



**Department of Distance Education**  
**Punjabi University, Patiala**  
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**M.A. (ENGLISH) PART-I**

**COURSE-III**

**SEMESTER-I**

**BEGINNINGS OF THE NOVEL**

**UNIT NO. I**

**NOVEL: AN INTRODUCTION**  
**ORHAN PAMUK: "What Our Minds Do When**  
**We Read Novels"**

**LESSON NOs.**

- 1.1 : Important Terms pertaining to Novel
- 1.2 : Rise and Growth of English Novel
- 1.3 : An Analysis of Orhan Pamuk's Essay  
"What Our Minds Do When  
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**HENRY FIELDING: JOSEPH ANDREWS**

- 1.4 : Henry Fielding : An Introduction
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- 1.6 : *Joseph Andrews*: A Textual Analysis
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(Fielding's Theory of Fiction)

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### **Important Terms Pertaining to Novel**

Dear Student,

In this lesson, we shall acquaint you with some of the important terms pertaining to Novel.

**The Novel/fiction :-** Novel is an important literary form of imaginative literature. Though comparatively new, it has emerged as one of the most popular and major forms of writing. Though poetry and drama came much earlier yet novel has gained in popularity. Poetry suffered in popularity because of its rigorous formal discipline and drama is written primarily for being acted on the stage. As novel is free from any such constraint it has become very popular since its rise in the eighteenth century. Moreover, it is the most comprehensive form of writing and has the potential to portray the life of man in the fullest sense.

Novel portrays life and people and history performs the same function. What then is the difference between 'history' and 'novel' ? Both history and novel consist of the material intended for the public or of interest to the public. Both deal with people, but history emphasises only the external causes, novel, on the other hand, deals with the essentials of human nature, its joys, sufferings and compulsions. Thus we say that a historian records, whereas a novelist creates. In the act of creation, the vision and the temperament of the novelist play a crucial role herself. But then the question arises how far can we trust the vision of the novelist himself ? If we go to the recesses of history, we recollect that Plato banished artists from the ideal state *Republic* . His criticism of art and the artist stems from his conviction that art is an inferior form of knowledge as compared to philosophy.

Artist, Plato believes, falsifies reality because in creating a work of art, his subjective emotion plays a crucial part. Some of the modern linguists also feel that all language is a machine for creating falsehoods. Since language is the only medium for creating literature, it is bound to create false and unreal images. Still it has been almost universally accepted that literature serves an important function, as it not only presents reality but also tries to interpret it. Literature is a mirror of society as it also is a criticism of society. Since novel portrays life in all its fullness, it is nearer to reality and in depicting reality can also perform a useful corrective function. Stendhal, an American

novelist, remarks, "A novel is a mirror which goes along a high road. Sometimes it reflects the blue of the sky to your eyes, sometimes the mud and filth of the road." Reading a novel can be a life enhancing experience. A novel like *Tom Jones* or *Joseph Andrews* gives a very convincing picture of the then eighteenth century society, may be better than what most of the history books could. Who can give a better picture of man's life, both on its domestic and heroic side, than a Tolstoy novel, who can explore a man's soul as deeply as a Dostoevsky text, who can analyse modern man's consciousness as successfully as Marcel Proust, or who can portray the elemental darkness that surrounds human heart as convincingly as Conrad does. The novel contains the novelist's point of view on human situation. It deals with the nature and appraisal of the vital issues of life. Yet it is not philosophy. It is not supposed to analyse and instruct. Nevertheless, the merit and the value of a novel will ultimately be tested on the touchstone of its moral soundness. Hence, novel as an artistic creation has also a useful social function to perform. The term for novel in most European languages is 'roman' which is a derivative from the medieval *romance*. The English name for the form, however, is derived from the Italian *novella* (meaning 'a little new thing'), which was a short tale in prose. However, for a proper definition of novel we have to go to a French critic Abel Chevalley who says 'novel is a fiction in prose of a certain extent' (Cited in E.M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*, p. 13).

Fiction means an imaginary world, what the Renaissance poet and critic Sidney called 'a second nature'. Northrop Frye applies the name 'fiction' to any work of art in 'prose'. To make it more clear, let us say that fiction is any narrative which is feigned or invented. It stems from the imagination of the artist. It may not be historically or factually true.

When we say that novel is a fiction in prose what we mean is that it is a narrative of any length dealing with any subject. However, the novel has to be distinguished from the *short story*. The novel is an extended narrative. Its magnitude permits a greater variety of characters, greater complication of plot, an ampler development of milieu, and a more sustained and subtler exploration of character than is possible in a *short story*. The comparative brevity of the *short story* does not permit the multiplicity of settings, the span of years, the large number of characters, or the multiple and complex relationships that are possible in longer fiction. As a result, the *short story* tends to centre on a climatic moment or a representative moment in the life of the protagonist rather than upon the long and tangled lines of his development. The novel, as narrative, then relates a sequence of events, usually involving a conflict and a resolution of the conflict alongwith such supporting elements as story, characters, setting and description.

The basis of a novel is a story. We read a novel for its story. Everything else is subordinate to this. This is a fundamental aspect without which it cannot exist. E.M. Forster defines story as “a narrative of events arranged in a time sequence”. Most important term here is time sequence. This means that one event follows another strictly in chronological form-breakfast followed by lunch, morning followed by evening and Sunday is to be followed by Monday. Calendar is strictly adhered to. There is always a clock. However, in some of the novels the clock has been upset. Emily Bronte, Thomas Sterne, Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein are some of the novelists who do not strictly follow the clock or the calendar. Hence, the narration of events purely in its time sequence has been of late not strictly followed. Presenting the stream of thought of a character, or projection of a particular view point has become more important now. In a novel like *Heart of Darkness* written by Joseph Conrad there are frequent time-shifts. The technique of flash-backs and flash ahead and intermingling of past and present creates a particular kind of effect, ‘a sinister resonance which the novelist claims is his main aim in this novel. In *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf, when the Big Ben strikes twelve, Mrs. Dalloway goes out to buy flowers for her birthday party which is to take place in the evening. She recollects certain events from her past life. The memories of her childhood, her youthful love entanglements flash across her mind. Thus in her mind she is living the past, present and the future simultaneously. This helps us to know Mrs. Dalloway from her own perceptions and through the novelist’s pen. Yet this does not mean that a novel can do away with a story. A novel has to have a story even though in a skeletal form. It may be a novel like *Joseph Andrews*, where Henry Fielding lovingly puts his arms around our waist to guide us through various stages of Joseph Andrew’s life from his early life till his marriage to Fanny. It may be a novel like *Heart of Darkness* where the novelist leaves us to our imaginative resources to interpret the meaning of darkness but the elements of story cannot be kept aside. “Similarly, the time sequence in a story also cannot be destroyed without carrying in its ruin all that should have taken its place. The novel that would express values only becomes unintelligible and therefore valueless.”

### **Short Story :**

In the words of M.H. Abrams, “A short story is a brief work of fiction, and most of the terms for analysing the component elements, the types, and the various narrative techniques of the novel are applicable to the short story as well.” As in a novel, the action, thought and dialogues of the character in a short story also are well organized. Like a novel, the platform of the story can be romantic, tragic, comic, or satiric. The story can be presented from different points of view. The major difference between a novel and a short story is in the dimension, which Aristotle called “Magnitude.”

**Prose Romance :**

Prose fiction has been generally divided into two categories ; the realistic novel and the prose romance. Whereas in a realistic novel (also called a novel of manners) a fictional attempt is made to represent the issues pertaining to a particular social class by focusing on its “Customs, conversation and ways of thinking”, a prose romance “usually deploys characters who are sharply discriminated as heroes or villains, masters or victims.” The precursors of the prose romances are the chivalric romances of the middle Ages and the gothic novel of the later eighteenth century.

The protagonist of the prose romance is usually a solitary figure and relatively an isolated one from the social context. The prose romance is generally set in the historical past and the atmosphere does not pertain to everyday experience. The emphasis of the plot of this kind of novel is on adventure, the quest for an ideal or pursuit of an enemy. The non-realistic and melodramatic events project in the symbolic forms “the primal desires, hopes and terror in the depths of human mind” which are “analogous to the materials of dream, myth, ritual, and folk lore,” says M.H. Abrams. Some of the famous examples of romance novels are Walter Scott’s **Rob Roy** (1817), Alexandre Dumas’s **The Three Musketeers** (1844-45), Emile Bronte’s **Wuthering Heights** (1847), and the narratives written by Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville.

**Novella :**

*Novella* is a historical term used for short narratives. Although often bawdy and comic, the subject matter of the novella may be serious. Treatment of details is realistic. The total effect may not be so. Novella is used as a synonym for novelette also. The novelette is an intermediate form between the short story and the novel, e.g. Hemingway’s, *The Old Man and the Sea*.

**Plot :**

In most literary works there are two elements: human individuals or characters and the element called, let us put it in very simple terms, story. We have defined a story as a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence. As we usually narrate a story we say that first of all this happens, e.g., one usual form of narrating a story is once upon a time, there was a king. He had a queen. The usual stock response will be then what? We say the king died. The natural response will be, then what happened to the queen. If we say the queen also died that means there is no story beyond this. Remember, a childhood prank, (‘ਇੱਕ ਸੀ ਰਾਜਾ, ਇੱਕ ਸੀ ਰਾਣੀ, ਦੋਵੇਂ ਮਰ ਗਏ ਖਤਮ ਕਹਾਣੀ’ or एक था राजा, एक थी रानी दोनों मर गए खत्म कहानी)

But if we say that the king died and the queen had very bad days indeed, we have introduced an element of cause and effect. Hence, *plot is also a narrative*

of events; but here the emphasis falls on *causality*. There is *a reason for the queen to be in a bad state*. Naturally, if the queen falls on bad days, there is going to be an effect of this too. Hence, the story can go on. The plot saves the novel from becoming a mere group of episodes—a string of events. It gives it a unity of structure and unity of purpose. Let us now proceed to infer certain conclusions from what we have already said : plot is an arrangement of events connected with one another through cause and effect, or a more formal definition will be, the plot in a dramatic or narrative work is the structure of its actions as these are ordered and rendered toward achieving particular emotional and artistic effects. It is with the help of plot that a writer can put across his point of view most effectively. One significant point which emerges from this is that plot and character are interdependent critical concepts. Henry James has a very pertinent observation to make on this, “What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?”

In some works of art there is a parallel sequence of events running alongside the main story. Such a plot is known as *sub plot* or *under plot*. Its purpose is usually to present a contrast with the main story, complicate or refine the theme, sustain interest, or in general to make up for any aesthetic or thematic deficiencies present in the main story.

**(a) A Double Plot :** A double plot occurs when two independent or semi-independent stories of almost-equal magnitude and interest exist side-by-side in the same narrative as in Bennet’s *The Old Wives Tale*, which follows the separate lives of two sisters, one of whom stays home while the other has an adventurous but a comparatively empty life.

**(b) A Circular Plot :** A circular plot is one that after taking the protagonist through a series of experiences, leaves him with the problems he began with, i.e. it can either be a trick to give the work a kind of specious unity by bringing the reader back to the work’s starting point, or it can be a thematically effective device for indicating that despite the experience of the protagonist there has been no real change. A good plot has unity of action, i.e., it is an artistic whole, an organic structure, if it is a single, complete, and ordered structure of actions, all directed towards the intended effect, in which none of the component parts or *incidents* is unnecessary and as Aristotle said in his *Poetics* all the parts are, “so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoint and dislocate the whole.” The order of unified plot, Aristotle pointed out, is a continuous sequence of beginning, middle and end. The beginning initiates action in a way which looks forward to something more; the middle presumes what has gone before and requires something to follow from what has gone before but the end requires nothing further, we are satisfied that the plot is complete.

We have already made a passing reference to the life-like quality of the novel. The illusion of reality is one of the essential qualities in fiction. Plot of a novel should be such that it creates illusion of reality. It must be *plausible* and must have an element of *probability* failing which it will come down to being a *fantasy* only. And it must be remembered that novel gives a complete picture of life whereas main purpose in a *fantasy* is the creation of an endearingly imaginative world.

Now let us distinguish one kind of plot from another. Take for example, a novel like *Treasure Island* or *Vanity Fair* or *Coolie* or *The Old Man and the Sea*. In all these novels certain events take place, a few things happen and they happen in a certain order. Now remember, it is the order which distinguishes one kind of plot from another. Events move along one line in *Coolie*, along another line in *Woodlanders*.

### **Character**

One of the impulses behind the creation as well as the study of literature is our interest in other human beings and their responses to different situations in life. Novel, like other forms of literature, offers us an opportunity to see men and women placed in different circumstances and coming to grips with problems.

We have already told you that a story is the sequence of events. And these events take place in the life of men and women. These people are the subject matter of the novel. We remember the novel for the living and throbbing characters than by the events recorded in it. From what we have said so far, we can deduce now that “characters are the persons, in a dramatic or narrative work endowed with moral and dispositional qualities that are expressed in what they say-the dialogue and what they do-the action.” “And why does a character behave in a particular fashion”? is the next question we ought to ask. The impulse behind a particular action- the grounds in a character’s temperament and moral nature for his speech and action constitute his *motivation*. All his actions must be plausibly grounded in his temperament. A character’s consistency definitely depends on this virtue.

There are two types of characters. A character may remain essentially stable or unchanged in his/her outlook and disposition, from beginning to end of a work or he may undergo a radical change, either through a gradual development or as result of an extreme crisis. E.M. Forster in *Aspects of the Novel* discriminates between flat and round characters. A *flat character*, is known to the reader only by the characteristics necessary for the progress of the story, for comedy, identification, and so on. A flat character is also called a ‘type’ or ‘two dimensional’. Forster says a flat character is built around ‘a single idea’ or ‘quality’ and is presented in outline without much individuation granted to him. Prospero in *The Tempest*, Micawber in *David Copperfield* can be

called flat characters. While a flat character remains fixed and is stable, a *round character* seems to have something of the complexity we find in real human beings. He is complex in temperament and motivation and is represented with subtle particularity; thus he is as difficult to describe with any accuracy as a person in real life. and, like most people, he is capable of surprising us. A round character is also known as *dynamic character*. A dynamic character changes in some important way. The kind and quality of the change of a dynamic character often reflects the theme of the work. Emma in *Emma*, Becky Sharp in *Vanity Fair* are the examples of round characters.

### **Protagonist/Hero**

The *Protagonist* or *hero* or *heroine* is the person the story is about. He has a decisive role in the events of the story. Because of that he is allowed a central space in the novel. The protagonist can be a good man who may hold an eminent position in society. But he may be guilty of a tragic flaw or error. The protagonist can be a legendary or mythic hero who embodies the idealised values of a particular culture. The anti-hero, a recent type, is a protagonist taking the usual qualities associated with heroism. He is often the common man and very often something of a bungler. In serious narratives, the protagonist is likely to embody those values that make up the positive aspect of the theme.

**Narrator :** The narrator is the person or persons who tell the story or from whose vantage point the events are viewed. The narrator, especially in twentieth century fiction, may be as important to the theme and effect of the fiction as the protagonist because, superficially at least, everything is filtered through the mind of the narrator. A *trustworthy narrator* is one whose judgement we may accept. An *untrustworthy narrator* is the one whose veracity of judgement we have reason to doubt.

Because the logic of a story may often require a narrator whose values or perceptions differ markedly from those the author wishes to suggest, a number of techniques are used to betray the untrustworthiness of the narrator.

Among them are :

1. The obviously eccentric, self-serving or unwise judgement of the events by the narrator.
2. The selection or details or description or action to comment obliquely on the narrator's statements.
3. The judgement of other characters who seem wiser than the narrator, or who are in a position to know more or to judge more objectively.
4. The manipulation of sentence-structure and rhetorical details.

When the accumulation of such techniques creates a coherent tone or value system distinct from that of the narrator, we may speak of the authorial voice.

When we read a story we have to be fully alert about the fact, how the story gets told, the perspective or perspectives established by an author through which the reader is presented with the characters, action, setting and events which constitute the narrative in a work of fiction. How the story is told is determined by the choice of the *narrator*. The *narrator* can choose to narrate either in third-person or in first person. In a *third-person narrative* the narrator is someone outside the story who refers to all the characters in the story proper by name, or 'he', 'she' or 'they'. In a *first person narrative* the narrator speaks as 'I' and is himself a character in the story.

A few other frequently discussed Narrative tactics, which cut across diverse points of view, may also be mentioned: (i) The self-conscious narrator and (ii) The fallible or unreliable narrator (iii) Unintrusive or Impersonal narrator.

**The Self-Conscious Narrator** is one who is conscious that he is creating a work of art; he shares his problems with the readers. The desire behind the artist's motive to confide in the reader can vary, of course. For example, Fielding in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* involves the readers for serious purposes. Sterne in *Tristram Shandy* does it for comic effects. Nabokov in *Pale Fire* does it for reasons not clearly stated.

**The Fallible or Unreliable Narrator** is the narrator whose interpretation and evaluation of the matters he narrates does not coincide with the implicit beliefs and norms of value held by the author, and which the author expects the reader to share with him. In simple terms, it means that what the narrator reports is necessarily not the opinion of the author. Narrator, usually in this mode, is a flawed "centre of consciousness." In such works of art, the author relies greatly on the ironical mode. The task of the reader in reading such a work of art is immense indeed. The reader has to be very receptive and alert in his response. He must be able to distinguish between what actually is implied and what is stated.

Henry James made use of fallible narrator in *The Sacred Fount*, *The Turn of the Screw*. Iris Murdoch makes use of this mode in *Under the Net*, *The Black Prince*.

**Unintrusive or Impersonal Narrator** : He describes reports or 'shows' the action in dramatic scenes, without introducing his own comments or judgements. *Pride and Prejudice* is a nice example of impersonal narration.

**Dialogue** : Dialogue refers to a conversation among characters. It may be a part of a narrative, or it may exist as an independent form. It can be either in prose or verse. *Stichomythia* is a form of dialogue in which the characters engage in a verbal duel, rapidly exchanging single lines. A *monologue* is a speech usually of some length by a single character. Like dialogue, it may exist either as a part of a narrative or independently. The *Aside* is a dramatic convention in which a participant in the action directly addresses the audience. The other characters are not supposed to overhear the aside. A

*soliloquy* is a monologue spoken by a character alone. Usually it either indicates what is to happen later in the play or expresses the innermost thoughts of the speaker.

**The Novel of Action :** In a novel of action, action is the main thing. The response of the characters to it is incidental, and always such as to help in the plot. The actors have generally only that much character as the action demands. In such a novel, a trifling event assumes unexpected consequences; these will spread; and soon they will be numberless; an apparently inextricable web will be woven which will later be miraculously unravelled. In its action, its complication and its resolution; our interest is taken up; and being interested, we are pleased. Though the figures are roughly characterised, however, the events will evoke response from them as well as serve to complicate the action, e.g., in *Treasure Island*, Trelawney must be of a temperament that he cannot keep a secret, otherwise the pirates would never know he was sailing to find the treasure. Silver, in the same way must be a diplomat, otherwise the crew would not reach the island without Silver being suspected; and the pirates must conveniently quarrel, or the few faithful hands would never win in the end. Had Silver and his followers killed all the loyal ship's company, secured the treasure, sailed away, been captured, taken to England and executed, *Treasure Island* would not have been a novel of action but something else.

**The Novel of Character** is one of the most important divisions of prose fiction. Hence the characters are not conceived as parts of the plot; on the contrary they exist independently and the action is subservient to them. Whereas in the novel of action particular events have specific consequences, here the situations are typical or general and designed primarily to tell us more about the characters, or to introduce new characters. Hence as in the novel of action the characters are designed to fit the plot, here the plot is improvised to elucidate the characters. *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice* are the novels of character. *Tom Jones* and *Treasure Island* are the novels of action.

**Conflict :** Conflict is often called the heart of narrative and usually determines both action and theme. Conflict can be between individuals, there may be the conflict of a protagonist against fate, or against the circumstances that stand between him and a goal he has set himself and in some works, the conflict is between opposing desire or value in a character's own mind. Like conflict, *suspense* and *anticipation* are common ways of getting the reader to keep turning pages. *Suspense* is the desire of the reader to discover what will happen. *Anticipation* occurs when the reader is fairly certain of what will happen but continues turning pages in order to discover how it will happen.

**Episodes** or incidents may be broadly defined as units of narrative action. They may range from short bits of dialogue, through individual scenes to long

and involved action sequences. Although an episode may be tightly integrated into the narrative, it gives the feeling of having a beginning, a middle and an end, e.g., in Fielding's novel *Joseph Andrews*, Mrs. Slipslop decides to seduce Joseph and he refuses. This is a fairly self-contained episode that is nevertheless an integral part of the novel. If the episodes are not fully integrated into a single, continuing story, the narrative will appear episodic.

