide of robbery to get rid of him. He flees with his servant Cacamho, leaving behind his beloved and the old woman. As usual, he meets them later in Constantinople, where he finally settles on a farm. He meets in between many more misfortunes. His final settlement on a farm, with his beloved and the old woman and his servant, is a sort of utopian solution. Its peace and quiet contrasts the unrest and violence of other places. The utopian resolution may also be a case of irony with a straight face. When the novel does not spare all other concepts of the type, how can one believe that its ending is not ironic?

Those who accuse Voltaire of cynicism or pessimism should consider the fact that all his major characters in *Candide* – Candide, Cunegonde, Pangloss, Cacamho, the old woman – are good characters by any standard. They do face calamities – natural as well as man-made – but they do not grow bitter, they do not lose faith in life, they do not lose faith in goodness. Candide remains a model of sweetness, of innocence. He and Cunegonde are very much like Adam and Eve. The difference is that they have fallen among robbers and murderers. They had their paradise in the beginning. They lose it. But they also regain it in the form of the farm near Constantinople. He is not heroic. He is not a warrior. He is all Candide. Things are done to him, because he is living in a corrupt and violent world.

VOLTAIRE'S STYLE

Early commentators of Voltaire remained interested only in his religious views–his humanitarian principles, his neo-classical tragedies and his encyclopedic histories. His light–verse and his *Contes* (stories) by which he is best known today, they completely ignored. They said almost nothing about his literary style. Perhaps they took it for granted. In any case they did not attach much importance to it. Oliver Goldsmith, for instance, was one of the enthusiastic admirers of Voltaire,

but his tribute to him, in *the Citizen of the world*, says nothing of his wit, irony, and narrative concision. It was only during the Victorian era that attention began to be paid to this aspect of his writings. John Morley's *Voltaire* (1872) proved one of the most successful ventures in this respect. Since his radical and unconventional views were either to be ignored or at least turned down for the genteel Victorians, the critics of the period like Morley chose to focus on the literary aspects of his work. Morley's appreciation of Voltaire's prose elegance and its social influence remain even today, after more than a century, of great value to the Voltaire reader.

In Morley's view, Voltaire may not have had the loftier endowments of the highest poetic conception, shuttle speculative penetration, or triumphant scientific power, he did posses a superb combination of wide and sincere curiosity, an intelligence of vigorous and exact receptivity, a native inclination to candour and justice, and a preeminent mastery over a wide range in the art of expression. Literature being concerned to impose form, to diffuse the light by which common men are able to see the great host of ideas and facts that do not shine in the lightness of their own atmosphere, it is clear what striking gifts Voltaire had in this respect. In Morley's view, Voltaire's style is like a translucent stream of purest mountain water, moving with swift and animated flow under flashing sunbeams. As a detractor of Voltaire said, Voltaire is the very first man to be a spiteful censure, was in fact a truly honourable distinction.

The secret of Voltaire's style is actually incommunicable. No spectrum analysis can decompose its enchanting ray. However, some of the external qualities of this striking style can surely be detected. We can seize its dazzling simplicity, its almost primitive closeness to the letter, its sharpness and precision, above all, its admirable brevity. We see that no writer ever used so few words to produce such pregnant effects, which can only be adequately presented in colour or in the combinations of musical sound. Note, for instance, the following:

> They floated some leagues between banks sometimes flowery, sometimes sandy, now steep, now level. The river widened steadily; finally it disappeared into a chasm of frightful rocks that rose high into the heavens. The two travelers had the audacity to float with current into the chasm. The river, narrowly confined, drove them onward with horrible speed and a fearful roar. After twenty four hours, they saw day-light once more; but their cause was smashed on the snags. They had to drag themselves from rock to rock for an entire league; at last they emerged to an immense horizon, ringed with remote mountains. The countryside was tended for pleasure as well as profit; everywhere the useful was joined to agreeable. The roads were covered, or rather decorated, carrying men and women of singular beauty, and drawn by great red sheep which were faster than the finest horses of Andalusia, Tetuan and Mequinez.

Reading this prose, one can surely say that no other writer seems to have known better the true limitations of the material in which he worked, or the scope of possibilities of his art. Voltaire's Alexandrines, his witty stories, his mock-heroic, his exposition of Newton, his histories, his dialectic, all bear the same mark, the same natural, precise, and condensed mode of expression, as we see in the passage cited here.

At first, there seems something paradoxical in praising the brevity of an author whose works are to be counted by scores of volumes. But this is no real objection. A writer may be insufferably prolix in the limits of a single volumes. Style, to the sure, is independent of quantity. No study of this outward ease and swift compendiousness of speech, as we saw in the passage cited here, can teach us the secret that lies beneath it in Voltaire. His eye and hand never erred in hitting the exact mark of appropriateness in every order of prose or verse. Perhaps no such vision for the befitting in expression has ever existed. He can be said to be the most trenchant writer in the world, yet we may not find a sentence of strained emphasis or overwrought antithesis. We can also say that he is perhaps the wittiest, and yet we may not find not a line of bad buffoonery. We can see how this intense sense of the appropriate had by nature and cultivation become such a fixed condition of Voltaire's mind that it shows spontaneousness and without an effort in his work. No one can be said to be more free from the ostentatious correctness of the literary precision. Also, nobody can be credited with preserving so much purity and so much dignity of language with so little formality of demeanour. See, for example, the following:

> One day it occurred to me to enter a mosque; no one was there but an old imam and a very attractive young worshipper who was saying her prayers. Her bosom was completely bare; and between her two breasts she has a lovely bouquet of tulips, roses, anemones, buttercups, hyacinths, and primroses. She dropped her bouquet, I picked it up, and returned it to her with most respectful attentions. I was so long getting it back in place that the imam grew angry, and seeing that I was a Christian, he called the guard. They took me before the Cadi, who sentenced me to receive a hundred blows with a cane on the soles of my feet, and to be sent to galleys. I was chained to the same galley and precisely the same bench as my lord the Baron. There were in this galley four young fellows from Marseilles, five Neapolitan priests and two Cofu monks, who assured us that these things happen every day. My lord the Baron asserted that asserted that he had suffered a greater injustice than I; I, on the other hand, proposed hat it was much more permissible to replace a bouquet in a bosom than to be found naked with an ichoglan. We were arguing the point continually, and getting

> twenty lashes a day with bullwhip, when the chain of events within this universe brought you to our galley, and you ransomed us.

One would notice here the absence of that intensely elaborated kind of simplicity in which the Victorians, even the best of then, expressed the final outcome of their thoughts. They invariably qualified their propositions. It forced them to follow truth slowly along paths steep and devious. Voltaire does not use any of those focalizing words and turns of composition, which shows that to him thought was much less complex than to the Victorians. In the English language, only in Swift do we find some of these stylistic virtues which abound in Voltaire. But Swift at times can be truculent and brutally gross, both in thought and expression, which Voltaire is not. What always attracted Voltaire in Racine and Boileau, he tells us, was that they said what they intended to say, and that their thoughts have never cost anything to the harmony or the purity of the language. Voltaire ranged over far wider ground than these two French writers ever attempted to do, and trod in many slippery places. And yet, Voltaire is entitled to the same praise as that which he gave to them.

Style, as Morley defines it, can never be anything but the reflex of ideas and habits of mind. And since the ideas and habits of mind of Voltaire were bold and forthright so is his prose. Each word and sentence of his bears the stamp of that mind and spirit which shook France into a new society. It is, decidedly, not the prose of the conformist; it is the prose of the radical reformist. The spark of his revolutionary spirit comes out very clearly. The following passage illustrates not merely the spark but also the simplicity, the naiveté, as its deceptive garb; the smooth and simple surface covering the questioning intelligence is the way of Voltaire's prose:

> – It is true, said Pangloss, that you saw me hanged; in the normal course of things, I should have been burned, but you recall that a cloudburst occurred just as they were about to roast me. So much rain fell that they despaired of lighting the fire; thus I was hanged, for lack of anything better to do with me. A surgeon bought my body, carried me off to his house, and dissected me. First he made a cross-shaped incision in me, from the navel to the clavicle. No one could have been worse hanged than I was. In fact, the executioner of the high ceremonials of the Holy Inquisition, who was a subdeacon, burned people marvelously well, but he was not in the way of hanging them. The rope was wet, and tightened badly; it caught on a knot; in short, I was still breathing. The cross-shaped incision made me scream so loudly that the surgeon fell over backwards; he thought he was dissecting the devil, fled in an agony of fear, and fled downstairs in his flight. His wife ran in, at the

> noise, from a nearby room; she found me stretched out on the table with my cross-shaped incision, was even more frightened than her husband, fled, and fell over him. When they had recovered a little, I heard her say to him: 'My dear, what were you thinking of, trying to dissect a heretic? Don't you know those people are always possessed of the devil? I'm going to have a priest and have him exorcised.' …

Here, several aspects of Voltaire's style come to the fore. The rapid narrative, the simple and straight sentences, the straight-face satire, the sting-in-the-tail irony, the precise phrase, the clean prose, all combine to make a wonderful reading. And yet, the sting in the tail does not spoil the surface charm of the comic mode in which the incident is narrated.

A word about Voltaire's vocabulary will be in place here. His vocabulary is more copious than that of any of his non-technical contemporaries. This enabled him to avoid much of circumlocution so often found in French prose. Equally admirable is his choice of words. He had a precise apprehension of the right word needed to convey a meaning or a feeling. He also had a unique ear for the word which was not only right but sounded right, too. The resulting style was so flexible that it could be adapted to various purposes. For instance, in argumentative works, Voltaire's aim was to arrest the attention, to underline, to emphasize. He achieved this, so far as the vocabulary is concerned, by the tactical placing of a technical, a difficult or even merely an unexpected word. The stories (*Contes*), such as *Candide*, on the other hand, were intended to persuade with a smile. Their aim was to carry the reader along on the even flow of the narrative, rapid, smooth, the events producing the emotive power, never interrupting the rhythm, however extraordinary they might be in themselves. Here Voltaire never relaxes his pressure on the accelerator, and seldom touches the brakes. Many other devices are used. There is an almost metrical succession and alternation of long and short sentences. This can be particularly noticed in the choice of names, as in the hammering effect obtained by the gutturals in Thunder-ten-tronckh, Candide, Cunegonde, Cacambo, Prococurante; and the liquid polysyllables of Formosante, Amazan, Gangarides, Cimmeriens in the *Princess de Babylone*.

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE IN CANDIDE:

Voltaire belongs to the period of the enlightenment and shares many strategies of style and technique the writers of the period used. One of these strategies was the stylistic level of the realistic texts which served the propaganda purposes of the period. During the eighteenth century the strategy becomes increasingly aggressive and polemical. Voltaire emerged as a master of this game. Whatever goes on in the story, say of *Candide*, we are told only in a general way.

The purpose is much rather to insinuate certain ideas, which constitute the core of the narrative. For achieving his polemical purpose, Voltaire, like his contemporaries, always uses the device of coupling the opposites or dissimilar, as though they were forms of human endeavour on the same plane and to be judged from the same viewpoint. Voltaire deprives the activity, say religion, which he wants to attack, of its essential character and presents it as something absurd or ridiculous. It is a technique which sophists and propagandists of all times have employed with success. Voltaire is, of course, a master of this technique. In such a case, he would emphasize a purely external detail which is intrinsically absurd and comic. What comes out is not really the true nature of that object, say religion or optimism, but the external aspect of its ceremonial. Note, for instance, the following:

> Finally, while the two kings in their respective camps celebrated the victory… Candide undertook to do his reasoning of cause and effect somewhere else. Passing by mounds of the dead and dying, he came to a nearby village which had been burnt to the ground. It was an Abare village, which the Bulgars had burned, in strict accordance with the laws of war. Here old men, stunned from beatings, watched the last agonies of their butchered wives, who still clutched their infants to their bleeding breasts; there, disemboweled girls, who had first satisfied the natural needs of various heroes, breathed their last; others, half-scorched in the flames, begged for their death stroke. Scattered brains and severed limbs littered the ground.

Here, we see Voltaire© use of a favourite propaganda device, often used rather crudely and maliciously. It might be called the searchlight device. It consists in over-illuminating one small part of an extensive complex, while everything else which might explain, derive, and possibly counterbalance the thing emphasized is left in the dark. And yet everything is falsified, for truth requires the whole truth and the proper interrelation of its elements. We see here how the searchlight is focused on the tiny village and the picture is magnified through catalogueing of horrific details. Even more than the calamity of war the object of satire is the cause-and-effect reasoning represented by Candide, for there is no such rationale available behind the butchery and savagery committed in this village. The device proves highly effective. It serves the purpose of Voltaire the moralist and propagandist.

No doubt, the searchlight technique, which over-illuminates the ridiculous, the absurd, or the repulsive in one's opponent, had been in use long before Voltaire. But his way of handling it is peculiarly his own. Especially his own is his tempo. His rapid, keen summary of the development, his quick shifting of scenes, his surprisingly sudden confronting of things which are not usually seen together–in

all this he comes close to being unique and incompatible. Surely, it is in this tempo that a good part of his wit resides. Note, for instance, the tempo of the following:

> – As soon as my companions could walk, we were herded off to Moscow. In the division of booty, I fell to a boyar who made me work in his garden, and gave me twenty whiplashes a day; but when he was broken on the wheel after about two years, with thirty other boyars, over some little court intrigue, I seized the occasion; I ran away; I crossed all Russia; I was for a long time a chambermaid in Riga, then at Rostock, Wismar, Leipzig, Cassel, Utrecht, Leyden, The Hague, Rotterdam; I grew old in misery and shame, having only half a backside and remembering always that I was the daughter of a Pope. A hundred times I wanted to kill myself, but always I loved life more. This ridiculous weakness is perhaps one of our worst instincts; is anything more stupid than choosing to carry a burden that really one wants to cast on the ground? To hold existence in horror, and yet to cling to it? To fondle the serpent which devours us till it has eaten out our heart?
>
> – In the countries through which I have been forced to wander, in the tavern where I have had to work, I have seen a vast number of people who hated their existence; but I never saw more than a dozen who deliberately put an end to their own misery: three negroes, four Englishmen, four Genevans, and a German professor named Robeck. My last post was as servant to the jew Don Issachar; he attached me to your service, my lovely one; and I attached myself to your destiny, till I have become more concerned with your fate than with my own. I would not even have mentioned my own misfortunes, if you had not irked me a bit, and if it weren't the custom, on shipboard, to pass the time with stories. In a word, my lady, I have had some experience of the world, I know it; why not try this diversion? Ask every passenger on this ship to tell you his story, and if you find a single one who has not often cursed the day of his birth, who has not often told himself that he is the most miserable of men, then you may throw me overboard head first.

Here is the old woman's story, told swiftly, largely mentioning the places where she has been all over Europe, covering a long life of wandering, with only one or two generalizations about life and man, making thereby her story a story, in fact, of the whole of mankind. A large part of the story's charm lies in its tempo. If it were drawn out longer, it would lose its freshness and become trite. And the tempo determines the wit of the piece too. We can observe here the presence of pleasing

classical clarity, which is present in every word, in every phrase, in every rhythmic movement.

Quite closely linked to the rapidity of tempo, but more generally in use as a propaganda device, is the technique of reducing all problems to extreme simplification. In fact, in Voltaire, even the rapidity of tempo is made to serve the purpose of simplification. Voltaire achieves this simplification by reducing the problem to an antithesis. Then the antithesis is exhibited in a giddy, swift, high-spirited narrative in which black and white, theory and practice, etc., are set in clear and simple opposition. We can consider here an example from *Candide*, where there is an attack made on the metaphysical optimism of Leibniz's idea of the best of all possible worlds. In chapter 8 of *Candide*, Cunegonde, who was lost and has been found again, begins her narration of the adventures she has undergone since Candide's expulsion from her father's castle:

> I was in my bed, in a deep sleep, when it pleased Heaven to send the Bulgarians into our fair castle of Thunder-ten-tronckh; they cut my father's throat and my brother's, and chopped my mother to pieces. A huge Bulgarian, six feet tall, observing that I had fainted at the sight, began to rape me; that brought me to, I recovered consciousness, I screamed, I struggled, I bit, I scratched, I tried to eat out the big Bulgarian's eyes, not knowing that everything that was happening in my father's castle was perfectly customary: the brute gave me a knife-thrust in my left side, of which I still bear scar. "Alas! I hope that I shall see it," said the simple Candide. "You shall see it," said Cunegonde; "but let us go on." "Go on", said Candide.

These horrifying happenings appear comic because they come hammering down with almost slapstick speed and because they are represented as willed by God and everywhere prevalent – which is in comic juxtaposition to their dreadfulness and to the aims of their victims. On top of all this comes the erotic quip at the end. Antithetical simplification of the problem and its reduction to anecdotal dimensions, together with dizzing speed of tempo, prevail throughout the novel.

Voltaire also assumes as a demonstrated premise that any individual in his personal history may encounter any destiny which is in accordance with the laws of nature, regardless of the possibility of a connection between destiny and character. He quite often amuses himself by putting together causal chains in which he explains only the factors which are phenomena of nature. He purposely omits anything to do with morals or the history of the individuals concerned. An example to this effect can be cited from the fourth chapeter of *Candide*, where Pangloss discusses the origin of his syphilis:

> … you know Paquette, our august Baroness's pretty attendant; in her arms I tasted the joys of Paradise which produced the infernal tortures which you see devouring me; she was infected with them; perhaps she has died of them. Paquette had received the gift from a most learned Franciscan, who himself had gone back to the source; for he had got it from an old countess, who had received it from a cavalry captain, who owed it to a marquis, who had it from a page, who had received it from a Jesuit, who, as a novice, had received it in the direct line from the companion of Christopher Columbus….

Such an account regards only natural causes. As for the moral plane, it merely lays a satirical emphasis on the moves of the clergy (including their homosexuality). At the same time, it merrily whisks out of sight and suppresses all details of the personal histories of the individuals concerned. Such an account insinuates a very specific conception of the concatenation of events. In this conception there is room neither for the individual's responsibility for acts he commits in obedience to his natural instincts nor for anything else in his particular nature which leads to particular acts. It is not often that Voltaire goes as far as he does in this instance and in *Candide* in general. But he is always inclined to simplify. And his simplification is handled in such a manner that the role of the sole standard of judgement is assigned to sound, practical common sense. Voltaire despised everything historical and spiritual, and valued only the enlightened reason. He and his heroes set out to rid human society of everything that impeded the progress of reason.

Voltaire arranges reality so that he can use it for his purposes. Realism in his fiction is never for its own sake. There is, of course, vivid and colourful everyday reality in his novels. But it is incomplete, consciously simplified, and hence nonchalant and superficial. As for the stylistic level, a lowering of man's position is implied in the attitude of the Enlightenment. The taste of the age does not favour the sublime. In its intermediate level the erotic and sentimental style coincides with Voltaire© style in propaganda. In both instances the people introduced are no sublime heroes detached from the context of everyday life but individuals embedded in circumstances which are usually intermediate, on which they are dependent, and in which they are enmeshed materially and even spiritually. In Voltaire, the realistic elements, however colourful and amusing they may be, remain mere froth. The pleasantness and frothiness of the realism is present only to serve the ends of Enlightenment ideology. In Voltaire this technique is developed into such an art that he is able to use even the "creatural" premonitions of his own decrepitude and death as material for an amiably jocular introduction to a popular philosophical disquisition. Even with such subjects as old age and its decrepit body Voltaire remains witty and pleasing. For his moral and satirical purposes he

arranges realism artfully. A certain seriousness in all this cannot be avoided. Voltaire after all takes his ideas seriously. However, in contrast to classicism, there occurs now a mixing of styles. It does not, however, go very far or very deep, either in its everyday realism or its seriousness. It only continues the aesthetic tradition of classicism inasmuch as its realism always remains pleasant. Tragic and creatural penetrations are avoided.

BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

1. Norman Torrey. *The Spirit of Voltaire*. New York, 1938.
2. W.H. Barber. *Voltaire: Candide*. London, 1960.
3. Dorothy McGhee. *Voltaire's Narrative Devices*. Wisconsin, 1933.
4. Theodore Besterman. *Voltaire*. Oxford, 1969.
5. _____. *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth century*. Oxford, 1969.

QUESTION BANK

1. Discuss Voltaire in relation to the Neo-classical View of the World.
2. Discuss Voltaire as a neo-classical satirist.
3. Examine Voltaire's case as a pessimist or misanthropist.
4. Examine the narrative technique Voltaire uses in *Candide*.
5. Discuss *Candide* as a moral-fable.
6. Write a note on Voltaire's method of characterization and the character of *Candide's* hero.
7. Discuss the plot-structure of *Candide*.
8. Who among the European thinkers are the target of Voltaire's attack in *Candide*.

HENRY FIELDING

Tom Jones

Unit-IV
1. Writer and His Age

A. Life of the Novelist

Henny Fielding, the greatest novelist of the eighteenth century, was born on the 22nd of April, 1707, at Sharpham Park, Glastonbury. He was the eldest son of General Edward Fielding; his mother, Sarah was the daughter of Sir Henry Gould, a judge. Fielding was educated at Eton, and by the time he left the college in 1725, he was well grounded in Greek and Latin. In 1728 he left England to study law at the University of Leyden but paucity of funds drove him back to London, struggling to make a living as a writer.

For about ten years before he took up the novel, between 1728 and 1737, Fielding wrote some 25 plays. During his London theatre days he devoted all his time to the stage, as playwright and manager. In fact, Fielding was the only writer whose career shows the two major literary developments of the eighteenth century – the decline of the drama and the rise of the novel. As regards his dramatic career, Fielding worked close to the popular theatre. As he was intent upon eking out a living, Fielding fell in with the trends of current drama which was declining. He had an early success with *Tom Thumb: a Tragedy* (1730). Certainly Fielding's experience as a playwright stood him in great stead. As Hudson remarks : "this long training in drama had taught him many valuable lessons in the art of construction." Thus he started with a "preliminary preparation in technique."

Fielding married Charlotte Cradock in 1734. The years immediately following the marriage was the creative period. He wrote one comedy, *The Miser* (1737) which was based on Moliere. His two plays of political satire *(Pasquin, 1736* and *The Historical Register for 1736, 1737*) became the cause of the Licensing Act of 1737. And with that ended Fielding's theatrical career.

Fielding was now a comfortable young man of 30, well educated and happily married with a secure financial status. He entered the Middle Temple and resumed the study of law; in 1740 he was called to the Bar; his observations of law, justice, crime and punishment, and practitioners of law led to a large number of satirical passages in his novels. From 1739 to 1741, Fielding published three issues a week of *The Champion,* a periodical written in the tradition of the *Spectator* essays. From 1741 until his death in 1754, Fielding devoted himself to the practice and the enforcement of the law (as a justice of peace) and to the writing of political trealises and fiction and non-fiction.

Fielding's solid contribution to the English novel is well-known. He is deservedly called the greatest novelist of his period. In 1742 came his first novel, *Joseph Andrews*, most witty book with a large number of comic episodes. The novel was written as a satirical rejoinder to Richardson's *Pamela*, or, *Virtue Rewarded* (1740). During 1743 he brought out three volumes of *Miscellanies* which includes the powerful satirical romance, *Jonathan Wild the Great.* In 1748 an important development occurred in Fielding's life when he was appointed a Justice of Peace for West-minister and for Middlesex. This august position enabled him to show serious concern at the social abuses and judicial corruption of the times. These concerns are reflected in quite few of his essays.

In 1749 appeared his masterpiece, *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*. It has, like *Joseph Andrews*, picaresque elements. The theme of journey occupies the large part of action. Charlottle, Fielding's wife, who

died in 1745, is immortalized as Sophia Western, the heroine, in *Tom Jones*. His last novel *Amelia* (1751) embodies Fielding's own grim experience of social hardships in the metropolis; it is certainly a gloomy book. Fielding's health continued to deteriorate, and, in 1754 he left London for a farm at Ealing. But this change made no difference. His physician advised him to shift to a warmer climate. Fielding left London for Portugal in June 1754. The diary he kept during his voyage was published posthumously under the title, *The Journal of a Voyage*. It is one of the most enjoyable travel books ever written. Again. change of place for climate could not improve his health and he died on the 8th of October in 1754, at the age of 47.

B. Fielding's Age : The Rise of the Novel

The English novel, as we now think of it, emerged in the early Eighteenth century. In fact, the eighteenth century is an important epoch as both the theory as well as practice of the novel begins here. The Periodical essay and the novel are the two outstanding contributions of the age of "prose and reason." Although *Addisons's Spectator*, a peculiar product of the environment prevailing at that time, was born with the Eighteen century and died with it, the novel survived, and since then it has been growing from strength to strength.

After Daniel Defoe (1660-1731) there was little doubt that the English novel had been born. His best known works are *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Moll Flanders* (1722). But Hudson does not class these works as novels. As the critic says "His tales are so far removed from normal life and character, they deal so largely with strange adventure and crime, and the picaresque element in them is so strong, that, speaking strictly, it would seem that they should be classed rather as romances than as novels." In point of fact, when we refer to the rise of the English novel in Fielding's age we mean the novel which breaks with the medieval romances and shows affinity with what Hudson calls "a novel of contemporary social and domestic life." And such a novel Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) offered us in *Pamela* (1740). Hudson even assigns him the title of "the father of the modern novel" As Water Allen also remarked "the first great flowering of the English novel began in 1740, with Richardson's *Pamela*" And the critic adds that "of the four great novelists of the century, Richardson and Fielding are the greatest." The rise of the novel in the Eighteenth century is deservedly associated with Richardson and Fielding.

Most of the English fiction before the Eighteen century had been either romantic as that of More, Sidney, Lodge, and Greene, or didactic as that of More and Lyly; there is a slight element of realism in the picaresque work of Nash. French Heroic Romance was what Hudson calls "a strange compound of sham chivalry, sham pastoralism, pseudohistory, and the extravagant gallantry of a sophisticated society." Romance was based on social laws of feudal society; it followed what Kettle calls "the social rigidity and intellectual conservatism of the feudal order." Hence "Romance was the non-realistic, aristocratic literature of feudalism." It was non-realistic in the sense that it provided escape from the hard realities of life; it transported the reader "to a world different, idealized, nicer "than their own." Its themes were chivalry, sensational adventure and idealized love. Besides, one of the important elements of romance is didacticism. Gallant men and charming women embodied the feudal idea of chivalry. Medieval romance shows a tendency towards showing static ethical code. It shows life as a battle between Good and Evil.

The Eighteenth century fiction shows a break with the feudalism and a sure tendency towards realism. The rise of the English novel in the Eighteenth century was the result of the reaction against "the medieval romance and its courtly descendants of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries." The rising middle class reacted against the feudal social and ethical ideas. As David Daiches says that the novel "was in a large measure the product of the middle class, appealing to middle-class ideals and sensibilities".

C. Reasons for the Rise of the Novel in the 18th Century

Reasons for the rise of the novel in the eighteenth century are social, political and literary. The first and the foremost social reason was the rise of the middle class. The unprecedented rise in profits provided leisure and comforts to this class. This new rich class had its own taste and predilections. The literary works were written for the higher classes. They demanded literature closer to their sensibilities; it must cater to their needs ; it must delineate their aspirations. The rising middle class could not identify itself with the higher classes and found the works written for them as escapist. So a new kind of work which could express the new ideals of the eighteenth century was needed. They could not be satisfied with what a critic calls "the exaggerated romances of impossible heroes and the picaresque stories of intrigue and villainy which had interested the upper classes." They were no more interested in knights or kings; they wanted something closer to their heart; they wanted heroes with whom they could identify.

In the second place, the popularity of the novel in the eighteenth century, like that of the periodical essay which immediately preceded it, was the result of the democratic movement in the era. The Glorious Revolution of 1689 brought in the era of Parliament and ushered in the new democratic spirit. Now the reading public included people from the upper class and the common masses. As the democratic movement brought the common people in the centre, new form of literature which could offer a consistent view was needed. And this new form was the novel. The prior forms like romance and tragedy could not fulfil this purpose; they were closer to the aristocratic ways of life. Their themes were escapist and idealistic, and characters were kings and princes. According to Hudson, even Defoe who repudiated romantic conventions, held aloof from the ordinary social world, merely substituting adventurers and criminals for princes and Arcadian shepherds." Richardson, Fielding, Sterne, and Smollett told stories of everyday life. Fielding called this new literary genre "the comic prose epic." Richardson, in his novels, carried on the ethical traditions established by Addison and Steele. He did an admirable job "in the purification of society and manners." In his very first novel, *Pamela*, or *Virtue Rewarded* (1740), he introduces a lady's maid as the heroine, and strikes a democratic note. The novel became a sensational success.

Thirdly, the novel of the eighteen century was free from restraints, rules and limitations of classicism. In the epic and drama, it was impossible to break with the authority of anitquity. In the novel that authority could be dispensed with. In fact, no authority existed in the novel. Of course, Fielding wrote a preface to *Joseph Andrews* (1742) in which he discusses technical questions from a classical standpoint. He has also written a prefatory note to every Book in *Tom Jones* (1749). His preface to the former may be called his solid contribution to the technique of fiction but in a limited sense. Here he refers to the classical epic theory but uses it in the reverse and calls his novel "a comic epic poem in prose." In fact, he uses only the form and that too not fully. His main purpose is to give a panoramic view of the eighteenth century society; for that "epic theory" was used as a convenient device. And prefatory notes to *Tom Jones* parade only Fielding's wide learning rather than a basis for the novelistic theory.

Tom Jones can be read and enjoyed by just ignoring these notes. In the eighteenth century no theory of the novel was available; the novel offered a fresh field and the novelists were free to work independently and freely. It enabled them to display their genius and lay the foundation of a durable tradition of novel writing.

The decline of drama is yet another factor that contributed to the rise of the novel in the Eighteenth century. Ifor Evans calls it "a dreary period as far as dramatic authorship is concerned." As the critic says, the licensing act passed in 1737 "cut at the very heart of drama." Besides, the audience of the Eighteenth century lacked "taste and discernment" of the earlier audiences. So it lost its influence as a literary form. The reading public wanted to be diverted and amused in another way. They wanted new pastures which were made available in the story

which was closer to their environment, and appealed to their sensiblities. The rise of the novel made it possible for them.

Finally, the rise of the novel offered a wider scope and a comprehensive view of social reality than drama. It offered a comic view of life, a view closer to life. Realism was its hall-mark. The new novel of the eighteenth century took up for analysis and scrutiny such issues as marriage, love, family, and society. Eighteenth century introduced real issues of society and treated them with a seriousness hitherto unknown.

Love, marriage and sex are treated according to new assumptions. They are based on such considerations as morality, ethics, sentiments and commitment. The novel of the Eighteenth century shows not only man but also woman, the new woman who was becoming aware of her status in society. The novel in the century, thus, offers a comprehensive view of society. Especially Fielding in his novels presents people as they are. His characters such as Lady Booby, Tom Jones, and Blifil are, to use Dr Johnson's words, "the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find."

2. Fielding's Novels

As we have seen in the biographical note, Fielding began as a dramatist; he wrote quite a number of plays. he also wrote non-fiction. Here we are concerned with Fielding as a novelist. As we are to take up *Tom Jones* (1749), his second novel, for a detailed discussion, here, we may give a brief story line of his other novels.

Jospeh Andrews, published in 1747, was begun as a parody of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*. Joseph, the hero of the book, is shown as the brother of Pamela Andrews, the heroine in Richardson's *Pamela*. He is a footman in the London house of Lady Booby. This beautiful and rich but a lascivious widow tries to assail the virtue of Joseph. Joseph has read his sister's letters; he vows to follow her example of virtue. Joseph is also coveted by Mrs. Slipslop who is lady's maid of honour. Lady Booby's design on his chastity are frustrated. However, he becomes the vicitim of her ire. Like his sister, he becomes the victim of a plot and is readily dismissed from service. He resolves to take to the road and return to his sweetheart, Fanny. In showing Lady Booby's enticements Fielding is satirizing the hypocrisy of the upper society. Now when Joseph takes to the road, the book assumes the greater scope of comedy. On the highway, Joseph is robbed by thieves and left naked and bleeding in a ditch. Now Fielding has an opportunity to describe with irony the behaviour of the passengers of a stage- coach. It is shown that only the poor took pity on Joseph in distress. He is carried to the nearby inn where he meets his old schoolmaster, Parson Abraham Adams. The interest now shifts from handsome Joseph to the quixotic curate. He is a comically absent minded and gullible curate from the Sir Thomas Booby's country seat. Now onwards Adams becomes the central character. This character shows the influence of Spanish writer Cervantes on Fielding. But Fielding individualizes him by making Adams a genuine representative of Christian piety. Adams embodies goodness, charity, learning, and fellow-feeling. Adams is returning to bring the sermons. Now Adams and Joseph encounter many adventures, and face many embarrasments and exploitations; they also encounter many fights in the wayside inns.

The loosely constructed story moves forward. Now the plot becomes complex and reaches the climax. In the end, all the important characters, such as Lady Booby, Parson Adams, Joseph Andrews, Fanny, Mrs Slipslop are seen together at lady Booby's country-seat. Lady Booby continues her war of malice against Joseph. She tries to prevent the marriage of Jospeh and his boyhood sweet heart, Fanny Adams. Now a sinister discovery reveals that Joseph and Fanny are brother and sister. This complication is removed by the device of discovery. Joseph has a strawberry mark on his shoulder. It is discovered that Joseph is the son of Mr Wilson, a wealthy man of high status. Thus his true identity is reavealed and he is restored to his father from whom he had been stolen away by the gypsies many years ago. Squire Booby has meanwhile married Pamela (Joseph's sister), and she has been conducting herself with modesty and prudence. Now all complications are removed and Jospeh is married to Fanny. In the end Parson Adams too is not forgotten; he is rewarded for his simple christianity; he acquires a living valued at 130 pounds a year. The novel thus ends happily.

The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great (1743)

Jonathan Wild is a satirical novel by Fielding. It was published in 1743; it is a part of his *Miscellanies*. It gives a fictional version of the life of an infamous criminal. It contains a veiled attack on Fielding's old enemy, Sir Robert Walpole. So it is written in the shape of savagely caustic attack. The book rests on the thesis that the Prime Minister can embody the qualities of the great criminal.

Titus Oates baptized Wild which shows his early tendency towards underhand behaviour. Wild goes to work for Snap, who is a warden of a sponging house. It is a place where arrested debtors are trained before being imprisioned. So Wild is tutored in the art of extortion and exploitation. Ultimately he becomes a chief of a gang

of thieves and criminals. As a parasitical chief he takes the lion's share of the profits out of the loot. He safeguards himself by turning over to the law any subordinates who challenge him or question his leadership. Wild marries Laetitia Snap who is the daughter of his former employer. Laetitia is hypocritical. Now he concentrates on ruining jeweller Heartfree who is his virtuous former school fellow. Wild first robs him and then gets him imprisoned for bankruptcy. This is not the end.

He demeans himself further. This time he directs his villainy against Mrs Heartfree. He tricks her to flee the country. Then he contrives to prove that Heartfree has murdered his wife. But the jeweller is ultimately rescued and Wild is exposed. Wild is hanged; thus a 'hero' and great man meets his end.

Jonathan Wild is not about character development, but about "general moral principles". As Arnold Kettle holds "The force of *Jonathan Wild* comes from Fielding's social vision which is what puts life into the great passages of the book." Fielding's criticism covers not the count but "the whole genteel tradition." It is a satire on Tories and Whigs; it hits at the whole party system itself; the corruption at the official level is brought to light. More than most it exposes the horrors of the criminals and debtors in jail. Kettle sums up "Here there is more than a precise sordidness, more than a determination to leave no horror unspoken." Fielding analyses the great in these words: "Mankind are first properly to be considered under two grand divisions – those that use their own hands, and those who employ the hands of others." But despite "all its power and its extraordinary insight *Jonathan Wild* is not a great novel." It is a politically committed novel. Characterization is weak. Heartfree who is the chief representative of good never comes to life. Only once in his soliloquy he moves us but everywhere else he is doicle and unimpressive. He accepts things passively. When he tells that "What we seek in this world is vanity" we are not impressed. We cannot take him as hero; what he represents is only surface life. The picture of women too is discouraging. Women are shown on the mercy of men, merely their tools. On the whole *Jonathan Wild* falls short of greatness for its weak characterization, limited vision of society, and Fielding's own commitment. But certainly it is a readable book because the story is gripping.

Amelia (1751)

Amelia, Fielding's last novel, was his most ambitious. It deals with the tribulations of married life. It portrays a full and serious picture of corruptions in society and its various institutions. As its title indicates, the interest centres in the character of a woman. Walter Allen calls it "a domestic novel." Amelia Booth is a virtuous and charming woman. She is an embodiment of goodness, devotion and resourcefulness. William Booth, who is her husband, is also attractive young man from the army. But now he is out of employment. She marries him against the wishes of her mother. He is an errant husband, and is a slave to his habit of gambling. Amelia is cheated by her sister who disinherits her from her rightful inheritance. She is even wronged by her husband's treacherous friends. But she triumphs over the odds. There is less of humour in the development of the plot. It centres more on the pathetic situation of the Booths. In the process, Amelia is shown as a victim and William as a shiftless husband. The story is brought closer to life when we are shown that Amelia refuses her children tarts for supper, and denies herself half a pint of white wine to give relief to her gloomy spirits. On the contrary, William squanders money in a gambling den. William is always faithful to his wife no matter sometimes he falls a victim to temptations. Amelia shows great sincerity and steadfastness as a wife and mother. She frustrates all treacherous advances of her husband's friends and proves herself stronger than her husband. She is generous enought to forgive her husband for his lapses. Dr Johnson rightly calls her "the most charming heroine of all romance." Although she forgives William for his infidelity, their life becomes more miserable when William is imprisoned for debt. This situation is the result of his gambling rounds that lead him into heavy debt. But this miserable predicament is alleviated by a happy discovery that she is the rightful inheritor of her mother's property. It is revealed that her sister forged her mother's will. So lawfully she is the rightful heiress to her mother's property. William too is released from jail. The Booths happily retire to the country. The sound and the fury calm down. Now they retire to a life of comforts and calm.

Colonel James's one-sided love for Amelia is an absorbing episode in the novel. He even tries to remove William from his way. Thus Colonel makes their family life a real hell. A noble lord with the help of Mrs Wilson also has

designs on Mrs Booth. These episodes make the plot of the novel complex and the heroine intense. They also arouse suspicion in William Booth which add to the conflict in his relationship with Amelia. Amelia is a person of strong virtues. She faces all odds. She emerges as a person of integrity as she rebukes both Colonel James and the lecherous lord. This makes her a noble lady.

The real strength of the novel lies in its conclusion. Both, William and Amelia, husband and wife, emerge as better human beings. Life is a compromise. You cannot continue tearing each other's life for ever. William writes a letter to Amelia confessing. He even begs her forgiveness when she visits him in the jail after receiving the letter. She is also generous enough to forgive him. She embodies real Christian virtues.Dr Harrison's arrival resolves the issue. He bails out William. Amelia gets possession of her mother's property. Dr Harrison gets Murph, the lawyer, who tried to deprive Amelia of her due, arrested. Every complication is resolved and William Booth and Amelia, in the end, heave a sigh of relief. As we know they retire to the country and to a life of calm and peace.

Tom Jones : Plot Summary

Mr Allworthy is a rich and benevolent gentleman and a childless widower. He lives in retirement in Somersetshire alongwith his sister Miss Bridget Allworthy. After his return from London where he had gone on business, Allworthy finds a baby in his bed the same night. So the novel begins with the mysterious discovery of an infant in Mr Allworthy's bed. It causes great commotion in the house. Ultimately the gentleman decides to become the baby's guardian and gives him shelter and full protection. Now the mystery of the foundling's parentage remains unresolved. But there must be somebody who placed the baby in Mr Allworthy's bed. Suspicion falls on one Jenny Jones. Mrs Deborah Wilkins, the squire's housekeeper, reveals that Jenny Jones, who has been attending upon Miss Bridget, was in violent fit of illness; Jenny is thus supposed to have delivered the child. While questioned by the squire, she confesses that she gave birth to the bastard. But despite hard inquiries she refuses to disclose the name of her partner in the sin. Squire admonishes her and asks her to leave the neighbour. Now the Squire names the foundling Tom Jones, who is the hero of the book. After the departure of Jenny the squire summons Partridge who is the local school master and whom Jenny had served for some time. He is suspected to be the father of the foundling. He is reprimanded and deprived of his annuity by the Squire. Partridge's wife who appeared as witness against her husband dies, and Partridge leaves the county. Meanwhile Miss Bridget marries Captain Blifil; eight months after their marriage, she gives birth to a baby, Master Blifil. The Squire has already become the foundling's guardian; now he decides that Master Blifil, his nephew, and Tom Jones, the foundling, will be brought up under the same roof. And they grow up sharing Mr Allworthy's affections and care. Meanwhile Captain Blifil dies of apoplexy.

Tom Jones wins Mr Allworthy's affections and the Squire becomes quite fond of him. Both Tom and Blifil are educated by Thwackum and Squire, the philosopher. They are narrow embodiments of so many Eighteenth century theory mongers. Both are diagonally opposed to each other. Both are hypocritical. Blifil is their true discipline. The means spirited Blifil is supported by these pseudo-theorists in his designs against Tom. Blifil leaves no opportunity of degrading Tom and win the favours of Bridget. He is always in search of an opportunity to tarnish Tom's image and degrade him in the eyes of Mr Allworthy, but Tom remains a favourite of both. However his misadventures with Black George and his daughter Molly Seagrim prove too costly. Tom and Black George are involved in a poaching incident in the neighbouring estate belonging to an ill-tempered country squire. Tom takes the blame on himself and thus saves George. Besides he helps George's family in many other ways. Later on, Blifil and his two tutors use this act of Tom as a proof to tarnish his image and turn Squire Allworthy against him.

Here Tom's relation with Molly Seagrim need a comment. He has an affair with Molly who is a voluptuous and lusty woman. Tom is genuinely interested in her and has physical relations with her. Circumstances bring him closer to Sophia Western, daughter of Squire Western. Both fall in love with each other. Molly declares that she is pregnant. Tom honestly owns the responsibility. At the same time, he knows that Sophia's father will never

agree to their marriage, as he is a penniless bastard. Squire Western wants her to marry Blifil. A chance discovery of Squire in Molly's bed absolves Tom of his responsibility towards Molly but the damage has been done. Blifil, Thwackum and Square have succeeded in tarnishing Tom's image and poisoning Mr Allworthy's ears. Thus betrayed by the unscrupulous and jealous Blifil, Tom is turned away by Mr Allworthy and he takes to the road, penniless and lost and lonely. Meanwhile when Sophia is pressed very hard to marry Blifil whom she detests, she runs away from her father's home. She is accompanied by her maid, Mrs Honour; she is on her way to London to have a shelter their in a relative's house. Now both are on the road but separately. Thus the first movement of the action closes.

Tom's adventures on the road and at the Upton Inn form the second movement of the plot. Tom wants to join the army. He wants to take help of the recruits and volunteers. But he picks a quarrel with Ensign Northerton who enjoyed a bawdy jest at the expense of Sophia. He also meets Partridge who is supposed to be his father. Partridge denies that charge. However, he offers to accompany him. Tom shows an act of chivalry by saving the Man of the Hill who is attacked by two ruffians and is at the verge of being robbed. He saves Mrs Waters from the violent and unscrupulous Ensign Northerton. He conducts her safely to the Upton Inn. The road and the Upton Inn are the two situations which enabled Fielding to offer a realistic view of the then ways of the world, and also to portay characters. At the inn, Mrs Waters allures and seduces Tom. Sophia accidently reaches the inn; when she discovers that Tom is involved with Mrs Waters, she leaves the inn. Squire Western, who also reaches there in search of his daughter, misses her by a fraction of time. As he is lured by a fine hunting day, he postpones his chase. Tom finds a pocket book belonging to Sophia, and follows her to London in order to return it. With this closes the second part the plot.

The third and the last part of the novel is set in London what Eliot called the "Unreal City." Fielding hits at the vanity and hypocricies of the town-dwellers. Now all major characters arrive here. Squire Western has already arrived; Mr Allworthy has arrived, in search of his nephew. Sophia is under the protection of Lady Bellaston in London. In London, Tom and Partridge share lodgings with Mrs Miller. Mrs Miller's daughter is pregnant and is under the threat of rejection by her lover, Nightingale. Tom now shows his goodness. He prevails upton Nightingale to marry Nancy and thus saves Mrs Miller's family from ignominy. Thinking that Lady Bellaston alone can help him meet Sophia, he falls a victim to her advances, and allows himself to be seduced by her. She is a lusty lady. Tom proposes marriage to Lady Bellaston as a tactical exercise which works wonders and the lady terminates her affair with him. But she cannot leave him alone, she tries to procure Sophia for her friend Lord Fellamar. She even persuades him to rape her. Sophia has discovered Tom's relation with Lady Bellaston; so she turns her back on him. Sophia is luckily saved by the timely arrival of her father who now takes her under his protection. Lady Bellaston has not yet forgotten Tom and Sophia. She uses Tom's letter of proposal to instigate the young lady against her sweetheart whose fate is not on his side. She even invents a plot to get Tom abducted by a press gang. His miseries do not end. Tom is forced into a duel and apparently kills Mr Fitzpatrick. Lady Bellaston, furious at being deceived by Tom, and Lord Fellamar angry at being rejected by Sophia, plan for Tom's ruin. The supposed death of his rival lands him in jail. Fortunately the wounded man does not die. Tom is released from the jail. These amorous intrigues add to the complexity of the plot.

Now the time is ripe for the denouement. The comic epic concludes with revelation and recognition. It is revealed that Mrs Waters is Jenny Jones; Tom is given the shock of having committed incest. Mr Fitzpatrick is said to be out of danger. Besides he confesses that he provoked Tom for a duel. So Tom is absolved of the charge of murder. Square's death bed letter and Mr Miller's testimony to the innate goodness and generosity of Tom reconciles him to his guardian, Mr Allworthy. Blifil's villainy too is unmasked. He makes a sincere confession of his treachery. Jenny reveals that Tom is the illegitimate son of Bridget and Summer. Latter was a former resident of Mr Allworthy's estate. So Tom is absolved of the sin of incest and turns out to be Mr Allworthy's proper heir. Sophia too shows magnanimity and forgives Tom for his infidelities; since Tom turns out to be Mr Allworthy's heir; Squire Western poses no opposition to his union with Sophia. Tom and Sophia are married. There is a kind of poetic justice in the punishment of Blifil. He turns Methodist in order to marry a rich widow. In the true comic spirit, all complications are resolved and the hero and the heroine are happily united forever.

3. Tom Jones: Detailed Critical Summary

BOOK-I
Introduction

We note that the first chapter to each Book in the novel is a critical essay. In the very opening chapter, Fielding discusses his aims and objectives as a novelist. He may even hit at the critical endeavour of other critics and take them to task. In fact, it is the novelist's heart to heart talk with the reader. Even within the narrative, sometimes, he establishes intimacy with the reader. Certainly these introductory chapters show Fielding's large learning and scholarship. These chapters are a helping device for the reader. He comes to know the real intention of the author as well as is able to form his own opinion about the development of events in the book.

In the very beginning, Fielding compares a novelist to the keeper of an "eating house" and the stuff served on the table to a bill of fare. A menu is provided by the host; similarly, here the novelist informs the reader what he should expect in the novel. The novel offers a sumptuous dish of human nature. Human nature alone is the most extensive and intensive subject in the world. The reader may consider it a common subject, but such an objection is not valid. It is not an easy task to represent human nature. Only a writer blessed with learning, taste, and wit, that, is a natural genuis with cultivated skill alone can present human nature honestly. A writer with inferior wit cannot perform this duty. So the comparison is apt; only an author with true genius like a cook with genius of preparing a dish alone can present true human nature.

CHAPTER II-XIII

Summary

Squire Allworthy, a middle-aged widower, owns the largest estates in Somersetshire. He is a venerable looking, agreeable and pleasant man. He is said to be the favourite of nature and fortune. From "nature" Mr Allworthy "derived an agreeable person, a sound contitution, a sane understanding, and a benevolent heart", from "fortune" he was decreed to the inheritance of one of the largest estates in the country. Now that he is an issueless widower and his wife having died five years before the beginning of this history, he lives with his sister Miss Bridget Allworthy. She is a spinster past the age of thirty. She is commended by her associates for her qualities rather than her beauty. She is a prude, and holds that personal charms in a woman are snares.

As the novel begins, Mr Allworthy has just returned from London. He has been away from his estate and was detained for three months attending to an important business. We see him preparing for bed, and "after having spent some time on his knees – a custom which he never broke on any account" – he discovers an infant sleeping in his bed. Mr Allworthy is highly surprised. He immediately rings for his housekeeper, Mrs Deborah Wilkins. Mrs Deborah expresses her genuine Christian spirit when she suggests that the infant may be wrapped up and placed at the church warden's door. If the baby survives, all right; if not, she says " we have discharged our duty in taking proper care of it; and it is .....better for such creatures to die in innocence." But generosity takes hold of Mr Allworthy and he declines to approve of Mrs Deborah's suggestion.

Next Morning at breakfast, Allworthy summons Mrs Deborah to bring the child and offers it to his sister as a present. Miss Allworthy shows no surprise. Rather, she express her oneness with her brother's decision of extending care and protection to the child. She has all praise for her brother's charitable approach. Now search to find out who the mother of the child begins. Mrs Deborah's suspicion falls on Jenny Jones. Though not beautiful, Jenny Jones is an intelligent woman. A local school master named Partridge instructs her in Latin. Jenny has often been to Mr Allworthy's house. Besides she has nursed Miss Bridget through a violent malady.

Mr Allworthy summons her to answer the charge of having delivered the bastard. While addressing Jenny, he is stern but compassionate. He is concerned more about her moral well being than about punishment. He, instead of admonishing her, exhorts her to lead a virtuous life. He earnestly persuades her to reveal the name of the father of the child so that he may be apprehended and punished. Jenny refuses to reveal the name though she says that the name of child's father will come to light someday. She also tells that at present the man is out of his reach. She is asked to leave the neighbourhood. To the great surprise of Mrs Deborah, Miss Bridget approves of her brother's decision. She even defends Jenny taking her to be a victim of a depraved man.

Squire Allworthy is known for his hospitality. He was always surrounded by men of merit. One such man was Dr Blifil. Miss Bridget is drawn towards him, but Dr Blifil was already married. The doctor has a brother, a retired army captain, who is still a bachelor. Dr Blifil persuades his brother to rise to the occasion. Besides, Mr Allworthy has no heir. He is lured by the Squire's property. So the captain courts Miss Bridget. He pursues her. After only seeming resistance she accepts his proposal. Mr Allworthy too makes no objection. He happily accepts the captain a match for his sister.

But the captain is made of baser stuff. His marriage with Miss Bridget was based not on love but his interest in the estate of Allworthy. Soon after the wedding, the captain shows his contempt for his brother. Nor can Dr Blifil inform Mr Allworthy of the real nature of his brother because he himself is their march-maker. The doctor is forced to leave the country. Heart broken, he returns to London where he dies soon afterwards.

Commentary

In Book I, which is largely introductory, Fielding sets the plot in motion. A few of the main characters too are introduced. These are Mr Allworthy, his sister, Miss Bridget, her waiting gentlewoman, Mrs Deborah Wilkins; others are Jenny Jones, Dr Blifil, Captain Blifil, and, of course, the infant Tom Jones, who is the hero in the book. Here Tom has been introduced as a foundling infant. We have very little to say about him. Fielding himself does not comment much on his parentage. It is done for the sake of propriety.

Mr Allworthy is, of course, the major character. He is shown as "the favourite of nature and fotune." Above all, he is extra kind to the infant foundling. Mrs Deborah suggests that child be placed at the church warden's door. But he does not agree. He immediately orders that the child must be looked after properly. Besides, he lets Tom share the shelter with Blifil, his nephew. Instead of punishing Jenny for here immoral act, he advises her to follow morality and mend her ways. He simply asks her to leave the neighbourhood. He uses polite language. He is polite and generous to his sister as well.

Even the two brothers, Dr Blifil and captain Blifil, though minor characters, are introduced to project Mr Allworthy's better aspects. When the captain's courtship matures and Miss Bridget is won over he does not object to their marriage. Rather he feels pleased that his sister will be happy.

Besides, the opening of the novel is very dramatic. Fielding's training as a dramatist has great deal of bearing on the episodes. The structure of the novel depends on the swift development of the episodes, the character contrast and the panoramic description of the neighbourhood. Here the action is swift.

BOOK II
Introduction

This introductory chapter deals with Fielding's treatment of time in the novel. He also informs the reader that the novel is entitled a "history". Again it is not a regular history of a person or events. It is a history in a special sense. It is not "a life, nor apology for a life." But this history is concerned with the events of great significance. In other words, it records events not incidents. To fulfil this purpose many years may be passed over in silence. The time may drag on. But if there is happening of special note or crucial urgency, it will be treated at length.

