TILAK MAHARASHTRA VIDYAPEETH
FACULTY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

M.A. (ENGLISH)
PART – I

ENGLISH FICTION
(E-103)
INTRODUCTION

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Wish you all the best!

Prof. Neelima Mehta
Head. Faculty of Distance education
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CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

The novel is a comparatively recent entrant into the field of English literature; only by the eighteenth century did the novel become prominent in literature, while its present commanding position was not consolidated until the nineteenth century. Literary historians are able to trace the developments of the novel back to classical days, when the works of a few of the Greek and Roman writers were of a form similar to that which we now regard as typical of the novel. The actual word “novel” is derived from the Italian word “novella,” the term used for each of a collection of about a hundred narratives which appeared in the latter half of the thirteenth century. From that date onwards, the novel as a literary type rapidly gained popularity in Italy and many of these were translated into English.

The birth of the English novel as we today understand the term, came in 1740 with a publication of Samuel Richardson’s Pamela: or Virtue Rewarded- a series of letters between two imaginary characters. They were designed to encourage in the young people of that time strict moral principles. Richardson’s work led immediately to Joseph Andrews by Henry Fielding and Roderick Random by Smollett, both realistic novels. It was not long before Fielding’s Tom Jones appeared - the first English novel which had a definite plot. Smollett replied with his Peregrine Pickle (1751), while Richardson wrote The History of Sir Charles Grandison (1753). New themes and new ideas had their effect on the English novel in the thirty years after Richardson; in this period we get Sterne’s humorous novel Tristram Shandy and the fiction works of Dr. Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith. By 1770, the novel had firmly established itself as a literary form.

The remaining years of the century brought forth little of value in English fiction. The second decade of the nineteenth century, however, produced two great writers whose names will forever hold a place of distinction in English literature - Jane Austen and Sir Walter Scott. Jane Austen was a satirist of English society in her time. Yet that satire is gentle and delicately presented through her brilliantly portrayed characters. Scott’s approach was different. For his themes, he went back to legend and history, and his heroes were Knights and Lords of the bygone days. Contributing to the rapid rise in the popularity of the novel was the growth of a moneyed, leisured, educated, middle-class reading public, and an increase in the number in the circulating libraries. The next really great novelist after Scott was Charles Dickens, who began in 1836 with The Pickwick Papers. Dickens’s novels lived through his characterisation. In his writings, there are strong sociological and humanitarian leanings. Dickens described some of the horrors of the conditions in which millions of people in
industrialized Britain lived, and he was therefore a social reformer as well as a writer. Four other novelists took their cue from Dickens - Thackeray, Charlotte Bronte, Mrs. Gaskell and George Eliot. By the close of the nineteenth century, the novel had become the most popular form in England with women readers forming a large portion of the reading public. Yet the eminent novelists of the end of the nineteenth century were all men - H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, Galsworthy, Conrad and Hardy - but they were conscious of their female audience. A large proportion of the best novels reflected the keen interest of the time in social criticism and social reform and influenced public opinion.

In the modern period, the novel is derived from both English and American sources e.g. Henry James. Notable works arising from the war were by writers like Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner. A little later, Somerset Maugham, E. M. Forster, D. H. Lawrence and Aldous Huxley wrote realistic novels with great originality. James Joyce and Virginia Woolf developed the psychological novel which tried to portray the inner life of man. Katherine Mansfield, George Orwell, Graham Greene, Iris Murdoch and Muriel Spark were writers who contributed significantly to the novel in the fifth and sixth decades of the twentieth century.
Henry Fielding: his life and career

Henry Fielding was born on 22 April 1707, in a landowning family in Somerset, England. He was educated at Eton and later went to the University of Leyden, in the Netherlands. In 1729 he left Leyden to go to London where he began a career as a professional dramatist. During the early part of the 18th century, Fielding wrote many plays which satirized the leading politicians and public figures of the day, including Hugh Walpole, King George II and the Queen. This resulted in the censoring of the stage and the closure of Fielding’s own theatre. He had to find other means of livelihood and soon became a novelist. In 1740, Samuel Richardson’s novel *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* was published and immediately became a sensation. Richardson’s story of a virtuous servant girl protecting her chastity against her wealthy employer, which resulted in her triumph over him and their marriage, was highly praised as an example of moral purity. Several writers wrote burlesques and parodies of Pamela. Fielding felt that Richardson’s novel was clumsy, pretentious and absurd. In 1741, he wrote a parody, *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shameia Andrews*, which treated the chastity of Richardson’s heroine as dishonest and hypocritical, having little to do with goodness of heart or spirit.

In 1742, Fielding published *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews. And of his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams. Written in Imitation of the Manner of Cervantes. Author of Don Quixote*, to ridicule *Pamela*. He reversed the situation in Richardson’s novel by presenting Joseph the chaste servant (instead of the innocent and virtuous serving - maid), whom Lady Booby tempts from the path of virtue, and who runs away to save his chastity. At this moment in the story, Fielding became so engrossed in the narrative that Richardson was almost forgotten, and described a series of adventures on the road, where Joseph is accompanied by Parson Adams. *Joseph Andrews* was followed by *The History of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great*, in 1743, a satiric novel which alluded to Sir Robert Walpole. Fielding’s belief that generosity frequently exists in those whom society condemns, intensified, as is seen in his next novel, *Tom Jones*, published in 1749, which has as its theme the life and adventures of Tom Jones and is a profound portrait of what Fielding considered a complete man. His last novel, *Amelia*, published in 1751, does not have the balance of his preceding novel, and was not very successful.

The only major English novels before *Joseph Andrews* were Defoe’s *Robinson*
Crusoe and Moll Flanders and Richardson’s Pamela. But with Fielding the novel had come of age. He endowed it with form and gave it middle-class realism and used characters and places that existed and represented real life.

**Joseph Andrews: A Summary**

Joseph Andrews consists of a preface followed by four books divided into sixty-four chapters. Each chapter is prefaced by a short, often humorous summary. In the preface to the novel, Fielding calls it a comic romance, a comic epic poem in prose. He also says that the novel is not a burlesque, as the characters are based on those found in real life. Fielding begins Book I by talking about the moral purpose of actual examples, and declares that the reader is improved by a mixture of instruction and entertainment. He says that Joseph Andrews is the brother of Pamela and has kept in mind the pattern of his sister’s virtues, thus being a good example of “male chastity”. Fielding talks about Joseph as if he were a great hero. By the time he was ten and could read and write, Joseph was apprenticed to Sir Thomas Booby. He took care of dogs and horses, and was moved from working in the fields to the stables because he had an excellent voice. At the age of seventeen he caught the eye of Lady Booby who wanted him as her personal servant. Fielding then tells us about Parson Abraham Adams, an excellent scholar, good-natured, but ignorant of the ways of the world. Simplicity is the hallmark of his character, and he is a good parson but earns a small income which is not enough to live well with his wife and six children. He is surprised at Joseph’s knowledge of the New Testament. Mrs. Slipslop, “the waiting-gentlewoman” likes to use jargon, which she often does not understand, and wants Parson Adams to accept her superior knowledge of theology. Lady Booby wants to go to London and take Joseph with her. In London Joseph follows the fashions, but avoids gambling, drinking and other vices. Lady Booby now finds him attractive, and tries to tempt him by holding hands with him, leering at him, and having him bring messages to her room. Joseph remains chaste, but London gossip suggests that he has become her lover. When Sir Thomas Booby dies, she pretends to mourn, but in fact plays cards with her friends for six days. On the seventh day she attempts to seduce Joseph. When Joseph does not respond, she says that he is either a fool or pretends to be, so as to avoid what she is offering, and orders him out of the room. Joseph writes to his sister Pamela complaining about Lady Booby’s behaviour and expressing a wish to look for another job as London appears to be a bad place. Then Joseph is approached by Mrs. Slipslop, who also desires him. An ugly old woman, Mrs. Slipslop has been without a lover for so long that she is no longer afraid of ruining her reputation. But Joseph offers her respect and she feels insulted. Lady Booby calls Mrs. Slipslop to her room and the two disappointed women talk about Joseph. Mrs. Slipslop says that he is a drunkard, gambler and a rascal who has made a
chambermaid pregnant. Lady Booby tells her to dismiss Joseph and the maid, and asks her to send Joseph to see her immediately. She then talks to him about his supposed misbehavior with the maids in the house, and implies that he will be excused if he kisses her and may also take other liberties. Joseph says that he hopes to remain virtuous and follow his sister Pamela’s example. Lady Booby orders him out of the house and summons Mrs. Slipslop to tell her about her decision. Mrs. Slipslop mocks her and Lady Booby wonders if she should dismiss her because Joseph may have told her about Lady Booby’s passion for him. But she decides not to dismiss Mrs. Slipslop, who, in turn, decides to continue working in her house. Joseph writes a letter to Pamela, telling her about Lady Booby’s passion for him and resolving to imitate her chastity. He receives his wages from Peter Pounce, the steward (who lends money at very high rates), and leaves the house. Joseph leaves London and towards Lady Booby’s house in the country because in that parish lives Fanny, a beautiful but poor girl, he loves. She has been brought up by Sir Thomas’s family and they have not married because Parson Adams advised them to wait until they had sufficient money and experience to live comfortably.

During his journey, Joseph is at first offered the use of a horse by another traveler, but later continues alone on foot. He is attacked and beaten unconscious by two thieves who take his clothes and money. After a time a stage-coach passes by. The passengers do not want to stop to help because some are afraid that they will also be robbed, some object that Joseph is naked, and some say that if he dies they will have more trouble. None of the rich passengers will lend him clothing, but the postillion gives him his own coat so that he can enter the coach. The coach moves on and is also robbed. They reach an inn where Betty, the maid, provides a shirt and a bed for Joseph, while Mr. Tow-wouse, the owner of the inn, and his wife, argue over the charity Betty has shown. A stranger enters the inn, and turns out to be Parson Adams. One of the thieves is caught and Joseph’s clothing and a gold coin belonging to him are also found. The thief is to be taken before a justice of the peace the next day, but is left unguarded and escapes during the night. Parson Adams is on his way to London to sell his sermons, and Barnabas, the local clergyman, introduces a bookseller to him. The bookseller tells Adams that the trade is overstocked with sermons. Betty falls in love with Joseph but is rejected and in anger, allows herself to be taken to bed by the landlord, whose wife discovers them and dismisses Betty from employment.

Fielding opens Book II by giving reasons for dividing a work of literature into books and chapters. Adams leaves the inn to sell his sermons in London, but accidentally leaves them behind. He takes this as a sign that he should return to the parish, and decides to accompany Joseph who is going to meet Fanny. With one horse between them, Joseph and
Adams take turns to ride and walk. The rider, after a distance, will tie the horse to a tree and proceed on foot until the other catches up with him. Adams goes ahead and waits for Joseph at an alehouse where Mrs. Slipslop arrives in a stage-coach. Apparently, she met Joseph when he was detained for the debt of the horse and paid for it. Joseph keeps the horse, while Adams rides in the coach with Mrs. Slipslop and they travel towards an inn. On the way, Joseph is thrown from the horse and gets a sore leg. The innkeeper’s wife tends to his leg instead of preparing food for the coach passengers and is scolded by her husband. There is a quarrel in which Adams and Mrs. Slipslop join in.

The journey continues and Joseph sees Adams walking ahead. The absent-minded parson forgot his horse and left it at the inn. They try to catch up with Adams but he walks so fast that he out distances the coach and takes a wrong turning. As he continues, it becomes dark, and hearing the sound of a woman shrieking, Adams goes to her rescue. He fights with the ravisher and knocks him unconscious. Several young men appear and as Adams is telling them what happened, the man regains consciousness and accuses Adams and the woman of attempting to murder him. The young men decide to hand over Adams and the woman to the justice of the peace. Adams realizes that the woman he rescued is Fanny, Joseph’s beloved. The justice is about to send them to prison, when someone recognizes Adams and has him released, while the real criminal escapes. Fanny and Adams meet someone who knows where Joseph is, and they go in search of him. They stop at an alehouse because of a storm, and meet Joseph, as well as Mrs. Slipslop. She refuses to acknowledge Fanny, though she has lived in the same house for many years, and departs angrily in the coach. They wake Adams and request him to wed them immediately, but he insists that they follow the church regulations and wait until their intentions have been publicly announced three times. As they do not have money to pay for the bill, Adams decides to borrow money from a local parson, named Trulliber, who takes a dislike to him because of his poor appearance, insults him, and will give him nothing. As the hostess refuses to let them go without paying the bill, and no rich person in the neighbourhood will lend them money, they cannot leave, but a poor pedlar comes to their rescue by lending them all he has.

Book III begins with praise of biography and how good literature is based on real people and has the object of correcting behaviour. Fielding says that Joseph, Fanny, and Adams leave the inn, and in the course of a dark, starless night, reach a house where they are offered refreshment. Mr. Wilson, the owner, tells the story of his life and he and Adams sit up all night drinking and talking. He tells Adams how he had spent his fortune, married the daughter of the man who had swindled him, and that their eldest son had been stolen by some gypsies and never been found. Wilson says that he will be able to recognize his son by a
strawberry mark on his left breast. As they observe the Wilson household, they conclude that it is an ideal one. Having rested, the trio resume their journey. A pack of hounds attack them and they beat them off with sticks. A squire, the owner of the pack, arrives and demands that they should not be beaten. He then invites them for dinner to his house, but once they arrive, Joseph and Fanny are sent to eat in the kitchen, while Adams eats with his host. The servants are told to make Joseph and Fanny drunk as the squire intends to rape Fanny. But Adams and Joseph leave the house using their sticks to protect Fanny whom the servants attempt to detain. They reach an inn and in the morning, the squire’s servants come and fight with them. Fanny is carried off and Adams and Joseph are beaten up and tied to the bed-posts. Some men, armed with pistols rescue her, and one of them is Peter Pounce, Lady Booby’s steward. The chariot, with Fanny and Peter, proceeds to the inn where Adams and Joseph are bound. They find Adams’s horse and go to Booby Hall.

In Book IV, Fielding tells us that Lady Booby still dreams of Joseph and makes various excuses for his not loving her. She decides to retire into the country. On her way to Booby Hall, she is surprised to see Joseph. Parson Adams takes Fanny and Joseph to his house. On Sunday Lady Booby is at church when Parson Adams announces the coming marriage of Joseph Andrews and Fanny Goodwill. When Lady Booby returns home, she summons Parson Adams. Lady Booby threatens Parson Adams for befriending Joseph when she has dismissed him from her employment. She commands Adams not to publish the banns again, and thus not allow Joseph and Fanny to have a church marriage. Adams refuses to obey her so Lady Booby sends for Lawyer Scout and tells him to have both Joseph and Fanny removed from the parish. He says that he will have Justice Frolick commit them to prison in London. Two days later Lady Booby hears Parson Adams publish the banns again at church. Returning home she meets Slipslop who informs her that Joseph and Fanny have been taken as criminals before Justice Frolick. Slipslop is upset and cries that Joseph will be hanged! Lady Booby wants Fanny removed from the parish but Joseph to remain. While she puzzles on what to do next, a servant announces that her nephew, Mr. Booby, and his wife have arrived in a coach. This is the first Lady Booby has heard of her nephew’s marriage. She is introduced to his wife, Pamela, who is the sister of Joseph. As soon as Mr. Booby learns from his servants that Joseph is committed to trial he visits the judge so that his wife’s brother may be freed and Pamela and Joseph reunited. When he arrives the judge is in the process of sending Joseph and Fanny to prison in London. He goes to Lady Booby’s house and tells her that Joseph is now his brother-in-law and requests that he admitted to their circle and treated as a gentleman. Lady Booby, secretly still in love with Joseph, immediately agrees but as soon as her nephew mentions Fanny, she becomes angry. The squire returns to Joseph and tells him that he must stay with his sister Pamela, while Fanny returns to Parson Adam’s
house. Parson Adams agrees that Joseph and Fanny can marry on Monday. Mrs. Adams attempts to persuade her husband not to publish the marriage banns as it would make Lady Booby angry. Joseph and Fanny enter. Adams tells Joseph that he should have patience and wait to marry Fanny in church. He then lectures him concerning the need to accept the ways of Divine Providence. Someone enters and tells the parson that his youngest son has drowned. Adams acts with all the passion and lack of resignation of which he accused Joseph. The son, however, is alive; he fell into a river and was saved by a pedlar.

Lady Booby decides to bring Fanny and Beau Didapper together in the hope that his fine appearance will win the girl’s love and make her abandon Joseph. Lady Booby and Beau Didapper visit Parson Adams. He is short, misshapen, effeminate and self-satisfied. Beau Didapper makes advances toward Fanny. Joseph, angered, hits him. Mr. and Mrs. Booby disapprove of Joseph’s defending Fanny and of his wish to marry a girl of her class. Haughty Pamela also scolds him for this. A pedlar tells Fanny that he knows of her parents. A woman he once lived with confessed before she died that years ago she traveled with some gypsies who kidnapped a young girl from the Andrews family and sold her to a Sir Thomas Booby as servant. Fanny, hearing the story, faints. It appears that Joseph is her brother and Pamela is her sister! Parson Adams gives thanks that the secret has been discovered before incest is committed by Joseph and Fanny. Slipslop tells Lady Booby that a strange pedlar claims that Fanny and Joseph are sister and brother. Everyone then gathers at Booby Hall to hear the pedlar’s story. Mr. Booby says that Mr. Andrews and his wife will arrive the next morning and will confirm or disprove the story.

Beau Didapper plans to slip into Fanny’s bed at night by pretending to be Joseph. He mistakenly enters into Slipslop’s room. Her cries of alarm bring a naked Parson Adams to the rescue. In the dark he mistakes Slipslop for a man and they fight while Beau Didapper escapes. Lady Booby finds them and assumes the naked person is attacking Slipslop. She sees the fine clothes the Beau has left, and the situation is explained. Adams starts back to his bedroom, but takes the wrong turn, enters Fanny’s room and, naked, falls asleep unknowingly alongside her. When Joseph enters, the parson awakens believing that witchcraft has taken place. At first angry, Joseph knows the parson’s eccentricities and understands there has been a mistake.

Mr. and Mrs. Andrews arrive. Mrs. Andrews claims Fanny as her daughter. Mr. Andrews went abroad while his wife was pregnant. She gave birth to a daughter who was stolen by gypsies, who left behind a boy. The boy is Joseph, whom Mrs. Andrews raised as her own child. The pedlar claims that Joseph was the child of a gentleman, Mr. Wilson. Joseph was stolen by gypsies who later, when he was ill, left him with Mrs. Andrews when
they stole Fanny. Mr. Wilson arrives and hearing the story identifies Joseph from a strawberry mark on his breast. Joseph obtains his father’s permission to marry Fanny. They are wedded by Parson Adams in church. Mr. Booby gives Fanny two thousand pounds which she and Joseph use to purchase an estate. Mr. Booby offers Mr. Adams a position with a better income. Adams refuses to quit his parishioners, but then decides to accept the offer because with the additional money he can hire another curate to help him to look after both parishes.

Characterisation

Joseph Andrews is a panoramic novel, and the reader is introduced to the world of the eighteenth century, from the highest to the lowest social planes. Every new page introduces a new character as the novel moves from the Booby parish to London and back again. All the characters, no matter how small their appearance, are vital, and serve to complement the progress of the main action and the principal characters. Fielding’s experience in the field of drama helped him to delineate the characters as also to dramatize the action. The novel essentially revolves around five characters: Parson Adams, Joseph Andrews, Fanny Goodwill, Mrs. Slipslop, and Lady Booby.

Parson Abraham Adams is undoubtedly the character whose fortunes the reader follows with the most interest. He is a bundle of contradictions, a delightful mixture of scholarship and simplicity, and pedantry and credulity. He is a scholar with a perfect knowledge of Greek and Latin and of such modern and European languages as French and Italian. He often uses Latin expressions, and during the novel he journeys with a manuscript of Aeschylus’s plays in Greek. He gives irreprouachable advice to Joseph about fortitude and resignation, but he is overwhelmed with grief when his child is reported to be drowned. When he speaks on discipline, marriage, or faith, he is very sensible, but he is deceived by every rogue he meets, and believes in the principles of Peter Pounce and the humanity of Parson Trulliber. Brave, friendly and without malice or envy, he is a man of good sense and good nature, but ignorant of the ways of this world. He is about fifty years old and has a wife and six children whom he can barely support on his very small income as a curate. Adams enjoys drinking beer. He considers all his parishioners, especially Joseph and Fanny, as his children. He is eccentric and forgetful; he often leaves his hat and his sermons (which he intends to sell) behind, and has to return for them. Adams at first appears to be a stock character - the typical absent-minded scholar familiar in literature. But Fielding takes this stock figure and gives it individuality. He lands into misadventure after misadventure - he wanders from inn to inn without the means to pay his bills, he is beaten, swindled and mocked at, he is involved in hilarious nightly adventures -but he never loses his innate dignity and goodness.