**Local colour :** If there is a detailed representation in a novel of one particular setting or dialect, customs, dress and ways of thinking and feeling which characterise a particular area or region we can say that in the novel local colour is predominant, e.g., in R.K. Narayan's novels, Malgudi provides local colour. In Hardy's novels reference to Wessex also is aimed at making use of local colour, in Faulkner's novels, it is Yoknapatawpha county which brings local colour.

But in such works, the writer's interest may rally round the sentimental or comic representation of the surface peculiarities of a region without penetrating into universal human characteristics and problems.

### **Types of Novels**

The novel is divisible into numerous sub-types. We shall consider only some representative varieties.

**The Picaresque Novel :** The word 'picaresque' comes from the Spanish term *pícaro* which means rogue. Generally in a picaresque novel, the protagonist and his companions move from one adventure to another and one set of character to another so that one episode ends and another begins. When the picaro completes a caper and moves on, the novel ends. The best known English example is Defoe's *Moll Flanders*.

**The Epistolary Novel :** In this novel the story is narrated through the exchange of letters. The form creates problems of points of view because the letter writers have to be in a position to know enough to keep the reader informed. At the same time they should not know so much that they make suspense, anticipation and verisimilitude impossible. Richardson's *Pamela* is an example of this type.

**Gothic Novel :** Gothic refers to highly dramatic works, usually horror stories set in areas remote in time or space and populated by heroes, heroines, ghosts, vampires, and similar creatures. The Gothic novels are characterised by setting remote in time (usually The Middle Ages) or place (Turkey was common), where mysterious and magical events could be given an air of plausibility. The details of setting (dungeons, monstrous states, dark corridors and trap doors, omens and ancestral curses) emphasise morbid gloom. The central conflict is usually between a genteel but courageous young man and the forces of evil-often aided by magic. Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* is a famous

example.

**Science Fiction :** Science fiction is also a highly imaginative form. It often merges with the Gothic or fantasy. It is characterised by its attempts to provide a scientific or quasi scientific basis for the wonders it shows. Because of its basis in the physical or the social sciences, highly serious Science Fiction also has come to be available. For example, Huxley's *Brave New World*.

**The Psychological Novel :** The psychological novel is one of the most important and prevalent of contemporary forms of fiction. In this type of novel the novelist explores the inner world of the character, less attention is paid to the portrayal of outside reality. The conflict in these novels arises out of individual's battle with his own self.

The psychological novel sometimes merges into *Bildungsroman*- the novel of development. The hero in such novels is shown as developing. He grows and matures in this process. The psychological novel makes use of *stream-of-consciousness* technique. This technique works by presenting the flow of thought of the minds of the characters. We learn about the characters, from what they think and not from the novelist himself. Here the emphasis is on the *inner scape* of the character. When a part of a *stream of- consciousness* fiction is unfolded by (a) being reflected through the mind of a single character and (b) by centering on a single event, pattern of thought, tone etc, it is known as *interior monologue*. The *stream of-consciousness* technique and the *interior monologue* have been used with great skill by novelists like Virginia Woolf and James Joyce.

**Historical Novel :** Any novel set in the past, usually at least one generation before the birth of the author may be considered a historical novel. The purpose of historical novel may be to evoke some aspect of the past, its manners, its political and social tensions and climatic events, e.g., Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian*. The Historical novel may also suggest comparisons of past and present societies such as Styron's *The Confessions of Nat Turner*.

**The Regional Novel :** The Regional novel or local colour novel is concerned with an accurate depiction of the manners, morals, dialects and scenery of a particular geographical area. But 'Regional' usually implies a wider interest even though it may refer to one specific area. 'Regionalism' was influenced by a wave of realism and its demand for literal accuracy. Hardy in his novels deals with the Wessex region, R.K. Narayan with Malgudi and Faulkner with Yoknapatawpha.

**Point-of-view :** While explaining the term *Narrator* we told you that *how* a story is told, is determined by who is telling the narrative, that means who is the narrator. We can also say that the point-of-view signifies the way a story gets told.

You are advised to go through the explanation on the term *Narrator* and read explanation on point-of view in continuation with explanations on the term narrator.

The story can be told either through the Omniscient point-of-view or through the limited point-of-view.

**An Omniscient Narrator** knows everything relevant to the narrative, including the innermost thoughts of all the characters; there is consequently no need to explain or justify his knowledge. An omniscient narrator is always considered trustworthy. In omniscient point of view we have further two categories, i.e., *intrusive narrator* and *unintrusive or impersonal narrator*. *Intrusive narrator* freely reports and comments on his characters; evaluating their actions and motives and also expresses his views about human life in general. His reports and judgements are authoritative. Some of the greatest novels have been written in this mode. *Tom Jones* and *War and Peace* are some of the important examples.

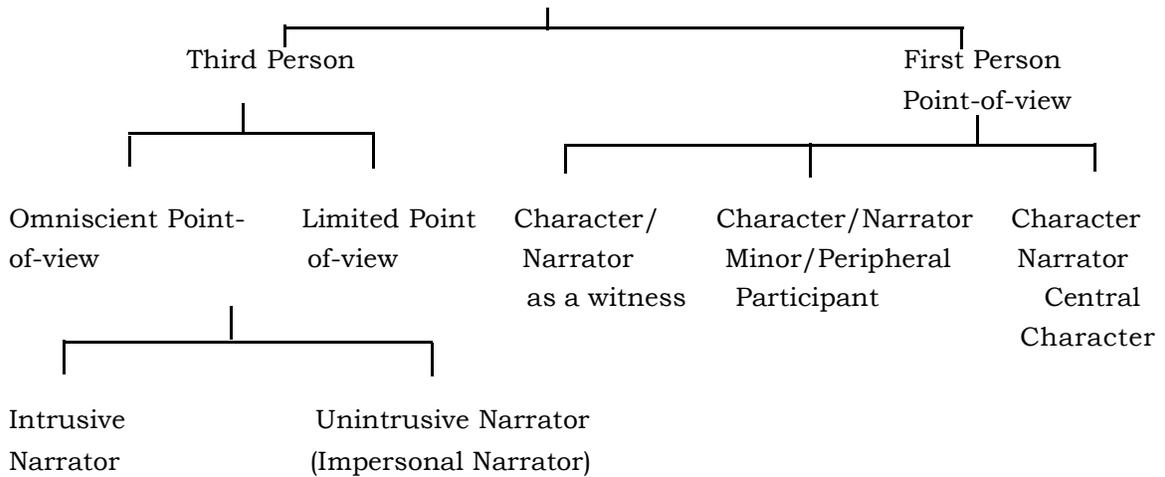
**Unintrusive or Impersonal Narrator :** He describes, reports or 'shows' the action in dramatic scenes, without introducing his own comments or judgements. *Pride and Prejudice* is a nice example of impersonal narration.

**Limited Point of View :** The narrator tells the story in the Third person, but confines himself to what is experienced, thought and felt by a single character, or at the most by a very limited number of characters within the story. Henry James, who refined this narrative mode described such a character as his 'locus' or 'mirror' or 'centre of consciousness'. However, it may be pointed out that a limited narrator may be untrustworthy because his knowledge is limited by his relation to the events told in the narrative; he can know only what he is told, what he senses or what he guesses.

**First-Person Point of View :** This mode, in so far as it is consistently carried out, naturally limits the point of view to what the first person narrator himself knows, experiences, infers, or can find out by talking to other characters. We distinguish between the narrative 'I' as (i) who is a fortuitous witness of the matters he relates, e.g., Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*. (ii) who is a minor or peripheral participant in the story, e.g., Nick in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*; (iii) who is himself the central character in the story as in Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Dear Student,

We hope you are not confused and perplexed by these distinctions. The terms are a little baffling though, but five minutes reading with full concentration will make clear the whole complex variety of Point-of-view. To make matters a little smooth, we are giving you the following diagram, which will help you to comprehend the art of characterisation-methods of narration and Point-of-view.

**Novelist's Point-of-View (Presentation of Character)**

We have made modest efforts to discuss the essentials of a novel as also to define certain terms. We hope that you will go through the texts prescribed for your study with these details in mind. You will find them useful while interpreting and analysing the novels. You should consult books related to the theory of novel and literary terms, especially *A Glossary of Literary Terms* by M.H. Abrams.

## **Rise and Growth of English Novel**

In this lesson, there will be made a survey of the growth and development of English Novel from its birth at the end of the eighteenth century to the Victorian period - a time of its full flowering. The lesson is divided into three parts - (i) Eighteenth century novel (ii) Novel in the Romantic Age and (iii) The Victorian Novel.

### **Novel in the 18th Century:**

Novel in England had a late flowering despite literary antecedents. It emerged fully first in the eighteenth century. Elizabethan prose tales, picaresque stories and accounts of the underworld, the character writers of the seventeenth century, all helped to make the fully realized novel possible. Here I may point it out that there are two main classes of fictional prose narratives, namely, the tale or romance and the novel. The tale or romance proceeds with the elaboration of incident and adventure, the novel reveals character and motive.

Modern novel has its roots in medieval romances such as *Sir Gawain* and *The Green Knight* and those dealing with the legends of King Arthur, and in the adventures of popular heroes like Robin Hood. During the Elizabethan times developed the Prose Romance. Sidney's *Arcadia* is a chivalrous romance. Bacon's *The New Atlantis* presents the story of the discovery by mariners of an unknown country. These two books are neither romances nor novels, in the strict sense but studies of social institutions. Nearer to the true novel is Lodge's romantic story of *Rosalynde*. It is around this time that the tradition of the picaresque comes into English romances. One of the earliest examples of the picaresque novel in English is Nash's *The Unfortunate Traveller or The Life of Jack Wilton* which is also the forerunner of the historical novel since the action takes place during that gorgeous interview between Henry VIII and the King of France on the Field of the cloth of Gold. In all these short stories and picaresque novels the emphasis was laid not so much on life and character as on the adventures of the hero, and the interest consisted largely in wondering what would happen next and how the plot would end.

So we see that the earlier romances start taking the shape of the novel around the 16th and 17th century. But it was around 1740 that the novel proper took its form. The genre as a realistic form came to be perfected by Richardson, Fielding, Sterne and Smollett. Before we proceed to discuss the

growth of the novel in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, let us first analyse the reasons for its development.

I have already mentioned that the literature of the Seventeenth century flourished under the patronage of the upper classes. The eighteenth century social history of England is characterised by the rise of the middle classes. And the novel was the product of the middle class sensibilities. "It was by large measure the product of the middle class appealing to middle class ideals and sensibilities, patterning of imagined events set against a clearly realized social background and taking its view of what was significant in human behaviour from agreed public attitudes." The eighteenth century saw an unprecedented rise of the middle class due to the rise of trade and commerce. The merchants and tradesmen of the towns came to play a more and more important part on the life of the country. The education and the entertainment of the middle classes became a legitimate objective of literature. They demanded a new kind of literature which should conform to their temper and their tastes. Novel was the answer to their needs because it laid emphasis on the common man and presented the psyche of the middle classes.

The novel with its realism, its democratic spirit and its concern with the everyday problems of the common man, powerfully appealed to the readers. David Daiches remarks that, "Many currents came together to produce the English novel - Elizabethan prose tales, picaresque stories, and the accounts of the urban underworld represented one, the character writers of the seventeenth century developed a technique of psychological portraiture which was available to Addison and Steele in their creation of Sir Roger de Coverley, Sir Andrew Freeport, Will Honeycomb, and the rest of the portrait gallery in "The Spectator" and which inevitably led to the anecdote illustrative of character, the straight forward narrative style used by Bunyan in *The Pilgrim's Progress* and the somewhat similar factual style of Defoe's journalistic and pseudo-autobiographical writings also helped to make the fully realized novel possible. Addison and Steele, Defoe and Swift provided the more immediate and obvious background for the emergence of the English novel." Of these writers Bunyan, Defoe and Swift deserve a special mention as their works do provide a kind of a writing which was very close to the art of novel as we identify it.

**John Bunyan** (1628-88) was a Puritan writer and his Prose style looks forward to the development of the English novel. His interest in spiritual autobiography and cautionary allegory stems from a long Puritan tradition which in turn had roots in medieval religious thought and expression, his method of translating his theological ideas into vivid, realistic, contemporary terms, reflecting with extraordinary immediacy the daily life and conversation of the ordinary people of England, shows, the technique of the embryo novelist. Two of his works *The*

*Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Holy War* are archetypal allegories. *The Pilgrim's Progress* takes the archetypal theme of man's life as a journey and *The Holy War* takes the other great archetypal allegory that of man's life as a war between good and evil.

**Daniel Defoe** (1668-1731) had a remarkably varied career which included several trade and business projects which ended in failure, a number of journalistic enterprises and secret work for the government. In 1697 he published his "Essay on Projects" which forwarded an impressive number of proposals including the establishment of society. In 1701, Defoe produced a satire, *The Trueborn Englishman* in which he answered those who objected to the occupation of the English throne by the Dutch King William. His next pamphlet entitled, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* satirized the Anglican Tory attitude to the non-conformists and suggested extreme measures of persecution against them. He produced a periodical *The Review* from 1704-13. In 1706 he published a minutely realistic account of a supernatural occurrence in *A True Relation of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal*. He produced his first work of fiction *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719 which presents the relation between man and nature that sprang from the depths of the English middle-class view of life. The novel shows the shipwrecked trader on his deserted island endeavouring to remould in his distant isolation the whole pattern of the material and moral civilization he had left behind him, and in so doing adding a new kind of romantic interest to the common necessities of life. The success of *Robinson Crusoe* encouraged him to write the works of fiction which include *Captain Singleton* (1720), *Moll Flanders* and *Colonel Jacque* (1722), *Roxana* (1729), and *Captain George Carlton* (1728).

In, *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe brought the realistic adventure story to a very high stage of its development, but his work according to W.J. Long "hardly deserves to be classed as true novels, which must subordinate incident to the faithful portrayal of human life and character."

**Jonathan Swift** (1667-1745) : Swift's two greatest works are his *Tale of a Tub* and *Gulliver's Travels*. *The Tale* began as a grim exposure of the alleged weaknesses of three principal forms of religious belief : Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England and the Protestant Dissenter, but it ended in a satire upon all science and philosophy. In *Gulliver's Travels*, the satire grows more unbearable as it is directed against humanity at large. Swift uses the weapons of wit, raillery, sarcasm, irony, allegory and banter to perfection in his attack on folly, injustice, hypocrisy and unreason. These two works can be called the precursors of the modern novel.

During the later half of the eighteenth century, a large number of novels appeared. However, four persons namely Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne were the real masters of this genre.

**Samuel Richardson** (1689-1761) has been regarded the father of the modern English novel. His first novel was *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded*, written in endless series of letters, telling the trials and tribulations, and the final happy marriage of a sweet young maiden. The novel was published in four volumes between 1740 and 1741. His second novel was *Clarissa or The History of a Young Lady* which was published in eight volumes in 1748. This novel is regarded as his masterpiece. Clarissa, the virtuous, beautiful, talented, younger daughter of the wealthy Harlowes, with a fortitude of her own left her by her grandfather is manipulated from a position which combines the height of virtue with the height of material good fortune to one in which she is despised and rejected, becomes an almost Christ like figure. However, she rises in death from her degradation to shine on the high and glorious resurrection. Richardson's third novel was *Sir Charles Grandison* which was published in seven volumes in 1754. Richardson is here concerned with high life, which was unfamiliar to him, and the result is a stiffness that compares most unfavourably with Pamela's vulgar self-revelations. The hero is intended to be a model of aristocratic manners and virtues for the middle class people. Richardson in his novels presents the story of human life, told from within, and depending for its interest not on incident or adventure, but on its truth to human nature.

**Henry Fielding** (1707-54) who came to the novel after a career as a writer of comedies, burlesques and satirical plays published his first novel *Joseph Andrews* in 1742 which was inspired by the success of *Pamela* and began as a burlesque of the false sentimentality and the conventional virtues of Richardson's heroine. He took for his hero the alleged brother of Pamela who was exposed to same kinds of temptations, but who instead of being rewarded for his virtue was unceremoniously turned out of service by his mistress. There the burlesque ends and Fielding tells about the adventures of Joseph Andrews and his companion Parson Adams. Fielding's other novels are *Jonathan Wild*-the story of a rogue, *The History of Tom Jones-a Foundling*-(1749) and *Amelia* (1751) the story of a good wife in contrast with an unworthy husband.

**Tobias Smollett** (1721-71) was content to work in the picaresque tradition. His first novel *Roderick Random* appeared in 1748. Here Smollett followed the outlines of his own life but crammed the story with innumerable invented incidents and episodes, many of them violent and cruel. *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickel* is the longest and most rambling of Smollett's novels and it is told in the third person. The speed and the variety of the incidents, and the violence and coarseness of many of them, give the novel the characteristic Smollett colour. *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*, is the history of a scoundrel in the manner of Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*. *The Adventures: of Fancelo Greaves* is written in imitation of Cervantes, *Don Quixote*. Smollett's most popular novel is his last *Humphrey Clinker* (1771), which recounts the mild adventures of a Welsh Family in a journey through England and Scotland. As

a writer, Smollett could boast of a lively and vivid style. His stories are rich in incident though they are unequal in characterisation. He has a genius for depicting oddities. He lacks Richardson's psychological subtlety and Fielding's sanity and diversity.

**Lawrence Sterne** (1713-68) was an altogether more original figure. The two works for which he is known are *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*. Commenting on Sterne's contribution to the development of English novel Arthur Compton-Rickett remarks : "Richardson had given sentimentality, Fielding humour, Smollet liveliness, Strene blends humour and sentiment in a way peculiarly his own, and although structurally he defies every convention of the novel yet develops still further the art of characterisation. Incident is non-existent in Sterne's fiction. His novels have no chronology or progression. Yet despite the chaotic incoherence of his method of story telling, his effects are made with consummate ease."

Thus novel as a literary genre emerged in the later half of the eighteenth century and established itself as a dominant literary form for all times to come.

**Oliver Goldsmith's** contribution to the English novel is worthy of attention on account of his attempt to define and elevate this art form and save it from the coarseness which it had suffered at the hands of Smollett and Sterne. Goldsmith's only novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* gives to "home life an enduring romantic interest". According to William J Long (*English Literature : Its History and Significance*) "Goldsmith, in this simple story of common life, has accomplished three noteworthy results: he has made human fatherhood almost a divine thing; he has glorified the moral sentiments which cluster about the family life as the centre of civilisation; and he has given us, in Dr. Primrose, a striking and enduring figure, which seems more like a personal acquaintance than a character in a book."

With the publication of Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* in 1766 the first series of English novels came to a close from *Robinson Cruose* to *Vicar of Wakefield*. Within twenty five years, novel flourished in a way that it became the most dominant art form and continues to be so till this day. Each successive novelist brought to it an added strength so that the novel came to enjoy a position it enjoys today.

### **Novel in the Romantic Age:**

The English Romantic movement, which found its supreme expression in poetry, was reflected in a somewhat cruder and more primitive manner in the novel. The extraordinary change which took place in the last quarter of the eighteenth century is hard to define, for the Romantic movement was essentially complex and changes in sensibility had long been in progress. At the heart of the matter there was a profound reaction against the long domination of reason

and authority.

For over a hundred years since the time of philosopher Hobbes- imagination and fancy had been regarded with distrust and the reason and reality was strictly limited to what could be experienced by the senses. Gradually the old intellectual approach to life gave way to a wider outlook which admitted the claims of passion and emotion and accepted the sense of mystery in life. In literature, criticism and satire were replaced by a more creative spirit and wit by humour and pathos. The wide spread admission that there was a mystery in life that reason could not fathom led men to reject many of the ideas that had seemed commonplace to the Augustans and to welcome others that the Age of Reason would have frowned upon. Romantic souls preferred Rousseau's idea of natural goodness to Lord Chesterfield's chilling scepticism. Men began to warm to the notion that their kind were inherently noble and therefore capable of perfection once the system which hampered the development of human beings was reformed or swept away.

A striking characteristic of the approach to the Romantic period was the strong interest shown in the past. It was a feeling that manifested itself in many branches of art and literature. And of all the various periods which the past had to offer, that which afforded the greatest satisfaction was the Middle Ages. It may be said that the renaissance of imagination consisted above all in the literary and artistic discovery of the Middle Ages, which lived again as a period of faith, of picturesqueness, of simplicity, of pathos-in fact, of all the qualities lacking in the Age of Reason. The Middle Ages were hailed as a reality once alive, and whose revived existence was not to be mysteriously interwoven with the life of the present. Closely associated with the spirit of wonder awakened by the Age of Faith was the revival of interest in magic and witchcraft. Men were obviously tired of being wholly reasonable. The new-found appreciation of Nature in her wild and savage aspects was yet another sign that an emotionally starved generation was beginning to seek inspiration in remoteness from familiar scenes and everyday life.

