Accredited with NAAC A Grade

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British Fiction

MAENCC104

CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION

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BRITISH FICTION

(MAENCC104)

REVIEW COMMITTEE

Prof. Dr. Manjula Jain
Dean (Academics)
Teerthanker Mahaveer University (TMU)

Prof. Dr. Vipin Jain
Director, CDOE
Teerthanker Mahaveer University (TMU)

Prof. Amit Kansal
Associate Dean (Academics)
Teerthanker Mahaveer University (TMU)

Prof. Dr. Manoj Rana
Jt - Director, CDOE
Teerthanker Mahaveer University (TMU)

PROGRAMME COORDINATOR

Dr. Sandeep Verma
Associate Professor
Department of Humanities
Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE)
Teerthanker Mahaveer University (TMU)

BLOCK PREPARATION

Dr. Anuradha Pawar
Department of Humanities
Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE)
Teerthanker Mahaveer University (TMU)

Secretarial Assistance and Composed By:
Mr. Namit Bhatnagar

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Unit 01: British Fiction

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1.1 What is British Fiction?

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1.3 Fiction Writing

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- examine a historical-cum-critical perspective on British Fiction
- analyse the significance of British fiction in totality
- recognize the essential identity markers of British fiction

Introduction

British fiction, a term that, perhaps, raises more questions than answers. What is "new" when it comes to considering the novel, a genre that by virtue of its name is always new, innovative, a repository of novelty? "British" is even more problematic, especially given several of the writers discussed in the issue who are new and British in an increasingly cosmopolitan, multiracial, and multilinguistic society. In A Shrinking Island, Jed Esty's study of British late modernism, the argument is made that the literature of the 1930s evidences signs of a diminishing, postimperial British national culture whose increasing insularity offered, counterintuitively, opportunities for channeling "the potential energy of a contracting British civilization into a resurgent discourse of national particularism" (54). One might counter that British literature written in the wake of the Thatcher era, after the "last battle of the British empire" represented by the Falklands Conflict (April 2, 1982-June 14, 1982), and in the midst of the digital age and various "isms"—multiculturalism, globalism, postmodernism, terrorism, postnationalism—is expanding rather than contracting in ways that, among other things, suggests that "Britain" as a conceptual framework for cultural production is increasingly inadequate. If particularism, arguably, has been replaced by the rhizomatic multiplicity observable everywhere in contemporary literature, British or otherwise, then the frameworks for understanding what is going on in new British fiction must be appropriately expansive, post-insular.

English literature is not so much insular as detached from the continental European tradition across the Channel. It is strong in all the conventional categories of the bookseller's list: in Shakespeare it has a dramatist of world renown; in poetry, a genre notoriously resistant to adequate translation and therefore difficult to compare with the poetry of other literatures, it is so peculiarly rich as to merit inclusion in the front rank; English literature's humour has been found as hard to convey to foreigners as poetry, if not more so—a fact at any rate permitting bestowal of the label "idiosyncratic"; English literature's remarkable body of travel writings constitutes another counterthrust to the charge of insularity; in autobiography, biography, and historical writing, English literature compares with the best of any culture; and children's literature, fantasy, essays, and journals, which tend to be considered minor genres, are all fields of exceptional achievement as regards English literature. Even in philosophical writings, popularly thought of as hard to combine

with literary value, thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, David Hume, John Stuart Mill, and Bertrand Russell stand comparison for lucidity and grace with the best of the French philosophers and the masters of Classical antiquity.

There are three aspects of the art of fiction under which we may usefully consider the contributions of novelists. One aspect is the matter of the novel, its material: what it is written about. Another aspect is the manner of the novel: its art, its technique, how it is written. Then there is a third aspect, less easy to explain but very important in all modern novels. The two writers who overtop all others in British fiction today are Mrs. Virginia Woolf and Mr. Aldous Huxley. They are diverse in many ways. Mrs. Woolf began to write in 1915; Mr. Huxley belongs to the war generation which awoke in the 1920's from its dreams of a world fit for heroes to find itself, as he says, in the dustbin at the bot- tom of the area steps. Mrs. Woolf's chief interest is in the technique of the novel; Mr. Huxley's, in faith. think, in its faith. But both have made original contributions to the English novel; both have definitely enriched the quality and extended the scope of English fiction by adding to it new elements, which are now available for the use of other writers.

Side by side with Miss Austen's delicate mosaics of English genteel country life in the early century was the "big bowwow" style of Sir Walter Scott, as the Wizard of the North, humorously and exaggeratedly described his own work. The popularity of the Waverley Novels was one of the phenomena in literary history, and remains so. But although in the rich color of mere romance, in the portrayal of the chivalrous Middle Ages and the Crusades, in the exactness or nicety of historic knowledge and setting, Scott may have been or may be over taken, as, for example, in certain points of Mr. Maurice Hewlett's "Richard Yea-and-Nay" ; yet in the knowledge of Scot land, Scotch scenery, Scotch manners, Scotch traditions, Scotch human nature, and all that goes to make up national life and character, that is Scott's realm where he is crowned king not to be usurped by any school or novelist to come.

The lively humanitarian spirit and moral reforms of the nineteenth century found their first strong impulse in the novel in Charles Dickens's succession of stories for a purpose, often saved from becoming tracts or being sensational only by the author's inimitable humor and unrivaled knowledge of fundamental human nature in certain phases of life. These two things are Dickens's own, and Dickens lives for us because we have to go to him if we hope to get just his particular relation to these things. The great man of letters in the nineteenth century British novel, Thackeray, gave this novel of manners a deeper significance and a loftier artistic aim. Somewhat corresponding to Balzac's "Human Comedy" for Paris and for French manners, the English Thackeray portrayed the Vanity Fair of London life; and the characters we have met in his pages, Becky Sharp, Rawdon Crawley, Lord Steyne, Jos. Sedley, Pen and Laura, Capt. Costigan, Col. Newcome, and Clive, we feel have lived.

In George Eliot's work the woman's soul brooded over the illusion and disillusion of life which found relentless expression in the characterization of Dorothea Brooke and Dr. Lydgate in "Middlemarch," and the psychological novel of character and analysis of motive was at length born for the English-speaking world. Mr. George Meredith and Mr. Thomas Hardywho at first went over to the local schoolthough independent and more influenced by continental examples, have worked in similar paths.

Certainly the two most marked influences upon the younger group of writers seem to be Mr. Stevenson and Mr. Kipling, with their stories of South Sea adventure and Indian soldier life. Both prepared, in a measure unconsciously, America for her Eastern and Asiatic experiences and England for her South African difficulties. In their stories, both Mr. Stevenson and Mr. Kipling represent vigor and action as opposed to the other significant contemporary methodthe calm introspection of Mrs. Humphry Ward and the subtle refinement of Mr. Henry James.

In the 20the century, the name that comes most readily to mind in a consideration of the state and the novel is George Orwell. His two most famous political fables, Animal Farm: A Fairy Story (1945) and Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949), have proved hugely significant in the post-war world, influencing many subsequent literary dystopias, and also supplementing our use of language. Terms like ‘Big Brother’, ‘doublethink’ and ‘unperson’ from Nineteen Eighty-Four have become part of the contemporary political lexicon. It is also possible to see the cautionary note of these novels as establishing a liberal world-view, based on a deep scepticism of political extremes that helps fashion ‘a new lineage of liberal and socially attentive writing’ that is dominant in British fiction in the 1950s and beyond.

The most significant writing of the period, traditionalist or modern, was inspired by neither hope nor apprehension but by bleaker feelings that the new century would witness the collapse of a whole civilization. No one captured the sense of an imperial civilization in decline more fully or

subtly than the expatriate American novelist Henry James. In *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), he had briefly anatomized the fatal loss of energy of the English ruling class and, in *The Princess Casamassima* (1886), had described more directly the various instabilities that threatened its paternalistic rule. Another expatriate novelist, Joseph Conrad (pseudonym of Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, born in the Ukraine of Polish parents), shared James's sense of crisis but attributed it less to the decline of a specific civilization than to human failings. In *Almayer's Folly* (1895) and *Lord Jim* (1900), he had seemed to sympathize with this predicament; but in *Heart of Darkness* (1902), *Nostromo* (1904), *The Secret Agent* (1907), and *Under Western Eyes* (1911), he detailed such imposition, and the psychological pathologies he increasingly associated with it, without sympathy.

1.1 What is British Fiction?

The history of English literature is itself like a well-written novel or drama. Events build on one another, as each new wave of writers impacts both the overall body of work and the subsequent efforts of other writers. There are unexpected twists and turns, as the styles and subject matter of English literature have sometimes rebelled against existing conventions or simply moved in unprecedented directions. Finally, as with any good story, the pace of action in English literature has seemed to accelerate over time, with the most recent two centuries representing an era of prolific productivity and creativity. The modern era of English literature can be traced to the emergence of the novel as an all-conquering force in the literary marketplace during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837–1901). There is an image of Victorian times as dignified to the point of repression, but the mid-to-late 19th century actually represented a tumultuous era in British history. Great Britain's rise to the stature of leading world power was juxtaposed with deepening urban poverty at home. During Victoria's reign, an economic crisis in the 1840s, democratic reforms in the 1860s and 1880s, and growing demands for women's suffrage were all elements of a period marked by rapid, and sometimes wrenching, changes.

The emergence of Charles Dickens onto this scene roughly coincided with the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign. For the next four decades, he was to capture the public's imagination with a wide range of works, including his first published novel, the comic Pickwick Papers; works with serious themes such as David Copperfield, Bleak House, and Hard Times; and a masterpiece from late in his career, Great Expectations.

A prime contributor to late Victorian fiction was Mary Ann Evans, who published under the name George Eliot. From early works such as The Mill on the Floss to her later masterpiece Middlemarch, Eliot brings to bear some of the observational wit of Jane Austen. Rather than dealing with the relatively simple dilemmas of society and romance, however, Eliot uses her impeccably crafted fiction to analyze the deep internal ethical and existential dilemmas of her characters. With this complex subject matter being juxtaposed against highly realistic depictions of provincial settings, the effect is especially striking. Eliot stands out, but she was far from alone in producing distinguished work in the latter half of the 1800s. Part of the richness of this period is that it embraced so many different styles; realism battled with a revival of Gothic and Romantic themes, not to mention with early examples of science fiction. Writers as diverse as George Meredith, Robert Louis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde, and H.G. Wells thrived during these years.

One of the greatest lights of the late 19th century was Thomas Hardy. His books dealt with tragic themes that were highly personal, but on a larger scale, his rural settings embodied a simplicity and tranquility that was being lost to the modern world. Whatever ambivalence Hardy may have felt toward the passage of time, with novels such as The Mayor of Casterbridge, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, and Jude the Obscure, he helped bring the century, and the Victorian era, to a close with English prose fiction in top form.

It is natural for the turning of any century to bring feelings of a new beginning and a break from the past, but when the 19th century gave way to the 20th, change on the calendar was accompanied by genuinely radical changes in society and politics, as well as science and technology. This conflict was natural material for some novelists. Wells, along with Joseph Conrad and E.M. Forster, examined the toll taken by progress and commerce on cultures and individual lives.

By the beginning of the 20th century, some poets and novelists were eager to rebel against the traditions of the past. These writers came to be known as the Modernists. They used free verse, unconventional language, and experimental forms not simply to liberate forms of expression from traditional boundaries, but to emphasize individual perception rather than a uniform, linear account of events. Their sentiment was that traditional literature had become tiresome, and that

more insightful modes of expression were needed. In his novel Ulysses, Joyce used stream of consciousness to relate the inner observations and fantasies of various characters. In the process, he suggested that there were certain universal sentiments buried beneath the restrictions and conventions of society. He echoed this theme later in the even more experimental Finnegans Wake. Another noteworthy Modernist was Virginia Woolf. Writing primarily in the period between World Wars I and II, Woolf was part of a community of writers and artists known as the Bloomsbury group.

Side by side with Miss Austen's delicate mosaics of English genteel country life in the early century was the "big bowwow" style of Sir Walter Scott, as the Wizard of the North, humorously and exaggeratedly described his own work. The popularity of the Waverley Novels was one of the phenomena in literary history, and remains so. But although in the rich color of mere romance, in the portrayal of the chivalrous Middle Ages and the Crusades, in the exactness or nicety of historic knowledge and setting, Scott may have been or may be over taken, as, for example, in certain points of Mr. Maurice Hewlett's "Richard Yea-and-Nay" ; yet in the knowledge of Scot land, Scotch scenery, Scotch manners, Scotch traditions, Scotch human nature, and all that goes to make up national life and character, that is Scott's realm where he is crowned king not to be usurped by any school or novelist to come.

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1.2 Introduction to the Different Genres of English Literature

Fictional novel

A novel is a long story told in prose. Fiction is a type of literature that is 'made-up', not real, written using the imagination. There are lots of different types of fictional novel, spanning a range of styles and themes, including crime, history, horror, romance and more.

Fictional novels usually describe fictional characters and events.

There is no particular writing style – authors can be as imaginative as they want when writing a novel; they can experiment and even make up words and break traditional grammar rules.

Most novels are divided into shorter *chapters* that are either numbered or titled.

Non-fiction

If fiction is fake, then non-fiction is the opposite – it comes from real life. Works of non-fiction are all based on real world experiences. These include:

- Newspapers
- Journals
- Diaries
- Academic textbooks

Most of the time the purpose of non-fiction is to pass on information and educate the reader about certain facts, ideas, or issues.

While fictional works can use a lot of figurative and creative language, non-fiction tends to be more straightforward. Non-fiction pieces are also written in prose and can be divided into chapters too.

Biography/autobiography

Biographical books tell the story of a real person's life. The word *biography* comes from the Greek word *bios* meaning *life*.

A **biography** is a book written by an author about another person

An **autobiography** is written by the author about him or herself

Lots of notable people and celebrities have written books about their own lives or have had biographies written about them.

However, some 'everyday' people have written important autobiographical works too. These books give us an insight into what life was like for everyday people during a particular point in time – for example: *The Diary of Anne Frank*. You can find a list of other notable autobiographies, from as early as 175 AD to the present day.

Drama

A drama is a work of fiction designed to be performed in some way. Dramatic works include plays for the theatre, radio, television and film. Shakespeare's plays are some of the most well known English language dramas in the world.

Drama also refers to a story or play that is more serious than a comedy.

Because dramas usually include a cast of characters who talk and interact with each other, this literary genre uses a lot of direct speech.

Pick up a play and you'll instantly see that it's very different from a novel. Dramas involve the use of:

- Acts – the name given to each 'chapter' of the drama
- A lot of direct speech (dialogue spoken by each character in inverted commas "like this")
- Stage directions for the actors – this can include instructions on how to pronounce the dialogue, such as *spoken quietly* or *shouted loudly*. It can also let the actor know where to stand on the stage, or actions to carry out

Poetry

Poetry is a type of literature that uses the aesthetic qualities and the *sound* of words to evoke meaning and emotions. Poets use imaginative language to express feelings and ideas. Poetry is more expressive and less 'plain' than ordinary English prose. It commonly includes the use of:

- Similes – describes something by comparing it to something else using *like* or *as*, for example: the snake moved *like* a ripple on a pond. Or, it was *as* light *as* a feather.
- Metaphors – a word or a phrase used to describe something as if it were something else, for example: a **wave** of terror washed over him. The terror isn't actually a wave, but a wave is a good way of describing the feeling of terror.
- Alliteration – this is when words start with the same sound, for example: the **s**lippery **s**nake came **s**liding
- Rhyme – this is where words with the same sounds are used, for example: hickory, dickory **dock**, the mouse ran up the **clock**. Many poems rhyme, but not all do.

1.3 Fiction Writing

The critics of the 1830s felt that there had been a break in the English literary tradition, which they identified with the death of Byron in 1824. The deaths of Austen in 1817 and Scott in 1832 should perhaps have been seen as even more significant, for the new literary era has, with justification, been seen as the age of the novel. More than 60,000 works of prose fiction were published in Victorian Britain by as many as 7,000 novelists. The three-volume format (or "three-decker") was the standard mode of first publication; it was a form created for sale to and circulation by lending libraries. It was challenged in the 1830s by the advent of serialization in magazines and by the publication of novels in 32-page monthly parts. But only in the 1890s did the three-decker finally yield to the modern single-volume format.

10 Points to Remember in Fiction Writing

1 Never open a book with weather. If it's only to create atmosphere, and not a character's reaction to the weather, you don't want to go on too long. The reader is apt to leaf ahead looking for people. There are exceptions. If you happen to be Barry Lopez, who has more ways than an Eskimo to describe ice and snow in his book *Arctic Dreams*, you can do all the weather reporting you want.

2 Avoid prologues: they can be annoying, especially a prologue following an introduction that comes after a foreword. But these are ordinarily found in non-fiction. A prologue in a novel is backstory, and you can drop it in anywhere you want. There is a prologue in John Steinbeck's *Sweet Thursday*, but it's OK because a character in the book makes the point of what my rules are all about. He says: "I like a lot of talk in a book and I don't like to have nobody tell me what the guy that's talking looks like. I want to figure out what he looks like from the way he talks."

3 Never use a verb other than "said" to carry dialogue. The line of dialogue belongs to the character; the verb is the writer sticking his nose in. But "said" is far less intrusive than "grumbled", "gasped", "cautioned", "lied". I once noticed Mary McCarthy ending a line of dialogue with "she asseverated" and had to stop reading and go to the dictionary.

4 Never use an adverb to modify the verb "said" ... he admonished gravely. To use an adverb this way (or almost any way) is a mortal sin. The writer is now exposing himself in earnest, using a word that distracts and can interrupt the rhythm of the exchange. I have a character in one of my books tell how she used to write historical romances "full of rape and adverbs".

5 Keep your exclamation points under control. You are allowed no more than two or three per 100,000 words of prose. If you have the knack of playing with exclaimers the way Tom Wolfe does, you can throw them in by the handful.

6 Never use the words "suddenly" or "all hell broke loose". This rule doesn't require an explanation. I have noticed that writers who use "suddenly" tend to exercise less control in the application of exclamation points.

7 Use regional dialect, patois, sparingly. Once you start spelling words in dialogue phonetically and loading the page with apostrophes, you won't be able to stop. Notice the way Annie Proulx captures the flavour of Wyoming voices in her book of short stories *Close Range*.

8 Avoid detailed descriptions of characters, which Steinbeck covered. In Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants", what do the "American and the girl with him" look like? "She had taken off her hat and put it on the table." That's the only reference to a physical description in the story.

9 Don't go into great detail describing places and things, unless you're Margaret Atwood and can paint scenes with language. You don't want descriptions that bring the action, the flow of the story, to a standstill.

10 Try to leave out the part that readers tend to skip. Think of what you skip reading a novel: thick paragraphs of prose you can see have too many words in them.

Summary

- Take a pencil to write with on aeroplanes. Pens leak. But if the pencil breaks, you can't sharpen it on the plane, because you can't take knives with you. Therefore: take two pencils.
- If both pencils break, you can do a rough sharpening job with a nail file of the metal or glass type.
- Take something to write on. Paper is good. In a pinch, pieces of wood or your arm will do.
- If you're using a computer, always safeguard new text with a memory stick.
- Do back exercises. Pain is distracting.
- Hold the reader's attention. (This is likely to work better if you can hold your own.) But you don't know who the reader is, so it's like shooting fish with a slingshot in the dark. What fascinates A will bore the pants off B.
- You most likely need a thesaurus, a rudimentary grammar book, and a grip on reality. This latter means: there's no free lunch. Writing is work. It's also gambling. You don't get a pension plan. Other people can help you a bit, but essentially you're on your own. Nobody is making you do this: you chose it, so don't whine.
- You can never read your own book with the innocent anticipation that comes with that first delicious page of a new book, because you wrote the thing. You've been backstage. You've seen how the rabbits were smuggled into the hat. Therefore ask a reading friend or two to look at it before you give it to anyone in the publishing business. This friend should not be someone with whom you have a romantic relationship, unless you want to break up.
- Don't sit down in the middle of the woods. If you're lost in the plot or blocked, retrace your steps to where you went wrong. Then take the other road. And/or change the person. Change the tense. Change the opening page.
- Prayer might work. Or reading something else. Or a constant visualisation of the holy grail that is the finished, published version of your resplendent book.

Keywords

British Fiction, Gender Injustice, Class Hierarchy, Urban Migration, Sexuality

Self Assessment

1. Which of the followingdoes not form a part of the 'character' element in creative writing?

A. Animals

B. Creatures
C. People
D. The Thread of a Story

2. Which of the following does not form a part of the 'settings' element in creative writing?
A. A place or a building.
B. A city or a village.
C. An unfolding story.
D. A planet or a universe.

3. Which of the following does not form a part of the 'language' element in creative writing?
A. English.
B. Robot.
C. Spanish.
D. Hindi.

4. Which of the following does not form a part of the 'plot' element in creative writing?
A. Primary thread.
B. Secondary thread.
C. Actions of characters.
D. Russian.

5. Which of the following does not form a part of the 'structure' element in creative writing?
A. Hero.
B. Beginning, Middle, Ending.
C. Verses and stanzas.
D. Acts.

6. Which of the following does not form a part of the 'action' element in creative writing?
A. A plane crashing.
B. A fight on a road.
C. The primary thread .
D. An emotional outburst.

7. Which of the following does not form a part of the 'issues' element in creative writing?
A. Problems faced by characters.
B. The Prime Minister of India.
C. Solutions created by characters.
D. An altercation between two persons.

8. Which of the following does not form a part of the 'dialogue' element in creative writing?
A. Main character.
B. Supporting character.
C. Actors.
D. Place.

9. Which of the following does not form a part of the 'narration' element in creative writing?

A. First plot.

B. First person.

C. Second person.

D. Third person.

10. Which of the following does not form a part of the 'language' element in creative writing?

A. English.

B. Robot.

C. Spanish.

D. Hindi.

11. Which of the following does not form a part of the 'plot' element in creative writing?

A. Primary thread.

B. Secondary thread.

C. Actions of characters.

D. Russian.

12. Which of the following does not form a part of the 'structure' element in creative writing?

A. Hero.

B. Beginning, Middle, Ending.

C. Verses and stanzas.

D. Acts.

13. Rupert Brooke wrote his poetry during which conflict?

A. Boer War

B. Second World War

C. Korean War

D. First World War

14. Father of Utilitarianism

A. james mill

B. jermybentham

C. newman

D. macaulay

15. Which novel by Charles Dickens is generally regarded as the first Victorian novel

A. hard times

B. the pickwick papers

C. little dorrit

D. bleak house

Answer for Self Assessment

1. D 2. C 3. B 4. D 5. A

6.	C	7.	B	8.	D	9.	A	10.	A
11.	C	12.	B	13.	D	14.	B	15.	B

Review Questions

1. What is Fiction Writing?
2. What is the importance and need of Fiction?
3. What is a Novel?
4. What are major complexities in Creative Writing?
5. How one can overcome writing difficulties?
6. What is a balanced Writing?
7. What do you understand by prose writing?
8. What is the first reaction of students towards any writing task?
9. How do readers react towards any writing task?
10. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
11. Throw light on the common ways of writing?
12. What is Fiction?
13. What are major complexities in Poetry Writing?
14. How one can overcome writing difficulties?
15. What do you understand by prose writing?
16. What is the first reaction of students towards any writing task?
17. How do readers react towards any writing task?
18. What are major complexities in Creative Writing?
19. How one can overcome writing difficulties

Further Readings

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Unit 02: British Fiction

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2.2 Early Writers
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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- examine a historical-cum-critical perspective on British Fiction
- analyse the significance of British fiction in totality
- recognize the essential identity markers of British fiction

Introduction

Readers of fiction tend to fall into two categories: those whose opinions upon the novel are a function of their predispositions and for whom pleasure plays a large part in evaluative judgment – aka the general reader – and those for whom their choice of reading and their response to the novel are compromised by other commitments – the latter tend to exist within the education system.

In 1971 David Lodge invented the now famous image of the novelist at the crossroads. The main road to this junction had been taken by the 'realistic novel', beginning in the eighteenth century and 'coming down through the Victorians and the Edwardians'. At that point the modernists – notably James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson – had begun to chart significant byways. In 1971, at least in Lodge's view, realism was still the principal route chosen by the majority of novelists. There had been exceptions – writers who, after Joyce et al., had kept the torch of modernist experiment alight – but more frequently contemporary novelists would simply 'hesitate at the crossroads' and then 'build their hesitation into the novel itself ' (The Novelist at the Crossroads, Routledge, 1971, p. 22).

To decode Lodge's metaphor: the radicalism of modernism had by 1971 become an accoutrement, a decorative feature of the mainstream, realist novel. Twenty years later Lodge reframed the image as a question, 'The Novelist Today: Still at the Crossroads?' (in New Writing, ed. M. Bradbury and J. Cooke, British Council, 1992), and conceded that the situation of the novelist in 1992 bore less resemblance to a figure standing at a junction than a person in an 'aesthetic supermarket' facing an unprecedented abundance of styles, techniques and scenarios; the novelist/customer could now select and combine these in any way they wished. What had once been the stark contrast – often antagonistic conflict – between realism and modernism had been sidelined; hybridity now occupied the center ground.

We need to look briefly at the writers and trends which predated the 1970s and any such investigation must focus upon the opposition that bestraddle all of twentieth-century literary

culture: modernism (also known as radicalism, the avant-garde, experiment, self-preferentiality et al.) versus realism (aka traditional, naturalistic, conventional or orthodox writing).arguably central to the essence of scholarship which you exercise every day in other academic tasks like teaching, supervision and guiding students.

2.1 What is British Fiction?

In Adam Bede George Eliot digresses briefly on the nature of her task as a novelist and offers what could stand as the manifesto for classic realism, the mode of writing that evolved during the eighteenth century and dominated fiction until the beginning of the twentieth. She concedes that she could 'refashion life and character entirely after my own liking' but this would be an 'arbitrary picture'. Her duty, her task, is to 'give a faithful account of men and things as they have mirrored themselves in my mind'. She will, she adds, minimalize any distortions in this mirror image by striving 'to tell you as precisely as I can what that reflection is, as if I were in the witness box narrating my experience on oath'.

This seems to be a watertight ordinance for what the novel is supposed to be and do, but it raises questions, questions which would inspire and inform the writing of the modernists. James Joyce's Ulysses (1922) is cited by most as the quintessential modernist novel. The story, such as it is, involves the relatively mundane activities and experiences of Stephen Daedalus, Molly and Leopold Bloom and a cast of secondary characters of their acquaintance during one day (6 June, 1904) in Dublin. The text shifts unpredictably between the chaotic interior monologues of each principal character, more objective conventional narrative methods, journalistic reportage, operatic collage, theatre-style dialogue and in one famous passage an account of stultifyingly ordinary events via a sequence of styles borrowed from virtually every period of the history of English prose from the Middle Ages to the present day.

It is routine but misleading to treat Ulysses – along with related but by no means identical pieces by Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson – simply as radical deviations from realism. Certainly in manner and technique they bemused readers who had become accustomed to the trustworthy, dependable presence of the nineteenth-century narrator, but it is a mistake to perceive modernism as founded upon an anti-realist aesthetic. Its practitioners were offering an alternative form of realism, something which exposed the naturalistic techniques of the nineteenth century as hidebound and self-limiting, capable only of offering a socially and culturally acceptable 'mirror image'.

Joyce and Woolf, albeit in different ways, treated the world not simply as something composed predominantly of prelinguistic states and objects to be articulated and represented by language – the premise of the classic realists – but rather as a condition and an experience that are, at least in part, dependent upon and modified by language. Moreover, the modernists challenged what had become the pre-eminent – some would argue the defining – characteristic of fiction since the eighteenth century: the demand that the novel, irrespective of its accuracy as a 'mirror', should tell a story. A narrative in which a succession of events and their effects upon characters operates as the structural core of the book is the mainstay of traditional fiction.

Modernist writing, however, inferred that storytelling, involving deference to an ever-present question of 'what-happens-next?', involves a reshaping of life and experience according to an arbitrary system of fabulation. In the novels of Joyce, Woolf and Richardson, very little tends to happen; instead the focus shifts toward the process of representation and to conditions and states of mind. Whether this or the conventional reliance upon a cause-and-effect narrative backbone enables fiction to best fulfill its role as combination of art and a means of recording the world is the question that has divided advocates and practitioners of modernism and realism for almost a century. Few would deny that the attraction of having our disbelief suspended, of being drawn into the mindset of a character or a group of characters and following them through a sequence of compelling episodes has maintained traditional fiction writing as far more popular than its experimental counterpart.

This, however, raises the question of whether the pre-eminence of a story indulges a populist taste for fantasy, and that other means of writing should be employed to bring the book closer to the random un-predictabilities of life. By inference this question informs the work of novelists who sustained the modernist project beyond its heyday of the 1920s and 1930s. Samuel Beckett's 1950s fiction, including Watt (1953), Molloy (1956), Malone Dies (1958) and The Un-nameable (1960) (all dates refer to Beckett's own English translations from French) are extensions of the pioneering work

of his friend and associate James Joyce. None involves a story or even a recognizable context beyond the imprisoned, self-referring mindset of a speaking presence. If they can be said to have a subject it is language, specifically the undermining of the assumption that reality can exist independently of the strangeness of language. Similarly, in Malcolm Lowry's Under the Volcano (1947) Geoffrey Firman, alcoholic depressive British Consul to Somewhere, is less a character than a witness to the novel's unbounded concern with the cyclic and unfathomable nature of truth and its quixotic confederate, writing

2.2 Early Writers

Jane Austen

In 1811, Sense and Sensibility was published anonymously 'By a Lady'. It was the first book written by Jane Austen, the first major woman novelist in the English language. Best known for describing the romantic lives of the middle class, Jane Austen is author of other novels, such as Pride and Prejudice, Emma, and Persuasion, that are also considered some of the milestones in English literature. What makes her works outstanding is the wit and the cynicism she uses to portray – in evident contrast to the novels of her time – ordinary people and ordinary homely settings. Being one of the first authors to promote the idea that women should marry for love, and not for financial security, Jane Austen presents timeless stories that are still relevant in our century.

Charles Dickens

Through a poetic writing style matched with a strong comic touch, Charles Dickens portrays, with great awareness, the troubles and the sense of social injustice of the Victorian working class people. With the intent of revealing the disreputable side of the era, his works focus on the hypocrisy, the discrimination and the poverty of the British class system, diminishing ideas of civilisation and progress. Living in London, Dickens absorbed all the aspects of the capital that became the setting for many of his novels: streets, corners, inns…all aspects of the city are drawn in his books in a fascinating way that makes it a character in itself. To read novels such as Oliver Twist, David Copperfield, Great Expectations, is a journey in a world full of moving characters with astonishing outcomes that will stick with you long after you have closed the book.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is best known as the creator of the detective Sherlock Holmes, one of the most famous and enduring fictional characters of all the time. An excellent writer and storyteller, war journalist, medical doctor, keen patriot, and firm imperialist, Arthur Conan Doyle not only wrote detective stories but also historical and social romances. The famous detective first appeared in the novel The Study in Scarlet; although rejected three times by publishers, the novel became a Christmas giveaway for a magazine. Rude but likeable, the beloved detective continues to enchant generation after generation with several stage, TV and movie adaptations.

George Orwell

Novelist, poet, essayist and critic, George Orwell — pen name of Eric Arthur Blair — is known worldwide for his two novels The Animal Farm and 1984. Orwell's deep dissonance with society and his pessimistic view of modern civilisation are key to the interpretation of his works. An allegorical anti-Soviet satire, presenting two pigs as main characters, Animal Farm is the author's first very successful novel. Orwell had to experience many obstacles before the book, based on the idea of undermining totalitarianism, was published. Influenced by totalitarian regimes of the time, such as Hitler's Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, 1984 was published in 1949, describing three totalitarian states at war controlling the world. The book has been adapted for several TV shows and movies.

George Eliot

Known by the name of George Eliot, the English novelist Mary Ann Evans used a male pen name in a not easy time for female writers. Born in 1819, George Eliot wrote some of the most famous works of English literature, including *Silas Marner*, *The Mill on the Floss* and *Adam Bede*. In her novels she attempts to analyze the shades of the human mind, rather than just create plots. George Eliot presents a massive range of characters, and gets into the head of every major player in the novel. Showing that everyone thinks in their own way, it will make you impossible to judge anyone.

Mary Shelley

Mary Shelley was a British author best known for her horror novel Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus, one of the first Gothic novels that has since inspired several films, TV programs and video games. The influence of her work in pop culture is so great, that she's considered by many as the mother of modern science fiction. After having experienced the loss of her mother and of her half-sister, Mary married – after a controversial relationship – the poet Percy Shelley. On a cold rainy night in June 1816, the couple gathered in a villa located in Lake Geneva, in Switzerland, hosted by the poet Lord Byron. At Byron's suggestion, they each agreed to write a horror story and that's how Mary Shelley composed, at the age of 19, Frankenstein, a manifestation of Mary's own sense of alienation and isolation.

Charlotte Brontë

One of the most famous Victorian writers, Charlotte Brontë is noted mainly for her novel *Jane Eyre*. As an ambitious woman who decided not to follow the norms of the society of her time, in Jane Eyre she introduces a thinking woman who is able to follow her feelings and maintain her independence, and through the narrative creates a strong intimacy with the reader. Although Jane Eyre's story can be considered a happy one, it reflects the social difficulties a woman had to face in her upbringing during her time.

Thomas Hardy

One of the most renowned poets and novelists in English literary history, Thomas Hardy wrote poetry and novels, though the first part of his career was devoted mostly to novels. Published as a magazine serial in 1895, *Jude The Obscure* is Hardy's most pessimistic novel which roused condemnation by critics and clergy with its sexual content and scathing critiques of Christianity and marriage. Copies of the book were burnt publicly, and several libraries pulled the novel from their shelves. His books depict people fighting against the cruelty of life, injustice and laws that obstruct the social growth.

2.3 Their Contribution

In Adam Bede George Eliot digresses briefl y on the nature of her task as a novelist and offers what could stand as the manifesto for classic realism, the mode of writing that evolved during the eighteenth century and dominated fiction until the beginning of the twentieth. She concedes that she could 'refashion life and character entirely after my own liking' but this would be an 'arbitrary picture'. Her duty, her task, is to 'give a faithful account of men and things as they have mirrored themselves in my mind'. She will, she adds, minimalize any distortions in this mirror image by striving 'to tell you as precisely as I can what that reflection is, as if I were in the witness box narrating my experience on oath'. This seems to be a watertight ordinance for what the novel is supposed to be and do, but it raises questions, questions which would inspire and inform the writing of the modernists. James Joyce's Ulysses (1922) is cited by most as the quintessential modernist novel. The story, such as it is, involves the relatively mundane activities and experiences of Stephen Daedalus, Molly and Leopold Bloom and a cast of secondary characters of their acquaintance during one day (6 June, 1904) in Dublin. The text shifts unpredictably between the chaotic interior monologues of each principal character, more objective conventional narrative methods, journalistic reportage, operatic collage, theatre-style dialogue and in one famous passage an account of stultifyingly ordinary events via a sequence of styles borrowed from virtually every period of the history of English prose from the middle ages to the present day. It is routine but misleading to treat Ulysses – along with related but by no means identical pieces by Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson – simply as radical deviations from realism. Certainly in manner and technique they bemused readers who had become accustomed to the trustworthy, dependable presence of the nineteenth-century narrator, but it is a mistake to perceive modernism as founded upon an anti-realist aesthetic. Its practitioners were offering an alternative form Before Now 5 of realism, something which exposed the naturalistic techniques of the nineteenth century as hidebound and self-limiting, capable only of offering a socially and culturally acceptable 'mirror image'. Joyce and Woolf, albeit in different ways, treated the world not simply as something composed predominantly of pre-linguistic states and objects to be articulated and represented by language – the premise of the classic realists – but rather as a condition and an experience that are, at least in part, dependent upon and modified by language. Moreover, the modernists challenged what had become the pre-eminent – some would argue the defining – characteristic of fiction since the eighteenth century: the demand that the novel, irrespective of its accuracy as a 'mirror', should

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Similarly, in Malcolm Lowry's Under the Volcano (1947) Geoffrey Firman, alcoholic depressive British Consul to Somewhere, is less a character than a witness to the novel's unbounded concern with the cyclic and unfathomable nature of truth and its quixotic confederate, writing. Another postwar writer within this general tradition – referred to by some as postmodernism – is B. S. Johnson. Johnson's novels are frequently cited as archetypes of meta-fiction – fiction whose principal topic is its own status as fiction. Travelling People (1963) extends the moderately experimental technique of the chapter-by-chapter shift in narrational perspective – already used by Aldous Huxley, amongst others – to include a more radical blend of foci, such as fi lm scenarios, letters and typographical eccentricities. In Alberto Angelo (1964) the author steps into the narrative to discuss his techniques and objectives, in arguably the most bitter and angry example of stream of consciousness yet offered. Johnson's most famous piece is The Unfortunates (1969). This 'novel' is unbound, leaving it up to us to read 25 of the 27 loose-leaf sections in whatever order we may wish to do so: the 'story' becomes as a consequence a mutable, dynamic intermediary between the processes of writing and reading.

Summary

- **English literature**, the body of written works produced in the English language by inhabitants of the British Isles (including Ireland) from the 7th century to the present day.
- The major literatures written in English outside the British Isles are treated separately under American literature, Australian literature, Canadian literature, and New Zealand literature.
- English literature has sometimes been stigmatized as insular. It can be argued that no single English novel attains the universality of the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* or the French writer Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*.
- Yet in the Middle Ages the Old English literature of the subjugated Saxons was leavened by the Latin and Anglo-Norman writings, eminently foreign in origin, in which the churchmen and the Norman conquerors expressed themselves.
- From this combination emerged a flexible and subtle linguistic instrument exploited by Geoffrey Chaucer and brought to supreme application by William Shakespeare.
- During the Renaissance the renewed interest in Classical learning and values had an important effect on English literature, as on all the arts; and ideas of Augustan literary propriety in the 18th century and reverence in the 19th century for a less specific, though still selectively viewed, Classical antiquity continued to shape the literature.
- All three of these impulses derived from a foreign source, namely the Mediterranean basin. The Decadents of the late 19th century and the Modernists of the early 20th looked to continental European individuals and movements for inspiration.

- Nor was attraction toward European intellectualism dead in the late 20th century, for by the mid-1980s the approach known as structuralism, a phenomenon predominantly French and German in origin, infused the very study of English literature itself in a host of published critical studies and university departments.
- Additional influence was exercised by deconstructionist analysis, based largely on the work of French philosopher Jacques Derrida.
- The novel, in short, has managed to cultivate a new intellectual space: it is the middlebrow art form par excellence, with unique and unrivalled access to every corner of social life, but a form that retains that 'literary', or serious quality, defined as the ability to deliberate, or to stimulate reflection on social and cultural questions.
- Reviewing British fiction of the 1980s, D. J. Taylor, a prominent and important critic, detected a widening gap between 'the novel of ideas and the (usually comic) novel of action', or, put more crudely, between 'drawing-room twitter and the banana skin'.8 My sense is that this gap between the novel of ideas and the more popular (especially comic) novel has become less, rather than more, distinct in the post-war years, as a natural consequence of the gradual democratization of narrative fiction.
- Successive critics of the novel in Britain, and especially England, have been less sanguine about its state of health, however. Arthur Marwick states the social historian's view that the novel in the immediate post-war period is 'fading', characterized by 'a national, even parochial quality' in the inwardlooking manner of contemporary political thought; and throughout the period literary critics have found cause for concern about the novel's future.
- There is, for example, a perceived moment of crisis in David Lodge's famous declaration from 1969 that the 'English novelist' then stood at a crossroads, faced with the alternative routes of fabulation and experimental metafiction. Lodge's advice was to go straight on, remaining on the road of realism and adhering to the liberal ideology it enshrines.10 More pessimistic was Bernard Bergonzi's assessment of 1970, that 'English literature in the fifties and sixties has been both backward- and inwardlooking', indicating that 'in literary terms, as in political ones, Britain is not a very important part of the world today'.
- Preoccupied with parochial matters, and less innovative than the novel elsewhere (especially in America), English fiction offers little, Bergonzi argued, 'that can be instantly translated into universal statements about the human condition'.
- He was only able to mount a partial challenge to this overview (as in the case of Lodge, this was based on a defence of English liberalism), so that his negative suggestions retain some of their force. One has to grant, further, that the picture he painted has remained partially true of the post-war novel, notably the preoccupation with parochial themes and topics, and the distrust of experimentation and formal innovation.

Keywords

Gender, Class, Poverty, rural-urban landscape, human relationships, romance, migration

Self Assessment

1. The…………….was a turning point in the British Political history of Nineteenth Century.

A. factory act of 1833

B. emancipation act of 1833

C. reform bill of 1832

D. education act 1833

2. Father of Utilitarianism

A. james mill

B. jermybentham

C. newman

D. macaulay

3. Which novel by Charles Dickens is generally regarded as the first Victorian novel

A. hard times

B. the pickwick papers

C. little dorrit

D. bleak house

4. Which novel by Thomas Hardy had the subtitle “ A Pure Woman” which shocked Victorian readers?

A. the obscure

B. the well – beloved

C. a pair of blue eyes

D. tess of the d’urberviles

5. Which of the Bronte sisters wrote “Shirly” a novel set in Yorkshire during the Industrial depression

A. charlotte

B. emily

C. maria

D. Elizabeth

6. Which of the book was written by Victorian novelist George Eliot?

A. hard times

B. mill on the floss

C. far from madding crowd

D. the heart of darkness

7. Name of the novel by Thackeray known as “A Novel without a Hero”

A. timbuctoo

B. catherine

C. a shabby genteel story

D. vanity fair

8. What is inscribed above the entrance of Wuthering Heights?

A. hindleyearnshaw 1729

B. 1623

C. abandon all hope, ye who enter here

D. haretonearshaw 1500

9. What kind of countryside surrounds Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange

A. moorland

B. savannah

C. forest

D. grassy plains

10. Why doesn't Bingley visit Jane while she is in London?

A. He Doesn't Know That She's There.
B. Lady Catherine Forbids Him From Going.
C. Darcy Advises Him Against It.
D. He Thinks That Jane Does Not Like Him.

11. What is the name of the estate that Bingley rents?

A. Longbourne
B. Rosings
C. Netherfield
D. Fox Hall

12. Why does Elizabeth reject Darcy's initial proposal?

A. It Was Customary For Women At That Time To Reject The First Proposal.
B. She Does Not Like Him.
C. He Is Too Poor
D. She Is In Love With Someone Else.

13. What is inscribed above the entrance of Wuthering Heights?

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14. What kind of countryside surrounds Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange

A. moorland

B. savannah

C. forest

D. grassy plain

15. Which writers represent predicament of women?

A. Jane Auster

B. Charles Dickens

C. Mary Shelley

D. W. B Yeats

Answer for Self Assessment

1.	C	2.	B	3.	B	4.	D	5.	A
6.	B	7.	D	8.	D	9.	A	10.	A
11.	B	12.	A	13.	C	14.	D	15.	A

Review Questions

1. What is British Literature?
2. What is the importance and need of writing skills?
3. What is the contribution of British Fiction writers?
4. What are major complexities in academic writing?
5. How one can overcome writing difficulties?
6. What is British Fiction?
7. What do you understand by contemporary novel?
8. What is the first reaction of students towards any writing task?
9. How do readers react towards any writing task?
10. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
11. Throw light on Early British Novel?
12. What is academic writing?
13. What are major complexities in British Fiction?
14. How one can overcome writing difficulties?
15. What do you understand by contemporary novel?
16. What is the first reaction of students towards any writing task?
17. How do readers react towards any writing task?
18. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
19. Throw light on Early British Novel?
20. What is academic writing?

Further Reading

- A Course in Academic Writing by Renu Gupta, Orient Blackswan Pvt. Ltd.
- English Grammar by RajeevanKaral, Oxford University Press
- A course in Academic Writing by Renu Gupta, Orient Blackswan Pvt. Ltd.
- English Grammar by RajeevanKaral, Oxford University Press
- Oxford EAP: A Course in English for Academic Purposes by Edward De Chazal
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Unit 03: Joseph Andrews by Henry Fielding

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Examine a historical-cum-critical perspective on British Fiction
- Analyse the significance of British fiction in totality
- Recognize the essential identity markers of British fiction

Introduction

Henry Fielding – novelist, playwright and magistrate – was an active and influential public figure in the early 18th century.

Early Life and Law

Born in Somerset in 1707, Fielding's lifelong relationship with the law began early. After his mother's death, Fielding was the subject of a custody battle in which his grandmother successfully challenged the custodianship of his father, Lieutenant General Edmund Fielding. The young Fielding attended Eton, where he met the future Prime Minister William Pitt the Elder, but he was forced to flee the country to continue his studies after attempting to abduct his cousin, an heiress. Fielding studied classics and law at Leiden before returning to England.

From Law to Writing

Running short of funds, Fielding turned to writing, as did his sister, the novelist Sarah Fielding. His earliest theatrical writings so sharply satirized Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole that they were said to have catalyzed the passage of the Theatrical Licensing Act of 1737, which curtailed criticism of the government by requiring all plays to be read and approved by the Lord Chamberlain.

Hindered by the censorship of his plays, Fielding continued to write political satire that targeted Walpole and supported the Whig opposition, but returned to his legal career to support himself and his family. Fielding became a successful barrister and magistrate, co-founding with his brother an early version of a police force called the **Bow Street Runners**. Fielding's work as a magistrate would colour much of his later writing, from his profile of the criminal boss Jonathan Wild to his descriptions of London prisons in Tom Jones.

Writing Fiction

Fielding's turn to fiction came by way of his satirical impulse. The popularity of Samuel Richardson's Pamela inspired Fielding to write an imitative parody. An Apology for the Life of Mrs.Shamela Andrews (1741), which Fielding published anonymously, mocked Richardson's style of 'writing to the moment', in which his heroines dashed off letters while defending their virtue. Fielding continued riffing on Richardson's famous novel in his second work, Joseph Andrews (1742), which chronicled the adventures of Pamela's brother in a genre-crossing performance that Fielding dubbed a 'comic epic poem in prose'. Tom Jones (1749), Fielding's masterful picaresque, remains an important milestone in the development of the 18th-century novel, with its complex plot and its mixture of moral seriousness and comic adventure.

Marriage, Later Work and Death

Fielding had five children with his first wife, Charlotte Craddock, and, after Charlotte's death, scandalised his peers by marrying her maidservant Mary Daniel. Fielding had a further five children with Mary.

In his later years Fielding continued to write, primarily satirical pieces for newspapers and pamphlets, while following his career as a magistrate. Fielding developed considerable influence in the movements for judicial and prison reform, authoring works such as Proposals for Making an Effectual Provision for the Poor (1753). Fielding's heath declined in the 1750s and he died shortly after travelling to Lisbon to seek medical care in 1754.

Fielding sets out to define his terms and to differentiate Joseph Andrews from the "productions of romance writers on the one hand, and burlesque writers on the other." He admits that he has included some elements of burlesque in his "comic epic-poem in prose," but excludes them from the sentiments and the characters because burlesque in writing, like "Caricatura" in painting, exhibits "monsters, not men." True comedy, however, finds its source in nature: "life everywhere furnishes an accurate observer with the ridiculous." The source of the true ridiculous is affectation, which can usually be traced to either vanity or hypocrisy. The latter, he points out, is the more striking as it involves a measure of deceit over and above the mere ostentation of vanity. Fielding defends the various vices inserted in his novel because "they are never the principal figure." He closes by emphasizing the character of Parson Adams, "whose goodness of heart" stems from his "perfect simplicity."

As in his later novel, Tom Jones, Fielding provides the reader with a critical framework and a kind of "Bill of Fare to the Feast." The classics are as important to Fielding as they are to Parson Adams, and in constructing the definition of Joseph Andrews as a "comic epic poem in prose," Fielding refersto two works which help explain his own. The reference to the Odyssey prepares the reader for the themes of wandering and faithfulness, but whereas in the Odyssey the much-tried hero is pursued on his homeward travels by Poseidon's wrath, in Fénelon's version in Télémaque (also referred to in the preface), it is Venus who is the vengeful deity. Thus, one is prepared for the pursuit of Joseph by Lady Booby and — in the intervals — by Mrs. Slipslop.

It is vital to appreciate the limited role that Fielding gives to burlesque; he is attempting to describe the real nature of comedy, just as Joseph Andrews will attempt to discover the real nature of everyone and everything. In linking himself with Hogarth, the "comic history" painter whose works are in the "exactest copying of nature," Fielding presents an argument later echoed by Henry James: "The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life. When it relinquishes this attempt, the same attempt that we see on the canvas of the painter, it will have arrived at a very strange pass" ("The Art of Fiction," 1884). Fielding also associates himself with Ben Jonson, "who of all men understood the Ridiculous the best," yet, it would be a mistake to view Joseph Andrews as merely a bitter, corrective piece of satire. The final reference to Parson Adams, for example, establishes the sort of unadorned criterion of simplicity against which the vanity and the hypocrisy of most of the other characters will be measured. In addition, Adams' character as a clergyman is important; throughout the novel, Fielding will be leading his readers beyond "vulgar opinion," which establishes the characters of men according to their dress rather than their greater excellencies, to a recognition of the "unaccommodated man" (King Lear) whom Lear described as "the thing itself."

3.1 Characterization

Joseph's chief attributes are his self-control, his virtue, and his devotion. He is attractive physically, as Lady Booby and Mrs. Slipslop are well aware, and his character matches this exterior excellence. The strength of his pure love for Fanny Goodwill enables him to deal plainly, directly, and even violently with the moral and physical weaklings who cross his path, be it the lustful Lady Booby or the insect of a man, Beau Didapper. Joseph is a man of genuine emotion, and it is this which inspires him to the virtuous action which Fielding believed so important: "I defy the wisest man in the world to turn a true good action into ridicule," Joseph comments in Book III. Joseph, however, would be a bore if he were only a knight-like figure. Fielding enhances his moralizing by giving us much rich laughter. It is true that Joseph is always ready to do battle for a stranger, but, throughout the novel, Joseph battles most for his chastity and it is this satiric reversal which is the basis of Fielding's "comic epic-poem."

As with Joseph, Fanny's outward beauty is matched by her inner qualities. She has sensibility, sweetness, and gentility; in short, she is the perfect object for Joseph's love, and the way in which she immediately takes to the road in search of Joseph after hearing of his plight testifies that she too has a depth of feeling all too rare in this novel. Yet she also possesses a deep sense of modesty; and, in all honesty, one must admit that Fanny is a little too perfect. But part of her charm is in the way Fielding uses her in his comic contrasts. Whether we are seeing Mrs. Slipslop huffily "forgetting" the name of this "impertinent" girl, or Lady Booby plagued to distraction by the mention of Fanny's beauty, the emphasis is on Fielding's satire of hypocrisy rather than on Fanny's pristine goodness itself.

Lady Booby is everything that Joseph and Fanny are not; attached to town life, blind to her own motives and consequently to those of others, shallow in her feelings and thus scornful of those who do feel deeply, her dangerous legal maneuvers in Book IV have extremely unpleasant implications.

Throughout the novel, Lady Booby's reason and her passion are at odds; she is clearly the agent of confusion in Fielding's comic plan. Her mental muddle works against the resolution toward which he is drawing his characters, her selfishness denies the love on which this resolution is based, and her concern for her reputation exile her from the novel's happy ending. Yet the energy and vividness with which Lady Booby is portrayed in her turmoils prevent us from seeing her as a supreme villainess; she is more than a pawn in Fielding's game. She embodies the struggles which we all have at times: "I despise, I detest my passions. Yet why?"

At the beginning of Chapter 5 (Book I), Fielding points out that he often uses Slipslop as a foil to her mistress, Lady Booby. By making them both fall for Joseph, Fielding can point out the "different operations of this passion of love in the gentle and cultivated mind of Lady Booby, from those which it effected in the less-polished disposition of Mrs. Slipslop." Slipslop is a foil and also a coarse echo of Lady Booby; she is vain and proud and thus is "a mighty affecter of hard words" toward those whom she considers her inferiors, such as Mrs. Grave-airs and Fanny Goodwill. Yet there are also crucial differences between Slipslop and her mistress. Slipslop is ridiculous in a warm way; we laugh kindly at the incongruity of a fat, pimply, red-faced, lame, forty-five-year-old slob pursuing Joseph. But at least she is direct in her physical desires; when Adams mistakenly enters her bed, she realizes that he is not Joseph, but that he is better than nothing. Lady Booby could never do this. Slipslop may be a snob in some matters, but she is always superbly practical.

Adams is a very good man and yet a very human man; he has his head in the clouds and although his feet are on the ground, they are usually in puddles. Comic though he is, he is the firm pivot of the novel's moral influence. It is his belief in charitable action which distinguishes him as a parson from such hypocritical boors as Trulliber. Like Joseph and Fanny, he acts on his feelings, and it is because of this affinity that he is such a fine guardian and guide to the young pair.

The devious ways of the world wash off Adams as surely as the filth of the pigsty or the muck of the chamber pot, for he trusts his learning to books. This unchanging quality of innocence — will Adams never learn about money? — is part of Adams' worth as a character. Throughout the novel, he never develops, never changes, but we know what he stands for; he is ever active, ever charitable.

3.2 Narration

The novel, one of the first in the English language, encompasses many principles of the Augustan Age in which it was written. In this era literature, particularly satire, was viewed as a means of instruction, and observation was considered the best way to learn about human nature and the world. Henry Fielding's satirical commentary on hypocrisy, status, and virtue demonstrates to readers which qualities to avoid and which to emulate. This guide refers to the edition of the book published by CreateSpace Independent Publishing.

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The only authority figure who might be thought beyond criticism is the narrator, for Joseph Andrews was the first book in which Fielding developed the voice of programmatic control that distinguishes the narration of Tom Jones. Cajoling, witty, firmly in command, reminding us always of where we are in the chapter, and telling us whether or not we are likely to like the next one, the voice is every inch the gentleman, outside the events it providentially arranges, aware of and sympathizing with the emotional states of the characters but by no means subjected to them. The reader is welcome to partake, or not: 'Then Joseph made a Speech on Charity, which the Reader, if he is so disposed, may see in the next Chapter; for we scorn to betray him into any such Reading, without first giving him Warning' (233; III.v). Yet here too, in the very marrow of the fiction that he opposes to the apparently authorless, self-generating works of Defoe and Richardson, there is a concern to distinguish authority from tyranny.

Conservative as the literary style is, it condescends with gusto, making itself flamboyantly dependent on low comedy, to the distress or scorn of many of the novel's first readers, and plugging its classicism into quotidian detail: 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 leave those Beds, in which they had slept away the Day. Now Thetis the good Housewife began to put on the Pot in order to regale the good Man Phœbus after his daily Labours were over. In vulgar Language, it was in the Evening ... (37–8; I.viii)

The extended mock-heroic description of Joseph beating with his ancestral cudgel the hounds that are pursuing a fleeing Adams, with its invocations of literary muses, modern geniuses (Swift, Mallet), and classical authorities (Virgil, Horace, Cicero), functions at once to question Adams's authority, hand the cudgel of righteous violence to Joseph, announce a super-educated narrator, and give a comic edge to the narrative mastery (III.vi).

The Patrician narrator, indeed, likes to play at insufficiency, in a proto-Sternean manner: 'As we cannot therefore at present get Mr. Joseph out of the Inn, we shall leave him in it, and carry our Reader on after Parson Adams' (95; II.ii). Even the principle of 'extradiegetic' narration, performed by a narrator not involved in the action and thus in a position of authority, is comically limited by moments which reset the frame: 'Indeed, I have often been assured by [Joseph and Fanny], that they spent these Hours in a most delightful Conversation; but as I never could prevail on either to relate it, so I cannot communicate it to the Reader' (168; II.xv). In its public restraint and wink to the reader, the gesture communicates more than the supposed private conversation would. Fielding's intervention in the history of the novel appears to hijack Richardson's heroine and repackage her subjectivity, her style, and her social mobility in an authoritative novel of classic literary breadth and direction. But the unnamed narrator, our guide throughout, reminds us that power, even narrative power, is at its best when it allows itself to include, or artfully highlight, complication, imperfection, and self-mockery.

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3.3 Style

The novel is similar in style to Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, as the main characters embark on a journey full of slapstick comedy and meet several upper- and lower-class characters along the way. As Joseph Andrews and Parson Adams journey from London to their country town, they face robbers, rude inn owners, sexual temptations, and false kindness from the upper class, all while maintaining their Christian virtue and charity. Written in response to Samuel Richardson's novel *Pamela* (1740), in which the heroine fends off sexual temptation to maintain her virtue, *Joseph Andrews* flips 18th-century ideas of sexuality and virtue upside down. Fielding shows that charity and virtue lead to true contentment and blessings from God, while selfishness and lust lead to nothing.

At the beginning of Fielding's last novel, Amelia (1751), there is an extended account of life in Newgate Prison.1 It is one of his most unusual and powerful writings, creating a new voice, which, had he lived to write novels again, might have given an additional dimension to Fielding's already considerable influence on the future of the English novel. This early part portrays a scabrous sub-world of prison inmates and guardians, including not only criminals, but criminalized unfortunates, either guilty of petty offences or more or less innocent. Fielding had dealt with such material before, notably in Jonathan Wild (1743), but without the vivid engagement or the pained intensity of bafflement which mark the opening of this late novel.

The narrative exposes, among other things, the injustices of a legal system personified by the vicious and corrupt magistrate Mr Thrasher, 'who was never indifferent in a Cause, but when he could get nothing on either Side' (A I.ii; W 21). This stingingly conclusive summation belongs to a type not uncommon in Fielding's prose or that of his contemporaries. It shares features with, or perhaps emulates, the satirical portraiture of the great verse satirists we sometimes speak of as 'Augustan'. Thus, Dryden wrote, in Absalom and Achitophel (1681), of a prominent nobleman, the Duke of Buckingham (Zimri), as one for whom 'Nothing went unrewarded, but Desert' (line 560). This is part of a virtuoso portrayal of self-destructive instability, but the individual line captures a moral perversity similar to that of Thrasher, in a similarly ordered definitional style, in which the second half of the description reverses norms or expectations evoked by the first. Pope's Rape of the Lock (1714) offers another example, describing what happens when judges are in a hurry for lunch, and 'Wretches hang that Jurymen may Dine' (III. 22).