In the concluding part of the chapter, Fielding provides the reader with clues pertaining to the structure of the novel. At the same time he asserts that he is an innovator in English fiction. Thus, in this chapter, Fielding takes

the reader into confidence and also wants him to be obedient and accepting. He thinks that rapport between them is a precondition.

CHAPTER II-IX

Summary

Eight months after her marriage with Captain Blifil, Mrs Bridget Blifil is blessed with a son, though prematurely. Squire Allworthy announces that the two children will be brought up together. Although Mrs Blifil knows that her husband will not digest such a suggestion, and as she loves her brother, she readily agrees. Mr Blifil argues with Mr Allworthy on the topic. He quotes from the Bible to convince him that the bastard must be kept apart. But as Mr Allworthy is as well read in the scriptures as the hyperbolic captain, he refutes his argument and silences him.

Now a considerable portion of Book II is devoted to Mrs Deborah's efforts to find out who is the father of the foundling, and the consequent action. Partly to please her mistress or to satisfy her curiosity she has been pursuing her search to find out as to who is the father of little Tommy. She is now more than sure that she has been able to discover the true father of the infant. This time the axe falls on Partridge, the local schoolmaster.

Partridge is said to be the best-natured person. This schoolmaster of sociable and lively nature is welcome in every house of the neighbourhood. He is hated by none, but unfortunately he has a nagging wife. They have been married for the past nine years. Their home, if at all it is a home, has been a battlefield.

After Jenny's departure, an uneasy peace prevails in the Partridge family. But this happy situation does not endure for long. One day she gets information that Jenny has given birth to a bastard. Since Jenny left them about nine months before, she immediately concluded that Partridge must be the father. The moment she reaches home, she attacks her husband violently.

When Mr Allworthy comes to know about Partridge's involvement with Jenny and his fatherhood of the foundling, he is shocked. But he would not believe without investigation. Partridge is immediately summoned. Mrs Partridge appears as a witness against her husband. She confirms that her husband is guilty. Partridge, however, protests and pleads himself innocent. He unwillingly, and just to quiet his wife, confesses. He adds that just for the peace of his wife he would have been willing to swear to anything. Partridge begs that Jenny may be sent for to prove him not guilty. Mr Allworthy agrees and asks to spot Jenny. But attempt to locate her failed. Partridge was consequently found guilty; he was deprived of the annuity. Besides he lost his job. Now they are miserable. Mrs Partridge succumbs to the attack of smallpox and Partridge leaves the county to try his luck elsewhere.

Book I also gives an account of Captain Blifil's self-centredness, his mercenary ends and motives and above all, his relation with his wife. He always preoccupies with the base thought that like Partridge Tommy must also be dismissed from the shire or at least must be defamed. He is also indifferent to his wife.

The family discord forces the captain to escape into thoughts concerning the disposal and arrangement of the estate of Mr Allworthy when it falls to his ownership. He is so lost in his utopian plans and designs that he may not survive to fulfil them. "Just at the very instant when his heart was exulting in meditations on the happiness which would accrue to him by Mr Allworthy' d death – died of an apoplexy."

The death of the captain affected his wife immoderately. She fell into a fit and was confined to bed for a month. A splendid epitaph was erected over his grave. It described him as tender and loving husband and a dutiful and virtuous Christian gentleman.

Commentary

Book II, like Book I, serves as a prologue to the novel proper. The reader is still being introduced to certain situations and informed about happenings. Structurally and thematically, three narrative threads are important. These are the married life and then the death of captain Blifil; the family life of Partridge, his wife's death and his leaving the country, and alongside is covered the false track of little Tommy's father; and the theme of Christian charity.

One of the themes in the novel is family. Here, in Book II, two family lives are artistically juxtaposed. Partridge is on the lower side. He and his wife are leading a life of sound and fury. But Partridge does not wear a mask. He is what he is. Their quarrels soon become public. His wife appears as a witness against her husband publically. It is like a street fight. On the contrary, Blifil and Mrs Blifil lead a life of hypocrisy, self centredness, and cruelty to each other. But they never make their wretchedness public. They are wearing a mask. Of course, she is not as nagging as Mrs Partidge is but she can never agree on anything with her husband.

In the first Book, we were introduced to the foundling alongwith other major and minor characters. Here we are introduced to the infant Blifil. In the earlier Book we are given Jenny's history. Here it is extended further. In Book I, she confessed that she was the mother of the infant child but refused to reveal the name of the child's father. Here she is related to Partridge who is pleaded guilty and partner of Jenny in the sin. It is because of her presence in house of the Partridge the she is associated with Partridge. This relationship is an important aspect of the structure of the novel. Jenny and Partridge play important roles in the plot.

The narrative touches the theme of Christian charity. This serious theme is developed mainly through the discussions of Captain Blifil and Mr Allworthy. They embody tenets of Christian virtues in their own way. Blifil is the professed Christian whereas Allworthy is the acting Christian. For Mr Allworthy charity means generosity and benevolence towards the poor and the miserable; for Blifil charity is a concept which emodies a high opinion of mankind.

BOOK -III
Introduction

In the first chapter of this Book, Fielding reiterates that in the course of the novel large spaces of time will be passed over if during these spans "nothing happened worthly of being recorded in the chronicle of this kind." This will help the reader, says Fielding, to pause, meditate, and make his own conjectures and guesses. Long narration of no avail will deprive the reader of pleasure and profit. Fielding considers the reader intelligent enough to fill the spaces of time himself. For instance, the reader can guess what happens after the death of Captain Blifil, he may brood over Mr Allworthy turning to religion and philosophy for solace to bear the shock of the death of her husband; he may guess over Mrs Bridget's changing mood, changing her attire accordingly, and recovering her former serenity.

These are only two instances and many more may be found; the reader may even contemplate over more common occurrences of no special note. More information may be collected about Mr Allworthy from daily and weekly historians.

The novelist is here indicating that economy is very essential in a narrative of this kind. Fielding would very well elaborate all these occurrences but he informs the reader that they will strike as redundant and superfluous as far as the plot construction is concerned. He suggests that they need only to be guessed at rather than dwelled on. It means Fielding is a votary of economy of expression. He wants to be precise and exact; for that he takes the reader into confidence.

CHAPTERS II-X

Twelve years pass between Tommy Jones' birth and now. At present he is fourteen. All agree in Mr Allworthy's family that the lad is "certainly born to be hanged." Such a devastating opinion of near ones is the result of his tendency towards wickedness and evil. He has been convicted of three petty thefts. Besides, his contrast with Master Blifil makes his misconduct all the more obvious, nay glaring. Everyone has a word of praise for Master Blifil. He is taken as a model of sobriety and pleasantness.

Black George, Mr Allworthy's gamekeeper, seems to be Tom's only companion. One day both were on a hunting expedition; they move a brood of partridges near the border of Mr Allworthy's manor. The birds fly over the boundary line. They pursue the game; one of the birds is shot down. By chance the owner of the manor

happened to be near. He hears the report of the gun; he tries to spot the transgressors and Tom is apprehended. Black George had hidden himself behind a thicket and thus escaped discovery. Tom appears before Mr Allworthy who is confirming the report to punish or acquit the guilty. It is insisted that there were two people because two shots had been heard. But Tom denies that anyone was with him. Despite a terrible beating from Thwackum, one of his tutors, Tom sticks to his earlier statement that he was alone. Allworthy is now convinced that the lad has unjustly been wronged. To make amends he gives Tom a little house as a present.

Mr Allworthy has assigned the duty of educating Tom and Belifil to Thwackum and Square. Thwackum has improved himself by study – "In morals he was a professed Platonist, and in religion he inclined to be an Aristotelian". On the other hand, Square is a specialist in the classics; he "held human nature to be the perfection of all virtue, and that vice is a deviation from our nature, in the same manner that deformity of body is." Their dispute concerning morality and religion is a perpetual debate. Besides, they never agree.

One day when they were debating hotly whether honour can exist independently of religion, their discussion is interrupted by appearance of Master Blifil with a bleeding nose. Again Tom was responsible for that violent act. Actually Master Blifil had called Tom a "beggarly bastard." Now he makes the secret of Tom's being with Black George in the shooting expedition public.

Now Thwackum and Square unanimously recommend that Tom must be punished severely. But Mr Allworthy having been impressed with Tom's "invincible fidelity" does not agree with them. He prefers it to the religion of Thwackum and the virture of Square. But he is displeased with Black George and dismisses him. Blifil cringes before his teachers and shows great respect, and remembers their precepts; he uses all occasions to praise them to Mr Allworthy. On the contrary, Tom not only shows aversion to their teaching, but also laughs at the duo.

Thwackum and Square have been casting covetous eyes at the widow Blifil. To win over the lady, they adopt the shorter route; they favour her son at the expense of the foundling. But the widow has no intention of marrying again. But she having the common feminine frailty of flattery, lets them carry on with their efforts. Besides, they are unaware of her dislike for Master Blifil. They interpret her kindness to Tom as her tactical exercise to ruin him. However, her preference for Tom arouses Allworthy's sympathy for Blifil.

During four years that have passed since Mr Allworthy expelled Black George, the gamekeeper, Tom has been helping the wretched family. He even sells his little horse and a Bible, which were Allworthy's gifts to him, to help them. Allworthy is so much overcome by Tom's kindness towards the family that he was about to reemploy him when Blifil accuses that George was guilty of poaching hares on Mr Western's estate. Hence Mr Allworthy drops the idea of rehiring Black George.

However, Tom succeeds in winning the favour of Squire Western. Western is the landowner on whose property occurred the original partridge incident in which Tom was accused of shooting and encroachment. In order to help his friend, the gamekeeper, he decides to apply to Mr Western. Also, he approaches Sophia, Squire Western's beautiful daughter, hoping to help Black George and his family.

Commentary

Book III, which covers more time than any other book in the novel, deals with the span of time and compares and contrasts Square and Thwackum. They hardly need any comments.

BOOK -IV
Introduction

This Book begins with Fielding's assertion that truth is fundamental to this history. This distinguishes his novel from the idle romances available. But to enliven the reader's spirit and to refresh him, he has taken the opportunies of embellishing his narrative. One such occasion is the introduction of the heroine. For that he prepares the reader. As a preliminary introduction at the entrance of the charming Sophia Western, the author says, "We have thought proper to prepare the mind of the reader for her reception, by filling it with every pleasing image we can

draw from the face of nature." He refers to the prior practice of introducing the hero in drama by a flourish of drums and lively music. Even while the Lord Mayor of London in formal appearances is welcome with great pomp and show. So the novelist says that he is following these precedents and introduces the "heroine with the utmost solemnity in our power, with an elevation of style, and all other circumstances proper to raise the veneration of our reader."

CHAPTER II-XIV

Sophia Western is a charmig girl of eighteen. She is an embodiment of sweetness, innocence, pleasantness. She represents the natural gentility proper to her womanhood. All her actions are spontaneously characterized by generosity and decorum. She is free from the acquired habits of what is called the "polite circle". She has been the playmate of Tom and Blifil ever since five years age when Tom presented a singing bird to her. The creature was the delight of her heart. While playing together Blifil, out of malice, sets the bird free. Tom tries to recapture Sophia's pet at a great physical risk.

From now onwards Sophia's love for Tom increases and she has developed an aversion for Blifil. She has been absent from the county for three years; she was away to her aunt who had taken the responsibility of her education; she has returned recently. Now Sophia and Tom meet very frequently because Tom has become a great favourite of her father and hunts with him. Now Tom wants to take advantage of this intimacy. He pleads Black George's case to her. Sophia promises to do what she can; she also asks for a favour. She requests him to take care of her father during the hunt. He assures her not to worry at all and promises all care for the Squire.

Squire Western loves his daughter very dearly. He never refuses any of her request; her request is granted and Black George is employed as Western's gamekeeper. Except Blifil, Square and Thwackum, the trio, all people in the neighbourhood are full of praise for Tom for helping George.

Whereas Sophia's love for Tom is enhancing, he has his reservations. There are two reason for his hesitation; one, he is aware of the social and financial gap between them; two, he believes that he is in love with Molly Seagrim, the daughter of Black George. This attractive girl has seduced Tom; being a perfect actress she has convinced the hero that it is he who has seduced her. He holds himselfs responsible for her "happiness or misery".

To help Molly, Sophia sends her some discarded finery. Her father notes some alteration in the shape of Molly's body. To hide this she attends the church in silken sack presented by Sophia. Molly becomes an object of ridicule for the whole congregation; her fancy dress also arouses the envy of her equals. After the service she is physically attacked, and an epic fight follows in the churchyard. Fielding describes it in his finest mock-heroic manner. Molly defends herself heroically. Tom arrives and rescuses her. He gives her his coat to cover herself and takes her home, and saves her from further shame.

Molly's miseries do not end here. In the broil she had unfortunately injured a travelling fiddler. On his complaint, Mr Allworthy summons Molly. When the Squire notices Molly's condition for the first time, he asks her to name the person responsible for her condition. At that time Tom was dining at the Westerns. When Parson Supple, Western's curate, breaks the news, Tom immediately rises from the table and begs leave. His sudden departure makes Squire Western suspect that Tom is the father of Molly's unborn child.

Tom reaches home well in time. Tom goes to Mr Allworthy and confesses that he is the father of her unborn child. Molly is asked to leave, but Mr Allworthy is offended with Tom's conduct. However, he takes a lenient view because Tom has repented of his sins. Thwackum offers his lectures on morality and virtue, whereas Square comments that Tom has been kind to Black George only to ruin his daughter. Mr Allworthy simply ignores them.

Now we turn to Sophia. Tom's admission of his guilt with Molly hurts her. She decides to avoid him as much as possible. She plans to go to her aunt. However, Mr Western presses him to ride with her to the hunt, and she agrees. During the hunt her horse bolts; immediately Tom rushes to protect her. She is not hurt but Tom breaks

his arm. The hunting party returns and Tom is confined to bed. Mr Western is often in Tom's sick room. This act of natural gallantry wins Tom great admiration. Certainly "it made a deep impression on her heart." Tom's act of fondling and kissing of Sophia's muff shows his love for her. Sophia is under the ravages of love for Tom though it is still an undercurrent.

Commentary

By introducing Squire Western, his charming daughter Sophia, and Sophia's maid, Mrs Honour, Fielding completes the cast of important characters who matter most in the plot. Mrs Honour and Molly will soon be dropped. In this book our concern is more with the Squire and Sophia, the heroine.

Sophia is introduced in the mock-heroic style. Her appearance reminds us of the conventions practised by the classical poets in their epics. In the second chapter of this book, the novelist perpares the reader to receive her: "Hushed be every ruder breath .... the lovely sophia comes!" Here she is treated with all solemnity and in elevated style. Fielding, thus, raises "the veneration of our readers", and uses "sublime" language.

As everywhere, Fielding uses character contrast as a method of characterization. Sophia versus Molly and Mrs Honour, Tom versus Blifil, Square versus Thwackum, and Squire Western versus Mr Allworthy make the book a deep study in human nature. Vice of Molly is juxtaposed with the virtue of Sophia; Tom' gallantry is set against Blifil's villainy. Both the squires are pleasantly contrasted. Mr Western's variousness is set against the sameness of Mr Allworthy.

BOOK-V
Introduction

In the introductory chapter, Fielding explains the necessity of the chapters, and suggests that if the reader finds them dull or interesting he may pass on to chapter II of every book where the novel proper begins. But he suggests that in order to appreciate the history and to make genuine responses, he must "consider these initial essays". No doubt, they serve as key to the history.

The chapter shows Fielding's, is critical acumen. Here he takes up the function and nature of critic and the function "contrast" in an artistic work. Fielding's, like other major writers of the eighteenth century, such as Pope, Addison and Swift, and in the following century such as Shelley and Keats, had not much praise for the critics. Fielding is of the conviction that every work of art is governed by its own laws of organic growth.

Fielding compares the critics to a judge's law clerk whose job is to copy out the rules handed him by the bench. But the clerk, with the passage of time, as Fielding adds, begins giving the laws himself. He calls the critics men of "shallow capacities" who commit grave error of mistaking 'form for substance'. He calls them impostors, and says that "time and ignorance" has "lent them their dubious authority to the critic".

In the concluding part of the prefatory chapter he says that like the "English Pantomine" these essays have both the serious as well as the comic purpose; thus he emphasizes the need to consider these essay type introductory chapters to each book of the novel.

CHAPTER II-XII
Summary

During his illness, Tom is confined to Squire Western's house. Every day Mr Allworthy visits him , and argues with him over his undesirable conduct. Thwackum and Square, during their visits, do not forget to offer the advice. Thwackum asks Tom to repent and lead a new life; and Square preaches indifference to pain. He elaborates how pain is a transitory emotion which needs to be treated with contempt. Blifil visits him very rarely lest he should be contaminated and lose his sobriety. Most of the time Sophia is with him playing the music at the harpsichord. Both are aware of the growing love between them. But Tom once again is reminded of the social gulf between them. Besides, he knows that her father who is his admirer is a practical man and would see his

daughter married to the wealthiest man in the world. Mr Allworthy too will react to any deceit Tom may invent in gaining Sophia. Also he is committed to Molly. So he resolves to forget Sophia and be faithful to Molly.

Meanwhile Mrs Honour tells Tom of Sophia's love of the muff he has kissed. Sophia, she tells, never wants to part company with the lively object. Sophia even managed to save it from the fire that Mr Western had flung into. Tom now cannot resist his love. But how he can manage Molly. He thinks of giving her a house and financial help. He goes to herto argue and bring her round. When Tom extends his offer, Molly calls her a faithless lover and bursts into tears. Her attitude changes when Tom discovers the "philosopher" Square in Molly's room. Overcome with happiness, he leaves while admonishing Square to be kind to her.

Tom is still in "to be or not to be" situation. He is chased by the thought that he might be the father of Molly's child. Molly's eldest sister, however, makes a revelation which solves his puzzle. She reveals that Will Barnes first seduced Molly, and may be Will is the father of her unborn child. Now one day while walking in the orchard of Mr Western's estate, Tom makes a confession of his love. Sophia is moved with emotion and withdraws hastly to her house.

About the same time, Squire Allworthy is down with fever and it soon becomes serious. The physician fears that the gentleman may even expire. He calls the family and servants to his bedside so that he may make the terms of his will known. Meanwhile he does not forget to preface his legacy with a long sermon on death. The heart of the matter of the discourse is how one should greet the Messenger of Death. Now he states some of the terms of the will. The lion's share goes to Blifil. As the heated argument between the two tutors follows, Blifil comes with the information that a lawyer has brought the news that his mother, Mrs Blifil, has died while returning home. But Tom's anger turns to joy when he learns that Mr Allworthy's health has shown signs of improvement. He drinks, laughs, and sings. Blifil asks him how he can show such behaviour in view of the recent news of Mrs Blifil's death, his mother. Immediately, Tom apologizes, and even invents an excuse that Mr Allworthy's "recovery" had made him so happy that it cancelled all other thought. But Blifil cannot feel defeated. He passes a derogatory remark to Tom's birth, and a scuffle ensues.

After this unpleasant incident, Tom leaves and goes to fields for solace.He is lost in sad thoughts when Molly happens to be there. They retire into a comfortable nearby thicket. They are surprised by Blifil and Thwackum. Molly quits and Tom is found sitting comfortably. When Thwackum asks the person's name who he could be with him and Tom refuses to reveal, again, stiff fight takes place in which Blifil is laid sprawling. Situation is saved by the timely appearance of Squire Western, Sophia, her aunt and Parson Supple. Mr Western rushes to Tom's help. Sophia faints when she sees Tom's blood. Now everybody attends to her. The party excluding Blifil and Thwackum leaves for Mr Western's place.

Commentary

Tom's convalescence at Squire Western's house serves as a touchstone to test characters. It shows that basic traits in human nature never change. Thwackum, Square and Blifil will remain what they are. The situation brings Tom and Sophia closer. It offers Tom the time gap to contemplate. It shows his conflicting nature as well. Tom's sincerity towards Molly is established. One of the most complicated problem of relation between Tom and Molly is solved. He goes to her house with all sincerity to convince her. Spotting of the philosopher Square in her closet frees Tom of all pricks of conscience. Now he is free to devote himself entirely to Sophia. Also we come to know about the real nature of Square. He exposes his hypocrisy.

Similarly Mr Allworthy's illness and his making the will public bring the real nature of many a character to light. It is only Tom who loves Mr Allworthy without any selfishness. He is the happiest one when it is revealed that Mr Allworthy has improved.

We are introduced to the lawyer who brings the news of Mrs Blifil's death en route for home. Later on he becomes a key figure to solve the riddle of Tom's parentage. This person is known as lawyer Dowling. He brings together the different threads of the plot. He will always be in a hurry and will always arrive when needed.

The scuffles between Tom and Blifil at two places gives us a peep into Blifil's evil nature. He will use every occasion to remind Tom of his base birth. Besides, he will always be helped by the evil forces such as Thwackum and Square, but he will always be defeated. Tom maintains his integrity and is heroic and chivalrous.

BOOK -VI
Introduction

In the introductory chapter of this Book, Fielding concentrates on the subject of love. He says that during their discoveries certain philosophers have concluded that there is no such emotion as love. Similarly, as Fielding adds, they are incapable of tracing either divinity or "anything virtuous or good, or lovely, or loving, very fairly, honesty, and logically concludes that no such thing exists in the whole creation." Fielding holds that every human being has kindness and benevolence as basic to his nature. And this he terms as love. He is of the opinion that love may be enhanced by amorous desire but may very well exits with it. Love is not shaken either by age or by sickness; besides, "gratitude and esteem" are its solid basis. No one can deny the existence of the passion of love. He suggests the reader that if he believes in the existence of love he may derive happiness out of this history; if he does not , he is wasting his time.

CHAPTERS II-XII

Mrs Western, Sophia's aunt is a worldly-wise woman. She is a "perfect mistress of manners, customs, ceremonies and fashions." She is specialized in the subject of love. No other interest of hers has diverted her from the pursuit of love. But she herself has never been obliged by any person extending this emotion. The reason is assigned to her masculine appearance. Ever since her arrival, she has been observing Sophia closely. Especially after the fight scene in the field she decided and informed Mr Western that Sophia is in love. Western is in fury as he cannot imagine that she can fall in love without seeking his permission. Mrs Western loves her brother and her niece very dearly. Mr Western thinks that his sister has rightly observed that Sophia loves Blifil. He has already considered the possibilities of this alliance. This could join the two estates. He immediately decides to propose the match to Mr. Allworthy. Mrs. Western is more than ready to assist him.

Mr Western invites Mr Allworthy, Tom and Blifil to dinner. Sophia suspects that her aunt might have noticed her growing love for Tom. Therefore she shows more favour to Blifil, and ignores Tom. Mr Western concludes that Sophia is in love with Blifil. He is happy over the development. As soon as dinner is over, he takes Mr Allworthy aside and proposes the match. As Mr Allworthy always wished this alliance, he is more than willing. However, he suggests that Blifil's assent is necessary.

Back home, Mr Allworthy asks Blifil about the proposal, and is surprised to learn that he is not in love with Sophia. However he agrees to be guided by the squire. Next morning the gentleman conveys a confirmatory information to Mr Western. Now Mrs Western enters Sophia's closet to inform her about the happy developments but Sophia thinks that it is about her alliance with Tom. But when she learns that it is Blifil and not Tom, she inadvertently lets slip her love for Tom. Mrs Western cannot digest the idea of contaminating her family with this alliance with a bastard. However, she agrees to keep Sophia's secret on the condition that she will be civil to Blifil and accept her as a lover. Mrs Honour who was spying through the keyhole rushes in and requests Sophia not to marry Blifil.

Next afternoon Mr Allworthy and Blifil arrive. Sophia receives Blifil with posed civilty. The interview lasted for a few minutes. She was all along conversing with downcast looks. Blifil took it as modesty, and assumed that she favoured him. He cannot think of Tom as his rival. Besides, he cannot read Sophia's mind because he is blinded by the prospects of gaining her fortune. After the party has left, Mr Western enters Sophia's closet, he proclaims his love and promises her clothes and jewels. Sophia in tears begs her father not to force her. She tells him that she hates Blifil. Western is furious. He warns her, either she must marry Blifil or she will be disinherited. In the hall he comes across Tom. He tells him about the development and asks him to go to Sophia and convince her.

A poignant scene follows. Tom requests Sophia not to marry Blifil; she assures that she will not do it, if it is within her power. Mrs Western informs her brother that Sophia loves Tom and not Blifil. The Squire is highly grieved; his fury returns; he storms into Sophia's room and challenges Tom to fight. Concluding that Western is not ready to listen to anything, Tom quits. Next day Western informs Mr Allworthy about the whole development. For his satisfaction Mr Allworthy investigates. Blifil testifies against Tom and describes the fight which took place between him, Thwackum and Tom. Thwackum confirms it. Mr Allworthy decides that Tom must be expelled from the house. The sentence is announced after dinner. Mr Allworthy gives him a paper which is actually bank note for £500. Tom is told to quit immediately. He accepts Mr Allworthy's verdict meekly. Once out of the house Tom is full of grief. In despair he rends his clothes, and throws away his articles including the papers containing pounds. Black George happens to be there. He picks up the papers; he keeps the amount as well as the secret. However, Tom takes Georges arrival as fortune; he decides to deliver a letter to Sophia through him.

Sophia is confined to her room, a prison. Mrs. Honour has been charged by Mr Western not to let anybody in her room and meet her. Paper, pen and ink are to be kept away lest she should be able to write a letter to Tom or anybody else. Despite all these instructions, Mrs Honour delivers the letter that black George brings to Sophia. After reading the letter she becomes the saddest creature on earth. Ecstasy of grief makes her most miserable. As Tom is homeless and penniless, Sophia sends him sixteen guineas, the only money she had.

Commentary

This book is of crucial importance as far as the structure of the novel is concerned. One of the burdens is that the story must move on; in the main it is the story of love between Sophia and Tom; since an obstacle has come in the way, Blifil has emerged as an antagonist. Besides, it is too early to close the issue. So the hero must be removed from the scene. Very soon the heroine too will move away from the dangerous house. Moreover, the book is written in the picaresque tradition. As such it must offer a panoramic view of the then society. We have enough of the neighborhood of Mr Allworthy's shire. The scene must change. So we will be made to follow the hero and his journey will offer a scenario in the tradition of a realistic history.

BOOK-VII
Introduction

In the introductory chapter of this Book, Fielding explains the imitative nature of art. He refers to the common tendency of comparing human life to a drama Fielding refers to Aristotle who called art an imitation of life. Sometimes, he says, imitation of life is so genuine that it is mistaken for the real thing. As the act of Black George's theft of Tom's money has not been elaborated or commented upon, Fielding takes it up here. He equals it with anything on the stage. He guesses as to how the audience should react to this incident. Of course, a few will condemn George's act; some will conclude that the author should have shown some punishment for his betrayal. There may be people who will just ignore it and take it as it happens. Fielding's not giving any significance shows that he is dealing with real human nature. Black George, as his position is, cannot resist from the allurement of money. Not that he is a thief or is insincere to Tom. He takes Tom's letter to Sophia and brings the money that she has spared for Tom. So Fielding cannot condemn Black George , as he says that a man with a generous heart will never condemn another.

CHAPTERS II- XV

Next morning Mr Allworthy sends Tom his belongings. Besides, he receives an unpleasant letter from Blifil who asks him to quit the area immediately. Helpless, Tom resolves to set out for Bristol. The same day, Mrs Western raises the subject of Sophia's marriage, she scoffs at the very idea of romantic love; marriage, according to her, is based on calculation and conveniences. But Sophia cannot be persuaded to accept her opinion; she states that she will not marry the man she hates. She refuses to marry Blifil. Mr Western, who happens to be listening outside the door, storms into the room and swears that she must bow to his dictates. Mr Western and his sister quarrel over the management of Sophia's marriage. Mrs Western threatens to leave.The Squire speaks against

Sophia, his late wife and his sister and tells that women have been his misfortune. When Sophia reminds her father that "if my aunt had died yesterday, I am convinced she would have left you her whole fortunes," Mr Western calms down. He requests his sister not to leave, and they reconcile. Now both agree that Sophia must marry Blifil. Mr Allworthy is made to believe that Sophia is eager to marry Blifil.

Their plan is overheard by Mrs Honour. She goes to Sophia immediately and acquaints her with every detail. Sophia first decides to end her life then resolves to run away from home and go to a female relative in London. Honour tells her that there is nothing to worry, and agrees to accompany her mistress. While alone, she is divided and even considers the idea of informing Mr Western. But her argument with maid of Mrs Western settles the matter. When the Squire's sister asks Mrs Honour to pack and quit, she promises Sophia "to meet her at certain place " near her house at midnight. Just to divert the attention of her father she consents to obey him. The squire is happy, forgives her , and gives 100 Pounds so that she may buy "some trinkets."

Tom has hired a guide to take him to Bristol, but the fellow is ignorant of the route. Both are lost and take shelter in an inn. A company of soldiers arrives. They are marching to crush a revolt in the North. Patriotic feelings grip Tom's imagination. Next day he marches with the soldiers. His manners impress the officer and he is invited to join the officer's mess. When Tom proposes Sophia's name during the after dinner toasts, a member of the group named Ensign Northerton makes an absurd remark at her expense. That man had once seen her with her aunt and could describe her. Tom was engaged in a scuffle with the drunken Ensign. The latter hurls a bottle of wine at him. Tom falls and remains motionless. Northerton is taken into custody. When Tom is a bit better, during the night, he purchases as word from the company sergeant. He treads out of his bed in search of Northerton to settle his score. Tom is fired at by the guards. The shot is missed but Northerton has already escaped by bribing the landlady. Tom is now left to the care of landlady and the company of soldiers marches off.

Commentary

The book widens the scope of action of the novel. Tom is on the road now. Like Joseph Andrews it becomes an epic of the road. Tom is penniless and must seek his fortune elsewhere. Sophia too has resolved to leave her father's home because she cannot agree to marry the person she detests. She emerges as a woman of independent thinking, she takes a bold decision. She will never marry Blifil. Honour emerges as a faithful maid servant. She stands for practical wisdom, she makes Sophia aware of the terror of the road. Through Sophia -Mr Western tangle we come to know about a family situation. The children at that time were supposed to pay utmost respect to their parents. A girl's revolt, especially regarding her marriage, was inconceivable. If Sophia had not planned to run away, she could have been tied with Blifil. The audience could very well realize the extent of her revulsion against Blifil. She was ready to brave the dangers of the road but could not accept Blifil as her partner. Sophia's decision to quit her home is a dramatic event which extends the action further.

The book offers good characterization. Blifil is an archetype of evil. He is revengeful, lusty and greedy; he can never give happiness to anybody but himself. He can hoodwink both the squires. Like father like son. Squire Western is a typical rural squire. But he is a caring father who wants his daughter to be married to the richest man in the world but he is insensitive to the emotional needs of his daughter. His sister is his pale copy. Similarly Squire Allworthy is all worthy but he can easily be misled.

BOOK-VIII
Introduction

This introductory chapter is on 'marvellous versus real' in fiction. Fielding is of the conviction that every writer must never cross the bounds of possibility. What he means is that what is possible is true and believable. He advocates Horace, who advises to use supernatural only sparingly. He adds that even ghosts should be introduced cautiously. According to him "man is the highest subject". Similarly, he says that the author must observe the rule of probability, the delineation of both good and evil should be kept within the bounds of possibility and probability. Like all eighteenth century writers, Fielding is of the conviction that action should remain within "the

compass of human nature". Besides, it must be consistent with the character delineated. What he means is that every action must be in-character. Fielding concludes that if the writer observes the rules of possibility and probability honestly he will be able to win the faith of his reader.

CHAPTERS II-XV

Summary

The landlady visits Tom in his room. She chides him for his scuffle with the soldier. When Tom mentions Sophia's name she calms down. Sophia has been a guest. She also tells that she has been to Mr Allworthy's estate and has taken him on her lap for more than once. Tom becomes poetic in praise of the Squire. Somebody knocks at the door, and she leaves. An argument ensues between Tom and his physician who visits him to treat his wound, leaves never to return. Tom is awaiting his usual dinner, while the local barber saves him. The barber is a strange fellow; he is full of oddities; his conversation is mixed with some quoting from Latin. Tom invites him to share a bottle of wine with him. This barber is known by the name of Little Benjamin. Tom relates his history up to the present moment. Now Little Benjamin reveals his identy. He is none other then Partridge, the village Latin schoolmaster and who is supposed to be the father of Tom. He tells him he is not his father. He tries to persuade Tom to return to Mr Allworthy so that he (Partridge) may be amply rewarded. He now accompanies Tom and on their way to Gloucester, reach an inn, The Bell. Here Tom meets Mr Dowling who is accompanied by another lawyer. The latter tells the landlady about Tom's mad pursuits at Mr Allworthy's. He reacts sharply and Tom is glad to part company with the lady and quit the place.

As the evening deepens into night and the road is dangerous, Partridge begs Tom to return to the inn but Tom does not heed and treads on. Both reach the foot of a steep hill. Partridge fears that there must be a ghost. They see a glimmering light in a cottage. They arrive to find an old woman in the cottage. She refuses to admit them into the cottage. She tells that her master, The Man of the Hill, has ordered not to admit anybody. Meanwhile they hear the sound of scuffle outside. Armed with a sword Tom goes out and finds two ruffians attacking the old man. He rescues the old man who invites Tom into the house. Tom is curious about the past history of his host, and the latter now settles down to relate his story.

The Man of the Hill tells that when he was young man of promise he went to the University where he was addicted to gambling and liquor. He bade farewell to the academic world and went to London. Their, the gambler, Watson, introduced him to the underworld of the city. His father rescued him and he returned to his home. For four years he devoted himself to his study. His physician advised him change of climate. The Man of the Hill goes to Bath where he meets Watson, the old gambler. Watson is now miserable. The Man of the Hill tries in vain to rehabilitate him. Duke of Monmouth's revolt inspires the Man of the Hill to join his faction. Watson also accompanies him. Both fight on behalf of the Duke against the King at the battle of Sedgemore. Watson betrays his friend to the King's forces. The Man of the Hill, however, manages to escape. After wandering in Europe, he came to that area. Now he keeps himself aloof and has devoted himself to the study of religion.

Tom, however, suggests that all mankind is not corrupt. But the Man of the Hill is not convinced; he considers all mankind depraved.

Commentary

This book reveals the character of Partriage who is know as Little Benjamin, the barber. He reminds us of Sancho Panza in Cervantes' *Don Quinote*. Little Benjamin is the former schoolmaster Partridge who had instructed Jenny Jones and who was humiliated by his wife and punished for the sin he had not committed. He reveals his identity and tells Tom that he is not his father. One of the mysteries is revealed; Tom's partentage is still a mystery.

The Man of the Hill episode is considered to be a digression. No doubt it has nothing to do with the main structure of the novel. His history is an isolated episode. It does not further the plot but as far as the theme of the novel is concerned, it is its integral part. Fielding compares and contrasts city and village life. The Man of the Hill

was corrupted by the city dwellers. The town had influenced him in the reverse. He represents the moral and social ideas. He has retreated to the country because he found London, Europe and wherever he went nothing but darkness. But Fielding does not approve of his negative approach. Patriage has better reasons to detest the world; even Tom is one who has suffered most. But they are men of the world. Tom's comment that one of two bad men cannot make us conclude that the world is wretched. Society and men who live in it are to be helped, served and loved .

BOOK-IX
Introduction

Fiedling here highlights the uses of these introductory chapters. More than most, he says, they help the reader to distinguish the true from the false in this kind of history. These chapters save the author from "the imitation of those who are utterly incapable of any degree of reflection, and whose learning is not equal to my easy." He tells that the hack writers have forced their talent on the reader. This is why Fielding has called his novel "history" and not "romance." Next Fielding proceeds to elobrate qualifications of the historians. These are genius, learning, conversation and sensibility.

CHAPTER II-VII

Summary

The Man of the Hill finishes his tale while the dawn is breaking. Tom and he go out for a walk; they hear fearful screams of a woman calling for help. Tom immediately leaps to her help, and rescues a woman who is half-naked. The ruffian is no other than Ensign Northerton, Tom's old adversary. In a moment the fight is over. Tom ties Ensing's hands, but he makes his escape because Tom forgot to bind his feet. Tom leads the lady to Upton, a town in the area so that she may have some clothes. They go to an inn. The landlady suspects them. A comical fight takes place; only Partridge's arrival saves the situation. The fight ends when the ladies arrive; the company of soldiers also arrives. It is the same company that Tom had volunteered for. Now the lady Tom rescued turns out to be the wife of Captain Waters. The landlady apologizes for her treatment. Peace is restored between them. After drinking to each other's health, all are in good mood.

Mrs Waters falls in love with Tom. She uses her charms to fascinate him. After Tom has his food to his fill he notices her. Now he thinks of satisfying his physical appetite. He forgets his loyalty to Sophia. Mrs Waters succeeds in seducing the hero. Meanwhile, during a conversation the sergeant reveals that the Captain and the lady are not man and wife, leagally. Her past life is also brought to light. She is accompaning the captain up to a point; then she will go to Bath. She is having an affair with Ensign Northerton. She was to wait for him at Worcester until his division's return. They plan to go to Hereford together. Enroute Northerton attacks Mrs Waters to obtain her valuables, but well in time Tom rescues her.

Commentary

The Upton episode which begins in this Book and concludes with Book X happens in the middle of the novel. Book IX begins with the comic action. Tom's fundamental good nature is projected through his readiness to save a woman is distress. The action slows down when the Man of the Hill narrates his own history. It has been introduced to give relief to the reader; he is given breathing time during the action.

The narrative of the Man of the Hill is not an irrelevant inclusion. It is related with the theme. One of the themes is existential problem. What kind of world is it. Is it worth living? The Man of the Hill offers one point of view which is one of withrawal. He finds the world too wretched to live in. Especially the city life is castigated at. He has withdrawn from the corrupting city life. But Tom offers just the opposite view. He suggests that one or two bad people cannot make us conclude that the whole world is corrupt.

Tom-Mrs Waters affairs again establishes that Tom is not a seducer; he is seduced. It is the woman, and that too a voluptous woman, who entagles him. Mrs Waters uses all charms to fascinate him. Besides Fielding refers to

sexual urge as "appetite" or "hunger." In case of Tom it is only a momentary affair. He is frustrated and has no hope of winning over the circumstance. Sophia is unattainable. So his affairs with Mrs Waters are to be taken as physical without involement or sincerity. In the next Book she is referred to as a "wench."

For full details the reader will have to wait till Book X which elaborates and concludes the Upton happenings.

BOOK-X

Introduction

In the opening chapter, Fielding cautions the reader not to make hasty judgement on the structure of the novel. Sometimes even an insignificant incident contributes to the overall design of the novel. Parts are to be assessed with the whole. Sometimes characters such as landladies, maids, etc act alike under the same circumstances. They may strike the reader as types; however they have individual qualities as well. Lastly, the writer makes an observation on the ethical and moral aspect of human nature. He says that the reader should not conclude that a character is bad because he is not perfectly good. No one is either perfectly good or thoroughly bad. Fielding's sympathies are with the one who is fundamentally good, and yet may show lapses under particular circumstances. The vice in an essentially good person should arouse reader's sympathy rather than aversion for the doer.

CHAPTERS II-IX

It is midnight. All are asleep. The inn at Upton breathes calmness. Only Susan Chambermaid is awake. She is to scrub the kitchen floor before going to bed. A stormy gentleman rushes into the inn. He says that he has lost his wife and is searching for her. When he asks about the woman, Susan concludes that she must Mrs Waters. She leads him to Mrs Water's chamber. Tom and Mrs Waters have locked the door from inside. The furious gentleman breaks it down. He finds the man emerging from Mrs Water's bed. A scufle ensues. Mrs Waters cries loudly "Rape!" The inn loses all its quiet. An Irish gentleman who is staying in the adjoining room who comes in rushing, recognizes the fiery gentleman as Mr Maclachlan Fitzpatrick and says amusingly that Mrs Waters is not Mrs Fitzpatrick. The landlady rushes in; Fitzpatrick feels sorry for his mistake; Tom rushes to his room through the connecting door. Mrs Waters immediately dresses herself; she apologizes to the landlady for her a bit immodest dress.

The landlady goes to the kitchen; she tells that the newcomer is a good for nothing fellow. Now the same fellow is sharing room with the Irish gentleman. Fielding ironically says that the new comer is a largehearted person. He is so generous that he has not only squandered his own wealth but has siphoned off quite a portion of hers.

Now two ladies enter the inn. The beautiful lady is accompanied by her maid. The former asks for a bed for a few hours. As soon as the lady retires, the maid orders food, finds fault with the inn, and the landlady. She invites hatred of all, whereas her mistress is admired by all. Actually the two ladies are Sophia and her maid Mrs Honour. The Landlady informs Mrs Honour that many a gentleman frequents her inn, and that Mr Allworthy's heir is in her inn at that time. Mrs Honour rushes to Sophia and tells the news. She asks Mrs Honour to find Tom. No one in the kitchen is prepared to help her. Partridge who is tipsy informs her that Tom is sharing a bed with a wench and asks her not to disturb him. Sophia receives the news with dismay. She takes off her muff; she bribes the chambermaid requesting to place it in Tom's room. Soon after Sophia and Mrs Honour leave the inn.

Next morning when Partridge awakens Tom, the latter finds the muff in his room. Cursing the day as well as Mrs Waters and Partridge, Tom dresses himself in haste and prepares to leave the inn.

Fitzpatrick and the Irish gentleman decide to hire a coach. The coachman tells them that he has two empty places in his coach. Fitzpatrick's friend, having questioned the coachman about the two ladies who had entered the inn during the fight, concludes that one was Mrs Fitzpatrick. A hectic search ensues in the inn. But Mrs Fitzpatrick, who had heard the furies her husband, had left the inn almost at the same time as Sophia did.

Meanwhile Squire Western enters. He is in pursuit of his daughter. But he was late by two hours. He missed both Sophia and Mrs Fitzpatrick. The latter was actually his niece who had eloped five years ago while she was

under Mr Western's roof. Fitzpatrick and Mr Western are not known to each other. There is great chaos; both are pouring out their fury. But it is a vain exercise and the poor lady, Mrs Waters, is again disturbed.

Commentary

Actually book IX and X are one unit and should be assessed together both structurally and thematically. The episode at the Upton Inn occurs exactly in the middle of the action. So it has structural importance. Thematically it brings many characters together, and also introduces certain new ones. Their coming together widens the scope of the scenario of the society being projected. It also places before the reader the parallel journeys of Tom and Sophia. Irony plays a significant role. Both are brought together at the Upton just to be separated again. The symbolic device of Sophia's muff is repeated. The reader is made to look back and recall it as it happens in Book V. So the inn episode is the central point of the novel.

The action in Book X is quick. Entry of Mr Fitzpatrick, his mistaken search for his run away wife, his mistaking Mrs Waters as his wife, his scuffle with Tom in Mrs Water's room is a comic interlude. Similar is the case with Mr Western's entry. The theme of flight and pursuit is artistically (also comically) brought forth. The flight of Sophia and Mrs Fitzpatrick is set against the pursuits of Mr Western, Tom, and Mr Fitzpatrick. Until now Tom was escaping from Sophia and his social surrounding; now the action is reversed. He is now pursuing her in haste. The whole action is gripping and the reader is taken along.

The muff is not an insignificant object. It is an important structural device. When it is placed in Tom's bed room he learns that Sophia is seeking him, and she has come to know of his infidelity. It also arouses emotions in Tom as it did earlier. When Tom rushes into the kitchen in search of Sophia, he meets Mr Western and when the latter finds Tom possessing her muff, he concludes that she is undone.

Above all, the Upton Inn episode provides comic relief. Humour is embodied in Mrs Waters-Tom episode; it is replayed with Mr Fitzpatrick's crashing into Mrs Waters' bedroom. Fielding blends humour of character and humour of situation. Certainly the Upton Inn episode offers a sumptuous dish of humour and comic relief.

BOOK XI
Introduction

Once again, in this introductory chapter, Fielding hits at the critics. And he very convincingly argues why he is averse to and against this tribe. He believes that their only function is to condemn, and they are ignorant of the true meaning of the word "judgement." They simply condemn mercilessly. Fielding calls them "slanderers" and "evildoers." Their weapon is sharper than the sword. The wounds that their slander inflict is beyond repair. Besides, slander is the child of a wicked and vicious mind, Fielding equates slander with murder. And he argues with an analogy. He holds that a work is the "child" of an author, and is a stay of the writer in his old age. He believes that by slandering a book the critic slanders the writer.

However, Fielding's remarks are not directed against good critics. He considered Aristotle, Horace, Longinus, Dacier, Bosu, and some others competent critics. They are critics with healthy, dispassionate, correct judgements. They do not belong to the tribe of critics who condemn and are slanders. This approach shows Fielding affinity with Pope and Swift who disliked critics.

CHAPTERS II- X

Summary

After leaving the Upton Inn, Sophia and Mrs Honour are on the road to London. Very soon, they are overtaken by another pair of ladies. Sophia feels relieved that it is not Mr Western. It is still dark and they continue their journey. The only abnormal incident that happened is that Sophia's horse stumbles and she is thrown from its back, but she is unhurt. It is dawn now and Sophia recognizes Harriet, who is her cousin. They are overjoyed to meet unexpectedly. They reach an inn and decide to stay on.

Now Harriet recapitulates her past history. She tells Sophia that she is in flight from her cruel husband. It is the person who created so much uproar at the Upton Inn. She recalls that five years ago Harriet was on vacation with her aunt Mrs Western at Bath. She met Fitzpatrick there. He pretended to be courting Mrs Western but his real motive was to gain Harriet. Their courtship was the cause of scandal in Bath. When Harriet married Fitzpatrick, Mrs Western disowned her. Actually he married her for her fortune. He took her to his home in Ireland. She faces real hell of a time there, when he leaves for England she is alone for months together. She loses her infant child and, to her dismay, she comes to know that Fitzpatrick is also supporting a mistress. When he is penniless he asks her to part with whatever she is in possession. When she does not meet his demands, she is locked in a room. She bribes someone who helps her to escape. Now she is in flight to London.

Sophia also tells her story but makes no reference to Tom. Meanwhile, the ladies learn that a gentlemen wants to talk to them. Sophia is terrified thinking that it is her father. But it turns out to be an Irishman who is a friend to Harriet. He offers them a lift and safe transportation to London. His offer is accepted, the gentleman takes leave. Harriet advises Sophia not to believe in husband's fidetily. The next morning they leave for London. Sophia discovers that she has lost the bank bill. She proceeds on leave. Mrs Fitzpatrick has already praised the Irish gentleman. The peer takes them safely to London. Sophia is suspicious about Mrs. Harriet's relations with the peer. Actually they had planned all this to go to London and then to Bath.

Sophia tells her cousin harshly and advises to take care of her behaviour. However Harriet ignores all this. Then the cousins take leave of each other. Harriet proceeds to her destination and Sophia to hers. Sophia is welcomed by Lady Bellaston. The Lady admires Sophia for her sagacity and discretion.

Commentary

Structually, Harriet's story has nothing to do with the action of the novel. It is a superfluous episode which does not add to the development of the plot. It stands apart from the whole point. Perhaps, her episode has been introduced to compare her with Sophia and her predicament. Sophia is also on flight but it is from a tyrranical father; and she is in search of her real destiny; besides, she is pure at heart and keeps herself aloof from the corrupt atmosphere. On the contrary, Harriet is also on flight but she is a flirt; she is after what Christopher Marlowe termed as "belly cheers." She is an animal. Her episode runs diagonally counter to that of Sophia. Besides, it serves one more purpose. It is a presage to town life. It foretells what kind of society we are going to see in London.

This book is also important from historical and social points of view. There is mention of the Rebellion of the' 45 when the landlard mistakes Sophia intentification with Jenny Camernon. Mention of Bath has importance in relation to social history. Reference of Both transports the reader to the atmosphere of that resort. Harriet plans to accompany the peer to Bath. She met Fitzpatrick for the first time at Bath. It is a place where people go for gossip, flirtation, gambling, etc. The reader had enough of country atmosphere; now he will have the flavour of the town life.

BOOK XII
Introduction

In the first chapter of this Book, Fielding takes up the topic of plagiarism. Fielding makes a confession that he has borrowed many passages from the ancient writers. He compares his relation with the ancients as that of the poor with the rich. The poor indulge in plunder as frequently as he can. If one steals from another it is a crime, as also it is absurd. Fielding says that if ever he borrows from a writer of his time, he will acknowldge and be grateful.

CHAPTER II -XIV

Summary

Mr Western laments not for the loss of his daughter but for having missed a fine hunting day. On hearing the loud sounds of a hunt he joins the group. The sportsmen immediately recognise his ability and praise him. They invite him to dinner and drinks. Passing the day like that amounts to a day well spent.

At the same time Tom' and Partridge are on the road. The latter advises him to return to Mr Allworthy but the former is more worried about the loss of Sophia. When Tom plays mad practical jokes, Partridge is convinced that Tom is not normal. Partridge also expresses his belief that the Man of the Hill was actually a gost, who warned them against joining army or going to wars. Tom calls him a coward. Meanwhile a beggar approaches them for alms. Tom, out of pity, hands him a shilling. It is now the beggar's turn ot oblige him. He shows an object to Tom which he found on the road. It is Sophia's pocketbook; it also contains the bank note. When the beggar asks for part of the sum, Tom says that it must be returned to its owner and premises to reward him later. Now they hear uproar which terrifies Partridge. But it turns out to be a puppet show. They watch it for some time and then spend the night at a nearby inn. Tom has Sophia's muff and pocketbook as his two companions. Partridge entertains the people in the kitchen by narrating Tom's history. He asks them to force Tom to go back to Mr Allworthy but they refuse to oblige him.

Next morning Tom is awakened from his sleep. He finds the owner of the puppet show and his Merry-Andrew quarrelling. The latter refers to the young lady who was saved from being robbed by the former. The lady was no other than Sophia herself. Tom is promised a safe conduct to the scene of the incident. Now Tom and Partridge proceed but rain forces them to take refuge in an inn. Here they collect news about Sophia from a postboy who offers to conduct them to the inn where he left her. It pleases Partridge that Tom has dropped the idea of joining army and was seriously pursuing Sophia.

When Tom arrives at the inn, he learns that horses are not available at the moment. Lawyer Dowling happens to be at the inn. He invites Tom to share drink with him. Dowling says that somebody must be there who wants to harm him. He informs the lawyer that he is not interested in Mr Allworthy's wealth; nor is he jealous of Blifil's possessions. Horses are available and Tom continues his journey. Again the guide does not know the route. Meanwhile wild music is heard. A gypsy wedding welcomes them with wine and food. A gypsy accompanies them to conduct Tom and Partridge to Coventry. When they proceed to St Alban's they learn that Sophia has left two hours ago. A highway man tries to rob Tom whom he disarms and advises to find out better ways of earning his livelihood. Tom and Partridge now proceed to London. Meanwhile Tom speaks on the injustice of hanging highway men.

Commentary

Like book XI, book XII covers the same three days. It treats Tom's journey from the same time Sophia left the inn until her arrival in London. Book XII offers an authentic glimpse of English life. The puppet show, the gypsy wedding and other happenings present a scenario of the countryside. The book deals with the then means of entertainment. It is only later on that sophisticated means of entertainment were inroducded.

The horrors of the road are also highlighted. Thieves, ruffians, pickpockets and murderers come across everywhere. The beggars too form a party of the scenario. Quarrels and fights in the inns are common happenings.

There is a searching comments on justice in the Book. Tom's conversation with the king of gypsies makes it obvious. Justice among of gypsies is quick and sure. When a gypsy girl tries to seduce Partridge it is the husband who is punished and not the gypsy girl. He is punished for not caring for her behaviour. Fielding also comments on governance. He notes that the mankind was happy only in the golden age. An absolute monarch needs moderation, wisdom and goodness. And since monarch possesses all the three, so such ruler can be a reality. Most rulers in the past lacked at least one of these three attributes.

BOOK-XIII
Introduction

In the first chapter of the Book, Fielding evokes his muse with an intimate flavour : "comfort me by a solemn asurance, that when the little parlour in which I sit at this instant shall be reduced to a worse furnished box, I shall be read with honour by those who ever knew or saw me, and whom I shall neither know nor see." The invocation here reminds him of authors who have been praying to the muses for grace. But it is neither in the

elevated style of Milton nor that of mock-heroic of Pope. Here Fielding is praying for fame and immediate material gain. It is prayer of a man of the world. He adds that if this may not be possible, "Warm my heart with the transporting thought of conveying...[riches]...to others." He prays, "Tell me that..... the prattling babes whose innocent play hath often been interrupted by my labours, may one time be amply rewarding for them."