Extremely significant at this period was the unfeigned delight in "ruins". The convention of the "ruin" played a great part in creating a special atmosphere of awe and the "Churchyard" school of poetry and the **Terror Novelists**.

Although the discovery of terror as a source of pleasurable emotion was not completed until the end of the eighteenth century, there are various indications that the subject aroused the interest of writers. In 1773 an essay appeared '*On the Pleasure derived from Objects of Terror*, and another entitled "*An Enquiry into those Kinds of Distress which excite Agreeable Sensations*." But in fact the literary reign of terror was actually inaugurated by **Horace Walpole** in *The Castle of Otranto*, which was published in 1764. **Walpole** believed that the scope of naturalism in fiction had been exhausted by Richardson and if the

novel was to survive it must be revitalized from other sources. In spite of the keen interest inspired by the Middle Ages, a return to the native adventure stories that amused the age of Caxton was out of the question. Yet there were possibilities in a type of romance that should combine the new realism with the old freedom of imagination. The result in Walpole's hands was a good-humoured essay in fiction that obtained its effects by a very mild use of the supernatural, but which twenty years later inspired a series of novels harrowing in their sensationalism.

Having written a novel in a new genre, Walpole was uncertain of its reception and so he enshrouded the original publication in mystery. After the success of the first edition he added a Preface to the second admitting the authorship.

Walpole explained that his object was to blend two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern, so that the best of each might be retained in a fiction at once new and exciting. The old romances had suffered from their inherent improbabilities, while the modern novel was cramped by too strict an adherence to common life. In *The Castle of Otranto* he congratulated himself that he had reconciled the two.

In spite of the success of Walpole's novel no one wrote a sequel to it until **Clara Reeve** published *The Champion of Virtue, A Gothic Tale* in 1777. With this novel, better known by its subsequent title *The Old English Baron*, the vogue for **Gothic Romances** started in earnest.

**Clara Reeve**, although a disciple of Walpole, was not uncritical of his faults. She disliked the wildly fantastic and her avowed aim was "a sufficient degree of the marvellous to excite attention; enough of the manners of real life to give an air of probability to the work; and enough of the pathetic to engage the heart on its behalf." *The Old English Baron* is typical early Romantic Gothic and had many imitators.

**Ann Radcliffe** (1764-1823), who followed Clara Reeve as a writer of Gothic "thrillers", exercised a more important influence on literature. Her novels represent the best phase of Terror fiction before it became debased by the cult of ghastliness started in imitation of the German school. All the young Romantics adored Ann Radcliffe.

Ann Radcliffe possessed a highly romantic temperament, an intense love of all that was beautiful, a passion for the mysterious and a taste for solitude that had been fostered during a lonely girlhood passed among elderly people. Her interest in the supernatural and the weird was strong, but always controlled by reason. She was too lofty and idealistic to exploit the purely horrible. Instead she specialized in studies of the psychology of fear when it is aroused by happenings that are only apparently supernatural. She rationalized terror and excelled in creating atmosphere and in describing the awe-inspiring

aspects of nature.

Ann Radcliffe's finest work, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, appeared in 1794. This novel enjoyed a wide fame and was followed by scores of imitations.

*The Novel of Terror* by the repulsive themes and creaking artifices brought, novel-reading into disrepute. The latest literary form seemed already by the beginning of the nineteenth century at the point of death from overstrain.

Nevertheless Ann Radcliffe's popularity with minds not unworthy to judge showed that there was a growing need for more freedom of imagination in fiction.

If women were active in creating the novel of terror they were even more active in producing the novel of contemporary social and domestic life in which the chief interest is the delineation of manners and the portrayal of character.

**Fanny Burney** (1752-1840) made a significant contribution to this kind of novel. Her novel "*Evelina: or The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*" presents an intimate and a thorough picture of the defects of society. "A novel of manners", in *Evelina*, Burney renders the contemporary social behaviour. *Cecilia* though written on the same pattern is not as impressive as Burney's first attempt.

**Miss Edgeworth** (1767-1849) belonged to an old English family settled in Ireland since the sixteenth century. She knew at first hand the problems she discussed, and allowed neither sentiment nor prejudice to blind her to the wrongs suffered by the Irish people.

**Maria Edgeworth's** novels were important historically, in heading the novel off again towards realism, but they suffer from too conscious moralizing. Her interest in the unfortunate anticipates the great sociological novelists of the next decade, such as Dickens, Kingsley and Mrs. Gaskell.

Maria Edgeworth wrote of the Irish social scene and was one of the first to treat Irish character seriously. Her novels are saturated with a didactic and moral content. *Castle Rackrent* is her most important work.

However, the most significant name is that of **Jane Austen** (1775-1817) who was born at Steventon in Hampshire, of which her father was rector, and she lived an uneventful life at her birthplace, at Bath, Southampton, Chawton and Winchester, where she died. Even in private her way of life was singularly quiet and inconspicuous. Jane Austen not only lived a quiet, sheltered existence but she was also curiously immune from the great movements of her time. The French Revolution and, the Napoleonic wars swept by her without comment.

In her world, the extremes of wealth and poverty were alike unknown. Three or four families, belonging to the country gentry of the professional middle

class, would form their own social circle, rigorously controlled by the laws of good taste and the customs of what today would be called their income group. There were few incidents to ruffle the surface of existence at Steventon, and the observer who happened to be a creative artist as well as forced to concentrate on the nuances of character and the delicate interplay of nicely regulated emotions.

The highlights of such a life were little visits, morning calls, wedding, shopping expeditions, or the quizzing of new arrivals. The acme of excitement was a ball, and the most appalling social gaffe an elopement. All these go to make up the plots of Jane Austen's novels.

If Jane Austen's actual world was circumscribed, her artistic integrity led her to limit her writing still more closely to the "comedy of sex". She occupies a place between Fielding and Meredith and she is perhaps more acutely observant than either. Nothing is hidden from her, and a character can be damned in a few swift strokes. What diverts her most are "follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies." Even in her reticence she is revealing. Meanness she detests, along with, thick-skinned vulgarity. Her heroines, for all their faults, are always ladies; and the brassy Miss Crawfords are deliberately inserted to point the contrast. Those, who cannot be gay and charming should at least be "sensible, amiable and well-informed". Would- be- blue- stockings are her aversion. The minds of the beings she *invents* and animates are as transparent to their creator as those who live about her. The secret complexities of self-love, the many vanities, the quiverings of selfishness, the odious unawareness of the arrogant and the vulgar are all reflected in the glassy essence of refined irony.

There is some considerable discrepancy between the times at which her novels were published and their composition. *Pride and Prejudice* in its original form, and entitled *First Impressions*, was begun in 1796, refused by publishers in 1797 and revised before ultimate publication in 1843. *Sense and Sensibility* was begun as early as 1797, but apparently left unfinished for many years. *Northanger Abbey*, her skit on the Terror romances, was begun in 1797, sold to publisher in 1803, but not then published. The manuscript was recovered in 1816 and may have been revised, but appears to represent the earliest of her work. *Mansfield Park* was begun in 1811, *Emma* in 1815 and *Persuasion* in 1815. She was the author of two works which she did not publish-*Lady Susan*, a story written about 1805 of a designing coquette, and a fragment, *The Watsons*, which were both published in 1871.

*Sense and Sensibility* (1811) gave Jane Austen her first success. The satire is implicit in the title and the novel contains type characters and situations that she was to present. It was followed in 1813 by her masterpiece, *Pride and Prejudice* perhaps the first work of art in the history of English fiction. The book has an incomparable freshness and sharpness of outline and the story is

developed very largely through dialogue, which gives it a trim spareness. She sets forth her comedy of *manner* in a spirit of amusement devoid of bitterness. Elizabeth Bennet the high-spirited and warm-hearted heroine, drew from her creator the comment, "I must confess that I think her as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print."

**Mansfield Park (1814)** has a new gravity. Its author was touched by the wave of Evangelism that had already engulfed and swept away some quite respectable lady novelists. Jane Austen's humour saved her, and the book includes some masterly character-drawing. There is Lady Bertram, for instance, who hardly speaks, but is "one of those people who thinks nothing can be dangerous or difficult or fatiguing to anyone but themselves." Sir Thomas Bertram, who is drawn in greater detail, provides the memorable scene in which the grave head of the family returns unexpectedly to find his house ravaged by amateur theatricals.

**Emma (1815)** a favourite with many readers, shows an important development by combining the gaiety of the earlier books with the gravity of the later ones. Its heroine, Emma Woodhouse, lacks Elizabeth's intelligence, but for that reason is nearer to average womanhood. Being cast by nature as an heiress and leader of society in Highbury, she aspires to a role in which Providence itself frequently fails, namely a match-maker, and is exquisitely discomfited. Emma takes under her wing a pretty but foolish girl of seventeen, the natural daughter of some person unknown, and sets to work on schemes for her advancement. The story is mainly occupied with the mortification to which Emma is subjected as a result of her injudicious attempts to find a husband for Harriet. Emma played the market in hearts for her friends, but is not averse to cornering a much-desired commodity for herself.

In *Emma* Jane Austen's favourite weapon, irony, is used superbly to deflate pretensions, mock vanity and lay bare the egoism that lurks, unsuspected, in family love.

Jane Austen died in 1817 and her last two novels were published posthumously.

As a novelist Jane Austen employed the dramatic form evolved by Fielding, but she refined it and gave it perfection. There are no digressions, no intrusions by the author; instead, we are offered a completely lifelike impression in which the movement of time is subtly controlled. She waits until her characters are ripe for an experience before she introduces them. She catches the dynamic moment which precipitates the crisis and then within the scope of her psychology allows the denouncement to proceed according to plan.

It was **Walter Scott** the "prophesier of things past", who set the novel on its feet again. He brought to the contemporary interest in the romantic past his own splendid gifts of imagination and developed an almost new genre, the Historical novel. In the pages of his books, the past is lived again in glowing

but credible colours. When John Murray, the publisher, read *Waverley* and wrote to his wife : “it is excellent. No dark passages, no secret chambers, no wind howling in long galleries,” he was voicing the relief many must have felt at the return of a healthy normality to fiction.

When **Walter Scott** took to writing novels, at the height of his fame as a narrative poet (he had refused the Laureateship before *Waverley* appeared), he brought to his task not only a passionate enthusiasm, but a mind packed with material -the ancient song and story of his beloved “Caledonia stern and wild.”

Out of his experiences Scott created the historical novel. Few novelists before him had attempted to write historical fiction. Admittedly Horace Walpole, Clara Reeve and Mrs. Radcliffe had been concerned in their Gothic romances with periods sufficiently remote to be invested with romantic charm to offer scope for the imaginative treatment of history. But none of them possessed any feeling for historical realism and they made no attempt to induce in the reader a willing suspension of disbelief.

The debt of the English novel at the time to Sir Walter Scott was considerable. His was the alchemy that transmuted the “horrid” elements into the pure gold of the creative imagination. What Richardson, Fielding and Smollett had done in holding a mirror up, to the eighteenth-century way of life, Scott did that for the remote centuries of which his contemporaries knew nothing. He took names and dates from the history primer and transformed them into literature. He made dry bones live. Like an enchanter he walked through the tombs of time and quickened into life their ghostly inhabitants. There may since have been more accurate interpretations of history but Scott was an artist, not a scholar. He violated chronology; he invented situations; he allowed his imagination free play but in making the past come alive he was gloriously successful. He saw history as a pageant sweeping by with characters and moments of high drama. But behind the changing scenes was a movement, a pattern, which he discerned and tried to interpret. His view of history was Elizabethan rather than modern. If he glamorized the past, it was partly because he saw in the past centuries the values which modern life was rapidly destroying. He loved the spirit of the Middle Ages which he thought bound men in the brotherhood of Christ; he saw these bonds being cast away in exchange for a soulless “cash nexus”. He was a conservative because he loved tradition, but he was alive to the part humble people had played in history and he never underestimated their importance. His faith was rooted in the Established Church and State, and his loyalty to both was emotional. There had been scattered attempts before Scott at the historical novel; but from now on it became the goal of almost every serious novelist to discover and work some new vein in the dark and backward abyss of time.

His *Waverley Novels*-*Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary*, *Old Mortality*, *Rob Roy*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *The Legend of Montrose* brought him fame and fortune. After this Scott turned from Scottish to English and then European themes to keep his public provided with new historical fiction. *Ivanhoe*, *Kenilworth*, *The Monastery* are some other important novels written by Sir Walter Scott.

**The Historical novel** had a few more practitioners also. Among these most noteworthy is the name of *Edward Bulwer Lytton*. Lytton to begin with started with the Gothic Novel. His novel *Pelham or The Adventures of a Gentleman* is a dandified novel of fashionable life and Lytton may be said to be the founder of this kind of novel. His historical novels include *The Last Days of Pompeii*, *Rienzi and Harold*, *The Last of the Saxons*. He also wrote mysterious and fantastic (The Haunted and The Haunters) and the domestic (*Kenelm Chillingly*) novels. "A versatile and talented novelist and a conscientious craftsman without being anything more, Bulwer Lytton responded to the varying tastes of his age so promptly that he remains an important figure for the student of literary taste and fashion" (David Daiches).

**William Harrison Ainsworth** wrote over forty novels dealing with different periods of English history. **G.P.R. James** wrote sixty five novels covering Europe as well as England. "Completely plotted intrigue, would be period dialogue, and as much local colour as could be conveniently brought in was the recipe for the historical novels practised by these professionals."

### **The Victorian Novel**

The Nineteenth century was the great age of the English novel. As I have already told you that the novel was a middle class form of literary art. As the middle classes rose in power and importance, the novel flourished. There was an increase in the number of reading public, the number of libraries was increasing, publishing was developing. So the entire intellectual and literary environment was also conducive. Moreover, novel with its commitment to the social reality appealed to the taste of the reading public.

The middle class reader wanted to read about the identifiable, known and recognisable experience of life, so the novel as an art-form was best equipped to present a picture of life lived in a given society against a stable background of social and moral values by people who were recognisably like the people encountered by readers. And the novel as it was written, in the **Victorian period** had extended its boundaries. It aimed at giving a realistic picture of actual life. Various writers experimented with the problem of its form in various ways. Going back to the antecedents, we see that Defoe put his tales in the form of autobiography, Richardson exploited the epistolary mode, Fielding turned to drama for help. But he and his followers took for granted that mere accurate chronicle to ordinary life would be intolerably dull to the reader. So

he evolved a working compromise. The setting and characters of the earlier novels were carefully realistic but they were fitted into a frame work of non-realistic plot derived from the drama, consisting of intrigue, enlivened by all sorts of sensational events-conspiracies, children at birth, mistakes of identity-centring round a handsome ideal hero and heroine and a sinister villain and solved nearly in the last chapter. As in drama, the characters were revealed mainly through speech and action. There was not much analysis of them by the author and the serious tension was relieved by a number of specifically comic characters drawn in a convention of slight caricature. Gradually, these artificial devices were discarded. Victorian novel presented with wonderful inwardness, different "kinds of moral possibility and the actuality of choice." It formed an extension of consciousness and gave life its vitality. Major novelists like George Eliot, Dickens, Hardy, Meredith, all extended the boundaries of the novel.

**George Eliot** (1819-80) was revolutionary in her own sober way. In her books we are presented for the first time with a form of fiction freed from the last vestiges of the dramatic tradition, novels without romantic heroes and villains, with lengthy analysis of motive and character in which action is determined by no convention of plot, but solely by the logical demands of character and situation. An extremely intellectual novelist she was uncompromisingly serious and employed her works to expound her most considered reflections imbued with spiritual meanings on human conduct. She is at her best in portraying characters. In her novels are found shallow insincere characters, mystics, men of the world, florentine scholars, way-ward passionate natures, half witted rustics, cultured free-thinkers. There is variety and subtlety. Her wide range of observation, her generous sympathies and the power of detachment trained by scientific study, helped to give breadth and variety to her canvas. Beginning with comparatively slight descriptions of men and manners, such as are found in *Scenes of Clerical Life*, George Eliot soon proceeded to more complex kinds of fiction. *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on The Floss*, *Romola*, *Felix Holt*, *Middle-March*, *Daniel Deronda* are her remarkable achievements. It is not erroneous to say that George Eliot by her achievement has permanently enlarged the scope of the novel.

**Charles Dickens** (1812-70) : With Dickens's works journalism and melodrama are gathered into the novel to give it new life and a new and important place in middle class entertainment. He weaves stories set in his own day or the recent past in which the vitality of the characters, the enthusiastic savouring of their physical environment, the movement from comedy to pathos and from compassion to horror and the sheer high spirits with which he rendered eccentrics, villains, unfortunates, hypocrites, social climbers, nouveaux riches, criminals, innocent bureaucrats, exhibitionists, self deceivers, roisterers and confidence men, human oddities of all kinds, each with his own physical and

moral individuality and each involved in a rich pattern of interacting lives played out against social background whose sights and sounds and smells were rendered with a vivid particularity in which all this is presented with an almost reckless profusion. *Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist, David Copperfield, Hard Times, Little Dorrit, Great Expectations, A Tale of Two Cities* have earned for him a permanent place in the English literary canon.

**W.M. Thackeray** (1811-63) came to the writing of novels in the same casual way which led Dickens to fiction. He came to literature through journalism. From the beginning he had a keen eye for social pretension, for the disparity between professed and actual motives, for all the hypocrisies with which social man learns to cover up his true intentions. He was against affectation and he looked at society as it really was. A moral realist he brought to the surface the hypocrisies, vanities, snobberies and all pervading selfishness which lay behind the charming mask of the socially successful. *The Luck of Barry Lyndon. The Book of Snobs, Vanity Fair, Pendennis. The Newcomes, The Virginians. The History of Henry Esmond* are his well-known works.

Dickens took the teeming and confused life of his day and projected it in his fiction brilliantly. George Eliot took the intellectual currents of her time and found a way to rendering them in the imaginative life of her novels, but Thackeray somehow never found a way of coming to terms simultaneously with his age and with his art.

With the novel rapidly establishing itself as the dominant literary form, more and more different kinds of sensibility came to express themselves in it. Even though the majority of novels produced during the Victorian age continued to handle the problems of man in society and to deal with moral situations as they emerged in a specific social world with specific and economic characteristics, there was also the occasional writer who turned to fiction to express the private passions and explore realms of personal emotion.

**Charlotte Bronte** (1816-55) in her *Jane Eyre* and **Emile Bronte** (1818-1848) in her *Wuthering Heights* present with great complexity the detail of the personal passions, education and dilemmas. It is usually said that Charlotte Bronte was an innovator in bringing English fiction into the domain of the writer's own emotional consciousness, and Emile Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* is manifestation of the intensity and solidity of Emily's imagination and the interpretation of the earthly and divine plane of being. It is the masterpiece from Bronte's genius.

**George Meredith** (1828-1909) is the most difficult of all the Victorian novelists. In *The Shaving of Shagpat, The Egoist, Victoria, The Ordeal of Richard Fernal, Diana of the Crossways, One of Our Conquerors, Lord Ormant and his Aminia,* and *The Amazing Marriage,* Meredith investigates egotism in particular relation to male weakness and female strength. Meredith's vocabulary which is characterised as odd

continues to baffle his readers. His works delight and impress in parts. Literary historians agree that his genius was never properly focussed and his achievement remains less great than his talent.

**Thomas Hardy** (1840-1928) intellectually was a man of the future, aesthetically he was a man of the past. His broad conception of the novel form was much more like that of Fielding. His taste in story-telling was that of the simple rural society in which he had been brought up. He liked a story to be a good story. It should be full of action and above all should be sufficiently unusual to arouse the interest of the readers.

Dear Student :

This survey of the English novel makes one fact clear that the novel written in the 18th and 19th century flourished as an argumentative and moral genre. But in the Victorian period the novel developed as entertainment. In this period we have propagandist novels also. But the art of novel writing in whatever form and manner it was written showed a considerable degree of artistry.

One of the most competent novelists during the Victorian period who aimed to entertain was **Anthony Trollope**. Some of his popular novels are known as *Barchester shire series-Barchester Towers, Doctor Thorne, and Phineas Finn*. Commenting on his contribution David Daiches writes, "Trollope had the imagination, the craftsmanship, and the knowledge of men and affairs to be able to construct a world substantial enough for the reader to retire to, and it is this quality in his novels that accounts for the cult of Trollope which began as a largely escapist movement during the second world war and has grown steadily ever since.

**Charles Reade's** *It is Never Too Late to Mend* and *Hard Cash*, each subtitled "A matter of fact Romance" are novels depicting the contemporary social scene. Reade also wrote a historical novel *The Cloister and the Hearth*.

