Jane Austen was born in Steventon, England, in 1775, where she lived for the first twenty-five years of her life. Her father, George Austen, was the rector of the local parish and taught her largely at home. She began to write while in her teens and completed the original manuscript of Pride and Prejudice, titled First Impressions, between 1796 and 1797. A publisher rejected the manuscript, and it was not until 1809 that Austen began the revisions that would bring it to its final form. Pride and Prejudice was published in January 1813, two years after Sense and Sensibility, her first novel, and it achieved a popularity that has endured to this day. Austen published four more novels: Mansfield Park, Emma, Northanger Abbey, and Persuasion. The last two were published in 1818, a year after her death.

During Austen’s life, however, only her immediate family knew of her authorship of these novels. At one point, she wrote behind a door that creaked when visitors approached; this warning allowed her to hide manuscripts before anyone could enter. Though publishing anonymously prevented her from acquiring an authorial reputation, it also enabled her to preserve her privacy at a time when English society associated a female’s entrance into the public sphere with a reprehensible loss of femininity. Additionally, Austen may have sought anonymity because of the more general atmosphere of repression pervading her era. As the Napoleonic Wars (1800–1815) threatened the safety of monarchies throughout Europe, government censorship of literature proliferated.

The social milieu of Austen’s Regency England was particularly stratified, and class divisions were rooted in family connections and wealth. In her work, Austen is often critical of the assumptions and prejudices of upper-class England. She distinguishes between internal merit (goodness of person) and external merit (rank and possessions). Though she frequently satirizes snobs, she also pokes fun at the poor breeding and misbehavior of those lower on the social scale. Nevertheless, Austen was in many ways a realist, and the England she depicts is one in which social mobility is limited and class-consciousness is strong.

Socially regimented ideas of appropriate behavior for each gender factored into Austen’s work as well. While social advancement for young men lay in the military, church, or law, the chief method of self-improvement for women was the acquisition of wealth. Women could only accomplish this goal through successful marriage, which explains the ubiquity of matrimony as a goal and topic of conversation in Austen’s writing. Though young women of Austen’s day had more freedom to choose their husbands than in the early eighteenth century, practical considerations continued to limit their options.

Even so, critics often accuse Austen of portraying a limited world. As a clergyman’s daughter, Austen would have done parish work and was certainly aware of the poor around her. However, she wrote about her own world, not theirs. The critiques she
makes of class structure seem to include only the middle class and upper class; the lower classes, if they appear at all, are generally servants who seem perfectly pleased with their lot. This lack of interest in the lives of the poor may be a failure on Austen's part, but it should be understood as a failure shared by almost all of English society at the time.

In general, Austen occupies a curious position between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Her favorite writer, whom she often quotes in her novels, was Dr. Samuel Johnson, the great model of eighteenth-century classicism and reason. Her plots, which often feature characters forging their respective ways through an established and rigid social hierarchy, bear similarities to such works of Johnson's contemporaries as Pamela, written by Samuel Richardson. Austen's novels also display an ambiguity about emotion and an appreciation for intelligence and natural beauty that aligns them with Romanticism. In their awareness of the conditions of modernity and city life and the consequences for family structure and individual characters, they prefigure much Victorian literature (as does her usage of such elements as frequent formal social gatherings, sketchy characters, and scandal).

Jane Austen's life resembles her novels — at first glance they seem to be composed of a series of quiet, unexceptional events. Such an impression is supported by the comment of her brother, Henry, who wrote after her death that her life was "not by any means a life of event." Similarly, her nephew James added in a biography published fifty years later that "Of events her life was singularly barren: few changes and no great crisis ever broke the smooth current of its course." However, just as readers find that the complexity of Austen's novel lies in its characters and style, those studying Austen herself discover that the events of her life are secondary to her compelling personality, quick wit, and highly-developed powers of observation. The fact that Austen's life lacked the drama that other authors may have experienced in no way detracted from her skill as a writer. In actuality, Austen's lack of "extraordinary" experiences, as well as of a spouse and children, probably made her writing possible by freeing her time to work on her books. Additionally, because her books were published anonymously, Austen never achieved personal recognition for her works outside of her sphere of family and friends. Such anonymity suited her, for, as literary critic Richard Blythe notes, "Literature, not the literary life, was always her intention."

**Historical Context for Pride and Prejudice**

**Late Eighteenth-Century Britain and the Regency Period: -** Jane Austen's brief life and writing career overlapped with one of the most transformative eras in British history, marked by revolution abroad and unrest at home. The signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the year after Austen's birth, signaled the start of the American Revolution, followed in the next decade by the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789. For the next two decades, Britain was engaged almost without cease in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars of 1793–1815, one of the most significant conflicts in British history. Among the effects of England's foreign wars during this period were great financial instability and monetary volatility. The precariousness of the late eighteenth-century was followed in the 1810s and 1820s by what is known as the Regency period. The Regency officially began in 1811, when King George III went permanently insane and his son George, Prince of Wales, was sanctioned to rule England in his place as
Regent. The political Regency lasted until 1820, when George IV was crowned. However, the Regency period has also come to refer more generally to the early decades of the nineteenth century before the start of Victoria’s reign in 1837, during which the Prince Regent provided a great deal of support for the development of the arts and sciences that flourished during this period. Austen would have witnessed, moreover, the beginning of industrialization in England, though the growth of the factory system would not reach its peak until the middle of the nineteenth century. Outside of the genteel world we see in Pride and Prejudice, a third of the country’s population lived on the verge of starvation, spurring food riots across the countryside. This unrest was compounded by Luddite protestors who attacked new industrial machinery (a practice called "machine breaking") in demonstrations that were a precursor to labor strikes. As these demonstrations spread fear of a revolution in England, the government responded with repressive measures that sharply curtailed freedom of speech.

War with France: - Stretching over twenty-two years, Britain’s war with France affected every level of British society. While an estimated quarter of a million men were serving in the regular army, a militia of officers and volunteers in the southeast coast of England (the region where Austen was from) mobilized for what was thought to be an impending invasion by Napoleon. Austen had a close connection to the militia, as her brother Henry joined the Oxfordshire militia in 1793. Though the rural countryside in which Austen’s novels are set seems at a far remove from the tumultuousness of the period, the world of Pride and Prejudice bears the traces of turmoil abroad. As Gillian Russell writes, “The hum of wartime, if not the blast or cry of battle, pervades [Austen’s] fiction.”[1] The presence of the troops at Brighton and militia officers like Wickham reflect wider concerns about the place of the military in English civil society.

The Landed Gentry: - The novel is also embedded within a set of domestic concerns over property, money and status that highlight the changing social landscape of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century England. Austen’s novels portray the gentry, a broad social class that includes those who owned land (the country or landed gentry) as well as the professional classes (lawyers, doctors and clergy) who did not. Though industrialization and urbanization had begun to take hold at the end of the eighteenth century, the most influential sector of society in Austen’s time was the landed gentry. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ownership of English land was concentrated in the hands of the relatively small landed classes, who retained their hold over the land through a system that encouraged the consolidation and extension of estates by enforcing strict inheritance laws. Entails of the kind referred to in the novel were established during this period in order to concentrate wealth and enlarge estates by funneling property to male children or male relatives rather than breaking it up and distributing it amongst family members. Thus, Mr. Bennett’s land is left not to his daughters but to a (male) member of his extended family, Mr. Collins, ensuring that the property stays in the family line, while disinheriting Elizabeth and her sisters. Large country estates, of the kind Darcy and Mr. Bingley own, served as a symbol of the wealth and power of the landed gentry.

Marriage and Gender Roles: - As we see in the novel, questions of land ownership and inheritance are closely interlinked with courtship and marriage. In the late eighteenth century, English conceptions of family and the role of women began to change, as British culture became increasingly focused on the accumulation and concentration of wealth within the family. One way for families to rapidly accumulate
capital was through advantageous marriages. As a result, the position of daughters within the family changed, as they became the means through which a family could attain greater wealth. Familial aspirations, coupled with women’s increased dependence on marriage for financial survival, made courtship a central focus of women’s lives.

At the same time, the late eighteenth century also witnessed a transformation in the conception of women’s rights following the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft’s Vindication of the Rights of Woman in 1792. In the Vindication, Wollstonecraft argues, in the language of Enlightenment thinkers like John Locke, that women should be treated as the rational equals of men. Elizabeth Bennett serves as a paradigmatic example of the conflicting transformations in women’s roles that occurred in the late eighteenth century. Disinherited of her father’s property, Elizabeth is not financially independent, and in fact depends upon an advantageous marriage for her future survival. Yet throughout the novel, she asserts an intellectual and moral independence that reflects a Wollstoncraftian conception of gender politics.

Print Culture and the Novel in Austen’s Time: - One particularly significant change that occurred during Austen’s lifetime was the expansion of literacy and print culture in England. By 1800, almost everyone in the middle classes and above could read, and literacy rates for the rest of the population rose steadily thereafter. At the same time, from 1780 onwards there was a fairly steady rise in the number of new novels being published, so that by the end of Austen’s life, the novel was the dominant form of literature in England. In part, the rise of the novel was spurred on by new forms of printing and marketing, which made books less expensive and expanded their readership. Smaller format books—octavos and duodecimos, as opposed to quartos—were more portable, and therefore easier to consume. Similarly, novels became more readily accessible through the expansion of various modes of access, including circulating and subscription libraries as well as periodicals, which made literature affordable in a time when books were often prohibitively expensive. Nevertheless, novels of the kind Austen published would have been an unaffordable luxury for a great deal of the population. This was particularly true in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, when “taxes on knowledge” raised prices on paper, newspapers, advertisements, and other texts. These taxes were in fact at their height during Austen’s career. This was in part because of a desire to limit access to information for the lower classes in response to revolution in France and upheaval at home. Though the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries marked an explosion in novel reading and the production of the novels themselves, the widely affordable novel would not become ubiquitous until the middle of the nineteenth century.

The realist novel, defined by its putatively objective narrator, psychologically developed characters, and minute description of the realities of domestic life, was in part inaugurated by Austen in Pride and Prejudice, and would come to dominate the literary scene in England throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. The rise of the novel has historically been linked to the rise of the middle class in England from the eighteenth century onwards, because this expanding social class (and middle class women in particular) had both the income and the leisure time available to consume them. Her novels were widely read throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries but they were largely considered unserious, frivolous, and even irrelevant—a merely “popular” genre.
Pride and Prejudice : Plot Overview

The news that a wealthy young gentleman named Charles Bingley has rented the manor of Netherfield Park causes a great stir in the nearby village of Longbourn, especially in the Bennet household. The Bennets have five unmarried daughters—from oldest to youngest, Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty, and Lydia—and Mrs. Bennet is desperate to see them all married. After Mr. Bennet pays a social visit to Mr. Bingley, the Bennets attend a ball at which Mr. Bingley is present. He is taken with Jane and spends much of the evening dancing with her. His close friend, Mr. Darcy, is less pleased with the evening and haughtily refuses to dance with Elizabeth, which makes everyone view him as arrogant and obnoxious.

At social functions over subsequent weeks, however, Mr. Darcy finds himself increasingly attracted to Elizabeth’s charm and intelligence. Jane’s friendship with Mr. Bingley also continues to burgeon, and Jane pays a visit to the Bingley mansion. On her journey to the house she is caught in a downpour and catches ill, forcing her to stay at Netherfield for several days. In order to tend to Jane, Elizabeth hikes through muddy fields and arrives with a spattered dress, much to the disdain of the snobbish Miss Bingley, Charles Bingley’s sister. Miss Bingley’s spite only increases when she notices that Darcy, whom she is pursuing, pays quite a bit of attention to Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth and Jane return home, they find Mr. Collins visiting their household. Mr. Collins is a young clergyman who stands to inherit Mr. Bennet’s property, which has been “entailed,” meaning that it can only be passed down to male heirs. Mr. Collins is a pompous fool, though he is quite enthralled by the Bennet girls. Shortly after his arrival, he makes a proposal of marriage to Elizabeth. She turns him down, wounding his pride. Meanwhile, the Bennet girls have become friendly with militia officers stationed in a nearby town. Among them is Wickham, a handsome young soldier who is friendly toward Elizabeth and tells her how Darcy cruelly cheated him out of an inheritance.

At the beginning of winter, the Bingleys and Darcy leave Netherfield and return to London, much to Jane’s dismay. A further shock arrives with the news that Mr. Collins has become engaged to Charlotte Lucas, Elizabeth’s best friend and the poor daughter of a local knight. Charlotte explains to Elizabeth that she is getting older and needs the match for financial reasons. Charlotte and Mr. Collins get married and Elizabeth promises to visit them at their new home. As winter progresses, Jane visits the city to see friends (hoping also that she might see Mr. Bingley). However, Miss Bingley visits her and behaves rudely, while Mr. Bingley fails to visit her at all. The marriage prospects for the Bennet girls appear bleak.

That spring, Elizabeth visits Charlotte, who now lives near the home of Mr. Collins’s patron, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who is also Darcy’s aunt. Darcy calls on Lady Catherine and encounters Elizabeth, whose presence leads him to make a number of visits to the Collins’s home, where she is staying. One day, he makes a shocking proposal of marriage, which Elizabeth quickly refuses. She tells Darcy that she considers him arrogant and unpleasant, then scolds him for steering Bingley away from Jane and disinheriting Wickham. Darcy leaves her but shortly thereafter delivers a letter to her. In this letter, he admits that he urged Bingley to distance himself from Jane, but claims he did so only because he thought their romance was not serious. As for Wickham, he
This letter causes Elizabeth to reevaluate her feelings about Darcy. She returns home and acts coldly toward Wickham. The militia is leaving town, which makes the younger, rather man-crazy Bennet girls distraught. Lydia manages to obtain permission from her father to spend the summer with an old colonel in Brighton, where Wickham’s regiment will be stationed. With the arrival of June, Elizabeth goes on another journey, this time with the Gardiners, who are relatives of the Bennets. The trip takes her to the North and eventually to the neighborhood of Pemberley, Darcy’s estate. She visits Pemberley, after making sure that Darcy is away, and delights in the building and grounds, while hearing from Darcy’s servants that he is a wonderful, generous master. Suddenly, Darcy arrives and behaves cordially toward her. Making no mention of his proposal, he entertains the Gardiners and invites Elizabeth to meet his sister.

Shortly thereafter, however, a letter arrives from home, telling Elizabeth that Lydia has eloped with Wickham and that the couple is nowhere to be found, which suggests that they may be living together out of wedlock. Fearful of the disgrace such a situation would bring on her entire family, Elizabeth hastens home. Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Bennet go off to search for Lydia, but Mr. Bennet eventually returns home empty-handed. Just when all hope seems lost, a letter comes from Mr. Gardiner saying that the couple has been found and that Wickham has agreed to marry Lydia in exchange for an annual income. The Bennets are convinced that Mr. Gardiner has paid off Wickham, but Elizabeth learns that the source of the money, and of her family’s salvation, was none other than Darcy.

Now married, Wickham and Lydia return to Longbourn briefly, where Mr. Bennet treats them coldly. They then depart for Wickham’s new assignment in the North of England. Shortly thereafter, Bingley returns to Netherfield and resumes his courtship of Jane. Darcy goes to stay with him and pays visits to the Bennets but makes no mention of his desire to marry Elizabeth. Bingley, on the other hand, presses his suit and proposes to Jane, to the delight of everyone but Bingley’s haughty sister. While the family celebrates, Lady Catherine de Bourgh pays a visit to Longbourn. She corners Elizabeth and says that she has heard that Darcy, her nephew, is planning to marry her. Since she considers a Bennet an unsuitable match for a Darcy, Lady Catherine demands that Elizabeth promise to refuse him. Elizabeth spiritedly refuses, saying she is not engaged to Darcy, but she will not promise anything against her own happiness. A little later, Elizabeth and Darcy go out walking together and he tells her that his feelings have not altered since the spring. She tenderly accepts his proposal, and both Jane and Elizabeth are married.

**Critical Analysis of Pride and Prejudice**

Pride and Prejudice published in 1830 had originally been titled “First Impressions”. The original title seems apt enough as the whole novel deals with the unreliability of first impressions. The new title however, focuses attention on the main theme of the novel which traces how ‘pride’ and ‘prejudice’ as two human traits guide relationships and this is brought out with respect to the relationship between two central figures of the novel – Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet. It is believed that these two characters are studies in pride and prejudice respectively. On a superficial level this view holds true but it would
certainly be over-simplifying matters to say that this alone brings out the full significance of the title.

Pride certainly is the pre-dominant characteristic of Mr. Darcy. On his very first appearance he makes himself highly unpopular, for he is discovered to be excruciatingly arrogant and above being pleased. His pride that stems of out of his superiority of intellect, his noble ancestry and enormous wealth prejudices him strongly against Elizabeth’s family and her low connections. Darcy’s is actually a social prejudice – a variant of the conventional snobbery of the aristocratic class. Although “he had never been bewitched by any woman as he was by her”, Darcy feels it beneath his dignity to admit to his love for her. Even when he can repress his feelings no longer and does propose to Elizabeth ‘he was not more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than on pride.” In fact his customary arrogance deepens into what amounts to insolence during the proposal in which he explains to her the various family obstacles he has had to overcome and the degradation this marriage will be for him. He is considerably humbled when he is rejected without ceremony and Elizabeth’s words “had you behaved in a more gentlemanlike manner” and her criticism of his conceit and ‘selfish disdain of the feelings of others’ affect him deeply. Elizabeth’s refusal initiates a process of introspection and self-criticism and he emerges as a man whose pride has been humbled. This is revealed in the way he welcomes the Gardiners at his estate and also by his long explanatory speech to Elizabeth towards the end of the novel. The greatest proof of this development is in his remaining firm in his choice of Elizabeth even after Lydia’s and Wickham’s dishonorable elopement which draws from Elizabeth the acknowledgement – “indeed he has no improper pride. He is perfectly amiable.”

In Elizabeth, the intelligent and self-assured young woman too we see the same interesting compound of Pride and Prejudice. Her initial prejudice against Darcy arises from injured pride. At the assembly she over-hears Darcy’s remark about herself: “she is tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt me”. From that evening Eliza is left with no cordial feelings towards Darcy. On the other hand Elizabeth is prejudiced in favor of Wickham, charmed by his fine countenance, pleasing addresses and his flattering attentions and when he provides slanderous information against Darcy, the possibility of doubting Wickham does not occur to Elizabeth and her prejudice against Darcy takes the shape of moral indignation. It is only when she reads Darcy’s letter that her eyes are opened to the true character of both. In fact, Darcy’s letter induces in Elizabeth the same self-criticism that Darcy too undergoes. She begins reading it “with a strong prejudice against everything” that he might have to say” but on reflection she realizes how blind, partial, prejudiced and absurd she had been. She was flattered and pleased by his attentions to her and her uncle and aunt at Pemberley and when she learns Darcy’s role in buying Lydia a marriage to Wickham she greaves over every ‘ungracious sensation that she has ever encouraged’ towards him. For herself ‘she was humbled, but she was proud of him’.

The traits of Pride and Prejudice do not dominate merely the main figures and the significance of this title is worked out perfectly through the minor characters as well. Pride in some of the minor characters takes the form of pompous and comic self-importance in Mr. Collins. Social prejudice finds embodiment in Bingley’s sisters, Lady Catherine and her daughter and renders them quite contemptible. Thus we see that the appropriateness of the title of Pride and Prejudice is indeed unquestionable and it bears
immense significance to the plot, thematic concerns and the characterization in the novel.

"Love & Marriage" in "Pride & Prejudice"

"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife." Jane Austen stated the main subject of the novel is stated in the first sentence. In this statement, Jane has cleverly done three things: she has declared that the main subject of the novel will be courtship and marriage; she has established the humorous tone of the novel by taking a simple subject to elaborate and to speak intelligently of, and she has prepared the reader for a chase in the novel of either a husband in reach of a wife, or a woman in pursuit of a husband. All the five marriages in the novel contrast each other to reveal Jane's opinions and thoughts on the subject of marriage.

The marriage between Darcy and Elizabeth reveals the characteristics, which constitutes a successful marriage. One of these characteristics is that the feeling cannot be brought on by appearances, and must gradually develop between the two people as they get to know one another. In the beginning Elizabeth and Darcy were distant from each other because of their prejudice. The series of events, which they both experienced, gave them the opportunity to understand one another and the time to reconcile their feelings for each other. Thus, their mutual understanding is the foundation of their relationship and will lead them to a peaceful and lasting marriage. This relationship between Elizabeth and Darcy reveals the importance of getting to know one's partner before marrying. At the end, Elizabeth feels the pure sincerity of Darcy.

"She began now to comprehend that he was exactly the man, who in disposition and talents would most suit to her". So, Elizabeth and Darcy's marriage is marriage of dissimilarity and long understanding and we know that long understanding always helps in judging positive and negative points of each other. In this way their marriage is a successful marriage.

The marriage between Jane and Bingley is also an example of successful marriage. Jane Austen, through Elizabeth, expresses her opinion of this in the novel "really, believed all his (Bingley) expectations of felicity, to be rationally founded, because they had for basis the excellent understanding, and super excellent disposition of Jane, and a general similarity of feeling and taste between her and himself."

However, unlike Darcy and Elizabeth, there is a plan in their relationships. The flow in that both characters are too gullible and too good-hearted to ever act strongly against external forces that may attempt to separate them.

Mr. Bennet says: "You (Jane and Bingley) are each of you so complying, that nothing will ever be resolved on; so easy, that every servant will cheat you; and so generous, that you will always exceed your income." So, their marriage is in between success and failure.
Obviously, Lydia and Wickham’s marriage is an example of bad marriage. Their marriage was based on appearances, good looks, and sensual or sexual pleasures and youthful vivacity. Once each other can no longer see these qualities, the once strong relationship will solemnly fade away. As in the novel, Lydia and Wickham’s marriage gradually disintegrates. Lydia becomes a regular visitor at her two elder sisters’ home and "her husband was gone to enjoy himself in London or Bath." Through their relationship Jane Austen shows that hasty marriage based on superficial qualities quickly looks and leads to unhappiness.

Marriage of Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Bennet was similar to that of Lydia and Wickham. Mr. Bennet had married a woman he found sexually attractive without realizing she was an unintelligent woman. Mrs. Bennet's favouritism towards Lydia and her comments on how she was once as energetic as Lydia reveals this similarity. Mr. Bennet's comment on Wickham being his favourite son-in-law reinforces this parallelism. The effect of the relationships was that Mr. Bennet would isolate himself from his family, he found refuge in his library or in mocking his wife. Mr. Bennet's self-realization at the end of the novel in which he discovers that his lack of attention towards his family had lead his family to develop the way they are, was too late to save his family. He is Jane Austen's example of a weak father. Austen says about Mrs. Bennet: "she was a woman of mean understanding, little information and uncertain temperament, the business of her life was to get her daughters marry. Therefore, her solace was visiting and views."

About their marriage: "Her father captivating by youth and beauty and that appearance of good humour, with youth and beauty generally gave, had married a woman whose weak understanding and illiberal mind had very early in their marriage put an end to all real affection for her. Respect, esteem and confidence had vanished forever and all his veins of domestic happiness were over thrown."

In these two later relationships, Austen shows that it is necessary to use good judgment to select a spouse; otherwise the two people will lose respect for each other.

The last example of a marriage is of a different nature them the ones mentioned above. The marriage between Mr. Collins and Charlotte is based on economics rather than on love or appearance. It was a common practice during Austen's time for women to marry a husband to save her from spinsterhood or to gain financial security. However, Jane Austen dramatizes this form of women inequality and shows that women who submits them to this type of marriage will have to suffer in tormenting silence as Charlotte does.

"When Mr. Collins said anything of which his wife might reasonably be ashamed, which certainly was not unseldom, she (Elizabeth) would involuntarily turned her eye on Charlotte. Once or twice she could discern a faint blush; but in general Charlotte wisely did not hear."

In Pride and Prejudice Jane has denounced the elements of Marriage and society that she found distasteful. These five marriages contribute that a happy and strong marriage takes time to build and must be based on mutual feeling, understanding, and respect. Hasty marriages acting on impulse and based on
superficial qualities will not survive and will lead to inevitable unhappiness. In this novel, "Love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage."

**Pride and Prejudice: Title**

The title Pride and prejudice better suits the book because the two protagonists of the novel are affected by these qualities. Elizabeth Bennet, the main female protagonist, judges her acquaintances based upon selective information, and she is proud when these judgments are correct. Fitzwilliam Darcy, the main male protagonist, is disliked because of his proud behavior. As the novel progresses the love between these two characters becomes what cures them of these bad habits. Pride and Prejudice is the most suitable title for this novel because it directly relates to the relationship between the two most important characters, whereas First Impressions only connects to Elizabeth’s prejudiced attitude towards others.

Pride is the major fault of Mr. Darcy’s character, and it is this pride that initiates Elizabeth’s prejudice towards him. At the ball in the opening scene of the novel Darcy establishes his character with this rude comment, “She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me” (Austen 13). This is Mr. Darcy’s first interaction with Elizabeth, and it establishes his pride. He dances very little at the ball, and this offends most of the people attending it. This instance is what makes Elizabeth then think of Darcy as “the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world”.

Elizabeth’s prejudice develops further as the novel progresses. She selectively chooses to believe only the information that supports her initial judgments. When Elizabeth first meets Mr. Wickham, she is attracted to his handsome features and agreeable attitude. She becomes inclined to believe his story about Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth searches for negative information on Mr. Darcy, and she is pleased whenever she acquires any. When Mr. Wickham tells his false tale that ruins Mr. Darcy’s name, she believes all that he says because Elizabeth is prejudiced against Mr. Darcy. She is entertained and fascinated by this rumor because Elizabeth takes pride in the accuracy of her initial prejudice. Elizabeth does not recognize the pride she has within herself because she is too occupied noticing it in Mr. Darcy as a result of her prejudice towards him.

Both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy’s feelings change after his proposal to her. Darcy states that it was hard for his love to overcome the many obstacles it had to face, such as his love would result in a very imprudent marriage on his part. Elizabeth, though offended that he insulted her family "could not be insensible to the compliment of such a man’s affection” This shows that Elizabeth yet again has pride in the fact that she has inspired love in Mr. Darcy, despite her hatred for him. Elizabeth states that she would still deny him even if Mr. Darcy had “behaved in a more gentleman-like manner”. This phrase stays with Mr. Darcy and causes him to realize how the way he acted came across as proud. Elizabeth denies Mr. Darcy on the grounds that he ruined the happiness of Jane and Mr. Wickham.

In order to set the situation straight, Mr. Darcy writes a letter to Elizabeth. He justifies his motives for both offences that Elizabeth accuses him of. It is from this point on that
these two characters begin to fall in love. It is ironically Elizabeth’s prejudice that causes her to fall in love with Mr. Darcy. This is because after reading the letter, Elizabeth realizes the error of her judgment, and she feels guilty for having judged him unfairly. This also takes away Elizabeth’s pride in her prejudice, because she realizes it was not as precise as she thought. Now that the other issues have been resolved, the only quality in Mr. Darcy, which Elizabeth dislikes, is his pride, and this issue is too resolved. After Elizabeth’s comment regarding Mr. Darcy’s behavior, he begins to change. She no longer sees him as the arrogant man she initially thought him to be. By the end of the novel Darcy states that Elizabeth is the cause for this change in him:

“You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you, I was properly humbled. I came to you without a doubt of my reception. You showed me how insufficient were all my pretensions to please a woman worthy of being pleased”.

Mr. Darcy is made aware of his pride by Elizabeth’s prejudice towards him, and once he is aware of it he is able to end it. Mr. Darcy’s pride was the last fault that Elizabeth could find in him, and now that he has been freed of it, she falls in love with him. The two protagonists exhibited pride and prejudice, and they were cured of these qualities by each other, thus resulting in their love.

It is apparent that the title of this novel should indeed be Pride and Prejudice. Had the title of this book been First Impressions it would only be half as effective as the book’s current title. The first impressions that are made upon Elizabeth do not incorporate what is occurring with Mr. Darcy, the main mail protagonist, or any of the other characters. Nowhere in the novel does it describe the first impressions of Elizabeth on the other characters. This title lacks in comparison to Pride and Prejudice, which tells the story of the two main characters, and how their love grew, all within two main qualities.

Both pride and prejudice play large roles in the novel, which is why they are the only two suitable words for the title. Mr. Darcy’s initial pride inspires the prejudice of Elizabeth. Whenever Elizabeth’s prejudice is correct, she takes pride in it. When Darcy proposes to Elizabeth in a proud manner offending her family, she rejects him, and this makes Darcy aware of his pride. Then, when Elizabeth realizes that her prejudice is incorrect because of the letter from Mr. Darcy, she no longer takes pride in it, and stops being prejudice. Elizabeth falls in love with Darcy because he was able to eliminate his proud mannerisms, and Darcy falls in love with Elizabeth because she treated him differently then all of the other women who attempted to court him, through her prejudice. These two qualities flow through the novel between the two main characters, and they cure each other of them. Pride and Prejudice is the correct title because it encompasses how their love came to be with only three words.

**Pride and Prejudice: A Novel with Limited Range**

Jane Austen confines her creative activity to the depiction of whatever fell within her range of personal experience. While her range of observation in life is not so wide her work has been variously called as the “**Two inches of ivory**” and “**three or four families**”. All these titles exhibit the excellence as well as the limitations of her craft and outlook.
Although she works on a very small canvas, yet she has widened the scope of fiction in almost all its directions. Her stories mostly have indoor actions where only family matters especially love and marriages are discussed. However, her plots are perfect and characterization is superb.

All of her six novels, including “Pride and Prejudice”, have been controversial since their publication, on account of Austen’s limited range. The critical view is divided in two groups – detractors and admirers. The former group had criticized her on various points.

Critics object that her novels present a certain narrow physical setting. It was the period of American War of Independence and of Napoleonic Wars, but the characters of Austen are blissfully unaware of all these tumultuous events. Whole of the story of “Pride and Prejudice” revolves around Netherfield Park, Longbourn, Hansford Parsonage, Meryton and Pemberley.

Nature does not play any specific role in her novels. It seems to be an irony of the history of English literature that when writers like Wordsworth, Byron, Coleridge and others were discovering the beauties of nature / outer world, Austen confines her characters within the four walls of the drawing room or Hall. Edward Fitzgerald states: “She never goes out of the Parlour.”

Austen avoids the sense of passions described by the romantics, because of her classical views of order and control. Bronte condemns her: “... the passions art completely unknown to her.”

Critics have complained that her subject matters are very much the same in all her novels and she writes the same sort of story and also that she does not introduce any great variety in her characters.

All of her six novels deal with same theme of love and marriages. There are pretty girls waiting for eligible bachelors to be married to. The opening line of “Pride and Prejudice” is the theme of her six novels. She writes: “It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.”

Another limitation of Jane Austen is the feminization of her novels. Men never appear except in the company of women. All the information about Darcy is proved through Elizabeth’s point of view. Hence, the reader looks at Darcy through Elizabeth’s eye.

Even in her limited world, Austen restricts herself to the depiction of a particular class of country gentry. She excludes the matters of lower class and hardly touches aristocracy. For instance she has discussed Lady Catherine only for the purpose of satire.

There is no terrible happening in her novels. Everything happens in a civilized manner. The extreme severity in “Pride and Prejudice” is elopement of Lydia with Wickham. “Wickham may elope with Lydia.”

A famous critic, Charlotte Bronte believes that Austen has no concern with the morals and she is an author of the surface only: “Her business is not half so much with the human heart as with the human eye, mouth, hands and feet.”
A. H. Wright remarks that there is very little religion in her novels. Politics is not mentioned too. There are no adventures found in her books, no abstract ideas and no discussion of spiritual or metaphysical issues.

The defence of Jane Austen’s limited range comes from the nature of her novels, the situation of her time and her physical surroundings. Austen’s novels are termed as “domestic novels”. She belongs to the era when neither the girls were allowed to be admitted to universities nor to be intermingled freely with men. So it is natural that her range is limited.

Austen was a daughter of a country clergyman. She has very less exposure to the world except her short visits to London and a few years study at Bath. Hence the world she experienced was very small. In a letter to her niece, Austen wrote: “There are four families in a country village is the very thing to work on.”

Though Austen’s limitations are very self-imposed yet within her deliberately restricted field, her art is perfect. Realization of one’s limitations is a positive virtue. The restricted social setting and purely interests, lend a sense of discipline to her art. “Within the limits she is superb.”

She gains in depth, what she loses in broadness of canvas. Her characters stem from a class which she knows well and hence they are very realistic and life-like. Elizabeth Bennet is one of the most delightful heroines one could come across in literature. Wordsworth remarks: “Her novels are an admirable copy of life.”

It would be wrong to say that her novels lack passion and profundity. Her themes are love, courtship and marriage and it is impossible to keep the feelings out from such a novel. Besides love, there are also significant emotions, like jealousy of Bingley’s, cunningness of Wickham, snobbery of Lady Catherine – all are depicted by Austen with perfect sincerity and conviction.

She also holds a definite moral concern in her novels. She laughs at the shortcomings of people to correct their behaviours. Beneath the theme of love and marriage, she deals with manners to correct the conduct of the middle class country gentry. She preaches the dictum of “know thyself”. Hence she aims at high morality. She also depicts the merits and strength of a marriage based on understanding through the wedding of Elizabeth and Darcy. The nature of her craft is defined by Austen herself as: “With bit of irony on which I work with so fine brush to produce little effect after much labour.”

Within her theme and subject matter, Jane Austen is unparalleled in her skill and plot construction. The sub-plots of Jane-Bingley, Lydia-Wickham, Charlotte-Collins all are closely linked to the main Elizabeth-Darcy plot and highlight the theme of good marriage. Even in her limits, no two of her characters are repeated. G. H. Lewis remarks: “Her circle may be restricted but it is complete. Her world is perfect orb and vital sphere.”

Thus it may be concluded that within her limited range Austen handles all the characters, events, dialogues and the plot of her novels in a very exquisite manner. Her art is fine, perfect and distinguishable. No doubt she is a fine flower of the expiring 18th century.
**Pride and Prejudice: Jane Austen's Moral Vision**

Jane Austen is not a proclaimed moralist. Unlike Fielding, her aim is not to propagate the morality. She believes in art for the sake of art. She is the pioneer of the novels. Therefore, her plots are well-knit. Her main interest lies in irony and there is a hidden significance of morality as we come across her moral vision in her novels through irony.

Jane Austen is in favour of social prosperity than individual. She upholds the organic unity of society. She stresses that the duty of human beings owe to others, to society and maintains that individual desires have to be sub-ordinate to the large scale. Lydia-Wickham elopement is passionate and irresponsible. It shows that how society's harmony is disrupted and how others' lives are ruined by the selfish act of the individual. On the other hand the marriage of Elizabeth and Darcy, Jane and Bingley bring happiness and stability to everyone, not simply to themselves.

She discusses individuals 'short comings’. Even the hero and heroine have no exception. Elizabeth blinds herself absurdly because of prejudice whereas Darcy is full of pride. "...tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt me."

But we can see that both learn and understand each other. Their pride and prejudice are vanished. But the shortcomings of the other characters are not changed. Mr. Bennet is careless and irresponsible man. Mrs. Bennet is vulgar and stupid. Charlotte is very much economic. Lydia is lusty and Wickham is a deceiver.

Society is divided into classes. “Pride and Prejudice” is an attempt to harmonize the two extremes of middle class – lower end and the top end – into one. Bingley's marriage with Jane and Darcy’s with Elizabeth. It is her moral approach to rub the class distinction-line of society.

She also discusses the institution of family which is disturbed. The heads of Bennet family are not mentally bound. This is a matchless couple. Their role as a parent is not active. The disadvantages of such an unsuitable marriage attend the daughters also. On the other hand Bingley family is betraying because there is no head for them but only guided by Darcy.

Jane Austen is concerned with the growth of an individual’s moral personality measured by the most exacting standards of 18th century values. Popes dictum "know thyself" underlines the theme of her novel. The conclusion of her novel is always the achievement of self-respect and principal mean of such an achievement is a league of perfect sympathy with another, who is one's spiritual counterpart. Jane Austen traces Elizabeth's prejudice and her anguished recognition of her own blind prejudice before she is united with Darcy in a marriage based on mutual respect, love and understanding. As she says,"How despicable have I acted! I, who have pride myself on my discernment! – I who have valued myself on my abilities."

In the end she says,"There can be no doubt of that. It is settled between us already that we are to be the happiest couple in the world."
Main theme of her novel is marriage. She tries to define good reasons for marriage and bad reasons for marriage. Her moral concern though unobtrusive, is ever-present. The marriage of Lydia-Wickham, Charlotte-Collins and of the Bennets serves the show by their failure the prosperity of the Elizabeth-Darcy marriage.

There is corruption in landed class. Jane Austen reflects this problem in her novel also. The Bingley sisters hate the Bennet for their vulgarity but are themselves vulgar in their behaviour. Lady Catharine is equally vulgar and ill-bred.

Army men in her novel are only for flirtation. They come only for enjoyment. They have no love in them. Some of them are deceiver like Wickham who elopes with Lydia not for love but for money.

Then she discusses the degeneracy of clergy. Mr. Collins is a clergyman. He comes at Netherfield in search of life partner. But he is rejected by Bennet's daughters. Then he turns towards Charlotte. He has some reason for marriage. “My reasons for marriage are, I think it right thing for every clergy (like me) in easy circumstances to set the example of matrimony in parish ...”

Jane Austen throws light on the materialism and economic concern of society. Charlotte is more concern with money than man. She is lusty. Her materialistic approach is judged by her remarks.”I am not romantic, you know, I never was. I ask only for a comfortable home.” Collins also has materialistic mind. Mr. Wickham is always thinking about money. He elopes with Lydia only for money.

Pride and prejudice, is in fact, corresponding virtue. Pride leads to prejudice and prejudice invites pride. Darcy is proud, at the beginning. As he says: “... my good opinion once lost is lost forever” His first appearance is appallingly insolent and we tend to agree with Mrs. Bennet's complaint:”He walked her and he walked there, fancying so very great”. Darcy’s remarks prejudiced Elizabeth. At ball-party, when he firstly sees her, he says:”... tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt me.”Wickham’s biased account about Darcy increased the hatred of Elizabeth. But we can observe that both earn when they go through the process of self-realization. Then Elizabeth thinks that:”...Darcy was exactly the man, who in disposition and talents; would suit for her.”