For the sucessful completion of the work, Fielding invokes four things. One, he asks for genius : "Teach me...to know mankind better than they know themselves...fill my pages with humour; till mankind learns the good nature to laugh to grieve at their own". Two, he requests for humanity, which inspires kindness and generosity; three, learning, so that he may study human nature properly; he begs experience which will enable him to know the manners of mankind. These will act as assisting agents whom he summons; "for arduous is the task I have under taken...But if you all smile on my labour I hope still to bring them to a happy conclusion."

CHAPTER II-XII

Tom arrives in London during the night. Besides his hectic search, Tom cannot locate the peer's house. However, he spots the house and by bribing the footman he is able to be taken to Mrs Fitzpatrick's home where Sophia is staying for the time being. He misses Sophia by ten minutes. Also Harriet suspects that Tom is sent by Mr Western and does not disclose her whereabouts. Harriet's maid advises her that if she restores Sophia to her father, Harriet herself may happily be reconciled to Western. As Sophia is staying with Lady Bellaston, Harriet meets her with the plan. But the Lady refuses to return Sophia to the brute father. She agrees that Sophia and Tom must be kept apart. As she does not know Tom, and the latter is calling on Mrs Fitzpatrick in the evening, she decides to visit her.

Tom calls at Harriet's in the evening. He informs her that his only purpose to meet Sophia is to return her pocketbook and money. Meanwhile Lady Bellaston arrives with an Irish peer. Tom leaves his name and address with a maid and quits.

Tom and Partridge are staying with Mrs Miller, the widow of a clergyman with two daughters. Mr Allworthy, while in London, also stays at her home. Nightingale, a pleasant young man is also staying with them. He goes to Mrs Fitzpatrick, the next day but cannot see her. Frustrated, he returns to the apartment; he hears some uproar and when he goes downstairs, he find Nightingale being harassed by his footman. Tom helps Nightingle and both become friends.

Next day, in the morning, Partridge comes with a news that Mrs Fitzpatrick is nowhere available. Immediately a parcel is received. It contains devices and a ticket to a masquerade from "the queen of the fairies." Tom is filled with optimism. He is sure that the parcel is from Harriet becaue only she knows his address. He hopes to meet Sophia at the ball. At the masquerade he is led by a masked lady who tells him that Sophia is not there. After the ball the same masked lady takes him home. She turns out to be Lady Bellaston and not Mrs Fitzpatrick. Tom stays with the Lady until six in the morning.

With a sleep of a few hours Tom feels refreshed. He gives Partridge a bank note for 50 pounds that he received from Lady Bellaston to have it changed. But he readily offers it to Mr Miller to help a family in distress.

Again in the evening, Tom waits upon Lady Bellaston. Thinking that there will be no end to his visits he and Partridge plan to bribe servants so that they may know Sophia's whereabouts. Now that Tom has money and the company of a lady, he becomes one of the best dressed young men. Now he is no more poor. But he is under the condition of making love to the Lady. She is in the autumn of her life but has the decorations of a young lady.

In the evening Tom prepares to meet Lady Bellaston. Meanwhile Mrs Miller detains him and introduces her relative whom Tom has aided. The man turns out to be the same highwayman who had tried to rob him. But Tom does not mention the incident of the attempted robbery. It detains his visit to the Lady. On reaching, he is shown into the drawing room. Lady Bellaston wanted to be alone with Tom. So she has already sent Sophia and Mrs Honour to the theatre. But Sophia does not find the noise in the theatre friendly and returns to Lady Bellaston's home. Sophia enters the same moment Tom is shown into the drawing room. Both meet. It is a touching scene.

Tom returns Sophia's pocket book; he says that he is unworthy of her; he begs pardon for his past actions. Also, he declares his never ending and sincerest love for her and only her. Sophia in reply reproaches him for tarnishing her name in public. She also declares her sincerest love for him.

Meanwhile Lady Bellaston enters. She does not reveal that she knows Tom. Tom too says that he has come to return Sophia's purse. In return he asks for a favour of another visit to which the Lady agrees. Later on Lady Bellaston chides Sophia. Sophia denies any familiarity with Tom.

Commentary

Book XIII is the beginning of the last part of the novel. With Tom's arrival in London the middle is concluded. We have been offered a comprehensive view of the country side in Somersetshire setting; then we had a survey of the highway. Now we are offered a scenario of the town, London.

Now the plot deepens. The action develops further. For some time the meeting between Tom and Sophia is delayed. Ultimately they meet unexpectedly at Lady Bellaston's home. They express love for each other. We are given a glimpse of the most piognant and touching love scene.

A comment on characterization will not be out of place here. Harriet and Lady Bellaston are types. They are embodiments of the corruptions of town life. Both remind us of Chancer's Wife of Bath in *The Canterbury Tales.* Lady Bellaston is closer to Lady Wishfort in Congreve's *The Way of the World*.They will remain what they are. Mrs Miller is in-character. She represents the fundamental virtue of charity, compassion and kindness. She is contrasted with the other two ugly specimen of London society.

Tom certainly develops, he cannot resist temptation. He plays as the gigolo to Lady Bellaston; he accepts her money; adopts fashions of London. But he is basically good. He helps Nightingale. When he finds him engaged in dispute with his footman, he even offers the whole money received from Lady Bellaston to Mrs Miller so that she may help a family in distress. He is always ready to help any one in danger.

London life is also projected through the means of entertainment. Now the puppet show and the gypsy wedding have been replaced by balls and masquerades. Town is as dangerous as the highway road. Fielding, thus, offers an authentic picture of Londen society in book XIII.

BOOK-XIV
Introduction

In this introductory chapter, Fielding praises the role of learning which many modern critics take as shackles shackles to imagination. According to Fielding the knowledge of men and manners he writes about is helpful to the writer. Many an English writer fails to offer a genuine portrayal of manners of upper society because they have no knowledge of their manners. Books, stage or imitation cannot help either. For that the writer must be in the thick of life. Only then they can delineate true manners. As he says, "The picture must be after Nature herself. A true knowledge of the world is gained only by conversation, and the manners of every rank must be seen in order to be known."

Fielding is of the view that a knowledge of high society is of no avial to a comic writer like him. He considers it the dullest thing existing in the world. Besides, it is not comic. The real comic is available in the lower classes. They offer diversity and variety. Upper society is limited by the drab activities of eating, drinking, visiting and cardplaying. It is a sleepy world. Fielding lables it a "grivolous" society, not a fit subject for the truly comic.

CHAPTERS II-X

Summary

A few moments after Tom reaches home, he finds two notes written in haste by Lady Bellaston. He has been asked to visit her immediately. He is just preparing to leave when the Lady herself rushes into the room. She fears that he may have told everything to Sophia. Meanwhile Partridge enters and he is immediately followed by

Mrs Honour. Instantly Lady Bellaston hides behind the bed. Mrs Honour castigates Lady Bellaston's morals and hands him a letter from Sophia. When they leave, the Lady comes out of her hiding with fire in her eyes. She demands the letter which he refuses to part with. Now she realises his preference for Sophia. However they agree that Tom will visit pretending that he is calling on Sophia.

Sophia's letter shows her concern about Lady Bellaston's suspicion about them. She has requested him not to visit her. At the same time she is hopeful for the future. In the morning he writes to both of the ladies. To the Lady he has written that he is unwell. Mr Miller Visits Tom and asks him not to permit any ladies to visit him at midnight. He says that he will change his lodgings. She leaves his room.

Nightingale enters and teases Tom for having visitors like Bellaston and that too in the middle of night. He too is changing his lodgings. He wants to avoid Nancy, Mrs Miller's daughter, with whom he is in love because his father has fixed up another match for him. Both decide to have a house together. Next morning Mrs Miller invites Tom to tea just to please him. She tells him about her relation with Mr Allworthy, about his goodness, and about the death of her husband.

Next morning an uproar awakens Tom. Partridge brings the news that Miss Nancy is in precarious conditon; he also informs that Nightingale has left the house. Mrs Miller is hysterical; Tom comforts her. She tells Tom that Nightingale is responsible for the condition of Nancy who has tried to kill herself .Tom promises to go in search of Nightingale and bring them good news. He spots Nightingale who is full of remorse. He is a good person and says he will not betray Nancy. But his father wants him to marry a girl of his choice. Tom assures him that he will contact his father, and get his approval.

Tom meets the elder Nightingale and tactfully tells him that his son is already married. It shocks the old gentleman; meanwhile elder Nightingale's brother enters who tells him that he should care for his son's happiness and not for that of his own. Mr Nightingale is both angry and irritated. Tom leads Nightingale's brother to Mrs Miller's residence. Now it is no longer a house of sobs and weepings. Marriage of Nightingale and Nancy is being celebrated. Mrs Nightingale thanks Tom and calls her the saviour of her family. Mr Nightingale is, however, not pleased with the development. We learn that Nightingale and Nancy are not really married. His uncle takes Nightingale home. Tom is suspicous, but now he is preoccupied with the thought of Sophia.

Commentary

The situation is highly comic. When Lady Bellaston storms into Tom's room and is surprised by Partridge and and Mrs Honour following him, she hides herself behind the bed, and Mrs Honour passes derogatory remarks against her. It reminds us of the scene in Book V, Chapter V, in which Tom is in Molly's bedroom and her would be lover, Square the philosopher, hides behind the curtain. Such scenes were common in eighteenth century literature. There is a famous screen scene in Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* in which Lady Teazle hides herself behind the Indian screen.

The rest of the book covers the family affairs of Mrs Miller and especially the love story of Nightingale and Miss Nancy, Mrs Miller's daughter. This is a side story and has nothing to do with plot structure; its only purpose is to present a parallel. Here Mr Nightingale behaves in the same way as does Mr Western. Both come in the way of the happiness of their children. This gives a universal connotation to the episode. Besides, it projects the natural goodness of Tom.

BOOK-XV
Introduction

Fielding does not approve of the accepted view on morality that virtue leads to happiness and vice is a sure way to misery. There is nothing as absolute "good" or absolute "evil". They are relative. For instance, misery is also the result of poverty and contempt. Mischiefs like backbiting, envy and ingratitude are the agents of misery. Fielding is in favour of fundamental and essential goodness as is projected in Tom. To help others, to sympathize with the miserable, and to save one in distress are the real acts of a virtuous person. Tom is out to help others

while others are bent upon destroying him. His approach is Christian whereas his adversaries are anti-Christian. The chapter treats Fielding's views on the real meaning of morality.

CHAPTERS II-XII

Mrs Honour brings news about Sophia and narrates a terrifying tale. Lady Bellaston thinks that Sophia is her adversary. The Lady is hypocritical. She is outwardly sympathetic to her cousin but inwardly she hates her, and schemes against her. As Lady Macbeth corrupts her husband and persuades him to kill their guest, the king, Lady Bellaston persuades Lord Fellamar to rape Sophia. In fact the lord is in love with Sophia. On the night of the theatre disturbances, he conducts her to Lady Bellaston's home. He confesses his hopeless love, and the lady tells that he has a rival "a beggar, a bastard, a foundling, a fellow in meaner circumstances than one of " his lordship's footmen. She devises a situation persuading him to rape Sophia. Sophia is reading a book when the lord enters her room, and she resists his advances. When he forces himself upon her, she screams. But no help is available because the good lady has dismissed everybody. Now unexpected help comes. Mr Western storms into the room. Mrs Harriet Fitzpatrick, in order to win his favour, has written a letter to Mr Western, who now reaches in the nick time and Sophia is saved. Mr Western takes Sophia to his lodgings. This is how Sophia gets rid of Lady Bellaston.

Mrs Honour relates the episode graphically and than feels worried because she has no job now. Mr Western dismissed her. Tom comforts her. Meanwhile Lady Bellaston visits Tom. He conceals Mrs Honour behind the bed. The episode develops into a comedy of errors. While Lady Bellaston is in Tom's room, Nightingale enters. She retreats behind the bed ony to find Mrs Honour already there. A comic situation sends the reader into peals of laughter. Lady Bellaston offers a position to Mrs Honour, and leaves. Tom assures his constancy to Sohphia.

Next morning the marrige ceremony of Nightingale and Nancy takes place at Doctors' Commons. Nightingale's uncle has to leave as he receives a news of his daughter's elopement. Tom is now free to attend to his own affairs.

After returning from wedding Tom finds three letters from Lady Bellaston. When Nightingale enters, Tom is reading her letters. Tom wants to get rid of the lady. Nightingale suggests that if he wants to get free he must propose to her; he himself dictates the letter. Very soon Tom gets her reply in which she scorns "that monstrous animal - a hunband and wife." Now she has nothing to do with Tom.

Mrs Miller receives a letter from Mr Allworthy. He is expected in the town, and asks her for lodgings. Tom is to live with Nancy and Nightingale. The news of Blifil's expected arrival frustrates Tom. He knows the purpose of his visit.

The following day he receives two letters; one from Mrs Honour who informs him that she is now in the service of Lady Bellaston. The other is from Mrs Arabella Hunt, who has proposed marriage. Tom, though uncertain about his future, declines the offer. He takes out Miss Western's muff and kisses it several times and "turns about his room."

Partridge brings the news that Squire Western and Black George are in the town; he offers to smuggle Tom's letter to Sophia.

Commentary

Now the action becomes quick. It is heading towards conclusion. All the characters are once again being assembled. Tom, Sophia, Mrs Western and Partridge ar the first to arrive in London. After this advance party Mrs Western reaches with a bang. His arrival is most dramatic; he bursts into the room when the peer is attempting to rape Sophia; Mrs Fitzpatrick and Mrs Waters are to appear shortly. We are informed that Mr Allworthy and Blifil will appear on the stage soon. The Nightinale-Nancy affairs have already been given happy conclusion. Tom and Lady Bellaston have been separated. Now Tom-Sophia affairs will take the front stage.

This book develops the attempted rape of Sophia in a mock-heroic style. The rape is prevented by a sudden entry of Mr Western. The reader was not expecting Mr Western at least. Lady Bellaston's persuading Fellamar

in the epic tradition in which she fires the ambition of the hero of the epiosde. Fielding turns it into the mock heroic, thus moulding it into the comic mode. But he is given the opportunity only to kiss Sophia's neck when Mr Western thunders into the room.

Similarly, the dialogue between Mr Western and the peer is highly comic and funny. It provides comic relief. Sophia, of course, conducts herself most gracefully. The introduction of Sophia's muff the third time is symbolic of true love of Sophia and of the commitment of Tom to her. He sees Sophia's presence in the object.

BOOK -XVI
Introduction

Once again, in writing the prefatory chapters to the book shows Fielding's practical knowledge of drama. They stand to the book as do prologues to the play. These chapters have a serious purpose. They make the reader familiar with the abuses of the taste of town life; they take the contemporary writers to task, and land the efforts of the writer. They are used as a helping device to the reader and provide an opportunity to the writer to scrutiny his own efforts. They are thus a link between the writer and his audience. They offer to the reader a direction as to how to approach a work.

CHAPTER II-X

Sophia is now locked in a room in the lodgings of Mr Western. He is staying at the Hercules Pillar Inn. Now a highly comic scene occurs. An emissary from Lord Fellamar arrives and conveys the peer's word that he wants full satisfaction for what happened the previous night. Mr Western does not understand anything. He holds the lord to be Sophia's lover and will not permit them to marry. As for the duel he has no time to go out.

He hears Sophia screaming and heads towards her room hastily. He persuades her to marry Blifil saying that happiness depends on her consent to the marriage. She refuses to oblige him and he thunders out of the room. She even refuses to eat when Black George brings her dinner. Actually he has brought a letter from Tom in the body of a pullet. She reads the letter which conveys Tom's undying love for her. He wishes her to be happy with or without him.

Meanwhile Mrs Western arrives; she does not approve of Mr Western's lodgings. She takes Sophia to a more fitting apartment.

Tom receives a letter from Sophia. He comes to know about her freedom from her cruel father and her new lodgings. She has expressed her love and promises never to marry any other person. Tom is overjoyed. He goes to the theatre with Mrs Miller and others.

Mr Western sends a message to Blifil that Sophia has been traced. He wants immediate marriage which pleases Blifil. Blifil is not in love with Sophia. Actually he wants to marry her not out of love but out of hatred.

Mr Allworthy does not want to do anything in haste. However he reluctantly agrees to go to London and lets Blifil pursue the matter. Arriving in London Blifil meets Western immediately. The latter takes the former to Sophia. Sophia is speechless. She turns to see him. Mrs Western chides her brother for his failure to show decorum.

Lord Fellamar is so much in love with Sophia that he cannot resist from revealing it to Lady Bellaston. She not only encourages him, she goes to Mrs Western and presses Mr Fellamar's suit. Thinking that Sophia will be married into nobility, feels pleased. She promises Lady Bellaston to persuade Sophia. Both Fellamar and Lady Bellaston have planned to send Tom to sea.

Tom visits Mrs Fitzpatrick; she met him at the theatre and had invited him. She has already met Mrs Western. She was received with rudeness by Mr Western and his sister. Now she wants to avenge her humiliation. She suggests that he should call on Mr Western and taking the advantage of the occasion should meet Sophia. But he does not agree with her. Tom leaves never to see her again. In the street he is met by Fitzpatrick. They are engaged in a duel. Fitzpatrick is seriously wounded. Now the press gang hired by Fellamar arrives but its

services are no more needed. Tom is arrested. Partridge arrives with a letter from Sophia informing that her aunt has read the letter of proposal he has written (which was dictated by Nightingale). Tom's obvious infidelity frustrates her. She has said in the letter that now she will never see him any more. Tom's fortunes are now lowest.

Commentary

Structurally Fellamar-Sophia-Bellaston episode seems to be out of place, but as it is used as a device to solve or complicate Sophia-Tom tangle it is of great dramatic importance. Sending of press gang by Fellamar, the scheming nature of Lady Bellaston, love intrigues among the upper society make the action quick and real. It is a dangerous world to live in. Tom's arrest shows that our innocent hero is now in real trouble. Evil seems to have succeeded. But as it is a comic work, no problem will remain unsolved and complication unresolved. But the reader is now pressed hard to watch the further action.

The episode of Partridge at the theatre is a delightful occasion. He comments on the appearance of the ghost in *Hamlet*, the hero's relation with his mother and the King's actions are simple and factual. Tom's reaction to Partridge's comments is sophisticated but spontaneous.

The book complicates the action, but the resolution is not far to see. The action becomes all the more quick.

BOOK-XVII
Introduction

In this introductorly chapter the author expresses his views on comic and tragic modes of writing when he concludes his work. Tom and Sophia seem to be in an unhappy situation. Their future seems to be uncertain. Sophia may have a good husband; Tom's future seems to be entirely bleak. In the end Fielding says that if he is to get rid of difficulties he will have to devise some logical and natural way of escaping.

CHAPTERS II-IX

One morning Mr Allworthy and Mrs Miller are at breakfast. Blifil returns from some business. At the table, he speaks sarcastically against Tom and calls him a villain. Mrs Miller defends Tom and speaks of his many acts of kindness to her. Mr Allworthy intervenes saying that Blifil and Tom are good friends. Now Blifil breaks the news that Tom has killed a man in a duel. Again Mrs Miller defends Tom by saying that the man must have provoked him and calls him the gentlest man. Meanwhile Squire Western enters. He is in bad mood. He will never allow his daughter to marry a lord. He adds that either she marries Blifil or she will be fed on bread and water for the rest of her life.

However, Mr Allworthy has all praise for Sophia. He admires her for her graces. Besides, he says he will never force her to marry Blifil. He even offers his advice that parents should never force their children to marry against their wishes and ruin their happiness. But Mr Western will not listen. He says that he is her father and has every right to guide and govern her. Blifil enters; he says that Sophia should have nothing to do with a murderer (Tom). Mr Western is overjoyed. He will be all the more happy if Tom is hanged. He invites Mr Allworthy to dinner and leaves. Thereafter Mr Allworthy speaks to Blifil harshly and advises him not to pursue Sophia.

Meanwhile Mrs Western presses Sophia very hard to marry Lord Fellamar. Sophia does not find him any different from Blifil. She says she hates both. Having a coronet on one's coach fascinates her. She tells Sophia that by marrying into a nobility she will enhance the image of the family. She tells her aunt about Fellamar's attempt to rape her. She has even invited the lord. Mrs Western's enthusiasm gets further impetus when Bellaston tells her that there should be no further delay. But Sophia requests the lord not to press her any further. She adds that she is not interested in rank, title and honour. In the end, she begs him to leave. However, Mrs Western assures the lord that Sophia will soon be made to see reason.

Mrs Miller and Nightingale visit Tom in the prison. They try to console him. Meanwhile Partridge enters and informs that Fitzpatrick is alive. Whereas Nightingale convinces Tom that he attacked in self-defence, Tom repents that he has been forced into shedding the blood of a fellow human being. More than most, he feels sorry that he has lost Sophia. Mrs Miller takes the responsibility of delivering Tom's letter to Sophia.

The same evening Mrs Miller informs Mr Allworthy that Tom has lost the money the gentlemen gave him. But he still considers Blifil better than Tom, and will not relish anything said against the former. She reminds Mr Allworthy's former love for Tom; She acquaints him with the virtues of Tom, and her obligation to him for saving her family. Mr Allworthy softens and promises to meet Mr Nightingale and see how reconciliation can be made possible.

Next day Nightingale visits Tom in the jail again. He informs him that he has traced the sailors who have witnessed the duel and that they persist in saying that it was Tom who provoked and struck the first blow. When told to consider that a person's life is at stake, they persisted in their stand.

Mrs Miller's entry adds to the general melancholic atmosphere. But fortune has not yet abandoned Tom. After his well wishers have left, Mrs Waters enters. She informs Tom that Fitzpatrick is out of danger. Tom again lamets his wicked acts and errors. However, his words do not impress her. She assures him that he will soon be at liberty.

Commentary

The course of action complicated by Tom's arrest is near solution. There is hope that he will be released soon. As regards his marriage with Sophia complication still persists. Mr Western is bent upon her marriage with Blifil; Mrs Western is attracted by a coronet on a coach; she wants Sophia to marry Fellamar. Allworthy is full of praise for Sophia, but his doubts about Blifil's marriage to her persit, and he is yet to reconcile with Tom. But the reader is sure that these complications will soon be resolved, but he is left guessing. The reader is sure that the writer will soon make some revealing discovery and relieve him of his concern. The writer knows what the reader wants.

The book is a fine study of human nature, characters are developed further. It is suggested that basic nature never changes. There are fine characters whose behaviour shows their fundamentals. Mr Allworthy will be constantly good and will even stand the evil in other with kindness; Mrs. Miller will never speak ill of Tom; once convinced, she praises his virtues and no evil design of any one can change her opinion. Blifil persists in his evil designs. Tom laments that he has been wicked and has injured a fellow being. His basic goodness is emphasized.

As the action is heading towards conclusion, Fielding is summing up the episodes. The action is swiftly pace in this penultimate book. It directs the reader's attention to the conclusion in the last book.

BOOK-XVIII
Introduction

In this prefatory chapter of the last Book, Fielding tells the reader that they have reached almost the end of the journey. It has been a long journey. He invites the reader to forget if any odd things have occurred during the journey. He says that they are parting for ever. He now puts aside "jesting" and "raillery" and speaks in plain language. As he is plain and sober there will no more be any amusement or entertainment. The narrative will be straightforward and simple. He bids farewell to the reader. All along, he has been reader's companion and his entertainer. In fact, it has been his primary mission . It has never been his intention to annoy him. However, there may have been occasion when he or his friends have felt offended. In fact, it has never been his intention to hit either of them. But he has directed his ire against those who have offended or given opportunity to feel so.

CHAPTER II-XIII

While Tom is in jail brooding over his fate, Partridge enters his cell, and informs him that the woman (Mrs Waters) who has just left and with whom he slept at Upton, is his own mother. The idea of the sin of incest that Tom has committed torments him. He requests Partridge to go and fetch Mrs Waters but Partridge's all efforts to spot her are in vain. Meanwhile Tom receives a letter from Mrs Waters. The contents of the letter agree with what Partridge has said about the Upton episode.

Black George enters and finding Tom and Partridge serious comes to the conclusion that Fitzpatrick is no more. He has brought money for Tom which he refuses to take. He informs Tom that Sophia has been taken to her father's apartment. He elaborates the episode with great witticism and humour how Sophia refused to marry Lord Fellamar. He also adds that Western is happy over the idea that Tom may be hanged. To celebrate the thought the Squire retired to bed dead drunk.

Next day in the morning, as promised, Mr Allworthy visits Mr Nightingale and induces him to see Tom. Mr Nightingale shows him 500 pounds in bank bills that Black George has handed him to invest. Mr Allworthy immediately identifies that bill that he had given to Tom. Mr Allworthy asks him to retain the bill till further discussion. While Mr Allworthy is convincing himself that he should be glad to know that he is wrong in his assessment of Tom, young Nightingale enters with the news that Fitzpatrick is out of danger. He also adds that Fitzpatrick has confessed that he provoked Tom to start the brawl. Tom is thus absolved of all responsibility. All are happy to learn that Tom is proved innocent.

Mr Allworthy receives two letters which force him to change his heart. One letter is from Square who has confessed at the death bed that he is a party to the villainy against his adopted son. Similarly Thwackum writes advising Mr Allworthy against himself now the record is set straight. Now Allworthy is clear about the villainy hatched by the trio – Square, Thwackum and Blifil.

Now Mr Allworthy' is preoccupied by the thought of Tom's attempted kidnapping. Blifil confesses that he sent Dowling to make an effort to soften the evidence. Mr Allworthy wants to visit Tom in the prison. Meanwhile Partridge enters. He informs the Squire that he is not the father of Tom; he also informs about the sinful relation between Tom and Mrs Waters. It horrifies and shocks the gentleman. Mrs Waters rushes in and discusses with the squire in private. She reveals that Partridge is not the father of Tom. She makes a revelation that he is the son of Summer. The Summer was the son of a clergyman whom the squire held in great honour. On asking about the mother Mrs Waters, who is actually Jenny Jones, reveals that the mother of Tom was the gentleman's sister. It was Mrs. Wilkins who was dispatched on trip so that she remained ignorant of the episode. She adds that the infant was placed in the Squire's bed the same night he returned from London.

Western enters and repeats once again that Sophia will have to marry Blifil. Meanwhile Dowling informs about Tom's release. After Western quits, Mrs Waters continues the narrative. She tells everything about herself. She tells how she was bribed to own the child and keep the secret. Allworthy promises assistance if she promises to lead virtuous life.

Now Dowling enters. Mr Allworthy wants answer to all his doubts. Dowling's replies set the record straight. He tells that Blifil sent him to persuade the witnesses against Tom. He also tells that he was at Mrs Blifil's bedside at the time of her death. She gave him a letter revealing the truth of Tom's parentage and her relation to Mr Allworthy. On asking why he did not deliver that letter he says that he gave it to Blifil who promised to deliver to him, and who purposely, concealed it. Mr Allworthy calls Blifil "that wicked viper". He goes to Mr Western's apartment, directs Blifil to find out the said letter before he returns.

Mr Allworthy visits Sophia and apoloiges for the treatment he is guiltly of. He says that he was ignorant of the villainy of Blifil. She has been saved. He adds that now she is free to marry any other person. He speaks of Tom's fundamental goodness. If she marries him, he pleads, she can make him to show his real worth. However, she rejects Tom outrightly. Meanwhile Western rushes into the house. He thinks that Mr Allworthy is pressing

Blifil's case. Allworthy says that now he is for Tom and not Blifil. Western thinks that Sophia now favours Lord Fellamar. Allworthy leaves promising to returns in the afternoon the same day.

All ends meet at Mrs. Miller's home. Tom begs his uncle's forgiveness for all his lapses. Allworthy feels sorry for his ignorance and advises Tom to be careful about his behaviour in future. Meanwhile Western bursts into the room and begs Tom's forgiveness. Tom now narrates past incidents and completes his history upto the present moment. Blifil sends a message asking if he can meet his uncle. Mr Allworthy declares that he has nothing to do with Blifil . Tom persuades his uncle no to be crude to Blifil. When Mrs Miller feels uneasy about Blifil's presence in her home, Tom again urges charity. Mr Allworthy asserts that Blifil must leave the house the same evening. When Allworthy informs Tom of Black George's treachery regarding 500 pounds, Tom first gets angry, then forgives him, saying that temptation was beyond the control of man of George's station.

Mr Allworthy and Tom visit Westerns. Sophia and her father are expecting them at teatime. Tom is looking more handsome than ever before. Sophia has never looked so charming and lovely before. When tea is over, Western takes Mr Allworthy out of the room leaving the couple to their privacy. After an uneasy silence both warm up to their love theme. Sophia charges Tom with inconstancy; Tom begs for mercy and forgiveness; he defends himself regarding his letter to Lady Bellaston. He even asks for trial so that he may prove his devotion to her. He hugs Sophia and kisses her most passionately. At this Western enters and askes if the wedding will take place tomorrow or not. Sophia submits to her father's wish with all faithfulness. A rich supper is arranged at the Millers'. The nightingales also attends the supper; the father and son are happily reconciled. Western drinks and sings.

The next morning Tom and Sophia are married at Doctor's Commons. Their trials are over now and they live happily for the rest of their life. Fielding summarizes the fates of other characters. Blifil, after the persuasion of Tom and Sophia, is given 200 pounds a year; Tom secretly adds a third to it. Blifil retires to the northern counties hoping to marry a widow. All other near and dear to Mr Allworthy are given money, and position according to their status.

Squire Western hands over his estate to Tom and Sophia and retires to his other estates; now he will drink, hunt and be happy. Western keeps visiting them; he gladly whiles away his time with his grand childern, a girl and a boy.

Mr Allworthy is most kind to Tom. At all occasions he shows him willing favours. In company with Sophia and his confabulations with the old gentleman, Tom's character is greatly improved. His reflections on his past "follies" have inspired in him "a discretion and prudence very common in one of his lively parts."

Commentary

The history concludes with the marriage of the hero and the heroine. This happy ending is preceded by their vicissitudes partly caused by their errors of judgements and mostly infected by the scheming and treacherous people around them. The ending unmasks the villainies of Blifil and his emissaries. It being a comic book, things must reach a happy conclusion. All complications are solved all problems resolved. Discoveries and revelations are a natural element in a comic novel. Mr Allworthy recognizes Tom; he turns out to be his nephew and the true heir. The discovery of this noble birth solves all problems. All is well with the discovery and reversal devices. Fielding handles the plot with great skill. Probability and possibility contribute to the verisimilude in the action.

The last Book like the last act in a drama brings all characters together. Fielding does not forget to relate the fates of characters major or minor. By showing them in diverse relationships, Fielding delineates their real natures. Besides, reward and punishment add to realism in the novel. Every character contributes to the action in the novel. Especially in the last Book no character has been introduced without purpose.

More than most, the emphasis here is on human nature. The town life is full of corruption but those who come from the country bring their own corruption with them. The epic journey of life, from the country via highway road shows that the fundamental human nature is everywhere the same. But it is goodness that will triumph; it is fundamental and essential virtue that stands one in good stead. And order comes out of disorder; good will triumph; honest and committed life alone can initiate and ensure lasting happiness.

4. Details of Important Characters in *Tom Jones*

Tom Jones: the hero of the comic epic; he is supposed to be a foundling; but later on he is discovered to be the son of Bridget and Summer, and the true heir to the Paradise Hall; the mystery and revelation of his parentage and his love and marriage with Mr Western's daughter, Sophia, are the central issues that the plot of the novel is based on.

Squire Allworthy: a wealthy, benevolent country squire. He is a widower and lives with his sister Bridget. The foundling is discovered lying in his bed; he adopts the infant; he is kind to the child, generous to the sinful, but gullible and credulous which give rise to actions and reactions. His decisions are basic to the development of the plot.

Miss Bridget Allworthy (Mrs. Blifil): sister to Mr Allworthy; she is the actual mother of Tom; she is the wife of Captain Blifil, and mother of Blifil. She is hypocritical and vain. But her secrets and informations are important elements in the plot construction.

Squire Western: father to Sophia and a typical country squire. He is a brutish, beef-eating and hunting country squire. His despotic decisions further the action of the plot.

Sophia: Daughter to Squire Western and the lovely heroine in the novel. She is a woman of remarkable beauty and an embodiment of virtue and fidelity. Her love with Tom is the pivotal issue in the novel.

Mrs Western: sister to Squire Western and aunt to Sophia. International politics is her hobby-horse. She is a vain, self-centered and hypocritical woman. She serves as a chorus on Tom-Sophia relationship and guides her brother accordingly; she is a manly woman.

Blifil: the villain in the novel. He is Mr Allworthy's nephew. Like his father, Captain Blifil, he is mundane and selfish. As an adversary to Tom, he plays an important role in the development of the action. In the end he is deservedly punished.

Captain Blifil: husband to Bridget and father of Tom; he marries Bridget for money and dies a lonely death. He betrays his brother, Dr Blifil.

Mrs Honour: a faithful but worldly-wise maid to Sophia. She accompanies her to London also, and is helpful in every way.

Benjamin Partridge: a poor mediocre village school teacher. For some time Jenny Jonnes learnt Latin from him. He is supposed to be Tom's father; his wife has testified against him; he has to leave his village; he meets Tom at Upton Inn and becomes his companion in the imitation of Cervante's Sancho Panza.

Mrs Partridge: the jealous and nagging wife of Partridge, the village school master; she is a garrulous and quarrelsome woman; she misinterprets her husband's relation with Jenny and testifies against him. She reduces her family to misery; she dies in poverty, and Partridge leaves the village.

Jenny Jones (Mrs Waters): a servant woman, bribed by Bridget to own the foundling as her child; she is generous but loose in sexual behaviour. She allures Tom at Upton Inn and seduces him; she ultimately marries Parson Supple.

Captain Blifil: brother of Dr Blifil, marries Bridget Allworthy and is father of Blifil; he is self-centered and marries Bridget for her fortune; betrays his brother; he dies while on a walk.

Dr Blifil: a casual visitor to Mr Allworthy's house; he introduces his brother, Captain Blifil, to Mr Allworthy; later, his brother betrays him; he goes to London where he dies heartbroken.

Square: a hanger-on at Squire Allworthy's house; he is a philosopher, and an adversary of Thwackum in all disputes; he is guilty of sexual hypocrisy; before his death he writes a letter to the squire confessing his guilt, and, thus, shows some atonement.

Thwackum: a clergyman; Square's adversary in discussion on scriptures, and, like him, a tutor to Tom and Blifil; he is cruel, selfish and hypocritical; in the end he makes amends by writing a letter to Mr Allworthy in which he highlights Tom's real worth.

Black George Seagrim: Mr Allworthy's gamekeeper; he is found guilty of hare poaching and expelled from service; he is the only companion of Tom; Tom helps Black George and his family; he is a dishonest opportunist; he appropriates Tom's money but the latter pardons him. Otherwise, he remains on the side of Tom.

Molly Seagrim: daughter of Black George; she is a village slut and the first woman who seduces Tom; she is vain and hypocritical; she is a woman of easy virtues; she is known for her churchyard mock-heroic battle with the congregation.

Deborah Wilkins: Mr Allworthy's housekeeper; she is a callous woman who proceeds with great cunning to spot the mother of the foundling; she is a hypocrite, and a flat character.

Parson Supple: Chaplain of Squire Allworthy's; he marries Jenny Jones in the end, otherwise, his role is a minor one.

Summer: the actual father of Tom; we never meet him in person in the novel; his relation with Bridget is revealed only in the end.

Mr Fitzpatrick: a dashing Irish adventurer, but a foolish, hot-headed person, marries Harriet for her fortune; she runs away from him because he has wasted all her wealth; he pursues her desperately; he picks a quarrel with Tom and has relations with Mrs Waters.

Mrs Fitzpatrick (Harriet): Sophia's cousin; she is niece of Squire Western and Mrs Western; she is charming, self-willed and bohemian; she meets Fitzpatrick at Bath and marries him; she wants to have an affair with Tom; she is the keep of a lord.

Will Barnes: a young man with whom Molly flirts; he is not an important character; his relations with Molly absolve Tom of the responsibility of her pregnancy.

The Man of the Hill: an old man whom Tom saves from the ruffians; he lives in his ivory tower aloofness, cut away from the world. Tom advises him not to hate the world and be positive in his approach to life.

Susan: a chambermaid at Upton Inn.

Ensign Northerton: an ensign in the army; he passes remarks on Sophia, throws a bottle of wine at Tom and hurts him while in an Inn. Tom buys a sword to settle his score but he escapes. Later on he attacks Mrs Waters; Tom rescues her from Northerton.

Captain Waters: the husband of Jenny Jones, when she appears as Mrs Waters.

Mrs Miller: a generous, kind and benevolent widow of a clergyman; in London. Tom stays with her; Mr Allworthy too stays with her whenever in London; she reconciles Tom with Mr Allworthy; she has all admiration for Tom and calls him "saviour" of her family.

Nancy Miller: daughter of Mrs Miller; falls in love with Nightingale; they are reconciled by Tom.

Nightingale: a good, gay young man; he loves Nancy; when she becomes pregnant he leaves her, but they are reconciled by Tom. Both are introduced to establish Tom's goodness.

The Elder Nightingale: father to young Nightingale.

Anderson: a poor relative of Mrs Miller; he is the one who attacked and tried to rob Tom on the road to London.

Arabella Hunt: a charming widow who tries to exploit Tom and even proposes to him but is rejected by him.

Lady Bellaston: a nymphomaniac, hypocritical, sexually diseased woman of London society; she persuades Lord Fellamar to rape Sophia; she is an ugly specimen of upper class society of London.

Lord Fellamar: a good for nothing, vain, hypocritical lord; tries to rape Sophia; proposes to her for marriage; he represents the ugly face of upper class; he is a male prototype of Lady Bellaston.

5. Detailed Critical Analysis of Major Topics

Plot and Structure

Fielding's **Tom Jones** is rightly considered one of four great works which dominated English fiction of the eighteenth century and made solid contribution to the form of the novel. The other three are Swift's **Gulliver's Travels**, Richardson's **Clarissa,** and Sterne's **Tristram Shandy.** Fielding's **Tom Jones** has been highly, and deservedly, praised for its superb plot construction and structural unity. We have Coleridge's famous verdict: "What a master of composition Fielding was!" The poet-critic places **Tom Jones** with Sophocles's **Oedipus Tyrannus** and Jonson's **The Alchemist** calling them "the three most perfect plots ever planned." Walter Allen, while admiring Fielding's architectonic quality as the new element in the novel, says "no plot has ever been carried through with more consummate skill." The critic even asserts "Fielding was as superb a craftsman in his own way as Henry James." Arnold Kettle, however, finds "too much plot" in **Tom Jones.** R S Crane has aptly said that "it is hard to think of any important modern discussion of the novel that does not contain at least a few sentences on Fielding's 'ever-to-be-praised skill as an architect of plot." Crane's own essay "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of **Tom Jones**" has added a new dimension to the discussion of plot and structure of **Tom Jones.**

Crane calls the plot of **Tom Jones** "classic." No doubt it has a unified plot which falls into the category of complex plot. The eighteen Books, with a large number of characters, episodes and incidents fall into three act division. It is not difficult to discover Fielding's use of dramatic training in the structure of **Tom Jones.** The book is laid out in three "acts," and each act covers six Books of the novel, corresponding to the beginning, the middle and the end. With Tom as the central, character the whole novel falls naturally into a tripartite division – the country, the road, and the town. **Tom Jones** begins with a fairy-tale atmosphere. The action begins with the mysterious discovery of an infant in Mr Allworthy's bed. Squire Allworthy has just returned home from London. Tom's origin remains a mystery, though the gentleman takes pity on the foundling; he decides to bring him up with his own nephew, young Blifil. Here Fielding refrains from too much comment about Tom's parentage. He reserves it till the climax of the novel so that he may preserve the curiosity of the reader and maintain verisimilitude of the incidents. The reader is given to believe that Tom is an illegitimate child; that his mother is Jenny Jones; and that his father's identity is still a mystery.

Although the structure of the novel does not correspond exactly to the act-division of a play, its action is "episodic." As the novelist wrote it as "a comic epic in prose," and is following picaresque tradition, the action is bound to be swiftly-paced. The first six Books cover the Somersetshire estate of Squire Allworthy, and occupy a space of twenty-one years. These Books cover how Tom and Blifil grow together, and both are educated by Thwackum and Square. Tom falls in love with Sophia Western, his childhood companion, and the beautiful daughter of Squire Western. The squire, however, is ambitious to secure the bond of Sophia and Blifil, so that the two estates can be joined. The main thread is the development of love between Sophia and Tom, and the forces opposing it. By the end of Book VI the Sophia-Blifil-Tom triangle makes the plot complex and the sneaking and hypocritical Blifil succeeds in poisoning Mr Allworthy against the open-hearted, simple and honest Tom. Tom's gallant but what R.P.G. Mutter calls "high-spirited escapades" with Molly Seagrim are used by Blifil to achieve the displeasure of Allworthy against Tom. Mr Allworthy turns Tom away penniless and rejected. Lost and lonely, Tom takes to the road. The plot develops further quickly.

The journey motif enters in the second part of the story and is developed from Book VII to Book XII. At the same time, as Tom takes to the road, Sophia, to escape a forced marriage with Bilfil, whom she detests, runs

away from her father's home. The middle part of the book covers their adventures graphically. As Sophia follows Tom's trail, she meets various adventures, and then, after the climatic episodes at Upton-on-Severn, Tom pursues her. Meanwhile the introduction of Little Benjamin, who is actually the former schoolmaster Partridge, is directly related to the plot and structure of the novel. He reminds us of Sacho Panza in Cervente's **Don Quixote**, and Parson Adams in Fielding's **Joseph Andrews.** He serves a vital connection in the novel. He resolves at least one mystery of Tom's parentage. He discloses that he is not Tom's father. Now Tom and Partridge go along together. The purpose of the episodes in the middle is to reinforce structurally the horrors of the road. The highway to London, as life itself, is full of dangers. Tom rescues Mrs Waters from an attempted murder, and accompanies her to Upton where he falls a victim to her charms and allows himself to be seduced by her. The action of the second Six Books takes place on the roads; now it becomes the epic of the road leading to London and occupies a space of ten days.

The third part which begins with Book XIII and covers a space of twenty three days shows Fieldings's skill as a master craftsman. The structure here attains consummate symmetry. The third and last part is set in London. Tom's gallantry, good looks and charm enable him to establish himself. He gets involved with the middle-aged and vain Lady Bellaston. She is a nymphomaniac. The action becomes swift, and the various lines of the action are heading towards their inevitable end. Fielding introduces yet another intrigue, the Fellamar-Sophia-Bellaston intrigue. Here Fielding uses the device of discovery to solve the riddles. Revelation and recognition bring about the denouement with swiftness and precision. Tom's parentage is no more a mystery. His father is a young man named Summer. The unraveling of the plot is handled with great skill. Besides, probability is never violated. Tom has passed through impossible situations; he wins over his beloved Sophia. Blifil has been unmasked. Mr Allworthy recognizes Tom as his genuine nephew and his true heir. Now Mr Western poses no opposition to his union with Sophia. In the end poetic justice prevails. Blifil is forced to quit and he becomes a Methodist so as to marry a rich widow. In the true comic spirit, Tom apologizes for his moral lapses, and requests for trial; Sophia forgets and forgives. They are married at Doctors' Commons, and they live happily ever after. This is how Sophia-Tom love is consummated. The whole plot centers on this issue.

There are certain episodes, incidents and even characters which are considered to be superfluous and not necessary to the plot and structure. One such episode is the introduction of the Man of the Hill in Book VIII, chapter XI. It is generally considered to be a digression. No doubt the book may go without this episode. Nor does it contribute to the action of the novel. But thematically it is of central importance. The Man of the Hill is a misanthrope; he is happy with his ivory tower aloofness. He embodies one of Fielding's persistent themes: one or two lapses in an essentially good person do not make him irrevocably bad, and that goodness of heart will ultimately triumph. Tom, on the other hand, loves society and advises the Man of the Hill not to hate society. Commenting on the relevance of the old man, William Empson rightly says that "as part of the structure of ethical thought he is essential to the book, the keystone at the middle of the arch."

Similarly, Mrs Harriet Fitzpatrick's history which covers a considerable portion in the novel does not contribute to the development of the plot. But the history of Mrs Harriet Fitzpatrick is directly related to the ethical aspect of the novel which is Fielding's major preoccupation. The form of the novel is only a device, the structural unity a necessity, but moral and ethical aspect of the novel is their prop. Through this episode, Fielding is preparing the reader for the evils he is to see prevailing in the town. It presages London life. Harriet met the dashing Fitzpatrick at Bath where she was holidaying with her aunt. She marries that brute, suffers him, and is now in flight from him. Bath aside, London will be equally unreal and corrupt. Later on we meet Lady Bellaston in London who is the prototype of Mrs Waters and Mrs Harriet Fitzpatrick. So the Harriet episode is relevant to the thematic aspect of the plot. Even insignificant episodes and characters of no real worth are either related with or contribute to the development of theme or the movement of the plot or action. The appearance of the beggar who hands over Sophia's pocket-book and bill to Tom is an important link. Tom's giving him alms establishes his generosity and charity, and the diary will make the meeting between Tom and Sophia possible. Even the Quaker who meets Tom and Partridge for a few minutes has his role to play. He reinforces the theme of father-daughter relationship. So nothing is irrelevant in the novel. Every episode and character is related either structurally or thematically.

The introduction of Lawyer Dowling is the most effective device used to unravel the mystery of Tom's parentage and true identity. The whole plot is built on this mystery. It is he who brings the news of Mrs. Blifil's death and hands over to Blifil her letter which contains the information of Toms true identify. Blifil holds back that information and devises treacherous ways and means to get Tom expelled and disinherited. Tom is turned out of Mr Allworthy's house and is on the road to face the dangers of the highway, and by implication, those of life. Once again Dowling happens to meet Tom, but he does not reveal his true identity; he keeps alive the mystery. So he is present in the middle of the action whereas Blifil makes no appearance. In the concluding part of the plot Dowling plays the major role in unraveling the mystery. When Mr Allworthy shows his displeasure, Dowling reveals the whole thing. He tells that he kept it a secret thinking that Mr Allworthy wished it so. His confession unravels the whole mystery surrounding Tom's birth and the problem is resolved, and the story given a happy ending. So, Dowling is not only a character but a structural device skillfully used.

As an adept craftsman, Fielding effects harmony between plot and character. Unlike Richardson, he does make one character the nucleus of action. Of course, Tom is the central character, but he is not all in all. The characters are contrasted and juxtaposed to make the plot a complex development of action. Henry James rightly said that incidents are nothing but elaboration of character and character is nothing but interpretation of incidents. This is what James means when he says that character is action. Sets of characters represent opposing views which develop the action. Blifil and his two tutors are a force which succeeds in getting Tom expelled. It develops the plot; Mr Western's despotic attitude incites Sophia to revolt; gullibility of Mr Allworthy makes Tom's expulsion possible. Ironic development of characters too contributes to the unity of the structure. Sophia is courageous enough to revolt against the dictates of her father, but is tolerant and generous towards Tom's frailties; Tom, though loose in sexual ethics, has kindness, generosity and develops into a responsible person. This complex relation between characters and situations make the plot of **Tom Jones** highly complex.

As the denouement shows, the structure of the novel is the structure of comedy. In the end, through the devices of discovery and reversal of fortune, all problem of Tom's true identity is resolved. The whole action moves towards the happy ending. The style, the coincidences, characters and incidents culminate in the discovery of Tom's identity. He is discovered to be the true heir to the Paradise Hall. Final reconciliation takes place. Mr Allworthy is reconciled with Tom; Sophia with her father who is now willing to give her hand to Tom. Poetic justice prevails. Blifil is disinherited from his fake claim to Mr Allworthy's estate; he goes to live in the North hoping to marry a rich widow, and manipulate a seat for the Parliament. All other characters are rewarded according to their status and capability. Sophia and Tom are married at the Doctors' Commons and they live happily ever after.

Thus, the whole structure and plot construction of the novel is based on probable and possible characters and episodes; beginning with complications, the plot heads towards a comic end. The whole development of the plot shows Fielding as a superb craftsman. A large number of characters and incidents give unity to the epical structure of the novel. Nothing is wasted. All contribute to the unity and symmetry of the plot.

Tom Jones as Comic Epic in Prose

Fielding, in the Preface to **Joseph Andrews,** called his novel "a comic epic poem in prose." He described it as something new in the field of fiction. In the same Preface he gives a detailed account of his views on the genre. He called his novel an "epic" merely as the prose "correlative" to a narrative poem thinking especially of the structure rather than the content. Although Fielding claimed that he was founding a new genre of writing, this was not entirely true. He had a long tradition of such writing. For instance, Homer had long ago written a "comic epic in verse," and according to Aristotle, it bore the same relation to comedy as the **Iliad** and the **Odyssey** to tragedy. Though E.A. Baker hesitates a little to apply the appellation "the comic epic in prose" to **Joseph Andrews**, yet he holds that the term may aptly be applied to **Tom Jones** with "admirable propriety."

"Many previous writers and critics of fiction," says Ian Watt, "notably of the seventeenth-century French romances, had assumed that any imitation of human life in narrative form ought to be assimilated as far as

possible to the rules that had been laid down for the epic by Aristotle and his innumerable interpreters." Prior to Fielding, Defoe and Richardson did nothing to win respectability for the novel and their general attitude to epic was one of casual disapproval. Defoe was after facts and condemned the new genre on realistic ground. And Richardson, too, showed a sort of hostility and antipathy to the heroic genre. Being a conscious artist, Fielding was averse to a na ve condemnation of the epic. On the contrary, he was deeply rooted in the neo-classical literary tradition. By propounding the theory of the "comic epic in prose," he was ironically equating the novel with the epic. Fielding believed that as the epic was the first example of a narrative form on a large scale and of a serious kind, so the novel may also be said to be of the epic kind.

Both in **Joseph Andrews** and **Tom Jones,** Fielding puts to practice the mechanics of epic and makes them fit into the scheme of the new genre. Expressing his debt to Aristotle, he says that he has introduced "fable, action, characters, sentiments, and diction and is deficient in metre only." And thinks it "reasonable to refer it to the epic." In **Tom Jones**, as in **Joseph Andrews**, Fielding describes "a series of separate adventures, detached from and independent of each other yet all tending to one great end."

Fielding called **Joseph Andrews** an **Odyssey** of the road. But it does show the same careful attention to the refinement of plot as does **Tom Jones**.

The best critical theory of the time agreed that an epic should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. The beginning should deal with the causes that initiate and extend the action. The eighteen Books of **Tom Jones** are divided into three parts having six books each. The first six books form the beginning. Here our hero is born as an illegitimate child; he grows along with Blifil, his rival. Also, the part shows Tom's and Sophia's adolescent love which develops into a passion. Blifil and his two tutors, Thwackum and Square, the trio, prejudice the gullible Mr Allworthy, Tom's foster father; the Squire turns Tom away from his home. This corresponds to Joseph Andrew's expulsion by Lady Booby. The next six books form the middle in which Fielding records the swift dramatic succession of adventures on the road. The various threads of the narrative become highly complex and a large number of characters are introduced. Series of adventures on the highway road which culminate in the Upton Inn episode correspond to those of Joseph and Parson Adams. The last six Books with which the action concludes form the ending. The highway road leads to London. Tom along with Partridge, and Sophia with Mrs Honour follow the same highway though separately. Both reach London almost simultaneously. Sophia too has run away from her tyrannical father. All other important characters have also reached the town. Now the time is for a discovery or a reversal of fortune. Tom's true parentage comes to light. Villainy is unmasked; Mr Allworthy accepts him as his nephew and true heir. Tom and Sophia's marriage is celebrated. Thus revelation and recognition bring about denouement, and all incidents tend "to one great end."

Fielding is following classical norms in the action. But we should not forget that he is using the term "comic epic in prose" ironically. He laid much emphasis on the phrase "the comic epic in prose" and hence called **Tom Jones** a "heroic historical, prosaic poem" and a specimen of "prosaic-comic-epic writing." Obviously, he laid much emphasis on the word "comic." Since it is a comic variant of epic, Fielding excludes the heroic persons and sublime thought. Idealizing attitude is absent here. Tom, the hero in the novel, is heroic in his own right. He is a chivalric gallant. Early in the novel Sophia asks for a favour, and he replies heroically "by this dear hand, I would sacrifice my life to oblige you." And for the rest of the book he is the knight errant of romance and fairy tale, who wins his lady love after many adventures and misadventures. Besides, the knight must have a squire; Tom is accompanied by Partridge.

The comic dimension of the hero becomes obvious during his Quixotic adventures on his way to London and in London itself. His sexual adventures with Molly Seagrim, Mrs Waters and Lady Bellaston, to whom he plays as her gigolo, and allows to be seduced reduce him to a comic level. He is rather an "unheroic hero." His chivalric acts such as owning the responsibility of Molly's pregnancy, his helping Black George's family despite all criticism, his risking of life while saving Sophia falling from horse's back, his helping of Mrs Miller's family, his forgiving of Black George for appropriating his money, etc. make him a loveable protagonist of a romantic tale. But his loose sexual ethics cancel these gallantries and mould him into a comic hero.