This style, in verse and prose, was a received manner among late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers, reflecting cultural aspirations, even in defeat, to notional ideals of order, elegance, and discipline. Fielding's version has its distinctive form of urbane acerbity or playfulness, and its own flavour of relationship with the verse couplet, sometimes called 'heroic' or valued for 'correctness', which was the dominant idiom of English poetry in Fielding's lifetime. Its masters were John Dryden (1631–1700), and especially Alexander Pope (1688–1744), with whom Fielding was personally acquainted. This style, crisp, antithetical, and conclusive, has its most concentrated expression in the verse couplet, as perfected by Pope, where each line not only develops a startling or paradoxical sting, but is then capped by the next, as in Pope's Epistle to a Lady (1735).

Sometimes, however, this style of masterful summation has an opposite effect, creating an atmosphere not of release, but of enveloping viciousness. The finalities suggest entrapment, a readerly bind, rather than reassuring containment. The biting acerbity of the sentence about Justice Thrasher gives the impression that the fitness of things is being violated. The words have an imprisoning aura, in its way not inappropriate in a Newgate setting, whose effect is to close off for the reader any relief from a sense of unbearable and unnatural injustice, of which the system of justice itself is a part. The Newgate scenes in this novel create a closed world of outlandishly strange behaviours and happenings, which are both the consequence of Thrasher's judgements and expressions of a no-way-out quality in Fielding's perspective on the subject.

The emphasis on a perverse or shocking conformity to 'Nature', in Pope's line 'His Figure such as might his Soul proclaim', which was ironically replicated in a hostile squib describing Pope's own hump as 'the Emblem of thy crooked Mind',10 shows a stylistic predisposition similar to Fielding's account of Nature's ministrations in the matter of Moll's eyes, nose, and chin, but not present inSwift's Thersites episode. Ironies of unnaturalness are common in Swift, but with little of the residual allure of the original violated norm. Pope introduces a further offended symmetry by adding an eye not in Homer: 'One Eye was blinking, and one Leg was lame', a symmetrical deployment of two separate asymmetries, prefiguring Moll's bad eye and Slipslop's uneven legs.

Such portraits differ sharply from Richardson's near contemporary description of Mrs Jewkes as seen by the heroine Pamela: 'She is a broad, squat, pursy, fat Thing, quite ugly ... Her Nose is flat and crooked ... a dead, spiteful, grey, goggling Eye, to be sure she has. And her Face is flat and broad.'12 The details are often similar, but they come in an unstylized sequence, as ugly empirical facts rather than aberrant departures from confidently accepted patterns. Jewkes's 'hoarse man-like Voice' evokes a hothouse atmosphere of lesbian overtures, rather than, like Lord Didapper's or Mrs Western's similarly contrary sexual characteristics, mainly a comic disarrangement of the fitness of things. The words have the stamp of the heroine's, not the author's, voice, as in her comment about Jewkes's saltpetre complexion, with its immediacy of spite ('I dare say she drinks'), which Fielding would have converted into a stylish narrative knowingness. Jewkes was probably the original of Slipslop.

But the contrast between her and both Slipslop and Moll could not be more marked. All are misshapen women, but as against Richardson's fraught factuality, Fielding's portraits come in paired arrangements self-consciously evoking the patterns they contravene. Even the nose, which does not come in pairs, has to be paired and balanced with another part of the face (eyes in Slipslop,

chin in Moll). The resemblance of Slipslop's 'two brown Globes' to the udders of a cow belongs with Pope's nearly contemporaneous portrait of the writer Eliza Haywood as a 'Juno of majestic size,/With cow-like udders, and with ox-like Eyes'. The latter image recycles a frequent Homeric epithet about the goddess Hera's (Juno's) 'ox-like eyes' (Iliad, I.551 etc.), which comes without any of Fielding's or Pope's elaborate montage. Pope's lines appeared in all versions of the Dunciad between 1728 and 1743, i.e. both before and shortly after the publication of Joseph Andrews in 1742. 13 'Nature', in such contexts, means something like the 'natural order of things', rather than the raw facts or spontaneous impulses a modern reader might think of as 'natural'.

It implies an ideal 'normality' in which the proportion and balance of human eyes, breasts, or limbs are taken for granted, and whose disfigurement we speak of as 'abnormal', just as an infringement of customary moral values might be called 'unnatural' (as in an 'unnatural' crime, howeverspontaneously committed). An accompanying assumption, familiar from the earliest poetry and fiction, is that moral worth is reflected in physical beauty, so that the strongest hero, or the ideal heroine, tend also to be supremely beautiful in body. In many couplet styles, notably in Fielding and Pope, this takes the form of an unusually strong preoccupation not only with the notional harmonies and contradictions of moral character or the physical body, but also with the correlation between the two. The cultural aspirations of eighteenth-century England did not usually include a literal belief in such congruences, but they did involve an accentuated feeling for order and the 'fitness' of things. That Pope added a crisply definitional irony about Thersites' 'Figure' being 'such as might his Soul proclaim' reflects an impulse to emphasize the bad or unnatural not as mere facts of circumstance, but in a presumed relation to a violated or ironic norm.

Fielding's prose has a more relaxed version of this feature, supplemented by Fielding's habitual display of narrative management. Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones offer a witty parade of the narrator's right to proceed in any way he pleases, his manipulation of the events and his commentaries about them, his discursive 'introductory' chapters, and his frequent conversations with the reader. Proceeding which way, the author pleases is a directly opposite claim to that in which a narrator's self-expression purported to be guided by his pen rather than the other way round. Sterne's Tristram Shandy, and indeed Sterne himself, were to say some years later that their pen 'governs me, – I govern not it' (Tristram Shandy).14 Richardson similarly addressed his pen as though it were an autonomous being, a pretension Swift saw as peculiarly 'modern', and mocked in advance when his narrator at the end of A Tale of a Tub (1704), having nothing more to say, announces his determination 'to let the Pen still move on'.

Fielding's novels provide the earliest major challenge to an alternative and almost equally recent novelistic tradition, which prides itself on effacing the author and neutralizing the impression that what we are reading 'is only a story'. Its early master was Richardson (1689–1761), Fielding's older contemporary and rival, whose novels are narrated by the characters in their letters. Richardson preened himself on the fact that his novels were sometimes taken for real, an objective that was later professed by the French novelist Gustave Flaubert (1821–80), and some English followers, including Ford Madox Ford (1873–1939). Ford was to deplore Fielding's authorial intrusions as symptoms of an unprofessional preference for displaying himself as a gentleman at the expense of his fiction.

Fielding viewed Richardson's manner as an abdication of selection and authority, and as an ill-bred failure to keep his distance. His own manner was designed to show the reader that he was not overwhelmed by the flow of events, or by intimate emotional immediacies. His contempt for Richardson's boasts of conveying his characters' emotions in their own words and 'to the Moment' had more than a touch of patrician scorn for what Fielding saw as Richardson's vulgar and unselective surrender to the raw data of circumstance and sentiment. Richardson's hot-house immediacies in the matter of his heroines' sexual appeal, and their suitors' lustful cravings, repelled Fielding as a literary equivalent of indecent exposure.

Summary

- Lady Booby, the wife of squire Sir Thomas Booby, takes a romantic interest in Joseph Andrews for his good looks and popularity, and makes him her footman. Parson Adams is also

interested in Joseph, but for his Christian character and aptitude for education. Lady Booby and Joseph leave for London, where Sir Thomas Booby dies. After his death, Lady Booby flirts with Joseph and cleverly invites him to sleep with her. Joseph does not notice her sexual advances, thinking that a woman in her high position would not be interested in him.

- In anger, Lady Booby fires Joseph. He heads toward the Booby's country parish in search of Fanny Goodwill, a milkmaid and Joseph's childhood sweetheart. On the road Joseph is robbed, beaten, and left for dead. A group of wealthy coach passengers save him to avoid being sued. They take him to a nearby inn to recover, where Parson Adams stops on his way to London, hoping to publish his sermons. Realizing he forgot sermons at home, Adams decides to return to the country parish with Joseph as his traveling companion.

- On their journey Adams ends up taking the wrong path. He meets a partridge hunter, and while the two men are talking, they hear a young woman screaming. Adams runs to her rescue while the hunter runs away, and Adams saves her from attempted rape.

- Adams realizes that the woman is none other than Joseph's sweetheart, Fanny Goodwill.

- Adams and Fanny stop at an inn, where they find Joseph. Joseph wants to marry Fanny right away but accepts Adams's advice to wait. In the morning Adams goes to the local clergyman, Mr. Trulliber, to ask for a loan to pay their bill at the inn, but his request is denied. A poor but kind peddler at the inn lends them the last of his money. As they continue traveling, they meet a falsely kind squire as well as sheep stealers and, through a series of events, end up taking shelter with a kind family. Their hosts, the Wilson family, enjoy a simple life of contentment in the countryside. The only sadness marring their sweet fellowship is the loss of their son, who was kidnapped as an infant.

- After another series of adventures, the group returns to the country parish. Lady Booby deals with emotional turmoil between her attraction to Joseph and her love for her own reputation and status. Jealous of Fanny, she takes legal action to get Fanny banished from the parish. Her nephew, Mr. Booby, arrives with his wife Pamela, who is Joseph's sister. Mr. Booby rescues his brother-in-law and Fanny during their sentencing, and tells Joseph he wants to make him a gentleman. After being influenced by his aunt, he advises Joseph to break off his engagement to Fanny since she is poor and will hurt his chances at attaining a higher social rank. However, Joseph remains loyal to Fanny.

- The poor peddler the group met on the road comes into the parish and tells Fanny that her parents are Mr. and Mrs. Andrews. Everyone is shocked by this news, as it indicates that Joseph and Fanny are brother and sister. Mr. and Mrs. Andrews arrive the next day, and Mrs. Andrews confirms the story that her daughter was kidnapped in infancy and replaced with Joseph. The peddler then discloses that Joseph's parents are Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, the kindly hosts who gave refuge to Joseph, Adams, and Fanny. Fanny and Joseph are married, and Mr. Booby gives them enough money to live quite comfortably.

Keywords

Chastity, Gender, Marriage, Romance, Migration, Relationship, Class, Profession, Nature

Self Assessment

1. What is Joseph's first job in the Booby household?

A. Weeding the garden

B. Tending hogs

C. Waiting at table

D. Scaring birds

2. What is Joseph's job when Lady Booby first notices him?

A. Attending the hunting dogs

B. Driving the coach

C. Racing Sir Thomas's horses

D. Sweeping the stable

3. What is Joseph's job when Mr. Adams first notices him?

A. Butler

B. Footman to lady booby

C. Page boy

D. Steward to Sir Thomas

4. What ancient language does Mr. Adams want to teach Joseph?

A. Greek

B. Latin

C. Syriac

D. Aramaic

5. Why does Joseph fail in his first two jobs of scaring birds and whipping-in dogs?

A. The animals keep attacking him

B. He is afraid of the animals

C. He is lazy

D. The animals are attracted to his sweet voice

6. Why do Joseph and Fanny not correspond during his time in London?

A. Fanny is illiterate

B. Lady booby reads all of Joseph's correspondence

C. Mr. Adams advised them against it

D. Joseph falls in love with someone else

7. Why does Joseph initially refuse to approach the stage-coach that passes by after his attack by the Ruffians?

A. The snobbism of the passengers offends him

B. Mrs. Slipslop is in the coach

C. The "witty" old gentleman is telling dirty jokes

D. He is naked and there are ladies in the coach

8. What is the crucial piece of evidence in the case against the captured Ruffian?

A. A love note from Mrs. Slipslop

B. A gold piece with a ribbon given to joseph by fanny

C. Joseph's livery

D. Joseph's monogrammed handkerchief

9. Why is Mr. Adams going to London?

A. To escape Mrs. Adams

B. To procure a living for his eldest son

C. To meet with his bishop

D. To publish his sermons

10. Who on the stage coach gives a coat to the naked Joseph?

A. The proper lady
B. The postilion
C. The lawyer
D. The coachman

11. Who eventually pays for the board of Mr. Adams's horse?
A. Mr. Barnabas
B. Mrs. Slipslop
C. Peter Pounce
D. Betty

12. How does Lady Booby react to the death of Sir Thomas?
A. She plays cards
B. She gets drunk
C. She goes for a carriage ride
D. She weeps copiously

13. What profession does Mr. Adams's 30-year-old son want to pursue?
A. Clergyman
B. Lawyer
C. Soldier
D. Steward

14. Why did Mr. Adams expect that Sir Thomas would give him a living?
A. Mr. Adams introduced Sir Thomas to lady booby
B. Mr. Adams saved Sir Thomas's life
C. Sir Thomas owed Mr. Adams money
D. Mr. Adams helped sirThomas get elected to parliament

15 Which of George Whitefield's doctrines does Mr. Adams find objectionable?
A. The doctrine of no salvation outside the church
B. The doctrine of faith without works
C. The doctrine of the poverty of the clergy
D. The doctrine of the real presence of the eucharist

Answer for Self Assessment

1.	D	2.	C	3.	B	4.	B	5.	D
6.	A	7.	D	8.	B	9.	D	10.	B
11.	B	12.	A	13.	A	14.	D	15.	B

Review Questions

1. What is British Literature?
2. What is the importance of Henry Fielding Writings?
3. What is the contribution of Henry Fielding?

4. What are major complexities in Joseph Andrews?
5. How writer overcomes those difficulties?
6. What is British Fiction?
7. What do you understand by contemporary novel?
8. What is the style of the novel?
9. What is the narration in the novel?
10. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
11. Throw light on Early British Novel?
12. Describe characterization in novel?
13. What are major complexities in British Fiction?
14. How one can overcome writing difficulties?
15. What is the importance of Henry Fielding Writings?
16. What is the contribution of Henry Fielding?
17. What are major complexities in Joseph Andrews?
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19. What is British Fiction?
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Further Reading

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- English Grammar by RajeevanKaral, Oxford University Press

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Unit 04: Joseph Andrews by Henry Fielding

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- examine a historical-cum-critical perspective on British Fiction
- analyse the significance of British fiction in totality
- recognize the essential identity markers of British fiction

Introduction

Henry Fielding – novelist, playwright and magistrate – was an active and influential public figure in the early 18th century.

Early life and law

Born in Somerset in 1707, Fielding's lifelong relationship with the law began early. After his mother's death, Fielding was the subject of a custody battle in which his grandmother successfully challenged the custodianship of his father, Lieutenant General Edmund Fielding. The young Fielding attended Eton, where he met the future Prime Minister William Pitt the Elder, but he was forced to flee the country to continue his studies after attempting to abduct his cousin, an heiress. Fielding studied classics and law at Leiden before returning to England.

From law to writing

Running short of funds, Fielding turned to writing, as did his sister, the novelist Sarah Fielding. His earliest theatrical writings so sharply satirised Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole that they were said to have catalysed the passage of the Theatrical Licensing Act of 1737, which curtailed criticism of the government by requiring all plays to be read and approved by the Lord Chamberlain.

Hindered by the censorship of his plays, Fielding continued to write political satire that targeted Walpole and supported the Whig opposition, but returned to his legal career to support himself and his family. Fielding became a successful barrister and magistrate, co-founding with his brother an early version of a police force called the Bow Street Runners. Fielding's work as a magistrate would colour much of his later writing, from his profile of the criminal boss Jonathan Wild to his descriptions of London prisons in *Tom Jones*.

Writing fiction

Fielding's turn to fiction came by way of his satirical impulse. The popularity of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* inspired Fielding to write an imitative parody. *An Apology for the Life of MrsShamela Andrews* (1741), which Fielding published anonymously, mocked Richardson's style of 'writing to the moment', in which his heroines dashed off letters while defending their virtue. Fielding continued riffing on Richardson's famous novel in his second work, *Joseph Andrews* (1742), which chronicled the adventures of Pamela's brother in a genre-crossing performance that Fielding dubbed a 'comic epic poem in prose'. *Tom Jones* (1749), Fielding's masterful picaresque, remains an important milestone in the development of the 18th-century novel, with its complex plot and its mixture of moral seriousness and comic adventure.

Marriage, later work and death

Fielding had five children with his first wife, Charlotte Craddock, and, after Charlotte's death, scandalised his peers by marrying her maidservant Mary Daniel. Fielding had a further five children with Mary.

In his later years Fielding continued to write, primarily satirical pieces for newspapers and pamphlets, while following his career as a magistrate. Fielding developed considerable influence in the movements for judicial and prison reform, authoring works such as *Proposals for Making an Effectual Provision for the Poor* (1753). Fielding's heath declined in the 1750s and he died shortly after travelling to Lisbon to seek medical care in 1754.

Fielding sets out to define his terms and to differentiate *Joseph Andrews* from the "productions of romance writers on the one hand, and burlesque writers on the other." He admits that he has included some elements of burlesque in his "comic epic-poem in prose," but excludes them from the sentiments and the characters because burlesque in writing, like "Caricatura" in painting, exhibits "monsters, not men." True comedy, however, finds its source in nature: "life everywhere furnishes an accurate observer with the ridiculous." The source of the true ridiculous is affectation, which can usually be traced to either vanity or hypocrisy. The latter, he points out, is the more striking as it involves a measure of deceit over and above the mere ostentation of vanity. Fielding defends the various vices inserted in his novel because "they are never the principal figure." He closes by emphasizing the character of Parson Adams, "whose goodness of heart" stems from his "perfect simplicity."

As in his later novel, *Tom Jones*, Fielding provides the reader with a critical framework and a kind of "Bill of Fare to the Feast." The classics are as important to Fielding as they are to Parson Adams, and in constructing the definition of *Joseph Andrews* as a "comic epic poem in prose," Fielding refers to two works which help explain his own. The reference to the *Odyssey* prepares the reader for the themes of wandering and faithfulness, but whereas in the *Odyssey* the much-tried hero is pursued on his homeward travels by Poseidon's wrath, in Fénelon's version in *Télémaque* (also referred to in the preface), it is Venus who is the vengeful deity. Thus, one is prepared for the pursuit of Joseph by Lady Booby and — in the intervals — by Mrs. Slipslop.

It is vital to appreciate the limited role that Fielding gives to burlesque; he is attempting to describe the real nature of comedy, just as Joseph Andrews will attempt to discover the real nature of everyone and everything. In linking himself with Hogarth, the "comic history" painter whose works are in the "exactest copying of nature," Fielding presents an argument later echoed by Henry James: "The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life. When it relinquishes this attempt, the same attempt that we see on the canvas of the painter, it will have arrived at a very strange pass" ("The Art of Fiction," 1884).

Fielding also associates himself with Ben Jonson, "who of all men understood the Ridiculous the best," yet, it would be a mistake to view *Joseph Andrews* as merely a bitter, corrective piece of satire. The final reference to Parson Adams, for example, establishes the sort of unadorned criterion of simplicity against which the vanity and the hypocrisy of most of the other characters will be measured. In addition, Adams' character as a *clergyman* is important; throughout the novel, Fielding will be leading his readers beyond "vulgar opinion," which establishes the characters of men according to their dress rather than their greater excellencies, to a recognition of the "unaccommodated man" (*King Lear*) whom Lear described as "the thing itself."

4.1 Social, Economic and Political Background

The general reception of Joseph Andrews among Fielding's social peers leaned more towards the positive spectrum. While there were few who held a great dislike for the novel, they were greatly outnumbered by those who held a very high opinion of the novel. One such person was James Beattie; he wrote that "the Comick Romance has been brought to perfection in England by Henry Fielding; who seems to have possessed more wit and humour, and more knowledge of mankind, than any other person of modern times"(400). Fielding's ability to create an entertaining and intellectually stimulating story that closely resembles reality would have earned him accolades among many Augustan readers. Pierre Desfontaines claimed that "the English place [this novel] above all novels that have ever existed, or at least that they rank equal to the Adventures of D. Quixote and Scarron's Roman comique" (397).

He also wrote,"I have no fear of affirming that England has never before produced anything so perfect of this kind" (397). Desfontaines opinion shows that Fielding's writing was exalted by not only the English but by other European nations as well (such as France). Opinions such as these show that Fielding has been compared to literary legends as a writer and his work has been considered equal to the ingenious creations of his time. William Hazlitt wrote, "As a painter of real life, he was equal to Hogarth; as a mere observer of human nature, he was little inferior to Shakespeare" (402). As a writer, Henry Fielding embodied all of the principles of the Augustan Age; he showed his talent in his depictions of human nature through endearingly familiar characters and his ability to wield a number of literary tools through his use of satire and his parodic creations; he has been found to be one of the greatest writers of his time.

To Henry Fielding, an ambiguous aristocrat, the influence of commerce and the part it played in rewriting patriarchal authority posed a serious problem to social and moral order, one he con- fronted in some of his essays as well as his novels. Although no opponent to trade, Fielding hoped to legislate legal and moral guidelines to ensure socially responsible behavior in its practice. In "An Inquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers" and "A Proposal for Making an Effectual Provision for the Poor" he offers some legal and administrative remedies for the many occur- rences of "depradations on property. "3

The need for legal remedy stemmed from a constitution that had not adapted to the changes wrought by commerce, what Fielding terms "the introduction of trade," and the effect such changes had on the political "order of the people" an order guaranteed by the Ancient Constitution, the provisions of which circumscribed power, authority, and sta- tion (13:14).4 Without that circumscription available in a legally binding form, the lower orders, who had acquired wealth, also had the power to subvert "the former state of affairs," because money obliterated distinction. According to Fielding, this riot of luxury and its attendant vices would continue, if legal remedy were not forthcoming: "for as riches are the certain consequence of trade, so is luxury the no less certain consequence of riches; nay, trade and luxury do indeed support each other; and this latter, in its turn, becomes as useful to trade, as trade had been to the support of luxury" (13:14).

In his effort to reconstitute social authority in Joseph Andrews, Fielding no doubt felt confident that he could supplant Lockean anti-patriarchalism and the new commercialism it fostered- those influences at work in Richardson's first novel, which, in Fielding's estimation, spelled its moral and political failure. Yet Fielding's own words, written nine years after the publication of Joseph Andrews, bear remembering; in his "Late Increase of Robbers" he states that art, which includes the art of novel writing, can only "restrain and palliate the evil consequence" of the "vices and dis- eases" that arise from trade or commerce (13:15). This mature observation, while it predicts that art can do little to curb self-interest the most telltale symptoms of unhealthy commercial rule does not seem to form part of Fielding's conscious intention in Joseph Andrews, if we trust to the conspicuously significant role the narrator plays. Whether even a specially endowed narrator, a type of father-providence, can exist immune to the self-interested and commercialized world about which he writes remains in doubt. In the following pages, I will examine how the dominant commercial ideology compromises patriarchal authority in Joseph Andrews and, in effect, makes Fielding the prophet of his own words.

The relationship between patriarchal authority and the new commercialism in Joseph Andrews is an antagonistic one-the novel pits the old against the new, the force of conservatism against that of novelty and change. Fielding hints at this uneasy relationship by declaring his novel new-"hitherto unattempted" -and a reconstruction of a lost, ancient form of writing.9 Yet Fielding enjoys a qualified success in affirming the value and relevance of patriarchal authority.

Joseph Andrews (1742) is about the absence of charity in eighteenth century England. Throughout the novel, Joseph is continually denied it-by characters in a stage coach who will not allow him to enter, by innkeepers like Mrs. Tow-wouse who do not want the good name of their establishments ruined by poor vagabonds, and by Lady Booby who wants to deny him a settlement in her parish. For the most part, scholars have argued that the novel imagines the solution to the absence of charity as a return to a golden age in which benevolence took care of the poor. Martin Battestin, for example, argues that Parson Adams is the novel's moral center who appears out of place in a world where charity and goodwill have eroded: "We may laugh at the parson's good-natured innocence and bookish idealism, but his honest bewilderment and shock at the great world imply a standard by which to measure the moral degeneracy of his age" (Moral Basis 113). In other words, if community leaders in the novel were more like the benevolent Adams, poor characters like Joseph who must wander the English countryside, would not go wanting.

While it is beyond the scope of this discussion to provide a detailed account of the complexities of poor relief in eighteenth-century England, it can be said with some certainty that as the cost of poor relief increased, the Poor Laws were used more and more by parish overseers to deny the poor charity; laws designed to control the poor and give them relief were also used to further stigmatize and marginalize them.1 The great contribution of Fielding's two pamphlets to the poor problem issue is the way they argue for a nation that can contain the poor and keep track of them. In his Proposal, he observes that the great failing of the punishment of rogues and vagabonds is that the existing laws are used for expulsion, a policy at odds with the nation's demand for labor.

He expresses the need to hold onto each individual: "...if it should be the interest of a wretch in these circumstances to be banished from a country, where he must steal or starve, it is scarce the interest of the public to lose every year a great number of such able hands" (180). Punishing criminals by transporting them, hanging them, or putting them out onto the road was to throw away a valuable commodity that could be reformed and put to good use. Because of this set of problems, Fielding unveils in the Proposal his plan for an enormous county workhouse-one much larger than the usual parish workhouse-a building designed to hold 5000 in one place. Here, the unemployed poor are collected in one spot so that they become accessible to the employer.

They are constructed as a labor pool that can be accessed at all times according to the demands of the economy. He writes, "The true reason...that the poor have not yet been well provided for, and well employed, is that they have not yet been drawn together" (173). In his scheme, out-of-work individuals are never allowed to be outside the employment and workhouse system. It is not left to the individual to get to his or her next place of employment. When a laborer's term of employment is up, he or she is to be returned to the workhouse on an exact date specified by the original employment contract (Proposal 158).

4.2 Themes

Violence

here's an awful lot of violence in *Joseph Andrews.* Between Parson Adams and his crabstick and Joseph and his cudgel, we wouldn't want to mess with this crew. We could see this two ways. Either Adams harbors a lot of inner rage that he's letting out, or he really does believe in the principles he advocates. (Good thing he doesn't advocate for violence, right?) We're going with the second option. Usually, the fights Adams gets in have to do with sticking up for his friends or being slighted by someone rude. Surely, we can forgive him that much.

Appearances

Joseph's face could launch a thousand ships… Wait, that's not how that goes. But seriously, Joseph is a handsome guy who attracts ladies right and left. A major plot point has to do with his obliviousness to female attention, largely a result of that gorgeous mug. What's a male model-lookalike to do? Like Fanny, Joseph isn't aware of how attractive he is—and that could be one thing that makes him even *more* attractive to the ladies. Think of it this way: since Joe doesn't know how handsome he is, he's free to dwell on the stuff that matters, like developing his inner self and, you know, memorizing Parson Adams's copy of Aeschylus. Everyone else is free to stare at his pretty face.

Lust

The ladies are the lustful ones in *Joseph Andrews.* Sure, the men (besides Joseph) have their fair share of randy moments, but the women are the ones who actually indulge their feelings. Take Lady Booby, for instance: she makes a pretty bold move by inviting Joseph into her bedroom while she's naked. Or consider Mrs. Slipslop, who makes a pretty straightforward play for Joseph at the beginning of the book. In a society where lust often has serious social ramifications, what's the deal with these women? Lady Booby, at least, has a lot to lose. That should tell us a lot about how tempting Joseph is, first and foremost. But Fielding is also totally making fun of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, where the virtuous heroine tries to withstand a lot of unwholesome male attention. It's as if Fielding is saying, "Hey, this is the eighteenth century: everybody's got sex on the brain. Some of us just deal with it better than others."

Of course, in Lady Booby and Mrs. Slipslop, we do also see these women taking control (if you can call it that) of their sex lives in a way that isn't totally typical—or representative—of eighteenth-century life. If Lady Booby really pulled a stunt like seducing Joseph, she probably would have some major consequences to face up to—if anybody ever found out, anyway.

Charity

According to Fielding, Adams is the very model of Christian charity. What exactly does that mean in *Joseph Andrews*? Well, we definitely get to see how Adams sticks to his principles and doles out his minimal wealth to anyone who asks. More importantly, we see what a great influence Adams is on everyone around him. Joseph is generous at the start of the book, but that's largely because he grew up with Adams as a dad figure. (Parson Trulliber is probably more characteristic of the average character in *Joseph Adams*… which means that he's totally unconcerned with anyone else's well-being.)

Society and Class

Society is just one more thing that Joseph is oblivious about—but just because he's clueless about crumpets and tea doesn't mean that everyone else is, too. Lady Booby, for one, is certain she can have her way with Joseph as soon as he figures out the (ahem) benefits of living the upper-class life. Mr. Wilson, on the other hand, learns the hard way that his class position won't shelter him from the seedy side of London.

So even if Joseph isn't aware that he's navigating a complicated social system, it definitely influences everything he does. For example, while the hoity-toity folks of *Joseph Andrews* gallivant around the countryside in coaches, they're not often eager to share those coaches with a footman—handsome as he might be. The great epic of the road has everything to do with the fact that Joseph's class limits the spaces he can access.

4.3 Symbols

The Aeschylus Text

The text by Greek dramatist Aeschylus (c. 525/524–456/455 BCE) of Parson Adams represents his learning as well as his vanity about his learning. The text also represents his overreliance on book knowledge. When the parson accidentally throws the text in the fire, he signals his willingness to give a back seat to book learning in favor of paying more attention to what is in front of him. However, his resolution is short lived.

Character Names

Henry Fielding uses people's names to create broad comedy in the novel as well as indicate character. For example, Joseph Andrews has a name reminiscent of the handsome and kind Joseph of the Old Testament, who is favored by his father, Jacob, and then thrown into a pit by his jealous brothers and sold into slavery. Joseph's identity is hidden in the Bible story, just as Joseph Andrews's true identity is hidden. Both Josephs resist the advances of predatory mistresses. Parson Abraham Adams has a name that recalls the biblical characters of Abraham and Adam. Adam is the father of mankind, as the parson is the father of his parishioners. The parson attempts to mimic Abraham in his obedience to God and is much enamored of the story of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac. Other characters have names that represent their flaws: for example, Lady Booby, Mrs. Slipslop, Constable Suckbribe, and the like.

Parson Adams's Crabstick

Parson Adams is a fighter by nature—both in word and in deed. He is never one to back down from a fight. The crabstick (cane made of wood from a crab apple tree) symbolizes his venerability as a teacher, since he is middle-aged, and also his skill in physical fighting and his strength and vitality. The crabstick is his weapon of choice when he has to defend the people who are in his charge.

Joseph's Birthmark

Joseph's strawberry birthmark is a symbol of his true origin and identifies him as the son of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, stolen from the gypsies and raised by Mrs. Andrews. A strawberry is also a fitting symbol for Joseph, since it is a fruit associated with summer, fresh and sweet and beautiful to look at. Joseph is a beautiful man who is a magnet for female attention, and he is ripe for the picking, like a summer strawberry.

Summary

- Lady Booby, the wife of squire Sir Thomas Booby, takes a romantic interest in Joseph Andrews for his good looks and popularity, and makes him her footman. Parson Adams is also interested in Joseph, but for his Christian character and aptitude for education. Lady Booby and Joseph leave for London, where Sir Thomas Booby dies. After his death, Lady Booby flirts with Joseph and cleverly invites him to sleep with her. Joseph does not notice her sexual advances, thinking that a woman in her high position would not be interested in him.

- In anger, Lady Booby fires Joseph. He heads toward the Booby's country parish in search of Fanny Goodwill, a milkmaid and Joseph's childhood sweetheart. On the road Joseph is robbed, beaten, and left for dead. A group of wealthy coach passengers save him to avoid being sued. They take him to a nearby inn to recover, where Parson Adams stops on his way to London, hoping to publish his sermons. Realizing he forgot sermons at home, Adams decides to return to the country parish with Joseph as his traveling companion.

- On their journey Adams ends up taking the wrong path. He meets a partridge hunter, and while the two men are talking, they hear a young woman screaming. Adams runs to her rescue while the hunter runs away, and Adams saves her from attempted rape. Adams realizes that the woman is none other than Joseph's sweetheart, Fanny Goodwill.

- Adams and Fanny stop at an inn, where they find Joseph. Joseph wants to marry Fanny right away but accepts Adams's advice to wait. In the morning Adams goes to the local clergyman, Mr. Trulliber, to ask for a loan to pay their bill at the inn, but his request is denied. A poor but kind peddler at the inn lends them the last of his money. As they continue traveling, they meet a falsely kind squire as well as sheep stealers and, through a series of events, end up taking shelter with a kind family. Their hosts, the Wilson family, enjoy a simple life of contentment in the countryside. The only sadness marring their sweet fellowship is the loss of their son, who was kidnapped as an infant.

- After another series of adventures, the group returns to the country parish. Lady Booby deals with emotional turmoil between her attraction to Joseph and her love for her own

reputation and status. Jealous of Fanny, she takes legal action to get Fanny banished from the parish. Her nephew, Mr. Booby, arrives with his wife Pamela, who is Joseph's sister. Mr. Booby rescues his brother-in-law and Fanny during their sentencing, and tells Joseph he wants to make him a gentleman. After being influenced by his aunt, he advises Joseph to break off his engagement to Fanny since she is poor and will hurt his chances at attaining a higher social rank. However, Joseph remains loyal to Fanny.

- The poor peddler the group met on the road comes into the parish and tells Fanny that her parents are Mr. and Mrs. Andrews. Everyone is shocked by this news, as it indicates that Joseph and Fanny are brother and sister. Mr. and Mrs. Andrews arrive the next day, and Mrs. Andrews confirms the story that her daughter was kidnapped in infancy and replaced with Joseph. The peddler then discloses that Joseph's parents are Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, the kindly hosts who gave refuge to Joseph, Adams, and Fanny. Fanny and Joseph are married, and Mr. Booby gives them enough money to live quite comfortably.

Keywords

Modernism, Romantic Literature, Victorian Culture, Augustan Era, Class, Gender

Self Assessment

1. What is Joseph's first job in the Booby household?
A. Weeding The Garden
B. Tending Hogs
C. Waiting At Table
D. Scaring Birds

2. What is Joseph's job when Lady Booby first notices him?
A. Attending The Hunting Dogs
B. Driving The Coach
C. Racing Sir Thomas's Horses
D. Sweeping The Stable

3. What is Joseph's job when Mr. Adams first notices him?
A. Butler
B. Footman To Lady Booby
C. Page Boy
D. Steward To Sir Thomas

4. What ancient language does Mr. Adams want to teach Joseph?
A. Greek
B. Latin
C. Syriac
D. Aramaic

5. Why does Joseph fail in his first two jobs of scaring birds and whipping-in dogs?
A. The Animals Keep Attacking Him
B. He Is Afraid Of The Animals
C. He Is Lazy
D. The Animals Are Attracted To His Sweet Voice

6. Why do Joseph and Fanny not correspond during his time in London?
A. Fanny Is Illiterate
B. Lady Booby Reads All Of Joseph's Correspondence
C. Mr. Adams Advised Them Against It
D. Joseph Falls In Love With Someone Else

7. Why does Joseph initially refuse to approach the stage-coach that passes by after his attack by the Ruffians?
A. The Snobbism Of The Passengers Offends Him
B. Mrs. Slipslop Is In The Coach
C. The "Witty" Old Gentleman Is Telling Dirty Jokes
D. He Is Naked And There Are Ladies In The Coach

8. What is the crucial piece of evidence in the case against the captured Ruffian?
A. A Love Note From Mrs. Slipslop
B. A Gold Piece With A Ribbon Given To Joseph By Fanny
C. Joseph's Livery
D. Joseph's Monogrammed Handkerchief

9. Why is Mr. Adams going to London?
A. To Escape Mrs. Adams
B. To Procure A Living For His Eldest Son
C. To Meet With His Bishop
D. To Publish His Sermons

10. Who on the stage coach gives a coat to the naked Joseph?
A. The Proper Lady
B. The Postilion
C. The Lawyer
D. The Coachman

11. Who eventually pays for the board of Mr. Adams's horse?
A. Mr. Barnabas
B. Mrs. Slipslop
C. Peter Pounce
D. Betty

12. How does Lady Booby react to the death of Sir Thomas?
A. She Plays Cards
B. She Gets Drunk
C. She Goes For A Carriage Ride
D. She Weeps Copiously

13. What profession does Mr. Adams's 30-year-old son want to pursue?
A. Clergyman
B. Lawyer

C. Soldier
D. Steward

14. Why did Mr. Adams expect that Sir Thomas would give him a living?
A. Mr. Adams Introduced Sir Thomas to Lady Booby
B. Mr. Adams Saved Sir Thomas's Life
C. Sir Thomas Owed Mr. Adams Money
D. Mr. Adams Helped Sir Thomas Get Elected to Parliament

15. Which of George Whitefield's doctrines does Mr. Adams find objectionable?
A. The Doctrine of No Salvation Outside the Church
B. The Doctrine of Faith Without Works
C. The Doctrine of The Poverty of The Clergy
D. The Doctrine of The Real Presence of The Eucharist

Answer for Self Assessment

1.	D	2.	C	3.	B	4.	B	5.	D
6.	A	7.	D	8.	B	9.	D	10.	B
11.	B	12.	A	13.	A	14.	D	15.	B

Review Questions

1. What is British Literature?
2. What is the importance of Henry Fielding Writings?
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4. What are major complexities in Joseph Andrews?
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6. What is British Fiction?
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17. What do you understand by contemporary novel?
18. What is the style of the novel?
19. What is the narration in the novel?
20. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
21. Throw light on Early British Novel?
22. Describe characterization in novel?

Further Reading

1. A Course in Academic Writing by Renu Gupta, OrientBlackswan Pvt. Ltd.

2. English Grammar by RajeevanKaral, Oxford University Press
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3. Oxford EAP: A Course in English for Academic Purposes by Edward De Chazal
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4. MLA Handbook by Modern Language Association of America, Modern Language
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Unit 05: Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

CONTENS

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5.1 Characterization

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5.3 Style

Summary

Keywords

Self Assessment

Answer for Self Assessment

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Objectives

- After studying this unit, you will be able to:
- examine a historical-cum-critical perspective on British Fiction
- analyse the significance of British fiction in totality
- recognize the essential identity markers of British fiction

Introduction

The daughter of a Hampshire clergyman, Austen was born at Steventon Parsonage on 16 December 1775. The seventh of eight children, she grew up in a happy and close-knit family, and the careers and families of her brothers (two clergymen, two admirals, and one adopted by wealthy relations) inform her stories. She started writing at a young age, and her juvenilia includes dramatic sketches, spoofs and poems. Friends and family circulated her writings and wooed publishers, but it was over a decade before *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) went into print, soon followed by Pride and Prejudice (1813), which she called 'my own darling child'. In his journal, Sir Walter Scott contrasted her 'exquisite touch' with his own 'Big Bow-Wow' approach, praising the way she made 'commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment.'[1]

Sense and Sensibility and Pride and Prejudice both revolve around sisters, and Austen's loving alliance with her only sister Cassandra lasted all her life. Both Jane and Cassandra had romances, but, like Austen's heroines, refused to marry for the sake of marriage. They remained single, supporting their mother after the death of their father in 1805.

In 1809, Austen moved with her mother and her sister to Chawton, a tranquil Hampshire village. There, in a house given to them by her wealthy brother Edward, Austen spent her happiest years. All six of her novel's dates in their finished form from this period. Mansfield Park was published in 1814 and Emma, with its heroine whom Austen half-jokingly predicted 'no one but myself will much like', in 1815.

Austen died, aged only 41, on 18 July 1817, leaving the subtle *Persuasion* and her Gothic satire Northanger *Abbey* to be published later that year.

It is said that Jane Austen lived a quiet life. Only a few of her manuscripts remain in existence and the majority of her correspondence was either burned or heavily edited by her sister, Cassandra, shortly before she died. As a result, the details that are known about her are rare and inconsistent. What can be surmised through remaining letters and personal acquaintances is that she was a woman of stature, humor and keen intelligence. Family remembrances of Austen portray her in a kind, almost saintly light, but critics who have studied her books and the remnants of her letters believe she was sharper than her family wished the public to think.

Jane Austen was born in Steventon, Hampshire on December 16, 1775 and grew up in a tight-knit family. She was the seventh of eight children, with six brothers and one sister. Her parents, George Austen and Cassandra Leigh, were married in 1764. Her father was an orphan but with the help of a rich uncle he attended school and was ordained by the Church of England. Subsequently, he was elevated enough in social standing to provide Cassandra a worthy match whose family was of a considerably higher social status. In 1765, they moved to Steventon, a village in north Hampshire, about 60 miles southwest of London, where her father was appointed rector.

Like their father, two of Austen's older brothers, James and Henry, were ordained and spent most of their lives in the Church of England. Of all her brothers, Austen was closest to Henry; he served as her agent, and then after her death, as her biographer. George, the second oldest son, was born mentally deficient and spent the majority of his life in institutions. The third son, Edward, was adopted by their father's wealthy cousin, Thomas Knight, and eventually inherited the Knight estate in Chawton, where Austen would later complete most of her novels. Cassandra, Austen's only sister, was born in 1773. Austen and Cassandra were close friends and companions throughout their entire lives. It is through the remaining letters to Cassandra that biographers are able to piece Austen's life together. The two youngest Austen boys, Francis and Charles, both served in the Navy as highly decorated admirals.

When Austen was 7, she and Cassandra were sent to Oxford to attend school but sometime later the girls came down with typhus and were brought back to Steventon. When Austen was 9 they attended the Abbey School in Reading. Shortly after enrolling however, the girls were withdrawn, because their father could no longer afford tuition. Though this completed their formal schooling, the girls continued their education at home, with the help of their brothers and father.

The Austens often read aloud to one another. This evolved into short theatrical performances that Austen had a hand in composing. The Austen family plays were performed in their barn and were attended by family members and a few close neighbors. By the age of 12, Austen was writing for herself as well as for her family. She wrote poems and several parodies of the dramatic fiction that was popular at the time, such as *History of England* and *Love and Freindship* [sic]. She then compiled and titled them: *Volume the First*, *Volume the Second* and *Volume the Third*.
Austen is said to have looked like her brother Henry, with bright hazel eyes and curly hair, over which she always wore a cap. She won the attention of a young Irish gentleman named Tom Lefroy. Unfortunately, Lefroy was in a position that required him to marry into money. He later married an heiress and became a prominent political figure in Ireland.

In 1795, when she was 20, Austen entered a productive phase and created what was later referred to as her "First Trilogy." Prompted by increasing social engagements and flirtations, she began writing *Elinor and Marianne*, a novel in letters, which would eventually be reworked and retitled *Sense and Sensibility*. The following year, she wrote *First Impressions*, which was rejected by a publisher in 1797. It was the first version of *Pride and Prejudice*. She began another novel in 1798, titled *Susan*, which evolved into *Northanger Abbey*.
The Austens lived happily in Steventon until 1801, when her father suddenly announced he was moving the family to Bath. Austen was unhappy with the news. At the time, Bath was a resort town for the nearly wealthy with many gossips and social climbers. As they traveled that summer, however, she fell in love with a young clergyman who promised to meet them at the end of their journey. Several months later he fell ill and died.

Bath was difficult for Austen. She started but did not finish *The Watsons* and had a hard time adjusting to social demands. She accepted a marriage proposal from Harris Bigg-Wither, the son of an old family friend, but changed her mind the next day. A few years later, in 1805, her father died, leaving Jane, Cassandra and their mother without enough money to live comfortably. As a result, the Austen women relied on the hospitality of friends and family until they were permanently

relocated to a cottage in Chawton, Hampshire, belonging to her brother Edward Austen-Knight. There, Austen began the most productive period of her life, publishing several books and completing her "Second Trilogy."
Austen finished the final drafts of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* in 1811. They were published shortly after and she immediately set to work on *Mansfield Park*. In 1814, *Mansfield Park* was published and *Emma* was started. By this time, Austen was gaining some recognition for her writing, despite the fact that neither *Sense and Sensibility* or *Pride and Prejudice* were published under her name.

Austen began showing symptoms of illness while she worked on *Persuasion*, her last completed novel. It was published with *Northanger Abbey* after her death. Unknown at the time, Austen most likely suffered from Addison's disease, whose symptoms include fever, back pain, nausea and irregular skin pigmentation. On her deathbed, when asked by her sister Cassandra if there was anything she required, she requested only "death itself." She died at the age of 41 on July 18, 1817 with her sister at her side.

5.1 Characterization

The opening sentence of Pride and Prejudice may be interpreted as the statement of a law of nature and of human nature, and the descrip- tion of the actions and reactions which forms the body of the book derives its sense, that is, its meaning and direction, from the natural laws which govern action and reaction. The interplay of nature and human nature can be seen in inanimate as well as in animate nature, as is apparent in Elizabeth's description of Pemberley where nature had done more to realize beauty than in other places and where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by human taste. Pride and Prejudice may be read as a psychotherapeutic or socioeconomic retributive novel descriptive of the actions and reactions of natures unchanged in power and inclinations and of natures in circumstances in which natural functions of perception and feeling, action and production are suppressed or dis- torted or in which they are freed from impediments and superimposed alterations.

Manners and styles are what is experienced as indices of characters and attitudes in action, and as determinants of meanings and intentions in speech. What a man is must be inferred from the impres- sion he makes; and what a character means to say cannot be known simply from what he says without consideration of how he says it, for his manner may make clear that he means something opposite or tangential to what he says. Manners and modes reveal character in action and give meaning to speech. What Bingley and Darcy are emerges from judgments which relate and compare them. That development of their manners and revelation of their characters is fastened to a fixed point by Jane and Elizabeth's judgment of Bingley. That judgment in its turn has its fixed point in Elizabeth's judgment of Jane. The objects of judgment in turn judge each other and uncover characters determined by expectation of how they will be judged by others.

This establishment of the manners and characters of Bingley and Darcy relative to each other and in opposition to each other in the impressions they make on others lays an objective foundation for the changes which Darcy's character undergoes and the consequent changes in his manners and for the constancy of the character of Bingley who from the first pleases. That pivot of manners and character, however, is given a further dimension of variation in the differences in the judg- ments of Jane and Elizabeth which are reflexively indications of their own characters and of the potentialities they reveal of constancy or change injudgement of the characters and manners of Bingley and Darcy. Jane, who has been cautious in her praise of Bingley, reveals to Elizabeth how much she admires him: " 'He is just what a young man ought to be,' said she, 'sensible, good humoured, lively; and I never saw such happy manners!-so much ease, such perfect good breeding!' " (1.4.9 [4]).

The balanced judgments of the Bennet sisters are given objectivity in balance with the judgments of the Lucas sisters. The eldest Lucas daughter, Charlotte, is Elizabeth's intimate friend. Mrs. Bennet "with civil self-command" compliments Charlotte for being Mr. Bingley's first choice; but Charlotte replies that he liked his second, Jane, better, and he is reported to have said that she is beautiful. This overheard judgment is contrasted by Charlotte to another overheard judgment, that of Darcy, that Elizabeth is tolerable, but not handsome enough for him to dance with. Charlotte remarks that Mr. Darcy is not so well worth listening to as his friend, Mr. Bingley, who thought Elizabeth very pretty, and later adds that Darcy's pride does not offend her so much as pride often does because there is an excuse for it. "One cannot wonder that so very fine a young man, with family, fortune, everything in his favor, should think highly of himself. If I may so express it, he has a right to be

proud." Elizabeth says she could easily forgive his, if he had not mortified hers. Her sister Mary, who piques herself on the solidity of her reflections, observes that pride is a very common failing. She distinguishes pride from vanity, although they are frequently used as synonyms: pride is our opinion of ourselves, vanity what we would have others think of us. A brother of the Lucas sisters finds such pride in need of no excuses: if he were as rich as Mr. Darcy, he would not care how proud he was; he would keep foxhounds and drink wine.

Elizabeth Bennet

The novel's protagonist. The second daughter of Mr. Bennet, Elizabeth is the most intelligent and sensible of the five Bennet sisters. She is well read and quick-witted, with a tongue that occasionally proves too sharp for her own good. Her realization of Darcy's essential goodness eventually triumphs over her initial prejudice against him.

Fitzwilliam Darcy

A wealthy gentleman, the master of Pemberley, and the nephew of Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Though Darcy is intelligent and honest, his excess of pride causes him to look down on his social inferiors. Over the course of the novel, he tempers his class-consciousness and learns to admire and love Elizabeth for her strong character.

Charles Bingley

Darcy's considerably wealthy best friend. Bingley's purchase of Netherfield, an estate near the Bennets, serves as the impetus for the novel. He is a genial, well-intentioned gentleman, whose easygoing nature contrasts with Darcy's initially discourteous demeanor. He is blissfully uncaring about class differences.

Mr. Bennet

The patriarch of the Bennet family, a gentleman of modest income with five unmarried daughters. Mr. Bennet has a sarcastic, cynical sense of humor that he uses to purposefully irritate his wife. Though he loves his daughters (Elizabeth in particular), he often fails as a parent, preferring to withdraw from the never-ending marriage concerns of the women around him rather than offer help.

Mrs. Bennet

Mr. Bennet's wife, a foolish, noisy woman whose only goal in life is to see her daughters married. Because of her low breeding and often unbecoming behavior, Mrs. Bennet often repels the very suitors whom she tries to attract for her daughters.

George Wickham

A handsome, fortune-hunting militia officer. Wickham's good looks and charm attract Elizabeth initially, but Darcy's revelation about Wickham's disreputable past clues her in to his true nature and simultaneously draws her closer to Darcy.

Lydia Bennet

The youngest Bennet sister, she is gossipy, immature, and self-involved. Unlike Elizabeth, Lydia flings herself headlong into romance and ends up running off with Wickham.

5.2 Narration

CONSIDER THE FAMOUS opening sentence of Pride and Prejudice: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife." The narrator seems to be standing outside the story, not yet observing the characters but gazing off into the middle distance for some reflections on life in general. But this impression does not last. As Mr. Bennet and "his lady" begin their dialogue, it rapidly becomes clear that the story- teller had them

both in view when that opening generalization was made. It is an opinion, we find, that Mrs. Bennet would greet with a clapping of hands and little cries of joy-and one Mr. Bennet would send flying to the paradise of foolish ideas with a shaft of ridicule. The narrator ostensibly takes the responsibility for the opinion; but we see from the beginning that her observations are likely to bear an ironic relation to the views, and points of view, of her characters. This is our introduction to the quality of tough yet gentle irony that will control every page of the novel, making us feel a wonderful balance between sense and sensibility.

This artful control of over-all narrative perspective in the service of Jane Austen's irony is supported by a most subtle manipulation of point of view for the sake of the novel's unity. Even a sleepy reader of this book must be well aware, before he has read very far, that it is Elizabeth Bennet's story. But how does he know this? The title gives no clue, and Elizabeth is not the storyteller. The opening pages make it clear that the matrimonial prospects of the Bennet daughters will direct the action-but there are five daughters. True, three of them look far from promising: Mary is a pedantic bore; Lydia is an empty-headed flirt; Kitty is just empty-headed. But both Jane and Elizabeth are attractive and accomplished, and for several chapters it looks as if Jane's chances with Bingley will bring the central action into focus, with Elizabeth playing some subsidiary role.

How is it, then, that by the time we are quarterway through the novel-say by the time Mr. Collins makes his celebrated proposal to Elizabeth-it has become perfectly clear that Elizabeth is the heroine of Pride and Prejudice, and that Jane is only a secondary character? Partly, this is revealed by the sheer amount of attention the story- teller pays to Elizabeth, which increases rapidly as we move through the first eighteen chapters. This, of course, is itself a function of point of view. The storyteller chooses to gaze upon Elizabeth more and more often, and for longer and longer stretches of time. But the inter- esting fact is that this deliberate restriction of the narrator's privilege of gazing anywhere and everywhere is most stringently applied when the mechanics of the plot call, quite on the contrary, for attention to Jane. In chapter vii, Jane goes to visit Caroline Bingley at Nether- field.

Mrs. Bennet's most sanguine hopes are fulfilled when Jane catches a bad cold on the way, and therefore has to spend several days with the Bingleys. But note that this is reported by letter; for when Jane leaves for Netherfield we do not go with her. The nar- rative perspective remains focused on the Bennet household, and particularly on Elizabeth; and it is not until Elizabeth decides to put sisterhood above gentility, and walks three miles across muddy fields, that we make our first entry into the Bingley household. More- over, we see nothing of Jane until Elizabeth goes upstairs to nurse her; and even then we get a scanty glimpse, since Jane evidently is too sick to talk. By this time, it begins to be obvious that the narrator is only slightly more interested in Jane than is the feline Miss Bingley, who tolerates her chiefly for the sake of Bingley's interest.

Jane's relation to Bingley will be important in the plot, but much less for itself than as a necessary device to help build up Elizabeth's prejudice against Darcy. Actually, the narrator's audacity in slighting Jane is almost rude. When poor Jane emerges from her sickroom after several days (chap. xi), she is nearly ignored. Everyone greets her politely, of course; but although Bingley "then sat down by her and talked scarcely to any- one else," none of this tete-a-tete between the two nascent lovers is reported. On the other hand, a word-for-word rendering of a most lively conversation including Elizabeth, Bingley, his sister, and Darcy takes up the rest of the chapter; but for all she contributes to the scene, Jane might as well be stretched out asleep on a sofa like the languid Mr. Hurst, who is also present but inaudible.

5.3 Style

About this time, we also begin to be aware that the narrator's in- creasing attention to Elizabeth and neglect of Jane is not simply a matter of direction of gaze. We are induced to see much of Elizabeth, and not much of her older sister; but we also begin to see more and more of the action, and of the other characters, from Elizabeth's point of view. In chapter x, for example, just before the one in which Jane becomes so remarkably inconspicuous, we are quite specifically encouraged to identify ourselves with Elizabeth at the beginning of the scene: Elizabeth took up some needlework and was sufficiently amused in attending to what passed between Darcy and his companion.

The perpetual commenda- tions of the lady either on his handwriting, or on the evenness of his lines, or on the length of his letter, with the perfect unconcern with which her praises were received, formed a curious dialogue, and was exactly in unison with her opinion of each. We are not told that Elizabeth smiles, or makes any other outward sign of her amusement. The narrative perspective has penetrated to Elizabeth's consciousness; the point of view has become hers not only physically, but psychically. By means of such skillful technical maneuvering, Jane Austen gradually forces the action of Pride and Prejudice to coalesce around Elizabeth, and we are prepared for an essential part of that action to take place in the intimate and subtle chambers of her mind.

When we reach the crisis of the novel with Darcy's first proposal to Eliza- beth (chap. xxxiv)-which, as a matter of structural nicety, comes exactly halfway through the book-we know that everything that follows must depend on her discovery of his true character. The groundwork is laid very shortly, in chapter xxxvi, which consists entirely of a searching analysis of Elizabeth's inward reactions to Darcy's letter of explanation. And the fact that her discovery is chiefly a psychological process, not an outward action, is stressed by her realization that it involves self-discovery. "Had I been in love," she cries (tantalizing the reader with the conditional), "I could not have been more wretchedly blind.... I have courted prepossession and ignorance and driven reason away where either were concerned. Till this moment I never knew myself." Thus the management of narrative perspective plays an essential part in establishing the unity of the action: it is Elizabeth's story, and it is the story of her sense and sensibility rather than her outward behaviour. But now an intriguing question occurs.

Much of Pride and Prejudice moves at the pace of life itself: the action is rendered with a degree of detail and fullness of dialogue that gives a highly developed dramatic illusion. But note how fast the storyteller can shift to drastic synopsis when it seems desirable to step up the action and move on to a scene essential to the plot. When Elizabeth is waiting at Longbourn for the Gardiners to come and take her on a tour of the Lake district, she is disappointed by a letter saying that they cannot start until two weeks later than planned, and consequently cannot go so far on their trip.

When it comes to selectivity, the filters through which the narrator of Pride and Prejudice habitually views the action are much more discriminating than those of any photographer, and they positively cut out much that is the stock in trade of the average novelist. What color is Elizabeth's hair? What did she wear at the Netherfield ball? What in the world do these people eat at all the dinners that are mentioned? What do Mr. and Mrs. Bennet look like? But the answers to these and a hundred similar questions it is the narrator's privilege to withhold: we must take what he (or she) chooses to give us. What Jane Austen chooses to give is pretty well summed up in her observa- tion about Darcy and Elizabeth at the happy moment when Eliza- beth finally accepts Darcy's hand: "They walked on, without knowing in what direction. There was too much to be thought and felt and said for attention to any other objects." Thought and feeling, and their verbal expression-this is the world of Jane Austen, so beauti- fully illuminated for us by her artistic control of narrative perspective.

Dancing

This is a symbol that comes into the story early on. In the beginning of the novel, while Jane is at her most prejudiced and Mr. Darcy at his most prideful, Jane and Mr. Darcy dance together in a stylistically formal and precise manner that mirrors their relationship at that point.

Pemberley

This is Mr. Darcy’s estate, which Elizabeth visits at a point in the novel during which she is starting to soften, thanks to traveling and being away from the pressures of her mother and her hometown’s social expectations. The reader starts to get the sense at this point in the novel—about halfway—that Elizabeth feels freer and more relaxed while she is traveling. Pemberley serves as a symbol for the person Mr. Darcy really is, underneath his pride and social status. Elizabeth is enchanted by the beauty of the property and subsequently starts to see Mr. Darcy in a new light and allows herself to feel charmed by him as well. To enhance this symbol, Austen has Elizabeth cross a small bridge as she approaches his home. This suggests that the divide that has so far existed between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth will be bridged as well as the two become closer to each other. As Elizabeth starts to

see Mr. Darcy for who he really is, he starts to see Elizabeth for who she is when she is free of social pressures and expectations.

Outdoor Settings

The interactions that Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy have with each other tend to change depending on whether they are indoors or outdoors.Much of their most strained interactions take place while they are confined in a building. They generally tend to behave much more rigidly, keeping a careful distance from each other. However, when they interact outdoors (they take a few meaningful walks together at different points of the novel), their rigid behaviour relaxes as they find themselves less beholden by expectations. They loosen up and are able to have more emotionally free conversations alone in the outdoors.