We may say that Jane Austen’s main concern was irony. She uses irony to shake the major figures of their self-deception and expose the hypocrisy and pretentiousness, absurdity and insanity of some of her minor figures. It is definitely possible to deduce from her work a scheme of moral value. Andrew H. Wright rightly points out that irony in her hand is the instrument of a moral vision. Walter Allen rightly comments:”She is the most forthright moralist in English.”

**Pride and Prejudice: Irony**

One of the most prominent features of the literary style of Jane Austen is her frequent use of irony. In Pride and Prejudiceshe investigates social relationships in the limited society of a country with an ironic and often humorous eye.
General Irony

Irony in the themes of ‘pride’ and ‘prejudice’:— The title of the novel, which refers to those failings of the main characters that initially prevent them from accepting each other, contains a strain of hidden irony. Jane Austen subtly introduces an inversion in the thematic foibles (‘pride’ and ‘prejudice’) and the characters they belong to. This very inversion is another example of Austen’s use of irony. It is Darcy who is supposed to have the pride and Elizabeth who is supposed to have the prejudice. But in her misunderstandings with Darcy, she accuses him of excessive pride, while he accuses her of prejudice.

Irony in the very first line: - The reader is invited to laugh at the ironies of human perception and expectations from the very first line of the novel: “It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.” Read ironically, this sentence is turned on its head to mean: “Everyone who knows a single rich man will pursue him with ambitions to be his wife.” This is irony, which allows the author to communicate more than the literal or expected meanings of her language.

Mr. Bennet’s irony

Mr. Bennet’s intentional irony: - Mr. Bennet, the intelligent, detached father of the Bennet sisters is an interesting study in the novel’s use of irony. His own sense of irony is very well defined, and he enjoys laughing at his wife’s and his family’s follies.

His ironical comments at the expense of his wife range from the gently mocking: “You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves... They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least” and the subtle and indirect: “Now, Kitty, you may cough as much as you choose” to the harsh and direct: “This is a parade which does one good; it gives such an elegance to misfortune! Another day I will do the same; I will sit in my library, in my night cap and powdering gown, and give as much trouble as I can, - or, perhaps, I may defer it, till Kitty runs away”.

But Mr. Bennet’s conscious use of irony serves no useful purpose. It neither serves to shame his wife, who fails to detect the vein of sarcasm underlying all his comments, nor does it educate his younger daughters or make them see how improper their behaviour is.

Mr. Bennet’s unintentional irony: - This is why the plot of the novel seems to show, through Mr. Bennet, the limitations of sitting back and observing irony as a response to human experience. Trapped in a bad marriage, Mr. Bennet makes life endurable for himself by assuming the pose of an ironic passive spectator of life, who has long ago abandoned his roles as a husband and a father. And this ironic detachment on the part of Mr. Bennet is closely linked to his abdication from responsibility.

His most spectacular abandonment of duty comes in connection with Lydia’s proposal to go to Brighton. “Lydia will never be easy till she has exposed herself in some public
place” says Mr. Bennet, “and we can never expect her to do it with so little expense or inconvenience to her family as under the present circumstances.” His statement, seen in retrospect, is even more ironic than he meant it to be. Lydia did, in fact, end up exposing her family. And the expense and inconvenience, which he claimed would be little, turns out to be enormous.

Elizabeth's irony

Elizabeth’s intentional use of irony: - On the other hand, Elizabeth’s playful irony is for her both a defense against others whose faults she can perceive, and a weapon which she uses to condemn them for these faults.

In the war against stupidity, she uses irony to skewer the negative traits she is quick to find in people. She targets Mr. Collins’ self-importance and his sycophantic behaviour towards Lady Catherine De Bourgh: “They...were indebted to Mr. Collins for the knowledge of what carriages went along, and how often especially Miss De Bourgh drove by in her phaeton, which he never failed coming to inform them of, though it happened almost every day.” Mr. Collins, of course, was too blinded by his self-importance and his infatuation with Lady Catherine’s power and wealth to see that Elizabeth was really not at all indebted to him, and in fact her irritation and contempt of him increased with this behaviour.

Similarly, she criticizes the contrast between Wickham’s duplicity and Darcy’s honesty to Jane: “There certainly was some great mismanagement in the education of those two young men. One has got all the goodness, and the other all the appearance of it.”

She does not even spare Bingley, accusing him of over-compliance in his reliance on Darcy: “Elizabeth longed to observe that Mr. Bingley had been a most delightful friend; so easily guided that his worth was invaluable”.

She criticizes Mr. Darcy’s lack of social graces to his face: “I have always seen a great similarity in the turn of our minds. We are both of an unsocial, taciturn disposition, unwilling to speak, unless we expect to say something that will amaze the whole room”. And she does not spare him in Bingley’s drawing room when she says to him: “I am perfectly convinced by it that Mr. Darcy has no defect. He owns it himself without disguise.” The irony, of course, is that by accusing him of owning that he has no defect, she is actually accusing him of a grave defect: arrogance.

Elizabeth response at Charlotte’s marriage – unintentionally ironic: - Yet, Elizabeth’s own behaviour towards Wickham is unknowingly tinged with irony. Perhaps the worst instance of Elizabeth’s stubborn belief in Wickham’s character is her serene acceptance of his defection to the moneyed Miss King. Ironically enough, just a few months ago, she had expressed shock at Charlotte’s decision to marry Mr. Collins for very similar reasons, and in fact, had partially estranged herself from Charlotte because of what she thought were Charlotte’s mercenary and shallow motives.
In her letter to Mrs. Gardiner, she says of Wickham: **“handsome young men must have something to live on, as well as the plain”**. Contrast this to her very different response when Charlotte herself said much the same thing to her: “[Elizabeth] could not have supposed it possible that when called into action, [Charlotte] would have sacrificed every better feeling to worldly advantage. Charlotte, the wife of Mr. Collins, was a most humiliating picture! – And to the pang of a friend disgracing herself and sunk in her esteem...” This seeming inconsistency on her part reeks of hypocrisy, but the truth is that Elizabeth is simply less clear-sighted in the case of Wickham than she is with Charlotte.

The irony of the difference in her response to Charlotte’s engagement and her own subsequent leniency towards materialism is further underlined by the reaction that the first sight of Pemberley arouses in her ("at that moment she felt that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something!"). Later, she tells Jane “...I hardly knew when it began. But I believe I must date it from my first seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley.” People have differed on how ironically this statement by Elizabeth, supposedly dating the beginning of her love for Darcy, should be taken. But however ironically she meant it herself, it cannot be denied that her regard for Darcy received a great impetus when she saw his beautiful house.

**Darcy’s irony**

Darcy is not as humourless and sober as he appears on the surface. He may not laugh, but in his own way he is as attuned to irony and incongruity as Elizabeth is. Their conversation shows that his wit can be as ready as Elizabeth’s. For example, when Miss Bingley accuses Elizabeth of being ‘one of those young ladies who seek to recommend themselves to the other sex, by undervaluing their own,’ Mr. Darcy’s ironic response that “there is meanness in all the arts which ladies sometimes condescend to employ for captivation”indicates that he sees through Miss Bingley’s own attempt to “recommend” herself to him by “undervaluing” Elizabeth.

**Mrs. Bennet’s irony**

Mrs. Bennet is a minefield of unintentional irony. Her ill-natured, materialistic and narrow-minded view of the world is revealed in her foolish comments, such as the one she made about Bingley to Elizabeth on her return from Hunsford “Well, my comfort is, I am sure Jane will die of a broken heart, and then he will be sorry for what he has done.”

Other such comments abound. But in the final resolution of Mrs. Bennet’s deepest wishes for her daughters’ marriages, there lies still more irony. Even though it is the business of her life to get them married, she has only succeeded in ruining their prospects. If her daughters’ futures were left entirely up to her, her improper management of them would have ended up making them ineligible for any respectable suitors. In fact, it is Mr. Darcy who moves behind the scenes and secretly arranges the marriage of all the three Bennet girls. Thus Darcy, who she despises, and who in turn despises her, is the one who is ultimately responsible for her exultation at the end. This, then, is the greatest irony of all.
Jane Austen’s irony in the social context

Finally, the author’s most devastating use of irony in the book is in her attacks on community and on society, such as on the Meryton society. She uses irony as a social tool to direct the reader's gaze to some of the human imperfections that threaten the virtues of her culture.

Independent of any character, she uses irony in the narrative parts for some of her sharpest judgments. Through the Meryton community’s reaction to Lydia's marriage with Wickham: (“the good-natured wishes for her well-doing, which had proceeded before, from all the spiteful old ladies of Meryton, lost but little of their spirit in this change of circumstances, because with such an husband, her misery was considered certain.”), Austen attacks society’s practice of taking pleasure in others’ ills, and the mean-spirited gossip-mongers that inhabit society.

Austen also pokes fun at society’s practice of suddenly becoming enamoured with a man because of his wealth without knowing his true nature. For instance, upon Darcy’s entrance to a dance in chapter 3, Austen writes that “the report was in general circulation within five minutes...of his having ten thousand a year.” She adds that “the ladies declared that he was much handsomer than Mr. Bingley” – obviously his wealth recommended his countenance to them. That they retract their approval so fast when they realize that he pays no attention to them is no less ironic.

A striking feature of the irony in Pride and Prejudice is that it is mixed with unmistakable strains of cynicism. This ‘black’ irony is very much in evidence throughout the book. For example, in the following statements

**Elizabeth on Bingley:** “Is not general incivility the very essence of love?”

**Mr. Collins to Elizabeth:** “Your portion is unhappily so small that it will in all likelihood undo the efforts of your loveliness and amiable qualifications.”

**Charlotte Lucas on marriage:** “If a woman conceals her affection ... from the object of it, she may lose the opportunity of fixing him. ... In nine cases out of ten, a woman had better show more affection than she feels.”

The cynicism of all this is striking – especially the suggestions that human attachments spring largely from selfish motives, and that women who do not feign affection for men are likely to be left on the shelf.

Thus, irony is employed by Jane Austen in Pride and Prejudice as the lens through which society and human nature are viewed. She uses irony not only to create humour and make her books more enjoyable, but also to make veiled, bitter observations about the world around her. And this is why this novel is as relevant in our times as it was in hers, perhaps more – for in her hands irony is an extremely effective device for moral evaluation that exposes those defects in her society which still prevail in ours today.
**Pride and Prejudice: Art of Characterization**

The range of Jane Austen’s characters is rather narrow. She selects her characters from among the landed gentry in the countryside. Sir Walter Scott very accurately describes this range: “Jane Austen confines herself chiefly to the middling classes of society ... and those which are sketched with most originality and precision belong to a class rather below that standard.”

She omits the servants and the labourers. They appear wherever they are needed but they are usually not heard. Aristocracy also is hardly touched and if taken, it is only to satirize. Lady Catherine in “Pride and Prejudice” is arrogant, pretentious, stupid and vulgar. Austen finds herself at home only with the country gentry and their usual domestic interests.

In spite of such a limited range, Austen never repeats her characters. Lord David Cecil says: “In her six books, she ever repeats a single character ... There is all the difference in the world between the vulgarity of Mrs. Bennet and the vulgarity of Mrs. Jennings.”

Though these characters are so highly individualized, yet they have a touch of universality. Thus Marianne becomes the representative of all romantic lovers while Wickham represents all pleasant-looking but selfish and unprincipled flirts.

Austen usually presents her characters dramatically through their conversation, actions and letters. Darcy and Wickham, Lydia and Caroline are much revealed through their actions, while Collins and Lydia are revealed through their letters. A direct comment is sometimes added. The mean understanding of Mrs. Bennet and the sarcastic humour of Mr. Bennet have already been revealed in their dialogues before the direct comment of the novelist. Similarly before she tells us about Mr. Collins, we have already become aware from his letter that he is not a sensible man.

Though Jane Austen does not conceive her characters in pairs yet her characters are revealed through comparison and contrast with others. Lady Catherine and Mrs. Bennet balance each other in their vulgarity and match-making drills. Wickham serves a contrast to Darcy while Bingley is a foil to him. Elizabeth’s is compared and contrasted with Jane and Caroline Bingley.

Austen builds character through piling an infinite succession of minute details about them. In “Pride and Prejudice”, the Elizabeth-Darcy relationship is traced through minute details, details which look trivial and insignificant in the first instance but whose significance is realized only after reading the novel. Sir Walter Scott makes a fine comment: “The author’s knowledge of the world, and the peculiar tact with which she presents characters ... reminds us something of the merit of the Flemish school of painting.”

Austen is a great realist in art. Her characters are creatures of flesh and blood, pulsating with vitality. She studies her characters kindly but objectively. Regarding their appearance, she treats them quite generally, fixing them with a few bold strokes. She is constant in providing details about their outlook, attitude, manner and accomplishments.
Lord Cecil says: “Her lucid knife-edged mind was always at work penetrating beneath such impressions to disown their cause, discover the principles ... that go to make up his individuality.”

Austen’s characters are neither embodiment of virtue nor pure villains but real human beings both pleasant and disgusting. Elizabeth is perceptive but her perception is sullied by her initial prejudices. In contrast Wickham has so much charm that it is rather difficult to detest him. Austen often mingles knavishness with folly making villainous characters a source of rich comedy.

Jane Austen’s minor figures are flat. They do not grow and are fully developed when we first meet them. As the action progresses our first impressions of them get confirmed. Mrs. Bennet seems to be stupefied and vulgar right from the first scene. Her appearance at the Netherfield Park or her reaction to Lydia’s elopement confirms her stupidity and vulgarity. This is true of almost all of her minor figures.

But her major characters are ever changing, ever growing. Usually self-deceived in initial stages, they are capable of understanding, growth and maturity. They are complex, dynamic and intricate. Her heroines, blinded by ego, vanity or over-confidence, commit gross errors and suffer bitter reverses. But by virtue of their insight they are gradually disillusioned and, thus, grow.

Minor or major all characters created by Jane Austen may be described as round inasmuch as they are all three-dimensional. E. M. Forster brings out this point quite admirably: “All her characters are round or capable of rotundity ... They have all their proper places and fill other several stations with great credit ... All of them are organically related to their environment and to each other.”

Dull characters are made interesting. An eminent critic, describing Jane as a prose Shakespeare remarks: “What, in other hands, would be flat, insipid ... becomes at her bidding, a sprightly versatile, never-flagging chapter of realities.”

Thus touched by the magic wand of Jane Austen’s art, even the fool and bore of real life became amusing figures. The pompous stupidity of Mrs. Collins and the absurdity and vulgarity of Mrs. Bennet should in real life, prove as irritating to us as to Elizabeth and Darcy. But even these characters become such a rich source of mirth and entertainment.

Still there are a few characters that do not look enough life-like or relevant. Mary Bennet fails to impress, nor is she even vital to the story. Jane Fairfax in “Emma” is shadowy. Margaret is “Sense and Sensibility” never comes to life. But these minor failures do not detract much from her reputation as one of the greatest delineators of characters.

**Pride and Prejudice : First Impressions**

First impressions and separation of social classes plays a very active role in the whole theme of Pride and Prejudice. In this novel by Jane Austen, we not only see how first impressions effect relationships, but also see how the characters in this story experience transformation through their experiences of first impressions, pride and prejudice.
First impressions cause these characters’ preconceived notions, based on wealth and class to activate more pride and prejudice against each other. Elizabeth Bennet’s first impression of Mr. Darcy is that he is “proud, above his company, and above being pleased,” while Mr. Darcy’s first impression of Elizabeth is that “she is tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt” him.

Furthermore, Elizabeth’s pride and prejudice towards Mr. Darcy continues to grow stronger. She is unaware of his admiration towards her, because she figures a man like him would never love her and she could never love a man with so much pride and conceit. The confusion of Mr. Darcy’s true character takes her almost the entire novel to discover the truth about him: the truth about him and Wickham and his true reasoning for parting Bingley and Jane.

Pride and Prejudice is a story about a man who changes into a better man and his true and upstanding character, and he blossoms into a true gentleman. It’s also about a woman who changes because her perception of this man has been clarified. Both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy learn to see beyond their first impressions of each other and learn how to make things right. Both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy act out of misjudgment, pride, prejudice, and lack of open communication right from the very beginning of their acquaintance. Although they are both extremely guilty of these character flaws, Elizabeth accomplished a greater transformation because, ironically, her pride and prejudice exceeded Mr. Darcy. They are much alike in character, however, and they both undergo great transformation.

The fact that Mr. Darcy is rich and of a higher class than Elizabeth seems to lead her to immediately assume his lack of interest in anything else going on around him at the balls is influenced by his wealth. “I should have judged better had I sought an introduction; but I am ill qualified to recommend myself to strangers... I certainly have not the talent which some people possess of conversing easily with those I have never seen before. I cannot catch their tone of conversation, or appear interested in their concerns, as I often see done." We see that Elizabeth has not come to know the fact about Mr. Darcy that he is not shallow or as snooty as she conceives.

Early in the novel Mr. Darcy judges Elizabeth by saying that she is not handsome enough to tempt him. His mind changes about Elizabeth as he discovers the depth of her personality. Elizabeth perceives Mr. Darcy’s quick wits and response to her comments as prideful, but actually they both challenge each other’s minds and patterns of thinking in a positive way. Mr. Darcy also bases his prejudice and misjudgment of Elizabeth based on her pushy, boisterous mother. Her mother turns him off from the Bennet family entirely, and foolishly he turns Mr. Bingley off from Jane as well, not only for that reason but because he didn’t believe Jane felt any affection for Mr. Bingley. These were misjudgments on Mr. Darcy’s behalf for Elizabeth sometimes can’t even stand her own mother and Jane truly did have affection for Mr. Bingley. Mr. Darcy acted immaturely, without knowing the fullness of the situation. Later when Elizabeth confronts and reveals the truth to Mr. Darcy, he honestly feels remorse, and later fixes his mistake.

In the same manner Elizabeth makes judgments also about Mr. Darcy and Wickham. Elizabeth believes Wickham’s story about him and Mr. Darcy when they have only just met. Elizabeth has not begun to understand Wickham’s character, yet she believes him
whole heartedly without first asking Mr. Darcy about that matter. She foolishly allows her prejudice to grow inside her against Mr. Darcy; and she even talks to her family and friends, causing distaste in their mouths as well. This is immature and prejudice in the fullest.

Mr. Darcy, after several miscommunications between Elizabeth and himself finally admits his faults of pride and ignorance. He got to explain himself as well. His true character unraveled as more events took place. His maid spoke so highly of him and all that he has done for others and especially his sister. He has never shown anger, pride, or prejudice to any of his servants. He makes things right with Elizabeth and Jane- Bingley situation and even helps Lydia and Wickham after all that had happened. These are true advancements of his character from false first impressions to humbling himself and admitting fault.

For Elizabeth, she finally admits herself of being “blind, partial, prejudiced, and absurd.” She admits she has acted despicably, by priding herself on her discernment. “Vanity, not love, has been my folly. Pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the other, on the very beginning of our acquaintance, I have courted prepossession [pride] and ignorance, and driven reason away where either were concerned. Till this moment, I never knew myself.” This is the greatest moment, the pivotal point in Elizabeth’s character transformation. Elizabeth finally realizes first impression, pride and prejudice, have been false and wrong towards Mr. Darcy.

Both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy could not have experienced such a character transformation as these if it were not for their initial first impressions of each other. They grew to know one another better and deeper. They caused each other to mature and transform into a greater man and a greater woman. Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy were both so stubborn about what they thought about each other for most of the novel that it caused them to see each other unclearly; luckily they overcame their false first impressions and were able to see the truth about each other and help each other grow.

**Pride and Prejudice : Characteristics of a drama**

The novel Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen has several characteristics of a drama. The novel shares such leading qualities of a drama as dialogue, character development, plot, theme, action and dramatic irony. The use of these dramatic devices makes the novel interesting to read.

**Dialogue:** The novel opens with dialogue. It provides the substance of the play. Dialogue is used to show the characters speaking directly to each other which give the reader access to the thoughts and emotions of the characters. It grows intimacy between characters and audience. “My dear Mr. Bennet,” said his lady to him one day, “have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?”

All of Austen’s many characters come alive through dialogue. Long, unwieldy speeches are rare and in their place, the reader hears the crackle of quick, witty conversation. True nature reveals itself in the way the characters speak: Mr. Bennet’s emotional detachment comes across in his dry wit, while Mrs. Bennet’s hysterical excess drips from
every sentence she utters. Austen’s dialogue often serves to reveal the worst aspects of her characters—Miss Bingley’s spiteful, snobbish attitudes are readily apparent in her words, and Mr. Collins’s long-winded speeches carry with them a tone-deaf pomposity that defines his character perfectly. Dialogue can also conceal bad character traits: Wickham, for instance, hides his rogue’s heart beneath the patter of pleasant, witty banter, and he manages to take Elizabeth in with his smooth tongue. Ultimately, though, good conversational ability and general goodness of personality seem to go hand in hand. Pride and Prejudice is the story of Darcy and Elizabeth’s love, and for the reader, that love unfolds through the words they share.

**Plot:** The plot of a drama involves unexpected turns, suspense and climax. In pride and Prejudice we find some turning points which motivate the novel such as Darcy and Elizabeth’s first meet at the Meryton ball. Darcy’s Pride arouses Elizabeth’s prejudice. Darcy refuses to dance with Elizabeth upon Bingley’s request, saying that Elizabeth is no handsome enough to tempt him. Elizabeth hears this comment and greatly hurt. She immediately takes a view about Mr. Darcy that he will be a man of arrogant personality.

However through the Bingely-Bennet friendship Darcy and Elizabeth are brought into each other’s company. Again Jane’s illness at Netherfield brings the two together again. And it is the beginning of his admiration for her.

Now the audience becomes suspicious when Mrs. Bennet’s garrulous vulgarity turns Darcy away from his interest in Elizabeth and leads him to take the docile Bingley to London. Moreover Elizabeth’s initial prejudice is deepened by the smooth lies of Wickham against Darcy. She accepts at face value everything that Wickham says about Mr. Darcy. Mr. Wickham professes to be discrete and hints that he would not defame anybody’s character, but he defames Darcy. Elizabeth would not have tolerated such a conversation if anybody except the disagreeable Mr. Darcy were the subject of the talk. As a result, Elizabeth forms an even more unfavorable opinion about Mr. Darcy than she had formed before. Her prejudice turns into hatred.

As an another principal turning point the two meet again when Elizabeth is visiting Charlotte Collins and Darcy is visiting his aunt Lady Catherine at Rosings. Darcy’s old interest is revived with increased fervor.

Now we see the struggle in Darcy’s mind between his pride and love for Elizabeth with the handicaps of such relations as Collins, Lydia, Kitty, Mary, Mrs. Bennet and the inferior family connection with trade. Love wins enough of a victory to bring him to the point of proposing.

The chief climax of the main story occurs when Darcy proposes to Elizabeth at Rosings and is refused. Darcy constantly emphasizes the struggles and obstacles that he had to overcome in order to make him this step. Rather than emphasizing his love, he constantly refers to all the obstacles which he has had to overcome. This proposal completely stuns Elizabeth. She thinks that Mr. Darcy is only seeking a wife who is so inferior as to be ever grateful for a chance to be his wife. She rejects his proposal without least hesitation and she gives her reasons for her refusal. She mentions his past ill-treatment to Mr. Wickham and she tells him that he was responsible for breaking up
between Jane and Bingley. And finally she accuses him not behaving in a gentleman-like manner. The denouement is reached with his second proposal and this time acceptance.

On the very next day, Mr. Darcy hands over to Elizabeth a letter which contains a defense of him against the charges which she had leveled against him. There is much logic in this defense and Elizabeth is deeply affected by it. She is forced to acknowledge the justice of his claims as regards Wickham, his criticism of her family and even his claims concerning Jane. She comes to a self-realization. Suddenly, she cannot remember anything that Mr. Darcy has ever done which was not honorable and just, while Mr. Wickham has often been imprudent in his comments. Previously, she had called Jane blind, and now she has gained a moral insight into her own character and sees that she has also been blind. Consequently, Elizabeth’s character increases in depth as she is able to analyze herself and come to those realizations. This self-recognition established her as a person capable of changing and growing.

Meanwhile, the youngest Bennet, Lydia, rushes into an ill-advised romance with Wickham, an officer who at first appears charming and trustworthy. Wickham fails in a ruthless attempt to marry a rich northern woman and impulsively elopes with the naive Lydia. The 16-year-old girl speaks recklessly, acts offensively, and must gratify her impulses instantly. Lydia fails to see that running off with Wickham scandalizes her family.

Darcy shows his true mettle by secretly helping Charles return to Jane, by ensuring that Wickham and Lydia return to Longbourn as a married couple with an income, and by proposing again to Elizabeth with new humility. Shamed, Elizabeth recognizes many of her misjudgments and accepts Darcy's proposal. Their personalities soften and blend beautifully.

Another coincidence brings Elizabeth and Darcy at Pemberley House. He is very warm and friendly and inquires of her family. There is no trace of haughtiness in the manner in which he now talks to her and to her relatives. Even more, when she learns the role which Darcy has played in Lydia’s marriage, she becomes strongly inclined towards him.

In this changed circumstances Mr. Darcy arrives at Netherfield and proposes marriage to her. This time she gladly accepts the proposal because she has now begun to think that Mr. Darcy is truly a gentleman. He also tells Elizabeth that it was her frankness which had finally revealed to him his shortcomings. He also admits that he encouraged Bingley to propose Jane. Elizabeth also honestly confesses the change in her feelings and the two lovers are finally happy.

A plot also centers on a single interest and other sub-actions become involved to it. There is a quite compact plot in Pride and Prejudice. In Pride and Prejudice the main story of Elizabeth and Darcy runs throughout the whole narrative. Minor stories, kept under complete control, are never permitted to obtrude and are always made to contribute to the main story.

Secondary plots revolve about Jane and Bingley, Lydia and Wickham, Mr. Collins, Miss Bingley’s schemes, Lady Catherine de Bourgh. The action is developed around the gradual coming together of Elizabeth and Darcy and their ultimate happiness. The
secondary figures act as foils to the main characters and interact with them to help bring about the final resolution.

**Character:** - In a drama the characters show significant development. The characters of a drama suffer from their mistakes and finally learn many lessons. In the same way, here in this novel we also see the development of characters. The characters who mostly develop are Elizabeth and Darcy.

Jane Austen’s characters evolve the drama. Throughout the novel, the characters, like in a drama are developed gradually or step by step. They are placed in different contexts in which he encounter each other and help reveal their personalities. Darcy and Elizabeth, for example, undergo significant changes throughout the novel.

Letter plays an important role to develop the relationship between Elizabeth and Darcy. Darcy’s first letter to Elizabeth makes her even more prejudiced against Darcy but at the same time begin to think deeply about Wickham’s previous story.

Darcy writes his first letter in such a way as if he is showing favor to her, which exhibits his pride. She rejects his proposal without least hesitation and she gives her reasons for her refusal. She mentions his past ill-treatment to Mr. Wickham and she tells him that he was responsible for breaking up between Jane and Bingley. And finally she accuses him not behaving in a gentleman-like manner. This final accusation gives a serious blow to Darcy. This is a turning point for his self-realization.

Elizabeth learns lessons and changes the way she thinks about some situations. An extremely rich and famous man, one of the most sought after men in the country falls in love with Elizabeth, and although she initially rejects his proposals of marriage, thinking him too proud, does slowly fall in love with him, realizing his pride was only shyness, and they become engaged. She admits her own faults and overcomes her prejudice against Mr. Darcy and she becomes aware of her own social and emotional prejudice. When her friend Charlotte marries Mr. Collins, Elizabeth condemns the marriage as ridiculous but comes to understand and accept the position her friend was in. The marriage between Mr. Collins and Charlotte is based on economics rather than on love.

Elizabeth regards Jane as more noble and kind-hearted than herself. Jane is slightly naive, she expects all people to have pure and good motives for everything and seeks to find good in everyone. She has not shown much emotion to Bingley’s advances, though she accepts them. She shows little of the same sentiment, although this is just her nature, this is what made Darcy think Jane would not be much hurt if Bingley left her. This is untrue, she suffers the loss greatly, though alone and privately.

Lydia and Wickham have each other in an unhappy and impecunious marriage. Miss Bingley’s jealous envy brings only bitterness and disappointment. Mr. Bennet’s indolence and failure as a parent brings him the pain and shame of Lydia’s elopement and Lady Catherine’s arrogance brings about her humiliation in her interview with Elizabeth and her defeat in the marriage of Elizabeth and Darcy.

**Theme:** - The title of the novel Pride and Prejudice can be interpreted as a theme running through the novel. Pride is the feeling that one is better or more important than other people and prejudice is an adverse judgment or opinion formed beforehand.
without knowledge of the facts. When we add these two themes together, we get this novel Pride and Prejudice.

The very basis of this book is on Pride and Prejudice. Jane Austen created a world in which most of the people are guilty of Pride and Prejudice and judge each other on the basis of their pride and prejudice. But pride and prejudice are not very unusual factors in this world which is based on artificial and conventional behaviors. And Jane Austen appreciates those who can come out of their Pride and Prejudice and reject the superficial behaviors. But those who can’t discard their pride and prejudice remain the objects of ridicule till the end of the novel.

Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet, the two central characters of the novel, for the better part of the novel is the focus of Pride and prejudice respectively. And in the later part of the novel both Darcy and Elizabeth have come out from their Pride and Prejudice respectively.

**Irony:** Irony is the very soul of Jane Austen’s novels and “Pride and Prejudice” is steeped in irony of theme, situation, character and narration. Irony is the contrast between appearance and reality.

The first sentence of the novel Pride and Prejudice opens with an ironic statement about marriage, “It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife” (1). A man with a fortune does not need a wife nearly so much as a woman is greatly in need of a wealthy husband. The entire novel is really an explanation of how women and men pursue each other prior to marriage. Jane Austen uses a variety of verbal, dramatic and situational irony through the novel.

The novel is full of verbal irony, especially coming from Elizabeth and Mr. Bennet. Verbal irony is saying one thing, but meaning the complete opposite. Although Mr. Bennet is basically a sensible man, he behaves strangely because of his sarcasm with his wife. He amuses himself by pestering his foolish wife or making insensitive remarks about his daughters. Mr. Bennet cruelly mocks his wife silliness and is shown to be sarcastic, and cynical with comments as “…you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley might like you.

In chapter 4, Elizabeth confirms her strong dislike for Darcy and criticizes Bingley’s sisters as well. She is critical of Jane for being “blind” to others. This criticism is filled with irony, because in the later part of the novel Elizabeth is blind in analyzing Darcy because of her prejudice against his pride. Shortly in the novel, Darcy grows interest in Elizabeth, but Elizabeth doesn’t notice it. Elizabeth misunderstands Darcy attraction toward her. As she was playing the piano at the parsonage, she believes that Darcy is trying to unsettle her when he stands by the piano to hear her play the piano.

Also, Darcy was blind in the beginning of the novel because he did not realize that Elizabeth possesses the qualification his future wife must have. Another dramatic irony is in chapter 39 when Elizabeth is shocked by the behavior that she sees in her family and realizes the truth Darcy has stated about the weak impression they make.
It is interesting to note that ironically, in “Pride and Prejudice”, it is the villainous character Wickham and lady Catherine – who are responsible for uniting Elizabeth and Darcy.

**Action:** - Another requisite of drama is action. In Pride and Prejudice there is a great deal of action, even though it is quite and seemingly unexciting. The characters of the novel do not behave in any wild or improbable way. Since the picture drawn is of everyday life and activities, it is easy for us to comprehend it and is that much more real to us.

The elements of drama, by which dramatic works can be analyzed and evaluated, are categorized into the above discussed areas. And because of the presence of these dramatic elements we can call Pride and Prejudice as a dramatic novel.

**Feminine Individuality in Pride and Prejudice**

Literature is a mirror of social evolution. In it we find a living record of the progressive emergence of individuality in history. It depicts the development of political rights, social equality and psychological individuality as several stages in a common evolutionary movement.

The well-loved English novelist, Jane Austen lived in an age when female social conformity was demanded, original thinking frowned upon and creativity discouraged among women. Women were expected to be virtuous, submissive, modest, concealing to their intelligence and abilities and leaving matters of science, philosophy, politics and business to more intelligent and better informed gentlemen. English law at the time forbade divorce and regarded married women much like the property of her husband’s. It was an age in which it was universally believed that every girl must marry and marry young to secure a groom for financial security and social status, in utter disregard of foolish, idealistic notions of love and romance. Jane Austen rejected one very respectable proposal and refused to marry at all because she could not marry for love.

Her writing was as individualistic as she was and her own individuality was reflected in that of her heroines. In Pride and Prejudice she portrays Elizabeth Bennet’s struggle to express her individuality in a society that demanded strict social conformity, a situation far afield for most Western women today, but closely resembling the pressures felt by woman in many Asian countries even now. Elizabeth has inner strength. She doesn’t value people and things just because society values them. She judges according to her own values. She is not socially self-conscious or pretentious. She has a natural spontaneity. She has social skill and capacity, but she is not constrained by artificial social formalities. Nor is she a prisoner of her own ego. She has the sincerity to examine her own behaviour and the capacity to change. She has the will, as well as the strength, to resist social pressure. Elizabeth is not aggressive, rebellious or frivolous, disrespecting societal norms and breaking rules for fun. She has high human values, and employs her good sense and strong will as she sees fit, thinking independently of her family, friends and neighbours.
Unlike many contemporary notions about female individuality, Elizabeth is able to express her intelligence, independence and strong character without in any way compromising on her femininity. She is able to stand up for her rights, speak her mind freely and disregard social status, yet she never aspires to be a successful man in a man’s world. She strives only to express her own unique feminine individuality. With her cheerfulness and goodwill, she is feminine as well as individualistic.

Elizabeth belongs to a family of five daughters, their father a gentleman farmer of moderate fortune. With no male heir, the family estate is to pass on to a cousin after her father’s time. With no suitor in sight and no dowry to recommend her in case one turned up, marriage and financial security seem like distant dreams. But Elizabeth is not daunted. Marriage, to her, is not an ideal in itself. Her mother’s one aim in life is to marry five daughters. Her younger sisters cannot wait for their turn to marry. Her best friend goads her to do all she can to secure a wealthy husband, be he a fool or a villain. But Elizabeth feels differently, and fear of neither spinsterhood nor poverty can dilute her values. At a time in England where marrying for love hardly ever happened, like her creator Jane Austen, Elizabeth is determined to marry a man she loves and respects, or not marry at all.

Her bumbling cousin Collins visits the Bennets and announces his intention of marrying Elizabeth. Collins is a decent man with a college education, respectable job and considerable income. More significantly, he is the heir to the Bennet estate. Mrs. Bennet who has intensely felt the pressure of having five unmarried daughters and dreaded the thought of their becoming poor old maids, celebrates this end to all their troubles. There is pressure on Elizabeth to accept the lucrative proposal. But she is not swayed. She cannot accept her clownish cousin just for the comforts he can supply. She does not love him, cannot possibly respect him, and seeing no admirable values in him, turns him down. Her friend Charlotte seizes the opportunity and secures him for herself, and is satisfied with the accomplishment, as is the rest of her family and neighbourhood. But to Elizabeth, the idea of marriage with such a man is humiliating. When those around her see his social standing, exalted connections and financial advantages, she sees right through it all, at his core, foolishness and pomposity.

Bingley, a wealthy young man moves to the neighbourhood, with his fashionable sister Caroline and even wealthier friend, Mr. Darcy. Bingley is a pleasant type, but his entourage acts proudly and haughtily. The entire town admires Caroline’s fashionable gown and dainty lace, graceful walk and superior airs. The townspeople go up to Darcy for the privilege of exchanging a word with him, and some feel gratified even to receive a gruff snub from the aristocrat. They value only money and status. But Elizabeth Bennet is not deceived by the packaging. She sees rude, uncultured, selfish people where others see fashionable, sophisticated, wealthy folks.

Much to his own amazement as well as hers, Darcy falls in love with Elizabeth passionately and proposes to her. All that he had to offer would have tempted any other girl in Elizabeth’s place to say yes before he finished speaking. But Elizabeth turns him down without a second thought. She could not accept a man with no scruples and goodness, as she mistakenly believes him to be, in spite of his fine estate, huge income,
prestigious family and superior connections. She does not set her values based on the society's, or take decisions with an eye on society's approval.

Darcy's aunt Lady Catherine is the queen of her territory. Her imperialism, founded on the virtue of her wealth and status, is gratefully enjoyed or quietly accepted, but never challenged. Here again, Elizabeth thinks for herself. The lady, Elizabeth believes, does not deserve to be worshipped because she has immense wealth. She need not be obeyed for the sake of her aristocracy. Elizabeth could not sacrifice her good sense or self-respect to please another. She scandalizes all by contradicting the lady, while all around mumble their agreement or safely nod and smile. The lady calls on Elizabeth and abuses, threatens and coaxes in turns to prevent her from marrying Darcy. Elizabeth braves the storm that would have sunk many a mighty ship, and defiantly sails past the lady right up to the altar with Darcy.

A developed mind, good values and strong character are the source of Elizabeth’s strength. Nothing from the outside can dictate to her how to feel, think or act, and if her wishes are contrary to those external voices, she gallantly listens to her inner voice. She has great psychological strength that lets her face that impalpable, yet overwhelming foe of social disapproval and rewrite rules that define society.

Society comes around. It learns from her, and rewards her for transforming it. It raises her sky high. Elizabeth Bennet who had a mere £50 a year, a family to be embarrassed about and no high connections, becomes mistress of one of the finest estates in the country, a husband with an income of £10,000 a year who respects and loves her passionately, wealth to grant every comfort she could wish for and society that looks up to her in appreciation.

Jane Austen was a pioneering individual who showed that individuality is not breaking away from femininity, but enhancing it to make a more beautiful, meaningful personality. As she tells us through her heroine Elizabeth Bennet, individuality is not about competing with men or becoming masculine. It is not about getting rid of femininity. It is about recognizing the beauty, strength and values within oneself, nurturing them, and accomplishing a complementary relationship with the men and women in one’s life.

The growing numbers of biographies, journals and literary societies devoted to Austen, film and television adaptations of her works, online reading groups, fan sites and mailing lists are an ode to the increasing popularity and relevance of Jane Austen and the feminine individuality she epitomized.

It is interesting to compare and contrast the characteristics of individuality that emerge in Jane Austen’s and Elizabeth Bennet’s personality with the more traditional masculine conception of rugged individuality.