The action of this comic prose epic also follows the classical elements of verisimilitude, marvelous and surprise. Fielding concluded that the novelist must "keep within the limits not only of possibility but of probability too." He qualified it further by saying that "the great art of poetry is to mix truth with fiction, in order to join the credible with the surprising." Tom's hurting himself in his fight with Thwackum, Square, and Blifil, his naivety in his relation with Molly, his falling a victim to the charms and opportunities provided by Mrs Waters and Lady Bellaston are all probable occurrences. Sophia Muff, the meeting of the beggar who hands over to Tom Sophia's pocket-book and money, the introduction of Partridge on Tom's way to London are the surprising incidents. All these elements contribute to the epic structure of the prose work.

Still another element is the mock-heroic battles. Fielding introduces two mock-heroic battles. 'One is between' Tom and his adversaries, Blifil, Thwackum and Square. More particular is one between Molly Seagrim and the village mob. It occurs (Book V, chapter 8) right in the churchyard just after the prayer is over. Here an unthinking village mob assaulting a defenceless pregnant woman is a masterpiece of mock-heroic instance of Fielding's masterly handling of burlesque.

The medium of expression is, of course, prose. But the novelist also keeps some elements of grand style. He makes use of Homeric descriptions and similes. At times he uses elevated style with utmost soleminity. This he does especially in the case of introducing Sophia. Her introduction onto the stage of the novel is in Fielding's best mock-heroic vein. The elevated style reminds us of the classical poets which attends the entrance of venus: "Hushed be every ruder breath…….. the lovely Sophia comes!" At times Fielding uses rhetoric but this neither to laugh at the "sublime" nor to castigate "fact." He uses these stylistic devices simply to amuse the reader, and thus makes **Tom Jones** a classical example of "the comic epic in prose."

6. Picaresque Elements

Picaresque tradition in the English novel was borrowed from the Spanish picaresque stories that originated in the fifteenth century. "Picaro" in Spanish means a rogue. So a picaresque novel covers the story of a good-natured rogue, a clever and diverting adventurer of low social class. He lives by tricks and roguery rather than by honest hard work. When out of job, he may do petty, odd jobs such as household servant, page or a footman. However, Arnold Kettle adds that generally the "picaro" used to be a young son of a good family gone to the dogs. A picaresque novel is generally episodic in nature; there is almost no plot at all. The loose plot consists of a series of breathtaking adventures, thrilling incidents and episodes seemingly connected and strung together without corresponding relationship. Usually it is a novel of the road; a novelist writing in picaresque tradition is a satirist. The hero's wanderings and adventures in various social settings offer a survey of the social etiquettes and men and manners of different social classes.

Tom Jones, unlike **Joseph Andrews,** is not a typical picaresque novel, but it has picaresque elements. Of course, Fielding is not an innovator of the type. Thomas Nash's **The Unfortunate Traveller,** or **The Life of Jack Jack Wilton** (1594) and Daniel Defoe's **Moll Flanders** are written in the picaresque form. Fielding novels show clear influence of the Spanish writer Cervantes. Like his **Don Quixote** the frame work of **Joseph Andrews** is episodic. However the plot of **Tom Jones,** though episodic, is not loose. Leaving aside the story of the Man of the Hill and that of Mrs Fitzpatrick, all episodes are structurally related and well-formed. These two episodes too have thematic relevance.

As the structure of **Joseph Andrews** and **Tom Jones** is episodic, the tales are arranged as journeys. In fact, journey motif provides impetus to the action of the novel. In the former, like Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, Joseph Andrews and Parson Adams, set on an odyssey. Andrews, the domestic servant of Lady Booby has incurred the wrath of the gentle lady and is forced to leave her house and to go on the road. Similarly, in **Tom Jones,** the hero has been subject to the displeasure of Mr. Allworthy and is forced to leave his home; lost, lonely and penniless, he has to be on the road. Tom Jones, who is not a real picaro**,** spends one third time at home, one third on the road, and the rest in London. But as he is illegitimate and his parentage is still a mystery, he neatly fits into the category, though temporarily. Tom's journey on the highway from the country to London make it partly "a novel of the road."

Once on the road, the comfortable life of the shire has been left behind and the hero and the heroine are exposed to the hostile world of the highway. Tom's saving of the Man of the Hill from an attack of two ruffians, his rescuing of a woman from her assailant, who is no other than Ensign Northerton, his old antagonist, question the very cosy comforts of rural life that the old Man so fervently advocates. It is rightly said that the picaresque novel is "anti-pastoral, anti-chivalric, anti-aristocratic." Mrs Waters-Tom episode at Upton connotes the same meaning. By way of comparison, Fielding has introduced the poetic elements of a puppet show and a gypsy wedding. The former is an innocent means of entertainment whereas the latter is seen as an act of quick justice. The innocence and helping attitude of gypsies are seen as the last resort. Very soon we are to be led into the corruptions of the town.

A picaresque novel gives a picture of a whole age. This is provided through the central figure, that is, Tom himself. In the first part of the novel we had a panoramatic view of the shire of Mr Allworthy and Mr Western. We are offered a survey of feudal society. Fielding offers a comic view of the whole society. We are shown the generosity of Mr Allworthy, hypocrisy of the two tutors, Thwackum and Square, the villainy of Blifils, fads of Mr Western and egotism of Miss Western, nagging of Mrs Partridge, and above all the beauty and grace of Sophia.

Then we had the pulsating and precarious life of the rural English people. Now we reach London. Again we have the sexual intrigues of the upper society. Mrs Hunt, Lady Bellaston and Lord Fellamar belong to the same clan. Tom is victimized by Lady Bellaston. He plays her gigolo. Mr Fellamar is persuaded by Lady Bellaston to rape Sophia; the former hires a press gang to dispatch Tom to a foreign land. Bath and London embody the ugliness of town life. The upper society people are the wretched specimen of the urban society.

So the comic novel written in the picaresque tradition is a novel of life, of men and women, playing out the great comic role in society. Although the structure of **Tom Jones** is compact. It is a story of the hero who is not a rogue but a person of goodwill. He is ready to suffer and help anybody in distress. Ultimately he wins his heroine; his parentage is revealed and he gets settled. The novel covers Tom's journey within and journey without. The book falls in the category of the picaresque novel because, to use Edwin Muir words, it has a central figure who passes through a succession of scenes, and offers a panoramic view of the whole society.

7. Theme : Morality or Sexual Ethics

It will be a futile exercise to trace a particular theme in **Tom Jones.** But at the risk of over simplification, we may say that the theme is synonymous with Fielding's basic philosophy. The novel illustrates his concept of morality, especially in relation to sexual behaviour of men and women. Right from its publication, the book was chiefly criticized on moral and ethical ground. It was considered a "low" book. Richardson maliciously denounced it as "a dessolute book," "a profligate performance" and an attempt "to whiten a vicious character." Dr Johnson called it "so vicious a book," and he scarcely knew "a more corrupt work." The book appeared in 1749, and when the following spring, London experienced shocks of two earthquakes, **Tom Jones** was considered to be the cause. In the nineteenth century itself, even Carlyle, though he called Fielding's novels "genuine things", had his reservations to recommend them, because "their morality is so loose."

But such a view ignores the very intention of the novelist and the true spirit of the work. In fact, in **Tom Jones,** Fielding is offering a new kind of morality and his own views on sexual ethics. He had already given **Joseph Andrews** to the reading public his answer to Richardson's confined views on morality, chastity and sexual behaviour. Fielding was not a philosopher in the accepted sense of the term, but he had certain moral convictions which he stressed in his non-fiction work and even in the novel itself. He laid particular emphasis on the necessity of "good nature" in man. He equated it with virtues. According to him good nature was "that benevolent and amiable temper of mind, which disposes us to feel the misfortunes, and enjoy the happiness of others; and consequently pushes us on to promote the latter and prevent the former." His **Tom Jones** illustrates his convictions founded on charity rather than the abstract theory of virtue; they also include prudence, and an eagerness to learn by experience. He held hypocrisy as a sin of sins, and goodness, simplicity, and generosity as the great virtues. Above all, he took a broader and realistic view of sexual ethics.

The real issue is the sexual behaviour of Tom, the protagonist in the novel. His moral lapses resulting from his sexual escapades are taken as an affornt to decent society. In accordance with the traditionally held views on morality, Tom falls three times. William Empson, in his defence of the issue, says that "the most striking illustration is in the sexual behaviour of Jones, where he is most scandalous." This is in relation to Molly Seagrim, the daughter of his gamekeeper companion, Black George; Mrs Waters who is actually Jenny Jones and with whom he indulges in sex at Upton Inn; and Lady Bellaston, a nymphomaniac Lady to whom he plays the sedulous ape.

Very early in the novel, Tom falls in love with Sophia. Mrs Honour found him fondly kissing Sophia's muff, calling it "the prettiest muff in the world." Then why he submits to Molly's temptations. According to Christian morality it is a sinful indulgence. In personal relationships it may be termed as betrayal and even debauchery. Even if we do not defend Tom, we find that he is serious about this relationship. When Molly is pregnant he owns the responsibility. When she is produced before Mr Allworthy for the trial, Tom confesses that he is the father of her unborn child. It is only later when he discovers Square, the philosopher and his tutor, in her bed room, he concludes that she is a slut. Long after, he remains divided whether he is the father of her child or not. Besides, on account of the difference of social status, because he is known to be a bastard, he is not sure about his marriage with Sophia. Moreover, his affair with Molly may be taken as his instinctive behaviour, and is pardonable on realistic ground.

His sexual relations with Mrs Waters and Lady Bellaston can stand no defence. But something can be said in his favour. It is always the woman who pursues him. The point is that he is an easy catch. As Elizabeth Drew remarks "Women (including Sophia herself) always take the initiative, and Tom never corrupts innocence in the unmarried, or virtue in the married." The trouble with him is that he cannot resist. Mrs Waters, during the Upton Inn episode, employs all charms at her disposal to allure him. Tom's appetite for sexual gratification lets him

forget his allegiance to Sophia. Mrs. Waters is certainly a flirt and Tom is not serious about her. Besides, he is never sure about his love for Sophia. He has been cut from his moorings, penniless and lonely on his way to London, he finds temporary escape into his venture with this trollop.

Tom's falling a victim to Lady Bellaston in London is the repetition of the Upton Inn episode. He plays the gigolo to the lady. Again it is the woman who challegnes him, and as William Empson says Tom simply "thinks it a point of honour to accept the challenge." This time the challenger is Lady Bellaston who is frantically pining to recapture her lost youth. Her riches and status afford her enough chances for sexual freedom. Tom is ready to allay her apepetites because he believes that he may reach Sophia through her. We cannot condone Tom's looseness but such things do occur in such a society. Perhaps it is also because of the corrupting influence of the town life. From a masquerade to the bed room of Lady Bellaston – such is Tom's development here. But in this case Fielding advises the reader not "to condemn a character as a bad one because it is not perfectly a good one." Besides, in all the three cases of so called moral depravity, it is the woman who seduces him. He is not a seducer; he is seduced.

It follows that Fielding assesses man as an individual who is not all good. As he says in one of his prefatory chapers that if there is enough goodness in a character to engage our admiration and affection it does not matter if there should appear some little blemishes. Tom is essentially good. On the other hand, Blifil and his tribe, Square and Thwackum, are hypocritical. As Walter Allen also says that Fielding considered sexual lapses a much smaller offence than the absence of essential goodness. The positive evils like malice, meanness, treachery, and hypocrisy in Blifil, Square and Thwackum are juxtaposed with the generosity, goodness and charity inTom. He helps the poor family of Black George by selling his horse and Bible which were gifts from Mr Allworthy. He rescues the Man of the Hill from robbers, and a lady under attack by the ruffians on the way to London. He helps Mrs Miller and hands over to her the whole money he gets from Lady Bellaston; he effects the marriage between Ningtingale and Nancy and succeeds in reconciling the former with his father, Mr Nightingale; he is kind to Bilfil when he is fully unmasked and forgives him for his villainy; he forgives Black George who appropriated his money when he needed it most. When Mr Allworthy is reconciled with Tom, he exclaims: "Oh, my child, to what goodness have I been so long blind."

It follows that, as Dudden holds, Fielding laid down an important principle. "Goodness, he contended, not much on a man's actions as on his motives and intentions, not on the quality of conduct, but on the quality of his character." The good man, Fielding thought, must be not only good in heart, and not only good in action; he must also present to the world a good appearance. We find these virtues fully illustrated in the development of Tom. Other characters who embody Fielding's conception of morality are Mr Allworthy, Mrs Miller, and Sophia herself. Those who negate these virtues are Blifil, Thwackum, Square, Lady Bellaston, Fitzpatrick and Lady Bellaston. They are an ugly specimen of humanity and are painted pitilessly in hideous colours.

Thus, in his moral ethics, Fielding is closer to Chaucer and Shakespeare. He is tolerant of every other human weakness except positive vice or hypocrisy. He favours essential good as an answer to vice and hypocrisy. **Tom Jones** illustrates Fielding's true morality authoritatively and convincingly.

8. Element of Realism : Concept of History

Realism is an artistic creed which holds that the purpose of art is to depict life with complete and objective honesty, to show things "as they really are." Literature of realism reflects life itself, life as it is rather than as it should be. A work of realism is a rolling mirror reflecting the true and real picture of contemporary society without any unrecognizable distortions. Its emphases are life emphases. A realist depends more on his own observation an experience than on some abstractions or preconceived theory. Chaucer was, perhaps, the first realist in English literature. Legouis and Cazamian rightly call him the social chroniccer of his age. Shakespeare's plays, especially his comedies, offer an infinite variety of characters closer to life. However, delineation of realism as a conscious culture begins with the eighteenth century, particularly in fiction, with Defoe, Richardson and Fielding.

The treatment of realism in the eighteenth century novel was the natural outcome of social developments. While tracing its rise in the century, Arnold Kettle assigns it to the decline of feudalism and the emergence of middle class as a force to reckon with. "Romance" that was patronized by the aristocratic feudal society was "non-realistic." It provided escape and amusement. The reader was shut in his ivory tower aloofness. The rising middle class was in search of something more real and concrete, something closer to their life. When Fielding appeared on the literary scene, the soil was ready for the rich crop. He may be called the pioneer in the novel of realism in English literature. No doubt, Defoe and Richardson were the trend setters in this field, but Fielding found them lacking in definite principles or guidelines that he could rely upon. Consequently, he devised his own devices and formulated certain workable principles which enabled him to portray men and manners of his age as they really were.

As Fielding was committed to hold a faithful mirror to his age, he called his **Tom Jones** a "history," and not "romance." While discussing the marvellous versus real in fiction, in the prefatory chapter of Book VIII, he states that general principle that "man……. is the highest subject …… which presents itself to the pen of our historian…….. and, in relating his actions, great care is to be taken that we do not exceed the capacity of the agent we describe." Again and again, in the prefatory chapters, he directs the reader to distinguish between the true and the false historic kind of writing. His **Tom Jones** is a true history. As Kettle says: "history is men's action. History is life going on, changing, developing." And as the critic adds "History is the process of change in living." Fielding in **Tom Jones** deals with the living men. In reading his fiction we feel that we are in contact with a man, a man intensely interested in life. The province of **Tom Jones** is the humanity.

Fielding's portrayal of men and manners is highly authentic and closer to the verities of life. What Dr Johnson said about the characters of Shakespeare may aptly be applied to those of Fielding:

> "They are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in Shakespeare it is commonly a species."

Fielding himself says "I describe not men but manners, not individual but species." To fulfil this aim, Fielding treats man as an amalgamation of vice and virtue and good and evil. He stands not for extremes but for the synthesis of the two. He was of the conviction that an individual can embody both the dark and bright side of life.

Certainly he was averse to hypocrisy, seeming goodness in any individual. In **Tom Jones,** all the actions of Blifil, the antagonist, appear to be good while all Tom's actions seem wicked and for which he "deserved to be

hanged." But a careful study will reveal that Tom is essentially good; he is generous, truthful, chivaleric, and constant whereas Blifil is false, hypocritical, deceitful, lecherous, and flattering. Tom-Sophia-Blifil traingle treats their fundamental natures. In this relationship Blifil is motivaed by jealously, Tom by devotion, and Sophia by constancy. So characters here are true to life.

Fielding's other characters also are a blend of the opposing natures which shows his realistic approach. The seemingly virtuous Square can fall a victim to lust in Molly; both Square and Thwackum illustrate doctrines rather than follow them; Mr Western is tyrranical but indulgent. Once again, Tom is chivalrous but with Achilles' heel. Similarly, Mrs Western, Molly Seagrim, Mrs Partridge, Lady Bellaston and Mrs Waters are treated with great authenticity. As Walter Allen says: "He populated a whole world, but it exits as a considered criticism of the real world."

Fielding's treatment of sexual ethics too is realistic. His views on sexual behaviour include his ideas on morality as also vice and virtue. He severely reacted against the cut and dried Christian morality. If the motive is good, nothing else matters. Tom is shown as essentially good; his sexual behaviour is taken as his natural urge which has nothing to do with his fundamental nature. Commenting on his relation with Molly Seagrim, Mutter says "Fielding is presenting an accurate enough picture of an age in which sexual irregularity (particularly between a handsome young man of spirit and a girl of lower social standing) was taken for granted." Tom's sexual escapades with Mrs Waters and Lady Bellaston do not dim his attraction and commitment towards Sophia, nor does it decrease his enthusiam to help people like Mrs Miller who consider him the saviour of her family. Tom's basic goodness and charity absolve him of his moral lapses. Philosopher Square's affairs with Molly too are taken as human weakness, an excusable lapse. The really wicked are people like Thwackum, Blifil, Mrs Bellaston, and Lord Fellamar who are consciously malignant, treacherous and corrupt.

Both thematically and structurally, in substance and style and in matter and method, **Tom Jones** offers a comprehensive view of the then society. He wrote it as "a comic epic in prose," and adopted the picaresque form showing the hero's journey as the central motif. First we are given a survey of the feudal system of the estates in Somersetshire. The benevolence of Mr Allworthy is equated with his authoritative distates of a feudal squire; the tyrannical father, Mr Western, is a fox-hunting Jacobite; Square and Thwackum, the two tutors, are the parasites and trappings of that system. Black George and his family show the misery that such a system encourages. Tom's journey covers a wide range of the spectrum of society. Robberies, scuffles, looting, chasing, man-hunting, noisy and mismanaged inns, and the sexual corruptions as portrayed in the Upton Inn are faithfully described. From the high road we are led to London, what Eliot called the "Unread City." The heart of the matter is that there everyone is against everyone. We meet the nymphomaniac and scheming Lady Bellaston, the rapist peer Fellamar, and wife-hunting Mr Fitzpatrick. Here the country puppet show and pastoral gypsy-wedding has been replaced by masks and masquerades which are a poor and sordid substitutes. Here Tom can be trapped by a press gang; Sophia can be subjected to an attempted rape. Things have certainly fallen apart.

Thus, **Tom Jones** is a novel of realism. It holds a true mirror to its age and covers the widest range of humanity. It offers a panoramic view of men and manners of the eighteenth century. Besides, he treats fundamental nature and deals with verities of life. Henry James said "Humanity is immense and reality has a myriad forms; the most one can affirm is that some of the flowers of fiction have the ordour of it, and others have not." We fully agree with Mutter that "**Tom Jones** has."

9. Characterization

Being an artist-critic, Fielding had a definite theory of the novel. He was guided by certain definite precepts which went into the making of his personages. His characterization is based on his general views on life. As he was writing a "history" not a "romance", his characters were bound to be real human beings, persons of flesh and blood, taken directly from life. The form of the novel as "comic epic in prose" has a burden to delineate things as they are, rather than as they should be. In the Preface to his first major novel, **Joseph Andrews**, Fielding announced the theory of the novel. He says that the story will be based on probable incidents and recognizable people. His characters, he said, are taken from life. As he avers :

> "For though everything is copied from the book of nature, and scarce a character or action produced which I have not taken from my own observations and experiences".

In this way he wanted to bring his character closer to life. Hence we see a greater degree of reality in setting and characterization. As his motto is humanity, we have infinite variety of characters in *Tom Jones.* The unbelieverable range of humanity in his fiction is available only in Cervantes, Fielding's master, and in Dickens. By contrast with Fielding, Richardson's range of characters is narrow and confined.

Fielding's treatment and delineation of characters presuppose his preoccupations as a "historian". Through his personages, he holds a true miror to his age; he is committed to the present, to use John Dryden's expression, "a just and lively image of human nature". As he states in one of the prefatory chapters "man...is the highest subject...which presents itself to the pen of our historian... and, in relating his actions, great care is to be taken that we do not exceed the capacity of the agent we describe." The moment we meet the "agent" or the character, we recognize him as a single separate person, an individual with whims and mood what we call "humour." As soon as we meet Squire Allworthy and his house keeper Mrs Deborah Wilkins, we recognize them through their humour. Mr Allworthy is kind, generous, a man of true Christian piety and charity; Mrs Deborah believes only in the formality of Christian virtues. Mr Allworthy shows kindness to the infant he discovers lying in his bed, whereas she wants that the child be wrapped up and put at the Church warden's door. This is what she means by duty. Besides, she is curel as she suggests "it is.....better for such creatures to die in a state of innocence." Flattery is her humour. When Mrs Bridget approves of her brother's descision to adopt the child, Mrs Deborah changes her opinion in the favour of the child. Here all characters are true to their nature. Mr Allworthy remains generous, and also gullible, Mrs Wilkins cruel and calculative, and Mrs Bridget vain and hypocritical. Their particular qualities are a clue to their nature and behaviour.

Fielding's portayal of character is authentic and balanced. He shows characters dominated by common traits, swayed both by good and evil. He does not concentrate on individuals, as does Richardson, for instance. He takes up people as a "species." As he himself says : "I describe not men but manners, not individuals but species." What Dr Johnson said about the personages of Shakespeare can safely be applied to Fielding's characters:

> "They are the genuine progency of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in Shakespeare it is commonly a species".

This is very true of Fielding's characters. Tom, Blifil, Square, Thwackum, etc. are all swayed by their general passions. Blifil and his tutors are an embodiment of evil. They represent this extreme. Blifil proceeds with a malignant motive to hurt others. He devises ways and means to disinherit Tom and to marry Sophia for her

fortune. He can go to any extent; for him means justify the end. He is all evil without any streak of humanity. He belongs to the "progeny" of Satan, Iago, Edmund and Goneril and Regan. Square and Thwackum are his allies in evil doings. The devil and his deputies make a single unit. Mr Allworthy, Sophia and Mrs Miller are all good. Tom is in between these two extremes, an amalgamation of good and evil, a kind of "natural man", a true to life, and a "recognizable" character.

Tom Jones, though a comic novel in form and spirit, is a serious book. In all serious writings the author establishes standards through his characters. And as F.R. Leavis says, though in a different context, "Standards are formed in comparison." The "comparison" and contrast of characters in **Tom Jones** enables the author to make certain judgements. In the very beginning of the novel this contrast is presented through such figues as Mr Allworthy and Mr Western, Square and Thwackum, Dr Blifil and Captain Blifil, Mrs Deborah Wilkins, and Mrs Honour. Mr Allworthy is gullible and credulous, lacking in insight; Mr Western is irrational and unreasonable, guided only by mundane considerations; Square and Thwackum are duplicate of each other negating their profession and travesting their duties; Dr Blifil is simplistic and naive; Captain Blifil is treacherous, calculative and avarious. All these characters embody various standards. Their decisions are highly consequential to the deveopment of the plot.

In Fieldings works, characters are judged in a situation and are "revealed dramatically", says Elizabeth Drew. The critic presupposes that the plot of **Tom Jones** is episodic in which characters are developed through incidents, happenings and conversations. The very situation of the discovery of the foundling in the bed of Mr Allworthy reveals the characters in the squire household. Later on it becomes a touchstone to test a Board of characters. Now we learn that Miss Bridget is a hypocrite; Mrs Deborah uses third degree methods in the procedure to find out the infant's parents; the actions and reactions of the whole neighbourhood establish their true nature; the chuchyard attack on Molly reveals the meanness of the congregation attacking a pregnant woman; the incident surrounding Sophia's pet bird reveals the jealous nature of Blifil and the chivalry of Tom; at the same time the incident reveals Sophia's responses towards Tom and Blifil. Throughout the novel, incidents and episodes develop the characters and reveal their consistencies and inconsistencies, their strength's and frailties. Through the communications between incidents, episodes and characters, Fielding offers a pattern of life which raises his work to classical heights.

Fielding's characters are a blend of natures which shows Fielding's realistic approach to characterization. Besides, it lends complexity to his character development. It shows a discrepancy between appearance and reality, a highly ironic treatment. The characters, sometimes, are not what they seem to be, and, sometimes, they seem to be what they are not. For instance, Blifil is outwardly calm and sophisticated; he seems to be considerate towards Mr Allworthy, submissive towards his two tutors, and very polite to Sophia, but actually he is just the opposite. He reveals the news of his mother's death when the squire is seriously ill, and holds back information of the true parentage of Tom contained in the letter handed over to him by Lawyer Dowling who was by Mrs Bridget's bedside when she died. The seemingly virtuous Square is discovered to be a lusty fellow when he is found concealing in Molly's bedroom; Molly herself chides Tom for insincerity whereas she is already having the tutor in her closet; Tom is chivalrous but has his sexual escapades; Mr Western is despotic but indulgent; Mrs Western can cry "rape" whereas she is a slut; Lady Bellaston is most hypocritical in her sexual behaviour. But Fielding treats all these characters realistically, as they are, without moralizing, or castigating or even ridiculing them.

Above all, Fielding is a great admirer of charity, generosity, and fundamental goodness in characters. He treats characters from all walks of life; most of his characters are from lower and middle classes, but he also takes characters from higher society. But hypocrisy, jealousy and wickedness, which he called negative virtues, are unacceptable to Fielding. He considered them more dangerous than even loose sexual behaviour. Mr Allworthy, Sophia and Mrs Miller are his models of positive virtues; Molly, Mrs. Waters, Lady Bellaston, Lord Fellamar, Blifil, the two tutors, the Blifil brothers are the ugly specimen of humanity. Mrs Miller's goodness is exemplary; Sophia's chastity is ideal. Tom is a model of basic goodness. Even his sexual behaviour, though not condoned, is

excused. Tom's generosity towards Black George and his family, his saving of the Old Man of the Hill from ruffians, his rescuing Mrs Waters from robbers, his helping of Mrs Miller and many others in distress absolve him of his sexual escapades with three women of disrepute. Through Tom, Fielding upholds basic goodness in man.

Sometimes characters in Fielding are subservient to an idea, or values, or a conception or even to a person. At times, a character or a group of characters may serve as a chorus. Perhaps, his training as a dramatist helped him make the villager, what he calls "Somersetshire mob", comment on the situation. The mob in Fielding, as the rustics in Hardy, perform the function of a commentator. When Mr Allworthy shows consideration to Jenny Jones, they castigate him for his leniency; they even hold that Mr Allworthy is the father of the foundling; they even charge the squire that he has sent Jenny to meet an unfortunate end. Similarly they praise Tom for his generosity towards Black George and are displeased with Blifil for his inhuminity towards the gamekeeper. Like Shakespeare, Fielding shows the mob as a living entity with their own convictions. Similarly such minor characters as the fiddler, the beggar, the chambermaids, footmen, etc. are given importance. The notebook and bill of pounds given by the beggar to Tom is of great consequence. The appearance of such a minor character as the Quaker who is going to disown his daughter who has disobeyed him, has been introduced to comment on Mr Western-Sophia relations; he perpetuates the father-daughter relationship.

It will not be far amiss to say that sometimes Fielding introduces a set of minor characters or an individual character subservient to another character, as, for instance, is Mrs. Honour to Sophia and Little Benjamin (Partridge) to Tom. There are quite a number of minor characters such as Mrs Deborah, Mrs Honour, Mrs Partridge, Mrs Waters, Mrs Miller, Lady Bellaston, etc. who play their role as subservient to an idea. Mrs Deborah and Mrs Honour are faithful to the idea of service towards their masters; Mrs Partridge represents the concept of a nagging wife; Molly, Mrs Waters and Lady Bellaston represent corruptions and perversions of sex. But Partridge, who is also a major character, and remains present from the beginning to the end, is subservient to Tom. He comments and improves upon men and manners and is an important link between characters and situations. All these characters are important in relation to the development of sophia and Tom. In fact no character is superfluous. Even the Old Man of the Hill has been introduced to comment on the vanities of the world, one of the themes in the novel.

Fielding's characterization is said to have one limitation. It is generally said that Fielding does not present psychological analysis of his characters. It is held that his characterization is based on his superticial observation of "men and manners". Actually such a charge is not well founded. The form of the novel, as "comic epic in prose", is based on episodic development; accidents and coincidences which make the plot highly compicated, says Elizabeth Drew, "forbids any psychological revelations." His aim was not to treat characters psychologically, but realistically; his primary aim was to offer a panoramic view of the eighteenth century; his treatment makes his characters living portraits of that particular society. At the same time their fundamental nature, and their real behaviour, make them universal. Like Chancer's portraits, and Shakespeares characters before him and those of Dickens's after him, Fielding's characters will always remain contemporary, because they belong to humanity and are universal.

10. Style

Fielding's style, which deserves equally great attention, is in keeping with the form of the novel. Like his earlier novel **Joseph Andrews** his **Tom Jones**, too, is written as "comic epic in prose". As it is written in the picaresque tradition and is largely episodic, he adopted as style which could present the scenario of society ironically. As his moral purpose is more than obvious, his major preoccupation was to encourage virtue and reproach vice, he blended wit and irony to achieve his mission. He wrote **Tom Jones** as a "history" and not "romance"; hence his purpose was to delineate human nature, and, since, human nature is a complex thing, he could not do it with a simple and straightforward style. He had to dress his wit accordingly. In the very first chapter of Book I, he quotes Pope

> "True wit is nature to advantage drest, what oft' was thought, but ne'er so well exprest".

He certainly expresses in a novel way. He also fulfils Dr Johnson's improved definition of 'wit' when the latter said "to be wit is to be newly thought." So Fielding does not use one style but many styles.

More than most, Fielding in this "comic epic in prose" purposely uses mock-epic or mock-heroic style. Such a style parodies the style of epic or heroic poetry. It is ironic in its mode and is consistently set in the inflated mode. Fielding's sustained inflated style reminds his reader of Homer's style in **The Iliad** and that of other masters. The introduction of Mrs Deborah Wilkins, in the very first book, shows that epic simile is Fielding's Cleopatra. After disposing the foundling as directed by Mr Allworthy, Mrs Deborah prepares to visit the inhabitants to trace its mother. As Fielding describes it on epic scale :

> "Not otherwise than when a kite, tremendous bird, is beheld by the feathered generation soaring aloft, and hovering over their heads, the amorous dove, and every innocent little bird, spread wide the alarm, and fly trembling to their hiding places. He proudly beats the air, consicious of his dignity, and meditates intended mischief."

The simile, appropriately, in the true comic spirit, describes the nature of Mrs Deborah, who is a callous, cruel, and unfeeling human engine.

Fielding uses mock-heroic style in describing situations which serve as a touchstone to test men and manners which was his avowed purpose. One such situation occurs in Book II in which Mrs Partridge suspects her husband's fidelity. Her onslaught on the poor victim (Mr Partridge) is described in mock-heroic inflated style :

> "Not with less fury did Mrs Partridge fly on the poor pedagogue. Her tongue, teeth, and hands fell all upon him at once. His wig was in an instant torn from his head, his shirt from his back, and from his face descended five streams of blood, denoting the number of claws with which nature had unhappily armed the enemy".

Here wit, humour and irony are blended to present in the mock-heroic style, what Dryden calls the "just and lively image of human nature".

Molly Seagrim's battle in the Church is the best exmaple of the mock-heroic style. The congregation after prayer, attack the woman out of jealousy as she looks more beautiful in her borrowed sack than they do in their genuinely own clothes. Fielding first invokes the Muse : "Ye Muses, then whoever ye are, who love to sing battles.....assist me on this great occasion." It reminds us of Milton's invocation address to the Muses. Now, he proceeds to bring out the absurdities of the "Somesretshire mob." He compares them to "a vast herd of cows." The fall of the victims is described in mock-heroic inflated style which is a parody of the elevated Homeric style. There are Miltonic echoes in such descriptions as "First Jenny Tweedle fell on his hinder head the direful

bone."

In fact, Fielding uses both the high and the low styles. For instance, the entrance of Sophia is described in high style where the author is speaking in all seriousness but a bit mockingly : "Hushed be every ruder breath".

And

> "Awaken all the charms in which nature can array her; bedecked with beauty, youth, sprightliness, innocence, modesty, and tenderness, breathing sweetness from her rosy lips, and darting brightness from her sparkling eyes, the lovely sophia comes".

As Sophia is to be shown an embodiment of chastity, innocence and prudene, Fielding introduces her with all solemnity. In her case Fielding uses "sublime" language and prepares the reader to see her as charming as the cool breeze in summer.

However he uses highly low and comic style in relation to the description of fight at upton Inn, especially when Fitzpatrick crashes into the room Tom and Mrs Waters have locked. His very entry is described in mock-heroic low style : "When he found the door locked, he flew at it with such violence, that the lock immediately gave way, the door burst open, he fell head long into the room," the situation is highly comic; Fitzpatrick first wanted to feel sorry, but when he spotted all the articles of vanities in women, he scuffled with Tom. And when the good lady found the two young men fighting in her chamber, she "began to scream in the most violent manner, crying out murder! robbery! and more frequently rape!". Similarly the descriptions of Little Benjamin (book VIII, iv), and Mrs Honour at the Upton Inn itself (Book X, iv) are highly comic and in the low style.

Irony is the great hallmark of Fielding's style. A light and gentle irony runs like a silken thread in the fabric of his story throughout. Molly's bedroom episode when Tom spots Square in her room in an obvious example of ironic situation. Molly upbraids Tom for his infidelity whereas Square is hiding in closet. Tom had gone to apologize and own the responsibility of her unborn child but Square is already there. It is a case of double irony. It exposes the hypocrisy of Square and the double game of a vain woman. Sometimes, Fielding uses irony as a pleasant weapon to laugh at the delusion of a common spinster such as Miss Bridget Allworthy: "She was that species of women who commend rather for good qualities than beauty".

Certainly, Fielding's satire and irony are directed against those who violate the magnetic chain of humanity. Such cases are as Square, Thwackum and Blifil, Mrs. Waters and Lady Bellaston. Pleasant irony is used in case of Mr Allworthy, Mrs Western and Partridge.

Thus, Fielding uses not one style but many styles. In fact **Tom Jones** is a fine blend of high and low styles which, like Shakespeare in his comedy, enables Fielding to provide relief to the reader from Sophia-Tom theme with comic scenes. Like that of Addison, Fielding's style may be termed as "middle" style, neigther high nor low. Generally his prose is straightforward, simple and unadorned. Especially in the concluding part of his novel (Book XVIII) he drops irony, satire, sarcasm and all other devices of mock-heroic style, and uses simple language without jesting and raillery. Here all satire and irony are absent. What we witness here is an unadorned narrative.

11. Prefatory Chapters

Every Book in **Tom Jones** is preceded by a short essay. These prefatory Chapters are not a part of the tale, and it can very well go without them. Here also Fielding's knowledge as dramatist stands him in a good stead. These prefatory chapters stand to his novel as do prologues to dramas. These chapters are, in fact, the novelist's heart to heart talk with the reader, and serve as a key to his preoccupations. Much labour is involved in the writing of these chapters. As he avers: "I can with less pains write one of the books of history than prefatory chapter to each of them." These essays show his great knowledge of art and life, and profess his wide reading. These prefatory chapters are of abiding interest to the reader in the sense that they serve as a key to the novelist's aims and objectives in the novel. In these essays, Fielding discusses the problems an artist is subject to during writing; he takes the critics to task; and helps the reader, to use Joseph Conrad's words "to read and to judge." It is certainly rewarding to trace Fielding's preoccupations in these prefatory chapters.

The very first chapter to Book I is a clue to Fielding's purpose as a novelist. He compares a novelist to the keeper of an "eating house," and the material of the novel to a bill of fare As an honest host will first provide a menu, the novelist shall acquaint the read with the subject he is going to treat in his book. Fielding's bill of fare is the great and universal dish of human nature. As the true preparation of the dish depends upon the genius of the cook, the delineation of human nature depends upon the genius of the author. An expert cook serves the simplest dishes first to the hungry guests but as the meal proceeds he improves the fare by adding spices and this teases their decaying hunger. As Fielding says:

> "In like manner, we shall represent Human Nature at first to the keen appetite of our reader, in that more plain and simple manner in which it is found in the country, and shall herafter hash and ragoo it with all the high French and Italian seasoning of affectation and vice which courts and cities afford".

The analogy between the skilled cook and the author of genius persists throughout these chapters. Besides, the reference to Human Nature occurs repeatedly in the prefatory chapters.

In the prefatory chapters Fielding tells about the purpose of his writing this book. He tells that he is writing a "history" and not a "romance." It is history because it is closer to life. In the introductory chapter to Book IV, he says that truth is the hallmark of his history. He calls the romances "idle." To achieve that end he is committed to bring his history closer to life. He refers to Aristotle whose theory of imitation has become the basis of all discussions on art. He agrees that the stage is a representation of life. Fielding continues the neo-classic tenet of pleasant representation of human nature which Dryden terms as "just and lively representation of human nature", and Pope asserts as "True wit is nature to advantage drest." To delineate Nature and to keep within the bounds of human nature, a historian (or a novelist) must keep himself within the bounds of possibility in his writing. Discussing the "marvellous" versus the "real," Fielding avers : "man..... is the highest subject....which presents itself to the pen of our historian.... and, in relating his actions, great care is to be taken that we do not exceed the capacity of the great agent we describe." For that the author will keep himself within the bounds of "possibility" and "probability." What Fielding means is that the action will remain within "the compss of human nature" and consistent with the character of the agent. This commitment to truth will enable the author to win the faith of his reader. Fielding says that these introductory chapters will, thus, help the reader to distinguish between the true and false kind of writing.

In the introductory chapter of Book IX, Fielding lays down certain qualifications for the "historians" to have and to acquire. The first and the foremost is "genius" which is blended with the other two qualities, which are invention and judgement. The second is "learning" which must fit them to use. The next is "conversation" which

is essential to the understanding of men and manners. This cannot be acquired through books. In the prefatory chapter of Book XIV, Fielding adds :

"The picture must be after Nature herself. A true knowledge of the world is gained only by conversation, and the manners of every rank must be seen in order to be known".

The last qualification is "sensibility." If the historian lacks sensibility all other qualities are of no avail. Sensibility is the combination of mind and heart, thought and feeling, what Matthew Arnold calls "culture" and the revolt between the two he terms as "anarchy". Fielding rightly says that a good heart must be "capable of feeling." He quotes Horace who says that the author who will make us weep "must first weep himself." To these four qualifications, Fielding adds another, that is, learning (Book XIV, Ch. I). He does not agree with those who call learning a fetter to the imagination. At the same time, he says that the knowledge of the subject is even more necessary or else "all the other learning in the world will stand him in little stead." He invokes genius, humanity, learning, and experience for himself (Book XIII, Ch. I).

As regards the subject matter, he takes human nature as the most genuine subject. He takes love as the fittest emotion to be treated in a "history." Fielding favours healthy and true love between two loving people as the spice of life. Lust and orgasm are taken as unhealthy. This is why he equates the lustful sexual urge with animal behaviour. He calls it "appetite" and "hunger". Fielding, in his novels, equates lustful sexual behaviour with these appetites and terms them as illicit passion. According to him love is a benevolent disposition which contributes to the happiness of others. It is a generous emotion which can exist without amorous desires.

The prefatory chapters put forth his theory of morality forcefully and authentically. His emphasis is on the basic, fundamental goodness of man. If a man is essentially good he should not be condemned for one or two "blemishes." No man in this world is perfect or entirely good; similarly no man is all bad. As he elaborates in the prefatory chapter in Book XV, some people hold that virtue leads to happiness, whereas vice to misery. According to Fielding this is not exactly the case. He prefers an essentially good person to a hypocrite who is seemingly good. He considers "poverty and contempt," and "backbiting, envy, and ingratitude" greater evils. Fielding himself is tolerant of human weaknesses.

In the prefatory chapters, Fielding takes the critics to task. He calls false critics slanderers. Ironically Fielding himself turns out to be a good critic. Within these essays he offers good criticism of his own work. The other topics covered are plagiarism. There are also some comments on the plot and characterization, and the contemporary taste.

I an Watt, however, considers these prefatory chapters as Fielding's personal intrusion into the novel which break "the spell of the imaginary world represented in the novel." Fielding is acting as a guide who considers it his responsibility to explain everything in the novel. This "literary point of view," Watt holds, "tends to diminish the authenticity of his narrative." But we know that the prefatory chapters are used as a device to help the reader as do prologue to a drama. They equip the reader with better assessment of the plot and characters in the novel. Above all, Watt himself agrees that these chapters show that Fielding is "attentive to his audience." More than most, these chapters introduce us to Fielding's moralistic attitudes, his artistic foundations, his predilections, his friends and his favourites, and, above all, his scholarship and wide range of life and letters which go into the making of his art. So, we find it hard to agree that these chapters "derogate from the reality of the narrative."

In sum, Fielding's prefatory chapters in **Tom Jones** have a literary importance in the novel. They may be taken as "asides" of the novelist, which, as prologue in a drama, acquip the reader with better means to assess Fielding's art. Later on Henry James and Joseph Conrad used the same method by introducing prefaces and author's notes and guided their readers.

12. Fielding's Contribution as Novelist

Fielding is rightly called one of the four "wheels of the English novel" in the eighteenth century. Others are Richardson, Smollett and Sterne. He is the only man of letters among his contemporaries whose career marks two of the major literary developemnts of the eighteen century, that is, the decline of the drama and the rise of the novel. As we know, he had a consistent and pretty concentrated career in the dramatic art. As a theorist and novelist he made solid contribution to the form of the novel. F R Leavis (**The Great Tradition**, 1948) rightly says that "Fielding made Jane Austen possible by opening the central tradition of English fiction." The critic reiterates that "to say that the English novel began with him is as reasonable as such propositions are." Even before Richardson and Fielding some work in the field of fiction had been initiated by swift, Dofoe, Addison, and Steel, who may be called the pioneers, in a limited sense. Some critics even call Defoe the first English novelist. But these periodical essayists and novelists made no recognizable contribution to the form of the novel as such. Certainly, as Leavis adds, Fielding "completed the work began by **The Tatler** and **The Spectator**." And as Walter Allen holds "the form the novel took in England for more than a hundred years had its origin in Fielding, and in this respect Smollett, Scott, Dickens, and Meredith all wrote in his shadow." Rightly so, Sir Walter Scott calls Fielding "the Father of the English Novel."

Fielding's contribution to the art of the novel is beyond dispute. The moment he came to write **Joseph Andrews**, his first great novel, he explained the purpose and form of the novel. His preface to this novel may be taken as a manifesto of his art. Here he explained the form, the plot, the way he was to treat his characters, and delineate them in the novel. His assertions on the form of the novel as "comic epic in prose" became the foundation of **Tom Jones**. His prefatory chapters in **Tom Jones** are an addition to his tenets on the art of fiction. In these chapters he discusses his aims and objectives in the novel. In his theoretical assertions, Fielding emerges as a theorist-novelist and has become a model for such great artist critics in fiction as EM Forster, Henry James, and Joseph Conrad. Fielding's conscious preoccupation with the theory of the novel made him technically better equipped and more aware of the needs of the reader. As a theoretician he emerges as a guide to the reader.

Fielding made solid and durable contribution to the form of the novel and plot construction. He adopted the form of epic, and called his novel "comic epic in prose." Both in **Joseph Andrews** and **Tom Jones**, Fielding put to practice the mechanics of the new genre. Following the classical norms laid down by Aristotle, he has introduced "fable, action, characters, sentiments, and diction and is deficient in metre only." Both are developed as epics of the road. Also written in the picaresque tradition, they offer a comprehensive view of the whole society. Plot in **Tom Jones** is given tripartite divison comprising the country, the road, and the town. According to Walter Allen "no plot has ever been carried through with more consummate skill." R S Crane rightly calls Fielding "an architect of plot." Summing up the plot construction in **Tom Jones**, Dorothy van Ghent says "The plot movement follows the curve characteristic of comedy plots, taking the protagonist from low fortune to high fortune." Sometimes, Fielding introduces certain characters or incidents which are directly not related to the main development of action. For instance, the episode of Leonora in **Joseph Andrews**, and the story of the Old Man of the Hill, and the history of Mrs. Harriet Fitzpatrick in **Tom Jones**, seem to be digressive. But it goes to the credit of Fielding that he makes such occurrences thematically relevant. Besides, conflicts in motives of characters, and fast pace of development of incidents make his plot rapid and the reader is so much involved in the development of action that he hardly notices any such blemishes. Generally his plot is compact and structure unified.

As Fielding wrote his major novels as comic epics in prose, and invented fable as wide in its sweep as an epic, he was bound to introduce large number of characters. As his purpose was to delineate human nature, he was pressed very hard to encompass a large variety of characters with their conflicts and contrasting attitudes. As

his purpose was comic, he was to laugh at certain incongruities, vanities, and hyporcrisies of the contemporary society. In order to portary human nature in **Tom Jones**, he introduced contrasting figures of Mr Allworthy and Mr Western, Dr Blifil and Captain Blifil, Square and Thwackum, Tom and young Blifil; a large number of minor characters such as Mr Deborah and Mrs Honour, Molly Seagrim and Mrs Partridge and later on Mrs Bellaston and Lord Bellaston are various shades of human nature. All these characters are true to life creations. His characters are authentic because they represent basic human nature. His numerous doctors, lawyers, soliders, beggars, priests, robbers and rufians show that Fielding was a great observer of human nature. Commenting on Fielding's characterization, Walter Allen rightly says that "they are so real to him that even though he may give us no more than a glimpse of them, they become real for us." So, Fielding's great contribution in characterization paved the way for such great novelists as Dickens. And it is interesting to note that his variety is available only in Dickens. Fielding, in his novels, offers an unprecedented harvest of characters.

One of the greatest contributions of Fielding is his offering of a healthy view on sexual behavour. He introduced a healthy morality and a representation of wholesome man-woman relationship. By introducing Lady Booby, who assails the virtue of her domestic servant in **Joseph Andrews,** Fielding was laughing at the hypocrisies and vanities associated with the contemporary sexual ethics. Here he pushes at "the virtue rewarded" thesis of Richardson. In **Joseph Andrews,** he offers a parody of Richardson's confined views on morality, chastity and sexual behaviour; **Tom Jones** presents his broader philosophy on sex. He holds man's sexual behaviour as natural. It is a philosophy of natural man. He takes man as a blend of good and evil, vice and virtue. He believes in the essential goodness of man. The real enemies of man and society, according to him, are hypocrisy, jealousy, hatred, vanity and cunning. Generosity, sympathy, sacrifice, charity and fidelity are the positive virtues. This is illustrated through Tom's love with Sophia and his sexual excapades with three women. Though the book was called "low," "dessolute," and "a profligate performance" in its own time, it has, in the succeeding centuries, taken to be the most realistic approach to man's sexual behaviour. Through the fidelity of Sophia and the natural sexual behaviour and fellow-feeling and generosity of Tom, Fielding exposes the vain and hypocritical view associated with sexual and moral ethics. He is tolerant of every other human weakness except vice or hypocrisy. Thus he improves upon the traditionally held confined view on morality and sexual ethics. His emphasis is on the inner goodness and natural responses, and not on the abstract and unpractical moral theorizing. So, he offers a new healthy and more acceptable view on morality.

Fielding's yet another contribution was his introduction of the journey motif. Although he borrowed the idea from the classical epics, and the writing of Cervantes, it was his solid contribution to the narrative aspect of English fiction. As he was to present a panorama of the then society he chose picaresque tradition and introduced the bastard as a natural hero. He uses it in **Joseph Andrews** and brings it to perfection in **Tom Jones.** The latter is both, to use Albert Guerard's phrase, "a journey within" and "a journey without." Tom's journey from Somersetshire, through the country, to London, presents a scenario of village inns, the village customs, the risks and dangers of the highway and the vanities of the town people. At the same time, his journey improves him as a human being. It enables him to save people in distress, to help those in misery, and also to test his valour, and his virtues. So to present life as a journey is Fielding's way of looking at men and manners which enable him to delineate real life. His method was forcefully used by James Joyce in **Ulysses** in the twentieth century and with great success. The introduction of journey motif by Fielding will continue inspiring men of letters in the coming ages.

In matter of style, Fielding's contribution is beyond dispute. First of all we are impressed with his highly artistic sense of dialogue. His dialogue reveals the real nature of his characters; it highlights their peculiarities. Mr Allworthy's utterance is measured; it smacks of the rustic vulgarity of Squire Western, the pedantry of Partridge, the sentimental garrulity of Mrs Miller, and the pious but calculated hypocrisy of Blifil, and so on. The mock-epic style which includes epic similes, mock-heroic battles and humour and irony, enables Fielding to present a comprehensive view of men and manners. Sometimes, he uses adorned style in the description of an incident or

situation, but generally his language is plain and simple. However, his fondness for archaic forms is of peculiar quality. He generally uses archaic form like "doth" and "hath", but it makes his prose expressive. He employs varied shades of humour – farcical humour, ironical humour, satirical humour – but his humour is always spontaneous like that of Shakespeare, exuberant like that of Jonson, and tolerant like that of Addison; it is never sharp-edged like that of Dryden and vehement like that of Swift. In this way Fielding's style is a model of spontaneity and simplicity with a variety of shades which make it an example to follow.

Thus, Fielding's contribution to the English novel is solid and durable. He founded the theory of comic epic in prose in the real sense. He offers new, healthy and acceptable morality; he brought greater degree of reality to bear upon his settings and characterization; in his fiction he brings us in contact with real men and manners. He offers a comprehensive view of society. There is no psychological probing because his approach is realistic and its purpose is to delineate observed manners. His style includes irony and humour, simple language, and simile and allusion which suit his purpose of presenting the spectrum of humanity. We fully agree with Martin C. Battestin that Fielding's place in "the tradition of English fiction is quite secure." His comic approach to life has influenced such novelists as Kingsley Amis, in the contemporary literature. Amis's **Lucky Jim** may be read as contemporary **Tom Jones**. Fielding's writings will continue inspiring the coming generations because they are a genuine representation of men and manner and a just copy of human nature.

13. Major Characters

Tom Jones

Tom Jones, who also gives title to Fielding's novel, is the central character. **Tom Jones** is said to be the first English novel of the eighteen century written to fit a theory. Fielding wrote it in the form of "a comic epic in prose" in which he puts the whole eighteenth century society to a comic test. Tom and Sophia stand at the moral and ethical centre of the novel, and are the props of his theoretical foundations. Tom is the hero of "the comic epic" which Fielding, like his earlier novel, **Joseph Andrew**, wrote with a thesis. Of course, Tom is not a "rogue," a typical picuresque hero, but supposed as a bastard, he is brought closer to such a meaning. Besides, Tom is sometimes called the "natural man" coming down from a "golden age," and the "noble savage," which, as Arnold Kettle points out, "are of course sentimental idealizations." Walter Allen comes closer to Fielding's conception when he calls Tom Jones "the unheroic hero," a blend of weak and strong points.

Tom unites the two threads of the plot. One is the unravelling of the mystery of his birth and parentage, and the second is his love with Sophia. In the beginning of the novel, Fielding refrains from too much comment on Tom's true parentage; he withholds the revelation till the climax of the novel. For the time being, he deems it sufficient that the reader takes Tom to be an illegitimate child; that he is adopted by Mr Allworthy; Jenny is his mother. But the identity of his father is still a mystery. He grows along with Master Blifil, the nephew of the squire, passes through the grind of early life, victimized by Blifil himself, and the two malicious tutors, Square and Thawckum; his only friend is Black George, the gamekeeper of the squire. Even at the age of fourteen, it is universally believed in Mr Allworthy's family that the lad is "certainly born to be hanged". He is convicted of three petty thefts. He flirts with Molly Seagrim, the daughter of Black George. Mr Allworthy is grievously offended at Tom's conduct. Master Blifil lies to Mr Allworthy, and the gullible and credulous squire turns Tom out of his house. Tom accepts Mr Allworthy's verdict without protest. Up to this point, as Allen says, Tom is a "depiction of ordinary, weak man."