Summary

Although Austen's novels have always been open to widely divergent interpretations, the two basic stances taken by critics are to view her as a conservative holding the values of the landed gentry in the late eighteenth century or as a subversive who undercuts the very premises upon which English society rests.1 Most feminist studies have represented Austen as a conscious or unconscious subversive voicing a woman's frustration at the rigid and sexist social order which enforces women's subservience and dependence, though many feminist critics, as Julia Prewitt Brown notes, are distinctly uncomfortable with what they see as Austen's "cowardly accommo? dations" with the patriarchal order.2 What these rival camps share, however, is a tendency to make the patriarchal order itself Austen's essential subject matter. Austen, placed as she is historically, is perhaps most often seen as a pivotal figure, looking both backward and forward; but whether critics emphasize her eighteenth-century roots or stress her affinities with Romanti? cism, almost always the big question is her valuation of the established patriarchal order. I do not mean to suggest that this is not a question worth asking.

Jane Austen has long been credited with being a keen observer of human nature and a creator of vital and convincing characters of both sexes. Critics, however, have down through the years regularly found fault with one group of characters in particular in her novels, the young men who appear as likely suitors for the heroines?the "heroes" and "villains." In many ways the ongoing complaint that certain of these male figures are inadequately charac? terized or crudely utilized merely manifested a masculine resistance to Austen's marginalization of male experience, but even recent feminist criti? cism exhibits a tendency to overemphasize the role of the "important" male characters, often in a misguided attempt to assert Austen's historical relevance and the profundity of her art.

Critics contemporary with Austen, of course, charged her with triviality of subject, and even her most earnest admirers have adopted a defensive stance. The attendant anxiety of her apologists has greatly affected the lines of developing argument to be found in the body of criticism dealing with the novels. In particular, the regrettable tendency in much Austen criticism to stress the role of individual characters as representatives of a particular class or social orientation is born of the desire to make Austen's subject matter more significant and comprehensive. The practice, defended by David Monaghan, of reading the novels as "social allegories" is an approach that broadens the novels' scope with the added advantage of inflating the importance of male characters.5 Darcy in Pride and Prejudice is no longer one man possessing the advantages and prejudices of a particular class: he becomes the quintessential great landowner with ties to the nobility, synonymous with an entire class and a distinct way of life. Similarly Captain Wentworth in Persuasion as a self made man must signal Austen's endorsement of an enterprising middle class that displaces a decayed aristocracy.

Virginia Woolf called Jane Austen "mistress of much deeper emotion than appears on the surface,"4 yet there is still vagueness about what that deeper emotion is. To investigate it is to risk dis- turbing the prevailing view of Austen as a cool, rational comedi- enne of manners who delineates social surfaces and measures comic aberrations against the stable moral norms of a civilization in whose values she has supreme confidence. Nevertheless, it is hard to read the less buoyant novels, lMansfield Park and Persuasion, without sensing that the societies they depict are somehow being challenged. Verbal wit may be toned down, but possibly because Jane Austen wants to heighten social comment without coloring it too highly with satiric comedy. If one accepts that she is critical of her own society's conventions, one is free to notice that as an artist too she examines convention, periodically experimenting within her fairly small range of comic techniques and simultaneously

probing more complicated emotions than pure pain and pleasure, more blurred moral categories than straight sense and sensibility. In her two most somber novels she does not abandon the conven- tions she uses elsewhere, but she does transform them from within.

The heroine of Pride and Prejudice faces successive "truths" much more inwardly, and her discoveries are more testing. Like Elinor, Elizabeth argues first from appearances, hardening prob- abilities into proofs and dismissing as naivete Jane's sound doubts that Darcy's intimate friends could be deceived in his character. It suits Elizabeth's prejudices to believe that Wickham has "given a very rational account" (84) and that his case against Darcy is un- assailable: "names, facts, every thing mentioned without ceremony" (86). When, however, she reads Darcy's clarifying letter, Elizabeth realizes the extent to which social attractiveness has masked devi- ousness in Wickham. She reasserts standards that have slipped: "She saw the indelicacy of putting himself forward as he had done, and the inconsistency of his professions with his conduct" (207). Elizabeth's conviction that "there was truth in his looks" is now.

exploded and Jane's opinion vindicated. Like Elinor, Elizabeth chooses to hide her depression and is supported by a strong sense of social duty. But what is impressively different is that Austen's pre- sentation of Elizabeth's shame-"till this moment, I never knew myself" (208)-preserves a balance of feeling and judgment despite its declamatory style. Jolting the heroine about halfway through the novel lets Austen not only increase the tensions of her love story but also use the girl's consciousness as a filter for her own 'Views about the Bennet family. Elizabeth's gain in self-knowledge sharp- ens her scrutiny, though one of the penalties this entails is a sense of separateness from her own kin: she sees previously unrecognized faults in her father, and her intimacy with Jane is partly falsified by the recognition that the only circumstances in which she could reveal Bingley's love would make the disclosure pointless: "The liberty of communication cannot be mine until it has lost all its value!" (227).

Elizabeth's emotions lag behind her judgment until after she visits Pemberley, where Darcy's portrait, his housekeeper's eulogy, and his hospitality decisively prove his desirability as well as his worth. Elizabeth's emotional shake-up comes late in the novel and coincides with the climax of the plot, Lydia's elopement. At Pem- berley, Elizabeth is still confident that it is up to her to decide whether to grace Darcy with her favor. Only when it seems too late is she fully enlightened: "Never had she so honestly felt that she could have loved him, as now, when all love must be vain" (278). Having kept Elizabeth unaware of her love, though not her respect, for Darcy, Jane Austen can claim naturalness and worth for love based on gratitude and esteem, and can scorn the sentimentality of love at first sight. More importantly, she can both reinforce and humanize the dictum "Know thyself" by allowing full play to the pathos of love lost through error. The moralist's vocabulary softens into simple cadences of regret: "She was humbled, she was grieved; she repented, though she hardly knew of what. She became jealous of his esteem, when she could no longer hope to be benefited by it. She wanted to hear of him, when there seemed the least chance of gaining intelligence. She was convinced that she could have been happy with him; when it was no longer likely they should meet" (311). Despair is founded on reasonable likelihoods, but it is felt on the pulses, in wanting "to hear of him." Repentance is more felt than understood.

Keywords

Victorian Literature, Romance, Marriage, Patriarchy, Class, Gender difference, Intergenerational Gap, Chastity, Morality

Self Assessment

1. Where does Mr. Bennet live?

A. Kent

B. Meryton

C. Hertfordshire

D. London

2. Who is Mr. Collins’ patroness?

A. Mrs. Bennet

B. Mrs. Lucas

C. Lady Catherine
D. Lady Anne

3. What feature of Elizabeth does initially attract Darcy towards her?
A. Her eyes
B. Her honesty
C. Her manner of dance
D. Her dressing sense

4. What is the name of the estate that Bingley rents?
A. Hertfordshire
B. Manner house
C. Longbourne
D. Netherfield

5. Why does Elizabeth reject Darcy's initial proposal?
A. He is uncivilized

B. She loves Mr. Bingley

C. She does not like him

D. She wanted to become independent first

6. What event interrupts Elizabeth's vacation with the Gardiners?
A. Darcy's accident
B. Lydia's elopement with Wickham
C. Death of Mr. Collins
D. Her father's illness

7. What is the name of Darcy's estate?
A. Netherfield
B. Northgate
C. Mansfield Park
D. Pemberley

8. Why does Charlotte marry Mr. Collins?
A. She wants financial security
B. Elizabeth motivates her
C. She loves Mr. Collins since childhood
D. Mr. Collins bound her to do so

9. Jane Austen used ……………… point of view in *Pride and Prejudice*?
A. First Person
B. Second Person
C. Third Person Omniscient
D. Third Person Limited

10. Jane Austen also makes use of free ………………….. which takes place without signals in the novel.
A. choice of writing style
B. direct discussion
C. indirect discourse
D. figure of speech

11. Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* follows the literary tradition of…..
A. Novel of Manners
B. Novel of Style
C. Picaresque Novel
D. Cyber-punk Novel
12. *Pride and Prejudice* features a cast of characters who are very concerned with ……………...
A. moral and honesty
B. religious belief and spirituality
C. money and social position
D. None of the above

13. What is the overall style of *Pride and Prejudice*?
A. Ironic and Witty
B. Romantic and Elegant
C. Tragic and Emotional
D. Satiric and Ambiguous

14. Mr. Bennet and Elizabeth are the two most frequent contributors to ……...
A. Nonverbal irony
B. Situational irony
C. Verbal irony
D. Above all

15. Jane Austen's Ironic style adds ……………...to relatively straightforward plot events.
A. vibrancy and interest
B. ridicule and satire
C. pictorial art
D. none of the above

Answer for SelfAssessment

l.	C	2.	C	3.	A	4.	D	5.	C
6.	B	7.	D	8.	A	9.	C	10.	C
11.	A	12.	C	13.	A	14.	C	15.	A

Review Questions

1. What is British novel?
2. What is the importance of Jane Austen's Writings?
3. What is the contribution of Henry Fielding?
4. What are major complexities in Pride and Prejudice?
5. How writer overcomes those difficulties?
6. What is British Fiction?
7. What do you understand by the themes of gender and class in the novel?
8. What is the style of the novel?
9. What is the narration in the novel?
10. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
11. Throw light on Early British Novel?
12. Describe characterization in novel?
13. What are major complexities in British Fiction?
14. How one can overcome writing difficulties?

15. What is British Fiction?
16. What do you understand by the themes of gender and class in the novel?
17. What is the style of the novel?
18. What is the narration in the novel?
19. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
20. Throw light on Early British Novel?
21. Describe characterization in novel?

Further Readings

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Unit 06: Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

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Objectives

- After studying this unit, you will be able to:
- Examine a historical-cum-critical perspective on British Fiction
- Analyse the significance of British fiction in totality
- Recognize the essential identity markers of British fiction

Introduction

The daughter of a Hampshire clergyman, Austen was born at Steventon Parsonage on 16 December 1775. The seventh of eight children, she grew up in a happy and close-knit family, and the careers and families of her brothers (two clergymen, two admirals, and one adopted by wealthy relations) inform her stories. She started writing at a young age, and her juvenilia includes dramatic sketches, spoofs and poems. Friends and family circulated her writings and wooed publishers, but it was over a decade before *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) went into print, soon followed by Pride and Prejudice (1813), which she called 'my own darling child'. In his journal, Sir Walter Scott contrasted her 'exquisite touch' with his own 'Big Bow-Wow' approach, praising the way she made 'commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment.'[1]

Sense and Sensibility and *Pride and Prejudice* both revolve around sisters, and Austen's loving alliance with her only sister Cassandra lasted all her life. Both Jane and Cassandra had romances, but, like Austen's heroines, refused to marry for the sake of marriage. They remained single, supporting their mother after the death of their father in 1805.

In 1809, Austen moved with her mother and her sister to Chawton, a tranquil Hampshire village. There, in a house given to them by her wealthy brother Edward, Austen spent her happiest years. All six of her novels date in their finished form from this period. *Mansfield Park* was published in 1814 and Emma, with its heroine whom Austen half-jokingly predicted 'no one but myself will much like', in 1815.

Austen died, aged only 41, on 18 July 1817, leaving the subtle *Persuasion* and her Gothic satire *Northanger Abbey* to be published later that year.

It is said that Jane Austen lived a quiet life. Only a few of her manuscripts remain in existence and the majority of her correspondence was either burned or heavily edited by her sister, Cassandra,

shortly before she died. As a result, the details that are known about her are rare and inconsistent. What can be surmised through remaining letters and personal acquaintances is that she was a woman of stature, humor and keen intelligence. Family remembrances of Austen portray her in a kind, almost saintly light, but critics who have studied her books and the remnants of her letters believe she was sharper than her family wished the public to think.

Jane Austen was born in Steventon, Hampshire on December 16, 1775 and grew up in a tight-knit family. She was the seventh of eight children, with six brothers and one sister. Her parents, George Austen and Cassandra Leigh, were married in 1764. Her father was an orphan but with the help of a rich uncle he attended school and was ordained by the Church of England. Subsequently, he was elevated enough in social standing to provide Cassandra a worthy match whose family was of a considerably higher social status. In 1765, they moved to Steventon, a village in north Hampshire, about 60 miles southwest of London, where her father was appointed rector.

Like their father, two of Austen's older brothers, James and Henry, were ordained and spent most of their lives in the Church of England. Of all her brothers, Austen was closest to Henry; he served as her agent, and then after her death, as her biographer. George, the second oldest son, was born mentally deficient and spent the majority of his life in institutions. The third son, Edward, was adopted by their father's wealthy cousin, Thomas Knight, and eventually inherited the Knight estate in Chawton, where Austen would later complete most of her novels. Cassandra, Austen's only sister, was born in 1773. Austen and Cassandra were close friends and companions throughout their entire lives. It is through the remaining letters to Cassandra that biographers are able to piece Austen's life together. The two youngest Austen boys, Francis and Charles, both served in the Navy as highly decorated admirals.

When Austen was 7, she and Cassandra were sent to Oxford to attend school but sometime later the girls came down with typhus and were brought back to Steventon. When Austen was 9 they attended the Abbey School in Reading. Shortly after enrolling however, the girls were withdrawn, because their father could no longer afford tuition. Though this completed their formal schooling, the girls continued their education at home, with the help of their brothers and father.

The Austens often read aloud to one another. This evolved into short theatrical performances that Austen had a hand in composing. The Austen family plays were performed in their barn and were attended by family members and a few close neighbors. By the age of 12, Austen was writing for herself as well as for her family. She wrote poems and several parodies of the dramatic fiction that was popular at the time, such as *History of England* and *Love andFreindship* [sic]. She then compiled and titled them: *Volume the First, Volume the Second* and *Volume the Third*.

Austen is said to have looked like her brother Henry, with bright hazel eyes and curly hair, over which she always wore a cap. She won the attention of a young Irish gentleman named Tom Lefroy. Unfortunately, Lefroy was in a position that required him to marry into money. He later married an heiress and became a prominent political figure in Ireland.

In 1795, when she was 20, Austen entered a productive phase and created what was later referred to as her "First Trilogy." Prompted by increasing social engagements and flirtations, she began writing *Elinor and Marianne*, a novel in letters, which would eventually be reworked and retitled *Sense and Sensibility*. The following year, she wrote *First Impressions*, which was rejected by a publisher in 1797. It was the first version of *Pride and Prejudice*. She began another novel in 1798, titled *Susan*, which evolved into *NorthangerAbbey*.

The Austens lived happily in Steventon until 1801, when her father suddenly announced he was moving the family to Bath. Austen was unhappy with the news. At the time, Bath was a resort town for the nearly wealthy with many gossips and social climbers. As they traveled that summer, however, she fell in love with a young clergyman who promised to meet them at the end of their journey. Several months later he fell ill and died.

Bath was difficult for Austen. She started but did not finish *The Watsons* and had a hard time adjusting to social demands. She accepted a marriage proposal from Harris Bigg-Wither, the son of an old family friend, but changed her mind the next day. A few years later, in 1805, her father died, leaving Jane, Cassandra and their mother without enough money to live comfortably. As a result, the Austen women relied on the hospitality of friends and family until they were permanently relocated to a cottage in Chawton, Hampshire, belonging to her brother Edward Austen-Knight. There, Austen began the most productive period of her life, publishing several books and completing her "Second Trilogy."

Austen finished the final drafts of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* in 1811. They were published shortly after and she immediately set to work on *MansfieldPark*. In 1814, *MansfieldPark* was published and *Emma* was started. By this time, Austen was gaining some recognition for her writing, despite the fact that neither *SenseandSensibility* or *Pride and Prejudice* were published under her name.

Austen began showing symptoms of illness while she worked on *Persuasion*, her last completed novel. It was published with *Northanger Abbey* after her death. Unknown at the time, Austen most likely suffered from Addison's disease, whose symptoms include fever, back pain, nausea and irregular skin pigmentation. On her deathbed, when asked by her sister Cassandra if there was anything she required, she requested only "death itself." She died at the age of 41 on July 18, 1817 with her sister at her side.

6.1 Social, Economic and Political Background

Throughout the Austen novels, characters concern themselves with the mutable fortunes of their relative social positions. To be independent is to be governed only by one's own will-in other words, to have the power as an individual to make choices and to be governed by those choices alone. By contrast, to be dependent is to be governed by the will of others-either to have others choose for one, or to be oneself the choice of others. These two possibilities are ranked: it is better to be independent than dependent, "better to chuse than to be chosen" (E 17),4 better to be followed than to follow (P 272)-for it is better to be an individual who can, to borrow Louis Dumont's term, "encompass" others than an incomplete person who depends upon superiors.5 Indeed, in the Austen texts, a person dependent upon another is included within the latter's social identity and is, thus, not fully a person in his or her own right. In this sense, to be "dependent" upon another is to be incomplete as a human being, that is, to be less than fully human (cf. Mac- pherson 1962); by contrast, to be independent of others is to achieve the apex of civil society, and to have the greatest power to order society hierarchically.

Of course, hierarchy in Austen's social world is much too complex to be reduced to a simple, binary opposition between masters and servants. Characters such as Charlotte Lucas of Pride and Prejudice advocate marrying for social advantage, thereby foregoing the possibility of deep, mutual understanding and respect (Handler and Segal 1984, in press). In marriage, as elsewhere in social life, Austen advocates neither that the social facts of status be ignored, nor that they be accepted without question.

The social class in England in the nineteenth century is influenced by the industrial revolution. As Perkin (1969) has observed, "the Industrial Revolution was no mere sequence of changes in industrial techniques and production, but a social revolution with social causes as well as profound social effects". The impact of industrial revolution had a great influence especially in forming of the structure of the society (McKay, Hill and Buckler, 1983: 780). In the nineteenth century, the structure of the society consists of third major classes in England. They are upper class, middle class, and lower class (working class). But Jane Austen in Pride and Prejudice only reflects two structure of the society, the upper class and middle class. In Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen shows that Darcy family belongs to the upper class. It can be seen from their estate, snobbish life style. They stay at the large estate and they have company. The income also identifies the social status of someone. The higher someone's income the higher social status she or he gets in society. The income identifies Darcy's social status. Fitzwilliam Darcy is annual income is ten thousands pounds. Another character belonging to the upper class is Bingley family. Mr. Bingley is Darcy's closest friend. He always holds the dancing party. He is categorized based on his wealthy. His wealthy got from inheritances property to the amount from his father. As a part of Bingley family, she thinks that wearing an elegant gown in every party at ball so important to determine her social status. She feels that it shows one's pride and position in society. Lady Catherine de Bourgh family also represents the upper class. She is Darcy's aunt. Like the other upper class family, they dwell at the elite estate, which is known Resigns park. It is a beautiful modern building house at England. From the analysis above, Jane Austen wants to portray that the upper class usually stay in the luxurious and elite estate. It is also completed with a beautiful park in front of the house as a symbol of their social status. The middle classes are represented by Bennet's family and William Collins. It is categorized based on their income and their profession. Bennet's family consists of Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Bennet and their five unmarried daughters. They live in Long bourn, the small town in England. Bennet's income is two thousands a year. William Collins is a Clergyman. During Austen's time, clergyman in the Church of England increasingly came from the middle class. The

occupation was viewed as a learned and prestigious profession and providing a moderate income. Actually, the lifestyle of the middle class is almost the same as the upper class. They like to go to important places where many people are gathering such as attending the dancing parties. Jane Austen also draws the class distinction which is in fact very rigid at her time. The upper class also shows their identity to the society. They do not want to be similar with the other class. Their performances are elegant and luxurious. They like to have the distinction of rank preserved. There are distinctions among the landed classes that are determined by the amount of wealth possessed by the members. In this novel, for instance Miss Bingley and her sister underestimate Bennet's family because they are not wealthy compared to them. This situation is shown when Miss Elizabeth visited her old sister in Netherfield. 2. Economic Aspect In the sixties and early seventies of last country, the British economy was one of the fastest growing in the world. Condition were unusually favorable at that time in all of its great departments, in agriculture, industry, transport and foreign trade, for an exceptionally wide and rapid advance in output and incomes (Court, 1965: 3). The new industrialist and traders were gradually rising as class, but had still not won the right vote. Jane Austen creates the character of Mr. Gardiner to reflect that. He is in business and he is not considered a gentleman by the social elite although he has every personal quality associated with gentility. Through Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen presents this phenomenon in to surface by drawing economic setting that is mostly filled by professions dealing with agricultures. She wants to depict the British economic condition before the booming of industrialization in nineteenth century. She attaches the characters in this novel with professions. For instance, Mr. Bennet represents the farmers who cultivate his field. 3. Political Aspect Two political parties dominated English politics in the early 19th century –the Whigs and the Tories. The Whigs and Tories were loose groupings rather than tightly disciplined modern parties. Both parties' names were originally seventeenth century terms of abuse associated with their supposed religious and rival loyalties (McNeese, 2013: 18). In Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen does not draw any political condition that seems to affect the story since the setting, characters, or theme is merely about life society in that time. There are no political acts or regulations issued by the government during nineteenth century that influence the flow of the story. Neither domestic nor foreign political policies which influence any events in the story can be found. She also does not portray any role of society in political process or the role of society in decision making and public policy. 4. Science and Technology In science, the nineteenth century was great period of specialization, as witness the formation of the separate scientific societies to supplement the older general academies such as the Royal Society (Bernal, 1953: 11). The technical developments of the nineteenth century brought about a complete transformation of the manner of life of hundreds of millions of people in countries dominated by industrial production and mechanized agriculture, and notably affected the conditions of all the remaining population of the world. Nevertheless, it is principally in quantity that the technical transformation of the nineteenth century was remarkable, in quality it was much less so (Bernal, 1953: 18). In Pride and Prejudice the development of science and technology reflected in this novel. There is many tools as the results of the industrialization shown in the story, such as newspaper, bell and letter. Newspaper, as one of printed material or information really helps people to get some information. This novel also uses interesting is letter. Letters are built into the novel in a quite fascinating way. It is used for a long distance communication. In Pride and Prejudice letters are mostly used to make information available and letters are used to inform about circumstances the Jane when she was sick in the Netherfield to her young sister, Elizabeth. (PAP, 1813: 28) Industrialization also improved transportation system so it makes people to go some places easier. Jane Austen wants to give strong emphasis on traditional values in his novel. The most popular transportation in that time is carriage and coach. Most of the people have them to go some places. Traveling in that time was accomplished in horse drawn carriages and coach. This is proven by jane, when she asked Mrs. Bennet to permit her to use carriage to come at Caroline's dinner invitation at Netherfield.

Cultural Aspect In the nineteenth century many people especially the upper class enjoyed aristocrats' excessive diet, and married woman from this class enjoyed increasing leisure. The amount of reading and writing grew voluminously. It was common to judge everything materially, money and wealth become the standard of pride and dignity (Back, 1967: 78). Many activities occurred during leisure times. One of them was dancing party at the ball. It became activity for most of people in their spare time. In this novel, Mrs. Bennet represents this character because she always encourages their five daughters to attend the ball follow the dancing party. They come to the dancing party almost everyday when they are in spare time. It is due to has become their life style. Another major sort of marriage which occurs in this novel is the one concerning marrying outside social class which happens in the novel. This is when someone from a rather high class marries a village girl which would be considered a social disaster. This is demonstrated by Mr.

Darcy;s first marriage proposal towards Elizabeth. He is taking on asking of someone of a much lower class. In that time, everything is valued by material. The concept of materialism can be seen from the way Mrs. Bennet has a strong opinion on this subject due to her situation in life which is she should be concerned with herself and her daughters because if Mr. Bennet dies they will be left with nothing, because all their property will go to Mr. Collins. Mrs. Bennet wants her daughters married because if they do not then they will have no place to live, her great anxiety to get her daughters married is shown when she says "A single man of a large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!" (PAP, 1813: 2) In the nineteenth century, most women of England did marry. After the marriage, the wives tended to stay at home to manage the households and took care the family. In this novel, Charlotte Lucas after becoming Williams Collins's wife, she also tended to stay at home and managed the household. (PAP, 1813: 186) In the traditional British class system, wealth is passed on via the inheritance of family property. Inherited wealth conferred for more status than money earned by work. Family estates were usually inherited by the oldest son and sometimes daughters were given smaller incomes. In this novel, Mr. Bennet cannot inherit their wealth to their daughters but he inherits to his male cousin, Mr. William Collins. 6. Religious Aspect In the nineteenth century there were two different groups in England that are largely Christian middle classes and largely un-Christian working classes. The factory worker did not go to the church because they were outside of any religious body. They thought religion just part of fading way of life and they were described by religion doubt (Gwinn, 1768: 79). In Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen represents William Collins as the religious person. He is a clergyman and he has patroness, Lady Catherine. She always pays attention to his wishes, and consideration for his comfort, appeared very remarkable. William Collins had already had the honor of preaching her. (PAP, 1813: 57) A clergyman in the Church of England is given a living, meaning a house, in a Church district or parish. He usually stays at personage, which is usually modest but comfortable. The minister is called a parson. In this novel, Jane Austen draws Mr. Collins has become a financial sponsor, or patron of the local church. The majority religion in England is Christianity. Every Sunday they go to the Church for praying. As a good Christian, Lady Catherine de Bourgh also goes to the Church every Sunday. So, based on the condition above the story of the novel can be mirror of the real condition society in the early nineteenth century that concerned with social status and social stratification in their society. Here, the writer tries to find whether there is a social stratification reflected in this novel or not. By focusing on social aspects, Jane Austen tries to illustrate the social condition of the society at that time, and concludes that social class is not permanent. It can change depending on the effort of human. It can be called as a social mobility. By marriage, someone can change their social status be higher than before. This is experienced by Elizabeth Bennet and Jane Bennet. At the story, they are told that they belong to middle class, but after they get married with rich men, Darcy and Bingley, their social status automatically follows their husband's social status. In the analysis and discussion above, it can be concluded that Jane Austen describes marriage based on social status or social stratification, clearly in the novel. It is not different from the reality in the early nineteenth century where in that period were many people had marriage based on material oriented and social status. After analyzing the novel using sociological approach, finally the researcher finds that there is correlation between underlying theory, the historical background of the England in the early nineteenth century, and also the structural elements of the novel. It can also be said that Jane Austen is able to reflect the condition of England society in that period in the story of the novel.

Between 1797, when a young Jane Austen began work on what would become Pride and Prejudice, and 1813, when the novel was published, the French Revolution was fought, Marie Antoinette was guillotined and Napoleon rose to power and conquered most of Western Europe. Closer to Austen's home, Great Britain combined with Ireland to become the United Kingdom, the slave trade was abolished by Parliament throughout the British empire and King George III, driven to apparent madness by what historians now suspect to have been a rare hereditary metabolic disorder, was replaced in his duties by his son, the Prince Regent, later to become King George IV.

The Georgian era into which Jane Austen was born, characterized for Britain by almost constant warfare abroad, was in many ways a transitional period. It saw the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, the shift from Enlightenment to Romantic trends in arts and letters, and the first whispers of feminist and abolitionist concerns in Western Europe. A little familiarity with these sweeping historical trends can lend some context to Austen's domestic fictions, but perhaps more helpful is an understanding of the particular details of daily life during the Regency period; life as faced by Austen and so many of her fictional characters.

6.2 Themes

Class

The theme of class is related to reputation, in that both reflect the strictly regimented nature of life for the middle and upper classes in Regency England. The lines of class are strictly drawn. While the Bennets, who are middle class, may socialize with the upper-class Bingleys and Darcys, they are clearly their social inferiors and are treated as such. Austen satirizes this kind of class-consciousness, particularly in the character of Mr. Collins, who spends most of his time toadying to his upper-class patron, Lady Catherine de Bourgh.

Though Mr. Collins offers an extreme example, he is not the only one to hold such views. His conception of the importance of class is shared, among others, by Mr. Darcy, who believes in the dignity of his lineage; Miss Bingley, who dislikes anyone not as socially accepted as she is; and Wickham, who will do anything he can to get enough money to raise himself into a higher station. Mr. Collins's views are merely the most extreme and obvious. The satire directed at Mr. Collins is therefore also more subtly directed at the entire social hierarchy and the conception of all those within it at its correctness, in complete disregard of other, more worthy virtues.

Through the Darcy-Elizabeth and Bingley-Jane marriages, Austen shows the power of love and happiness to overcome class boundaries and prejudices, thereby implying that such prejudices are hollow, unfeeling, and unproductive. Of course, this whole discussion of class must be made with the understanding that Austen herself is often criticized as being a classist: she doesn't really represent anyone from the lower classes; those servants she does portray are generally happy with their lot. Austen does criticize class structure, but only a limited slice of that structure.

Family

Family is an integral theme in the novel. All of the characters operate within networks of family connections that shape their decisions and perspectives. For the female characters in particular, the influence and behavior of their family members is a significant factor in their lives. Because "the business of [Mrs. Bennet's] life was to get her daughters married", the Bennet sisters constantly have to navigate their mother's plans and schemes. While male characters like Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley have much more social and financial independence, they still rely on the judgment and opinions of female family members like Caroline Bingley and Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Individuals are judged according to the behavior of their family members, which is why Darcy points out to Lizzy that he is doing her a favor by proposing even though she comes with embarrassing family connections. The theme of family shows that individuals never lead totally autonomous lives, and that individual actions have wider communal implications.

Integrity

Elizabeth Bennet considers herself to have very high standards of integrity, and she is often frustrated and disappointed by the way she sees others behaving. She complains bitterly to her sister, "The more I see of the world, the more am I dissatisfied with it, and every day confirms my belief of the inconsistency of all human characters." She behaves in ways she considers consistent with her definition of integrity by refusing to marry both Mr. Collins and Mr. Darcy (when he proposes the first time): Elizabeth thinks it is very important to only marry a man she loves and respects, despite the pressure to achieve economic security.

By the end of the novel, Lizzy's commitment to integrity has been rewarded because she marries a partner who will truly make her happy. She has also come to see that she can sometimes be too rigid and judge too quickly, since she was initially mistaken about the nature and ethics of Wickham and Darcy. The novel endorses the importance of integrity, but it also reminds readers not to be too quick to pass judgment on who has it and who doesn't.

Gender

Gender is a key theme in *Pride and Prejudice*. The story takes place at a time when gender roles were quite rigid, and men and women had a very different set of options and influences. Marriage is a

pressing question for female characters like Charlotte Lucas and the Bennet sisters because marriage is the only way women can achieve economic stability and autonomy. As upper-class women, they would not have been able to work to earn a living, or live independently. Marriage offered one of the only ways to move beyond their birth families. However, a woman's marriageability relied on an impeccable reputation for chastity, and for women like Georgiana Darcy or Lydia Bennet, a reckless decision to trust the wrong man could permanently ruin their future prospects. Lydia's elopement causes Lizzy to exclaim with horror that "she is lost forever." If Lydia is living with Wickham without being married to him, her reputation will be destroyed.

6.3 Symbols

Dancing – This is a symbol that comes into the story early on. In the beginning of the novel, while Jane is at her most prejudiced and Mr. Darcy at his most prideful, Jane and Mr. Darcy dance together in a stylistically formal and precise manner that mirrors their relationship at that point.

Pemberley – This is Mr. Darcy's estate, which Elizabeth visits at a point in the novel during which she is starting to soften, thanks to traveling and being away from the pressures of her mother and her hometown's social expectations. The reader starts to get the sense at this point in the novel—about halfway—that Elizabeth feels freer and more relaxed while she is traveling. Pemberley serves as a symbol for the person Mr. Darcy really is, underneath his pride and social status. Elizabeth is enchanted by the beauty of the property and subsequently starts to see Mr. Darcy in a new light and allows herself to feel charmed by him as well. To enhance this symbol, Austen has Elizabeth cross a small bridge as she approaches his home. This suggests that the divide that has so far existed between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth will be bridged as well as the two become closer to each other. As Elizabeth starts to see Mr. Darcy for who he really is, he starts to see Elizabeth for who she is when she is free of social pressures and expectations.
Outdoor Settings – The interactions that Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy have with each other tend to change depending on whether they are indoors or outdoors.
Much of their most strained interactions take place while they are confined in a building. They generally tend to behave much more rigidly, keeping a careful distance from each other. However, when they interact outdoors (they take a few meaningful walks together at different points of the novel), their rigid behavior relaxes as they find themselves less beholden by expectations. They loosen up and are able to have more emotionally free conversations alone in the outdoors.

Summary

Although Austen's novels have always been open to widely divergent interpretations, the two basic stances taken by critics are to view her as a conservative holding the values of the landed gentry in the late eighteenth century or as a subversive who undercuts the very premises upon which English society rests.1 Most feminist studies have represented Austen as a conscious or unconscious subversive voicing a woman's frustration at the rigid and sexist social order which enforces women's subservience and dependence, though many feminist critics, as Julia Prewitt Brown notes, are distinctly uncomfortable with what they see as Austen's "cowardly accommo? dations" with the patriarchal order.2 What these rival camps share, however, is a tendency to make the patriarchal order itself Austen's essential subject matter. Austen, placed as she is historically, is perhaps most often seen as a pivotal figure, looking both backward and forward; but whether critics emphasize her eighteenth-century roots or stress her affinities with Romanti? cism, almost always the big question is her valuation of the established patriarchal order. I do not mean to suggest that this is not a question worth asking.

Jane Austen has long been credited with being a keen observer of human nature and a creator of vital and convincing characters of both sexes. Critics, however, have down through the years regularly found fault with one group of characters in particular in her novels, the young men who appear as likely suitors for the heroines? the "heroes" and "villains." In many ways the ongoing complaint that certain of these male figures are inadequately charac? terized or crudely utilized merely manifested a masculine resistance to Austen's marginalization of male experience, but even recent feminist criti? cism exhibits a tendency to overemphasize the role of the "important" male characters, often in a misguided attempt to assert Austen's historical relevance and the profundity of her art. Critics contemporary with Austen, of course, charged her with triviality of subject, and

even her most earnest admirers have adopted a defensive stance. The attendant anxiety of her apologists has greatly affected the lines of developing argument to be found in the body of criticism dealing with the novels. In particular, the regrettable tendency in much Austen criticism to stress the role of individual characters as representatives of a particular class or social orientation is born of the desire to make Austen's subject matter more significant and comprehensive. The practice, defended by David Monaghan, of reading the novels as "social allegories" is an approach that broadens the novels' scope with the added advantage of inflating the importance of male characters.5 Darcy in Pride and Prejudice is no longer one man possessing the advantages and prejudices of a particular class: he becomes the quintessential great landowner with ties to the nobility, synonymous with an entire class and a distinct way of life. Similarly Captain Wentworth in Persuasion as a self made man must signal Austen's endorsement of an enterprising middle class that displaces a decayed aristocracy.

Virginia Woolf called Jane Austen "mistress of much deeper emotion than appears on the surface,"4 yet there is still vagueness about what that deeper emotion is. To investigate it is to risk dis- turbing the prevailing view of Austen as a cool, rational comedi- enne of manners who delineates social surfaces and measures comic aberrations against the stable moral norms of a civilization in whose values she has supreme confidence. Nevertheless, it is hard to read the less buoyant novels, Mansfield Park and Persuasion, without sensing that the societies they depict are somehow being challenged. Verbal wit may be toned down, but possibly because Jane Austen wants to heighten social comment without coloring it too highly with satiric comedy. If one accepts that she is critical of her own society's conventions, one is free to notice that as an artist too she examines convention, periodically experimenting within her fairly small range of comic techniques and simultaneously probing more complicated emotions than pure pain and pleasure, more blurred moral categories than straight sense and sensibility. In her two most somber novels she does not abandon the conven- tions she uses elsewhere, but she does transform them from within.

The heroine of Pride and Prejudice faces successive "truths" much more inwardly, and her discoveries are more testing. Like Elinor, Elizabeth argues first from appearances, hardening prob- abilities into proofs and dismissing as naivete Jane's sound doubts that Darcy's intimate friends could be deceived in his character. It suits Elizabeth's prejudices to believe that Wickham has "given a very rational account" (84) and that his case against Darcy is un- assailable: "names, facts, every thing mentioned without ceremony" (86). When, however, she reads Darcy's clarifying letter, Elizabeth realizes the extent to which social attractiveness has masked devi- ousness in Wickham. She reasserts standards that have slipped: "She saw the indelicacy of putting himself forward as he had done, and the inconsistency of his professions with his conduct" (207). Elizabeth's conviction that "there was truth in his looks" is now.

exploded and Jane's opinion vindicated. Like Elinor, Elizabeth chooses to hide her depression and is supported by a strong sense of social duty. But what is impressively different is that Austen's pre- sentation of Elizabeth's shame-"till this moment, I never knew myself" (208)-preserves a balance of feeling and judgment despite its declamatory style. Jolting the heroine about halfway through the novel lets Austen not only increase the tensions of her love story but also use the girl's consciousness as a filter for her own 'Views about the Bennet family. Elizabeth's gain in self-knowledge sharp-ens her scrutiny, though one of the penalties this entails is a sense of separateness from her own kin: she sees previously unrecognized faults in her father, and her intimacy with Jane is partly falsified by the recognition that the only circumstances in which she could reveal Bingley's love would make the disclosure pointless: "The liberty of communication cannot be mine until it has lost all its value!" (227). Elizabeth's emotions lag behind her judgment until after she visits Pemberley, where Darcy's portrait, his housekeeper's eulogy, and his hospitality decisively prove his desirability as well as his worth. Elizabeth's emotional shake-up comes late in the novel and coincides with the climax of the plot, Lydia's elopement. At Pem-berley, Elizabeth is still confident that it is up to her to decide whether to grace Darcy with her favor. Only when it seems too late is she fully enlightened: "Never had she so honestly felt that she could have loved him, as now, when all love must be vain" (278). Having kept Elizabeth unaware of her love, though not her respect, for Darcy, Jane Austen can claim naturalness and worth for love based on gratitude and esteem, and can scorn the sentimentality of love at first sight. More importantly, she can both reinforce and humanize the dictum "Know thyself" by allowing full play to the pathos of love lost through error. The moralist's vocabulary softens into simple cadences of regret: "She was humbled, she was grieved; she repented, though she hardly knew of what. She became jealous of his esteem, when she could no longer hope to be benefited by it. She wanted to hear of him, when there seemed the least chance of gaining intelligence. She was convinced that she could have been happy with him;

when it was no longer likely they should meet" (311). Despair is founded on reasonable likelihoods, but it is felt on the pulses, in wanting "to hear of him." Repentance is more felt than understood.

Keywords

Economic Condition, Socio-Cultural practices, Marriage, Faith, Infidelity, Chastity, Rural-Urban Landscape, Countryside

Self Assessment

1. Where do the Bennets live?

A. Meryton

B. Hertfordshire

C. Kent

D. London

2. What is the name of the Bennet estate?

A. Longbourn

B. Netherfield

C. Rosings

D. Pemberley

1. With whom does Lydia go to Brighton?

A. Mrs. Bennet

B. Mrs. Forster

C. Wickham

D. Mrs. Philips

2. Who is the governess who betrays Georgiana Darcy?

A. Miss Price

B. Mrs. Williams

C. Miss Younge

D. Miss Denny

3. Mrs. Bennet's reaction to Lydia's marriage is best described as:

A. Cautiously pleased

B. Indifferent

C. Condemnatory

D. Unreservedly jubilant

4. Why does Mr. Collins come to Longbourn?

A. He wants to redecorate it.

B. He wants to become acquainted with his relatives.

C. He is looking for a wife.

D. He is passing through town.

5. Who is Mr. Collins's patroness?

A. Mrs. Lucas
B. Lady Catherine
C. Mrs. Hurst
D. Lady Anne

6. What is Mr. Gardiner's profession?

A. Army officer
B. Merchant
C. Lawyer
D. Clergyman

7. What feature initially attracts Darcy to Elizabeth?

A. Her cheerfulness
B. Her eyes
C. Her smile
D. Her intelligence

8. Why doesn't Bingley visit Jane while she is in London?

A. He doesn't know that she's there.
B. Lady Catherine forbids him from going.
C. Darcy advises him against it.
D. He thinks that jane does not like him.

9. What is the name of the estate that Bingley rents?

A. Longbourne
B. Rosings
C. Netherfield
D. Fox hall

10. Why does Elizabeth reject Darcy's initial proposal?

A. It was customary for women at that time to reject the first proposal.
B. She does not like him.
C. He is too poor
D. She is in love with someone else.

11. What event interrupts Elizabeth's vacation with the Gardiners?

A. Darcy's second proposal
B. The death of Mr. Collins
C. The news of jane's engagement to Bingley
D. Lydia's elopement with Wickham

12. Which of the Bennet sisters dislikes social events?

A. Lydia
B. Mary
C. Jane
D. Kitty

13. Where do Lydia and Wickham go when they run off from Brighton together?

A. London
B. Gloucester
C. Kent
D. Scotland

14. Why does Wickham flee from Brighton?

A. He wants to leave the militia and become a clergyman.
B. He has accumulated over 1,000 pounds gaming debts.
C. He has been fired from his post on account of misconduct.
D. He has fallen madly in love with Lydia.

15. Mr. Bennet responds to the news of Elizabeth's engagement with:

A. Anger
B. Resignation
C. Unreserved joy
D. Skepticism

Answer for Self Assessment

1.	B	2.	A	3.	B	4.	C	5.	D
6.	C	7.	B	8.	B	9.	B	10.	B
11.	C	12.	B	13.	D	14.	B	15.	A

Review Questions

1. What is British novel?
2. What is the importance of Jane Austen's Writings?
3. What is the contribution of Henry Fielding?
4. What are major complexities in Pride and Prejudice?
5. How writer overcomes those difficulties?
6. What is British Fiction?
7. What do you understand by the themes of gender and class in the novel?
8. What is the style of the novel?
9. What is the narration in the novel?
10. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
11. Throw light on Early British Novel?
12. Describe characterization in novel?
13. What are major complexities in British Fiction?
14. How one can overcome writing difficulties?

Further Reading

- A Course in Academic Writing by Renu Gupta, Orient Blackswan Pvt. Ltd.
- English Grammar by Rajeevan Karal, Oxford University Press
- A course in Academic Writing by Renu Gupta, Orient Blackswan Pvt. Ltd.
- English Grammar by Rajeevan Karal, Oxford University Press
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Unit 07: Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte

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Objectives

- After studying this unit, you will be able to:
- Examine a historical-cum-critical perspective on British Fiction
- Analyse the significance of British fiction in totality
- Recognize the essential identity markers of British fiction

Introduction

"Wuthering Heights is a strange sort of book—baffling all regular criticism; yet, it is impossible to begin and not finish it; and quite as impossible to lay it aside afterwards and say nothing about it." This review, from Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper, was one of the first receptions to Emily Brontë's novel, and concluded with the line, "we must leave it to our readers to decide what sort of a book it is." The conclusion in this review, which is the extent of praise the novel received on its publication, pertains not only to the novel Wuthering Heights but to Emily Brontë herself; it is up to readers to determine what type of writer Brontë was: Besides Wuthering Heights, only a few poems of hers exist and precious little of her personal history exists to complement those writings. Thus, in order to ascertain what type of writer Brontë was, critics must speculate based on a limited family history, some poems, and one excellent novel. Brontë was one of six children born to Reverend Patrick Brontë and Maria Branwell Brontë. Born in Thornton, Yorkshire, England, on July 30, 1818, she was the sister of Maria, Elizabeth, Charlotte, Anne, and Branwell. Her family moved to Haworth when she was two years old, and here she first experienced the moors, a part of the Pennine Chain of mountains, andhere she lived until she died 30 years later.

A variety of conflicting influences shaped her life. Her father, of Irish descent, was known for his poetry and imagination even though he was the cleric. Her mother, a staunch Methodist, died when Emily was only three years old, so what she knew of her she learned from her siblings and her Aunt Elizabeth (Maria's sister), who raised the children after Maria's death. Elizabeth brought a religious fervor to the house that Brontë soon rejected. Brontë's environment shaped her life and her work. The village of Haworth was isolated and surrounded by moors; thus, the one world she knew and lived in became the setting for her only novel. Paralleling her own life, she creates motherless characters in Wuthering Heights. Writing was a means of amusement for the Brontë children. After the two oldest sisters died, the remaining siblings began writing plays and poems, creating a world called Angria and Gondal. These worlds became little books and the sources for later poetry and prose. Emily Brontë went to school, but she was unable to stay there. Possessing a reclusive nature, she had longings and desires for her home on the moors, which prompted her

return home after a scant three months. 2 CliffsNotes Brontë's Wuthering Heights. In the following year, 1837, she attempted to teach school. This endeavor lasted eight months, but she could not handle the stress and again returned home. In 1842 she went with Charlotte to Brussels to study foreign languages and school management in order to open a school in Haworth. Brontë hadsuccess there. One of her professors stated that she "had a head for logic and a capability for argument, unusual in a man, and rare indeed in a woman," but she returned to Haworth when her aunt died in 1843. Living with her father at the parsonage in Haworth, this became a period of creativity. Although the earliest dated poem is from 1836, the majority of her poetry that survives was written during this time.

Like most authors, Emily Brontë was a product of her environment, and this directly influenced her writing. During her life she had no close friends, was interested in mysticism, and enjoyed her solitude outdoors. All of these elements grace both her poems and Wuthering Heights. In fact, many contemporary critics praise Emily Brontë first and foremost as a poet, marveling at the poetic nature of Wuthering Heights. In 1845 Charlotte found some of the poetry that Emily had been writing and eventually persuaded her sister to attempt to publish her work. Charlotte and Emily, along with their sister Anne, eventually published a collection of poems under the male names of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. Each pseudonym begins with the same consonant as the writer's name. The sisters paid to have the collection published, and even though it only sold two copies, they were undaunted and continued to write. This time each sister wrote a novel. Evidence suggests that Emily Brontë began writing Wuthering Heights in December 1845 and completed it the next year. A year after that, in July of 1847, Wuthering Heights was accepted for publication; however, it was not printed until December, following the success of Jane Eyre. Although Wuthering Heights did not meet with the critical success Jane Eyre received, contemporary critics tend to consider Emily the best writer of the Brontë sisters. Emily Brontë's highly imaginative novel of passion and hate was too savage and animal-like and clumsy in its own day and time, but contemporary audiences consider it mild. The fall following publication, Emily Brontë left home to attend her brother's funeral. She caught a severe cold that spread to her lungs, and she died of tuberculosis on December 19, 1848. Following the publication of poems, Jane Eyre, Wuthering Heights, and Anne's novel Agnes Grey, audiences considered all three "Bells" to be one author. Confusion continued as Anne published The Tenant of Wildfell Hall. Wuthering Heights was reissued with poems and a biographical notice by Charlotte. By this time, both Emily and Anne had died, and Charlotte succinctly stated how and why she and her sisters assumed the name of Bell. Charlotte Brontë also provided insight into the life of her sister. Long after its initial publication and subsequent death of its author, Wuthering Heights has become one of the classics of English literature. After the reissue of Emily Brontë's text, the editors of the Examiner commented upon Charlotte's introduction. Their words and sentiments are often echoed by admirers of Wuthering Heights: "We have only most unfeignedly to deplore the blight which fell prematurely on sure rich intellectual promise, and to regret that natures so rare and noble should so early have passed away."

Although Wuthering Heights received neither critical praise nor any local popularity during its initial publication, the reading public has changed substantially since 1847, and now both critical and popular opinion praise Emily Brontë's singular work of fiction. Victorian society would not accept the violent characters and harsh realities of Wuthering Heights, but subsequent audiences are both more understanding and accepting of the use of unsavory aspects of human life in literature. The first person to praise publicly Wuthering Heights was Charlotte Brontë, Emily's sister, who wrote a preface and introduction for the second publication of the novel in 1850 and became the novel's first and foremost critic. Yet Charlotte herself was not entirely convinced of all its merits. Commenting upon the advisability of creating characters such as Heathcliff, Charlotte states, "I scarcely think it is [advisable]." Charlotte's comments may be a direct concession and appeal to Victorian audiences to accept and respect Wuthering Heights without having to accept completely everything within the text. In addition to having difficulty with the content, the Victorian audience's view of women could not allow anyone of that period to accept that Wuthering Heights was the creation of a female (it had been published originally under the pseudonym Ellis Bell). After its initial publication, both critical and popular audiences ended up embracing Wuthering Heights, and it remains one of the classic works still read and studied. Wuthering Heights is an important contemporary novel for two reasons: Its honest and accurate portrayal of life during an early era provides a glimpse of history, and the literary merit it possesses in and of itself enables the text to rise above entertainment and rank as quality literature. The portrayal of women, society, and class bear witness to a time that's foreign to contemporary

readers. But even though society is different today than it was two centuries ago, people remain the same, and contemporary readers can still relate to the feelings and emotions of the central characters—Heathcliff and Catherine—as well as those of the supporting characters. BecauseBrontë's characters are real, they are human subjects with human emotions; therefore, Wuthering Heights is not just a sentimental romance novel. It is a presentation of life, an essay on love, and a glimpse at relationships.

Many critics, praising Brontë's style, imagery, and word choice, contend that Wuthering Heights is actually poetry masquerading as prose. Brontë's Wuthering Heights.This lyrical prose has a distinct structure and style. Significantly, Wuthering Heights is about ordered pairs: two households, two generations, and two pairs of children. Some critics dismiss the plot of the second-generation characters as being a simple retelling of the first story; however, in doing so, they are dismissing the entire second half of the book. Each of the two main story lines of the two generations comprises 17 chapters. Clearly, in order to appreciate fully Wuthering Heights, attention must be paid to the second half, particularly noting that the second half is not just a retelling but rather a revising—a form of renewal and rebirth. These ordered pairs more often than not, are pairs of contrast. The most noticeable pair is that of the two houses: Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Wuthering Heights has the wild, windy moors and its inhabitants possess the same characteristics. Opposite this are the calm, orderly parks of Thrushcross Grange and its inhabitants. Each household has a male and female with a counterpart at the other. Readers gain insight into these characters not only by observing what they think, say, and do but also by comparing them to their counterparts, noticing how they do not think, speak, and act. Much is learned by recognizing what one is not. Structurally, the narrative is also primarily told from a paired point of view. Lockwood frames the initial story, telling the beginning and ending chapters (with minor comments within). Within the framework of his story, Nelly relates the majority of the action from her outsider's point of view. In essence, readers are eavesdropping rather than experiencing the action. And embedded within Nelly's narrative are chapters told primarily from another character's point of view that has been related to Nelly. This technique allows readers to experience more than would with any one narrator, enabling readers to gain an insider's perspective. The role of the outsider should not be overlooked because the setting of Wuthering Heights is one of complete isolation; therefore, only those with first- or second-hand experiences are able to relate them to others.

The moors connecting Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange serve a dual purpose—linking the two households while simultaneously separating them from the village and all others. This isolated setting is important for Brontë's combination of realism and gothic symbolism. Brontë took conventions of the time and instead of merely recreating them in a work of her own, used them as a springboard to write an entirely original tale, creating characters who are simultaneously real and symbolic archetypes. Brontë uses these characters to explore themes of good versus evil, crime and punishment, passion versus rationality, revenge, selfishness, division and reconciliation, chaos and order, nature and culture, health and sickness, rebellion, and the nature of love. These themes are not independent of each other; rather, they mix, mingle, and intertwine as the story unfolds. Wuthering Heights is also a social novel about class structure in society as well as a treatise on the role of women. Brontë illustrates how class mobility is not always moving in one direction. For Catherine, representing a lower class, social class plays a major role when deciding to get married. That is why she cannot marry Heathcliff and agrees, instead, to marry Edgar. For Isabella, however, just the opposite is true. She is drawn to the wild, mysterious man, regardless of the fact that he is beneath her social standing. Because of her infatuation, she loses everything that is dear to her. Readers must therefore look not only to social class when judging and analyzing characters; they must determine what decisions are made by members of a certain class and why these characters made the decisions they did. On the surface, Wuthering Heights is a love story. Delving deeper, readers find both a symbolic and psychological novel. (Contemporary audiences, for example, easily relate to issues of child abuse and alcoholism.) In fact, Wuthering Heights cannot be easily classified as any particular type of novel—that is the literary strength that Brontë's text possesses. The novel told from multiple points of view is easily read and interpreted from multiple perspectives, also. Like other literary masterpieces, Wuthering Heights has spawned dramatic productions, a musical retelling, movies, and even a novel that fills in the gaps of Heathcliff's three missing years. Emily Brontë's novel has overcome its initial chilly reception to warm the hearts of romantics and realists worldwide.

7.1 Themes and Symbols

Themes are simply subjects the author is concerned with. When we think of the elements of a novel, we tend to think rather glibly of 'characters, plot, themes, style' and so on; but we should recognise that 'themes' are different from these other elements, because the author does not identify and name them, we do. So, we might quite reasonably discuss a 'theme of revenge' in Wuthering Heights, and in our discussion, we could look at Heathcliff's long pursuit of revenge against both the Earnshaw's and the Linton's, Hindley's attempt to revenge himself upon Heathcliff, and Edgar Linton's refusal to be reconciled to Isabella. This discussion might be enlightening and useful, but we should never forget that we chose the subject 'revenge'. What is 'revenge'? It follows 'injury', in the sense that Heathcliff was injured by Hindley's tyranny and Catherine's marriage; Edgar was injured by Heathcliff's destruction of his marriage; Hindley was injured by Heathcliff stripping him of his authority and property. It stands to reason that there is no 'revenge' without prior 'injury'. So, perhaps we should discuss a 'theme of injury and revenge' instead of just 'revenge'? A theme, then, is a subject we think is important in the text, and it is selected and defined by us. A theme is also not a literal thing, created by the author, like a character or an event. It follows that we can find any number of 'themes' in a text, and also that different critics can call the same 'theme' by different names. A quick read through past examination questions on Wuthering Heights, for example, would show that some of themmention a 'theme of emotion' and others mention the 'theme of love'. Love, of course, is an emotion. We know from reading Wuthering Heights that deep and shallow 'love', or deep and shallow 'emotion', is a major element in the conflict between Catherine and Heathcliff on the one hand, and Edgar on the other. The two ideas are not the same, of course, but they overlap. Themes, then, present two difficulties: the terms used to describe them are often arbitrary, and you can always think of more of them to study.

Lockwood's Dreams

Emily Bronte has taken to prepare the elements which appear in Lockwood's dreams. For example, on page 15 he witnessed the argument between Cathy and Joseph, where the old servant's dour, rigid religion was emphasised, and the woman was accused of being a witch. The title-page of the book he is reading as he falls asleep blends into his first dream as he is 'half consciously, worrying my brain to guess what Jabes Brander ham would make of his subject'. The suggestive surnames for Catherine: Earnshaw, Heathcliff or Linton, appeared all over the margins of the book, and the extract from her diary provided yet more evidence of Joseph's persecutions in the name of religion. The author's careful realism continues into and through the narrative of the dreams themselves. Elements of dream and physical worlds are related to each other in close detail. So the chapel Lockwood dreams of is real ('I have passed it really in my walks, twice or thrice'); the noise of JabesBranderham hammering the floor with his staff is a dream-representation of 'the branch of a fir-tree that touched my lattice ... and rattled its dry cones against the glass'; and in his dream he piles up the real books, a detail remembered from his actual surroundings, to keep out Catherine's ghost. The narrative returns to this detail when 'the pile of books moved as if thrust forward'.

Emily Bronte has been equally thorough in providing psychological justifications for these dreams. Lockwood's admission that 'terror made me cruel' before he tried to cut the ghost's wrist on the glass, echoes the cold rejection of emotional appeals we already know to be characteristic of him. He has told us that he cruelly rebuffed the advances of 'a fascinating creature, a real goddess' when at a sea-coast resort (see page 6). After waking, Lockwood provides Heathcliff with an explanation. He had never heard the name 'Catherine Linton' before, but 'reading it often over produced an impression which personified itself when I had no longer my imagination under control' (p. 28).

Bronte ensures that we have a clear understanding of the relationship between the real world and Lockwood's dream visions, then. The dreams have no physical effect, either. The glass was not broken when Heathcliff 'wrenched open the lattice' after the dream, and Lockwood's voice is deliberately ironic in observing that 'The spectre showed a spectre's ordinary caprice; it gave no sign of being' (pp. 28-9). We can therefore conclude that the dreams are two vivid, dramatised stories made out of elements from the real waking world: objects and observations that have recently surrounded Lockwood; and pre-existing traits of his character, which we can trace clearly between waking and dream worlds.

Absolutes and Limitations

Much of the imagery in the novel can now be classified into two groups: images conveying the absolute, and images of limitations. For example, the 'foliage' which is Catherine's love for Edgar is temporary, an image of something limited, in contrast to the permanence, or absolute, of her love for Heathcliff as 'the eternal rocks beneath'. In the same way, Edgar's emotional capacity is compared to a limited 'horse-trough' which cannot contain Catherine's love, a love which Heathcliff likens to the infinite depth of 'the sea'. Catherine tries to explain the difference between Edgar's soul and those of herself and Heathcliff, in terms of absolute brightness and heat ('lightning' and 'fire') in contrast to the limited image-ideas 'moonbeam' and 'frost' (p. 80). Heathcliff specifically relates these images of sallowness and infinite depth, to love in contrast to shallower emotions: 'And that insipid, paltry creature attending her from duty and humanity! From pity and charity! He might as well plant an oak in a flower-pot, and expect it to thrive, as imagine he can restore her to vigour in the soil of his shallow cares!' (p. 151). The images of limitation we have noticed include small containers like the 'horse-trough' and 'flower-pot'; and this motif links with images which bring to mind imprisonment and enclosure, like Catherine's ideas of seeing a 'glorious world' dimly 'through tears' or 'through the walls of an aching heart'.