Darcy’s Individuation
In one sense we are all individuals, each with his or her own defining characteristics and attributes. But in another sense, some people are more formed individuals than others; less dependent for their attributes on how others think, feel and act, relying more on their own personal judgment, values and experience. It is easy to find examples of both types of people in life and literature. But it is more difficult to explain the process by which a member of the collective evolves into a unique individual. Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice provides a rare insight into that process of individuality formation.

The story takes place at the turn of the 19th century when the spirit of French Revolution on the other side of the Channel is exerting a quiet pressure for social evolution in England. At the beginning of the story, we encounter Fitzwilliam Darcy, the hero of the novel, as a self-centered, arrogant, wealthy English aristocrat who takes great pride in his status and estate. By the end of the story, he has shed his sense of self-importance and superiority and learnt to value himself and those around for their character and values, rather than their material possessions or social standing. Darcy’s transformation clearly depicts the process of individualization.

Darcy belongs to a distinguished family. He owns a fine estate generating £10,000 annual income and a large, dependent, tenant population. He has a college education. He is handsome, strong and intelligent. As a result, in a deeply class conscious society, he has developed an acute sense of superiority. Given his class, almost all of Darcy’s friends are a few rungs below him in the social ladder. Darcy dominates them socially. He convinces his impressionable friend Charles Bingley not to marry the girl he loves because she doesn’t belong to the right class. Along with a cousin, the second son of an Earl with only on a modest income of his own, he visits his aunt, and takes all the decisions about the trip without once consulting his cousin.

When Bingley moves to Meryton, a provincial town, Darcy turns up his nose at the country folk. Their rural lifestyle is naturally different from his city-bred ways. Their culture, which he sees as lack of culture, offends him. The people appear noisy and ill mannered. So at every dinner or dance, Darcy stands aloof on his pedestal, refusing to mix, spurning every hand extended to him from below. When the friendly Sir Lucas suggests that he dance with one of the girls present, Darcy brusquely refuses. When a clergyman introduces himself to Darcy, he considers it an affront to be spoken to by one from a lower status without formal introduction, and rudely walks away. Like many of his society, Darcy sees a man’s manners, his family, status and wealth, and misses the man himself. So when Bingley offers to introduce him to Elizabeth Bennet, Darcy fails to see her beauty, good nature, quickness, wit, or any other value that is going to make him fall in love with her later. All he sees is a local girl with unfashionable clothes and unaffected manners. Repulsed by her irresponsible parents, silly sisters and low class relatives, he dismisses her.

In the background greater forces are at work. Across the channel, the French are violently tearing down the pedestal that aristocracy had raised for itself all over Europe. As the guillotine tries to abolish the distinctions between the classes in French society, it dawns on the English aristocrats that they will have to give up their superiority if they want to save their heads. Something stirs in Darcy.
He begins to notice the imperfections in people of his own class. He sees much to be ashamed of in his stately aunt, Lady Catherine. Her rank has rendered her boorish and vulgar. Bingley’s sister Caroline is, unlike the Meryton girls, wealthy, fashionable and elegant. But all her style does not make up for her coarse thoughts and meanness. The more she fawns on him, the more Darcy is repelled. His titled, wealthy cousin, Lady Anne is from an even higher social level than himself. But she is sickly, weak, lifeless, a nonentity.

By contrast, Elizabeth radiates life and energy. Darcy gradually comes to see a light in her eyes that renders her a joy to behold. Where he saw undignified manners, he now sees liveliness. Lack of sophistication now seems natural and charming. He discerns goodness, intelligence, strength, quickness and beauty in this girl he had brushed aside as only tolerable. It is perhaps the first time that Darcy sees someone simply for what they are, without being distracted by their surroundings. This signals the onset of Darcy’s transformation from social conformity to true individuality, a journey that shifts his center-of-reference from external society to his own inner values.

But the path of Darcy’s individuation is not smooth, as is the course of his love. Two decades of social conditioning do not let go of a man without a struggle. They lead to an inner conflict in Darcy. The emerging individual in him wants to change, move on, and embrace the new. The conservative social aristocrat in him does not want any change in the status quo. Society gets the better of him just then, and Darcy forces himself away from Meryton and Elizabeth Bennet.

Their paths cross unexpectedly when Darcy visits his aunt at Hunsford and finds Elizabeth staying with a cousin who lives nearby. With each day, he becomes clearer about his feelings for Elizabeth. Her family is still vulgar, her connections inferior, her status is no match for his, but she alone, he believes, is good enough for him. He decides to marry her, and proposes, ignorantly and arrogantly assuming that she will accept so worthy a match as his. He is stunned to hear Elizabeth’s reply.

Elizabeth makes it clear to him, in a language he has never heard before, that he is the last man on earth she would ever marry. She accuses him of pride, arrogance and insensitivity. Darcy valued himself for his social position and assumed she would too. He never imagined that there was anything else for her to consider apart from his wealth, rank and estate. His value system has been turned upside down. He is angry with Elizabeth for abusing him. He is disappointed his proposal has not been accepted. He is at a crossroads. He has a choice to make. He can fall back on his old status, fortify himself in his luxurious estate, keep all commoners at a distance, and dismiss Elizabeth and all that she said as foolish. Or, he can give up his sense of superiority, cultivate humility and learn to appreciate the good values he finds in others, regardless of their status. That will mean letting go of all that is familiar and comforting, and plunging into unknown territory. Darcy does just this. He chooses the way forward. Whether it is the result of the French Revolution raging nearby, or the emotional outburst of the girl he passionately loves, or both, Darcy transforms himself from a member of a social type into a unique, psychological individual.
Displaying great humility, he recognizes and accepts the truth in Elizabeth’s accusations against him. He vows to give up his pride in his family, culture, wealth and rank. He looks at himself as another would, and discovers his own faults. He sets about changing himself. He takes another look at the people he wrote off as inferior, and finds admirable qualities in them. He makes his respect for the Gardiners, Elizabeth’s uncle and aunt, evident when he meets them. These people whom he had written off simply because they resided in Cheapside, a low class locality in London, and were in trade, now win his admiration and gratitude. He sees their goodness, culture and knowledge.

A greater test of his commitment to getting rid of old attitudes comes when his arch enemy Wickham elopes with Elizabeth's sister Lydia. For the sake of Elizabeth, he goes searching for Wickham in shady neighborhoods, negotiates with a man he despises, arranges his marriage, pays off £6000 of his debts and gets him an officer's position in the military. Darcy who a year earlier could not stand to be in the same room as the rural folk of Meryton, who convinced his friend to give up his love for the sake of his class, rejects all those snobbish, aristocratic social attitudes for the sake of his love.

As proof that Darcy has completely risen above the society and looks no more to it for approval, respect or appreciation, he conceals from Elizabeth and her family his role in saving Lydia. He acts out of his personal values, and saves the girl whose sister he loves. He does it neither to impress Elizabeth nor the society they live in. Darcy is rewarded for his transformation. Elizabeth learns his secret, is filled with gratitude and eagerly accepts him when he proposes the second time. Darcy attains a romantic fulfillment he had not dreamed possible.

Darcy's process of individuation is an expression in the microcosm of the transformation taking place in English society at that time. In saving Lydia and her family, compromising with the roguish Wickham, embracing the rural people of Meryton, and marrying Elizabeth Bennet, Darcy contributes his mite to the peaceful evolution in England that integrated the society and prevented a violent revolution.

**The Development of the Darcy-Elizabeth Relationship**

**Mutual Dislike in the Beginning; Marriage at the End:** - Pride and Prejudice is largely the story of Miss Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy, although certain other characters such as Mr. Bingley, Miss Jane Bennet, and Mr. Wickham also figure prominently in the novel. Both Elizabeth and Darcy create a forceful impression on us.

In fact, we would be perfectly justified in designating Elizabeth as the heroine, and Mr. Darcy as the hero of the novel. The Elizabeth-Darcy relationship dominates the novel. These two persons begin with a mutual dislike of each other, but then they both begin to feel drawn towards each other till they find that they are both in love with each other and are, in fact, indispensable to each other. Marriage is the natural consequence of this discovery by them.

**Elizabeth’s Self-Esteem, Hurt By Mr. Darcy’s Remark:** - Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy meet each other at an assembly (that is, a social gathering). Mr. Darcy has come to this assembly in the company of his intimate friend, Mr. Bingley. The girls attending the
assembly are greatly attracted by Mr. Darcy chiefly because of his handsome appearance and his large estate (which is situated in Derbyshire). The girls are also attracted greatly by Mr. Bingley who too is a good-looking and very rich man. While Mr. Bingley shows a lot of interest in the girls, and more especially in Miss Jane Bennet, Mr. Darcy does not feel much attracted by any of the girls. In fact, Mr. Darcy thinks that none of the girls present suits him as a partner in the dancing and therefore he dances only with the two sisters of his friend, Mr. Bingley. When Mr. Bingley suggests to Mr. Darcy that he should dance with Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy speaks disapprovingly of her, saying that there is not much charm about her. This uncomplimentary remark by Mr. Darcy about Elizabeth is overheard by her, and she therefore feels very annoyed with him. Otherwise too Mr. Darcy seems to be a very proud man. Mrs. Bennet, after attending the assembly, and speaking to her husband, describes Mr. Darcy as a very rude kind of man. Thus on the occasion of their very first meeting, Mr. Darcy expresses the view that Elizabeth is not beautiful enough to tempt him, while Elizabeth feels deeply offended with him after overhearing this remark. Elizabeth feels that Mr. Darcy is a very proud man who has mortified her own pride. What she means is that Mr. Darcy has hurt her self-esteem.

A Change in Mr. Darcy's Opinion of Elizabeth: - When Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy meet again, Elizabeth is determined not to dance with him because of the grudge which she is harbouring against him. However, a slight change now takes place in Mr. Darcy's view of Elizabeth. He begins to find that Elizabeth's face is rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes. He also finds that her figure is light and pleasing; and he is impressed by the easy playfulness of her manners. He now tells Miss Bingley that Elizabeth is a pretty woman having a pair of fine eyes. Miss Bingley regards Mr. Darcy's praise of Elizabeth as a clear signal that he is thinking of Elizabeth as his would-be wife. She then makes a sarcastic remark, telling Mr. Darcy that, in case he marries Elizabeth, he would get a charming mother-in-law in Mrs. Bennet. Actually, Mrs. Bennet has not produced a good impression on either Miss Bingley or Mr. Darcy, and Miss Bingley's remark is therefore meant to lower both Elizabeth and her mother in Mr. Darcy's estimation.

Mr. Darcy's Comment upon Elizabeth's Long Walk: - When Jane has fallen ill at Netherfield Park, Elizabeth goes to attend upon her sister. Elizabeth walks the whole distance of about three miles from Longbourn to Netherfield Park. Mr. Bingley's two sisters mock at Elizabeth for having walked such a long distance because they think themselves to be fine ladies and because, in their opinion, only a low-class girl would care to walk such a long distance. However, Mr. Darcy does not share the opinion of these two ladies in this respect. He defends Elizabeth for having walked this long distance, and says that her eyes looked brighter after she had walked that long distance. Elizabeth, of course, does not know the comments which these persons have made upon the long walk that she has taken. She continues to nurse a grievance against Mr. Darcy for having made an adverse remark about her at the assembly.

Mr. Darcy, Charmed by Elizabeth; her Handicap in his View: - Mr. Darcy now becomes more and more interested in Elizabeth. Miss Bingley perceives this change in Mr. Darcy, and she tries her utmost not to allow Elizabeth to get too close to him because Miss Bingley is herself interested in him. Mr. Darcy has now begun to like Elizabeth very much and is, in fact, feeling thoroughly charmed by her. Her only handicap in his eyes is that she does not belong to the aristocratic class of society to which he himself belongs. If she had been the daughter of aristocratic and rich parents,
Mr. Darcy would certainly have proposed marriage to her at this very stage in the story. Mr. Darcy is a proud man and a snob who believes in distinctions of class and rank. Elizabeth, on her part, continues to feel prejudiced against Mr. Darcy because of the adverse opinion which he had initially expressed about her.

**Different Points of View:** In the course of a conversation, Mr. Darcy happens to say that it has always been his effort to avoid weaknesses which invite ridicule. Elizabeth asks if vanity and pride are among the weaknesses which he tries to avoid. Mr. Darcy replies that vanity is surely a weakness which should be avoided, but that pride has to be properly regulated if a proud man has a really superior mind. Elizabeth, speaking to Miss Bingley, says half ironically that Mr. Darcy suffers from no defect. Mr. Darcy, intervening, says that he has his full share of faults, though his faults are not due to any mental deficiency in him. He then goes on to say that he cannot ignore the follies and vices from which other people suffer; and he adds: "My good opinion once lost is lost forever." Elizabeth, however, tells him that it is surely a fault in him if he can never ignore other people's follies and vices. She even says to him at this time that his defect is a tendency to hate everybody, to which he replies that her defect is deliberately to misunderstand everybody. Now, it is clear to us that Elizabeth is keen to maintain the independence of her mind. Any other girl would have been at pains to humour Mr. Darcy and to endorse whatever opinion he might have expressed. But Elizabeth has the courage to differ with him. Mr. Darcy, it seems, does not resent Elizabeth's disagreeing with the opinions which he expresses. On the contrary, Mr. Darcy finds that he is feeling more and more drawn towards her.

**Mr. Darcy, Almost in Love with Elizabeth:** Mr. Darcy now thinks that, if he comes into contact with Elizabeth more often, he might actually fall in love with her. The author in this context writes: "He began to feel the danger of paying Elizabeth too much attention." Mr. Darcy pays little heed to Miss Bingley who tries her utmost to win his good opinion and his heart. At this point we get the feeling that Mr. Darcy has already fallen in love with Elizabeth though he does not yet admit this fact even to himself. The chief obstruction in his way is Elizabeth's lower social position. He thinks that his marrying Elizabeth would be an unseemly step because he is far above Elizabeth in social standing.

**Elizabeth Hardening; and Darcy Softening:** A new complication arises in the Elizabeth-Darcy relationship when Mr. Wickham appears on the stage. This man, who becomes rapidly familiar with Elizabeth because of his social charm, tells Elizabeth that Mr. Darcy had done him a great wrong and a great injustice. Mr. Wickham represents himself to Elizabeth as a victim of Mr. Darcy's callousness and high-handedness, with the result that Elizabeth's prejudice against Mr. Darcy is now increased. In this frame of mind, Elizabeth tells her friend Charlotte that she is determined of hate Mr. Darcy and that there is no possibility at all of her finding him an agreeable man. Then another event takes place which further intensifies Elizabeth's bitterness against Mr. Darcy. She learns from Colonel Fitzwilliam that Mr. Darcy had dissuaded Mr. Bingley from proposing marriage to her sister Jane. Thus several reasons have now combined to harden Elizabeth's attitude towards Mr. Darcy, while Mr. Darcy, on his part, has been softening towards Elizabeth.

**Darcy's Proposal of Marriage; and Elizabeth's Rejection of It:** Mr. Darcy is now so much in love with Elizabeth that he proposes marriage to her. This happens when
Elizabeth is staying at Hunsford. However, his consciousness of Elizabeth's social inferiority to him has by no means weakened or diminished. Even while making this proposal of marriage to her, he goes out of his way to emphasize the fact of her being socially very much beneath him. Elizabeth, who is a very self-respecting girl, feels deeply offended by the condescending manner in which Mr. Darcy has made his proposal of marriage, and she therefore summarily rejects his proposal not only because of his arrogant manner but because of other reasons as well. She gives him her reasons for this rejection in some detail. She tells him that he had prevented his friend Mr. Bingley from marrying her sister Jane. She tells him that he had most unjustly and cruelly treated Mr. Wickham, the son of the steward to Mr. Darcy's late father. And, of course, she points out to him the superiority complex from which he is suffering.

**Darcy's Letter to Elizabeth in Defence of Himself:** On the following day, Mr. Darcy hands over a letter to Elizabeth. This letter contains Mr. Darcy's defence of himself. Through this letter he informs Elizabeth that he might have been mistaken in his judgment of her sister Jane and might have committed an error of judgment in preventing Mr. Bingley from marrying Jane, but that his treatment of Mr. Wickham had fully been justified because Mr. Wickham, far from deserving any favour or any kindness, is an obnoxious man, having no scruples at all. Mr. Darcy further points out that the behaviour of Elizabeth's mother and her two youngest sisters has been far from pleasing.

**A Change in Elizabeth's View of Darcy:** Although Elizabeth finds that the tone of Mr. Darcy's letter is insolent and haughty, yet the letter does bring about a certain change in her. She begins to realize that Mr. Darcy had, after all, not been unjust in his treatment of Mr. Wickham. She also realizes that Mr. Darcy had some valid ground for preventing Mr. Bingley from marrying Jane because Jane had really not given to Mr. Bingley a sufficient indication that she was deeply in love with him. Elizabeth also admits to herself that the behaviour of her mother and her two youngest sisters has been undignified and therefore disagreeable.

**Mutual Appreciation of Each Other:** During Elizabeth's stay at Lambton and her visit to Pemberley House, Mr. Darcy is at pains to please Elizabeth by his talk and by calling in her in the company of his sister Georgiana. So anxious is Mr. Darcy to place Elizabeth at Lambton that Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner feel convinced that he is in love with her. On one occasion when Miss Bingley begins to speak unfavourably about Elizabeth's physician appearance, Mr. Darcy says that Elizabeth is one of the handsomest women of his acquaintance. Elizabeth, on her part, has now begun to think that Mr. Darcy is exactly the man who, in disposition and talents, would suit her most as her husband. She believes that his understanding and temper, though unlike her own, would answer all her wishes.

**Elizabeth's Admiration for Darcy for his Role in the Lydia-Wickham Affair:** Elizabeth begins to admire Mr. Darcy still more when she comes to know of the role which he had played in bringing about the marriage of Lydia and Mr. Wickham. She now thinks that the Bennet family has reason to feel deeply indebted to Mr. Darcy for having saved them from disgrace and infamy. Mr. Darcy's action in having paid Mr. Wickham the required sum of money and having settled the whole matter amicably shows him to be a high-minded man.
The Effect on Mr. Darcy of Lady Catherine's Talk with Elizabeth: - Another event now takes place to bring Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy closer to each other. This event is a visit by Lady Catherine to Longbourn. Lady Catherine, in a private meeting with Elizabeth, warns her against agreeing to marry her nephew, Mr. Darcy. Lady Catherine says that Mr. Darcy is to marry her own daughter Miss Ann de Bourgh and that Elizabeth should not dare to think of marrying him. Lady Catherine utters all sorts of threats to Elizabeth; but Elizabeth remains calm and unafraid, and her answers to Lady Catherine show that she would decide the matter in accordance with her own wishes in case Mr. Darcy at all proposes marriage to her. Lady Catherine feels most annoyed by Elizabeth's attitude. When Lady Catherine meets Mr. Darcy in London, she tells him of the meeting which she has had with Elizabeth, and the answers which Elizabeth had given to her. Mr. Darcy now feels convinced that Elizabeth has a soft corner for him, and so he decides to renew his proposal of marriage to her.

Elizabeth's Acceptance of Mr. Darcy's Proposal of Marriage: - At his next meeting with Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy once again proposes marriage to her, admitting that he is now a changed man and that all his pride, vanity, selfishness, and arrogance have been humbled by her. He says that he owes the great change in his character to the manner in which she had been behaving towards him. Elizabeth, whose own attitude towards Mr. Darcy has undergone a great change on account of various reasons including the role which Mr. Darcy had played in the Lydia-Wickham affair, gladly accepts the proposal. And so, after the permission of Mr. Bennet has been obtained by Mr. Darcy, the marriage of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth takes place amid great jubilation.

Theme of Mercenary in Pride and Prejudice

Theme of mercenary or money marriage plays a significant role to the extent that without this theme; the novel is either incomprehensible or prosaic. Although the theme of mercenary resonates through almost all the major characters; we cannot take it to be Austen’s view point. She is against; not for mercenary marriages.

19th century England had some serious social problems left over from the heyday of Royalty and Nobility. One of the most significant of these was the tendency to marry for money. In this basic equation, a person sought a spouse based on the dowry receivable and their allowance. This process went both ways; a beautiful woman might be able to snag a rich husband, or a charring handsome man could woo a rich young girl. In these marriages, money was the only consideration. Love was left out, with a feeling that it would develop as the years went by. In Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen comments that marriage in her time is a financial contract, where love is strictly a matter of chance. Lady Catherine states the fact that happiness in marriage is strictly a matter of chance. This holds true in the conception of marriage held in the novel. All of the marriages in the book formed under the bonds of money rather than the bonds of love end up unhappy or unsuccessful. The whole novel outlines attempts to dance around love for the combination of a wealthy person with an attractive person.

Before Austen can chart the difficult process through which the heroine of Pride and Prejudice becomes a skilled player of the marriage-gambling game, however, the novelist must establish the association between money and marriage. She accomplishes this throughout the book by mixing the languages of love and economics. The novel's
celebrated first sentence presents an example of this type of punning: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife". The line's comic effect derives primarily from the incongruity between the lofty diction of the phrase "truth universally acknowledged" and the baldly mercenary sentiment with which the sentence ends. The humorous conflation of philosophic and monetary speculation continues through the first and into the second chapter, as Mr. Bennet misses no opportunity to amuse himself with repeated puns that portray the arrival of the Bingley party at Netherfield as a serendipitous investment opportunity for the families in the village. When, for example, Mr. Bennet tells his wife that he needn't call on Bingley, since their neighbor Mrs. Long has promised to introduce the Bennet girls to the rich young man at an upcoming party, Mrs. Bennet replies that Mrs. Long is a "selfish, hypocritical woman" who will do no such thing since she has "two nieces of her own". In that case, replies Mr. Bennet, Mrs. Bennet herself should introduce the girls, justifying such a breach of decorum on the sound financial principle that he who hesitates is lost: "if we do not venture, somebody else will; and after all Mrs. Long and her nieces must stand their chance". All financial ventures, from the stock market to marriage, entail an element of risk that one must expect and for which one must plan.

The first line of Pride and Prejudice, "It is a universally acknowledged fact that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife", sets the tone for the rest of the novel. We interpret it to mean that a wealthy man either actively pursues a wife based on his knowledge that no one would turn down a wealthy suitor, or attractive women use their beauty to their advantage to attract a rich husband. Confident in his knowledge of his own wealth and magnificence, Darcy's less than romantic first proposal to Elizabeth is a good example of the first of these truths. Darcy marches into the room, and after stating all the reasons why a wealthy man such as himself should never marry a "socially inferior" person such as Elizabeth, he proposes to her. He is totally confident in the knowledge that no woman would turn down marriage to a person as rich as himself, no matter how obnoxious he is. He seems out rightly stunned when Elizabeth refuses him. This refusal shatters his conception of reality, showing him that money is not all powerful. This is what seems to throw him head over heels in love with Elizabeth.

Mrs. Bennett is the embodiment of the second part of the rule. Her marriage was based on the principal of financial gain, and she desires her daughters to be the same. She was able to attract Mr. Bennett, a seemingly sensible and self-controlling man, by, “keeping her mouth shut and smiling a lot.” Basically stated, she entered their marriage under false pretenses. She had no real love for him, only a desire to gain financially. Every action taken by her in the novel is directly intended to undermine her daughter's marriages, guiding them toward financial gain. She is furious when Elizabeth turns down Collins, as her marriage to him would mean the estate would stay in the family. She found Darcy most disagreeable, but would have been furious if Elizabeth had told her the she had turned Darcy's marriage proposal down.

Charlotte Lucas represents the group entirely left out of this equation. She has neither extreme beauty nor wealth. She cannot even attract a husband through her wit as Elizabeth does, and so she is basically without hope for inclusion. Elizabeth is astonished when Charlotte accepts Mr. Collin's marriage proposal, as she does not understand fully Charlotte’s predicament. She cannot hope for a wealthy and handsome husband like Elizabeth and Jane can, as she does not have their particular assets. She can hope at best for security and a degree of comfort.
In Ch.26 we read that Wickham has switched his affections from Elizabeth to Miss King because she has suddenly acquired 10,000 pounds. In Ch.27 When Mrs.Gardiner teases Elizabeth that Wickham who till then was her admirer is "mercenary" Elizabeth replies:"Pray, my dear aunt, what is the difference in matrimonial affairs, between the mercenary and the prudent motive? Where does discretion end, and avarice begin?" Money no doubt is certainly necessary for a successful and happy marriage. But the vital question is 'how much?': In Ch.33 Col.Fitzwilliam Darcy, the younger son of an earl, a very rich charming young man, subtly hints that he cannot marry Elizabeth:"Our habits of expense make us too dependent, and there are not many in my rank of life who can afford to marry without some attention to money." to which Elizabeth playfully suggests that his price would perhaps not be "above 50,000 pounds." In Ch.19 Collins threatens Elizabeth to submit to his proposal by emphasizing her impoverished status:"one thousand pounds in the 4 per cents, which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to." The novel is a heart rending cry for the freedom of young women from the clutches of mercenary men who toyed with their happiness: "Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance."

Mr. Wickham's quick transferal of his affections to Miss King after she has acquired 10,000 pounds provides important insight into his true character. While Elizabeth had clearly been his favorite, Wickham must have realized that her social position gave him little chance of being able to marry her. Of course, this knowledge did not prevent him from forming an attachment to her in the first place. Because he paid no attention at all to Miss King before she inherited the money, his motives for beginning to show a preference for her must be purely mercenary. Elizabeth does not seem to find fault with him for his actions, however, even Mrs. Gardiner points out the purely mercenary reasons for his actions. Having been sufficiently flattered by his preference for her and having formed a positive judgment of him, it seems that even in the face of such strong evidence she is unwilling to rethink her positive judgment of him. It is ironic that while Elizabeth is unable to make excuses for her good friend Charlotte for her choice to marry based on financial concerns, she sees no problem in Wickham's feigning attraction to a woman simply because her sizeable inheritance.

Elizabeth learns from Lydia that Mr. Wickham has given up his thought of marrying Miss King also. This and the other facts show Mr. Wickham to be an utterly unreliable kind of man. When Elizabeth tells Jane the true facts about Mr. Wickham, Jane too feels shocked and says: "Wickham so very bad! It is almost past belief." Mr. Wickham provides further evidence of his being a rascal and a villain by eloping with Lydia. The news of Lydia's elopement with Mr. Wickham comes as a great shock to the whole Bennet family, especially to Elizabeth. It is true that much of the blame for this elopement rests upon Lydia herself; but Mr. Wickham cannot be exonerated. According to the information supplied by Mr. Wickham's friend Mr. Denny, Mr. Wickham had no intention to marry Lydia. Thus, Mr. Wickham's real purpose in running away Lydia had been only to seduce her and to satisfy his lust for her. If Mr. Wickham does marry Lydia ultimately, it is because of the role played by Mr. Darcy in the whole affair. Mr. Wickham states certain terms and conditions on which he is prepared to marry Lydia; and Mr. Darcy goes out of his way to fulfil those terms and conditions. Of course, Mr. Bennet too has to satisfy certain conditions laid down by Mr. Wickham, but the major role in bringing about the marriage is that of Mr. Darcy. Mr. Wickham also reveals at this time that he had incurred certain debts which are also now paid by Mr. Darcy. Thus, Mr. Wickham shows himself to be a mercenary man, besides being unscrupulous in his relations with girls.
Wickham's next victim is Lydia. It is rather difficult to explain his motives here, for Lydia has neither money, nor beauty, nor brains. And Wickham does not love her at all. The fact is that his gambling and his reckless extravagance involve him in a number of undischarged debts of honour, and he is forced to leave the neighborhood. The elopement is brought on by the strength of Lydia's love for him. He has absolutely no intentions of marrying her. Mrs. Gardiner's letter to Elizabeth clearly reveals that, even after elopement, he cherishes the hope of more effectually making his fortune by marriage in some other country. His willingness to take Lydia along is either a pure piece of rakishness or an attempt to blackmail Mr. Bennet and extort as much money as possible. However, Darcy's intervention persuaded intervention promises him substantial immediate relief and he is persuaded to marry Lydia. His conduct in this episode betrays his extreme selfishness, his mercenariness and venality, and his utter baseness and want of principle. In pursuing his selfish aims he is thoroughly calculating - as in the careful plan to gain Georgiana Darcy's money as well as revenge on Darcy. In most of his pursuits he is thoroughly mercenary, as in his pursuit of a wealthy wife and his readiness to marry Lydia when offered enough money. His style of living is debauched: he likes gambling to excess and drinking, and his sexual morals are weak or non-existent. He is totally lacking in honour, and runs away from paying gambling debts, feels no guilt about the social stigma which will attach to Lydia after she has run away with him, and shows no intention of marrying her. Nor on his return to Longbourn after the marriage does he show any shame. At the end, we feel that in marrying Lydia he gets the fate he deserves.

In conclusion, the essential statement made about marriage in Pride and Prejudice is that a marriage for money will end up unsuccessful. At the same time, a marriage based purely on the means of passion and love alone will also be doomed to failure. A balance must be met. Balance doesn’t necessarily have to be equal, but must be present in order for a marriage to be successful. This is proven in the novel Pride and Prejudice, by examples of unsuccessful marriages formed for money, and successful marriages formed by a combination of love and security.

**Character Analysis of Elizabeth and Darcy**

**Elizabeth Bennet:**

The protagonist of the novel, is portrayed as an independent and innovative woman of her time. She is the second eldest of the five Bennet sisters and shares a close relationship with her older sister Jane. Favored by her father, Elizabeth is seen as her mother's least favorite. This comes as no surprise as Mrs. Bennet is extremely superficial and self-absorbed, the polar opposite of Elizabeth. Her younger sisters, Kitty and Lydia, are equally repulsive, shamelessly flirtatious with men of the local military outpost. Though very dedicated to her family, Elizabeth is often humiliated by their personalities.

A central theme within the novel is Elizabeth's limitation for marriage resulting from her family's social status. Elizabeth's mother throws a fit when her predetermined plans to wealthily wed each of her daughters clashes with Elizabeth's personal creed to marry for love, regardless of material wealth. One such example is when Elizabeth is proposed to by her imbecilic cousin, Mr. Collins. According to inheritance mandates of nineteenth century England, Mr. Collins is entitled to the family's entire estate upon Mr. Bennet's
death. Elizabeth, however, does not love him nor ever could. She is often regarded as being too stubborn, socially rebellious, and judgmental, viewing those who do not share her same beliefs concerning marriage in a condescending light. This proves true when Elizabeth’s dear friend, Charlotte Lucas, in turn marries the spurned Mr. Collins solely for financial security. Elizabeth disapproves of her friend’s shallow and conformist decision, causing her to so eagerly court and proceed to marry him.

Just as she possesses critical opinions about select others, so too do others reciprocate the criticism and judgment for her. When faced with opposition, Elizabeth’s quick and fiery tongue often gets the better of her. A key event in the novel that exemplifies Elizabeth’s spirit transforms her life drastically. While attending a social gathering, Elizabeth is introduced to Fitzwilliam Darcy, a tall, handsome, and wealthy landowner. Their meeting is spiteful and cruel. Mr. Darcy does not hesitate to insult and slight Elizabeth and her family. Somewhat uncharacteristically, Elizabeth’s musters the strength to internalize his words and remain silent; however, Mr. Darcy’s insults give her reason to be prejudiced against him and his seemingly unjustifiable pride.

The rollercoaster of affairs involving two men in Elizabeth’s life begin partially after her initial acquaintance with Mr. Darcy followed by that with a handsome and charming, yet impoverished soldier named George Wickham. Initially, Wickham captures Elizabeth’s interest, however, he is deceitful about his past, portraying Mr. Darcy as the primary source of his suffering and misery. Elizabeth trusts Wickham’s fabrication completely, only succeeding to fuel Elizabeth’s increasing distain for Mr. Darcy. In addition to Wickham’s malicious tales, Elizabeth discovers that Mr. Darcy is responsible for the cruel end to the romantic relations between her beloved older sister Jane and Mr. Darcy’s good friend, Mr. Bingley. Elizabeth loathes Mr. Darcy as Jane is overcome with depression from the abrupt ending of her relationship with Mr. Bingley.

The turning point of the novel is marked by Mr. Darcy’s shocking marriage proposal to Elizabeth. Naturally, she is stunned and even appalled at this, considering her preconceptions of his character. Elizabeth proceeds to charge Mr. Darcy with poor manners and ignoble character. Mr. Darcy eventually enables Elizabeth to see his true character as an honorable and respectable gentleman. Ironically, Elizabeth also comes to realize that all the characteristics she erroneously distained in Mr. Darcy truly belong to Mr. Wickham.

As time goes on, Fitzwilliam Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet’s relationship only strengthens as they solidify a loving relationship. New obstacles arise between the two proud lovers, though, mainly stemming from social faux pas and class divides only true love can bond. Additionally, a dramatic scandal arises nearly eliminating any possibility of marriage between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth discovers that her impulsive sister Lydia has run away with George Wickham, without any intentions of marrying. Lydia’s actions are certain to bring shame and dishonor to the entire Bennet family, such that no respectable man would be able to consider marrying the remaining sisters thereafter. Mr. Darcy rescues the Bennet family name by providing the financial means for Lydia and Wickham to marry. It is only due to the audacious personalities of both Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth that the two are able to overcome tribulations caused by nearly every character involved: Lady Catherine de Bourgh, Mrs. Bennet, George Wickham, the younger Bennet sisters and Mr. Bingley’s sisters.
Elizabeth suffers the loss of hope after introspective reflection and painful confrontation of shallow social standards. She is devastated by the possibility that after reconsidering true nobility of Mr. Darcy’s character, she could have lost him forever. It will take redeeming the seemingly irreversible and shocking scandal of Lydia and George Wickham’s elopement for Mr. Darcy to prove his noble, selfless, and considerate character. He saves not only the Bennet family by making Lydia an honorable woman by offering Wickham enough money to entice him to wed the virtually penniless Lydia, despite his own personal grudge against the deceitful Wickham. The restoration of honor to the Bennet family provides for two more important marriages to take place: one between Jane and Mr. Bingley, and the other between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. In the end, Elizabeth has maintained her pride, yet is able to overcome her prejudice against Mr. Darcy, who initially sought to damage this pride upon meeting each other for the first time. Eventually, Elizabeth is forced to reconsider her prejudice attitudes, targeting the superfluous societal values as a whole, instead of the people who live by them.

Fitzwilliam Darcy:

Mr. Darcy is the second of the two protagonists in the novel. Over time as the story unfolds, the reader’s perception of Mr. Darcy’s transforms from maliciousto benevolent. His position as the ideal match for Elizabeth becomes obvious, though once an unimaginable possibility. In addition to being educated and worldly, he is rich and handsome, claiming the adoration of various women throughout the novel. It is clear from the onset, however, that he is only interested in the very woman who despises him most, Elizabeth Bennet. Nephew of Lady Catherine de Bourgh, Mr. Darcy’s rank in society is just below that of nobility.

Mr. Darcy praises and holds dear many things in his life. Among the most important are his sister, Georgiana and his estate, Pemberley. Pemberley proves a fitting symbol for Mr. Darcy throughout the novel. From afar, Pemberley appears to be a proud and arrogant residence. Upon closer inspection, however, it radiates natural warmth, beauty, and a solid foundation.

Mr. Darcy’s family ties and relations, in addition to Lady Catherine de Bourgh, are strong and formidable. As the only son of a well-established family, he inherits of the Pemberley estate and becomes the master of the family, especially of his adoring younger sister Georgiana Darcy. As her legal guardian, Mr. Darcy adopts a paternalistic role in Georgiana’s life. Upon the death of Wickham’s father, Mr. Darcy’s father took the penniless Wickham under his wing and treats him like his own son. Wickham and Mr. Darcy mature together, both enjoying financial and social success at an early age. It soon became apparent, however, the conflicting characters of the two men. Where Mr. Darcy is honest, forthright, and hardworking, Wickham is discovered to be surreptitious, especially in regards to money, Mr. Darcy’s father, Georgiana, and Elizabeth. In addition to being deceitful, Wickham is a philanderer and gambler.

A rift between the two childhood friends develops and quickly grows to irreparable proportions once Wickham decides to earn his fortune by eloping with young Georgiana Darcy. Georgiana was an heiress in her own right. Fortunately, Darcy due to his undying commitment to family and virtue, he succeeds in preventing the dishonorable elopement. Fortunately for Wickham, he decides not to publicly ruin him; instead, but he buys Wickham off, and thus severing all connections between them.
Unfortunately, Wickham’s actions and an atrocious first impression form Elizabeth’s repulsive opinion of Mr. Darcy. Ironically, her response to his hostilities and the obvious interest she shows in George Wickham only intrigue Darcy further, igniting within him a passion for Elizabeth. It is only after a fruitless and shocking proposal to Elizabeth, signifying the turning point of the novel, that Mr. Darcy receives the opportunity to clear his good name with his beloved, in addition to his dark past with Wickham and his influences on the relationship between Jane Bennet and Charles Bingley. Mr. Darcy does exactly this and slowly begins to win her affections. Despite humiliating himself by proposing and being rejected from one of inferior social class, he remains steadfast and determined to win Elizabeth’s heart. His prejudice is proven through both his initial insulting comments to Elizabeth upon introduction, and by the reasons he offers to Mr. Bingley for ending relations with Jane Bennet. It is not long, however, before Mr. Darcy realizes that Elizabeth is far different from any of the solicitous women enamored with him.

Although both are quick to judge and initially are often blinded to the truth behind their pride and prejudices. Love escapes him. He is desirous not to wed or doom his days to an ordinary girl, but he is intrigued not only for Elizabeth’s beauty, but her intellect, spirit, and wit as well. Elizabeth’s bitter feelings towards him, and his own haughtiness seem only to deny any romantic prospects between the two. While Darcy hails from the upper echelons of society and family, Longbourn, Mr. Bennet’s estate, is just barely profitable enough to admit the family into Mr. Darcy’s social realm. Undoubtedly, Elizabeth’s rejection of his proposal humbles Mr. Darcy tremendously.

Elizabeth’s beauty claims Darcy’s affections for her throughout the remainder novel, causing him to demonstrate his growing commitment to her, regardless of social standings and the family’s harsh criticisms of him. Mr. Darcy finds himself in a peculiar situation, faced with the potential ruin of the Bennet family that Elizabeth had prophesied. He knows that the only way to save the family, as well as his romantic prospects with Elizabeth, is to aid Lydia Bennet, and the deplorable George Wickham.