Parallel to Tom's development as an adolescent person, runs the theme of his love for Sophia. This develops into Sophia-Tom-Blifil triangle. They have been playmates all these years. In an episode Blifil, out of malice, sets Sophia's singing bird free; Tom risks his neck to recapture her pet but cannot succeed. It shows Tom is sacrificing, generous and considerate; Blifil is self-seeking and conceited; Sophia's love for Tom increases; he also wins the favour of her father, Squire Western. In another incident, while on a hunting expedition, Sophia's horse bolts; Tom jumps to her aid and saves her which speaks of his "natural gallantry," Tom's arm is broken. The incident "made a deep impression on her heart." Tom too starts loving her genuinely. He is surprised by Mrs Honour "in the act of fondling and kissing Sophia's muff," and calling it "the prettiest muff." Tom comes to know from Mrs Honour that Sophia has great love for the muff Tom has kissed; now he is hopelessly in love with her. After he spots Square in Molly's room, he is absolved of his responsibility towards her; now Sophia is the centre of his love. One day, in the garden of her father's estate, Tom confesses his love to Sophia. Meanwhile, Mr Western is furious to know about Tom-sophia affairs. Guided by his mundane motives, he wants her to marry Blifil whom she detests. Tom also requests her not to marry Blifil. Meanwhile Tom is turned out of the house of Mr Allworthy, and he is on the road, penniless, lost, and lonely.

Once on the road, Tom becomes the knight-errand on the highway. Again the discovery of Tom's true parentage is withheld. In the beginning the Lawyer Dowling brings the news of the death of Mrs Blifil, but her letter which has the secret of. Tom's true parentage does not reach Mr. Allworthy. Now in an inn he meets Tom, but makes no mention of his birth. However, Tom's love for Sophia is secure in his heart. In the inn he reacts sharply to

Northertons' remarks at Sophia. He is injured as Northerton throws a bottle of wine at him. He even buys a sword to settle his score. He emerges here a man of honour. Now our hero is accompanied by Little Benjamin who is no other than Partridge, the village schoolmaster. The picaresque hero has his Sancho Panza. Once again Tom shows his gallantry by saving the Man of Hill from ruffians and a lady from a robber. He conducts the lady who is known as Mrs Waters safely to the Upton Inn. Fielding now beings to draw Tom's character in greater depth and with more dimensions. At Upton, Tom falls to the charms of Mrs. Waters. Sophia, who has run away from her father's home to escape her marriage to detestable Blifil, and who is also on her way to London is also staying at the Upton Inn. When she is informed by Mrs Honour that Tom is in bed with a wench, she gets her muff smuggled into Tom's room, and leaves without meeting him. Tom follows her to London intending to return a pocket book of hers that he got from the beggar. London is another touchstone of characters and situations. Despairing of getting Sophia, Tom plays gigolo to Lady Bellaston with whom she is staying in London.

Tom embodies Fielding's conception of sexual morality and ethics. The central issue is his love for Sophia and his relation with the other three women. Fielding nowhere condones or approves of Tom's looseness in sexual behaviour. but why does he behave as he does? The answer should be available within the text. As regards his relation with Sophia he is pretty sincere towards her; he owns the responsibility of her unborn child, and is prepared to marry until he has the proof that she is a village slut. When he discovers Square in her closet he absolves himself of the responsibility. As regards his flirtation with Mrs Waters, it is all the more glaring because it involves incest because Mrs Waters is no other than Jenny Jones. But Mrs Waters is a flirt; earlier she ran away with a soldier. Besides, Tom is not sure about his love for Sophia. Out of frustration he finds temporary escape into his venture with this trollop. As regards Lady Bellaston, he regards her as the only source to reach Sophia. Elizabeth Drew rightly says that it is always the woman who allures him, and he "never corrupts innocence in the unmarried, or virtue in the married." Besides, as Arnold Kettle says "he acts 'naturally' and therefore the excesses into which his animal spirits lead him are forgiven."

It will not be far amiss to say that Fielding is depicting Tom as an essentially good person. His generosity, fellow-feeling, and sacrifice cancel and balance all his frailities. In the beginning he saves Black George morally and financially; he saves the Man of the Hill and advises him not to hate the world. Tom rescues Mrs Waters from the ruffians. He upholds Fielding's view that faults in one or two persons do not make the world a bad place to live in; he gives alms to the begger on his way to London. Tom and Sophia are the only persons who give money to help others. Tom hands over the whole amount of 50 pounds he gets from Lady Bellaston for the physical labour to Mrs. Miller to spend in charity. He reconciles Nancy, Mrs Miller's daughter, with young Nightingale and wins her honour. Mrs Miller calls Tom the "saviour" of her family. He forgives Black George for his act of robbing his money. He even pleads charity towards Blifil in the end. Tom's own words on himself are sincere and justified when he says to Nightingale :

"I am no canting hypocrite, nor do I pretend to the gift of chastity, more than my neighbours. I have been guilty with women, I own it; but am not conscious that I have ever injured any–nor would I, to procure pleasure to myself, be knowingly the cause of misery to any human being."

In fact, Fielding held such positive vices as hypocricy, guile, malice, treachery embodied in Blifil, Square and Thwackum more dangerous than moral aberration or sexual irregularties found in Tom.

Tom is especially related to the plot. R S Crane in his essay "The plot of **Tom Jones**" focuses attention on the pivotal importance of the hero. He is related to "the action and thought." The whole action from the beginning, through the middle, to the end carries forward the mystery relating to his birth and his relation with Sophia. In the whole process of his development there is running irony. As regards his identity he is not worried. This is particularly emphasized during the action of the novel. Time and again he says that he has nothing to do with Squire Allworthy's estate. When Partridge asks him to return to the Squire, he forcefully says he will not. He also tells Lawyer Dowling that he is not interested in the squire's property. But one thing he never forgets is his love for Sophia. Here he stands opposite to Blifil who wants to marry Sophia for her fortune. Even the mystery

of Tom's birth is subservient to his love for Sophia. When his true identity is revealed there is no problem now; he is now respectable enough to marry her. But even then there is a complication. He must prove his sincerity. Sophia is not impatient to marry him. When they meet during the denouement, she upbraids him with inconsistency. He is prepared to go through the trial. This shows his sincerity. Besides, he is so much impatient to marry her, as all romantic lovers are, that when she mentions a longer period, he calls it "eternity." In fact, for Tom, the whole of his life has been a trial. Ultimately he gets what he deserves; their love consummates into wedding bells.

One of the devices to judge a character is to see as to what others say about him. It also matters as to who says it. In the beginning of the novel he is surrounded by such hypocritical and malicious persons as Blifil, Square and Thwackum who are up against him. They are wearing a mask of gentility and morality. They are able to play upon Mr Allworthy, gullible and credulous as he is. But in the concluding part of the novel, Tom is judged by such people as Mrs Miller, who is a plain, simple person without malice. Again Blifil is there to malign Tom's image. He tries hard to convince Squire Allworthy that Tom is a murderer and a villain. But now Mrs Miller is there to contradict him. Her words are an antedote to Blifil's slander. She speaks with a conviction when she says :

"By all that's sacred, 'tis false.....Mr Jones is no villain. He is one of the worthiest creatures breathing; and if any person had called him villian, I would have thrown all this boiling water in his face."

In London, too, he is a rare person. Here, too, "self-interest, greed, hypocrisy and snobbery rule supreme." Fielding's preoccupation has been to show that Tom is surrounded by "a panorama of the follies, vices and hypocrisies of the world as it is."

Thus, in Tom, Fielding has offered a new kind of hero. He is the "natural" hero. He is the "natural" hero who is a mixture of good and evil. He has animal instinct, and his sexual behaviour, his appetites, and his failings make him an unheroic hero. But all along his frailities, failings, and vices are counterbalanced, rather redeemed, by his natural goodness, generosity and charity. We can conclude with the philosopher Square's words quoted from his letter written to Mr Allworthy as his dying declaration : "Believe me, my friend, this young man hath the noblest generosity of heart, the most perfect capacity for friendship, the highest integrity and indeed every virtue which can ennoble a man".

14. Sophia

Soiphia Western, the heroine in Felding's **Tom Jones,** first of all fascinates the reader for her beauty, charm, and grace. She has all along been presented as an embodiment of chastity, virtue and constancy. Walter Allen has all admiration for "her beauty, her goodness, and generosity of spirit." The critic aptly places her "in the tradition of the Shakespearean heroine." Undoubtedly, she can be classed with the master-dramatist's Desdemonas, Cordelias, and Rosalinds. Fielding tells us that she is modelled on his first wife, Charlotte Cradock, whom he married in 1734. Perhaps, while describing Sophia's physical and spiritual aspects, Fielding was paying a tribute to his beloved wife :

> "Such was the outside of Sophia; nor was this beautiful frame disgraced by an inhabitant unworthy of it. Her mind was every way equal to her former; for when she smiled, the sweetness of her temper diffused that glory over her countenance, which no reglarity of features can give".

Besides, Fielding introduces Sophia on the scene with all pomp and show, though in mock heroic style. Her entrance is compared with that of venus in the mock-epic vein : "Hushed be every ruder breath.....the lovely Sophia comes." Fielding comments that he used "solemnity in our power, with an elevation in style, and other cricumstances proper to raise the veneration of our reader." Certainly sophia commands respect and is an embodiment of loveliness and grace.

Sophia's physical charms are enhanced by her other attributes. She has "infinite variety." One of her graces is her devotion to her father, Squire Western, who is coarse and boorish; she genuinely loves him. She requests Tom to take care of him when they go hunting; she even agrees to accompany her box-hunting father during a hunting expedition just to please him; she plays music when he needs good rest. She is a woman of tender heart. She promises Tom to help Black George get a job as gamekeeper in her father's establishment; she sends clothes to help Molly Seagrim; she is respectful to her aunt, Mrs Western. Her love of her pet bird, and her tears on its loss, show the tenderness of her heart. Elizabeth Drew sums up Sophia's spiritual qualities when she says that she (Sophia) is "goodhearted" and "generous."

But these attributes of Sophia must not lead us to conclude that she is a docile, submissive and doll-like creature. She is certainly not, nor does Fielding want us to take her so. Her adoring aspect has its hard side. The author is not projecting her as a typical heroine of the eighteenth century novel. Like Tom Jones, Sophia is a rebel. Both revolt against the reverently approved and accepted standards of the society. This is apparent in the father-daughter relationship. Sophia holds her father in high esteem; and for her, fatherhood embodies affection, security, sanctity, and also, to some extent, authority. But Squire Western is a mundane, self-seeking male-head. Sophia loves Tom, and detests Blifil. Mrs Western dictates her to marry the latter. By this alliance, he holds, the two estates will be joined. Of course, his plan is guided by his concern that his daughter should lead a comfortable life, but it shows that he has no consideration for her emotional needs. As he subjugated his wife, he believes that his daughter is also born to remain servile. But she not only protests, she plans to leave her father's house. She learns that Tom is exiled, and when her father dictates her to marry the man she detests, she runs away to face the vicissitudes on the highway to London. In this way, Sophia rebels against the parental degree and has the certitude to follow her convictions by running away from the cosy comforts of her home, and escapes from what Elizabeth Drew calls "a predatory masculine world." Besides, her revolt is a part of the total design of the book, a structural necessity. Like Tom, she must be on the road, and follow the same highway to London.

Sophia is an embodiment of Fielding's conception of true and sincere love. The author traces its gradual but steady development. Her love for Tom, as also aversion to Blifil, are spontaneous responses. They have been playmates, and when Sophia was thirteen, an episode became the cause of her hatred for Blifil and love for Tom.

A little singing bird was the delight of her heart. Out of jealousy, Blifil sets the bird free. Tom risks his life to recapture Sophia's pet, but fails.

The incident increases Sophia's love for Tom. In another incident in which Sophia's horse bolts on the hunt, Tom jumps to her aid, and breaks his arm. She considers it a brave act which "made a deep impression on her heart." When Mrs Honour, Sophia's garrulous maid, informs her of Tom's fondling and kissing her muff, she is completely won over though unknowingly. Later on, she rescues the muff her father flings into the fire which shows her increasing love for Tom. She loves him so dearly that she forgives him for his relations with Molly Seagrim, and even sends him money when he is banished, and is penniless.

Sophia is courageous in love. When she learns that Tom has been set on the road, she resolves to run away from her father's house. It is certainly a bold step. She is willing to brave the dangers and terrors of the highway than to be tagged in marriage with a man she detests. Now along with Mrs Honour she is also on the road to London. For her love means constancy, commitment and faithfulness. But it also includes self-respect and honour. She embodies Fielding's concept of "love" against "lust", "pining" against "hunger" or "appetite." This is why when she is informed at Upton Inn that Tom is sleeping with a wench, she gets her muff smuggled into his room by bribing the chambermaid, and leaves the place without seeing him. She explains later that she left Upton not because he accepted favours from Mrs Waters but because he had dishonoured her by indulging in gossip about her with the servants. Actually, it was Partridge who had done it, and it despaired Tom greatly. Love on both sides is perpetual. As Fielding says that age and sickness cannot weaken love "nor ever shake or remove, from a good mind, that sensation or passion which had gratitude and esteem for its basis."

Sophia's virtue, chastity, and constancy is throughout contrasted with immorality, looseness and fickleness of her counterparts. Fielding's intention of contrasting "the standards of honour in sexual matter" can be seen running throughout the plot of the novel. In fact, all other women have been introduced as her travesties. Molly Seagrim is a village slut always in search of a man; on the highway, at Upton Inn, we have Mrs. Honour who is promiscuity incarnated; in the city Sophia is juxtaposed with Lady Bellaston, her host, who is nyphomaniac, man-hunting, upper class trollop. Nor is Mrs Western, Sophia's aunt, much better. With all her claims to prudence and family honour, she makes herself believe that Fitzpatrick is wooing her, whereas he is courting Harriet, her niece, and that too for her fortune. Above all, Harriet Fitzpatrick, who is a flirt, who has no role to place, has been introduced to show that Sophia can never be corrupted like her. Against these ugliest specimen of womanhood, Sophia is a paragon.

Sophia is a woman of convictions. She has seen many a climate, but she remains unruffled and steadfast. She has already rejected Blifil; she resists boldly the advances of Lord Fellamar, and turns down his proposal of marriage and allurements of nobility. She is equally frustrated in Tom, especially after she has read his letter to Lady Bellaston. Despite Mrs Alworthy's defence for Tom, who emerges his true heir-apparent and whose identity has been revealed, she rejects him. It is only when the lovers meet alone, thinngs are cleared. Sophia chides Tom for inconstancy; Tom begs for merey and forgiveness. He also explains his letter to Lady Bellaston; he is even prepared to go through a trial. They embrace and kiss each other for the first time. It is only after full assurance from Tom and her belief in his basic goodness that she agrees to marry him. They are married at Doctors' Common. Ultimately, Sophia emerges as an embodiment of true love, chasity, constancy and true womanhood, and an ideal heroine in the novel.

15. Squire Allworthy

Squire Allworthy is one of the major characters in Fielding's **Tom Jones**. He is central to the theme as well as the strucutre of the novel. In the tripartite structural division of the novel–country, highway, city–his role is pivotal in the early and the latter part of the book. As in Shakespeare, the very opening of the novel serves as a key note to the development of this domineering figure. In the very first Book, Squire Allworthy is introduced as a middle-aged widower; he is the owner of one the largest estates in Somersetshire; he is a simple, agreeable, and pleasant man, blessed by "Nature and Fortune." He is leading a quiet and contented retired life of a country gentleman with his sister, Miss Bridget Allworthy. As the novel begins, the squire has just returned from London, after three months' stay on business. Now his introduction is both dramatic and ironic. As he gets ready to retire to bed, and "after having spent some time on his knees–a custom which he never broke on any occasion" he is greatly surprised to find an infant sleeping in his bed. His compassion is aroused. Immediately he rings for Mrs Deborah Wilkins, his housekeeper. In haste he forgets that he is wearing only his nightshirt. She suggests that the infant be wrapped and placed at the churchwarden's door to which he disagrees. Next morning he presents the child to his sister and decides that the infant will grow up under their roof. Later on, when Bridget is married and is blessed with a baby, the squire gives his verdict that both the children will be brought up together. We instantly conclude that Allworthy, as his name, perhaps borrowed directly from Morality, suggests that he is all good. At the very outset, he is introduced as a devout christian embodying its cardinal virtues of charity and benevolence.

Mr. Allworthy is a typical country squire who is a man of convictions and takes care of the shire accordingly. As a country squire, occasionally he is to act as magistrate and pass verdicts of consequence. During these occasions he remains calm, relaxed, and unruffled. But again his guide is Christian morality, that is hate the sin not the sinner. Fielding refers to the squire as one "whose natural love of justice, joined to his coolness of temper, made him always a most patient magistrate." When Partridge requests that Jenny may be called in order to estabish his innocence, he instantly agrees and extends his verdict for three days. But when Jenny is not traceable and Partridge has been proved guilgy of being the father of the foundling, he is deprived of the annuity he used to receive from Mr Allworthy. Similarly, Molly Seagrim has to appear before Allworthy as she has injured a travelling fiddler during her churchyard scuffle. He is offended at Tom's owning of Molly's unborn child. Mr Allworthy delivers a sermon on the right conduct as he did on the occasion when Jenny Jones was produced before him. However, Jenny confesses that she is the mother of the infant and is expelled from the neighbourhood. When Black George is found guilty of poaching hares on the Western estate, he is deprived of his position of Mrs Allworthy's gamekeeper.

However, Squire Allworthy's sternness and authoritarian demeanour as the justice of peace cannot make the reader oblivious to his other qualities. He is certalnly not a type. He is an embodiment of human goodness, virtue, and good nature. He is also a convivial person. Hence he loves to be in the company of men of taste, wit, and learning. His conversation with the knowledgeable people has made him a connoisseur of "most kinds of literature." He welcomes deserving men of values nad merit to his house. At times, he may strike to the reader as gullible. For instance, he cannot see through the treacherous plans of Captain Blifil; he considers Dr Blifil and Captain Blifil as his well-wishers; he agrees to the proposed marriage of his sister with the captain. Later on he plays in the hands of Square, Thwackum and Blifil, and banishes Tom from his home with poor judgement. In case of Tom-Blifil episodes, he is oblivious to much that is going on. Square and Thwackum thrive on Mr Allworthy's credulity and simplicity.

In fact, the squire is a many dimensional character and cannot be classed with a particular character or set of characters. His blindness to the behaviour of treacherous people like the two tutors can be seen as his noble indifference. He certainly sees "infirmities in the tutor (Thwackum), which he could have wished him to have been without." Besides, the squire looks for the good in all people and not the bad. As regards the motives of Captain Blifil, he is well aware of the man and his doings. But he is guided by the thought of his sister's happiness. At the same time, guileless himself, he does not suspect guile or treachery in others. But we may consider his turning Tom out of his home a cruel and callous attitude. A.E. Dyson discusses this point quite convicingly. The critic holds that it will be simplistic approach if we say that Tom's rejection is a dramatic necessity because "the plot demands" it. Dyson elaborates that Mr Allworthy very much represents a rational attitude. Besides, the squire represents Fielding's conception of human nature. Man is fallible. In the end when Mr Allworthy repents and apologizes to Tom for his omissions, the latter says : "The wisest man might be deceived as you were, and under such a deception, the best must have acted as you did."

Mr Allworthy is a reasonable person. When he comes to know about the reason for Sophia's running away from home, and he is convinced about the heart of the matter, he considers it futile to pursue this affair. But reluctantly goes to London to see the possibility of Blifil's winning over Sophia. He praises Sophia for her graces. He derides forcing anybody being forced into a distasteful marriage. He is open to reason; when Mrs Miller convinces him of Tom's goodness, he prepares to sift things; he is quick in action; he immediately calls Lawyer Dowling and finds out the truth. When he is informed of Tom's innocence in his assult on Fitzpatric, he realises that he was having a "wicked viper" (Blifil) near his bosom. In the end he emerges as a magnanimous gentleman; he embraces Tom and says, "Oh! my child, how have I been to blame! How I have injured you! What amends can I ever make you for those unkind, those unjust suspicions which I have entertained; and for all the sufferings they have occasioned". Now he is happy to find in Tom his heir to the Paradise Hall. He is all the more happy to see Tom and Sophia married at Doctors' Commons. The squire is most generous to Tom on this occasion, and remains so to him ever after.

In sum, Squire Allworthy is a personification of generosity, virtue, and goodness. He is a true embodiment of human nature, as he represents virtues and weaknesses of common humanity. In the end he emerges as a magnanimous elderly figure. He is certainly a memorable human creation that Fielding has added to the portrait gallery in English literature.

16. Squire Western

What Dryden said about Zimri in **Absalom and Achitophel**, we can happily say about Squire Western in **Tom Jones** that he is worth the whole book. If we want to go to the book again and again it is undoubtedly for the Squire. Martin Price very rightly says that he is "perhaps the finest English comic character to have emerged after Falstaff." He is said to have been modelled on Carew Hervey Mildway, "Whose lungs and memory, and tongue, will never wear out". But Fielding has infused so much life into him that he does not seem to be confined to any set pattern in a personality. Western is not one; he is many; his multitudinous figure transcends all confines. Whenever the reader comes across him he is face to face with a person bursting with enthusiasm, ready to effect his quaintness, and make his presence felt. He is, like Falstaff, an amalgmation of many oddities. He is a squire and the gentleman devoted to his pastures and hunting, beef eating, and his bottle. Although he professes his affinity with Jacobite clan, his real sympathies are with King, Church, and Country. Above all, he is his own best guide, and brooks no one's advice in the affairs of his family. And in delineating the character of Squire Western, Fielding is at his creative best.

Squire Western's creation was a necessity as Fielding made him to fit into "the pastoral motive," and "the mock pastoral centring" in **Tom Jones.** Western carries his pastoralism with him wherever he is. When he is in his county he is a typical country squire. He is always preoccupied with his fields, stable and dog knnel. His pastimes are hunting, drinking, beef-eating, and swearing. Even his language has the flavour of his hobbies. His fondness for his daughter increases so much "that his beloved dogs themselves almost gave place to her in his affection." Even Sophia, aware of her father's weakness for hunting, agrees to accompany him so that she may check his reckless behaviour. He is so much fond of his game that while at Upton Inn, he gives up the idea of pursuing her temporarily so that he may join a hunting expedition and win applauds.

Western is an embodiment of true human nature. He follows his code of honour, though it is guided by the set norms of his family. Here he effects a contrast with Squire Allworthy. The latter holds that Sophia's addition to his family will increase its grace. But for Squire Western, marriage is only a bargain. He holds that if his daughter marries Blifil it will augment his fortune. His approach is mundane. For him romantic love is nothing more than a madness. This does not mean that he does not love his daughter. He can quit the world for her or may sacrifice all the estates of England for her. But he is insensitive to the emotional responses of his daughter. He is interested in Blifil for material considerations, and it is consistent with his character. Later on, he wants her to marry Tom, because the latter has emerged as the rightful heir to the Pardise Hall. So he remains true to his code of honour and remains a caring father; he is true to life. He is not selfish; he is true.

Western is a comic charater of very real stature. His behaviour, his gestures, and his actions show that, at times, he is eccentric, gross and ridiculous. For instance, his entries are always comically dramatic and whimsically ridiculous. Generally he appears with a bang. He arrives at Upton Inn shouting at the top of his voice; when Fitzpatrick is swearing and whooping for his wife, Western is creaming for his daughter. He quits without giving any heed to Fitzpatrick, and without demanding the muff. His most comic and unexpected entry occurs in book XV. He bursts into the room when Lord Fellamar is attempting to rape Sophia. When he Says that his daughter has refused the best match, Fellamar thinks that the quire is referring to him. Western tells him bluntly that it is not he. Then he carries his daughter off to his lodgings. Later on when Fellamar visits the squire and challenges him for a duel, the latter finds no time to stir out of his lodgings. His honour is at stake, but like Flastaff he wants to live on. So he is a coward on necessity. He bursts into a place shouting and swearing, and storms out cursing and screaming. In these situations, he looks most ridiculous but full of life. The reader wants him to persist in his behaviour, and the squire obliges him on every occasion.

However, Fielding does not let Western deviate into a type. He maintains his individuality. Sometimes, the author treats him ironically. In the beginning of the novel he is shown as an authoritairan father; so much so that his attitude verges on the ridiculous. When he learns that Sophia is in love, he gets furious and says :

> "How! In love without acqainting me! I"ll disinherit her; I'll turn her out doors, stark naked, without a farthing."

And if she accepts the match of his choice "She may love whom she pleases." If she is obstinate enough to go against his wishes, he can warn her "I am resolved upon the match." In the same breath, he can plead with her:

> "I tell thee, it will preserve me; it will give me health, happiness, life, everything. Upon my soul, I shall die if dost refuse me; I shall break my heart, I shall, upon my soul."

He can immediately compromise with the situation. When he learns that Tom is reconciled with Mr Allworthy and is absolved of the criminal charges, he immediately bursts into the room, apologizing and begging his forgiveness, and is ready to carry him to Sophia. In the end, he very happily agrees to accept Tom as a fit match for his daughter. She too accepts Tom to please her father and to be happy herself.

In the end, this beef-eating, fox-hunting Jacobite, English country squire, turns his house over to Tom and his daughter. He visits them occasionally; he spends much of his time playing with his grand children, a girl and a boy. But he regularly gets tipsy with the company of his choice. Thus, Squire Western is full of vitality; his eccentricity and oddities are acceptable to us. Though a comic character, he is throughout individualized. He reminds us of Shakespeare's Falstaff and Addison's Sir Roger de Coverley; he is forerunner of Captain Bluntschli in Shaw. Squire Western is certainly the master creation of Fielding.

17. Blifil

Blifil is one of the major and the most important characters in Fielding's **Tom Jones**. He is important both thematically as well as technially, and structurally. As far as his relevance to the theme is coneerned, he is one of the ugliest specimen of human nature. He is a true to life representation. Fielding is a historian in the sense that "man" is his highest subject. He keeps the action within the confines of human nature. His emphasis is on the probable and possible behaviour of human beings and Blifil is true in the sense that his nature is consistent with his action. He is presented as evil, and he remains evil until the very end. But this should not make us conclude that he is, to use E.M. Forster's phrase, a flat character. He is not flat or static in the sense that he keeps on changing his strategies and mechanisms. In relation to the structure of the novel his calculations, his machinations are of real consequence. His designs are central to the development of the action in the novel. As regards the theme and the structure of the novel, he stands as a single separate entity, and in this sense, he is directly related with Tom, the hero, as his potential antagonist. In this regard he is the second most important character.

Willian Faulkner, a major American novelist, once said that in order to show evil we need not create Satan, "man is capable enough." And rightly so, Blifil is evil incarnate; he embodies all that is malicious and malignant in human kind, and is Satan's surrogate. In the very beginning of the novel he is introduced as the son of Bridget and Captain Blifil. This connection is a significant clue to his character. Bridget is vain and hypocritical, a secretive though not a wicked woman. Captain Blifil is a mundane, calculative and ambitious person. His marrying her was based on his ambition to acquire Squire Allworthy's estate. Young Blifil embodies his father's self-centredness, and possessiveness. Blifil continues to play his father's game of disinherting Tom, and he moves with calculative designs. This malignant motive of Blifil is the basis of all actions and reactions in the novel.

Fielding's **Tom Jones** presents characters as "humours." Their nature moves them. There are good-natured characters such as Squire Allworthy, Sophia, and Mrs Miller; there are bohemians like Molly Seagrim and Mrs Waters, Fellamar; there are also characters like Tom, and young Nightingle who are a blend of good and mixed human qualities. But there is a species of mankind which represents all that is wicked and vicious. This category includes Square, Thawakum, Lady Bellaston, and Fellamar. Blifil belongs here. They belong to the clan of Edmund, Goneril and Regan. Like his mother and father, Blifil is a hypcrite. Fielding was, like his contemporaries, the most conscious writer, who castigated hypocrisy. In his preface to **Miscellanies**, he terms it "this monster," "this detestable vice," and "the bane of all virtue, morality, and goodness." In his **Joseph Andrews** and **Tom Jones** he lashes at the representatives of vanity and hypocrisy. Blifil is shown as a smiling villain. He is introduced as "a lad of remarkable disposition; sober, discreet and pious beyond his age." As against Tom who is considered a lad "certainly born to be hanged"; Blifil is the darling of the family. He has with great art impressed and won the love and affections of Mr Allworthy. He flatters his tutors who themselves are highly vain and hypocritical. Fielding says in cleverly devised words

"With one he was all religion, with the other he was all virtue. And when both were present, he was profoundly silent, which both interpreted in his favour and in their own".

Outwardly, he is fine and sophisticate. He will say only what pleases Mr Allworthy, but inwardly he wants him to die; and rather tries to hasten his end by breaking news of the death of Mrs Blifil (Mr Allworthy's sister and his own mother) when the squire is seriously ill. People like Mr Allworthy are often corrupted by vanity and hypocrisy. So Blifil's "appearance and reality" and his "private and public motive" are artistically shown in his nature and nurthure. He hypocritically holds back the information of Tom's true identity contained in the letter of his mother, which he gets from Dowling.

Throughout the action of the novel, Blifil is presented as a foil for Tom. While showing them growing from boyhood to adolescence, Fielding emphasizes the difference between their natures and attitudes. Tom is generous, kind, and above board; Blifil is cruel, calculative and hypocritical; Tom is truthful, Blifil is false. Tom is always ready to help others and often lands himself in trouble, Blifil is discreet and clever enough to escape from a situation. Tom never betrays, whereas Blifil can lie and win over people. He is machiavellian, cunning, scheming and unscrupulous. Whereas Tom tells a lie to save Black George, Blifil treacherously betrays the poor gamekeeper who has to lose his livelihood. The incident in which Blifil lets fly Sophia's signing bird speaks of his jealous and cruel nature. He simply does it out of jealousy and to hurt Sophia. When Tom tries in vain to save the pet at the risk of hurting his neck, it shows his generosity. Blifil tells lies to poison Mrs. Allworthy's ears and gets Tom turned out of the squire's home. Honesty and kindness are not akin to him. Like Satan he has adopted evil–"evil be thou my good" and "to do aught good" will never be his task. He has not been allowed to utter a good word about others which can earn even a part favour from the readers.

Blifil is an important link in the love responses of Tom and Sophia. Together they form Tom-Sophia-Blifil triangle. Again they project Fielding's conception of love. For Tom and Sophia, love stands for faithfulness, sacrifice and fidelity. Even Toms' abberations are to be judged in relation to Sophia. Tom may flirt out of simplicity, honour, or commitment; his relations with Molly, Mrs Honour and Lady Bellaston can be interpreted accordingly. But he never thinks of offending Sophia. His love is an open book. But Blifil's love towards Sophia, if at all we may call it love, is lust. Unlike Tom's, his love is calculative. His father, Captain Blifil, married Miss Allworthy for her estate. Similarly, he wants to marry Sophia for her estate. R.P.G. Mutter rightly says that Blifil's sex contains "elements of sadism, lust, and some other perversions "which we detest too much, even to mention." And the critic sees Blifil's "unappetizing sexuality to be another element in that youth's total opposition to Tom." He lacks morals and scruples, and proceeds with malicious and trecherous plans to win Sophia so that he may take revenge. Lust and greed drive him to separate Tom and Sophia. He succeeds in hoodwinking Mr Allworthy by convincing him that Sophia herself desires the marriage. As he proceeds with the malignant motive of revenge, he violates the sanctity of human heart and emerges as the arch hypocrite in the love triange. He has deservedely become an object of Sophia's hatred and detestation. He loses sympathy of the reader.

Throughout Blifil is presented as an affront to human dignity. He can either find or devise opportunities to hurt others. He is a foul mouth. He calls Tom a "beggarly bastard" and is rightly made to have a bloody nose. He loses no opportunity of making sneering reference to Tom's birth. He even attacks Tom physically though he himself is defeated. Once he makes a sneering reference to his birth, and a scuffle follows, but Thwackum and Square intervene and the situation is saved. But after a shortwhile when Tom is in the fields for solace, Molly appears and they retire into a thicket. Blifil and Thwackum come for a walk, Molly escapes. Now Tom is found sitting alone. Thwackum demands that the name of his companion be revealed. Again Tom refuses to oblige him and a scuffle follows. Tom pins Blifil down, whereas Thwackum, who had been a boxing champion gives him a tough fight. Meanwhile Blifil recovers and rushes to his help and together they attack Tom. But it does not last for long and Blifil is defeated again. The situation is saved by the unexpected arrival of Squire Western who has been there for a stroll with Sophia, her aunt and Parson Supple. The incident proves Blifil's villainly.

Blifil's rivalry with Tom is double edged. He wants to deprive him of Mr Allworthy's affection so that he may appropriate the whole estate of the squire. And in relation to Tom-Sophia affairs, he wants to deprive him of both, Sophia and her fortune. Blifils' all energies are directed against Tom. This motive is structually important as it gives rise to eventful happenings. First, Mr Allworthy is biased against Tom and the gentleman turns Tom out of his home and Tom is on the road. Similarly, Sophia is pressed very hard to leave her father's house to escape marriage with Blifil whom she detests. So Blifil's doings are consequential because they further the action, and develop the plot.

Blifil embodies absolute evil. Till the very end he remains evil. In the last phase of the novel which occurs in London, he continues with his wicked actions. When Tom is in the prison he wants him to be hanged. He plans to get Tom convicted and punished; he sends Lawyer Dowling on to a mission to manipulate the witnesses. He

has already suppressed the information regarding Tom's true parentage. He conceals his mother's letter that Dowling gave him to be handed over to Squire Allworthy. Now he is trying all means to see that Mr. Allworthy disowns Tom, and that Tom must be hanged.

Fielding was a great moralist. He must expose the evil. So in the end Blifil is thoroughly exposed. He shows that evil however intelligent, attractive efficient, is, after all, self-destructive. Evil in the end cannot triumph. Blifil's treachery comes to light. Mr Allworthy comes to know about Blifil's cunning. Lawyer Dowling confesses and traces all events which prove Blifil's villainy. Mr Allworthy now tells Mrs Miller "Your friend, madam, is my nephew; he is the brother of that wicked viper, which I have so long nourished in my bosom." Now poetic justice prevails. Reward and punishment follow. Ultimately Tom's innocence is proved and he is released from jail; now, he is heir to the paradise Hall. So, he regains his paradise whereas Blifil loses it. Tom and Sophia are united. Mr Allworthy even refuses to see Blifil, but on the persuasion of Tom and Sophia, settles 200 pounds annually upon him to which Tom on his own adds a third. Blifil goes to live in the North hoping to marry a widow, manipulating to purchase a seat in Parliament.

Thus, Blifil is thematically and structurally an important character in the novel. But he is a one-track mind and procceeds with an evil intent to destroy all that is good. He is evil and remains so until the very end. He is important in relation to Fielding's moral structure. Blifil violates the sanctity of human heart and is rightly punished. His hypocrisy is thoroughly exposed, and the reader cancels him from his memory.

18. Partridge

Partridge is one of the comic characters of Fielding. As the plot develops he assumes greater importance. But in the beginning of the novel, he is shown as a victim of circumstances beyond his control. He is the village schoolmaster whose small Latin learning lands him in trouble. He instructed Jenny Jones in Latin and that becomes the basis of his wife's suspicion and his ruin. Jenny Jones confesses to be the mother of the foundling. Mrs Partridge suspects that her husband is Jenny's partner. On her witness Partridge is convicted of being the father of the infant. Consequently, he is deprived of the annual annuity and banished from the county. Here he is shown as an ordinary human being who suffers indignities at the hands of his wife, and is a victim of fate and circumstances. But his diappearance does not solve the problem of the parentage of Tom, and the mystery prevails. Of course, here he strikes as a pathetic character.

Again, in book VIII, Partridge reappears as Little Benjamin, the barber. From here onwards he becomes a highly amusing figure in **Tom Jones**. Immediately he reminds us of Sancho Panza in Cervante's **Don Quixote**, and Parson Advams in Fielding's own earlier novel, **Joseph Andrews**. At once the reader becomes aware of the technical and spiritual affinities between Partridge and his Spanish counterpart, Don's squire. There are striking similarities between the two. Both are loquacious and gullible; both are pleasantly witty; both are introduced to provide comic relief; both follow their masters faithfully but with hope to gain. Sometimes, they serve as a chorus on their masters and the situation they are sometimes trapped in.

However, this comparison in no way should lead us into the conclusion that Partridge is a type. He is not. The connotation of the meaning too should not be taken literally. As soon as he is re-introduced, his role becomes crucial to the action; his character attains greater depth. His actions, his conversations, and, above all, his spleasingly odd behaviour make him a muli-dimentional character. Here he is important in the sense that he unravels the mystery of Tom's parentage. He reveals his identity and tells Tom that he is not his father. Besides, Partridge, again, during the action of the novel reminds us of an important connection in the novel, that is, the Allworthy-Jones bond. For instance, at Upton Inn, in the kitchen at night, when Northerton-Mrs Waters episode is being discussed, Partridge enters with a bang and gives an account of Tom. He tells the audience that Tom is actually heir to Mr Allworthy's estate, and he (Tom) is on a journey inspired by his eccentricity. Once, when Partridge and Tom are on the road to London, the former advises the latter to return to the squire. On yet another occasion he requests his listeners to persuade Tom to go back though they do not oblige him. There is also his self-interest which guides him. He blieves that Tom's return to Mr Allworthy will win him a rich bounty.

Now onwards, Partridge becomes Tom's guide, friend, and follower. He remains with him throughout his journey on the road, and then in London. During his journey he imparts vital informations which make the story develop further. It is his information to Mrs Honour at Upton Inn that Tom is sleeping with a wench and cannot be disturbed that gives an impetus to the action. The information makes Sophia smuggle her muff by bribing the chambermaid into Tom's room. Consequently, Mrs. Honour and Sophia quit the place. As a result Tom follows them. Later on, Partridge's information that Tom has committed an incest gives a new twist to the whole story. Mrs Waters letter reinforces the guilt of incest in Tom. It is only later that Mrs Water reveals that Tom's father was a young man named Summer. This, of course, relieves Tom of his sense of quilt. Thus Partridge's informations are vital to a the characters and the events.

Partridge is a part of the total scheme of the plot and pattern of the structure. Fielding gives tripartite structural scheme to **Tom Jones** : the country, the road, and the town. Partridge is vital to all these locales. In the country he is shown as a victim of personal tragedy. He is a good man destroyed by a bad wife. On the high way, like Touchstone who comments on the thorns and brambles of the forest, Partridge offers a running commentary on

the dangers and risks of the road. When Tom speaks of love poetically, Partridge complains of the cold of the night and the odds that come in the way on the journey. In the city, he keeps Tom in touch with all developments. He is sensitive to Miss Nancy's delicate condition resulting out of Nightingale's departure. So Partridge makes us aware of the heart breaks that a town life imposes on sensitive people. He visits Tom in the jail, and makes the reader wiser by his imformations, comments and participation in the action.

Parridge is a comic character also in the sense that he has been throughly individualized through his fears of the ghost, his cowardice on the strange sounds he hears before he sees the puppet show and participates in gypsy wedding; his genuine fears of wars, etc. bring him closer to Falstaff. In the end, he is not forgotten. To our great satisfaction, Jones settles a 50 pounds anuity on him; he has set up a school which he is running successfully. There is a pleasant rumour afloat that Partridge may marry Molly Seagrim. In sum, Partridge is a living and unforgettable character in **Tom Jones**.

19. Minor Characters

Thwackum and Square

Thwackum and Square fall in the category of minor characters. As the whole book is set in the comic mode both are, like most other minor characters in the novel, broadly static characters. Both are tutors and have been entrusted the education of the Tom and Blifil. The introduction of these two young men is Fielding's great addition to gallery of comic characters. Both are duplicate and travesty of each other. They can neither be thought of nor discussed separately. Although they are brilliantly comic, and remind us of the pompous fools in Shakespearean comedy, they are not superfluous, and like the clowns of the great master, serve their function admirably well. Obviously, Fielding is not presenting them as wits, but butts they certainly are. Touchstone is a wit; Falstaff is both butt and wit. Thwackum and square are simply butts and a source of satire and laughter.

Their primary duty in the novel is to teach Tom and Blifil. Fielding shows they lack the very spirit of the profession. As far as their qualification is concerned they are pedants. Thwackum is introduced ironically when Fielding says that his natural parts are not the highest, he only improved them by industry and study. "In morals he was a professed Platonist, and in religion he is inclined to be an Aristotelian." Square specializes in the classics. He holds "human nature to be the perfection of all virtue, and that vice is a deviation from our nature, in the same manner that deformity of body is".

As regards their views on morality and religion they are opposed to each other. They never agree with each other. Both are two extremes which never meet. They are confined in their view on morality and religion. They stick to their misconception on both. In fact, the "philosopher" is no philosopher and the "divine" is a misnomer. Both are pseudo intellectuals, more intent on the letter of the text than its true spirit. The philosopher is oblivious to the spirit of the "love of wisdom"; the parson does not consider the quality of charity (as also mercy) as the essence of religion. On these issues they are always clashing. But as regards their malice against Tom and softness towards Blifil they are unanimous. They are hypocritical. They prejudice Mr Allworthy against Tom; they even, along with Blifil, attack Tom and injure him. Together with Blifil they form the unholy trinity. They have been created to show Mr Allworthy's gullibility and simplicity and poor judgement about people around him.

However, both Thwackum and Square have been a bit individualized. Both have an eye upon the widow, Mrs Blifil. Square is even discovered in Molly's bedroom. Mr Allworthy sees infirmities in the tutor and "wished him to have been without". However, their confession in the end shows that whatever they were clinging to was wrong. They are a travesty of their forerunners, Parson Adams in Fielding's earlier novel.

Black George

In the third Book of **Tom Jones**, Black George is introduced as Mr Allworthy's gamekeeper and the only friend that Tom has. In the hierarchy of the feudal society he is at the lowest, and depends entirely on the squire's kindness. This is proved when found guilty of poaching an animal, he is expelled by Mrs. Allworthy, and he and his family are reduced to a wretched state. He is a coward on necessity. Once he and Tom go on a hunting expedition near the boundary of Allworthy's manor. When they spring a brood of partridges, the birds fly over the boundary line. They have been warned by Allworthy not to trangress the estate next to his. They, however, pursue the game. The owner of the neighbouring estate happens to be there. He hears the report of the gun. Tom is captured but Black George hides himself in a thicket and escapes. When the matter is reported to Allworthy that there was a second person with Tom, and as the suspicion falls on George, he is expelled from service.

Black George's misery arouses our sympathy. Though he is helped by Tom his misery is not alleviated. He depends entirely on Tom, as does Fool in Lear. Tom gets him employed as a gamekeeper to Mrs Western. But he remains a sincere friend to Tom. He becomes a go-between and carries his letter to Sophia; in London also he delivers her his letter concealed in the "belly" of a bird. But he appropriates a bill of 500 pounds that Mr Allworthy gives to Tom; when Allworthy reveals his treachery, Tom rightly says that a man of George's position cannot resist such a temptation. However, he remains faithful to Tom; he visit him in the jail; he informs him that Sophia is with her father; that Mrs. Fitzpatrick is alive. And he also offers him all help. He is certainly a character who is really alive. He is treated without irony or ridicule.

Dr Blifil and Captain Blifil

In order to show complexity of human nature Fielding, like Shakespeare, compares and contrasts people in the same blood. Goneril, Regan and Cordelia, and Edmund are juxtaposed to show their nature. Dr Blifil and his brother, Captain Blifil, too are introduced to give a peep into the working of a selfish mind. Dr Blifil is dealt with a bit of irony. He is said to be "a master of almost every other science but that by which he was to get his bread." His brother is a retired army captain. Dr Blifil is admired by Allworthy for his learning and skill in conversation. His appearance of religion is a good qualification to recommend him as a cadidate to marry Miss Bridget Allworthy. But unfortunately he is already married and has a living wife. But certainly Dr Blifil is a generous brother.

Captain Blifil is a man of selfish nature; he is guided only by self-interest. Dr Blifil recommends him as a match for the lady to Mr Allworthy. Captain Blifil wooes her; after some resistence she assents; Allworthy wants nothing but his sister's happiness. Soon after Captain and Bridget are man and wife. But shortly after his marriage, Captain Blifil starts treating his brother with contempt. His coldness increases and he asks this brother to quit his house. Dr Blifil knows the nature of his brother and wants to acquaint Allworthy with it but since he is the matchmaker, he resists. He leaves the house, returns to London; it breaks his heart and he dies.

This relationship shows that blood is thicker than water. But at the same time, self-interest can make a real brother callous and cruel. Above all, ingratitude in any form is killing and detestable.

Lawyer Dowling

Dowling is the lawyer who brings the news of Mrs Blifil's death during Mr Allworthy's serious illness, in the early part of the novel. He is always in a hurry. Of course, he is a minor character, but in the course of the action he assumes greater importance. Dowling appears during Tom's journey to Gloucester, in an excellent inn, The Bell. His role becomes crucial to the action in the concluding part of the book where he becomes a key figure in the final solution and resolution of the narrative. He keeps the secret of Tom's parentage which makes the mystery prevail. In fact, he was on Mrs. Blifil's bedside when she died while returning from London to her brother's home. She gave him a letter for her brother which he handed over to Blifil, as Mr Allworthy was serious. Blifil treacherously keeps it from the squire which ironically makes the action develop further. Later on, Dowling too becomes Blifil's accomplice when he tries to ferret out the witnesses and get Tom punished for his attack on Mr Fitzpatrick, and the latter's supposed death. Here he becomes a villain.

However, he shows amendment when Mr Allworthy castigates him for his treachery. He confesses everything and tells about Mrs Blifil's letter that he gave to Blifil. The mystery is unraveled; Tom turns out to be Mr Allworthy's nephew and his true heir to Paradise Hall. Thus Lawyer Dowling, though not a major character, is important in the total design of the narrative, and thus plays a significant role in the book.

Bridget (Mrs Blifil)

Bridget is one of the minor women characters in the novel. She does not play a major role in the action of the novel but what she has done before the action begins is crucial to the development of the plot. She is the real mother of Tom, who, till the end of the novel, is considered to be the foundling which becomes a motive force to

the structure of the novel. She gives birth to Tommy, and bribes Jenny Jones to own the child and keep the secret. This act of hers gives pattern to the winding story. She is sister to Mr Allworthy, the squire. Both love each other dearly. It is for love of his sister that he agrees to her marriage with Captain Blifil. She is certainly soft and sensitive and responsive in sex relationship. Captain Blifil's wooing her bears fruit and they are married. A son is born to them. But the captain who married her for her wealth, soon grows cold towards her. They mutually contradict each other. Their home life becomes a battle field. But ironically the Captain expires; she shows genuine grief and even gets a splendid epitaph praising him as a loving, dutiful husband and as a virtuous Christian gentleman, erected over his grave.

She dies as Captain Blifil's widow. Very tactfully she evades the advances of the two tutors, Thwackum and Square. The news of her death reaches through her attorney, Lawyer Dowling. She also gives him a letter revealing the mystery of Tom's parentage. In this way, Bridget is an important character, though a minor one.

Jenny Jones (Mrs Waters)

Jenny Jones, one of the women characters in the novel, is directly related with Tom Jones, first as his supposed to be mother, and then as Mrs Waters, in the middle of the book; in the ending of the novel she resolves the mystery of discovery and resolution. In the beginning she appears as a student of Latin, under the guidance of Partridge. She masters the language and can boast of her superiority to her mentor. On her confession that she is the mother of the foundling, she is expelled by Mr Allworthy and she disappears from the shire. Her intimacy with Partridge becomes the solid reason for his wife's suspicion. Thus she disrupts their domestic life. Partridge's wife testifies against her husband to prove that he is the father of Tom. Partridge too has to quit the shire. Thus, Jenny's role is crucial in the beginning of the novel.

In the middle of the novel, Jenny reappears as Mrs. Waters at Upton Inn. The Upton episode is of central importance. She allures Tom and seduces him; she is hypocritical in the sense that when Fitzpatrick crashes through the door when she is in the bed with Tom, she cries out "rape." Her affairs with Ensign Northerton and Fitzpatrick establish that she is a slut. She is here projected as a forerunner of nymphomaniac Lady Bellaston. Thus Jenny Jones or Mrs Waters is presented as a pale copy of Molly and Lady Bellaston and a travesty of Sophia. Jenny is certainly an ugly specimen of womanhood.

Mrs Deborah Wilkins

Mrs Deborah Wilkins is Mr Allworthy's house-keeper. She is a flat character, and certainly a comic one. She appears prominently only in the first two books; and her role too is confied to discover the parentage of the foundling. In the very beginning Mr Allworthy, who finds an infant sleeping in his bed, and has, out of anxiety forgotten to dress himself property, calls Mrs Deborah. She almost faints at the sight of her master's bare legs. She is a hypocrite and a half-Christian. She suggests that the infant be wrapped up and put at the churchwarden's door. She holds that "it is better for such creatures to die in a state of innocence." She immediately sets about to the task of search for the baby's mother. She is cruel without kindness and uses third degree methods in her pursuit among the villagers. Her smelling faculty is stronger than that of a dog. Soon her suspicion falls on Jenney Jones, and she finds all reasons to prove her a culprit, the mother of the bastard. Mrs Deborah is prudent and shrewd. When she finds that Miss Allworthy (Bridget) has approved of her brother's decision, she immediately agrees with her. She is certainly a wordly-wise woman. Meanwhile Bridget has married Captain Blifil. A child is born to them and Allworthy has said that both the children will be brought up together. Mrs. Deborah had continued her search to discover Tommy's father. Now her axe falls upon Partridge, the village school master. She devises all the circumstances to implicate him. The poor fellow, besides all his disavowals, is convicted and banished from the territory. Her role is over, and she disappears from the scene.

Thus, Mrs Deborah Wilkin's role, though minor, is highly crucial to the plot. Her discoveries make the story go further. She is faithful to her master, keen in her observation, and worldly-wise in her approach. But she is without any emotion or compassion. She is a human-machine.

Mrs Honour

Mrs Honour is Sophia's talkative maid, an important minor character in **Tom Jones.** She is introduced in Book IV, and remains present until the end. At times she is slighted but she cares for Sophia and remains faithful consistently. She is an important link between Tom and Sophia. It is she who tells Sophia about Tom's fondling and kissing of her muff and calling it "the prettiest muff in thte world." Since that moment Sophia belongs to Tom Jones. Later on, when Mr Western and his sister decide that Sophia should marry, it is Mrs Honour who begs her not to agree to their decision. When Sophia protests and wants to run away from her home, she supports Sophia and rather encourages her to escape from the tyranny. Not that she is not faithful to her master; once she decides to inform Mr Western about Sophia's plan, but she is faithful and devoted to Sophia. She accompanies Sophia though she is aware of the dangers of the road. She is, now, to Sophia, what Little Benjamin (Partridge) is to Tom. At Upton Inn also it is Mrs Honour who comes to know about Tom's presence and extracts news from Patridge that Tom is in the bed of a wench. She immediately informs Sophia. In London also she acts as a faithful messenger between Tom and Sophia. She is even expelled by Mr Western but she remains loyal.

Thus, Mrs Honour, the garrulous maid of Sophia, is a flat character. She embodies gratitude, faithfulness and constancy of a maid. But she is not so dynamic and ready as is, for instance, Mrs Deborah in Mr Allworthy's household.

Molly Seagrim

Molly Seagrim is the daughter of Black George, the gamekeeper of Mr Allworthy in **Tom Jones**. She is the prototype of Mrs Waters and Lady Bellaston. If the latter are city trollops, the former is a village slut. Fielding's approach is comic; his assessment is based on realistic approach to men and manners. He portrays them as they are. But in the case of promiscuous behaviour he becomes sarcastically harsh. Again, like the other two, Molly is ridiculed. Tom is genuinely in love with her and even takes the responsibility of her pregnancy, and owns publically that he is the father of her unborn child. Actually she seduces Tom, but convinces him that he has seduced her. She exploits him for money and sexual appetites. She chides him for his unfaithfulness and betrayal. But sluts cannot be consistent for long, nor do they know of Shame. Mr Allworthy thinks of sending her to Bridewell. When Tom goes to meet her and apologize, he discovers philosopher Square in her closet. She is winsome enough to cause orgasm in any young man she casts her eye upon. When she finds Tom in the grove she readily slips into the thickest bush. Her sister testifies that Molly was made pregnant by one Will Barnes.

The churchyard attack on Molly by the congregation is described in mock-epic style. The incident has a deeper meaning. Resentment of people against her dress means that they cannot tolerate any abnormality in dress (she looks different in a "sack" given by Sophia) or behaviour especially in a maid. Certainly, Molly is drawn sarcastically and with ridicule, but realistically. She is introduced as a foil for Sophia and disappears in book V because her role is over.

Mrs Western

Mrs Western, sister to Squire Western, is another addition to Fielding's gallery of women characters. Like Mrs Honour, Sophia's maid, Mrs Western is developed with great precision. Both are comic characters, and static ones. However, Mrs. Western transcends the confines of a pure "comic" character. In the Jonsonian sense of the term she is a "humour" character. Such a character is dominated by one overriding passion for something. She is in the real sense a victim of affectation. Her humour is to dabble in politics. Politics is her hobbyhorse. Her speech is flavoured with political jargons and concepts of international relation. Even ordinary life seems to her an embodiment of treaties, campaigns, sieges, and triumphs. She is a Whig and her brother a Tory. She is always guided by a preconceived ideology, her "humour."