**Wilkie Collins** is known as the father of the detective story with his ingeniously plotted novels of crime and discovery. *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone* are his notable works. Later works of Dickens show Wilkie Collins's influence.

**With Mrs. Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell** the novel of social description moves at a deeper level and, with considerable fineness of psychological perception and human feeling. *Mary Barton* and *North and South* deal with social problems of the day examining the effects of industrialisation and machinery on the lives of those involved and exploring the contrasts between agricultural and industrial England and their human implications.

**Charles Kingsley** also used the novel as a means of discussing "the condition of England question." In *Yeast* and *Alton Locke* he presents with considerable emotional force and strength of generous feeling iniquities and injustices suffered by the British working classes in the age of Chartism. He also wrote a

historical novel *Westward Ho*.

**Benjamin Disraeli** tackled “the condition of England question” in quite different manner. His novels have political themes. *Coningsby* and *Sybil*-subtitled *The Two Nations*. i.e. the rich and the poor present his political and social programme for England. His other novels show either his confident familiarity with aristocratic manners or his political and historical imagination working on more fantastic schemes and grandiose actions.

A minor novelist who represents a characteristically English genre with remarkable spirit is **R.S. Surtees**. He presents lively and humorous pictures of the way of life of the country gentry. *Jorrocks's Jaunts and Jollities*, *Handley Cross*, *Mr. Sponge's Sporting Tour* and *Ask Mamma* are some of his important novels.

Among the **Regional Novelists** may be included the name of **Charles Lever** who wrote light hearted pieces of Irish life. *The Confessions of Harry Lorrequer*, *Charles O'Malley* and *The O'Donaghue* project a phase of Irish history and society. **Samuel Lover** dealt with Irish life in his *Rory O'More* and *Handy Andy*. Regionalist in a different sense is **R.D. Blackmore** whose Devonshire novels anchor the action in the local scene with loving particularity. His novel **Lorna Doone** is historical as well as regional.

**George Borrow's** contribution is significant as he combines fiction with autobiography. In *Lavengro*, *Romany Rye*, and *Wild Wales*, and *The Bible in Spain*, Borrow's exploited his own personality with the aggressiveness that both attracts and irritates.

**A.W. Kinglake** **Charles Doughty** and **T.E. Lawrence** wrote books of travel. Kinglake's *Eothen*, Doughty's *Travels in Arabia Desert* and Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* are some important travel books. Frederick Marryat wrote adventure stories of the Sea. *Mr. Midshipman Easy* and *Masterman Ready* became popular.

**George Macdonald** was a writer who wrote children's books. His books include *At the Back of the North Wind*, *The Princess and The Goblin* and *The Princess and Curdie*. **W.H. Hudson** gave in his novels *Green Mansions*, *A Romance of the Tropical Forest*, remarkable accounts of natural and animal world.

Various kinds of mystical and religious feeling found expression in the Victorian novel **J.H. Shorthouse's** *John Inglesant* is a historical novel dealing with English religious life in mid-seventeenth century and is one of the most interesting of the many Victorian religious novels.

**William Hale White** in his novels the *Autobiography of Mark Rutherford* and *Mark Rutherford's Deliverance*, probes with persuasive psychological understanding the problems posed by religious doubt.

**Robert Louis Stevenson** tried his hand at travel books and adventure stories. *Treasure Island* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* are his popular works.

Dear Student,

In this brief survey of the Victorian novel, I have tried to draw attention to the variety and multiplicity of the kinds of novels written. You must have noticed that the novel at this time had exhausted all varieties. The material for this survey has been derived from David Daiches's book *A Critical History of English Literature* (Vol. IV). The three novelists I am going to discuss below, indicate a different trend.

**Samuel Butler** launches in his novels a full scale attack on the Victorian ethos. *Erewhon* is a satire on the Victorian concept of society, duty, morality and religion. *The Way of All Flesh* attacks the despotism of Victorian family life, the hypocrisy and cruelty of Victorian religion. *The Way of All Flesh* achieves tremendous satirical force, and is more responsible than any other single book for the early twentieth century revolt against Victorianism.

**George Moore** assimilates the influence of French Naturalism. He was an aesthete also. *A Mummer's wife*, *Esther Waters*, *Confessions of a Young Man* are his important works.

I shall conclude this survey by discussing the contribution of Rudyard Kipling. We have already seen that dents and chinks had started appearing in the Victorian setup. The complacent attitude was being greatly doubted and foreign influences now were surfacing.

However, Kipling with his Imperialist view continued to write novels celebrating the British Empire. An advocate of "the White Man's burden", he took up on himself the task of writing of an epoch and a phase of civilisation which appeared to him superior to all others. But it is not erroneous to say that Kipling was one of the last novelists to blow the bugle of the British monarchy and imperialism.

This survey makes one point clear that during the Victorian age the area of novel as art form was enlarged. It excluded no life, no society, no profession. Instead of the sequence of trivial adventures, we have now very elaborate studies of life, men, manners and society. The novel had made itself adequate to the needs of the age. It had gained much in vitality, variety and depth. It was richer in colouring, more subtle in observation and more artistic in form.

## **An Analysis of Orhan Pamuk's Essay : 'What Our Minds Do When We Read Novels'**

Orhan Pamuk (b. 1952) is a Turkish novelist. Among his novels are *My Name is Red*, *Snow*, *The Museum of Innocence*, and the recently published *A Strangeness in my Mind* (2015). For his outstanding contribution to literature, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2006. *The Naive and the Sentimental Novelist* (2009) is based on the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures delivered in 2009. It was translated in 2010 by Nazim Dinkci.

'What our Minds Do When We Read Novels' is the opening essay of *The Naive and the Sentimental Novelist*, which has six essays and an epilogue.

Pamuk explains in these essays the complex and engaging process of reading as well writing novels. His key argument is that the novel is fundamentally different from any other literary genre, including the epic. It has "a secret centre" to which everything in it points. Even those things which seem, on the surface, to be irrelevant arouse, in the best of novels, the happy suspicion that they are significant. A good reader, like a good writer, is able to see the whole novel as a pattern of which every detail is significant.

### **I. 'Novels are second lives'**

Pamuk begins the essay with this memorable short sentence: "Novels are second lives." It is the seed from which the entire book grows like a tree. After you have read the book, you realize how remarkably the sentence had already said everything.

The sentence has several levels of meaning. The first is that novels, being works of fiction, are like dreams. When we dream, we believe the dream to be real. Good fiction has the vividness and power of dreams. But there is a difference also: when we are reading a novel, we are aware of its fictional nature. Moreover, we enjoy reading it in a way that we would not suffer the illusion to break. In other words, reading a novel is like entering a dream and enjoying it, but also knowing that it is a dream. As Pamuk emphatically remarks, "The art of the novel relies on our ability to believe simultaneously in contradictory states." He later on adds that the experience of fiction enriches our understanding of reality. Interestingly, the fictional world which a novel

offers does not contradict reality. This is another reason novels can be described as second lives; good novels have the richness and complexity of real lives.

Pamuk recalls that there was a time he would read a novel for its visual power and detail, or for action and conflict. Not all novels, however, satisfy such a desire on the reader's part. Some, like Kafka's, are 'atmosphere novels'. They may not have the visual clarity and openness of a landscape painting, their world may be closed and claustrophobic. But some dreams too are like that. And reality is also like that, at times.

As a young reader of novels, Pamuk would feel drawn into the novel's world, with the outer world fading. Anything that interrupted or impeded immersion in the fictional world annoyed him. But the process of immersion used to be slow and it demanded effort. After all, the novel's world is built of words and sentences. The reader has to enter these words and sentences to let the novel reveal its world. Once this happened, Pamuk would feel he was standing before "a huge continent...after the fog lifts". In other words, the experience was like "gazing easily and comfortably out of a window and watching a view." Pamuk's choice of similes is significant: the experience of reading would bring clarity and perspective to him.

The ability to focus one's mind on the novel is necessary for entering it, he observes. Giving an example from his favourite novel, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, he remarks that Anna is unable to focus on the novel she is trying to read during a train journey; her mind is distracted by other thoughts.

Pamuk gives examples from Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and Stendhal's *The Red and the Black* to illustrate the way a novel opens for the reader a window on its fictional world. Pamuk emphasizes more than once that a reader's essential qualification is "the ability to transform words into a large landscape painting through visualization...."

## II. The Singularity of the Novel

It is in its peculiar use of language that the novel distinguishes itself from all other literary genres, film, and painting, according to Pamuk. It is language that enables the reader to move smoothly between the novel's outer world and the inner world of its characters, between a landscape and a mind. As he says, "The real pleasure of reading a novel starts with the ability to see the world not from the outside but through the eyes of the protagonists living in that world." The novel as a genre can achieve this "oscillation" between the outer and the inner, between an object and a feeling, between long view and close-up at a speed which no other genre can match. In a novel alone can language fuse the outer and the inner into a whole so that the reader can "see both the faces and thoughts of the protagonists as part of a single vision." Indeed, an able reader of novels is distinguished by the ease with which he can make sense of the

characters' thoughts and actions "within the general landscape."

### **III. The naïve reader/writer and the sentimental-reflective reader/writer**

The reader's mind, thus, performs complex operations, but not all readers realize this. This is like driving a car. To a habitual driver, driving seems to be a spontaneous, natural activity. Neither reading nor writing is a spontaneous and natural activity; both involve a high degree of artifice.

Pamuk thus makes a distinction between the naïve reader/writer and the reflective (or "sentimental") reader/writer. To be a naïve reader/writer means "not at all being concerned with the artificial aspects of writing and reading a novel." To be a reflective reader/writer means to be attentive to the "methods" and techniques used in writing novels and to "the way our mind works" during reading and writing. A novelist, more so a modern novelist, is one who can be "both naïve and reflective at the same time."

Pamuk acknowledges the debt he owes to the German philosopher Friedrich Schiller for making the distinction between the native reader/writer and the reflective reader/writer. Schiller had used the distinction to describe two kinds of poets, and he had employed the term "sentimental" to refer to the kind that Pamuk denotes by "reflective". The naïve writers write "spontaneously", or naturally, apparently without any conscious effort and artifice. The English poet S.T. Coleridge also advocated this approach to poetic composition, as stated in his Preface "of 1816 to the poem "Kubla Khan".

Schiller's "naïve" poet believes that his words will "adequately and thoroughly describe and reveal the meaning of the world". On the other hand, the "sentimental" poet is "unsure his words will encompass reality." Schiller thus describes himself as "sentimental" while considering Goethe to be "naïve". It should be clear that being "sentimental" (in the sense of "reflective", the term Pamuk uses for the purpose of greater clarity) is a mark of the modern consciousness. Pamuk, in fact, notes that in this way Schiller's essay can be read as referring to two human types.

To revert to the figure of the window referred to earlier, we may say that "the sentimental-reflective novelist" is one who is aware of the framing window as he views the landscape.

### **IV. The operations our mind performs when we read a novel**

Pamuk now enumerates the various operations which the mind of a reader performs when a novel is read. These various operations are, however, bound by a common thread: the search for "the secret centre" of the novel.

1. The reader observes the general scene and follows the narrative. In doing this he is driven by the desire to figure out the main idea, the

- motive, and “the secret centre” of the novel.
2. A novel is more than its story, because it is made of words. It achieves completeness, hence, only in being read. But reading is a special activity for it involves the transformation of words into images. These images, patiently realized, would disclose the “secret centre” of the novel: this is what guides the reader along.
  3. Even as we step from words into images, and so enter the realm of imagination, we cannot but wonder how much of this all is real and how much imagined. This “conflict” in the reader’s mind is a central characteristic of the modern novel, and it gives complexity to the fictional world.
  4. Reading a novel implies comparing what we read with what we have experienced in reality. A part of our mind thus remains a witness to the absorbing power the text wields over another part of the mind.
  5. If we are alert to the elements of style that go into the making of the artificial, fictional world of the novel, the pleasure of reading is enhanced.
  6. Reading involves making moral judgements. These are made at two levels. We judge the acts of various characters in the novel. And we also judge the writer’s judgements. This double operation is the core of any great work of fiction. Pamuk says, “...the art of the novel yields its finest results not through judging people but through understanding them.” Edmund, Shylock, Cassius, Macbeth, Raskalnikov, Emma Bovary – a mature reader is led to understand them, not to sit in judgement on them.
  7. The reader enters into an intense relationship with the text and into “complicity with the novelist to a certain extent.” To a certain extent, not absolutely. The distance for reflection remains, whatever the degree of absorption, or immersion.
  8. The reader is driven to seek “the secret centre” of the novel, hoping to find in it the meaning of the novel. It is this centre that invisibly structures the novel and lends it coherence.

A good novel, then, is one in which “everything is connected to everything else.” It is “a web of relations,” which is constituted by the “atmosphere” of the novel as much as by its “secret centre”. In other words, the centre touches everything and everything points to it, howsoever obliquely. But an attentive reader alone can sense this. “What is the novel’s centre made of?” Pamuk asks; and answers, “Everything that makes the novel.”

A good reader, then, is one who acts “like a hunter.” He possesses a heightened sensitivity, looking for and discovering significance in the least obvious places.

The ultimate source of the novel's "reality" is, according to Pamuk, its "three dimensional" nature. This is what makes novels like second lives. In them, as in life, we search for the meaning of life, hoping that life probably has a meaning – which, of course, it may or may not have. But this is surely the reason the experience of reading great novels is an experience to nurture and cultivate. As Pamuk says, "I read novels... to gain knowledge of the world, to construct myself, and to shape my soul." Only because novels are second lives, they mean so much to us.

### **HENRY FIELDING: AN INTRODUCTION**

Henry Fielding was born in 1707. He began his writing career with drama and wrote more than twenty plays. But the posterity does not know him as a dramatist. He is known as the father of modern English novel since he initiated new trends in English fiction and imparted the novel a kind of philosophical unity.

Fielding might have continued writing plays if rigorous censorship had not been imposed on the theatre. This circumstance drove him on to seek other means of livelihood. He became a practising lawyer, a journalist and a novelist. The profession of law and journalism brought him in contact with all kinds and classes of people. All these people stand portrayed in his writings.

Since his early days, Fielding had a passion for the Greek and the Latin classics. He could not imagine a novelist without adequate grounding in the classical lore, "inestimable treasure" as he found in the Greek writers. It is from them partly that Fielding formulated his philosophy of life.

Full of vitality and an extroverted zeal, Fielding settled in London by the year 1726 with an allowance of 200 pounds a year. These were the years (1725-26) when he was courting Sarah Andrews, a beautiful young girl, three years his junior in age, though his courting led them nowhere.

In 1727, poverty drove him on to earn his livelihood through his writings. He had the option before him, as he put it, of becoming "either a hackney writer or a hackney coachman."

His play, *Love in Several Masques* dedicated to Lady Mary, was first performed in 1728 at Drury Lane theatre. It was quite a success. For the next two years, he shifted to the University of Leyden where he

got his grounding as a man of letters.

Back to London, he resumed his creative activity in the field of drama. *The Welsh Opera* and later *The Grub Street Opera* contained damaging reference to Sir Robert Walpole and the royal family so that certain restrictions had to be imposed on the theatre.

By 1734, Fielding had written more than sixteen plays and gained popularity as a dramatist. Paying posthumous tributes to Fielding, one of his friends, Murphy, referred to "the brilliancy of his wit, the vivacity of his humour, and his high relish of social enjoyment", as the remarkable qualities of Fielding as a writer.

The Licensing Act of 1737 was directly the result of the fierce attack Fielding had made on Sir Walpole in *The Historical Register for the Year 1736*. From now onwards, he saw his genius operating in apparently diverse fields - writing novels and practising law.

*The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams* written in imitation of the manner of Cervantes author of *Don Quixote*, written in 1742 brought Fielding an instant fame. It was on the basis of this novel that he was acclaimed as the father of modern English novel. There may be two opinions about this claim but what goes without controversy is the fact that in *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding initiated altogether a new trend and attempted a new "Kind of writing not hitherto attempted in our language", as the novelist stated in the Preface to this novel. With it was born the novel of realism although Fielding designated it as "a comic romance."

A "comic romance", Fielding stated, was different from a serious romance to the extent it involved "persons of inferior rank and consequently of inferior manners."

Coleridge considered the plot of Fielding's second novel. *Tom Jones* as the most compactly contrived and placed it among the three best plots in literature- the other two being, *The Alchemist* and *Oedipus Tyrannus*. *Joseph Andrews*, too, shows Fielding's remarkable gift of manipulating his material. The rather long title of the novel provides a clue to the structure of *Joseph Andrews*. Based on Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, Fielding has provided his story a picaresque framework. The plot is replete with incidents, all adventures taking place here and there and

revealing characters in action. As the reader moves out along with the hero in the course of his journey, he comes across a rich galaxy of characters, all studied with faithful fidelity and dispassionate realism. The vogue of realism, in fact, came to be set in English fiction with this novel.

The circumstances which provided Fielding the initial impulse to write *Joseph Andrews*, make an interesting reading. He designed this novel as parody of *Pamela* or *The Virtue Rewarded*, novel written by a contemporary novelist, Richardson and published in 1740.

Richardson wrote *Pamela* with a view to instructing "handsome girls who were obliged to go out to service, as they phrased it, how to avoid the snares that might be laid against their virtue." Pamela was working at the house of Mr. B. who was the Justice of Peace. By all conceivable means, Mr. B was trying to seduce her. But she throughout resisted his advances. In this suspenseful struggle between his seductive attempts and her virtuous behaviour, it is the virtue that is rewarded at last. Lord B. is subdued at long last so that he marries Pamela. What shocked Fielding in this scheme of things was how the man who was hideous earlier could become a dear husband to Pamela.

Fielding did not like this "Prudential morality". His concern was more with the manners of the age than with morals.

While writing a parody of Richardson's novel, Fielding deliberately reversed the situation. Joseph, in Fielding's novel, is Pamela's Brother. The latter was employed at Lord B.'s house while virtuous Joseph is employed as footman at the aristocratic house of Lady B. (Lady Booby). Lord B. is Lady Booby's nephew. The Lady is highly sexed, predatory old woman, not unlike her counterparts in Restoration drama. When she makes advances towards her young servant, calling these advances "a little innocent freedom", he replies: "That boy is the brother of Pamela and would be ashamed that the chastity of his family, which is preserved in her should be stained in him." His virtue remains not only unrewarded but punished in so far as he is thrown out of Lady Booby's job, stripped of his livery. But this parody goes hardly beyond fifty pages. The novelist in Fielding comes

alive, and is so carried away by the incidents of the story that what comes to us in the final form is not the parody but a fine English novel.

In the year 1743, Fielding wrote the story of a criminal in his novel, *The History of the Life of Late Mr. Jonathan Wild, the Great*. The author's purpose is to expose the true meaning and reward of greatness from goodness, when greatness is not obscured by worldly eminence. He relates the career of a consummate rogue, from his birth and baptism to his arrival at the 'tree of glory', the gallows. The hero, having shown his disposition for inequity, enters on his career of crime under the auspices of Mr. Snapkeeper of a sponging house, and shows dexterity as a pickpocket. He becomes the chief of a gang of robbers, contriving their exploits, taking the largest share of the booty, keeping himself out of the clutches of law and maintaining discipline by denouncing any of the gang who contests his authority. He marries Snap's daughter, Latita, who is as worthless as himself and whose assumption of virtue provides some amusing scenes. His principal undertaking is his attempt to ruin the fortunes and domestic happiness of his old school fellow, the virtuous jeweller, Heartfree's. He robs him and gets him locked up as a bankrupt. He induces Heartfree's wife by a trick to leave England and accuses Heartfree of having done away with her, thus bringing him to the point of execution. But his trickery is fortunately exposed, and he meets his end with the 'greatness' that has distinguished him throughout. It is the story of a thief, the superman of the underworld of criminals, who was hanged in 1725. Fielding is all admiration for him. He is great, though not good. The greatness, goodness antithesis is nowhere presented with so much clarity:

"No two things can possibly be more distinct from each other, for greatness consists in bringing all manner of mischief on mankind, and goodness in removing it from them."