The decision serves as a great burden upon Mr. Darcy’s conscience as he is forced to choose between pride and charity. Darcy proves his benevolence as he proceeds to secretly funnel money to the Bennets through Mrs. Bennet’s brother, Mr. Gardiner. In the process, Mr. Darcy is able to overcome any previous judgments, and even accepting Wickham as a prospective brother-in-law. With a renewed outlook, he offers his consent and support of Mr. Bingley and Jane Bennet’s marriage, which Darcy had also previously delayed due to his critical opinions of their relationship. Mr. Darcy’s patronage of the Bennet family as well as his romantic intentions are offered at a superficial cost to him, voiced by his disapproving aunt, Lady Catherine, a prude and narrow-minded woman. Lady Catherine is appalled at the alleged destruction of her family name that would result by admitting Elizabeth into her family. Instead, she considers her own sickly daughter, Heiress Anne de Bourgh, a far more fitting wife for Mr. Darcy.

In the end, however, Mr. Darcy is only too set on winning Elizabeth’s heart. She regrets her initial harsh judgments of Mr. Darcy, and begins to see him with new eyes, the man of her dreams. Darcy, being the impressionable man that he is, holds few people in high esteem, and Elizabeth is one of them. She joins Georgiana, Mr. Darcy’s dear sister, as the two most influential and precious elements in his life. Pemberly becomes the home to his new wife, Elizabeth. Mr. Darcy overcomes various internal battles, such as his
arrogance, prejudice, and social restraints. Finally, he reaches a state of harmony between all the elements of his life including fortune, family, friends, and the very dearest to his heart, his new wife, Elizabeth.

Jane Austen as a Novelist

Jane Austen wrote out of sheer love of writing without having an eye on popularity or monetary gain. She has often been praised for the silvery perfection of her art. Macaulay has in his journal the entry: "I have now read once again all Miss Austen's novels; charming they are. There are in the world no compositions which approach nearer to perfection." She is perfect because she never strays outside the material and method of her art.

Jane's creative range is in some respects a very limited and narrow one. In the first instance it is confined to her portrayal of the gentry class in which she was born and which she knows best. Leonie Villard has rightly pointed out: "The 'gentry,' that class which is essentially proper to English society, holding to the aristocracy as well as to the middle class, and forming a link between them, is not only the class which Jane Austen knows best, it is also the only class that she wishes to know."

Jane further limits herself by taking not a large canvas for her portraiture but selecting only "the little bit of irony (two inches wide)" to work upon. According to her, "3 or 4 Families in a Country Village is the very thing to work on," as she wrote to her niece, the literary Anna. Owing to the fascinating pictures of domestic life portrayed by Austen, her novels are considered the classics of "domestic comedy" novels. She lived through the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, but she does not mention these historic events even once in her novels. There are no adventures, no sensational incidents, and no romantic musings in her novels. There are incidents of elopements such as those of Lydia and Wickham in Pride and Prejudice, or Julia and Henry Crawford in Mansfield Park. They are, however, in no sense romantic affairs but fall in the natural course of events in the story.

Jane Austen's novels deal with commonplace humdrum events of everyday life, in which people do little more than talk to one another about their trivial interests. Life mostly consists of paying Visits, quizzing and speculating about new arrivals, driving to meet relatives or to do shopping, walking in parks, etc. The quiet drama of life that is treated is mostly confined to drawing rooms. That is why Charlotte Bronte regrets that Jane's novels lack the picturesque aspects of external nature for there is "no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck" in her novels. Owing to Jane's preoccupation with ordinary, commonplace events of life, her novels are called "tea-table romances." Walter Scott praised her for her exquisite treatment of ordinary events: "The young lady has a talent for describing the involvements of feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with." He also praises her "...exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting...."
her characters." Even in the treatment of love Jane is limited in her inability to express impulsive emotions, associated with love, directly and passionately. Charlotte Bronte emphasizes the lack of passions in her novels when she remarks: "She ruffles her reader by nothing vehement, disturbs him by nothing profound. The passions are perfectly unknown to her; she rejects even a speaking acquaintance with that stormy sisterhood." According to George Eliot, Jane Austen "never penetrated into deeper experience, the powerful and spiritual things of life."

The most important aspect of Jane's narrow range is her comic mode of holding a mirror up to life. She is a comedian and her literary impulse from the beginning to the end, has been humorous. On being asked to write an historical romance by the Prince Regent's librarian, Mr. Clark, she clearly told him that she "could no more write a romance than an epic poem." She could under no condition go beyond her range of the comic vision of life. Most of her successful characters are regular comic character-parts like Mrs. Bennet and Mr. Collins.

Within her narrow range Austen is among the greatest literary artists, the greatest "artificers" of fiction. Her picture of life is "a delicate water-colour to put beside the more vigorous oil-painting of Fielding." Her work is that of a miniaturist or illuminator. According to Charlotte Bronte "There is a Chinese fidelity, a miniature delicacy in the painting" of life by Austen. Like a true artist Jane holds to the classical ideal, "nothing in excess; everything in its proper proportion." She, however, conceals the effort of her creative activity so well that her work seems absolutely spontaneous and natural, almost a free outburst. Her own conception of a perfect novel as given in Northanger Abbey is "a work in which the greatest powers of mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language."

Professor Garrod's remark that Jane Austen is incapable of writing a story refers to her inability of narrating sensational and exciting happenings. In fact, such a sequence of happenings was beyond her range. But, even while dealing with commonplace events of life, she goes on manipulating relationships among characters by giving twists to them in such a way as always keeps the reader in suspense. The story of the struggle of mutual attraction against mutual repulsion of Darcy and Elizabeth in Pride and Prejudice, passes through" such situations as keeps the readers eager to know the next development, till the end. Jane Austen also anticipates Henry James' favourite technique of telling the story not as the author perceives it, but as one of the characters in the story perceives it. This device helps to eliminate the frequent intrusions of the author, which break the illusion of reality and make the novel rambling and loose in form. The story of Pride and Prejudice is narrated from the point of view of Elizabeth.

All of Jane Austen's novels are meticulously integrated. There is not a character or incident that does not make its necessary contribution to the development of the plot. Structurally her novels belong to that type of the "dramatic novel" in which the hiatus between the characters and the plot disappears. The given qualities of the characters determine the action, and the action in turn progressively changes the characters, and thus everything is borne forward to an end. In Pride and Prejudice, the pride of Darcy and prejudice of Elizabeth give rise to action which in its turn brings about a change in them. Darcy discards his pride and Elizabeth her prejudice and thus the hero and the heroine are finally united. Baker divides the plot of Pride and Prejudice into five acts of
high comedy corresponding with the five stages of situation at the beginning, development of conflict, climax in the middle of the plot, followed by the decline of conflict and final resolution. In the novel the climax is reached when Darcy's proposal is rejected by Elizabeth.

Austen's skill to fuse together good and bad in her characters in the same proportion as is found in nature makes them real and life-like. She has an unerring eye for the outward idiosyncrasies of her characters, their manner, their charm and their tricks of speech. Her characters are therefore so much individualized that each is different from the other. In Macaulay's view she approaches nearest to the manner of Shakespeare in this respect. He says: "she has given us a multitude of characters, all, in a certain sense, commonplace, all such as we meet every day, yet they are all as perfectly discriminated from each other as if they were the most eccentric of human beings."

Austen has a deep psychological insight which enables her to correlate the surface peculiarities of her characters with their inner nature. She also reveals a keen insight into the processes of the heart and the hidden internal workings of the minds of her characters. These hidden tumults of heart often bring about changes in her characters. Austen's characters are, therefore, not static or flat but well-rounded and vibrant. Being embodiments of essential human nature, her characters transcend the bounds of time, to become figures of as timeless and universal a significance as the pilgrims of Chaucer.

What makes Jane Austen a source of perennial interest is the all-pervading presence of humour and irony in her stories. It is the irradiating spark of humour that enlivens her commonplace subject matter and gives to her novels their exhilarating charm. But she never ridicules "what is wiser or good." "Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies" (Chapter XI) divert her and she laughs at them. In Pride and Prejudice, Mrs. Bennet and Mr. Collins are constantly the source of laughter because of their vulgarity and mean understanding. Mr. Bennet misses no opportunity of amusing himself at their cost. Mr. Collins' foolish display of self-importance and humility and his pompous proposal to Elizabeth are also full of great fun and laughter.

Jane Austen's humour is quiet and delicate. She never exaggerates the fun. Her sense of ridicule is proportioned to the follies which divert her. Her humour is cultivated and genial; it is the humour of an observer — of a refined, satisfied observer — rather than the humour of a reformer. This is why even her satire is mild and genial, and often tinged with irony. When Lydia in Pride and Prejudice suggests to her mother that the family visit her for she can get husbands for her sisters easily there, Elizabeth remarks: "I thank you for my share of the favour; but I do not particularly like your way of getting husbands".

Irony is the most important element of Jane's comic vision. According to Professor Chevalier, "the basic feature of every irony is a contrast between a reality and an appearance." While "verbal irony" shows the contrast between the apparent meaning of a statement and its real meaning, "situational irony" provides the contrast between the expectation and fulfillment of a situation. "Ironic of character" presents the contrast between appearance and reality of characters. Irony is at play continually and all through Pride and Prejudice. All the characters do the opposite of what they wish to do and experience the opposite of what they and others expect them to experience. Darcy and Wickham are the impressive examples of the irony of character. Elizabeth who
describes Wickham as "the most agreeable man I ever saw" and considers Darcy to be "the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry", has to revise her opinion soon to her great mental agony Darcy, who at first sight finds Elizabeth "not handsome enough to tempt me", later on describes her "as one of the handsomest women of my acquaintance". He in good faith tries to prevent his friend Bingley from marrying a Bennet girl, but marries one himself. Mrs. Renne thinks Darcy to be the most disagreeable man in the world, but soon after goes "distracted" with delight when she hears he is to be her son-in-law. She takes Elizabeth to her husband so that he may persuade her to marry Mr. Collins, but Mr. Bennet instead tells Elizabeth: "An unhappy alternative is before you, Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents — your mother will never see you if you do not marry Mr. Collins, and I will never see you again if you do".

Jane Austen is undoubtedly one of the great prose stylists among prose writers in English. She uses proper and apt words and her sentences are balanced, clear, precise, and simple, yet refined and lively. Though she sometimes uses archaisms and stilted diction, her dialogues are very natural and suited to her characters. Dr. Chapman calls her "one of the most accurate writers of dialogue of her own or any age."

Jane Austen’s moral-realistic vision, the perfection of her art, her sparkling humour and irony, her skill in framing compact plots and natural dialogues, and portraying living characters, and the universal significance of her stories — all contribute to making her in the words of David Cecil "one of the supreme novelists of the world."

**Importance of Economic Concerns in Pride and Prejudice**

Economic concerns are set up right from the opening sentence of Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice as the foil for love. The novel is a lengthy discourse upon the old adage that “money doesn’t buy happiness”, and throughout the textual dance between these two elements, the author presents the [perhaps rather bleak] theme that happiness in marriage is possible only when love, affection, and mutual respect are all present and influential, and yet tempered with sound financial resources and decisions. “The danger of losing it all” must be removed far enough for love to blossom, and yet must not be the sole reason for the match. My essay will explore this theme through studies of the five major matrimonial arrangements in the novel.

Due to economic misfortune, the marriage between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet cannot be described as a happy one. Exasperated cries such as “Oh, Mr. Bennet!” are heard throughout the story as his wife fails repeatedly to anticipate his mind, whereupon Mr. Bennet invariably chooses to isolate himself from her shrewish voice in his library. Their relationship is significantly dysfunctional.

Mr. Bennet is motivated mostly by a desire to enjoy his life as comfortable as possible, and take nearly nobody seriously. Mrs. Bennet on the other hand is perpetually troubled by the looming threat of being reduced to her pittance of an inheritance to support her family, thanks to the “cruel entail” of the Bennet estate upon a male heir. This riles her fragile nerves, and inclines her to the sort of behaviour that Mrs. Bennet calls “silly”, such as gossip, match-making, and behaving like a snob-nosed bitch. Mrs. Bennet’s emotional despair at her financial affairs is what drives them apart. She has little
recourse but to gossip about the prospects of eligible rich men marrying her daughters, as we are to understand Mr. Bennet has been unable or unwilling to save for his family. His happiness and that of Mrs. Bennet and their daughters would therefore always be greatly impaired due to his failure to properly address these economic concerns.

A character that has far too much regard for economic concerns and far too little regard for emotion is Charlotte Lucas, whom marries the ill-mannered Mr. Collins for the “worldly advantage” and security he can offer her. She admits to the reader that she finds Mr. Collins “neither agreeable nor sensible”, and his society “irksome” rather than pleasing, just like everybody else does. However, she still marries him without hesitation asking only “a preservative from want.” Her own happiness is not even a factor in her calculations; she sees it as something external to the entire institute of marriage, saying “happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance.” Elizabeth and the reader pity her since they know that happiness consists principally in not marrying Mr. Collins, a giant douche. After Charlotte marries she finds the only way she can bear her life with Mr. Collins is by furnishing a room for her own comforts, and by subtly manipulating him into spending time in the garden or the study, away from her.

As for Mr. Collins, he married in a manner that becomes his financial position, but his happiness too also depends on matters outside of marriage. He endlessly prioritizes the iron will [whim?] of Lady Catherine de Bourgh over any mutual attachment with either his cousin Elizabeth or Charlotte Lucas, and in general seems honored to be her loyal terrier for the rest of his life.

The married lives of Mr. and Mrs. Collins shows exactly how happiness is unobtainable in marriage without both love and sound economic reasoning in the right proportions.

The embarrassing put-up marriage between Wickham and Lydia comes as a result of her having no regard at all for financial concerns, and being swept up entirely in her emotions.

Not realising that the scandal of an elopement will make her sisters utter ineligible as wives for rich men in high society, thus causing the ruin of the whole family, Lydia’s affair causes more grief to her mother than anyone else, shocking her and leaving her confined to her bed with misery. Swept up in girlish raptures of emotion Lydia fails to understand Wickham’s motives as Lizzy does, in that “handsome young men must have something to live on, as well as the plain”, and that he was only happy to marry her firstly for the money he thought he was marrying into, and later for the money he was promised by Darcy.

Since Lydia continues to naively overlook Wickham’s vices she, and the family too, appear to be perfectly happy once the financial problems of her marriage are solved, and the scandal is thus disguised.

Quite shortly, the romance and marriage between Mr. Bingley and Jane Bennet is the purest in the story, and is possible only because of Bingley’s fortune.

Having all his financial matters well in hand, and fully able to provide for a future wife and maintain his current life of impulsive self-serving luxury, Bingley is able to court Jane freely without complication other than his interfering sisters. In this respect he
proves true the opening line from the novel, “A single man in possession of good fortune must be in want of a wife”, for his fortune being assured, they have leave to both be simply happy making each other happy.

The **eventual marriage between Darcy and Elizabeth** is almost identical to that of Jane and Bingley’s in terms of happiness and inexhaustible financial means; Darcy is indeed even richer than Bingley, and anybody who gets to know this pair well can see they are far richer in personality too. However in their courtship period Darcy and Elizabeth are unable to make each other happy. They firstly have no love for each other on account of Wickham’s poisonous tales of Darcy causing a prejudice, and Darcy’s pride in his superiority in wealth and class.

Their relationship builds and after some time Darcy hastily proposes to Elizabeth, but at the same time pointing out the glaring deficiencies in her financial and social position and his magnanimity in condescending to propose in spite of them. He, the careful steward of his father’s great legacy, is most likely still of the mindset that in marriages between two highly wealthy families, such as would be the case between for example his and the Bingleys or de Bourghs, it is important for the lady to be equally distinguished and accomplished and bring her own financial and class benefits to the match. Not surprisingly, his proposal is rejected in this form since Elizabeth can see that she would not be happy to be regarded as an inferior.

Not until he voluntarily entreats with the despicable Wickham and even bribes him with his own [precious] fortune, does Elizabeth truly credit Darcy with having learned that his unashamed pride in his high financial position was a character flaw, and then resolve to be happy with him in marriage. His aid in first clearing Lydia’s scandal with Wickham, and then confessing to meddling in Bingley’s attempts to court Jane Bennet, resolves both his own reservations about lowering himself to become involved with the comparatively poor Bennet family, and Elizabeth’s distaste for his pride.

After resolving both their personal and financial conflicts, they like Bingley and Jane are nothing but happy.

To conclude we can say that various marriages of characters in Pride and Prejudice explore the idea that it is essential for us to be sensible of our financial position when searching for a husband or wife, and that love and economics are equally important.

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet can no longer be happy with their dwindling wealth. In the case of the Collinses, they wed for reasons of social expectation and provision of a respectable income, and cannot make each other happy. In the case of Lydia and Wickham they are happy, but only when the truth of Wickhams financial indiscretions are concealed.

But the happy ending to the story comes when Darcy and Bingley finally overcome the economic disparities between their families and accept their brides the very happy Miss Bennets for richer or for poorer.
Thomas Hardy was born on June 2, 1840, in Upper Bockhampton, not far from Dorchester, in Dorsetshire, southern England. The son of Thomas Hardy, a master mason or building contractor, and Jemima Hand, a woman of some literary interests. Hardy's formal education consisted of about eight years in local schools. He was bright enough so that, by this time, he'd read a good deal in English, French, and Latin on his own. Later, in London, he made his own rather careful study of painting and English poetry. He was also interested in music and learned to play the violin. At the age of sixteen, he was apprenticed to an architect in Dorchester and remained in that profession, later in London and then again in Dorchester, for almost twenty years.

He began to write poetry during this time, but none of it was published. His first novel, The Poor Man and the Lady, written in 1867–68, was never published. Although the manuscript did not survive, Hardy used parts of it in other books. His first published novel was Desperate Remedies in 1871. The first novel to appear in installments in a magazine before publication as a book, an arrangement he was to follow for the rest of his novels, was A Pair of Blue Eyes in 1873.

Hardy's real fame as a novelist, along with sufficient income to let him abandon architecture for good, came with Far from the Madding Crowd in 1874. On September 17, 1874, Hardy married Emma Lavinia Gifford.

From this time on, Hardy devoted his full time to writing, continuing to publish novels regularly until his last, Jude the Obscure, in 1895. Among these are some of the best of his so-called Wessex novels (Hardy uses the name of one of the kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon Britain to designate an area including his native Dorsetshire): The Return of the Native, 1878; The Mayor of Casterbridge, 1886; The Woodlanders, 1887; Tess of the D'Urbervilles, 1891; in addition to Jude. To this list of best should be added the earlier Far from the Madding Crowd.

In writing most of his novels, Hardy worked out the details of time and geography he wanted to use with great care. Almost every novel is, therefore, located in a specific, mapped-out area of Wessex and covers a specified period of time. The Return of the Native, for example, covers the period 1842–43 and is set on Puddletown Heath (called Egdon Heath in the novel), on which Upper Bockhampton is situated. This novel also reveals a side of Hardy's authorship for which he has been taken to task by critics. In response to requests from readers of the novel in serial form, he added a sixth book to the original five to give his story a happier ending. He says in a note to the novel that the reader can choose which of the two endings he prefers but that the rigorous reader will probably favor the original conception.
Tess sold more rapidly than any of his other novels, and Jude was probably more vehemently denounced. During this period of time, Hardy also published his first poems as well as short stories. On June 29, 1885, he moved into a house he had built in Dorchester and lived there for the rest of his life.

On November 27, 1912, Mrs. Hardy, a woman with whom he had become increasingly incompatible, died. Several months later, he married Florence Emily Dugdale, a woman whom he had referred to for several years previously as his assistant and who was about forty years younger than he. After the appearance of Jude, Hardy devoted his attention entirely to poetry and drama, publishing a number of books of poems, including one which he prepared just before his death. He also wrote and published an epic drama on the Napoleonic era, The Dynasts, which appeared in three parts with a total of nineteen acts. He was given a number of honors, including an honorary degree from Oxford. The success of Tess had made possible a good income from his writing for the rest of his life, and when he died he left an estate of nearly half a million dollars. He died on January 11, 1928, and a few days later was buried in Westminster Abbey.

“The Return of the Native”: Summary

Across Egdon Heath (a "vast tract of unenclosed wild . . . a somber, windswept stretch of brown hills and valleys, virtually treeless, covered in briars and thorn bushes"), an older man makes his way. Soon he encounters a horse-drawn van, being led by Diggory Venn, a reddleman (seller of a reddish powdery dye used by sheep farmers to identify their flock). In the van is a young woman whose identity Venn rudely conceals from the elderly hiker. As he continues walking alongside the van, the reddleman notices the figure of a woman, standing atop Rainbarrow, the largest of the many Celtic burial mounds in the area, profiled against the sky, "like an organic part of the entire motionless structure," and then, replacing her, other figures. These are heath folk (locals, living near the heath) come to start a Fifth-of-November bonfire, a local custom. The night sky is lit by a number of these bonfires.

The young woman traveling in Diggory Venn's horse cart is Thomasin Yeobright, who was to have married Damon Wildeve that day. Mrs. Yeobright takes Thomasin with her to see Wildeve at the inn he operates in order to demand an explanation of his failure to marry her. When their bonfire has burned out, the locals come to serenade Thomasin and Wildeve, thinking them to be newly married and wanting to celebrate. When Wildeve is able to get rid of them he starts off to see Eustacia Vye, the mysterious figure Venn saw earlier, standing on Rainbarrow.

Eustacia watches for Wildeve on Rainbarrow, returning now and then to check on the signal fire she has had built before her grandfather's house. (Captain Vye is the chance acquaintance of Venn's). Wildeve was once Eustacia's lover, but she has not seen him since his interest in Thomasin. Eventually, Wildeve does finally arrive.

Venn accidentally learns of the meeting between Eustacia and Wildeve. A longtime admirer and once rejected suitor of Thomasin, Venn thinks he can score points with her. He now resolves to help her and purposely overhears the conversation between Eustacia
and Wildeve the next time they meet on Rainbarrow. Venn then calls on Eustacia to get her to help Thomasin, finally telling her he knows about her meetings with Wildeve. Venn also informs Mrs. Yeobright he would like to marry her niece. Though he is rejected, the aunt uses him as a means to put pressure on Wildeve. Wildeve goes immediately to Eustacia to convince her to leave with him, but she will not answer right away.
The news of the arrival for the Christmas holidays of Mrs. Yeobright's son, Clym, is widely talked about on the heath, including Captain Vye's house, where Eustacia also hears about his impending visit.

Mrs. Yeobright and Thomasin make preparations for Clym's arrival. After getting a glimpse of him, Eustacia is fascinated by him. She arranges to substitute for one of the boys in the traditional Christmas mumming (a play or pageant in which the actors use gestures, masks, props, and elaborate makeup, but do not have spoken lines), the first performance of which is at a party Mrs. Yeobright is giving. During the performance at the party, Eustacia succeeds in meeting Clym while she is in costume. Now that her interest in Wildeve has paled, Eustacia makes clear to Venn that she would like to see Wildeve married to Thomasin. They do marry, with Eustacia serving as witness. Mrs. Yeobright, who has once opposed the marriage, does not attend; and Clym, who has been away from home, finds out about the marriage after it has taken place.

Giving up his business career in Paris, Clym has returned to Egdon Heath to set up as a schoolteacher to those who can't afford existing schools. Mrs. Yeobright disapproves, thinking Clym's career goals do not show enough ambition. Clym meets Eustacia, in her own person this time, and is strongly attracted to her, an attraction that Mrs. Yeobright argues against. Clym sees Eustacia regularly, usually on the heath, for several months and then asks her to marry him. She says yes, though she hopes he will finally give up his plans and take her to Paris.

When Mrs. Yeobright and Clym quarrel over his love of Eustacia and he feels forced to leave his mother's house, he decides he and Eustacia should marry right away and live for a time on the heath. Clym finds a cottage and moves from home, leaving his mother disconsolate and bitter. Wildeve's interest in Eustacia revives when he hears of her approaching marriage.

On the occasion of their marriage, Mrs. Yeobright decides to send a gift of money. Her son, Clym, is marrying Eustacia against her wishes, and she hopes that, by offering this gift, she and her son can repair their relationship. The other half of the money is to go to her niece, Thomasin, who has recently married Damon Wildeve, Eustacia's former lover. Unfortunately, Mrs. Yeobright selects as her messenger the inept Christian Cantle, the village simpleton. Cantle loses the money gambling with Wildeve, who wants revenge on his wife's aunt for not trusting him with the money. Venn, protecting Thomasin, wins it back from Wildeve, but not understanding that part of it should go to Clym, Venn he delivers it all to Thomasin.

Eustacia and Clym for a time live a secluded life. When Mrs. Yeobright receives no response from Clym about the money, she calls on Eustacia, and they quarrel bitterly. Clym, hurrying his study to be a teacher so as to pacify the impatient Eustacia, develops severe eye trouble and is forced to suspend his work. To his wife's dismay, he takes up furze cutting (furze is a low, prickly shrub) as a way of making a little money and getting exercise. To Eustacia, this is a far cry from what she yearns for — the gay life of the great world, especially as represented by Paris — and since Clym had business and connections in Paris, Eustacia saw him as a way out of her constrained life on the heath. To compensate, she goes to a gipsying (a dance) and unexpectedly encounters Wildeve.
and dances with him. Venn sees them together and attempts to discourage Wildeve's loitering around Clym's house at night.

Persuaded by Venn to forget her pride and call on her son, Mrs. Yeobright starts the long walk to his house on a hot August day. She sees Wildeve admitted by Eustacia before she can get there; when she knocks on the door, Clym's wife looks out the window but doesn't answer. The older woman tries to walk back home, stops in exhaustion, and is bitten by an adder. She is later discovered by Clym, who has set off for her house to attempt a reconciliation, but even medical attention cannot save her and she dies. Clym blames himself for her death. Eustacia is nearby when Mrs. Yeobright dies but doesn't make an appearance; she has accidentally encountered Wildeve, who has lately come into an inheritance.

Clym for some time is ill and irrational because of his mother's death. His constant blaming of himself exhausts Eustacia, and she tries to find consolation in Wildeve. Once back to normal again, Clym sets out to discover what his mother was doing on the heath. From Mrs. Yeobright's handyman, Cantle, from Venn, and a young boy who came across his mother as she tried to get home that day, Clym learns what happened. He accuses Eustacia of cruelty to his mother. When Clym adds the charge of deception of himself as a husband, the relationship between him and Eustacia is effectively over. She leaves his house to return to Captain Vye's.

At her grandfather's, Eustacia doesn't know how to occupy herself and once even thinks of suicide. A bonfire is lit for her when the Fifth of November comes, an inadvertent signal to Wildeve, who offers to help Eustacia get away from the heath to Paris. On Thomasin's advice, Clym, now moved back to his mother's house, writes to ask his wife to return to him.

On the evening of the sixth of November, Eustacia signals to Wildeve that she wants to go, by chance not getting Clym's letter before she leaves the house. Thomasin, has suspicions about Wildeve. She and Captain Vye, who finds out Eustacia has left the house very late at night, come to ask Clym's help. Thomasin tries to get back home, finally with Venn's assistance. While Wildeve waits with a horse cart for Eustacia, and Clym searches for his wife, Eustacia on this dark, stormy night throws herself in a stream near a weir. Both Wildeve and Clym try to rescue her, but it is Venn who pulls out both men as well as Eustacia. Of the three, only Clym survives.

After her husband's death, Thomasin moves into the family home with Clym. Venn, having given up the reddle trade, calls on her, and they become interested in each other. However, Clym thinks he ought to ask his cousin to marry him since his mother wished it. But Thomasin and Venn decide to marry and do. Clym is last seen on top of Rainbarrow, performing as an itinerant preacher of moral lectures.

"The Return of the Native": Critical Analysis

The Return of the Native looks at first like a typical nineteenth-century novel: long, with several plots, and set in a wide landscape. But this tale is really very compact. The major
action takes place in a year's time. All of the characters live in the Egdon area, and the outside world does not intrude (we do not hear, for example, about the national problems of England).

All of the major characters are bound together in a dense knot of relationships. The structure of this book is concentrated, to reflect the tight organization of the action. Book first, the longest book, sets the stage and introduces the characters. Book second brings Clym and Eustacia together and sees the marriage of Thomasin and Wildeve. Book third shows the split between Clym and his mother and his marriage to Eustacia. Book fourth tells of the terrible accidents that lead to Mrs. Yeobright's death. Book fifth sees Clym and Eustacia separate, bringing about the tragic deaths that end the main action. Book sixth, a kind of epilogue, shows the marriage of Thomasin and Diggory.

The action is organized around seasonal celebrations, beginning and ending with the autumn bonfires, as if to emphasize the dramatic changes that can take place in such short periods of time. The story is told in straight chronological order, without the use of flashbacks or other devices. (This may underscore the story's sense of the straightforward, irresistible movement of time itself.) Regularly, our concentration upon the major characters is broken by the appearance of the country folk, as if for comic relief, to stress the need for the reader to step back and consider the meaning of the tale.

Take, for instance, the example of Egdon Heath, the first "character" introduced into the book. The heath proves physically and psychologically important throughout the novel: their relation to the heath defines characters, and the weather patterns of the heath even reflect the inner dramas of the characters. Indeed, it almost seems as if the characters are formed by the heath itself: Diggory Venn, red from head to toe, is an actual embodiment of the muddy earth; Eustacia Vye seems to spring directly from the heath, a part of Rainbarrow itself, when she is first introduced; Wildeve's name might just as well refer to the windwhipped heath itself. But, importantly, the heath manages to defy definition. It is, in chapter one, "a place perfectly accordant with man's nature." The narrator's descriptions of the heath vary widely throughout the novel, ranging from the sublime to the gothic. There is no possible objectivity about the heath. No reliable statement can be made about it.

For Clym, the heath is beautiful; for Eustacia, it is hateful. The plot of the novel hinges around just this kind of difference in perception. Most of the key plot elements in the novel depend upon misconceptions--most notably, Eustacia's failure to open the door to Mrs. Yeobright, a mistake that leads to the older woman's death--and mistaken perceptions. Clym's eventual near-blindness reflects a kind of deeper internal blindness that afflicts all the main characters in the novel: they do not recognize the truth about each other. Eustacia and Clym misunderstand each other's motives and true ambitions; Venn remains a mystery; Wildeve deceives Thomasin, Eustacia and Clym. The characters remain obscure for the reader, too. When The Return of the Native was first published, contemporary critics criticized the novel for its lack of sympathetic characters. All of the novel's characters prove themselves deeply flawed, or at the very least of ambiguous motivation. Clym Yeobright, the novel's intelligent, urbane, generous protagonist, is also, through his impatience and single-minded jealousy, the cause of the novel's great
tragedy. Diggory Venn can either be seen as a helpful, kind-hearted guardian or as an underhanded schemer. Similarly, even the antagonistic characters in the novel are not without their redeeming qualities.

Perhaps the most ambiguous aspect of the novel is its ending. The novel seems to privilege a bleak understanding of human nature. Given the tragedy of the double drowning, it seems impossible that the novel could end happily. And yet, Diggory Venn and Thomasin are contentedly married. This is not, however, the way the novel was first conceived; Hardy was forced to give the novel a happy ending in order to please the Victorian public. In an uncharacteristic footnote, Hardy remarks, "The writer may state here that the original conception of the story did not design a marriage between Thomasin and Venn... But certain circumstances of serial publication led to a change of intent. Readers can therefore choose between the endings." Thus, even the true conclusion of the novel is left in doubt, a fitting end for a novel that thrives on uncertainty and ambiguity.

Hardy frequently interrupts his story to tell us what it means - but does he really tell us? One cannot always be certain that this author is explaining himself fully, even when he seems to be doing so. It's not that he attempts to deceive the reader; rather, he wants to make it clear that life is unclear. He wants to emphasize the mystery of existence. He doesn't believe that life offers simple, clear-cut answers, nor does he imagine that human beings, or his characters, can be judged as either completely good or completely bad.

His point of view, then, could rightly be called "ambiguous." He may directly criticize Wildeve in one passage, for example, but then his narrative suggests that Wildeve is not responsible for everything that happens to him and Eustacia. He may number all of Eustacia's worst faults, but somehow most readers still feel that Hardy is, like Clym, fascinated with her.

He shows that life is filled with disasters and tragedies, but he says that new life will continually spring up to replace the old.

Although Hardy frequently shows a sense of humour, many readers have felt that he puts too much emphasis on the unhappy aspects of life. He would argue against that charge, saying that he simply reported life as it is, and the true report just happens to be filled with unhappiness. Is that the thinking of an objective observer, or a pessimist? As you read this novel, form your own opinion of where Hardy really stands.

"The Return of the Native" : Major Themes

The Heath: - The heath is more than just a dramatic backdrop to the action; it is an integral part of the plot and character development, and a constant thematic symbol. Hardy devotes the novel's entire first chapter to describing the timeless landscape of Egdon heath. What defines it most of all is its timelessness - it is much bigger than any human drama, and hence might its natural forces swallow those humans.
The heath can also be viewed as an antagonist in the story, working against the key characters to bring about their tragic fates. Mrs. Yeobright, exhausted by her long toil to Clym’s house, collapses in the darkness on her return, and is bitten by a snake. Wildeve and Eustacia both drown as they plan to flee the heath forever. Clym becomes a preacher, extolling the virtues of a world beyond the heath. Only Thomasin and Diggory, who are truly at ease with their surroundings, endure. The heath is a place for lasting sentiment, not fiery passion or intellectual ideals. Those who are able to tune to its rhythms and pace remain. Those who feel they can live beyond its power are destroyed by it. Eustacia views it as an explicit antagonist - “’Tis my cross, my shame and will be my death” - and yet falls in attempting to defeat it (69). Most of all, the heath is an expression of Hardy's tragic sense, which suggests that time and the world have little use for the squabbles of humans and will thereby negate their efforts time and again.

**Superstition:** Superstition permeates the text, and is connected with the death of Eustacia and possibly Mrs. Yeobright. In the most basic sense, superstition exists through the heath locals. So tied to nature, they are naturally drawn more towards pagan rituals than towards the transcendent message of Christianity. They judge their lives according to the cycles of the heath, and hence believe that strange forces beyond their understanding rule the world.

Many locals, Susan Nunsuch most of all, believe Eustacia is a witch. Susan brings a fearful dimension to their charge, both stabbing Eustacia with a pen and then later making a wax effigy that she burns. Hardy was cautious to avoid being labelled immoral, and so he never extrapolates on Susan's suspicions, which could be based in the possibility of Eustacia's sexuality. Both of Susan's actions are based around witch-lore. A witch would supposedly not bleed if pricked, and an effigy works akin to a voodoo doll, by transferring pain to another.

Eustacia's death also evokes witch-lore, since a suspected witch was thrown in water. If she floated, she was vindicated, and if she drowned, she was proven witch. Tragically, Eustacia floats but it brings her no benefit, since she dies. In surviving and dedicating himself to Christianity, Clym suggests Hardy's dismissal of such lore, though the author never goes so far as to outright denounce any of the ancient superstitions suggested in the text.

**Tradition:** One of the novel's inherent conflicts is that between the declining, traditional attitudes of Dorset and the modern world that was replacing it. Hardy’s work often highlighted the waning traditions and ideals of his age, and there are many examples where custom and folklore feature as central to the narrative. Part of the novel's appeal is the way it records these dying customs. For instance, Diggory Venn’s trade as a reddleman represents the dying skills of the region:

He was one of a class rapidly becoming extinct in Wessex, filling at present in the rural world the place which, during the last century, the dodo occupied in the world of animals. He is a curious, interesting and nearly perished link between obsolete forms of life and those which generally prevail.(6)
Though Diggory does dismiss the traditional fears - that a reedleman stole children - he nevertheless dedicates himself to this ancient trade.

Hardy also records the decline in church attendance in rural regions like Egdon, and discusses the history and function of the mummers. In terms of the latter, he explains how repeated tradition can lead to perfunctory execution and reception, as opposed to the true passion of a regenerated custom.

There are some customs that Hardy connects to more ancient customs. Hardy believed the November 5th bonfires were a continuance of Druid tradition more than a commemoration of Gay Fawkes. Further, the May Day celebrations seems to have a primal draw, since it is those which finally bring Thomasin and Diggory together.

**Education:** - The Return of the Native presents a range of views on education without ever delivering a final conclusion in the issue.

As an extraordinary resident of the heath whose intelligence allowed him to explore the greater world, Clym is a strong proponent for education. In fact, he wants to explore a new type of education with the residents of the heath, and is drawn home for that purpose. However, he confronts both reticence and outright opposition to these noble plans, and ends up as a preacher - a vocation more associated with tradition than modernity - than as a teacher. To some extent, Clym is oblivious to the nature of those he wishes to educate. They are not only not ready for his ideas, but are also fundamentally opposed to them. Captain Vye gives a reflective instance of their skepticism when he describes education as valuable only towards encouraging the young to engage in offensive graffiti.

In fact, Hardy explores how Clym's natural good-looks stand in opposition to these modern ideas of education exemplified in his intellect:

He already showed that thought is a disease of flesh, and indirectly bore evidence that ideal physical beauty is incompatible with emotional development and a full recognition of the coil of things.(109)

It is only really within the spiritual world that he is finally able to find solace. His ideal of "instilling high knowledge into empty minds" is unrealistic to the point of arrogance, an indicator that his learning has not helped him to connect with his fellow man (160). Even as preacher, his "moral lectures" maintain a didactic air that repulse some listeners. He continues to speak but not to listen, which gives an implicit criticism of the educational instinct.

Clym’s most significant education is what he learns on the heath - that the world is controlled by large forces beyond our understanding.

**Romantic Love:** - The quest for romantic love amongst the nature-centered heath affects many characters, Eustacia most of all. She is desperate to discover the passion of romantic love. Early in the text, she expresses that she seeks, "A blaze of love, and extinction, [which] was better than a lantern glimmer of the same which should last long
years (56). She wants a quick burst of passion, rather than the pragmatism of a sustaining respect and passion. This desire helps explain her tragic demise - she is too quick to romanticize a situation, ignoring its reality. She ignores the fact that Wildeve mostly repulses her, to twice become attracted to him, and ignores Clym's stated intentions to justify her acceptance of his proposal. This conflict creates a sense of dissatisfaction that has tragic consequences.

Clym is attracted to Eustacia on so many levels, but ultimately chooses a respectable, simple life with her. The passion and romanticism that defined him on his return is quickly traded for a more pragmatic personality that disappoints Eustacia. His tragic flaw here is his blindness to what she needs, and they both pay for it.