Henry Fielding : Joseph Andrews / 9
Joseph Andrews is supposedly the only son of Gaffar and Gammer Andrews and the brother of Pamela. In fact he is the son of Mr. Wilson. Joseph was stolen by gypsies as a child and left with Mrs. Andrews who brought him up as her own son. Mr. Andrews recognises him by a strawberry mark on his breast. At the early age of ten he is made an apprentice to Sir Thomas Booby and at seventeen becomes Lady Booby’s footman. He has a very musical voice, and instead of scaring the birds, his cries attract them, and the hounds turn from the huntsman and his horn to follow the boy’s tuneful notes. He is virtuous and handsome, and being well read in the Bible and influenced by Parson Adams, he preserves his purity in the midst of temptations. At the time of the novel he is twenty-one years old. He has nut-brown, curly hair and dark eyes. When in danger, he is ready to fight courageously, and never hesitates his to risk his life for Adams or Fanny. Though for the most part, he is nothing more than the amusing figure of a young lover, simple and frank, both morally and physically vigorous, a few weeks of life on the roads develops the boy into a man - the boy who wrote timid letters to his sister changes into the young man who defends his beloved Fanny when she is chided by Adams.

Fanny Goodwill is the child of Mr. and Mrs. Andrews and the sister of Pamela. She was stolen by gypsies in her infancy. At the age of three she was sold to Sir Thomas Booby and raised as a servant in Lady Booby’s family. She is nineteen years old, beautiful and plump, and very modest. She is also poor, and can neither read nor write.

Mrs. Slipslop, Lady Booby’s companion, is one of the most delightful characters in the novel. She is forty-five years old, short, heavy-set, red-faced, large-nosed and pimpled, and not at all attractive. She is of gentle birth, the daughter of a curate. She believes herself to be learned and argues on theology with Adams. She often mispronounces what she intends to say or uses the wrong words (malapropisms), and her dignity, servility, insolence and her sensuality, all give her a life-like reality.

Lady Booby, the wife of Sir Thomas Booby, takes Joseph with her to London as her servant, attempts to seduce him, and when unsuccessful dismisses him from service. Later, still desiring him, she tries to prevent his marriage to Fanny. She is very conscious of her social superiority, and is torn between her passion for Joseph and her humiliation at loving her servant. Lady Booby reveals herself almost completely through her actions e.g. in her attempted seduction of Joseph, and her attempts to thwart his proposed marriage. She is portrayed as a proud, ruthless, vain, selfish, hypocritical and immoral woman.

Pamela Andrews is based on the heroine of Richardson’s Pamela, who, as a servant, protects her chastity from her rich employer, Mr. B - who fails to seduce her, and marries her.
In *Joseph Andrews*, she is the supposed sister of Joseph and, unknown to her, the sister of Fanny. Joseph looks upon her as a model of chastity. Fielding amuses himself by showing her as a young wife who preaches and moralizes without end and does not want to have any connection with Fanny as she regards her as socially inferior.

Fielding’s minor characters are also vividly portrayed and have a distinct identity of their own. Peter Pounce who holds back the salaries of servants and charges high interest on loans, Parson Trulliber with his greediness, shrewish Mrs. Tow-wouse who scolds her erring husband, Beau Didapper the typical 18th century dandy, all serve to make a colourful gallery of characters. All these individual types are clearly characterized e.g. a traveller in a coach, a post-boy, an innkeeper, appear for one instant, yet they remain firmly engraved upon the mind.

### The Structure of Joseph Andrews

Many critics have commented that *Joseph Andrews* resembles a play (perhaps because Fielding was an experienced dramatist). The four books are said to resemble four acts, in which the first book presents the problem, the second and the third present the complications and the fourth book presents the unfolding of the action. At the same time, the first part of every chapter, the preface, is an informal essay - obviously the work of a man who wrote in 18th century periodicals. Conditioned by his experiences as a playwright, he has broken his action into scenes, which enable him to juxtapose incidents and characters so that they comment on each other. When Fielding wants to retard the action, he does so by using the simplest means e.g. rain or storm force the characters to stop at an inn, they cannot leave because they do not have money to pay the bill, thieves rob them, or a judge arrests them. But although the devices are so simple, nothing remains unexplained. The novel is thus subjected to the discipline of drama, which give it life even though it is a novel of character.

The careful organization of the novel is seen in its structure. The story begins with the supposed history of Joseph’s parentage and the last chapter reveals his true father. The story also begins in the country house of the Boobys which is also Adam’s parish. Joseph, Adams, Lady Booby and Mrs. Slipslop, four of the five principal characters, are introduced. Fanny’s late appearance is meant as a surprise. The action shifts to London for a short while. Then the narrative moves through the countryside as Joseph and later others return towards the parish from which the story began. So the novel begins with a group of characters who are dispersed and come together again while other significant characters are added. Finally the original group, enlarged by Pamela and her husband, Mr. Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Andrews, and the pedlar, reassemble for the wedding of Joseph and Fanny. Fielding took surprising care to
provide symmetries within the narrative, e.g. Lady Booby expresses similar passions and conflicting emotions in Book I and Book IV, Pamela is mentioned early in Book I and late in Book IV, Joseph and Fanny are reunited at inns in Book II, Chapter 12 and Book III, Chapter 12, and the attempted rape and abduction of Fanny occurs in Book II, Chapter 9, and Book III, Chapter 9. Besides symmetry there are many contrasts, e.g. Lady Booby is unfaithful to her husband while Joseph is faithful to Fanny, Adams’s conduct contrasts the behaviour of Trulliber.

It has often been observed that *Joseph Andrews* has a weak ending because it appears to be a contrived one. Joseph is found to be the son of a gentleman, Mr. Wilson, while Fanny, far from being a foundling, is the daughter of Gaffar and Gammar Andrews. Bourgeois proprieties are satisfied, and no one opposes the marriage, which brings the book to a happy ending. Yet this denouement is not brought about clumsily, because Fielding is at pains to lead on to the surprise gradually. Fanny is found to be the daughter of the Andrews, so that for some time everyone believes her to be Joseph’s sister, which allows the novelist to show us the different reactions of the chief characters to the situation. E.g. grief of Fanny and Joseph, Pamela’s moralizing, the advice of Adams, and hope blossoming in the heart of Lady Booby, Finally Mr. Wilson arrives and recognizes Joseph as his long-lost son by the strawberry mark on his chest. But it should be noted that the arrival of Mr. Wilson, which takes place in Chapter XV, is announced as early as Chapter V.

*Joseph Andrews* is often called “a novel of adventure”, but adventure plays only a minor part because the characters are seen to be far more important than the action in the novel. The picaresque novel (which narrated the adventures of the picaro - a vagabond who journeyed for some time before he was rewarded with happiness) was popular during this time and *Joseph Andrews* is said to belong to this tradition. This kind of a novel had a very loose plot, while Fielding’s novel, as we have seen, has a well-constructed plot. One can conclude by saying that Fielding’s novel began in the picaresque tradition, but developed into a novel of character. The narrator of *Joseph Andrews* is the omniscient narrator, who holds opinions, comments upon events, and guides the reader through the novel by means of common sense and universally held opinions. But he is often ironic, satirically meaning the opposite of what he explicitly says, and the reader has to be alert for the narrator’s irony and sense of humour.
Jane Austen and the social background of her novels

Jane Austen was born in Hampshire in 1775. Her father was a clergyman and she was the last but one of a family of eight children. Accompanied by Cassandra, her sister and lifelong friend, she went to school first at Oxford and then at Reading, but her education was completed at home under the supervision of her father. She lived quietly, a happy and uneventful life. She began writing at an early age, but her first novel, *Sense and Sensibility*, was published in 1811, followed by *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813, *Mansfield Park* in 1814, *Emma* in 1815, and *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* in 1817. She fell ill and died in 1817.

England was undergoing a rapid change in Jane Austen’s lifetime. The economy was changing from an agricultural to an industrial one and the aristocratic world of the 18th century was giving way to a new one. Yet Jane Austen’s novels hardly mirror all this. This was because she lived a sheltered life in southern England, which remained agricultural. The England of her novels was still that of 18th century elegance and easy living. Thus Jane Austen’s world was a closed world in which a very small proportion of the total population participated, and this is the world her novels reflect. Class distinctions were very rigid and were divided thus: the land-owning aristocracy and the settled gentry; the new prosperous industrialists; the workers and the labourers. *Pride and Prejudice* is set exclusively in the context of the upper classes (e.g. The Bingleys, the Darcys, Lady Catherine de Bourgh). None of the major characters works, for these moneyed classes lived entirely on their on their income from rents and inheritances, and they looked down on traders like Mr. Gardiner, who earn their money in business. Within the upper classes, there were further petty distinctions arising from the amount of wealth possessed by its members, e.g. The Bingley sisters look down upon the Bennets, because they are not as wealthy as they are, while they have enormous respect for Mr. Darcy because of his income of ten thousand pounds per annum. The occupations of this class were largely social: dinner parties, balls, and a daily round of trivialities - visits to friends, a few household tasks which were considered good enough for them, etc. One should note that Jane Austen had very little material to work from. That she should have been able to construct a worth-while novel from such trivia is in itself no mean achievement.
Pride and Prejudice: A Summary

Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* is a social comedy set in the provincial society of Hertfordshire, England, around the 18th century. Austen begins with the maxim that “a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife”. Marriage is a constant pursuit in Austen’s comic world. Local balls are a source of continuous gossip and speculation. The key stumbling block to marriage, as the title suggests, is a disparity in social class. When the novel opens, Mrs. Bennet is excited by the news that a rich, eligible young bachelor is moving into the neighbourhood. With five unmarried daughters, her mind is preoccupied with finding husbands for them, and Mr. Bingley would clearly be an excellent catch. The Bennets discuss the expected arrival of Mr. Bingley and Mrs. Bennet wants her husband to make his acquaintance before her neighbours. Mr. Bennet is ironic and pretends not to understand. He does visit Mr. Bingley but does not tell his wife, and later, matter-of-factly reveals the news of his visit. Mr. Bingley repays Mr. Bennet’s call and then goes to fetch a group for the ball.

Mr. Bingley arrives with a party from London, which consist of two sisters, a brother-in-law, and his friend Mr. Darcy. Bingley is immediately said to be good looking and gentlemanlike, while Darcy, who dances only with the Bingley sisters and remains aloof, is regarded as a most disagreeable man. Elizabeth feels insulted when she overhears Bingley trying to persuade Darcy to dance with her. He refuses and says that she is only tolerable. The next morning the two eldest sisters discuss the ball. Jane admits that she admires Bingley, who has paid particular attention to her. Bingley and Darcy also do the same, but while Bingley is generous with his praise, Darcy finds little to applaud. The excitement also necessitates visits around town, where Mrs. Bennet triumphs over Jane’s success. As their socializing continues, Darcy finds himself increasingly impressed with Elizabeth’s wit and beauty. At a dinner party, a pompous Sir Lucas tries to persuade him to dance with Elizabeth, but while he is willing, she refuses. Mr. Bennet’s property is entailed and will not be inherited by any of his daughters. He and his wife disagree over the intelligence of Lydia and Kitty, who are always running after the officers in the militia. They take after their mother who once liked soldiers herself and encourages her daughters in their behaviour. Miss Bingley invites Jane to dinner in her brother’s absence; and Mrs. Bennet sends her on horseback, thinking it will rain so that Jane must then stay overnight. News comes next morning that Jane has caught cold. Elizabeth anxiously walks the three miles to Netherfield, causing great surprise when she arrives at breakfast time.

Elizabeth sees how hypocritical the regard of the Bingley sisters for Jane is. They soon forget her illness despite their assurances of sympathy. Mr. Hurst lives only lives to eat.
and play cards. Miss Bingley criticises Elizabeth severely when she is out of the room. Bingley defends Jane and Elizabeth against her criticism of their relatives. Although Darcy is further attracted to Elizabeth by her walk, he accepts that the inferiority of their relatives in social standing will hinder Jane and Elizabeth making good marriages.

The next morning Jane is no worse, but Elizabeth sends a note to her mother asking her come to Netherfield. Mrs. Bennet and her two youngest arrive soon after breakfast and she and the doctor decide that Jane cannot return home. Mrs. Bennet thank Mr. Bingley and his sisters for their kindness to Jane, and in doing so makes an utter fool of herself. They return home and Elizabeth goes back to Jane. Jane is a little by evening and, after dinner, Elizabeth joins the party in the drawing-room. Darcy is writing a letter but Miss Bingley is sitting nearby trying to distract his attention. Darcy finishes his letter and asks Miss Bingley for some music. Darcy’s eyes are frequently fixed on her, but Elizabeth thinks it is only because he disapproves of her appearance - she has no idea that he now admires her. Jane comes down to the drawing-room after dinner. Mr. Bingley is delighted to see her and sits down by her side, hardly talking to anyone else. Next morning Elizabeth writes to her mother to ask for the carriage to come and fetch them home. The match-making Mrs. Bennet, however, is anxious that the visit should be for the prolonged and sends a message that the carriage will not be available before Tuesday. But Elizabeth is determined to leave and borrows Mr. Bingley’s carriage to take them home the following day. Darcy avoids them, Mr. Bennet is glad to see them, but Mrs. Bennet is disappointed, and does not welcome them home. The next morning Mr. Bennet informs his wife that they are to have a guest to dinner. He has received a letter from his cousin, Mr. Collins, who, after Mr. Bennet’s death, will inherit the Longbourn estate. Mr. Collins has obtained his parish through the patronage of Lady Catherine, a wealthy widow with an only daughter. He is always eloquent in his praise of this lady. Mr. Collins, having a good house and a sufficient income, intends to marry and has visited Longbourn with the intention of choosing one of the Bennet daughters. He likes Jane but Mrs. Bennet makes it clear that her affections are engaged and he turns his attention to Elizabeth. One morning, the sisters walk into Meryton, accompanied by Mr. Collins. They meet two young men Denny and Wickham, and later Bingley and Darcy. Both Darcy and Wickham seem upset at the sight of each other. The Bennet sisters, with Collins, dine with their aunt and uncle and Wickham is one of the officers who join the party. Elizabeth is delighted when he sits near her and begins to talk about Darcy. He tells her that Darcy has treated him unfairly. He says that Lady Catherine is a fitting aunt for Darcy, because she is arrogant and proud. Elizabeth tells Jane what she has heard about Darcy’s unkindness to Wickham. But Jane does not believe her. Bingley and his sisters invite the Bennets to a ball at Netherfield. On the night of the ball, Elizabeth is disappointed that Wickham is not present and realises that he has
done so to avoid Darcy. Later in the evening she dances with Darcy and though she is still unimpressed by him there are signs that he is attracted by her. During supper Elizabeth is embarrassed to hear her mother speaking openly to Lady Lucas of her expectation that Jane will marry Bingley. After supper she is further mortified by her younger sister Mary’s efforts to sing because her voice is weak and manner affected. Mr. Collins gives a pompous speech and later comes to her side where he remains for the rest of the evening.

The following day Mr. Collins asks permission to speak to Elizabeth alone. He informs her that he has chosen her to be his wife. When Elizabeth declines the proposal he replies that it is usual for young ladies first to reject the man they secretly mean to accept. Elizabeth denies this but Collins persists in his beliefs that she really intends to marry him so she decides to tell her father to deal with this suitor. Soon after Elizabeth has left the room, Mrs. Bennet enters and congratulates Collins. He returns the congratulations with pleasure and tells her of Elizabeth’s modesty. Her mother cannot believe him but assures him that she is headstrong and foolish and will be brought to reason. She tells Mr. Bennet to tell Elizabeth to accept him. Mr. Bennet tells Elizabeth that her mother will never see her again if she does not marry Collins but that her father will never see her again if she does. Mrs. Bennet tries to coax Elizabeth to accept Collins but her daughter is firm in her refusal.

Mr. Collins then turns his attention to Elizabeth’s friend Charlotte Lucas and proposes to her. She accepts and her family is delighted. When she tells Elizabeth about it, she is horrified but Charlotte tells she prefers marriage with Mr. Collins to the lonely future which she risks if she does not accept his proposal. Mrs. Bennet is very upset by this news and cannot forgive Elizabeth or Charlotte. The wedding of Charlotte and Mr. Collins takes place and Charlotte extracts a promise from Elizabeth that she will visit them. In March Elizabeth accompanies Sir Lucas and his daughter Maria to stay with Charlotte. Charlotte seems contented with marriage and bears her husband’s irritating behaviour with composure. They visit Lady Catherine who lives nearby. She is a large woman with strong features and an authoritative way of speaking. She advises how to manage her home, her cows and her poultry and takes great pleasure in dictating to others. She asks Elizabeth many impertinent questions about her family and is astonished when Elizabeth stands up to her.

Mr. Darcy arrives at Lady Catherine’s house with his cousin Colonel Fitzwilliam, who is about thirty years old and, though not good-looking has pleasing manners. That evening when they visit Lady Catherine Fitzwilliam is attracted by Elizabeth while Darcy keeps looking towards them. The following morning Elizabeth is sitting alone writing to Jane when to her surprise Darcy enters the room and talks to her for a little while. After this Darcy
comes often and Elizabeth notices that he looks at her a great deal but speaks little. One day, Mr. Darcy unexpectedly calls, and with unusual agitation, abruptly declares his love to an astonished Elizabeth. He explains that he has struggled in vain against an attachment that would link him to an inferior family. Elizabeth angrily refuses him. Darcy is shocked because he expected a favourable answer, but Elizabeth censures him for his ungentlemanly behaviour and accuses him of having ruined his sister’s happiness and having destroyed the career of the noble Mr. Wickham. Darcy leaves in anger. The next morning Elizabeth is passing the park gates when Darcy hands her a letter and walks away. Elizabeth reads the letter, in which Darcy explains that he persuaded Bingley to give up any thoughts of Jane because he thought that Jane did not return Bingley’s affection. Darcy now realises that he may be mistaken. He goes on to say that Mrs. Bennet and the younger daughters often show a lack of propriety which is unfitting in a family into which Bingley should marry. This fact influenced him to part Jane and his friend. Darcy adds that Elizabeth and Jane were always extremely well behaved. He informs Elizabeth that Wickham was the son of his father’s estate manager to whom Darcy’s father was always kind and helped in school and college, intending to provide for him in the church if he made it his profession. After the father’s death, Wickham wrote to Darcy, saying that he did not intend to become a clergyman and asked for the money instead. He accepted the three thousand pounds that Darcy gave him instead of the church career. When the money had been gambled away, Wickham tried to improve his finances by eloping with Darcy’s fifteen-year-old sister. Darcy had discovered the clot in time to save his sister in disgrace and had broken all ties with him. Elizabeth finds Darcy’s story difficult to believe, but as she reconsiders Wickham’s behaviour she begins to see the truth. In a painful moment of self-recognition, she realises that her vanity and wounded pride have lead her to make wrong judgements. When, after hours of wandering, she returns to the house, she finds that Darcy and his cousin have already left for London.

Elizabeth departs after another week’s stay. She leaves still occupied with thoughts of Darcy. In London, Jane joins her and they meet the two youngest sisters. Elizabeth is ashamed of their silliness and poor manners. At home, Elizabeth tells Jane of Darcy’s proposal and Wickham’s past which they decide to keep a secret. The younger Bennet sisters are disappointed because the militia is scheduled to depart. Lydia is invited by one of the officer’s wives to visit them in Brighton, the new station. Elizabeth secretly advises her father against Lydia’s trip, but he lets her go. Elizabeth plans to visit the home of Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner, but at the last moment her uncle’s plans change and they go only as far as Derbyshire, which is where Darcy has his estate. Mrs. Gardiner takes Elizabeth to see the estate which is named Pemberly. The housekeeper is sincere in her praise of Darcy as master and brother. As she is walking in the garden, she sees Darcy who has just arrived from
London. She is surprised and embarrassed but also astonished at his solicitous manners. Although her uncle is only a businessman, he asks for an introduction and acts as a gracious host. The next morning Darcy brings his sister to call on Elizabeth. Miss Darcy is a reserved girl of sixteen who struggles against her shyness. Her feelings towards him have changed from dislike to respect and gratitude. Then a letter from Jane announces a terrible calamity: Lydia has eloped with Mr. Wickham, and Mr. Bennet has gone to London to look further. Just as Elizabeth finishes the letter, Darcy enters, and overcome with distress she tells him the news. He is shocked and soon departs. Elizabeth, her aunt and uncle return home.

They find Mrs. Bennet very upset and full of self-pity. No news has arrived from London. It is discovered that Wickham owes money to almost every local tradesman as well as a thousand pounds in gambling debts in Brighton. A letter of condolence arrives from Mr. Collins who observes that the death of their daughter would have been a lesson in comparison to this and congratulates himself at not having married into the family. Mr. Bennet returns disheartened from London, and admits to Elizabeth that he has been too lenient in Lydia’s upbringing. News finally comes from Mr. Gardiner. He has found the couple, they are to be married, and Mr. is to pay a small yearly allowance in return. Mrs. Bennet instantly recovers in anticipation of the marriage. Elizabeth realises but all hope of marrying Darcy has been destroyed by her family’s new connection to Wickham. Lydia comes to Longbourn on the day of her marriage oblivious to the suffering she has caused. Several days later Lydia describes her wedding to Elizabeth and mentions that Darcy had been present. Elizabeth asks her aunt and comes to know that had brought the marriage, by offering Wickham a large sum of money and convincing him that he should marry Lydia.