Written in 1748-49, Fielding's *Tom Jones* is perhaps the best of his novels in which Fielding envisages Rousseau's concept of the "noble savage" and presents very much the modern concept of the anti-hero. The plot of *Tom Jones*, which is generally regarded as Fielding's

greatest work, is briefly as follows. *Tom Jones* is a foundling, mysteriously discovered one night in the bed of the wealthy, virtuous and benevolent, Mr. Allworthy, who gives him a home and educates him, but presently repudiates him. There are several causes which lead to Tom's dismissal. Firstly, Tom is generous and manly but too human. Youth has incurred the wrath of his benefactor by his amour with Molly Seagrim, the keeper's daughter. Then he has fallen in love with the beautiful Sophia (daughter of the bluff irascible fox-hunter, Squire Western) who is destined for another person. He has incurred the enmity of his tutor, the pedantic divine, Thawackum and in a lesser degree, of his colleague, the hypocritical philosopher, Squire, and lastly, he is the victim of cunning misrepresentations of young Blifil, a mean sneak, who expects to marry Sophia himself and hates Tom. Tom sets out on his travels, accompanied by the school master, Partridge, a simple lovable creature, meets with many adventures, some of them of an amorous description, notably that with Lady Bellaston, which has been much criticized. Lady Bellaston falls in love with Tom, who does not show himself reluctant and supports himself out of her liberality. Meanwhile, Sophia, who is in love with Tom and determined to escape from the marriage with Blifil to which her despotic father has condemned her, runs away from home with Mrs. Honour, her maid, to a relative in London. Here, she escapes a wicked design of Lady Bellaston to place her in the power of Lord Fellamer, thanks to the opportune arrival of Squire Western in pursuit of her. Finally, Tom is discovered to be the son of Allworthy's sister. The machinations of Blifil are exposed. Sophia forgives Tom, his infidelities and all ends happily. It is full of brilliant ideas which in the eighteenth century genteel society were considered rather outrageous. Fielding was writing in this novel about human nature as it is, without in any way white-washing it or deliberately presenting it in lurid colours. A comic epic in prose, *Tom Jones* unfolds the panorama of the eighteenth century society; its men and manners and its fads and foibles with utmost sincerity. "Open the book and here is god's plenty", as Murphy remarked. *Tom Jones* is a veritable picture gallery. Characters are all drawn from life without being unnecessarily idealized portraits. Generous Squire Allworthy takes his place among the vicious lords and ladies. Like Parson Adams, Joseph's associate,

we have here Partridge, barber-cum-surgeon. There is a world of inn keepers, postillions, coachmen, clergymen, lawyers, doctors, wayside bandits, beggars, gypsies and methodist preachers. They are all drawn with faithful fidelity.

The beautiful heroine of the novel, Sophia Western, in her modernity is far ahead of her time. She prefers to run away from home but would not marry odious Blifil as imposed upon her by the father. She is modern not only in her dress and demeanour, her hair style and her love for elegant fineries but also in her attitude toward life. She can forgive her lover for all his escapades and immoralities but not for his lack of propriety and decorum and good taste.

While Fielding was still at work on *Tom Jones*, he was appointed Justice of the Peace of the Bow Street Court and the Country Middlesex. It is a fact of history that he remained throughout, one of the scrupulously honest magistrates. An income of thousand pounds which a "reading justice" earned those days was considered by Fielding as the "dirtiest money upon earth." As a magistrate, he got a first hand knowledge of the underworld of crime and came in touch with gamblers, thieves, bandits and social outlaws. This contact with the world of criminals literally triggered in him "a spiritual evolution". In order to better comprehend the enormity of crime, squalor of brutality, one can refer to the staggering crime graphs as presented by J.H. Plumb in his *England in Eighteenth Century*.

In 1751, Fielding published his last novel, *Amelia*. It is a fine psychological study. A sentimental novel, *Amelia*, is a befitting reply to those critics who thought Fielding incapable of diving deep into his character's innerscape. Like his *Joseph Andrews*, a picaresque novel, and *Tom Jones*, a comic epic in prose, a good deal of the book is devoted to exposing various social evils of the time, such as the defects in the law of debt, and the scandals of the sponging houses and persons. William Booth, a penniless young officer, with little to recommend him beyond a good person and physical courage, has run away with the virtuous Amelia against the wishes of her mother. The poverty of the couple, Booth's folly and weakness of character, and the beauty of his wife, involve the couple in a series of misfortunes with which the story

is occupied. Booth himself succumbs to the charms of Miss Matthews, whom he meets in person. But his infidelity, when it subsequently comes to the knowledge of Amelia, is generously forgiven. Amelia becomes the object of the illicit pursuit of various unscrupulous admirers. The couple are reduced to the utmost misery. The long suffering devotion of Amelia is finally rewarded by the discovery that the Will by which her sister inherited her mother's property is forged and Amelia is the true heiress. Among the pleasant features of the book are some of the minor characters, the faithful sergeant Atkinson, the benevolent Dr. Harrison, the pair of Colonels, James, the unprincipled Bath, whose bravery is only equalled by his punctiliousness, and the admirably drawn women, Mrs. Atkinson and Miss Matthews. *Amelia* reveals Fielding's experiment with a technique which was new in those days. It is no panoramic study of the times, not a social chronicle. Here our attention remains focused on Amelia alone, who is modelled after his wife.

*The Covent Garden Journal* of November 25, 1752, is his last writing in which he decides to wind up his career as a writer, "I solemnly declare that unless in revising my former works, I have at present no intention to hold any further correspondence with the gayer Muses." Physically also he was crippled, not able to move without crutches. He published the revised edition of *Jonathan Wild* in 1754, the year when his eventful and busy life came to an end on October 8, 1754.

Dear Student,

We hope that this short background prepares you for the study of *Joseph Andrews*, the prescribed text for your syllabus. This popular work of Fielding is known for its picaresque narration. Such kind of fiction is realistic in manner, episodic in structure and usually satiric in its aim. The novel as a genre in English literature, emerged in England in the early eighteenth century. In 1719, Daniel Defoe wrote *Robinson Crusoe* and in 1722, *Moll Flanders*. Both of these are picaresque in type, in the sense that they are a sequence of episodes held together largely because they happened to one person. But *Robinson Crusoe* is given an enforced unity of action by its focus on the problem of surviving on an uninhabited island. While both stories

present so convincing a central character, set in so solid and factually realised a world, that Defoe is often credited with writing the first true "novel of incident". The credit for having written the first English "novel of character" is invariably given to Samuel Richardson for his *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* (1740), (already discussed earlier in this lesson). The distinction between the novel of incident and the novel of character cannot be drawn sharply, but in the novel of incident the greater weight of interest is on what the character will do next and how story will come out; in the novel of character, it is on his motives for what he does, and on how he as a person will turn out to be. Daniel Defoe is also known as the first realistic novelist, who dealt with extraordinary adventures of a ship-wrecked mariner, Robinson Crusoe and with extraordinary misadventures of *Moll Flanders*; but these novels are made to seem the very mirror held to real life by Defoe's reportorial manner of rendering the events whether trivial or extraordinary in the same circumstantial, matter-of-fact, and seemingly unselective way. Henry Fielding is actually known as the first realistic novelist, who rendered common place people so well that they convince us, as such in a way of people really live and talked this way.

Henry Fielding's *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and of his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams*, the full title of the work, is often called the first realistic novel of English literature. Henry Fielding turned aside from the episodic sentimental writing of the age to give an honest picture of the manners and customs of his time and to satirize the foibles and vanities of human nature. In particular, he ridiculed affectation, whether it stemmed from hypocrisy or vanity. Although the structure of the novel is loose and rambling, the realistic setting and the vivid portrayal of English life in the eighteenth century more than compensate for this one weakness. Joseph is presented as the younger brother of Samuel Richardson's heroine, Pamela. The story of the novel is given below, in order to acquaint you with the crowded canvas of Fielding's Masterpiece.

Joseph Andrews has been some ten or eleven years in the service of Sir Thomas Booby, uncle of the Squire Booby who married the virtuous Pamela, Joseph's sister. After the death of Lord Booby, Joseph

continues to work as a footman in Lady B's service. This lady felt no reluctance in showing her growing interest in her twenty-one-year old servant, whom she finds both well-mannered and handsome. But Joseph, keeping intact his virtues, is fired for resisting the Lady's advances. Feeling the insult, the Lady suspends Joseph from her service in spite of the protests of her maid, Mrs. Slipslop, who too finds herself attracted toward the young Joseph. Once on the road, without money or any kind of future prospects, Joseph sets out from London to Somersetshire to see his old friend, Fanny whom he loved deeply. On the very first night of his journey, Joseph is attacked, and looted by some robbers, who beat him and leave him lying naked and half dead in a ditch. After a great resistance from the passengers in a passing-by coach, Joseph was finally delivered at a nearby inn.

The mistress of the inn cares and nourishes Joseph only as long as she does not realize his poverty. However, Parson Adams, another visitor at the inn, who had been Joseph's tutor, recognizes him. Parson Adams is on his way to London to sell his collection of sermons. After paying Joseph's bill at the inn, he decides to accompany him to Somersetshire as he realizes that he had left back the sermons, he intends to sell.

As they take to the road, taking alternative shifts on the Parson's horse, they are overtaken by Mrs. Slipslop, who is on her way to Lady Booby's country place. She accommodates the Parson in the coach as Joseph rides the horse. At the next inn where they halt, Joseph is insulted by the host followed by a first fight in which even Parson Adams actively participates.

On continuing the journey, Joseph is adjusted in the coach, while the parson has to walk on foot for having forgotten his horse behind. But his gait is so brisk that he can easily keep up with the coach. While resting on his journey, he hears the shrieks of a woman. He at once runs to help and discovers a young woman being cruelly attacked by a burly fellow. The Parson at once intervenes and rescues the girl from the molester's attack, but both the Parson and the girl are taken as prisoners, when the ruffian accuses them of being conspirators in an attempt to rob him. It is on the way to the Sheriff that the Parson discovers that the girl whom he had helped, was no other than Fanny,

who is on her journey to meet Joseph and help him in his plight. After the Parson is recognized, he and Fanny are released and they go to the inn where Joseph and Mrs. Slipslop are staying. Both Joseph and Fanny are overjoyed to be together once again. Mrs. Slipslop's envy for Fanny, as she becomes the main attraction for Joseph, makes the former leave behind the Parson and the young lovers. The three do not have a single penny with them. The Parson goes to visit the Clergyman of the Parish in order to borrow the money, so that the bills at the inn could be paid. But he is disappointed. Finally a poor pedlar at the inn gives them every penny he has, just enough to cover the bill. They continue their journey on foot, and halt at another inn, later they come across a secluded house, at which they are asked to stop and rest. The hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, are kind to them and Mr. Wilson relates his story to the Parson. Mr. Wilson had once been allured by the glamorous life of the urbanised London city, and there he had wasted both his youth and money, until he was imprisoned for debt. He had been saved by a rich cousin, whom he had later married. The two had retired from London to this quiet country home. They had two lovely children and their only sorrow was the third child, a boy with a strawberry mark on his shoulder, who had been stolen by gypsies and had never been heard of since.

After spending a pleasant time with the generous family, the travellers set out again, Parson Adams suddenly finds himself caught in the middle of a hare hunt, with the hounds inclined to mistake him for the hare. Their master goaded on the dogs, but Joseph and the Parson are victorious in the battle. They find themselves face to face with an angry squire and his followers. But when the squire catches sight of the lovely Fanny, his anger softens, and he invites the three to dine with him. The party of the three travellers at once sets out on the road, after going through an unpleasant supper with the squire. The three leave the squire's house in anger. They go to an inn, but in the middle of the night some of the squire's men arrive, overcome Joseph and the Parson, and abduct Fanny. She is, however, recognized and rescued by one of her acquaintances, Peter Pounce. The rest of the journey is quite uneventful. It is only after they reach the house that further difficulties arise. Joseph and Fanny stay at the parsonage

and wait eagerly for their wedding. Lady Booby, who arrives in the Parish, and who is still in love with Joseph, tries her best to prevent the marriage. She even has Fanny and Joseph arrested. At this point Squire Booby and his wife, Pamela arrive. The gentleman insists on accepting his wife's relatives as his own, even though they belong to a lower class. Hence Joseph and Fanny are quickly released from custody. All kinds of arguments are presented by Pamela, her husband, and Lady Booby to prevent Joseph from marrying Fanny, keeping in mind her lowly birth. The plot of the story enters further complications when a travelling pedlar reveals that Fanny is the sister of Pamela. The appearance of Mr. and Mrs. Andrews discloses the fact how Fanny had been stolen by the gypsies while she was still a baby. In her place, the gypsies had left behind a little boy whom the couple had brought up as their own. The Strawberry mark on Joseph's shoulder reveals the fact that he is the lost child of the kindly Wilson. Thus both the lovers are finally secure in their social positions, and nothing further prevents them from getting married.

Dear student,

The above summary of the novel, hopefully gives fairly a good idea about the plot and to some extent the theme, but do not depend on this summary only. You must go through the text of the novel to have a complete and a better understanding of the various aspects of the book. Lesson Nos. 3, 4, 5 of this unit have been prepared with the objective of highlighting some of these aspects of the text.

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

1. Walter Allen : *The English Novel*
2. Elizabeth Jenkins : *Henry Fielding*
3. Aurelien Digeon : *The Novels of Fielding*
4. Austin Dobson : *Fielding (English Men of Letters Series)*

#### *Electronic Readings*

1. [www.associatedcontents.com/.../character-analysiswithin-fielding.html](http://www.associatedcontents.com/.../character-analysiswithin-fielding.html)
2. [www.litencyc.com/php/sworks.php?rect=true&uid=1642](http://www.litencyc.com/php/sworks.php?rect=true&uid=1642)
3. [www.literature-study-online.com/essays/fielding.html/](http://www.literature-study-online.com/essays/fielding.html/)

### **FIELDING'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ENGLISH NOVEL**

Fielding has often been acclaimed as the father of modern English novel, though a section of critical opinion would bestow this distinction on Bunyan or Defoe. But almost all the readers of English novel agree that Fielding was an initiator of new trends and an innovator of an absolutely new kind of writing, the rules of which he discussed at great length in the preface to *Joseph Andrews*.

Before Fielding appeared on the literary scene, the prevalent genres were epic poetry, comedy, tragedy and satire. No doubt, there were seventeenth century heroic romances, moral allegories like Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, social and political satires like *Gulliver's Travels*, personal history like Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Defoe had brought into the novel something that sounded realistic with exact dates, existing side by side with fertile imaginative contrivances. Addison and Steele through their periodicals, "The Spectator" and "The Tatler" had popularised the art of delineating character. In other words all the components of the novel existed here and there but novel as an independent art form did not exist prior to Fielding. The work of art known as novel conforming to E.M. Forster's specification, with a plot plus character plus story, had to wait till Fielding came out with his *Joseph Andrews*.

Richardson's *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* cannot be considered a novel for obvious reasons. Richardson failed to impart unity to the story of Pamela narrated through letters.

Novel in the hands of Fielding became for the first time a grouping together of characters drawn from actual life and studied with dispassionate realism in their day-to-day life, with a moralistic intention not visible on the surface but artistically hidden behind the

novelist's attempt at selecting details.

In *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding set out to create an art form which in the eighteenth century was the same thing as was an epic to the primitive world. It was both a mirror to and a criticism of its times. It is human nature which he studies as announced by him in the first chapter of the present novel. This attempt of the novelist led him to achieve a panoramic vision and a critical evaluation of the contemporary scene.

There are three essential qualities in a writer, i.e., genius, learning and a wide experience of human nature. "Genius alone", said Fielding, "is not sufficient without a good share of learning---, nature can only furnish us with capacity.....learning must contribute its part at least of the materials."

Fielding as a novelist was equipped with enough of material by his prodigious learning. In various prefaces in *Joseph Andrews*, he refers to the influence on him of great writers of fiction like Scarron, Le Sage and Marivaux.

As an epic of the road, *Joseph Andrews* comes nearest to novel like *Le Roman Comique*, *Gil Blas* and *Marianne*. Also, as a picaresque novel, the plot of *Joseph Andrews* is neither skilfully constructed nor is it very elaborate. Mock-heroic descriptions are common to both *Joseph Andrews* and the Spanish and French picaresque novels which Fielding has commended as example of true histories.

But much more than all these influences, the one most pervasive influence on Fielding was that of *Don Quixote* by the Spanish writer, Cervantes published in 1737. Fielding admits this influence on the title page of *Joseph Andrews*. Both the structure and tone of the novel are determined by Cervantes's picaresque novel. The lineaments of Parson Adams' character are clearly influenced by the Spanish novelist. In both the novels, we have the sharpened perception of the ridiculous in human behaviour. A certain drollery, taking at places, a mock-heroic turn is a stylistic peculiarity of both the novels. Both provide us a keen insight into characters belonging to lower sections of society such as innkeepers, ostlers, chamber maids, puppet showmen and so forth. And both have a refreshingly genial temper.

The material of both works is organised into books. Episodic digressions or introduction of extraneous stories are common, similarly, to both *Don Quixote* and *Joseph Andrews*.

But all these resemblances notwithstanding, *Joseph Andrews* is a novel in its own right, having none of the qualities of romance or the hunt for the imaginary and the ideal that one would find in Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. Each one of Cervantes's characters is an island in himself or most of his characters form a class by themselves. They do not belong to their times nor is their life the normal life of the times.

Hogarth, his friend, who had designed in 1731, the front piece for the published version of *Tom Thumb* and to whom Fielding pays glowing tributes in his *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* as an excellent creator of character, could be another possible influence.

Fielding, however, should not be charged with plagiarism, simply because his works show influences of other writers and bring forth some resemblances. In a widely read novelist like Fielding, situational similarities and echoes become a part of the mental baggage of the writer.

By far the greatest fountain from where Fielding drew was perhaps life itself. In the preface to *Joseph Andrews*, he says that everything in that novel is "copied from the book of nature and scarce a character or action produced, which he had not taken from his own observations and experiences." In the same preface he remarks that "life everywhere furnished an accurate observer with the ridiculous."

Referring to the prevalent tone of Fielding's novels, Coleridge said that "to take him up after Richardson is like emerging from a sick room heated by stove into an open lawn on a breezy day in May."

"Nature prompted him and he wrote", said Garrick of Fielding.

The preface to Book Three of *Joseph Andrews* is an explicit statement of Fielding's critical and artistic code. "To copy nature and to present men and women as they really are; to present not an individual, but a species."

The credit goes to Fielding for making the novel a social chronicle, a

panoramic study of its time, devoted to generalities and to particulars. This earth-rootedness of his works is what imparts them their abiding significance.

Practically, the whole of Fielding's contemporary scene stands reflected in the pages of *Joseph Andrews*. It is the England of the western countries which he portrays in the novel. Himself a sophisticated Londoner, a man-about-town and the colourful rural folk. There are in the novel, boorish and slovenly country squires, rural tyrants, great sportsmen, voracious eaters, drunkards with a passion for their dogs and horses. There are similarly physicians and surgeons who do not understand the rudimentaries of their professions. There are innkeepers of all kinds and conditions, there are the maid servants, the coachmen, the postillions and the beggars and the wayside bandits. He shows himself quite well read in stage coaches, country squires, inns and pubs and inns of court.

"I should be at a loss," said Hazlitt, "where to find any authentic documents of the same period, so satisfactory an account of the general state of society, and of moral, political and religious feeling in the reign of George II, as we meet with in *Joseph Andrews*." The novel is "a perfect piece of statistics", said Hazlitt.

"*Joseph Andrews* would perhaps be not as great a novel, if it were only a faithful picture of its times. The novel is a coherent expression of an experienced author's intentions." This evidently refers to "the moral status" of Fielding's first novel.

While depicting contemporary scenes and situations, it was Fielding's intention to so choose his materials that a serious moral purpose is illustrated and newer tone imparted to his times. He stood in line with other satirists of eighteenth century, like Pope in the field of poetry, Swift in that of prose, Addison and Steele in that of Journalism.

Triggered initially by Richardson's limited vision, *Joseph Andrews* developed into a broader-based definition of virtue and morality. Virtue for Richardson was nothing more than sexual integrity, prudential self-protection. There was nothing wrong about Richardson's concern for female chastity. But it was downright

hypocrisy on the part of Richardson's heroine to cash on her chastity. Justice B., who is villainous enough in his attempts at violating her chastity, suddenly becomes acceptable to her after he agrees to marry Pamela. The suspenseful details of the rapish attempts by Lord B., as Fielding took them, were morbid and perverted in their details and also expressed Richardson's prudency of imagination.

*Joseph Andrews* presents a contrast between the healthy commonsense morality of Fielding and false morality and sickly sentimentality of Richardson as expressed in *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded*.

Fielding's characters are not tailored according to the novelist's specifications. They are vital characters living in flesh and blood, portrayed with utmost objectivity in all their actions both good and bad. They are natural characters moving about in the vividly realistic world, whether it is a wayside house or a pub, an innyard or a pigsty. Elizabeth Jenkins has considered Fielding's morality as perhaps the healthiest and has asked the pertinent question: "If the standard of morality is to be applied to these great writers, which of them has the healthy attitude to sex? The author who speaks of it frankly and openly but without detail or suggestiveness, or the one who through too lengthy novels keeps the reader's imagination in a long, drawn-out suspense, culminating in a wedding night and a rape respectively?" (The latter references are to Richardson's two novels, *Pamela* and *Clarissa*).