She is masculine in appearance and behaviour hence no man has ever been courageous enough to woo her. However, she is conscious of her family's respectability. She loves her brother, and is very fond of her niece and

considerate for the well being of both. This is why she prefers Blifil to Tom, because she thinks the former is heir to Mr Allworthy's estate. Later on she agrees to persuade Sophia to marry Lord Fellamar because this will win her respectability in the nobility. Throughout she remains a caring sister and considerate aunt. It is another matter that all her proposals turn out poorly thought out, confined, and matter of fact. Hence not acceptable.

Mrs Harriet Fitzpatrick

Mrs Harriet Fitzpatrick has no significant role to play in **Tom Jones.** Like those of Mrs Waters and Lady Bellaston, Harriet episode has been introduced to contrast her character with that of Sophia. Harriet and Sophia meet during their journey to London. Both are in flight, the former from her barbarous husband, and the latter from her tyrannical father. They recognize each other, and they turn out to be cousins. She relates how she, during her vacationing with Mrs Western, their aunt, at Bath, fell to the dashing Fitzpatrick, and then married him. The rest of the story tells her miserable married life. However, she is a Bohemian, a free woman; she advises Sophia not to expect a husband's fidelity. She is thoroughly hypocritical. Sophia discovers that the Irish nobleman whom Harriet knows and who conducts them safely to London, is a person with whom she flirts. She arouses aversion in the reader. She is a stranger to a life of fidelity and commitment, nay, norms. Sophia rightly advises her to have care for her behaviour and the name of the family. She disappears never to be seen again.

Structurally Harriet's story is redundant, but thematically she belongs to the clan of Mrs Waters and Lady Bellaston. Together, the trio embodies a diseased aspect of sexual relationships. Mrs Harriet's looseness is directily contrasted with the restraint of Sophia.

Mrs Miller

Mrs Miller, the widow of a clergyman, and at whose home Tom and Partridge have taken lodgings in London, plays a significant role in the last phase of the action in **Tom Jones.** Leaving aside Sophia, Mrs Miller is the only woman character among the whole lot who offers a ray of hope. She is an embodiment of the true Christian spirit of charity, fellow feeling, good towards all but malice towards none. She is a caring mother who is concerned about their well being; when she comes to know about her daughter's attempted suicide, she becomes hysterical. She is affectionate and considerate towards Tom and advises him to keep a distance from the sluts of the town; she is charitable and spends all the money she gets from Tom on the wretches of the society. She is courteous, as she invites Tom to tea to make amends for her curt advice to him; she is a lady of sure convictions, and is convinced of Tom's goodness. Despite Mr Allworthy's contrary view she defends Tom that he cannot hurt and murder anybody unless he is proved. She is grateful to Tom for his help in persuading Nightingale to marry her daughter, Susan; she thanks him for his generosity and calls him the "saviour" of her family.

Mrs Miller's role becomes all the more important when she prevails upon Mr Allworthy to meet Tom. She pleads with him for all his goodness towards him in the past. Allworthy rises to the occasion. The mist is cleared and Tom is absolved of his crime, and Tom and Allworthy are reconciled. In the final act of the novel, Miller's role is decisive. She is a true embodiment of womanhood, and Fielding's conception of an ideal woman. She is treated with respect.

Lady Bellaston

Lady Bellaston is the only woman character in **Tom Jones** who is treated with sarcasm. She is ridiculed and laughed at throughout her appearance in the novel. She is an embodiment of the corruptions of the upper town life. She is one of the trollops who sends Tom a ticket to a masquerade posing as "the queen of fairies." Lady Bellaston is vain and hypocritical. She is in the autumn of her life but wears all the trappings of a young woman. Like Lady Wishfort in one of Congreve's plays, Lady Bellaston will never admit her age. She hires Tom to allay her sexual appetites. She has an Irish peer as her regular visitor and has many more in her net. She reminds us of Wife of Bath in Chaucer's **The Cantebury Tales**. Like her she is nymphomaniac, and has a sexually diseased mind. She scorns "that monstrous animal a husband and wife."

Lady Bellaston is an intriguing woman. When she is convinced that she cannot separate Sophia from Tom, she encourages Lord Fellamar to attempt a rape on her. When she finds Tom ignoring her she treacherously suggests to Fellamar the idea of his impressment. But all her plans are frustrated. She looks most ridiculous when she has to conceal herself behind the bed in Tom's room. She uses her wealth and status as a bate to allure men. Mrs Waters and Lady Bellaston embody the sexual perversions of a promiscuous society. Both are stock characters and an object of ridicule. They arouse our aversion rather than sympathy. Lady Bellaston is certainly a ridiculous character and treated with sarcasm.

20. Short Notes

Beginning (Opening) of *Tom Jones*

Fielding's **Tom Jones** begins with the introduction of one of the major characters and issues of the novel. We meet Squire Allworthy, who is a middle-aged widower; he is the owner of the largest estates in Somersetshire. He is a pleasant and lively person. He is called "the favourite of Nature and Fortune." The only unhappiness is that he has lost his wife and three children. Now he is leading a contented and carefree life with his sister, Miss Bridget Allworthy. As the novel begins Mr Allworthy has just returned from London; he has been away on business, and was detained there for three months. One comic comment is made here; Mr Allworthy is to retire to his bed; we are told that before going to bed, he spends "some time on his knees." He never breaks this routine. Preparing for the bed, the gentleman to his great surprise discovers "an infant sleeping in his bed." He broods, takes pity on the child, and rings for his housekeeper, Mrs Deborah Wilkins. We are offered another comic situation; Mr Allworthy, out of surprise and haste, forgets that he is wearing only his nightshirt; he dresses himself, and discusses the fate of the infant; Mrs Deborah suggests that the child may be put at the churchwarden's door; Mr Allworthy ignores her suggestion and decides to adop the foundling. The next morning he presents the child to his sister as a present for her.

The beginning of the novel, as the opening in a Shakespearean drama, serves as a key to the coming events. We learn that the foundling has been adopted by the squire. He is a kind and generous person; on the other hand Mrs Deborah is only a worldly-wise woman. The stage is set. We are prepared to learn more about Mr Allworthy and the infant, who is to become the hero of the novel.

Significance of the Poaching Scene (Book III)

The poaching scene occurs in Book III in **Tom Jones.** Literally "poaching" means catching birds or small animals or trespassing, or encroaching on another's territory. The act of poaching occupies a central place in the novel both literally and metaphorically. The actual poaching is done by Tom and Black George, the gamekeeper of Mr Allworthy. During their hunting expedition, they spring a group of partridges near the border of Mr Allworthy's manor. But the birds cross over to Mr Western's territory. They pursue the game and together shoot a bird simultaneously with their guns. Mr Western who happens to be there apprehends Tom. Black George, however, manages to hide in a thicket and escape. Tom is produced before Mr Allworthy. Mr Western insists that there were two people because he heard two shots. But Tom lies that he was alone. He is given a hard beating by Thwackum. George; is expelled from the job. Later on, when he tells the truth that he actually wanted to save George, Allworthy is impressed and presents him a horse as gift and compensation.

The poaching incident serves as a touchstone to test everyone's character. It proves that Tom is kind and stoic; Mr Allworthy is just and kind; Thwackum is cruel and callous; and Black George is, like Falstaff, a coward on necessity. The incident has symbolic connotations. Poaching suggests that the private territory is always vulnerable to prying; people pry into Tom's parentage; Thwackum and Square cast sheep's eyes at Mrs Bridget, the widow of Captain Blifil; they are also poaching with their eyes; Blifil's treacherous plans to appropriate the estate of Allworthy is also a case of poaching. Thus poaching scene has the central position in the scheme of things.

Attack on Molly in The Churchyard (Book IV)

The attack on Molly Seagrim in the churchyard occurs in Book IV in **Tom Jones.** After her father is employed by Mr Western, a change in her physical appearance is noted. In order to conceal it she wears the fine silken

sack which Sophia has given her out of sympathy for her. One Sunday she attends the church in the same dress. It arouses envy among Molly's equals. She becomes a laughing stock of the whole congregation. After the service, the whole congregation, with fire in their eyes and thunder in their hands, attack Molly physically. This fight occurs in the courtyard of the church itself. Fielding describes this fight in the finest mock-heroic manner. Molly faces and defends herself with great certitude. She is rescued by the timely arrival of Tom, who covers her with his coat and conducts her to her home. When she reaches home she is reviled by her sisters and her mother. They chide her for wearing the fancy dress and for her immorality.

The churchyard fight has thematic and dramatic significance. It contributes to the mock heroic aspect of the narration; it establishes the real nature of the congregation; it gives rise to further action. In the battle she accidently hurts a traveling fiddler which leads to her trial in Mr Allworthy's court and the consequent action fellows. It establishes the goodness and responsibility of Tom who owns the fatherhood of Molly's unborn child. It also shows that Molly is otherwise a brave girl, but her flirtatious character is more than obvious. In its setting and purport the scene is comic.

Somersetshire Mob (Villagers)

The villagers or the common country folk, too, have a role to play, especially in the beginning of the novel. In Shakespeare the common people or men in the street are referred to as the "riff-raff," "clap-trap," whom Addison calls the "ciphers" of society. The villagers in Fielding's **Tom Jones** work as a Chorus, as do the rustics in Hardy's novels. They comment on persons and situations, offer their opinion, pass judgement, spread rumours, and even slanders, and can be both kind and callous. Fielding calls them "Somersetshire mob."

As soon as Allworthy's lenient view in Jenny Jones case is known, the villagers react sharply. They have already condemned Jenny. It is generally taken for granted that Allworthy himself is the father of the child; it is also held that Jenny has been sent to meet a tragic end; they want investigation into the case. When Mrs. Partridge injures her husband and her face is covered with his blood her women-neighbours flock to her help. Previously the villagers favoured Blifil, but when Black George is dismissed by Allworthy and Tom shows his resentment, they praise Tom and despise Blifil. Similarly, when Tom gets him a place as Western's gamekeeper the whole countryside is agog with happiness.

Fielding's approach to the villagers is very realistic; they are fickle minded and continue changing their opinion. Sometimes they can be callous enough to attack a pregnant woman, and that too in the courtyard of a church and can be kind enough to sympathize with the father of the same girl. Fielding rightly calls them " a vast herd of cows." So, they are not reliable. But certaintly their commentary helps the reader to form his own view dispassionately.

Partridge and Mrs Partridge Relationship

Partridge and Mrs. Partridge relationship represents the sound and fury of life. Generally woman is shown a victim of a bullying husband; here a meek husband is a victim of a nagging wife. Partridge is of gentle nature; he is the village schoolmaster and is respected in every house in the neighbourhood. But he is cursed by a jealous and quarrelsome wife. Jenny has been working for their family and learning Latin from the schoolmaster; once she smiled at her master's bad Latin. Mrs Partridge misinterprets this smile and concludes that she has been whoring with him. Now their family life becomes a real hell. Jenny is expelled. For sometime uneasy calm prevails, but one day, Mrs Partridge learns that Jenny Jones has given birth to two bastards. As nine months have passed since Jenny was expelled from the Partridges, she immediately concludes that her husband is the father. Reaching home she gives a thrashing to Partridge whose face is covered with blood; she becomes sentimental, starts weeping, and faints. The news of their quarrel spreads throughout the shire. Mrs Wilkins brings the news to the Squire. He pleads not guilty. Mrs Partridge is the chief witness; she calls him a wife beater and a drunkard; he is charged with adultery. However, he begs that Jenny be called to establish his innocence, but she has left the village and cannot be traced. Consequently, Partridge is found guilty; he is

deprived of the annuity. Now they are reduced to wretchedness. Mrs Partridge catches smallpox and dies; Partridge leaves the village. Later on he joins Tom.

Thus, Partridge-Mrs Partridge episode is a pathetic happening. Its contribution to the plot is that it is related with the mystery of Tom's parentage. It is a sad commentary on married life.

The Man of The Hill Episode (Book VIII, Ch. xi)

The Man of the Hill episode which occurs in Book VIII, chapter xi, is genrally said to be a digression. It has nothing to do with the plot of the novel. When the old man is saved from ruffians by Tom, in the middle of the novel, they get friendly, the former relates his story. His narration covers his disillusionments during his stay at the university, his introduction to the underworld, his going to Bath, his falling into the web of gamblers at London. Then he joined the Monmoth faction during the Duke's rebellion. Here the very friend Watson, whom he tried to rehabilitate, betrayed him to the King's forces. Consequently he has withdrawn from the world, and spends time in the study of religion. Now he has turned a misanthrope. Tom reasons with him and tries to convince him against his attitude. The former tells him that the presence of one or two bad men do not make the world of mankind corrupt. However, the Man of the Hill persists in his opinion and is convinced that the world is full of wicked and vicious mankind. Tom is sorry that he has not been able to change the Old Man's mind.

Though the episode of the Old Man of the Hill is not directly related to the structure of the novel, it has much to do with the thematic burden of the book. Through this episode Fielding is treating his dominant theme: the man who is essentially good cannot be termed as bad and condemned for one or two bad actions; creation of God needs love and care; the episode juxtaposes the old Man's and Tom's views. One is a misanthrope and the other a lover of human kind. The episode also prepares the reader for what he should expect in London. William Empson rightly says that the Old Man is "part of the structure of ethical thought," and "the stone at the middle of the arch."

Upton Inn Episode (Books IX – X)

The Upton Inn episode takes up most of Books IX and X. As soon as Man of the Hill concludes his tale, Tom hears a woman's screams for help, and jumps to save that half-naked woman. He guides her to Upton Inn. The landlady suspects them and a mock-heroic fight ensues. Meanwhile Sophia and Mrs Honour and a company of soldiers arrive. The lady that Tom rescued is recognized as the wife of Captain Waters. Mrs Waters has fallen in love with Tom. Tom too cannot resist her advances. It is now midnight. Tom and Mrs Waters have locked the door. Meanwhile a furious gentleman, Fitzpatrick, enters the inn; he is in pursuit of his wife; he asks Susan, the Chambermaid; presuming the lady must be Mrs Waters, she leads him to her (Mrs Waters's) room. He breaks down the door, and grapples with the man (Tom) whom he sees rising from the bed. Mrs. Waters most hypocritically screams "Rape!" Sophia has been informed of Tom's infidelity; she gets her muff smuggled into Tom's room and leaves the Inn. Meanwhile, Mr Western also enters the Inn with a bang. He arraigns Tom because he finds him in possession of his daughter's muff. Only Susan's witness rescues Tom. Mr Western departs in pursuit of his daughter, and Tom and Partridge, too, are on the road.

The Upton Inn episode is significant both thematically and structurally. It happens exactly in the middle of the book. It brings many characters together; it develops the story further. The muff has been introduced to show the presence of Sophia and convey her message to Tom that she has come to know about his infidelity. The episode introduces, though temporarily, the theme of incest (Mrs. Waters is actually Jenny Jones); it shows that the animal appetite in Tom is overpowering. Above all, it provides hilarious comedy which gives relief to the reader. The action is quick; so the reader gets a breather. R.P.G. Mutter rightly calls the Upton episode "the pivotal point of the action, and the physical center of the novel."

Significance of Puppet-Show and Gipsy-Wedding (Book XII)

Scenes of Puppet-show and gipsy-wedding introduced in Book XII of **Tom Jones**, like the circus and horse-race in Dickens' **Hard Times**, are the poetic elements in the book. They represent pastoral simplicity and

innocenceas compared to the vain masquerade in town life as shown in the next book. To compare and contrast the country and town life is also one of the burdens of "history." The puppet show occurs in Book XII when Tom and Partridge are on their way to London. When Partridge hears the drum beat, a shivering fit of fear captures him. He fears for something dangerous. But as soon as he meets the puppet-show all his fears are gone. Tom agrees to stay and watch the show for some time and then they go to spend the night in an Inn closeby.

Next day when Tom and Partridge are continuing their journey, and the guide forgets the route, they spot a light and move towards it. They hear wild music; Partridge and the guide are terrified. But it is only a gypsy wedding. The travelers are warmly welcomed and offered food and drink. Partridge, as usual is tipsy and falls an easy prey to a gysy girl who attempts to seduce him. Her husband is punished for encouraging his wife for that sinful act, as he supported her in her pursuit by ignoring her. Tom marvels at the gypsy justice. The king of the gypsies enlightens Tom when he says that he gypsies steal from Englishmen, but the latter steal from one another. Later on, a gypsy conducts them to Coventry. Later on, Tom also compares the justice of gypsies with that of the English, and pities the wretches who are its victims. Gypsy life embodies self-sufficiency.

Thus, puppet-show and the gypsy wedding embody pastoral simplicity and solace and add to the comprehensive description of society.

Sophia-Lord Fellamar Episode (Book XV)

Fielding called upper society a dull drab, and boring and not an interesting subject for a comic writing. Throughout the neo-classical period, the genteel society has been ridiculed by such writers as Congreve, Addison, and Pope. Lord Fellamar is the butt of Fielding's satire. He is a city debauch, and belongs to Lady Bellaston's clan. It is he who conducted Sophia to the Lady's house on the night of playhouse disturbance. She is staying with the lady in London. This young nobleman has fallen hopelessly in love with her. He confesses it to Lady Bellaston who tells him that he has a rival, who is no other than Tom, "a beggar, a bastard, a foundling" and "a fellow in meaner circumstances than on of your lordship's footmen." Sophia's preference for "the foundling" agitates him. Now he must own her. He contemplates how to achieve his end. The answer is with Lady Bellaston. She persuades him to rape her. She even provides the stage. She sends all her servants away. Sophia is alone that evening and reading in her room. He enters and advances upon her forcibly. He succeeds in kissing her neck. Sophia screams.

Help comes unexpectedly, when Sophia's father crashes into the room. Mr Western is on the trail of his daughter. A comic situation is created. Lady Bellaston enters; Western tells that Sophia has refused the best match in England. Lord Fellamar thinks that the squire is referring to him. He bluntly tells the lord that he is not the candidate. Western then discharges Mrs Honour and takes Sophia to his lodgings. The episode exposes the frivolous nature of the upper class, and establishes integrity and steadfastness of Sophia.

Implications of Incest (Book XVIII)

The implications of incest surface when Partridge visits Tom in the jail, in London. Partridge's face looks "paler than ashes, his eyes fixed in his head, his hair standing on end, and every limb trembling" when he tells Tom that the lady he went to bed with at Upton Inn is no other than Jenny Jones, his mother. Tom is equally distressed. The horror, and the sense of guilt, connected with the monstrous sin of incest overpowers him. He asks Partridge to go and fetch Mrs Waters to him. All efforts of the barber to spot her fail. Meanwhile, he receives a letter from Mrs Waters in which she refers to the day they spent together at Upton, and "which is likely to embitter all" her future life. It adds to Tom's dread of the sin. Soon the reader comes to know that the guilty of the "act" are innocent. Mrs Waters, however, knew all along that she had never mothered a child. Later on, it is confirmed by Lawyer Dowling and the letter written by Mrs Blifil that Tom is the nephew of Mr Allworthy. All complications are resolved.

The incest supposed to be committed has social and moral implications. The society considers it a sin, and the individual who has committed it is condemned to a mental state of sin. It is taken as an immoral act, and a sin.

But for Fielding, hypocrisy is much greater a sin than incest. Robert O Bowen refers to a "casual comparison of the morality of **Tom Jones** and the morality of **Hamlet**. For Fielding, the critic says, it is "one of outer circumstance and not spirit." In **Hamlet** "the Prince is driven mad, not by the technical accomplishment of incest but by the idea of if." William Empson is of the view that the idea of incest has been introduced "to make the end more exciting." However, the critic thinks that "the book feels much better when it is cleared up."

Conclusion (Ending) of The Novel (Book XVIII)

Fielding's **Tom Jones** ends with the true comic spirit of repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, and the idea that life must continue. It is achieved through the exposition of treachery, villainy, and hypocrisy. The hero and heroine are united in wedlock. Sophia yields to her father's wish and forgives Tom for his infidelities; Tom promises to be sincere. He has improved; experience has taught him a great lesson in life. His essential goodness has been proved. Mr Allworthy repents that he has been ignorant of Tom's goodness. The record is set straight. He is reconciled with Tom. Tom's identity is established; Lawyer Dowling reveals everthing. Tom is the son of Allworthy's own sister. The rogue is rewarded. Tom's villainy is thoroughly exposed; he goes to live in the North and hopes to marry a widow. Square writes a letter before his death to Mr Allworthy confessing his guilt; Thwackum too confesses his role in the villainy against Tom. All other characters are pardoned or rewarded for their respective deeds.

All is now well. Tom and Sophia inherit both estates. Squire Western is a frequent visitor to his estate and Sophia loves the old gentleman. He spends much of his time playing with his grand children, a girl and a boy. Above all, he drinks regularly in the company of his choice. Allworthy is highly generous to Tom. Tom's character has improved because of his conversation with the Squire, and his union with "the lovely and virtuous Sophia." By reflection on his past follies he has acquired "discretion and prudence." The history is told most truthfully and the thesis is proved. The device of discovery and resolution is used to unravel the plot with great mastery.

Sophia's Muff

Sophia's muff is an object that serves both the thematic and technical purpose. The muff is symbolic of the relation between Sophia and Tom. It is vital to the action, and embodies their love relationship which they avoid discussing openly. In other words it suggests the state of their tenderness and love which cannot be dramatized. The muff provide a peep into their heart and mind. It makes its first appearance in the early part of **Tom Jones** when Mrs Honour, Sophia's talkative maid, finds Tom fondling and kissing Sophia's muff; she elaborates "He kissed it again and again and said it was the prettiest muff in the world." It shows Tom's overpowering love for Sophia. Sophia, too, from this moment, belongs to Tom. In the middle of the novel, the muff is again introduced. At Upton Inn Mr Western spots his daughter's muff and sues Tom before the justice of peace for stealing it. However Susan, the chambermaid, comes to his rescue and he is cleared of the charge. Actually when Partridge informs Mrs. Honour that Tom is sleeping with a flirt and when she breaks the news to Sophia, the gentle lady herself bribes the chambermaid to smuggle it into Tom's room.

Sophia's muff, thus, is a significant device. It connotes various meanings. When Tom fondles it he is expressing his sentiments, and Sophia feels elevated; when Mr Western spots it with Tom, he concludes that he has won over his daughter, and the arraignment scene serves comic purpose, and also parodies the law procedure which based the trivial charge as "muff-stealing"; when Tom finds it in his room it is an information that both are in parallel search for each other; it also indicates that she has come to know of his infidelity. So it conveys the necessary information. Later on Sophia's pocket book and her bill of pounds taken from the beggar, are added to the muff. Tom, later on, at lady Bellaston's home in London returns the pocket book and the bill but does not mention the muff. It means that his love for her is constant. Thus, Sophia's muff is a symbolic device used artistically in the novel. It moulds the character and interprets situations.

Historical and Social (Factual) References

There are quite a few references to historical and social occurrences in **Tom Jones**. Fielding calls it a "history" because its action concerns "human nature," and is consistent with the character of the performer. At the same time it is a social history. Fielding, in order to make the book a living and vibrant document, refers to actual historical happenings, social events and actual places. The band of soldiers that Tom wants to join (Book VII) are marching to the North to suppress an uprising. The rebels are making the second attempt in English history to restore the Stuart line to the throne. The first attempt was made in 1715. At that time the supporters of James Stuart resisted George Hanover's accession to the throne, after the death of Queen Mary. The revolution referred to in **Tom Jones** (Book VII) occurred in 1745.

The second reference to the Rebellion of 1745 occurs in Book XI. The landlord of the inn confuses Sophia's identity with that of Jenny Cameron; he calls her the young Chevalier's (Bonnie Prince Charlie's) mistress. He thinks that the ladies (Sophia and Mrs Honour) are taking indirect path to London to escape the Duke of Cumberland's army. As far as the standpoint of social history is concerned, Fielding mentions Bath as a city of gossip, gambling. Its corrupting influence is projected in the episode of Mr Fitzpatrick and Miss Western. Both are the corrupted specimen of Bath. Later on, the actual happenings in London are shown as the corruptions referred to in relation to Bath. Thus, these social and historical references and occurrences make the novel a complete and authentic "history."

Tom's Encounters with Ensign Northerton (Books VII and IX)

Tom encounters Ensign Northerton twice in the novel, first in Book VII and then in book IX. Tom is on his way to Bristol, in the middle of the book. He and his guide are ignorant of the route. The Quaker suggests them to take shelter in an inn. A company of soldiers also enters the same inn. Fired by patriotism, Tom decides to join the company which is marching with the soldiers so he appears before the commanding officer. The latter is so much impressed with him that he invites him to join the officer's mess. During the after dinner toasts, Tom unwillingly proposes the name of Sophia. Ensign Northerton, who had seen Sophia with her aunt, makes some uncharitable remarks at Sophia's expense. When Tom protests, the drunken Ensign throws a bottle of wine at Tom. Tom falls down. He takes to bed and Northerton is now under guard. Now, during the night Tom buys a sword from the sergeant of the company. Next morning he attacks him. He wants to settle his score with the assailant. The terrified guard shoots but the shot misses Tom. Northerton, meanwhile, manages to escape by bribing the landlady. Putting Tom under the care of the landlady, the soldiers march on.

The second time (Book IX) Tom encounters Northerton when he was in the company of the Man of the Hill. The Old Man had just finished his narrative when they heard the terrifying screams of a woman for help. Tom jumps to help her. He rescues the half-naked woman from the ruffian, who is no other than his old enemy. He binds Northerton's hands, but he runs away because Tom forgets to bind his feet. These episode establish Tom's gallantry, his love for and commitment to Sophia, and the dangers of the road.

The Setting : the Country, the Road, the City

The setting in Fielding's **Tom Jones** is realistic. The tripartite structure of the novel – the country, the road, and the city – offers a wide range of people and episodes. Together these three locales represent life in its interrelatedness and diversity. They are like three acts in a drama. The novel opens with the delineation of Somersetshire atmosphere with Mr Allworthy as the squire, the magistrate and the care taker of the shire. We are introduced to Mr Allworthy's family; he lives with his sister; there is his housekeeper Mrs. Deborah Wilkins; later on his sister marries Captain Blifil and they are blessed with a son. Mr Allworthy has already shown his kindness to the foundling he discovers in his bed room and adopted him. The beginning shows Allworthy to be kind, Captain Blifil self-centred, Blifil and Square and Thwakum hypocritical; the villagers swaying and undependable. Molly is a village flirt; here families have fallen apart. The highway to London is also full of dangers; there are robberies, rapes, and risks of all kinds. The doctors, the lawyers, chambermaids, beggars, the

landladies, and landlords together present a scenario of the eighteenth century. The sexual indulgences here are a presage to London life. The town is no better than the country or the road. Mrs. Bellaston and Lord Fellamar are the ugly specimen of humanity. They represent sexual perversions. Hypocrisies, vanities and machinations of the town dwellers are thoroughly exposed.

Thus, the tripartite setting – the country, the road, the town – presents a comprehensive image of the whole humanity. It is a true picture of men and manners.

The Mock-Heroic (Elements) Style

Fielding follows the comic mode in **Tom Jones**. As it is a "comic epic in prose," he uses the mock-heroic style. Such a style parodies the epic style. In order to burlesque the style of an epic, he inflates the style of his comic-epic by using epic similes in the comic mode. The movement and speed of Deborah Wilkins is compared with a kile which is further likened with a "tremendous bird." The appearance of Sophia is described in epic style. She is introduced with all solemnity. Her introduction onto the stage of the book is described in the mock-heroic vein. It reminds us of the entrance of venus in the classical writings: "Hushed be every ruder breath… the lovely Sophia comes!" As the author tells us in the prefatory chapter of Book I: "our intention, in short, is to introduce our heroine with the utmost solemnity in our power, with an elevation in style, and the circumstances proper to raise the veneration of our reader." Similarly Molly Seagrim's churchyard battle is described in epic style. Fielding begins with an invocation to Muse: "ye Muses, then, whoever ye are, who love to sing battles," etc. It is travesty of the epical grand style used by the classical poets. Similarly, Mrs. Water's seductive looks at Upton Inn are described in the same vein "Say then, ye Graces," etc. reminds us of Milton's style.

In this way, Fielding uses mock-heroic style to laugh mankind out of their favourite vices and follies.

Tom-Squire Western Relationship

Tom and Squire Western stand in a peculiar relationship to each other. Tom's affinity with the squire develops into a stronger bond. Their bond is based on their common interest in hunting. Mr Squire Western has great admiration for Tom's skills in horse-riding and hunting. When Tom rescues Sophia during a horse-fall, Mr Squire's admiration for Tom increases. But all the same he takes Tom to be a bastard. When Tom learns about Molly's trial by Mr Allworthy, and leaves Mr. Western's company, he holds Tom responsible for Molly's misery. When he learns that Tom and Sophia love each other he gets greatly annoyed. His approach to life is mundane. He wants his daughter to marry Blifil so that both the estates may be joined. When Tom is banished Sophia follows suit. Now the squire also chases his daughter. He holds Tom responsible for the situation. At Upton Inn when he spots Tom in the possession of Sophia's muff, he produces him before the justice of peace. Tom is saved only by the witness chambermaid. Mr Western can go to any extent in getting his daughter, bring her to his lodgings and persuades her to marry Bilfil. But the moment he comes to know that Tom is the true heir to Mr Allworth's estate, he immediately apologizes to Tom, and persuades his daughter to marry Tom. He is developed as a comic character.

Thus, Tom and Mr Western represent a strange relationship. First they are friends, then adversaries and then they become relatives. Mr Western is guided by his single interest in the welfare of his daughter, whereas Tom's respones to him are spontaneous. Thus it is one of important relationships in the novel.

Sophia-Squire Western Relationship

Sophia-Squire Western relationship is a peculiar father-daughter relationship. They have opposing natures. Sophia is an affectionate daughter and can never annoy her father. She fulfils her filial duties admirably well. On the contrary Mr Squire is a misognist. He has been cruel to his wife. Now he wants that his daughter too must be under his despotic rule. Sophia is considerate towards her father; she plays music when he is bedridden; she asks Tom to take care of her father on the hunting expedition. She will never do anything which may annoy him or disturb him. But she loves Tom and detests Bilfil, whereas her father wants that she should marry the latter.

He has no consideration for her emotions. He is guided by mundane interest. He thinks that her marriage with Blifil will keep her happy and provide her with all comforts. But she cannot marry the man she detests. This conflict between the daughter and father becomes a cause of discord and she has to run from her home. Even then he cannot be convinced. He chases her and reaches London. There also the clash between the two continues. He persists in his course, and the problem is solved and conflict resolved only when Tom's true identity is revealed. Now he persuades her to marry Tom, to which she agrees.

Thus, Sophia and Mr Western, though opposite in nature, represent a parent-child bond. Though Mr Western is guided by worldly interests, he cares for her comforts; she is dutiful but individualistic and embodies revolt against parental authority, something new during those days. She rebels against the patriarchal code, and is, thus, a new woman.

The Journey-Motif

Life is generally represented in three ways – as a battle, as a struggle, or a journey. Fielding uses the journey motif in **Tom Jones.** As he declared in the preface to **Joseph Andrews** that he is using the epic mode. In both novels he adopted the mode of comic epic in prose. In **Tom Jones** , Tom, the hero is made to leave his home and is set on the road. Like the earlier novel, **Tom Jones** becomes the epic of the road. The journey motif gives a wider scope to the novel. Through this form, Fielding offers a comprehensive view of society. The highway to London is full of risks and dangers. The inns, the robberies, attacks on women, risks of rape, chambermaids, hosts, and beggar together present a scenario of the countryside. It is a dangerous road. The road also tests and proves Tom's gallantry. He saves the Old Man of the Hill, rescues Mrs Waters, gives alms to the beggar and even indulges in sexual escapades, and comes to know about the gypsies' justice. The journey prepares him for the risks he is going to face in London. Similarly, it proves that Sophia remains untainted during the journey. Both the hero and the heroine pass through the same circumstances though they behave according to their basic nature.

In this way, journey motif in **Tom Jones** is a touchstone to test the true nature of characters. Tom's helping of different people in distress and Sophia's fidelity serve as key to their behaviour. By implication journey on the road embodies man's journey of life. It is a metaphor effectively used.

Irony, Wit and Humour

Fielding calls his **Tom Jones** "a comic epic in prose." The mode suited his purpose. His express purpose is to present, in Dryden's expression, "a just and lively image of human nature." To achieve this end he uses irony, wit and humour. He uses irony to show the difference between appearance and reality. He lashes at hypocritical people such as Blifil, Square and Thwackum, Mrs Waters, and Lady Bellaston. Wit is used to present things in a novel way – "what oft said but never so well expressed." He uses stylistic devices of the mock-heroic to say things in a new way. Humour occupies central position in his novel. Humour springs from the ridiculous and the only source of ridiculous is affectation, he says in the Preface to **Joseph Andrews.** And affectation is the result of either vanity or hypocrisy. He declares in his dedication to **Tom Jones** : "I have employed all the wit and humour of which I am master in the following history; wherein I have endeavoured to laugh mankind out of their favourite follies and vices." He uses farcical humour in the case of quarrel between Partridge and his wife; ironical humour in the case of the churchyard battle between Molly Seagrim and the "Somersetshire mob"; and satirical humour in the case of Lady Belleston and Mrs. Waters. Through different shades of humour he parodies and depicts the incongruities in human behaviour.

Thus, irony, wit, and humour are the stylistic devices that Fielding uses in a mock heroic way in **Tom Jones.** It serves his purpose to expose vanities, hypocrisies and affectations of the whole mankind.

Suggested Study Topics (Questions)

1. Discuss **Tom Jones** as a picaresque novel.
2. Examine the statement that **Tom Jones** is the first English novel written to conform to a theory of fiction.
3. Discuss **Tom Jones** as a comic epic in prose.
4. Fielding regarded himself as the founder of a new provice of writing. Discuss **Tom Jones** in the light of this claim of Fielding.
5. Discuss **Tom Jones** as a study in human nature.
6. Fielding called **Tom Jones** a "history." Discuss and elaborate.
7. Fielding offers a panoramic view of the eighteenth century in **Tom Jones.** Illustrate.
8. In what respect is **Tom Jones** a social document or a dossier on the contemporary society?
9. Write an essay on Fielding's philosophy of life as presented in **Tom Jones**.
10. Discuss Fielding's views on morality and sexual ethics as illustrated in **Tom Jones.**
11. Fielding's **Tom Jones** is called "low," and morally "corrupt" book. Do you agree? Discuss.
12. Fielding offers a healthy philosophy on man-woman relationships. Discuss with reference to Tom's relations with different women.
13. How does Fielding preach a "commonsense morality" as against conventional and confined one in **Tom Jones**? Elaborate.
14. Write an essay on Tom Jones as a "new," "natural," and "unheroic" type of hero.
15. Discuss critically the plot construction in **Tom Jones**.
16. Write an extended note on the tripartite plot construction of **Tom Jones**.
17. "There is too much plot in **Tom Jones**." Do you agree? Discuss.
18. Write an essay on the characterization in **Tom Jones**.
19. Fielding's characters are universal and not local. Do you agree? Elaborate your answer.
20. Write an essay on Fielding's style in **Tom Jones**.
21. Write an extended note on the use of wit, irony and dialogue in **Tom Jones**.
22. Compare and contrast the characters of Squire Allworthy and Squire Western. How are they individualized?
23. Compare and contrast Square and Thwackum. Is not each an incomplete character separately?
24. Discuss Partridge and Mr Western as comic figures. How are they individualized? Which is the more memorable character?
25. Discuss Mr Allworthy's character in the light of his gullibility and positive qualities.
26. How are Tom and Blifil contrasted in **Tom Jones**? Discuss with illustration from the novel.
27. Do you agree with the statement that Sophia is Fielding's most charming heroine? Elaborate.
28. Write an essay on Fielding's minor women characters in **Tom Jones**.
29. How do the Portrayal of Lady Bellaston and Lord Fellamar help Fielding in showing his reaction to the high society life of London?

30. Discuss the relevance of the episode of the Man of the Hill and the history of Harriet Fitzpatrick in the total design of the novel.
31. How are Molly Seagrim, Mrs Waters, and Lady Bellaston related with the development of the character of Tom Jones?
32. Write an essay on the comic characters in **Tom Jones**.
33. Write an extended note on humour in **Tom Jones**.
34. Write an essay on the mock-heroic in **Tom Jones**.
35. Discuss the delineation of realism in **Tom Jones.**
36. What is the central theme of **Tom Jones**? Support your answer from the text.
37. How does Tom develop from a profligate to a "good" and "wise" man?
38. Do you consider **Tom Jones** a "great or "classic" novel? Why or why not?
39. Write short notes in not more than 200 words each on any four of the following:
    i. Poaching episode (Book III)
    ii. Churchyard Mock- heroic battle scene (Book IV)
    iii. Black George
    iv. Mrs Miller
    v. Somersetshire Mob
    vi. The Man of the Hill
    vii. Upton Inn Episode (Books IX – X)
    viii. Puppet-show and Gypsy-wedding (Book XII)
    ix. Sophia-Fellamar attempted rape scene (Book XV)
    x. Sophia's Muff
    xi. Molly Seagrim
    xii. Conclusion of the novel (Book XVIII)
40. Write a detailed note on Fielding's contribution to the English novel. Will it be appropriate to call him the "Father of English Novel"?

Note: For answers to all these problems, go through the topics covered under different headings in the preceding pages beginning with "Detailed Critical Analysis of Major Topics," and ending with "Short Notes."

Suggested Readings

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2. Ronald Paulson (ed.), **A Collection of Critical Essays,** in the series **Twentieth Century Views,** Prentice – Hall, 1962.
3. Ronald Paulson and Thoman Lockwood(eds.), **Henry Fielding: The Critical Heritage,** Routege and Kegan Paul, 1972.
4. Walter Allen, **The English Novel**, Penguin, 1984.
5. Arnold Kettle, **An Introduction to English Novel,** Unwin Hyman, 1950; rpt. Universal Book Stall, New Delhi, 1991.
6. Andrew Wright, **Henry Fielding : Man and Mask,** Chatto and Windus, 1965.
7. Frank Kermode, **Richarson and Fielding, Cambridge, Journal** IV, 1950.
8. Maurice Johnson, **Fielding's Art of Fiction,** Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 1961.
9. Glenn W Hatfield, **Henry Fielding and the Language of Irony,** 1968.
10. Elizabeth Drew, "Tom Jones," **The Novel : A Modern Guide**, New York, 1963.
11. R S Crane, "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of **Tom Jones**," **Critics and Criticism,** Phoenix Books, the University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1952.
12. R.P.C. Mutter (ed.), **Henry Fielding : Tom Jones,** Penguin 1966.
13. Fredrick O Bissell, **Fielding's Theory of the Novel,** Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1933.
14. Wilburt Lucicus Cross, **The History of Henry Fielding, Y**ale University press, New Haven, 1918.
15. Dorothy Van Ghent, **The English Novel : Form and Function,** 1953.
16. Frederick Homes Dudden, **Henry Fielding, his Life, Works and Times,** Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1952.
17. E.M.W. Tillyard, **The Epic Strain in the English Novel,** 1958.
18. E.M. Thornbury, **Henry Fielding's Theory of the Comic Prose,** 1931.

Unit-V: Rousseau's Confessions

ROUSSEAU: HIS LIFE AND WORK

Some readers of Rousseau reach his writings through his life. And if they happen to dislike his unconventional conduct, they also form an unfavourable opinion of his work. No doubt, as in the case of so many writers, his life and his work are near allied, but we always need to possess a certain discretion in seeing life as life and art as art. It is important, therefore, in the case of Rousseau, more than in the case of any other writer, to know what his life was like and how it enters into his work. However, even when we embark upon an account of his life, it is not possible to ignore his work and its importance to the world of letters and the world of ideas. Let us cast a glance at the great work he accomplished in the world, at the revolution he wrought in the intellectual and imaginative life of Europe. Think, first of all, of the more imaginative side of his achievement. Think of the vast space which he fills in the purely literary movement of his time. He was the one who gave a new and most fruitful turn to the European novel, just as Flaubert did a century after him. He brought a keener observation, a more searching analysis, of incident and character than had been known until his time. It is widely acknowledged that he was the fountain-head of the English Romantic Movement. Wordsworth and Coleridge, Byron and Scott, all are considered his spiritual children.

In the related field of reflection and abstract thought, call it philosophy, he has left a yet deeper mark behind him. He is considered a great moral and spiritual teacher. He is also considered the father of all that has since been done for educational reform. He was the one who gave an impulse to social and political progress, of which the world has still cause enough to be thankful. He was the one who recast the whole fabric of political philosophy from top to bottom. It was his *Contract Social* that dealt the first deadly blow to the individualism, which since the day of Locke had swept everything before it. From the publication of the *Contract Social,* that theory has tottered slowly to its fall. There are a very few men, indeed, in the entire history of Europe whose influence upon subsequent generations has been so strong and so definite as that of Rousseau. Except perhaps Plato and Aristotle, no one else compares more favourably with him in the annals of western philosophy.

It is quite natural with us that whenever a great task has been accomplished in the world, we are instinctively driven to ask: Of what sort was the man who did it? Does his own life, his personal character, offer any mirror of the qualities which give strength and enduring value to his great achievements? The simple assumption is that if someone has done great deeds, he must also be a great man. We must learn from his life the qualities that go

into the making of a great man. We must seek inspiration from him. Such thoughts and such expectations and such curiosities are quite understandable among us. In the case of certain great men, such as Rousseau and Voltaire, the readers do not find everything ideal, and all that they expect in the lives of great men. Hence the debate as it has been in the case of Rousseau. The debate has been so vehement in the present case that the picture of his life drawn by different debaters are so dissimilar that one remains wondering as to the authenticity of each. In between the glorious and the sinister portraits of Rousseau stand his abiding confessional writings, his own *Confessions* and other autobiographical writings, which are unsparing in the evil they record, but also rich in touches, both conscious and unconscious, which make strongly for the good. In the light of all that has been revealed about the life of this great writer let us try to reconstruct his portrait as near the facts (not maliciously or marvelously interpreted) as we can possibly remain.

Jean Jacques Rousseau was born in 1712 and lived upto 1778. He was the son of a Genevan watchmaker. Since his mother died at his birth, he was brought up by his father until the age of eight or nine years. As he himself reveals, during these years Rousseau's chief amusements were the *Grand Cyrus* and such other romances of the preceding (that is, the seventeenth) century and the *Lives* of Plutarch. While from the romance he drew the delight in story-telling, from the *Lives* he certainly drank in that admiration for the great states of antiquity. What interested him in particular in Plutarch were the republics of Rome and Sparts. These kingdoms left a strong mark on the *Contract Social* and his whole work in political philosophy. In 1720, his father got embroiled in a quarrel with a fire-eating officer. Even otherwise, he was known to be a rolling stone. As a result, he hastily left Geneva and handed over the care of his son, Rousseau, to his brother. This uncle of Rousseau sent him to board with a Pastor on the outskirts of the city. After spending some years with the pious Pastor, Rousseau was apprenticed first to a Notary; then, on proving utterly unfit for such a work, to an Engraver. His new life was all the more hateful to him. He lost in this rough rearing all the refinement which birth and early training had given him. He now began to run wild. One Sunday evening, finding the city gates shut on him, and knowing that he would be flogged by his master, he decided on the spot that he would never submit to that disgrace. The only option available to him now was to run away, which he did. This was the year 1728, when he was only 16 years of age. Thus he found himself adrift upon the world on the threshold of his manhood. In fact, this made him a wanderer for all his life, as he was never thereafter able to settle for long at any one place.

After having aimlessly wandered for some days, Rousseau was directed by the Priest of a neighbouring village to seek the help of a benevolent lady. This lady was a convert to the Catholic faith, who lived at Annecy. Her name was Mme de Warens, to whom, far more to his father or to any other of his early benefactors, he owed all that went into the shaping of his personality. It was

from her that he drew the love of calm and the love of outward nature, which were to become the strongest of his passions. It was during this very life with her that the foundation of his meditative habit was laid. Also, it was during these very years that he developed his strangely varied intellectual and artistic tastes, which lasted with him all his life. In certain other respects, her influence was not so healthy. The dreamy and impressionable youth as Rousseau was at that stage, many of her not so healthy notions of life were instinctively absorbed by the youth. He was under great spell of her charms and her style of life. She left on his personality some indelible marks. For instance, her notions of love were both extensive and peculiar. After a few years of his quasi-religious devotion to her person, she insisted on making him her lover. She said she did it to preserve him from the corruptions of the world. During this seed time of his growth between 1728 and 1741, his life was truly that of a vagrant, a lover, and a student. In relation to her, all these three roles stood combined. He did her bidding without questioning.

After a short absence from Annecy, when Rousseau returned he felt that his place in the affections of Mme de Warnes had been taken by another. So, in 1741, at the age of twenty nine, he set forth once more to make his fortune. This time he went to Paris to try his luck. He did make a few false starts there. But finally in 1743, he settled down as a struggling aspirant in literature and music. It is to this period in Paris that belongs what has been considered by some the "worst deed" with which his memory has been charged. Soon after settling in Paris, he formed a connection with a "wholly uneducated" woman, whom with "pathetic constancy" he never ceased to cherish as the "child of nature." Her name was Therese Levasseur. Why should it sound the "worst deed" of his life is rather intriguing to the present writer. She may have been a great source of education for him about man and nature. In the European critical credo, to be "wholly uneducated" is also a grave moral flaw. At least, that seems to be the import of the critical judgment concerning the "worst deed." He had five children by her. He lodged each of these children, immediately after birth, in the Foundling Hospital at Paris. It has been called an "abominable act," about which most critics have been either apologetic or not ready to defend at all. It has been considered by these "moralists" a gross misdeed. In our time, this Victorian hypocrisy of self-righteousness may not find many sympathizers among the intelligentia. Voltaire, around the same time, exposes such moral shams in European society. Rousseau has the upright conscience to hold a mirror to his life; an act his detractor would shudder to perform.

A short new life came upon Rousseau in the year 1749. Nothing short of a chance, he received the offering of a prize by the Academy of Dijon. For the first time, now, his genius was revealed to the world and to himself. The prize came for his first publication, *Discourse* on the moral influence of the Arts and Sciences. It became the literary event of the year 1751. from then onward Rousseau became the marked man of Europe. As he himself has described, the

next twelve years of his life were full of delirium and fevers. During this period Rousseau continued to pour forth the works which changed the face of thought, feeling, and imagination of the entire Europe. Seldom has fame come to a great writer so late in life as it did to Rousseau. He was almost 40 years of age in 1751. His next four publications – second *Discourse*, the *Nouvelle Heloise*, *Emile*, and the *Contract Social* – all these were crowded into the short space between 1753 to 1762. A landmark in history of Europe, this period was equally so in the life of Rousseau himself. To these years belong his breach with Mme d'Epinay, Grimm and Diderot (1757-58). To these years also – and this is far more important – belongs what he himself calls his "inward reformation." It was almost sudden and complete like the "conversion" in religion. This brought a complete revolution in his whole moral outlook. That is how biographers view it. But can there be any thing so sudden and so complete in life? Nothing is so sudden and so complete in any one's life. Rousseau's forty years were full of his honest exposure to life experiences. If anything grew or developed, it had to be a result of that long ordeal of forty years. The habit of making sweeping or sensational statements makes bad criticism. Such habits are better avoided.

At this point of time, he did, of course, resolve to apply unsparingly to his own life and conduct the principles which, in a reflective form, he had forged, with ever-increasing clarity, in his writings. He was determined now to follow the path he was asking others to pursue, and follow it unflinchingly. This resolve and determination was to free himself, once and for all, from that enslavement to public opinion, to those alien codes of conduct, which he was denouncing in others. His aim now was to square his own life and conduct with the exacting standard of honesty and truth which he had acquired through toilsome meditation. In others, his entire effort now was to return, as far as possible, in his inward thinking and outward action, to "the state of nature". With this end, he abandoned at once and for ever all attempts to make his way in this world. He discarded the gentleman's laced-coat and sword, lived as a plain bourgeois, and set out to make his livelihood by copying music at sixpence a sheet. Rousseau made this change at a time when his worldly prospects were far brighter, and the temptation to pursue wealth and social status far stronger, than they had been ever before. It was an act of asceticism, denying oneself the worldly treasures well within reach.

Now since Rousseau had undergone a radical change, it makes us look back at his past life in a new light. Our estimate of them, as an index to his character, gets signally changed. As we shrink from judging St. Paul by the acts done before his conversion, so should we hesitate to judge Rousseau by his acts before his change. The first response to his *Emile* and the *Contract Social* was a storm of persecution upon the author's head. Within a month decrees of arrest or banishment were launched against him, first by the Parliament of Paris, and then by the Council of Geneva and of Bern. It was only owing to the open-mindedness of Frederich the Great, a friend of Voltaire, that at last he found

refuge in the Cauton of Neuchatel, then an appendage of Prussia. After three years of comparative calm, he was driven out from here also by a rising of the populace. Eventually, on the invitation of Hume, he turned his steps to England in 1766. But because of his breach with Hume, England also became a country of torment for him. Just after a year and a half of his arrival in England, he fled back to France in 1767. it became evident from now onward that Rousseau had undergone a sea change. His courage was no longer to be seen for any action. For the rest of his life there was nothing left him but to endure. The hostility of the philosophers, which had smoldered ever since his quarrel with Grimm and Diderot, was now fanned into a flame by his rupture with Hume. Seeing an unmistakable conspiracy of philosophers against him, which was decidedly there, he became oversuspicious of their hand in every happening in his life adverse to his expectations. He became susceptible to delusions and hallucinations. The storm of the last five years had been too great to weather. On certain points and at certain moments, his mind gave way beneath the strain. However, these delusions and hallucinations should not be mistaken for a general ill health of his mind. They were confined within very narrow limits, beyond which his mind was as clear and sound as ever. The *Dialogues*, which shew the cloud of suspicion more clearly than any of his other writings, remains a masterpiece of dialectic. In them, as well as in the other writings of this period, can be found a knowledge of the human heart and a power of poignant description which were a new thing in the European literature.

Rightly indignant at the treachery of his assailants, it was only natural that Rousseau should look for weapons of defence. From the men of his own day there was hardly any hope of redress. His only hope was to clear his character in the judgment of posterity. It was with this objective in view that he composed his *Confessions* and, after a short interval, the *Dialogues*, which form an inseparable sequel. The *Confessions* were completed in 1770, but during the next winter readings were, however, stopped on the application of Mme d'Epinay to the Lieutenant of Police. Thus, he was not able to draw his enemies into the open, while he was there to answer them. The only thing he had gained was to have cleared his conscience by giving his enemies the fair notice that there would be a posthumous defence. The fate of the *Dialogues* (1772-6) appears to have struck him far more closely to his heart. As far as possible, he had avoided in this work all reference to detail. His object here was not to tell the outward story of his life, but to reveal the innermost working of his mind. Therefore, he went far more nearly to the heart of the matter than he had done in the *Confessions*. The picture that he now paints of himself is far more personal and intimate. This being the case, he was naturally yet more concerned to secure for it some measure of publicity. The plan he decided upon for the purpose was to lay the completed copy solemnly upon the high altar of Notre Dame (a church in Paris). However, when he made his way to the famous cathedral, he found his approach to the altar blocked by a barrier. He took it for a token that

the will of God was against the fulfillment of his design. So, after a bitter struggle, he bowed his head in submission (1776).

Perhaps this was the last conflict of his troubled life, and it was also the most cruel. But his defeat was complete. From then onward he abandoned all hopes of justifying his ways (character) even to the men of posterity. "Buried alive among the living," he made no further attempt to strike against "the triple wall of darkness that surrounded him." "I resigned myself," he says, "without reserve, and once more I have found peace." Thus, his last link with life was broken. All that was left him was to prepare himself by stern self-discipline for the death. This is the spirit that informs throughout the *Reveries*, the last of his writings, and surely not far from the best. It was begun within two months of the final mortification of his hopes. It was left unfinished at his death. His own end came quite suddenly in the summer of 1778. There is no ground for the often repeated assertion that it was self-sought. Not much is known, however, about the manner of his death.

SUMMARY OF CONFESSIONS

Confessions is an autobiography written by Jean Jacques Rousseau. It covers the period between 1712 and 1765. The locale includes Switzerland, France and England. It was posthumously published in 1784, as Rousseau had died in 1778. The book is an acknowledged attempt by the famous French writer to speak honestly and fully of his own life. It has been considered, by generations of critics, an important work of literary merit. It is an expression of a writer's remembrance of things past, more revealing through its signs of passion and prejudice than through its recording of the facts of his experience. The book serves as autobiography only to the extent that it can be checked against other, more objective, reports. However, whatever be its bias, it remains Rousseau's work which reflects the man as he was at the time of its writing.