Finally, Thomasin begins with a romantic passion for Wildeve, but ultimately realizes the greater wisdom of pragmatism. When they finally marry, she is no longer enamored with him, but rather has matured to realize that she must protect her reputation over her romantic pride.

The Oedipus complex: - Clym has an intense and turbulent relationship with his mother, which evokes the Oedipus complex, so-named by Freud because of the ancient play Oedipus Rex. Simply put, the Oedipus complex describes an unhealthy love-hate attraction between a mother and son.

Mrs. Yeobright has clearly had great ambitions for her son. We see her disappointment when he reveals that he has left Paris to return to Egdon. She cannot appreciate his return to Egdon as a step forward; instead, she vicariously considers it as sign of failure, asking him, "But it is right, too, that I should try to lift you out of this life into something richer, and that you should not come back again, and be as if I had never tried at all?" (140).

This vicarious association further explains her contempt for Eustacia. She cannot understand that he is attracted to her instead of finer Parisian ladies. The relationship between Clym and his mother starts to sour after he begins to court Eustacia. He chooses to give Eustacia a gift – a charnel pot unearthed from the burial mound – which was originally intended for his mother. Though all of these attitudes can be explained, they together suggest an intimate and intense connection.

Clym is aware of the challenges to his happiness, and refers to the competing areas of his life as "antagonistic growths." Interestingly, his relationship with his mother is the first he lists, before his wife and vocation. He is forced into making a choice between Eustacia and his mother, and the regrets over this situation lead to a romantic demise for almost all involved.

Constancy: - In the novel, characters who display constancy are rewarded. Like the unswerving firmness of the Egdon landscape, those who remain true to their ideals endure. Diggory Venn, as example, is unwavering in his love for Thomasin. He adapts his lifestyle and means of income to win her affections, and patiently remains her faithful champion. Similarly, Charley the stable boy does not waver in his affection for Eustacia. He gives her his mummer’s role, and later cares for her despite her attitudes towards
him. Even the dim-sighted Clym can perceive Charley's love for his wife. Similarly, the heath folk are characterized by their adherence to unchanging tradition and folklore. They accept the heath as timeless and constant, and their kind perseveres for that reason.

The characters more defined by transient, changing passions - Wildeve, Eustacia, and Clym - all suffer a tragic end. The heath, with its constancy, has little use for such dynamic human passions.

“The Return of the Native” : Hardy’s Concept of Tragedy

Expressions like pessimism and fatalism have unreservedly been used by critics and readers to describe Hardy’s philosophy of life, and there is no doubt these labels do largely convey his outlook and his stance. He is deemed pessimist because he considers that man is born to suffer and he is called fatalist because he thinks that destiny is antagonistic to man and that it governs human life, allowing very little free will to human creatures and often inflicting undeserved sufferings upon them.

Hardy, however, is not a cynic because he does not regard man as essentially mean and wicked. There, certainly, are villains in his novels but he believes on the whole that there is more goodness and nobleness in human nature than evil, and that man is capable of a heroic endurance of misfortune. Further wise, it is possible to call Hardy a determinist instead of fatalist, because, while fatalism implies a blind and arbitrary working of some supernatural power, determinism implies the logic of cause and effect. In Hardy’s novels the logic of cause and effect is as much at work as an arbitrary supernatural power.

Hardy’s conception of life is essentially tragic. As Austin never wrote a tragedy, Hardy never attempted a comedy. He holds an opinion: “Happiness is an occasional episode in the general drama of pain”.

Hardy feels that “man is born to suffer” and the glory of man lies in his power of bearing his catastrophe. It appears that his mind is trained in the Greek literature, which was the first attempt to project a mighty clash between man’s dreams and realization. Hardy also portrays this conflict, but with a slight difference. In Greek tragedy, Fate is some of supernatural power holds responsible of the catastrophe, while in Shakespearean tragedy, man is solely responsible for his actions their consequent disaster. Hardy combines both these concepts to carve his own view of tragedy. In his stories, destiny is as much responsible for the disaster, as a character himself. “The Return of the Native” fully illustrates Hardy’s conception of tragedy.

Aristotle defines ‘a tragedy is a story of a conspicuous man, who falls from prosperity to adversity, because of his error of judgment i.e. his hamartia and his sufferings, downfall arouses a feeling of pity and fear in us, thus becomes a source of catharsis’. As it is clear from the statement as well as from the historical facts, that Greek tragedy was the story of a conspicuous man, related to country life, and almost same is the case with Shakespearean tragedy. But Hardy sets his tragedy in the rural background. His story
brings forth the downfall of a common man, yet noble. As Clym is a noble man, his innate kind and loving nature, residing at the Egdon Heath. He is surrounded by the intense figures of common life, rustics. His mind is a kingdom, filled with his noble aims of educating the rustics, in the true sense of the word, as author comments:

"He had a conviction that the want of most men was knowledge of a sort which brings wisdom rather than affluence".

But striving after high thinking, he still likes his plain living. He struggles selflessly to achieve his high aims, but he is somewhat unpractical rather, too simple to plan properly for his goals. And his flaw lies in the fact he goes too far, selflessly but unplaned, for his aims, and thus injures himself, both physically and spiritually, causing poor eye sight in the first case and tension through disharmony with his mother and wife, in the second case.

His unpractical nature also comes out when he ‘decides to marry Eustacia’ though she warns him that she would not make “a good home spun wife” and his mother pronounces her as “an idle voluptuous woman”. Clym thinks that Eustacia would help in his educational prospects, but she proves to be exactly the opposite. It’s said, that Eustacia holds the “greatest responsibility” for the tragedy in “The Return of the Native”, then it would not be wrong.

Hardy also shows the weak power of decision of Clym that he fails to strike a balance between his duties (to his mother), his ambition (for teaching) and his love (for Eustacia). As the author states:

“Three antagonistic growths had to be kept alive: his mother’s trust in him, his plan for becoming a teacher, and Eustacia’s happiness”.

And he fails to maintain them, at a time, first inclining totally towards Eustacia and then towards his mother, and in adjusting his educational plans between them.

According to Hardy, Fate and destiny have always an essential part to play in bringing a catastrophic end. In the novel under discussion, destiny is disguised in the cloak of “nature” and “co-incidences”. Chances and Coincidences occur, in Hardy's novels, too frequently that they become almost unrealistic. In this novel, the story leads to ultimate tragedy, with the death of Mrs. Yeobright, which is caused by a number of ironic accidents and co-incidences. It is also the role of chance that the letter of Clym fails to reach Eustacia, which becomes the cause of her fatal ending death. Thus, Hardy feels: “Human will is not free but fettered”.

Nature is always considered as a “living agent”, by Hardy, which is always so strong and influential, that his human characters can never escape from its clutches. “Egdon Heath” also depicts such qualities. It contrasts with the human existence. Eustacia feels the heath, as her “cross”, her “shame”, and eventually it becomes a potential cause and the place of her death. Nature is also hostile to Mrs. Yeobright, as Heath kills her by a venomous creature from its own bosom.
Nature also appears as the “foreteller” of coming events, when the Heath becomes furious before the death of Wildeve and Eustacia.

The thick-skinned rustics are also an essential part of Hardy’s writings. They perform the “role of chorus” of the Greek tragedies and provide “Comic relief”, like Shakespeare’s characters. In “The Return of the Native” much of the useful information, also, about the main characters is provided by these rustics.

The most important aspect of a tragedy, according to Aristotle, is the feelings of catharsis. Undoubtedly, the tragedies of Hardy also provide a source of catharsis. One certainly experiences the feelings of pity and fear, when one observes Clym’s paralysis of will. He appears in the story as a devoted, sympathetic, energetic fellow but he ends up as a miserable, pitiable, half-blinded figure, with the end of the story. Truly, the description of the author is very true, when he says:

“Everywhere he (Clym) was kindly received, for the story of his life had become generally known”.

It can be noted through the treatment of Clym, that Hardy’s general view about the human nature is essentially noble and sublime, but tragic. His main characters portray the higher values of human traits of tolerance and bearing of misery, the eyes of the reader.

In short, it can be said that Hardy’s concept of tragedy is of a higher level. Though he does not reach the height of Shakespeare, but comes quite near to him. Thus, it can be said that his art of tragedy is perfect.

“The Return of the Native” : Chances & Coincidences

Is chance the same thing as fate? Different readers disagree on this question. Perhaps it is cruel, deliberate fate that Eustacia, for instance, has been set down to live on the heath she loathes. It may be mere capricious chance, however, that Mrs. Yeobright decides to visit on the very afternoon that Wildeve also decides to come to Eustacia’s cottage. In other words, fate seems to rule events according to some vast pattern, which is beyond human control. Chance seems to intervene in smaller, random ways, when human beings are trying to act on their own. Many readers, however, feel that chance and fate is the same thing in this novel. Things “just happen,” without rhyme or reason, and that in it is the pattern of the universe.

Hardy lost faith in orthodox Christianity quite early in his life. It was mainly because of the advancement and challenges of science to dogma. As a consequence, he reached a new kind of scepticism. He felt that universe is governed by some blind chance and not by any conscious power. For this reason chance and coincidences play a very vital role in all the novels of Hardy.

Such a conspicuous influence of accidents, on the course of events, does not appear in the works of any other novelist. Though Hardy’s characters are responsible for their
suffering yet the role of chance and coincidences often operates as a deciding factor. Hardy feels: “An impishness of circumstances invades our life and becomes the cause of our undoing”.

In his novel, man is tossed here and there in the ruthless struggle for survival and the stronger one suffers more as he tries to resist the sweep of chance.

Hardy believes that chance is an embodiment of fate. He feels that fate or destiny is sometimes indifferent, but it is most often hostile to human happiness. He thinks: “Happiness is an occasional episode in the general drama of pain”.

The hostile of fate, disguises itself in the irony of circumstances, which one finds in the novels of Hardy. In other word, when the human beings are not themselves responsible for the frustration for their hopes and thwarting of their aims, fate appears in the shape of chance or accident to contribute to or to complete, their ruin. Hardy thinks: “Chance is the incarnation of the blind forces, controlling human destiny”.

There is also an abundant use of chances, accident and coincidences in “The Return of the Native”. These chances are interwoven with the actions of characters, to bring forth the ultimate catastrophe.

Johnny Nunsuch introduces the first coincidence in the story. He overhears the conversation of Wildeve and Eustacia, when Wildeve visits her in response to her bonfire. Johnny narrates this incidence to the Reddle-man. As a result of this chance, Reddle-man becomes activity involved in the affairs of these two principal characters Eustacia and Wildeve. On the other hand, furthermore, this chance meeting eventually results in the wedding of Thomasin with Wildeve.

At some later stage, during the story, Christian Cantle meets the village folks, by a sheer accident that takes him to a raffle (lottery). He is carrying Mrs. Yeobright’s money, which is to be delivered to Thomasin and Clym, in equal halves. Cantle, by a chance stroke of good luck, wins prize at raffle. Being encouraged by his winning, he agrees to play the game of dice with Wildeve and loses all the money of Mrs. Yeobright. Then, the Reddle-man appears and with his luck, wins all the money back and delivers all the money to Thomasin. Thus, the chance meeting of Cantle with the village folks causes a great misunderstanding and also a future quarrel between Mrs. Yeobright and Eustacia.

“The marriage is not a misfortune in itself. It is simply the accident which has happened since that has been the cause of my ruin”.

Another accident is the chance meeting of Eustacia with Wildeve, which leads not only to the renewal of bond between the two but also to the suspicion in the mind of the Reddle-man, who immediately goes to Thomasin and informs her about her husband’s plans.

The most crucial accidents, however, are yet to come in the novel. At an occasion, Wildeve visits Eustacia during the daytime. At the same time Mrs. Yeobright comes to reconcile with her son. This coincidence creates a big complication, as Eustacia fails to open the door, while Wildeve is inside and when she opens it, Mrs. Yeobright has gone
while Clym is fast asleep, just by a chance. Consequently, each of these four characters has to pay heavily for these accidents, happening simultaneously.

On her homeward journey, Mrs. Yeobright faces yet another accident. She is bitten by an adder and is dead. Her death results in a fierce quarrel between Clym and Eustacia. Thus, much of the tragedy of the novel centres round the closed door, to which a number of accidents contribute.

At a later stage, Wildeve receives a legacy, by a pure chance. This news would have been a sign of hope in the story, but the future events prove Hardy’s essentially tragic conception of life. Hence: “There is pervading note of gloom, only momentarily relieved”.

The news of legacy brings new thoughts to Eustacia’s mind. Her meeting with Wildeve encourages her to seek his help in her attempt to escape from Egdon Heath. Unfortunately, this attempt proves fatal and deadly for both of them.

After the death of Clym’s mother, he first expels Eustacia out of his house but later, he intends to bring her back to home therefore, he writes a letter to her, but Captain Vye fails to handover the letter to Eustacia and she decides to escape with Wildeve to Paris, this chance brings her fall.

Finally, the nature also contributes in the contrivance of chance. On the night of Eustacia’s escape, the weather accidentally gets worst. The night becomes dreadful, because of rain and storm. This desperate situation of weather adds to the gloomy condition of Eustacia and causes her death.

Thus, Hardy certainly makes his story hard to believe by his excessive use of chance and coincidence. There are accidents and coincidences in real human life, but they are not so frequent, as in the novels of Hardy, nor are accidents and coincidences always malicious and hostile to man. A critic says: “The plot of the novel lacks the terrific and terrifying logic of cause and effect that marks the plots of the greatest tragedies. That, yet operates the way it does more accidental than necessary.”

But to condemn his use of chance altogether is to misunderstand his view of life. His novels present a bottle between man and destiny, whereas, destiny appears through chances and coincidences. However, the realism of “The Return of the Native” is certainly marred by an extraordinary use of the device of chances and coincidences: As Shakespeare says: “Fate has a terrible power; you cannot control it by wealth or war”.

"The Return of the Native" : A tragedy of Character & Environment

Hardy has been called the Shakespeare of the English novel and the four great Hardian tragedies, Tess of the D'ubervilles, Jude the Obscure, The Mayor of Casterbridge and The
Return of the Native have been likened to the four great Shakespearean tragedies. But Hardy's conception of tragedy is radically different from that of Shakespeare.

**Hardy's Tragic Hero:** In a Shakespearean tragedy, as Bradley has pointed out, the tragic hero is a man of high rank and position. He may belong to the royal family or he may be some great general and warrior indispensable for the state. He is not only exalted socially but he has also some uncommon qualities of head and heart. He is in short a rare individual. When such a person falls from greatness and his high position is reversed, the result is 'Cathartic'. His fall excites the tragic emotion of terror and the readers are purged of the motion of self-pity.

This was the traditional concept of Tragedy up to Hardy. But Hardy has how own concept, he is the innovator of a new form of tragedy, His tragic hero and heroines are no exalted personages. They are neither kings nor queens. They belong to the lowest ranks of society. Thus in the present novel, Clym is humble by birth, and he takes to furze-cutting as his profession, and Mrs. Yeobright is the wife of a humble farmer. But these humble people have exceptional qualities of head and heart which raise them above the common run of mankind. Thus Clym is the idealist, and Mrs. Yeobright is prudent, strong and loving.

**Hardian Tragedy: Apotheosis of the Human Spirit:** When these humble heroes and heroines of Hardy suffer and fall from grace the effect is as "Cathartic" as that of a Shakespearean tragedy. A Hardian tragedy is an apotheosis of the human spirit. It reveals to us the essential nobility and heroism of the human soul. The nobility of Mrs. Yeobright is brought out by her death, and Clym suffers because of his idealism.

**Tragic Waste in Hardy:** Like a Shakespearean tragedy, a Hardian tragedy also creates the impression of tragic waste. Evil is eliminated in the long run, but always at the cost of much that is good and desirable. The real tragedy is this waste of good. Much good is wasted when Eustacia comes to a tragic end. Similarly, the real tragedy is not that Mrs. Yeobright dies, but that in her death so much of love and prudence are wasted.

**Hardian Tragedy, Elevating:** But Hardian tragedy does not discourage or cause despair. "It is elevating and stimulating. It does not shake our faith in life, all the more it strengthens us; it does not make us light-hearted, but makes -us wiser and better." Thus, The Return of the Native, is not depressing. Hardy has introduced a note of meliorism by showing the happy end of Thomasin's love story.

**No Tragic Flaw in Hardy:** The Shakespearian hero has some fault of character, some strong tendency to act in a particular way, which is the cause of his undoing. Bradley has called this weakness of the hero as the "tragic flaw' of his character. This tragic flaw results in the fall of the hero, it is the cause of the tragedy. Though at a later stage the course of action is complicated by other factors — chance, abnormal state of mind, some supernatural force, etc.-yet primarily action issues out of character. Character is responsible for tragedy.

"Character is Destiny in Shakespeare." But this is not so in Hardy. His Tragic heroes and heroines are free from any 'tragic flaw' in the Shakespearean sense. They do not have
any obsession or a marked tendency to act in a particular way. Thus the tragedy of Clym and Eustacia is the result of chance to a very great extent. Mrs. Yeobright's death is also brought about by chance events.

**Destiny, and Not Character, the Cause of Tragedy:**

"Character may be destiny" in Shakespeare, but in Hardy, "Destiny is Character." In all his novels, chance events happen throughout. Fate expresses itself as chance. However in the. Return of the Native character too plays a significant role in bringing about the tragedy. Eustacia's tragedy results from her excessive love of the glittering city life and from her extreme hunger for love. Isolation in Egdon makes her rebellious, morose and gloomy. It intensifies her hunger for love, and for the pleasures of city life. Similarly, Clym's idealism is responsible to a very great extent for his tragedy. He is impractical and lacks worldly wisdom. Character and environment play a larger part in causing tragedy in this novel, than in other novels.

Considered as a tragedy, The Return of the Native has other peculiar features as well. For one thing, while in a Shakespearean tragedy both the hero and the heroine die at the end, in this novel the heroine, Eustacia, alone dies, and the hero lives on a life of deep anguish, virtually a life-in-death. This is another instance of the relentless cruelty of destiny.

Secondly, the Return of the Native has a double-ending. While Eustacia, Wildeve and Mrs. Yeobright come to a tragic end and Clym too suffers terribly, the end of Thomasin's love-story is a happy one. We find her in the end married to the faithful Venn, and likely to enjoy a happy life ever afterwards. In this way, the novelist has introduced a note of meliorism in the novel. He has thus shown that a limited happiness is possible even in this sorry life of ours. The happy end of the Thomasin story does not reduce the tragic intensity of the Catastrophe, rather it enables the novelist to present his vision of life truthfully and honestly.

**"The Return of the Native" : Role of Egdon Heath**

Huge, forbidding, strange- the wasteland of Egdon Heath is like a stage set for the action of this novel. It offers wide spaces for movement, but it also has hiding-places for intimate scenes. Its many different faces reflect or heighten the many different moods of the story. One can believe that the Heath has many secrets, and has witnessed all possible varieties of human experience. It is a place of long life and of sudden death, of fertile spring and short, vivid summer. No matter what feeling Hardy wants to express at any particular point, the heath can offer it up.

Something about Egdon Heath depresses the restless, adventure-seeking characters of the novel, Eustacia and Wildeve. But it is a comforting presence to unselfish people like Clym and Thomasin. As you read, notice each character's reaction to the heath; it may say something about his or her inner nature. The less intellectual country folk simply take the place for granted, just as they take their own souls for granted.
Does Egdon Heath represent life? Time? The supernatural? Destiny? Readers have suggested these and other possibilities. Perhaps it is not a symbol for anything, but merely a background, a small universe, having no meaning, offering no answers. Part of the mysterious appeal of this novel is that Hardy makes the heath seem so significant, but then never specifically explains his purposes. We must use our own imaginations to try to understand and feel what the heath finally means.

Egdon Heath is the first ‘character’ introduced into the book. The heath proves physically and psychologically important throughout the novel: their relation to the heath defines characters, and the weather patterns of the heath even reflect the inner dramas of the characters. Indeed, it almost seems as if the characters are formed by the heath itself: Diggory Venn, red from head to toe, is an actual embodiment of the muddy earth; Eustacia Vye seems to spring directly from the heath, a part of Rainbarrow itself, when she is first introduced; Wildeve’s name might just as well refer to the wind-whipped heath itself. But, importantly, the heath manages to defy definition. It is, in chapter one, “A place perfectly accordant with man’s nature.”

The narrator’s descriptions of the heath vary widely throughout the novel, ranging from the sublime to the gothic. There is no possible objectivity about the heath. No reliable statement can be made about it.

For Clym, the heath is beautiful; for Eustacia, it is hateful. The plot of the novel hinges around just this kind of difference in perception. Most of the key plot elements in the novel depend upon misconceptions—most notably, Eustacia’s failure to open the door to Mrs. Yeobright, a mistake that leads to the older woman’s death—and mistaken perceptions. Clym’s eventual near-blindness reflects a kind of deeper internal blindness that afflicts all the main characters in the novel: they do not recognize the truth about each other. Eustacia and Clym misunderstand each other’s motives and true ambitions; Venn remains a mystery; Wildeve deceives Thomasin, Eustacia and Clym. The characters remain obscure for the reader, too. When The Return of the Native was first published, contemporary critics criticized the novel for its lack of sympathetic characters.

All of the novel’s characters prove themselves deeply flawed, or at the very least of ambiguous motivation. Clym Yeobright, the novel’s intelligent, urbane, generous protagonist, is also, through his impatience and single-minded jealousy, the cause of the novel’s great tragedy. Diggory Venn can either be seen as a helpful, kind-hearted guardian or as an underhanded schemer. Similarly, even the antagonistic characters in the novel are not without their redeeming qualities.

“The Return of the Native”: Role of Eustacia Vye

For Hardy, romantic passion can be dangerous. Another kind of passion, uncontrolled anger, can also have unfortunate consequences. The only feelings, which can be trusted, are moderate, like Thomasin’s kindness and desire for people to be at peace with each other. Relationships between people are best not when they are violent and sudden, but when they have a long history and have endured much, like the love between Diggory and Thomasin. Love at first sight, as Eustacia and Clym find out, is likely to be a
mistake. Hot-tempered reactions are generally a mistake, as well. Hardy understands that passion is fundamental to human nature— and he portrays passion so well that we cannot help but respond to it in characters like Eustacia. But he stresses that we must try to act in the light of reason. We may fail— as Clym does— but we must try. Moderation is the goal.

Is Eustacia really a superior being, or does she merely thinks she is? Are her passions deeper than other people’s, or is she simply greedy? Is she doomed by fate or by her own selfishness? Few readers have ever been able to decide for certain. That is the genius of Hardy’s portrayal. If you are like most readers, you will find this beautiful young woman fascinating one moment, exasperating the next. Even the other characters of the novel find her unpredictable, and their reactions to her vary widely. Is she a goddess or a witch?

Hardy skilfully avoids simple answers by showing us many sides of this complex character. At times, he seems sympathetic to her frustrations with her narrow life, yet he does not shrink from showing her at her worst. She is capable of deception, and she has a killing temper. She can be disloyal, she can wound with a perfectly aimed insult, and she can exploit other people’s good nature.

Why, then, does the reader simply not turn away from her? Perhaps because almost everyone can feel pity for her at moments, such as before her death when she cries out,

“**How I have tried and tried to be a splendid woman, and how destiny has been against me... I do not deserve my lot!**”

If she had been able to live in a great city, perhaps she would have been splendid. If she had found a society that appreciated her rare qualities, rather than fearing or scorning them as the people of Egdon do, she might have achieved great things.

Hardy’s point, of course, is that those possibilities are not available. Like all of us, Eustacia must make do with the situation that faces her: she must either accept or change her fate. Her tragedy is that she refuses to accept it but fails to change it.

Usually, Hardy describes Eustacia in contrasts, to stress the divided nature of her soul, the conflicts that torture her. Early in the novel, he writes,

“**As far as social ethics were concerned Eustacia approached the savage state, though in emotion she was all the while an epicure. She had advanced to the secret recesses of sensuousness, yet had hardly crossed the threshold of conventionality.**”

He is saying that, on the positive side she is a nonconformist, an independent spirit; but on the negative side, emotion, passion, the heart’s needs have become an obsession with her. She lives solely for romance.

“**To be loved to madness- such was her great desire.**”
One side of her nature, however, all too poignantly recognizes that love itself is evanescent: she is terrified of time. Think of her first appearance in the novel, eagerly searching with her telescope for Damon. She is the very picture of a desperate woman searching for experience. She carries with her an hourglass, even though, as Hardy takes pains to point out, she does have a modern watch. It is as if she actually wants to see time, her dreaded enemy, as it dribbles away. At the moment which should be her most blissful, when she and Clym decide to marry, she gazes toward the eclipsed moon and warns,

“See how our time is slipping, slipping, slipping!”

She confides to her lover the deep (and perceptive) fear that their love will not last.

Though she lives by certain illusions, another side of Eustacia is ruthlessly realistic. Perhaps her most attractive quality is this inability to lie to herself about herself. Basically, she knows her own faults; she's intelligent, perceptive, and honest. When she first meets Clym, she explains to him that she is depressed by life. It's a simple statement, but it may well sum up all her difficulties. Life itself is somehow too much for her unusually sensitive and demanding nature. Life doesn't give her what she wants. Life, as she experiences it, is a prison.

Not surprisingly, readers disagree on many aspects of this puzzling, ambiguous character. Her actions can be seen from many different perspectives. For example, some say that she sincerely loves Clym; yet surely she also has a selfish motive in agreeing to marry him: in her mind, the marriage is associated with an escape to Paris. Throughout the book, her mixed motives often lead to troubling actions.

No matter how many times you read this novel, you will probably never be certain just how you feel about Eustacia Vye. She is too contradictory; she is too special and rare. Hardy himself is most eloquent when he describes her in symbolic terms, as when he writes that she and Damon, walking together under the full moon, “appeared amid the expanse like two pearls on a table of ebony.” Equally doomed, these two passionate beings shine brightly in a dark world only to be extinguished.

“The Return of the Native” : Role of Clym

Well denotation, if sometimes mistaken, Clym is Hardy's central character, the returning native of the novel's title. He does not find happiness, but he does find a kind of wisdom through his suffering. In the beginning, he is stubborn and proud. When he discovers that he can cause tragedy for others, he learns humility. Hardy wants the reader to learn what Clym learns. We cannot always get what we want in life, but neither can anyone else. Human beings should love one another and try not to cause each other pain.

Well-meaning, intelligent in certain ways, Clym Yeobright is not suited to life in the real world of his day. He dislikes city life as “effeminate,” but when he returns to Egdon, no one understands his ambition to teach school. His ideas come from books rather than from direct experience with people. Unfortunately, he does not really know himself,
either. He thinks he is rational and controlled; but love for Eustacia causes him to act rashly. He thinks he is morally right; but this leads him to be cruel to others, whom he believes to be in the wrong.

Like his cousin Thomasin, Clym loves Egdon Heath, and the people there love him for his pure nature. The most important influence in his life is his home, especially his mother, Mrs. Yeobright. Temporarily, he leaves her to marry Eustacia, but in the end, even after her death, her influence on him remains strong.

Hardy suggests that Clym is too sensitive. His constant thinking almost seems to weaken him physically; his studying literally makes him an invalid for a while. His high ideas are not very practical. In day-to-day experiences with other people, he often has little or no idea what they want, or what they are thinking.

Yet this does not make him ridiculous. We have to respect him because he is struggling to find the truth of life. Though he is sometimes obtuse, he is never thoughtless. Perhaps he lacks the sense of self that is necessary to survive. If Wildeve is too selfish, then Clym in contrast is too unselfish.

In the end, Clym dedicates himself to others, hoping to spread truth and comfort and to teach all men to love each other. Ironically, he himself has failed with his mother and with Eustacia, the two people he loved most. He is more successful at loving all mankind than at being a son or husband.

"The Return of the Native" : Responsibility of Character and Fate

Pessimism, Fatalism, Determinism: - Words like pessimism, fatalism and determinism have freely been used by critics and readers to describe Hardy’s philosophy of life. These labels largely convey his outlook and attitude. Everywhere in the novels of Hardy, human beings appear to us crushed by a superior force. He is pessimistic because he believes that man is born to suffer and he is fatalistic because he believes that destiny is hostile to man and that it governs human life, allowing very little free will.

Whether his creed is fatalism or determinism, Hardy is haunted by the vision of necessity. He shows us the sad consequences of a conflict of contradictory wills and the development of this conflict is crossed at every moment by accidents which interpret them. Hardy, however, is not cynic. He doesn't regard man as essentially mean and wicked. There are villains in his novels; but he believes that there is more goodness than evil in human nature. Man is capable of heroic endurance of misfortune. Therefore it is possible to call Hardy a determinist than a fatalist. Fatalism implies a blind supernatural power and determinism implies the logic of cause and effect.

Character and Fate responsible: - Hardy believes that “happiness is an occasional episode in a general drama of pain.” He didn't think life to be a boon. Hardy’s conception of life is essentially tragic. The conflict is one in which there is only the remotest chance of escape. Man suffers from a lack of foresight and from an inability to
subdue his own insubordinate nature and this suffering is aggravated by the chances and
incidents and a strange overwhelming power. The Tragedy in RN is due largely to the
weaknesses and faults of the characters themselves. To that extent, character is fate,
but tragedy is also caused by the natural and fateful forces working on the other end.

Clym’s responsibility: - Human weaknesses largely determine the course of events
in the novel. Clym is a noble man and would like to serve his fellow human beings by
educating them. He is not a materialistic man. In fact, has forsaken the fashionable life
of Paris and returned to Egdon Heath. We should not expect such a man to be unhappy;
but he has his shortcomings. He fails to perceive Eustacia’s unsuitability as a wife to a
man like himself. He is unable to see materialistic nature of Eustacia and love for worldly
gaiety. She warns him that she doesn’t have the makings of a “good some-spun wife”
and his mother emphatically tells him that he would regret his marriage to Eustacia
whom she rightly describes as an “idle, voluptuous woman” but Clym doesn’t see to
these warnings. Having fallen in love with and married Eustacia, fails to keep the
marriage. He also fails to balance between his wife and mother. Both the couples are
incompatible with each other.

Mrs. Yeobright’s responsibility: - Mrs. Yeobright, though a respectable matron
for whom we feel great respect, is rigid and obstinate. Being worldly and practical, she is
unable to read Clym’s mind and feels unsympathetic to his humanitarian projects. She
objects to her educational plans and marriage to Eustacia.

Wildeve’s responsibility: - Wildeve is the villain of the piece and is the author of
much of the misery that the characters suffer. He is an unscrupulous man, with a
shallow nature and shifting loyalties. He fluctuates between one woman and another,
maries one of them but keeps running after the other. His intimacy towards married
Eustacia triggers more crises in the lives of characters.

Incongruities of the situation: - The tragedy in RN results from the incongruities of
the situation in which these characters find themselves. For example, the incongruity of
incompatibility between Clym and Eustacia, she hates Egdon Heath as much as Clym
likes it. She like the glamour of Paris and thinks Heath a hell. Describe the tragic story in
brief...

The role of destiny: - The responsibility of the characters for their tragedy is
obvious. We repeatedly have a clash of wills and a conflict of purposes between the
various persons involved, each pulling in a different direction. The tragic situation keeps
mounting and the characters reach the limit. We are unable to understand the force
working behind their tense and tragic life. It is destiny which manifests itself in the form
of accidents and incidents. It is just when Mrs. Yeobright has determined to reconcile
between the couple that the demon of mischance begins its game. Mrs. Yeobright’s
death is the result of many ironic accidents and coincidences. She arrives at her son’s
house at a time when Wildeve is having an intimate conversation with Eustacia and when
she cannot immediately open the door. Mrs. Yeobright turns back and on her way back
home is bitten by an adder and is killed. Before her death, she tells the boy, Johnny
whom she meets purely by chance that Eustacia had discarded her. Clym has driven out
Eustacia; fate resumes its flippant jests. He writes a letter to her to come back; but the
letter miscarry by a few minutes. Clym, unaware of this, sits in his house waiting for Eustacia to knock. The night is the worst imaginable. The Heath is beaten by wind and rain. At length, a woman’s footstep is heard. He feels excited. Thinking it to be Eustacia, he finds Thomasin who breaks the news of Eustacia’s elopement with Wildeve which ends in drowning. We must remember that almost all Eustacia’s meetings with Wildeve after her marriage to Clym have been accidental. All these incidents are responsible for their tragic ends and are supplemented by human weaknesses and get aggravated.

**The Part of Nature and Egdon Heath**: - In Hardy’s stories, nature is always a personage and this personage is embodied here in Egdon Heath. Heath is the dark immemorial environment whose influences control the lives and destinies of those who dwell here. Egdon Heath symbolizes the whole cosmic order, win which man is but an insignificant particle. Eustacia looks upon Heath as a great enemy. She regards it as her cross, as her shame and as the potential cause of her death. Egdon Heath is swept by rain and wind causing death to Eustacia and Wildeve and it also kills Mrs. Yeobright with its venomous adder from its bosom.

**“The Return of the Native”**: The Sense Disillusionment

Thomas Hardy has a very pessimistic philosophy of life and his characters also suffer from disillusionment of their lives. He shows man lives in an indifferent world. Return of the Native is based on the assumption that man is destined by God to suffer the overwhelming pain and suffering which exists in the world.

All the main characters of Return of the Native namely- Clym, Eustacia, Wildeve, and Mrs.Yeobright have their own aim ambition. But all their plans turn into vain. All of their lives are full of aim. But they are trapped in a series of bitterly ironic events. They are faced with an incomprehensible universe.

The protagonist of the novel, Clym at an early age have been sent to Budmouth and from where he had gone to Paris. In Paris he had placed in trade and he had risen to the position of a manager of a diamond-merchant’s establishment. He is a boy of whom something is always expected. He feels that he has to use his services for the people in Egdon Heath. In order to be of some service to the people, he wants to start a school. His misfortune, semi blindness disables him from executing the educational project.

In his love affair also he was not successful. Clym is very much attracted by the charm and beauty of Eustacia. Ignoring his mother’s strong opposition he takes a cottage at Alderworth, several miles away from Blooms-End. But the utter incompatibility of temperaments had foredoomed their marriage.

The heroine of the novel, Eustacia was fully aware of the beauty, which nature has bestowed upon her. She didn’t care about what people may tell about her. She can’t bear the loneliness that heath has. She says, “Tis my cross, my shame and will be my death”. Eustacia dreamed of a life in Paris. She hopes that if she marries, Clym he may take her to Paris. She has fascination for the pompous city life. But Clym on the other
hand wants to settle in Egdon. So she had to stay in Heath. In the later part of the novel she tries to escape from the Egdon Heath with the help of Wildeve. Coincidentally Clym writes Eustacia a letter begging her to return to him - but he sends the letter too late. Eustacia does not see the letter before she leaves to flee with Wildeve. If she had, she might have no die like this.

Mrs. Yeobright, the mother of Clym, is a woman of middle age with well-formed feature. She vehemently opposes the plans of Clym to start a school. She wants Clym to go back in Paris because there he has a respectable job. She had brought up her with great care and devotion. She also strongly opposes not to marry Eustacia. She says, “Is it best for you to injure your prospects for such a voluptuous, idle woman as that?” But nothing could restrict her son from staying in the Heath or marrying Eustacia.

She was shocked, for example, by the sight off her son dressed as a furze cutter. She could not believe her eyes. She had thought it was only a diversion or hobby for him.

Again she resolves to reconcile with her son. But she never gets the chance to reconcile with her son and she dies.

**Wildeve**

Though Wildeve is depicted as a demon here but still he is also the portrayal of disillusionment. In the beginning of the novel, Wildeve responses quickly to Eustacia’s signal fire. It is true that he wishes to marry her. But he could not. And in the later part of the novel he unhesitatingly leaps into the stream with all his clothes on to try to rescue Eustacia. But in this time also he fails and dies.

Analyzing all the above discussed characters we can say that man is thus posited to be the source of the cosmic but the cosmic is considered to be too complex for human understanding.

**“The Return of the Native” : Hardy’s Art of Characterization**

**Introduction:** In the field of characterization, Hardy’s talent, as compared with that of some great novelists, is narrow. His memorable characters all have a family likeness, but there is no doubt about the realistic quality of Hardy’s character portrayal. He makes his characters live in almost vital manner.

We get the feeling that we have actually met the various persons whom Hardy portrays in his fiction. His characters are made of solid flesh and blood like Clym and Eustacia. They are recognizable human beings and their conversation, actions, irritations, annoyances and quarrels perfectly convincing. It has been said that Hardy’s great success is with subtle characters. But the fact is that his men and women are the most vividly realized when they are simple, primal characters: rustics such as Grandfer and Christian Cantle, sturdy countrymen like Diggory Venn.; passionate wayward women such as Eustacia and plausible rogues such as Wildeve. The portrayal of male characters
are admirable, he perhaps succeeds ever better in the treatment of men than women. This choice of his characters leads him away from intellectual complexities which delight most novelists. If his best characters are not subtle, the art that describes them is surely one; for he can record the minutest fluctuations of emotional experiences - write the problems in the relationships of the characters and discuss them - such as incompatibility of Eustacia etc. Hardy introduces each of his principal characters with a vivid description of the personal appearance. The reddenman is described “as young and, if not exactly handsome, approaching very near to handsome.” Wildeve is quite a young man. The grace of his movement is singular. It is “the pantomimic expression of a lady-killing career.” Eustacia is “full-limbed and somewhat heavy and soft to the touch as a cloud. She has pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries.”

**The portrayal of Eustacia:** Return of The Native contains some of Hardy’s greatest characters, notably Eustacia and Clym. Her rebellious nature and force of will are for what Hardy calls her, “the raw material of the divinity”. She is the most powerfully-drawn woman in the Hardy’s portrait-gallery. Her selfishness, her charms and beauty, her uncontrolled passions do not blind us to her celestial imperiousness. Hardy suggests that she is a goddess in her power. She has a femme fatale in her power to arouse passions in others and Cleopatra in her pride, her passion and her scorn of consequences. She is Hardy’s greatest creations whom no reader is likely to forget. She herself is responsible for the tragedy that befalls her. These are the factors which put her to tragedy: Her unsatisfied longing to be taken to Paris and her Hatred of Heath are the main factors governing her fate. She was attracted towards Clym simply by the hope that she would be taken to Paris. She was also aware of his deficiencies and she frankly confessed to Clym that she didn’t have the makings of a good house-wife. But she also told him that she loved him and that she could sacrifice her dream of Paris for him, “To be your wife in Paris would be heaven to me; but I would rather live with you in a hermitage here than not be yours at all.” In spite of this her desire of Paris never perished. Her reaction to Clym’s furze-cutting, her renewed interest in Wildeve, Her failure to open the door, and her final decision and death are all the factors which contribute to her tragedy. Eustacia’s own weaknesses and lapses play a large part in bringing about the tragedy. Her love of gaiety and fashion, her worldliness and incapacity to appreciate her husband’s lofty nature and her inconsistency are the powerful factors.