Fielding is far ahead of his times, in respect to his attitude towards sex, "Our sympathies in sexual matter", says Elizabeth Jenkins, "are much nearer to Fielding's than were of many of his contemporaries." Sexual irregularities were for Fielding non-issues. There were other sins of an unforgivable kind: sins committed against humanity. His concern was more with the manners of his age than with morals. As a novelist, Fielding was bubbling with ideas which were rather revolutionary for the eighteenth century society, marked by pseudo gentility and fake social and moral standards.

Among the basic conflicts of the novel are those between humanity on the one hand and hypocrisy and bogus morality on the other. Parson Adams, for all his ignorance of the ways of the world, is an

embodiment of humanity. The contrasted attitudes are brought forth by the significant dialogue between Parson Adams and Peter Pounce: "Riches without charity were nothing worth; for that they were a blessing only to him who made them a blessing to other", says Adams to which Peter Pounce replies:

"You and I have different notions of charity." When Parson Adams says that charity is "a generous disposition to relieve the distressed," Pounce plays on the word "disposition" and says that "it is a disposition and does not so much consist in the act as in the disposition to do it."

The dialogue is not just a casual one. Through the character of Mrs. Tow Wouse for whom charity consists in "Providing for one self and our families," Fielding's views on charity as a Christian virtue and its absence in a Christian Country stand thoroughly discussed in such dialogues and sequences.

What emanates from Fielding's Pages are ideas, refreshingly original for his times. It is pertinent to note that the great, fashionable, lascivious, money-minded people generally belong to the higher strata of society while the humble people are represented as kind, such as the postillion who gives Joseph his only coat, the common soldier who pays the bill at the inn and the farmer who has been through the ways of the world. The pervading sense of generous humanity in Fielding's novels springs from a sharp social awareness and understanding of people. There is hardly anything sentimental about this view. The common people in Fielding's novels may be often cruel, bestial or criminal but they are human and receive as such, Fielding's adulation.

As a novel, *Joseph Andrews* contains brilliant flashes of wit and sharp irony mixed with deep insight. There is a certain amount of genial but perfectly remorseless revelation of human springs of action which distinguish scenes in the book. As pointed out earlier, it is Fielding's *Tom Jones* which was considered among the three best plots in literature. There is hardly any plot in *Joseph Andrews*, if the function of the plot is to hold together the subject matter in a tight framework. The present novel is rather loose and episodic. The subject matter is

held together not by a story but by certain themes and also in a subtle way, its basic form, that of a journey by Joseph and Adams from Lady Booby's country seat to London and back. The journey has a certain symbolic quality about it. It is a journey not simply of adventure but also of discovery. As the central characters move out of doors, they capture admirably the rhythm of life. The experience they gain adds to their dimensions and they impart added meanings to the lives of people they meet in the course of their journey.

For Digeon, the parody of *Pamela*, which provided the initial impulse to write *Joseph Andrews*, fails after the first ten chapters and the book is propelled forward by the momentum of Fielding's ideas. The same parody which provided the beginning now supplies the denouement. The novelist would see to it that no loose strands are left straggling. Wilson's tale, and Leonara's are considered by some as digressions and therefore serious flaws in the artistic design of the novel. At the surface level they do look like lengthy interruptions but are introduced to serve the novelist's moral purpose. The subject matter of both the tales is vanity. The moral of Wilson's tale is that withdrawal from the town is the only way to escape the world's snares. Wilson loses but recaptures the innocence which is Parson Adam's characteristic. After Wilson narrated how he had debauched a young girl who later ended at Newgate and how he was guilty of adultery with another female, he came to the conclusion that "vanity is the worst of passions." And Adams agreed, "I have never been a greater enemy to any passion, than that silly one of vanity."

The story of Wilson, highlighting the corruption of the town and of the pleasures of country life, is in its moral aspects, like the story of the Man of the Hill in Fielding's *Tom Jones* and is, as such, an integral part of the overall moral design of *Joseph Andrews* as a novel.

"Nor are the stories of Leonara and Mr. Wilson without their interest", says Ausin Dobson. "They interrupt the straggling narrative far less than the Man of the Hill interrupts Tom Jones, and they afford an opportunity for varying the epic of the highway by pictures of polite society which could not otherwise be introduced."

Whether Fielding is the father of modern English novel or not, one

thing is clear that the novel in his hand came to have a distinct personality. Novelists prior to him showed absolute unconcern with verisimilitude. What they wrote were, in the words of Scott, "Huge folios of insanity over which our ancestors yawned themselves to sleep." In those unrealistic novels there was abundance of what Fielding called "monsters in lace and embroidery", strutting about as kings and queens, lords and ladies, beaux and belles. A realist, Fielding was naturally harsh on such stuff because he believed in portraying the actual world of first hand experience.

Realism entered the pages of English novel with Fielding. A remarkable insight into human nature coupled with his innate creative gifts enabled him to portray his world with faithful fidelity. In *Tom Jones*, he lays down the qualifications for a writer. He should get admitted behind the scenes of life otherwise he should write dictionaries and spelling books alone. It is the essential truth of Fielding's reporting that impresses us in *Joseph Andrews*. Primarily a story teller, Fielding does not write history of his time consciously. That is only incidental underneath his story. We are continually aware of the hard realities of life, our small impulses, feelings and beliefs. Fielding said that he presented at all time "not an individual but a species." If he were to write about an individual, he would be unnecessarily circumscribing his world. Fielding's greatness as a novelist lies in his ability to project a world which is universal and timeless. It is the clear stamp of authenticity that all his novels carry on them, and that is what ensures their immortality.

**JOSEPH ANDREWS: a TEXTUAL ANALYSIS**

Dear Student,

In Lesson Nos 1 and 2, we introduced you to Henry Fielding and his popular works and his contribution to English novel. This lesson shall give you a detailed analysis of *Joseph Andrews*, the prescribed text for your syllabus. Before you proceed further with this lesson, kindly read the text of the novel. This would give you a better understanding of the various aspects of the book.

*Joseph Andrews* is written in four books with a regular and solid plan like the plays of the French Classical writers. The First book introduces the characters in a given situation. It contains the knot of the problem. The second and the third books are in the nature of the "Peripeteia", or a series of happenings and the fourth book gives the "denouement."

Fielding organizes the details of the story meticulously. There is not a single character who could be called a figment of fantasy. They are all taken from life, men and women as they are and not as they ought to be. The overall construction of the novel is in keeping with the requirements of the picaresque story, modelled on the Spanish novel *Don Quixote* by Cervantes. As the story begins, we are introduced to the rich, aristocratic house of Lady Booby where Joseph, recommended by his good looks and excellent voice, is promoted as Lady Booby's favourite footman. As pointed out earlier, Joseph happens to be the brother of the virtuous Pamela, the servant girl of Richardson's *Pamela* who is guarding her honour against persistent attacks by Lord B. a justice of peace and a nephew of Lady Booby.

Fielding makes Joseph the male counterpart of Pamela and as much concerned with protecting his virtue against the repacious attacks of a highly sexed Lady Booby. As Lady Booby's footman, Joseph is called

upon to do odd jobs for her, such as serving her at the tea table or carrying her prayer book to the church and singing psalms in a highly attractive voice which endears him to Parson Adams, the local priest. Parson Adams, who becomes the pivotal character of the novel, is introduced in the opening sections of the novel. Deeply read, he is basically a man of God but is as much a man among men. One of the most companionable persons, he is presented as thoroughly enjoying a clean life, which includes drink and tobacco and voracious reading of the ancient classics. He is a practical Christian, much too simple for the cunning world.

Mrs. Slipslop, "the waiting gentlewoman," another fascinating character, a product of Fielding's ironic humour, is also introduced in the opening pages of the novel. She speaks affectedly florid languages which Parson Adams, with all his knowledge of the classics, fails to understand. It is Mrs. Slipslop who tells Parson Adams that Lady Booby is "concisely" going to London and she is "conficuous" that she is taking Joseph along into the fashionable London life. In London, Joseph with his smart looks and the latest style in haircut, gets still nearer to Lady Booby, keeping her company in her walks through Hyde Park. She leans on his arm when tired. He keeps her company when she goes out in her coach. At many such occasions Lady Booby shows her indulgence through "innocent little freedoms", not uncommon among aristocratic women of her type.

Their familiarity becomes the subject of public gossip, which is checked by the sudden death of Lady Booby's husband, Sir Thomas Booby. The disconsolate widow is confined to her house in mourning, "During the first six days the poor lady admits none but Mrs. Slipslop and three female friends who made a party at Cards."

It is on the seventh day that she calls Joseph to her bedroom and after a little general discussion about things she says in artificial surprise, "La, what am I doing? I have trusted myself with a man alone, naked in bed, suppose you should have any wicked intentions upon my honour, how should I defend myself."

Joseph assures her that he has no wicked intentions whatever and shows least interest in her. Annoyed by his indifference, she orders

Joseph out of the room. Outside Lady Booby's bedroom, Mrs. Slipshop is waiting for Joseph. She has her eye on him. While they are drinking wine together, she accuses Joseph of coldness and cruel indifference. She would have laid an amorous hand on Joseph if she had not been, right at this moment, summoned by Lady Booby.

Lady Booby conveys to Slipslop her suspicions about the wild and loose habits of Joseph and expresses her intentions of dismissing him from her house. Mrs. Slipslop agrees as to his loose habits, though she would not agree to his dismissal. Lady Booby agrees to give the boy a second chance, but finding him as indifferent, ultimately, orders his dismissal.

Poor Joseph is now on the road, and the novel from now onwards becomes a picaresque novel. Joseph, on the highway, gets an occasion to meet diverse characters, revealing themselves in action and through dialogues. Joseph, like his sister Pamela, maintains his chastity and stands stoutly against the seductive designs of Lady Booby. Naturally as a punishment, he is driven out on the highway. The reader is afforded, through this kind of arrangement, an opportunity to see the characteristic life of the eighteenth century, its highways, dotted with inns and ale houses. There were wayside robberies and inadequate police protection. The novel is deeply rooted in contemporaneity.

Joseph, after having been paid his wages and stripped of his uniform, is on his own. He decides to meet Fanny, a young servant girl with whom he had long since been in love. She lived in the parish, where Booby's estate is located.

On his way to Fanny, Joseph is assaulted by highway robbers, who strip him entirely naked, rob him of all that he has and leave him for dead in a ditch. When Joseph regains consciousness, he sees a stage coach approaching. But the passengers, restrain from having any pity or help for the poor naked boy, they would not admit him into the coach. Each has his or her own reason for not helping him. The driver, already running late would not stop for the boy unless somebody paid a shilling for his carriage. The sight of the naked young boy is an affront to the modesty of the prudish lady:

“Oh Jesus ! A naked man! Dear Coachman, drive on and leave him.”

The old gentleman would not stop fearing a recurrence of robbers. The lawyer would not show him pity under legal compulsion. In one of the most satiric sequences, Fielding tells us:

“Though there were several great coats about the coach, it was not easy to get over this difficulty.”

The coachman who has two great coats spread under him refuses to lend one, lest it should be blood stained. The other gentleman would not spare him since it is cold. Joseph would have perished if the postillion had not lent him the coat, his only garment, swearing a great oath at the same time. The postillion is rebuked by the passengers for the unchristian vice of swearing. A practical Christian, the postillion, we are told, was the lad “who hath since been transported for robbing a hen-roost.”

The famous coach scene presents an excellent example of Fielding’s ironic vision and his sharp attitude towards fakery characterising human relationship. At Dragon Inn, a wayside halting place, another set of characters is introduced, Mr. Tow Wouse, the domesticated and hen-pecked innkeeper and his formidable wife Mrs. Tow Wouse, Betty, the maid-servant, unedifying surgeon, and Barnabas, the priest. Whereas Mr. Tow Wouse agrees to spare one of his shirts for Joseph, Mrs. Tow Wouse refuses any help to the “scabby rascals.” Mr. Tow Wouse’s plea for common charity fails to click with her.

“Common charity, a fait...”

“Common charity teaches us to provide for ourselves and our families, and I and mine won’t be ruined by your charity...”, she argues.

Fielding draws Mrs. Tow-wouse with a pen dipped in gall. She is made as repulsive in her physical appearance as in her idea concerning common charity. Fielding, with the forceful eye of a caricaturist, at occasions, has thus to describe her:

“Her person was short, thin, and crooked. Her forehead projected in the middle and thence descended in a declivity to the top of her nose, which was sharp and red, and would have hung over her lips, had not

nature turned up the end of it. Her chin was peaked, and at the upper end of that skin which composed her cheeks, stood two bones that almost hid a pair of small red eyes. Add to this a voice... being both loud and hoarse.”

Parson Adams, the noble priest of the Church belonging to Lady Booby's estate, joins Joseph at Dragon Inn. The Parson is on his way to London for having three volumes of his sermons published and thus raising money for his large family. The clue as to the presence of Joseph at this Inn is provided by the recovery of Joseph's clothes from one of the thieves brought under arrest to this Inn. Adams recognises the clothes and meets Joseph still recovering from his wounds.

From now onwards, Adams decides to remain by the side of Joseph and help him recover. Barnabas, the priest, introduces Adams to a London publisher, a personal friend of Barnabas and on a short visit this side. This chance meeting with the publisher enables Parson Adams to discuss his project concerning the publication of sermons. The publisher tells Adams how selling sermons is quite difficult unless they happen to be of eminent persons. Adams provides the publisher a glimpse into his religious ideas which determine the contents of his sermons:

“.....a virtuous and good Turk, or heathen is more acceptable in the sight of their creator than a vicious and wicked Christian, though his faith was as perfectly orthodox as St. Paul's himself.”

“I wish you success”, says the publisher, “but must beg to be excused, as my hands are so very full at present and indeed, I am afraid you will find a backwardness in the trade to engage in a book which the clergy would cry down.

This dialogue is interrupted by the shouting and counter-shouting at each other of Mr. Tow-wouse and Mrs. Tow-wouse with Betty joining in every now and then. The reason for this fight is provided by Mrs. Tow-wouse's catching her husband with Betty, the maid-servant.

“To abuse my bed, my own bed, with my own servant... a beggarly, saucy, dirty servant maid”, Mrs. Tow-wouse complained.

Betty is dismissed from her job and Mr. Tow Wouse is given a chance to make amends for his immorality. Fielding's characters, as observed

earlier, are amazingly alive because they are presented as they are, inside out. Betty, one of the most realistic portraits, we are told, "had good nature, generosity and compassion, but unfortunately, her constitution was composed of those warm ingredients which though the purity of courts or nunneries might have happily controlled them, were by no means able to endure the ticklish situation of chamber maid at an inn."

This section of the novel is remarkable for describing the innerscape of Betty, a young girl of twenty one whose passion once aroused, needs to be looked after. Since Joseph shows no interest in her, her master Tow Wouse can be as good. She is the female counterpart of the Squire in *Tom Jones* who was never so squeamish in his tastes that he could not feed on a dainty simply because somebody else had fed on it. That was argument enough for him to go to loose Molly Seagrim. Similarly Betty's "Passions were not so whimsically capricious that one man only could lay them." There is no clash between Betty's easy morals and her generous warm-heartedness.

After having recovered from his wounds, Joseph leaves the Dragon's Inn alongwith Parson Adams who discovers at this stage that he had forgotten at home his sermons and was carrying a few shirts in his bag instead. Adams, by a mutual arrangement, travels in a coach while Joseph rides a horse. In a chance meeting, Adams meets Mrs. Slipslop travelling by the same coach. One of the passengers begins to narrate the melancholy story of a woman of fashion, Leonara. This story is considered a digression by many readers.

Leonora, the daughter of a rich landlord, engaged for marriage to a promising young lawyer, Horatio, comes to grief because she jilts her fiance and falls in love with one Bellarmine just returned from Paris. Bellarmine is a man of fashion, artificial in manners and dressed gaudily in "a cut velvet coat of cinnamon colour, lined with a pink satin embroidered all over with gold, all in French fashion." Leonora transfers her love from a nice, devoted lover to this gallant representing pseudo culture. Naturally she comes to grief.

Far from being a digression, the episode is made an integral part of the story. Basically a moralist, Fielding exposes the follies and

hypocrisy of “polite” society, with its love for the fan, the gloves, the snuff box and its smelling bottles.

Adams leaves the coach, walks on foot, covers a few miles and waits for Joseph to join him. A hunter reaches him and they get into conversation. Adams discovers that he is on the wrong road. There is no time to get back and he agrees to spend the night with the hunter whose place is nearby. The hunter boasts of bravery and courage but when they hear the shrieks of a woman from the nearby bushes, the champion of courage advises Adams not to think of helping the woman in distress, even though he has a loaded gun. “This is no business of ours”, he says and advises him to run away. Adams disregards his advice and hastens towards the bushes, while the man of courage runs to his home. With only his crab stick as his weapon, Adams makes a pass at the man who is attacking the young woman. This woman is none other than Fanny herself. The miscreant being no match for Adams is subdued and Fanny rescued. Fanny, it comes out, was on her way to London on hearing of Joseph’s misfortunes. The villain, who was still lying on the ground sees a few fowlers enter the jungle and takes it as an occasion to get up and accuse Adams and Fanny of violence towards him. Both Fanny and Adams are produced before the nearby justice of the peace. Their trial takes place in the court of the rural magistrate.

This section of the novel contains perhaps the severest denunciation of the mockery of justice, the rural magistrates made in those days. The magistrate himself starts cracking indecent jokes on poor Fanny, while his clerk records the evidence. Adams’s manuscript, not readable, gives the magistrate the idea of its being a plot against the government and Adams being a spy. Aeschylus is for the clerk “an outlandish name.” The Parson’s cassock and the manuscript, they pronounce, as stolen and Adams as a robber. Adams and Fanny are, however, let off on the testimony of a Squire who recognizes Adams. The chapter contains an incisive analysis of conditions of law and magistrates in the eighteenth century England. Being himself one of the eminent magistrates, Fielding had first hand knowledge of the legal profession. He was appalled to see a colossal ignorance of law

and legal procedure on the part of the magistrates, and the punishments were often out of all proportion of the crime.

The trial over, Adams and Fanny set on their journey but lashing rain and night force them into a nearby alehouse. It is here that another chance meeting brings Fanny and Joseph together. It is a passionate union for the two long-parted lovers. Still another chance wind blows Mrs. Slipslop into the same alehouse. She is naturally unhappy at the Joseph-Fanny reunion.

A remnant of feudalism, Mrs. Slipslop refuses to recognize Fanny saying, "I can't remember all the inferior servants in our family." She is also angry with Parson Adams for the violence he did to Fanny's molester in order to save Fanny. His business as a clergyman was to pray and not to fight. When Adams said that he was never ashamed of his action, Mrs. Slipslop in her usual malapropism remarks that want of shame was never the "currycuristic" of a clergyman.

This section of the novel brings forth clearly Fielding's outbursts at the degenerating influence of the eighteenth century hierarchical system. Fielding uses "The ladder of dependence" as a metaphor to convey his idea of the social system as it obtained in the eighteenth century. At some step of this ladder stands Mrs. Slipslop who, being "the gentle waiting woman" of Lady Booby, is certainly the big boss of those who stand below it. In the passage cited below is contained the most delectable irony which Fielding aims at the eighteenth century feudalistic structure:

"And with regard to time, it may not be unpleasant to survey the picture of dependence like a kind of ladder, for instance in the morning arises the position of some other boy.....and falls to brushing the clothes and cleaning the shoes of John, the footman, who being dressed himself, applies his hands to the same labours for Mr Second hand, the squire's gentlemen, the gentleman, in the like manner, a little later in the day, attends the squire, the squire attends the levee of my lord, my lord himself is seen at the levee of the favourite who is at the levee of the sovereign."

Another full-blooded and satiric portrait of Parson Trulliver is

introduced, to whom Parson Adams, being short of funds, goes for borrowing seven shillings so as to be able to pay the inn keeper his reckonings.

Parson Trulliver is a priest once a week. For the remaining six days a rich farmer and a hog raiser. He takes Adams for the buying of hogs. Without listening to Adams, he shows him his hogs, offers him breakfast, grudgingly though. He is shocked to learn that Adams wanted to borrow money. Trulliver not only refuses him the loan but also lectures him on his idea of charity. It is parson Trulliver's hypocrisy that Fielding exposes. He talks about Christianity and scriptures, but when it comes to lending Adams a few shillings, he calls him a vagabond and a beggar:

"I know what charity is", Trulliver.

Adams comments ironically, "I am sorry you know what charity is since you practise it no better." For Adams, one devoid of charity is no Christian.

Fielding's vision is essentially ironic. He places in sharp focus a hypocritical man's quality. In the whole of parish, poor Adams is not able to raise seven shillings, all this in a country professing the principles of Christianity. Parson Trulliver's reputation as a man of charity is truly ironic, "since he never gave a farthing, he had always that word in his mouth."