Both Catherine and Heathcliff suggest that they will not be confined by death unless they are finally together: the infinity of their desire will escape the physical confines of coffin, earth, and whatever else may be placed about them. Catherine says they may 'throw the church down over me; but I won't rest till you are with me ... I never will' (p. 125); and Heathcliff warns Nelly that she will have 'a better chance of keeping me underground, when I get there' now he has seen that Catherine is in her grave (p. 286). Heathcliff proposes to remove the physical barriers between their corpses, also, by removing the coffin-sides. The image-idea of enclosures and walls further links to the setting of Wuthering Heights. Edgar's fear of his daughter passing beyond the enclosed 'park' ofThrushcross Grange is clearly a sign of his limitation: he only wishes her to experience a part of life (Nelly comments that she grew up like a 'perfect recluse' - p. 188), and is frightened of the unlimited, unbounded experience she might meet if she ventured farther afield.

Ghosts

Ghosts symbolize lost souls, memory, and the past in *Wuthering Heights*, and Brontë uses this symbol to support the themes of love and obsession and good versus evil. Cathy's ghost lingers in Heathcliff's memory, supporting love and obsession, and then it actively and vengefully pursues Heathcliff in the end, supporting good versus evil.

When alive, Heathcliff and Cathy curse each other, creating spiritual anguish, turning their love into obsession, so they will not be parted in death, nor lose each other to the traditional heaven they both reject. When Heathcliff sees Cathy before she dies, and she is angry he will continue to live when she is gone, he asks her, "Are you possessed with a devil?" and after her death, he cries out, "May she wake in torment ... I pray one prayer ... Cathy Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living ... I *cannot* live without my soul!" In Cathy and Heathcliff's willful desire to haunt and be haunted, the symbolism of ghosts cannot be extricated from ideas of good and evil in the novel; by rejecting heaven, both characters become lost souls roaming the earth.

Weather, Wind and Trees

Brontë uses weather to produce tone, reflect the plot, and mirror characters' emotions. The author's use of pathetic fallacy as a literary device is greatest in her symbolism of the weather, wind, and trees, though it is used in other symbols as well. Typically, storms and rain symbolize angry, violent, or passionate emotions, and breezes and calm weather reflect peace, hope, and goodness. The use of pathetic fallacy is so pervasive, the novel can be opened at almost any point in the narrative and the weather will reflect perfectly the events and characters' emotions of that particular chapter.

Wind and trees symbolize how the emotions of one character shape or disfigure the growth of another character, as much as how the emotional and physical environment plays a role in shaping or contorting a character's disposition. Heathcliff is used as the mouthpiece to deliver the meaning of the symbolism of wind and trees in Chapter 17 when he says to Hareton: "Now my bonny lad, you are mine! And we'll see if one tree won't grow as crooked as another, with the same wind to twist it."

Symbols

It is important to be clear about the distinction between images and symbols. Definitions in dictionaries and literary 'companions' can be extremely confusing. However, if we use our common sense, we can cut away much of the complication and use a clear method to tell one from the other. When do we need to know which is which? It happens when we are in the middle of studying a text. We have come across something in the text which suggests further meaning, or resonates in our minds, as if it carries extra significance and cries out to be interpreted. We do not need to go back to dictionary definitions, then: we are already involved in studying literature. Simply, we have found something in the text that provokes us to think in an exciting, referential way, as if something in the text stands for an idea, or is attached to a feeling. All we want to know is what to call it: image or symbol?

Penistone Craggs

We are struck by the amount of emotion and meaning attached to Penistone Craggs. Cathy longs to go there, they shine 'golden' to her, and her discussion with Nelly gives provocatively conflicting interpretations of their attraction or hostility (Cathy sees them 'golden' and 'bright', but to Nelly they are 'bare masses of stone'). Penistone Craggs also seems to mean something: Cathy's remark 'But I know the park, and I don't know those' places the Craggs with the wonder of a wider world, and connects them to the excitement and adventure of youth. It is not going too far to say that they represent the fascination of the unknown, in this passage. Now ask the question: are Penistone Craggs really there, literally and actually a part of the story of Wuthering Heights? The answer is yes: Cathy can really see them through her window; Nelly has really visited them. In this case, then, when you study Penistone Craggs and their significance in the novel, you are studying symbolism.

Isabella's dog

The dog is first mentioned as 'something white'. Its movement attracts Nelly's attention because it seems unnatural: it moves 'irregularly' and the wind does not account for this. Bronte reminds us that Nelly is rushing to fetch the doctor, because Mrs Linton is critically ill. Clearly, the irregular movement of 'something white' arrests Nelly powerfully: she stops to investigate 'Notwithstanding my hurry'. Nelly then explains even more fully why she stopped. She is a sensitive, suggestible person, as we know from other parts of the text (for example, when Heathcliff returns and accosts her in the porch, she is 'uncertain whether to regard him as a worldly visitors' - p. 93), yet she clings to her homespun morality and common sense. On this occasion, Nelly feels a need to bring something apparently supernatural down into the world of reason. She is frightened in case she will be haunted by the mystery for the rest of her life: 'lest ever after I should have the conviction impressed on my imagination that it was a creature of the other world'. Emily Bronte, then, introduces the hanging dog in a carefully built-up aura of unnatural mystery and power.

Even then, the strangeness of the dog is not dispelled. Nelly recognises it 'by touch more than vision' and remains in great 'surprise and perplexity,' which makes her wonder 'much' how it came to be there. While she is releasing the dog, another mystery is introduced in the 'strange sound' of galloping hoofbeats 'at some distance'. The hoofbeats resemble Nelly's first glimpse of the dog in being indistinct: she says that 'it seemed' that she 'caught the beat of horses' feet'. Bronte, then, places a heavy emphasis on the difficulty Nelly has in discerning the truth of either the dog or the distant sound of hooves. She emphasises hearing and touch at the expense of indistinct sight.

Gardening at the Heights

The gardening that Hareton and Cathy begin at Wuthering Heights, not long before Heathcliff's death, is narrated in this matter-of-fact manner. We quickly realise that it is significant, however, in the context of references to plants and flowers throughout Wuthering Heights. In this passage, the 'black' currant-bushes (which are dark, wild and hardy, with thorns) are the type of vegetation that suits the Heights. We remember Lockwood's description of 'a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun' (p. 4). A flowerbed and flowers, on the other hand, are to be 'imported from the Grange', where the garden is enclosed and cultivated.

Cultivating a garden at Wuthering Heights, then, symbolises Cathy's civilising influence (like her teaching Hareton to read), importing the culture in which she was brought up and softening the wildness of the old house. The suggestion that this activity is like a symbolic spring after the long winter of pain, deaths and Heathcliff's destructive revenge, is reinforced by other slight touches during the final chapters of the novel. For example, when they go inside for breakfast, Catherine teases Hareton by 'sticking primroses in his plate of porridge' (p. 315); and Lockwood is surprised on his final visit to the Heights, to notice 'a fragrance of stocks and wall flowers, wafted on the air, from amongst the homely fruit trees' (p. 304). Cathy's and Hareton's gardening, then, is a straightforward symbol of renewal and growth; an external sign of their youth, love, and re-born hope.

7.2 Characterization

Joseph How does Bronte introduce a character? We will look at Joseph, who appears in the first chapter. We first see him through Lockwood's eyes, and the narrator is typically uncertain of his age: 'Joseph was an elderly, nay, an old man, very old, perhaps, though hale and sinewy.' Joseph's voice and expression are described in the next paragraph, the first as 'an undertone of peevish displeasure' and the second as 'looking ... sourly' (all from p. 4). This is the sum total of description devoted to Joseph, but it is reinforced, strengthening the impression he makes. On page 6 Joseph's 'undertone' is mentioned again as he 'mumbled indistinctly', and his sour expression develops into 'vinegar-faced Joseph' on page 9. Joseph's manner of speech begins with the common, intelligible phrase 'The Lord help us!' (p. 4), which establishes his voice as being laced with religious phrases and names. The next time he speaks, his dialect is fully represented: 'Whet are ye for? ... T'maister'sdahni' t'fowld' (p. 9). Joseph's dialect curses and mumbles are a recurrent feature of the novel until his last appearance by Heathcliff's body, when he exclaims 'Th'divil's harried off his soul' (p. 332). He also frequently mumbles and mutters in his 'undertone', and looks badtemperedly. We have examined Joseph's first appearances, then, and found certain distinct features in the way this is done. First, Emily Bronte does not pause to introduce him: there is a minimum of description, and hardly any visual presentation of the character. The impression he makes appeals to the mind and emotions, and the ear. That is, the riddle of his age, his 'sour' expression, and the sound of his voice. These impressions are given immediately and strongly, and are reinforced, appearing like a motif each time we meet him again. The absence of pictorial details is quite striking, and contributes to the emphasis on emotion: we do not know whether he was tall or short, thin or stocky, with a pudgy nose or a hooked beak. However, we are told the feeling that animates his expression - he looked 'sourly'. In the same way, we are not told that he had a high voice, or a rich deep tone; but we are told that it was full of 'peevish displeasure'. So we can say that Joseph is presented with an absence of conventional description: instead there is an emphasis on the mood he projects, and the impact of that on the feelings.

Hindley Earnshaw

We can now look at the introduction of another secondary character, Hindley Earnshaw. Does Emily Bronte follow the same method consistently, focusing on mood and emotional impact, and throwing her character into actions and speech as quickly as possible? The suddenness of Hindley's arrival in the novel is accentuated because he is introduced in Catherine's journal, not in Lockwood's narrative. A strongly paradoxical effect is set up by the journal device: Hindley's name is mentioned without explanation, as if we already know his character, and his relationship to the narrator. On the other side of this narrative paradox, however, ignorance and doubt are heavily underscored. We do not know anything about Hindley at all. In fact, we know nothing about the person who is writing about him, our narrator for the moment, either. Lockwood's confusions emphasise uncertainty: this person seems to have many different handwritings, and three possible surnames: ' ... in all kinds of characters, large and small - Catherine Earnshaw, here and there varied to Catherine Heathcliff, and then again to Catherine Linton' (p. 19). Hindley, then, arrives as an unexplainable name. On the other hand, he does appear attached to powerful feelings: he is immediately 'detestable', and his behaviour is 'atrocious'. This hostility is strongly marked throughout the short scene Catherine's journal relates. He is called 'the tyrant' and is physically aggressive ('seizing one of us by the collar, and the other by the arm, hurled both into the back-kitchen') before the end of the scene. Bronte slips in the fact that he is the writer's 'brother', unobtrusively, during the narration.

Heathcliff We can now consider the major characters. Young Cathy, Hareton, Mrs Dean herself, Edgar Linton and Linton Heathcliff are all characterised in greater detail and depth than those we have called 'secondary' in the previous section. However, in the remainder of this chapter we focus our attention on the two most famous figures from the novel - Heathcliff and Cathy. There are two distinct stages in our investigation. First, we look closely at crucial extracts, hoping to gain further insight into Bronte's methods and intentions in creating the people in Wuthering Heights. Subsequently, we will discuss the role each character plays in the scheme and meaning of the novel as a whole.

Heathcliff's style, then, emphasises immediate experience in which actions, emotions and thoughts seem to spring directly from each other. This enables the reader to re-live the story vividly; but it also gives us the opportunity to follow the workings of Heathcliff's character very closely. His state seems to alter during this sentence, and this naturally leads us to ask why? A technique based on summary can often help us understand a character's changes. First, summarise his state before the pivotal moment; then summarise his state after.

The change between these two states is startling. By the end of the sentence, Heathcliff has forgotten his need to stay with Cathy, and has deferred his own death to some future date. His love for Cathy has left his mind, which is now filled with jealousy of Linton. This is a major change, and we are provoked to ask: Why has he changed so radically? What has brought this about? The text provides one answer, in the form of Heathcliff's plan to doctor the coffins: he can look forward to being with Cathy after death, because of the coffin-sides. So, this plan is a substitute for staying with her now. This would seem to be the answer Heathcliff gives to himself, but are we convinced? If we think about it in practical terms, the answer has to be no. Heathcliff's plan is elaborate, because it involves ordering a special coffin for himself, and bribing the sexton. The plan is very uncertain, because it depends on Heathcliff being obeyed after his own death.

Heathcliff's emotions are so powerful that they create an illusion in his brain. The 'ghost' is a psychological phenomenon in Heathcliff, not a supernatural event. This explanation has the virtue that it chimes with the central trait of Heathcliff's character, as we have come to know him. He repeatedly goes to extraordinary lengths in order to change reality so that it will conform to his wishes. This time, he manages (but only in his mind) to change the facts of life and death, and make them conform to his desires.

On the one hand, he has a powerful grasp of reality. On the other hand, his emotions cannot accept the pain they experience in living through change - in particular the most fundamental change human beings encounter: death. Can we find corroborative evidence elsewhere, to add weight to our theory of conflict in Heathcliff? The conflict is not resolved by his illusion of Cathy's ghost, and we can trace it through his account of the next eighteen years. It has a cumulative effect on him. He calls it 'a strange way of killing', and it has 'racked' him until he 'groaned aloud'. The nervous tension of his state has been 'intolerable torture! Infernal' and 'keeping my nerves at sucl1 a stretch' that only his unusual powers of endurance have kept him from collapse.

Summary

The story of Wuthering Heights centres on a group of characters - Catherine and Hindley Earnshaw, Heathcliff, Edgar and Isabella Linton, and their three children. We can say that this 'story' begins when Heathcliff is brought into the Earnshaw family, when Catherine and Hindley are children; and ends with the marriage of Hareton Earnshaw and Catherine Linton/Heathcliff, and the death of Heathcliff himself. It is an exciting story, full of passions, marriages, births and deaths. However, it is important to remember that the author does not tell us this story: Wuthering Heights has a narrative frame. Another character, Nelly Dean, tells the story to Mr Lockwood, and he tells it to us. The first-person narrator of Wuthering Heights, then, is a long way removed from the actual experiences of the story. He only meets three of the main characters (Hareton and young Cathy, the two survivors of the younger generation; and Heathcliff), and he meets them as an unperceptive stranger, preoccupied by his own affairs, in the final year of their forty-year story. Emily Bronte has devised an elaborate 'frame' for her story, then. In Wuthering Heights, the normal

act of reading a fable related by an author is trebled: we read a fable narrated by a man who was told the story by a woman who was peripherally involved. This form places an insistent focus on the act of storytelling, and raises numerous questions: What is a 'story'? What kind of an activity is 'storytelling'? How should we navigate the complex relationship between any narrative account, and the thing - life - itself. An equally heavy emphasis is placed on the act of reading or 'hearing' the story, so we are provoked to question our own activity when we are engaged in reading the novel. How do we hear the things that are related to us? Do we accept a truth that has been filtered through the prejudices, and is imprisoned in the language, of successive narrators? Or do we believe we can reconstruct the original event, compensating for the different viewpoints that have coloured it? Is it reasonable to attempt such a reconstruction? Can a story exist independent of the language that tells it?

These questions go to the heart of how literature is written and read. Many modern critics are particularly interested in analysing the actions of language, in order to throw light onto literary activity itself. Some concentrate on words as the constituent elements of language, treating them as 'signs' which refer to a reality we can never reach because it can never be fully represented to us. Others see language and the act of storytelling as a 'code', which readers are eager to break in order to reach through to the reality behind it. In this view, writers 'encode' a story which we attempt to 'decode'. Yet other critics focus on the act of reading, as a hopeless search for 'mastery' of the text: hopeless because the authority of the story is constantly undermined by the act of narration, so that meaning retreats from us.

It is not our purpose to indulge in modern critical controversies in our first chapter. But we do begin with the recognition that Wuthering Heights tells its story in a particularly elaborate and questionable way, within a double frame. In this chapter we look at extracts which highlight the influence of the different narrators. From analysing specific passages, we hope to understand more about how and why Emily Bronte introduces such complex relationships between the original story and the reader, and how she plays the narrators off against each other.

Keywords

Gothic, Nature, Countryside, Chastity, Love, Romance, Marriage, Childhood, Class hierarchy, Gender

Self Assessment

1) Where does Heathcliff live?

A. Lowood

B. Wuthering heights

C. Thrushcross grange

D. The chase

2) Why does Lockwood visit Heathcliff in Chapter 1?

A. To inquire about his health

B. He and Heathcliff were friends in their school days

C. To rent property from him

D. To sell him a bible

3) To which Shakespearean hero does Lockwood compare himself after Joseph and Heathcliff accuse him of stealing?

A. Hamlet

B. Romeo

C. Othello

D. King Lear

4) What did Joseph make Catherine and Heathcliff do as children?

A. Scrub the floors
B. Chop wood
C. Memorize multiplication tables
D. Listen to sermons

5) Where is Lockwood's nightmare about Catherine Linton set?
A. Wuthering heights
B. A library
C. The moors
D. A church

6) How does Lockwood wake up Heathcliff?
A. By gently shaking his arm
B. By accidentally slamming the door
C. By crying out in his sleep
D. By falling down the stairs

7) How long has Ellen Dean lived at Thrushcross Grange?
A. 16 years
B. 15 years
C. 10 years
D. 18 years

8) What does Lockwood mean when he says that "my predecessor's name was Linton"?
A. Linton rented Thrushcross grange before Lockwood did
B. Linton was married to Cathy before Lockwood met her
C. Linton occupied the position of village pastor before Lockwood did
D. Like Lockwood, Linton was also a newcomer to the village at one point

9) What gift did Mr. Earnshaw promise to bring Nelly Dean from Liverpool?
A. A fiddle
B. Fruit
C. A set of paints
D. A bridle for her horse

10) Who took care of Heathcliff when he had measles as a child?
A. Nelly dean
B. Cathy Earnshaw
C. Mr. Earnshaw
D. Hindley Earnshaw

11) Cathy does something to cause tension between herself and Heathcliff when she returns from her first visit to the Linton's. What does she do?
A. She doesn't notice Heathcliff until after she has greeted everyone else

B. She refuses to kiss Heathcliff

C. She comments on Heathcliff's bad hygiene

D. She gushes about how much fun she had with Edgar and Isabella Linton

12) Who is Linton in Wuthering Heights?

A. Earnshaw

B. Lockwood

C. Son of Heathcliff

D. None of the above

13) Who is Cathy?

A. Wife if Heathcliff

B. Sister of Heathcliff

C. Daughter of Healthcliff

D. None of the above

14) What happens to the marriage of Cathy and Edgar

A. It is happy

B. It is troublesome

C. It is sad

D. Both b and c

15) What happens to Cathy in the novel?

A. She reunites with Heathcliff

B. She dies

C. She is very sick

D. None of the above

Answer for Self Assessment

1.	B	2.	A	3.	B	4.	C	5.	D
6.	C	7.	B	8.	B	9.	B	10.	A
11.	C	12.	D	13.	D	14.	B	15.	A

Review Questions

1. What is British novel?
2. What is the importance of Emily Bronte's Writings?
3. What is the contribution of Emily Bronte?
4. What are major complexities in Wuthering Heights?
5. How writer overcomes those difficulties?
6. What is British Fiction?
7. What do you understand by the themes of gender and class in the novel?
8. What is the style of the novel?
9. What is the narration in the novel?
10. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
11. Throw light on Early British Novel?
12. Describe characterization in novel?

13. What are major complexities in British Fiction?
14. How one can overcome writing difficulties?

Further Reading

- A Course in Academic Writing by Renu Gupta, Orient Blackswan Pvt. Ltd.
- English Grammar by RajeevanKaral, Oxford University Press
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  Association

Unit 08: Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Examine a historical-cum-critical perspective on British Fiction
- Analyse the significance of British fiction in totality
- Recognize the essential identity markers of British fiction

Introduction

"Wuthering Heights is a strange sort of book—baffling all regular criticism; yet, it is impossible to begin and not finish it; and quite as impossible to lay it aside afterwards and say nothing about it." This review, from Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper, was one of the first receptions to Emily Brontë's novel, and concluded with the line, "we must leave it to our readers to decide what sort of a book it is." The conclusion in this review, which is the extent of praise the novel received on its publication, pertains not only to the novel Wuthering Heights but to Emily Brontë herself; it is up to readers to determine what type of writer Brontë was: Besides Wuthering Heights, only a few poems of hers exist and precious little of her personal history exists to complement those writings. Thus, in order to ascertain what type of writer Brontë was, critics must speculate based on a limited family history, some poems, and one excellent novel. Brontë was one of six children born to Reverend Patrick Brontë and Maria Branwell Brontë. Born in Thornton, Yorkshire, England, on July 30, 1818, she was the sister of Maria, Elizabeth, Charlotte, Anne, and Branwell. Her family moved to Haworth when she was two years old, and here she first experienced the moors, a part of the Pennine Chain of mountains, andhere she lived until she died 30 years later.

A variety of conflicting influences shaped her life. Her father, of Irish descent, was known for his poetry and imagination even though he was the cleric. Her mother, a staunch Methodist, died when Emily was only three years old, so what she knew of her she learned from her siblings and her Aunt Elizabeth (Maria's sister), who raised the children after Maria's death. Elizabeth brought a religious fervor to the house that Brontë soon rejected. Brontë's environment shaped her life and her work. The village of Haworth was isolated and surrounded by moors; thus, the one world she knew and lived in became the setting for her only novel. Paralleling her own life, she creates motherless characters in Wuthering Heights. Writing was a means of amusement for the Brontë children. After the two oldest sisters died, the remaining siblings began writing plays and poems, creating a world called Angria and Gondal. These worlds became little books and the sources for

later poetry and prose. Emily Brontë went to school, but she was unable to stay there. Possessing a reclusive nature, she had longings and desires for her home on the moors, which prompted her return home after a scant three months. 2 CliffsNotes Brontë's Wuthering Heights. In the following year, 1837, she attempted to teach school. This endeavor lasted eight months, but she could not handle the stress and again returned home. In 1842 she went with Charlotte to Brussels to studyforeign languages and school management in order to open a school in Haworth. Brontë had success there. One of her professors stated that she "had a head for logic and a capability for argument, unusual in a man, and rare indeed in a woman," but she returned to Haworth when her aunt died in 1843. Living with her father at the parsonage in Haworth, this became a period of creativity. Although the earliest dated poem is from 1836, the majority of her poetry that survives was written during this time.

Like most authors, Emily Brontë was a product of her environment, and this directly influenced her writing. During her life she had no close friends, was interested in mysticism, and enjoyed her solitude outdoors. All of these elements grace both her poems and Wuthering Heights. In fact, many contemporary critics praise Emily Brontë first and foremost as a poet, marveling at the poetic nature of Wuthering Heights. In 1845 Charlotte found some of the poetry that Emily had been writing and eventually persuaded her sister to attempt to publish her work. Charlotte and Emily, along with their sister Anne, eventually published a collection of poems under the male names of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. Each pseudonym begins with the same consonant as the writer's name. The sisters paid to have the collection published, and even though it only sold two copies, they were undaunted and continued to write. This time each sister wrote a novel. Evidence suggests that Emily Brontë began writing Wuthering Heights in December 1845 and completed it the next year. A year after that, in July of 1847, Wuthering Heights was accepted for publication; however, it was not printed until December, following the success of Jane Eyre. Although Wuthering Heights did not meet with the critical success Jane Eyre received, contemporary critics tend to consider Emily the best writer of the Brontë sisters. Emily Brontë's highly imaginative novel of passion and hate was too savage and animal-like and clumsy in its own day and time, but contemporary audiences consider it mild. The fall following publication, Emily Brontë left home to attend her brother's funeral. She caught a severe cold that spread to her lungs, and she died of tuberculosis on December 19, 1848. Following the publication of poems, Jane Eyre, Wuthering Heights, and Anne's novel Agnes Grey, audiences considered all three "Bells" to be one author. Confusion continued as Anne published The Tenant of Wildfell Hall. Wuthering Heights was reissued with poems and a biographical notice by Charlotte. By this time, both Emily and Anne had died, and Charlotte succinctly stated how and why she and her sisters assumed the name of Bell. Charlotte Brontë also provided insight into the life of her sister. Long after its initial publication and subsequent death of its author, Wuthering Heights has become one of the classics of English literature. After the reissue of Emily Brontë's text, the editors of the Examiner commented upon Charlotte's introduction. Their words and sentiments are often echoed by admirers of Wuthering Heights: "We have only most unfeignedly to deplore the blight which fell prematurely on sure rich intellectual promise, and to regret that natures so rare and noble should so early have passed away."

Although Wuthering Heights received neither critical praise nor any local popularity during its initial publication, the reading public has changed substantially since 1847, and now both critical and popular opinion praise Emily Brontë's singular work of fiction. Victorian society would not accept the violent characters and harsh realities of Wuthering Heights, but subsequent audiences are both more understanding and accepting of the use of unsavory aspects of human life in literature. The first person to praise publicly Wuthering Heights was Charlotte Brontë, Emily's sister, who wrote a preface and introduction for the second publication of the novel in 1850 and became the novel's first and foremost critic. Yet Charlotte herself was not entirely convinced of all its merits. Commenting upon the advisability of creating characters such as Heathcliff, Charlotte states, "I scarcely think it is [advisable]." Charlotte's comments may be a direct concession and appeal to Victorian audiences to accept and respect Wuthering Heights without having to accept completely everything within the text. In addition to having difficulty with the content, the Victorian audience's view of women could not allow anyone of that period to accept that Wuthering Heights was the creation of a female (it had been published originally under the pseudonym Ellis Bell). After its initial publication, both critical and popular audiences ended up embracing Wuthering Heights, and it remains one of the classic works still read and studied. Wuthering Heights is an important contemporary novel for two reasons: Its honest and accurate portrayal of life during an early era provides a glimpse of history, and the literary merit it possesses in and of itself enables the text to rise above entertainment and rank as quality literature. The portrayal of women, society, and class bear witness to a time that's foreign to contemporary readers. But even though society is different today than it was two centuries ago, people remain the

same, and contemporary readers can still relate to the feelings and emotions of the centralcharacters—Heathcliff and Catherine—as well as those of the supporting characters. Because Brontë's characters are real, they are human subjects with human emotions; therefore, Wuthering Heights is not just a sentimental romance novel. It is a presentation of life, an essay on love, and a glimpse at relationships.Many critics, praising Brontë's style, imagery, and word choice, contend that Wuthering Heights is actually poetry masquerading as prose. Brontë's Wuthering Heights.This lyrical prose has a distinct structure and style. Significantly, Wuthering Heights is about ordered pairs: two households, two generations, and two pairs of children. Some critics dismiss the plot of the second-generation characters as being a simple retelling of the first story; however, in doing so, they are dismissing the entire second half of the book. Each of the two main story lines of the two generations comprises 17 chapters. Clearly, in order to appreciate fully Wuthering Heights, attention must be paid to the second half, particularly noting that the second half is not just a retelling but rather a revising—a form of renewal and rebirth. These ordered pairs more often than not, are pairs of contrast. The most noticeable pair is that of the two houses: Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Wuthering Heights has the wild, windy moors and its inhabitants possess the same characteristics. Opposite this are the calm, orderly parks of Thrushcross Grange and its inhabitants. Each household has a male and female with a counterpart at the other. Readers gain insight into these characters not only by observing what they think, say, and do but also by comparing them to their counterparts, noticing how they do not think, speak, and act. Much is learned by recognizing what one is not. Structurally, the narrative is also primarily told from a paired point of view. Lockwood frames the initial story, telling the beginning and ending chapters (with minor comments within). Within the framework of his story, Nelly relates the majority of the action from her outsider's point of view. In essence, readers are eavesdropping rather than experiencing the action. And embedded within Nelly's narrative are chapters told primarily from another character's point of view that has been related to Nelly. This technique allows readers to experience more than would with any one narrator, enabling readers to gain an insider's perspective. The role of the outsider should not be overlooked because the setting of Wuthering Heights is one of complete isolation; therefore, only those with first- or second-hand experiences are able to relate them to others.

The moors connecting Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange serve a dual purpose—linking the two households while simultaneously separating them from the village and all others. This isolated setting is important for Brontë's combination of realism and gothic symbolism. Brontë took conventions of the time and instead of merely recreating them in a work of her own, used them as a springboard to write an entirely original tale, creating characters who are simultaneously real and symbolic archetypes. Brontë uses these characters to explore themes of good versus evil, crime and punishment, passion versus rationality, revenge, selfishness, division and reconciliation, chaos and order, nature and culture, health and sickness, rebellion, and the nature of love. These themes are not independent of each other; rather, they mix, mingle, and intertwine as the story unfolds. Wuthering Heights is also a social novel about class structure in society as well as a treatise on the role of women. Brontë illustrates how class mobility is not always moving in one direction. For Catherine, representing a lower class, social class plays a major role when deciding to get married. That is why she cannot marry Heathcliff and agrees, instead, to marry Edgar. For Isabella, however, just the opposite is true. She is drawn to the wild, mysterious man, regardless of the fact that he is beneath her social standing. Because of her infatuation, she loses everything that is dear to her. Readers must therefore look not only to social class when judging and analyzing characters; they must determine what decisions are made by members of a certain class and why these characters made the decisions they did. On the surface, Wuthering Heights is a love story. Delving deeper, readers find both a symbolic and psychological novel. (Contemporary audiences, for example, easily relate to issues of child abuse and alcoholism.) In fact, Wuthering Heights cannot be easily classified as any particular type of novel—that is the literary strength that Brontë's text possesses. The novel told from multiple points of view is easily read and interpreted from multiple perspectives, also. Like other literary masterpieces, Wuthering Heights has spawned dramatic productions, a musical retelling, movies, and even a novel that fills in the gaps of Heathcliff's three missing years. Emily Brontë's novel has overcome its initial chilly reception to warm the hearts of romantics and realists worldwide.

8.1 Narration Style

The story of Wuthering Heights centres on a group of characters - Catherine and Hindley Earnshaw, Heathcliff, Edgar and Isabella Linton, and their three children. We can say that this 'story' begins when Heathcliff is brought into the Earnshaw family, when Catherine and Hindley are children; and ends with the marriage of Hareton Earnshaw and Catherine Linton/Heathcliff,

and the death of Heathcliff himself. It is an exciting story, full of passions, marriages, births and deaths. However, it is important to remember that the author does not tell us this story: Wuthering Heights has a narrative frame. Another character, Nelly Dean, tells the story to Mr Lockwood, and he tells it to us. The first-person narrator of Wuthering Heights, then, is a long way removed from the actual experiences of the story. He only meets three of the main characters (Hareton and young Cathy, the two survivors of the younger generation; and Heathcliff), and he meets them as an unperceptive stranger, preoccupied by his own affairs, in the final year of their forty-year story. Emily Bronte has devised an elaborate 'frame' for her story, then. In Wuthering Heights, the normal act of reading a fable related by an author is trebled: we read a fable narrated by a man who was told the story by a woman who was peripherally involved. This form places an insistent focus on the act of storytelling, and raises numerous questions: What is a 'story'? What kind of an activity is 'storytelling'? How should we navigate the complex relationship between any narrative account, and the thing - life - itself. An equally heavy emphasis is placed on the act of reading or 'hearing' the story, so we are provoked to question our own activity when we are engaged in reading the novel. How do we hear the things that are related to us? Do we accept a truth that has been filtered through the prejudices, and is imprisoned in the language, of successive narrators? Or do we believe we can reconstruct the original event, compensating for the different viewpoints that have coloured it? Is it reasonable to attempt such a reconstruction? Can a story exist independent of the language that tells it?

These questions go to the heart of how literature is written and read. Many modern critics are particularly interested in analysing the actions of language, in order to throw light onto literary activity itself. Some concentrate on words as the constituent elements of language, treating them as 'signs' which refer to a reality we can never reach because it can never be fully represented to us. Others see language and the act of storytelling as a 'code', which readers are eager to break in order to reach through to the reality behind it. In this view, writers 'encode' a story which we attempt to 'decode'. Yet other critics focus on the act of reading, as a hopeless search for 'mastery' of the text: hopeless because the authority of the story is constantly undermined by the act of narration, so that meaning retreats from us.

It is not our purpose to indulge in modern critical controversies in our first chapter. But we do begin with the recognition that Wuthering Heights tells its story in a particularly elaborate and questionable way, within a double frame. In this chapter we look at extracts which highlight the influence of the different narrators. From analysing specific passages, we hope to understand more about how and why Emily Bronte introduces such complex relationships between the original story and the reader, and how she plays the narrators off against each other.

Narrators

(a) Lockwood

We start with the first-person narrator, Mr. Lockwood. He arrives in the story almost by chance, as a gentleman who has casually rented Thrushcross Grange, but who might have 'fixed on' a completely different part of 'all England'. He has never been to that part of the country before, and immediately identifies himself as a newcomer by exclaiming 'This is certainly a beautiful country!'; while the aura of diary or travelogue is enhanced by the bald statement of the date '180 1' followed by a dash, which is the first mark of the novel.

We are interested in the way Mr Lockwood expresses himself, first of all, as the story of Wuthering Heights comes to us through the filter of his language. What are the noticeable features of his language in this extract, and what conclusions about him can we draw based on these? One insistent feature in this passage is Lockwood's speculations. The language is filled with guesswork: 'I suppose', 'perhaps' and 'I conjectured' govern the three main statements about Joseph (that he is the only servant; his age; and that he repeatedly calls on God) when Lockwood meets him. When the narrative turns to describe the exterior of the house, Lockwood assumes the wild weather they 'must have', and uses the slanting vegetation to 'guess' the power of the wind. Amusingly, he attributes the same speculative approach to the housebuilder three-hundred years before, who 'happily' (meaning luckily) built the house strongly and with small windows. When Lockwood sees the date '1500', he is curious and 'would have ... requested a short history of the place'; but the pattern of the extract, where Lockwood speculates but has no definite information, is maintained. Heathcliff looks morose, so Lockwood is deterred from asking his question.

Lockwood is an observer who takes in sense-impressions and thinks about them, as does any person travelling through life; and he struggles to translate these impressions into words for us. Bronte's repeated use of the language of guesswork and hesitant deduction never allows us to

forget that the thing itself- Heathcliff and his house - is only relayed to us by means of a clumsy, struggling observer. So far, then, we have found a consistent seam in Lockwood's language which emphasizes the act of narration, reminding us that the story comes to us via a narrative frame. We have also noticed that the Lockwood 'filter' only allows a small amount of solid material to reach us. So, for example, we saw that the paragraph about Heathcliff was 278 words long, but only 47 of these words conveyed reliable information. So, the frame restricts our information. The next question is: does it also change, distort or suppress information?

The 'diction of the story itself' is found in the characters' direct speech, and in two words which Lockwood puts in quotation marks. This language comes to us direct from the story without interference and is markedly plain. Heathcliff and Joseph both speak in monosyllables apart from the two names 'Joseph' and 'Lockwood'. Heathcliff includes two imperatives, 'take' and 'bring'. Their short, plain words are in sharp contrast to Lockwood's narrative. Immediately after Heathcliff speaks, Lockwood uses 'establishment' and 'domestics'; and following Joseph's speech he uses 'soliloquized', 'undertone' and 'displeasure'.

The narrator is openly uncertain, and only a small amount of reliable material filters through him from the story to us. We are constantly reminded of how little we know, and how speculative all our interpretations must be. So, it seems at first that Bronte has created a very thin and rarefied story, and we might expect the effect of this narrative to be reductive or economical. This is not the effect, however. The explicit, insistent lack of thorough information in the story paradoxically creates the opposite effect. As we are reminded how thin our information is, we are at the same time reminded, continually, of the fullness of vague distances which contain more but unknown information. Heathcliff's 'entirely dissimilar' motives, the unknowable infinite mystery of another individual, are like the 'other dogs' which 'haunted other recesses': they are things we are vaguely aware of which create an unlimited but obscured environment around the story itself.

(b) Nelly Dean

Nelly Dean was a girl-servant at Wuthering Heights when Mr. Earnshaw returned from a visit to Liverpool with the orphan child, Heathcliff. When Lockwood records the story, she is the middle aged housekeeper at Thrushcross Grange. Most of the novel is narrated to Lockwood by her. Mrs. Dean does use guesswork, and interprets on the basis of what she observes. When she approaches Heathcliff and announces Cathy's death, for example, she tells us that 'a foolish notion struck me that his heart was quelled, and he prayed' because Heathcliff's mouth is moving. This is a straightforward example of the narrator guessing about the character's state of mind, and by calling her guess a 'foolish notion', Mrs. Dean reminds us that we cannot rely on her. A more complex situation surrounds her picture of the dead Cathy as 'that untroubled image of Divine rest'. This is a conventional view of the dead, yet in the context of Wuthering Heights, Mrs. Dean's description raises unanswerable questions. We will discuss these later in our analysis. For now, we simply notice that she does guess about the characters, and that she repeatedly reminds us not to rely on her guesses. In this case, she goes so far as to ask Lockwood whether Cathy is in heaven ('Divine rest') or not. Does the narrator's character interfere with the story? Yes, again. Mrs. Dean is an active participant in this part of the story, and she acts on the basis of what she believes, introducing her concepts of good, evil, and Heathcliff's character, into her words. She admonishes him pompously ('if we ... leave our evil ways'), and rubs salt into his wounds by saying that Cathy died 'Quietly as a lamb' and without mentioning his name. These are hostile actions.

The narrative frame in Wuthering Heights throws up complicated and ambiguous ironies. This is only a short extract, but we have deferred full discussion because there are so many implications that it is difficult to hold them all in our heads at the same time. In these circumstances it is helpful to summarize exactly what happens in relation to the narrative. Here is an attempt to reduce the implications of Mrs. Dean's guesswork to manageable proportions, by summansmg.

(c) Other Narrators

There are a number of narratives spoken by the participating characters in Wuthering Heights. We will look at two of them. We begin with Heathcliff's account of his marriage and life with Isabella. Let us look at the language Heathcliff uses. When we begin toassess his style, we may be surprised at the breadth and complexity of his vocabulary, since our first observation of his speech commented on short words and simple physical verbs. This speech seems much more elaborate. Close analysis soon shows us that the plain language is still there, but is one of two distinct styles in Heathcliff's speech.

We know from previous extracts that Heathcliff commands a rough, violent diction that contrasts with Nelly's and Lockwood's. For example, we heard him say 'don't snivel' to Nelly, and 'May she wake in torment!' of Cathy. The present passage includes some choice insults aimed at Isabella. She is a 'mean-minded Brach' and an 'abject thing' who showed 'silly smiles and grimaces', for example; and Heathcliff's concise colloquial energy is apparent in forceful phrases such as 'she'd thank nobody for dividing us' and 'I never told her a lie about it.' These expressions could not possibly come from either Lockwood or Nelly- they are purely Heathcliff's rough, energetic style.

We have also heard Heathcliff's sarcasm before. He asked Nelly 'Did she take due warning, then?', angrily deflating her pompous moralizing over Cathy's death. In the present passage, Heathcliff uses sarcasm intensively. Perhaps the strongest impression we form of his language, is his trick of hijacking the vocabulary of others and using it sneeringly against them. So, Isabella expected 'unlimited indulgences' from his 'chivalrous devotion'. He tried hard to show her his hatred, but it was 'a marvelous effort of perspicacity' for her to discover this truth. She reveals her hatred of him as if it is an 'appalling intelligence', and Heathcliff satirically comments on the 'positive labor of Hercules' it has been to open her eyes. He treats Edgar Linton with equal sarcasm, talking of his 'fraternal and magisterial heart'. These phrases have in common that they employ an elaborate, literary vocabulary and tend to be hyperbolic.

Clearly, Emily Bronte has created a distinct dramatic 'voice' for Heathcliff. Analysis has shown us more than this, however. His voice is surprisingly wide-ranging. It takes and uses the narrators' diction, exposes its hollowness and throws it away with contempt; and in contrast, Heathcliff speaks through the narrative frame in his own forceful, plain style. So, not only does he make direct contact with us, like a dramatic character speaking straight to the audience; he also shreds the linguistic pretensions of the narrators, at the same time. The effect is peculiarly powerful and suggests the idea that the story of Wuthering Heights is too strong, too powerfully alive, to be contained within the storytellers' frame. It - the story itself- actively breaks the frame through which we read it.

8.2 Social, Economic and Political Background

The main characters of Wuthering Heights belong with two families, the Earnshaw's and the Linton's, and on the surface, this would seem an obvious way to group them into two contrasting types. Our first thoughts about these groupings may provide some supporting evidence, such as a difference in looks that is discussed several times, and the combination of traits described in young Cathy; the contrasting environments of the Heights and the Grange (exposed and wild/protected and civilized), and so on. The two-family groups, then, give us a theory about structure in the characters. Our next task is to make notes which group the characters in this way, then examine these groupings critically to discover whether they 'work'. By this we mean: Are the family groups consistent, sharing common character-traits? Do these family groups seem to be significant in the overall meaning of the novel?

The setting of Wuthering Heights attracts our attention because, like the plotting of time discussed earlier in this chapter, it is so fully and precisely created for us. As soon as we begin to consider the setting, we realize that every scene of the story takes place within or between the two houses: Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Emily Bronte limits the extent of the setting exactly. Peristome Craggs are beyond Wuthering Heights: they are the most distant visible feature. The narrative does not visit them, although several of the characters have been there and report what they are like. In the other direction, Thrushcross Grange itself is as far as the story travels. There is a village, Gimmerton; and a chapel and churchyard at the edge of the cultivated valley, half-exposed on the moors. We never see the other side of the valley (i.e., looking in the other direction from Thrushcross Grange). The characters who leave this limited area go out of the knowledge of the narrative (Mr. Earnshaw, Hindley, Heathcliff, Isabella). The characters who arrive from outside, arrive without any history or information (Heathcliff, Frances Earnshaw. When Linton Heathcliff arrives we know his parentage, and Isabella's letters have called him 'an ailing, peevish creature', but we discover nothing else about his life up to the age of twelve).

The two houses dominate this stage, and each house takes its character from its immediate surroundings. A brief discussion of each house's character will amplify this statement. First, the houses' names are significant. 'Wuthering' is a local word for stormy weather, as Lockwood explains on page 4. A 'thrush' is a valley bird, a woodland or garden bird with an attractive song. 'Cross', in a place-name, may signify a crossroads, a place where journeys and people meet; but it also suggests the idea of Christianity and its conventional church emblem, a cross. 'Grange' means a barn, a storehouse for agricultural produce. The word suggests cultivation, harvest and plenty.

Wuthering Heights is often in darkness, and dark corners are emphasized when Lockwood hears sounds from 'deep within' and imagines other dogs which 'haunted other recesses' (p. 5). Isabella, sitting on the stairs, 'remained in the dark' when Joseph took the candle away, and to clear up the mess she 'groped from step to step' (p. 142). Thrushcross Grange, in contrast, is full of light. In the first description of the Grange, Heathcliff emphasizes light: 'a pure white ceiling bordered by gold, a shower of glass-drops hanging in silver chains from the centre, and shimmering with little soft tapers' (p. 48). This motif continues, and on Heathcliff's return, he stands in the Lintons' drawing-room 'now fully revealed by the fire and candlelight' (p. 95).

There is a weakness at the heart of the Thrushcross Grange faith, however. Edgar's hopeful last words are uttered in the context of false belief. Nelly has told Cathy to say that she will be happy with Linton, and the worst of Heathcliff's brutalities are hidden from him because of Nelly's intention 'to add no bitterness, if I could help it, to his already overflowing cup' (p. 279). His consoling belief that Catherine has gone to heaven is also questioned, by Nelly herself. We remember her doubts, which Lockwood called 'something heterodox': 'Retracing the course of Catherine Linton, I fear we have no right to think she is [happy in the other world]' (p. 165). This view is supported by Catherine's dream, when she finds herself miserable in Heaven and cries to be returned to the open moors (p. 80).

What have we discovered from this discussion of the two houses and their ambience? It appears that the houses have distinctive characters, which are strong and opposed to each other; and these two characters dominate the setting. In addition, we can say that the 'character of Wuthering Heights' or the 'character of Thrushcross Grange' extends into many other aspects of the novel. The result is that the story is played out within a dualism, embodied in the topography of two houses and two landscapes, which reaches into every aspect of the text.

The dualism of the two houses, then, provides a conceptual structure to the novel. We can suggest abstract ideas which are associated with the two sides of this dualism. For example, we could say that Wuthering Heights stands for the primitive, and depth; Thrushcross Grange for civilization, and shallowness; conflict is embodied in Wuthering Heights, while Thrushcross Grange represents compromise.

Class

The theme of class is related to reputation, in that both reflect the strictly regimented nature of life for the middle and upper classes in Regency England. The lines of class are strictly drawn. While the Bennets, who are middle class, may socialize with the upper-class Bingleys and Darcys, they are clearly their social inferiors and are treated as such. Austen satirizes this kind of class-consciousness, particularly in the character of Mr. Collins, who spends most of his time toadying to his upper-class patron, Lady Catherine de Bourgh.

Though Mr. Collins offers an extreme example, he is not the only one to hold such views. His conception of the importance of class is shared, among others, by Mr. Darcy, who believes in the dignity of his lineage; Miss Bingley, who dislikes anyone not as socially accepted as she is; andWickham, who will do anything he can to get enough money to raise himself into a higher station. Mr. Collins's views are merely the most extreme and obvious. The satire directed at Mr. Collins is therefore also more subtly directed at the entire social hierarchy and the conception of all those within it at its correctness, in complete disregard of other, more worthy virtues.

Through the Darcy-Elizabeth and Bingley-Jane marriages, Austen shows the power of love and happiness to overcome class boundaries and prejudices, thereby implying that such prejudices are hollow, unfeeling, and unproductive. Of course, this whole discussion of class must be made with the understanding that Austen herself is often criticized as being a classist: she doesn't really represent anyone from the lower classes; those servants she does portray are generally happy with their lot. Austen does criticize class structure, but only a limited slice of that structure.

Family

Family is an integral theme in the novel. All of the characters operate within networks of family connections that shape their decisions and perspectives. For the female characters in particular, the influence and behavior of their family members is a significant factor in their lives. Because "the business of [Mrs. Bennet's] life was to get her daughters married", the Bennet sisters constantly have to navigate their mother's plans and schemes. While male characters like Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley have much more social and financial independence, they still rely on the judgment and

opinions of female family members like Caroline Bingley and Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Individuals are judged according to the behavior of their family members, which is why Darcy points out to Lizzy that he is doing her a favor by proposing even though she comes with embarrassing family connections. The theme of family shows that individuals never lead totally autonomous lives, and that individual actions have wider communal implications.

Integrity

Elizabeth Bennet considers herself to have very high standards of integrity, and she is often frustrated and disappointed by the way she sees others behaving. She complains bitterly to her sister, "The more I see of the world, the more am I dissatisfied with it, and every day confirms my belief of the inconsistency of all human characters." She behaves in ways she considers consistent with her definition of integrity by refusing to marry both Mr. Collins and Mr. Darcy (when he proposes the first time): Elizabeth thinks it is very important to only marry a man she loves and respects, despite the pressure to achieve economic security.

By the end of the novel, Lizzy's commitment to integrity has been rewarded because she marries a partner who will truly make her happy. She has also come to see that she can sometimes be too rigid and judge too quickly, since she was initially mistaken about the nature and ethics of Wickham and Darcy. The novel endorses the importance of integrity, but it also reminds readers not to be too quick to pass judgment on who has it and who doesn't.

Gender

Gender is a key theme in *Pride and Prejudice*. The story takes place at a time when gender roles were quite rigid, and men and women had a very different set of options and influences. Marriage is a pressing question for female characters like Charlotte Lucas and the Bennet sisters because marriage is the only way women can achieve economic stability and autonomy. As upper-class women, they would not have been able to work to earn a living, or live independently. Marriage offered one of the only ways to move beyond their birth families. However, a woman's marriageability relied on an impeccable reputation for chastity, and for women like Georgiana Darcy or Lydia Bennet, a reckless decision to trust the wrong man could permanently ruin their future prospects. Lydia's elopement causes Lizzy to exclaim with horror that "she is lost forever." If Lydia is living with Wickham without being married to him, her reputation will be destroyed.

8.3 Symbols

Dancing – This is a symbol that comes into the story early on. In the beginning of the novel, while Jane is at her most prejudiced and Mr. Darcy at his most prideful, Jane and Mr. Darcy dance together in a stylistically formal and precise manner that mirrors their relationship at that point.

Pemberley – This is Mr. Darcy's estate, which Elizabeth visits at a point in the novel during which she is starting to soften, thanks to traveling and being away from the pressures of her mother and her hometown's social expectations. The reader starts to get the sense at this point in the novel—about halfway—that Elizabeth feels freer and more relaxed while she is traveling. Pemberley serves as a symbol for the person Mr. Darcy really is, underneath his pride and social status. Elizabeth is enchanted by the beauty of the property and subsequently starts to see Mr. Darcy in a new light and allows herself to feel charmed by him as well. To enhance this symbol, Austen has Elizabeth cross a small bridge as she approaches his home. This suggests that the divide that has so far existed between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth will be bridged as well as the two become closer to each other. As Elizabeth starts to see Mr. Darcy for who he really is, he starts to see Elizabeth for who she is when she is free of social pressures and expectations.

Outdoor Settings – The interactions that Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy have with each other tend to change depending on whether they are indoors or outdoors.

Much of their most strained interactions take place while they are confined in a building. They generally tend to behave much more rigidly, keeping a careful distance from each other. However, when they interact outdoors (they take a few meaningful walks together at different points of the novel), their rigid behaviour relaxes as they find themselves less beholden by expectations. They loosen up and are able to have more emotionally free conversations alone in the outdoors.

Summary

Although Austen's novels have always been open to widely divergent interpretations, the two basic stances taken by critics are to view her as a conservative holding the values of the landed gentry in the late eighteenth century or as a subversive who undercuts the very premises upon which English society rests.1 Most feminist studies have represented Austen as a conscious or unconscious subversive voicing a woman's frustration at the rigid and sexist social order which enforces women's subservience and dependence, though many feminist critics, as Julia Prewitt Brown notes, are distinctly uncomfortable with what they see as Austen's "cowardly accommo? dations" with the patriarchal order.2 What these rival camps share, however, is a tendency to make the patriarchal order itself Austen's essential subject matter. Austen, placed as she is historically, is perhaps most often seen as a pivotal figure, looking both backward and forward; but whether critics emphasize her eighteenth-century roots or stress her affinities with Romanti? cism, almost always the big question is her valuation of the established patriarchal order. I do not mean to suggest that this is not a question worth asking.

Jane Austen has long been credited with being a keen observer of human nature and a creator of vital and convincing characters of both sexes. Critics, however, have down through the years regularly found fault with one group of characters in particular in her novels, the young men who appear as likely suitors for the heroines? the "heroes" and "villains." In many ways the ongoing complaint that certain of these male figures are inadequately charac? terized or crudely utilized merely manifested a masculine resistance to Austen's marginalization of male experience, but even recent feminist criti? cism exhibits a tendency to overemphasize the role of the "important" male characters, often in a misguided attempt to assert Austen's historical relevance and the profundity of her art. Critics contemporary with Austen, of course, charged her with triviality of subject, and even her most earnest admirers have adopted a defensive stance. The attendant anxiety of her apologists has greatly affected the lines of developing argument to be found in the body of criticism dealing with the novels. In particular, the regrettable tendency in much Austen criticism to stress the role of individual characters as representatives of a particular class or social orientation is born of the desire to make Austen's subject matter more significant and comprehensive. The practice, defended by David Monaghan, of reading the novels as "social allegories" is an approach that broadens the novels' scope with the added advantage of inflating the importance of male characters.5 Darcy in Pride and Prejudice is no longer one man possessing the advantages and prejudices of a particular class: he becomes the quintessential great landowner with ties to the nobility, synonymous with an entire class and a distinct way of life. Similarly Captain Wentworth in Persuasion as a self made man must signal Austen's endorsement of an enterprising middle class that displaces a decayed aristocracy.

Virginia Woolf called Jane Austen "mistress of much deeper emotion than appears on the surface,"4 yet there is still vagueness about what that deeper emotion is. To investigate it is to risk dis- turbing the prevailing view of Austen as a cool, rational comedi- enne of manners who delineates social surfaces and measures comic aberrations against the stable moral norms of a civilization in whose values she has supreme confidence. Nevertheless, it is hard to read the less buoyant novels, lMansfield Park and Persuasion, without sensing that the societies they depict are somehow being challenged. Verbal wit may be toned down, but possibly because Jane Austen wants to heighten social comment without coloring it too highly with satiric comedy. If one accepts that she is critical of her own society's conventions, one is free to notice that as an artist too she examines convention, periodically experimenting within her fairly small range of comic techniques and simultaneously probing more complicated emotions than pure pain and pleasure, more blurred moral categories than straight sense and sensibility. In her two most somber novels she does not abandon the conven- tions she uses elsewhere, but she does transform them from within.

The heroine of Pride and Prejudice faces successive "truths" much more inwardly, and her discoveries are more testing. Like Elinor, Elizabeth argues first from appearances, hardening prob- abilities into proofs and dismissing as naivete Jane's sound doubts that Darcy's intimate friends could be deceived in his character. It suits Elizabeth's prejudices to believe that Wickham has "given a very rational account" (84) and that his case against Darcy is un- assailable: "names, facts, every thing mentioned without ceremony" (86). When, however, she reads Darcy's clarifying letter, Elizabeth realizes the extent to which social attractiveness has masked devi- ousness in Wickham. She reasserts standards that have slipped: "She saw the indelicacy of putting himself forward as he had done, and the inconsistency of his professions with his conduct" (207). Elizabeth's conviction that "there was truth in his looks" is now.

exploded and Jane's opinion vindicated. Like Elinor, Elizabeth chooses to hide her depression and is supported by a strong sense of social duty. But what is impressively different is that Austen's pre- sentation of Elizabeth's shame-"till this moment, I never knew myself" (208)-preserves a balance of feeling and judgment despite its declamatory style. Jolting the heroine about halfway through the novel lets Austen not only increase the tensions of her love story but also use the girl's consciousness as a filter for her own 'Views about the Bennet family. Elizabeth's gain in self-knowledge sharp- ens her scrutiny, though one of the penalties this entails is a sense of separateness from her own kin: she sees previously unrecognized faults in her father, and her intimacy with Jane is partly falsified by the recognition that the only circumstances in which she could reveal Bingley's love would make the disclosure pointless: "The liberty of communication cannot be mine until it has lost all its value!" (227). Elizabeth's emotions lag behind her judgment until after she visits Pemberley, where Darcy's portrait, his housekeeper's eulogy, and his hospitality decisively prove his desirability as well as his worth. Elizabeth's emotional shake-up comes late in the novel and coincides with the climax of the plot, Lydia's elopement. At Pem-berley, Elizabeth is still confident that it is up to her to decide whether to grace Darcy with her favor. Only when it seems too late is she fully enlightened: "Never had she so honestly felt that she could have loved him, as now, when all love must be vain" (278). Having kept Elizabeth unaware of her love, though not her respect, for Darcy, Jane Austen can claim naturalness and worth for love based on gratitude and esteem, and can scorn the sentimentality of love at first sight. More importantly, she can both reinforce and humanize the dictum "Know thyself" by allowing full play to the pathos of love lost through error. The moralist's vocabulary softens into simple cadences of regret: "She was humbled, she was grieved; she repented, though she hardly knew of what. She became jealous of his esteem, when she could no longer hope to be benefited by it. She wanted to hear of him, when there seemed the least chance of gaining intelligence. She was convinced that she could have been happy with him; when it was no longer likely they should meet" (311). Despair is founded on reasonable likelihoods, but it is felt on the pulses, in wanting "to hear of him." Repentance is more felt than understood.

Keywords

Gothic, Victorian culture, Gender hierarchy, industrialization, Class hierarchy, Forest, Countryside

Self Assessment

1. Where do the Bennets live?

A. Meryton
B. Hertfordshire
C. Kent
D. London

2. What is the name of the Bennet estate?

A. Longbourn
B. Netherfield
C. Rosings
D. Pemberley

3. With whom does Lydia go to Brighton?

A. Mrs. Bennet
B. Mrs. Forster
C. Wickham
D. Mrs. Philips

4. Who is the governess who betrays Georgiana Darcy?

A. Miss Price
B. Mrs. Williams

C. Miss Younge

D. Miss Denny

5. Mrs. Bennet's reaction to Lydia's marriage is best described as:

A. Cautiously Pleased.

B. Indifferent.

C. Condemnatory.

D. Unreservedly Jubilant.

6. Why does Mr. Collins come to Longbourn?

A. He Wants to Redecorate It.

B. He Wants to Become Acquainted with His Relatives.

C. He Is Looking for A Wife.

D. He Is Passing Through Town.

7. Who is Mr. Collins's patroness?

A. Mrs. Lucas

B. Lady Catherine

C. Mrs. Hurst

D. Lady Anne

8. What is Mr. Gardiner's profession?

A. Army Officer

B. Merchant

C. Lawyer

D. Clergyman

9. What feature initially attracts Darcy to Elizabeth?

A. Her Cheerfuless

B. Her Eyes

C. Her Smile

D. Her Intelligence

10. Why doesn't Bingley visit Jane while she is in London?

A. He Doesn't Know That She's There.

B. Lady Catherine Forbids Him from Going.

C. Darcy Advises Him Against It.

D. He Thinks That Jane Does Not Like Him.

11. What is the name of the estate that Bingley rents?

A. Longbourne

B. Rosings

C. Netherfield

D. Fox Hall

12. Why does Elizabeth reject Darcy's initial proposal?
A. It Was Customary for Women At That Time To Reject The First Proposal.
B. She Does Not Like Him.
C. He Is Too Poor
D. She Is In Love With Someone Else.

13. What event interrupts Elizabeth's vacation with the Gardiners?
A. Darcy's Second Proposal
B. The Death of Mr. Collins
C. The News of Jane's Engagement to Bingley
D. Lydia's Elopement with Wickham

14. Which of the Bennet sisters' dislikes social events?
A. Lydia
B. Mary
C. Jane
D. Kitty

15. Where do Lydia and Wickham go when they run off from Brighton together?
A. London
B. Gloucester
C. Kent
D. Scotland

Answer for Self Assessment

1.	B	2.	A	3.	B	4.	C	5.	D
6.	C	7.	B	8.	B	9.	B	10.	A
11.	C	12.	B	13.	D	14.	B	15.	A

Review Questions

1. What is British novel?
2. What is the importance of Jane Austen's Writings?
3. What is the contribution of Henry Fielding?
4. What are major complexities in Pride and Prejudice?
5. How writer overcomes those difficulties?
6. What is British Fiction?
7. What do you understand by the themes of gender and class in the novel?
8. What is the style of the novel?
9. What is the narration in the novel?
10. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
11. Throw light on Early British Novel?
12. Describe characterization in novel?