**Mrs. Yeobright’s character:** Mrs. Yeobright has been vividly portrayed. Her love for her son is her most outstanding quality. With it she combines a strength and firmness of mind, a shrewdness and sagacity. She has a practical mind especially in her assessment of Eustacia. Her opposition to her son’s educational plans shows her narrow-mindedness.

**The portrayal of Clym:** His portrayal is much less complex. His aversion to materialistic and fashionable life of Paris, his great love for her mother, his decision to be a school teacher and educator and his acceptance of his misfortune all make him a convincing character. The delineation of his character has superbly been made by Hardy.

**Diggory Venn:** In the portrayal of Diggory Venn, too Hardy is matchless. He represents the honest, steadfast, devoted, self-sacrificing and selfless lover. Some of us remain
unconvinced by the selfless love he expresses towards Thomasin. It would be seen that he has nothing else to do but safeguard the interests of his farmer sweetheart.

**Wildeve’s character:** Wildeve is the villain whose conduct arouses disgust in our minds. He is depicted as casual, irresponsible, selfish, pleasure-loving and even callous. He plays with the hearts of girls, marries one of them and runs away. He strongly reminds us of Sergeant Troy in Far From the Madding Crowd. He has attractive manners and amiable nature. He partly redeems himself by sacrificing his life for Eustacia. The character of Wildeve is convincing.

**Contrasted Portrays:** One important aspect of Hardy’s characterization is the contrasting portraits of his characters. Mrs Yeobright and Eustacia are as unlike each other as any two women could be. The one honest and devoted; the other, unscrupulous and inconstant in love. Clym is contrasted with both Diggory and Wildeve. He portrays men though in a narrow range, but he delineates women eminently. There are three women characters in the novel. Eustacia, Mrs. Yeobright and Thomasin (Compare them). There are only three main male characters; Clym, Wildeve and Diggory Venn (Compare them here).

**The Egdon Heath:** In delineating the various characters, Hardy makes use of the natural environment in which these characters live. Egdon Heath is not only the scene of the story; it dominates the plot and determines the characters. (write attitude of different characters to Heath)

**The Rustic Group:** We cannot ignore the rustic group of characters. Although they appear here as a group, yet they have been individualized too.

**How Hardy Uses his Knowledge of the Bible, Art, the Universe and Wessex Folklore to Add Depth to "The Return of the Native"?**

Hardy began writing Return of the Native in 1877 and Hardy includes many of the beliefs and views of the Victorian period in his writing including concerns about God and religion, scientific theories, moral values and cultural attitudes of the people of the day. Hardy wrote the novel at a time when he was happiest, when he had returned to his native Dorset after living for a time in London. He loved the countryside but realized that with this great time of change, with the industrial and agricultural revolution, that the customs of rural England were under threat. He was concerned that local traditions and regional identity would be forgotten through the civilizing of the masses. Hardy was keen to preserve a record of the local folk history and superstition which continued to play a major part in the lives of the Dorset people, even in the 1890's. By drawing on his knowledge, Hardy was able to illustrate to the reader the changing beliefs of the period at the same time as giving deeper meanings to the story and giving the reader a better understanding of the characters through his extensive use of Greek mythology and biblical references.
Hardy began his life with strong religious beliefs. He was born into a very active Christian family and regularly attended church services. His faith was devout until 1862 when he moved to London. There he was exposed to new ideas and scientific advancements and as he started questioning religion and searching for the meaning of life, his faith weakened and his spiritual beliefs were strengthened. It was a time when the bible had been brought into question through Darwin's work 'The Origin of the Species' which suggested that evolution had been responsible for man's development rather than being created by God. With this and other discoveries, people had started to think about the nature of existence.

In Return of the Native, Hardy writes from the point of view of an agnostic as his characters, although uneducated, question traditional beliefs. Conventional Christian religion is conspicuous by its absence in the novel. Although the Church did play a central part in most rural communities at the time, in the world of Egdon Heath, the heath folk rarely made the effort to attend church services. When Fairway recounts the story of Mrs Yeobright forbidding the wedding banns in book 1 chapter 3, he says

'ah well I was at church that day ...... which was a very curious thing to happen' and Humphrey replies, 'I haven't been these three years'.

This suggests it is an unusual occurrence for the local people to go to church. Hardy also describes in Book 2 chapter 4 how the local inhabitants of Egdon are unlikely to visit church, even on Christmas Day, as because of the weather 'they did not care, to trudge two or three miles to sit wet footed in the church'. If their belief had been strong, then it wouldn't have mattered what they had had to endure to demonstrate their faith.

Hardy's views on religion are obvious in his writing. He is almost mocking of Clym as when he first returns to the Heath, he is likened to a Victorian missionary in his aim to improve the lives of the common workers through education. Hardy describes him as 'John the Baptist who took ennoblement rather than repentance for his text' and his further comment that 'the rural world was not ripe for him' seems to criticise his unwelcome intentions. Hardy ends the novel with Clym as a rather pathetic and tragic hero, preaching his 'Sermons on the Mount'.

Hardy uses a great deal of religious imagery in the novel and the purpose of this reference to biblical characters and disasters, gives the reader a better understanding and magnifies the importance of events. In book 1 chapter 4, Eustacia explains her hatred of the heath as she tells Wildeve, 'Tis my cross, my shame, and will be my death'.

The imagery anticipates her failure to escape the heath and foreshadows her death. In the chapter The Night of the 6th of November, Hardy describes Eustacia's last walk on the Heath. He refers to the 'agony in Gethsemane'. Eustacia's thinks of various historical and biblical events as she heads off into the night on the path towards Rainbarrow. Such references are extremely symbolic. Similarly Venn is compared to an 'Ishmaelitish creature' inferring that he has been cast out and gives a better understanding to how Venn is seen as an outsider by the locals. The purpose of Hardy including these biblical references reflected the thinking of the time and is meant to be ironic.
Hardy's lack of Christianity led him to the conclusion that there was an imminent will that controlled life and that people were simply pawns being manipulated by a higher force that was indifferent to pain. Although some of the characters in Return of the Native are uneducated, they question traditional beliefs which are shown through the Heathfolk's Pagan rituals.

**Art**

In the novel, Hardy frequently pauses from the story to talk about the past and often refers to people in Greek mythology, art and literature to compare the characters. In his description of Eustacia, he compares her to myths like 'Artemis, Athena, Hera' to emphasise how much like a goddess she is and how she is different to other normal women. He also refers to her as 'an embodiment of the phrase a populus solitudo' likening her to a quotation of one of Hardy's favourite poems 'Child Harold by Byron.'

When Hardy describes Mrs Yeobright perception of communities he suggests that she sees things from a distance and suggests that her view of life is the same as you would have to view the work of Flemish painters 'Sarlert and Van Alsloot'.

From the point of view of Mrs Yeobright's experience of rejection by Clym, the novel echoes the themes and actions of Shakespeare's play King Lear, as it explores the themes of the parent-child bond, pride, arrogance, misunderstandings, justice, blindness and madness. The allusion to King Lear and the tone which Clym speaks to Eustacia is Shakespearian in its style as he says in book 5, chapter 3,

'By my wretched soul you sting me, Eustacia! I can keep it up, and hotly too. Now, then, madam, tell me his name!'

The inclusion of Shakespearean themes in the novel adds more seriousness to the events taking place and stresses the tragedy.

**Wessex Folklore**

Hardy loved his native Dorsetshire and preferred country life to city life, much like Clym Yeobright. At the time of writing the novel in the 19th century, major changes were taking place largely due to the industrial revolution. This resulted in people moving from the farmlands to work in new factories in the cities. Hardy was well aware that one of the effects of the social change taking place was a loss of identity.

Hardy's novel is centred around Egdon Heath and the people who live there and documents a vanishing life of colourful characters, traditional dialects, seasonal celebrations, folk remedies and superstitions. He included the details of the vanishing country life as a historical record which also included negative aspects. As the great agricultural depression took place in Britain and Ireland between 1870 - 1890, people lost their jobs. This is possibly the reason that Clym was forced to leave Egdon to look for work and probably the reason Diggory Venn was forced to take up employment as a Reddleman as his work running a dairy herd no longer existed as he writes 'since the introduction of the railways Wessex farmers have managed to do without these'.
As well as documenting dying traditions, the heath folk act like a chorus in a classical Greek drama and through their talking and joking, they are able to comment on the actions of the main characters. Hardy uses them to provide the reader with a background to the story. For example in Book 1, chapter 3, they provide information that the marriage between Thomasin and Wildeve and that the brides Aunt, Mrs Yeobright 'forbad the banns'. The main action of the plot is interspersed with the appearance of the Heathfolk who are always light and jovial, which allows the reader to take in important information and think about the consequences of the action of the main characters.

The heathfolk are the main participants in the ritualized celebrations that Hardy wanted to include. The action is organized around seasonal celebrations, which begin and end with the autumn bonfires. The bonfire is a symbol of continuity which has its origins in a pagan ritual and because the heathfolk are strongly superstitious, they use the bonfire to ward off evil spirits. Hardy uses the 5th November to show a strong sense of tradition which began in 1605 when Guy Fawkes attempted to get rid of the King James I by blowing up the houses of parliament. Bonfire night is also related to the Celtic New Year when bonfires were lit as part of the New Year celebrations.

Another example of traditional celebration comes when the heathfolk perform the Mummers play as part of the Christmas festivities. The Play of St George shows a battle between Christianity and Paganism and Hardy includes the play to make a point about good and evil and the fact that the reader should consider the complexity of the characters and not make moral judgments about them.

The gypsyng at the village picnic in late August also marks the changing of the seasons as does the Maypole dance, a festival of Spring which is symbolic of fertility and renewed life. Hardy uses the Maypole dancing to suggest that new life may also be possible for Thomasin.

As well as the seasonal celebrations, Hardy includes other ancient rituals that are performed by the locals. In the novel, to cure Mrs Yeobright of her adder bite, Sam suggests an old folk remedy telling Clym 'You must rub the place with the fat of other adders'.

Christians believed that man had the right to chose between right and wrong. However they also believed that there exists an evil agent at work in the world which the bible calls Satan. Following the New Testament teaching, the ancient church regarded the devil as the originator of all evil. Magicians, sorcerers and witches who were believed to make use of Satanic powers were therefore excommunicated.

Hardy was keen to emphasise the superstitious beliefs and god fearing nature of the rustics on Egdon Heath. The two main examples of the local superstition are Diggory Venn and Eustcia Vye. Both of these characters are isolated and feared for being different and therefore arouse suspicion. In the early Christian years, the Church was relatively tolerant of magical practices. If you were proven to be involved in it, then all you had to do was to pay penance but later on, it was considered evil and the Church's attitude became aggressive and all people suspected of witchcraft and socery were now charged with having made a pact with the devil, and using their supernatural powers to
harm people. Most of the Heath people suspect Eustacia of being a witch as Jonny Nansuch explains to Venn, 'They say she's clever and deep, and perhaps she charmed 'en to come'. She is linked to witchcraft often because she seems to have an unnatural power over men. She also strange habits, roaming the countryside at night, lighting bonfires. As the story develops, the fear of Eustacia as an evil force is shown in the cruel treatment she receives. Susan Nansuch believes that Eustacia has spellbound her children and when her son Johnny becomes ill, she believes Eustacia is the cause and makes a wax effigy of her and throws it into the fire after sticking it with pins.

'To counteract the malign spell which she imagined poor Eustacia to be working, the boys mother busied herself with a ghastly invention of superstition, calculated to bring powerlessness, strophy and annihilation on any human being against whom it was directed'.

Diggory Venn, the Reddleman is also a victim of the heathfolks superstition. The fact that he is 'trapped' in his red colouring and the myths associated with his lonely trade cause many of the images associated with Venn to be Satanic. Hardy mentions that the Reddleman was the favourite bogeyman that Wessex mothers used to threaten their naughty children as they told them 'the Reddleman is coming for you'.

**Dorset Festivals**

Ashmore village in Dorset hosts the Filly Loo celebration on the nearest Friday to the longest day, June 21st. Villagers dance beside the village pond. A traditional morris band plays to the crowd who dance in the street. A Green Man arrives in a procession and takes part in the first dance to start the evening. There are display dances followed by public dancing, then at dusk, the celebrations reach their climax with the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance. This is a torchlit procession with six antlered deer-men and four other costumed characters: a Maid Marion, a bowman, a hobby horse and a fool. The procession and dance is accompanied by a haunting solo melody in a minor key which is very atmospheric. The celebration finishes with the torches in the ground around the pond and everyone holding hands around the pond for the last dance.

Wessex Morris Men dance above the Cerne Abbas Giant, an ancient fertility symbol, at dawn, around 5.20am. They then walk down the hill collecting may and dance and process through Cerne Abbas accompanied by the Dorset Ouser (or Ooser), a horned animal-like figure.

**Maypoles**

The earliest sources suggest that the maypole acted as a focal point for May festivities or games, marking the spot of the where everyone should meet. There is no evidence that they were connected to pagan beliefs or worship - such accusations were first made by sixteenth-century Puritan reformers hostile to all dancing, drunkenness and merry-making, which they associated with idolatry. As a result, during the Protestant regime of Edward VI (1547-53) the May Day customs were curtailed. In the reign of 'Good Queene Bess' the Puritans seem to have been the first to link the maypole to 'heathen' worship.
as a regular part of their propaganda and 'anti-ceremony' agenda. The matter became an issue of debate in ecclesiastical courts.

The Stuart monarchs seem to have had no objection to the maypole customs, although religious opposition from the Puritans continued. The issue of morris dancing and maypoles became a ‘bit player’ in a larger and more fundamental debate between Church and State. This reached new levels with the Puritan revival during the English Revolution (1640-60), when such 'folk' revelries were banned, along with celebrating Christmas and playing football. Maypoles were banned by Act of Parliament in 1664. Those local officials who did not comply could be fined 5 shillings a week.

On the restoration of the monarchy a Charles II General Wade raised the famous maypole in April 1661 on The Strand in London to celebrate the king's return to the capital.

The tradition of raising maypole to celebrate royal anniversaries began in the 17th century. In 1760 to celebrate the accession of George III maypoles were also erected. Likewise in 1887 and 1897 to celebrate milestones during the reign of Queen Victoria. Our present Queen, Elizabeth II, has also had maypole raised in celebration of her Jubilees in 1977 and 2002.

May customs and maypoles were brought into the industrial cities of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as part of the continued evolution of the celebrations.

Yet even as the old May traditions began to fade, they were revived as part of the cult of 'Merrie England'. Traditional song retained the May Day references. May Day acquired its connection with socialism at the end of the 1800s. In 1975 it became a public holiday again for the first time since 1640.

The majority of 'working maypoles' are only ribboned at the time of public festivities, such as May Day, and remain 'undressed' for the rest of the year. Maypoles are still ribboned for public dancing in different parts of England.

**Mummers Plays**

Mummers' Plays have been performed in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland for hundreds of years. They are folk dramas based on the legend of St. George and the Seven Champions of Christendom. They were originally mime or dumb shows (Thus mummers from the Middle English word mum, meaning silent.) where all the performers were disguised and known as 'Guisers'. All the characters were played by men who kept the same part for many years. Eventually, dialogue was added, but was passed on by word-of-mouth. Consequently, the 'Chinese Whispers' effect over the centuries and the loss of the real significance of the original story, makes present day performances very entertaining but virtually meaningless to most audiences.

The principal characters are St. George (â€¦of dragon fame.), Captain Slasher, The Turkish Knight, The King of Egypt, Doctor and several men-at-arms who challenge St.
George to a duel and are subsequently slain. The Doctor enters and demonstrates his skill by resuscitating the dead knights.

Many historians believe that this drama is a celebration of the death of the year and its resurrection in the spring.

**"The Return of the Native" : A love-story**

Hardly was a modern so far as his thought or philosophy is concerned, but the form of his novel is traditional. His plots are all old fashioned. All of them turn on love. In all of them, we find the conventional love-triangle. Hardy's novels are all basically love-stories.

This is also true of the Return of the Native. It is also a love-story. And in it, there is not merely a love-triangle, but a rhomboid (a four cornered figure) with a tail. The love triangle in the novel may be represented as follows:

(a) Eustacia-Clym Yeobrightl (b) Wildeve-Tliomasin-Venn

Both Clym Yeobright and Wildeve love Eustacia, and both Wildeve and Venn love Thomasin. Thus there is a double love-story, the path of the lovers cross, and the result is much sorrow and suffering, and ultimately tragedy. Love, in the present novel, as in other novels, is a lord of terrible aspect, a source of tragedy rather than of happiness. A detailed consideration of the love-triangle would make the point clear.

**Clym-Eustacia-Wildeve** : Long before the novel opens, Wildeve and Eustacia have been in love with each other. They meet frequently on the Rainbarrow near Eustacia's home, and the sound produced by the dropping of a stone in the nearby pond is used as the signal of love. But their love is neither true nor sincere. They are strangely fascinated and drawn towards each other, and yet they are unfaithful to each other. The fact is that isolation in Egdon Heath has made Eustacia love-hungry, and she turns to Wildeve because there is no other more worthy object of love on the desolate heath. Wildeve too loves her because she is the most beautiful woman on the heath. However, as she is proud, hot and impulsive, he turns to pretty Thomasin who is the very opposite of Eustacia. He is a sort of lady-killer and likes to make love to a number of women at one and the same time.

On her part, Eustacia is equally capricious and changeable. She, too, transfers her love to Clym as soon as he returns to Egdon. She is disgusted with Egdon, yearns for the pomp and glitter of city life, and loves Clym because she thinks he would take her to Paris. However, her dream is frustrated. Clym has his own plan of educating the rustics, studies for long hours loses his eye-sight, and is compelled to take up the humble work of a furze-cutter. This is a great humiliation for Eustacia. At this juncture, Wildeve again crosses her path. The two dance on the village green, and Wildeve comes to meet her secretly at her home. The visit results ifi the tragedy of the closed door and the death of Mrs. Yeobright.
When Clym comes to know of the circumstances which led to the death of his mother, he is, quite naturally, angry with his wife. There follows a violent quarrel, and Eustacia leaves her husband and comes to live with her grandfather. Unable to tolerate life on Egdon, she decides to elope with Wildeve. They leave home on the night of the 6th of November. It is absolutely dark and a furious storm is raging. Eustacia falls into a pond and is drowned. Both Wildeve and Clym jump into the pond to save her. Wildeve is drowned, while Clym is saved by the reddleman.

In this way, Clym-Eustacia-Wildeve love-triangle results in tragedy for all concerned. Eustacia and Wildeve come to a tragic end. Clym's love for Eustacia is the direct cause of the tragic death of Mrs. Yeobright. No doubt, Clym lives in the end, but his is a life in death. He live haunted by a sense of guilt that he is responsible for the death both of his wife and his mother.

**Wildeve-Thomasin-Diggory:** Wildeve-Thomasin-Diggory Venn have-triangle, on the other hand, ends more happily, largely, as a result of the patient and forbearing nature of Thomasin. Diggory Venn had loved Thomasin from the very beginning, but Thomasin rejected him for three reasons. First, because she did not love him, secondly, because she loved another person, and thirdly because her aunt, Yeobright, did not agree to her marriage with Diggory, by far their social inferior. Diggory was much frustrated. He was a small dairy farmer but dis-appointment in love led him to give up his farm and adopt the profession of a reddleman.

When the story opens we find the poor Thomasin has been jilted by Wildeve at the eleventh hour. They had gone to be married, but it was discovered that there was some technical flaw in the marriage license and so they could not be married. This is a great humiliation for Thomasin. Instead of returning home with Wildeve after the unfortunate event, she returns in the van of Diggory. In Egdon all supposed that they, Wildeve and Thomasin, were duly married, and so the Wessex folk even came to the Quiet Woman Inn to congratulate them.

Wildeve, instead of acting honorably and marrying Thomasin at the earliest, turns once again to Eustacia who is gratified to have her lover back. Diggory does her best to help Thomasin. He adopts his, "silent system", to scare away Wildeve from Eustacia, and keep him at home in the evening. At a critical moment, he offers himself to Mrs. Yeobright as a possible suitor for Thomasin. The result is that Mrs. Yeobright is able to talk to Wildeve from a position of strength, and to tell him frankly that if he does not marry her at an early date, there is another lover waiting to marry her. However, Thomasin is determined to marry Wildeve for, "her pride's sake". It is only though marriage with that she can wash off the disgrace from her fair name.

It is the return of Clym to Egdon that makes matters easier for Thomasin. Eustacia falls in love with him, and writes to Wildeve telling him that she no longer wants him, and he may marry Thomasin, if he so desires. The result is that Thomasin and Wildeve are married. But Wildeve does not remain faithful to her for long. He meets Eustacia by chance, dances with her and then visits her secretly, first in the evening, and then in the day. Thomasin knows all this, and suffers deeply as a consequence.
Melioristic Note: - However, her patience, tolerance, humility and prudence are rewarded in the end. Wildeve and Eustacia are drowned in the pond on the might of the 6th of November, and in this way she becomes a widow. The faithful Diggory still loves her and continues to court her. The episode of the lost glove touches her heart deeply. She now realises the sincerity and depth of his love. The result is that she now accepts him, and the two are duly married. We may be sure that the two lived happily together ever afterwards.

Thus the love story of Thomasin end; happily. Through her the novelist has introduced an element of meliorism in the novel. Life is tragic, and love is a cause of sorrow and suffering, but we can get some happiness even out of human life, if we are sufficiently gentle, humble, patient and forbearing like Thomasin and Diggory Venn. It is in this way that the tragedy of human life can be ameliorated or softened a little.

"The Return of the Native" : Significance of the Title

A good title must be appropriate and significant. Just as a signboard indicates the contents of a shop, a good title should indicate the substance or the basis theme of a novel is the story of the tragic consequences of the return of Clym Yeobright who is a native of Egdon Heath.

Clym Yeobright was born and bred up on Egdon Heath. He is its native. He loves the Heath, and is permeated through and through with its influences. He finds the hills congenial and friendly, and its very spirit is in his blood. His playthings have been the flora and fauna of Egdon, and he is as familiar with the face of the ancient Heath, as one is with the face of a close relative. He is the son of Egdon, Egdon is in his blood, and he cannot remain happy away from it.

As Clym, the native of Egdon, was a promising lad, he was sent to Paris so that he may prosper and rise in life. There he became the manager of a big diamond business. He was doing well there, but still he did not feel happy and satisfied. He felt bored and tired in the artificial and unnatural life of the city of Paris. He did not feel at home there. He felt that in Paris, "he was pandering to the meanest vanities" of libertines and shameless women. The call of Egdon was too strong for him and he returned.

The return of Clym to his native Egdon causes much sorrow, suffering in the life of at least five people —Clym himself, Eustacia, Wildeve, Mrs. Yeobright and Thomasin. Clym was disgusted with the life at Paris, and he intended to devote the rest of his life to the education of the Heath-folk. He intended to stay forever in his birthplace to start a sort of school for the education of the rustics. This is a noble end, indeed, but it too idealistic and is bound to result in frustration and disappointment. The illiterate Egdon people would never have appreciated his nobility or his attempts at education them. In order to put his plan into practice, he studies hard late into the night. The result is that he grows-semi-blind, and is obliged to take to the humble work of a furze-cutter to support himself. This is a great tragedy, and Clym's suffering can better be imagined than described.
But this is not all. His return brings tragedy in the life of others also. Eustacia, the Queen of Night, falls in love with him and marries him in the hope that he would take her to Paris, and in this way her craze for city life would be satisfied. She is disgusted with Egdon, regards it as a Hell, and yearns for the pomp and glitter of city life. When she finds that Clym has no intentions of returning to Paris, her frustration knows no bound. She turns once again to Wildeve, and plans to elope with him. The result is that both of them are drowned in the dark and stormy night.

Thus is cut short the career of the beautiful. Eustacia, and of Wildeve, the Rousseau of Egdon. Had Clym not returned, Eustacia would have married Wildeve, and all would have been well. As it is, his return makes Wildeve marry Thomasin, and the two are incompatible by their very natures. Wildeve does not remain faithful to Thomasin for long, and makes love to Eustacia again. Thomasin suffers silently as long as he lives, and finally has to suffer the pangs of Widowhood. Her life would have been a long tale of misery, had not there been the faithful Diggory to marry her and thus bring a ray of sunshine into her dark life.

Again, it is the return of Clym to Egdon, which brings him into direct conflict with Mrs. Yeobright, his mother. Mrs. Yeobright loves her son deeply and devotedly. She lives for him alone. A wise and shrewd woman, she knows that Eustacia would never make a good wife to him. She, therefore, warns Clym against a hasty marriage with her. She strongly objects to their marriage. The result is that the two quarrel violently, and finally separate and live apart. The result is that both of them suffer acutely, but silently. Their suffering is terrible. When Mrs. Yeobright comes to know that her son has turned a furze-cutter, she relents and goes to his cottage to be reconciled. But cruel Destiny has willed otherwise. The door of Clym's house remains closed in her face, she turns back disappointed and exhausted, and dies on the Heath.

Thus the novel narrates the story of the tragic consequences of the return of Clym to Egdon, his native place. Hence the title is appropriate.

"The Return of the Native" : The Pessimism of Thomas Hardy

Is Hardy a Pessimist? : - Much ink has been spilt in proving, and disproving too, that Hardy is a pessimist through and through. But Hardy himself repeatedly denied this charge in his prefaces, letters and diaries. He called himself an "evolutionary meliorist" and a realist. Let us here examine the arguments, both for and against, and then from our own conclusions.

Arguments of Hardy's Critics: - Those who charge Hardy with being a pessimist do so on account of his 'twilight' or gloomy view of life. They point out that in Hardy's considered view all life is suffering. Suffering is the universal law and happiness is but an occasional episode. In one of his poems, "Tire Poet's Epitaph", he calls life a "senseless school" and in another one that "Life offers only to deny." In hide the Obscure a child, called Father Time, murders his step brothers and sisters and then hangs himself. He does so because he feels that life is not worth living, and it is better not to have been
born at all. Hardy himself adds the comment that Father Time symbolises the coming universal wish not to live.

**Hardy Pessimistic about the First Cause:** - Moreover, Hardy's critics point out, he is pessimistic about the governance of the world. He rejected early in life the Christian belief in a benevolent and omnipotent anthropomorhic God or First Cause. He rather conceives of Him as malevolent, as one who take delight in the suffering of us mortals. In Tess we are told, "Justice was done, and the President of the immortals had ended this sport with Tess."

In one of his poems he speaks of the Creator as, "Godhead dying downwards, with eyes and head all gone" and elsewhere refers to it as some "vast imbecility". Thus in his view 'the supreme power is blind, imbecile and malevolent and it takes joy in killing and torturing his innocent creation. In this ill-conceived scheme of things, with an hostile imbecility as the supreme governing force, there can be nothing but, "strange orchestra of victim shriek and pain." If this is not pessimism, ask the critics of Hardy, then what is?

**Hardy's Own Point of View:** - But Hardy vehemently denied this charge, times out of number. He pointed out that he was an artist and not a philosopher. It would be wrong to read any considered belief or theory of life in his mood-dictated writings. Expressions, like the one in Tess, regarding the President of the immortals, were simply poetic fancies, merely poetic devices like the use of ghosts, witches, fairies, etc., commonly used in all imaginative literature. Poems like "The Poet's Epitaph" were merely impressions of the moment and did not represent his considered view. He should not be judged by them. In his letters, diaries and prefaces he frequently explained his own point of view and called himself an, "evolutionary meliorist", or an "explorer of reality."

**Hardy a Realist and Not Pessimist:** - The fact is that Hardy was a thorough realist. Born and bred in a scientific age, he could not shut his eyes to the fact of suffering. Therefore, the cheap, blind optimism of poets, like Browning, who sang, "God is in His heaven
All is right with the world."

failed to satisfy him. Rather, the brutal and ruthless struggle for existence which he saw being waged in Nature everywhere, the starvation, hunger, sickness and disease which stalks the earth, made him feel that God was not in heaven and all was wrong with the world. He claimed, and rightly, that his position was nearer the truth. Nor could he agree with the Romantic poets, like Wordsworth, who said that Nature had a "Holy plan" and that there was joy everywhere in Nature. How could it be so, when numbers of children were born to shiftless parents, like the Durbeyfields, to bring misery to themselves and to others. The world was already overcrowded; there were already too many hungry mouth to be fed. Acutely conscious of this fact of universal suffering, he felt with his own Jude that mutual butchery was the law of nature. This is not pessimism, but realism. This state of affairs can be mended not by turning our backs to it, but by facing it squarely. He therefore taught:

"If a way to the better there be
It implies a good look at the worst."
This is a perfectly sane and healthy view of life and no right-minded person can object to it.

**Hardy's View of the First Cause: Scientific:** - As regards the creation and the Creator, Hardy was much influenced by the scientific theories of his age. He agreed with evolutionary scientists, like Darwin, that the universe could not have been created out of nothing by a single act of creation. It was in a constant process of evolution. With all modern thinkers, he lost faith in the benevolent, anthropomorphic God of Christian orthodoxy and conceived of the First Cause as an inhering force or energy, working constantly from within. Thus Hardy's universe is in a constant state of evolution. He conceives of this energy as indifferent and unconscious, without any hostility or any sense of pleasure in causing pain. This is his considered view. But when carried away by his indignation, he shakes his fist at the cause of things and personifies it as a conscious and hostile Creator. For example, with indignation burning in his heart at the unmerited suffering of Tess, he calls the First Cause as the President of the Immortals who kill us for their sport. He may be excused for such poetic fancies, for they have been made use of by all poets and writers of fiction. They do not reflect in any way this logical position.

**Ultimate Enlightenment of the First Cause:** - Moreover, he believes that this energy or power would gradually evolve consciousness and then human lot would undergo amelioration. Towards the end of his epic-drama, The Dynasts, his most philosophical work, he holds out a hope of the gradual emergence of a better order of things. In this drama, he calls the First Cause, Immanent Will, and says that already,

"..... a sound of joyance thrills the air,
Consciousness the will informing
Till it fashion all things fair,
And the rages of the ages shall be mended."

This is certainly not pessimism. It may be what Hardy called, "evolutionary meliorism."

**Philosophy of Resignation, Not of Nihilism:** - Besides this, Hardy is not a Nihilist. Except in his last novel Jude the Obscure, he never advocates a rejection of life. Suffering, no doubt, is the universal law but human lot can be ameliorated a great deal through tact and wisdom and through wise social reform. It is a philosophy of resignation which he teaches. The Wessex rustics are resigned to their lot and suffer patiently. Joan Durbeyfield's suffering is not so intense, because when faced with misfortune she again and again mutters, "It was to be", and then goes about her way as usual. Elizabeth-Jane and Thomasin tactfully adjust themselves to their circumstances and so escape much misery.

**Emphasis on Wise Social Reform:** - Social reforms can go a long way towards ameliorating human lot. Marriage laws, specially, should be liberalized in favour of the fair sex. 'Pure' women, like Tess, who are more sinned against than sinning, should not be looked down upon and treated as outcasts. Our double standards of morality must go. A marriage should be dissolved as soon as it becomes a cruelty to either of the two contracting parties, for it is then no marriage at all.
Hardy's View of Man: Moreover, Hardy does not take a degraded view of mankind. Odious villains, detestable and condemnable rascals, are few in the Wessex Novels and none of them is an unredeemed villain. Thomas Hardy cannot draw completely odious people. David Cecil writes in this connection, "Odiousness implies meanness; and mean people neither feel deeply nor are aware of any issues larger than those involved in the gratification of their selfish desires." If Hardy tries to draw such a mean person, he is a dreadful failure. It does not mean that all his successful creations are virtuous. Henchard and Eustacia commit sins, but they do so in a grand manner. There is no calculated selfishness in them. Moreover, they know they are wrong: they are torn with conscience. They are simply carried away by an over-mastering passion. Therefore, we do not dislike them. Mankind for Hardy always assumes heroic proportions. The Wessex Novels are the, "apotheosis of the human spirit", and not expositions of its meanness.

Hardy a Humanist, and Not a Pessimist: The spirit of, "Loving-kindness", Hardy advocates, should he the basis of all human relations. Much of human misery results from the imperfections of the First Cause, but much more suffering can be avoided if we are kind and sympathetic to each other. Instead of seeking refuge in nature and turning our back on life, we should rather turn to our own kind, for,

"There at least discourse trills around,
There at least smiles abound,
There sometimes are found,
Life-Loyalties."

A poet who could write like this cannot be called a pessimist. Thomas Hardy is a 'humanist" or what he called himself an, "Evolutionary meliorist."

To sum up, there has been hot controversy as to whether Hardy is a pessimist or not. Those who consider him a pessimist point out that in his view all life is suffering and happiness is only an occasional interlude. They also point out that the ruling power is blind, unconscious of human suffering and lacking in moral sense. Its activity is purposeless. Hardy considered himself a realist and an evolutionary meliorist. He believed that if a way to the better there is, it requires a good look at the worst. The ruling power would be gradually enlightened with the passing of time. Human lot can be improved by tactful and adjustment to one's circumstance, by wise social reform and "loving-kindness."

"The Return of the Native" : Hardy's Contribution to the English Novel

Hardy's Greatness as a Novelist: Hardy has come now to be universally recognised as the greatest novelist of the Victorian era. Indeed, he is one of the greatest novelists in the whole range of English Literature. Some critics have even called him the Shakespeare of the English novel. Let us here consider the various merits and demerits of his art and then form our own estimate of his true greatness as a novelist.
The Classification of Hardy's Novels: Hardy's first novel the Desperate Remedies appeared in 1871, and thereafter novels after novels flowed from his pen in quick succession. His last novel, Jude the Obscure, which was published in 1895, was vehemently criticised as being immoral. This hostile reception made him give up novel writing for good, for exclaimed he, "a man would be a fool, to deliberately stand up to be shot at." The Mayor of Casterbridge, The Return of the Native, Tess of the D'urbervilles and Jude The Obscure are regarded by universal consent as his masterpieces, and they have been compared to the four great Shakespearean tragedies. Prof. L Abercrombie has divided Hardy's novels in to two groups — the dramatic and the Epic. Dramatic novels are those in which our interests is divided between a group of character whose actions and interests clash with each other, such conflict forming the main point of the novel. The Return of the Native and Far From the Madding Crowd are dramatic, for in them the chief interest arises from a clash between the main characters. In the epic novels the interest of the novel centres round the life of a single character. The background is vast and imposing and there is no sub-plot. Tess of the D'urbervilles obviously belongs to the second class, for in this novel the action centres round a single character, a milk-maid, whom Hardy calls a "pure woman". The Mayor of Casterbridge shares the qualities of both these kinds. Hardy was a born poet and even his novels are the works of a poet. Poetic scenes of great power abound, and they have earned for Hardy World-wide acclaim and popularity.

Hardy as a Regional Novelist: Hardy is a regional novelist. He is the creator of "Wessex" a small tract of country consisting of six odd countries in South England. His knowledge of this limited region is as thorough as that of Scott of his beloved Scotland and that of Wordsworth of the Lake District. "Wessex" appears and reappears successively in one novel after another and it is seldom that he strays out of it. But his treatment of this locality is not narrow or provincial. He has raised it to the level of the universal. Wessex scenes and sights are made a part of universal nature and his characters are at one with humanity as a whole. Wessex heaths and woodlands have an epic grandeur and his principal characters have the greatness of epic heroes and heroines. He has thus imparted a new emphasis and significance to the regional novel which had already been dignified by the Brontes.

His Theme: But above all Thomas Hardy is the creator of the philosophical novel. Uptill now the English novel was a vehicle of social criticism. Man in society had been its theme so far. But Thomas Hardy uses the novel to inquire into the cause of things. His novels are questionings about life. He constantly inquires about the why and whereof of things and constantly attacks accepted beliefs. Man's predicament in the universe is the theme of Thomas Hardy's novels. He has no faith in the benevolent and omnipotent God of Christianity. He conceives of the First Cause as blind, indifferent and unconscious. Man suffers owing to the imperfections of the powers on high. The Return of the Native is a tragedy of character and environment but even here chance and fate play an important role in bringing about the tragedy. Character is responsible for the tragedy only to a very limited extent. Thus his conception of tragedy differs radically from that of Shakespeare. His characters suffer for no fault of their own, but because they happen to inhabit a blighted planet. In Tess of the D'urbervilles, Tess suffers even though she has done no wrong. She is essentially a pure woman more sinned against than sinning. She has no 'tragic-flaw' in the sense in which all the tragic heroes of
Shakespeare have it. In this way, Hardy is the father of a new form of tragedy. He has given to the English novel depth, richness and significance.

**The Creator of the Democratic Novel:**

To Thomas Hardy must go the credit of having democratized the English novel. Aristotle had taught that the hero (at least the tragic hero) of an epic, drama, or novel must belong to the highest rank of society so that his fall from his previous greatness may rouse the emotions proper to tragedy. Writers in general followed this precept of Aristotle. Witness, for example, the great tragic heroes of Shakespeare. But the heroes and heroines of the great Hardian tragedies are all drawn from the lowest rank of life. Henchard, the hero of The Mayor of Casterbridge, is a haytrusser, Tess is a milkmaid, Giles is a cider-maker and pine-planter, Gabriel Oak is a shepherd and Clym is a furze-cutter. He has thus completely broken away from tradition and his novels do not suffer in any way. He has revealed the essential nobility and grandeur of the soul of humble humanity that remains unknown in country isolation. Tess, though an humble milk-maid, has the nobility and grandeur befitting an empress. Hardy's tragedy is as great an apotheosis of the human spirit as the tragedy of Shakespeare.

**Hardy: Treatment of Sex:**

Hardy has broken new ground in another respect also. He was the first English novelist who dared to make a woman who had sinned, or who was an adulteress, the heroine of his novels. Tess is a woman with a past, yet Hardy has made her the heroine of Tess of the D'urbeivilles. Similarly, Sue Bridehead, heroine of Jude the Obscure, is an adulteress. Hardy thus shocked Victorian notions of morality and was vehemently criticised as being immoral and a corrupter of the people. His books were burnt. But he did not yield; he rather chose to give up novel-writing when the bitter attacks of his critics were too much for him.