Bingley comes to call Jane and Darcy accompanies him. They all meet again at a dinner party where Bingley continues to admire Jane and everyone begins to wonder about their engagement. Darcy leaves for London and Bingley begins to call on the Bennets daily. He proposes to Jane and she consents to marry him. In the midst of their happiness, Lady Catherine arrives and demands an audience with Elizabeth. Elizabeth is astonished by her visit and even more surprised when she accuses her of a secret engagement to Darcy. Elizabeth refuses to be bullied by her guest’s questions, and Lady Catherine’s irritation grows and she insists that Darcy will marry her daughter. Elizabeth refuses to promise not to accept Darcy and Lady Catherine leaves, seriously displeased. Several days later, Darcy returns and calls on them with Bingley. Elizabeth can no longer refrain from thanking him for what he has done for Lydia, and he tells her he has acted only out of concern for her. He then reveals his unaltered affections, and Elizabeth explains her own change of heart. Both lovers then admit their faults. Elizabeth had been rash and thoughtless while Darcy had been haughty and
proud. The next evening Darcy asks Mrs. Bennet for Elizabeth’s hand. Her father calls her to
the library, troubled by this unexpected news, but is reassured of her feelings. Bemused at the
rapid series of betrothals, he tells Elizabeth that if any young men came for Mary or Kitty,
they should be sent in to him. Mrs. Bennet is astonished to learn that the disagreeable Darcy
is to be her son-in-law and is happy because of his ten-thousand-income. Thus the two
courtships end happily and Jane and Elizabeth are safely married.

Characterisation

Pride and Prejudice is brought vividly to life by a gallery of different and contrasting
characters. Not all of these are complex for e.g. Jane and Bingley are simpler and, less
intricate than Darcy and Elizabeth because psychologically they have no great. They suffer
setbacks at the hands of other more complex characters, while those complex characters
create their own problems, to the confusion of themselves and others. Less beautiful than her
sister Jane, whom she loves without jealousy, Elizabeth is much more spirited and
independent than a twenty-year old lady of her times would be. She is impatient with
pretensions and conventions, but at the same time, she understands the value of propriety and
good taste. She is her father’s favourite, having inherited his wit and intelligence. Her lively
playful nature makes her attractive, well-liked by women (e.g. Her aunt and Charlotte Lucas),
and much admired by men. Her judgement is not as correct as she imagines, and once her
pride is hurt, as it is by Darcy cutting remarks at the ball, it is badly clouded by prejudice in
which she stubbornly persists, in the belief that she is being clever. For all her intelligence
and perception she makes bad mistakes of judgement. She lets Wickham’s manners and
appearance bias her against Darcy. She allows her own pride to prejudice her against him.
She sees the bad breeding of her younger sisters and the folly of her mother. Her advice to her
father against Lydia going to Brighton is mature and realistic. When she falls in love with
Darcy, she does so having first felt respect and gratitude towards him. Although not anxious
by nature, she is upset over Jane’s unhappiness and her own uncertainty over Darcy. From the
time she receives Darcy’s letter, her eyes are opened, and she acknowledges that she never
knew herself. Her intellectual acknowledgement of her own pride and prejudice comes much
earlier than her understanding of her emotions, which shift gradually from hatred of Darcy to
love of him. Despite her youth, she refuses to defer to Lady Catherine and is not brow-beaten
by her. She has enough sharp wit to out-argue Lady Catherine and the moral courage to defy
her. She has faults, but they are faults of impulsive generosity, not meanness of spirit. With
typical fair-mindedness, she admits her errors and struggles towards a mature self-knowledge.
Elizabeth has originality, especially in her liveliness, which makes her an interesting
character.

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In doing the unexpected but at the same time remaining sensible, she is a more life-like heroine than the conventional heroine of sentimental novels.

Fitzwilliam Darcy, when seen from the outside appears to be pompous and solemn, in keeping with his great pride. He contrasts sharply with Elizabeth by lacking all lightness of touch. An aristocrat with ten thousand pounds a year, he quickly attracts criticism at the ball because of the aloof contempt he shows to the company at large, and earns Elizabeth’s resentment by deliberately insulting her. His rudeness and haughtiness are defensive: that contrary to appearances, he is basically shy, too serious by nature for the frivolities of society, too sincere in his feelings to be able to make the charming display of them that comes naturally to a hypocrite like Wickham. Initially we see Darcy as Elizabeth sees him (and she is very biased), but we are subsequently given more and more evidence of his true nature, “culminating in the testimony of Mrs. Reynolds, the housekeeper at Pemberley, who speaks of him as an ideal master and landlord, an excellent brother, a model of good nature and generosity. Meanwhile, the natural good taste of Pemberley itself is a powerful witness to the “kind of man Darcy really is. In the end, Elizabeth has to acknowledge not only that he has been fairer to Wickham than he deserves, but also that his part in bringing about a separation between Bingley and Jane was not malicious, but done out of a concern for his friend in the excusable belief that Jane was not in love.

Darcy resolves the disgrace of Lydia’s elopement by a practical marriage-settlement, and does so secretly, though once the secret is, exposed, it confirms the deep sincerity and constancy of his love for, Elizabeth. He has come a long way in self-knowledge since he offended Elizabeth by his patronising proposal. His pride, but not his self respect, has been humbled. He, like Elizabeth has come to realise they are equals, as people; that his family, like hers, is not exempt from vulgarity (Lady Catherine and Mrs. Bennet are very similar by nature). Both of them see through silly formalities and conventions; both take pride in their discernment; both dislike vulgarity and, most importantly of all, both of them come to see through appearances and to share the same moral perspective. There is some truth in Elizabeth’s claim that her attraction for Darcy resulted from his being ‘sick of civility, of defence, of officious attention’ from women like Caroline Bingley; he comes most alive in dialogue when challenged by Elizabeth’s wit, but is rather rigid and wooden as a character. Like Elizabeth, we have hopes that, in return for the ‘judgement, information and knowledge of the world’ he brings in marriage, she will succeed in her effort to get him to relax and laugh more at himself.

Jane Bennet is so beautiful, physically and by nature, that she is If beyond the
criticism of even Darcy and Caroline Bingley. Her sweetness and disinterestedness’ may be ‘really angelic,’ but this "often makes her naive in her judgements. She is too good-natured in herself to discover harm or bad nature in others. She has genuine I modesty and humility and this prevents her from giving enough positive encouragement to Bingley, as the shrewd Charlotte Lucas is quick to see; indeed, her character lacks forcefulness of any kind, and I her sufferings and delights are passive, never the result of any action on her part. In sharp contrast with Elizabeth, Jane has the simplest of, natures. She is far less conscious of the vulgarity and shortcomings of her family than Elizabeth, who agonises over them, and she is painfully slow in forcing to recognise what Elizabeth sees at a glance: that Caroline Bingley is two-faced and no real friend. Her courtship and marriage belonged to the tradition of the sentimental novel. Hers is love at first sight, as is Bingley’s. External difficulties prevent it from running its smooth course, but in itself it is an unclouded romantic love. It has something child-like about it, but Jane herself is in many ways child-like.

Charles Bingley is a perfect match for Jane. Since he shares her good nature, is modest, passive and acted upon, without ever acting himself. When Elizabeth makes a distinction between characters who can be perfectly understood because of their simplicity and straightforwardness and those who are complex and intricate, she is mentally contrasting him with Darcy. He stands in contrast to Darcy in the same way as Jane does to Elizabeth, and therefore is an extrovert, not snobbish easily pleased, and not critical of others. Just as Elizabeth watches protectively over Jane, so Darcy protects Bingley and orders his life for him.

Mr. Bennet is an intelligent man, attractive and amusing. But having made an unwise marriage with a woman of low intelligence, he does not take care to conceal from his children the contempt he feels for his vulgar and stupid wife. He thinks that his daughters are silly and ignorant like most girls. He is disillusioned and diverts himself with books and by ridiculing everyone. But his sarcasm does not excuse the neglect of his daughters. He feels to discipline and allows their mother to encourage their ignorance and vanity. Far from giving his children the support they badly need, he withdraws himself physically and psychologically for all parental responsibility. Elizabeth and her father are seen in reverse roles when she pleads with him not to give permission to Lydia to go to Brighton, while he jokes about Elizabeth’s seriousness. Later, he is very disturbed by Lydia’s elopement which shakes him into action and he realises that a more disciplined upbringing could have prevented her thoughtless behaviour.

Mrs. Bennet is more of a caricature and her only interest in life is to get her daughters
married, go visiting and keep in touch with all the gossip in the neighbourhood. She is jealous of her neighbours except when she can triumph over them. Her obsession with her daughters is really a selfish one because having been beautiful herself, she wants to relive her vanity through them, especially Jane and Lydia. She criticises others freely when they are not present and wishes always to have her own way. Her schemes to marry off her daughters are very indiscreet and tactless. Mrs. Bennet becomes irritable when things go wrong e.g. when Lydia elopes with Wickham. She recovers immediately at the news of Lydia’s arranged marriage to Wickham and now regards it as a triumph, boasting about it to the neighbours. But her biggest change of face comes with Darcy, when she at first calls him disagreeable and hateful, and later calls him charming and gentlemanly. Lacking in moral awareness, she is childish, self-centered and uncharitable to everyone outside her family.

Mr. Collins is a source of humour through his pompous and affected behaviour which he carries to the point of ridiculousness. His courtship of Elizabeth ending in the proposal of marriage is humorous because he is completely unaware of anyone’s feelings except his own. His style, in his conversation and letters, exposes as a pretentious, hypocritical fool, who does not have much education or refinement but who is egoistic and a sycophant.

Lydia is the only other Bennet daughter to play an important role in the novel. She shows herself to be a silly unprincipled girl whose only interest in life is to attract men. She is the youngest and resembles the mother more than any of them. Mrs. Bennet relives her youth through Lydia whom she encourages when she badly needs to be disciplined. She is not well-read, bold, vulgar and very immature. She never shows the least moral awareness and her brash behaviour when she comes as a bride is a testimony to her stupidity and bad taste. Lady Catherine is an egoist and a fitting patron for Mr. Collins. An aristocrat she is, conscious of her own self-importance and wants to be respected by everyone. She always gives her opinion and does not expect to be contradictory. She is a caricature of all that is worst in rank and privilege - the aristocratic class at its most materialistic and ill-bred. Her proud assertion of good breeding exposes her lack of it, and Darcy realises that his aunt and Mrs. Bennet closely resemble each other. Charlotte Lucas is Elizabeth’s best friend, sensible and intelligent, but plain in appearance. She is twenty-seven and realises that her chances of a good marriage are not great. So she accepts Collins being of the opinion that happiness in marriage is completely a matter of chance. George Wickham has a fine countenance, a good figure and a pleasing manner - outward advantages that he uses well to deceive everyone. He is the exact opposite of Darcy and usually makes a good impression in society. He is totally selfish, unscrupulous and lacking in morals. His seduction of Lydia is loveless, calculating
The Structure of the Novel

Pride and Prejudice is a well-constructed novel in which the events follow logically, there are no digressions, the sub-plots are related closely to the main plot, and the characters and action complement and supplement each other. The first six chapters introduce the Bennets, Lucases, Darcy and the Bingleys, and also give the reader hints about the development of the plot. After Jane returns this leads from Netherfield, Wickham and Collins are introduced, and this leads to first high point in the story - the Netherfield ball. The next few chapters deal with Mr. Collins, his marriage to Charlotte, Elizabeth’s contact with Darcy which leads to the climax of the first half of the novel - Darcy’s proposal to Elizabeth and her rejection. Elizabeth also stops at the Gardiners, giving the reader an opportunity to get to know these characters and preparing him for their role in their latter part of the story where they help to bring about a reunion of Elizabeth and Darcy. Meanwhile, many hints have prepared for the elopement of Lydia and Wickham, which, ironically acts as a catalyst to bring Darcy and Elizabeth together. Into the main theme are woven the developing love affairs of Jane and Lydia which act as a commentary on the central story. Austen uses what is called the “Kaldidoscopic” presentation of the main characters, i.e., the reader is shown a first one aspect of character, then the emphasis shifts, and a new aspect is shown. This process continues until all aspects of the character have been revealed. The plot of the novel is thus symmetrical, the characterisation psychological, and nothing and no character is unnatural or unnecessary. Jane Austen’s technique and her characterisation are so skillful that they cannot be considered apart.

Some Important Themes in the Novel

The opening lines of the novel (“It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.”) indicate the main theme of Pride and Prejudice, which, as in all of Jane Austen’s novels, is marriage. It is mainly about the difficulties a couple has to overcome before they can marry. Elizabeth and Darcy have to first overcome the obstacles within their own selves viz. of pride (in Darcy) and prejudice (in Elizabeth) before they can become suitable marriage partners. Elizabeth is attractive and intelligent, Darcy is rich and handsome. But both have to gain self-knowledge. This is because Darcy is proud and will not humble himself while Elizabeth is hasty in her judgement and angered at Darcy’s haughty exterior. Darcy’s upbringing makes him hesitate in proposing to Elizabeth because of her lower social status but he does so inspite of himself, because he is attracted by her lively mind, affectionate nature and attractive appearance. He believes that
Elizabeth will accept him because he is so superior. But she feels insulted by his patronising behaviour and rejects him. Darcy is seen only through the eyes of Elizabeth and other people in society - it is at the end that we learn of his generosity to Wickham and of his good reputation among his employees. It is also at the end that we learn of his feelings at crucial points in the story. The events which occur towards the end eventually help Darcy and Elizabeth to resolve their mistakes and accept each other for what they are. Thus their marriage is founded on affection and understanding and not on blind impulse. Austen contrasts other marriages against the story of Elizabeth and Darcy. Charlotte’s marriage to Collins is a compromise she makes because she is twenty-seven, plain, and has no prospects of making a good marriage. So she marries Collins who is inferior in intelligence, only for the position he offers. Lydia and Wickham have married on the basis of momentary attraction on her part and mercenary aim on his. There appears to be little attachment between them and the future does not seem to be a very happy one for them. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet obviously have an incompatible marriage. They have nothing in common because Mrs. Bennet is a selfish, vain, and unprincipled woman who attracted Mr. Bennet because of her good looks. He married her though she was inferior to him in intelligence, and now regards her with contempt which he does not try to hide. The only other marriage which is likely to be a happy one is that of Jane and Bingley because they are both essentially good-natured and have genuine affection for each other. But they are both too passive and gentle and lack the liveliness that is seen in the relationship between Elizabeth and Darcy.

A further theme in the novel is that of parental responsibility, though it is explored in negative, rather than positive terms. Mr. Bennet has made the grave mistake of marrying a woman who had nothing to commend her except a pretty face. Instead of accepting his mistake and making the best of it by giving their children the support they need, he has withdrawn himself physically and psychologically from wife and family alike. He is lazy and takes the easy way out of his difficulties by refusing to face them. His sharp wit is used as a defence against any demand made on him. One instance of his neglect of his parental duties is when he does not heed Elizabeth’s warning that Lydia should not be sent to Brighton. Elizabeth also suggests that her younger sisters’ impudent behaviour reflects badly on herself and Jane. But Mr. Bennet childishly abandons all responsibility and treats her warnings lightly with self-indulgent amusement. When Lydia other for what they are. Thus their marriage is founded on affection and understanding and not on blind impulse. Austen contrasts other marriages against the story of Elizabeth and Darcy. Charlotte’s marriage to Collins is a compromise she makes because she is twenty-seven, plain, and has no prospects of making a good marriage. So she marries Collins who is inferior in intelligence, only for the position he offers. Lydia and Wickham have married on the basis of momentary attraction on
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lightly with self-indulgent amusement. When Lydia elopes, he tells Elizabeth that he deserves
to suffer for his irresponsibility, but when the matter is resolved, he is glad because it will
save him a world of trouble. Apart from his dismay at the elopement, the only other occasion
when he shows a father’s concern is when Elizabeth tells him of her intention to marry Darcy.
Speaking sincerely for once, out of the misery of his own experience, he then begs her not to
repeat his own mistake by making an incompatible marriage. But there is no indication to
show that either he or his wife is aware that their children are victims of a disastrous
marriage. The only positive example of parental responsibility comes from her aunt and
uncle, whose sympathy, tact and good sense are a contrast to that of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet.

The theme of appearance and reality is integrated into the total moral perspective of
the novel, and people are often far from being what they appear to be. Outwardly, Mr. Collins
is a Christian clergyman, but he is by nature a sycophant and a hypocrite; Mr. Hurst is
outwardly a gentleman but actually a greedy mercenary; the fashionable Bingley sisters can
hardly wait for the door to close on Elizabeth before criticising her; and above all, Darcy and
Wickham, one who is actually good and one who only appears to be good. A failure in self-
knowledge also belongs to the theme of appearance and reality. Both Darcy and Elizabeth
have to discover their own genuine selves, and this discovery comes along with their discovery of one another. They learn to rid themselves of the illusions and misunderstandings created by their pride and prejudice.
Charles Dickens: his life and career

Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth in 1812. He was the second of six children, and his father, John Dickens, who was a clerk, failed in his financial responsibilities. Declining family fortunes forced them to move to London, and at the age of ten, he took up work in a blacking factory under conditions of stress and want which he never forgot. John Dickens was sent to the Marshalsea debtors’ prison, and was joined there by the rest of the family, but Charles remained outside in the lodgings, able to visit his parents but experiencing acute loneliness and humiliation. He began to store up observations of London people, and to grow in sympathy with the victims of poverty and social ills. In 1824, with the release of his father, Charles Dickens returned to school with a determination to succeed. After leaving school he worked first for a firm of solicitors, and then as a reporter in Doctors’ Commons, developing an interest in legal courts. He registered impressions of comedy, tragedy and melodrama in law, and human nature in the witness box, which he later used in his writing. At the same time his interest in acting increased. At one time he intended becoming an actor, and the theatre remained a lifetime enthusiasm. In 1832 he began the first of the Sketches by Boz. The next year the first numbers of the Pickwick Papers began to appear. In 1835 he married Kate Hogarth but his marriage was not a happy one. In 1837 he began Oliver Twist as a serial and between 1838 and 1841 he wrote Nicholas Nickleby, The Old Curiosity Shop and Barnaby Rudge. A tour of the United States resulted in Martin Chuzzlewit, satirizing life in America. In the years 1843-49, A Christmas Carol, Dombey and Son and David Copperfield were published. In 1850, Bleak House and Hard Times appeared in serial form. Little Dorrit came next in 1857, and A Tale of Two Cities was serialized in 1859. Between 1859 and 1870, Dickens gave readings of his work, great solo acting performances which brought him both money and a sense of power. The period 1861-65 saw the publication of Great Expectations and Our Mutual Friend. In 1870, he began The Mystery of Edwin Drood but died before its completion.

Dickens’s writing, which extended approximately over the first thirty-five years of Queen Victoria’s reign, reveals particularly the continuity of the 18th century tradition begun by Fielding and Smollett - a novel form consisting of loosely connected adventures, the use of farcical situations and a profusion of comic, often eccentric characters who are types presented as highly individual caricatures. His canvases are vast in scope and brilliant in his
...power to put the spark of his individuality into each figure. In his writing he showed himself a liberal reformer of his age, concerned with the problems arising in city life and the life of the poor, especially in London as a result of the Industrial Revolution. Dickens appealed to various classes of society -from aristocrats to labourers, from intellectuals to simple people and to different levels of emotion. His range and universality catered for entertainment for everyone because they contained boisterous humour, pathos and satire.

The Social Background of the Novel

A study of Hard Times reveals that it represents an attack on the utilitarianism brought about by industrialization. The mushroom growth of the British industry led to the growth of sprawling, blackened towns of mills and factories with the accompanying evils and miseries of the factory system. The immediate demand for more coal to produce more steam, and more steel and iron for more machines led to tremendous growth in the mining industry. The production of iron and coal became predominant features of what used to be open country in the north of England. The mines surrounding Coketown are a significant part of the local landscape. Rail roads and bridges became symbols of the new age, along with the endlessly smoking chimneys of the mills. As the factory system developed, the gulf between capital and labour grew, a situation unknown in the days of the cottage industry. The work and the lives of the workers became very monotonous as each performed his or her limited, almost mechanized, task.

All through Hard Times, the reader is aware of Coketown as a typical industrial city with its rattling mills and smoke trails from chimneys which blanketed the whole district in a dingy cloud. Dickens does not give us details about the mills or the production but hints about material gain being the only aim. The background of Coketown gives the novel its unity. Its smoke and stench, the dye-blackened river and the noisy mills are symbols which give the picture of such a town and the general impression is one of the suffocative effect of industrial life on the individuals living there.