Fielding found springs of goodness and charity where one least expected these. One poor pedlar who parts with his six shilling and six pence, the only amount with him, is like the postillion who had given his only coat to poor naked Joseph.

Adams, Joseph and Fanny resume their journey and come across fresh adventures and a new set of characters. More details are added to the character of Parson Adams. The night fall drives them into a lighted house in the parish where the conversation reveals Parson Adams's prodigious knowledge of the classical writers. He compares Homer to the Greek tragedian and offers a brilliant analysis of *The Iliad*. This impresses their host a great deal. Adams raps out a hundred verses with such an emphasis, voice and action that he almost frightens the women.

The gentleman with whom the three are lodging is, Mr. Wilson who narrates his personal story, considered by some as another digression after the history of Leonara. Fielding has taken care to make this story an integral part of the novel and expressive of the overall moral design of the book.

Primarily a satirist, Fielding's works present a trenchant picture of the times. Here is the picture of a man about town with a public school background. With an ambition to be "a gentleman", he falls prey to all vices, fads and foibles of a modern society. He has his body furnished by a tailor and a perwig maker learns dancing, fencing, horse riding and singing. He goes to London to fall in love with the opera, coffee house, the theatre, the brothel and the casino. No wonder he comes to grief.

When Mr. Wilson tells Adams how he had debauched the young daughter of deceased army officer and had made her a common prostitute, Adams "started up, fetched three strides across the room and then replaced himself in the chair." It was all shocking for a man of Adams's innocence.

The history of Wilson is designed to present the general picture of the contemporary society, its dissipations and immoralities. The gusto and frankness with which he narrates his escapades with women is characteristic of Fielding's style.

The next morning, these travellers leave Mr. Wilson's house after breakfast and encounter around noon hooting hunters and braying hounds, The hounds are encouraged by their master to seize poor Adams's wig and his cassock. Adams runs before the hounds. In fact, the innocent looking poor Parson is subjected to practical jokes and a lot of inconvenience in this sequence of the plot.

Being taken in by Fanny's charms, and "with mischief in his head", one of the hunters offers his regrets and invites them to dinner at the Squire's house.

The Squire, one of the villainous characters, has evil designs on Fanny and plans to molest her after stupefying Joseph and Adams with drinks. But his schemes misfire because he could not realize Adams's capacity of drink. Nothing happens to him.

Adams and party soon realize that they had fallen into the hands of inhuman persons, who subjected poor Adams to innumerable pranks like pulling the chair from underneath him, spilling a bowl of soup in his lap, forcing him to dance, throwing obscene puns upon the clergy and ultimately throwing him into a large tub full of water. The outrageous attempt on Fanny is averted by the watchfulness of Adams and the three travellers escape the evil company to get shelter a few miles away. The next morning the Squire's men along with a captain trace out the travellers. After a terrible fight, they vanquish Adams and Joseph and abduct Fanny. The providential appearance of Peter Pounce who recognizes Fanny, saves the poor girl from the worst of misfortunes and she is brought back to the inn and restored to her lover Joseph. This brings the third book to a close.

The last book completes the circular movement of the story. Lady Booby appears on the scene and we feel that she still retains the old spark for Joseph. It is amusing to find this woman once again getting restless to obtain Joseph and fulfil her life's longing, but all in vain. Back home to her country estate she is shocked to hear Parson Adams read the banns of marriage between Joseph and Fanny. She threatens the Parson of dismissal if he proceeds with their marriage. Adams is not the person to be afraid of the threats since he is doing his "duty" in giving the poor lovers "their common privileges and innocent enjoyments, which nature indulges to the animal creation." With the advice of a lawyer, Lady Booby plans to involve Joseph in a trumped up case and influence Justice Frolick to commit Joseph. It takes just two days' time for her to see the scheme through and as soon as Joseph and Fanny are about to be put under arrest, Pamela, Joseph's sister, comes to visit Lady Booby along with her husband, who, as we know, is Lady Booby's nephew. It is through the intervention of Lord B., Pamela's husband, that the two accused are released from Mrs. Booby's custody. While Joseph is brought to Lady Booby's house where he has an emotional meeting with his sister Pamela, Fanny is sent off to Parson Adams's place.

Lady Booby determined to scuttle Joseph's chances of marriage with Fanny, secures the intervention of her nephew and Joseph's sister Pamela. Fielding gets another opportunity of hitting Pamela, this time

for showing the attitudes of the *nouveau riche*, as earlier for the prudential morality. She is a hypocritical woman for whom an aura of respectability and social position are more important than chastity and virtue. "Making a figure in the world is what matters for Mr. B, and has now come to matter for Pamela also. Pamela joins her husband in denouncing Fanny because she is beneath them in social status. Joseph simply turns a deaf ear to their solicitations and sets out to marry Fanny, staying with Adams at present.

*Joseph Andrews* as a novel is nearing its end. What remains to be solved is the mystery of Joseph and Fanny's birth. It is a tribute to Fielding's genius as novelist that even at the fag end of the novel he incorporates details which deepen the mystery and account for a breath-taking suspense. The pedlar who had saved Parson Adams's son from drowning arrives at Adams's house, to inform him about his wife at her death having confessed how once moving with gypsies she had abducted a young female child (Fanny) from a family known as Andrews and who had another daughter named Pamela. In this way, Fanny is Joseph Andrews's sister. This leads to hell in the family of Adams. Joseph loses colour, Parson Adams is glad that an incest is averted.

All this makes Joseph eligible for Lady Booby, though she still has a conflict whether or not to "marry a footman... can I afterwards bear the eyes of my acquaintances."

All the tension in the mind of Joseph and Fanny is removed only when the next day Gaffer and Gammer Andrews arrive - Mr. Gaffer Andrews to testify that he had never lost a daughter to the gypsies and had only two children, Joseph and Pamela.

Joseph is placed by the identity of a strawberry birthmark as Mr. Wilson's son who pays the promised visit to Parson Adams on his way to the west. Thus

Jack hath his Jill.

And nothing goeth ill.

One of the finest comic novels of the eighteenth century comes to an end with the marriage of Joseph and Fanny. After Lady Booby's

designs on Joseph fail, we are told, she entices a young captain of dragoons who “soon obliterated the memory of Joseph.”

### SHORT NOTES

**Q.1. How does Parson Trulliver respond to Parson Adams’s request to lend the latter some money?**

Ans. When Parson Adams is short of seven shillings to pay for their stay in the inn, he goes with a hope to the Parson of that area, Mr. Trulliver, to borrow the money. Mr. Trulliver thinks that the man has come to him to make a deal of business of hogs. He entertains him well, though grudgingly. When he learns that Adams has come to borrow money, he not only refuses him money, rather he lectures him on his idea of charity also. Trulliver, thus, reveals his own hypocrisy.

**Q.2. How does Lady Booby react when Parson Adams publishes the banns of marriage between Joseph and Fanny?**

Ans. When Lady Booby on her return to her country estate learns that Parson Adams has read the banns of marriage between Joseph and Fanny, she is shocked and frustrated, as she still wants to obtain Joseph. She calls Adams to her house and threatens him of dismissal if he proceeds with their marriage. But Adams does not deter from his decision. Then with the advice of a lawyer, Lady Booby plans to involve Joseph in a trumped up case and influences Justice Frolick to achieve her aim. She also requests her sister-in-law, Pamela to persuade Joseph, her brother, not to marry Fanny because she belonged to the lower strata of the society. But her plans could not succeed.

**Q.3. How does the Squire tarnish the image of Fanny before Lady Booby?**

Ans. When Joseph and Fanny are released with the intervention of Squire Booby, who is Lady Booby’s nephew and now Joseph’s brother-in-law, Lady Booby wants to undo the plans of marriage between Fanny and Joseph. Squire Booby too objects to their marriage by pleading that Fanny is very inferior to Joseph in her social status, as Joseph is now the relative of Squire Booby, Joseph’s sister being his wife. The squire denounces Fanny since she is

beneath him in social position. The argument of Lord B. reflects the feudal system of England which permits alliances only among men of equal status.

**Q.4. What news is revealed by the Pedlar and what sort of confusion is created at the point?**

Ans. The Pedlar who had saved Parson Adams's son from drowning arrives at the house of Adams to inform him that his wife on her death bed had confessed that she had been told by one gypsy woman that the latter had kidnapped a young female child named Fanny from the family of Andrews who had another daughter named Pamela. This way it becomes clear that Fanny is the sister of Pamela and Joseph. This news creates a confusion and shock for Joseph and Fanny as both cannot marry now. Parson Adams is happy that God had saved them from committing the sin of incest. This episode has been used by Fielding as Deus ex Machina to complicate the plot of the novel. The trick seems to be contrived. But this trick tells us of the intrigues prevalent in the life of the people of the time.

**Q.5. What is revealed by Mrs. Gaffer Andrews to Gaffer Andrews and the other person?**

Ans. In order to confirm whether Fanny is the daughter of Gaffer Andrews, both Mrs. and Mr. Gaffer Andrews are called from the village and Mr. Andrews informs that he never had another daughter named Fanny. Only Joseph and Pamela were his two children. But immediately Mrs. Andrews embraces Fanny and calls her, her own daughter, whom she had given birth and had fed for one and half year. She informs that when her husband was away for a long time she was expecting a child and she gave birth to a daughter. But this healthy daughter was kidnapped one day from her cradle and in her place one weakling male baby was put in the cradle. Since then she had never told this to anybody, not even to her husband and had reared up Joseph as her own child. This fact reveals that Fanny was the daughter of the Andrews and Joseph was the son of somebody else.

### **FIELDING'S CHARACTERIZATION**

“Prose Shakespeare” of the eighteenth century, Fielding is the first and foremost creator of character. He moved into the contemporary society with his eyes and ears open; saw people as they were, heard them speak in their usual accents and literally transplanted them into his novels. Byron called him the “Prose Homer of Human Nature.” For Arthur Murphy, he is “the English Cervantes.” All this praise is amply merited.

The first thing that strikes the reader of Fielding's novels is the overcrowdedness of his canvas. His novels are over populated; there is such a prodigious variety of characters from the highest to the lowest, belonging to almost all strata of eighteenth century society. “Open the Book, and here is God's plenty” said Murphy. He is the first writer in English, excepting Chaucer and Shakespeare, whose works communicate the sense of the whole sweep of English society.

It was in *Joseph Andrews* as in other novels that Fielding enlarged the boundaries of fiction. Whereas in his plays, there were stock characters of the drawingroom comedy-the usual upper class aristocrats and a footman or two, there was here and there, a sprinkling of the bawdy and the rakes in his farces as in *Tom Thumb*. There was an attack on politicians as in *Pasquin* which necessitated the passage of the Licensing Act-none could have the panoramic study of his times in his plays as one finds in his novels.

In the Preface to *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding proclaimed his originality in “the introduction of persons of inferior rank” and this was a departure from the common practice prevalent in the eighteenth century of celebrating high ranking aristocratic sections of society. This explains the presentation in his novels of a large number of servants, postillions, coachmen, beggars, vagabonds, wayside bandits, ostlers, puppet showmen, gypsies, innkeepers and maid servants. These low placed characters are studied at length with utmost fidelity in all their behaviour, their fads and foibles, their manners and mannerisms. This made the novel in his hand, a direct imitation of life.

Fielding's characters are basically comic characters. That is why they

are studied in their outer behaviour without any wastage of words in portraying their innerscape, It is a life in spectacle that is the avowed intention of the writer of comedy to evoke and not the life in-experience which is the concern of a writer of tragedy. What Fielding keeps in the foreground is the comic purpose even when he describes the moral aberrations of his characters. In other words, he so describes the immoral escapades of Tom in *Tom Jones*, or of Betty, the maid servant, in *Joseph Andrews*, that it is the ridiculous or the comic aspect of it which is called forth rather than the repulsive one.

After Betty had been caught red-handed with Mr. Tow Wouse by Mrs. Tow Wouse and called a "bitch", Betty replied: "I am a woman as well as yourself and not a she-dog; and if I have been a little naughty, I am not the first I have done nothing that's unnatural." Betty, expelled from her job and trusted to the protection of the ostler, found him "rather a greater beast than her mistress" and Mr. Tow Wouse had "something to be performed on his side by way of gratitude for his wife's goodness in being reconciled to him."

All this shows Fielding's characters as natural and amazingly alive, presenting through their actions Fielding's large hearted view of morality. What he did not forgive was hypocrisy. "Vanity could be forgiven" he says, "but hypocrisy is akin to deceitfulness."

"Everything is copied from the book of nature, and scarce a character or action is produced which I have not taken from my own observations and experience," said Fielding.

Fielding's characters are not figments of a fanciful imagination. They are real men and women Fielding had actually met in life. Attempts have been made to identify them and all this despite Fielding's statement made in the preface to *Joseph Andrews* that the originals of his characters cannot be guessed at.

Parson Adams is none other than Rev. William Young, a deep scholar of Greek literature, the Curate of East Stour from 1731-40. He had assisted Fielding in a translation of the comedy of *plutus* from the Greek of Aristophanes. He was as absent minded as Parson Adams and had the same views on public school education as our Adams in *Joseph Andrews*.

Parson Trulliver is Rev. Mr. Oliver of Motcombe, Fielding's early tutor.

Peter Pounce is identified as the scrivener and the usurper Peter Walter of Stalbridge. He made considerable addition to his estates and according to Fielding was awfully greedy.

Betty, in matter of full bloodedness, is based perhaps on Genevieve of Marivaux.

It must, however, be said to the credit of Fielding that despite these resemblances his characters are startlingly original.

“I describe not men, but manners, not an individual but a species,” observed Fielding. In keeping with nature of comedy, the emphasis is not so much on individual experience as on the social, and for that purpose he has introduced typical characters in his novel *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*. His concern is not with the specific as with the general. Elsewhere as in his *Amelia*, his concern is with the individual and hence his approach also is different. The novel is a profound psychological study of a character placed in a certain milieu. But in *Jospeh Andrews*, Fielding’s concern is primarily with the *milieu*. The characters are not enveloped in events and remain immutable like the lawyer, about whom Fielding says:

“The lawyer is not only alive, but hath been so these four thousand years; and I hope G. will indulge his life as many yet to come. He hath not indeed confined himself to one profession, one religion, or one country; but when the first mean selfish creature appeared on the human stage, who made self the centre of the whole creation, he would give himself no pain, incur no danger, advance no money, to assist or preserve his fellow creatures, then was our lawyer born; and whilst such a person as I have described exists on earth, so long shall he remain upon it.”

This typical character is introduced in his novels not with a view to exposing “one pitiful wretch to the small and contemptible circle of his acquaintance.” His intention is rather “to hold glass to thousands in their closets, that they may contemplate their deformity, and endeavour to reduce it, and thus by suffering private mortification may avoid public shame. This places the boundary between, and distinguishes the satirist from the libeller; for the former privately corrects the fault for the benefit of the person, like a parent. The latter publicly exposes the person himself, as an example to others, like an executioner.”

(Preface to Book Three of *Joseph Andrews*)

This does not amount to saying that the personality of his characters, their identity, their individuality gets lost in the generality. Fielding knows how to individualise his character through the techniques of “bas relief.” With utmost economy, he brings the characters before our eyes. Parson Adams is rendered vivid through a handful of details, pipe, crabstick, snapping fingers and Asechylus or his Latinism. Almost each one of Fielding’s characters is placed by some fad or foible or mannerism of speech or dress or idiom. Mrs. Slipslop can be recognized by her malapropism, and Parson Trulliver by his “I ca-a-I’d Vurst.”

Fielding renders them all the more vivid through minute descriptions. At

places, he exaggerates, and with the fierce eye of a caricaturist, he can render hideous, the character he himself does not like, the bearded Mrs. Slipslop, for example-

“Was not at this time remarkably handsome, being very short and rather corpulent in body, and somewhat red, with the addition of pimples in the face. Her nose was likewise rather too large and her little eyes too little; nor did she resemble a cow so much in her breath as in two brown globes which she carried before her; one of her legs was also a little shorter than the other, which occasioned her to limp as she walked.”

Mrs. Tow-ouse’s short stature together with her loud and hoarse voice has already been described. Parson Trulliver’s caricature similarly has been given in order to individuate him:

“The rotundity of his belly was considerably increased by the shortness of his stature...”

This is how Fielding makes his typical characters individual as the need be. But his “design” as he says in the preface to *Joseph Andrews* “has not been to write a burlesque, a caricature which arises laughter by distorting reality.”

Fielding describes his characters most realistically. “Fielding’s realism” in the words of Digeon, “is always broad, expressing itself in passionate dialogues, rough words, simple and familiar gestures - a judge before listening to the witness, takes time to light his life- or in scenes of profound and irresistible comedy like that in which Adams.....is condemned upon the sight of his manuscript copy of Aeschylus, which an illiterate judge takes for a book written in cipher.”

In a remarkable passage, Lady Booby defends herself before Mrs. Slipslop against the charge of sensuality:

“I believe my conduct may defy malice itself to assert so cursed a slander my husband, the dear man who is gone (here she began to sob), was he alive again then (she produced tears), could not upbraid me with any one scene of tenderness or passion. No, slipslop all the time, I cohabited with him. He never obtained a kiss from me without my expressing reluctance in the granting of it.”

It is towards characters such as these that Fielding’s irony operates like a rapier. The impact owes its peculiar flavour to the restraint and simplicity which stand in sharp contrast to Richardson’s affected sentimentality.

Fielding’s satiric characters are expressive of his overall moral design. Leonara’s story in Book Two and Wilson’s in Book Three, considered

by some as unhappy digressions do leave a moral purpose. The characters involved in these tales are the stock characters of the eighteenth century; the wastrels and bohemians contrasted with basically good characters and their contrasted values show the utter futility of the former.

Leonara, who prefers the gaudy splendour and fake blandishments of the Paris returned Bellarmine, to the virtuous and devoted Horatio, is shown coming to grief for her preferences. Her aunt to whom she turns for advice stands in her matter-of-factness, as a contrast to the basically good Parson Adams who acts as a sane moral teacher to Joseph and Fanny:

“Engagements to a fig,” counsels the old Lady, “You should thank heaven on your knees that you have it yet in your power to break them. Will any woman hesitate a moment whether she shall ride in a coach or walk on foot, I assure you there is not anything worth our regard besides money.”

The two sets of characters in this sequence represent two different scales of values. Through the revelation of characters, Fielding exposes the follies and hypocrisy of the gay and ‘polite’ London society. Wilson’s tale similarly is made to illustrate Fielding’s moral purpose. There is strong evidence to believe that in the delineation of Wilson, Fielding was indebted to Hogarth’s drawings, ‘The Rake’s Progress’, executed in 1733. There is the contrast in it of the artificial and perverted values represented by the theatre, the coffee house, the brothel, and the casino in the town and the natural world of abiding moral values represented by the countryside.

Among Fielding’s satiric portraits, mention must be made of the magistrate before whom Parson Adams and Fanny are produced for trial. Fielding, who was himself a magistrate, had an intimate knowledge of legal matters in the England of his times. He was appalled to see colossal ignorance of law and legal procedure on the part of the rural magistrates. The magistrate mentioned here is more a fox hunter and an irresponsible drunkard than a custodian of laws. As soon as Adams and Fanny are produced before him, he concludes that they are criminals without knowing the elementary things in law

that the accused and the culprit are two distinct entities. The justice in a tipsy state begins himself and encourages his friend to crack indecent jokes on Fanny and denies hearing to Parson Adams. This sequence in the story presents the highest kind of comedy. Hidden behind it is the serious purpose of ameliorating the social life of England.

### **Parson Adams:**

Parson Adams's character is worth the whole book. "If he is not the real hero of the book", says Austin Dobson, "he is undoubtedly the most fascinating and the central character in the novel." A delightful mixture of benevolence and simplicity, of pedantry and credulity, with a remarkable ignorance of the ways of the world, Parson Adams is the grandest delineation of a pattern priest which the world has not yet seen. In the words of Lawrence:

"Goldsmith borrowed some of the characteristics of this ideal priest for his Dr. Primrose in *The Vicar of Wakefield*."

Parson Adams, as pointed out earlier, is modelled on Rev. William Young, a friend of Fielding and his name is befittingly mentioned in the title of the novel: *The Adventures of Joseph Andrews and his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams*.

"In Adams", Fielding says, he had "designed a character of perfect simplicity."

On this central point, Fielding makes an explicit statement. "Parson Adams", the novelist says: "was a man of good sense, good parts, and good nature but was at the same time as entirely ignorant of the ways of this world as an infant just entered into it would possibly be. As he had never any intention to deceive, so he never suspected such a design in others. He was generous, friendly, and brave to an excess, but simplicity was his characteristic; he did more than Mr. Colley Cibber, apprehend any such passion as malice and envy to exist in mankind."