**Characterization:**

Characterization is an important aspect of the art of a novelist and Thomas Hardy is a master of the art of characterization. Some of his characters are among the immortal figures of literature. They remind us of the immortal creations of Shakespeare. He chooses his characters from the lower strata of society because he believed that while the character and actions of people from high society are concealed by conventions, the rustics are free from any such control. Hence in their case character is fully revealed and can easily be portrayed. Thus Thomas Hardy excels in the portrayal of simple, elemental natures. His female characters are better and more forceful than his male characters, because women are more elemental, nearer to nature, than men. Thus his range of characterization is limited. AH his important characters belong to Wessex and to the lower strata of society. When he strays out of Wessex or attempts to portray complex characters drawn from the upper classes of society, he fails miserably. But this does not mean that his characters have only a topical or local interest. He deals with the universal passions of man and so his characters are universal in their interest. They appeal to people in all ages and countries. One has to think only of Henchard, Clym, Tess, Eustacia, Giles, Marty South, etc., to realise the truth of his statement.

Thomas Hardy's characters are all human beings, with common human weaknesses and virtues. They are neither saints nor angels, nor unredeemed villains. His characters may have some faults; they may sin but they are never mean. We never hate them, we love them despite their faults. They are grand even in the faults they might commit. They
have conscience, and they are torn within themselves when they do some wrong. Henchard is jealous and revengeful, his wrongs are the result of impulse, never the result of calculated malice. Whatever we may call him, we can never call him mean. Similarly, Tess has sinned, but she is essentially a pure woman whom we pity, and whose heroic struggle against heavy odds we admire.

**Minor Characters:** Hardy's characters may be divided into two broad classes — major and minor. His major characters include such unforgettable and forceful figures as Henchard, Farfrae, Elizabeth-Jane. Clym, Eustacia, Giles, Marty South, Bathsheba, Gabriel Oak, Tess, Angel Clare, Sue, Jude, etc. His minor characters are sons of the soil, real children of the earth. They are representatives of antiquity. They perform the function of the Greek Chorus in the novels of Hardy. They comment on action and people and tell us of what has happened off the stage. They are the main source of humour in his novels. They provide a norm by which to judge the main characters of his novels. Often they are the spokesmen of Hardy himself and express his views on life. They appear in groups and generally remain in the background. They may be likened to the clowns of Shakespeare or to his rustics. They, too, are unforgettable and unique in their own way and constitute much of the charm of his novels. When they are absent, as from Tess, even the best of his novels lose something owing to their absence.

**Plot Construction:** Hardy's novels are masterpieces from the point of view of plot construction as well. They have an architectural finish and symmetry. The architectonics of Hardy have been praised by all who have studied him. The forethought, the careful planning, the pattern and design, the majesty and grandeur of the plots of his novels, is explained by his early architectural training. They are all massively built. As an edifice rises brick by brick, joined together by mortar according to a particular plan, so are Hardy's plots constructed scene after scene, and his Wessex and his philosophy are the cement that welds the scenes into a single whole. Digressions are there, still everything develops according to a preconceived design. There is no looseness, unfinished odds and ends.

**The Faults of His Plots:** But his plots are old fashioned. They are all love stories. The wrong man meets the wrong woman or vice versa and thus complications arise leading the characters to their doom. The "eternal triangle", is always there. Moreover, they follow the old fashioned dramatic plot-pattern in the convention of Fielding. There is action, sensation and thrill; but there is no such introspection, or psychol-analysis as we expect from a modern novelist, and as we get in the novels of writers like Henry James. While Hardy is a modern as far as the thought content of his novels is concerned, he is conventional and old fashioned in his plot construction. Moreover, his plots turn too much on chance and coincidence. This is unrealistic and jars upon the reader's sense of probability.

**Style:** The style of Hardy has come in for a great deal of criticism. Mr. Erza Pound accused him of writing with a blunted pencil. Others have called him pedantic for his use of obsolete, dialectic words and such words and expressions drawn from the terminology of the arts and the sciences, as are unlikely to be familiar to the average reader. He has been condemned for his faulty grammar —for his split infinitives, unrelated participles, and the misuse of articles and prepositions. These are serious faults, no doubt, and it is
right that they should be pointed out. But the fact remains that Thomas Hardy's style is the best suited for his purposes. It is a poetic style. He has an almost Shakespearean felicity of expression, and has the rare, and invaluable knack of using the best word for his purpose. At every step his style reveals the sincerity of the man. He uses obsolete words and expressions, and scientific terminology only because he wants to be exact and convey his sense to the readers as accurately as possible. He is master of the use of similes and metaphors. When at his best, images after images come out of his pen as sparks from a chimney fire. His rustics speak their own dialect, but they use it most forcefully and effectively. Hardy instinctively chooses the best possible vehicle of expression for them and for himself.

The Modern Note: - Hardy is largely a traditional novelist. His plots, his characters are all conventional. His narrative is straightforward. We do not find in him that probing into the human soul which we find in the modern psychological novel. He does not, "move backward and forward in time as a stream of consciousness" novelist does. He does not disregard chronology or the logical sequence of events. His form is conventional, but as far as his matter is concerned he is entirely a modern. He is a modern in his views of God and religion, and in his free and frank treatment of sex.

To sum up, we can say that 'In the largeness of design, in the march and sweep of imagination, in the greatness of his great themes, he has given to the novel a simple grandeur and impressiveness, the more impressive for his preoccupation with the concerns of modern thought." Thus Hardy occupies an important place in the development of the English novel.
THE VICTORIAN ERA (1850-1900)

The Queen Victoria (1819-1901), who was 18 when she became the Queen, had all the personal traits and characteristics of her age; in the arts she did not introduce any changes; she simply approved of them and became a symbol of them. She was a sheltered child, with well-marked personal traits which she demonstrated throughout her long life as the Queen of England. For the moderns, she represents false modesty, squeamishness in facing the facts of life. We associate with her name such concepts as complacent narrowness, artificial respectability, a code of 'decency' decided upon by the 'best' people. Victoria, as a queen was simply an ideal, who personally agreed with the practices and ideals of the new commercial upper-middle classes of England. Throughout her reign, she was adored by the people and was the symbol of the greatness and glory of England. Love of England meant love of the great and glorious Queen.

An Era of Peace and Prosperity: In the beginning of the era there was a widespread faith in unlimited progress. This sense of self-satisfaction or complacency resulted from the immense strides that England had taken in the industrial and scientific fields. The nation was prospering and growing richer and richer every day. Wealth brought with it many evils, like snobbery and social climbing. Money values prevailed, and as a result of increased materialism of the age, art and culture suffered. The British Empire was already a reality; the white man's burden; or the colonising mission of the English, was already bringing in rich dividends. They attributed all this prosperity to their glorious and dominant Queen Victoria. It was an era of prosperity, an era of aggressive nationalism, an era of rising imperialism. Hence, nobody wanted that the status quo should be disturbed; any questioning of the present order was frowned upon. Emphasis was on faith, faith in one's religion, faith in the Queen and those in authority, and faith in continuous progress. It there were doubts anywhere, they needed to be compromised with the existing order.

Rapid Social Change: However, such a state of affairs could not continue for long. The Industrial revolution gradually destroyed old agricultural England. It shook the supremacy of the aristocratic class and landed gentry, and brought into being a new merchant class. This new class, quite naturally, clamoured for power and prestige, both political and social, and did not agree to the accepted order of things. Victorian traditions and conventions were thus subjected to greater and greater pressures and by the last quarter of the century there were large cracks in the Victorian fabric. Moreover, the lower classes, too, were acquiring political rights. There was mental and cultural emancipation all around.

Rise of Democracy and Liberalism: This spirit of emancipation is nowhere seen to better advantage than in the freedom which women gradually acquired. Victorian tradition and Victorian prudery placed ex-cessive emphasis on the chastity of women. Their proper sphere was within the four walls of the home; any contact with the outside
world was supposed to corrupt and spoil them. Their sole business was to look after the comfort of their menfolk. But with the passing of time the movement for women's emancipation gained ground; women were given political rights and more and more of them came out of their homes to take up independent careers. Florence Nightingale did valuable service to the cause of women. Problems of sex and married life were receiving increasing attention from thinkers and writers. Havelock Ellis and Freud were already working on their epoch-making works. Tennyson expresses his views on the problem in his The Princess.

**Evolutionary Science and the Spirit of Questioning:** This breakup of Victorian traditions and conventions was accelerated by the rapid advance of science. Science with its emphasis on reason rather than on faith encouraged the spirit of questioning. Victorian beliefs, both religious and social, were subjected to a searching scrutiny and found wanting. The publication of Darwin's Origin of Species in 1859 is of special significance from this point of view. His celebrated theory of Evolution contradicted the account of Man's origin as given in The Bible. His theory carried conviction as it "was logically developed and supported by overwhelming evidence. Man's faith in orthodox religion was shaken; he could no longer accept without question God's mercy, etc., for such orthodox notions of God were contradicted by facts. Similarly, Darwin, with his emphasis on the brutal struggle for existence which is the law of Nature, exploded the romantic view of her as a "Kindly Mother" having a "Holy plan" of her own. The process started by Darwin was completed by philosophers like Huxley, Spencer, Mill, etc. The impact of these developments in science and philosophy on the literature of the period is far-reaching.

**Pessimism of the Age:** Thus the established order, customs, faiths, beliefs and traditions were losing their hold on the minds of the people, and the new order of things had not yet been established. Man had lost his mooring in God, Religion and Nature. The mechanistic, view of the universe precluded any faith in a benevolent creator. Man felt, "Orphan and defrauded". He took a gloomy, view of life, for he felt miserable and helpless with nothing to fall back upon. It was for the first time, says David Cecil that "conscious, considered pessimism became a force in English literature". The melancholy poems of Arnold, the poetry of Fitzgerald, Thomson's The City of God, and the works of Thomas Hardy all reflect the pessimistic outlook of the late Victorian era. This growth of pessimism was further encouraged by the flow of pessimistic thought from Europe, where pessimism was much in the air at the time.

**The Victorian Compromise:** A word may now be said of the famous Victorian compromise. The age in which Tennyson matured and produced was an era of social change. Man was caught between two worlds, with the old one crumbling down, and the new one not yet formed. Doubts and unrest possessed man's soul and everything was in ferment. The chief disintegrating forces of the Victorian age were three: (a) the Industrial Revolution resulting in the rise of a new, rich and prosperous merchant class, desirous of rank and privilege, (b) the rise of democracy, and (c) the rise of evolutionary science. All these forces tended towards the break-down of the existing order; hence an effort was made to reconcile the old and the new, to bring about a compromise between science and religion, between the demand for "progress" and the need of stability, order and peace.
Its Several Aspects: The Victorian compromise had several aspects. Politically it meant the reconciliation of the claims of liberty and progress with order. An orderly broadening down of freedom from precedent to precedent became the Victorian ideal. Government still remained an affair of "great families" whether Whig or Tory. But the aristocracy itself was recruited more freely from the middle classes. In every field the Victorians tried to uphold authority in the face of the rising tide of social change. In the political field "authority" meant State and established law: in the field of government it meant aristocracy; in religion it was represented by the Established Church: in the domestic sphere it meant the supremacy of man over woman. Victorianism emphasised authority, and in religion it was represented by the English Church. The emphasis on Church authority deepened in the face of the challenge from science and rationalism.

Social Morality: Morality and respectability were the corner-stones of Victorianism. This emphasis on conventional morality was partly a reaction against the corruption of the earlier age, scandals of Byron and the radicalism of Shelley who did not hesitate even from depicting incest. "Moral duty remained for most Victorians a categorical imperative." The Victorians expected the poets not only to amuse but also to instruct. Men of letters must show a sense of social responsibility in a high degree. It is reflected in the humanitarianism of Dickens, Kingsley and Charles Reade.

Avoidance of Extremes: The Victorians disliked extremes of feeling or passion or even language. There was a tacit understanding as to what was to be depicted on the stage and what was to be left to the imagination. A general reticence concerning matters of sex is a common characteristic of literature in the Victorian age. H.M. Jones remarks: Victorianism is the pretense that if you do not name a thing it isn't there. According to Elwin, "prudery and humbug" presided over the age. This prudery placed a real limitation on the contents of the novel. It made it impossible for the novelist and poets to portray a real, living woman. Hence it is that decorum and solemnity are associated with Victorianism.

General Characteristics: The Victorian Age, also known as the Age of Tennyson in English literature, witnessed an unprecedented change and progress in all spheres of life. It was an era of material affluence, political awakening, democratic reforms, industrial and mechanical progress, scientific advancement, social unrest, educational expansion, idealism and pessimism. The literature of this period, wonderfully rich and varied in personal quality, embodies the spirit of the age. The Victorian era is characterised by the following main currents which transformed both life and literature:

(i) An Era of Peace: The Victorian Era was remarkable for its uninterrupted peace. The few colonial wars that took place during this period did not seriously disturb the national life. Though the Crimean War directly affected Britain, the sores of this war were soon healed up. The liberals of this period were particularly ardent champions of universal peace, brotherhood and justice. They regarded war as an unmitigated evil on a relic of barbarism. It was a peaceful epoch when Englishmen could complete the transformation of all aspects of their industrial, commercial, and social life without any of those risks of violent interruptions that gave quite a different quality to the history of continental nations.
(ii) **Prosperity and Progress:** As it was an age of peace, it made remarkable progress in industrial and mechanical development. Factories were established all over England, and large-scale production added to the national wealth. The new commercial energy of England was reflected in the Great Exhibition of 1851 and it was hailed as the beginning of a new era of prosperity. Carlyle writes in Signs of The Time "It is the age of machinery, in every outward and inward sense of that word; the age which, with its whole undivided might, forwards, teaches and practices the great art of adapting means to evils. Not the external and the physical alone are now managed by machinery, but the spiritual also. Men are grown mechanical in head and heart, as well as in hand. It was an era of prosperity, an era of aggressive nationalism, an era of rising imperialism.

Rapid industrialisation, commercial and material expansion also resulted in many evils, such as the appalling social conditions of the new industrial cities, the squalid slums, and the exploitation of cheap labour, often child labour, the painful fight by the enlightened few to introduce social legislation and the slow extension of franchise. The evils of Industrial Revolution were vividly painted by Dickens, Mrs. Gaskell and Kingsley. The disintegration of the village community, which was also necessitated by industrial expansion, is expressed in Hardy's novels.

(iii) **The New Education:** Educational expansion was registered by the passing of Education Acts, by which education to a limited degree became compulsory. The education expansion produced an enormous reading public. As the publication of books became cheap, their production was multiplied. Education brought political and social awakening among the masses. Press became a powerful political force. With the diffusion of education, a great reading public grew up unlike any that had existed before. The new reading public had no high literary standards. It asked for something to read. So, journalism and novel writing grew up. Edward Albert writes: "The most popular form of literature was the novel, and the novelists responded with a will. Much of their work was of a high standard so much so that it has been asserted by competent critics that the middle years of the nineteenth century were the richest in the whole history of the novel."

(iv) **Victorian Compromise:** It was an era of turbulent social changes. Man was caught between two worlds, the one dead and the other not yet formed. The new democratic, scientific and industrial forces tended towards the breaking down of the existing order. Hence, an effort was made to reconcile the old and the new, to bring about a compromise between science and religion, between the demand for progress and the need of stability, order and peace. In the field of political life there was a compromise between democracy and aristocracy. Harold Nicholson writes that the Victorians "desired to be assured that all was for the best; they desired to discover some compromise which, while not outraging their intellect and their reason, would nonetheless soothe their conscience and restore their faith, if not completely, at least sufficiently to allow them to believe in some ultimate purpose and most important still, in the life after death. In voicing these doubts, in phrasing the inevitable compromise, Tennyson found, and endeavoured passionately to fulfill his appointed mission."

(v) **Social Unrest, Social Purpose and Realism:** Victorian era was characterised by great social unrest. The class of wealthy capitalists and mill owners was rolling in
wealth and luxury, but, on the other hand, factory workers and labourers were leading a life of abject misery and poverty. The industrial revolution had appealed strongly to the baser instincts of the commercial classes. To the wage earning classes the new Wealth accruing from the vast increase of manufacturers meant little. The Poor living conditions of the industrial slaves attracted the attention of social reformers and writers. The writers were inclined to depict a realistic picture of contemporary life with a conscious purpose of reformation. W. J. Long remarks: "The Victorian Age is emphatically an age of realism rather than of romance,—not the realism of Zola and Ibsen, but a deeper realism which strives to tell the whole truth, showing moral and physical diseases as they are, but holding up health and hope as the normal conditions of humanity." Both poets and writers worked under the shadow and burden of a conscious social responsibility. In the stories of Dickens is faithfully mirrored, writes Rickett, "the deplorable state of the Debtors' Prison, the Fleet, and the Marshalsea; the dismal abysses of elementary education; the oppression of little children; the prevalence of religious hypocrisy—these and many other dark corners of the life of London, were illuminated by the searchlight of his genius."

The closer approximation of literature to social life is very marked in the Victorian era. Kingsley writes passionate social tracts in the guise of a story, cheap bread inspires Ebenezer Elliott; Elizabeth Barrett voices The Cry of the Children, and Thomas Hood immortalizes the despairing unfortunate. Carlyle plunges into the political problems of the day. Ruskin, starting as critic of the art of painting, turns in the new century to the more complex art of life, and no man of letters has tackled industrial problems with greater insight and more brilliant suggestiveness.

(vi) **Advancement of Democratic Ideals:** In the political sphere the progress of democracy was a remarkable achievement. The political supremacy of the landed aristocracy had been destroyed by the Reform Bill of 1832 but there was no improvement in the condition of the working classes. Agitation for electoral reforms continued. The popular movement, known as Chartism kept England for about ten years in a state of political unrest, which was further stimulated by the industrial depression and widespread misery of "the hungry forties". The glaring social and political problems stirred the conscience of reformers and gave immense impetus to philanthropic energy and the spirit of humanitarianism. The repeal of the Corn Law in 1848 ushered in an era of improved industrial conditions. The Chartist movement came to an end in 1848. Subsequently the Reform Bills of 1867 and 1884-85 "transformed the essentially oligarchic England of William IV's time into "the crowned republic" whose praises Tennyson sang." The old feudal landmarks and distinctions gradually disappeared, and the growth of sympathy between man and man and class and class was evident. With the expansion of democratic and humanitarian ideals popular education also spread, which provided proper opportunities for personal development to all. Journalism also became popular. The literature of their period derived greater energy and driving power from the democratic and humanitarian ideals. Carlyle, Ruskin, Dickens, Kingsley and even Mrs. Browning were deeply influenced by these ideals.
Women's liberation also characterised the Victorian epoch. Women were given political rights, and more and more of them came out of their homes to take up independent careers.

(vii) **The Impact of Science:** The progress of science kept pace with the progress of democracy. Due to the spread of popular education, newspapers, magazines and cheap books, the facts and speculations of scientists and thinkers passed rapidly into the possession of the reading public at large. The doctrine of evolution which is generally associated with the names of Darwin, Wallace and Herbert Spencer had completely revolutionised all current ideas about nature, man and society. Faith in the Biblical view of cosmology and creation was shaken, and was replaced by the Darwinian theory of revolution through struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest.

The impact of science was so powerful on human mind that it had affected every channel of intellectual activity. It influenced human thought in two ways. First, it had fostered a spirit of restlessness; for by increasing man's material resources, it had commercialised human life at the cost of religious and spiritual values. Carlyle and Ruskin condemned growing materialism. Carlyle proclaimed the insufficiency of existing social ideals. The general spiritual unrest is voiced most remarkably in mid-Victorian poetry. Rickett remarks: "The questioning note in Clough, the pessimism of James Thompson, the wistful melancholy of Matthew Arnold, the fatalism of Fitzgerald, all testify to the sceptical tendencies evoked by scientific research. It did not kill poetry but it stifled for a while the lyric impulse and overweighed verse with speculative thought."

The scientific method of observation and critical insight influenced the poetic art of Tennyson and other poets. "In accuracy of detail it would be impossible to rival the scenic descriptions of Tennyson," says Rickett, "whose nature poetry is like the work of an inspired Scientist......"

The scientific spirit is also clearly discernible fiction. The problems of heredity and environment attracted the attention of novelists. Biology, psychology and pathology influenced the works of Charlotte Bronte, Dickens, Kingsley and Reade, who deal with social problems. We come across the influence of Herbert Spencer and Comte in the novels of George Eliot. The analytical methods of science were more subtly followed by George Eliot and Hardy.

(viii) **Revival of Interest in the Past:** Though the Victorians were interested in contemporary social and political life, they still had a fascination for the old ages. Some of the writers and poets had romantic thirst for beauty, love and art. The Pre-Raphaelites remained unaffected by the sweeping tide of realism in fiction and they were attracted towards the Middle Ages. In the sphere of religion Keble and Newman pioneered the Oxford Movement which was based on spiritual romanticism. Just as Romanticism went back to old traditions and feelings in the same way the Oxford reforms refreshed religious life by a return to the past. Pater and Oscar Wilde were the pioneers of the Aesthetic Movement, which was a reaction against utilitarianism and pessimism. Cazamian explains that the spirit of Romanticism continues to influence the innermost consciousness of the age which sees a Tennyson, a Thackeray, a Browning and an Arnold, it permeates every thought just as it colours almost every mode of expression.
Even its adversaries and even those who would escape its spell are impregnated with it. England, like Europe, is not yet entirely free from the predominant influence of Romanticism; she still witnessing the development of its effects."

**CHARLES DICKENS; 1812-1870**

Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth, England in 1812. As the second of eight children in a very poor family, he lived a difficult childhood. Eventually, his father was sent to debtor’s prison, and Dickens himself went to work at the age of twelve to help pay off the family’s debt. This troublesome time scarred Dickens deeply and provided him with substantial material for such stories as Great Expectations, Oliver Twist, and David Copperfield. Steeped in social criticism, Dickens’s writing provides a keen, sympathetic chronicle of the plight of the urban poor in nineteenth-century England. During his lifetime, Dickens enjoyed immense popularity, in part because of his vivid characterizations, and in part because he published his novels in installments, making them readily affordable to a greater number of people.

The Industrial Revolution, which swept through Europe in the late eighteenth century, originated in England. The rapid modernization of the English economy involved a shift from rural handicraft to large-scale factory labor. Technological innovations facilitated unprecedented heights of manufacture and trade, and England left behind its localized, cottage-industry economy to become a centralized, hyper-capitalist juggernaut of mass production. In tandem with this transformation came a significant shift in the nation’s demographics. English cities swelled as a growing and impoverished working class flocked to them in search of work. As this influx of workers into urban centers continued, the bourgeoisie took advantage of the surplus of labor by keeping wages low. The poor thus remained poor, and often lived cramped in squalor. In many of his novels, Dickens chronicles his protagonists’ attempts to fight their way out of such poverty and despair.

A Tale of Two Cities, originally published from April through November of 1859, appeared in a new magazine that Dickens had created called All the Year Round. Dickens started this venture after a falling-out with his regular publishers. Indeed, this period in Dickens’s life saw many changes. While starring in a play by Wilkie Collins entitled The Frozen Deep, Dickens fell in love with a young actress named Ellen Ternan. Dickens’s twenty-three-year marriage to Catherine Hogarth had become a source of unhappiness in recent years, and, by 1858, Hogarth had moved out of Dickens’s home. The author arranged to keep Ternan in a separate residence.

Dickens’s participation in Collins’s play led not only to a shift in his personal life, but also to a career development, for it was this play that first inspired him to write A Tale of Two Cities. In the play, Dickens played the part of a man who sacrifices his own life so that his rival may have the woman they both love; the love triangle in the play became the basis for the complex relations between Charles Darnay, Lucie Manette, and Sydney Carton in A Tale of Two Cities. Moreover, Dickens appreciated the play for its treatment of redemption and rebirth, love and violence. He decided to transpose these themes onto the French Revolution, an event that embodied the same issues on a historical level. In order to make his novel historically accurate, Dickens turned to Thomas Carlyle’s
account of the revolution. Contemporaries had considered Carlyle’s version to be the first and last word on the French peasants’ fight for freedom.

Dickens had forayed into historical fiction only once before, with Barnaby Rudge (1841), and the project proved a difficult undertaking. The vast scope and somewhat grim aspects of his historical subject forced Dickens largely to abandon the outlandish and often comic characters that had come to define his writing. Although Jerry Cruncher and Miss Pross embody some typically Dickensian quirks—exaggerated mannerisms, idiosyncratic speech—they play only minor roles in the novel. While critics continue to debate the literary merits of the novel, no one denies the light that the novel sheds on Dickens’s development as a novelist. More experimental than the novels that precede it, A Tale of Two Cities shows its author in transition. Dickens would emerge from this transition as a mature artist, ready to write Great Expectations (1860–1861) and Our Mutual Friend (1864–1865).

**Literary & Historical Information: A Tale of Two Cities**

A Tale of Two Cities is a popular, historic novel set in London and Paris before and during the French Revolution. It was initially published as a serial in the weekly entitled All Year Round, from April 30 to November 29, 1859. The novel concentrates on the social and psychological crises more than on a retelling of the actual historical event of the war. Dickens’ vision of the Terror encompasses aristocratic exploitation and neglect of the poor, public bloodshed, and private vengeance.

Dickens’ source of the French Revolution is undoubtedly Thomas Carlyle’s monumental work, The French Revolution. He is also indebted to Bulwer-Lytton’s novel Zanoni and Watt Philips’ play The Dead Heart, both having the French Revolution as their background. Even though Dickens relied upon other works, his vision and view in A Tale of Two Cities are clearly his own. He expresses his views most clearly when he shows how uncaring the aristocrats were to the plight of common people. But he is able to shift his sympathy away from the mob of French patriot revolutionaries to the plight of the aristocrats and their families. His dislike of the mob is seen in an earlier historical novel, Barnaby Rudge. There the mob storms the Newgate Prison, but the authorities are able to quell the violence. The vengeful, bloodthirsty mob that storms the Bastille cannot be restrained.

Dickens handles the historic event with maturity. He reveals the similarity between the behaviors of both aristocrats and the revolutionaries. Dr. Manette is thrown into prison without reason or trial in the same way that the patriots send innocent people, like Darnay or the seamstress, to death by the guillotine without a fair trial.

There is an autobiographical element in the story, for Dickens identifies himself with both Dr. Manette and Sydney Carton. He was in love with Ellen Terman, and the way Carton worships Lucie is the way Dickens loved Ellen. Like Dr. Manette, Dickens lived in two worlds—one of stark reality that he chose to forget and an imaginary one that made his bad experiences more acceptable.
The novel displays several literary influences. Dickens refers to classical legend in the chapter titled "The Gorgon's Head." His themes and characters also seem to be influenced by the Bible, especially the New Testament and its concepts of resurrection and redemption. He finally draws on the techniques used in folklore, fairy tales, and fable to enrich the descriptive passages. The symbols, allegory, and irony thus become more effective.

Revolutions have occurred ever since the first oppressed people became tired of their tyrannical rulers. They have been the cry of the downtrodden since the beginning of time, symbolizing hope for a better future. The French Revolution, which occurred from 1789 until 1799, violently transformed France from a country ruled by a monarch with a rigid social hierarchy into a modern nation where the social structure was loosened and power passed increasingly to the middle classes. The weakness of King Louis XVI is regarded as a crucial factor that started the revolution. He ignored individual rights, rich and poor alike. During his reign, the ordinary French person was very poor, and food became scarce and expensive. The agricultural recession in 1776 forced property owners to exploit their sources of revenue; but the growing middle class threatened the established landed aristocracy. When the lower classes refused to pay more taxes, the royal ministers attempted to tax all landowners. This plan led to the Aristocratic Revolt. Their first meeting in 1789, in Versailles, was paralyzed because the Third Estate (the Commons) refused to meet separately as a distinct inferior body. On June 17, the Commons took the very important revolutionary step of declaring their assembly to be the National Assembly and thus the States-General was destroyed. They asserted their power, and to show who really was in control, the people of Paris stormed the Bastille on July 14. Riots broke out everywhere. The failure of the 1788 harvest and an exceptionally severe winter aggravated the discontent of the peasants. They robbed and burned the chateaux of the aristocracy and destroyed all records. This episode is known as the Grande Peur (Great Fear).

The National Assembly established a new legal structure; privileges and feudal obligations were abolished. On August 4, a Declaration of Rights was formulated and the king was the chief executive power, but he had no legislative power except a suspensive veto. Louis XVI was reluctant to sanction the new decrees, and this led to the second Parisian uprising--the so-called March of the Women. On October 5, a mob marched to Versailles and forced the king to sign. The king and the queen, Marie Antoinette, were moved to Paris, followed by the Assembly. France became a constitutional monarchy, and legal distinctions between Frenchmen disappeared. From 1789 to 1791, the National Assembly did much to modernize France. However, the reformed franchise excluded the poor. But the people had faith in freedom as shown in the first Festival of Federation, a celebration of National Unity on July 14, 1790, Bastille Day.

When King Louis tried to escape from Paris on June 20, 1791), civil war was imminent. The Assembly retained control, and the crowd that had assembled in Paris to demand a republic was dispersed by force. In 1791, the king was reinstated after he accepted the completed Constitution. The Revolution was then believed to be over. This, however, was not true, as religious and social strife had already broken the unity of the Third Estate.
On April 20, 1792, the New Legislative Assembly declared war on Austria as King Louis was believed to have asked them for help to stop the revolution. Austrian and Prussian forces invaded France, and riots broke out in Paris. On August 10, the palace was stormed, and Louis was imprisoned by a new revolutionary Commune of Paris. The Legislative Assembly now did not have any power and so ordered an election. Counter revolutionaries were massacred in the prisons of Paris.

On September 22, 1792, the National Convention established a republic, and the king was sent to the guillotine on January 21, 1793. France was divided by a militant minority comprised of the Monteguards and the Jacobins who wanted to take vigorous revolutionary measures, while their opponents, the Girondists, leaders of the amorphous majority, looked to the Provinces and hoped to consolidate the Revolution. In 1793, a savage royalist uprising commenced, and the hard-core revolutionaries began to gain ground. Emergency bodies were set up, but there was no leadership and the Parisian insurrection of June 2 forced the Convention to expel the Girondists and accept Monteguard control. The Reign of Terror lasted from 1793 until 1794. The Monteguard Convention had to deal with invasion, royalist civil war, and widespread revolts in the provinces. At first George Danton tried to placate the provinces, who were revolting against the dictatorship of Paris, but later Maxmillian Robespierre sent armies to subdue the rebellious cities. The city of Toulon surrendered to the British, and a demonstration in Paris forced the National Convention to establish a repressive regime known as the Terror. The Revolutionary Tribunal sent state prisoners, including Girondists, to the guillotine and agents of the Convention known as representatives of the people enforced bloody repression throughout France. The churches were closed on November 23, 1793. The republican armies were now in command, and the Terror became identified with ruthless and centralized revolutionary government. Any dissidence was classified as counter revolutionary, and Monteguards and extremists were guillotined early in 1794. Robespierre insisted on associating Terror with virtue, and his effort to make the republic a morally united patriotic community became equated with the endless bloodshed. Robespierre was overthrown by a conspiracy of certain members of the National Convention on July 27, 1794. The Robespierrist deputies and most members of the Commune were guillotined the next day, July 28.

The period from 1794 to 1795 of the Thermidorian Reaction was so weak that anarchy and inflation almost overwhelmed the country. However, the extreme republicans could achieve nothing, and the Convention broke the popular movement permanently with the aid of the army. The Constitution was completed in 1795, and it took effect after a reactionary rising in Vendemiare was suppressed by General Napoleon Bonaparte. The Constitution of 1795 established an executive directory, two assemblies, and a property owner's franchise. Care was taken to see that the country could not revert to either democratic Terror or monarchy. In 1797 the directors purged the parliament ruthlessly. Many deputies were labeled as royalists and sent to the penal colony of French Guinea--called the dry guillotine. Soon the moderates were outnumbered, and in 1799, the Consulate, with Bonaparte as the First Consul, was established. The revolutionary period ended with the creation of the First Empire, which lasted from 1804 until 1815.

The French Revolution
Dickens relied heavily on Thomas Carlyle's The French Revolution when writing A Tale of Two Cities, but he also assumes a certain amount of familiarity with the history of the Revolution. Because the novel is in large measure a historical novel, it is important to be aware of the background against which his characters are acting.

The causes of the French Revolution, which began in 1789, are still debated by historians. Louis XIV had consolidated absolute rule for the French monarchy, and France was governed by the nobility (Monsiegneur's class) and the clergy. The country ran into huge debt due to an archaic system of taxation and the government's financial support of the American Revolution. Because of financial difficulties, the King was forced to call the States-General (the French legislature) in 1789 for the first time since 1614.

The Third Estate (commons) proclaimed themselves the National Assembly and took an oath in a tennis court that they would not disband until they had drawn up a constitution. On July 14, Parisians attacked the Bastille, a symbol of the other two estates (nobility and clergy). The people were mobilized by hunger and fear of retaliation by the nobles and moved to burn down chateaux belonging to noblemen (like Dickens's fictional Monsiegneur's) in what was known as the grandpeur ("great fear"). Riots and looting were rampant. A constitution created in 1791 created a limited monarchy with an elected one-body legislature. The king and queen tried to escape but were caught. They returned to Versailles and, humiliated, accepted the constitution. The Jacobin party was on the rise and "Liberty, equality, fraternity" became a catchphrase.

France declared war on Austria, and rumors that the king was guilty of treason turned the people against him. In 1792 a second revolution created the Commune of Paris, which suspended the power of the king and prompted arrests of suspected royalists. The September Massacres occurred thereafter, when mobs murdered 2,000 of these prisoners. The Republic was declared in 1792, and it became increasingly radicalized until Maximilien Robespierre took control and instituted the Reign of Terror, in which many were guillotined including the king and queen. The Revolution drew to a close with the death by guillotine of Robespierre himself in 1794 and the rise to power of Napoleon.

**A Tale of Two Cities : Plot Overview**

The year is 1775, and social ills plague both France and England. Jerry Cruncher, an odd-job man who works for Tellson’s Bank, stops the Dover mail-coach with an urgent message for Jarvis Lorry. The message instructs Lorry to wait at Dover for a young woman, and Lorry responds with the cryptic words, “Recalled to Life.” At Dover, Lorry is met by Lucie Manette, a young orphan whose father, a once-eminent doctor whom she supposed dead, has been discovered in France. Lorry escorts Lucie to Paris, where they meet Defarge, a former servant of Doctor Manette, who has kept Manette safe in a garret. Driven mad by eighteen years in the Bastille, Manette spends all of his time making shoes, a hobby he learned while in prison. Lorry assures Lucie that her love and devotion can recall her father to life, and indeed they do.
The year is now 1780. Charles Darnay stands accused of treason against the English crown. A bombastic lawyer named Stryver pleads Darnay's case, but it is not until his drunk, good-for-nothing colleague, Sydney Carton, assists him that the court acquits Darnay. Carton clinches his argument by pointing out that he himself bears an uncanny resemblance to the defendant, which undermines the prosecution's case for unmistakably identifying Darnay as the spy the authorities spotted. Lucie and Doctor Manette watched the court proceedings, and that night, Carton escorts Darnay to a tavern and asks how it feels to receive the sympathy of a woman like Lucie. Carton despises and resents Darnay because he reminds him of all that he himself has given up and might have been.
In France, the cruel Marquis Evrémonde runs down a plebian child with his carriage. Manifesting an attitude typical of the aristocracy in regard to the poor at that time, the Marquis shows no regret, but instead curses the peasantry and hurries home to his chateau, where he awaits the arrival of his nephew, Darnay, from England. Arriving later that night, Darnay curses his uncle and the French aristocracy for its abominable treatment of the people. He renounces his identity as an Evrémonde and announces his intention to return to England. That night, the Marquis is murdered; the murderer has left a note signed with the nickname adopted by French revolutionaries: “Jacques.”

A year passes, and Darnay asks Manette for permission to marry Lucie. He says that, if Lucie accepts, he will reveal his true identity to Manette. Carton, meanwhile, also pledges his love to Lucie, admitting that, though his life is worthless, she has helped him dream of a better, more valuable existence. On the streets of London, Jerry Cruncher gets swept up in the funeral procession for a spy named Roger Cly. Later that night, he demonstrates his talents as a “Resurrection-Man,” sneaking into the cemetery to steal and sell Cly’s body. In Paris, meanwhile, another English spy known as John Barsad drops into Defarge’s wine shop. Barsad hopes to turn up evidence concerning the mounting revolution, which is still in its covert stages. Madame Defarge sits in the shop knitting a secret registry of those whom the revolution seeks to execute. Back in London, Darnay, on the morning of his wedding, keeps his promise to Manette; he reveals his true identity and, that night, Manette relapses into his old prison habit of making shoes. After nine days, Manette regains his presence of mind, and soon joins the newlyweds on their honeymoon. Upon Darnay’s return, Carton pays him a visit and asks for his friendship. Darnay assures Carton that he is always welcome in their home.

The year is now 1789. The peasants in Paris storm the Bastille and the French Revolution begins. The revolutionaries murder aristocrats in the streets, and Gabelle, a man charged with the maintenance of the Evrémonde estate, is imprisoned. Three years later, he writes to Darnay, asking to be rescued. Despite the threat of great danger to his person, Darnay departs immediately for France.

As soon as Darnay arrives in Paris, the French revolutionaries arrest him as an emigrant. Lucie and Manette make their way to Paris in hopes of saving him. Darnay remains in prison for a year and three months before receiving a trial. In order to help free him, Manette uses his considerable influence with the revolutionaries, who sympathize with him for having served time in the Bastille. Darnay receives an acquittal, but that same night he is arrested again. The charges, this time, come from Defarge and his vengeful wife. Carton arrives in Paris with a plan to rescue Darnay and obtains the help of John Barsad, who turns out to be Solomon Pross, the long-lost brother of Miss Pross, Lucie’s loyal servant.