Hard Times : A Summary

The novel opens with a description of Mr. Thomas Gradgrind, the owner of a school who states that facts are the only concern of his model school. Mr. Gradgrind picks on a new pupil, Cecilia Jupe (Sissy Jupe), calling her girl number twenty, and objects to her name Sissy and to her father’s occupation as a horse-rider in a circus. Sissy is asked to define a horse, and cannot do so. A boy named Bitzer, the best pupil in the class, produces a definition of the word, which she cannot understand. Then the class is asked two questions about the choice of...
paper for walls and carpet for floors. Sissy replies by saying that she fancies flowers for her carpet, and is reprimanded and told never to fancy. Mr. Gradgrind then walks from his school towards his home, which is named Stone Lodge, and is on the outskirts of the filthy industrial Coketown. On the way home, he passes through an area which is gaily decorated by a travelling circus. He observes a number of children peeping through the tent flaps and is shocked and annoyed to see his own daughter, Louisa, and his son, Tom among them. He rebukes them arid Tom is sulky while Louisa is rebellious. Mr. Gradgrind asks them a single question, “What would Mr. Bounderby say?” The writer then introduces Mr. Josiah Bounderby, the wealthy banker, who is a close friend and patron of the Gradgrind family. It is Mr. Bounderby’s birthday and he celebrates this occasion with a visit to Stone Lodge. Mrs. Gradgrind, a feeble-minded woman is told the story of his life, including an account of how he was deserted by his mother and how he is entirely a self-made man. Just then, Mr. Gradgrind enters with Tom and Louisa who are sullen because they have been caught while peeping into the circus tent. Before going, Mr.Bounderby goes into the children’s room to speak to Louisa and kiss her. Mr. Gradgrind and Mr. Bounderby agree that Sissy, the new pupil, is unsuitable for their school, and decide to tell her father to remove her. But on the way, they run into Sissy, who has been frightened by Bitzer. The three of them go to Jupe’s lodging, but are surprised to find his room empty and his clothes missing. Alarmed, Sissy runs out to look for him. In the meanwhile, Mr. Childers and a boy enter, and explain that Jupe has not been performing well lately, and could be absconding. Though Mr. Bounderby tries to dissuade him, Mr.Gradgrind wants to help Sissy. The whole circus company gathers, followed by Mr. Sleary himself, who begs Mr. Gradgrind to help Sissy. Sissy now returns, very upset because she has failed to find her father.Mr. Gradgrind invites her to live in his house on condition that she severs all connection with the horse-riders, and Sissy accepts.

Mr. Bounderby, a bachelor, employs as housekeeper the impoverished widow of a once-wealthy drunkard. Her genteel family background is their mutual pride and chief topic of conversation and she has gone down in the world as he has gone up. Sissy has spent the night under Mr. Bounderby’s roof, and Mr. Bounderby is anxious to protect Louisa from her influence, for which Mrs. Sparsit senses a special reason. She comments with veiled sarcasm on his “fatherly” solicitude for Louisa. He replies that he is more like a second father to Tom. He plans to employ the boy in his office, once he is through with his “educational cramming.”

Their routine exchange of mutual admiration is interrupted by the arrival of Mr. Gradgrind and his daughter. Sissy is summoned and led away by them to Stone Lodge. Young Tom confides in his sister Louisa that he hates his life, himself and everybody else except her. She protests that he cannot possibly hate Sissy, and regrets her own inability to
entertain him with music or other diversions. Tom wishes he could “blow up” all facts and figures and plans to avenge himself against them by having all the fun he can when he escapes home and enters the home of “old Bounderby” whom he expects to manage by bringing Louisa’s cherished name to his aid whenever necessary. Louisa gazes abstractedly into the fire and asks if he is glad to be going to Mr. Bounderby’s, and Tom replies that any change from home would be welcome. Sissy now lives with the Gradgrind family, and wanting only to please her father and clinging to her belief in his ultimate return, she endures a hail of facts at school and from Mr. Gradgrind at home. Unable to take an interest in dates, measurements and dry definitions, she is considered slow. One evening Sissy and Louisa, who have little chance of intimate conversation, discuss the problem and Louisa suggests that it would help Sissy to talk about her own father and mother despite the prohibition. Louisa now learns that Sissy’s mother had been a dancer, with more education that her affectionate father, and that she died when Sissy was born. She herself had been his comfort and consolation, especially since his clowning had begun to raise fewer and fewer laughs. By reading him stories and plying him with loving encouragement, she had kept his spirits up until their last day together, when his tears had been inconsolable. At this point in Sissy’s narrative, Tom enters, bored as usual. Selfishly he interrupts, demanding that Louisa come to the drawing-room where “old Bounderby” is visiting, in hope that her presence will stimulate the invitation to dinner for which he is hoping. Time passes, and Tom grows more self-centred, while Louisa through her interest in Sissy develops a compassionate side to her nature.

The mills of Coketown are kept toiling by grossly underprivileged labourers who although like other people they have heads and bodies, are referred to as “Hands.” Among them is power-loom weaver Stephen Blackpool, an honest workman whom hardship has aged in appearance beyond his forty years. Stephen is standing in the street at the end of the long day’s work, waiting for his friend Rachael. He finds her with difficulty because fear of scandal has prompted her to evade him of late. In the perplexities of his troubled life he calls the world “a muddle.” Rachael alone can soothe him, and does so as she sees her home to her narrow street. With sturdier step he now strides towards his own poor but clean room, situated over a shabby little shop. A shock awaits him in the shape of his wife, a drunken vagabond who deserted him years ago and who reappears only when she wants money for drink. She collapses on the bed in a drunken stupor and Stephen sits up all night, leaving for work at dawn. During the lunch-break, he goes to seek advice about his unhappy marriage from Mr. Bounderby, who is sitting by the fire with Mrs. Sparsit. She expresses shock, while he rejects Stephen’s request for legal aid because divorce is only for the very wealthy. As Stephen leaves Mr. Bounderby’s house, an old woman comes up to him and enquires about Mr.
Bounderby’s well-being. She tells him that she spends her savings once a year on the long trip to Coketown, hoping to get a glimpse of this great man and to admire his factory. Stephen reaches home, and finds Rachael tending to his wife’s wounds with a fluid from a bottle that he realises is poisonous medicine. Stephen and Rachael doze by his wife’s bedside, and at dawn he wakes up to see his wife groping for the poison-bottle which Rachael snatches away in time.

Time passes and Louisa, Tom and Sissy grow up into adulthood. Tom enters the bank and the house of Mr. Bounderby and Mr. Gradgrind has become Member of Parliament for Coketown. The latter is disappointed with Sissy who has absorbed few of the facts she has been plied with, but he admits that she has tried very hard, and that she is very affectionate and helpful. Mr. Gradgrind now decides to reveal to Louisa his plans for her future and calls her to his room for a serious talk. Before the talk, Tom comes to see Louisa and subtly suggests that he will see more of her if she falls in with these plans which Mr. Bounderby is discussing with their father. Mr. Gradgrind tells her that Mr. Bounderby has asked for her hand and suggests that she should have a factual approach to the matter. He thinks that their disparity in age is of no importance since it is common, and that their social positions are similar. Devoid of emotion, Louisa tells him that she is willing to accept the proposal but is disturbed when she adds, “What does it matter?” Louisa reassures him and the news is given to her mother whose reaction is that she is puzzled about how she should address her son-in-law and that she hopes that the wedding will be over soon so that she will hear the last of it. Sissy looks at Louisa with pity and anxiety, but Louisa does not acknowledge these genuine emotions and henceforth treats her very coldly. Mr. Bounderby is anxious over the expected reaction of Mrs. Sparsit, who pessimistically hopes that he will be happy. He suggests that she should shift her quarters to the bank, where she can live in comfort. She accepts with condescension, and continues to treat Mr. Bounderby as a victim. For the two months which must elapse before the fixed wedding date, Mr. Bounderby visits Stone Lodge nightly to woo Louisa with gifts of bracelets. The ceremony is factual and the bridegroom’s speech a model of prosaic smugness. The honeymoon is to be combined suitably with factory business. Tom is really pleased because this marriage suits Tom’s self-interest ideally, and he calls it “uncommonly jolly.”

Book II of the novel begins on a hot midsummer afternoon about a year later in Coketown, when office hours are over, and Mrs. Sparsit sits in her grand manner by the window of the board-room in the bank, now her home and kingdom. Her staff consists of a deaf, old serving-woman, and a porter who is none other than pale-faced Bitzer. Mrs. Sparsit’s routine question, “All is shut up, Bitzer?” receives the routine answer as he places
her tea-tray beside her. Both are in a mood for conversation, Mrs. Sparsit retaining her patronizing manner while Bitzer curries favour. They exchange disapproving comments on the activities of labourers who unite for any purpose, and the conversation develops into a discussion on the day’s events in the bank. Spying Bitzer subtly undermines the reputation of young Tom Gradgrind, who is one of the clerks. Rebuked for disloyalty when he mentions Tom by name, he finds her encouraging when he calls Tom “an individual” who is an “extravagant idler” and whose security in his job rests on a “friend and relation at court,” meaning of course Louisa. They agree that her husband is to be pitied and he remarks that a gentleman has crossed the street and is knocking at the door. It is a stranger, a languid, elegant man in his thirties who has just arrived from London by train. He bears a letter from Mr. Gradgrind, M.P., to Mr. Bounderby, whose house he is seeking. The stranger is James Harthouse, who has come to Coketown to study the statistical approach to industry. He is curious about Mrs. Bounderby even before he has met her. When he meets Louisa, he observes that she is always impassive and disinterested but shows animation only at the sight of Tom. He draws Louisa’s interest by flattering Tom, who falls into his trap by offering to show the way back to the hotel. Tom has developed into a sensuous, undisciplined hypocrite. At the hotel, he greedily accepts the tobacco and alcohol offered by Harthouse to loosen his tongue. Tom tells him that Louisa married “old Bounderby” only to obey her father and please himself and that he needs her influence to keep him out of scrapes. Tom also tells him that Mrs. Sparsit’s opinion of Louisa is strongly motivated by jealousy, and then falls into a drunken sleep neither knowing nor caring what harm he has done.

Dickens tells us that the labourers of Coketown are trying to voice their grievances - Trade Unionism is being born. The speaker, Slackbridge, criticises Stephen for being the only man who refuses to join the Union. Stephen requests that he be left alone and many sympathize with him because they know his domestic problem. But no one speaks to him for the next four days and he does not dare to speak to Rachael. On the fourth evening, Bitzer tells him to go to Mr. Bounderby’s house. Stephen finds Mr. Bounderby with Tom, Louisa and Harthouse. Mr. Bounderby wants him to be informer against the workers, but Stephen defends them and warns against the grave error of treating people as if they were machines, stressing the need for dialogue between workers and employers. Mr. Bounderby dismisses him from the job, no one puts in a word for him, and Stephen leaves with no hope of being employed by any other mill. As he emerges out of Mr. Bounderby’s house, Stephen is surprised to find Rachael and the old woman he had met at the same spot on a previous occasion. The old woman, Mrs. Pegler, had been hoping to get a glimpse of Mrs. Bounderby, but had been disappointed. They go to Stephen’s room, and are surprised when, some time later; Louisa enters and offers to help Stephen by giving him a big sum of money. Stephen
refuses, and after much persuasion, accepts two pounds as a loan. Tom, who has accompanied Louisa, calls Stephen aside and tells him that he may be able to help him if he was willing to wait outside the bank for a while every evening until he leaves, and that Bitzer will give him a message. Stephen waits outside the bank for three evenings, but no message comes, and early next morning he leaves Coketown.

Harthouse insinuates himself into Louisa’s confidence, and Mr. Bounderby encourages his frequent visits, being unaware of his game of winning her favour. Harthouse comes to know that Tom has a weakness for gambling and that Louisa has often sold her trinkets to help him. She is embarrassed when he comes to know that she has scant regard for her husband and of Tom’s ingratitude towards her. He promises Tom to assist him if he should need more money. The next morning it is disclosed that the bank has been robbed. Louisa is dismayed to know that Mrs. Sparsit and Bitzer noticed Stephen lurking outside the bank three evenings in succession, after which he disappeared. An old woman was also seen with Stephen. That night, Louisa begs Tom to confide in her but he only says that he had asked Stephen to make good use of the money she had given him.

Mrs. Sparsit continuously spies on Louisa as she realises that Louisa’s bond of intimate understanding with Harthouse grows. Later the same morning Bitzer brings a message to Louisa. Her mother, never well, is gravely ill and sinking fast. Louisa returns to Coketown with him. Her father is away. Sissy is there, but Louisa has been cold towards her since she accepted Mr. Bounderby’s proposal. Louisa joins Sissy and her younger sister Jane beside her mother’s couch with a heavy heart. Louisa observes with a pang that her sister Jane’s attachment to Sissy is making her a happier, sweeter child than ever she was herself. Her mother asks to speak to her alone. When the others have gone and her mind is not wandering, she tells Louisa that among all that her father taught her, something very important was left out. She cannot think of its name but urgently wants to record it for Mr. Gradgrind tracing vague letters on her shawl, she dies. Mrs. Sparsit continues to pass her week-ends in the country-house. Her pitying manner is kept up in Mr. Bounderby’s presence, her scorn for his portrait when she is alone with it.

The search for the thief has not yet revealed him, but results are expected, Mrs. Sparsit spies from her window upon Louisa and Mr. Harthouse strolling in the garden, and regrets that she cannot overhear their conversation which is evidently tender. In fact, Louisa is asking for Mr. Harthouse’s impression of Stephen Blackpool, whom she would gladly see freed of the cloud overhanging him. Harthouse, assures her that no one in his position would miss a chance of making off with a fair sum of money, an appearance of virtue being
invariably sham. Mrs. Sparsit sees Louisa descending an imaginary staircase, into the pit of ultimate disaster, and she gloats over every step that Bounderby’s young wife takes downward. Mr. Gradgrind returns only briefly for his wife’s funeral. Mrs. Sparsit can no longer watch Louisa all week, but she observes Tom and Mr. Harthouse. One weekend Mr. Bounderby is called away on business. Mrs. Sparsit accepts the usual invitation to his country-house. Before leaving, she invites Tom to join her at supper, and asks after dear Mr. Harthouse. He is said to be shooting in Yorkshire, and has sent Louisa a huge basket of game birds. Tom expects him back in Coketown for the week-end, and is to meet his train and dine with him next evening. Mrs. Sparsit decides that she will nurse her poor nerves at the bank this weekend, and Tom is to ask his sister to excuse her after all. She will not be missed, he assures her! Saturday comes, and Mrs. Sparsit watches and broods all day. Evening finds her furtively haunting the station. Tom is there, but the train comes in without Mr. Harthouse. Mrs. Sparsit detects a ruse, aimed at keeping Tom out of the way while the fine gentleman visits Louisa. She is on the trail directly, boarding the next train for the country, although it leaves from another station at the opposite end of town. Arriving at dusk, she approaches the house stealthily. All is quiet, so she braves the gathering darkness of the wood to follow up her malicious instincts. There indeed she comes upon the tryst. Delightedly she eavesdrops from behind a tree. His aim is around Mr. Bounderby’s wife as Harthouse calls her his “dearest love.” Louisa remains still but does not withdraw. Heavy rain begins to fall, and in her fear of detection Mrs. Sparsit does not quite catch their plans to meet later. She watches Louisa return to the house alone and emerge again cloaked and muffled. She is eloping; her foot is on the edge of that bottom stair. Exultantly Mrs. Sparsit pursues her prey to the station, oblivious of the soaking rain. The thunderstorm crashes on as they await the next train, Louisa unaware of her peculiar shadow. They get into separate compartments, and when Mrs. Sparsit leaves the train at Coketown her joy deserts her and she is just a ridiculously wet old woman, for Louisa is nowhere to be seen. One day, Mr. Gradgrind is at home, writing in his study, listening to the thunder and rain, when Louisa arrives to speak to her father. He listens amazed to a torrent of reproaches. Her upbringing has left her with a wilderness instead of a heart. She would have been much better and happier had he neglected her. Her father bows his head and groans, acknowledging his grievous fault in having deprived her of all immaterial values and in having given her as a wife to a man whom she despises. She tells him that she has never known happiness, and that she married foreseeing none. He could not have expected her to love such a husband, and she agreed to the marriage only for Tom’s sake. Now another man has won her confidence, has declared himself her lover and is even now expecting her! Louisa begs her father to help her and faints at his feet.

Louisa regains consciousness next day in her bed at home. Her young sister Jane, at
her bedside, tells her that Sissy has nursed her. Mr. Gradgrind is stunned by her plight. He has gained insight into the basic weakness of his system and must bear the responsibilities for its failures, asking his favourite daughter only to believe that he “meant to do right.” Louisa softens, but makes little active response to this affectionate appeal. He hopes that Jane may have had a better start in life, less surrounded by his influence and befriended by Sissy Jupe. Louisa cannot bring herself to agree, nor to raise her head to greet Sissy when she joins them. She still resents the reproachful pity she saw in Sissy’s face before her marriage. But as she rests and Sissy lays a hand on her, the tears come at last to her closed eyes, Louisa accepts the companionship Sissy has long yearned to give.

Since the failure of his assignation with Louisa, Mr. James Harthouse has lost air of boredom and has been very much agitated. She seems to have vanished and he can only wait at his hotel for news. Day passes into evening, and at last he is summoned. A young lady is there to see him, a pretty girl, unknown to him, fearlessly bent upon delivery message. It is Sissy. She insists he must honour the secrecy of her mission, which is to explain that the lady he is concerned about is at her father’s home and that he will never see her again. He is speechless with embarrassment, a new experience for him, and accepts defeat.

She asks him to leave Coketown directly and permanently. So transparently frank is she in these courageous words that he cannot bluster his way out. His industrial career is at stake, but he owes it to Louisa to sacrifice his position, and appear ridiculous. He recalls Tom’s first visit to the hotel and sees the tables turned upon himself. It is he who is now the whelp.

Mrs. Sparsit, meanwhile has followed her employer post-haste to London, and bursts in upon him at his hotel, bringing with her a violent cold and carries her straight back to Coketown by the next train. There they proceed directly to Stone Lodge, and Mr. Gradgrind bids her repeat her story. He tells his son-in-law that he has written him a very special letter, but Mr. Bounderby is in no mood to discuss letters. Mrs. Sparsit must speak, but is ludicrously prevented from doing so by her sore throat. So Mr. Bounderby himself communicates her report of the conversation “accidentally” overheard by his former housekeeper. Mr. Gradgrind interrupts him - he knows all about it already. Bounderby is astounded to learn that Louisa, far from having eloped with Harthouse, is at Stone Lodge. Her father describes her arrival in the storm. Now Mr. Bounderby turns upon Mrs. Sparsit and demands an apology and she takes refuge, between sneezes, in tears.

Mr. Gradgrind is ready to admit all his mistakes, to apologise for having introduced Harthouse to Mr. Bounderby and especially to although it leaves from another station at the

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opposite end of town. Arriving at dusk, she approaches the house stealthily. All is quiet, so she braves the gathering darkness of the wood to follow up her malicious instincts. There indeed she comes upon the tryst. Delightedly she eavesdrops from behind a tree. His aim is around Mr. Bounderby’s wife as Harthouse calls her his “dearest love.” Louisa remains still but does not withdraw. Heavy rain begins to fall, and in her fear of detection Mrs. Sparsit does not quite catch their plans to meet later. She watches Louisa return to the house alone and emerge again cloaked and muffled. She is eloping; her foot is on the edge of that bottom stair. Exultantly Mrs. Sparsit pursues her prey to the station, oblivious of the soaking rain. The thunderstorm crashes on as they await the next train, Louisa unaware of her peculiar shadow. They get into separate compartments, and when Mrs. Sparsit leaves the train at Coketown her joy deserts her and she is just a ridiculously wet old woman, for Louisa is nowhere to be seen. One day, Mr. Gradgrind is at home, writing in his study, listening to the thunder and rain, when Louisa arrives to speak to her father. He listens amazed to a torrent of reproaches. Her upbringing has left her with a wilderness instead of a heart. She would have been much better and happier had he neglected her. Her father bows his head and groans, acknowledging his grievous fault in having deprived her of all immaterial values and in having given her as a wife to a man whom she despises. She tells him that she has never known happiness, and that she married foreseeing none. He could not have expected her to love such a husband, and she agreed to the marriage only for Tom’s sake. Now another man has won her confidence, has declared himself her lover and is even now expecting her! Louisa begs her father to help her and faints at his feet.

Louisa regains consciousness next day in her bed at home. Her young sister Jane, at her bedside, tells her that Sissy has nursed her. Mr. Gradgrind is stunned by her plight. He has gained insight into the basic weakness of his system and must bear the responsibilities for its failures, asking his favourite daughter only to believe that he “meant to do right.” Louisa softens, but makes little active response to this affectionate appeal. He hopes that Jane may have had a better start in life, less surrounded by his influence and befriended by Sissy Jupe. Louisa cannot bring herself to agree, nor to raise her head to greet Sissy when she joins them. She still resents the reproachful pity she saw in Sissy’s face before her marriage. But as she rests and Sissy lays a hand on her, the tears come at last to her closed eyes, Louisa accepts the companionship Sissy has long yearned to give.