Rousseau has undoubtedly been successful in his attempt to write an autobiography of such an authenticity that he could confidently present himself before "the sovereign Judge with this book in my hand and loudly proclaim, Thus have I acted; these were my thoughts; such was I. with equal freedom and veracity have I related what was laudable or wicked, I have concealed no crimes, added no virtues …." Only a person of supreme honesty and integrity, of courage of conviction, would have revealed so frankly the most private experiences of his life. Gandhi is another example who revealed everything about himself freely and frankly, without fear and inhibition. Rousseau knew he was inviting trouble by doing so. But he would not be deterred from speaking out the truth, whatever be the consequences. Think, for example, of his revelation about the sensual satisfaction he received from the spankings administered by Mlle. Lambercier, the sister of the pastor at Bossey, who was his tutor. Only a writer of Rousseau's inclination towards seeking satisfaction either in truth or self-abasement would have gone on to tell that his passion for

being overpowered by women continued throughout his adult life: "To fall at the feet of an imperious mistress, obey her mandates, or implore pardon, were for me the most exquisite enjoyments; and the more my blood was inflamed by the efforts of a lively imagination, the more I acquired the appearance of a whining lover." Having made this confession, Rousseau probably found it easier to tell of his extended affair with Mme de Warens at Annecy and of his experiences with his mistress and commonlaw wife, Therese Levasseur.

Confessions opens with Rousseau's recording that he was born at Geneva in 1712, the son of Isaac Rousseau, a watchmaker, and Susanne Bernard. His mother died at his birth, which fact Rousseau calls "the first of my misfortunes." According to the son's account of his father's grief, Isaac Rousseau had mixed feelings towards his son, seeing in him an image of Susanne and, at the same time, the cause of her death. Rousseau writes: "… nor did he ever embrace me, but his sighs, the convulsive pressure of his arms, witnessed that a bitter regret mingled itself with his caresses …. When he said to me, 'Jean Jacques, let us talk of your mother,' my usual reply was, 'Yes, father but then you know we shall cry,' and immediately the tears started from his eyes." Rousseau then describes his first experiences with reading. He turned to the romances that his mother had loved. At times, he and his father spent the entire night reading aloud alternately. His response to books was almost entirely emotional, but he finally discovered other books in his grandfather's library. These ones demanded something from the intellect. These works included those of Plutarch, Ovid, Moliere, and others. He also describes with great affection how his Aunt Suzanne, his father's sister, moved him with her singing. He attributes his interest in music to her influence. He loved music as much as he loved books.

After his stay at Bossey with Pastor Lambercier, Rousseau was apprenticed to an angraver, Abel Ducommum, in the hope that he would succeed better in the engraver's workshop than he had with city Registrar Masseron, who had fired him after a brief trial. Rousseau describes Ducommum as "a young man of a very violent and boorish character." He was something of a tyrant, punishing Rousseau if he failed to return to the city before the gates were closed. According to his own account, Rousseau was by this time, a liar and a petty thief. He stole without reluctance his master's tools in order to misplace them. Once, returning from a Sunday walk with some companions, he found the city gates closing an hour before time. He ran to reach the bridge, but was too late for an entry. Reluctant to be punished by the engraver, he suddenly decided to give up his apprenticeship. After leaving Geneva, Rousseau wandered aimlessly in the environs of the city, finally arriving at Confignon. There he was welcomed by the village curate, M. de Pontverre, who gave him a good meal and sent him on to Madame Louise de Warens at Annecy.

On reaching Annecy Rousseau expected to see "a devout, forbidding old woman." However, he saw instead "a face beaming with charms, fine blue eyes full of sweetness, a complexion whose whiteness dazzled the sight, the form of

an enchanting neck ….” Rousseau was sixteen then, she was twenty-eight. She became something of a mother to him (he called her “Maman”) and something of a goddess. However, within five years he became her lover, at her instigation. Her motive was to protect him and to initiate him into the mysteries of love. First, she explained to him what she intended, and gave him eight days to think it over. Her proposal was intellectually cool and morally motivated. Since Rousseau had long imagined the delights of making love to her, he spent the eight days enjoying thoughts more lively than ever. But when he finally found himself in her arms, he felt miserable: “Was I happy? No: I felt I know not what invincible sadness which empoisoned my happiness: it seemed that I had committed an incest, and two or three times, pressing her eagerly in my arms, I deluged her bosom with my tears.”

Madame de Warens was at the same time involved with Claude Anet, a young peasant with a knowledge of herbs, who had become one of her domestics. Before becoming intimate with Rousseau she had confessed to him that Anet was her lover. She revealed it after having been upset by Anet’s attempt to poison himself after a quarrel with her. Despite her generosity to the two young men, however, she was no wanton. Her behaviour was more a sign of friendship than of lust. Her pursuit was to become an intelligent and gracious woman of the world. Through her good offices Rousseau had secured a position registering land for the king in the office at Chambery. His interest in music, however, led him to give more and more time to arranging concerts and giving music lessons. He finally gave up his job in the survey office.

This proved a turning point of Rousseau’s life. This decision threw him into the society of his times and made possible his growing familiarity with the world of music and letters. His alliance with Madame de Warens continued, but it no longer remained an intimate affair. The reason was that he had already been replaced by Winzenreid de Courtilles during their stay at his Charmettes. Wizenreid came on the scene after the first idyllic summer, a period in his life which Rousseau describes as “the short happiness of my life.” He tells of rising with the sun, walking through the woods, over the hills, and along the valley. His delight in nature is evident here. His later theories concerning natural man become comprehensible. On his arrival Winzenreid took over physical chores and was for ever walking about with a hatchet or a pickax. For all practical purposes, Rousseau’s close relationship with Madame de Warens was finished, even if a kind of filial affection on his part survived. He describes other adventures in love. Although some of them gave him extreme pleasure, he never found another “Maman.”

On having invented a new musical notation, Rousseau went to Paris, hoping to convince others of its value. But his system was dismissed as unoriginal and too difficult. Rousseau had been introduced, by that time, to Parisian society and had come to be known a young philosopher as well as a writer of poetry and operas. He received an appointment as secretary to the

French ambassador at Venice. But he and M. de Montaigu irritated each other, so he left his post about a year later. Returning to Paris, Rousseau became involved with the illustrious circle containing the encyclopedist Diderot, Friedrich Melchoir Grimm, Mme Louis d'Epinay. Later, he became involved in a bitter quarrel with these three, stemming from a remark in Diderot's *Le Fils naturel*. But Rousseau was reconciled with Diderot and continued the novel he was writing at the time, *La Nauvella Heloise*. His account of the quarrel together with the letter that marked its progress is one of the liveliest parts of the *Confessions.*

Another important event in Rousseau's life was his meeting with Therese Levasseur, a needle woman between twenty-two and twenty three years of age, with a "lively yet charming look." Rousseau reports that "At first, amusement was my only object," but in making love to her he found that he was happy and that she was a suitable successor to "Maman." Despite the difficulties put in his way by her mother, and despite the fact that his attempt to improve her mind were useless, he was satisfied with her as his companion. She bore him five children who were sent to the foundling hospital against Therese's will and to Rousseau's subsequent regret. To describe the movement on the road to Vincennes, when the question proposed by the Academy of Dijon – "Has the progress of science and arts contributed to corrupt or purify morals?" – so struck him that he "seemed to behold another world." The discourse that resulted from his inspired moment won him the prize and brought him fame. However, it may be that here, as elsewhere in the *Confessions*, the actual circumstances have been considerably altered by a romantic and forgetful author.

The Confessions covers the account of Rousseau's life to the point, when, having been asked to leave Bern by the ecclesiastical authorities as a result of the uproar over *Emile*, he set off for England, where David Hume had offered him asylum. Rousseau's *Confessions* offers a personal account of the experiences of the great writer. Here the events which history notes are mentioned – his literary triumphs, his early conversion, his reconversion, his romance with Madame d'Houdetot, his quarrels with Voltaire, Diderot, and churchmen, his musical successes – but they are all transformed by the passionate perspective from which Rousseau, writing years after most of the events he describes had happened, imagines own past. *Confessions* leaves the reader with the intimate knowledge of a human being, full of faults and passions, but driven by ambition and ability to a significant position in the history of literature.

ROUSSEAU AND ROMANTICISM

In his famous book *Rousseau and Romanticism,* Iriving Babbit calls Rousseau "the father of romanticism." No one has ever disputed it. It has become an acknowledged truism of literary criticism. Although he died eleven years before the French Revolution, and some of his books could see the light of

the day only after his death, and those that did were banned and burned, his ideas attracted people like the forbidden fruit and became responsible for the greatest change in Europe. Let us see in short what he wrote and which seminal ideas of the romantic movement his writings contained. Rousseau was thirty eight years old, when his essay on a subject proposed by the Academy of Dijon, *Discours sur les sciences et les arts (1750)* was awarded the first prize and published. In the *Discours*, the first of many works in which the natural man is preferred to the civilized counterpart, Rousseau argued that the development and spread of knowledge and culture, far from improving human behaviour, had corrupted it by promoting inequality, idleness, and luxury. The *Discours sur l'origine de l'inegalite* (1755) contrasts the innocence and contentment of primitive man in a "state of nature" to the corruption and discontent of the civilized man. He argues that the primitive man's mode of existence is determined by none but genuine needs, whereas there is dissatisfaction and perpetual agitation of modern social man, the majority of whom are condemned to the legally sanctioned servitude necessary to preserve the institution of private property. Rousseau's work, the *Lettre sur les spectacles* (1758), was provoked by the suggestion of d'Alembert that a theatre should be established at Geneva. In this work, the passive nature of playgoing, the preoccupation of modern plays with love, and the consequent unnatural bringing forward of women are seen as dangerous symptoms of the ills of society.

Rousseau was aware of the fact that a return to primitive innocence, after so many centuries of civilization, was just not possible. The ills of modern society, he thought, could only be remedied by reducing the gap separating modern man from his natural archetype and by modifying existing institutions in the interest of equality and happiness. His next work, therefore, entitled *Emile* (1762), lays down the principles for a new scheme of education in which the child is to be allowed full scope for individual development in natural surroundings, shielded from the harmful influence of civilization, in order to form an independent judgment and a stable character. The "*Profession de foi du vicaire Savoyard*," contained in the fourth book of *Emile*, sets against institutional Christianity a form of deism grounded in religious sentiment and guided by the divine instinct of conscience. The year 1762 also saw the publication of *Du contrat social*, his theory of politics, in which he advocated universal justice through equality before the law, a more equitable distribution of wealth. In that work, Rousseau defined government as fundamentally a matter of contract providing for the exercise of power in accordance with the "general will" and for the common good, by consent of the citizens as a whole, in whom sovereignty ultimately resides.

Rousseau also wrote a novel called *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Heloise* (1761), which was his greatest popular success. The work is a critical account of contemporary manners and ideas, which is interwoven with the story of the passionate love of the tutor St. Preux and his pupil Julie, their separation, Julie's

marriage to the Baron Wolmar, and the dutiful, virtuous life shared by all three on the Baron's country estate. Rousseau's posthumously published autobiographical works *Les Confessions* (1781-88) and *Les Reveries du promeneur solitaire* (1782) were written towards the end of his life as exercises in self-justification and self-analysis. As expressions of the complex individuality of a personality, and a sensibility, unexampled in their time in candour, detail, and subtlety, they remain landmarks of the literature of personal revolution and reminiscence.

The ideas contained in these books became the basis for the French Revolution as well as for the Romantic movement. The work of Rousseau has been so pervasive that everybody knows enough to cite him, and some even to abuse him. He has affected in one way or another all those who have come after him, so that to speak of his influence without further word is not enough. We must know *what* influence. With Rousseau and the Romantics, precisely because they are architects on a large scale, nothing less than the tendency of whole works or movements will supply correct conclusions. But the uncertainty about Rousseau tells us something besides, which may be even more important. Because of his widespread influence, everybody thinks he knows what Rousseau said. He is hotly arraigned and seldom read. If we can forget catchwords for a moment, we may be able to recover the impression Rousseau made on his contemporaries and near successors in time. He was glorified by Robespierre and the Revolution. He was of the eighteenth century and yet not with it. He wrote his *Confessions*, unusual and uncommon for a writer of his age. It was only in the next century that the romantics wrote autobiographical poetry and prose, including Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, Keats's *Letters*, Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, and Byron's *Childe Harold*.

Rousseau's *Confessions* alone can show the centrality of his influence in the writings of the Romantics who followed him half a century later. On reading this autobiographical work, what do we gather from it beyond the author's opinion about his own character? It holds an important but neglected clue, not only to Rousseau's work, but to the history of the old regime. We can see from this work that Rousseau was the only man of genius who traversed eighteenth century society from the bottom to the top. He was the only one who did not take root and stay fixed. The same cannot be said of any other eighteenth century writer. But the same cannot be said of almost every Romantic writer. In the course of his career, he was by turn a vagrant, a seminarian, a composer, a musician, an artisan, and a hundred more things from the lowest servant to the distinguished guest, friend as well as enemy of great philosophers and statesmen. Thus, by the accident of fortune, he was forever being dislodged from the society that his mind examined and condemned. The same can be said of Byron and Shelley, Wordsworth and Coleridge, Blake and even Keats. He was in effect, and so were the Romantics, outside his society. As such, he was bound to become the prophet of Revolution, and the prophet of a new world.

In short Rousseau achieved by chance and genius that sense of *primitive nakedness* in the face of nature which Pascal had felt a hundred years before, and which the generation of the Romantics was to feel half a century later. With them all it was of course a primitivism born of ethical judgment. History proved Rousseau right about what was alive and what was dead. The eighteenth century rationalists had tried to define man as within the laws of physics. But Rousseau saw man as a political being acting upon impulse and emotion …. No doubt he knew more about politics and society than all the Enlighteners taken together. His view of man in society was realistic. By 1762, the date of Rousseau's *Emile* and *Social Contract*, the rationalists looked belonging to the past, doomed with the society in which they held the position of critical and destructive profiteers. Rousseau can he said to have enjoyed a unique position as a man whose youth belonged to the Enlightenment but whose maturity was of a later age.

Returning to the slogans associated with his ideas, the most famous is certainly "Back to Nature." Although Rousseau himself never used this phrase, it does serve as a condensed way of putting his objection to the artificialities of a superannuated society or regime. He never intended that we should return to living in caves and wearing skins. He clearly saw that this was neither possible nor desirable. But he also saw that the complication of life resulting from civilization disturbs or destroys in man something serious and valuable; something that cannot be flouted with impunity. This he calls nature. He found that children were dressed and reared as if they were miniature men. He found the mothers of well-to-do families sending their infants to baby farms. This resulted in neglect and high mortality of children. He saw a useless nobility and clergy given over to gambling, intrigue and etiquette. He saw a widening gap between the idling rich and toiling poor. Tragic or trivial, these were social symptoms as indicative of the precarious state of France as the inefficiencies of public finance or the 285 different codes of custom law which defined the rights and controlled the relations of men. Now all this can be called artificiality and complexity without suggesting that its extreme opposite – the absence of all laws – is what Rousseau desired.

The moot question is: if Rousseau attacks existing conventions as artificial and yet declines to return to savagery, what does he propose; what is a natural society or a natural man? The symbol of the tree, which Rousseau often uses, and so do the Romantics, gives a standard by which we can apprehend what he really means by nature. The tree is a natural product. It remains natural product. It remains natural even if "artificially" watered, and tended, and protected by the hand of man. But suppose the hand of the same man started twisting the growing plant into fanciful shapes for topiary ornament, the tree does become artificial. In other words, what Rousseau means by nature is the given norm that we can discover under any deformation, like the eighteenth-century gentleman's hair under his wig.

Of course, this discovery of the "nature" of anything is always tentative, never absolute. But the desire to discover it is a guide which western civilization had come to neglect. Layers of conventions act as a cushion which society clings to, and never attempts to reach the "nature" underneath. Whoever proposes to penetrate these layers is termed an anarchist, as Rousseau and the Romantics were. Established societies, especially those civilized by science and cultural sophistications, neglect the claims of whole classes of men of life, liberty, or the pursuit of happiness: Reason, custom, legality, all resist any change. But something in man breaks through the crust. As we have it said in a Frost poem ("Mending Wall") "Something there is that doesn't loke a wall;" This "something" is "nature" in man. It is in pointing out this presence and its necessity for expression, which call for planning a new society, that Rousseau is a revolutionary, that he is regarded an individualist and an apostle of freedom. He, and after him, the Romantics attack legality in the name of human nature, just as man have always done where social conditions become absurd, or unbearable or both.

The opening sentence of Rousseau's *Social Contract*, "man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains", has been misunderstood to mean a call of anarchism. The romantics like Byron and Shelley were also labled as anarchists for that very reason. What Rousseau is trying to say here, and what the romantics followed, is only to mean that the newborn infant has no notion whether he is a prince or a pauper, but he grows up into one or the other. But it does not mean that Rousseau wants to break all chains. We may recall here the sentence that follows the first on in his *social contract*: "One man thinks himself the master of others, but he is even greater slave than they." In other words, society binds all the freeborn in a network of duties and compulsions. His *Social Contract* is thus an attempt to make clear under what conditions social chains are legitimate, to reconcile the rights of free individuals with the requirements of society. In his view, men have a will to be free. "To renounce liberty is to renounce being a man", he says. But he also says that man by nature is a social animal; and men always have an urge to live together. This dichotomy between solitude and society is one of the major themes of Romantic poetry. From Blake to Keats, all of them remain preoccupied with these contrary pulls in human nature. The also try, as Rousseau does, to reconcile the conflicting claims of the contraries. For "without contraries is no progression", as Blake says.

Therefore, in Rousseau's view, society as such is not bad. Here is what Rousseau says about the passage from an imaginary pre-social conditions to the civil state; "It produces a very remarkable change in man, by substituting justice for instinct in his conduct, and giving his actions the morality they had formerly lacked. Then only, when the voice of duty takes the place of physical impulses and the right of appetite, does man, who so far had considered only himself, find that he is forced to act on different principles, to consult his reason before listening to his inclination. Although in this state he deprives himself of some

advantages, which he got from nature, he gains in return others so great … that did not the abuses to this new condition often degrade him below that which he left, he would be bound to bless continually the happy moment which took him from it for ever, and, instead of a stupid and un imaginative animal, made him an intelligent being and a man."

The fact of the matter is that Rousseau is both reasonable and creative, revolutionary and practical. What makes it hard for some to conceive the contraries together is that some of us approach him with a series of unhistorical images in the mind's eye. He is considered a romantic who loved country walks, jumping to the conclusion that he was unable to see reality. Similarly, he is considered an old man with a persecution mania, which blinds to the thousands of accurate observations that he made – not only in political science, but in education, philosophy, botany, and music. Rousseau, even though he owes something to Locke and Montesquieu, actually belongs to the tougher school of Hobbes and Machiavelli, whom he supplements and perfects by showing that they do not go far enough. They show the necessity of government at all costs. Rousseau shows the possibility of reconciling government with individual liberty. This is the distinctive contribution Rousseau made, and which the Romantics embodied in their poetry. He, like most Romantics after him, is a proponent of balance, not an advocate of any extreme, of contradiction if you will, rather than of unity achieved at the cost of one or the other legitimate claim.

Thus, Rousseau inspired the Romantics with his ideas of primitive naturalness, child's innocence, individual literty, primacy of emotion over idea, all of which the English poets of the nineteenth century imbibed and illustrated, dramatized and lyricised in their prose writings as well as poetic compositions. It changed the outlook of writers and thinkers on history and civilization, on man and nature, on child and primitive, on emotion and imagination, on state and society. It turned upside down the neoclassical concepts on these subjects and made possible the advent of the modern world. The idea of organic universe, of integrated personality, of harmonious society, all flow from the writings of Rousseau.

CONFESSION AS A LITERARY FORM

Rousseau's *Confessions* cannot be said to be without a precedent. We have under the same title the work of St. Augustine, written at the close of the fourth century. It is considered, on the one side, a culmination of the classical mode of giving an account and justification of one's life. However, Augustine converts the classical procedure of putting oneself forward as the representative of a cultural idea, performing overt deeds on a public stage, into a circumstantial narrative of the private events of the individual mind. Rousseau's *Confessions* is also a work of this type in which private, not public, circumstantial, not culturally representative narrative, reveals the individual life. While Augustine's

work can be said to be the first sustained history of an inner life, Rousseau's can be said to be the last in that order. Augustine expanded in great and fine detail the tendency to individualize and internalize the pattern of Biblical history, in so doing, he imposed on the flux of experience, the randomness of events, and the fugitive phenomena of memory, the enduring plot-form and the standard concepts and imagery of the unique and characteristic genre of the spiritual autobiography. Rousseau's *Confessions,* too, is a spiritual autobiography of the author, and follows the same pattern that Augustine had laid down in the seminal work of this new literary genre.

Rousseau's work, like its predecessor, is not merely the presentation of an individual life for its inherent interest. It is decidedly written from a special point of view and for a specific purpose. However, Rousseau's confession is not addressed to God, rendered in the form of colloquies with himself, which constitutes the form of Augustine's *Confessions*. Rousseau addresses the readers of future generations, and adopts the form of communication rather than self-talk. Since the work is written about a period of the author's life which lapsed several years ago, it begins in the present time with a sort of reminiscence of the earlier life. Then it proceeds to take up the narrative proper, opining with the events in the author's infancy. Hence, there emerge two distinctive selves in the work – what the author once was, and what the author is now at the time of writing. Throughout the book, Rousseau evokes his life explicitly as the present recollection of the past, in which Rousseau as he was in co-present with Rousseau as he is at present:

> I have entered upon a performance which is without precedent, whose accomplishment will have no imitator. I intend to present my fellow-mortals with a man in the integrity of nature; and this man shall be myself.

The performance may not be without a precedent – Augustine's *Confessions* having appeared fourteen hundred years before Rousseau – But in a sense it is first of its kind in that while Augustine confessed before God, Rousseau does it before his "fellow-mortals". Another significant difference is that while Augustine presented himself as a "fallen man" before the Supreme Authority, Rousseau presents himself as a "man in the integrity of nature." St. Augustine may make confessions as a private individual, he still takes himself to be a representative Christian; Rousseau is an individual through and through, with his identity defined in terms of difference with others, not in sharing a common destiny with other "fallen" individuals:

> I know my heart, and have studied men; I am not made like any one I have met, perhaps like no one in experience. If not better, I at least claim originality, and whether Nature did wisely in breaking the mould with which she formed me, can only be determined after having read these books.

Even Wordsworth and Whitman consider themselves representatives of mankind in its prime, Adam-like, innocence. Rousseau alone insists upon his complete difference with others. And it is this very unique individuality which becomes the basis for the unique individuality of his ideas on man, nature, and society. It must also be noted here that unlike Augustine, he does not use the word God; instead, he prefers "nature".

Even when Rousseau talks of the supreme power in the universe, he avoids using the word God. Instead, he prefers to use the expression, "sovereign Judge":

> Whenever the last trumpet shall sound, I will present myself before the sovereign Judge with this book in my hand and loudly proclaim, 'thus have I acted; these were my thoughts; such was I.' With equal freedom and truth have I related what was laudable or wicked, I have concealed no crimes, added no virtues; and if I have sometimes introduced unessential ornament, it was merely to occupy a void occasioned by defect of memory: I may have called that certain, which I only knew to be probable, but have never asserted a truth, a conscious falsehood. Such as I was, I have declared myself; sometimes low and despicable, at others virtuous, generous and sublime; even as thou hast my inmost soul. Power eternal! Assemble round thy throne an innumerable throng of my fellow-mortals, let them listen to my confessions, let them blush at my depravity, let them tremble at my sufferings; let in each his turn expose with equal sincerity the failings, the wanderings of his heart, and, if he dare, aver, *I was better than* that man.

Once again, even though Rousseau speaks of the last trumpet sounding, meaning death, he does not use the Christian terminology of the Judgment Day, etc. He only vows to reveal himself honestly, without withholding anything good or bad done in life. Of course, he does not promise to narrate every inane details; he only promises to record the laudable and the wicked acts of his life and include in the autobiographical narrative only those that, in his life and view, matter in the growth of his personality. One can recall here Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, which relates events indicating the growth of his mind. He is committed fully to reveal his innermost soul, showing all that is there, showing it in all its hues. Like Whitman, he does invite the reader to make a similar exposure of his soul; but, unlike Whitman, he does not offer to be a guide or teacher to the reader. He places himself at par with other individuals.

Since Rousseau's interest is greater in his inner life than in the outer, not all the outer events are for their own sake; most are meant to indicate what happens to the inner self, his spiritual life. From the multitude of the post events, therefore, he selects, orders and dwells upon only those few which are heavy with spiritual significance, as indices of a stage in his hazardous journey from sensual involvement and conventional commitments to intellectual

understanding and unconventional or revolutionary ideas, but the emotional or intellectual impact they make on the person of Rousseau that count, and that alone count, in the spiritual history of the author. As the author himself states,

> I have but one faithful guide on which I can depend: this is the chain of the sentiments by which the succession of my existence has been marked, and by these the events which have been either the course or the effect of the manner of it, I easily forget my misfortunes, but I cannot forget my faults, and still less my virtuous sentiments. The remembrance of these is too dear to me even to suffer them to be effected from my mind. I may omit facts, transpose events, and fall into some errors of dates; but I cannot be deceived in what I have felt, nor in that which from sentiment I have done; and to relate this is the chief end of my present work. The real object of my confessions is to communicate an exact knowledge of what I interiorly am and have been in every situation of my life. I have promised the history of my mind, and to write it faithfully I have no need to other memories: to enter into my own heart, as I have hitherto done, will alone be sufficient.

Thus, very clearly it is an inner biography of Rousseau the man and writer. As he says, it traces the development of his mind, just as Wordsworth's *The Prelude* does the development of the poet's mind. In the case of Augustine's *Confessions,* it is the growth of his spirit in relation to God. Here, it is the growth of mind and heart in relation to the social and natural world. The transcendental is replaced here by the transient, the spiritual by the contingent.

In the *Confessions* of Rousseau, there is an element of self-reflectiveness. For the very act of writing confessions also becomes a theme of the book. Time and again the writer returns to it. He keeps examining the act of writing as to its being what it ought to be, always remaining alert about the possible lapses in the effort. Note, for instance, the following:

> I come to one of the critical moments of my life, in which it is difficult to do anything than to relate, because it is almost impossible that even narrative should not carry with it the marks of censure or apology. I will, however, endeavour to relate how and upon what motives I acted, without adding either approbation or censure.

Or

> I have promised my confession and not my justification; on which account I shall stop here. It is my duty faithfully to relate the truth, that of the reader to be just; more than this I never shall require of him.

Thus, there is a good deal of self-consciousness on the part of the author. He is all the time conscious of the fact that he is writing confessions, and all the more conscious that his case must be properly understood and that it must be properly judged by the reader. His difficult and to peculiar circumstances explain it all. He very much needed to be understood from the view point of the facts of his

case, not from the viewpoint of slanderous propaganda about him. He has naturally to work hard to clear the clouds of vicious prejudice and conventional attitudes to whatever he was doing by being thoroughly honest with himself. He was acting as his feelings dictated. Later, on maturity, he was acting as truth demanded. In the interest of the truth, he sacrificed wealth and fame, friends and patrons, even 'mother' and mistress. However, his too much self-consciousness as a writer of confession betrays a certain desperation for appreciation of his position in relation to his detractors and the society at large. The self-awareness and self-consciousness at times seems to stand face to face with each other spoiling the natural flow of the narrative. At times, it makes the narrative contentious, bringing out the man in the fore, pushing the artist behind.

CONFESSIONS AS GROWTH OF THE WRITE'S MIND

As in the case of Wordsworth, so in the case of Rousseau, the impressions of early youth have done a good deal in the shaping of his mind. No wonder that he returns to his childhood and early youth quite often in the narrative. Also like Wordsworth, he not only narrates the events of his early life but also goes behind them to know the impact these events had on the growth of his mind. Note, for instance, the following;

> The long details of my early youth must have appeared trifling and I am sorry for it: though born a man, in a variety of instances, I was long a child, and am so yet in many particulars. I did not promise the public a great passage: I promised to describe myself as I am, and to know me in my advanced age it was necessary to have known me in my youth. As, in general, objects that are present make less impression on me than the remembrance of them (my ideas being all from recollection), the first traits which were engraven on my mind have distinctly remained those which have since been imprinted there, have rather combined with the former than effaced them. There is a certain yet varied succession of affections and ideas, which continue to regulate those that follow them, and this progression must be known in order to judge rightly of those they have influenced. I have studied to develop the first causes, the better to show the concatenations of effects. I would be able by some means to render my soul transparent to the eyes of the reader, and for this purpose endeavour to show it in every possible point of view, to give him every insight, and act in such a manner, that not a motion should escape him, as by this means he may form a judgment of the principles that produce them.

Here is emphasized, in the first place, the importance of youth for the understanding of the age. As in Wordsworth, so here, the idea is of the organic growth of the human personality. It is just like the growth of a tree, a natural object, where the seed becomes the plant, and the plant the tree, without any

separable division of the different stages. One grows out of the other, thereby making a complete whole. Further, we are told how it is, not so much the event, as its recollection which has been a significant factor in the growth of the writer's mind. It reminds us of Wordsworth once again, his insistence upon the remembrance or recollection of things that happened to him. This process led to the imaginative creation of his poetry. Here too, the process of composition takes the same course. Rousseau explains at length here how the impressions make a chain in themselves and get interrelated to each other to make an autonomous whole. The mind of man and the composition of literary work take shape on the same lines.

Rousseau's concern, more than Wordsworth's is as much with the art of writing as with the subject of writing. He is a very conscious artist. He is always, and all the time, conscious of the reader he is addressing, never forgetting his commitment to the reader – of giving the whole, and nothing but the whole, truth about himself. He goes on to show also how the whole truth includes presenting a picture of his soul from all sides, from all view-points, so that nothing remains unseen, and the soul becomes entirely transparent to him. Note, for instance, the following:

> Did I take upon myself to decide, and say to the reader, 'such is my character', he might think that if I did not endeavour to deceive him, I at least deceived myself; but in recounting simply all that has happened to me, all my actions, thoughts, and feelings, I cannot lead him into an error, unless I do it willfully, which by this means I could not easily effect, since it is his province to compare the elements, and judge of the being they compose; thus the result must be his work, and if he is then deceived, the error must be his own. It is not sufficient for this purpose that my recitals should be merely faithful, they must also be minute; it is not for me to judge of the importance of facts; I ought to declare them simply as they are and leave the estimate that to be formed of them to him. I have adhered to this principle hitherto, with the most scrupulous exactitude, and shall not depart from it in the continuation, but the impressions of age are less lively than those of youth; I began by delineating the latter; should I recollect the rest with the same precision, the reader may perhaps become weary and impatient, but I shall not be dissatisfied with my labour, I have but one thing to apprehend in this undertaking. I do not dread saying too much or advancing falsities, but I am fearful of not saying enough or concealing truths.

Here again, the subject and the manner of writing are inseparable. Rousseau prefers to give to the reader the account of his "actions, thoughts, and feelings" rather than an intellection of these. He believes that these are concrete things that should speak to the reader themselves, and the reader should see them as he wishes, rather than the author impose his own view of himself. In other words, Rousseau does not wish to act as an omniscient author; rather; he chooses to

stay as a neutral narrator. The only thing he insists upon is to give the reader all the wealth of actions, thoughts and feelings that he can recollect so that noting is concealed wilfully or otherwise from the reader who is to judge the man on the basis of the evidence produced before him. Here, he would not mind to indulge in excesses; he would feel guilty if anything remains unsaid. Of course, the narrative is not without a strict sense of relevance. Nothing that would not shed any light on the person being presented has to be included in the narrative, however cumbersome it might be otherwise. Like Wordsworth, when Rousseau recalls his experiences of youth, he recalls mainly those relating to the theodicy of the private life, of the landscape, and the redemptive imagination. For it is these and in response to these that the mind or person of the author has grown from youth to age.

THEODICY OF PRIVATE LIFE

In the opening of his *Confessions,* when Rousseau declares his intent to present his fellow mortals "with a man in the integrity of nature", it becomes his version of Milton's undertaking to "justify the ways of God to men". Rousseau's argument, like Milton's, is a theodicy which locates the justification for human suffering in the restoration of a lost paradise. In Milton's view, thus events will not occur "till one great Man/Restore us, and regain the blissful seat". Rousseau's paradise, however, can be achieved simply by a union of man's mind with nature, and so is a present paradise in this world, capable of being described without recourse, that is, either to an intervenient deity or to a heavenly kingdom to redress any imbalance between the good and evil of our moral state. In Rousseau's work the ultimate goodness governing the course of his life brought into question by his suffering and crisis of spirit. It is then established by the outcome of his experience. His assumption is that of life is to be worth living there cannot be a blank unreason or mere contingency at the heart of things. There has to be meaning, in the sense of good and intelligible purpose, in the occurrence of both physical and moral evils. The Christian theodicy of the private life, in the long lineage of Augustine's *Confessions,* transfers the locus of the primary concern with evil from the providential history of mankind to the providential history of the private self, and justifies the experience of wrongdoing, suffering, and loss of a necessary means towards the greater good of personal redemption. But in the case of Rousseau, it is a secular theodicy – a theodicy without an operative *theos* – which retains the form of the ancient reasoning, but makes the process coterminous with our life in this world, and justifies suffering as the necessary means towards the end of a greater good which is no other than the stage of achieved maturity. In other words, Rousseau's theodicy of the private life belongs to the distinctive Romantic genre which translates the painful process of Christin conversion and redemption into a painful process of self-formation, crisis, and self-recognition,

which culminates in a stage of self-coherence, self-awareness, and assured power that is its own reward.

In this process of maturation from youth to age, the Romantic self regains the lost paradise in a composed self that is not easily moved by the challenge of evil. Everything comes to be placed in an integrated picture of life, with the equipoise of mind accepting it without commotion. Here is a piece from the *Confessions* showing that sort of equipoise of maturity:

> The facility with which I forget past evils, however recent they may be, is astonishing. The remembrance of them becomes feeble, and, sooner or later, effaced, in the inverse proportion to the greater degree of fear with which the approach of them inspires me. My cruel imagination, incessantly tormented by the apprehension of evils still at a distance, diverts my attention, and prevents me from recollecting those which are past. Caution is needless after the evil has happened, and it is time lost to give it a thought. I, in some measure, put a period to my misfortunes before they happen: the more I have suffered at their approach the greater is the facility with which I forget them; whilst, on the contrary, incessantly recollecting my past happiness, I, if I may so speak, enjoy it a second time at pleasure. It is to this happy disposition I am indebted for an exemption from that ill humour which ferments in a vindictive mind, by the continual remembrance of injuries received, and torments it with all the evil it wishes to do its enemy.

Here is the Wordsworthian neglect of evil done to one's self and the recollection instead of the emotion of joy in tranquility, leading the possession of to the thing of beauty which remains a joy forever. Here is the picture of a positive (good) mind becoming poised.

On the one level Rousseau tells this story, in his *Confessions*, in terms of his literal experience of error, pain, misery, suffering, climaxed by his crisis in the storm provoked by his publications and the consequent malicious propaganda against him. He then justifies these experiences as, to borrow Wordsworth's words, "bearing a part/And that a needful part" in making him a man, in making him a writer, and in making him exactly the kind of writer he is. But through out the *Confessions* there is a double story being told – a story of Rousseau's life in the world and a correlative story of his life in nature. And on this second narrative level Rousseau incorporates the problem of suffering within his overarching myth of the interaction between mind and nature, in which fostering nature conducts the mind through successive stages of growth, while nature defines and imparts to the mind that degree of self-knowledge which its stage of cumulative experience has prepared it to receive.

THEODICY OF LANDSCAPE

Very much like Wordsworth, more familiar to us, Rousseau also begins the story of his life as a child unusually attracted to the pleasures of the countryside. He correlates this to showing his soul, also like Wordsworth, in direct engagement with nature. Throughout his *Confessions*, as he recalls his experiences of life, he repeatedly represents his mind as developing by a sustained interchange with different, even opposing, attributes of nature. Note, for instance, the following:

> The idea of this walnut tree, with the little anecdotes it gave rise to have so well continued, or returned to my memory, that the design which conveyed the most pleasing sensation during my journey to Geneva, in the year 1754, was visiting Bossey, and reviewing the monuments of my infantile amusement, above all, the beloved walnut tree, whose age at that time must have been verging on a third of a century, but I was so beset with company that I could not find a moment to accomplish my design. There is little appearance now of the occasion being renewed; but should I ever return to the charming spot; and find my favorite walnut tree still existing, I am convinced I should water it with my tears.

It is this kind of emotional, even sentimental, attachment that Rousseau in his childhood and youth felt with nature. Whenever he could find time from his hard life, he would quietly withdraw into the lap of nature and seek solace there to sooth his mind and heart. This remained a habit with him all his life. However, it were not just the beauties he saw in nature and abandoned himself to their enjoyment. Like Wordsworth he also experienced in the same nature scenes of fear and awe. Here, for instance, is one such experience:

> I have frequently fatigued myself running after and stoning a cock, a cow, a dog, or any animal I saw tormenting another, only because it was conscious of possessing superior strength. This may be natural to me, and I am inclined to believe it is, though its lively impression of the first injustice I became the victim of was too long and too powerfully remembered not to have added considerable force to it.
>
> This occurrence terminated my infantile serenity; from that moment I ceased to enjoy a pure unadulterated happiness, and on a retrospection of the pleasure of my childhood, I yet feel they ended here. We continued at Bossey some months after this event, but were like our first parents in the garden of Eden after they had lost their innocence; in appearance our situation was the same, in effect it was totally different.

As Rousseau moves from natural setting into the urban centers of civilization, moving from one country to another, it is a movement, from the rural milieu into the variegated life of the city. He represents himself as coming to terms with his experience in periodic accountings with the natural scene. At such moments,

what the mind brings to nature is the hitherto inchoate product of its experience of man and the world since it had last come to an understanding with nature.

Although carrying with him the antithetical images of the natural worlds, he always felt drawn to it compared to the city world.

> I felt a natural inclination to retirement and the country; it was impossible for me to live happily elsewhere. At Venice in the train of public affairs, in the dignity of a kind of representation, in the pride of projects of advancement, at Paris in the vortex of the great world, in the luxury of suppers, rivulets and solitary walks, constantly presented themselves to my recollection, interrupted by thoughts, rendered me melancholy, and made me sigh with desire. All the labour to which I had subjected myself, every project of ambition which by feet had animated my ardour, all had for object this happy country retirement, which I now thought near at hand.

Rousseau, like Wordsworth, is committed to a procreative marriage between man and nature. He finds his mind is exquisitely fitted to the natural world, and the natural world to the mind, and the two in union begetting a new world. Although the child's bliss or paradise is no longer possible, its being a force that recomposes the stressed and strained mind of the author after having been in the hub of urban life in Paris or Venice remains a reality even in his later life. As Rousseau calls it, the "rural delirium" enables him to face afresh the devastating onslaughts of the city life. He still finds in himself the capacity to abandon himself to the joys of county life:

> Although the weather was cold, and the ground lightly covered with snow, the earth began to vegetate, the trees began to bud, and the evening of my arrival was distinguished by the song of the nightingale, which was heard almost under my window, in a wood adjoining the house …. and I exclaimed in my transport: 'At length, all my wishes are accomplished? The first thing I did was to abandon my self to the impression of the rural objects with which I was surrounded …. The more I examined this charming retreat, the more I found it to my wishes. The solitary, rather than savage, spot transported me in idea to the end of the world. I had striking beauties which are just seldom near cities, …

Thus, theodicy of nature, of landscape, became a sort of substitute religion for Rousseau as well as Wordsworth. His pantheism may not be mystical like that of Wordsworth; it is no less committed to the powerful impressions of nature. The impression may be ennobling, hypnotizing or terrifying, it is acknowledged as the strongest force in the shaping of the mind of man. Of course ,not all can respond to the beauties and powers of nature. Only men of imagination like Rousseau and Wordsworth have the capacity to open themselves to its influences.

Rousseau shows difference with Wordsworth in his mood of indolence, which brings him closer to Keats, in so far as it relates to creativity, or even as a

mood that prevents participation in the worldly pursuits of appetites. See how he goes out to woo one kind of indolence, and flees from another kind:

> I have observed the indolence of great companies made them unsupportable to me, and I am now seeking solitude for the sole purpose of abandoning myself to inaction. This however is my disposition; if there be in it a contradiction, it proceeds from nature and not from me …. The indolence of company is burdensome because it is forced. That of solitude is charming because it is free, and depends upon the will.

It is in this indolence of solitude that, like most remnants, he feels the independence and autonomy of self, a sort of theodicy of private life. Rousseau explains further the precise nature of his indolence as under:-

> The indolence I love is not that of a lazy fellow who sits with his arms across in total inaction, and thinks no more than he acts, but that of a child which is incessantly in motion doing nothing, and that of a dotard who wanders from his subject. I love to amuse myself with trifles, by beginning a hundred things and never finishing one of them, by going or coming as I take either in my head, by changing my project at every instant, by following a fly through all its windings, in wishing to overturn a rock to see what is under it, by undertaking with ardour the work of ten years, and abandoning it without regret at the end of ten minutes; finally, in musing from morning until night without order or coherence, and in following in everything the caprice of a moment.

The "caprice of a moment" explains it all. The writer comes closer to Keats here, not in his mood of utter inaction, but in the action of the "negative capability," in one's ability to get lost in the momentary pleasure of an object or activity, just as the childh does, fully identifying itself with whatever object or activity it happens to get involved with. This quality, too, is one of the essential aspects of the Romantic sensuality which finds solace in solitude rather than society, in silence rather than noise, in inaction rather than action, in caprice rather than care or concern. In a way, Rousseau's *Confessions* constitute a kind of preparation for the writing of his great works, just as Wordsworth's *Prelude* is. However, in describing that preparation both Rousseau and Wordsworth achieve the masterpiece itself. For his *Confessions* is no less an important work in terms of its literariness than say Miss Julia or *Emile*.

THE CONFESSIONS –A REFLECTION OF ITS TIMES

Although Rousseau's *Confessions* is an autobiographical work, narrating the events of the author's life, it is not narrowly focused on the individual life alone. After all, the author was not an ordinary person; he moved from village to city, from city to city, from country to country, meeting and interacting with various important personalities of the day. Hence his life embraces or expands

into the life of its times. No doubt, his character is at the centre of the work. But his long journey of life through various countries of Europe, involving friends and foes of continental prominence, holding positions of political or literacy consequence, gives the work the form of a picaresque novel, in which the journey motive is used for showing what lies on either side of the road that is traversed by the picaro. Incidentally, the parallel with the picaresque novel becomes all the more pertinent when we find Rousseau qualifying for the status, placed as he is in the unenviable position of an outcast for several reasons, and for most of his life. Besides, the subjects and issues in which Rousseau got interested and involved were public, not private, carrying social, political, religious, cultural, and literary ramifications. So, his comments, his works, his life responses to the climate of his times creates a picture of the eighteenth-century Europe. He breathed that environment, was brought up in that atmosphere, got on the wrong side of the society of the time, and consequently suffered and reacted and revolted and in the process came out with radical views expressed in his books on politics, education, literature, etc., which ultimately ignited the French Revolution and changed the order of the day. He became the force that initiated the political as well as literary and educational movements. Let us therefore put together some of the images and reflections that the *Confessions* makes available to us about the age in which it was produced.

The six volumes of the *Confessions,* grouped in two parts, are given the following titles, which indicate how the personal life history of the author is entangled with the impersonal history of the eighteenth century Europe. Each volume consists of two books, both parts having six books each. Opening with "childhood", "followed by youth", "Studies and Love", "Journeys", Manhood", the first part closes with "Music and Amours." The second part opens with "Theresa", followed by "Misfortunes", "Passions and Politics", "Hotel de Luxembourg", "Exile", closing with "Persecutions." Thus, the chapter headings clearly show how the author's personal history is mixed with the political history of France and Europe. No chapter, in fact, is exclusively focused on the author's self; each reflects life around this growing self. Even the first chapter, dealing with the author's childhood, and least reflective of things larger, is not without the tinge of life around the author; his milieu, so to say, in which he was brought up. Here is a glimpse of Rousseau's way of making his narrative inclusive, rather than exclusive.

> In my native country, in the bosom of my religion, family and friends, I should have passed a calm and peaceful life, in the uniformity of a pleasing occupation, and among connections deard to my heart. I should have been a good Christian, a good citizen, a good friend, a good man. I should have relished my condition, perhaps been an honour to it, and after having passed a happy obscurity, surrounded by my family, I should have died at peace.

> Soon it may be forgotten, but while remembered it would have been with tenderness and regret.
>
> Instead of this – what a picture am I about a draw – Alas! Why should I anticipate the miseries I have endured? The reader will have but too much of the melancholy subject.

Thus in the opening itself, the relationship between the individual self of the author and the society around him is shown in clear terms. Seemingly concerned only about the author, the passage cited above defines indirectly the ethos of the society. What the author might have been – religiously, socially, professionally, culturally – implies in fact the reigning norm of the society. Rousseau's being a non-conformist from the start, being committed to truth rather than convention, to reason rather than ritual, to nature rather than culture had to be at odds with his environment. And so he was, and so he suffered. The last chapter of the work deals with persecutions.

In the next chapter, "Youth", also we get a few glimpses of the kind of society there was in France at the time, and what were the issues of the day in Europe. First, a brief passage about the King:

> The King, who was fond of appearing a zealous promoter of the catholic faith, took her [Madam de Warens] under his protection, and complemented her with a pension of fifteen hundred livres of Piedmont, which was a considerable appointment for a prince who never had the character of being generous; but finding his liberality caused some conjecture that he had an affection for the lady, he sent her to Annecy escorted by a detachment of his guards, where, under the direction of Michael Gabriel de Bernex, titular bishop of Geneva, she abjured her former religion at the Convent of the Visitation.

Here is a reflection about the King, the bishop, the conversion of religion, all the three of which were powerful institutions of the time, which governed the lives of the masses. The stranglehold of religion was greater than that of politics. None was beyond the control of the church. Madam de Warnes, for instance, "could not exhort me [Rousseau's] to return to Geneva, being too well aware that her words were strictly scrutinized, and that such advice would be thought high treason against Catholicism." One had to adopt the religion of the city or country on reaching there, or you would face trouble. Rousseau himself had to undergo such an ordeal. He describes how, along with certain strangers, he had to accept conversion:

> In this hall of audience were assembled four or five ill-looking banditti, my comrades in instruction, who would rather have been taken for trusty servants of the devil than candidates for the kingdom of heaven. Two of these fellows were Slavonians, but gave out they were African Jews, and (as they assured me) had run through Spain

> and Italy, embracing the Christian faith, and being baptized wherever they thought it worth their labour.

Thus, the racial and religious identities were important passports for entry and accommodation in the small town or village societies. Here, of course, the instance relates to the big city of Paris.

While in Geneva, Rousseau was a catholic. Now in Paris, he is converted to Protestantism. He makes a significant remark at this occasion on the importance of religion in the education of children and men:

> It is understood, I believe, that a child, or even a man, is likely to be most sincere while persevering in that religion in whose belief he was born and educated; we frequently detract from, seldom make any additions to it: dogmatical faith is the effect of education. In addition to this general principle which attached me to the religion of my forefathers, I had that particular aversion our city entertains for Catholicism, which is represented there as the most monstrous ideology, and whose clergy are painted in the blackest colours. This sentiment was so firmly imprinted on my mind, that I never dared to look into their churches –

This goes on through several pages as to how his contempt was overcome in Geneva by the enticement for attractive meals offered by the country parishes, and how he felt guilty on conversion for convenience, finally ending in a comparison between the two chief sects of Christianity: "Protestants, in general, are better instructed in the principle of their religion than Catholics; the reason is obvious; the doctrine of the former requires discussion, of the latter a blind submission; the Catholic must content himself with the decisions of others, the Protestant must learn to decide for himself …" The running, and never ending, fued, so to say, between these two sects poses problems of conscience for millions of individuals who have to undergo the ordinals of unwilling conversions if they moved form one place to another, only to buy peace with the dominant group. Rousseau's own ordeal is worth our attention:

> I was not absolutely resolved to become a Catholic, but, as it was not necessary to declare my intention immediately, I gradually accustomed myself to the idea; hoping, meantime, that some foreseen event would extricate me from my embarrassment. In order to gain time, I resolved to make the best defense I possibly could in favour of my own opinion; but my vanity soon redered this resolution unnecessary, for on finding I frequently embarrassed those who had the care of my instruction, I wished to height on my triumph by giving then a complete overthrow. I zealously pursued my plan, not without the ridiculous hope of being able to convert my converters; for I was simple enough to believe, that could I convince them of their errors, they would become Protestants; they did not find, therefore, that facility in the work which they had expected, as

> I differed both in regard to will and knowledge from the opinion they had entertained of me.

Thus is contained the picture of the contemporary society in the individual picture of the author. The individual and society here are like the fish and ocean: one contains the other. The individual is shaped by the environment through conformation or defiance of the social codes and conventions, norms and notions. Either way, the interaction has to be an act of the living process; there is no way to escape it. These trials and ordeals of conscience relate to the author's period of youth, all figuring in Book II of the *Confessions.*

The second powerful social force in the age of Rousseau, the eighteenth century, was politics. The author of the *Confessions* was as much at odds with the politics of the time as he was with the religion of the age. It was so much to his disliking that it compelled his revolutionary response to this force finally resulting in the writing of his radical book, the *Social Contract,* or *Contract Social,* which became the guide book for modern democracies of the world. It generated altogether new ideas about individual constitution, social structure, and power pyramid. Some of the reflections of the political life of the age need to be cited to have an adequate idea of what it was like. Rousseau had become painfully aware that the most powerful force in shaping the destiny of a society is politics. Neither any individual nor any group had any escape from it. Therefore, if we wished to change our destiny, we had to change our government. Note, for distance, the following:

> Of the different works I had upon the stocks, that I had longest resolved in my mind which was most to my taste, to which I destined a certain portion of my life, and which, in my opinion, was to confirm the reputation I had acquired, was my *Institutions Poliliques.* I had, fourteen years before when at Venice, where I had an opportunity of remarking the defects of that government so much boasted of, conceived the first idea of them. Since that time my ideas had become much more extended by the historical study of morality. I had perceived everything to be radically connected with politics, and that, upon whatever principles these were founded, a people would never be more than that which the nature of the government made them; therefore, the great question of the best government possible appeared to me to be reduced to this: What is the nature of a government the most proper to form the most virtuous and enlightened, the wisest and best people, taking the last epithet in its most extensive meaning? I thought this question was much if not quite of the same nature with that which follows: What government is that which, buy its nature, always maintains itself nearest to the laws, or least deviates from the laws. Hence, what is the law? and a series of questions of similar importance. I perceived these led to great truths, useful to the happiness of man kind, but more especially

> to that of my country, wherein, in the journey I had just made to it, I had not found notions of laws and liberty either sufficiently just or clear. I had thought this indirect manner of communicating these to my fellow citizens would be least mortifying to their pride, and might obtain me forgiveness of having seen a little further than themselves.

No volume of history, with all its wealth of details, can compare with this cryptic account of the conditions that prevailed at the time on the political map of Europe, of which Rousseau was a real citizen. As his own biography covers only the essentials that went into the shaping of his mind and morals, so does he choose to give us the essential picture of politics on the continent. His indirect way of describing it – of making it a matter for comment through an alternate model rather than of giving a detailed direct critique of the existing model – is much more effective than the reformist's account of contemporary political scene.

Rousseau's meditations on his times were very thorough which covered all aspects of life – religious, political, social educational, biological, environmental, cultural, literary, etc: – and on all these he brought out books which changed the face of the world, of letters as well as lives. Note, for instance, his meditation on morals:

> The striking and numerous observations I had collected were beyond all manner of dispute, and by their natural principle seemed proper to furnish an exterior regimen, which varied according to circumstances, might place and support the mind in the state most favourable to virtue. From how many mistakes would reason be preserved, how many vices would be stifled in their birth, were it possible to force economy to favour moral order, which it so frequently disturbs! climate, seasons sounds, colours, light, darkness, the elements, ailments, noise, silence, motion, rest, all act on the animal machine and consequently on the mind: all offer a thousand means, almost certain of directing in their origin the sentiments by which we suffer ourselves to be governed. Such was the fundamental idea of which I had already made a sketch upon paper, and whence I hoped for an effect the more certain, in favour of persons well disposed, who, sincerely loving virtue, were afraid of their own weakness, as it appeared to me, easy to make of it a book as agreeable to read as it was to compose. I have, however, applied myself but very little to this work, the title of which was to have been *Morale Sensitive ou le Materialisme du Sage*….