The very presence of this kind of innocent person in a crooked world, and to show him striding along and dominating his world as a colossus, is itself a bold idea. He is credulous, simple hearted, frank,

voluble and basically ignorant of evil in the world of which he unconsciously discloses all secrets. These innate qualities of his character frequently land him and his friends into loss of convenience and troubles.

Parson Adams resembles Cervantes's Don Quixote in his height, his love of duels and his bookish knowledge. Both make mistakes in "good faith" and are so well dimensioned that they soon become lovable. Parson Adams is a "compact" character, who epitomizes within himself the oldest contradictions and the most diverting eccentricities. He has Aristotle's *Poetics* at his fingers' ends, but knows nothing of the daily Gazetteers.

But despite all these eccentricities, the most remarkable thing in his character is his "Native dignity which he maintains even when subject to worst humiliations like being splashed with hog, blood or thrown into cold water and "as he stands before us in the short-great-coat under which his rugged cassock is continually making its appearance with his old wig and battered hat, a clergyman whose social position is scarcely above that of footman and who supports a wife and six children upon twenty-three pounds a year, he is a fine figure than Pamela in her coach-and-six or Bellormine in his cinnamon velvet."

*Joseph Andrews*, as pointed out earlier, began as a parody of Richardson's *Pamela* but after couple of chapters when the scene of action began, the story takes altogether a new turn. Adams becomes the central figure in this novel. He rides into the Dragon Inn on his way to London, where he is going to have his sermons published. It is here that he, on recognising Joseph's clothes recovered from a thief, learns of the young boy's presence at this inn.

While drinking punch in the company of the clergyman, Barnabas and the surgeon, they discuss Adams's mission to London, regarding the publication of his sermons. The chance meeting with one of the London publishers reveals the contents of his sermons and simultaneously one of the finest aspects of Parson Adams's character. He is a practical Christian for whom clean, virtuous conduct means practical help of the poor, "... a virtuous pagan will earn greater favour in the eyes of God than the vicious professing Christian." So

radical are his views, as he tells the publisher, such stuff which the clergy would be certain to cry down.

A Quixotic figure, Adams is an embodiment of the Christian virtue of charity like the Knight of the Woeful Countenance is of Christian chivalry. Nine shillings, three pence and half a penny is the meagre amount in his pocket and he hands it over to Joseph whose need is greater at this time while he is recovering from serious wounds.

Similarly Parson Adams's encounter with a fellow priest, Parson Trulliver, affords another example of his basic Christianity. The latter with a lot of charity in his mouth but none in his heart stands sharply juxtaposed to our Parson Adams.

Among the various facets of his personality, reference must be made to his prodigious reading and brilliant explication of classical criticism and Homeric poetry. Aristotle's treatise on poetry and tragedy, *The Poetics*, forms the subject matter of discussion. Also, he makes meaningful comments on Cicero, Horace, Sophocles, Euripides and Seneca. The *Iliad* is discussed at great length in matter of its characterization, structure and manipulation of its action. Pedantic Parson Adams dazes the landlord by his eloquent account of the voyages, he has made although as he reveals later, much to the landlord's amusement, all these are bookish voyages. He is frequently made a butt of ridicule but his discomfiture is more a reflection on those who cause it. These discomfitures never affect his native dignity.

Never before Fielding was there such a harmonious reconciliation of contraries of conflicting elements in one person. He is basically a good character but eccentric, his eccentricity is heightened by certain mannerisms of behaviour like his habit of snapping his fingers or usual forgetfulness or the habit of brandishing his crabstick. He is surprisingly a courageous man before ruffians but mortally afraid of ghosts.

Adams is a bundle of contradictions. He preaches to Joseph the value of patience and Christian resignation

"Now believe me, Christian ought to set his heart on any person or thing in this world, but that, whenever it shall be required or taken

from him in any manner by divine Providence, he may be able, peaceably, quietly and contentedly, to resign it." But he preaches what he himself cannot practise, for example at the moment when the news of his son's drowning is conveyed to him, he is overwhelmed with grief, and when the information proves wrong "the Parson's joy was now as extravagant as his grief has been before."

All these little contradictions notwithstanding, Parson Adams is a lovable character because he is thoroughly human.

"The author of Waverley had not produced Adams's equal," said Coleridge, and Leigh Hunt was still more lavish in his praise of this character.

Although Parson Adams is seriously involved in mankind, out on the road, jostling with common people, he yet believes that "knowledge of men and women is only to be learnt from books." But these books strangely enough, have not given him any idea of deceit and evil in the world. Hence he suspects none.

Two other outstanding traits of his character that deserve mention are his lack of practical sense and a phenomenal degree of courage in a situation which poses serious challenges to his life.

An incident that takes place early in the book shows Adams completely devoid of common sense. "He came to a large water, which filling the whole road, he saw no method of passing unless by wading through, which he accordingly did upon the middle; but was no sooner got to the other side than he perceived if he had looked over the hedge, he would have found a foot path capable of conducting him without wetting his shoes."

As to his courage in the face of dangers and his physical strength, Parson Adams stands comparison with any brave man in history or legend. The best example of his phenomenal intrepidity is presented in Book Two, Chapter Nine. The fully armed canting gentleman impresses Adams with his views on courage, but whisks home on hearing the screams of a woman being molested. This man had courage in mouth but terrible fear in the heart. Adams, on the other hand, brandishes his crabstick and rushes to the woman's rescue who turns out to be none other than Fanny herself.

Parson Adams's character gains steadily in depth in the course of the novel and conforms fully to E.M. Forster's specification concerning a 'round' character.

**Women Characters:**

*Joseph Andrews* does not have women characters of much eminence. There is Fanny, of course, a sweet picture of innocence who resembles Sophia Western of *Tom Jones*, though not as daring as Sophia. In Book Two, Chapter Twelve, is given her description, which is well worth the envy of a portrait painter.

"Fanny was now in the nineteenth year of her age; she was tall and delicately shaped. The exact shape of her arms denoted the form of those limbs which she concealed; and they were little reddened by her labour, yet if her sleeve slipped above her elbow, or her handkerchief discovered any part of her neck, a whiteness appeared which the finest Italian painter would be unable to reach. Her hair, nature had been extremely lavish to her of it, which she had cut and on Sunday used to curl down her neck in the modern fashion." Not much can be written on Fanny because all the time she is overshadowed by Parson Adams and Joseph.

Lady Booby, Mrs. Slipslop, Mrs. Tow-ouse belong to a type of women for whom Fielding had a dislike and whom he has hit with the weapons of irony and good-hearted banter.

Lady Booby is like her counterparts in the Restoration comedy; Lady Wishfort in her sensuality minus Lady Wishfort's basic material traits. Her sinister designs on poor Joseph and after she fails to seduce him, her efforts to thwart his marriage make her hideous and one of the most unedifying characters among Fielding's women.

By far the most fascinating female character in the novel is Mrs. Slipslop who is the creation of pure humour. She is Lady Booby's "waiting gentlewoman." The daughter of a curate, Mrs. Slipslop "about forty-five years of age, who having made a little slip in her youth, has continued a good maid ever since." But this restraint breaks down the moment she comes across Joseph. She tries all conceivable means to win him over but fails.

She is the kind of prudish woman, marked by pseudo gentility whom Fielding disliked in real life. She is a mighty affectator of hard words. What Fielding emphasizes in her character is her sensuality, her servility, her highly affected vocabulary which paved the way for Sheridan's Mrs. Malaprop and Dickens's Mrs. Gamp.

In describing her physical frame, Fielding comes the nearest to the caricaturist, as illustrated elsewhere in this lesson. She is a typical eighteenth century woman of fashion, with her love for keeping up appearances, for fashionable coaches and her talkativeness.

The landlady Mrs. Tow-wouse is another ugly, heartless and lascivious shrew who resembles Mrs. Partridge in *Tom Jones*. She is uncharitable and tyrannical and remains unmoved by the sight of a suffering naked boy until she is sure of his capacity to pay the bill. Such is the kind of world Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* projects. One thing that goes without saying is that all these characters are human and give us the impression of "the mingled irony and insight, the wit and satire, the genial but perfectly remorseless revelation of human springs of action which distinguish scene after scene of the book."

**HENRY FIELDING : JOSEPH ANDREWS : A COMIC EPIC IN  
PROSE (FIELDING'S THEORY OF FICTION)**

"I must confess, I should have honoured and loved Homer more. He to The Journal of The *Voyage to Lisbon*, one of his late works. The extract is a pointer to Fielding's deep grounding in classical literature and the impact of famous classical works on his mind.

Thackeray, who indicted Fielding for his "absurd brag of two penny learning" in *Joseph Andrews*, was just not able to appreciate Fielding's prodigious learning of classical literature, particularly of the Homeric epics. "Homer and other epic poets," said Fielding, "found the limits of nature too straight for the immensity of their genius which they had not groomed without extending fact by fiction."

Fielding's option was for "true history." Almost all his works show his preoccupation with the living world around him, the world of pubs and road-side inns and the world of fake values.

Fielding seldom sought inspiration in classical or medieval story of legend for his plays. In *Tom Jones*, for example, he writes an effective satire on the excess of the heroic dramatists. It was in his prose writings that he brought out the social and political problems of his day.

Fielding called *Joseph Andrews* 'a comic epic in prose' in which everything is copied from the book of nature. His purpose in writing this book was "to hold the glass to thousands in their closet so that they may contemplate their deformity and endeavour to reduce it."

In eighteenth century, two literary generations tried in turn to keep up the classical order. Pope's generation succeeded in keeping the traditional forms intact. Fielding like other writers of the neoclassical

eighteenth century, chose to express himself in the classical forms of literature such as the poem, epistle or satire, the essay, the drama. But none of these forms could provide his genius to operate unhindered on an altogether new form of writing "The comic epic". Whereas the material of his novels lay around him, the inspiration to handle it came from distant antiquity, from *Lucia*, the *Aenied* and the *Odyssey*. Fielding discovered in the field of prose a new genre, designated it a new and imposed his own laws upon it. He called it "Prosai-Comic-Epic writing."

The title page of *Joseph Andrews* describes the novel as "written in imitation of the manner of Cervantes, author of *Don Quixote*." In the Preface to *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding declares his attempt at having written a new province of writing, hitherto unknown in the English language.

Fielding's Preface to *Joseph Andrews* is an indispensable piece of evidence for understanding what he means by the phrase "comic epic poem in prose" and how his novel conforms to this specification. "Comic epic poem in prose" for Fielding is the same thing as a comic romance. Comic romance is different from a comedy as an epic like the *Iliad* is different from a tragedy like the *Oedipus*. The action of the comic romance is "more extended and comprehensive, containing a much larger circle of incidents, and introducing a greater variety of characters. It differs from the serious romance in its fable and action in this, that as in the one these are grave and solemn, so in the other they are light and ridiculous." "The comic romance," says Fielding, "can admit persons of inferior rank and, therefore, of inferior manners, whereas the serious romance introduces only the highest before us. The comic romance and the comic epic differ from the serious epic in its sentiment and diction. The former preserves the ridiculous and the latter sublime. Burlesque, if at all, can be admitted only in the diction sometime."

If the comic romance is different from the comedy, it must be considered something different from the preposterous and voluminous romances with which the eighteenth century reading public was so familiar. Fielding refers to the scurrilous, long-winded French romance like *Madame Scudery's Grand Cyrus* written in ten volumes, a

popular reading stuff, narrating the stories of the high born parsonages in a rather pompous and serious tone. As opposed to such books, his comic epic in prose, claimed Fielding, was more earth-footed, concerned with characters of inferior rank and manner. The incidents concerning these characters were so carefully selected as to emphasize only the comic and the ridiculous.

Fielding found himself preoccupied with the portrayal of nature and truth so that in his *Joseph Andrews*, he made a dig at "those persons of surprising genius" who, as he sarcastically described in *Tom Jones* as romances "filled with monsters, the productions, not of nature, but of distempered brains."

Fielding created the anti-romantic novel which in his hands portrayed real life, real persons with a minute study of their actions and motives.

Referring to *Tom Jones*, Stendhal said that "it is to other novels what the *Iliad* is to epic poetry." The remark is equally applicable to *Joseph Andrews*.

Fielding applied to the new province of writing "the comic epic in prose," the rules of the epic as interpreted by the critics, particularly the French critics. He often quotes *Le Bossu's Traite' du Poeme Equidue*, a book which appeared in the translated form in the eighteenth century. Fielding resembles Bossu in his approach to his comic epic in prose.

Bossu says that an epic in prose will be different from an epic poem because "a poem is a discourse in verse." "The commonality", says Bossu, "are as much subjects as are great lords. They have as great need of Homer's lessons as have kings and are as capable of profiting by them." While talking about a clear beginning, a middle and an ending in accordance with the chain of causation, Bossu comes to the ending of a comic epic. "Sad endings", he says, "are proper for tragedy but these reasons will not serve for the epic, since it serves to purge the passions than to make men leave off evil habits and take on good ones". (Perhaps Bossu is referring to the moralistic intent of all mock epics).

"Homer, Virgil, and the rest have made no scruples in disregarding

history, in order to make their fables seem more real. Aristotle seems to confirm this doctrine when he teaches that a poet unlike an historian does not set down what Alcibiades was, what he did, or what he said in this or that encounter, but what with the most probability, he should have said or done.”

Chapter one of Book Three, read together with the Preface to *Joseph Andrews*, presents an explicit statement of Fielding’s art and ethics. He is out “to copy nature and present men and women as they really are.” This kind of presentation, says Fielding, conforms to the “truth” of the biography which is superior to the “truth” of history. Being not dependent on the accidental, the biographer is concerned with the essential truth unlimited by time and space. This is the truth of human nature which is eighteenth century like Mrs. Mary Manly of the *New Atlantis* fame. “These writers”, Fielding complains, “record persons who never were, or will be, and facts which never did, not possibly can happen, whose heroes are of their own creation and their brains, the chaos whence all the materials are selected.”

In keeping with his avowed intention to introduce human nature as he sees it, Fielding has sometimes gone too far. His own ethics at places in *Joseph Andrews* and particularly in *Tom Jones* have been criticised by more than one critic. It is argued that the sexual escapades of Tom, the levity in the behaviour of Betty or Lady Bobby should have no place in epics, serious or non-serious or seriocomic. Fielding has, however, a word of justification in the preface to *Joseph Andrews* for the unedifying pictures of vice that the novel contains: “First that it is very difficult to pursue a series of human actions and keep clear from them. Secondly, that the vices to be found here (in *Joseph Andrews*) are rather the accidental consequences of some human frailty or foible than cause habitually existing in the mind.” Fielding defends himself against the charge of having introduced bad characters in his comic epics by giving the same argument as Le Bossu:

“These reflections are not designed to exclude from poetry all that is condemned by morality. A poet should never set a bad example but there is a great difference between a bad example and the example

of bad action or of a wicked person.” If the intention of the epic is to enable people to leave evil habits and take on the good ones, then the evil has got to be shown.

“Burlesque, if at all, can be admitted in the diction sometime”, said Fielding. There are remarkable scenes where the style and the images approximate to the serious epic:

“Aurora now began to show her becoming cheeks over the hills whilst ten million of feathered songsters, in jocund chorus, repeated odes a thousand times sweeter than those of our laureate.” The pomposity of style is consciously burlesque in tone.

Elizabeth Jenkins has invited the reader’s attention to some of Fielding’s scenes which are truly Homeric. “The scene in Lady Booby’s house”, says Elizabeth Jenkins, ‘Where Beau Didapper steals to Mrs. Slipslop’s bed in mistake for Fanny’s and Parson Adams hearing a scream rushes in the dark to the bedside, where, misled by the feel of the Beau’s delicate skin and of Mrs. Slipslop’s bread, he starts punching the latter unmercifully is a scene built on what one might venture to call a Homeric scale.”

No epic can be imagined without a battle of some sort. Since Fielding is writing a comic epic in prose, the battle of fisticuffs between man and woman, often husband and wife, or between woman and woman, provides not only fun but also reminds one of Fielding’s conscious application of epic principles to his new province of writing.

Fielding narrates admirably the fight which takes place between Betty and Mrs. Tow-wouse after she had caught Betty in a compromising position with her husband, Mr. Tow-wouse. This is how the fight begins:

“Mrs. Tow-wouse, Mr. Tow-wouse, and Betty (were) all lifting up their voices together; but Mrs. Tow-wouse’s voice, like a bass voil in a concert was clearly and distinctly distinguished among the rest.”

“Huzzy, huzzy” says Mrs. Tow Wouse “did I not catch you, you saucy”. “Mrs. Tow-wouse then armed herself with the spit, but was prevented from executing her dreadful purpose by Parson Adams who confined her arms with the strength of a wrist which Hercules would not have been ashamed of.” Here is a conscious animal version of the ancient

epic weapons. Instead of usual weapons of war, here the weapon is the spit, like it is broomstick in *Tom Jones* or a bodkin instead of a spear or a pinchful of titillating dust known as snuff or bag full of sobs and sighs, a vial full of tears used in the mock battle of sexes in Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*.

Similarly the Homeric similes are parodied in paragraphs like the following:

"Now the rake Hesperus had called for his breeches, and having well rubbed his drowsy eyes, prepared to dress himself for all night: by whose example his brother rakes on earth, likewise leaves those beds in which they had slept away the day. Now Thetis, the good housewife, begins to put on the pot etc."

In matter of style, the serious epic moves on a higher plane and expresses a more profound vision. But in matter of context, it expresses the collective consciousness of a nation at a particular moment in its total history, its total ethos or the *Zeitgeist*. Fielding obeys the laws of the epic with faithful fidelity. The interminably long, voluminous novels of Fielding capture the total spirit of their times, present a sweeping panorama of life and are so deeply rooted in contemporaneity that practically the whole of England looks through Fielding's pages. "For instance", says Digeon, "I open at random the Journal in which Mrs. Calderwood describes a Journey made in 1756, two years after Fielding's death. Her description of England roads conforms word for word the one in *Tom Jones*." The same is the case with *Joseph Andrews*.

Earlier in 1749, a critic in *the London Magazine*, defining Fielding's conception of the novel, described it as "a novel or prose epic composition which like all such compositions consists of a principal history and a great many episodes or incidents, all contributing to the chief design."

The emphasis in Fielding's definition "comic epic in prose" is on the word 'comic', the spirit in which *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* are conceived. In the preface to *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding gives not only his conception of the comic romance but also his theory of humour. "Life every where furnishes the observer with the ridiculous" and "the only source of the true ridiculous is affectation and affectation

proceeds from one of two causes, vanity or hypocrisy.” Of these two passions, vanity is positive because it makes us project an image of ourselves which is different from the real so as to win praise for ourselves. Hypocrisy is a negative passion because it impels a man to conceal his vices behind a mask of virtue so as to escape social censure.

When affectation proceeds from hypocrisy, it is akin to deceit. The observer’s delight is stronger when he has the unmasking of the hypocrite than when he sees the vain man discovered.

Poverty, infirmity, or ugliness cannot be considered ridiculous. It is incongruity born out of affectation which makes us laugh. “For instance”, Fielding says, “If we enter a poor house and behold a wretched family shivering with cold and languishing with hunger, it would not incline us to laughter; but should we discover there a grate, instead of coats, adorned with flowers; empty plate or china dishes on the side board, or any other affectation of riches and finery, we might then indeed be excused for ridiculing.” Similarly, “When ugliness aims at the applause of beauty, or lameness endeavours to display agility, it is then that these unfortunate circumstances which at first moved our compassion, tend only to rise our mirth.”

Fielding succeeds in evoking the mood of exuberance in *Joseph Andrews*. No doubt, he passes “condemnatory judgement” on characters like Lady Booby, Parson Trulliver or Mrs. Slipslop. But condemnatory judgement is kept subordinate to “the exploration of comedy.” Only one instance should be enough. To watch Lady Booby unable to subdue passion for Joseph is amusing. Her open objection to the marriage of young persons and her orders to Parson Adams for not solemnising their marriage is simply comic. The comedy which characterizes Lady Booby becomes truly ironic when we are told that she in the end, “returned to London in a few days, where a young captain of dragoons, together with eternal parties at cards, soon obliterated the memory of Joseph.”

Fielding’s theory of the comic has stood the test of time and was widely imitated in the nineteenth century. Among those who consciously imitated Fielding was Dickens who confesses the extent

of his debt to Fielding. Thackeray wanted to “better Fielding and substituted the word “snobbery”, as the subject of his attack.” for Fielding’s vanity and affectation, Meredith used the word comic in its highest sense, that is “to express the intellectual contemplation of reality by a man who remains captain of his soul.” Comedy with them all is like it is with Fielding, the arrangement of incidents and events which at times may be moral and philosophical but mostly disinterested love of laughter and a frank delight in the incongruous situations.