Since the failure of his assignation with Louisa, Mr. James Harthouse has lost air of boredom and has been very much agitated. She seems to have vanished and he can only wait at his hotel for news. Day passes into evening, and at last he is summoned. A young lady is there to see him, a pretty girl, unknown to him, fearlessly bent upon delivery message. It is
Sissy. She insists he must honour the secrecy of her mission, which is to explain that the lady he is concerned about is at her father's home and that he will never see her again. He is speechless with embarrassment, a new experience for him, and accepts defeat.

She asks him to leave Coketown directly and permanently. So transparently frank is she in these courageous words that he cannot bluster his way out. His industrial career is at stake, but he owes it to Louisa to sacrifice his position, and appear ridiculous. He recalls Tom's first visit to the hotel and sees the tables turned upon himself. It is he who is now the whelp.

Mrs. Sparsit, meanwhile has followed her employer post-haste to London, and bursts in upon him at his hotel, bringing with her a violent cold and carries her straight back to Coketown by the next train. There they proceed directly to Stone Lodge, and Mr. Gradgrind bids her repeat her story. He tells his son-in-law that he has written him a very special letter, but Mr. Bounderby is in no mood to discuss letters. Mrs. Sparsit must speak, but is ludicrously prevented from doing so by her sore throat. So Mr. Bounderby himself communicates her report of the conversation “accidentally” overheard by his former housekeeper. Mr. Gradgrind interrupts him - he knows all about it already. Bounderby is astounded to learn that Louisa, far from having eloped with Harthouse, is at Stone Lodge. Her father describes her arrival in the storm. Now Mr. Bounderby turns upon Mrs. Sparsit and demands an apology and she takes refuge, between sneezes, in tears.

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Mr. Gradgrind is ready to admit all his mistakes, to apologise for having introduced Harthouse to Mr. Bounderby and especially to acknowledge his past failure to understand his daughter. He suggests that she remain for a time on a visit on a Stone Lodge, attended by Sissy Jue. Mr. Bounderby grossly misinterprets his old friend's words and says that if Louisa is not home by noon next day, he will assume that she does not want to return, and will send her clothes and belongings to Stone Lodge. His explanation for the world will be that they were incompatible. It would take an uncommon woman to be worthy of a man like him. Mr. Bounderby says good night and goes. Immediately after noon the next day, Louisa's baggage is sent to her father's house. Bounderby advertises the country-house for sale and resumes a bachelor's life.

Investigation into the bank robbery continue, with increased energy on the part of Bounderby in urging on the police. There are no further suspects and nothing more has been heard of Blackpool. One night big notices are pasted up all over town, offering twenty pounds reward for information about him. Mr. Bounderby goes to see Louisa with Tom and Rachaei. Rachaei angrily demands that Louisa acknowledged having met her before and that she described the occasion. Tom is rebuked for having kept silent about it, but he blames his sister, who accepts the responsibility. Louisa tells how she offered Stephen a big bank-note and how he accepted only two pounds. Rachaei expects Stephen to return soon to clear his reputation. As days pass Rachaei and Sissy keep each other company. They once happen to see Mrs. Sparsit dragging an old woman to Mr. Bounderby's house. The old woman is Mrs. Pegler and when Bounderby sees her he becomes very upset. He demands of Mrs. Sparsit how she dare interfere in his family affairs. Mrs. Pegler addresses Bounderby as “my dear Josiah” and explains that she has come against her will. She visited Coketown secretly just to see her fine son. When Mr. Gradgrind asks her how she can claim him to be her son when she deserted him in infancy, she is shocked. She says that she has always given him the best education she could provide and now he gave her an annual pension of thirty pounds asking her only to keep away. At her words, Mr. Bounderby is humiliated and Mrs. Sparsit realises
that her conspiring has been of little use. One morning Rachael and Sissy go out of town to walk through the open fields. Sissy notices a broken fence, and then a hat lying on the ground which is Stephen’s. Rachael screams and Sissy stops her just in time to prevent her from falling into a pit. They are convinced that Stephen is fallen down there, and that he is injured and needs help. They call out to him but there is no reply. So they run for help and bring back men with ropes and lanterns for a rescue operation. A stretcher is lowered into the pit and Stephen is brought out, seriously injured but alive. Louisa and Mr. Gradgrind arrive and Stephen asks them to clear his name. To his horror, Tom saw them speaking. Sissy whispered to him and he vanished. The stretcher is carried over the fields towards the town, but on the way, Stephen dies. Mr. Gradgrind looks for Tom but cannot find him. Both he and Louisa come to the conclusion that Tom must have persuaded Stephen to loiter near the bank in order to create a suspect for the crime. Louisa tells him that Sissy asked Tom to take refuge with Sleary’s circus, thus gaining time for his father to send him abroad before his disgrace is revealed. Louisa and Sissy travel all night to reach the circus, where Tom is in disguise and made to play a part in the ring. Tom admits stealing the money from the bank, but still repulses Louisa. Just then, Bitzer comes and catches Tom by the collar. All attempts at persuasion only draw principles of the Gradgrind system from his lips. Mr. Sleary pretends to support him and offers to escort them to the train for Coketown. But on the way, a circus dog and dancing horse do not let them go ahead, and Tom is sent aboard a ship, which takes him to a far-off place, where he dies, longing to return home. His guilt is published and Stephen is exonerated.

**Characterisation**

Mr. Thomas Gradgrind is a retired hardware merchant, a member of the industrialist class, sufficiently prominent to become Member of Parliament for Coketown. He is a man of facts who embodies the message of *Hard Times*. Through the tragedy of life, Dickens aims to expose the inhumanity of the economic doctrines and of the utilitarian philosophy of the day. He brings up his children along the lines prescribed by Jeremy Bentham, much as John Stuart Mill was raised. His house (it cannot be called a home) and his school are extensions of his own personality, stuffed with figures, but sterile. Yet the very fact that he cares enough about the children of Coketown to run a school for them, however like a gaol it may appear, reveals a basic spark of humanity. But Mr. Gradgrind is more deeply attached to his eldest daughter than he can realise, while he denies the intuitive side of human nature. Moreover, there is a kind of streak in him which will not succumb to theories, and which prompts him to admit abandoned Sissy Jupe to his school and household. With her, his own redemption enters to work an eventual transformation. This comes too late to prevent shipwreck of all his hopes on
the very rock of fact to which he has anchored himself, and too late to save his son from ruin. Louisa must suffer greatly and reach maturity through her own courage. Dickens had little schooling himself, and was unintellectual to the point of being anti-intellectual. In the person of Gradgrind, “cleverness” is identified with stupidity. Gradgrind brings up his children on a diet of “ologies,” each with its own dry ingredients of facts. They are forbidden to dream. “Never wonder.” This result is disastrous.

At the peak of his personal career is Mr. Gradgrind's interview with Louisa, in which it is decided that she shall marry Bounderby. He is yet to achieve his greatest public heights as Member of Parliament for Coketown, but his private life is crumbling at home. When disaster has struck, and Louisa has collapsed at his feet, his love for her reveals to him at last that the most important things in life are intangible, depending on the warmth of affection and fancy. These were brought into the house by the abandoned waif whom he could not turn away. He develops much in the inner, moral sense. His false ideas give way after the collapse of Louisa's marriage and he humbly accepts the hollowness of his values. This development of his character is skillfully interwoven with the plot, but is entirely convincing. In the end he is redeemed as well as chastened, and wins the sympathy of the reader because he has courage, honesty and a kind heart, to Mrs. Gradgrind is a vague, blurred personality, a colourless bundle of shawls who accepts her role of a semi-invalid, and has adjusted to living with a man who believes in facts. She is the perfect foil for the confidence Gradgrind and the bullying Bounderby. She does nothing to stop Louisa from marrying Bounderby and the reader gets an impression that though she sounds vague her remarks have a hidden relevance. She fades out of the picture before the turning point of the novel, and does not live to see the collapse of Louisa's marriage and Gradgrind's change of heart, nor does she have to share Tom's disgrace.

Louisa has both intelligence and beauty, but her animation is repressed beneath proud reserve. She is her father's favourite, and has been forcibly cast in his chosen mould. He has rammed his motto, “never dream,” down her throat until she no longer knows how to dream. Gifted with imaginative learnings and a capacity for live, the only outlet upon whom she can expend herself is her utterly selfish brother. Tom. She often gazes into the glowing fire as if in search of something to dream about. Stuffed with facts and figures and starved even of music lessons, her heart yearns and her mind gropes for deeper values. But she must travel through a long tunnel of misery, as chief victim of her father's system on whom, in some ways, the “hardest time” of all is inflicted, before she can emerge again through her own courage to resume and profit from friendship with Sissy. This friendship is interrupted by the repulsive marriage into which Louisa is driven by her father's stupidity, her own emptiness and her brother’s greedy selfishness. She senses Sissy’s unspoken, anxious sympathy and

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reproach when their eyes meet, and her pride makes her withdraw. Outwardly she becomes cold and distant, but her fire is only banked down. The charmer, Harthouse, exposes her anguish and she escapes from his snare only by great personal courage and integrity - qualities surely inherited from her father. Leaving both husband and lover, she flings her whole burden at her father's feet. He is big enough and open enough to accept his responsibility, and Louisa is able at last to receptive to Sissy. Her inner moral development, from intense introspection to outgoing, life-giving friendliness is consistent and not blocked by her inherently reserved nature, because it springs from a core of selflessness. This is at first seen only in her love for her brother. Though she knows nothing about working-class people, she understands the human suffering of Stephen and shows independence of spirit in offering help.

Tom Gradgrind is the light of his sister’s eyes, but of no one else’s. Sullen and sulky, he seems to cast a blight upon everyone around him. He lacks Louisa’s depth, and hates his strict home. Once free of the disciplined environment of his home, he becomes an undisciplined sensuous hypocrite. This is because he develops the worst strains latent in him and these are not consistent with his father’s honesty. Tom encourages his sister to marry Bounderby, fully intending to use her influence and her money for his own ends. These include gambling, and when his debts get beyond even her aid, he does not hesitate to steal money and put the blame on Stephen. Thus his role in the story is central. Once again it is Sissy who rescues Tom from some of the retribution which he deserves, when she sends Tom to take refuge with Mr. Sleary’s circus. Repentance, however, comes only at the end, when he dies in exile.

Sissy Jupe (Cecilia), weajyes her totally unselfish way through the story and links the lives of all the characters, doing sufficient good to outweigh the harm caused by Tom, Harthouse and Bounderby. Through Sissy, Dickens shows his own confidence that the forces of goodness are ultimately stronger than the forces of evil. Sissy is wherever she is most needed - tending to Mrs. Gradgrind, bringing warmth and happiness into the lives of the younger Gradgrind children, and ready to give sympathy to Louisa. It is Sissy who has the courage to face Harthouse in his hotel room and tell him to go away. She helps Rachael in her hour of need and together they discover Stephen in the mine shaft and bring help for him. She suggests an escape route for Tom and helps the Gradgrind family who have been her patrons. She represents the final triumph of intuition, and unselfishness over cold, abstract facts and selfishness.

Mr. Bounderby claims that he is a self-made man who has been abandoned by his
mother and brought up by an imaginary drunken grandmother. Even when his lies are exposed, he is embarrassed only for a few moments. Everything else may crumble but not his image of himself. His speeches are always monologues, bragging of his own superiority and refusing to praise anyone else. Human relationships mean nothing to him except to increase his self-esteem. He marries Louisa because he thinks it would be good to have the intelligent daughter of his rich friend as his wife. Louisa makes no pretence of any affection for him and Bounderby manages to ignore this. He lacks intelligence, integrity as well as sensitivity.

Stephen Blackpool is the chief representative of the exploited working class, and has a major role in the story as the innocent and heroic martyr. He is married to a drunkard but looks after her out of a sense of duty. His only consolation in his hard and bitter life is the friendship of Rachael who also guides him to behave correctly. His fall into the mine shaft symbolises the way good qualities of human beings are swallowed in the black depths of industrial life.

Rachael is Stephen’s beloved friend, and she alone remains loyal to him through his darkest hours and is true to his memory all his life. Typical of Dickens’s faultless heroines, she appears in the most sentimental scenes and behaves very nobly throughout the story. She looks after Stephen’s wife and always protects him from temptation. Mrs. Sparsit is a high-born lady, who has had bad fortune, but who still continues to have material ambitions. She would have been happy to assume the position of Mrs. Bounderby, and obviously regards Louisa as a usurper. She is shrewd enough to see the possibility of an emotional involvement between Louisa and Harthouse, and wants to make use of it for her own ends, but her flattery and intrigue come to nothing and she has to accept defeat. Bitzer appears at the very beginning of the story as Mr. Gradgrind’s best pupil. He has absorbed all the facts and philosophy of the school and is machine-like for his self-advancement. Harthouse is the bored, idle friend of Mr. Gradgrind who has come to study statistical methods in the industry. He is under no illusions and is concerned only with his own advantage and amusement. He befriends Tom so that he can further his relationship with Louisa and wins her confidence by his kindness to Tom. Though Louisa escapes from his toils, he has been instrumental in bringing about the breakup of her marriage to Bounderby.

Some observations on the novel

Hard Times was published in weekly serial form over a short period of five months. The novel is divided into three books with the titles Sowing, Reaping, Garnering, which make the Victorian message of reward and punishment explicit. The whole is compact and direct, proceeding in chronological order, with an economy that is unusual in Dickens. Everyone in
the book suffers in one way or another from the hardness of the times. All except Bounderby, reap more tears than they have sown. The worst characters inflict suffering on the best ones, but Sissy who symbolises intuition and freedom as well as goodness helps even those who are beyond hope. The novel is unified by the overshadowing mass of the city of Coketown which is more than a background to the story. Brooding over the whole book this town of factories gives the story its unity, because it draws together all the individuals and groups appearing in the story.

The message of *Hard Times* remains primarily a moral one inspite of the force of social criticism. Dickens, the moralist, always distinguishes between good and bad. He has condemned the evils of the factory system, but has also praised honesty, goodness and integrity as against hypocrisy injustice and exploitation. Dickens has shown the importance of imagination and sentiments, which should not be underestimated in the upbringing and education of children. Thus he also touches upon the theme’s of parental responsibility and educational institutions. In the depiction of his themes, Dickens has made use of symbolism which makes the novel more vivid and effective e.g. the dark and brooding city, the pit into which Stephen falls, Mrs. Sparsit’s staircase, etc. In *Hard Times*, the omniscient narrator enables the reader to keep up with the events as well as to get a glimpse into the minds of the characters. Dickens, with his authorial comments, clearly states his moral stand and conveys the message of the novel in no uncertain terms.
George Eliot: Her life and career

Mary Ann Evans, better known as George Eliot, was born in Warwickshire, in 1819 and spent the early years of her life with her father an estate agent, and her brother, Isaac. From childhood, she showed an unusual aptitude for study and was far ahead of her brother in academic achievements. At the age of twenty-two, she went with her father to Coventry, and soon began to free herself from the narrow religious outlook which bound her family. She later came into contact with thinkers like Francis Newman, Herbert Spencer and was deeply influenced by their philosophy. She then met George Henry Lewes, and defying Victorian convention, lived with him for the rest of her life. Poverty and misfortune dogged them for a while, but Lewes recognised her superior intellect and encouraged her with praise and devotion. Inspired by him, in 1857, she wrote Scenes from Clerical Life. Adam Bede appeared in 1859, and The Mill on the Floss, which is largely autobiographical, in 1860. Both the novels were very well acclaimed as also her Silas Marner (1861), Romola (1863), Felix Holt (1866), Middlemarch (1871-72), and Daniel Deronda (1873).

Of all the women novelists of the 19th century, George Eliot was the most learned and in her creative achievement, the most adult. She was a rationalist, and what interested her above all, were the human motives that she tried to explore and comprehend. She tried to analyse the thoughts of her characters, to probe their deepest desires, and while doing so, displays a deep compassion and understanding of human nature. Thus, George Eliot’s novels contain numerous examples of subtle psychological study.

The Social Background of the Novel

Middlemarch is concerned with the time period of about two and a half decades, beginning with the 1920s. The period covered is one in which there were many political reforms the most significant of which was the Reform Bill of 1832. Other factors like the increase in the number of factories and the coming of the railways suggest that it was a society undergoing rapid change. Though the landed gentry still commanded the most respect, other professions were gaining prominence, e.g. doctors (apothecaries, physicians, surgeons), lawyers, traders, etc. It was a very class-conscious society, in which those of noble birth were still the highest on the social ladder, and where there was a gulf between the town and the country. Man had to function and interact among institutions like the church,
marriage, money, politics, and labour. All these had a strong moral thread running through them, and George Eliot has interwoven it with the stories and characters to bring about the best possible effect.

Women occupied an inferior position in society. They were expected to remain in the background and fulfil their domestic duties, and did not have any say in legal or property matters. They were not expected to be intelligent or assertive, but ornamental as well as useful. All these factors give the reader the impression that individual lives were influenced by their personal choices, but also the socio-economic factors prevalent during the time.

**Middlemarch: A Summary**

Dorothea Brooke and her younger sister, Celia were young women of good birth, who lived with their bachelor uncle at Tipton Grange near the town of Middlemarch. So serious was Dorothea’s cast of mind that she was reluctant to keep jewelry she had inherited from her dead mother, and she gave all of it to her sister. Upon reconsideration, however, she did keep a ring and a bracelet. At a dinner party where Edward Casaubon, a middle-aged scholar, and Sir James Chettam both vied for her attention, she was much more attracted to the serious-minded Casaubon. Casaubon must have had inkling that his chances with Dorothea were good, for the next morning he sought her out. Celia, who did not like his complexion or his moles, disapproved of the matter. That afternoon Dorothea, contemplating the wisdom of the scholar, was walking and by chance encountered Sir James who was in love with her and mistook her silence for and supposed she might love him in return. When Casaubon made his proposal of marriage by letter, Dorothea accepted him at once. Mr. Brooke, her uncle, thought Sir James a much better match; Dorothea’s acceptance merely confirmed his bachelor views that women were difficult to understand. He decided not to interfere in her plans, but Celia felt that the event would be more like a funeral than a marriage, and frankly said so.

Casaubon took Dorothea, Celia, and Mr. Brooke to see his home so that Dorothea might order any necessary changes. Dorothea, intending in all things to defer to Casaubon’s tastes, said she would make no changes in the house. During the visit Dorothea met Will Ladislaw, Casaubon’s second cousin, who seemed to be hardly in sympathy with his elderly cousin’s marriage plans. While Dorothea and her new husband were travelling in Italy, Tertius Lydgate, an ambitious and poor young doctor, was meeting pretty Rosamond Vincy, to whom he was much attracted. Fred Vincy, Rosamond’s brother, had indicated that he expected to come into a fine inheritance when his uncle, Mr. Featherstone, should die. Vincy,
meanwhile, was pressed by a debt he was unable to pay.

Lydgate became involved in petty local politics. When the time came to choose a chaplain for the new hospital of which Lydgate was the head, the young doctor realised that it was to his best interest to vote in accordance with the wishes of Nicholas Bulstrode, an influential banker and founder of the hospital. A clergyman man named Tyke received the office. In Rome, Ladislaw encountered Dorothea had begun to realise too late how pompous and incompatible she found Casaubon. Seeing her unhappiness, Ladislaw first pitied and then fell in love with his cousin’s wife. Unwilling to live any longer on Casaubon’s charity, Ladislaw announced his intention of returning to England and finding some kind of gainful occupation.

When Fred Vincy’s note came due, he tried to sell a horse at a profit but the animal tried to be vicious. Caleb Garth, who had signed his note, now stood to lose a hundred and ten pounds because of Fred’s inability to raise the money. Fred fell ill, and Lydgate was summoned to attend him. Lydgate used his professional calls to further his suit with Rosamond. Dorothea and her husband returned from Rome in time to hear of Celia’s engagement to Sir James Chettam. Will Ladislaw included a note to Dorothea in a letter he wrote to Casaubon. This attention precipitated a quarrel which was followed by Casaubon’s serious illness. Lydgate, who attended him, urged him to give up his studies for the time being. To Dorothea, Lydgate confided that Casaubon had a weak heart and must be guarded from all excitement.