Here one can clearly see the foundation for Darwinian Theory of the origin of species; for the effect of environment in shaping the conduct of species is what both Rousseau and Darwin talk about, with the only difference that while Darwin's theory includes all animal species, that of Rousseau includes only the

human species. But the germinal idea is very much there in what Rousseau has said in the above observation. Similarly, his preceding observation on politics can be said to be a clear foundation for the Marxist political theory. The latter may be more economics based, but it does endorse Rousseau's idea of the system of governance being the determining factor for the moral and manners of men. The idea is that man's social behaviour is modulated by the system that governs him.

Rousseau makes an equally radical observation on the system of education as it prevailed at that time; of course, here again the method adopted is indirect in which an alternate model is framed and presented as a sort of comment on the prevailing. Note, for instance, the following:

> Besides this, I had for some time meditated a system of education, of which Madam de Chenonceaux, alarmed for son by that of her husband, had desired me to consider. The authority of friendship placed this object, although less in itself to my taste, nearer to my heart than any other. On which account this subject, of all those of which I have just spoken, is the only one I carried to its utmost extent.

He speaks of it later at length, in a subsequent chapter of the *Confessions*. The result was his *Emile*, which provoked, along with *Social Contract*, violent reaction from people and parliament. Here is a glimpse of the long narration the author gives us of the violent reception of these books:

> My tranquility still continued. Roumours increased and soon changed their nature. The public, and especially the parliament, seemed irritated by my composure. In a few days the fermentation became terrible, and the object of the menaces being changed, these were immediately addressed to me. The parliamentarians were heard to declare that burning books was of no effect, the authors also should be burned with them; not a word was said of the booksellers ….

Today, we are grateful to Rousseau for the new ideas he gave us on the subject of child education. He based his theory of education on his concept of human nature, and recommended a natural growth of the child fostered by free will and self-expression. The earlier method or system based on "spare the rod and spoil the child" was condemned in his book; and so was the old concept of human nature which, in Pope's words, was considered to be "always the same": Static and standard to be tutored, for there was nothing in it to begin with that was to be allowed expression. In the eighteenth century, these ideas were not less radical than Copernicus's discovery that "earth moves round the sun," which reversed the earlier belief in the static centrality of the earth. In a subtle way, it undercuts the Biblical theory of the creation of the world in which earth was created by God as the centre of earthly existence and man as the special creation

to rule other species. From Copernicus to Rousseau there is a radical erosion of the Biblical theory, which could not be tolerated by the old establishment.

Rousseau being a versatile genius, his contributions were not confined to the subjects of religion, politics, and education. He made equally important contributions to the subjects of music and literature. He was a practicing musician as well as a man of letters. His interest was keen in these subjects, as keen as in morals and manners of societies and governments:

> These different objects offered me subjects of meditation for my walks; for, as I believed I had already observed, I am unable to reflect when I am not walking: the moment I stop, I think no more, and as soon as I am again in motion my head resumes its workings. I had, however, provided myself with a work for the closet upon rainy days. This was my dictionary of music, which my scattered, mutilated, and unshapen materials made it necessary to rewrite almost entirely.

He was not only a noted musician of his day, but was also an inventor of a new "note" in music. His dictionary of music was no less a contribution to the subject. More than the music, however, it was literature of ideas, social, moral, or literary, that attracted his attention. His views, however, as in all other areas, were very strong on literature. He would not make any compromise on any account so far as his ideas were concerned. That brought him into conflict with all those who stepped into his life for one reason or another. Some of them turned even vicious, leading to the famous "Conspiracy" against him that plagued him until the end, bringing on him the worst possible man-made misfortunes, never suffered by any other man of letters.

Some of the important involvements with his contemporaries include Rousseau's unfortunate confrontation with Voltaire, Hume, Diderot and Grimn. The last two, along with a female writer of sorts, one Madam de Chenonceaux, were the conspirators who, through their most unscrupulous means, brought about meanest occurrences in the life of Rousseau. Inflamed by his unethical opponents, plagued by public fury, he might have been a little less than just to them in his report (or confession) about them. But his observations, all the same, on men of letters and their works are valuable in more ways than one. One of the more important of his comments is the one he made on Voltaire's poem about the Lisbon earthquake. The long piece of criticism runs as under:

> Struck by seeing this poor man overwhelmed, if I may so speak, with prosperity and honour, bitterly exclaiming against the misries of this life, and finding everything to be wrong, I formed the mad project of making him turn his attention to himself, and of proving to him that everything was right. Voltaire, while he appeared to believe in God, never really believed in anything but the devil; since his pretended deity is a malicious being, who, according to him, had no pleasure but in evil. The glaring absurdity of this

> doctrine is particularly disgusting from a man enjoying the greatest prosperity; who, from the bosom of happiness, endeavours, by the frightful and cruel image of all the calamities from which he is exempt, to reduce his fellow creatures to despair. I, who had a better right than he to calculate and weigh all the evils of human life, impartially examine them, and proved to him that of all possible evils there was not one to be attributed to Providence, and which had not its source rather in the abusive use man made of his faculties than in nature.

Here, one thing apparent is that while Rousseau, like any other romantic, believes in literature being the true voice of its author, Voltaire remains an eighteenth-century neoclassical writer composing, in verse and prose, satirical pieces, taking a philosophic or literary or moral position as a matter of convention, keeping his personal self out of the composed work. Another thing that becomes equally clear is that Rousseau seems to believe firmly that if a rich man writes about poverty, or a happy man finds life miserable, the writer is only being hypocritical. In fact, an obvious inference from his criticism of Voltaire's poem on Lisbon calamity is that only the poor and miserable has the right, or is at least better qualified, to write about poverty and miseries of life. One can see Rousseau's premise, which is typically romantic, but it is difficult to entirely agree with him. Voltaire only uses the Lisbon natural calamity only to draw the attention of those who preached that all is well with the world and that it was the best of all the possible worlds. If he happened to be rich, it does not deny him the sensitivity to feel a human tragedy or to see the absurdity of a philosophic position. One can only understand from Rousseau's personal life why he felt so about Voltaire's position, but it does not necessarily compel us to agree with him.

Responding to critical reactions to his novel *Heloise*, Rousseau not only defends his own work but condemns that of Richardson. "The work is by no means proper for the species of men of wit who have nothing but cunning, who possess no other kind of discernment than that which penetrates evil, and see nothing where good only is to be found." This brings out Rousseau's strong prejudice against the neoclassical writers, whose pessimism or cynicism about the nature and potential of man always irritated him. A romantic like Rousseau, who was far ahead of his times, had to fight a lone battle against the entire establishment of the eighteenth century writers of wit. Defending his novel against the hostile criticism from the line of wit, he makes some very interesting observations:

> The thing least kept in view, and which will ever distinguish it from every other work, is the simplicity of the subject and the continuation of the interest, which, confined to three persons, is kept up throughout six volumes, without episode, romantic adventure, or anything malicious either in the persons or actions.

> Diderot complemented Richardson on the prodigious variety of his portraits and the multiplicity of his persons. In fact, Richardson has the merit of having well characterized them all; but with respect to their number, he has that in common with the most inspired writers of novels who attempt to make up for the sterility of their ideas by multiplying persons and adventures. It is easy to awaken the attention by incessantly presenting unheard of adventures and new faces, which pass before the imagination as the figures in a magic lantern do before the eye; but to keep up that attention to the same objects, and without the aid of the wonderful, is certainly more difficult; and if, everything else being equal, the simplicity of the subject adds to the beauty of the work, the novels of Richardson, superior in so many other respects, cannot in this be compared to mine. I know it is already forgotten, and the cause of its being so; but it will be taken up again.

Once again, one can see how Rousseau is pitted against the popular taste of his times. Character and adventure were the key elements of the eighteenth century novel, not the element of thought. Its chief interests sprung from the variety of characters and novelty of incidents. Novel of ideas, of serious probing of an idea, theme, or character came later in the nineteenth century, that too in America with Hawthorne, Melville, and James, not in England. In Rousseau's own country, too, it appears a century after him with Flaubert, extending right up to Sartre. Here again, Rousseau was ahead of his times, and was sailing against the powerful tide of the popular taste.

In the midst of this popular distaste for Rousseau's novel, *Helois,* there was something exciting that encouraged the author. It was the Princess of Talmont's response to his new novel, and similar enthusiasm from majority of female readers (who were, of course, not many compared to male readers), that Rousseau found heartening in his otherwise depressing days. The account of the princess that Rousseau gives reads like fiction; it is so well narrated:

> It [*Heloise*] appeared at the beginning of a carnival; a hawker carried it to the Princess of Talmont on the evening of a ball night at the opera. After supper the princess dressed herself for the ball, and until the hour of going there, took up the new novel. At midnight she ordered the horses to be put into the carriage, and continued to read. The servant returned to tell her the horses were put to; she made no answer. Her people perceiving she forgot herself, came to tell her it was two o'clock. 'There is yet no hurry,' replied the princess, still reading on. Some time afterwards, her watch having stopped, she rang to know the hour. She was told it was four o'clock. 'That being the case', she said, 'it is too late to go to the ball; let the horses be taken off.' She undressed herself and passed the rest of the time in reading.

> Ever since I came to the knowledge of this circumstance, I have had a constant desire to see the lady, not only to know from herself whether or not what I have related be exactly true, but because I have always thought it impossible to be interested in so lively a manner in the happiness of Julia, without having that sixth and moral sense with which so few hearts are endowed, and without which no person whatever can understand the sentiments of mine.

Here, one can see an instance of romantic egotism. A romantic is a rare, an uncommon being, a person with superior sensibility, and as such beyond the reach of those with inferior or no sensibility. Rousseau is making here a similar case for himself as do most romantics when it comes to their works not being appreciated by the common reader. Decidedly, romantic art is not conceived to be a popular art. It is an expression of deeply felt emotions and seriously meditated thoughts. As such, obviously, it cannot receive popular appreciation. Only the female readers like the Princess would get attracted to emotional art but surely for wrong reasons. Rousseau knew it as well, but he did not mind (common human weakness with writers) being misunderstood so long as he received appreciation, that too, from women:

> What rendered the women so favourable to me was, their being persuaded that I had written my own history, and was myself the hero of the romance. This opinion was so firmly established…. Everybody thought it was impossible so strongly to express sentiments without having felt them, or thus to describe the transports of love, unless immediately from the feeling of the heart. This was true, and I certainly wrote the novel during the time my imagination was inflamed to ecstasy; but they who thought real objects necessary to this effect were deceived, and far from conceiving to what a degree I can at will produce it for imaginary beings…. I was unwilling to confirm or destroy an error which was advantageous to me.

Romantic literature, being more emotional in its tenor, has always had special appeal with women, especially the young. Rousseau's own life having been full of affairs with women was also responsible for this extraordinary female curiosity in his private life.

Thus through the personal life history, or autobiography, of Rousseau we get to know a good deal about the age in which he lived and wrote. A fairly wide variety of the various aspects of eighteenth century European world are brought home to the reader in their essential characteristics. It is decidedly not the kind of picture one finds in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales,* or in Thackeray's or Dickens's novels. There, the picture drawn is in terms of width and variety of characters and incidents both being representative in social terms. Here in Rousseau, as well as elsewhere in any romantic work such as Wordsworth's *The*

Prelude or Hawthorne's *The Scarlet letter,* the picture is presented to us in terms of the essentials of that life rather than in terms of width and variety of the social spectrum. Here, just an instance, a glimpse, a gesture, a comment, can do what long descriptions in a realistic work may not achieve. In other words, the level of presentation is different and deeper; it is more on the spiritual, rather than social, plain. We can conclude our discussion of the *Confessions* showing a mirror to its age despite its being an autobiography of an individual with a short citation which reveals as much of the conservative bigotry of the age as the radical humanism of the author:

> After the departure of Madam de Verdelin the fermentation increased, and, notwithstanding the reiterated rescripts of the King, the frequent orders of the council of state, and the cares of the chatelain and magistrates of the place, the people, seriously considering me as anarchist, and perceiving all their clamours to be of no effect, seemed at length determined to proceed to violence; stones were already thrown after me in the roads, but I was however in general at too great a distance to receive any harm from them. At last, in the night of the fair of the Motiers, which is in the beginning of September, I was attacked in my habitation in such a manner as to endanger the lives of everybody in the house.

Thus, the age depicted here in its essentials is done through characters, who stand for certain ideas or beliefs, and incidents, which reflect those beliefs and ideas. In that sense, the *Confessions* can be considered more a reflection of the beliefs and ideas of its times than a social history giving a wide range of social reality. Here, this autobiography of Rousseau has the same difference with the ordinary realistic biography as the romance has with the novel. The difference comes across quite clearly through this comparison. The personal history of the author's spiritual life and the impersonal history of the period's beliefs and ideas are inextricably interwoven into the fabric of the *Confessions*; neither can be comprehended in full without simultaneously taking into account the other.

ROUSSEAU ON LOVE AND WOMEN

As Rousseau himself says in the *Confessions*, for him living meant loving; life without love was meaningless for him. Also, the love he talks about is the love of women. He was naturally, and automatically, attracted to women. He was extremely sensual right from childhood. His hunger for women's love, in whatever form, may have stemmed from the death of his mother just when he was born. May be what he missed as a child, he kept seeking all his life. All of these women whom he loved at different stages of his life contributed towards his mental and spiritual growth. His concept of love as well as his relationship with women are both quite complex in nature. Only through our close reading of his narrations of his love affairs can help us understand both these as well the true personality of the author.

Rousseau's experience with women begins as early as 1720 when he was only eight years of age. Now under the care of his uncle he is sent to Bossey, a village, to board with the Minister Lambercier for learning Latin. Here he comes in contact with the Minister's wife, Mademoiselle Lambercier, who, as she "felt a mother's affection, sometimes exerted a mother's authority…. All this affection, aided by my natural mildness, was scarcely sufficient to prevent my seeking, by fresh offences, a return of the same chastisement; for a degree of sensuality had mingled with the smart and shame, which left more desire than fear of a repetition…. Benevolence, aided by the passions, has ever maintained an empire over me which has given law to my heart." The touch of the female personality, which begins with chastisement, finally effects an incalculable influence on his growth. Rousseau gives us a graphic account of his complex response to this woman of his mother's age:

> This event, which, though desirable, I had not endeavoured to accelerate, arrived without my fault; I should say without my seeking; and I profited by it with a safe conscience; but this second, was also the last time, for Mademoiselle Lambercier who doubtless had some reason to imagine this chastisement did not produce the desired effect, declared I was too fatiguing, and that she renounced it for the future. Till now we had slept in her chamber and during the winter in her bed; but two days after another room was prepared for us, and from that moment I had the honour (which I could very well have dispensed with) of being treated by her as a great boy.
>
> Who would believe this childish discipline, received at eight years old, from the hands of a woman of thirty, should influence my propensities, my desires, my passions, for the rest of my life and that in quite a contrary sense from what might naturally have been expected? The very incident that inflamed my senses, gave my desires such an extraordinary turn, that, confined to what I had already experienced, I sought no further, and, with blood boiling with sensuality, almost from my birth, preserved my purity beyond the age when the coldest constitutions lose their insensibility; long tormented, without knowing by what, I gazed on every handsome woman with delight; imagination incessantly brought their charms to my remembrance, only to transform them into so many Mademoiselle Lambercier.

Although vulnerable to female attraction, and amenable to female influence, Rousseau was never very enterprising with women. His natural timidity would not permit him to easily disclose his wishes. He would pass days in languishing in silence for those he most admired, and would not dare ask the overwhelming question. One is reminded of Eliot's Prufrock. He would, in fact, love to "fall at the feet of an imperious mistress, obey her mandates, or implore pardon." These

remained his most exquisite enjoyments. Hence, "the senses, in concurrence with a mind equally timid and romantic" preserved his "morals chaste, and feelings uncorrupted." This always prevented him from excesses to which he could otherwise be vulnerable.

Rousseau's next encounter with a woman takes place at the age of eleven. While at school, he comes in contact with his mistress named Madam de Vulson, who loaded him with caresses, and whose daughter made him her gallant. The girl, too, was twice his age. With Mademoiselle Vulson, he felt "flattered by the circumstance and went into it with my whole heart, or rather my whole head, for this passion certainly reached no further, though it transported me almost to madness, and frequently produced scenes sufficient to make even a cynic expire with laughter." At the same school, he came into contact with another mistress named Mademoiselle Goton. Although he "was so absolutely in the power of both these mistresses, that when in the presence of either [he] never thought of her who was absent," his regard for the former was much greater: "if Mademoiselle Vulson was ill, I suffered with her; would willingly have given up my own health to establish hers…. I loved her with a brother's affection only, but experienced all the jealousy of a lover." But even this innocent attachment to these mistresses was not without a danger: "I would not have offended Mademoiselle Vulson for the world; but if Mademoiselle Goton had commended me to throw into the flames, I think I should have instantly obeyed her. Happily, both for her and myself, our amours, or rather rendezous, were not of long duration: and though my connection with Mademoiselle Vulson was less dangerous, after a continuance of some greater length, that likewise had its catastrophe; indeed the termination of a love affair is good for noting, unless it partakes of the romantic, and can furnish out at least an exclamation."

Rousseau's much longer and more serious affair appears at the age of sixteen and goes on for eleven years, taking a strange course from the woman as mother to woman as mistress. In Rousseau's own words, "Louisa- Eleanora de Warnes was of the noble and ancient family…. She was married very young to a Monsieur de Warnes… there were no children by this marriage, which was far from being a happy one. Some domestic uneasiness made Madam de Warnes take the resolution of crossing the lake, and throwing herself at the feet of Victor Amadeus… thus abandoning her husband, family, and country by a giddiness similar to mine, which precipitation she, too, has found sufficient time and reason to lament." When Rousseau joins her, as a sort of orphan, at Annecy, just six years after her arrival there, she is twenty-eight, and he is only sixteen. At their very first meeting, he is struck by her beauty, presenting his letter of introduction "with a trembling hand," and she speaking "in a tone of voice which made every nerve vibrate." To Rousseau, "Her beauty, consisting more in the expressive animation of the countenance, than a set of features, was in its meridian; her manner soothing and tender; an angelic smile played about her

mouth, which was small and delicate; she wore her hair (which was of a ash colour, and uncommonly beautiful) with an air of negligence that made her appear still more interesting; she was short, and rather thick for her height, though by no means disagreeably so; but there could not be a more lovely face, a finer neck, or hands and arms more exquisitely formed."

Rousseau seems to believe in the philosophy of 'love at first sight'. He challenges those who do not accept it as a fact of life: "let those who deny the existence of a sympathy of souls, explain, if they know how, why the first glance, the first word of Madam de Warnes inspired me, not only with a lively attachment, but with the most unbounded confidence, which has since known no abatement. Say this was love… how could this passion be attended with sentiments which scarce ever accompany its commencement, such as peace, serenity, security, and confidence…. Is it possible to posses love, I will not say without desires, for I certainly had them, but without inquietude, without jealousy? … there was, certainly, something extraordinary in my attachment to this charming woman and it will be found in the sequel, that some extravagances, which can not be foreseen, attended it." Here is, then, a relationship which is love not without desire, and yet more than love. It borders devotion along with desire; it is spiritual as well as sensual. It is based on attraction of beauty, and yet transcends the domain of physical beauty. It is a relation also between a soul and a soul, as well as between a body and a body, even though unspeaking.

Made as he is by nature to fall for a woman at first sight even his highest regard and deepest love for Madam de Warnes does not come in his way of getting passionately involved with another woman, when he is on a short visit to Italy. The woman this time is Madam Basile. "Though an Italian, and too pretty to the entirely devoid of coquetry, she had so much modesty, and I so great a share of timidity, that our adventure was not likely to be brought to a very speedy conclusion, nor did they give us time to make any good of it. I can not recall the few short moments I passed with this lovely woman without being sensible of an inexpressible charm, and can yet say, it was there I tasted in there utmost perfection the most delightful, as well as the purest pleasures of love." All this just on a casual visit to Italy. Somehow, he finds any good-looking woman irresistible, provided she shows an inclination to oblige him, to respond to his uninterrupted hungry gaze. Madam Basile is a married woman, her husband considerable older than herself, who "has consigned her, during his absence, to the care of a clerk, too disagreeable to be thought dangerous." Rousseau falls for her at first sight, follows her helplessly, irresistibly. He does not completely forget Madam de Warnes. She does occur to him for comparison, but is not cause enough to prevent him from his present pursuit:

> I did not feel the same real and tender respect for her as I did for Madam de Warnes: I was embarrassed, agitated, feared to look, and hardly dared to breathe in her presence, yet to have left her

> would have been worse than death: How fondly did my eyes devour whatever they could gaze on without being perceived! The flowers on her gown, the point of her pretty foot, the interval of round white arm that appeared between her glove and ruffle, the least part of her neck, each object increased the force of all the rest, and added to the infatuation. Gazing thus on what was to be seen, and even more than was to be seen, my sight became confused, my chest seemed contracted, respiration was every moment more painful. I had the utmost difficulty to hide my agitation, to prevent my sighs from being heard, and this difficulty was increased by the silence in which we were frequently plunged.

Several more such opportunities come his way, he prepares himself to seize every opportunity, suspense is built up, climax is reached, and just when he is about to "go into it", the anti-climax follows, and the scene terminates in freezing the emotion at the boiling point. And yet whatever remains as a fringe benefit of a touch or a look undoes him wholly: "'get up! Here's Rosina!' Rising hastily I seized one of her hands, which she held out to me, and gave it two eager kisses; at the second I felt this charming hand press gently on my lips. Never in my life did I enjoy so sweet a moment; but the occasion I had lost returned no more, this being the conclusion of our amours." He may not have experienced consummation of love, but the memories are nonetheless sweeter, perhaps for that very reason: "Never did I taste with any other woman pleasures equal to those two minutes which I passed at the feet of Madam Basile without even daring to touch her gown. I am convinced no satisfaction compares to that we feel with a virtuous woman we esteem; all is transport! – A sign with the finger, a hand lightly pressed against my lips, were the only favours I ever received from madam Basile, yet the bare remembrance of these trifling condescensions continues to transport me."

This was only an interlude on his tour of Italy. But it was not the end of his adventures in Italy. He runs into another woman, named Madamoiselle de Breil, who was about his "own age, tolerably handsome, and very fair complexioned, with black hair, which notwithstanding, gave her features that air of softness so natural to the flaxen, and which my heart could never resist." Being just a domestic in her establishment, he could not afford to forget his status, but his desire for her remains: " … my ambition, confined to a desire of waiting on her, never exceeded its just rights. At table I was ever attentive to make the most of them; if her footman quitted her chair, I instantly supplied his place; in default of this I stood facing her, seeking in her eyes what she was about to ask for, and watching the moment to change her plate. What would I not have given her to hear her command, to have her look at, or speak the smallest word to me but no, I had the mortification to be beneath her regard; she did not even perceive I was there." As can be seen from this relationship, Rousseau just cannot resist a pretty woman, whatever her position, and

whatever his own station; his sensuality makes him stick around whatever woman happens to come in his way. If nothing more, even a sight of beauty would be a gratification. Somehow, there is a certain abjectness in his attraction for women. Be it as it may, we better return to his most important relationship in the world of women – with Madam de Warens.

As Rousseau returns from Italy, and approaches the habitation of Madam de Warens, "The first glance of Madam de Warens banished all my fear [of starvation] – my heart leaped at the sound of her voice; I threw myself at her feet, and in transports of the most lively joy, pressed my lips upon her hand …. 'Poor child!' said she, in an affectionate tone, 'art thou her again? I knew you were too young for this journey; I am glad, however, that it did not turn out so bad as I apprehended.'" She gives him a room in here own house, which thrills him. She is heard saying, "they may talk as they please, but since Providence has sent him back, I am determined not to abandon him." On his part, "I dare affirm, that those who only love, do not feel the most charming sensation we are capable of: I am acquainted with another sentiment, less impetuous, but a thousand times more delightful; sometimes joined with love, but frequently separated from it. This feeling is not simple friendship; it is more enchanting, more tender; nor do I imagine it can exist between persons of the same sex; at least I have been truly a friend, if ever a man was, and yet never experienced it in that kind. This distinction is not sufficiently clear, but will become so hereafter: sentiments are only distinguishable by their effects." Here is an instance of how Rousseau tries to understand in full the complex character of sentiments that he experiences in his relation with various women. In the case of Madam de Warens it is the most complex. She is his patroness, shows affection for him, a little indulgence also. He has reverence for her, is infatuated by her charms, regards her as a mother and yet his sensuality draws him to go beyond that feeling.

That the relationship is very complex between them becomes clear from the fact that in his long struggle to comprehend and define it Rousseau makes and amends and remakes so many statements, always remaining incomplete one way or another. Some of these statements may be cited here for our own benefit:

> The sudden sight of her, on our first interview, was the only truly passionate moment she ever inspired me with; and even that was principally the work of surprise. With her I had neither transports nor desires, but remained in a ravishing calm, sensible of a happiness I could not define, and thus could I have passed my whole life, or even eternity, without feeling an instant of uneasiness.

But a little later,

> I know not when I should have done, if I was to enter into a detail of all the follies that affection for my dear Madam de Warens made me commit. When absent from her, how often have I kissed the bed

> on a supposition that she had slept there; the curtains and all the furniture of my chamber, on recollecting they were hers, and that her charming hands had touched them; nay, the floor itself, when I considered she had walked there. Sometimes, even in her presence, extravagancies escaped me, which only the most violent passions seemed capable of inspiring, in a word, there was but one essential difference to distinguish me from an absolute lover, and that particular renders my situation almost inconceivable.

The two quotations show how Rousseau is caught up in his own complex of conflicting emotions, having at different levels different feelings for the same person. How complex this equation between the two is can be gauged from the following: "… absent or present I saw in her a tender mother, an amiable sister, a respected friend, but nothing more; meantime, her image filled my heart, and left room for no other object. The extreme tenderness with which she inspired me excluded every other woman from my consideration, and preserved me from the whole sex: in a word, I was virtuous, because I loved her." We have seen how vulnerable he is to women, given an opportunity of close proximity. His affair in Italy with Madam Basile, if it did not reach the stage of consummation, it was not because of any lack of willingness on his part. Only the time so conspired that it was interrupted at the crucial moments. Here again, his unconscious mind is deeply craving for a physical closeness with his madams he has started calling "mama."

When two members of opposite sex are thrown together in close proximity, and if the situation continues for a sufficient period of time, the inevitable has to follow. And it does in this case as well. And just before it happens, he states: "I always loved her as passionately as possible, but I now loved her more for herself and less on my own account; or, at least, I rather sought for happiness than pleasure in her company. She was more to me than a sister, a mother, a friend, or even than a mistress, and for this very reason she was not a mistress; in a word, I loved her too much to desire her." He may not be aware of it, but his love for her, which is "more" than every other love, is the real danger. And it happens, the "more" overtakes all other feelings. The two find themselves in each other's arms:

> This day, more dreaded than hoped for, at length arrived. I have before observed, that I promised everything that was required of me, and I kept my word: my heart confirmed my engagements without desiring the fruits, though at length I obtained them. Was I happy? No: I felt I know not what invincible sadness which empoisoned my happiness, it seemed that I had committed an incest, and two or three times, pressing her eagerly in my arms, I deluged her bosom with my tears. On her part, as she had sought pleasure, she had not the stings of remorse.

Well, it is not less than an incest, and yet a romantic like Rousseau is bound to find it irresistible. Similarly, adultery is another compulsive urge in such figures. In fact, the Romantic concept of love does not accept social institutions, including marriage. It accepts love on its own terms, love for love's sake, not for any other consideration. Rousseau is no exception; he freely enters into sexual relations with several women, without carrying any sense of uneasiness, leave aside sense of sin or guilt. Even in this case, the initial awkwardness is easily overcome, and the intimacy goes on smoothly, sensually as well as sexually: "… we got into the habit, though without design, of being continually with each other, and enjoying in some measure, our whole existence together, feeling reciprocally that we were not only necessary, but entirely sufficient for each other's happiness. Accustomed to think of no subject foreign to ourselves, our happiness and all our desires were confined to that pleasing and singular union, which perhaps had no equal, which is not, as I have before observed, love, but a sentiment impressively more intimate, neither depending on the senses, age, nor figure, but an assemblage of every agreeable sensation that composes our radical existence and which can cease only with our being."

Here again Rousseau makes a typically romantic response; for it is a romantic trait to think that there is no equal to your kind of love; that you are an exceptional person and so is your affair. Also, a romantic would always consider his love as something different from the ordinary human love; it is viewed as something higher, something special, something uncommon, something close to the divine. It may be called the Romantic fallacy, which is incorrigibly available in romantic writers as well as their romantic creations. The romantic has to be a hero among men. Rousseau's conception of his own self also measures up to the same romantic model of the hero:

> … and myself, by an assemblage of misfortunes of all kinds, was to become a striking example to those who, inspired with a love of justice and the public good, and trusting too implicitly to their own innocence, shall openly dare to assert truth to mankind, unsupported by cabals, or without having previously formed parties to protect them.

Undoubtedly, here is the self-portrait of a romantic, who is at odds with the conservative society for the sake of saying the truth as he perceives it. His alienation from society is also an essential trait of the romantic self. Like Wordsworth, his recalling the blissful past is also a way of forgetting the unhappy present. Left disillusioned by the failure of the French Revolution, one great hope for humanity, Wordsworth turns to or returns to his blissful childhood to seek solace. Rousseau finds the same use of imagination now that he, as well as his madam, are facing despondence:

> … here I remember all as distinctly as if it existed at this moment. Imagination, which in my youth was perpetually anticipating the future, but now takes a retrograde course, makes some amends by

> these charming recollections for the deprivation of hope, which I have lost for ever. I no longer see anything in the future that can tempt my wishes, it is a recollection of the past alone that can flatter me, and the remembrance of the period I am now describing is so true and lively, that it sometimes makes me happy, even in spite of my misfortunes.

And the happiest moment, he recalls, is the one with Madam de Warens: "My dearest friend, this day has long since been promised me: I can see nothing beyond it: my happiness, by your means, is at its height; may it never decrease; may it continue as long as I am sensible of its value – then it can only finish with my life."

Rousseau's tendency to live in the present was, at times, a dangerous principle or inclination. As he himself admits, "I have never been so near wisdom as during this period, when I felt no great remorse for the past nor tormenting fear for the future; the reigning sentiment of my soul being the enjoyment of the present." His explanation is that such a pleasure, like that of a child, is another name for paradise. For a child, yes. But not for the adult, whose mind is developed to see implications of the momentary enjoyment, if it relates to humanity, not nature. Just a little while after his movement away from Madam de Warens Rousseau runs into another named Madam de Larnage, who also has a daughter fifteen year old. His feeling in the moment is: "I saw nothing but Madam de Larnage, or what related to her; the whole universe besides was nothing was to me – even Madam de Warens was forgotten!" But soon comes a stage when reflection on the pleasure principle begins – just as it does in the case of Wordsworth when he turns to reason and duty. This is the turning point, I would say, in the life of Rousseau; the child in him is being replaced by the developed mind. He describes this change in detail which need to be noticed and understood – the growth of a writer's mind being the subject of both Wordsworth's *Prelude* and Rousseau's *Confessions*:

> Not thoroughly satisfied in my own mind on the rectitude of this expedition, as I advanced towards the Bridge of St. Esprit … I began to reflect on Madam de Warens, the remembrance of whose letters, though less frequent than those from Madam de Larnage, awakened in my heart a remorse that passion had stifled in the first part of my journey, but which became so lively on my return, that, setting just estimate on the love of pleasure, I found myself in such a situation of mind that I could listen wholly to the voice of reason. Besides, in continuing to act the part of an adventurer, I might be less fortunate than I had been in the beginning; for it was only necessary that in all Saint-Andiol there should be one person who had been in England, or who knew English or anything of their language, to prove me an imposter. The family of Madam de Larnage might not be pleased with me, and would, perhaps, treat

> me unpolitely; her daughter too made me uneasy, for, in spite of my self, I thought more of her than was necessary. I trembled lest I should fall in love with this girl, and that very fear had already half done the business. Was I going, in return for the mother's kindness, to seek the ruin of the daughter? To sow dissension, dishonour, scandal, and hell itself, in her family? The very idea struck me with horror, and I took the firmest resolution to combat and vanquish this unhappy attachment, should I be so unfortunate as to experience it …. This reproach at length became so keen that it triumphed over every temptation … I formed the resolution to burn my whole magazine of letters from Saint Andiol, and continue my journey right forward to Chambery.
>
> I executed this resolution courageously, with some sighs I confess, but with the heart-felt satisfaction, which I enjoyed for the first time in my life, of saying, 'I merit my own esteem, and know how to prefer duty to pleasure.' This was the first real obligation I owed my books, since these had taught me to reflect and compare. … Perhaps, after all, pride had as much share in my resolution as virtue; but if this pride is not virtue itself, its effects are so similar that we are pardonable in deceiving ourselves.
>
> … No sooner was my resolution confirmed than I became another man, or rather, I became what I was before I had erred, and saw in its true colours what the intoxication of the moment had either concealed or disguised.

This growth of the writer's mind is rightly placed at the centre of the work. What is crucial to remember here is the agent of change. It is his books, not nature or its pleasures, which brought about this change in Rousseau. These books, we may recall, are the ones which he speaks of reading during this period a little earlier in this book 6 of Part I itself, books of western philosophy from Plato to the present, and books of modern science. The books rightly ends Part I, the early phase of the writer's life. The second will begin after this growth that has taken place in his personality.

The irony of situation takes place now at this critical point of time in Rousseau's life. Just as he has resolved "to regulate my future conduct by the laws of virtue, and dedicate myself without reserve to that best of friends, to whom I vowed as much fidelity in future as I felt real attachment," just has he contemplate "only innocence and happiness through life," he touches "on the fatal period that was to draw after it the long chain of my misfortunes." Just when he has resolved to be fidel for life to Madam de Warens, he finds on return from this fateful journey that the same Madam has turned infidel to him. Like Hamlet, he gets the shock of his life, gets totally unsettled, knowing not where to go next. But life must go on. You have to learn to cope with its vicissitudes. After his initial violent reaction, he does find his feet and decides

upon the future course of action: "I resolved, therefore, to quit the house, mentioned it to her, and she, far from opposing my resolution, approved it. She had an acquaintance at Grenoble, called Madam de Deyhens, whose husband was on terms of friendship with Monsieur Mably, chief Provost of Lyons. Monsieur Deybens proposed my educating Monsieur Mabley's children; I accepted this offer, and departed for Lyons without causing, and almost without feeling, the least regret at a separation, the bare idea of which, a few months before, would have given us both the most excruciating torments."

The last meaningful relation with a woman that Rousseau came to have was with Theresa, totally illiterate whose mind was "as nature formed it," who could not count, read or write, would not know even hours and months. But she was the kind of woman Rousseau wanted in the particular situation in which he was placed at the moment.

> In the place of extinguished ambition, a life of sentiment, which had entire possession of my heart, was necessary to me. In a word, I wanted a successor to mama: since I was never again to live with her, it was necessary some person should live with her pupil, and a person, too, in whom I might find that simplicity and docility of mind and heart, which wanted nothing more than another heart to fill it up.

It was apparently quite a mismatch – a man of revolutionary ideas and a woman without intellect and education, a mere body. But, as Rousseau remarks, "With persons whom we love, sentiment fortifies the mind as well as the heart; and they who are thus attached have little need of searching for ideas elsewhere." He produced five children by her, but was not in a position to support them. Hence he sent them to asylum for care: "My third child was therefore carried to the foundling hospital as well as the two former, and the next two were disposed of in the same manner; for I have had five children in all." Rousseau's explanation for this act, which his friends-turned-foes used for slander, is worth the mention: "I' will satisfy myself by observing that my error was such that in abandoning my children to public education for want of the means of bringing them up myself; in destining them to become workmen and peasants, rather than adventurers and fortune-hunters, I thought I acted like an honest citizen and a good father, and considered myself as a member of the republic of Plato."

At this point of time, when he has had a long life with Theresa, Rousseau makes a terrible confession about his involvement with women:

> When it will be known, that after having done everything, braved everything, not to separate from her; that after passing with her twenty years in despite of fate and men; I have in old age made her my wife, without the least expectation of solicitation on her part, or promise, or engagement on mine, the world will think that love bordering upon madness, having from the first moment turned my head, led me by degrees to the last act of extravagance…. What,

> therefore, will the reader think when I shall have told him, with all the truth he has ever found in me, that, from the first moment in which I saw her, until that wherein I write I have never felt the least love for her, that I never desired to process her more than I did to possess Madam de Warens, and that the physical wants which were satisfied with her person were, to me, solely those of the sex, think and by no means proceeding from the individual? He will think that being of a constitution different from that of other men, I was incapable of love, since this was not one of the sentiments which attached me to women the most dear to my heart.

Denying that physical love was ever the basis of his affairs with women, especially the closest Madam de Warens, Rousseau goes on to elaborate the reason for his still, and ever, wanting to have intimacy with women, especially the beautiful: "The first of my wants, the greatest, strongest and most insatiable, was wholly in my heart; the want of an intimate connection, and as intimate as it could possibly be: for this reason especially, a woman was more necessary to me than a man, a female rather than a male friend. This singular want was such that the closest corporal union was body, without which I felt a void." Thus, this void drove him from one woman to another. None could fill it completely, but each must be placed there to make it less sensible. As he himself remarks, "Not having it in my power to take in all its plenitude the charms of that intimate connection of which I felt the want, I sought for substitutes which did not fill up the void, yet they made it less sensible."

Incorrigibly inclined as he was to fall for women, one of whom he must have all the time to fill his "void", yet another time he falls headlong for one Madam d' Houdetot, who already had a husband and a lover. But once attracted, nothing could easily stop him from falling: "she came; I saw her; I was intoxicated with love without an object…. I saw my Heloise [the heroine of his novel with that title] in Madam d' Houdetot, and I soon saw nothing but Madam d' Houdetot." He tries very hard to resist and restraine and ruin the instinct, but to no avail: "What powerful motive did I not call to mind to stifle it? My morals, sentiments, principles; the shame, the treachery and crime, of abusing what was confided to friendship, and the ridiculousness of burning, of my age, with the most extravagant passion for a object whose heart was pre-engaged…." On her part, she also tried to stay away from such a course: "she pitied my folly without encouraging it, and endeavoured to restore me to reason." Finally, "I became pressing: the step was delicate. It is astonishing, and perhaps without example, that a woman having suffered herself to be brought to hesitate should have got herself off so well. She refused me nothing the most tender friendship could grant; yet she granted me nothing that rendered her unfaithful, and I had the mortification to see that the disorder into which the most trifling favours had thrown all my senses had not the least effect upon her."

Thus Rousseau experienced yet another relationship with the opposite sex, and a relation of yet another type. Here was an "intimacy almost without example between two friends of different sexes who contain themselves within the bounds which we never exceeded." In this strange relationship, "yet love was equal on both sides, but not reciprocal." It ends romantically, as usual with Rousseau:

> It was the first and only time of my life; but I was sublime…. What intoxicating tears did I shed upon her knees! how many did I make her involuntarily! At length in an involuntary transport she exclaimed: 'No, never was a man so amiable, nor ever was there one who loved like you! But your friend Saint Lambert hears us, and my heart is incapable of loving twice.' I exhausted myself with sighs; I embraced her – what an embrace! But this was all. She had lived alone for the last six months, that is absent from her husband and lover; I had seen her almost every day during three months, and love seldom failed to make a third…. We were alone, in the grove by moonlight, and after two hours of most lively and tender conversation she left this grove at mid night, and the arms of her lover, as pure as she had entered it.

Thus, Rousseau's relation with women was of a natural attraction, of a natural necessity, and as passionate as it can ever be. Like a true romantic love, it would not admit any social or moral restrictions, remaining completely unselfconscious about questions of social obligations or moral responsibilities. It only looked for purity of emotion, bordering devotion, a necessity of being. It does not remain attached to any one particular woman for a life time. It is not the love of an object so much as it is love without any object; it is love of love, or love for its own sake. Hence not one but several women appear in the single life of our author. Rousseau is the prototype of romantic love which gets its illustrations in Shelley, Keats, and Byron; in *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan.* For Rousseau, love was more than love; it was a spiritual experience over and above the sensual and sexual, which too were necessary components of its order; it was through the experience of love that he developed as man and writer. This individual experience, while it offered a model of romantic love, it exposed the shams and hypocrisies of the unromantic love–for-marriage institution of society.

ROUSSEAU'S PROSE STYLE

Since we are dealing with Rousseau in translation, and not in original, it is not possible to speak of some of the aspects of his style, which can be considered only in the original French language in which he wrote the *Confessions.* However, since style reflects the way of thinking of a writer, his manner of putting things or presenting ideas and emotions, even translation would reflect, at least in part, that manner peculiar to each individual author. It

is with this premise in mind that we shall approach the prose of the *Confessions* as it is available to us in English translation. As Cardinal Newman said in the Victorian age, "style is a thinking out into language." And no translation worth the name would falsify a writer's thinking, nor obliterate it. In this sense of style it is something ingrained in writing and not stuck on top like a veneer. It follows from this view that a man's way of writing will be an expression of his personality and his way of looking at life. This explains the famous and most-quoted definition of style given by Buffon, a French writer and naturalist of the eighteenth century, "style, it is the man himself."

Rousseau's prose is not merely representative of the romantic prose, it is the prototype for that sort of writing; he became a model for the romantics that came after him, not merely for his ideas on man and nature, but also for his prose. Since a romantic is an individualist, wanting to explore his own thoughts and experience, not content with the general truths and standardised diction and expression, he follows his own individual resources of language and gives expression to his own experiences of life in the most expressive language possible. In prose, as well as in poetry, the romantic spirit reflects itself in questioning the authority, in asserting individual freedom, in being natural and spontaneous. Both Coleridge and Hazlitt, two leading prose writers of the English Romantic period, attacked the eighteenth century stalwart, Dr. Johnson, accusing him of the Augustan habit of dressing up trite thoughts in elaborate and grandiloquent language. Note, for example, the following piece from Coleridge: "Style is, of course, nothing else but the art of conveying the meaning appropriately and with perspicuity, whatever that meaning may be, and one criterion of style is that it will not be translatable without injury to the meaning. Johnson's style has pleased many from the very fault of being perpetually translatable; he creates an impression of cleverness by never saying anything in a common way." Here, translatability means availability as formula or trick which can be imitated by anyone and everyone. And since it is trick or formula, it does not belong to any individual. The only difference between one and another writer is that of being or not being or being in more or less degree the master of that trick or formula. Such a style of writing does not reflect what we call the personality of a writer, his own authentic and genuine feelings and thoughts.

Thus, in romantic writing, prose or poetry, sincerity and authenticity, simplicity and spontaneity, individuality and emotionality are some of the distinctive features of style. It is an aesthetics of experience, not of rules. Personality of the author permeates every word and sentence, every passage and chapter, giving the composition the unique flavour of the individual self and individual experience which is peculiar only to that personality. And yet, like any other literary movement, romanticism also showed a set of common qualities, habits of mind, and manners of expression, which are characteristic of the writers of that movement. For instance, the romantic habit of considering

one's self unique, different from all others, the habit of relying on feeling or emotion as the true expression of one's self as well as of truth, the habit of going ecstatic about things of beauty expressing it in superlative form, the habit of imparting sanctity to the autonomous self as well as to individual experience, for example, making love a divinity by it self. All of these habits get reflected in the prose style of these writers, which would be emotive rather than discursive, spontaneous rather than studied, ecstatic rather than economical, rambling rather than regimented, flowing rather than fabricated, pictorial rather than precise.

The greatest emphasis upon the personal is one of the prominent features of the Romantic prose, which is also a conspicuous aspect of Rousseau's prose in the *Confessions.* Note, for instance, the following:

> The manner in which I passed my time at Bossey was so agreeable to my disposition, that it only required a longer duration absolutely to have fixed my character, which would have had only peacable, affectionate, benevolent sentiments for its basis. I believe no individual of our kind ever possessed less natural vanity than myself. At intervals, by an extraordinary effort, I arrived at sublime ideas, but presently sunk again into my original languor. To be loved by every one who knew me was my most ardent wish. I was naturally mild, my cousin was equally so, and those who had the care of us were of similar dispositions. Everything contributed to strengthen those propensities which nature had implanted in my breast, and during the two years I was neither the victim nor witness of any violent emotions.

Here, we can see how an individual, a highly personal response is made to a life situation. The writer is describing his life at a new place where he has been sent in his early boyhood. We hardly get to know anything about the place or people. We only get to know the feelings of the writer towards the place and people there. Also, what is agreeable or not agreeable about the place and people is again a matter of individual inclinations and personal preferences. All that comes about the places comes only in the form of the narrator's emotional response to his surroundings. Nothing objective is motioned about any thing in the description.

Rousseau's prose is highly charged with emotion. Of course, it is emotional when the experience being described is emotional. For, if style is the man, it is also the subject. It has to remain in consonance with the subject it is handling. The subject and style harmonise to form a unified communication. Note, for instance, the following:

> She came; I saw her; I was intoxicated with the love without an object; this intoxication fascinated my eyes; the object fixed itself upon her. I saw my Heloise in Madam d' Houdetot, and I soon saw nothing but Madam d' Houdetot, but with all the perfections with which I had just adorned the idol of my heart. To complete my

> delirium she spoke to me of Saint Lambert with a fondness of passionate lover. Contagious force of love! while listening to her and finding myself near her, I was seized with a delirious trembling, which I had never before experienced when near to any person whatsoever. She spoke, and I felt myself affected; I thought I was nothing more than interested in her sentiments, when I perceived I possessed those which were similar; I drank freely of the poisoned cup, of which I yet tasted nothing more than the sweetness. Finally, imperceptibly to us both, she inspired me for herself with all she expressed for her lover. Alas! It was very late in life, and cruel was it to be consumed with a passion not less violent than unfortunate for a woman whose heart was already in the possession of another.

Here is the romantic subject, an emotional scene between a man madly in love with a woman married to someone else. And here is typically romantic prose, in which imagination and passion transform a real woman into a perfect beauty of the lover's (the writer's) dream. We have known just a little earlier that "The Countess of d' Houdetot was nearly thirty years of age, and not handsome; her face was marked with the smallpox, her complex-on coarse, she was short-sighted, and her eyes were rather round…." But this description came when the subject was the real woman and the writer was not yet aroused in his fit of passion. Here, the real woman gets transformed into the imaginary Heloise. The prose also becomes panting, throbbing with aroused passion, expressed through exclamations and short phrases, highly charged with delusion. It is a delirium rendered in functional prose style. Rousseau, however, the great writer as he is, modulates his style to tune with the change of subject. It can be matter-of-fact narration when the occasion so requires. Note, for instance, the following:

> I was born at Geneva, in 1712, son of Isaac Rousseau and Susannah Bernard, citizens. My father's share of a moderate living, which was divided among fifteen children, being very trivial, his business of a watchmaker (in which he had reputation of great ingenuity) was his only income. My mother's circumstances were more affluent; she was daughter of a Monsieur Bernard, minister, and possessed a considerable share of modesty and beauty; indeed, my father experienced some difficulty in obtaining her hand. The affection they entertained for each other was almost as early as their existence; at eight or nine years old they walked together every evening on the banks of the Treille, and before they were ten, could not endure the idea of separation.

Here, there is no romantic subject, nor romantic emotion; hence no passionate, panting prose. It is a simple clean narrative without any kind of exaggeration or heightening of expression. No exclamation because no sighs. So, the prose is in tune with the subject.

But the prose goes lyrical the moment the writer comes upon the description of beauty in a natural scene or a human figure. It gets loaded with epithets, images, and emotions. The narrative stops in time, gets focused on a spot, human or natural, and attempts only a close-view of the object in sight. The writer's emotional involvement in the scene gives it lyrical qualities of rhythm and alliteration. Note, for example, the following:

> These were my meditations during the finest season of the year, in the month of June, in cool shades, to the songs of the nightingale, and the warbling of brooks. Everything concurred in plunging me into that too seducing state of indolence for which I was born, and from which my austere manner, proceeding from a long effervescence, should forever have delivered me…. I presently saw myself surrounded by all the objects which, in my youth, had given me emotion…. My blood became inflamed, my head turned, not withstanding my hair was almost grey, and the grave citizen of Geneva, the austere *Jean Jacques*, at forty-five years of age, again became the fond shepherd.

Or the following:

> I however wanted a lake, and I concluded by making choice of that which my heart has never ceased to wander. I fixed myself upon that part of the bank of this lake where my wishes have long since placed my residence in the imaginary happiness to which fate has confined me. The native place of my poor mamma had still for me a charm. The contrast of the situations, the richness and variety of the sites, the magnificence, the majesty of the whole, which ravishes the senses, affects the heart, and elevates the mind, determined me to give it the preference, and I placed my young pupils at Verney.

In both these citations one can see how for the romantic Rousseau, it is not the object in itself which gets the attention, but the writer's own emotional response to that object. What we get in the prose here is not the actual landscape, but the emotion and associations, memories and recollections attached to that landscape. In other words it is the landscape of the writer's mind and heart which fills the space, not the natural scene. The object acts as merely a peg on which the writer hangs his emotions, memories, recollections. Even the object, thus, becomes an excuse to reveal one's own self. That is what Rousseau has done in these two pieces.

Sentimentality is another standard trait of romantic writing, in prose and poetry. The writer's emotionalism, his sentimentality, always outweighs the response required by a scene or a situation. The emotion is always in excess; the sentiment is always sizzling. It always remains much above the normal temperature. There are always sobs and sighs, torrents of tears, expressed freely

in any situation demanding slightest expression of emotion. Note, for instance, the following:

> When absent from her, how often have I kissed the bed on a supposition that she had slept there; the curtains and all the furniture of my chamber, on recollecting they were hers, and that her charming hands had touched them; nay, the floor, when I considered she had walked there. Sometimes even in her presence, extravagancies escaped me, which only the most violent passions seemed capable of inspiring….

Such adolescent conduct, even child-like attachments, are quite common to romantic characters, and the prose of the romantic writers becomes equally sentimental with highly-charged emotional expression, touching images, moving recollections. It becomes drenched with wet words carrying heavy emotional burden. Just like branches bend with the bunches of fruit on them, so do the sentences in romantic prose loaded with cluster of images. The epithet gets the better of the verb.

Rousseau's prose is not, of course, monotonous at all; it varies from passage to passage as the subject or the sentiment changes. The same sentimal and lyrical prose can become stately and analytical, even ironical and satirical, if need be. We do have quite a few portions of the *Confessions* which are analytical or critical, discursive or expository. Note, for instance, the following:

> My work therefore was to be composed of two parts absolutely distinct: one, to explain, in the manner I have just mentioned, the different projects of the author; in the other, which was not to appear until the first had had its effect, I should have given my opinion upon these projects, which I confess might sometimes have exposed them to the fate of the sonnet of the misanthrope. At the head of the whole was to have been the life of the author. For this I had collected some good materials, and which I flattered myself I should not spoil in making use of them.

Now, here, there is no sentimentality, nor superlative expressions; all we have is clean expository prose, without any ornamental epithets or emotional images. It is completely free from all these. Rousseau goes even beyond the expository, and uses sharp irony when it comes to retort to a rival's remarks or composition. Note, for instance, his comments on Voltaire's poem:

> Struck by seeing this poor man overwhelmed, if I may so speak, with prosperity and honour, bitterly exclaiming against the miseries of this life, and finding everything to be wrong, I formed the mad project of making him turn his attention to himself, and of proving to him that everything was right. Voltaire, while he appeared to believe in God, never really believed in anything but the devil; since his pretended deity is a malicious being, who, according to him, had no pleasure but evil. The glaring absurdity of this doctrine

> is particularly disgusting from a man enjoying the greatest prosperity; who, from the bosom of happiness, endeavours, by the frightful and cruel image of all the calamities from which he is exempt, to reduce his fellow creatures to despair.

Thus, Rousseau can always rise to the occasion a subject, situation, or scene demands, and modulate his prose to bring it in tune with the mood or atmosphere to be created in a given situation, or to make it serviceable to the expository, analytical, lyrical, or narrative purpose or the passage in hand. His *Confessions* being an autobiographical work carries greater stamp of his personality than any of his other works, although no work of his can be said to be completely free from that stamp of his personality.

BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

1. Jacques Barzun. *Classic, Romantic and Modern.* New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961.
2. Irving Babbit. *Rousseau and Romanticism.* London, 1919.
3. M.H. Abrams. *Naturalism Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature.* New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1971.
4. Alan Warner. *A Short Guide to English Style.* London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
5. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren. *Fundamentals of Good Writing.* Dobson, 1952.

QUESTION BANK

1. Discuss Rousseau as the father of Romantic Movement.
2. Examine Rousseau's concept of man.
3. Examine Rousseau's concept of nature.
4. Discuss Rousseau's *Confessions* as a literary biography.
5. Write a note on Rousseau's view of love.
6. Write a note on Rousseau's relationship with Madam de Warens.
7. Discuss Rousseau's prose style in the *Confessions.*
8. Discuss Rousseau's women in *Confessions.*