13. What are major complexities in British Fiction?
14. How one can overcome writing difficulties?

Further Reading

- A Course in Academic Writing by Renu Gupta, Orient Blackswan Pvt. Ltd.
- English Grammar by RajeevanKaral, Oxford University Press
- A course in Academic Writing by Renu Gupta, Orient Blackswan Pvt. Ltd.
- English Grammar by RajeevanKaral, Oxford University Press
- Oxford EAP: A Course in English for Academic Purposes by Edward De Chazal and Sam Mccarter, Oxford University Press
- MLA Handbook by Modern Language Association of America, Modern Language

Association

Unit 09: Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Examine a historical-cum-critical perspective on British Fiction
- Analyse the significance of British fiction in totality
- Recognize the essential identity markers of British fiction

Introduction

At age twenty, Charlotte Brontë sent a sample of her poetry to England's Poet Laureate, Robert Southey. His comments urged her to abandon all literary pursuits: "Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be. The more she is engaged in her proper duties, the less leisure will she have for it, even as an accomplishment and a recreation." His response indicates the political difficulties women faced as they tried to enter the literary arena in Victorian England; domestic responsibilities were expected to require all their energy, leaving no time for creative pursuits. Despite a lack of support from the outside world, Charlotte Brontë found sufficient internal motivation and enthusiasm from her sisters to become a successful writer and balance her familial and creative needs. Born at Thornton, Yorkshire on April 21, 1816, Charlotte was the third child of Patrick Brontë and Maria Branwell. In 1820, her father received a curate post in Haworth, a remote town on the Yorkshire moors, where Charlotte spent most of her life. In 1821, Mrs. Brontë died from what was thought to be cancer. Charlotte and her four sisters, Maria, Elizabeth, Emily and Anne, and their brother, Branwell, were raised primarily by their unpleasant, maiden aunt, Elizabeth Branwell, who provided them with little supervision.

Not only were the children free to roam the moors, but their father allowed them to read whatever interested them: Shakespeare, The Arabian Nights, Pilgrim's Progress, and the poems of Byron were some of their favorites. When a school for the daughters of poor clergymen opened at Cowan Bridge in 1824, Mr. Brontë decided to send his oldest four daughters there to receive a formal education. Most biographers argue that Charlotte's description of Lowood School in Jane Eyre accurately reflects the dismal conditions at this school. Charlotte's two oldest sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, died in 1824 of tuberculosis they contracted due to the poor management of the school. Following this tragedy, Patrick Brontë withdrew Charlotte and Emily from Cowan Bridge. Grieving

over their sisters' deaths and searching for a way to alleviate their loneliness, the remaining four siblings began writing a series of stories, The Glass-Town, stimulated by a set of toy soldiers their father had given them. In these early writings, the children collaboratively created a complete imaginary world, a fictional West African empire they called Angria. Charlotte explained their interest in writing this way: "We were wholly dependent on ourselves and each other, on books and Brontë's Jane Eyre study, for the enjoyments and occupations of life. The highest stimulus, as well as the liveliest pleasure we had known from childhood upwards, lay in attempts at literary composition." Through her early twenties, Charlotte routinely revised and expanded pieces of the Angria story, developing several key characters and settings. While this writing helped Charlotte improve her literary style, the Angria adventures are fantastical, melodramatic, and repetitive, contrasting with Charlotte's more realistic adult fiction. After her father had a dangerous lung disorder, he decided once again that his daughters should receive an education so they would be assured of an income if he died. In 1831, Charlotte entered the Misses Wooler's school at Roe Head. Shy and solitary, Charlotte was not happy at school, but she still managed to win several academic awards and to make two lifelong friends: Mary Taylor and Ellen Nussey. Although she was offered a teaching job at Roe Head, Charlotte declined the position, choosing to return to Haworth instead. Perhaps bored with the solitary life at Haworth and looking for an active occupation in the world, Charlotte returned to Roe Head in 1835 as a governess. For her, governessing was akin to "slavery," because she felt temperamentally unsuited for it, and finally, following a near mental breakdown in 1838, she was forced to resign her position.

Unfortunately, governessing was the only real employment opportunity middle-class women had in Victorian England. Because the family needed the money, Charlotte suffered through two more unhappy governess positions, feeling like an unappreciated servant in wealthy families' homes; she didn't enjoy living in other people's houses because it caused "estrangement from one's real character." In an attempt to create a job that would allow her to maintain her independence, Charlotte formed the idea of starting her own school at Haworth. To increase her teaching qualifications before beginning this venture, she enrolled as a student, at the age of twenty-six, at the Pensionnat Heger in Brussels so she could increase her fluency in French and learn German. Charlotte loved the freedom and adventure of living in a new culture, and formed an intense, though one-sided, passion for the married headmaster at the school: Monsieur Heger. After two years in Brussels, suffering perhaps from her love for Heger, Charlotte returned to England.

The plan to open her own school was a failure, as she was unable to attract a single student. Instead, Charlotte began putting all of her energy into her writing. After discovering Emily's poems, Charlotte decided that she, Anne, and Life and Background of the Author 3 Emily should try to publish a collection of poems at their own expense. In 1846, they accomplished this goal, using the masculine pseudonyms of Currer, Acton, and Ellis Bell because of the double standards against women authors. Although their book, Poems, was not a financial success, the women continued their literary endeavors. Excited to be writing full-time, they each began a novel. Anne's Agnes Grey and Emily's Wuthering Heights both found publishers, but Charlotte's somewhat autobiographical account of her experiences in Brussels, The Professor, was rejected by several publishers. Again, refusing to become discouraged, Charlotte began writing Jane Eyre in 1846, while on a trip to Manchester with her father where he was undergoing cataract surgery. While he convalesced, Charlotte wrote. The firm of Smith, Elder, and Company agreed to publish the resulting novel, and the first edition of Jane Eyre was released on October 16, 1847.

The novel was an instant success, launching Charlotte into literary fame. It also netted her an impressive 500 pounds, twenty-five times her salary as a governess. But the pleasures of literary success were soon overshadowed by family tragedy. In 1848, after Anne and Charlotte had revealed the true identity of the "Bells" to their publishers, their brother Branwell died. Never living up to his family's high expectations for him, Branwell died an opium-addicted, debauched, alcoholic failure. Emily and Anne died soon after. Although Charlotte completed her second novel, Shirley in 1849, her sadness at the loss of her remaining siblings left her emotionally shattered. She became a respected member of the literary community only when her sisters, her most enthusiastic supporters, were no longer able to share her victory. Visiting London following the publication of this book, Charlotte became acquainted with several important writers, including William Thackeray and Elizabeth Gaskell, who was to write Charlotte's biography following her death. In 1852, the Reverend Arthur B. Nicholls, Mr. Brontë's curate at Haworth beginning in 1845, proposed marriage to Charlotte. Earlier in her life, Charlotte had rejected several marriage proposals because she was hoping to discover true love, but loneliness following the death of her last three siblings may have led her to accept Nicholls' proposal. Saying she had "esteem" but not love for Nicholls, Charlotte's relationship with her husband was certainly not the overwhelming passion of Jane and

Rochester. Her father's jealous opposition to the marriage led Charlotte initially to reject Nicholls, who left Haworth in 1853, the year Villette was published. By 1854, Reverend Brontë's opposition to the union had abated somewhat, and the ceremony was performed on Brontë's Jane Eyre June 29, 1854. After the marriage, Charlotte had little time for writing, as she was forced to perform the duties expected of a minister's wife and take care of her aging father. In 1854 Charlotte, in the early stages of pregnancy, caught pneumonia while on a long, rain-drenched walk on the moors. She died on March 31, 1855, a month before her thirty ninth birthday. The Professor, written in 1846 and 1847,was posthumously published in 1857, along with Mrs. Gaskell's Life of Charlotte Brontë.

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When Jane Eyre was first published in 1847, it was an immediate popular and critical success. George Lewes, a famous Victorian literary critic declared it "the best novel of the season." It also, however, met with criticism. In a famous attack in the Quarterly Review of December 1848, Elizabeth Rigby called Jane a "personification of an unregenerate and undisciplined spirit" and the novel as a whole, "anti-Christian." Rigby's critique perhaps accounts for some of the novel's continuing popularity: the rebelliousness of its tone. Jane Eyre calls into question most of society's major institutions, including education, family, social class, and Christianity. The novel asks the reader to consider a variety of contemporary social and political issues: What is women's position in society, what is the relation between Britain and its colonies, how important is artistic endeavor in human life, what is the relationship of dreams and fantasy to reality, and what is the basis of an effective marriage? Although the novel poses all of these questions, it doesn't didactically offer a single answer to any of them. Readers can construct their own answers, based on their unique and personal analyses of the book. This multidimensionality makes Jane Eyre a novel that rewards multiple readings. While the novel's longevity resides partially in its social message, posing questions still relevant to twenty-first century readers, its combination of literary genre keeps the story entertaining and enjoyable. Not just the story of the romance between Rochester and Jane, the novel also employs the conventions of the bildungsroman (a novel that shows the psychological or moral development of its main character), the gothic and the spiritual quest.

As bildungsroman, the first-person narration plots Jane's growth from an isolated and unloved orphan into a happily married, independent woman. Jane's appeals to the reader directly involve us in this journey of self-knowledge; the reader becomes her accomplice, learning and changing along with the heroine. The novel's gothic element emphasizes the supernatural, the visionary, and the horrific. Mr. Reed's ghostly presence in the red-room, Bertha's strange laughter at Thornfield, and Rochester's dark and brooding persona are all examples of gothic conventions, which add to the novel's suspense, entangling the reader in Jane's attempt to solve the mystery at Thornfield. Finally, the novel could also be read as a spiritual quest, as Jane tries to position herself in relationship to religion at each stop on her journey.

Although she paints a negative picture of the established religious community through her characterizations of Mr. Brocklehurst, Introduction to the Novel 7 St. John Rivers, and Eliza Reed, Jane finds an effective, personal perspective on religion following her night on the moors. For her, when one is closest to nature, one is also closest to God: "We read clearest His infinitude, His omnipotence, His omnipresence." God and nature are both sources of bounty, compassion and forgiveness. In reading this novel, consider keeping a reading journal, writing down quotes that spark your interest. When you've finished the book, return to these notes and group your quotes under specific categories. For example, you may list all quotes related to governesses. Based on these quotes, what seems to be the novel's overall message about governesses? Do different characters have conflicting perceptions of governesses? Which character's ideas does the novel seem to sympathize with and why? Do you agree with the novel's message? By looking at the novel closely and reading it with a critical focus, you will enrich your own reading experience, joining the readers over the last century who've been excited by plain Jane's journey of self-discovery.

9.1 Characterization

Jane Eyre

The orphaned protagonist of the story. When the novel begins, she is an isolated, powerless ten-year-old living with an aunt and cousins who dislike her. As the novel progresses, she grows in strength. She distinguishes herself at Lowood School because of her hard work and strong intellectual abilities. As a governess at Thornfield, she learns of the pleasures and pains of love through her relationship with Edward Rochester. After being deceived by him, she goes to Marsh End, where she regains her spiritual focus and discovers her own strength when she rejects St. John River's marriage proposal. By novel's end she has become a powerful, independent woman, blissfully married to the man she loves, Rochester.

Edward Fairfax Rochester

Jane's lover; a dark, passionate, brooding man. A traditional romantic hero, Rochester has lived a troubled life. Married to an insane Creole woman, Bertha Mason, Rochester sought solace for several years in the arms of mistresses. Finally, he seeks to purify his life and wants Jane Eyre, the innocent governess he has hired to teach his foster daughter, Adèle Varens, to become his wife.

The wedding falls through when she learns of the existence of his wife. As penance for his transgressions, he is punished by the loss of an eye and a hand when Bertha sets fire to Thornfield. He finally gains happiness at the novel's end when he is reunited with Jane.

Sarah Reed

Jane's unpleasant aunt, who raises her until she is ten years old. Despite Jane's attempts at reconciliation before her aunt's death, her aunt refuses to relent. She dies unloved by her children and unrepentant of her mistreatment of Jane.

John Reed

Jane's nasty and spoiled cousin, responsible for Jane's banishment to the red-room. Addicted to drinking and gambling, John supposedly commits suicide at the age of twenty-three when his mother is no longer willing or able to pay his debts.

Eliza Reed

Another one of Jane's spoiled cousins, Eliza is insanely jealous of the beauty of her sister, Georgiana. She nastily breaks up Brontë's Jane Eyre Georgiana's elopement with Lord Edwin Vere, and then becomes a devout Christian. But her brand of Christianity is devoid of all compassion or humanity; she shows no sympathy for her dying mother and vows to break off all contact with Georgiana after their mother's death. Usefulness is her mantra. She enters a convent in Lisle, France, eventually becoming the Mother Superior and leaving her money to the church.

Georgiana Reed

Eliza's and John's sister, Georgiana is the beauty of the family. She's also shallow and self-centered, interested primarily in her own pleasure. She accuses her sister, Eliza, of sabotaging her plans to marry Lord Edwin Vere. Like Eliza, she shows no emotion following their mother's death. Eventually, Georgiana marries a wealthy, but worn-out society man.

Bessie Lee

The maid at Gateshead who sometimes consoles Jane by telling her entertaining stories and singing her songs. Bessie visits Jane at Lowood, impressed by Jane's intellectual attainments and ladylike behavior. Bessie marries the coachman, Robert Leaven, and has three children.

Mr. Lloyd

The kind apothecary who suggests that Jane be sent to school following her horrifying experience in the red-room. His letter to Miss Temple clears Jane of the accusations Mrs. Reed has made against her.

Mr. Brocklehurst

The stingy, mean-hearted manager of Lowood. He hypocritically feeds the girls at the school starvation-level rations, while his wife and daughters live luxuriously. The minister of Brocklebridge Church, he represents a negative brand of Christianity, one that lacks all compassion or kindness.

Helen Burns

Jane's spiritual and intellectual friend at Lowood. Although she is unfairly punished by Miss Scatcherd at Lowood, Helen maintains her poise, partially through her loving friendship with Miss Temple. From Helen, Jane learns tolerance and peace, but Jane can't accept Helen's rejection of the material world. Helen's impressive intellectual attainments inspire Jane to work hard at school. Dying in Jane's arms, Helen looks forward to peace in heaven and eventual reunion with Jane.

Maria Temple

The warm-hearted superintendent at Lowood who generously offers the girls bread and cheese when their breakfasts are inedible. An impressive scholar, a model of ladylike behavior and a compassionate person, Miss Temple is a positive role model for Jane. She cares for Jane and Helen, offering them seedcake in her room and providing Helen with a warm, private bed when she is dying.

Miss Miller

Teacher for the youngest students at Lowood who greets Jane on her first night at the school.

Miss Scatcherd

The history and grammar teacher at Lowood. She constantly humiliates and punishes Helen Burns.

Miss Smith

A red-cheeked teacher at Lowood who is in charge of sewing instruction.

Madame Pierrot

The likeable French teacher at Lowood who comes from Lisle, France.

Miss Gryce

Jane's roommate and fellow teacher at Lowood.

Mrs. Alice Fairfax

The housekeeper at Thornfield; Jane first thinks she is Thornfield's owner. She warmly welcomes Jane to Thornfield, providing a contrast to Jane's cold treatment at Gateshead, the Reed's house. Mrs. Fairfax doesn't approve of Jane and Rochester's marriage because of the differences in their ages and social classes. When she leaves Thornfield after Jane's mysterious disappearance, Rochester offers her a generous pension.

Blanche Ingram

The beautiful and haughty society woman Rochester pretends to love. Her comments about the insipidness of governesses show the lack of respect that most governesses faced in the wealthy Victorian families where they worked. As a fortunehunter, more interested in Rochester's money than his personality, Blanche is depicted as an unappealingly materialist model of femininity.

Adèle Varens

Jane's pupil at Thornfield, whose foreignness, like her mother's, reveals many of Jane's Anglocentric prejudices. Adèle initially shows unpleasantly French (in Jane's opinion)

characteristics such as sensuality, materialism, and egocentrism. But a firm British education erases all of these negative characteristics, and by the end of the novel Adèle has become a docile, pleasant companion for Jane.

Céline Varens

Once Rochester's mistress, this Parisian opera singer used Rochester for his money, although she actually despised him. Rochester discovers her true feelings when he overhears a conversation between her and one of her other lovers. He immediately breaks off relations with her. She eventually runs away to Italy with a musician, abandoning her daughter, Adèle, whom she claims is Rochester's child. Her hypocrisy, sensuality, and materialism make her another negative mode of femininity.

Bertha Antoinette Mason Rochester

Rochester's wife, the crazy woman in the attic. A Creole woman from Spanish Town, Jamaica, Bertha was betrothed to Rochester by the arrangement of their fathers, who planned to consolidate their wealth. This beautiful and majestic woman disintegrates into debauchery, coarseness, and, eventually, madness soon after their wedding. Bertha's mother was also mad and the novel suggests that Bertha's problems are a maternal inheritance. Following the deaths of his brother and father, Rochester returns to England with Bertha, locking her up in the third story of Thornfield, with Grace Poole as her keeper. She occasionally escapes her imprisonment, perpetrating violence whenever she gets loose. Eventually, she sets fire to Thornfield. Bertha is another example of unsavory foreignness in the novel.

Richard (Dick) Mason

Bertha's brother, a weak-willed man. During his visit to Thornfield, he is bitten and stabbed by Bertha when he goes up to her room alone. When he learns of Jane's upcoming wedding to Rochester, he arrives to thwart Rochester's bigamous intentions.

Grace Poole Bertha's keeper at Thornfield who has a predilection for gin. Her alcohol-induced lapses allow Bertha to escape from the third floor and perpetrate various crimes in the house, including the eventual fire that destroys Thornfield and maims Rochester. Grace is initially accused of perpetrating all of Bertha's sins in the household.

Mother Bunches Rochester's alias when he's disguised as a gypsy fortuneteller during a house party at Thornfield.

Hannah The Rivers' elderly housekeeper who initially denies Jane access to Moor House. Jane chastises Hannah for her class prejudices, but she and Jane later become friends.

St. John (pronounced sin'jin) Rivers Jane's cousin, St. John is cold, despotic, excessively zealous. Unhappy with his humble position as the minister at Morton, St. John wants to become a missionary in order to meet his ambitions for power and glory. St. John tries to force Jane to marry him and move to India. Jane resists him, and he spends the rest of his life furthering British colonialism by forcing Christian values on the natives.

Diana and Mary Rivers St. John's sisters and Jane's cousins, Diana and Mary are exemplars of accomplished, benevolent, and intellectual women. Working as governesses, they show the ways intelligent, well-bred women are degraded by their positions in wealthy families. Diana's support of Jane following St. John's marriage proposal helps Jane maintain her independence when faced with his despotism.

Rosamond Oliver the beautiful and flirtatious daughter of a wealthy man in Morton, Rosamond finances the girls' school in Morton. Although she seems to love St. John, she has become engaged to the wealthy Mr. Granby before St. John leaves for India. While St. John is physically attracted to her, he realizes that Rosamond would never be a good wife for him, because of her lighthearted, almost shallow, personality.

Mr. Oliver Rosamond's father and the only wealthy man in Morton. While the Rivers are an ancient and esteemed family, the Oliver's have "new money." He approves of St. John's talents, finding him a suitable husband for his daughter, but thinks missionary work is a waste of St. John's intellect.

Mr. Briggs John Eyre's attorney, Briggs prevents Jane's bigamous marriage to Rochester and searches for her following her uncle's death so she can claim her inheritance.

John Eyre Jane's and the Rivers' uncle, John Eyre makes a fortune as a wine merchant in Madeira. Although he plans to adopt Jane, he dies before they ever meet, but leaves his entire fortune—20,000 pounds—to her. He quarreled with Mr. Rivers, and therefore, didn't leave his money to the Rivers children.

Alice Wood Hired by Rosamond Oliver, Alice is an orphan who serves as Jane's assistant at Morton. The elderly servants who care for Rochester at Ferndean after Thornfield is destroyed by the fire.Introduction to the Different Genres of English Literature.

9.2 Narration

When Jane Eyre was first published in 1847, it was an immediate popular and critical success. George Lewes, a famous Victorian literary critic declared it "the best novel of the season." It also, however, met with criticism. In a famous attack in the Quarterly Review of December 1848, Elizabeth Rigby called Jane a "personification of an unregenerate and undisciplined spirit" and the novel as a whole, "anti-Christian." Rigby's critique perhaps accounts for some of the novel's continuing popularity: the rebelliousness of its tone. Jane Eyre calls into question most of society's major institutions, including education, family, social class, and Christianity. The novel asks the reader to consider a variety of contemporary social and political issues: What is women's position in society, what is the relation between Britain and its colonies, how important is artistic endeavor in human life, what is the relationship of dreams and fantasy to reality, and what is the basis of an effective marriage? Although the novel poses all of these questions, it doesn't didactically offer a single answer to any of them. Readers can construct their own answers, based on their unique and personal analyses of the book. This multidimensionality makes Jane Eyre a novel that rewards multiple readings. While the novel's longevity resides partially in its social message, posing questions still relevant to twenty-first century readers, its combination of literary genre keeps the story entertaining and enjoyable. Not just the story of the romance between Rochester and Jane, the novel also employs the conventions of the bildungsroman (a novel that shows the psychological or moral development of its main character), the gothic and the spiritual quest.

As bildungsroman, the first-person narration plots Jane's growth from an isolated and unloved orphan into a happily married, independent woman. Jane's appeals to the reader directly involve us in this journey of self-knowledge; the reader becomes her accomplice, learning and changing along with the heroine. The novel's gothic element emphasizes the supernatural, the visionary, and the horrific. Mr. Reed's ghostly presence in the red-room, Bertha's strange laughter at Thornfield, and Rochester's dark and brooding persona are all examples of gothic conventions, which add to the novel's suspense, entangling the reader in Jane's attempt to solve the mystery at Thornfield. Finally, the novel could also be read as a spiritual quest, as Jane tries to position herself in relationship to religion at each stop on her journey.

Although she paints a negative picture of the established religious community through her characterizations of Mr. Brocklehurst, Introduction to the Novel 7 St. John Rivers, and Eliza Reed, Jane finds an effective, personal perspective on religion following her night on the moors. For her, when one is closest to nature, one is also closest to God: "We read clearest His infinitude, His omnipotence, His omnipresence." God and nature are both sources of bounty, compassion and forgiveness. In reading this novel, consider keeping a reading journal, writing down quotes that spark your interest. When you've finished the book, return to these notes and group your quotes under specific categories. For example, you may list all quotes related to governesses. Based on these quotes, what seems to be the novel's overall message about governesses? Do different characters have conflicting perceptions of governesses? Which character's ideas does the novel seem to sympathize with and why? Do you agree with the novel's message? By looking at the novel closely and reading it with a critical focus, you will enrich your own reading experience, joining the readers over the last century who've been excited by plain Jane's journey of self-discovery.

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9.3 Style

10 Points to Remember in Fiction Writing

1. Never open a book with weather. If it's only to create atmosphere, and not a character's reaction to the weather, you don't want to go on too long. The reader is apt to leaf ahead looking for people. There are exceptions. If you happen to be Barry Lopez, who has more ways than an Eskimo to describe ice and snow in his book *Arctic Dreams*, you can do all the weather reporting you want.
2. Avoid prologues: they can be annoying, especially a prologue following an introduction that comes after a foreword. But these are ordinarily found in non-fiction. A prologue in a novel is backstory, and you can drop it in anywhere you want. There is a prologue in John Steinbeck's *Sweet Thursday*, but it's OK because a character in the book makes the point of what my rules are all about. He says: "I like a lot of talk in a book and I don't like to have nobody tell me what the guy that's talking looks like. I want to figure out what he looks like from the way he talks."
3. Never use a verb other than "said" to carry dialogue. The line of dialogue belongs to the character; the verb is the writer sticking his nose in. But "said" is far less intrusive than "grumbled", "gasped", "cautioned", "lied". I once noticed Mary McCarthy ending a line of dialogue with "she asseverated" and had to stop reading and go to the dictionary.
4. Never use an adverb to modify the verb "said" ... he admonished gravely. To use an adverb this way (or almost any way) is a mortal sin. The writer is now exposing himself in earnest, using a word that distracts and can interrupt the rhythm of the exchange. I have a character in one of my books tell how she used to write historical romances "full of rape and adverbs".
5. Keep your exclamation points under control. You are allowed no more than two or three per 100,000 words of prose. If you have the knack of playing with exclaimers the way Tom Wolfe does, you can throw them in by the handful.
6. Never use the words "suddenly" or "all hell broke loose". This rule doesn't require an explanation. I have noticed that writers who use "suddenly" tend to exercise less control in the application of exclamation points.
7. Use regional dialect, patois, sparingly. Once you start spelling words in dialogue phonetically and loading the page with apostrophes, you won't be able to stop. Notice the way Annie Proulx captures the flavour of Wyoming voices in her book of short stories *Close Range*.
8. Avoid detailed descriptions of characters, which Steinbeck covered. In Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants", what do the "American and the girl with him" look like? "She had taken off her hat and put it on the table." That's the only reference to a physical description in the story.
9. Don't go into great detail describing places and things, unless you're Margaret Atwood and can paint scenes with language. You don't want descriptions that bring the action, the flow of the story, to a standstill.
10. Try to leave out the part that readers tend to skip. Think of what you skip reading a novel: thick paragraphs of prose you can see have too many words in them.

Summary

Orphaned as an infant, Jane Eyre lives with at Gateshead with her aunt, Sarah Reed, as the novel opens. Jane is ten years old, an outsider in the Reed family. Her female cousins, Georgiana and Eliza, tolerate, but don't love her. Their brother, John, is more blatantly hostile to Jane, reminding her that she is a poor dependent of his mother who shouldn't even be associating with the children of a gentleman. One day he is angered to find Jane reading one of his books, so he takes the book away and throws it at her. Finding this treatment intolerable, Jane fights back. She is blamed for the conflagration and sent to the red-room, the place where her kind Uncle Reed died. In this frightening room, Jane thinks she sees her uncle's ghost and begs to be set free. Her Aunt Reed

refuses, insisting Jane remain in her prison until she learns complete submissiveness. When the door to the red-room is locked once again, Jane passes out.

She wakes back in her own room, with the kind physician, Mr. Lloyd, standing over her bed. He advises Aunt Reed to send Jane away to school, because she is obviously unhappy at Gateshead. Jane is sent to Lowood School, a charity institution for orphan girls, run by Mr. Brocklehurst. A stingy and mean-hearted minister, Brocklehurst provides the girls with starvation levels of food, freezing rooms, and poorly made clothing and shoes. He justifies his poor treatment of them by saying that they need to learn humility and by comparing them to the Christian martyrs, who also endured great hardships. Despite the difficult conditions at Lowood, Jane prefers school to life with the Reeds. Here she makes two new friends: Miss Temple and Helen Burns. From Miss Temple, Jane learns proper ladylike behavior and compassion; from Helen she gains a more spiritual focus.

The school's damp conditions, combined with the girls' near-starvation diet, produces a typhus epidemic, in which nearly half the students die, including Helen Burns, who dies in Jane's arms. Following this tragedy, Brocklehurst is deposed from his position as manager of Lowood, and conditions become more acceptable. Jane quickly becomes a star student, and after six years of hard work, an effective teacher. Following two years of teaching at Lowood, Jane is ready for new challenges. Miss Temple marries, and Lowood seems different without her. Jane places at advertisement for a governess position in the local newspaper. She receives only one reply, from a Mrs. Fairfax of Thornfield, near Millcote, who seeks a governess for a ten-year old girl. Jane accepts the job. At Thornfield, a comfortable three-story country estate, Jane is warmly welcomed. She likes both her new pupil, Adèle Varens, and Mrs. Fairfax, the housekeeper at Thornfield, but is soon restless. One January afternoon, while walking to Millcote to mail a letter, Jane helps a horseman whose horse has slipped on a patch of ice and fallen. Returning to Thornfield, Jane discovers that this man is Edward Fairfax Rochester, the owner of Thornfield and her employer.

He is a darkhaired, moody man in his late thirties. Although he is often taciturn, Jane grows fond of his mysterious, passionate nature. He tells Jane about Adèle's mother, Céline, a Parisian opera-singer who was once his mistress. Adèle, he claims, is not his daughter, but he rescued the poor girl after her mother abandoned her. Jane also discovers that Thornfield harbors a secret. From time to time, she hears strange, maniacal laughter coming from the third story. Mrs. Fairfax claims this is just Grace Poole, an eccentric servant with a drinking problem.

But Jane wonders if this is true. One night, Jane smells smoke in the hallway, and realizes it is coming from Rochester's room. Jane races down to his room, discovering his curtains and bed are on fire. Unable to wake Rochester, she douses both him and his bedding with cold water. He asks her not to tell anyone about this incident and blames the arson on Grace Poole. Why doesn't he press charges on Grace, or at least evict her from the house, Jane wonders. Following this incident, Rochester leaves suddenly for a house party at a local estate. Jane is miserable during his absence and realizes she is falling in love with him. After a weeklong absence, he returns with a party of guests, including the beautiful Blanche Ingram. Jane jealously believes Rochester is pursing this accomplished, majestic, dark-haired beauty.

An old friend of Rochester's, Richard Mason, joins the party one day. From him, Jane learns that Rochester once lived in Spanish Town, Jamaica. One night, Mason is mysteriously attacked, supposedly by the crazy Grace Poole. Jane leaves Thornfield for a month to attend her aunt, who is on her deathbed following her son John's excessive debauchery and apparent suicide. Jane tries to create a reconciliation with her aunt, but the woman refuses all Jane's attempts at appeasement. Before dying, she gives Jane a letter from her uncle, John Eyre, who had hoped to adopt Jane and make her his heir.

The letter was sent three years ago, but Aunt Reed had vindictively kept it from Jane. Sarah Reed dies, unloved by her daughters. When Jane returns to Thornfield, the houseguests have left. Rochester tells Jane he will soon marry Blanche, so she and Adèle will need to leave Thornfield. In the middle of this charade, Jane reveals her love for him, and the two end up engaged. Jane is happy to be marrying the man she loves, but during the month before the wedding she is plagued by strange dreams of a destroyed Thornfield and a wailing infant.

Two nights before the wedding, a frightening, dark-haired woman enters her room and rips her wedding veil in two. Although Jane is certain this woman didn't look like Grace Poole, Rochester assures her it must have been the bizarre servant. The morning of the wedding finally arrives. Jane and Rochester stand at the altar, taking their vows, when suddenly a strange man announces there's an impediment to the marriage: Rochester is already married to a woman named Bertha Antoinette Mason.

Rochester rushes the wedding party back to Thornfield, where they find his insane and repulsive wife locked in a room on the third story. Grace Poole is the woman's keeper, but Bertha was responsible for the strange laughter and violence at Thornfield. Rochester tries to convince Jane to become his mistress and move with him to a pleasure villa in the south of France. Instead, Jane sneaks away in the middle of the night, with little money and no extra clothing. With twenty shillings, the only money she has, she catches a coach that takes her to faraway Whitcross. There, she spends three days roaming the woods, looking for work and, finally, begging for food. On the third night, she follows a light that leads her across the moors to Marsh End (also called Moor House), owned by the Rivers family.

Hannah, the housekeeper, wants to send her away, but St. John Rivers, the clergyman who owns the house, offers her shelter. Jane soon becomes close friends with St. John's sisters, Diana and Mary, and he offers Jane a humble job as the schoolmistress for the poor girls in his parish at Morton. Because their father lost most of his money before he died, Diana and Mary have been forced to earn a living by working as governesses. One day, St. John learns that, unbeknownst to her, Jane has inherited 20,000 pounds from her uncle, John Eyre. Furthermore, she discovers that St. John's real name is St. John Eyre Rivers, so he, his sisters, and Jane are cousins.

The Rivers were cut out of John Eyre's will because of an argument between John and their father. Thrilled to discover that she has a family, Jane insists on splitting the inheritance four ways, and then remodels Moor House for her cousins, who will no longer need to work as governesses. Not content with his life as a smalltime clergyman, St. John plans to become a missionary in India. He tries to convince Jane to accompany him, as his wife.

Realizing that St. John doesn't love her but just wants to use her to accomplish his goals, Jane refuses his request, but suggests a compromise by agreeing to follow him to India as a comrade, but not as a wife. St. John tries to coerce her into the marriage, and has almost succeeded, when, one night Jane suddenly hears Rochester's disembodied voice calling out to her. Jane leaves Moor House to search for her true love, Rochester. Arriving at Millcote, she discovers Thornfield a burned wreck, just as predicted in her dreams. From a local innkeeper, she learns that Bertha Mason burned the house down one night and that Rochester lost an eye and a hand while trying to save her and the servants. He now lives in seclusion at Ferndean.

Jane immediately drives to Ferndean. There she discovers a powerless, unhappy Rochester. Jane carries a tray to him and reveals her identity. The two lovers are joyfully reunited and soon marry. Ten years later, Jane writes this narrative. Her married life is still blissful; Adèle has grown to be a helpful companion for Jane; Diana and Mary Rivers are happily married; St. John still works as a missionary, but is nearing death; and Rochester has regained partial vision, enough to see their first-born son.

Keywords

Gothic, Victorian culture, Gender hierarchy, industrialization, Class hierarchy, Forest, Countryside

Self Assessment

1) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'character' element in creative writing?

A. Animals

B. Creatures

C. People

D. The Thread of a Story

2) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'settings' element in creative writing?

A. A place or a building.

B. A city or a village.

C. An unfolding story.

D. A planet or a universe.

3) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'language' element in creative writing?

A. English.

B. Robot.

C. Spanish.

D. Hindi.

4) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'plot' element in creative writing?

A. Primary thread.

B. Secondary thread.

C. Actions of characters.

D. Russian.

5) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'structure' element in creative writing?

A. Hero.

B. Beginning, Middle, Ending.

C. Verses and stanzas.

D. Acts.

6) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'action' element in creative writing?

A. A plane crashing.

B. A fight on a road.

C. The primary thread .

D. An emotional outburst.

7) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'issues' element in creative writing?

A. Problems faced by characters.

B. The Prime Minister of India.

C. Solutions created by characters.

D. An altercation between two persons.

8) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'dialogue' element in creative writing?

A. Main character.

B. Supporting character.

C. Actors.

D. Place.

9) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'narration' element in creative writing?

A. First plot.

B. First person.

C. Second person.

D. Third person.

10) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'language' element in creative writing?

A. English.

B. Robot.

C. Spanish.

D. Hindi.

11) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'plot' element in creative writing?
A. Primary thread.
B. Secondary thread.
C. Actions of characters.
D. Russian.

12) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'structure' element in creative writing?
A. Hero.
B. Beginning, Middle, Ending.
C. Verses and stanzas.
D. Acts

13) Rupert Brooke wrote his poetry during which conflict?
A. Boer War
B. Second World War
C. Korean War
D. First World War

14) Father of Utilitarianism
A. James Mill
B. JermyBentham
C. Newman
D. Macaulay

15) Which novel by Charles Dickens is generally regarded as the first Victorian novel
A. Hard times
B. The Pickwick papers
C. Little dorrit
D. Bleak house

Answer for Self Assessment

1.	D	2.	C	3.	B	4.	D	5.	A
6.	C	7.	B	8.	D	9.	A	10	A
11	C	12	B	13	D	14	B	15	B

Review Questions

1. What is Fiction Writing?
2. What is the importance and need of Fiction?
3. What is a Novel?
4. What is the characterization in Jane Eyre?
5. Is Jane Eyre a Feminist Novel?
6. Do you see elements of Feminism in Jane Eyre?

7. What is Victorian Literature?
8. What is a protagonist?
9. What are major complexities in Creative Writing?
10. How one can overcome writing difficulties?
11. What is a balanced Writing?
12. What do you understand by Bildungsroman?
13. What is the first reaction of students towards any writing task?
14. How do readers react towards any writing task?
15. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
16. Throw light on the common ways of writing?
17. What is Fiction?
18. What are major complexities in Poetry Writing?
19. How one can overcome writing difficulties?
20. What do you understand by prose writing?
21. What is the first reaction of students towards any writing task?
22. How do readers react towards any writing task?
23. What are major complexities in Creative Writing?
24. How one can overcome writing difficulties

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Unit 10: Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- examine a historical-cum-critical perspective on British Fiction
- analyse the significance of British fiction in totality
- recognize the essential identity markers of British fiction

Introduction

At age twenty, Charlotte Brontë sent a sample of her poetry to England's Poet Laureate, Robert Southey. His comments urged her to abandon all literary pursuits: "Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be. The more she is engaged in her proper duties, the less leisure will she have for it, even as an accomplishment and a recreation." His response indicates the political difficulties women faced as they tried to enter the literary arena in Victorian England; domestic responsibilities were expected to require all their energy, leaving no time for creative pursuits. Despite a lack of support from the outside world, Charlotte Brontë found sufficient internal motivation and enthusiasm from her sisters to become a successful writer and balance her familial and creative needs. Born at Thornton, Yorkshire on April 21, 1816, Charlotte was the third child of Patrick Brontë and Maria Branwell. In 1820, her father received a curate post in Haworth, a remote town on the Yorkshire moors, where Charlotte spent most of her life. In 1821, Mrs. Brontë died from what was thought to be cancer. Charlotte and her four sisters, Maria, Elizabeth, Emily and Anne, and their brother, Branwell, were raised primarily by their unpleasant, maiden aunt, Elizabeth Branwell, who provided them with little supervision.

Not only were the children free to roam the moors, but their father allowed them to read whatever interested them: Shakespeare, The Arabian Nights, Pilgrim's Progress, and the poems of Byron were some of their favorites. When a school for the daughters of poor clergymen opened at Cowan Bridge in 1824, Mr. Brontë decided to send his oldest four daughters there to receive a formal education. Most biographers argue that Charlotte's description of Lowood School in Jane Eyre accurately reflects the dismal conditions at this school. Charlotte's two oldest sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, died in 1824 of tuberculosis they contracted due to the poor management of the school. Following this tragedy, Patrick Brontë withdrew Charlotte and Emily from Cowan Bridge. Grieving

over their sisters' deaths and searching for a way to alleviate their loneliness, the remaining four siblings began writing a series of stories, The Glass-Town, stimulated by a set of toy soldiers their father had given them. In these

early writings, the children collaboratively created a complete imaginary world, a fictional West African empire they called Angria. Charlotte explained their interest in writing this way: "We were wholly dependent on ourselves and each other, on books and Brontë's Jane Eyre study, for the enjoyments and occupations of life. The highest stimulus, as well as the liveliest pleasure we had know from childhood upwards, lay in attempts at literary composition."

Through her early twenties, Charlotte routinely revised and expanded pieces of the Angria story, developing several key characters and settings. While this writing helped Charlotte improve her literary style, the Angria adventures are fantastical, melodramatic, and repetitive, contrasting with Charlotte's more realistic adult fiction. After her father had a dangerous lung disorder, he decided once again that his daughters should receive an education so they would be assured of an income if he died. In 1831, Charlotte entered the Misses Wooler's school at Roe Head. Shy and solitary, Charlotte was not happy at school, but she still managed to win several academic awards and to make two lifelong friends: Mary Taylor and Ellen Nussey. Although she was offered a teaching job at Roe Head, Charlotte declined the position, choosing to return to Haworth instead. Perhaps bored with the solitary life at Haworth and looking for an active occupation in the world, Charlotte returned to Roe Head in 1835 as a governess. For her, governessing was akin to "slavery," because she felt temperamentally unsuited for it, and finally, following a near mental breakdown in 1838, she was forced to resign her position.

Unfortunately, governessing was the only real employment opportunity middle-class women had in Victorian England. Because the family needed the money, Charlotte suffered through two more unhappy governess positions, feeling like an unappreciated servant in wealthy families' homes; she didn't enjoy living in other people's houses because it caused "estrangement from one's real character." In an attempt to create a job that would allow her to maintain her independence, Charlotte formed the idea of starting her own school at Haworth. To increase her teaching qualifications before beginning this venture, she enrolled as a student, at the age of twenty-six, at the Pensionnat Heger in Brussels so she could increase her fluency in French and learn German. Charlotte loved the freedom and adventure of living in a new culture, and formed an intense, though one-sided, passion for the married headmaster at the school: Monsieur Heger. After two years in Brussels, suffering perhaps from her love for Heger, Charlotte returned to England.

The plan to open her own school was a failure, as she was unable to attract a single student. Instead, Charlotte began putting all of her energy into her writing. After discovering Emily's poems, Charlotte decided that she, Anne, and Life and Background of the Author 3 Emily should try to publish a collection of poems at their own expense. In 1846, they accomplished this goal, using the masculine pseudonyms of Currer, Acton, and Ellis Bell because of the double standards against women authors. Although their book, Poems, was not a financial success, the women continued their literary endeavors. Excited to be writing full-time, they each began a novel. Anne's Agnes Grey and Emily's Wuthering Heights both found publishers, but Charlotte's somewhat autobiographical account of her experiences in Brussels, The Professor, was rejected by several publishers. Again, refusing to become discouraged, Charlotte began writing Jane Eyre in 1846, while on a trip to Manchester with her father where he was undergoing cataract surgery. While he convalesced, Charlotte wrote. The firm of Smith, Elder, and Company agreed to publish the resulting novel, and the first edition of Jane Eyre was released on October 16, 1847.

The novel was an instant success, launching Charlotte into literary fame. It also netted her an impressive 500 pounds, twenty-five times her salary as a governess. But the pleasures of literary success were soon overshadowed by family tragedy. In 1848, after Anne and Charlotte had revealed the true identity of the "Bells" to their publishers, their brother Branwell died. Never living up to his family's high expectations for him, Branwell died an opium-addicted, debauched, alcoholic failure. Emily and Anne died soon after. Although Charlotte completed her second novel, Shirley in 1849, her sadness at the loss of her remaining siblings left her emotionally shattered. She became a respected member of the literary community only when her sisters, her most enthusiastic

supporters, were no longer able to share her victory. Visiting London following the publication of this book, Charlotte became acquainted with several important writers, including William Thackeray and Elizabeth Gaskell, who was to write Charlotte's biography following her death. In 1852, the Reverend Arthur B. Nicholls, Mr. Brontë's curate at Haworth beginning in 1845, proposed marriage to Charlotte. Earlier in her life, Charlotte had rejected several marriage proposals because she was hoping to discover true love, but loneliness following the death of her last three siblings may have led her to accept Nicholls' proposal. Saying she had "esteem" but not love for Nicholls, Charlotte's relationship with her husband was certainly not the overwhelming passion of Jane and Rochester. Her father's jealous opposition to the marriage led Charlotte initially to reject Nicholls, who left Haworth in 1853, the year Villette was published. By 1854, Reverend Brontë's opposition to the union had abated somewhat, and the ceremony was performed on Brontë's Jane Eyre June 29, 1854. After the marriage, Charlotte had little time for writing, as she was forced to perform the duties expected of a minister's wife and take care of her aging father. In 1854 Charlotte, in the early stages of pregnancy, caught pneumonia while on a long, rain-drenched walk on the moors. She died on March 31, 1855, a month before her thirtyninth birthday. The Professor, written in 1846 and 1847, was posthumously published in 1857, along with Mrs. Gaskell's Life of Charlotte Brontë.

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When Jane Eyre was first published in 1847, it was an immediate popular and critical success. George Lewes, a famous Victorian literary critic declared it "the best novel of the season." It also, however, met with criticism. In a famous attack in the Quarterly Review of December 1848, Elizabeth Rigby called Jane a "personification of an unregenerate and undisciplined spirit" and the novel as a whole, "anti-Christian." Rigby's critique perhaps accounts for some of the novel's continuing popularity: the rebelliousness of its tone. Jane Eyre calls into question most of society's major institutions, including education, family, social class, and Christianity. The novel asks the reader to consider a variety of contemporary social and political issues: What is women's position in society, what is the relation between Britain and its colonies, how important is artistic endeavor in human life, what is the relationship of dreams and fantasy to reality, and what is the basis of an effective marriage? Although the novel poses all of these questions, it doesn't didactically offer a single answer to any of them. Readers can construct their own answers, based on their unique and personal analyses of the book. This multidimensionality makes Jane Eyre a novel that rewards multiple readings. While the novel's longevity resides partially in its social message, posing questions still relevant to twenty-first century readers, its combination of literary genre keeps the story entertaining and enjoyable. Not just the story of the romance between Rochester and Jane, the novel also employs the conventions of the bildungsroman (a novel that shows the psychological or moral development of its main character), the gothic and the spiritual quest.

As bildungsroman, the first-person narration plots Jane's growth from an isolated and unloved orphan into a happily married, independent woman. Jane's appeals to the reader directly involve us in this journey of self-knowledge; the reader becomes her accomplice, learning and changing along with the heroine. The novel's gothic element emphasizes the supernatural, the visionary, and the horrific. Mr. Reed's ghostly presence in the red-room, Bertha's strange laughter at Thornfield, and Rochester's dark and brooding persona are all examples of gothic conventions, which add to the novel's suspense, entangling the reader in Jane's attempt to solve the mystery at Thornfield. Finally, the novel could also be read as a spiritual quest, as Jane tries to position herself in relationship to religion at each stop on her journey.

Although she paints a negative picture of the established religious community through her characterizations of Mr. Brocklehurst, Introduction to the Novel 7 St. John Rivers, and Eliza Reed, Jane finds an effective, personal perspective on religion following her night on the moors. For her, when one is closest to nature, one is also closest to God: "We read clearest His infinitude, His omnipotence, His omnipresence." God and nature are both sources of bounty, compassion and forgiveness. In reading this novel, consider keeping a reading journal, writing down quotes that spark your interest. When you've finished the book, return to these notes and group your quotes under specific categories. For example, you may list all quotes related to governesses. Based on these quotes, what seems to be the novel's overall message about governesses? Do different characters have conflicting perceptions of governesses? Which character's ideas does the novel seem to sympathize with and why? Do you agree with the novel's message? By looking at the novel closely and reading it with a critical focus, you will enrich your own reading experience, joining the readers over the last century who've been excited by plain Jane's journey of self-discovery.

10.1 Social, Economic and Political Grounds

Based on the ideas of Karl Marx, this theoretical approach asks us to consider how a literary work reflects the socioeconomic conditions of the time in which it was written. What does the text tell us about contemporary social classes and how does it reflect classism? Jane Eyre depicts the strict, hierarchical class system in England that required everyone to maintain carefully circumscribed class positions. Primarily through the character of Jane, it also accents the cracks in this system, the places where class differences were melding in Victorian England. For example, the novel questions the role of the governess: Should she be considered upper class, based on her superior education, or lower class, because of her servant-status within the family? What happens when relationships develop between people of different classes, such as Rochester and Jane? Jane's ambiguous class status becomes evident from the novel's opening chapter. A poor orphan living with relatives, Jane feels alienated from the rest of the Reed family. John Reed tells Jane she has "no business to take our books; you are a dependent . . . you ought to beg, and not to live here with gentleman's children like us." In this quote, John claims the rights of the gentleman, implying that Jane's family was from a lower class, and, therefore, she has no right to associate on equal footing with her wealthy cousins. Jane's lack of money leaves her dependent upon the Reeds for sustenance. She appears to exist in a no-man's land between the upper- and servant classes. By calling her cousin John a "murderer," "slave-driver," and "Roman emperor," Jane emphasizes her recognition of the corruption inherent in the ruling classes. As she's dragged away to the red-room following her fight with John Reed, Jane resists her captors like a "rebel slave," emphasizing the oppression she suffers because of her class status. When Miss Abbot admonishes Jane for striking John Reed, Jane's "young master," Jane immediately questions her terminology. Is John really her "master"; is she his servant? Emphasizing the corruption, even despotism of the upper classes, Jane's narrative makes her audience aware that the middle classes were becoming the repositories of both moral and intellectual superiority. Jane's experiences at Thornfield reinforce this message. When Jane first arrives, she is happy to learn that Mrs. Fairfax is a housekeeper, and not Jane's employer, because this means they're both dependents and can, therefore, interact as equals. Mrs. Fairfax discusses the difference between herself, as an upper-servant, and the other servants in the house; Critical Essays 101 for example, she says Leah and John are "only servants, and one can't converse with them on terms of equality; one must keep them at due distance for fear of losing one's authority." As a governess, Jane is in the same category as Mrs. Fairfax: neither a member of the family nor a member of the serving classes. The ambiguity of the governess is especially pronounced, as we see with the example of Diana and Mary Rivers: the welleducated daughters of upper-class parents who've fallen on hard financial times, the Rivers are better educated than their employers, though treated with as little respect as the family cook. Victorian society brutally maintained the boundaries between governesses and the upper-class families, practically prohibiting marriages between the two groups and attempting to desexualize governesses, who were often accused of bringing a dangerous sexuality into the family. Blanche, for example, calls governesses "incubi," and Lady Ingram believes that liaisons should never be allowed between governesses and tutors, because such relationships would introduce a moral infection into the household. The relationship between Jane and Rochester also emphasizes class issues. In a conversation preceding their betrothal, Rochester treats Jane like a good servant: Because she's been a "dependent" who has done "her duty," he, as her employer, wants to offer her assistance in finding a new job. Jane confirms her secondary status by referring to Rochester as "master," and believing "wealth, caste, custom," separate her from him. She fears he will treat her like an "automaton" because she is "poor, obscure, plain and little," mistakenly believing the lower classes to be heartless and soulless. Claiming the aristocratic privilege of creating his own rules, Rochester redefines Jane's class status, by defining her as his "equal" and "likeness." Before she can become Rochester's wife, Jane must prove her acceptability based on class. Does she have an upper-class sensibility, despite her inferior position at Thornfield? For example, when Bessie sees Jane at Lowood, she is impressed because Jane has become "quite a lady"; in fact, her accomplishments surpass that of her cousins, yet they are still considered her social superiors based solely on wealth. The conversation emphasizes the ambiguities of Jane's family's class status and of the class system in general: Should a lady be judged based on academic accomplishments, money, or family name? The novel critiques the behavior of most of the upper-class characters Jane meets: Blanche Ingram is haughty and superficial, John Reed is debauched, and Eliza Reed is inhumanely cold. Rochester is a primary example of upper-class debauchery, with his series of mistresses and his attempt to make Jane Brontë's Jane Eyre a member of the harem. In her final view of Thornfield, after Bertha has burned it down, Jane emphasizes the stark contrast between her comforting, flowering, breathtaking dream of Thornfield, and the reality of its trodden and wasted grounds. The discrepancy emphasizes that the world's vision of the upper classes doesn't always capture the hidden passions that boil under

the veneer of genteel tranquility. One of Jane's tasks in the novel is to revitalize the upper classes, which have become mired in debauchery and haughtiness. Just as Rochester sought Jane for her freshness and purity, the novel suggests that the upper classes in general need the pure moral values and stringent work ethic of the middle classes. At novel's end, Rochester recognizes the error in his lifestyle, and his excessive passions have been quenched; he is reborn as a proper, mild-mannered husband, happily dependent on his wife's moral and intellectual guidance.

10.2 Themes

Courtship Rituals

The courtship of Jane and Rochester, over which Bertha presides, is framed in very different terms to that of Rochester's account of his relations with Bertha. The dominant discourse here is not that of sexuality and the body, but rather that of phrenology and the economic and psychological principles of Victorian individualism. Sexuality is displaced into erotic power play. While Jane might not openly defy Rochester, she is not meekly submissive. Both figures treat their association as a fierce battle for the preservation of autonomy. As Rochester says to Jane, shortly alter his proposal, 'Encroach, presume, and the game is up' (p. 330). The rules of their 'game' are defined, as in all Brontë's novels, by an attempt to read the inner territory of the other while preserving the self unread. On their first evening together, Rochester reads Jane's character from her sketches, and on the second she is invited to read his skull. Her unquestioning assertion that Rochester is not handsome confirms that we are in the domain of phrenology, not physiognomy. Neither Rochester nor Jane, who constantly stresses her own lack of physical beauty, 28 Sally Shuttleworth conform to the rules of physiognomy which suggest, as Spurzheim observes, that 'an unsightly person ought to be the concomitant of an unenviable soul'.55 The external signs of the head and countenance do not directly express inner qualities, but rather offer a language that has to be decoded. Rochester offers his skull for Jane's perusal: 'Criticize me: does my forehead not please you?' He lifted up the sable waves of hair which lay horizontally over his brow, and showed a solid enough mass of intellectual organs; but an abrupt deficiency where the suave sign of benevolence should have risen. 'Now, ma'am, am I a fool?' 'Far from it, sir. You would perhaps think me rude if I inquired in return whether you are a philanthropist?' (p. 161) In this phrenological exchange the barriers of class and status are overthrown; all that matters is innate endowment and interpretative proficiency. As an equally skilled reader, Jane is momentarily placed on equal terms with Rochester. Surveillance and interpretative penetration form the groundworks of Jane and Rochester's erotic struggles. He attempts constantly to baffle her powers of deciphering external signs: he withholds information, offers misleading explanations, and even engages in masquerade, as in his courtship of Blanche, and his impersonation of a gypsy. Jane is never allowed to rest secure in her own interpretative powers. Following Rochester's stories concerning Grace Poole, she is 'amazed—confounded' by the discrepancies between her attributed character of would-be murderer and that suggested by her features and 'hard-forehead' (p. 192). Bodies cease to be legible. Rochester's explanations, indeed, trespass on the tremulous borders of Jane's own sanity. He denies, initially, the physical existence of the woman who tore her veil, thrusting on Jane, rather, the label of hysteric with his suggestion that it was 'the creature of an overstimulated brain' (p. 360). Not content with defining one wife as 'maniac', he places his future bride in that other category of female weakness: the nervous, hysterical woman. Their attempted marriage, in which he attempts to impose a false name and role on Jane, represents the culmination of his bid for control of interpretative and definitional power.

The Pleasures of Control

In order to understand the centrality of ideas of regulation and control in Jane Eyre it is necessary to place the novel within a wider frame of cultural Jane Eyre: Lurid Hieroglyphics 31 reference. Throughout nineteenth-century psychological theory one can see the emergence of a new emphasis on the centrality of opposition as the defining category of selfhood: in Esquirol's insistence that selfhood only emerges with the ability to conceal, and in the phrenologists' grounding of self in the experience of conflict, both internal, between the faculties themselves, and external, between the self and the world, a theory which, in turn, bears a strong relation to aspects of German Romantic psychology.59 Nowhere are these principles of opposition given more prominence than in a series of articles by James Ferrier entitled 'An Introduction to the Philosophy of Consciousness', published in Brontë's favorite periodical, Blackwood's, 1838–9. While Brontë would probably have read these articles, I am less concerned with questions of influence, than with Ferrier's role in

articulating and isolating one of the emerging principles of nineteenthcentury psychological thought which frames Brontë's writing. In Ferrier's work, the German Romantic ideal of striving and becoming is assimilated to the antagonistic, individualistic principles of Victorian economic culture. The self, he insists, only comes into being by an act of opposition or negation.60 Consciousness is not the 'harmonious accompaniment' but rather 'the antagonist and the violator of sensation'.61 The violent, implicitly sexual, imagery, which parallels that of Brontë, is indicative: his work is suffused with a sense of perpetual embattlement. In a passage of importance for Jane Eyre, Ferrier maintains that one cannot 'lay hold of the good' by remaining unconscious of evil, for the passions are real madmen, and consciousness is their only keeper; but man's born amiabilities are but painted masks, which, (if consciousness has never occupied its post) are liable to be torn away from the face of his natural corruption, in any dark hour in which the passions may choose to break up from the dungeons of the heart.

Gender Roles

In 19th-century England, gender roles strongly influenced people's behavior and identities, and women endured condescending attitudes about a woman's place, intelligence, and voice. Jane has an uphill battle to become independent and recognized for her personal qualities. She faces off with a series of men who do not respect women as their equals. Mr. Brocklehurst, Rochester, and St. John all attempt to command or master women.

Religion

Religion and spirituality are key factors in how characters develop in the novel. Jane matures partly because she learns to follow Christian lessons and resist temptation. Helen Burns introduces Jane to the New Testament, which becomes a moral guidepost for Jane throughout her life. As Jane develops her relationship with God, Mr. Rochester must also reform his pride, learn to pray, and become humble. Brontë depicts different forms of religion: Helen trusts in salvation;

Like many Victorians, Brontë was obsessed over the state of her own soul, not just in her youth prior to confirmation in the Anglican Church, but during her twenties when this letter was written, and on into her thirties when she wrote Jane Eyre , the novel for which she is most famous. Unlike some Victorian novelists, for example, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, and George Eliot, Brontë did not lose, reject, or deny her faith or the message of the Christian gospel. But this does not tell the full story. What do we really know about the religion of Charlotte Brontë? If she was a believer, as many of her letters and the themes in her novels lead me to conclude, how should we understand her spirituality, that is, her relationship to God and the way she expressed and lived out her faith in public and private? Was she affected by the evangelical movement that was such a distinctive feature of her time and culture? To what extent does Christianity inform her feminism, and what difference, if any, does this make to her depiction of Christianity in her writing? In particular, to what extent is Brontës own spirituality, her desire to live a godly life without denying her feminist impulses or her unique gifts as a woman writer, reflected in the development of her most popular heroine.

The Spiritual and the Supernatural

Brontë uses many themes of Gothic novels to add drama and suspense to *Jane Eyre*. But the novel isn't just a ghost story because Brontë also reveals the *reasons* behind supernatural events. For instance, Mr. Reed's ghost in the red-room is a figment of Jane's stressed-out mind, while Bertha is the "demon" in Thornfield. In *Jane Eyre*, the effects of the supernatural matter more than the causes.