Meanwhile all the relatives of old Mr. Featherstone were waiting impatiently for his death, but he hoped to circumvent their desires by giving his fortune to Mary Garth, daughter of the man who had signed Fred Vincy’s note. When she refused it, he fell into a rage and died soon afterwards. When his will was read, it was learned he had left nothing to his relatives; most of his money was to go to a Joshua Riggs, who was to take the name of Featherstone and a part of his fortune was to endow the Featherstone Almshouses for old men. Plans were made for Rosamond’s marriage with Lydgate. Fred Vincy was ordered to prepare himself finally for the ministry, since he was to have no inheritance from his uncle. Mr. Brooke, having gone into politics, enlisted the help of Ladislaw in publishing a liberal paper. Mr. Casaubon had come to dislike Ladislaw intensely after his cousin had rejected further assistance, and he had forbidden Ladislaw to enter his house. Casaubon died suddenly. A codicil to his will gave Dorothea all of his property as long as she did not marry Ladislaw. This strange provision caused Dorothea’s friends and relatives some concern because if publicly given out, it would appear that Dorothea and Ladislaw had been indiscreet.
Mr. Brooke, on the advice of his Tory friends, gave up his liberal newspaper and thus cut off his connection with Ladislaw. The latter realised that Dorothea’s family was in some way trying to separate him from Dorothea but he refused to be disconcerted about the matter. He resolved to stay on in Middlemarch until he was ready to leave. When he heard of the codicil to Casaubon’s will, he was more than ever determined to remain so that he could eventually disprove the suspicions of the village concerning him and Dorothea. Meanwhile Lydgate and Rosamond had married, and the doctor had gone deeply in debt to furnish his house. When he found that his income did not meet his wife’s spendthrift habits, he asked her to help him economize. He and his wife began to quarrel. His practice and popularity decreased.

A disreputable man named Raffles appeared in Middlemarch. Raffles knew that Ladislaw’s grandfather had amassed a fortune as a receiver of stolen goods and that Nicholas Bulstrode, the highly respected banker, had once been the confidential clerk of Ladislaw’s ancestor. More than that, Bulstrode’s first wife had been his employer’s widow. Upon money inherited from her, money which should have gone to Ladislaw’s mother, Bulstrode had built his own fortune. Already blackened by Raffles, Bulstrode reasoned that the scoundrel would tell Ladislaw the whole story. To forestall trouble, he sent for Ladislaw and offered him an annuity of five hundred pounds and liberal provision in his will. Ladislaw, feeling that his relatives had already tainted his honour, refused, unwilling to be associated in any way with the unsavory business. Deciding to leave Middlemarch, Ladislaw went to London without assurance that Dorothea loved him. Lydgate drifted deeper into debt. When he wished to sell what he could and take cheaper lodgings, Rosamond managed to make him hold on, to keep up the pretense of prosperity a little longer. At the same time Bulstrode gave up his interest in the new hospital and withdrew his financial support. Faced at last with the seizure of his goods, Lydgate went to Bulstrode and asked for a loan. The banker advised him to seek aid from Dorothea and abruptly ended the conversation. But when Raffles, in the last stages of alcoholism, returned to Middlemarch and Lydgate was called in to attend him, Bulstrode, afraid the doctor would learn the banker’s secret from Raffles’ drunken ravings, changed his mind and gave Lydgate a cheque for a thousand pounds. The loan came in time to save Lydgate’s goods and reputation. When Raffles died, Bulstrode felt at peace at last. But it soon became common gossip that Bulstrode had given money to Lydgate and that Lydgate had attended Raffles in his final illness. Bulstrode and Lydgate were publicly accused of malpractice in Raffles’ death. Only Dorothea took up Lydgate’s defense. The rest of the town was busy with gossip over the affair. Rosamond was anxious to leave Middlemarch to avoid public disgrace. Bulstrode also was anxious to leave the town after his secret, which Raffles had told while drunk in a neighbouring village, became known. But he became ill and his
doctors would not permit him to leave his bed. Dorothea, sympathetic with Lydgate, determined to give her support to the hospital and to try to convince Rosamond that the only way Lydgate could recover his honour was by remaining in Middlemarch. Unfortunately, she came upon Will Ladislaw, to whom poor Rosamond was pouring out her grief. Afraid Rosamond was involved with Ladislaw, Dorothea left abruptly. Angered at the false position Rosamond had put him in, Ladislaw explained that he had always loved Dorothea, but from a distance. When Dorothea forced herself to return to Lydgate’s house on the following morning, Rosamond told her of Ladislaw’s declaration. Dorothea realised she was willing to give up Casaubon’s fortune for Ladislaw’s affection.

Inspite of the protests of her family and friends, they were married several weeks later and went to live in London. Lydgate and Rosamond lived together with better understanding and prospects of a happier future. Fred Vincy became engaged to Mary Garth, with whom he had long been in love. For a long time Dorothea’s family disregarded her, but they were finally reconciled after Dorothea’s son was born and Ladislaw was elected to Parliament.

Characterisation

George Eliot’s Middlemarch is well-acclaimed for her compassionate delineation of character and subtlety of psychological analysis. Dorothea Brooke is a fine instance of this. Little information is given about the environment in which she grows up. She is deprived of the security of a happy family as her parents are dead, and Mr. Brooke, the only substitute for parents, is a tolerant uncle who lets everyone have their way because opposition causes him too much trouble. Dorothea is an idealist, and her idealism is misplaced because she wants to do good and great things in a world of which she is ignorant. She is a misfit in the narrow provincial society where women were expected to be submissive and accept the role assigned to them without aspiring for more. She has visions of being the partner in the accomplishment of a great work and her misguided notions lead her into committing the grave mistake of marrying Casaubon. Her childish ideas about marriage (that a husband could be “a sort of father”), and her inability to see the obvious (Casaubon, who is ugly to Celia, seems to be one of the most distinguished-looking men to Dorothea) bring about disillusionment and unhappiness to her. She wants to be needed and appreciated by Casaubon, because he is the only person she looks up to - she feels that other people are ordinary and mediocre. This wish remains unfulfilled because Casaubon is always aloof and unapproachable, and Dorothea is doomed to a life of loneliness and misery. With the death of Casaubon comes the final blow, the codicil to the will, which is the ultimate insult she has to bear. Her marriage to the quite
ordinary Will Ladislaw and willingness to give up Casaubon’s property, is clearly an attempt to come out of her loneliness and establish a close relationship with another human being. Giving up her noble ideals of doing good and great things, she settles down to a fife of humdrum domesticity.

Casaubon is a cold and remote figure, at pains to give an impression of dignity and learning. Celia sees through his pretentiousness and finds him ugly and pompous, but poor deluded Dorothea is taken in by his reserve into thinking that this vain, dry clergyman is an intellectual, a man of letters. He imagines that in Dorothea he has found a suitable wife as she will admire him, and be a wife, hostess and secretary. He cannot understand her ardour and enthusiasm because he is unemotional and self-occupied. Her intelligence and perception that he himself distrusts his ability to complete his work makes him conscious of his failure. His resentment at this realisation makes him retire deeper into his shell and he is a very lonely man. Casaubon’s jealousy towards Ladislaw arises out of his feelings of inadequacy - Ladislaw is everything he is not, viz. young, enthusiastic, and above all unafraid. His will is another example of his jealousy and possessiveness, because he dimly foresees the possibility of Dorothea marrying Ladislaw, and wishes to prevent it even after his death.

Unlike Casaubon, Lydgate’s intelligence and learning are genuine. Like Dorothea, he is a person who holds great promise but has to rest content with very ordinary achievements. As a surgeon with excellent training, who hopes to combine medical work with research in physiology, he is undoubtedly above ordinary people in intelligence and work. But he is very conscious of this and it is this consciousness as well as his materialistic tendencies make him a lesser individual. Lydgate’s affair with the French actress, and his marriage to Rosamond indicate that he seems to have a weakness for vain, beautiful women. But his good nature is genuine as is seen in his relationship with his patients and colleagues. Success, recognition, prestige, are very important to him, but he is not aggressive, hard, or tough. In fact, he is swayed by sentiments and also suffers from pangs of conscience e.g. when he accepts money from Bulstrode. When he falls in love with Rosamond, he does not see through her wiles, and it is only after their marriage that he realises that under her beauty He selfishness and a terrible obstinacy. He forgives Rosamond for her petty scheming and becomes resigned to her egoism and her determination to have her own way. When Lydgate fails to achieve his ambition of being an affluent, renowned surgeon, he is bitterly disillusioned and resorts to dishonesty and the fear of exposure haunts him. It is particularly important for him to present the image of a respectable man of medicine, since a good reputation will help him to further his career by establishing a good practice in elite society.
Rosamond is a self-centered product of a ladies academy, the spoilt daughter of the complacent Vincy family. She is discontented with the narrow dull life of Middlemarch and treats her eager suitors with contempt because her heart is set on getting away to London. In her hauteur and disdain, she deliberately remains aloof from the people around her, whom she regards as commonplace and unrefined. In this she is somewhat similar to Dorothea who also regards herself as superior to others, but whereas Dorothea is a victim of deluded and impractical ideas, Rosamond is deliberately selfish and calculating. The arrival of Lydgate arouses her interest because she hears of his connection with an aristocratic family. Marriage to him is her means of escaping from an environment unsuited to her supposedly superior accomplishments to a life of social importance. She is determined to marry him and sets out to charm him by showing off her petty talents. Rosamond’s obstinacy, which George Eliot at first only hints at, is seen clearly once she is engaged to Lydgate. She is soon disillusioned with Lydgate when she sees that their marital life is troubled by financial problems. Later, she flirts with Ladislaw because it diverts her mind from her displeasure with Lydgate. Though she is not unfaithful to her husband, she wants to keep other men to herself as her admirers. Lydgate’s resentment and jealousy are seen by her as a tribute to her womanhood and personal charm. As their marriage deteriorates further, Lydgate sees her obstinacy, her inability to accept reality, her extravagance, and her air of martyrdom and disdain if she does not get her own way. As Lydgate’s troubles increase, so does Rosamond’s lack of concern for them. Rosamond almost destroys the relationship between Dorothea and Ladislaw, but later behaves unlike her usual self by telling Dorothea about the nature of Ladislaw’s visit to her, thereby clearing the way for their love. This is one rare instance when she moves out of her selfishness to help a fellow-woman in trouble. But soon she goes back to her usual stand of selfishness and obstinacy, and this is why Lydgate calls her his “basil plant”.

Will Ladislaw is the representative of the world outside Middlemarch, and the antithesis of Casaubon, being unlike him in all possible ways. He is the grandson of a woman who rebelled against the Casaubon values of class and money. His father was a musician, mother an actress, while he is a dilettante and a Radical. He rejects the superficial liberalism of Mr. Brooke and has not yet found his vocation. He sympathizes with Dorothea and regards her marriage to Mr. Casaubon as a horrible sacrifice, and later falls in love with her himself.

Some Observations on the novel

Middlemarch is often praised for its sense of unity despite its vast canvas, numerous characters and their individual stories. George Eliot is said to have started on a story with Lydgate as the central character and concerned with the fictional town which gave it its title.
She then started on a separate work called “Miss Brooke”, which grew in complexity. She must have recognised the many similarities of theme and setting and by 1871 the two stories were fused into a single panoramic novel. At the heart of the novel we have these two stories of Dorothea and Lydgate, twin studies in defeated aspiration. Dorothea, the misguided idealist, anxious to do great good in a world that is too narrow for her, is trapped in a marriage to the pedantic Casaubon. Lydgate, who aspires to achieve glorious heights in medical research, also fails to fulfil his dreams, and has an unhappy marriage with the self-centered Rosamond. Interwoven into these main stories, are those of Bulstrode, banker and religious hypocrite, whose dishonest past betrays him; of Fred Vincy, good-natured but lazy, who is saved by his love for Mary Garth, and the example of her father, Caleb; of Featherstone’s disposition of his property; and several minor characters who give range and depth to the novel. One or more of the characters in each story plays an important part in each of the other stories, thus making the novel an integrated whole.

While reading the novel, some themes appear to be prominent. Foremost among these is the theme of defeated aspiration, of which Dorothea and Lydgate are the best examples. Both want to do great things in life but their movements are cramped in the narrow provincial society of Middlemarch. George Eliot makes use of such parallels as well as of contrasts to highlight the themes. The theme of love and marriage is also an important one in the novel. The Dorothea-Casaubon marriage and the Rosamond-Lydgate marriage are examples of failed marriages, as the Celia-Chettam marriage, the Dorothea-Ladislaw marriage and the Fred-Mary marriage are examples of successful ones. The search for one’s true vocation and the ways in which may be frustrated is seen in the stories of Dorothea and Lydgate, and also in the examples of Casaubon, Farebrother and Fred,

Throughout the novel, the voice of the narrator is very obvious because besides being omniscient, it makes moral judgements on all events and people. George Eliot is impartial in analyzing Dorothea and Lydgate as well as Bulstrode and Casaubon, and her comments are ironic as well as compassionate. Her characters make a psychological journey from delusion to self-realization, and it is to her credit that she makes it a very realistic one for the reader.
THOMAS HARDY: JUDE THE OBSCURE

CHAPTER – VI

Thomas Hardy: his life and career

Thomas Hardy was born in Dorchester in 1840. In 1862, he went to London as an assistant in an architect’s office. He had a liking for literature and read works of contemporary writers like T. H. Huxley, Swinburne, and Browning. He wrote Under the Greenwood Tree in 1872 and Far from the Madding Crowd in 1874, which were very popular. During the next ten years, he and his wife travelled in Britain and abroad and made their home in the country though they went to London at intervals. His The Return of the Native was published in 1678, The Mayor of Casterbridge in 1886, Tess of the D’Urbervilles in 1891, and Jude the Obscure in 1896. Hardy had always been sensitive to criticism, and the damning reception of his last novel upset him so deeply, that he gave up novel-writing. He devoted himself to the preparation of his epic drama, The Dynasts, which was published in 1904, and after that wrote only poetry until his death in 1928.

Jude the Obscure: A Summary

The novel opens in a small village in Wessex, with the departure of the village schoolmaster, Mr. Phillotson, and the author tells us that everybody in the village seemed sorry to see him leave. He is going to the city of Christminster, some twenty miles away. Jude Fawley, a little boy of eleven, who is the central figure in the novel, is very sorry to see him leave because they have been good friends. Though he is very young, Jude is one of the few who understand why the school master is leaving. The school master is leaving for Christminster because he wishes to get a university degree which is necessary for a man who wants to do in teaching. As Phillotson leaves the village Jude is rudely woken from thinking about his ambitious teacher by the loud voice of his aunt, an old woman who is bringing up the orphaned Jude and who lives in a small cottage with Jude. Jude is ordered to go to the well in the centre of village, and fetch two water buckets back to his aunt’s cottage. The old lady, Drusilla Fawley, earns her living as a baker. As the first chapter closes, Jude arrives at the old well. Jude returns to great-aunt Drusilla’s cottage with the two heavy water buckets; this is physical labour really beyond the boy’s strength, but he is not one to complain. He finds himself listening to a conversation between his aunt and another elderly woman, Mrs. Williams, and Drusilla tells the story of Jude and his parents to Mrs. Williams right in front of Jude. The story Drusilla tells is one of the tragic and untimely death of both of Jude’s parents, after what was apparently a very unhappy marriage ending with their separation and then
their death. She does not go into detail, but she warns Jude not to marry because it is not correct for the Fawleys to marry. As she tells the villagers as well as Jude something of the family history and its misfortunes, she also makes it known that Jude, like most of his family, is very much attracted to books. She wishes that the schoolmaster would have taken Jude off her hands and made a scholar of him in the university at Christminster, but he was not to be. The old woman mentions Jude’s cousin, Sue, who had been born in Drusilla’s own cottage, as having many of the same characteristics as Jude, especially her love for books. Jude feels a sense of identity with the birds, because nobody wants them, just as he feels that nobody wants him. Drusilla tells Jude more about Christminster and wishes that he had also gone there so that he would have been off her hands. Jude now begins to wish he could really go to Christminster, which has become his goal and aspiration. Jude meets a man with a coal-cart who tells him that they have come for Christminster where there are many scholars and clergymen. This increases Jude’s appetite for study at Christminster. Then Jude meets Physician Vilbert, a quack doctor who sells worthless medicines to trusting and ignorant rural people. Jude questions him about Christminster and the physician gives the impression that he is a university graduate. He tells Jude that he will give him the grammars of Latin and Greek, which are necessary for entrance into the university if Jude will get some customers for him. Jude honestly does so, and then realises that the physician is a dishonest man. He is really disillusioned and feels really depressed. During the next three or four years Jude studies hard along with the work of helping his aunt. One Saturday, as Jude is returning home, he hears the voices of some girls from the other side of the hedge. Suddenly he is hit with something which is the part of an animal’s body. He peeps over the hedge and sees three young women washing parts of animals’ bodies. One of them, a fine dark-eyed girl catches his attention and later, he comes to know that her name is Arabella. He decides to call upon her the next Sunday. Jude wants to break his date with Arabella but cannot make himself do so. Arabella tempts him and Jude seduces her. Two months later her he tells her that he plans to go and begin his career at Christminster. She consults the quack doctor Vilbert and tells Jude that she is pregnant with his child. Though he knows it is a mistake, Jude and Arabella are married and he tries to convince himself that she is the right person. Jude is nineteen, an apprentice stone-mason with poor financial prospects. He takes a small cottage where Arabella can wait for the expected child. But she tells him that she is mistaken about the pregnancy and that there is to be no child. He comes to know other things about her namely that she has been a barmaid, she wears a wig, that she lied to him about her pregnancy - all of which cause him to give less respect to her. The incident of the slaughtering of the pig reveals that Arabella is cold and unemotional about the killing while Jude is soft-hearted. Jude overhears a conversation between Arabella’s companions and discovers in which Arabella trapped him.
and on going home speaks to her about it. Arabella’s reaction is to say that every woman has a right to behave in such a way and after that to antagonize Jude by throwing his books on the floor and smearing them with grease. Jude uses physical force to stop her and Arabella walks out on the road shouting to the passers-by that she was being ill-treated by him. Several days later he receives a letter from her telling him that she is planning to emigrate to Australia with her parents. He sees that Arabella has auctioned of his portrait with the rest of the household goods and after buying it burns it as a sign that their relationship is finished. He decides to go to Christminster and forget his marriage to Arabella.

In Part II of the book, Hardy tells us that Jude goes to Christminster, which is the place of his dreams. He is twenty-two years old, has been married and separated, and is experienced in stone-cutting and stone-carving. Jude had seen at his aunt’s house the photograph of his cousin, Sue Bridehead, who lives in Christminster. Jude walks around Christminster and sees the names of great poets and writers associated with the college. For a number of days, he wanders around the colleges among the students and realises that he has little chance of becoming a university student. He gets employment at the stone-mason yard, rents a small room and buys a few books intending to study by night and work by day. He comes to know the place where Sue is employed and goes there to observe her. Next Sunday, Jude attends a church service because he knows that Sue often attends it. When he sees her he follows her and sees her buying plaster statues but he does not speak to her. At last Jude and Sue meet and Jude admits that he knows a great deal about her. She tells him that his school teacher, Phillotson, is now a schoolmaster in a small town outside Christminster. He meets Phillotson who tells her that he has given up his ideas of getting a degree and Jude wonders how he can succeed when Phillotson has been a failure. Meanwhile, Sue has left her employment and becomes the assistant teacher to Phillotson. She is quite good at her work and he wishes to keep her services. Jude looks forward to his next meeting with Sue but he sees her walking with Phillotson and is overcome with jealousy but he tells himself that he is still legally Arabella’s husband to marry Sue would be a criminal and moral offence. Then he comes to know that his aunt Drusilla is ill and goes to see her. When he speaks to her about Sue, she wants him not to have anything to do with Sue. Jude returns to Christminster and decides to go to see Sue. He goes to her cottage and tells her all he has done to himself and his reputation. Sue is sympathetic and allows him to sleep downstairs in the house. He leaves the cottage before Sue wakes up and goes to his aunt’s house, where he talks to the curate who has been comforting her in her illness.

Part III shows Jude temporarily abandoning the world to lead a religious life because he would never rise above the rank of a humble curate and this, he feels, would be purgatory.
that he deserved for his previous sinful life. He is considered a failure by the villagers because he went to Christminster to better himself but returns without any achievement. Jude receives a letter from Sue in which she asks him to come and see her as she is very lonely, and that she does not like the college because she hates the confinement. Jude goes to meet her and she tells him that Phillotson has proposed to her and that she has accepted. One afternoon Sue having a half-day’s leave from her strict college, goes with Jude on a visit near Melchester. They are stranded and a kind shepherd gives them shelter for the night. When she returns to college the next morning, she is severely reprimanded. That evening, Sue comes to Jude’s lodgings and stays the night. She tells him (with a total lack of emotion), of her friendship with a student who had ultimately died of a broken heart because she had refused to be his mistress. In the morning, Sue leaves the house with Jude, and thinking that they are unobserved, plans to return to college and be readmitted. But the college authorities refuse to take her back, and suggest that she marry Jude for the sake of her reputation. In the meanwhile, Phillotson is decorating a house in preparation of his marriage to Sue. She does not inform him about her expulsion, and he is shocked to know of it when he visits the college. He meets Jude, who tells him that Sue is innocent, and that he would like to marry Sue but cannot. Afterwards Jude meets Sue and tells her that he is married to Arabella and is upset that he had not told her about this earlier. Jude tells her that the Fawleys were not meant for marriage, but she makes light of this prophecy. Sue marries Phillotson, and Jude gives her away at the wedding, but he feels that she is making a ghastly mistake. Jude goes to see his aunt who is very ill, and then proceeds to Christminster, where he is offered a job. To his surprise, he sees Arabella, working as a barmaid. They go to stay at an inn, and the next morning, she tells him that she has married another man in Australia. They visit Drusilla, who seems to be better, and then Arabella shocks him by telling him that she is going back to her second husband in Australia. Jude returns to his studies for priesthood and after some days, receives an invitation from Sue for dinner to their house, but declines to go.

Jude meets Sue at the school and she invites him again, but later, she sends a note cancelling it. Jude receives a telegram saying that his aunt is dying, and by the time he reaches her house, she dies. Sue comes for the funeral, and after it is over, tells Jude that she is not happy in her marriage. Next morning, they are about to go their separate ways, but embrace before they go. Jude then burns all his theological books, symbolizing his break with his aspirations for a religious life. Though Sue returns to her husband, she cannot stand him and tries to lock herself in a cupboard. Phillotson is very bitter but keeps quiet until she asks him if he would mind if she lived separately. They continue to live together, but not as man and wife. The next morning, he tells her that she is free to go, although in doing so, he ruins himself professionally. Sue and Jude go off together but cannot legally again. So they start
divorce proceedings against Phillotson and Arabella. Sue has been of a questioner of society while Jude is more conservative, but from this point on their opinions are reversed, until Jude becomes a sceptic while Sue becomes orthodox.

Hardy tells us in Part V that though Sue and Jude are free to marry they neglect to do so for reasons which are rather obscure and lie in the character of Sue. One day Arabella returns to England with Carlett, her tavern-keeper husband and claims that she has a child by Jude and that he and Sue must accept it and take care of it. Jude is not sure that the child is his, but accepts it. It is a boy a quiet, withdrawn and fantastic child named Little Father Time. In the succeeding years Jude and Sue have two children of their own. Jude’s health fails due to exertion of his trade.

In Part VI the writer tells us that one day when he and Sue are absent, Little Father Time murders the two younger children and then kills himself. Sue feels that she is guilty and the deaths are punishments for her sins. She asks Phillotson to marry her again so that she can be punished. And she advises Jude to marry Arabella who’s second husband is now dead. As the novel concludes, Jude is married again to Arabella. He dies in Christminster on the anniversary of the death of his children. Meanwhile, Sue continues to be married to Phillotson though she has loved Jude to the end. The marriage is a loveless one and has been entered into by her out of a religious fanaticism and a wish for punishment.

**Characterisation**

Hardy has created Jude, the protagonist, as a tragic character. He is a man of humble origins but becomes an outsider in society. There is an obscure curse on the Fawley family and that is that they are not made for happy marriages. From his childhood, Jude has high aspirations. He wishes to leave the village and pursue learning at the university. At first, all he wants is a non-religious end, but gradually he abandons this and decides to become a clergyman, an aim which is also given up. At heart, Jude is a very sentimental man and cannot bear to hurt any living creature, be it an insect or a dumb animal like a pig or a rabbit. He feels the same sense of compassion for Arabella and Sue, neither of whom he wants to hurt. Unfortunately he does not conform to the social norms and invites criticism amounting to condemnation. Jude proceeds from faith and conservatism to skepticism. In showing Jude undergoing great suffering (as when his children are murdered), and dying an early death, Hardy has undoubtedly made use of melodrama to win the reader’s sympathy, but he has also shown him as the modern hero rebelling against society and alienated from it.

Arabella, Jude’s first wife, is described in animalistic terms, as the “pig-woman”.
and seen to be tending to pigs and preparing pork for the market. She is a schemer and
entraps Jude into marriage, but her motives are relatively uncomplicated. She wants to marry
Jude so that she can escape from an unsatisfactory life as a pig-keeper’s daughter, and she is
absolutely unscrupulous in the way she goes about trapping Jude. She deserts Jude and
contracts a bigamous marriage with little remorse and does not hesitate to make Jude accept
Little Father Time. At the end of the novel, she is the same selfish, unfeeling person she was
at the beginning, and this is seen in the way she tries to be friendly with the physician Vilbert
when Jude is going to die so that she may have a protector and a means of support.

Sue is the most complex character in the novel and also the most difficult to
understand. She is a classic case of sexual hysteria, which she is unable to admit to herself,
and which she converts into rigid self-punishment. Hardy, with great sympathy, has created
convincingly the weaknesses in her personality. She alternately attracts and repulses both her
lovers, and her sadism is directed towards both of them. She is, as Jude realizes, unfit for
normal marriage, and therefore, could not have married Phillotson or anyone else. Hardy
underlines the physical repulsion she feels for Phillotson. Hardy uses the melodramatic
episode of the death of the children to show Sue's breakdown into hysteria. He shows her
frantic struggle at the graveside, and it is the picture of a personality precariously balanced
on the edge of insanity. In her shrinking from the physical, she contrasts with Arabella, who
uses the physical for whatever satisfaction and material comfort it will bring her. As the
novel proceeds, her feelings remain the same, though grotesquely exaggerated, and she
finally deals with her emotional problems by self-punishment.

When Jude is a small boy, Phillotson the schoolmaster, fires Jude with ambition to
win a place in the university. Phillotson himself would be perhaps twenty years or more,
older than Jude. and when he appears after the initial scenes in Marygreen it is as a middle-
aged, rather, resigned man who acts even older than his looks. We never get a really good
physical picture of him, or indeed of any character in the novel except Arabella, because of
the tendency for Hardy to create two-dimensional characters who are symbols of ideas in
this novel, perhaps more than in any other work of his. Phillotson, at any rate, suffers for his
attempt to do the right thing by Sue when she wishes to leave him, and his character, too, is
stunted, so that at the end there is a hint of sadism in his relation to his wife. He gives the
impression of dryness, lack of vitality, deficiency in emotion, and a certain rawness of
personality which makes him one whom no woman can stand. Yet he would be described as
an upright and honourable person, who, in the terms of his society, falls from grace once,
when he gives Sue her freedom to go to Jude. And this is the most uncharacteristic action of
his life.
In contrast to the four major characters, most of the other characters, especially Mrs. Edlin, Gillingham, and aunt Drusilla, serve as a sort of Greek Chorus - commenting, foretelling, moralizing. No character is casual and without a function in the book; Hardy shows the actions of even the most minor of the characters as they irrevocably affect the lives of the major characters.

Some Observations on the Novel

In Jude The Obscure Hardy describes the shattered ideals of the two chief characters as their instincts are forced by society into moulds that do not fit them. Hardy’s attitude to Jude swings between sympathy, mockery and bitterness at Jude’s victimisation. The narrator’s reference to Christ in the early stages of the novel suggests the spiritual nature of the young Jude but in the middle of this Jude is awakened to the reality of physical needs when he meets Arabella. Arabella’s association with animals foreshadows her later seduction of Jude. Jude’s first entry into Christminster looking for work as a stonemason is not heroic. He is an impractical dreamer who has not even found out how to apply for admission to a college. He self-consciously regards himself as a symbol of the intellectual and social restlessness of the time. Sue occupies part of the pattern of contrasts in the novel. Arabella represents the temptation of the flesh, while Sue stands for sensitivity and intellect. Hardy’s attitude to Sue is ambiguous. Jude’s first glimpse of her, like his first view of Christminster is deeply ironic. She fears marriage as a degrading form of social prostitution but is very narcissistic and insecure. She displays her intense jealousy of Arabella’s place in Jude’s life and her vindictiveness is seen when she revenges herself on Jude and at the same time torments herself. Her physical aversion to her husband results in her elopement with Jude.

Hardy’s complex treatment of Jude and Sue depends on his shifting point of view which ranges from admiration and sympathy to mockery and anger. Underlying this changing pattern is the irony in the way Jude and Sue exchange places. In the beginning he is conservative and religious while she is radical and agnostic. But by the end he becomes a disbeliever and she becomes conservative. Sue’s final acceptance of convention is brought about by the horrific tragedy of her children who are killed at the hands of Little Father Time. Her dread of divine authority reasserts itself, and she punishes herself by returning to Phillotson. Jude’s tragic death is profoundly ironic because betrayed by Arabella who goes off with Vilbert, the dead Jude lies alone in his room. Hardy’s patterns of futility draw
attention to what he suggested in the narrative structure i.e. that life is a process of disillusion and defeat. Marriage is revealed as a meaningless contract which always ends in sorrow and suffering. Though the novel has touches of irony, it also has all the elements of a tragedy.
Joseph Conrad: his life and career

Joseph Conrad was born Teodor Jozef Konrad Korzeniowski in 1857, the only child of a patriotic Polish couple living in southern Poland. His father was a poet and a man of letters in Poland and mother was a gentle well-born lady with a keen mind but frail health. When he was five his father was arrested because he was suspected of taking part in revolutionary plots against the Russians and was exiled to northern Russia. Conrad and his mother went with him. His mother died from the hardships of prison life three years later when she was only thirty-four. Conrad’s father sent him back to his mother’s brother for his education, and Conrad was never to see him again. The poet patriot lived only four more years. Conrad was eleven years old, but the emotional bond between him and his father was so strong that a deep melancholy settled within the young boy and much of his writing as an adult is marked by melancholy under currents. Conrad received a good education in Poland but decided on a different career viz, he chose the sea as his vocation. Since the age of seventeen, he sailed almost continually, working on ships that traveled all over the world. This is why most of his novels and short stories have the sea as a background for the action. In 1886, when he was twenty-nine, he became a British subject. He published his first novel *Aimaver’s Folly* in 1895. He published his *The Nigger of the Narcissus* in 1897, *Heart of Darkness* in 1899, *Lord Jim* in 1900, *The Secret Agent* in 1907, and *Under Western Eyes* in 1911. He was offered Knighthood in 1924 and died soon after.

**Lord Jim: A Summary**

The reader is introduced to Jim (later Lord Jim) at a time when he was working as a water clerk for shipping firm in the Far East. It was not a very good job but Jim was happy and everyone liked him. Jim was born and raised in an Englishman’s home and when he was still a young boy, he decided to make the sea his career. He enrolled on a training ship for officers of the merchant marine. He did well and while still aboard the training ship, met his first test of courage when he was called to assist a vessel injured in a fierce storm. Afterwards he justified himself by saying that he was not really afraid but only waiting for a challenge that would be equal to his heroism. He then began to work as first mate on the ship Patna. This was an old steamer bound for holy places with eight hundred Muslim pilgrims. On a
calm dark night in the Arabian Sea, the Patna ran over some floating wreckage and got badly damaged. Water entered the bulkhead where hundreds of the pilgrims were asleep. Jim was convinced that soon the sea water would in and the pilgrims would all be drowned. As there were few lifeboats and no time, it would not be possible to save everybody on board. Meanwhile the skipper and other officers struggled to lower a lifeboat. Jim hated their cowardice and refused to help them. The officers got the lifeboat over the side and jumped in. Jim also jumped into the lifeboat. The next few hours were full of horror. The other officers resented Jim’s presence in the lifeboat. They watched as the lights of the Patna seemed to go out, and Jim imagined that he could hear the screams of the helpless passengers. The next day a ship picked up the four men and ten days later it delivered them to an Eastern port. The story which the Patna skipper invented to excuse their desertion was useless because they heard the news that a French warship had discovered the Patna deserted by the officers and towed it into Aden. At this news, the skipper vanished and the two engineers drank until they were hospitalised. Jim had to face the official inquiry panel alone. He defended himself and insisted that there had not been a chance to save the Patna. At the inquiry, a man named Marlow entered the scene and throughout most of the novel, the reader sees Jim through Marlow’s sympathetic eyes. Deeply interested in the young good-looking Englishman, Marlow attended the inquiry and tried to discovery why Jim had deserted the Patna. Jim thinks that Marlow is calling him a wretched dog and has a low opinion of him. On the other hand Marlow finds himself drawn to Jim and invites the young man to have dinner with him at Malabar House. There Jim relates the story of what happened that night on the Patna, and Marlow realises that Jim is a tormented soul. The inquiry ends with Jim losing his naval certificate.

Marlow finds a job for Jim and the young man does well and pleases his employer. But suddenly Jim disappears because someone mentions the Patna and Jim cannot endure it. In this way Jim leaves job after job until many people in the Orient know his story. Marlow finally confides his story to Herr Stein, a philosophical old trader who has a wonderful butterfly collection. He suggests that Jim should go to Patusan, an isolated island community in a Malay state where three warring groups are fighting for supremacy. In Patusan Stein had an unprofitable trading post under the direction of a cunning Portuguese named Cornelius. Jim could take over the trading post and begin new life because no one would know him in Patusan. Stein’s offer delighted Jim. He felt that he could now bury his past completely and no one would ever find out about it. Stein also gave Jim a silver ring which was a symbol of friendship between Stein and Doramin, chief of the Malays in Patusan. Alone Jim traveled to Patusan but was soon captured by Rajah Allang’s men. However, he manages to escape to
Doramin’s village where he shows him Stein’s silver ring and is warmly welcomed and protected. Doramin’s son, a strong intelligent young man named Dain Waris, and Jim become good friends walk together to bring Rajah Allang under control. Jim felt secure in the love and trust of all the people. He falls in love with a girl named Jewel who now shares his life. After two years Marlow visits Jim at Patusan, but he feels that he has intruded into Jim’s life and decides never again to visit Patusan. An Australian named Gentleman Brown and his band of desperate seamen steal a ship and travel up river to Patusan intending to plunder their settlement. When the bandits arrive Jim is away but the villagers drive the invaders away. When Jim returns Doramin, Dain Waris and all the villagers ask Jim to destroy the robbers but Jim decides to talk to Brown. Brown does not know Jim’s past but he judges Jim and sees that Jim has a guilty conscience about something. Jim did not want bloodshed so he promised Brown and his men safe conduct down the river. Brown, advised and guided by the cunning Cornelius, left as planned, but treacherously ambushed a group of villagers under Dain Waris who was killed. Survivors bring the body of Dain Waris to his father Doramin. On his hand is the silver ring which Jim had sent as a pledge of Brown’s good faith. Meanwhile the terrible news reaches Jim. His new life has been ruined. The Malays will never trust him again. He had three choices - he could run, he could fight, or he could give himself up. But Jim went to Doramin’s village, alone and unarmmed, he faced Doramin. Doramin shoots Jim through the chest and he falls at his feet, a hero in death.

Characterisation

Jim is a tall well-built young man with blue eyes and a deep voice. On his assignment on the Patna, Jim abandons eight hundred Muslim pilgrims because he thinks that the ship is going to sink. The ship is rescued and Jim feels terribly ashamed of his cowardly act. He is unable to live a normal life because he fears that his terrible cowardice will be revealed and follow him throughout his life. Jim is a very idealistic person who is ashamed because he cannot live up to his own idealised image that he has built up. His sense of guilt haunts him and makes him incapable of achieving anything in life. Conrad has tried to present Jim as a heroic character who has been misunderstood but who has become a failure because of his own guilt complex. Jim is a fine example of the psychological portrait of a man who could have been a hero but has become a neurotic.

Marlow is a sea-captain by profession and twenty-years older than Jim. He has deep sympathy for Jim and tries to help him in every possible way. Marlow’s role in the novel is that of the narrator who gives shape and order to the story and also who comments and performs the function of a chorus. He understands Jim’s problem because he belongs to the
same profession and also because he is very sensitive by nature. He tries to help Jim but the flaws in Jim’s own character bring about his tragedy.

All the other characters in the novel are minor characters like Jewel, the white girl who loves Jim and tries to protect him as much as possible; Doramin the native chieftain; Dain Waris the chief’s son and Jim’s best friend; Stein the wealthy businessman and collector of butterflies; Cornelius, Jewel’s stepfather who betrays Jim; Brown the pirate who wants to rob the village; etc.

The Structure and the Narrative Method in the novel

When one studies the structure of Lord Jim, one notices that once Marlow begins to speak, the novel proceeds according to his information and his ability to present that information. His presentation is in three parts. The first is his meeting with Jim and the long interview on the verandah of Malabar House. The second is his visit to Patusan many years later. And the third is the long written report which he sends to a friend. The incidents in between are merely links between the sequences, and also serve as parallels and contrasts to them. Thus the reader is presented with a cluster of ideas and incidents rather than a single, simple action.

In Lord Jim, there are two voices at work -the voice of the author and the voice of Marlow. For structural reasons, Conrad chooses to place an intermediary between the plot and the reader. Marlow is that intermediary and his arrangement of incidents is the structure of the novel. The voice of the author (in Chapter I) first tells the reader about Marlow on a verandah in England. Thereafter, Marlow relates events, but the voice of the author re-enters story many more times (e.g. in Chapters IV, VIII, X, XXI, XXXIV, XXXVI). Each time, the author pulls the reader back to what Marlow is relating on the verandah, from the place and time of the incident that he is relating.

The manner in which the events of the tale are related to the reader, i.e., through the omniscient author or through the first person “I”, indicates that Conrad wanted to combine the advantages of both the methods. (At the same time, only the former would have been too diffuse, and only the latter would have been too limited). Brief narratives are included in earlier ones (eg, Marlowe’s narrative accommodates the narratives of others). This frame-narrative involves narration within narration, which allows the reader to be at once inside and outside the narrator, and it is possible for the reader to have a many-sided point of view and complexity of vision. The shifting narrative makes possible the vividness of first-hand accounts, and the presence of Marlowe, dominant throughout the novel, makes for cohesion.
The story does not follow the linear method of narration. E.g. in Chapter XIV, we are taken back to the court of inquiry and its verdict. This zig-zag narrative method makes heavy demands on the patience and understanding of the reader. The mystery and glamour of Jim, and the interest he holds for the reader, are heightened by the narrative technique, which does not give a consecutive narrative of his adventures, but only occasional glimpses of his strange career, separated by long intervals.

Some Observations on the Novel

One of the themes in Lord Jim is the conflict between the individual’s ideals and the harsher aspects of reality. Conrad explores the idealistic side of human nature in conflict with darker psychic forces and with an indifferent or hostile society. The novel is also the story of a quest, or rather two quests. One is Jim’s search for adventure and self-fulfilment, and the other is Marlow’s psychological quest as he struggles towards an understanding of Jim. In one sense, Jim’s quest is also a futile quest for anonymity and respectability as well as status. It is also the eternal human quest for peace, which is also a futile one.

The major symbol in Lord Jim is light, and by contrast, darkness. The calm voyage of the Patna in sunlight and moonlight symbolises the absence of threatening circumstances. But after the collision, the Patna is swept by rain and darkness, and Jim jumps into the darkness in a moment of confusion. Marlow always mentions how dark and savage the jungle is, and to contrast Jim, always dressed in impeccable white, to the darkness around him. When Stein shows the delicacy and beauty of the butterfly, he contrasts the perfection of nature against the imperfections of man.

Nature becomes an active participant in Lord Jim. Rather than showing man living in harmony with nature, Conrad shows the constant struggle in nature which reflects the conflict in man’s affairs. Man’s will to survive unmasks every desire for decency and propriety. The sea becomes a natural ground for treachery and hate when man’s natural fears are touched. The jungle symbolises man’s hopeless struggle to keep afloat in life. Conrad’s symbols thus endlessly suggest new levels of meaning.
CHAPTER – VIII

D. H. LAWRENCE : THE RAINBOW

D. H. Lawrence: his life and career

D. H. Lawrence was born in 1885, in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, the fourth of five children in a working-class family. He was educated at Nottingham High School and University College, where he studied to become a school teacher. Lawrence’s parents did not get along with each other because of the disparity in their respective background. Lydia had been a school teacher, was fond of reading, had written poetry and was deeply religious, whereas his father worked in a colliery and spoke in the dialect of Nottingham. A few years after their marriage, the image of the handsome dancing young man she had met and fallen in love faded rapidly, and was replaced by that of a selfish, drunken bully. And this was how the mother made the children see their father. This picture is reflected in his autobiographical novel Sons and Lovers. Lawrence’s mother wanted to prevent her children from following in their father’s footsteps, and the most powerful weapon she had at hand was education, which wielded with great efficiency. So Lawrence went to school, learned shorthand and learnt typewriting and French and German. In 1912, he married Frieda and they spent much of their lives travelling in Europe, Australia and America. Lawrence supported himself by writing. His short stories were published in 1909 and his novel, The White Peacock in 1911. His Sons and Lovers was published in 1913, The Rainbow in 1915 and its sequel Women and Love in 1916. His The Lost Girl, The Kangaroo, Aaron’s Rod, Fantasia of the Unconscious and England My England, were published between 1921 to 1922. He also wrote The Plumed Serpent, Birds. Beasts and Flowers. The Woman who Rode Away. Lady Chatterley’s Lover and Collected Poems between 1925 1928. He died in France in 1930.