10.3 Symbols

The 'Mad Wife'

Recent feminist criticism has tended to adopt a celebratory response towards Brontë's 'mad-wife', suggesting that the representation offers a clear critique of the Victorian repression of the 'innate' forces of female sexuality.33 To figure woman as a sexualized creature, liable to outbreaks of insanity, is not to move beyond the parameters of Victorian thought, however, but rather to give them explicit inscription. Setting aside the romanticized view which depicts female madness as the

natural rebellion of the oppressed, we should consider rather the ways in which Victorian discourse had pre-defined the forms both of rebellion and conformity. Brontë's originality lies less in her focus on the issue of sexuality, than in her resolute juxtaposition of conflicting formulations within Victorian psychological thought, and her tracing through of the implications of these contradictions for the formation of female subjectivity. The measured rhetoric of self-development and control is placed alongside its feared inverse image, the eruption of uncontrollable energies; in the careful structuring of her narrative, Brontë breaks through the binary divide which policed the borders of category ascription, suggesting that the forces of conformity and rebellion are one and the same. Bertha's laughter and 'eccentric murmurs' constitute another narrative within the text, running in counterpoint to Jane's rational discourse. Yet her voice is not that of the semiotic (as defined by Kristeva), the upswell of madness outside the dominant patriarchal sphere of the symbolic.34 Rather, as incarnation of an alternate male model of the female psyche, a gendered inflection of the doctrine of control, the figure of Bertha functions to call attention to the tenuous, fragile foundations of Jane's imperialist claims to self-dominion. The issue of imperial control is one which has both psychological and political dimensions. Bertha is not only mad but is also, a Creole; placed on the border between European and non-European blood and culture, she is a literal realization of Jane's self-depiction as an 'heterogeneous thing', 'an uncongenial alien' within that first upper-class household.35 Bertha functions less as a 'self-consolidating Other' for Jane than as a destabilizing agent, undermining her attempts to construct a fiction of integrated selfhood.36 The explicit textual parallels drawn between Jane and Bertha have been well documented in feminist criticism: the red room and the attic, the imagery of blood and fire, the references to Jane as 'mad' and a 'fiend' and her famous question to Mrs. Fairfax, 'am I a monster?' (p. 334).37 To Rochester the division is absolute: Jane is 'my good angel' and Bertha is a 'hideous demon' (p. 402). Yet the very scene in which he hopes to offer a visible demonstration of this polarity to an assembled public audience is ambiguous.

The Red-Room

The red-room symbolizes how society traps Jane by limiting her freedom due to her class, gender, and independent streak.

Fire and Ice

Fire is a symbol of emotion in the novel. Mr. Rochester has a fiery personality, while St. John is associated with ice and snow, symbolizing his dispassionate character.

Eyes

The eyes are the windows to the soul in *Jane Eyre*. Jane is especially attracted to Mr. Rochester's black and brilliant eyes, which symbolize his temper and power.

Food

In *Jane Eyre*, food symbolizes generosity, nourishment, and bounty, and hunger symbolizes cruelty and a lack of nourishment.

Portraits and Pictures

Through dreams and drawings, Jane visualizes her deepest feelings. Jane's portfolio contains pictures that symbolize her life. Portraits can also stand in for people's characters.

10.410 Points to Remember in Fiction Writing

1 Never open a book with weather. If it's only to create atmosphere, and not a character's reaction to the weather, you don't want to go on too long. The reader is apt to leaf ahead looking for people. There are exceptions. If you happen to be Barry Lopez, who has more ways than an Eskimo to describe ice and snow in his book *Arctic Dreams*, you can do all the weather reporting you want.

2 Avoid prologues: they can be annoying, especially a prologue following an introduction that comes after a foreword. But these are ordinarily found in non-fiction. A prologue in a novel is

backstory, and you can drop it in anywhere you want. There is a prologue in John Steinbeck's *Sweet Thursday*, but it's OK because a character in the book makes the point of what my rules are all about. He says: "I like a lot of talk in a book and I don't like to have nobody tell me what the guy that's talking looks like. I want to figure out what he looks like from the way he talks."

3 Never use a verb other than "said" to carry dialogue. The line of dialogue belongs to the character; the verb is the writer sticking his nose in. But "said" is far less intrusive than "grumbled", "gasped", "cautioned", "lied". I once noticed Mary McCarthy ending a line of dialogue with "she asseverated" and had to stop reading and go to the dictionary.

4 Never use an adverb to modify the verb "said" ... he admonished gravely. To use an adverb this way (or almost any way) is a mortal sin. The writer is now exposing himself in earnest, using a word that distracts and can interrupt the rhythm of the exchange. I have a character in one of my books tell how she used to write historical romances "full of rape and adverbs".

5 Keep your exclamation points under control. You are allowed no more than two or three per 100,000 words of prose. If you have the knack of playing with exclaimers the way Tom Wolfe does, you can throw them in by the handful.

6 Never use the words "suddenly" or "all hell broke loose". This rule doesn't require an explanation. I have noticed that writers who use "suddenly" tend to exercise less control in the application of exclamation points.

7 Use regional dialect, patois, sparingly. Once you start spelling words in dialogue phonetically and loading the page with apostrophes, you won't be able to stop. Notice the way Annie Proulx captures the flavour of Wyoming voices in her book of short stories *Close Range*.

8 Avoid detailed descriptions of characters, which Steinbeck covered. In Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants", what do the "American and the girl with him" look like? "She had taken off her hat and put it on the table." That's the only reference to a physical description in the story.

9 Don't go into great detail describing places and things, unless you're Margaret Atwood and can paint scenes with language. You don't want descriptions that bring the action, the flow of the story, to a standstill.

10 Try to leave out the part that readers tend to skip. Think of what you skip reading a novel: thick paragraphs of prose you can see have too many words in them.

Summary

Orphaned as an infant, Jane Eyre lives with at Gateshead with her aunt, Sarah Reed, as the novel opens. Jane is ten years old, an outsider in the Reed family. Her female cousins, Georgiana and Eliza, tolerate, but don’t love her. Their brother, John, is more blatantly hostile to Jane, reminding her that she is a poor dependent of his mother who shouldn’t even be associating with the children of a gentleman. One day he is angered to find Jane reading one of his books, so he takes the book away and throws it at her. Finding this treatment intolerable, Jane fights back. She is blamed for the conflagration and sent to the red-room, the place where her kind Uncle Reed died. In this frightening room, Jane thinks she sees her uncle’s ghost and begs to be set free. Her Aunt Reed refuses, insisting Jane remain in her prison until she learns complete submissiveness. When the door to the red-room is locked once again, Jane passes out.

She wakes back in her own room, with the kind physician, Mr. Lloyd, standing over her bed. He advises Aunt Reed to send Jane away to school, because she is obviously unhappy at Gateshead. Jane is sent to Lowood School, a charity institution for orphan girls, run by Mr. Brocklehurst. A stingy and mean-hearted minister, Brocklehurst provides the girls with starvation levels of food, freezing rooms, and poorly made clothing and shoes. He justifies his poor treatment of them by saying that they need to learn humility and by comparing them to the Christian martyrs, who also

endured great hardships. Despite the difficult conditions at Lowood, Jane prefers school to life with the Reeds. Here she makes two new friends: Miss Temple and Helen Burns. From Miss Temple, Jane learns proper ladylike behavior and compassion; from Helen she gains a more spiritual focus.

The school's damp conditions, combined with the girls' near-starvation diet, produces a typhus epidemic, in which nearly half the students die, including Helen Burns, who dies in Jane's arms. Following this tragedy, Brocklehurst is deposed from his position as manager of Lowood, and conditions become more acceptable. Jane quickly becomes a star student, and after six years of hard work, an effective teacher. Following two years of teaching at Lowood, Jane is ready for new challenges. Miss Temple marries, and Lowood seems different without her. Jane places at advertisement for a governess position in the local newspaper. She receives only one reply, from a Mrs. Fairfax of Thornfield, near Millcote, who seeks a governess for a ten-year old girl. Jane accepts the job. At Thornfield, a comfortable three-story country estate, Jane is warmly welcomed. She likes both her new pupil, Adèle Varens, and Mrs. Fairfax, the housekeeper at Thornfield, but is soon restless. One January afternoon, while walking to Millcote to mail a letter, Jane helps a horseman whose horse has slipped on a patch of ice and fallen. Returning to Thornfield, Jane discovers that this man is Edward Fairfax Rochester, the owner of Thornfield and her employer.

He is a darkhaired, moody man in his late thirties. Although he is often taciturn, Jane grows fond of his mysterious, passionate nature. He tells Jane about Adèle's mother, Céline, a Parisian opera-singer who was once his mistress. Adèle, he claims, is not his daughter, but he rescued the poor girl after her mother abandoned her. Jane also discovers that Thornfield harbors a secret. From time to time, she hears strange, maniacal laughter coming from the third story. Mrs. Fairfax claims this is just Grace Poole, an eccentric servant with a drinking problem.

But Jane wonders if this is true. One night, Jane smells smoke in the hallway, and realizes it is coming from Rochester's room. Jane races down to his room, discovering his curtains and bed are on fire. Unable to wake Rochester, she douses both him and his bedding with cold water. He asks her not to tell anyone about this incident and blames the arson on Grace Poole. Why doesn't he press charges on Grace, or at least evict her from the house, Jane wonders. Following this incident, Rochester leaves suddenly for a house party at a local estate. Jane is miserable during his absence and realizes she is falling in love with him. After a weeklong absence, he returns with a party of guests, including the beautiful Blanche Ingram. Jane jealously believes Rochester is pursing this accomplished, majestic, dark-haired beauty.

An old friend of Rochester's, Richard Mason, joins the party one day. From him, Jane learns that Rochester once lived in Spanish Town, Jamaica. One night, Mason is mysteriously attacked, supposedly by the crazy Grace Poole. Jane leaves Thornfield for a month to attend her aunt, who is on her deathbed following her son John's excessive debauchery and apparent suicide. Jane tries to create a reconciliation with her aunt, but the woman refuses all Jane's attempts at appeasement. Before dying, she gives Jane a letter from her uncle, John Eyre, who had hoped to adopt Jane and make her his heir.

The letter was sent three years ago, but Aunt Reed had vindictively kept it from Jane. Sarah Reed dies, unloved by her daughters. When Jane returns to Thornfield, the houseguests have left. Rochester tells Jane he will soon marry Blanche, so she and Adèle will need to leave Thornfield. In the middle of this charade, Jane reveals her love for him, and the two end up engaged. Jane is happy to be marrying the man she loves, but during the month before the wedding she is plagued by strange dreams of a destroyed Thornfield and a wailing infant.

Two nights before the wedding, a frightening, dark-haired woman enters her room and rips her wedding veil in two. Although Jane is certain this woman didn't look like Grace Poole, Rochester assures her it must have been the bizarre servant. The morning of the wedding finally arrives. Jane and Rochester stand at the altar, taking their vows, when suddenly a strange man announces there's an impediment to the marriage: Rochester is already married to a woman named Bertha Antoinetta Mason.

Rochester rushes the wedding party back to Thornfield, where they find his insane and repulsive wife locked in a room on the third story. Grace Poole is the woman's keeper, but Bertha was responsible for the strange laughter and violence at Thornfield. Rochester tries to convince Jane to become his mistress and move with him to a pleasure villa in the south of France. Instead, Jane sneaks away in the middle of the night, with little money and no extra clothing. With twenty shillings, the only money she has, she catches a coach that takes her to faraway Whitcross. There, she spends three days roaming the woods, looking for work and, finally, begging for food. On the

third night, she follows a light that leads her across the moors to Marsh End (also called Moor House), owned by the Rivers family.

Hannah, the housekeeper, wants to send her away, but St. John Rivers, the clergyman who owns the house, offers her shelter. Jane soon becomes close friends with St. John's sisters, Diana and Mary, and he offers Jane a humble job as the schoolmistress for the poor girls in his parish at Morton. Because their father lost most of his money before he died, Diana and Mary have been forced to earn a living by working as governesses. One day, St. John learns that, unbeknownst to her, Jane has inherited 20,000 pounds from her uncle, John Eyre. Furthermore, she discovers that St. John's real name is St. John Eyre Rivers, so he, his sisters, and Jane are cousins.

The Rivers were cut out of John Eyre's will because of an argument between John and their father. Thrilled to discover that she has a family, Jane insists on splitting the inheritance four ways, and then remodels Moor House for her cousins, who will no longer need to work as governesses. Not content with his life as a smalltime clergyman, St. John plans to become a missionary in India. He tries to convince Jane to accompany him, as his wife.

Realizing that St. John doesn't love her but just wants to use her to accomplish his goals, Jane refuses his request, but suggests a compromise by agreeing to follow him to India as a comrade, but not as a wife. St. John tries to coerce her into the marriage, and has almost succeeded, when, one night Jane suddenly hears Rochester's disembodied voice calling out to her. Jane leaves Moor House to search for her true love, Rochester. Arriving at Millcote, she discovers Thornfield a burned wreck, just as predicted in her dreams. From a local innkeeper, she learns that Bertha Mason burned the house down one night and that Rochester lost an eye and a hand while trying to save her and the servants. He now lives in seclusion at Ferndean.

Jane immediately drives to Ferndean. There she discovers a powerless, unhappy Rochester. Jane carries a tray to him and reveals her identity. The two lovers are joyfully reunited and soon marry. Ten years later, Jane writes this narrative. Her married life is still blissful; Adèle has grown to be a helpful companion for Jane; Diana and Mary Rivers are happily married; St. John still works as a missionary, but is nearing death; and Rochester has regained partial vision, enough to see their first-born son.

Keywords

Nature, Class, Gender, Sexuality, Patriarchy, Animalism, Humanism, Culture difference, Countryside, Childhood, Industrialization

Self Assessment

1) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'character' element in creative writing?

A. Animals

B. Creatures

C. People

D. The Thread of a Story

2) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'settings' element in creative writing?

A. A place or a building.

B. A city or a village.

C. An unfolding story.

D. A planet or a universe.

3) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'language' element in creative writing?

A. English.

B. Robot.

C. Spanish.

D. Hindi.

4) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'plot' element in creative writing?
A. Primary thread.
B. Secondary thread.
C. Actions of characters.
D. Russian.

5) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'structure' element in creative writing?
A. Hero.
B. Beginning, Middle, Ending.
C. Verses and stanzas.
D. Acts.

6) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'action' element in creative writing?
A. A plane crashing.
B. A fight on a road.
C. The primary thread .
D. An emotional outburst.

7) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'issues' element in creative writing?
A. Problems faced by characters.
B. The Prime Minister of India.
C. Solutions created by characters.
D. An altercation between two persons.

8) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'dialogue' element in creative writing?
A. Main character.
B. Supporting character.
C. Actors.
D. Place.

9) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'narration' element in creative writing?
A. First plot.
B. First person.
C. Second person.
D. Third person.

10) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'language' element in creative writing?
A. English.
B. Robot.
C. Spanish.
D. Hindi.

11) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'plot' element in creative writing?
A. Primary thread.
B. Secondary thread.

C. Actions of characters.

D. Russian.

12) Which of the following does not form a part of the 'structure' element in creative writing?

A. Hero.

B. Beginning, Middle, Ending.

C. Verses and stanzas.

D. Acts.

13) Rupert Brooke wrote his poetry during which conflict?

A. Boer War

B. Second World War

C. Korean War

D. First World War

14) Father of Utilitarianism

A. James Mill

B. JermyBentham

C. Newman

D. Macaulay

15) Which novel by Charles Dickens is generally regarded as the first Victorian novel

A. hard times

B. the Pickwick papers

C. little Dorrit

D. bleak house

Answer for Self Assessment

1.	D	2.	C	3.	B	4.	D	5.	A
6.	C	7.	B	8.	D	9.	A	10	A
11	C	12	B	13	D	14	B	15	B

Review Questions

1. What is Fiction Writing?
2. What is the importance and need of Fiction?
3. What is a Novel?
4. What is the characterization in Jane Eyre?
5. Is Jane Eyre a Feminist Novel?
6. Do you see elements of Feminism in Jane Eyre?
7. What is Victorian Literature?
8. What is a protagonist?
9. What are major complexities in Creative Writing?
10. How one can overcome writing difficulties?

11. What is a balanced Writing?
12. What do you understand by Bildungsroman?
13. What is the first reaction of students towards any writing task?
14. How do readers react towards any writing task?
15. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
16. Throw light on the common ways of writing?
17. What is Fiction?
18. What are major complexities in Poetry Writing?
19. How one can overcome writing difficulties?
20. What do you understand by prose writing?
21. What is the first reaction of students towards any writing task?
22. How do readers react towards any writing task?
23. What are major complexities in Creative Writing?
24. How one can overcome writing difficulties

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Unit 11: Great Expectations by Charles Dickens

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- examine a historical-cum-critical perspective on British Fiction
- analyse the significance of British fiction in totality
- recognize the essential identity markers of British fiction

Introduction

Charles John Huffam Dickens was born in Landport, Portsea, near Portsmouth, England, on February 7, 1812, the second of eight children of John and Elizabeth Barrow Dickens. The family moved to London in 1814, to Chatham in 1817, and then back to London in 1822. By 1824 increasing financial difficulties caused Dickens's father to be briefly imprisoned for debt; Dickens himself was put to work for a few months at a shoe-blacking warehouse. Memories of this painful period in his life were to influence much of his later writing, in particular the early chapters of David Copperfield. After studying at the Wellington House Academy in London (1824–27), Dickens worked as a solicitor's clerk (1827–28), then worked for various newspapers, first the True Sun (1832–34) and later as a political reporter for the Morning Chronicle (1834–36). In 1833 Dickens fell in love with Maria Beadnell, but her family opposed any contemplated marriage. Dickens never forgot Maria, and she served as the model for Dora in David Copperfield.

In 1836 a collection of articles contributed to various periodicals appeared in two volumes as Sketches by "Boz," Illustrative of Every-day Life and Every-day People. This was followed by the enormously popular Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club (1836–37). Like many of Dickens's later novels, the Pickwick Papers first appeared in a series of monthly chapbooks or "parts." Other novels were serialized in magazines before appearing in book form. In 1836 Dickens married Catherine Hogarth, with whom he had ten children before their separation in 1858. At the beginning of his marriage, Catherine's sixteen-year-old sister Mary lived with them, but she died after a few months. The shock of this loss affected Dickens permanently, and Mary would be the model for many of the pure, saintly heroines in his novels—such as Little Nell in The Old Curiosity Shop—who die at an early age.

In 1843 Dickens published A Christmas Carol, the first in a series of Christmas books that included The Chimes (1845), The Cricket on the Hearth (1846), The Battle of Life (1846), and The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain (1848). Early in 1846 he was for a brief time the editor of the Daily News, a paper of the Radical party to which he contributed "Pictures of Italy" after visiting Italy in

1844 and again in 1845. During a visit to Switzerland in 1846 Dickens wrote his novel Dombey and Son, which appeared monthly between 1846 and 1848. In 1850 he started the periodical Household Words; in 1859 it was incorporated into All the Year Round, which Dickens continued to edit until his death. Much of his later work was published in these two periodicals, including David Copperfield (1849–50), Bleak House (1852–53), Hard Times (1854), Little Dorrit (1855–57), A Tale of Two Cities (1859), Great Expectations (1860–61), and Our Mutual Friend (1864–65).

Throughout his life, Dickens threw himself vigorously into a variety of social and political crusades, such as prison reform, improvement of education, the status of workhouses, and reform of the copyright law (American publishers were notorious for pirating his works and offering him no compensation). These interests find their way also into his work, which is characterized by sympathy for the oppressed and a keen examination of class distinctions. His novels and stories have been both praised and censured for their sentimentality and their depiction of "larger-than-life" characters, such as Pickwick or Mr. Micawber (in David Copperfield).

Charles Dickens reread his autobiographical novel, David Copperfield, before he began to write Great Expectations. He hoped thus not to repeat himself, and his hope was fulfilled: David and Pip are very different personages. Yet Dickens's anxiety was justified; both of these first-person narrators are versions of Dickens himself, and only acute self-awareness on the novelist's part kept Pip from becoming as autobiographical a figure as David had been. Still, one can wonder whether Pip is not a better representation of Dickens's innermost being than David is. Compared to Pip's incessant and excessive sense of guilt, David's consciousness seems much freer, or at least works in a more unimpeded fashion to liberate itself, in part, from the personal past. Pip does not become a novelist, as David and Dickens do, and Pip also does not submit to sentimentality, as David does. We are asked to believe that David Copperfield concludes the novel as a fully matured being, but we are left with considerable doubts. Pip, perhaps because he is more distanced from Dickens, seems more worthy of Dickens's respect and is endowed by the novelist with a more powerful imagination than the novelist David Copperfield enjoys.

Dickens originally ended the novel with a powerful unhappiness: Pip and Estella meet by chance in London; she has remarried, and each sees in the other a suffering that cannot be redressed. Unfortunately, Dickens revised this into the present conclusion, in which Pip prophesies that he and Estella will not be parted again. Though this is a little ambiguous and just evades sentimentality, it is highly inappropriate to what is most wonderful about the novel: The purgation, through acceptance of loss, that has carried Pip into an authentic maturity. What matters in that maturation is not that guilt has been evaded or transcended, but that the reader has come to understand it, however implicitly, as the cost of Pip's confirmation as an achieved self. What Dickens could not bring himself to do in David Copperfield, he disciplined himself into doing in Great Expectations. Self-made, even self-fathered, Dickens disowns part of that psychic achievement when he creates Pip, who is fatherless but keeps faith at last both with Joe and with the memory of Magwitch.

Great Expectations is at once an elegy for the lost innocence of lower-class rural population—who, like the Gargerys of Rochester, toiled in the countryside of his childhood—and a critical analysis of the broadening gap between illusion and reality that came with the hopefulness of reform, social mobility, and ever increasing commerce. In order to successfully render this transformation, Dickens's scholar David Paroissien says the author needed to use first-person narration and maintain a dual focus: "Pip looks back to those events of his life set in Regency England but tells them from a present he belongs to, the now of the relating time."

Throughhis protagonist, Pip, Dickens sought to define and question the motivations and forces behind a rise in social status and the prejudices surrounding the divide between high society and the base criminal world. An advocate of free trade, Dickens was sickened by the cruelty overcrowded London inflicted upon its inhabitants. His depictions of Smithfield market and Newgate prison serve as reminders of the filthy, teeming, bloody world of questionable justice during this era. But since Pip's story begins not in the present time but rather in the early part of the century, Dickens appealed to readers by depicting Pip as looking back from a current perspective, with some of the knowledge and maturity that wouldn't be available to a young, "common labouring boy" in the beginning of the century.

Reader faith and investment was necessary for a writer who constructed his plot as a series of bite-sized chunks. As the editor of the weekly journal All the Year Round, Dickens had to contend with the journal's plummeting sales following the failure of novelist Charles Lever's serialized publication of his A Day's Ride. Great Expectations appeared in weekly installments in both All the Year Round and Harper's Weekly from December 1860 to August 1861. This format, though

challenging for the writer, brought him a broad readership that only improved his career. Dickens used the serial constraints as structural features in the novel, shaping plot around his need to have a continual series of beginnings and endings and maintaining suspense throughout the work. Great Expectations does not fall neatly into any particular genre. It does have aspects of domestic realism—which by 1860 was characteristic of Dickens's contemporaries such as Thackeray, Eliot, and Trollope—but in different moments also resembles a variety of Victorian subgenres, including the historical novel; a "silver-fork" fiction dealing with high society; a "Newgate" sensationalist or crime novel; and, perhaps most obviously, the Bildungsroman.

Seeing the autobiographical nature of Great Expectations is easy with the knowledge that Dickens, like Pip, once lived in the marsh country, was employed in a job he despised, and experienced success in London at an early age. These similarities may be the reason why biographer Thomas Wrightsays that Great Expectations differs from Dickens's other novels, arguing that the hero and heroine are "really live and interesting characters with human faults and failings." Some critics, including Wright, argue that Estella, in name and spirit, is an amalgam of Ellen Lawless Ternan, a 20-year-old actress with whom Dickens had an affair following his divorce. Although like Pip and Estella, Dickens and Ternan were united in the end, Great Expectations's original ending was considerably more melancholy. After finishing the last installment of the book in June 1861, the exhausted Dickens brought the proofs to his friend, novelist Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Lytton argued that the Dickens's first and considerably shorter ending—in which Pip encounters Estella remarried and unambiguously leaves her forever—would be too disappointing for readers. In a letter to Forster, Dickens wrote, "I have put in as pretty a little piece of writing as I could, and I have no doubt that the story will be more acceptable through the alteration."

11.1 Characterization

Pip, the protagonist of the novel, is an orphan living with Mr. and Mrs. Joe Gargery, his sister and brother-in-law. Realizing with disgust his "commonness" once he encounters Miss Havisham and Estella, he is delighted when he learns he has a secret benefactor who wishes to make him a gentleman.

Estella, the adopted charge of Miss Havisham, has been raised with the intention of enacting her guardian's revenge on men. Upon encountering Pip after she has been "educated for a lady," she tells him that "I have no heart...no softness there, no—sympathy—sentiment—nonsense." (237). She endures an unhappy marriage to Bentley Drummle, who dies eleven years later.

An heiress and the owner of Satis house, Miss Havisham employs young Pip and delights in watching him play with Estella. Soon she decides that Pip will suffer the wrongs that she herself endured when her marriage was called off only minutes before the ceremony.

Abel Magwitch, a convict who worked with and was later betrayed by Compeyson, first encounters young Pip in the marshes and then, threatening the boy, begs for food and a file. When Pip reminds him of a young daughter he lost, Magwitch aims to earn a fortune to repay the boy by making him a gentleman through secret contribution.

An educated, gentlemanly criminal and former associate of Magwitch, Compeyson uses his looks and his manners to shift blame to Magwitch during a trial, sparking an eternal feud. He also uses his wiles to attract Miss Havisham and eventually to jilt her. Compeyson is responsible for Magwitch's capture at the end of the novel.

Joe Gargery is an honest, earnest blacksmith and Pip's brotherin-law, who endures marriage to a shrill woman without complaint. Later, his pride and love for Pip supersede Pip's callous shunning of his former social status.

Mrs. Joe is Pip's sister, more than twenty years his elder, who never loses a chance to remind her charge that she "brought him up by hand." This effort is often conducted with the help of a cane she calls "Tickler." Dissatisfied with her station in life, and often shrill, jealous, and confrontational, she is silenced when Orlick strikes her in the back of the head.

Pip's dark shadow throughout the book, Orlick first works as a day laborer in Joe's forge and later works as a porter at Satis house. He is responsible for the attack on Mrs. Joe, and he never forgives Pip for ruining his chances of wooing Biddy. He develops an association with Compeyson; baiting Pip with mention of Magwitch, Orlick lures Pip to a sluice-house in the marshes and attempts to kill him.

Jaggers is an intimidating and prominent criminal lawyer in London who assumes the role of Pip's legal guardian once Magwitch decides to support him in secret. Jaggers's association with Miss Havisham leads Pip to believe that she is in fact his benefactor. Cold and cruel with his clients and frugal with his emotions and lifestyle, Jaggers is involved with the dirty business of being an "Old Bailey" attorney—therefore he frequently washes his hands with scented soap. He brings Estella to be adopted by Miss Havisham.

Pip first encounters Herbert Pocket—the son of Miss Havisham's cousin, Matthew Pocket—as a "pale young gentleman" lurking in the courtyard at Satis house. Once Pip is informed of his intentions to be made a gentleman, he lives with Herbert; the two become close companions and Herbert nicknames Pip "Handel." Herbert wants to make a fortune as a merchant so that he can marry Clara Bailey

Educated at Harrow and Cambridge, Matthew Pocket is one of Pip's tutors and a chief civilizing force from his life. He has become estranged from his family because of his pragmatism at a time when Miss Havisham was giving large amounts of money to the man who eventually jilted her.

Wemmick is Jaggers's middle-aged clerk, who divides his life quite neatly into to compartments. The professional life, in which he maintains a "post-office mouth" and an obsession with "portable property"; and his personal life, which is housed in an imitation castle he shares with his aging father. His desire to help Pip out of certain predicaments is precluded by his professional life, and Pip must seek him out at home in order to get the advice for which he is looking. Wemmick is in love with the middle-aged Miss Skiffins.

One of Pip's earliest confidantes, Biddy helps Pip with his lessons and he is put at ease by her simple, earnest, humility. When Mrs. Joe is attacked, Biddy moves in with the Gargerys to keep house.

Joe's uncle, Pumblechook is a merchant obsessed with money and possessions. He first delivers Pip to Miss Havisham's house. After Pip's is educated to be a gentleman by the generosity of Magwitch, Pumblechook advertises that he was Pip's earliest benefactor.

Powerful though inarticulate, Drummle is one of Pip's classmates and an "old-looking young man of a heavy order of architecture." (190) When Jaggers encounters Drummle he is impressed by the man's mannerisms and nicknames him "Spider." To Pip's horror, Drummle courts Estella and eventually marries her.

Startop is Pip's other classmate, who has younger, more delicate features and mannerisms and is extremely devoted to his mother. Pip and Herbert solicit Startop's help in attempting to smuggle Magwitch out of London.

Magwitch's former lover, Molly bore his daughter, who is later revealed to be Estella. She is acquitted of murder, at which point Estella is placed in the care of Miss Havisham and Molly becomes Jaggers's housekeeper.

Mr. Wopsle is a church clerk and frustrated preacher who falls into playacting and moves to London shortly after Pip does, assuming the stage name of Waldengarver. When Pip comes to see one of his productions, Wopsle is startled to see a man lurking behind Pip—Compeyson.

11.2 Narration

Charles Dickens reread his autobiographical novel, David Copperfield, before he began to write Great Expectations. He hoped thus not to repeat himself, and his hope was fulfilled: David and Pip are very different personages. Yet Dickens's anxiety was justified; both of these first-person narrators are versions of Dickens himself, and only acute self-awareness on the novelist's part kept Pip from becoming as autobiographical a figure as David had been.

Great Expectations is at once an elegy for the lost innocence of lower-class rural population—who, like the Gargerys of Rochester, toiled in the countryside of his childhood—and a critical analysis of the broadening gap between illusion and reality that came with the hopefulness of reform, social mobility, and ever increasing commerce. In order to successfully render this transformation, Dickens's scholar David Paroissien says the author needed to use first-person narration and maintain a dual focus: "Pip looks back to those events of his life set in Regency England but tells them from a present he belongs to, the now of the relating time." Throughhis protagonist, Pip, Dickens sought to define and question the motivations and forces behind a rise in social status and the prejudices surrounding the divide between high society and the base criminal world. An

advocate of free trade, Dickens was sickened by the cruelty overcrowded London inflicted upon its inhabitants. His depictions of Smithfield market and Newgate prison serve as reminders of the filthy, teeming, bloody world of questionable justice during this era. But since Pip's story begins not in the present time but rather in the early part of the century, Dickens appealed to readers by depicting Pip as looking back from a current perspective, with some of the knowledge and maturity that wouldn't be available to a young, "common labouring boy" in the beginning of the century. Reader faith and investment was necessary for a writer who constructed his plot as a series of bite-sized chunks. As the editor of the weekly journal All the Year Round, Dickens had to contend with the journal's plummeting sales following the failure of novelist Charles Lever's serialized publication of his A Day's Ride. Great Expectations appeared in weekly installments in both All the Year Round and Harper's Weekly from December 1860 to August 1861. This format, though challenging for the writer, brought him a broad readership that only improved his career. Dickens used the serial constraints as structural features in the novel, shaping plot around his need to have a continual series of beginnings and endings and maintaining suspense throughout the work. Great Expectations does not fall neatly into any particular genre. It does have aspects of domestic realism—which by 1860 was characteristic of Dickens's contemporaries such as Thackeray, Eliot, and Trollope—but in different moments also resembles a variety of Victorian subgenres, including the historical novel; a "silver-fork" fiction dealing with high society; a "Newgate" sensationalist or crime novel; and, perhaps most obviously, the Bildungsroman. Seeing the autobiographical nature of Great Expectations is easy with the knowledge that Dickens, like Pip, once lived in the marsh country, was employed in a job he despised, and experienced success in London at an early age. These similarities may be the reason why biographer Thomas Wrightsays that Great Expectations differs from Dickens's other novels, arguing that the hero and heroine are "really live and interesting characters with human faults and failings." Some critics, including Wright, argue that Estella, in name and spirit, is an amalgam of Ellen Lawless Ternan, a 20-year-old actress with whom Dickens had an affair following his divorce. Although like Pip and Estella, Dickens and Ternan were united in the end, Great Expectations's original ending was considerably more melancholy. After finishing the last installment of the book in June 1861, the exhausted Dickens brought the proofs to his friend, novelist Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Lytton argued that the Dickens's first and considerably shorter ending—in which Pip encounters Estella remarried and unambiguously leaves her forever—would be too disappointing for readers. In a letter to Forster, Dickens wrote, "I have put in as pretty a little piece of writing as I could, and I have no doubt that the story will be more acceptable through the alteration." When the novel was published as a whole that July, critics had differing opinions on the revised ending, but the novel was a tremendous commercial success. A century and a half later, few remember that the novel once closed with a remarried Estella's encounter with Pip on a Picadilly street and their final, unambiguous parting soon after. Today the novel is popular— well-read and widely taught. And Dickens's controversial decisions in writing the serial have faded into the annals of history. "This was the author's last great work," wrote Swinburne. "The defects in it are as nearly imperceptible as spots on the sun or shadow on a sunlit sea."

This originating moment of Pip's narration and his narrative is a self-naming that already subverts whatever authority could be found in the text of the tombstones. The process of reading that text is described by Pip the narrator as "unreasonable," in that it interprets the appearance of the lost father and mother from the shape of the letters of their names. The tracing of thename—which he has already distorted in its application to self— involves a misguided attempt to remotivate the graphic symbol, to make it directly mimetic, mimetic specifically of origin. Loss of origin, misreading, and the problematic of identity are bound up here in ways we will further explore later on. The question of reading and writing—of learning to compose and to decipher texts—is persistently thematized in the novel.

The only clue to this unity which is given at the surface level of the narrative is Pip's obsession of criminal guilt. Pip tells us over and over again that he feels contaminated by crime. But we do not find the objective correlative of that conviction until we recognise in the insensate and compunctionlessOrlick a shadow image of the tender-minded and yet monstrously ambitious young hero.

Pip's relation with all characters is self-serving, even when he claims to be acting altruistically, and in his narration he occasionally covers this seemingly irreducible egotism with a veneer of disingenuous contrition. One example is his relation with Joe. As narrator, Pip claims to have developed a solicitude for Joe, but that claim is everywhere contradicted by his actions. After learning the selfless rationale for Joe's acquiesence in Mrs. Joe's "government," Pip writes:

Young as I was, I believe that I dated a new admiration of Joe from that night. We were equals afterwards, as we had been before; but afterwards, at quiet times when I sat looking at Joe and thinking about him, I had a new sensation of feeling conscious that I was looking up to Joe in my heart. (7, 52)

But nowhere afterwards are they "equals." On the contrary, at the end of the novel, Pip still condescends to Joe even as he benefits from his ransoming, even as he egocentrically worries what "little Pip," his only posterity, will think of him. Similarly distorted appraisals of his past conduct surface in his comments on Biddy, Estella, Pumblechook, and Magwitch. The pervasive pattern of Pip's distortions raises the question of whether there might be some inherent discontinuity between the narrating and the narrated self. Peter Brooks hints at such a contradiction when he cites Sartre's remark that all autobiographies are obituaries, excluding the margins of experience.4 But Pip's bad faith runs deeper than that phenomenological mauvaisefoi described by Sartre: it is not that Pip distorts by reifying the For-Itself in language. Instead, as we will see, there never was an original self apart from language to suffer such distortion. Selfhood has always already been the narrator's fictive construct, and Pip's moral bad faith serves to varnish that fact.

This deeper contradiction within the process of narration is discernible in other retrospective judgments. After concluding the account of his first visit to Satis House and his newperception of Joe's thick boots and coarse hands, Pip writes:

That was a memorable day to me, for it made great changes in me. But it is the same with any life. Imagine one selected day struck out of it, and think how different its course would have been. Pause you who read this, and think for a moment of the long chain of iron or gold, of thorns or flowers, that would never have bound you, but for the formation of the first link on one memorable day. (9, 76)

The admonitory tone of the passage makes it resemble an epitaph on a tombstone: narration itself may be only the substitution of a new set of dead letters for old. But in this paragraph, too, Pip struggles to articulate the determinative value of this first exposure to class, to wealth, to humiliation. In retrospect Pip speaks as a developmental psychologist, a Piaget, who believes in formative events and irrevocable stages of development. (We may note in passing that the metaphor of the chain also serves to exculpate Pip: after this point, he is no longer responsible for his actions.) Yet even more important than the passage's self-serving function are its contradictory metaphors for life. The chain is the privileged metaphor here, implying absolute continuity, formative events, historical determinism and a narration that could transparently trace these. And yet a life is also a "course," a movement through time, that lacks the capacity to "bind." The problem is not simply one of mixed metaphors. Instead, language seems incapable of articulating both diachrony and synchrony simultaneously. Words mark the conversion of the synchronic into the diachronic; to articulate is to be caught in a signifying chain; what Pip struggles to express cannot be expressed: the act of narration already excludes it. It is against this background that we should understand the novel's famous opening, in which Pip reads his name from the dead letters of the tombstones.

11.3 Style

A strictly literary technique related in a general way to the surrealistic movement, has from time to time been mentioned in connection with Dickens's writing but never traced in any detail throughout the novels. Great Expectations in particular would seem to have many of the characteristics of the technique, dose examination of which not only provides greater insight into the workings of the novel, but into Dickens's general style as well. It may not be the complex novel that twentieth-century readers of Joyce and Woolf have grown to expect, but Dickens's experiments with stream-ofconsciousness in Great Expectations may be responsible to some degree for the book's effect on modern readers.

That Dickens should arrive at simple forms of stream-ofconsciousness is not surprising, for he was throughout his life aconscious manipulator of readers' emotions both as a writer of novels and as a public reader of them. His pleasure in exciting and controlling his audience frequently led him to indulge in descriptions of violence, arch-villainy, mystery, flights and pursuits, and other melodramatic stock-in-trade. Well aware of the attraction of repulsion, Dickens often let his imagination play upon macabre or sadistic situations, leading some critics to suggest that his appeals for sympathy for the sufferings of the underdog at the hands of a brutal and callous society may have been more related to his interest in commercial success than to any artistic purpose.

However, as Stone asserts, the lasting success Dickens has enjoyed could have come only to a conscious artist capable of capturing "the evanescent and yet infinite quality of experience."1 In spite of the restrictions imposed by Victorian society, the phenomenal career of Charles Dickens reveals an equally phenomenal growth of artistic sophistication in the representation of such immediacy of experience in his novels.

The direct interior monologue aims at representing the contents and processes of the mind as they exist at prespeech levels. Harry Stone defines the interior monologue as a literary attempt to "render in written words that semistructured and evanescent aspect of private consciousness which is composed of disorganized and yet meaningfully associated speech-thought."18 In the direct interior monologue the narrator is invisible and "paring his nails." Stone recognizes that in his later novels Dickens was capable of representing consciousness by the interior monologue technique, and asserts that in some of his lesser-known short pieces he came close to the interior monologues of the twentieth century.19 However, in Great Expectations, certainly not a "lesser-known short piece," Dickens skillfully renders an individual consciousness. A major portion of the novel is concerned with the presentation not of external action but of the drama taking place in Pip's mind as he assesses the world

Summary

- **English literature**, the body of written works produced in the English language by inhabitants of the British Isles (including Ireland) from the 7th century to the present day.
- The major literatures written in English outside the British Isles are treated separately under American literature, Australian literature, Canadian literature, and New Zealand literature.
- English literature has sometimes been stigmatized as insular. It can be argued that no single English novel attains the universality of the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* or the French writer Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*.
- Yet in the Middle Ages the Old English literature of the subjugated Saxons was leavened by the Latin and Anglo-Norman writings, eminently foreign in origin, in which the churchmen and the Norman conquerors expressed themselves.
- From this combination emerged a flexible and subtle linguistic instrument exploited by Geoffrey Chaucer and brought to supreme application by William Shakespeare.
- During the Renaissance the renewed interest in Classical learning and values had an important effect on English literature, as on all the arts; and ideas of Augustan literary propriety in the 18th century and reverence in the 19th century for a less specific, though still selectively viewed, Classical antiquity continued to shape the literature.
- All three of these impulses derived from a foreign source, namely the Mediterranean basin. The Decadents of the late 19th century and the Modernists of the early 20th looked to continental European individuals and movements for inspiration.
- Nor was attraction toward European intellectualism dead in the late 20th century, for by the mid-1980s the approach known as structuralism, a phenomenon predominantly French and German in origin, infused the very study of English literature itself in a host of published critical studies and university departments.
- Additional influence was exercised by deconstructionist analysis, based largely on the work of French philosopher Jacques Derrida.
- The novel, in short, has managed to cultivate a new intellectual space: it is the middlebrow art form par excellence, with unique and unrivalled access to every corner of social life, but a form that retains that 'literary', or serious quality, defined as the ability to deliberate, or to stimulate reflection on social and cultural questions.
- Reviewing British fiction of the 1980s, D. J. Taylor, a prominent and important critic, detected a widening gap between 'the novel of ideas and the (usually comic) novel of action', or, put

more crudely, between 'drawing-room twitter and the banana skin'.8 My sense is that this gap between the novel of ideas and the more popular (especially comic) novel has become less, rather than more, distinct in the post-war years, as a natural consequence of the gradual democratization of narrative fiction.

- Successive critics of the novel in Britain, and especially England, have been less sanguine about its state of health, however. Arthur Marwick states the social historian's view that the novel in the immediate post-war period is 'fading', characterized by 'a national, even parochial quality' in the inwardlooking manner of contemporary political thought; and throughout the period literary critics have found cause for concern about the novel's future.
- There is, for example, a perceived moment of crisis in David Lodge's famous declaration from 1969 that the 'English novelist' then stood at a crossroads, faced with the alternative routes of fabulation and experimental metafiction. Lodge's advice was to go straight on, remaining on the road of realism and adhering to the liberal ideology it enshrines.10 More pessimistic was Bernard Bergonzi's assessment of 1970, that 'English literature in the fifties and sixties has been both backward- and inwardlooking', indicating that 'in literary terms, as in political ones, Britain is not a very important part of the world today'.
- Preoccupied with parochial matters, and less innovative than the novel elsewhere (especially in America), English fiction offers little, Bergonzi argued, 'that can be instantly translated into universal statements about the human condition'.
- He was only able to mount a partial challenge to this overview (as in the case of Lodge, this was based on a defence of English liberalism), so that his negative suggestions retain some of their force. One has to grant, further, that the picture he painted has remained partially true of the post-war novel, notably the preoccupation with parochial themes and topics, and the distrust of experimentation and formal innovation.

Keywords

Modernism, Victorian Era, Victorian Values, Femininity, Industrialization, Class Hierarchy, Poverty, Patriarchy, Education, Marriage, Morality, Chastity

Self Assessment

1. The……………was a turning point in the British Political history of Nineteenth Century.

A. factory act of 1833

B. emancipation act of 1833

C. reform bill of 1832

D. education act 1833

2. Father of Utilitarianism

A. james mill

B. jermybentham

C. newman

D. macaulay

3. Which novel by Charles Dickens is generally regarded as the first Victorian novel

A. hard times

B. the pickwick papers

C. little dorrit

D. bleak house

4. Which novel by Thomas Hardy had the subtitle " A Pure Woman" which shocked Victorian readers?

A. the obscure

B. the well – beloved

C. a pair of blue eyes

D. tess of the d'urberviles

5. Which of the Bronte sisters wrote "Shirly" a novel set in Yorkshire during the Industrial depression

A. charlotte

B. emily

C. maria

D. Elizabeth

6. Which of the book was written by Victorian novelist George Eliot?

A. hard times

B. mill on the floss

C. far from madding crowd

D. the heart of darkness

7. Name of the novel by Thackeray known as "A Novel without a Hero"

A. timbuctoo

B. catherine

C. a shabby genteel story

D. vanity fair

8. What is inscribed above the entrance of Wuthering Heights?

A. hindleyearnshaw 1729

B. 1623

C. abandon all hope, ye who enter here

D. haretonearshaw 1500

9. What kind of countryside surrounds Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange

A. moorland

B. savannah

C. forest

D. grassy plains

10. Why doesn't Bingley visit Jane while she is in London?

A. He Doesn't Know That She's There.

B. Lady Catherine Forbids Him From Going.

C. Darcy Advises Him Against It.

D. He Thinks That Jane Does Not Like Him.

11. What is the name of the estate that Bingley rents?

A. Longbourne

B. Rosings

C. Netherfield

D. Fox Hall

12. Why does Elizabeth reject Darcy's initial proposal?

A. It Was Customary For Women At That Time To Reject The First Proposal.

B. She Does Not Like Him.

C. He Is Too Poor

D. She Is In Love With Someone Else.

13. What is inscribed above the entrance of Wuthering Heights?

A. Hindley Earnshaw 1729

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D. Hareton Earshaw 1500

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D. grassy plains

Answer for Self Assessment

1.	C	2.	B	3.	B	4.	D	5.	A
6.	B	7.	D	8.	D	9.	A	10.	A
11.	B	12.	A	13.	C	14.	D	15.	A

Review Questions

1. What is British Literature?
2. What is the importance and need of writing skills?
3. What is the contribution of British Fiction writers?
4. What are major complexities in academic writing?
5. How one can overcome writing difficulties?
6. What is British Fiction?
7. What do you understand by contemporary novel?
8. What is the first reaction of students towards any writing task?
9. How do readers react towards any writing task?
10. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
11. Throw light on Early British Novel?
12. What is academic writing?
13. What are major complexities in British Fiction?
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17. How do readers react towards any writing task?
18. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
19. Throw light on Early British Novel?
20. What is academic writing?

Further Reading

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Unit 12: Great Expectations by Charles Dickens

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- examine a historical-cum-critical perspective on British Fiction
- analyse the significance of British fiction in totality
- recognize the essential identity markers of British fiction

Introduction

Charles John Huffam Dickens was born in Landport, Portsea, near Portsmouth, England, on February 7, 1812, the second of eight children of John and Elizabeth Barrow Dickens. The family moved to London in 1814, to Chatham in 1817, and then back to London in 1822. By 1824 increasing financial difficulties caused Dickens's father to be briefly imprisoned for debt; Dickens himself was put to work for a few months at a shoe-blacking warehouse. Memories of this painful period in his life were to influence much of his later writing, in particular the early chapters of David Copperfield. After studying at the Wellington House Academy in London (1824–27), Dickens worked as a solicitor's clerk (1827–28), then worked for various newspapers, first the True Sun (1832–34) and later as a political reporter for the Morning Chronicle (1834–36). In 1833 Dickens fell in love with Maria Beadnell, but her family opposed any contemplated marriage. Dickens never forgot Maria, and she served as the model for Dora in David Copperfield.

In 1836 a collection of articles contributed to various periodicals appeared in two volumes as Sketches by "Boz," Illustrative of Every-day Life and Every-day People. This was followed by the enormously popular Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club (1836–37). Like many of Dickens's later novels, the Pickwick Papers first appeared in a series of monthly chapbooks or "parts." Other novels were serialized in magazines before appearing in book form. In 1836 Dickens married Catherine Hogarth, with whom he had ten children before their separation in 1858. At the beginning of his marriage, Catherine's sixteen-year-old sister Mary lived with them, but she died after a few months. The shock of this loss affected Dickens permanently, and Mary would be the model for many of the pure, saintly heroines in his novels—such as Little Nell in The Old Curiosity Shop—who die at an early age.

In 1843 Dickens published A Christmas Carol, the first in a series of Christmas books that included The Chimes (1845), The Cricket on the Hearth (1846), The Battle of Life (1846), and The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain (1848). Early in 1846 he was for a brief time the editor of the Daily News, a paper of the Radical party to which he contributed "Pictures of Italy" after visiting Italy in

1844 and again in 1845. During a visit to Switzerland in 1846 Dickens wrote his novel Dombey and Son, which appeared monthly between 1846 and 1848. In 1850 he started the periodical Household Words; in 1859 it was incorporated into All the Year Round, which Dickens continued to edit until his death. Much of his later work was published in these two periodicals, including David Copperfield (1849–50), Bleak House (1852–53), Hard Times (1854), Little Dorrit (1855–57), A Tale of Two Cities (1859), Great Expectations (1860–61), and Our Mutual Friend (1864–65).

Throughout his life, Dickens threw himself vigorously into a variety of social and political crusades, such as prison reform, improvement of education, the status of workhouses, and reform of the copyright law (American publishers were notorious for pirating his works and offering him no compensation). These interests find their way also into his work, which is characterized by sympathy for the oppressed and a keen examination of class distinctions. His novels and stories have been both praised and censured for their sentimentality and their depiction of "larger-than-life" characters, such as Pickwick or Mr. Micawber (in David Copperfield).

Charles Dickens reread his autobiographical novel, David Copperfield, before he began to write Great Expectations. He hoped thus not to repeat himself, and his hope was fulfilled: David and Pip are very different personages. Yet Dickens's anxiety was justified; both of these first-person narrators are versions of Dickens himself, and only acute self-awareness on the novelist's part kept Pip from becoming as autobiographical a figure as David had been. Still, one can wonder whether Pip is not a better representation of Dickens's innermost being than David is. Compared to Pip's incessant and excessive sense of guilt, David's consciousness seems much freer, or at least works in a more unimpeded fashion to liberate itself, in part, from the personal past. Pip does not become a novelist, as David and Dickens do, and Pip also does not submit to sentimentality, as David does. We are asked to believe that David Copperfield concludes the novel as a fully matured being, but we are left with considerable doubts. Pip, perhaps because he is more distanced from Dickens, seems more worthy of Dickens's respect and is endowed by the novelist with a more powerful imagination than the novelist David Copperfield enjoys.

Dickens originally ended the novel with a powerful unhappiness: Pip and Estella meet by chance in London; she has remarried, and each sees in the other a suffering that cannot be redressed. Unfortunately, Dickens revised this into the present conclusion, in which Pip prophesies that he and Estella will not be parted again. Though this is a little ambiguous and just evades sentimentality, it is highly inappropriate to what is most wonderful about the novel: The purgation, through acceptance of loss, that has carried Pip into an authentic maturity. What matters in that maturation is not that guilt has been evaded or transcended, but that the reader has come to understand it, however implicitly, as the cost of Pip's confirmation as an achieved self. What Dickens could not bring himself to do in David Copperfield, he disciplined himself into doing in Great Expectations. Self-made, even self-fathered, Dickens disowns part of that psychic achievement when he creates Pip, who is fatherless but keeps faith at last both with Joe and with the memory of Magwitch.

Great Expectations is at once an elegy for the lost innocence of lower-class rural population—who, like the Gargerys of Rochester, toiled in the countryside of his childhood—and a critical analysis of the broadening gap between illusion and reality that came with the hopefulness of reform, social mobility, and ever increasing commerce. In order to successfully render this transformation, Dickens's scholar David Paroissien says the author needed to use first-person narration and maintain a dual focus: "Pip looks back to those events of his life set in Regency England but tells them from a present he belongs to, the now of the relating time."

Throughhis protagonist, Pip, Dickens sought to define and question the motivations and forces behind a rise in social status and the prejudices surrounding the divide between high society and the base criminal world. An advocate of free trade, Dickens was sickened by the cruelty overcrowded London inflicted upon its inhabitants. His depictions of Smithfield market and Newgate prison serve as reminders of the filthy, teeming, bloody world of questionable justice during this era. But since Pip's story begins not in the present time but rather in the early part of the century, Dickens appealed to readers by depicting Pip as looking back from a current perspective, with some of the knowledge and maturity that wouldn't be available to a young, "common labouring boy" in the beginning of the century.

Reader faith and investment was necessary for a writer who constructed his plot as a series of bite-sized chunks. As the editor of the weekly journal All the Year Round, Dickens had to contend with the journal's plummeting sales following the failure of novelist Charles Lever's serialized publication of his A Day's Ride. Great Expectations appeared in weekly installments in both All the Year Round and Harper's Weekly from December 1860 to August 1861. This format, though

challenging for the writer, brought him a broad readership that only improved his career. Dickens used the serial constraints as structural features in the novel, shaping plot around his need to have a continual series of beginnings and endings and maintaining suspense throughout the work. Great Expectations does not fall neatly into any particular genre. It does have aspects of domestic realism—which by 1860 was characteristic of Dickens's contemporaries such as Thackeray, Eliot, and Trollope—but in different moments also resembles a variety of Victorian subgenres, including the historical novel; a "silver-fork" fiction dealing with high society; a "Newgate" sensationalist or crime novel; and, perhaps most obviously, the Bildungsroman.

Seeing the autobiographical nature of Great Expectations is easy with the knowledge that Dickens, like Pip, once lived in the marsh country, was employed in a job he despised, and experienced success in London at an early age. These similarities may be the reason why biographer Thomas Wrightsays that Great Expectations differs from Dickens's other novels, arguing that the hero and heroine are "really live and interesting characters with human faults and failings." Some critics, including Wright, argue that Estella, in name and spirit, is an amalgam of Ellen Lawless Ternan, a 20-year-old actress with whom Dickens had an affair following his divorce. Although like Pip and Estella, Dickens and Ternan were united in the end, Great Expectations's original ending was considerably more melancholy. After finishing the last installment of the book in June 1861, the exhausted Dickens brought the proofs to his friend, novelist Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Lytton argued that the Dickens's first and considerably shorter ending—in which Pip encounters Estella remarried and unambiguously leaves her forever—would be too disappointing for readers. In a letter to Forster, Dickens wrote, "I have put in as pretty a little piece of writing as I could, and I have no doubt that the story will be more acceptable through the alteration."

12.1 Themes

Ambition

In Great Expectations, as in its legendary prototypes, the theme of ambition is treated under the two aspects of desire and will, the search for a superabundance of love and the drive for power. And it is in his presentation of the theme in the latter aspect that Dickens makes the more profound analysis of the immoral and criminal elements in his hero's (and the century's) favourite dream. But Pip's ambition is passive. He only becomes active and aggressive after he has ceased to be ambitious. How then doesGreat Expectations treat the theme of ambition in terms that are relevant to the total action of which Pip is the centre? I have already begun to suggest an answer to the question. Ambition as the instinct of aggression, as the pitiless drive for power directed against what we have called authority-figures is both coalesced and disguised in the figure of Orlick. And Orlick is bound to the hero by ties of analogy as double, alter ego and dark mirror-image. We are dealing here with an art which simultaneously disguises and reveals its deepest implications of meaning, with a method which apparently dissociates its thematic materials and its subject matter into moral fable-cummelodramatic accompaniment, yet simultaneously presents through patterns of analogy a dramatic perspective in which the apparent opposites are unified. In Great Expectations criminality is displaced from the hero on to a melodramatic villain. But on closer inspection that villain becomes part of a complex unity—we might call it Pip-Orlick—in which all aspects of the problem of guilt become interpenetrant and cooperative. The only clue to this unity which is given at the surface level of the narrative is Pip's obsession of criminal guilt. Pip tells us over and over again that he feels contaminated by crime. But we do not find the objective correlative of that conviction until we recognise in the insensate and compunctionlessOrlick a shadow image of the tender-minded and yet monstrously ambitious young hero.

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Recognition that Pip's ambition is definable under the aspect of aggression as well as in terms of the regressive desire for passive enjoyment of life's bounty depends upon the reader's willingness to work his way into the narrative from a different angle than the narrator's. The evidence for the hero's powerdrive against the authority-figures, the evidence of his 'viciousness' if you will, is embodied in the story in a number of ways, but a clear pattern of meaning only emerges after the

reader has correlated materials which are dispersed and nominally unrelated in the story as told. Orlick, thus far, hasbeen the figure whose implicit relations to the hero have constituted the chief clue to the darker meaning of Pip's career. He continues to be important in any attempt to set forth the complete case, but there are also some significant correlations to be made in which he does not figure. * * * We might begin with the apparently cynical remark that Pip, judged on the basis of what happens to many of the characters closely associated with him, is a very dangerous young man. He is not accident-prone, but a great number of people who move into his orbit decidedly are. Mrs. Joe is bludgeoned, Miss Havisham goes up in flames, Estella is exposed through her rash marriage to vaguely specified tortures at the hands of her brutal husband, Drummle. Pumblechook has his house looted and his mouth stuffed with flowering annuals by a gang of thieves led by Orlick. All of these characters, with the exception of Estella, stand at one time or another in the relation of patron, patroness, or authority-figure to Pip the boy or Pip the man.

Darwinian theory

Great Expectations lends itself to a Darwinian reading because it contains three concepts with broad evolutionary implications— the idea of the primitive or low and its relationship to "civilized" society; the idea of adaptation, of what is fit and not fit; and, finally, the conception of time as moving in one direction only—into the future—rather than being a reanimation of the past. The novel is essentially a Cinderella story in which the fairy godmother turns out to be a convict. The infusion of Magwitch's money into Pip's young life creates a relationship analogous to paternity. Jaggers refers to Magwitch as the fountainhead, the source of Pip's money, and therefore the generating force behind his birth as a gentleman. Magwitch himself makes the point: "Look'ee here, Pip. I'm your second father. You're my son ... I've put away money only for you to spend" (GE p. 337).11 In this father–son relationship, money substitutes for semen as the stuff out of which life is created. In the same way, money stands for both the biological and the material aspects of Pip's love for Estella. Pip writes that he cannot dissociate Estella from all his hankerings after money and gentility, nor yet separate her from "the innermost life of my life" (GE, p. 257). Heredity has been discarded; money— that most equivocal of external factors, and the one most commonly associated with metaphors of breeding—has taken its place as a determinant of human identity.

Great Expectations may appear to be a fairy tale, but it is a fairy tale turned inside-out. In fact, one of the novel's most obvious intentions is to overturn the fairy-tale plot of hidden identity. Traditionally, this plot depicts the lower-class hero as belonging biologically to a higher station than the one to which circumstances have assigned him. This is, in fact, the plot of Dickens's early novel Oliver Twist. As Gillian Beer points out, the plot of hidden identity is fundamentally opposed to Darwinism, which insists on the opposite—that all humanbeings, no matter how advanced they may think themselves to be, share the same lowly animal origins.13 Thus, by overturning the plot of hidden identity, Great Expectations constitutes a reassessment of Oliver Twist. But this reassessment goes beyond Pip's discovery that his sudden wealth allies him to the underworld rather than to the aristocracy. There is a concomitant reassessment of the very nature of that underworld and its relationship to the rest of society. Where Oliver Twist defines the genteel and the criminal spheres as distinct, contrary, and antithetical, Great Expectations maintains that the upper-class world of the gentleman is implicated in the criminal domain of the underclass, and that the relationship between the two, far from being mutually exclusive, is redolent of complicity and interdependence.

This makes Great Expectations, among other things, a meditation on the low, because it bases its demonstration of the inherent kinship between human beings on the interrelationship between the criminal world and its noncriminal counterparts. This interrelationship results in a redefinition of the manner in which Dickens depicts the criminal class in this novel. That class is here presented as more important for the base position it occupies in society than for its anti-social behavior. Magwitch belongs to the underclass of the underworld, but the fortune he makes Down Under will support Pip at the topmost reaches of the social scale. Because its emphasis is on the social position of the convict rather than on his criminality, Great Expectations neutralizes the moral dimension of crime. To be a convict in this novel is to occupy a position of shame, a shame which is primarily associated with being outcast and reviled rather than with being a villain. Evil, which had previously been a major preoccupation in all of Dickens's fiction, is no longer simply black in this novel, nor is it exclusively associated with crime. In fact, the concept of criminality has here been generalized to include such flawed beings as Pip himself, who sin in their hearts rather than in their deeds.

Morality

The problem of Pip's moral bad faith, both in his actions and in his narrative assessment of his past conduct, has long troubled critics, so much so that in recent years very probing questions have been asked about the depiction of his moral character, even about his self.1 In this essay I want to extend the direction of this recent questioning by considering Pip's bad faith as an instance of what J. Hillis Miller calls "varnishing," that is, the authorial establishment of some putative center for a work which simultaneously conceals evidence that would invalidate such a center.2 Pip's bad faith works this way in Great Expectations: because we so often attend to the serpentine maneuvers of his conscience, we accept without question that this conscience is functioning within an autonomous, continuous, achieved, created self. And yet analysis of the varnished side of Great Expectations shows that it is precisely these assumptions that have been called into question, even in the very attempt to establish Pip's conscience as a center. After a discussion of the general relation between narration and bad faith, I examine, in turn, the novel's famous opening, the allusions Pip makes as narrator, and the letters sent in the novel. The polemical connotations of "deconstruction" are nothing to the purpose here, but I do hope to show the existence of fundamental contradictions in the novel, aporia whose logical reconciliation seems impossible to articulate.

Pip's relation with all characters is self-serving, even when he claims to be acting altruistically, and in his narration he occasionally covers this seemingly irreducible egotism with a veneer of disingenuous contrition. One example is his relation with Joe. As narrator, Pip claims to have developed a solicitude for Joe, but that claim is everywhere contradicted by his actions. After learning the selfless rationale for Joe's acquiesence in Mrs. Joe's "government," Pip writes: Young as I was, I believe that I dated a new admiration of Joe from that night. We were equals afterwards, as we had been before; but afterwards, at quiet times when I sat looking at Joe and thinking about him, I had a new sensation of feeling conscious that I was looking up to Joe in my heart. (7, 52)3 But nowhere afterwards are they "equals." On the contrary, at the end of the novel, Pip still condescends to Joe even as he benefits from his ransoming, even as he egocentrically worries what "little Pip," his only posterity, will think of him. Similarly distorted appraisals of his past conduct surface in his comments on Biddy, Estella, Pumblechook, and Magwitch. The pervasive pattern of Pip's distortions raises the question of whether there might be some inherent discontinuity between the narrating and the narrated self. Peter Brooks hints at such a contradiction when he cites Sartre's remark that all autobiographies are obituaries, excluding the margins of experience.4 But Pip's bad faith runs deeper than that phenomenological mauvaisefoi described by Sartre: it is not that Pip distorts by reifying the For-Itself in language. Instead, as we will see, there never was an original self apart from language to suffer such distortion. Selfhood has always already been the narrator's fictive construct, and Pip's moral bad faith serves to varnish that fact.

Orphanhood

All Dickens' novels constitute variations on the theme of orphanhood, but only in Great Expectations is he able to confront it without false pathos, in all the dread it held for him and his age. Pip's confessions both recapitulate and comment on those of previous orphan novels we have looked at, andshow, too, why the myth of the orphan—which at its high point practically constituted orphan-worship—was losing its efficacy as the century drew to a close. (...) Pip's story repeats rather mechanically the paradigm of the orphan-myth established in the 1840's.17 Like Jane Eyre, Pip brings down by fire the great house he enters as "a kind of servant," destroying and purging it of the banked embers of its past. The power Pip acquires over Miss Havisham is not Jane's quasi-supernatural spell over Rochester, but the power of his sincere emotion, which to Dickens is always magical. In a key scene, Miss Havisham kneels to him: "'Until you spoke to her the other day, and until I saw in you a looking-glass that showed me what I once felt myself, I did not know what I had done. What have I done! What have I done!' And so again, twenty, fifty times over, What had she done!" (GE, p. 411). Miss Havisham's yielding to the power of Pip's emotion seems somehow to ignite the fire that destroys her and Satis House, a destruction that Pip, like Jane again, has foreseen in odd premonitory visions. So the vision of the orphan passing through a great house which his influence destroys and restores retains its potency. But we do not think of this as we read the novel.

For one thing, its point of view makes us aware not of Pip's power over his world, but of the power of his world over him. His early perspective—that of "the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry"—is never really lost. His adult life is still pervaded by his childhood terrors, so that he does not convey to us his powers even when he commands them. Of course, Dickens' specialty is the worm'seye perspective of a monstrous world looming large over a helpless child, but in Great Expectations the terror is not simply a trick of "camera angle," as it sometimes is in Dickens. It is inherent in Pip's situation: he really is alone. For the first time in the novels we have looked at, the orphan's parents are implacably dead, equated only with their tombstones.

Fatherfigures though generations of critics have rightly called them, neither Magwitch nor Joe is really Pip's father, making Pip's alienation all the more terrifying when Magwitch looms out of his parents' graves. Moreover, there is no God in Great Expectations to give sanction to Pip's identity. God withdrew from Dickens' world in Bleak House, when the "distant ray of light" that fell on the orphan Jo was finally extinguished in Jo's death. Pip's selfhood is contained not in his social definition, as Moll's was, nor in his soul, as Jane's was, but in a more fragile thing: his name.

For Pip's identity is self-bestowed; he names himself before the novel begins. His childish naming of himself recalls the eighteenth-century orphan as self-made man, but it is the last act of autonomy Pip is permitted. When Magwitch stipulates that Pip keep his name upon accepting his tainted inheritance, his fear is prophetic, for this is the one thing Pip can't do: from that moment, a bewildering variety of names is bestowed on him by everyone he meets, even his friend Herbert christening him "Handel." The crowning erosion of his identity is Joe's schizophrenic slipping back and forth between "Pip" and "sir." This is a cannibalistic inversion of the plenitude of names Moll assumed in her escapades. In her picaresque mutability, Moll was simultaneously all these selves and no-self. Pip has only one identity, which is Pip, and when others gnaw away at it, they gnaw away at him.

Just as the many names Pip is given employ a picaresque device to invert it, so does the motif of costume. Instead of being a master of disguise, Pip is tormented by his clothes, which become embodied in the humiliating Nemesis of Trabb's boy. His social rise itself inverts the picaro's. Instead of being a brilliant improviser, succeeding by the spontaneous manipulation of chance events, Pip mechanically obeys commands to succeed. He does not inveigle his way into Miss Havisham's house; he is ordered there. He plays grimly when she says "Play!"—no picaro, with his love of games, would require such a command!—loves Estella when she commands him to "love her," and yearns for gentility as she programs him to. Moll's desire for gentility was spontaneous; Pip's isconditioned. Once Pip is "made" a gentleman, all his moves are charted for him according to stipulations delivered by Jaggers. Never once does he act independently; even his adherence to Magwitch is as much a reaction to the influence of another as his love for Estella is. The legacy he bestows on Herbert and forces Miss Havisham to maintain is his one autonomous act, and here, he is "making" another as he has been "made." Estella, whose automaton-like qualities are only an exaggeration of Pip's, acts as his chorus: "We have no choice, you and I, but to obey our instructions. We are not free to follow our own devices, you and I" (GE, p. 285). The repetition of "you and I" is mechanical, sepulchral, emphasizing the identities they lack by insisting on them. Even more chilling are the words she intones to Miss Havisham: "I am what you have made me" (GE, p. 322). This zombie-like creature is the opposite of the early Victorian orphan, whose mysterious origins were suggestive of infinite Being. Having no soul, the orphan in Great Expectations has become a thing.

The eighteenth-century orphan has been turned around, having become manipulated by rather than manipulator of events. He has gone from self-made man to made man. In an odd inversion of the Frankenstein image, Pip returns to the eighteenth-century idea of the orphan as artifact, but emphasizes his loss of power: "The imaginary student pursued by the misshapen creature he had impiously made, was not more wretched than I, pursued by the creature who had made me, and recoiling from him with a stronger repulsion, the more he admired me and the fonder he was of me" (GE, p. 354). The idea of Pip as artifact is further emphasized by the fact that none of the people who manipulate him are his parents. His being is not organically shaped by inheritance, however hidden. His parents are tombstones; he is infinitely conditioned. The convict image that always follows him seems more suggestive of this incessant coercion than it is of guilt, despite the emphasis of Dorothy Van Ghent's brilliant essay.18 After all, Pip sins only in thought or by omission. He wishes to run away from the forge, and later from Magwitch, but never actually does so. He avoids seeing Joe and Biddy, but when he does, henever actively cuts them, responding to their love with love as he responds to everybody's emotions. The most terrifying part of Great Expectations is Pip's lack of the initiative to sin. Like Alex, Anthony Burgess' clockwork orange, he is a made man even when he hugs his own evil to himself. In a state of infinite conditioning, there is no room for the fruit of the soul growing on the tree of God. The protective coloring of the orphan was always a sham.

12.2 Symbols

River

is one of the most prominent demonic symbols in Dickens—it unites classes, reveals evidence, unites victim and criminal, and swallows people whole. Pip rows regularlyso as to establish himself and his boat as a presence on the river. He mentions the delights of freedom and compares life's fleetingness and fluidity to the river's. The river has a malignant potentiality that impregnates everything upon it—discolored copper, rotten wood, honeycombed stone, green dank deposit. The river is perhaps the most constant and effective symbol in Dickens, because it establishes itself so readily to the imagination as a daemonic element, drowning people as if by intent, disgorging unforeseen evidence, chemically or physically changing all it touches, and because not only does it act as an occult "force" in itself but it is the common passage and actual flowing element that unites individuals and classes, public persons and private persons, deeds and the results of deeds, however fragmentized and separated. Upon the river, one cannot escape its action; it may throw the murderer and his victim in an embrace. At the end of Great Expectations, it swallows Compeyson, while, with its own obscure daemonic motivation, though it fatally injures Magwitch, it leaves him to fulfill the more subtle spiritual destiny upon which he has begun to enter. The river scene in this section, closely and apprehensively observed, is one of the most memorable in Dickens.

Stars and Nature

Dickens' fondness for light imagery crops up once more in the way he uses stars. Estella's name is immediately relevant, of course, but we ought to note also that stars connote even more generally—until the very last scene—what candles and extinguished fires connote: the illusion which Pip basks in. On the night when Mrs. Joe will announce Miss Havisham's invitation to Pip, there is a fine contrast evident between fire and starlight—a contrast made while Joe and Pip wait for Mrs. Joe's arrival: "Joe made the fire and swept. the hearth, and then we went to the door to listen for the chaise-cart. It was a dry cold night, and the wind blew keenly, and the frost was white and hard. A man would die to-night lying out on the marshes, I thought. And then I looked at the stars, and considered how awful it would be for a man to turn his face up to them as he froze to death, and see no help or pity in the glittering multitude" (p. 49). This section suggests all sorts of contrasts: e.g., the difference between the book's many "prisoners" with and without one another's help; the difference between a deluded Pip with his eyes on a star (Estella), and an awakened Pip aware of his and Estella's tie with Magwitch; the pitiless gaze of Estella before her chastening marriage, as distinct from the gaze of an Estella restored to the human race even as Pip is restored. All of these contrasts are implicit—retrospectively— in the symbolic opposition between warm hearth and dry, cold, frosty, white, hard, starlit night; and, by extension, between Joe's warmth and the others' cold manipulation of one another. When Estella says that it is not in her nature to love (p. 366), she speaks of a fact which in one or another degree is true for Magwitch, Pip, and Miss Havisham as well, before their various interwound conversions. The same theme is suggested again as Pip leaves for his first meeting with Estella and Miss Havisham: "they [the stars] twinkled out one by one, without throwing any light on the questions why on earth I was going to play at Miss Havisham's, and what on earth I was expected to play at" (p.52). Only with Magwitch's return does Pip become aware of the game he has been "playing," and of how inhumanly cold he has become.

Such are some of the associations, offered by stars, which continually remind us of the real coldness and inhumanity of the particular illusion shown in this book. Thus, Estella's "light [a candle] came along the dark passage [in Satis House] like a star" (p. 59); later "I saw her pass among the extinguished fires [of the brewery], and ascend some light iron stairs, and go out by a gallery high overhead, as if she were going out into the sky" (p. 63); despite the "ashes" of Miss Havisham's "bridal feast," and that lady's looking like a "figure of the grave," "Estella looked more bright and beautiful than before, and I was under stronger enchantment" (p. 242); the juxtaposing of Estella and Miss Havisham's jewels reminds us that Estella, like the gems, is cold, brilliant, beautiful, and valuable as property owned and used by Miss Havisham (pp. 89, 245, 273); like these jewels, Estella is "'out of reach; prettier than ever; admired by all who see her'" (p. 117; see also pp. 237, 241, 251); after meeting Estella, Pip regards the stars as "poor and humble stars for glittering on the rustic objects among which I had passed my life" (pp. 145–146); speaking unknowingly of his own daughter, Magwitch regards her as jewel-like property, just as Miss Havisham does, and says to Pip that the "'bright eyes somewheres, wot you love the thoughts on ... shall be yourn, dear boy, if money can buy 'em'" (p. 325), and thus crassly echoes the sentiments of the "city" Wemmick, whose "'guiding star always is, Get hold of portable property'" (p. 202). This contrast between illusion and reality is shown again in Pip's statement that "Biddy ... look[ed] at me under the stars with a clear honest eye" (p. 288). In the context, Pip is deceiving himself in telling both himself and Biddy that he will come frequently to visit Joe, whereas Biddy knows that he will not be able to reconcile his promise with his gentlemanly pretensions.

Interestingly, stars eventually help to signal Pip's and Estella's coming to their senses, humbly seeking forgiveness of each other, and presumably seeing all things, including love, in clear—if subdued—light. Thus, "the stars were shining beyondthe mist, and the moon was coming, and the evening was not dark"; Estella's "once proud eyes" manifested a "saddened softened light"; and "as the morning mists had risen long ago when I first left the forge, so, the evening mists were rising now, and in all the broad expanse of tranquil light they showed to me, I saw no shadow of another parting from her" (pp. 491, 493). This last use of stars, though different from the consistent use of stars throughout the book, is not in violation of the characters' experiences or of the star symbol elsewhere. Further, the stars here support, rather than oppose, Dickens' decision to accept Bulwer-Lytton's suggestion for the ending: i.e., throughout the book, stars have symbolized illusion; quite appropriately, then, stars here symbolize the very illusions which Pip and Estella have healthfully dropped, as well as the cooler, more "tranquil," but very real promise left to them after they have shed all misleading glamour. In my opinion, then, Dickens' choice of endings is both psychologically and symbolically valid.

This paradoxical but perfectly accurate use of symbol appears also in the way gardens are treated. Like stars, gardens here are almost always associated with the illusory, the inhuman, the destructive, the unnatural. Miss Havisham's is "a rank garden" (p. 63) wherein one looks "upon a rank ruin of cabbage-stalks, and one box tree that had been clipped round long ago, like a pudding, and had a new growth at the top of it, out of shape and of a different colour, as if that part of the pudding had stuck to the saucepan and got burnt" (p. 80; see also p. 90). Pip the man sees ugliness and unnaturalness for what they are, even as he was earlier appalled by the "city" Wemmick's walking calmly through a "garden" full of "plants," "shoots," and other growths in his Newgate "greenhouse" (pp. 264–266) as distinct from his strolling about the little garden of natural growths in Walworth (pp. 208–211). But Pip the dupe misses the symbolic similarity between himself as unnatural plant raised by others' manipulations, and these ugly growths in Newgate and in Miss Havisham's yard. This same confusion turns up again as Estella tries to tell Pip that his devotion to her is based upon illusion. Significantly, since they are walkingthrough Miss Havisham's decayed garden, the ruin all about them is as nothing to Pip, for whom "it [the garden] was all in bloom" by virtue of Estella's accidentally brushing against his shoulder (pp. 238–241). In his right mind, of course, Pip sees the garden for the anti-Paradise which it has been in his life (p. 406); and this is why, again, Dickens was right to conclude the novel as he did. Just as Pip and Estella see the stars for what they seemed and for what promise they still hold, so finally and just as credibly they see the garden both as it seemed and as it suggests belated growth and renewal. Stars and garden work together symbolically to suggest neither a burgeoning of young love nor the permanent improbability of all love, but rather the mutual emotional rejuvenation made accessible by mutually suffering for illusions. The suffering which such unnatural careers imply makes Pip's and Estella's eventual love for each other as natural as the mist's lifting from the stars or the garden's displaying at this late date a second growth of ivy "growing green on low quiet mounds of ruin" (p. 490; see pp. 490–493).

12.3 Social, Economic and Political Background

Great Expectations is at once an elegy for the lost innocence of lower-class rural population—who, like the Gargerys of Rochester, toiled in the countryside of his childhood—and a critical analysis of the broadening gap between illusion and reality that came with the hopefulness of reform, social mobility, and ever increasing commerce. In order to successfully render this transformation, Dickens's scholar David Paroissien says the author needed to use first-person narration and maintain a dual focus: "Pip looks back to those events of his life set in Regency England but tells them from a present he belongs to, the now of the relating time." Throughhis protagonist, Pip, Dickens sought to define and question the motivations and forces behind a rise in social status and the prejudices surrounding the divide between high society and the base criminal world. An advocate of free trade, Dickens was sickened by the cruelty overcrowded London inflicted upon its inhabitants. His depictions of Smithfield market and Newgate prison serve as reminders of the filthy, teeming, bloody world of questionable justice during this era. But since Pip's story begins not in the present time but rather in the early part of the century, Dickens appealed to readers by depicting Pip as looking back from a current perspective, with some of the knowledge and maturity that wouldn't be available to a young, "common labouring boy" in the beginning of the century

Reader faith and investment was necessary for a writer who constructed his plot as a series of bite-sized chunks. As the editor of the weekly journal All the Year Round, Dickens had to contend with the journal's plummeting sales following the failure of novelist Charles Lever's serialized

publication of his A Day's Ride. Great Expectations appeared in weekly installments in both All the Year Round and Harper's Weekly from December 1860 to August 1861. This format, though challenging for the writer, brought him a broad readership that only improved his career. Dickens used the serial constraints as structural features in the novel, shaping plot around his need to have a continual series of beginnings and endings and maintaining suspense throughout the work. Great Expectations does not fall neatly into any particular genre. It does have aspects of domestic realism—which by 1860 was characteristic of Dickens's contemporaries such as Thackeray, Eliot, and Trollope—but in different moments also resembles a variety of Victorian subgenres, including the historical novel; a "silver-fork" fiction dealing with high society; a "Newgate" sensationalist or crime novel; and, perhaps most obviously, the Bildungsroman.

Seeing the autobiographical nature of Great Expectations is easy with the knowledge that Dickens, like Pip, once lived in the marsh country, was employed in a job he despised, and experienced success in London at an early age. These similarities may be the reason why biographer Thomas Wrightsays that Great Expectations differs from Dickens's other novels, arguing that the hero and heroine are "really live and interesting characters with human faults and failings." Some critics, including Wright, argue that Estella, in name and spirit, is an amalgam of Ellen Lawless Ternan, a 20-year-old actress with whom Dickens had an affair following his divorce. Although like Pip and Estella, Dickens and Ternan were united in the end, Great Expectations's original ending was considerably more melancholy. After finishing the last installment of the book in June 1861, the exhausted Dickens brought the proofs to his friend, novelist Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Lytton argued that the Dickens's first and considerably shorter ending—in which Pip encounters Estella remarried and unambiguously leaves her forever—would be too disappointing for readers. In a letter to Forster, Dickens wrote, "I have put in as pretty a little piece of writing as I could, and I have no doubt that the story will be more acceptable through the alteration."

When the novel was published as a whole that July, critics had differing opinions on the revised ending, but the novel was a tremendous commercial success. A century and a half later, few remember that the novel once closed with a remarried Estella's encounter with Pip on a Picadilly street and their final, unambiguous parting soon after. Today the novel is popular— well-read and widely taught. And Dickens's controversial decisions in writing the serial have faded into the annals of history. "This was the author's last great work," wrote Swinburne. "The defects in it are as nearly imperceptible as spots on the sun or shadow on a sunlit sea."

Summary

- **English literature**, the body of written works produced in the English language byinhabitants of the British Isles (including Ireland) from the 7th century to the present day.
- The major literatures written in English outside the British Isles are treated separately under American literature, Australian literature, Canadian literature, and New Zealand literature.
- English literature has sometimes been stigmatized as insular. It can be argued that no single English novel attains the universality of the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* or the French writer Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*.
- Yet in the Middle Ages the Old English literature of the subjugated Saxons was leavened by the Latin and Anglo-Norman writings, eminently foreign in origin, in which the churchmen and the Norman conquerors expressed themselves.
- From this combination emerged a flexible and subtle linguistic instrument exploited by Geoffrey Chaucer and brought to supreme application by William Shakespeare.
- During the Renaissance the renewed interest in Classical learning and values had an important effect on English literature, as on all the arts; and ideas of Augustan literary propriety in the 18th century and reverence in the 19th century for a less specific, though still selectively viewed, Classical antiquity continued to shape the literature.
- All three of these impulses derived from a foreign source, namely the Mediterranean basin. The Decadents of the late 19th century and the Modernists of the early 20th looked to continental European individuals and movements for inspiration.
- Nor was attraction toward European intellectualism dead in the late 20th century, for by the mid-1980s the approach known as structuralism, a phenomenon predominantly French and German in origin, infused the very study of English literature itself in a host of published critical studies and university departments.

- Additional influence was exercised by deconstructionist analysis, based largely on the work of French philosopher Jacques Derrida.
- The novel, in short, has managed to cultivate a new intellectual space: it is the middlebrow art form par excellence, with unique and unrivalled access to every corner of social life, but a form that retains that 'literary', or serious quality, defined as the ability to deliberate, or to stimulate reflection on social and cultural questions.
- Reviewing British fiction of the 1980s, D. J. Taylor, a prominent and important critic, detected a widening gap between 'the novel of ideas and the (usually comic) novel of action', or, put more crudely, between 'drawing-room twitter and the banana skin'.8 My sense is that this gap between the novel of ideas and the more popular (especially comic) novel has become less, rather than more, distinct in the post-war years, as a natural consequence of the gradual democratization of narrative fiction.
- Successive critics of the novel in Britain, and especially England, have been less sanguine about its state of health, however. Arthur Marwick states the social historian's view that the novel in the immediate post-war period is 'fading', characterized by 'a national, even parochial quality' in the inwardlooking manner of contemporary political thought; and throughout the period literary critics have found cause for concern about the novel's future.
- There is, for example, a perceived moment of crisis in David Lodge's famous declaration from 1969 that the 'English novelist' then stood at a crossroads, faced with the alternative routes of fabulation and experimental metafiction. Lodge's advice was to go straight on, remaining on the road of realism and adhering to the liberal ideology it enshrines.10 More pessimistic was Bernard Bergonzi's assessment of 1970, that 'English literature in the fifties and sixties has been both backward- and inwardlooking', indicating that 'in literary terms, as in political ones, Britain is not a very important part of the world today'.
- Preoccupied with parochial matters, and less innovative than the novel elsewhere (especially in America), English fiction offers little, Bergonzi argued, 'that can be instantly translated into universal statements about the human condition'.
- He was only able to mount a partial challenge to this overview (as in the case of Lodge, this was based on a defence of English liberalism), so that his negative suggestions retain some of their force. One has to grant, further, that the picture he painted has remained partially true of the post-war novel, notably the preoccupation with parochial themes and topics, and the distrust of experimentation and formal innovation.

Keywords

Modernism, Victorian Era, Victorian Values, Femininity, Industrialization, Class Hierarchy, Poverty, Patriarchy, Education, Marriage, Morality, Chastity

Self Assessment

1. The…………….was a turning point in the British Political history of Nineteenth Century.

A. factory act of 1833

B. emancipation act of 1833

C. reform bill of 1832

D. education act 1833

2. Father of Utilitarianism

A. james mill

B. jermybentham

C. newman

D. macaulay

3. Which novel by Charles Dickens is generally regarded as the first Victorian novel

A. hard times

B. the pickwick papers

C. little dorrit

D. bleak house

4. Which novel by Thomas Hardy had the subtitle " A Pure Woman" which shocked Victorian readers?

A. the obscure

B. the well – beloved

C. a pair of blue eyes

D. tess of the d'urberviles

5. Which of the Bronte sisters wrote "Shirly" a novel set in Yorkshire during the Industrial depression

A. charlotte

B. emily

C. maria

D. Elizabeth

6. Which of the book was written by Victorian novelist George Eliot?

A. hard times

B. mill on the floss

C. far from madding crowd

D. the heart of darkness

7. Name of the novel by Thackeray known as "A Novel without a Hero"

A. timbuctoo

B. catherine

C. a shabby genteel story

D. vanity fair

8. What is inscribed above the entrance of Wuthering Heights?

A. hindleyearnshaw 1729

B. 1623

C. abandon all hope, ye who enter here

D. haretonearshaw 1500

9. What kind of countryside surrounds Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange

A. moorland

B. savannah

C. forest

D. grassy plains

10. Why doesn't Bingley visit Jane while she is in London?

A. He Doesn't Know That She's There.

B. Lady Catherine Forbids Him From Going.

C. Darcy Advises Him Against It.

D. He Thinks That Jane Does Not Like Him.

11. What is the name of the estate that Bingley rents?

A. Longbourne

B. Rosings

C. Netherfield

D. Fox Hall

12. Why does Elizabeth reject Darcy's initial proposal?

A. It Was Customary For Women At That Time To Reject The First Proposal.

B. She Does Not Like Him.

C. He Is Too Poor

D. She Is In Love With Someone Else.

13. What is inscribed above the entrance of Wuthering Heights?

A. hindleyearnshaw 1729

B. 1623

C. abandon all hope, ye who enter here

D. haretonearshaw 1500

14. What kind of countryside surrounds Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange

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15. What is inscribed above the entrance of Wuthering Heights?

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B. 1623

C. abandon all hope, ye who enter here

D. haretonearshaw 1500

Answer for Self Assessment

1.	C	2.	B	3.	B	4.	D	5.	A
6.	B	7.	D	8.	D	9.	A	10.	A
11.	B	12.	A	13.	C	14.	D	15.	A

Review Questions

1. What is British Literature?
2. What is the importance and need of writing skills?
3. What is the contribution of British Fiction writers?
4. What are major complexities in academic writing?
5. How one can overcome writing difficulties?
6. What is British Fiction?
7. What do you understand by contemporary novel?
8. What is the first reaction of students towards any writing task?
9. How do readers react towards any writing task?
10. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
11. Throw light on Early British Novel?
12. What is academic writing?
13. What are major complexities in British Fiction?
14. How one can overcome writing difficulties?
15. What do you understand by contemporary novel?
16. What is the first reaction of students towards any writing task?
17. How do readers react towards any writing task?
18. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
19. Throw light on Early British Novel?
20. What is academic writing?

Further Reading

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1. A course in Academic Writing by Renu Gupta, Orient Blackswan Pvt. Ltd.
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Unit 13: Tess of the d'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy

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13.2 Narration
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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- examine a historical-cum-critical perspective on British Fiction
- analyse the significance of British fiction in totality
- recognize the essential identity markers of British fiction

Introduction

Thomas Hardy was born at Higher Bockhampton, close to Dorchester, a county town in the south-west of England, on 2 June 1840. Few great writers can have had as humble a birth-place as the small, secluded cottage hidden in the trees at the end of a country lane, which is now an object of pilgrimage for many thousands of his admirers each year. He lived in that cottage for the first twenty-two years of his life, growing up in the midst of a rustic environment which was to playa large part in his great novels. A boy of sensitive awareness to the life going on around him, and blest with a remarkable retentive memory, he was in those years to acquire the experience, the knowledge, the impressions which served him so well as a writer . From his parents he inherited contrasting qualities. His mother was an earnest, characterful woman determined that he should do well in life; his father, who earned his livingas a stonemason and small builder, enjoyed the life of the senses and had a passion for music which he passed on to his son. His mother bore him only six months after her marriage, and at birth he was thought to be dead until a midwife smacked him into life.

He was a weakly boy, sensitive and easily moved to tears. At that time there was no universal compulsory education, but his mother sent him to the local village school when he was seven, and subsequently he became a pupil at a school in Dorchester where he stayed until he was sixteen, when his mother paid £100 - a sum of something like £3000 in modern money - for him to be apprenticed to an architect. His architectural training in Dorchester lasted for about six years and was an influence upon him as a novelist. Whenever he describes a building, we recognise that he knows what he is talking about. But, even more important, his novels will be found to have the careful planning of an architect. The seven phases of Tess's life, into which the book is divided, provide a meticulously worked-out structure, and the novel is full of symmetries and parallels.

These years from 1856-62 were years of vital and rapid development. In the Life of Thomas Hardy by Thomas Hardy he describes how his life at that time was 'a life twisted of three strands - the professional life, the scholar's life, and the rustic life, combined in the twenty-four hours of one

day'. The architectural (i.e., professional) strand we have already mentioned. The life of a scholar is a reference to the intense programme of study he imposed on himself at that time , often rising at five in the morning in order to pursue his reading . He was as determined as his mother that he should show himself to be an educated man, and he read widely in English literature, in the Classics, and in many branches of knowledge, with a particular interest in science and philosophy. And he knew his Bible and his Shakespeare intimately; quotations from these two great books are found throughout his writing, and echoes abound. The third strand mentioned by Hardy - the rustic life - resulted from his actually living in the heart of the country.

The parish of Stinsford, in which Higher Bockhampton lay, was a community of people linked together by their past history and by their present dependence on each other. Hardy's father was a keen musician who had at one time, like his father before him, played his viol in the parish church choir. But he loved every kind of music, and when he went off to play his musical instrument at parties and weddings and feasts , he took his son, Tom, along with him . Tom himself had been taught to play the violin, and he spent many hours playing away at these functions and acquiring that knowledge of the local people , of their lives, their traditions, their stories and their songs, which enrich his writing . It was during this period that he decided that he would like to be a writer, preferably a poet, and he began consciously to prepare himself for a profession which he greatly esteemed. To widen his horizons, and to obtain that knowledge of the world which he thought every writer should have, he left his native village in 1862 and took a job in London as a practicing architect. It was a London which, with the development of the railway companies in the previous twenty years, had become very much the cent re of the universe , growing and changing rapidly, and abuzz with intellectual ideas and cultural activities.

New scientific discoveries had made it difficult to accept the literal truth of the Bible, the train was making people more mobile and beginning to destroy the old self-contained communities, and every idea and belief was being discussed and challenged. Hardy was very aware of all this and of the enormous changes which , beginning then, were to mark his whole life. He had loved the life of his parish church, its hymns and chants, its Bible readings and liturgy. He went on loving it for the rest of his life, but intellectually he found himself unable to accept the simple faith of his youth, and he became highly critical of the Victorian Church with its narrow morality and its uncharitable dogmatism. It is no accident that Hardy makes Parson Tringham responsible for starting the chain of events which is to lead Tess to the gallows.

Unable to get any of his poetry published, he decided to try his hand as a novelist and his first book, Desperate Remedies, was published in 1871. It failed , but Under the Greenwood Tree was more of a success when it was published in 1872, and the success of Far from the Madding Crowd in 1874 meant that he was able to give up architecture and become a fulltime writer. In the same year he married Emma Lavinia Gifford whom he had met in Cornwall in 1870 while he was drawing up plans for the restoration of a dilapidated old church. The marriage lasted until the death of Emma in 1912, but, although it began happily, the happines was not to last. True to Victorian convention they went on living together but there is much evidence of a lack of sympathy between them, of a wife who could not keep up with a husband who was rising in the world, and of a husband who , sensitive as he was as a writer, was insensitive to his wife's needs. It is not just chance that there are so many unhappy marriages in Hardy's later novels.

He published fourteen novels between 1871 and 1895, and through such masterpieces as Far from the Madding Crowd, The Return of the Native (1878) and The Mayor of Casterbridge (1885), he gradually made a name for himself among discriminating readers. But fame came only with the publication of Tess in 1891 and Jude the Obscure in 1895, and it was ironic that the enormous success of these two novels was partly due to the sensation they caused because they were attacked by so many pillars of the Establishment as unclean and unfit to be read. One noble bishop even informed the newspapers that he had burned his copy of Jude . Hardy, delighted as he must have been with the enormous sales which resulted from this publicity, was deeply hurt by the virulent attacks on him and decided to give up novel writing for his first love, poetry. In 1898 he published the first of what were to be eight books of verse written between then and his death in 1928. At first he was not taken seriously as a poet, but with the publication of The Dynasts in 1904-8 it was gradually realised that he was not only a very great novelist, but also a very great poet.

Max Gate, the solid Victorian house he had had built for himself near Dorchester in 1884-5, became a place of pilgrimage for his countless admirers, and honours were conferred on him by the State and by the universities. The boy born in such humble circumstances had become the grand old man of English letters, but he still retained much of the simple Wessex countryman he had always been, loving nothing more than to wander with his dog along the lanes and through the fields which he had immortalised in his novels. The churchyard at Stinsford, in which Emma and his ancestors

were buried beneath the greenwood tree, remained a sacred place to him and he requested that he should beburied there . His request was not heeded. At his death on 11 January 1928 the Establishment demanded that he should be buried in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey , and after an unseemly dispute a typical but barbaric British compromise was reached . His heart was cut from his body and buried at Stinsford, the rest of him cremated and buried with the utmost ceremony in the Abbey.

When Tess was first published it had an immediate success and it has remained a 'best-seller' ever since. To enjoy such popularity with a wide audience requires one particular quality: it must have the ability to entertain . But that in itself would not have ensured its survival over a hundred years. Even if we read it primarily for the pleasure of reading, we cannot fail to be aware that Tess is a serious novel, that is to say, it is packed with ideas about life, and this is one of the elements of its greatness. Hardy wanted to write a novel which would entertain (in fact, he needed to do so if it was to sell well and earn him his living!), but because he was passionately interested in human relationships, he poured into his novels impressions of life as he saw it. Thus, he was conscious of the hypo crisy of those who had one moral standard for men and another for women , and this becomes an important aspect of Tess.

The England in which Hardy had grown up had been an England of rigid moral codes and very dogmatic ideas about the relationships between men and women. He found himself increasingly questioning the assumptions of the time and the attitudes of the Church which imposed them. In Tess there is little sympathy for Parson Tringham who - ironically and significantly - triggers off the whole unhappy story by his disclosure to 'Sir John ' of his ancestral heritage , and there is nothing but contempt for Angel's two insufferable brothers. There is also powerful criticism of the Vicar of Marlott who has 'the natural feelings of a tradesman at finding that a job he should have been called in for had been unskilfully botched by his customers'. What kind of religion is it , Hardy is asking, which would condemn to damnation a baby who had not been baptised or visit the sins of the father on the child. Hardy sees some good in the evangelical Parson Clare and his wife, but we may take it that he intends there to be something amusing and paradoxical in their deep interest in Tess as soon as they learn that she is a 'sinner ' .

For Hardy, Tess is not , of course , a sinner, and he nailed his colours to the mast when he decided to add to the title the challenging words 'APure Woman' . It is worthwhile thinking very deeply about this move of Hardy's. He was bitterly attacked for calling Tess 'pure' , and the Establishment of the l890s found Tess a very disturbing book. Purity meant chastity, and a woman must before all else be chaste. Virginity was all important. Hardy , who had been brought up in the country and was so sensitively aware of the power of Nature, questioned this. He knew that among the workers in the fields there was not the same emphasis on virginity , and that what happened between Alec and Tess did not condemn her to be a perpetual moral outcast. Tess has 'been made to break an accepted social law, but no law known to an environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly'. Hardy seems to be saying, 'Why make the physical act itself a matter of such paramount importance ?'

Tess's problem is that she stands between two cultures, that of her parents and her natural surroundings, and that which has resulted from her having 'passed the Sixth Standard in the National School'. This is to some extent Hardy's own problem because he himself is an educated man from a humble background and a country environment, and in his novels he shows himself preoccupied by the difficulties confronting those who find themselves, like Tess, caught between two worlds, the old and the new. Hardy is aware of the 'ache of modernism' and his sympathies are with the old world , the world of his youth untouched by new ideas and new technology, the arguing of theologians and the mobility provided by trains and improved transport, but he knows, too, that progress brings its benefits, and he makes his ambivalent attitude on this issue very clear in his essay 'The Dorsetshire Labourer'.

Tess finds herself critical - although loyally supportive - of her family and yet her background makes her not easily acceptable to Angel's middleclass family . She is, therefore , doubly a figure in transition - she is caught between two classes and between two moral codes . Her plight is brought home to us by the fact that she has no permanent home throughout most of the novel. She seems to be continually travelling, forever setting out on the road to somewhere or other, and her unsettledness of mind is reflected in her constant movement from one place to another. And, of course, she is unlucky in that her travels bring her into contact with two men who represent two powerful forces which between them will destroy her. Alec can be seen as representative of the cruelty of lust , Angel of the fragility of love. Even if Hardy seems to be saying that there is nothing naturally sinful in the sexual act or sacred in virginity, not for a moment does he condone Alec's treatment of Tess. He is a bully who uses his money and his position to master and exploit women.

He takes advantage of Tess's innocence and vulnerability, and such a relationship is seen by Hardy as wholly deplorable. The blame is put by him on the exploiter and not the exploited, and it is in this that he throws a challenge down to Victorian society with its 'fallen women' and its belief that all such women must be impure and should be unhappy . Their illegitimate offspring, it was tacitly accepted, should be labelled bastards and ought to die at birth or soon after. Hardy follows the conventional pattern in making his heroine unhappy, letting her baby die, and bringing her to a tragic end, but he will not have it that her experience with Alec must coarsen her and make her 'impure'.

ake her 'impure'. Her unhappiness is partly the result, as we have already said, of her education which has developed her sense of sin and guilt , but it is far more the result of failures in Angel, the man who claims to love her. He is a far more complex figure than"Alec. Where Alec is a pseudo-gentleman and a pseudo-d'Urberville , Angel is a pseudo-liberal and a pseudo - angel. With his interest in 'intellectual liberty' and his condemnation of 'an untenable redemptive theolatry' he seems a man of the broadest outlook who would be able to love Tess for what she is, the kind of man who might well ask, 'Who was the moral man? Still more pertinently, who was the moral woman?' But on his wedding night he shows himself to be narrow-minded and as bound by Victorian orthodox morality as the most puritanical bigot, a fault made worse by his own confession to Tess of a previous sexual misdemeanour, and his unquestioning acceptance of a double standard of behaviour.

Hardy savagely enjoys himself exposing Angel's weaknesses, which he sees as those of a cruel and insensitive society. That such a potential for happiness and fulfilment should be destroyed by Angel indicates what is wrong with society: the word has become more important than the spirit. Angel's rejection of Tess illustrates yet another of Hardy's recurring themes : the dangers of idealisation, of living in a dream world. Love is for him a 'great thing', and nowhere in literature is love between man and woman more beautifully and powerfully described than in the Talbothays chapters of Tess. However, it is vital for happiness that one should love the person and not the idea. Angel thinks that he loves Tess but much of his love is linked to his idea of what Tess is. Almost his first thought about her is, 'What a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature that milkmaid is!' , and he continually sees her as 'a visionary essence of woman', as the Greek goddess of chastity, and as being 'chaste as a vestal' . He is so obsessed by this physical idea of purity, possibly because of guilt feelings brought about by his own fall from sexual grace, that it is no wonder that he is able to say to the distressed Tess on their wedding night, 'the woman I have been loving is not you'. How right Tess is when she tells him, 'It is in your own mind what you are angry at, Angel; it is not in me'! It is a measure of Angel's conversion that he is able finally to accept her as a murderess when earlier in the book she had been rejected for"a small sexual indiscretion. Hardy uses him here to explore the idea that the nineteenth-century Church puts its emphasis far too much on the physical and far too little on loving-kindness, far too much on chastity, too little on charity . Religion has become a rigid orthodoxy, out of touch with reality, a situation nicely summed up in the description of Angel's brothers as being unable to see 'the difference between local truth and universal truth'. It will be seen that criticism of religious and social codes permeates the whole novel.

Tess finds herself in conflict with these codes and through her Hardy explores yet another area of life which fascinates him - the relationship between character and fate. It is often said that Tess is doomed from the beginning of the novel, and it is certainly true that there is a feeling of tragic inevitability. However, it is indisputable that Tess's character affects the action of the story. Her terrible sense of guilt, her dithering about telling Angel of her past, her pride which makes her leave Emminster without seeing her mother and father-in-law, all these play their part in her tragedy . What each reader must consider is the extent to which Tess's character is her fate. Does she have to behave as she does? Where she has a choice does she have to make the one she does? Of course, chance plays a part , and it is a common criticism of Hardy's novels that chance plays too big a part.

The example often quoted from Tess is that of the confessional letter written by Tess to Angel going under the carpet. But he might have argued that this kind of bad luck does happen in life, and he does remark on 'that reckless acquiescence in chance too apparent in the whole d'Urberville family' . When Tess discovers that Angel has not read her letter she could still have handed it to him before the wedding. Isn't life, he might have said, a mixture of character and chance and haven't I got the mixture just about right in Tess? What do you think? These are some of the major ideas which make Tess such a rich novel. But there are many other ideas because Hardy had so lively a mind, such deep feelings, and so great an interest in life, that his books, as we have already seen, are a constant commentary on life. Heredity became a serious study about the time he was writing Tess, and it is very much present in the story which begins, of course, with Jack Durbeyfield's learning about his

ancestors, and which refers more than once to what Tess may have inherited from her aristocratic predecessors. We are also made aware of what Tess has inherited from her mother and father. It is worth looking in detail at this aspect of the novel, and others which would well repay study are superstition and the treatment of animals. Hardy leaves no doubt where he stands on the latter. In a postDarwinian world he thinks of animals as being related to us, and man's inhumanity to animals he sees as only slightly less culpable than man's inhumanity to man. There is a peculiar poignancy, an ironic aptness, about Tess's putting the dying pheasants out of their agony by breaking their necks, and she is herself repeatedly compared to animals. About superstition, Hardy's attitude is more ambivalent. What are we to make of The Compleat Fortune-Teller , of the legend of the d'Urberville coach, and the cock crowing in the afternoon? Does Hardy include them because of the colour they add to his story or because he knows that superstition plays some part in most people's lives and it is, therefore , a matter of concern? Hardy's novels always give one a great deal to think about, and that is one reason for their lasting appeal.

13.1 Characterization

Tess herself is central to the novel and Hardy describes her with such a wealth of physical detail and comment upon her thoughts and feelings that we feel that we know her well. It has been said that Hardy fell in love with his own creation, that he shares her sufferings as a father might those of his daughter, and this is undoubtedly true. He several times mentions her fluty voice and her well-developed figure. There are constant references to her lips, and Angel thinks of these as being 'distracting, infatuating, maddening'. Her lips and teeth remind him of the old Elizabethan simile of 'roses filled with snow', and Alec tries to force a strawberry between her parted lips. To Angel her lips are not quite perfect, 'And it was the touch of the imperfect upon the would-be perfect that gave the sweetness, because it was that which gave the humanity'.

Writing when he did , Hardy has to be very careful in writing about the physical aspect of love but he leaves us in no doubt about Tess's physicality and her sexual attraction to men. But it is her character, of course, that is so important to the story, and as an answer to the uncharitable who would see Tess as a wicked sinner, Hardy makes her almost a human angel, 'with a touch of the imperfect'. Yes, of course, she is proud, occasionally impulsive, and sometimes too passive, but what a long catalogue of virtues may be set against these occasional faults! Our love of her and sympathy for her are partly caused by our awareness of her loyalty and devotion to her feckless family. It is for them that she first goes to Trantridge and finally becomes Alec's mistress.

We are bound to feel sympathy for a sixteen-year-old girl who already finds herself having to get her parents back from their drinking at the alehouse and doing the work which her impossible father should be doing. She has a great love for her brothers and sisters, and love is what we most remember her for. The compassion she feels for the wounded pheasants and her love for her special cows identify her with the nature of which she is a part, and she becomes representative of the best of that nature. We see her, too , as a mother trying at first to hide the love she feels for that poor baby ,Sorrow, but then passionately revealing it in her anxiety about her baby's illness, about his christening, and about his burial. But it is the quality of her love for Angel which is her special mark of distinction, just as it is Hardy's distinction as a great writer that he can portray such love.

It is a love which is both physical - 'Clare learnt what an impassioned woman's kisses were like upon the lips of one whom she loved with all her heart and soul' - and emotional, and also has something of the spiritual about it. When Hardy writes of Angel not knowing 'at that time the full depth of her devotion, its single-mindedness, its meekness; what long-suffering it guaranteed, what honesty, what endurance, what good faith' he is deliberately echoing a famous passage in the Bible in which St Paul talks about Christian love, and he does so not just to shock the orthodox into considering the true nature of love, but also because Tess's love has something heavenly about it.

Described in such detail and with so much love, Tess is superbly real and living, and yet there is an important sense in which she is far more than Tess the milkmaid . Part of Hardy's object in writing the novel, as we have already said, was to expose how badly women could be treated sexually under a moral code which favoured the male. To make his point as strongly as possible he creates Tess to be both individual and symbol. We see this first in Chapter 7 where Tess sets out to take up residence at The Slopes, and there are repeated indications that she is being sacrificed by her mother and father - her hair is washed , she is dressed in white , the family group is 'a picture of honest beauty flanked by innocence', and she is carried away to her fate by Alec.

As a field-woman she is a 'portion of the field'. Fighting for her baby's salvation at the baptism, she is seen by her brothers and sisters as 'a being large, towering, and awful' , while she is more than

once compared to Eve, the mother of all women, and Angel sees her as 'a visionary essence of woman'. The result of this is that when Tess lies on the sacrificial stone at Stonehenge at the end of her painful pilgrimage through life most readers have no difficulty in accepting what might otherwise have seemed too contrived an incident. At this stage she becomes more symbol than individual and for this Hardy's careful planning has prepared us. Tess so dominates the novel, which very properly is given her name as a title , that the other characters must seem minor by comparison. There is something of the cardboard villain about Alec with his swarthy complexion, black moustache with curled points and bold, rolling eye. And , of course , he smokes! He is continually associated with darkness and there are parallels drawn between him and the Devil. To that extent he is a symbol of evil, and Hardy who has made him so is not as successful in combining symbol and individual in Alec as he is in Tess.

The Alec who seems to be so devoted to Tess that he is prepared to marry her , even if much of the attraction is physical , is a little difficult to reconcile with the demonic Alec who , complete with steel-pronged fork , digs by her in the allotment until his face is lit up by the fire. It may be difficult to accept his conversion, except as further evidence of the failure of the Church, and as a narrative device which enables Hardy to draw the maximum of irony from his 'un-conversion', but it is a well-known psychological fact that passionate sinners can become passionate religious converts. Certainly, it allows Hardy to set Tess's faith in a 'religion of loving-kindness and purity', (and it is worth thinking carefully about what she means by 'purity' there) against Alec's statement that 'I am not going to feel responsible for my deeds and passions if there's nobody to be responsible to'.

Appropriately, Alec is an outsider in the rural community - his father has made his money 'as an honest merchant (some said money- lender) in the North' - and even his name is false. His generosity to Tess's family results from his belief that money can buy anything, and it is significant that in Chapter 12 he says, 'I am ready to pay to the uttermost farthing ' and his words to Tess are echoed by her in Chapter 34 where Tess, having decided to tell Angel of her relationship with Alec, says to herself that she will 'pay to the uttermost farthing' , but whereas Alec's words are literal , he is thinking in terms of money , Tess's words are metaphorical - and both of them do pay to the uttermost farthing. Alec has so much money ,Tess so little, and it is the moneyed man who says, 'I was born bad , and I have lived bad , and I shall die bad in all probability'.

With his selfishness, his bad temper and his desire to master not only his horses but his women, there is much to dislike about Alec, but we should remember that Tess does find it possible to say of him, 'My eyes were dazed by you for a little', and 'perhaps you are a little better and kinder than I have been thinking you were' . Perhaps Hardy himself was a little puzzled at what to make of his playboy of the Wessex world. Angel is a far more complex character although he is like Alec in that he may be seen as the outsider who has come into the rustic community, and , like him, he treats Tess shabbily. It could even be argued that he is crueller and more callous than Alec in that he claims to love Tess, whereas Alec never makes quite the same protestations of affection and caring. Angel is an interesting character in that his views about the dogmatism of the Church resemble closely views that we know Hardy to have held.

He sees himself as an intellectual rebel, questioning the conventions of the time , and liberal in outlook. Sexually he seems somewhat inconsistent. He is deeply sensitive to Tess's physical charms and has had , almost unbelievably - even though it is necessary for Hardy to make his point about double standards - a short sexual encounter before he meets Tess. Yet he is able to reject Tess on the wedding night, beautiful as she is. In a roundabout way Hardy suggests that it might have been better if he had had a little more 'animalism' about him, but the invitation to Izz to accompany him to Brazil smacks more of 'animalism' than love. Whether these inconsistencies are a weakness resulting from Hardy's need to make a point or whether they are acceptable as the kind of inconsistency we find in characters in real life must be decided by the individual reader.

Although in his attitude to the Church Angel may seem to speak for his creator, when he fails to live up to his own beliefs and treats Tess so badly on their honeymoon Hardy's contempt for him is manifest. How could he be so hypocritical, so vicious in his attack on Tess, so insensitive to her devotion to him! But Hardy is shrewd and experienced enough to know that men and women are often in love with the ideal rather than the real, that there is often a gap between ideas and feelings, between one's beliefs and one's behaviour. The liberal Angel becomes a puritanical reactionary when he finds that his wife is not a virgin, and it takes a severe illness and a period in Brazil for him to ask the vital question , 'Who was the moral man? Still more pertinently; who was the moral woman?'

Interestingly and ironically, while Angel is abroad suffering his conversion, Tess at home takes over the 'religion of loving-kindness' which he had preached to her and preaches it to Alec. When we

meet Angel again in England he is much changed both physically and mentally, at last a true believer in the ideas he had betrayed on his wedding-night. The love he now shows to Tess is all-understanding but it has come too late . Just as Alec is identified with darkness , Angel is repeatedly associated with the sun. When he leaves Marlott in Chapter 3 'the rays of the sun had absorbed' his retreating figure; when there is talk of his leaving Talbothays in Chapter 25 'the sunshine of the morning went out at a stroke'. Angel in Chapter 23 describes Tess as being 'like an undulating billow warmed by the sun', and so on. This symbolism works out neatly with the sacrifice of Tess at Stonehenge brought about by Tess's worship of him and by Angel's rejection of her and his damaging remark about Alec, 'If he were dead it might be different', but there seems no other obvious reason why he should be associated with the sun. Sadly, our final judgement on Angel must be that at the moment of crisis he failed to be true to his beliefs, and like Othello, threw away 'a pearl richer than all his tribe'. It is a successful piece of characterisation made the more so by Hardy's obviously emotional involvement with the man who destroyed his beautiful Tess.

Tess's parents, Jack and Joan Durbeyfield, playa significant part in the novel even if for long periods they are missing from the scene. They have, by heredity, influenced Tess's character. In Chapter 37 Hardy writes 'Pride, too , entered into her submission - which perhaps was a symptom of that reckless acquiescence in chance too apparent in the whole d'Urberville family.' We remember here her father's pride in being a d'Urberville , a descendant of a noble and proud family, and his refusal to allow the vicar to come into the house to baptise Tess's dying baby . Jack's character is quickly drawn in the very first chapter. He drinks too much, and his pride, stupidity and fecklessness are revealed in his reaction to the information he receives about his ancestors. In spite of being chronically poor he orders a carriage, and rum, and behaves as if he had inherited money from his ancestors, not just some of what were probably their worst faults . There is something comic about the first chapter but it contains within it the seeds of the tragedy. We feel more sympathy for Tess because she remains loyal to her shiftless , irresponsible father regardless of his weaknesses. A thoroughly bad parent, he even manages to die at the worst possible moment for his daughter!

Joan has the easy-going irresponsibility of her husband, having children without the means to keep them and sharing her husband's love s is an important statement because it partly explains Joan's attitude to her daughter's affairs and her inability to understand Tess's predicament. It is Joan who is mainly responsible for sending her daughter into Alec's clutches at The Slopes. She does nothing to warn Tess of the dangers she faces, assumes that if anything goes wrong Alec will marry her, and when Tess returns pregnant is at first angry, and then accepts the situation with the fatalism of the working-folk who, through suffering, have learnt to accept life's buffets as inevitable.

Some might say that her advice to her daughter not to tell Angel of her relationship with Alec was sensible: 'We do not say it'. However, the contrast between the two women is brought out powerfully by their difference in attitudes over the confession. It is difficult to forgive the advantage both mother and father take of Tess, and remarks such as, '0 Tess, what's the use of your playing at marrying gentlemen, if it leaves us like this!' give someone as self-sacrificing as Tess no alternative but to surrender to Alec once again. It is wholly appropriate that her mentioning Sandboume to Angel leads to his finding Tess and to the deaths of both Alec and her poor daughter. Hardy's attitude to her seems to be ambivalent : he appears to envy her easy-going fatalism and her lack of any sense of guilt , but there is fierce condemnation of her failure as a mother.

There is a whole gallery of minor characters- the other members of the Durbeyfield and Clare families, Mercy Chant, Alec's mother, the workers at the dairy - particularly Izz, Marian and Retty, Parson Groby, Mrs Brooks, and others, like the painter of religious texts, who say their few words and are not even named . They all contribute to the picture of rural life in Wessex which Hardy paints so fully . Some, like Angel's brothers and Mercy Chant , seem to be little more than two-dimensional figures created to make a point. Others like the three dairymaids are fully life-like - even if perhaps their single-minded devotion to Angel is a little overpowering - and we are given a delightful picture of them at Talbothays.

Each is sharply individualised as if Hardy were reminding us that we should not think of farm-folk as being 'personified by the pitiable dummy known as Hodge'. Their love of Tess and their unselfish interest in her well-being make them very sympathetic characters and add to our appreciation of Tess's exceptionally lovable nature. Izz's remark to Angel that 'nobody could love 'ee more than Tess did .. . She would have laid down her life for 'ee' tells us something not only about Tess but also about Izz. With an unusual frankness for the time they are described as passionate girls with strong sexual desires which they know can find no satisfaction with Angel. As Hardy puts it, 'The air of the sleeping-chamber seemed to palpitate with the hopeless passion of the

girls. They writhed feverishly under the oppressiveness of an emotion thrust on them by cruel Nature's law.'

13.2 Narration

In the rural environment of Hardy's youth the telling of stories and anecdotes was an important part of life, and he heard many a tale from his grandmother, his parents, relatives and friends . Some of these he made notes of for future use, and he was always looking for incidents which he could use in his books. Thus, he claimed that he had actually heard a tipsy man swaggering past him and singing 'I've-got-a-great-family-vault-overat . . . ' and that the death of Prince , the horse, and the bloodstained ceiling were based upon actual newspaper reports. Brought up in th is tradition , he couldn't understand a novelist like Henry James who seemed to him to write books in which very little happened. For Hardy, a story should be exceptional enough to justify its telling : 'We tale-tellers are all Ancient Mariners,' he wrote , ' and none of us is warranted in stopping Wedding Guests (in other words , the hurrying public) unless he has something more unusual to relate than the ordinary experience of every average man and woman'.

Although it has become fashionable in some critical circles to sneer at the story as being the least valuable part of a book, it could be claimed that it is Hardy's ability as a story-teller which has played a large part in his popularity as a novelist. The story of Tess is a good one. It makes excellent use of suspense, surprise and irony. As it was first conceived as a serial, it is packed with dramatic incidents of a vividness which makes them stand out in the memory when the general outline of the plot is forgotten . By Victorian standards the plot is, in fact , comparatively simple. A country girl isforced by poverty to go out to work for a moneyed family ; she is seduced by the son of the house, but leaves him when she finds herself pregnant; the baby dies and she goes off to work as a dairymaid. She falls in love with a middle-class man who is training to be a farmer. He declares his love for her and asks her to marry him.

She feels that she should tell him about her seduction but fails to do so until the wedding night, when he angrily rejects her. Leaving her, he goes off to Brazil and she, after working in appalling conditions and in order to save her poverty-stricken family, becomes the mistress of the man who originally seduced her. Her husband has a change of heart , returns from Brazil, and eventually traces her. She kills the seducer and has a few brief days of happiness with her husband before she is captured and hanged . Put thus it seems a simple, elemental plot on the common subject of the seduced maid and her sufferings, but Hardy transforms it through the power of his creative imagination , loading it with interesting characters and memorable descriptions, and continually challenging our normal expectations and responses to this conventional seduction story.