D. H. Lawrence wrote with great care but added to the little form of the novel. He rejected tradition and wrote much about the adverse side of modern civilization which thwarted his spirit. Though many of his major novels attracted controversies when they were first published, they represent significant landmarks in artistic development and indicate that it was his ideal to discover a free flow of passionate life through inner experience.

The Rainbow: A Summary

Tom Brangwen was descended from a long line of small land holders who had owned Marsh Farm in Nottinghamshire for many generations. Tom was a man of the soil, living alone on his farm with only an old woman as his housekeeper to keep him company. Then a
Polish widow, Lydia Lensky, became the housekeeper of the Vicar of the local church. She brought her small daughter, Anna, with her. Within a few months Tom Brangwen found enough courage to present the widow a bouquet of daffodils one evening in the Vicar’s kitchen and to ask the woman to be his wife.

Their marriage was a satisfactory one, judged by the standards of the world. Tom was kind to his stepdaughter. Later he had two sons by his wife. But knowing his stepdaughter was easier for him than knowing Lydia. The fact that they were of different nationalities, cultures, and even languages kept the couple from ever becoming intellectually intimate with one another. There were times when either one or both felt that the marriage was not what it should be for them, that they were not fulfilling the obligations which their mating had pressed upon them. On one occasion Lydia even suggested to her husband that he needed another woman.

Little Anna was a haughty young girl who spent many hours imagining herself a great lady or even a queen. In her eighteenth year a nephew of Tom Brangwen came to work in the lace factory in the nearby village of Ilkeston. He was only twenty years old; The Brangwens at Marsh Farm looked after him and made him welcome in their home. Anna Lenksy and young Will Brangwen fell in love, with a naive, touching affection for each other. They soon announced to Tom and Lydia that they wished to be married. Tom leased a home in the village for the couple and gave them a present of twenty-five hundred pounds so they would not want because of Will’s small salary.

The wedding was celebrated with rural pomp and hilarity. After the ceremony the newly-married couple spent two weeks alone in their cottage, ignoring the world and existing only for themselves. Anna was the first to come back to the world of reality. Her decision to give a tea party both bewildered and angered her husband, who had not yet realised that they could not continue to live only for and by themselves. It took him almost a lifetime to come to that realisation. Shortly after the marriage Anna became pregnant, and the arrival of the child brought to Will the added shock that his wife was more a mother than she was a wife. Each year a new child came between Will and Anna. The oldest was Ursula who was always her father’s favourite. The love which Will wished to give his wife was given to Ursula, for Anna refused to have anything to do with him when she was expecting another child. In the second year of his marriage Will Brangwen tried to rebel. He met a girl at the theatre and took her out for supper and a walk. After that incident the life of Will and Anna began to gain in passion, intense enough to carry Will through the daytime when he was not necessary to the house until the night when he could rule his wife. Gradually he became free in his own mind.
Since Ursula was her father’s favourite child, she was sent to high school. That privilege was a rare thing for a girl of her circumstances in the last decade of the nineteenth century. She drank up knowledge in her study of Latin, French and Algebra. But before she had finished, her interest in her studies was shared by an interest in a young man. The son of a Polish friend of her grandmother’s was introduced into the house namely young Anton Skrebensky, a lieutenant in the British army. During a month’s leave he fell in love with Ursula, who was already in love with him. But she drove him away because he was afraid that she was too possessive.

After finishing high school, Ursula took an examination to enter the university. Having passed the examination, she decided to teach in a school for a time, for she wanted to save money to complete her education without being a burden to her parents. Anna and Will were furious when she talked about leaving home. They compromised with her however, by securing for her a position in a school in Ilkeston. Ursula spent two years teaching at a village elementary school and was glad to continue her education. She decided to become a botanist.

Then one day after the Boer War ended, Ursula received a letter which upset her completely. Anton had written that he wished to see her again while he was in England on leave. Within a week he arrived in Nottingham to visit her at school. Their love returned with greater intensity, and during the Easter holidays they spent a weekend together at a hotel. They went to the Continent as soon as Ursula finished classes for the summer. Even then, however, Ursula did not want to marry Anton but wanted to return to college to take her degree. Anton continued to press her for marriage and he wanted her to leave England with him when he returned to service in India, Meanwhile Ursula had neglected her studies and failed in her final examinations for her degree and had to study to take them over again before the end of summer. When Ursula failed her examinations a second time, Anton urged her to marry him immediately, because according to him in India a degree would mean nothing. In the meantime they went to a house party where they realised that they could not agree enough to make a successful marriage. They left the party separately and a few weeks later Anton went to India and married his regimental Commander’s daughter. After he had gone, Ursula realised that she was pregnant, and not knowing that he was already married, she wrote to Anton promising to be a good wife if he still wished to marry her. Before his reply came from India, Ursula contracted pneumonia and lost the child. One day as she was recovering, she observed the beautiful sight of a rainbow in the sky over the hideousness of the houses and estates, and recognises it as a sign of regeneration. She hoped that this was a promise of better
Characterisation

In *The Rainbow*, Lawrence creates characters who are complex and appear to have different identities. At one level they are recognizable human beings, farmers, emigrants, school teachers, husbands, wives, daughters, etc. But on another level, they are centres of consciousness and action, and there is a possibility of a union between these two identities. Tom Brangwen seems a traditional character, a fair strongly built man with blue eyes who sees a Polish woman, a widow with small daughter and comes to a great decision. In his straightforward way he proposes to her, and is happy when she accepts. On his wedding day he accepts the hearty handshakes of his friends and looks forward to a comfortable life. But Lydia, his wife lapses into a sombre mood and he feels that she is like a millstone that is crushing him. Though at times there are moments when the barriers break and there is communication between them, such instances are very few. As the children grow up he is seen to develop into a kind of patriarch who wants them to be brought up in a particular way. His life on Marsh Farm is presented as something that is valuable and concretely achieved. The flood in which Tom is carried away is presented as act of God which reminds us of the Old Testament.

Lydia Brangwen the Polish widow who marries Tom is dispossessed and alone in England, and makes him a father to her little child Anna. Their marriage is the first means in the novel through which Lawrence examines the development of feeling when the individuals have no common cultural ground. Tom cannot understand his wife’s language and manners and finds it difficult to communicate with her. Of the three generations in the novel, Tom and Lydia have the most difficulty in establishing a relationship, yet their success is greater than that of their children or grandchildren because they pass from uncertainty and fear to an understanding.

As a child, Anna is seen in terms of her hair which is described to be like thistledown, spun glass, wild fleece, and a fleecy halo. In her later life she is described in terms of flame, flashing, a bleze of light, a beam of sunshine. Her maturity, as a young mother is expressed in terms of a full ear of corn and violent fruitfulness. Her romance and marriage to her cousin Will provides the means of her break from the enclosed family community of Marsh Farm. Much of the narrative emphasis shifts to Will, an awkward, self-conscious youth who is passionately committed to the forms of early English church architecture, a willing student of Renaissance painters, and a craftsman in his own right. He is a foil to Tom because while Tom represents nature, inseparable from soil and community, Will represents culture more
alienated from his home ground. Will is a draughtsman, a conservator of church furniture, a drawing-master, an artist who balances creativity with labour. He is described in physical terms, as an animal, as a hawk, an eagle, a cat, a leopard, a savage thing, a feral and predatory creature of the undergrowth.

Ursula represents the modern generation. She has a very close relationship with her father as an infant and also as a child, but she moves away from his values and authority later. As Ursula grows up, Anna is an oppressive mother and Ursula begins her struggle for her own voice. She goes through a range of experiences, familial, sexual and professional, and her responses are often opposed to social norms. Her relationship with Anton causes a lot of suffering to her, and the conclusion of the novel is concerned with her breakdown and recovery after the end of her relationship with him.

**Some Observations on the Novel**

The **Rainbow** is an impressive fictional interpretation of a part of English social history which covers three generations. The parallels between the novel and biblical myth exists at many levels, from the structural to the stylistic. Perhaps the most obvious link is that suggested by the title. In the Old Testament, the rainbow is a sign of the covenant God makes with Moah. In the novel II the rainbow occurs at the various key points and suggests a two way relationship which may be a bond between a man and a woman or man and the world around him. Another resemblance to the Old Testament is that the novel spreads itself across several generations of human history. It also suggests the theme of salvation. Particular allusions to the Bible are frequent throughout the novel.

There are two basic narrative patterns in The Rainbow - a linear one concerned with the development in time when one character gives place to another, and a cyclic pattern in which each character undergoes a struggle for fulfillment. In a sense each generation enacts the same story i.e. the pattern of attraction and repulsion, the search for a meaningful relationship in life, the compromises with social reality etc. But in detail they are different and each story expands independently. The narrative moves progressively from the small circle of Marsh Farm to Cossethay and Beldover, to the larger world of school and university. The use of these two patterns of narration was quite deliberate by Lawrence, as also the language and its changing rhythm and the depiction of character. One of the most important ways in which Lawrence convinces us of the reality of the inner life is through the use of symbols. The central image of the rainbow is of course the most prominent one. Besides representing the bond between people The Rainbow also symbolises the self which is liberated from restraint, as in the final vision seen by Ursula. The ending of the novel has
often been criticised as unsatisfactory. But one must consider the question of at what level the novel is to be concluded as an unfolding story of three generations. It is satisfying enough with the young Ursula poised on the threshold of life looking with hope into the future.
Graham Greene: his life and career

Graham Greene was born in 1904, in a middle-class family in Hertfordshire. Though he had a secure, uneventful and happy childhood, his parents were both remote and authoritative. This lack of communication between them surfaced in the parent-child relationships in his novels, where they are of considerable thematic significance. Lack of understanding lies at the core of all human relationships in Greene, but are especially prominent in the parent-child one, which is after all traditionally based on sympathy, trust and caring. He left behind the security of home and joined school and was thrust into a strange world of new people, with strange and often contradictory emotions and actions. His misery increased when after thirteen he had to board at school during weekdays and was deprived of the haven at home. All around him the boy saw evil - in this awareness lie the roots of the novelist's obsession with the loss of awareness, sins and sufferings, corruption, crime and evidence, childhood traumas and adult depravity. Moments of escape from this stifling environment became for him a fleeting time of release and of prayer (towards the end of his life Greene who was born an Anglican converted to Catholicism).

By the time Greene reached his adolescence he found reality in fiction, with its world of pain, and betrayal. His growing unhappiness and depression made him seek desperate ways of escape, including suicide. All through his life this inclination towards self-destruction remained, and propelled him into dangerous situations. In most of his novels too his protagonists choose some kind of suicidal end for themselves. He was, in fact, later, a manic depressive, who displayed this weakness in his adolescence. His parents realised that he was close to a nervous breakdown and took him to a psychoanalyst for treatment. In spite of having adjusted better to life, Greene would find the essence of human life in the city and was most at home there. Perhaps this is why most of his novels are urban in setting and atmosphere. He made many attempts at writing, but achieved success for the first time with Stamboul Train in 1932. Some of his other novels were, A Gun for Sale (1936), Brighton Rock (1938), The Confidential Agent (1939), The Power and the Glory (1940), The Heart of the Matter (1948), and The End of the Affair (1951). Greene’s religious development is faithfully mirrored in his novels, many of which were directly Catholic in their themes and characterisation. His later novels show a gradual secularization. But he remained a Catholic to the end - he never divorced his wife inspite of their estrangement and was given a Catholic
funeral.

The Power and the Glory: A Summary

In a particular Mexican state the Church outlawed and the priests driven underground by the threat of being shot. After several months, word went out from the governor’s office that there was still one priest, who was moving from village to village carrying on the work of the Church by administering the sacraments and saying masses. A young lieutenant of police, an ardent revolutionist and an anti-clerical, persuaded his chief to let him search for the priest who, as the authorities saw it, was guilty of reason. Two photographs were pasted up together in the police station. One was the picture of an American bank robber who had killed several police officers in Texas; the other was that of the priest. No one noticed the irony, least of all the young lieutenant, who was far more interested in arresting the clergyman. While the officer was receiving permission to make a search for the priest, the priest was already in the village, having come there in order to get aboard a boat that would take him to the city of Vera Cruz and safety. Before the priest could board the boat word came to him that an Indian woman was dying several miles inland. True to his calling, the priest mounted a mule and set out to administer the last rites to the dying woman even though he realised that he might not find another ship to carry him to safety. There was one other priest in the vicinity, Father Jose. But Father Jose had been cowardly enough to renounce the Church, even to the point of taking a wife, a shrewish old woman. The authorities paid no attention to him at all, for they felt, and rightly so, that the priest who has renounced his vows was a detriment and a shame to the Church. After completing his mission, the priest came back to the coast, where he spent the night in a banana warehouse. The English manager on the plantation allowed him to hide there.

The following day, hoping to find refuge from the police and from the revolutionary party of Red Shirts, he set out on the back of a mule for the interior. As he traveled, he thought of his own past and of himself as a poor example of the priesthood. For the priest was a whisky priest, a clerk who would do almost anything for a drink of spirits. In addition, he had in a moment of weakness fathered a child by a woman in an inland village. Thinking himself a weak man and a poor priest, he was still determined to carry on the work of the Church as long as he could, not because he wanted to be a martyr but because he knew nothing else to do. After twelve hours of travel he reached the village where his one-time mistress and his child lived. The woman took him in overnight, and the following morning he said a mass for the villagers. Before he could escape the police entered the village. Marcia claimed him as her husband, and his child, a little grown girl of seven, named him as her
father. In that manner, because of his earlier sins, he escaped. Meanwhile the police had decided on a new tactic in uncovering the fugitive. As they passed through each village they took a hostage. When a certain length of time had passed without the apprehension of the priest, a hostage was shot. In that manner the lieutenant of police in charge of the hunt hoped to betray their priest.

After the police had left the village without discovering him, the priest mounted his mule and went on his way. He travelled northward in an effort to escape the police and, if possible, to make his way temporarily into another state. Some hours after leaving the village, the priest met with a native who fell in with him. Before long the half breed discovered the priest for whom the police were searching. He promised that he, a good Catholic, would not betray the secret, but the priest was afraid that the promised of seven hundred pesos would be too much of a temptation for the poor man. When they reached a town, however, it was the priest’s own weakness which out him into the hands of the police. He had to have some liquor, the sale of which was against the law. He managed to but some illegally, but his possession of the contraband was discovered by one of revolutionary Red Shirts, who raised a cry after him. Tracked down by a posse, the priest was caught and placed in jail. Fortunately, he was not recognised by the police, but since he had no money he was kept in jail to work out the fine.

The lieutenant of police who was searching feverishly for him unexpectedly did the priest a good turn. Seeing the ragged old man working about the jail, the lieutenant stopped to talk with him. The priest claimed to be a vagrant who had no home of his own. The lieutenant, feeling sorry for the old fellow, released him and gave him a present of five pesos. Leaving town, the priest started out across the country to find a place of temporary safety. After travelling for some time, he met an Indian woman who could speak only a few words of Spanish. She managed to make him understand that something was wrong with her child. He went with her and found that her baby had been shot; his immediate guess was that the American bandit had done the deed.

After performing rites over the child the priest continued his flight. He eventually made his way into the next state, where he was given sanctuary by a German plant owner. After resting a few days, he planned to go to a city and present his problems to his bishop. Before he could leave, however, he was told that the American bandit, a Catholic, was dying and needed the priest. The priest answered the call, even though he was sure he was being led into a trap. The bandit was really dying, but he lay in the state from which the priest had just escaped. With him was a party of police, waiting for the priest’s appearance in order to arrest

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him.

Immediately after the bandit’s death, the police closed in and the priest was captured. Taken back to the capital of the state and tried for treason, he was found guilty and sentenced to be shot. The lieutenant of police, who felt sorry for the old priest tried to persuade Father Jose to hear his last confession. But Father Jose, feared the authorities and refused. The priest was led out and shot without the benefit of the Church’s grace. Yet the lieutenant of police had not succeeded in removing the Church’s influence; in the evening of the day on which the priest died, another priest made his way in secret, into the town where the execution had taken place.

**Some Observations on the Novel**

*The Power and the Glory* is one of the most powerful of Greene’s major novels, and the one considered by most critics to be his finest. The theme of the hunted man establishes an exciting and nightmarish atmosphere to the novel which is like a thriller. But there is much more in it than a simple manhunt. Greene has created characters who are human and symbolic at the same time. The priest and the lieutenant represent the dualism in the human spirit - godliness as opposed to godlessness, love as against hatred, spirituality as against materialism, and concern for the individual as against concern for the nation. After the lieutenant captures the priest, there is a dialogue between the two men which lies at the heart of this story of good and evil. The lieutenant’s ambition to catch this man is a disinterested one. He has no personal enmity towards the priest but sees him as a symbol of the poor who are corrupted by the church. He is a nihilist who wants to destroy the church along with memories along with his own unhappy childhood. Though the lieutenant is the antithesis of the priest his obsession with the hunt and his dedication to his job (of eradicating Catholicism) lead him to lead a life that is priest-like, e.g. He lives in very simple lodgings. The lieutenant’s hunt for and persecution of the priest turned the priest into a martyr in the eyes of the people. The lieutenant hates the rich and loves poor, but he cannot understand or tolerate pain.

On the other hand the priest has endured pain, anxiety and guilt for years but sees in his suffering the presence of God’s love. The priest is very conscious of his weakness and failure both as a man and as a priest. An alcoholic, a scandalous priest with an illegitimate child, a man terrified of pain and death, he has no illusions about himself. In fact his self-knowledge raises him to the level of a hero. He is redeemed in our eyes by his keen sense of responsibility for his sins and for the suffering he has brought upon others. His purgatory is in Mexico in his years of flight and in his tormented conscience. He accepts his loss of peace in...
the belief that the only reason God denies him rest is so that he could save a soul. After he sees Brigida, his love and sense of responsibility for this child overwhelm him. Through her he finds his salvation. The lieutenant and the priest provide a foil for each other and one realises that the lieutenant needs the priest to absorb his hatred. This symbolic relationship between the two characters is of fundamental importance to the novel. For further reading:
CHAPTER – X

CONCLUSION

A study of the above novels, which are representative texts, gives an idea of the literary trends during a particular period in English literature. They also indicate some aspects of the philosophy and style of that particular writer. Such a study enables the reader to understand how the novel evolved as a literary form and how it was shaped by the period in which it was written. Literature grows out of life, and a literary artist tries to reflect the microcosm (the individual’s world), as well as the macrocosm (the outside world) in his or her art. While doing so, the artist weaves together the various threads of plot and characterisation by using a narrative technique that suits him best to build a structure that will be aesthetically and logically satisfying.

While studying the novels prescribed for study, it is important to analyze them in the light of these factors. Though a study of the critical works is useful, a careful reading of the text is essential for a proper understanding and appreciation of the novel. The critical works suggested are a preliminary guideline, and the student is expected to analyze the text and form an independent opinion after reading many more of them.
Question Bank

1. ‘The main theme of ‘Joseph Andrews’ is the exposure of vanity and hypocrisy in Society’ Do you agree? Justify your answer.
2. Discuss Joseph as the hero in ‘Joseph Andrews’.
3. Write a note on satire and humour in ‘Joseph Andrews’.
5. Comment on the structure of ‘Pride and Prejudice’.
6. Discuss theme of love and marriage in ‘Pride and Prejudice’.
7. With reference to ‘Pride and Prejudice’, discuss how Jane Austen’s women characters are more vividly drawn than her men characters.
8. Comment on the appropriateness of the title ‘Pride and Prejudice’.
10. Write a note on the theme of parental responsibility in ‘Hard Times’.
11. Discuss ‘Hard Times’ as a novel depicting the ill-effects of industrialization,
12. Do you think Stephen Blackpool’s story is a piece of melodrama? Justify your answer.
13. Illustrate how ‘Middlemarch’ has exactness of structure and symmetry of form.
14. Discuss ‘Middlemarch’ as a reflection of contemporary society.
15. Compare and contrast the characters of Dorothea and Rosamond in ‘Middlemarch’.
17. Discuss ‘Jude the Obscure’ as a tragic novel.
18. Write a character sketch of Sue Bridgehead in ‘Jude the Obscure’.
19. “Hardy’s feeling of pessimism is dominant in ‘Jude the obscure” Elaborate.
20. Do you think fate plays an important part in shaping the lives of Jude & Sue? Justify your answer.
21. Discuss the role of Marlow as the narrator in ‘Lord Jim’.
22. How far has Conrad made use of symbolism in ‘Lord Jim’?
23. Trace the development of Jim’s character in ‘Lord Jim’.
24. Write a note on the incident of the Patna in ‘Lord Jim’.
25. Discuss the theme of betrayal and guilt in ‘The Power and the Glory’.
26. How has Greene made use of irony in ‘The Power and the Glory’?
27. “Greene’s ‘The Power and the Glory’ depicts the condition of modern man” Elaborate.
28. Explain how Greene unfolds the plot in The Power and the Glory’.
29. Discuss the women characters in ‘The Rainbow’.
30. How has Laurence used symbolism in The Rainbow’?
Selected Bibliography

About The Subject


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