Unusually, he divides the book into 'Phases' : in the first phase she is 'The Maiden', the young, virginal girl so vulnerable to such as Alec, whose seduction of her means that in Phase the Second she is 'Maiden No More', and we are able to observe the effect on her life of that seduction, of her brief motherhood, and of the death of her child. The third phase of her life is 'The Rally' which occurs when, having seemingly recovered from her early misfortunes, she sets out for the dairy-farm in the spring and, in hope , meets Angel, and knows a brief happiness as they fall in love. In such a lush and benevolent atmosphere as that of Talbothays in the summer we feel, surely, all must be well, but Phase the Fourth, 'The Consequence' shows the shadows growing as winter approaches and, as a consequence of her seduction, Tess worries herself to distraction about her guilty secret. Just as Phase the First ends with her loss of virginity, Phase 'the Fourth ends with her marriage and the arrival of the moment of confession.

'The Woman Pays' , the title of Phase the Fifth has been carefully chosen because it puts the emphasis on 'The Woman'. It is not Alec or Angel but the woman who pays, and she will continue to pay until that moment when she becomes the supreme sacrifice. Phase the Fifth ends almost ironically with her meeting the 'converted' Alec, an event which far from ending her paying will only add to it , and it must have been with some further irony that Hardy entitled Phase the Sixth 'The Convert'. In it Alec 'progresses' from convert to sinner, or to put it another way, suffers a further conversion at the hands of Tess who uses Angel's criticism of organised religion in order to restore him to his previous state . Meanwhile Angel is being 'converted' through his experiences in Brazil, and it is he who introduces Phase the Seventh, 'Fulfilment' , by returning to England after his calamitous absence from the scene throughout Phase the Sixth. The title 'Fulfilment' is ambiguous. Angel and Tess have their romantic fulfilment for a few days at Bramshurst Court, but the title could also be taken to refer ironically to what happens to Alec or even to Tess's final fate . Such ambiguities add a richness to the book's texture.

The structure of the novel depends, then, upon the seven phases, but Hardy adds to this by building up a pattern of references and cross references which resonate through the story. Thus when Tess impulsively hits Alec's face with her leather glove, and when she kills him, we are reminded of Parson Tringham's, 'However, our impulses are too strong for our judgement sometimes'. When we hear the legend of the d'Urberville coach we are reminded ofJack Durbeyfield riding home in a carriage after hearing the news of his aristocratic connections in Chapter 1. And as the hour strikes eight and Tess dies in the final chapter we think of another clock striking in Chapter 3, 'when suddenly the student said that he must leave'. It is rewarding to look for the many other instances of this patterning which add so much to our feeling that this is a very carefully structured novel. In talking about structure we should also bear in mind Hardy's cosmic view of his story, his ability suddenly to change the perspective. For most of the time we are concerned with characters who seem to be real people living in a minutely observed world. We see and hear the scene in the field when the reaping of the wheat is taking place, and it is described in such vivid detail that we are present ourselves.

At Talbothays the dairy farm and the milkers are so presented that a whole way of life at a particular time is immortalised. We are told of the methods of milking, of the difficulties which can arise, and of the day's activities. We even know the names of the cows, and we can see the long, thatched sheds and the eaves supported by wooden posts. It is all so lifelike, so present, so touchable - and then Hardy adds that these posts have been 'rubbed to a glossy smoothness by the flanks of infinite cows and calves of bygone years, now passed to an oblivion almost inconceivable in its profundity', and we see the situation from a wholly different perspective. Hardy's cosmic view frames his story, making us aware from time to time of our own littleness in the perspectives of time and space. As Tess walks to Talbothays she is suddenly portrayed 'like a fly on a billiard-table of indefinite length, and of no more consequence to the surroundings than that fly'. By such means Hardy not only structures his novel but also adds to its meaning. We are united by our common humanity. We exist as individuals but are united by the passing of time and the inevitability of death.

13.3 Style

An idea of the immediate response to the publication of Tess was given earlier (see page 5). It was both viciously attacked and stoutly defended, and Hardy, who like almost all writers was sensitive about the reception of his books, was very much hurt by the stridency of some of the reviewers. However , it was not long before critical comment became largely favourable. Such opposition as there was became based far less upon Hardy's attitude to the Church and to sexual morals, and rather more upon his style , his so-called 'pessimism', his authorial intrusions, and his alleged philosophical inconsistencies. Not that the Establishment found it easy to forgive him. As late as 1943 it was possible for an Archbishop of Canterbury to say, 'Hardy's Tess of the d 'Urbervilles is one of the worst books ever written.'

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Summary

- When Tess was first published it had an immediate success and it has remained a 'best-seller' ever since. To enjoy such popularity with a wide audience requires one particular quality: it must have the ability to entertain .
- But that in itself would not have ensured its survival over a hundred years. Even if we read it primarily for the pleasure of reading, we cannot fail to be aware that Tess is a serious novel, that is to say, it is packed with ideas about life, and this is one of the elements of its greatness.
- Hardy wanted to write a novel which would entertain (in fact, he needed to do so if it was to sell well and earn him his living!), but because he was passionately interested in human relationships he poured into his novels impressions of life as he saw it. Thus, he was conscious of the hypo crisy of those who had one moral standard for men and another for women , and this becomes an important aspect of Tess.
- The England in which Hardy had grown up had been an England of rigid moral codes and very dogmatic ideas about the relationships between men and women.
- He found himself increasingly questioning the assumptions of the time and the attitudes of the Church which imposed them.
- In Tess there is little sympathy for Parson Tringham who - ironically and significantly - triggers off the whole unhappy story by his disclosure to 'Sir John ' of his ancestral heritage , and there is nothing but contempt for Angel's two insufferable brothers.
- There is also powerful criticism of the Vicar of Marlott who has 'the natural feelings of a tradesman at finding that a job he should have been called in for had been unskilfully botched by his customers'.
- What kind of religion is it , Hardy is asking, which would condemn to damnation a baby who had not been baptised or visit the sins of the father on the child.
- Hardy sees some good in the evangelical Parson Clare and his wife, but we may take it that he intends there to be something amusing and paradoxical in their deep interest in Tess as soon as they learn that she is a 'sinner ' .

- For Hardy, Tess is not , of course , a sinner, and he nailed his colours to the mast when he decided to add to the title the challenging words 'APure Woman' . It is worthwhile thinking very deeply about this move of Hardy's.
- He was bitterly attacked for calling Tess 'pure' , and the Establishment of the l890s found Tess a very disturbing book. Purity meant chastity, and a woman must before all else be chaste. Virginity was allimportant. Hardy , who had been brought up in the country and was so sensitively aware of the power of Nature, questioned this.
- He knew that among the workers in the fields there was not the same emphasis on virginity , and that what happened between Alec and Tess did not condemn her to be a perpetual moral outcast.
- Tess has 'been made to break an accepted social law, but no law known to an environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly'. Hardy seems to be saying, 'Why make the physical act itself a matter of such paramount importance ?'
- Tess's problem is that she stands between two cultures, that of her parents and her natural surroundings, and that which has resulted from her having 'passed the Sixth Standard in the National School'.
- This is to some extent Hardy's own problem because he himself is an educated man from a humble background and a country environment, and in his novels he shows himself preoccupied by the difficulties confronting those who find themselves, like Tess, caught between two worlds, the old and the new.
- Hardy is aware of the 'ache of modernism' and his sympathies are with the old world , the world of his youth untouched by new ideas and new technology, the arguing of theologians and the mobility provided by trains and improved transport, but he knows, too, that progress brings its benefits, and he makes his ambivalent attitude on this issue very clear in his essay 'The Dorsetshire Labourer'.
- Tess finds herself critical - although loyally supportive - of her family and yet her background makes her not easily acceptable to Angel's middleclass family . She is, therefore , doubly a figure in transition - she is caught between two classes and between two moral codes .
- Her plight is brought home to us by the fact that she has no permanent home throughout most of the novel.
- She seems to be continually travelling, forever setting out on the road to somewhere or other, and her unsettledness of mind is reflected in her constant movement from one place to another. And, of course, she is unlucky in that her travels bring her into contact with two men who represent two powerful forces which between them will destroy her.
- Alec can be seen as representative of the cruelty of lust , Angel of the fragility of love. Even if Hardy seems to be saying that there is nothing naturally sinful in the sexual act or sacred in virginity, not for a moment does he condone Alec's treatment of Tess.
- He is a bully who uses his money and his position to master and exploit women. He takes advantage of Tess's innocence and vulnerability, and such a relationship is seen by Hardy as wholly deplorable.
- The blame is put by him on the exploiter and not the exploited, and it is in this that he throws a challenge down to Victorian society with its 'fallen women' and its belief that all such women must be impure and should be unhappy.
- Their illegitimate offspring, it was tacitly accepted, should be labelled bastards and ought to die at birth or soon after.

- Hardy follows the conventional pattern in making his heroine unhappy, letting her baby die, and bringing her to a tragic end, but he will not have it that her experience with Alec must coarsen her and make her 'impure'.
- ake her 'impure'. Her unhappiness is partly the result, as we have already said, of her education which has developed her sense of sin and guilt , but it is far more the result of failures in Angel, the man who claims to love her.
- He is a far more complex figure than"Alec. Where Alec is a pseudo-gentleman and a pseudo-d'Urberville , Angel is a pseudo-liberal and a pseudo - angel.
- With his interest in 'intellectual liberty' and his condemnation of 'an untenable redemptive theolatry' he seems a man of the broadest outlook who would be able to love Tess for what she is, the kind of man who might well ask, 'Who was the moral man?
- Still more pertinently, who was the moral woman?' But on his wedding night he shows himself to be narrow-minded and as bound by Victorian orthodox morality as the most puritanical bigot, a fault made worse by his own confession to Tess of a previous sexual misdemeanour, and his unquestioning acceptance of a double standard of behaviour.
- Hardy savagely enjoys himself exposing Angel's weaknesses, which he sees as those of a cruel and insensitive society. That such a potential for happiness and fulfilment should be destroyed by Angel indicates what is wrong with society: the word has become more important than the spirit.
- Angel's rejection of Tess illustrates yet another of Hardy's recurring themes : the dangers of idealisation, of living in a dream world.
- Love is for him a 'great thing', and nowhere in literature is love between man and woman more beautifully and powerfully described than in the Talbothays chapters of Tess. However, it is vital for happiness that one should love the person and not the idea.
- Angel thinks that he loves Tess but much of his love is linked to his idea of what Tess is. Almost his first thought about her is, 'What a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature that milkmaid is!' , and he continually sees her as 'a visionary essence of woman', as the Greek goddess of chastity, and as being 'chaste as a vestal' .
- He is so obsessed by this physical idea of purity, possibly because of guilt feelings brought about by his own fall from sexual grace, that it is no wonder that he is able to say to the distressed Tess on their wedding night, 'the woman I have been loving is not you'.
- How right Tess is when she tells him, 'It is in your own mind what you are angry at, Angel; it is not in me'! It is a measure of Angel's conversion that he is able finally to accept her as a murderess when earlier in the book she had been rejected for"a small sexual indiscretion.
- Hardy uses him here to explore the idea that the nineteenth-century Church puts its emphasis far too much on the physical and far too little on loving-kindness, far too much on chastity, too little on charity .
- Religion has become a rigid orthodoxy, out of touch with reality, a situation nicely summed up in the description of Angel's brothers as being unable to see 'the difference between local truth and universal truth'. It will be seen that criticism of religious and social codes permeates the whole novel.
- Tess finds herself in conflict with these codes and through her Hardy explores yet another area of life which fascinates him - the relationship between character and fate. It is often said that Tess is doomed from the beginning of the novel, and it is certainly true that there is a feeling of tragic inevitability. However, it is indisputable that Tess's character affects the action of the story.

- Her terrible sense of guilt, her dithering about telling Angel of her past, her pride which makes her leave Emminster without seeing her mother and father-in-law, all these play their part in her tragedy.
- What each reader must consider is the extent to which Tess's character is her fate. Does she have to behave as she does? Where she has a choice does she have to make the one she does? Of course, chance plays a part , and it is a common criticism of Hardy's novels that chance plays too big a part.
- The example often quoted from Tess is that of the confessional letter written by Tess to Angel going under the carpet. But he might have argued that this kind of bad luck does happen in life, and he does remark on 'that reckless acquiescence in chance too apparent in the whole d'Urberville family' .
- When Tess discovers that Angel has not read her letter she could still have handed it to him before the wedding. Isn't life, he might have said, a mixture of character and chance and haven't I got the mixture just about right in Tess? What do you think?
- These are some of the major ideas which make Tess such a rich novel. But there are many other ideas because Hardy had so lively a mind, such deep feelings, and so great an interest in life, that his books, as we have already seen, are a constant commentary on life.
- Heredity became a serious study about the time he was writing Tess, and it is very much present in the story which begins, of course, with Jack Durbeyfield's learning about his ancestors, and which refers more than once to what Tess may have inherited from her aristocratic predecessors. We are also made aware of what Tess has inherited from her mother and father. It is worth looking in detail at this aspect of the novel, and others which would well repay study are superstition and the treatment of animals. Hardy leaves no doubt where he stands on the latter.
- In a postDarwinian world he thinks of animals as being related to us, and man's inhumanity to animals he sees as only slightly less culpable than man's inhumanity to man. There is a peculiar poignancy, an ironic aptness, about Tess's putting the dying pheasants out of their agony by breaking their necks, and she is herself repeatedly compared to animals. About superstition, Hardy's attitude is more ambivalent.
- What are we to make of The Compleat Fortune-Teller , of the legend of the d'Urberville coach, and the cock crowing in the afternoon? Does Hardy include them because of the colour they add to his story or because he knows that superstition plays some part in most people's lives and it is, therefore , a matter of concern? Hardy's novels always give one a great deal to think about, and that is one reason for their lasting appeal.

Keywords

Modernism, Victorian Era, Victorian Values, Femininity, Industrialization, Class Hierarchy, Poverty, Patriarchy, Education, Marriage, Morality, Chastity

Self Assessment

1. The action of the novel takes place in?

A. Essex

B Sussex

C Wessex

D London

2. What is the primary reason why the Durbeyfields send Tess to Trantridge Cross?

A. So That She May Not Shame The Family With Her Illegitimate Child

B. So That She May Claim Kinship With The D'urbervilles

C. So That She May Eventually Marry A Nobleman

D. So That She May Find Employment With Mrs. Stoke-D'urberville.

3. Which of the Durbeyfields finally claims the family from Rolliver's?

A. Joan

B. Tess

C. John

D. Abraham

4. Which novel by Thomas Hardy had the subtitle " A Pure Woman" which shocked Victorian readers?

A. the obscure

B. the well – beloved

C. a pair of blue eyes

D. tess of the d'urberviles

5. At what location does Alec seduce Tess?

A. Chasebourough

B. Marlott

C. Trantridge Cross

D. The Chase

6According to Joan Durbeyfield, what is the 'trump card' that Tess has?

A. Her Innocence

B. The D'urberville Name

C. Her Face

D. Her Education

7. Which of the following is not a possible reason why Tess is seduced by Alec?

A. She Believes That To Resist Him Proves That She Is Ungrateful And Unkind.

B. She Believes That She Loves Him.

C. She Is Momentarily Attracted To Him.

D. She Is Too Tired To Resist His Advances.

8. What is inscribed above the entrance of Wuthering Heights?

A. hindleyearnshaw 1729

B. 1623

C. abandon all hope, ye who enter here

D. haretonearshaw 1500

9. Which of the following is not significant about the death of the Durbeyfield's horse?

A. Although The Death of Prince Is an Accident, Tess Feels That She Is to Blame.

B. The Death of The Horse Makes Tess Feel Guilty, Causing Her to Agree to Her Father's Plan to Claim Kinship.

C. Tess Bears Responsibility for The Death of The Horse, But the Tragedy Occurs Because Of Her Family's Irresponsibility and Not Her Own.

D. The Death of The Horse Foreshadows Later Deaths Caused During Carriage Rides.

10. Why doesn't Bingley visit Jane while she is in London?

A. He Doesn't Know That She's There.

B. Lady Catherine Forbids Him from Going.

C. Darcy Advises Him Against It.

D. He Thinks That Jane Does Not Like Him.

11. What is the name of the estate that Bingley rents?

A. Longbourne

B. Rosings

C. Netherfield

D. Fox Hall

12. Why does Elizabeth reject Darcy's initial proposal?

A. It Was Customary For Women At That Time To Reject The First Proposal.

B. She Does Not Like Him.

C. He Is Too Poor

D. She Is In Love With Someone Else.

13. What is inscribed above the entrance of Wuthering Heights?

A. hindleyearnshaw 1729

B. 1623

C. abandon all hope, ye who enter here

D. haretonearshaw 1500

14. What kind of countryside surrounds Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange

A. moorland

B. savannah

C. forest

D. grassy plains

15. Why doesn't Bingley visit Jane while she is in London?

A. He Doesn't Know That She's There.

B. Lady Catherine Forbids Him from Going.

C. Darcy Advises Him Against It.

D. He Thinks That Jane Does Not Like Him.

Answer for Self Assessment

1.	C	2.	B	3.	B	4.	D	5.	A
6.	B	7.	D	8.	D	9.	A	10.	A
11.	B	12.	A	13.	C	14.	D	15.	A

Review Questions

1. What is British Literature?
2. What is the importance and need of writing skills?
3. What is the contribution of British Fiction writers?
4. What are major complexities in academic writing?
5. How one can overcome writing difficulties?
6. What is British Fiction?
7. What do you understand by contemporary novel?
8. What is the first reaction of students towards any writing task?
9. How do readers react towards any writing task?
10. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
11. Throw light on Early British Novel?
12. What is academic writing?
13. What are major complexities in British Fiction?
14. How one can overcome writing difficulties?
15. What do you understand by contemporary novel?
16. What is the first reaction of students towards any writing task?
17. How do readers react towards any writing task?
18. What are the points that a writer needs to keep in mind while attempting any writing task?
19. Throw light on Early British Novel?
20. What is academic writing?

Further Reading

- A Course in Academic Writing by Renu Gupta, Orient Blackswan Pvt. Ltd.
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Unit 14: Tess of the d'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- examine a historical-cum-critical perspective on British Fiction
- analyse the significance of British fiction in totality
- recognize the essential identity markers of British fiction

Introduction

Thomas Hardy was born at Higher Bockhampton, close to Dorchester, a county town in the south-west of England, on 2 June 1840. Few great writers can have had as humble a birth-place as the small, secluded cottage hidden in the trees at the end of a country lane, which is now an object of pilgrimage for many thousands of his admirers each year. He lived in that cottage for the first twenty-two years of his life, growing up in the midst of a rustic environment which was to play a large part in his great novels. A boy of sensitive awareness to the life going on around him, and blest with a remarkable retentive memory, he was in those years to acquire the experience, the knowledge, the impressions which served him so well as a writer. From his parents he inherited contrasting qualities. His mother was an earnest, characterful woman determined that he should do well in life; his father, who earned his living as a stonemason and small builder, enjoyed the life of the senses and had a passion for music which he passed on to his son. His mother bore him only six months after her marriage, and at birth he was thought to be dead until a midwife smacked him into life.

He was a weakly boy, sensitive and easily moved to tears. At that time there was no universal compulsory education, but his mother sent him to the local village school when he was seven, and subsequently he became a pupil at a school in Dorchester where he stayed until he was sixteen, when his mother paid £100 - a sum of something like £3000 in modern money - for him to be apprenticed to an architect. His architectural training in Dorchester lasted for about six years and was an influence upon him as a novelist. Whenever he describes a building, we recognize that he knows what he is talking about. But, even more important, his novels will be found to have the careful planning of an architect. The seven phases of Tess's life, into which the book is divided, provide a meticulously worked-out structure, and the novel is full of symmetries and parallels.

These years from 1856-62 were years of vital and rapid development. In the Life of Thomas Hardy by Thomas Hardy he describes how his life at that time was 'a life twisted of three strands - the professional life, the scholar's life, and the rustic life, combined in the twenty-four hours of one

day'. The architectural (i.e., professional) strand we have already mentioned. The life of a scholar is a reference to the intense programme of study he imposed on himself at that time, often rising at five in the morning in order to pursue his reading. He was as determined as his mother that he should show himself to be an educated man, and he read widely in English literature, in the Classics, and in many branches of knowledge, with a particular interest in science and philosophy. And he knew his Bible and his Shakespeare intimately; quotations from these two great books are found throughout his writing, and echoes abound. The third strand mentioned by Hardy - the rustic life - resulted from his actually living in the heart of the country.

The parish of Stinsford, in which Higher Bockhampton lay, was a community of people linked together by their past history and by their present dependence on each other. Hardy's father was a keen musician who had at one time, like his father before him, played his viol in the parish church choir. But he loved every kind of music, and when he went off to play his musical instrument at parties and weddings and feasts, he took his son, Tom, along with him. Tom himself had been taught to play the violin, and he spent many hours playing away at these functions and acquiring that knowledge of the local people, of their lives, their traditions, their stories and their songs, which enrich his writing. It was during this period that he decided that he would like to be a writer, preferably a poet, and he began consciously to prepare himself for a profession which he greatly esteemed. To widen his horizons, and to obtain that knowledge of the world which he thought every writer should have, he left his native village in 1862 and took a job in London as a practising architect. It was a London which, with the development of the railway companies in the previous twenty years, had become very much the cent re of the universe, growing and changing rapidly, and abuzz with intellectual ideas and cultural activities.

New scientific discoveries had made it difficult to accept the literal truth of the Bible, the train was making people more mobile and beginning to destroy the old self-contained communities, and every idea and belief was being discussed and challenged. Hardy was very aware of all this and of the enormous changes which, beginning then, were to mark his whole life. He had loved the life of his parish church, its hymns and chants, its Bible readings and liturgy. He went on loving it for the rest of his life, but intellectually he found himself unable to accept the simple faith of his youth, and he became highly critical of the Victorian Church with its narrow morality and its uncharitable dogmatism. It is no accident that Hardy makes Parson Tringham responsible for starting the chain of events which is to lead Tess to the gallows.

Unable to get any of his poetry published, he decided to try his hand as a novelist and his first book, Desperate Remedies, was published in 1871. It failed, but Under the Greenwood Tree was more of a success when it was published in 1872, and the success of Far from the Madding Crowd in 1874 meant that he was able to give up architecture and become a fulltime writer. In the same year he married Emma Lavinia Gifford whom he had met in Cornwall in 1870 while he was drawing up plans for the restoration of a dilapidated old church. The marriage lasted until the death of Emma in 1912, but, although it began happily, the happiness was not to last. True to Victorian convention they went on living together but there is much evidence of a lack of sympathy between them, of a wife who could not keep up with a husband who was rising in the world, and of a husband who, sensitive as he was as a writer, was insensitive to his wife's needs. It is not just chance that there are so many unhappy marriages in Hardy's later novels.

He published fourteen novels between 1871 and 1895, and through such masterpieces as Far from the Madding Crowd, The Return of the Native (1878) and The Mayor of Casterbridge (1885), he gradually made a name for himself among discriminating readers. But fame came only with the publication of Tess in 1891 and Jude the Obscure in 1895, and it was ironic that the enormous success of these two novels was partly due to the sensation they caused because they were attacked by so many pillars of the Establishment as unclean and unfit to be read. One noble bishop even informed the newspapers that he had burned his copy of Jude. Hardy, delighted as he must have been with the enormous sales which resulted from this publicity, was deeply hurt by the virulent attacks on him and decided to give up novel writing for his first love, poetry. In 1898 he published the first of what were to be eight books of verse written between then and his death in 1928. At first, he was not taken seriously as a poet, but with the publication of The Dynasts in 1904-8 it was gradually realised that he was not only a very great novelist, but also a very great poet.

Max Gate, the solid Victorian house he had had built for himself near Dorchester in 1884-5, became a place of pilgrimage for his countless admirers, and honours were conferred on him by the State and by the universities. The boy born in such humble circumstances had become the grand old man of English letters, but he still retained much of the simple Wessex countryman he had always been, loving nothing more than to wander with his dog along the lanes and through the fields which he

had immortalised in his novels. The churchyard at Stinsford, in which Emma and his ancestors were buried beneath the greenwood tree, remained a sacred place to him and he requested that he should beburied there. His request was not heeded. At his death on 11 January 1928 the Establishment demanded that he should be buried in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, and after an unseemly dispute a typical but barbaric British compromise was reached. His heart was cut from his body and buried at Stinsford, the rest of him cremated and buried with the utmost ceremony in the Abbey.

When Tess was first published it had an immediate success and it has remained a 'best-seller' ever since. To enjoy such popularity with a wide audience requires one particular quality: it must have the ability to entertain. But that in itself would not have ensured its survival over a hundred years. Even if we read it primarily for the pleasure of reading, we cannot fail to be aware that Tess is a serious novel, that is to say, it is packed with ideas about life, and this is one of the elements of its greatness. Hardy wanted to write a novel which would entertain (in fact, he needed to do so if it was to sell well and earn him his living!), but because he was passionately interested in human relationships, he poured into his novels impressions of life as he saw it. Thus, he was conscious of the hypocrisy of those who had one moral standard for men and another for women, and this becomes an important aspect of Tess.

The England in which Hardy had grown up had been an England of rigid moral codes and very dogmatic ideas about the relationships between men and women. He found himself increasingly questioning the assumptions of the time and the attitudes of the Church which imposed them. In Tess there is little sympathy for Parson Tringham who - ironically and significantly - triggers off the whole unhappy story by his disclosure to 'Sir John ' of his ancestral heritage, and there is nothing but contempt for Angel's two insufferable brothers. There is also powerful criticism of the Vicar of Marlott who has 'the natural feelings of a tradesman at finding that a job he should have been called in for had been unskilfully botched by his customers'. What kind of religion is it, Hardy is asking, which would condemn to damnation a baby who had not been baptised or visit the sins of the father on the child? Hardy sees some good in the evangelical Parson Clare and his wife, but we may take it that he intends there to be something amusing and paradoxical in their deep interest in Tess as soon as they learn that she is a 'sinner '.

For Hardy, Tess is not, of course, a sinner, and he nailed his colours to the mast when he decided to add to the title the challenging words 'APure Woman'. It is worthwhile thinking very deeply about this move of Hardy's. He was bitterly attacked for calling Tess 'pure', and the Establishment of the l890s found Tess a very disturbing book. Purity meant chastity, and a woman must before all else be chaste. Virginity was all-important. Hardy, who had been brought up in the country and was so sensitively aware of the power of Nature, questioned this. He knew that among the workers in the fields there was not the same emphasis on virginity, and that what happened between Alec and Tess did not condemn her to be a perpetual moral outcast. Tess has 'been made to break an accepted social law, but no law known to an environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly'. Hardy seems to be saying, 'Why make the physical act itself a matter of such paramount importance?'

Tess's problem is that she stands between two cultures, that of her parents and her natural surroundings, and that which has resulted from her having 'passed the Sixth Standard in the National School'. This is to some extent Hardy's own problem because he himself is an educated man from a humble background and a country environment, and in his novels, he shows himself preoccupied by the difficulties confronting those who find themselves, like Tess, caught between two worlds, the old and the new. Hardy is aware of the 'ache of modernism' and his sympathies are with the old world, the world of his youth untouched by new ideas and new technology, the arguing of theologians and the mobility provided by trains and improved transport, but he knows, too, that progress brings its benefits, and he makes his ambivalent attitude on this issue very clear in his essay 'The Dorsetshire Labourer'.

Tess finds herself critical - although loyally supportive - of her family and yet her background makes her not easily acceptable to Angel's middleclass family. She is, therefore, doubly a figure in transition - she is caught between two classes and between two moral codes. Her plight is brought home to us by the fact that she has no permanent home throughout most of the novel. She seems to be continually travelling, forever setting out on the road to somewhere or other, and her unsettledness of mind is reflected in her constant movement from one place to another. And, of course, she is unlucky in that her travels bring her into contact with two men who represent two powerful forces which between them will destroy her. Alec can be seen as representative of the cruelty of lust, Angel of the fragility of love. Even if Hardy seems to be saying that there is nothing

naturally sinful in the sexual act or sacred in virginity, not for a moment does he condone Alec's treatment of Tess. He is a bully who uses his money and his position to master and exploit women. He takes advantage of Tess's innocence and vulnerability, and such a relationship is seen by Hardy as wholly deplorable. The blame is put by him on the exploiter and not the exploited, and it is in this that he throws a challenge down to Victorian society with its 'fallen women' and its belief that all such women must be impure and should be unhappy. Their illegitimate offspring, it was tacitly accepted, should be labelled bastards and ought to die at birth or soon after. Hardy follows the conventional pattern in making his heroine unhappy, letting her baby die, and bringing her to a tragic end, but he will not have it that her experience with Alec must coarsen her and make her 'impure'.

Her unhappiness is partly the result, as we have already said, of her education which has developed her sense of sin and guilt, but it is far more the result of failures in Angel, the man who claims to love her. He is a far more complex figure than "Alec. Where Alec is a pseudo-gentleman and a pseudo-d'Urberville, Angel is a pseudo-liberal and a pseudo - angel. With his interest in 'intellectual liberty' and his condemnation of 'an untenable redemptive theolatry' he seems a man of the broadest outlook who would be able to love Tess for what she is, the kind of man who might well ask, 'Who was the moral man? Still more pertinently, who was the moral woman?' But on his wedding night he shows himself to be narrow-minded and as bound by Victorian orthodox morality as the most puritanical bigot, a fault made worse by his own confession to Tess of a previous sexual misdemeanor, and his unquestioning acceptance of a double standard of behaviour.

Hardy savagely enjoys himself exposing Angel's weaknesses, which he sees as those of a cruel and insensitive society. That such a potential for happiness and fulfilment should be destroyed by Angel indicates what is wrong with society: the word has become more important than the spirit. Angel's rejection of Tess illustrates yet another of Hardy's recurring themes: the dangers of idealisation, of living in a dream world. Love is for him a 'great thing', and nowhere in literature is love between man and woman more beautifully and powerfully described than in the Talbothays chapters of Tess. However, it is vital for happiness that one should love the person and not the idea. Angel thinks that he loves Tess but much of his love is linked to his idea of what Tess is. Almost his first thought about her is, 'What a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature that milkmaid is!', and he continually sees her as 'a visionary essence of woman', as the Greek goddess of chastity, and as being 'chaste as a vestal'. He is so obsessed by this physical idea of purity, possibly because of guilt feelings brought about by his own fall from sexual grace, that it is no wonder that he is able to say to the distressed Tess on their wedding night, 'the woman I have been loving is not you'. How right Tess is when she tells him, 'It is in your own mind what you are angry at, Angel; it is not in me'! It is a measure of Angel's conversion that he is able finally to accept her as a murderess when earlier in the book she had been rejected for "a small sexual indiscretion. Hardy uses him here to explore the idea that the nineteenth-century Church puts its emphasis far too much on the physical and far too little on loving-kindness, far too much on chastity, too little on charity. Religion has become a rigid orthodoxy, out of touch with reality, a situation nicely summed up in the description of Angel's brothers as being unable to see 'the difference between local truth and universal truth'. It will be seen that criticism of religious and social codes permeates the whole novel.

Tess finds herself in conflict with these codes and through her Hardy explores yet another area of life which fascinates him - the relationship between character and fate. It is often said that Tess is doomed from the beginning of the novel, and it is certainly true that there is a feeling of tragic inevitability. However, it is indisputable that Tess's character affects the action of the story. Her terrible sense of guilt, her dithering about telling Angel of her past, her pride which makes her leave Emminster without seeing her mother and father-in-law, all these play their part in her tragedy. What each reader must consider is the extent to which Tess's character is her fate. Does she have to behave as she does? Where she has a choice does she have to make the one she does? Of course, chance plays a part, and it is a common criticism of Hardy's novels that chance plays too big a part.

The example often quoted from Tess is that of the confessional letter written by Tess to Angel going under the carpet. But he might have argued that this kind of bad luck does happen in life, and he does remark on 'that reckless acquiescence in chance too apparent in the whole d'Urberville family'. When Tess discovers that Angel has not read her letter, she could still have handed it to him before the wedding. Isn't life, he might have said, a mixture of character and chance and haven't I got the mixture just about right in Tess? What do you think? These are some of the major ideas which make Tess such a rich novel. But there are many other ideas because Hardy had so lively a mind, such deep feelings, and so great an interest in life, that his books, as we have already seen, are a constant

commentary on life. Heredity became a serious study about the time he was writing Tess, and it is very much present in the story which begins, of course, with Jack Durbeyfield's learning about his ancestors, and which refers more than once to what Tess may have inherited from her aristocratic predecessors. We are also made aware of what Tess has inherited from her mother and father. It is worth looking in detail at this aspect of the novel, and others which would well repay study are superstition and the treatment of animals. Hardy leaves no doubt where he stands on the latter. In a post Darwinian world, he thinks of animals as being related to us, and man's inhumanity to animals he sees as only slightly less culpable than man's inhumanity to man. There is a peculiar poignancy, an ironic aptness, about Tess's putting the dying pheasants out of their agony by breaking their necks, and she is herself repeatedly compared to animals. About superstition, Hardy's attitude is more ambivalent. What are we to make of The Complete Fortune-Teller, of the legend of the d'Urberville coach, and the cock crowing in the afternoon? Does Hardy include them because of the colour they add to his story or because he knows that superstition plays some part in most people's lives and it is, therefore, a matter of concern? Hardy's novels always give one a great deal to think about, and that is one reason for their lasting appeal.

14.1 Themes and Symbols

Heredity

The first paragraph of the novel sets the place and time of the story, and, as so often in a Hardy novel, we are introduced to someone travelling along a road, a symbol of man as a wayfarer, of life as a journey. The theme of heredity is introduced and Jack Durbeyfield's casual, tipsy attitude to life tells us something about his character. Heredity became a serious study about the time he was writing Tess, and it is very much present in the story which begins, of course, with Jack Durbeyfield's learning about his ancestors, and which refers more than once to what Tess may have inherited from her aristocratic predecessors. We are also made aware of what Tess has inherited from her mother and father. It is worth looking in detail at this aspect of the novel, and others which would well repay study are superstition and the treatment of animals. Hardy leaves no doubt where he stands on the latter. In a post Darwinian world, he thinks of animals as being related to us, and man's inhumanity to animals he sees as only slightly less culpable than man's inhumanity to man. There is a peculiar poignancy, an ironic aptness, about Tess's putting the dying pheasants out of their agony by breaking their necks, and she is herself repeatedly compared to animals. About superstition, Hardy's attitude is more ambivalent. What are we to make of The Complete Fortune-Teller, of the legend of the d'Urberville coach, and the cock crowing in the afternoon? Does Hardy include them because of the color they add to his story or because he knows that superstition plays some part in most people's lives and it is, therefore, a matter of concern? Hardy's novels always give one a great deal to think about, and that is one reason for their lasting appeal.

Idealizations

Angel's rejection of Tess illustrates yet another of Hardy's recurring themes: the dangers of idealization, of living in a dream world. Love is for him a 'great thing', and nowhere in literature is love between man and woman more beautifully and powerfully described than in the Talbothays chapters of Tess. However, it is vital for happiness that one should love the person and not the idea. Angel thinks that he loves Tess but much of his love is linked to his idea of what Tess is. Almost his first thought about her is, 'What a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature that milkmaid is!', and he continually sees her as 'a visionary essence of woman', as the Greek goddess of chastity, and as being 'chaste as a vestal'. He is so obsessed by this physical idea of purity, possibly because of guilt feelings brought about by his own fall from sexual grace, that it is no wonder that he is able to say to the distressed Tess on their wedding night, 'the woman I have been loving is not you'. How right Tess is when she tells him, 'It is in your own mind what you are angry at, Angel; it is not in me'! It is a measure of Angel's conversion that he is able finally to accept her as a murderess when earlier in the book she had been rejected for "a small sexual indiscretion. Hardy uses him here to explore the idea that the nineteenth-century Church puts its emphasis far too much on the physical and far too little on loving-kindness, far too much on chastity, too little on charity. Religion has become a rigid orthodoxy, out of touch with reality, a situation nicely summed up in the description of Angel's brothers as being unable to see 'the difference between local truth and universal truth'. It will be seen that criticism of religious and social codes permeates the whole novel.

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14.2 Symbols

Tess as a Field Woman

Hardy's love for his creation, Tess, and his passionate concern for her are nowhere felt more strongly than in this richly textured chapter. It begins with the reaping of the corn in all the beauty of an autumn landscape, and ends with the reaping of Tess's aptly named illegitimate child, Sorrow. Tess becomes the symbolic field-woman and is identified with her natural surroundings. But all is not idyllic. The scarlet reaping machine is a sign of the progress which is to destroy the old farming ways, and the animals caught in the center of the field by the reaping are 'everyone put to death by the sticks and stones of the harvesters'. The work is hard and Tess's arm bleeds from the scarifying of the stubble, and we are moved by her strangely mixed feelings about her child. Her love for the baby and the desire that he should not be consigned to Hell because he has not been baptized wins our sympathy for her, and we share Hardy's contempt for a Church which has allowed its charity to be less important than its dogmatic tenets. The cross of two lathes and the marmalade jar provides that kind of realistic detail which Hardy uses so well, and they add to the pathos of a scene which increases our sympathy for the suffering woman.

Sun, Moon and the Willows

Hardy lets us experience Tess's emotions as the struggle between her love and her sense of guilt rends her. This anguish keeps the reader in suspense and builds up our sympathy for the suffering which is blighting what should be an idyllic romance. There is more passionate writing in the incident at cheese-making when Angel kisses the inside vein of Tess's soft arm and the blood is 'driven to her finger-ends'. Angel's persistence in wooing her in spite of her protestations is important in view of his later behavior, while her gradual acquiescence is seen by Hardy as the triumph of nature 'in revolt against her scrupulousness'. The reference to the sun (Angel?), the moon (chastity) and the willows (symbols of unhappy love), at the end of the chapter seem to presage coming events, and when we re-read the story we recognize a constant prefiguring of coming events in such remarks as Angel's, 'But you will make me happy!' and Tess's reply, 'Ah - you think so, but you don't know!'

Nature and the Plant of Mistletoe

Angel's irresponsible behavior in trying to shock Mercy Chant with his fiendishly heterodox views - Hardy necessarily fails to tell us what they were - and then his immoral proposal to Izz that she should accompany him to Brazil, are devices used by Hardy to show us other facets of his character. Hardy seems unable to forgive Angel for his treatment of Tess and goes to almost extreme measures to reveal what a psychological case he is. At this stage of the novel Angel is the embodiment of much that Hardy is out to reveal as hypocritical, stupid, cruel and prejudiced. Narrowminded bigotry can be felt in the exchange between Angel and Mercy Chant about Roman

Catholicism, and there is something ludicrous, almost laughable, in Mercy Chant's religious stance. A far more pagan culture is associated with the mistletoe, for it was a sacred plant to the Druids, a symbol of fertility, its berries being regarded as the semen of the gods. Hardy makes good use of this symbol when Angel finds that the berries of the mistletoe he had placed over the marriage-bed are now brown and wrinkled. The contrast between Mercy Chant and Izz Huett is seen not only in their names but in their characters. Mercy is almost too 'good' to be true: Izz almost too true to be good. She loves Angel and would 'live in sin with him' but she cannot, even to help herself, lie about Tess's love for him, and it is entirely appropriate that in a sentence that echoes one of the great passages of the Bible, she says of Tess that 'She would have laid down her life for 'ee.'

Honeymoon-House

If we see Tess as symbolic of deceived and abused women and we remember the many associations of Angel with: the sun it is completely appropriate that Tess should make her final appearance in the novel lying like a sacrifice on the altar-stone of an ancient religion which worshipped the sun. This may be regarded by some readers as too contrived, but for many Tess is such a real person and there is such authenticity in the description of the scene that it is a completely acceptable and brilliantly conceived conclusion to Tess's life. During her short but happy honeymoon she achieves a fulfilment so complete that she is loath to leave and there is significance in her final words 'This happiness could not have lasted. I am ready'. We are reminded of Hamlet's, 'The readiness is all', and made to consider the possibility that fulfilment can often only be achieved by suffering. Their honeymoon-house, so different from Wellbridge, becomes a symbol of 'affection, union, error forgiven' while 'outside was the inexorable '. Most of us have experienced at the end of some great happiness this feeling of life and time's inexorability. As they approach Stonehenge there is an emphasis on darkness and on 'black', a color which has been used for its metaphorical associations throughout the book. The night grows 'as dark as a cave', something makes 'the black sky blacker', the monoliths and trilithons are 'blackly defined' and the dark figures which converge upon Stonehenge and its sacrifice remind us of the darkness frequently associated with Alec, and of those 'shapes of darkness' she knew to be in the background even when she was at Talbothays (Chapter 31). Tess, with her care for ' Liza-Lu, her deep and spiritual love for Angel, and her brave and wise comments on her feelings and her situation, emerges in this remarkable chapter as one of the great tragic heroines of English literature.

Tess as a Symbol

Part of Hardy's object in writing the novel, as we have already said, was to expose how badly women could be treated sexually under a moral code which favored the male. To make his point as strongly as possible he creates Tess to be both individual and symbol. We see this first in Chapter 7 where Tess sets out to take up residence at The Slopes, and there are repeated indications that she is being sacrificed by her mother and father - her hair is washed, she is dressed in white, the family group is 'a picture of honest beauty flanked by innocence', and she is carried away to her fate by Alec. As a field-woman she is a 'portion of the field'. Fighting for her baby's salvation at the baptism, she is seen by her brothers and sisters as 'a being large, towering, and awful', while she is more than once compared to Eve, the mother of all women, and Angel sees her as 'a visionary essence of woman'. The result of this is that when Tess lies on the sacrificial stone at Stonehenge at the end of her painful pilgrimage through life most readers have no difficulty in accepting what might otherwise have seemed too contrived an incident. At this stage she becomes more symbol than individual and for this Hardy's careful planning has prepared us.

Tess so dominates the novel, which very properly is given her name as a title, that the other characters must seem minor by comparison. There is something of the cardboard villain about Alec with his swarthy complexion, black moustache with curled points and bold, rolling eye. And, of course, he smokes! He is continually associated with darkness and there are parallels drawn between him and the Devil. To that extent he is a symbol of evil, and Hardy who has made him so is not as successful in combining symbol and individual in Alec as he is in Tess. The Alec who seems to be so devoted to Tess that he is prepared to marry her, even if much of the attraction is physical, is a little difficult to reconcile with the demonic Alec who, complete with steel-pronged fork, digs by her in the allotment until his face is lit up by the fire.

Angel in Chapter 23 describes Tess as being 'like an undulating billow warmed by the sun', and so on. This symbolism works out neatly with the sacrifice of Tess at Stonehenge brought about by

Tess's worship of him and by Angel's rejection of her and his damaging remark about Alec, 'If he were dead, it might be different', but there seems no other obvious reason why he should be associated with the sun. Sadly, our final judgement on Angel must be that at the moment of crisis he failed to be true to his beliefs, and like Othello, threw away 'a pearl richer than all his tribe'. It is a successful piece of characterization made the more so by Hardy's obviously emotional involvement with the man who destroyed his beautiful Tess.

Finally, of course, there is the use of nature as the background to the story. Hardy makes us intimately acquainted with three areas of Wessex - the Vale of Blackmoor where Tess was born, the Valley of the Great Dairies where she falls in love with Angel, and Flintcornb-Ash where, rejected and oppressed, she falls again into the clutches of Alec. Each of these three areas is described in such detail that it adds greatly to the impact and richness of the novel. The tragedy of Tess is acted out against a living and detailed background - which at times becomes a foreground - of country life. Better than any history book Hardy 's novel describes what it was like to work as a binder of sheaves, as a milker, as a swede-grubber and slicer, as a reed-drawer, and at the threshing of the wheat. Here is country life as it really was lived at that particular moment of time. But the life of the country is threatened by the reaping machine and the threshing machine, and nature itself is on the defensive. One of the most striking images in the book occurs in Chapter 30 where Angel (the outsider) and Tess (the field-woman) take the milk to the station. 'Modern life,' we are told, 'stretched out its steam feeler to this point three or four times a day, touched the native existences, and quickly withdrew its feeler again.' And then we read 'The light of the engine flashed for a second upon Tess Durbeyfield's figure, motionless under the great holly tree.' It is a moment which symbolizes unforgettably the impact of the new on the old. It is as if Tess, symbol of an agricultural life which is already doomed by the Industrial Revolution, hangs from the tree as an indication that the way of life which she represents will soon be as dead as she herself will be eventually when she hangs from the gallows-tree.

14.3 Social, Economic and Political Background

When Tess was first published it had an immediate success and it has remained a 'best-seller' ever since. To enjoy such popularity with a wide audience requires one particular quality: it must have the ability to entertain. But that in itself would not have ensured its survival over a hundred years. Even if we read it primarily for the pleasure of reading, we cannot fail to be aware that Tess is a serious novel, that is to say, it is packed with ideas about life, and this is one of the elements of its greatness. Hardy wanted to write a novel which would entertain (in fact, he needed to do so if it was to sell well and earn him his living!), but because he was passionately interested in human relationships, he poured into his novels impressions of life as he saw it. Thus, he was conscious of the hypocrisy of those who had one moral standard for men and another for women, and this becomes an important aspect of Tess.

The England in which Hardy had grown up had been an England of rigid moral codes and very dogmatic ideas about the relationships between men and women. He found himself increasingly questioning the assumptions of the time and the attitudes of the Church which imposed them. In Tess there is little sympathy for Parson Tringham who - ironically and significantly - triggers off the whole unhappy story by his disclosure to 'Sir John ' of his ancestral heritage, and there is nothing but contempt for Angel's two insufferable brothers. There is also powerful criticism of the Vicar of Marlott who has 'the natural feelings of a tradesman at finding that a job he should have been called in for had been unskilfully botched by his customers'. What kind of religion is it, Hardy is asking, which would condemn to damnation a baby who had not been baptised or visit the sins of the father on the child? Hardy sees some good in the evangelical Parson Clare and his wife, but we may take it that he intends there to be something amusing and paradoxical in their deep interest in Tess as soon as they learn that she is a 'sinner ’.

For Hardy, Tess is not, of course, a sinner, and he nailed his colours to the mast when he decided to add to the title the challenging words 'A Pure Woman’. It is worthwhile thinking very deeply about this move of Hardy's. He was bitterly attacked for calling Tess 'pure’, and the Establishment of the l890s found Tess a very disturbing book. Purity meant chastity, and a woman must before all else be chaste. Virginity was all-important. Hardy, who had been brought up in the country and was so sensitively aware of the power of Nature, questioned this. He knew that among the workers in the fields there was not the same emphasis on virginity, and that what happened between Alec and Tess did not condemn her to be a perpetual moral outcast. Tess has 'been made to break an accepted social law, but no law known to an environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly'. Hardy seems to be saying, 'Why make the physical act itself a matter of such paramount importance?'

Tess's problem is that she stands between two cultures, that of her parents and her natural surroundings, and that which has resulted from her having 'passed the Sixth Standard in the National School'. This is to some extent Hardy's own problem because he himself is an educated man from a humble background and a country environment, and in his novels, he shows himself preoccupied by the difficulties confronting those who find themselves, like Tess, caught between two worlds, the old and the new. Hardy is aware of the 'ache of modernism' and his sympathies are with the old world, the world of his youth untouched by new ideas and new technology, the arguing of theologians and the mobility provided by trains and improved transport, but he knows, too, that progress brings its benefits, and he makes his ambivalent attitude on this issue very clear in his essay 'The Dorsetshire Labourer'.

Tess finds herself critical - although loyally supportive - of her family and yet her background makes her not easily acceptable to Angel's middleclass family. She is, therefore, doubly a figure in transition - she is caught between two classes and between two moral codes. Her plight is brought home to us by the fact that she has no permanent home throughout most of the novel. She seems to be continually travelling, forever setting out on the road to somewhere or other, and her unsettledness of mind is reflected in her constant movement from one place to another. And, of course, she is unlucky in that her travels bring her into contact with two men who represent two powerful forces which between them will destroy her.

Alec can be seen as representative of the cruelty of lust, Angel of the fragility of love. Even if Hardy seems to be saying that there is nothing naturally sinful in the sexual act or sacred in virginity, not for a moment does he condone Alec's treatment of Tess. He is a bully who uses his money and his position to master and exploit women. He takes advantage of Tess's innocence and vulnerability, and such a relationship is seen by Hardy as wholly deplorable. The blame is put by him on the exploiter and not the exploited, and it is in this that he throws a challenge down to Victorian society with its 'fallen women' and its belief that all such women must be impure and should be unhappy. Their illegitimate offspring, it was tacitly accepted, should be labelled bastards and ought to die at birth or soon after. Hardy follows the conventional pattern in making his heroine unhappy, letting her baby die, and bringing her to a tragic end, but he will not have it that her experience with Alec must coarsen her and make her 'impure'.

Her unhappiness is partly the result, as we have already said, of her education which has developed her sense of sin and guilt, but it is far more the result of failures in Angel, the man who claims to love her. He is a far more complex figure than "Alec. Where Alec is a pseudo-gentleman and a pseudo-d'Urberville, Angel is a pseudo-liberal and a pseudo - angel. With his interest in 'intellectual liberty' and his condemnation of 'an untenable redemptive theolatry' he seems a man of the broadest outlook who would be able to love Tess for what she is, the kind of man who might well ask, 'Who was the moral man? Still more pertinently, who was the moral woman?' But on his wedding night he shows himself to be narrow-minded and as bound by Victorian orthodox morality as the most puritanical bigot, a fault made worse by his own confession to Tess of a previous sexual misdemeanour, and his unquestioning acceptance of a double standard of behaviour. Hardy savagely enjoys himself exposing Angel's weaknesses, which he sees as those of a cruel and insensitive society. That such a potential for happiness and fulfilment should be destroyed by Angel indicates what is wrong with society: the word has become more important than the spirit.

Summary

- Hardy wanted to write a novel which would entertain (in fact, he needed to do so if it was to sell well and earn him his living!), but because he was passionately interested in human relationships, he poured into his novels impressions of life as he saw it. Thus, he was conscious of the hypocrisy of those who had one moral standard for men and another for women, and this becomes an important aspect of Tess.
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- Hardy savagely enjoys himself exposing Angel's weaknesses, which he sees as those of a cruel and insensitive society. That such a potential for happiness and fulfilment should be destroyed by Angel indicates what is wrong with society: the word has become more important than the spirit.
- Angel's rejection of Tess illustrates yet another of Hardy's recurring themes: the dangers of idealization, of living in a dream world.
- Love is for him a 'great thing', and nowhere in literature is love between man and woman more beautifully and powerfully described than in the Talbothays chapters of Tess. However, it is vital for happiness that one should love the person and not the idea.
- Angel thinks that he loves Tess but much of his love is linked to his idea of what Tess is. Almost his first thought about her is, 'What a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature that milkmaid is!', and he continually sees her as 'a visionary essence of woman', as the Greek goddess of chastity, and as being 'chaste as a vestal'.
- He is so obsessed by this physical idea of purity, possibly because of guilt feelings brought about by his own fall from sexual grace, that it is no wonder that he is able to say to the distressed Tess on their wedding night, 'the woman I have been loving is not you'.
- How right Tess is when she tells him, 'It is in your own mind what you are angry at, Angel; it is not in me'! It is a measure of Angel's conversion that he is able finally to accept her as a murderess when earlier in the book she had been rejected for "a small sexual indiscretion.

- Hardy uses him here to explore the idea that the nineteenth-century Church puts its emphasis far too much on the physical and far too little on loving-kindness, far too much on chastity, too little on charity.
- Religion has become a rigid orthodoxy, out of touch with reality, a situation nicely summed up in the description of Angel's brothers as being unable to see 'the difference between local truth and universal truth'. It will be seen that criticism of religious and social codes permeates the whole novel.
- Tess finds herself in conflict with these codes and through her Hardy explores yet another area of life which fascinates him - the relationship between character and fate. It is often said that Tess is doomed from the beginning of the novel, and it is certainly true that there is a feeling of tragic inevitability. However, it is indisputable that Tess's character affects the action of the story.
- Her terrible sense of guilt, her dithering about telling Angel of her past, her pride which makes her leave Emminster without seeing her mother and father-in-law, all these play their part in her tragedy.
- What each reader must consider is the extent to which Tess's character is her fate. Does she have to behave as she does? Where she has a choice does she have to make the one she does? Of course, chance plays a part, and it is a common criticism of Hardy's novels that chance plays too big a part.
- The example often quoted from Tess is that of the confessional letter written by Tess to Angel going under the carpet. But he might have argued that this kind of bad luck does happen in life, and he does remark on 'that reckless acquiescence in chance too apparent in the whole d'Urberville family'.
- When Tess discovers that Angel has not read her letter, she could still have handed it to him before the wedding. Isn't life, he might have said, a mixture of character and chance and haven't I got the mixture just about right in Tess? What do you think?
- These are some of the major ideas which make Tess such a rich novel. But there are many other ideas because Hardy had so lively a mind, such deep feelings, and so great an interest in life, that his books, as we have already seen, are a constant commentary on life.
- Heredity became a serious study about the time he was writing Tess, and it is very much present in the story which begins, of course, with Jack Durbeyfield's learning about his ancestors, and which refers more than once to what Tess may have inherited from her aristocratic predecessors. We are also made aware of what Tess has inherited from her mother and father. It is worth looking in detail at this aspect of the novel, and others which would well repay study are superstition and the treatment of animals. Hardy leaves no doubt where he stands on the latter.
- In a post Darwinian world, he thinks of animals as being related to us, and man's inhumanity to animals he sees as only slightly less culpable than man's inhumanity to man. There is a peculiar poignancy, an ironic aptness, about Tess's putting the dying pheasants out of their agony by breaking their necks, and she is herself repeatedly compared to animals. About superstition, Hardy's attitude is more ambivalent.
- What are we to make of The Complete Fortune-Teller, of the legend of the d'Urberville coach, and the cock crowing in the afternoon? Does Hardy include them because of the color they add to his story or because he knows that superstition plays some part in most people's lives and it is, therefore, a matter of concern? Hardy's novels always give one a great deal to think about, and that is one reason for their lasting appeal.

Keywords

Nature, Gender, Love, Heredity, Idealisation, History, Countryside, Dream World, Victorian, Innocence

Self Assessment

1. The action of the novel takes place in?

A. Essex

B Sussex

C Wessex

D London

2. What is the primary reason why the Durbeyfield's send Tess to Trantridge Cross?

A. So That She May Not Shame The Family With Her Illegitimate Child

B. So That She May Claim Kinship With The D'urbervilles

C. So That She May Eventually Marry A Nobleman

D. So That She May Find Employment With Mrs. Stoke-D'urberville.

3. Which of the Durbeyfields finally claims the family from Rolliver's?

A. Joan

B. Tess

C. John

D. Abraham

4. Which novel by Thomas Hardy had the subtitle "A Pure Woman" which shocked Victorian readers?

A. the obscure

B. the well – beloved

C. a pair of blue eyes

D. Tess of the d'Urbervilles

5. At what location does Alec seduce Tess?

A. Chasebourough

B. Marlott

C. Trantridge Cross

D. The Chase

6According to Joan Durbeyfield, what is the 'trump card' that Tess has?

A. Her Innocence

B. The D'urberville Name

C. Her Face

D. Her Education

7. Which of the following is not a possible reason why Tess is seduced by Alec?
A. She Believes That To Resist Him Proves That She Is Ungrateful And Unkind.
B. She Believes That She Loves Him.
C. She Is Momentarily Attracted To Him.
D. She Is Too Tired To Resist His Advances.

8. What is inscribed above the entrance of Wuthering Heights?

A. Hindley Earnshaw 1729

B. 1623

C. abandon all hope, ye who enter here

D. Hareton Earnshaw 1500

9. Which of the following is not significant about the death of the Durbeyfield's horse?
A. Although The Death Of Prince Is An Accident, Tess Feels That She Is To Blame.
B. The Death Of The Horse Makes Tess Feel Guilty, Causing Her To Agree To Her Father's Plan To Claim Kinship.
C. Tess Bears Responsibility For The Death Of The Horse, But The Tragedy Occurs Because Of Her Family's Irresponsibility And Not Her Own.
D. The Death Of The Horse Foreshadows Later Deaths Caused During Carriage Rides.
10. Why doesn't Bingley visit Jane while she is in London?
A. He Doesn't Know That She's There.
B. Lady Catherine Forbids Him From Going.
C. Darcy Advises Him Against It.
D. He Thinks That Jane Does Not Like Him.

11. What is the name of the estate that Bingley rents?
A. Longbourne
B. Rosings
C. Netherfield
D. Fox Hall

12. Why does Elizabeth reject Darcy's initial proposal?

A. It Was Customary For Women At That Time To Reject The First Proposal.
B. She Does Not Like Him.
C. He Is Too Poor
D. She Is In Love With Someone Else.

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14. What kind of countryside surrounds Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange

A. moorland

B. savannah

C. forest

D. grassy plains

15. Which novel by Thomas Hardy had the subtitle "A Pure Woman" which shocked Victorian readers?

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Answer for Self-Assessment

1.	C	2.	B	3.	B	4.	D	5.	A
6.	B	7.	D	8.	D	9.	A	10.	A
11.	B	12.	A	13.	C	14.	D	15.	A

Review Questions

1. What is British Literature?
2. What is the importance and need of writing skills?
3. What is the contribution of British Fiction writers?
4. What are major complexities in academic writing?
5. How one can overcome writing difficulties?
6. What is British Fiction?
7. What do you understand by contemporary novel?
8. What is the first reaction of students towards any writing task?
9. How do readers react towards any writing task?
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Further Reading

1. A Course in Academic Writing by Renu Gupta, Orient Blackswan Pvt. Ltd.
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Address: N.H.-9, Delhi Road, Moradabad - 244001, Uttar Pradesh

Admission Helpline No. : 1800-270-1490

Contact No. :+ 91 9520 942111

Email : university@tmu.ac.in