At Darnay’s trial, Defarge produces a letter that he discovered in Manette’s old jail cell in the Bastille. The letter explains the cause of Manette’s imprisonment. Years ago, the brothers Evrémonde (Darnay’s father and uncle) enlisted Manette’s medical assistance. They asked him to tend to a woman, whom one of the brothers had raped, and her brother, whom the same brother had stabbed fatally. Fearing that Manette might report their misdeeds, the Evrémondes had him arrested. Upon hearing this story, the jury condemns Darnay for the crimes of his ancestors and sentences him to die within
twenty-four hours. That night, at the Defarge’s wine shop, Carton overhears Madame Defarge plotting to have Lucie and her daughter (also Darnay’s daughter) executed as well; Madame Defarge, it turns out, is the surviving sibling of the man and woman killed by the Evrémondes. Carton arranges for the Manettes’ immediate departure from France. He then visits Darnay in prison, tricks him into changing clothes with him, and, after dictating a letter of explanation, drugs his friend unconscious. Barsad carries Darnay, now disguised as Carton, to an awaiting coach, while Carton, disguised as Darnay, awaits execution. As Darnay, Lucie, their child, and Dr. Manette speed away from Paris, Madame Defarge arrives at Lucie’s apartment, hoping to arrest her. There she finds the supremely protective Miss Pross. A scuffle ensues, and Madame Defarge dies by the bullet of her own gun. Sydney Carton meets his death at the guillotine, and the narrator confidently asserts that Carton dies with the knowledge that he has finally imbued his life with meaning.

A Tale of Two Cities - Critical Analysis

In 1859, Charles Dickens wrote the book A Tale of Two Cities. In A Tale, Dickens writes about the French Revolution, and relates the events in the lives of two families, one French and one English. In addition to writing about a very interesting fiction plot, Dickens also tied in a wide variety of important themes and sub plots that keep the reader interested as well as portraying very valuable lessons for us even today. He chose very archetypical characters for the book, all strengthening or portraying one of the themes. The main themes are revenge, courage and sacrifice, and resurrection.

One theme involves revenge; the evil effects of revenge bring out one's bad side. Although it occurs many times in A Tale, Madame Defarge is the main character representing this theme. Her sister and mother were assaulted by the brothers Evrémonde. After this, she vows to herself that all members of the Evrémonde family will die. She turns into a ruthless killer because she must get revenge. When her husband tells her to stop, she replies, "tell the wind and fire to stop, not me". We now see that she is a person teeming with hatred. Revenge is so powerful. When she found out Charles Darnay is an Evrémonde and is planning to marry Lucie Manette, she began to knit his name into the shroud she was making, symbolizing his impending death. Also, she tried to kill Lucie and her daughter, just because they were related to an Evrémonde, even though Darnay (Evrémonde) denounced his heritage and disconnected all relationships to them. Lucie was in a state of mourning so Defarge jumped on the situation.

"She will be at home, awaiting the moment of his death. She will be mourning and grieving. She will be in a state of mind to impeach the justice of the Republic. She will be full of sympathy with its enemies. I will go to her." (p. 349)

She had no mercy, her main goal was to kill all descendants of the Evrémonde family, women and children included and even non-blood relatives. At the end of the novel, she receives an end fitting her ways; she was killed by Ms. Pross, who is the epitome of love and kindness. It is evident from here that Dickens believed that good would always win
over bad. Madame Defarge was going to kill out of hate and revenge, but she got killed because of the love Ms. Pross had for her friend Lucie.

Another key theme in the novel has to do with courage and sacrifice. There were many sacrifices in this novel by many different characters. Charles Darnay went back into the war-torn France from his safe house and family in England to save his former servant Gabelle from the hands of the rebels. He did this, for the simple reason that he gave his promise, many months ago. Also, Dr Manette 'sacrifices' his love for her for her love to Darnay. After the wedding, we see how much Lucie means to Dr Manette in his return to cobbling shoes.

Sydney Carton made the ultimate sacrifice. Because of his love for Lucie and his friendship with Darnay, Carton's actions portray one of the most important themes implied in this book. Carton helps others, and does not think so much of himself. As we first see Sydney Carton, he is a lazy man, who drinks his life away. However there is more to him as he said "I cause no harm to any man on earth, and no man on earth cares for me" (page 99). He does not like the other people's view of him, and he wants to change it. When Darnay was sent to the guillotine, Carton could have let him go, and possibly have Lucie for himself. However, he ended up being the true hero, and sacrificed his life for the life of another, in the name of love. Right before going to the guillotine, Carton visualizes a better life, a life where he gave to others, not thinking of himself. It shows the complete turn-a-round in his view of life for the better. Sydney Carton is really a courageous, loving man.

The final main theme in the book is the idea of resurrection. Book one of A Tale is entitled 'Recalled to Life'. This shows resurrection being a major theme. An example of this is Dr Manette's resurrection after being in prison for nearly eighteen years of mental torment, and when he got out, he was asked the question, "you know that you are recalled to life". We know that he has been, as he no longer refers to himself as "105 North Tower". He is spiritually resurrected with his daughter when they first meet. Lucie forms a relationship with him, which gives Dr. Manette a sense of pride.

"The Doctor was in his best condition, and looked especially young. The resemblance between him and Lucie was very strong at such times, and as they sat side by side, she leaning on his shoulder, and he resting his arm on the back of her chair, it was very agreeable to trace the likeness".

Throughout the novel, Dr. Manette has gone through several mentally tragic episodes. Every time he goes into a relapse, Lucie is the only one that can help him regain normalcy. Darnay also took a part in this theme of resurrection. Charles Darnay's soul had been spiritually resurrected and saved from being killed. Due to being an Evrémonde and for portraying his own family, he was tried and sentenced to death by the guillotine. Dr Manette tried to save Darnay many times, though Barsad would always seem to find a way to get him back to prison and succeeded in sentencing him to death. When the final day of Darnay's life came, it turned out a happy one for him, "The door was quickly opened and closed, and there stood before him face to face, quiet, intent, upon him, with the light of a smile on his features, and a cautionary finger on his lip, Sydney Carton". Sydney Carton, who resembled Darnay very closely, exchanged
places with him. Feigning illness, Darnay was thus snuck out of prison, and physically resurrected.

Often when reading a book, the individual tends to draw parallels in the literature. One parallel often used is the difference between the beginning and ending of the book. A Tale of Two Cities began and ended with a journey. In the second chapter of the novel, Jarvis Lorry travels to recall Dr. Manette to life. In the end of the book, Sydney Carton is taken to his death, because of Defarge's revenge. He saved his friends life. Lorry began with the theme of resurrection, and Carton finished off with the theme of sacrifice, dying because of revenge.

**Themes of “A Tale of Two Cities”**

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work. The ever present possibility of Resurrection with A Tale of Two Cities Dickens asserts his belief in the possibility of resurrection and transformation both on a personal level and on a societal level. The narrative suggests that Sydney Carton’s death secures a new peaceful life for Lucie Manette, Charles Darnay, and even Carton himself. By delivering himself to the guillotine, Carton ascends to the plane of heroism, becoming a Christ-like figure whose death serves to save the lives of others. His own life thus gains meaning and value. Moreover, the final pages of the novel suggest that, like Christ, Carton will be resurrected—Carton is reborn in the hearts of those he has died to save.

Two of the most outstanding and obvious themes in this novel are **resurrection and renunciation**. Resurrection appears here in several forms. Dickens elaborates his theme with the character of Doctor Manette. Early on in the novel, Lorry holds on imaginary conversation with him in which he says that Manette has been “recalled to life”. As this statement implies, the doctor’s eighteen-year imprisonment has constituted a death of sorts. Lucie’s love enables Manette’s spiritual renewal, and her maternal cradling of him on her breast reinforces this notion of rebirth.

The theme of **resurrection** is introduced at the very beginning when Mr. Lorry, who is travelling by the Mail-coach to Dover, sends a message to Tellson’s Bank through the messenger, Jerry Cruncher. The words of Mr. Lorry’s message are “Recalled to life.” Under the circumstances, to bring Dr. Manette to England and to enable him to live again as a free man is nothing short of recalling him to life. It is truly a resurrection or a rebirth after death for Dr. Manette.

But a second resurrection for Dr. Manette has yet to take place. Dr. Manette cannot lead a normal life or enjoy his new found freedom unless he recovers his sanity. Under the loving care of his daughter, Dr. Manette begins to improve both physically and mentally. This, then, is Dr. Manette’s second resurrection. If his release is a physical resurrection for him, his recovery from insanity under the care of his daughter is a mental resurrection for him. Then Charles Darnay is saved from the jaws of death at least three times, once at Old Bailey and twice in Paris after his trials by the Revolutionary Tribunal.
The necessity of sacrifice connected to the theme of the possibility of resurrection is the notion that sacrifice is necessary to achieve happiness. Dickens examines this second theme, again on both a national and personal level. For example the revolutionaries prove that a new, egalitarian French republic can come about only with a heavy and terrible cost-personal loves and loyalties must be sacrificed for the good of the nation. Also, when Darnay is arrested for the second time, in book the third chapter the guard who seizes him reminds Manette of the primacy of state interests over personal loyalties. Moreover, Madame Defarge gives her husband a similar lesson when she chastises him for his devotion to Manette an emotion that, in her opinion only clouds his obligation to the revolutionary cause. Most important, Carton’s transformation into a man of moral worth depends upon his sacrificing of his former self. In choosing to die for his friends, Carton not only enables their happiness but also ensures his spiritual rebirth.

Among the obvious themes of this novel is social injustice. This theme is related, of course, to the French Revolution which was largely a result of those oppressive conditions under which the common people in France had been living for many decades. The first glimpse of the prevailing social injustice in France is given to us in the chapter called “The Wine - Shop”.

A large cask of wine had been dropped and broken in the street.”

After briefly describing the scene of poverty, the author goes on to describe the hunger which was rampant among the inhabitants of Paris. Hunger was pushed out of the tall houses.”

Hunger was prevalent everywhere, says the author. The incident of a child being run over by the Marquis’s carriage and getting killed also points to conditions of social injustice.

“That you people cannot take care of yourselves and your children ………. He threw out a gold coin for the valet to pick up ………. The tall man called out again with a most unearthly cry, “Dead!”

The Marquis throws a gold coin towards the bereaved father as if that would compensate him for the death of his child. The Marquis’ attitude towards the widow who meets him on his way is another example of the gulf between the rich and the poor, between the privileged classes and the common people. But the most shocking example of social injustice in those times is the prolonged imprisonment of Dr. Manette. “Did you ask me for my name?” … Assuredly I did.”… “One Hundred and Five, North Tower.”

It shows how much influence the members of aristocratic and titled families wielded in those days at the royal court and with the government ministers, and how ordinary people were victimized by them. “To destroy the corrupt old world, they must seize absolute power. Yet absolute power is unjust, corrupt by nature.”

The French Revolution and the violence and bloodshed led to constitute another obvious theme. Without any direct analysis of the Revolution, Dickens succeeds in conveying us the logic of cause and effect. The Revolution took place because of the conditions of social injustice which prevailed exercised by the government over the
common people to whose needs it had become completely indifferent. The revolutionary scenes and episodes show clearly Dickens’ view that, when the common people acquire unlimited power, they are capable of becoming as ruthless and cruel as the privileged classes had previously been. The revolutionary mob in the novel goes to the extreme and commits kinds of excesses.

The excesses come afterwards when for instance; eleven hundred persons are butchered by the mobs during a period of four days and four nights. The excesses are represented by two blood-curdling incidents, the sharpening of swords, knives etc. by a crowd of people on a grindstone, and the dancing of the Carmagnole. The obvious inference from these scenes and accounts is that revolution is a monster which should be shunned and that the only way in which it can be avoided is that the rich people should realize their responsibility towards the poor and take the necessary steps to relieve the misery of the poor before it is too late. Thus the novel contains an implied warning to the rulers and the privileged classes of all countries.

Coming to the less obvious themes, we find that much of Dickens’ own life and experience in the past as well as at the time of his writing this novel has gone into the making of it. “A Tale of Two Cities” equal history plus Dickens”.

A Tale of two cities is deeply coloured by Dickens’s early experiences in life and by what was happening to his emotional life when he started writing his novel. His childhood, like many of those portrayed in his novels, was not a particularly happy one, owing in the main of his father’s inability to stay out of debt. This led in 1824, to his father’s imprisonment. Memories of this time haunted him for the rest of his life.

Early in his life he had been a helpless and miserable witness to be imprisonment of his father, and this imprisonment had left an unforgettable impression upon his mind.

Dickens elaborates his theme with the character of Doctor Manette. Early on in his novel, Lorry holds an imaginary conversation with him in which he says that Manette has been “Recalled to Life”. As this statement implies, the doctor’s eighteenth-years imprisonment has constituted a death of sorts, Lucie’s love enables Manette’s spiritual renewal and her maternal cradling of him on her breast reinforces this notion of rebirth.

The two lovers of Lucie seem to symbolize the duality in Dickens’s own heart. Darnay and Carton who physically resemble each other were self-projections by Dickens. These two men represent the two different sides of Dickens’s literary personality. Darnay represents the light, sunny and optimistic aspect of Dickens nature.

Carton, on the other hand represents the dark side of Dickens. Carton loves Lucie but at first he denies her by describing her as “a golden haired doll” and then he fails to claim her.

Madness is also a theme in this novel. Dr. Manette goes mad during the long years of his imprisonment. After he has been rescued, he is brought back to health through love and care. This recurrence of madness is a doubling of the original condition, and it
produces a feeling that one is never to be free. Doubling in this sense and in several senses is part to the structure of this novel.

Other examples of this kind of doubling are Darnay's double arrest, and the sudden announcement that Dr. Manette is one of the three persons who have denounced Darnay. The latter development is a notable irony because Dr. Manette had earlier been represented as an innocent man who had suffered a gross injustice. These cases of doubling symbolically represent examples of the contradictory nature of subjective experience even of the self, in relation to events. Certainly Dr. Manette had as much reason to curse the Evrémonde race as to protect his son-in-law.

Symbolism in “A Tale of Two Cities”

The word `symbolism' refers most specifically to a manner of representation in which what is shown (normally referring to something material) means by virtue of association, something more, or something else (normally referring to something immaterial). Anything that signifies something is a symbol. Even a word may be symbol. What a simple word or even a long sentence or a paragraph or even a whole poem cannot do what a symbol can. A symbol, thus, connotes (indicate) a huge corpus (quantity) of thought. Charles Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities is replete with symbols.

Let us review some of the major symbols of A Tale of Two Cities. Some of the names of characters in this novel have a symbolical significance. Manette, for example, is the diminutive (miniature) of `man'. A full-blooded `man' is crushed into a Manette. Lucie may mean the luminous one. Evrémonde may mean `everyman'.

Sydney Carton is the symbol of self-sacrifice and service. Charles Darnay symbolises composure (calm, mixture). Lucie stands for sweetness and grace. Jarvis Lorry stands for disinterested service. Stryver symbolizes pomposity (arrogance) and selfishness. Madame Defarge stands for cruelty, revenge and hatred. `Monseigneur' represents decayed aristocracy. Marquis d'Evremonde is the symbol of inhumanity and barbarism.

Blood is a major symbol. Gaspard of Saint Antoine Street dips his fingers in the red-blood wine that has spilt on the street, and scratches the word `Blood' on the wall. Blood becomes the symbol of the French Revolution, the leaders of which forgot the ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity (union) and plunge Paris into a blood-bath. Marquis d'Evremonde watches the blood-red glow of the setting sound. He drives rashly on Saint Antoine Street and Gaspard's son is run over, lying in a pool of blood. The entire atmosphere looks as red as blood when the magnificent Chateau of the Evréononde is set ablaze. The indiscriminate slaughter and the non-stop use of the guillotine have shed so much human blood.

Water is Dickens' favourite symbol. The water of the river, of the sea, of the fountain, of the reservoir is the elixir of life. At times the water is contaminated and ends the life. Water flows as time flows. In chapter seven of Book Two Dickens comments: "The water of the fountain ran, the swift river ran, the day ran into evening, so much life in the city.
only ran into death according to rule". Running its own course is the law of nature. The
water ran not in the city alone it flows in the village as well.

`Footsteps' is also a recurrent (repeated) image that becomes a symbol. Even in the
tranquil atmosphere in Soho Square, London Lucie hears the sound of footsteps, the
stamped (charge) of the frenzied (hyperactive) and furious revolutionaries that would
not give a moment's rest to the poor Manette, who is destined to suffer.

Right at the beginning of Book one, the Mail Cash bound for Dover is symbolical.
The journey is arduous, and has ominous associations. Horses are fighting shy as if they
have seen something uncanny. All the passengers wear looks of suspicion and distrust.
Even the guard grows suspicious. All things, living and dead, feel that dark days are
ahead. And what can be darker than the French Revolution, the activists of which are on
the spree (extravaganza) to shed blood.

Dickens uses personal symbols while referring to the woodcutter and the farmer.
They are not babblers. They work continuously. They are represented here as not the
bringer of fuels and the producer of daily food that sustains us. The woodcutter is the
symbol of unchangeable destiny, at whose wish a man may live or die. He represents the
inevitability of the Revolution that would overcome mankind. The farmer is the sower of
the seeds of death—death that would come in the wake of the Revolution.

The Bastille spreads out before us as Dante's Inferno (firestorm), at the gate of which it
is decorated: "Abandon hope, ye all who enter here". Hundreds of innocent men,
who have caused the least irritation either to the monarchy or the aristocracy, have been
committed to the vast prison with its dark cells to languish (decay) away. The human
beings are reduced to mere numbers. Dr. Manette has forgotten his name and become
Prisoner No. 105, North Tower. Tyranny, cruelty, injustice, exploitation—these are the
vices the Bastille stands for. The Fall of the Bastille on 14 July, 1789 heralds (indicates)
the end of tyranny.

The Grindstone is apparently harmless. In reality it is not Dickens who looks upon the
grindstone not as a machine for grinding wheat into flour that keeps us alive. Most of the
inhabitants of Saint Antoine Street area had to work round the clock at the Mill for their
bare subsistence. As the wheat was being crushed by the grindstone, they were also
crushed and bled white. Hence the grindstone had a dual role to crush the wheat and
also the poor labourers. Child labour was there. Children worked at the Mill and lost their
childhood—the period of primal joy, bubbling (sparkling) with life. Dickens must be
thinking of his factory days. The Mill and the grindstone have more or less similar
functions. Both crush wheat and the labours, children included.

The grindstone during the frenzied (hyperactive) days of the Revolution had another
role to play. Men, women and children had to use the grindstone for sharpening not only
swords and daggers (blade), but all metallic instruments to be used as improvised
(unplanned) weapons to kill the enemies of the people.

La Guillotine becomes the symbol of quick extermination (killing) after summary
trial. In the common parlance (idiom, manner of speaking), the guillotine was `the
national Razor to behead the aristocrats with. The King and the aristocrats had their conventional, but lethal weapons for the liquidation (collapse) of the poor and the oppressed. Since the table was turned, the revolutionaries devised a new weapon, namely, the guillotine.

Resurrection is a major symbol. A devout (pious) Christian, Dickens believes in Resurrection. What Sydney Carton heard from the priest, while quite a child, at the funeral of his father—"I am the Resurrection. I am the life," had little meaning for him then. But with the passage of time, particularly when he chooses to be Charles Darnay, he is inspired by the words of Christ, "I am the Resurrection, I am the Life". From the temporary earthly life he is stepping into life eternal. It is Sydney Carton who resurrected Charles at Old Bailey. Dr. Manette is resurrected on his release from the Bastille, and gets a new lease' of life in the company of Lucie. Sydney Carton, who was suffering death-in-life, is resurrected by the profound sympathy and compassion of Lucie. He finds a new meaning in life, a purpose, a mission, to live for, and also to die for. And towards the end Sydney Carton's death and resurrection inspire all even amidst blood and vengeance.

Carmagnole, the frenzied dance of a section of the revolutionaries strikes terror in the delicate heart of the delicate Lucie. Flaunting (showy) their red caps, they gnash (grind) their teeth and sing in prison to give vent (expel) to their excessive joy over their well-organized and yet chaotic victory. What was a symbol of joy to the masses was a symbol of horror to Lucie.

So many symbols are there only to heighten the horrors of the Revolution and the supremacy of Resurrection in the long run.

There is another symbol, not public or conventional, but a personal one. It is the symbol of the lion and the jackal. Stryver is a symbol of pomposity and conceit. A barrister-at-law, he has an extensive practice. He, therefore, calls himself a lion, and Sydney Carton a ’jackal'. A lion is the king of animals. Stryver, therefore, prides himself upon describing himself as the king of the beasts. The lion always takes the lion's share and the leavings are shared by the lioness, the cubs, and when practically nothing is left in the carcass (skeleton) the timid jackal steps in. Carton is far more talented and intelligent than Stryver. It is he who, with his quick perception and critical acumen (intelligence) easily solves the intriguing problems of the clients. Stryver owes his success to Carton. Stryver, in the fitness of things, takes more than the lion's share, and Carton, who has absolutely no material ambition, is thoroughly satisfied with wine that Stryver provides. Stryver does not understand that he is "stout fond bluff". An egocentric person, he does not understand that his assistant, 'the jackal' is the source of his professional success. He with his usual self-complacency claims to be the lion, the patron of Carton. And Carton, the charge, accepts the appellation 'jackal'. He has no vanity, no inflated ego. That is why he dances attendance upon Stryver, as a jackal does upon the lion. We, however, feel that the position should have been reversed. But the jackal becomes the Christ-like figure and serves not one master, but the whole humanity with love and inspires them to avoid all cruelty and hatred, and make the world a better place to live in.
To sum Up, Dickens has used symbols artistically and significantly in A Tale of Two Cities. The symbols are a part of the plot and they are so well integrated with the theme of Revolution, resurrection and love that they make the novel rich in meaning, significant and dramatic.

**A Tale of Two : A Sad Tale of Two Cities**

The focus of A Tale of Two Cities concerns the impetus and fervor of 18th century European socio-political turmoil, its consequences, and what Dickens presents as the appropriate response of an enlightened aristocracy and just citizenry.

The tale opens with Dr. Manette having spent the last 18 years of his life in the Bastille - innocent of all crimes save his disdain for the base actions of a French Marquis. The heinous nature of his confinement induced a madness remedied only by the devoted love of his Lucie.

We next encounter these characters five years later attending the trial of Charles Darnay - a nobly born French immigrant who relinquished his station rather than partake in the barbarous class structure of 18th century France.

The beautiful and virtuous Lucie Manette is admired by both Sydney Carton and his repugnant legal partner, Stryver. It is the inherently ethical Carton, not the aristocratic (and bellicose) Stryver who realizes that marriage to Charles Darnay would bring the greatest happiness to Lucie. Their bliss is short lived however, as the honor bound Darnay returns to Paris.

His prosecution is propelled by a vengeful and newly empowered Madame Defarge a "patriot of the revolution" who utilizes the revolutionary "People's Tribunals" to redress grievances committed by the Evrémonde clan. Aided by her cohort (aptly given the code name of "Vengeance") retribution, not justice, is her sole concern. "...I have this race a long time on my register, doomed to destruction and extermination."

This savage character - "Madame's resolute right hand was occupied with an axe,...and in her girdle were a pistol and a cruel knife".- exhibits resolute and ferocious anger.

Dickens does not portray Madame Defarge and her compatriots as morally bankrupt but rather depicts their inevitable creation in the oppressive aristocratic class structure of 18th century Europe. A Tale of Two Cities is written in a perfectly linear progression of this theme. It initially portrays the oppressive nature of the aristocracy (the imprisonment of Dr. Manette, the accidental death of a child and the trite response of the Marquis - among other graphic illustration) which leads to the fervor of revolutionary assassins seeking justice. These zealots empty the Bastille and destroy all remnants of the oppressive regime in freedom's name, yet as products of this abusive system there is hatred latent in their persona. These "patriots" recreate the system which they so despised - "...the new oppressors who have risen on the destruction of the old..." (404);
as Madame Defarge, they no longer seek justice but vengeance. The graphic depictions of mob bloodlust hammer this point home.

European aristocratic society is not doomed however. Carton redeems his wasted existence by sacrificing his life for the life of Darnay and thus insures the happiness of his beloved Lucie. This redemption brings honor to his name for generations to come. Charles Darnay's renouncement of his Family's ill-gotten wealth results in his ultimate happiness. The implication is clear: the wastrels of the British aristocracy may yet redeem their virtue and save their love (Mother England) by pursuing societal equity and justice. It is only the noble pursuit of justice which can produce a society of the just. The hatred latent in oppressive societies results only in socio-political turmoil and the manifestation of evil.

Dickens harkens to the moral fiber of Charles Darnay and Sydney Carton as a necessity for the preservation of British society and European aristocracies in general. The heroism displayed by these two characters would avert the horrors of a mob inspired rebellion in England - thus such sacrifices would be - to paraphrase Dickens, a far, far, better thing to do.

"A Tale of Two Cities” equals history plus Dickens."

“A Tale of Two Cities” pertains to the period before and during the French Revolution. Dickens' projection of himself and his personal crisis into the story of this novel is a deeply personal quality (At the time this novel was written, Dickens was passing through a period of acute mental struggle and torture because of the collapse of his married life and his love affair with the young actress Ellen Ternan). At the same time “A Tale of Two Cities” is Dickens most impersonal novel, especially because of the grand objectivity of historical events with which it deals and the steady movement of its action.

It is the story of Dr. Manette, Lucie, Darney, and Carton. This story is told against the historical background of the French Revolution. The French Revolution was the great political upheaval which was caused by the evils of taxation and land-owning system which oppressed the lower classes in France.

“A Tale of Two Cities” is not a particular historical event that is his chosen dramatic setting but rather the relationship between history and evil”. In 1792 the monarchy was overthrown and France was declared a Republic with “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity” as its slogan and motto. The Reign of Terror started in 1793, the King and afterwards the Queen becoming the victims of the guillotine. The action of ‘A Tale of Two Cities’ covers the period from 1775 to 1793 which includes the years of the Revolution (1789-93).

"The human spirit, distorted by systems, produces distorted societies."“Carlyle's book “French Revolution is Dickens main source for the historical scenes and events which find a place in ‘A Tale of Two Cities’. By the time he wrote ‘A Tale of Two Cities’ he
was interested in history and was convinced of its importance in relation to his own times.

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way.”

Dickens novel does not by any means depict the enormous sweep and drama of the French Revolution in all its complexity. Dickens has condensed the basic threat of the Revolution and the basic lesson that can be drawn from it by depicting the effects of the Terror, or the revengeful side of the Revolution, on a small group of people who get involved in these public events against their will.

In 'A Tale of Two Cities' Dickens depicts the beginnings of popular discontent in France, the rising dissatisfaction of the people with members of the privileged classes the turmoil caused by public fury, and the excesses and barbarities committed by the revolutionaries during the years of the French Revolution. Dickens gives us no connected account of the French Revolution, its progress and its culmination. He gives us brief and scattered accounts of some of the principal episodes. At the same time, Dickens takes no notice of the leading historical personalities of the French Revolution.

“Dickens emphasis is not on physical actions, speeches, battles, riots (the stuff of history) but on the pure passions, the dreams, joys, sorrows and self communings of his imagined characters.”

In the first part of his novel Dickens sympathizes with the poor and down trodden people, but in the end these very people became the villains who therefore repel him. Dickens first reference to the outward causes of the French Revolution comes in the chapter called “The Wine shop” in which he uses the symbol of the mill to convey the grinding poverty through which the people of Saint Antoine are passing. Then there are the three chapters in which the arrogance of a particular nobleman is depicted. He also symbolizes the entire privileged class. One of the best known episodes of the French Revolution is then briefly described by Dickens in the chapter entitled “Echoing Footsteps.” But the real excesses and brutalities of the French Revolution are conveyed to us in the final part of the novel, where we have a depressing description of the prisoners in La Force, a frightening description of the sharpening of weapons by the revolutionaries on the grindstone.

“To make an omelet you have to break a few eggs.”

However, Dickens debt to Carlyle is much greater than has been indicated above. For instance, Dickens accounts of the trials, of prison, procedures, of the tumbrels, and of the guillotine all come from Carlyle.
Dickens' main achievement lies not only in giving us graphic and stirring account in the manner of Carlyle, but also in interweaving the personal lives of a group of private characters with the events of the French Revolution. These private individuals are Dr. Manette, Lucie Manette, Darney and Carton, besides such less important figures as Mr. Lorry, Miss Pross, and John Barsad. The leading characters are drawn into the whirlpool of the revolutionary events not because they have any ideological interest in the events of the time but as innocent victims who have done nothing at all to deserve the suffering and distress caused to them. The sentence of death against Darney is most unjust when we realize that he was on the side of the people. He was visiting France briefly in an attempt to save the life of a poor man who was in danger. The others are drawn into the whirlpool for the sake of Darney and Carton’s sacrifice of his life and his execution flown primarily from Lucie’s involvement.

Although Dickens does not present any systematic theory of the revolution, he certainly reveals a well-defined attitude towards the revolution and seems to have formed certain definite views about it. Dickens was encouraged by Carlyle’s views to regard the past primarily as a store house of lessons, and a terrible Moral drama. In writing his novel, he was very particular about integrating the personal lives of his characters with the wider pattern of history. It is the principal scheme of the novel to show the individual fate mirroring and being mirrored by the fate of the social order.

"The rape itself implies social exploitation or oppressing of the messes. The raped girl stands for thousands of unjustly executed victims—an historical fact well documented by Charles Dickens."

The doctor returns to life and finds its place in the new world. And Carton embodies both the novel’s central narrative theme and its profoundest moral view: his past of sinful negligence parallels the past of 18th century Europe; his noble death demonstrates the possibility of rebirth through love and expiation. According to one critic:

"There is no other piece of fiction in which the domestic life of a few simple private people is in such a manner knitted and interwoven with the outbreak of a terrible public even, so that the one seems to be part of the other."

Although Dickens was evidently obsessed with the violence which had erupted during the French Revolution, yet he was by no means a revolutionary himself. He makes it clear that the French Revolution was the natural and inevitable consequence of the social oppression which had continued in France for centuries. It is true that some critics have treated “A Tale of Two Cities” as a work of revolutionary intentions, and have claimed Dickens as one of them. It is also true that Dickens has always been a favourite author with revolutionaries. Both Marx and Engels appreciated his novels and regarded him “As a fellow fighter in the war against the social abuses and injustices of Victorian England.”

Madame Defarge is the ultimate personification of the French Revolution in ‘A Tale of Two Cities’ and she is a person whose uncontrolled desire for revenge has changed her into a monster of pure evil. The final struggle between her and Miss Pross is a contest between the forces of hatred and of love. It is love that wins when Madame Defarge is
self-destroyed through the accidental going off of her own pistol. This incident shows that Dickens feels no sympathy whatever for the revolutionaries of Madame Defarge’s type.

The actual fact is that Dickens regarded that revolution as a monster. That is why we remember the revolutionary scenes of A Tale of Two Cities, these scenes have the quality of a nightmare, and it is Dickens own nightmare. The moral which Dickens therefore wishes to teach us through his treatment of the French Revolution is that violence leads to violence, that prison is the consequence of prison, and that hatred is the reward of hatred.”

He wanted that governments should not allow the people to become so frustrated and angry that they are compelled to revolt and become frustrated and not only violent but ruthlessly violent.”Dickens attempts a painterly

**A Tale of Two Cities : Story of Vengeance & Blood**

In A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens depicts how pointless the revolution becomes when the original goal of equality becomes lost when the anger, frustration, and desire for revenge of the third estate is finally discharged. The trial of Charles Darnay, the words and actions of Madame Defarge and use of symbolism and foreshadowing show how anger drove the revolution to a state of pointlessness.

One major reason the revolution became out of hand was due to unscrupulous people running the courts and the imprisonment of innocent people for no reason. Charles Darnay happens to be a character in dire trouble, when he finds himself being imprisoned and tried before an unjust tribunal. Darnay was a wealthy man who left France, but returned to help a former servant and “was accused by the public prosecutor as an emigrant, whose life was forfeit to the Republic, under the decree which banished all emigrants on pain of Death”. One way to impose revenge on the higher classes was to sentence them to death for little or no reason, which was the case with Darnay. At his second trial Darnay realized that “before the unjust Tribunal, there was little or no order of procedure, ensuring to any accused person any reasonable hearing.

There could have been no such Revolution, if all laws, forms, and ceremonies, had no first been so monstrously abused, that the suicidal vengeance of the Revolution was to scatter them all to the winds. The chaotic and murderous atmosphere within the courts reflected the frenzied state that lay outside of its dreaded doors. Another example of revenge can be seen in the character Madame Defarge.

Madame Defarge represents the people in France who gave in to hate to satisfy the hurt and pain that had churned inside of them for so long, and is finally released in murder and acts of revenge. She was a woman without pity and virtue. It was nothing to her that an innocent man was to die for the sins of his forefathers; she saw, not him, but them. It was nothing to her that his wife was to be made a widow and his daughter an orphan; that was insufficient punishment, because they were her natural enemies and
her prey, and as such had no right to live". Many people showed this same type of vindictiveness, which created a curtain that blocked the original goal of the third estate.

Of course, there is a reason as to why Madame Defarge is the way she is. When Madame Defarge says, "All our lives, we have seen our sister-women suffer, in themselves and in their children, poverty, nakedness, hunger, thirst, sickness, misery, oppression and neglect of all kinds," she is representing all of the pain the third estate had suffered, and why it finally boiled over. Other instances of suffering and pointless actions include the girl who stood by Sydney Carton while waiting to be executed, and a small boy run over by the Monseigneur. Symbolism and foreshadowing also exhibit the peoples hate and suffering and how it's released in violence.

A small girl is sentenced to La Guillotine and a boy is run over, both are actions in which there is no meaning or gain. Neither helps to win the revolution. The girl has faith in the Republic, but questions what will be gained from killing her. Addressing Sydney Carton she says, "I am not afraid to die, Citizen Evrémonde, but I have done nothing. I am not unwilling to die, if the Republic which is to do so much good to us poor, will profit by my death; but I do not know how that can be Citizen Evrémonde". Wine is used to show how bloody and gruesome the revolution would become. When a wine barrel spills, Dickens uses symbolism and foreshadowing of death by writing, "The time was to come, when that wine too would be spilled on the street-stones, and when the stain of it would be red upon many there, ".

The French Revolution was fuelled by vengeance and crime. Instead of sticking together in a mutual quest for equality, people turned against each other, and tangled the sticky web of the revolution even more. Although some positive reactions came out of the revolution, "Far and wide lay a ruined country, yielding nothing but desolation. Every green leaf, every blade of grass and blade of grain, was as shrivelled and poor as the miserable people". Everyone makes mistakes, but the important thing is to learn from them. Each of us needs to take the mistakes of the French Revolution and learn from them, so that the needless death and suffering doesn't ever repeat itself.

**Theme of Love and Hate in “A Tale of Two Cities”**

Love and hate are both emotions that are used in our attempt to express ourselves to certain people. Hate is more sinister of the two, without hate, the scales would be upset. We cannot always get the best of everything. However, in the novel “A Tale of Two Cities” by Charles Dickens, hate only adds to the story's appeal.

In the novel, both emotions are displayed by the characters in the book through the actions they carry out and the words that they speak, even though it can be justified that there are more examples of love than hate. The love between Lucie Manette and her father, as well as that of Charles Darney and Lucie and indeed many other characters are just some of the many examples of love. The more baleful emotion of hate is also revealed many times in the novel, by the French commoners and especially by Madame
Defarge when it came to Charles Darney being an aristocrat and the suffering of her own family.

The first strong example of love we read about in the novel is that of Lucie Manette and her father, Dr. Manette who has been kept in the Bastille for eighteen years. Lucie meets him with the help of another character, Mr. Jarvis Lorry, and tells her father that his agony is over and that she'll bring him to London and away from his previous sufferings. Later in the story, the night before Lucie is to be wedded to Charles Darney, we learn that Lucie has saved her last day as a single woman to be with her father and to reassure him that she'll still be with him even though she is to be married. "Lucie was to be married tomorrow. She had reserved this last evening for her father, and they sat alone under the plane-tree."

Throughout the whole conversation with her father that evening, it is evident that her love for her father prevails even that between Charles and herself. "If I had never seen Charles, my father, I should have been quite happy with you."

The affection for her father does not go only one way. Her father's for Lucie is also clear as we can see by the following quote:

"Quite sure my darling! More than that, my future is far brighter, Lucie, seen through your marriage, than it could have been - nay, than it ever was - without it.".... "Believe it, love! Indeed it is so. You, devoted and young, cannot fully appreciate the anxiety I have felt that your life should not be wasted-wasted for my sake. Your unselfishness cannot entirely comprehend how much my mind has gone on this; but, only ask yourself, how could my happiness be perfect while yours was incomplete?"

In the first parts of Book Three, Dr. Manette helps to protect Charles Darney after he was captured by the French commoners and manages to free him after some time. During that time Lucie stood outside a window in the Bastille every day in all weathers so that Charles could see her when he walked past even when it was impossible for Lucie herself to see him. In other words, he could see her, but she could not see him. She begs Madame Defarge, who undoubtedly hates all the French aristocrats to help Charles and not harm him. "As a wife and a mother, I implore you to have pity on me and not to exercise any power that you possess, against my innocent husband, but to use it in his behalf."

Likewise, the fondness Charles has for Lucie has not gone unnoticed. "He had loved Lucie Manette from the hour of his danger. He had never heard a sound so sweet and so dear as the sound of her compassionate voice; he had never seen a face so tenderly beautiful, as hers when it was confronted with his own on the edge of the grave that had been dug for him."

He confesses his love for her to Dr. Manette and asks for his advice on the matter and says that he would never weaken the bond between father and daughter. That shows that he is willing to share Lucie with her father, and that in turn shows his love and
respect for Lucie and her wishes. "But I love her. Heaven is my witness that I love her!"

Besides Charles Darney, Lucie has other suitors but only one other character, Mr. Styver went forward with the idea of having Lucie as a wife and even thought of proposing to her. Sydney Carton, who works for Stryver, also has feelings for Lucie, but knows that he isn't good enough for Lucie, and says that he is willing to do anything for Lucie and her loved ones. He later carries this promise out by dying in place for Charles, thus saving his life. Even at his hour of death, Carton demonstrates his good heart by showing his love to a seamstress who is led to the guillotine before him.

There is one more character that is practically made of the emotion. Miss Pross, Lucie's maid, shows her unfailing devotion to Lucie, her ladybird, and near the end of the book, we discover that Miss Pross fights it out with Madame Defarge who is determined to exterminate Lucie and her entire family, so that Lucie, Dr. Manette and Mr. Lorry will have enough time to get away before they get caught and denounced for showing grief for a prisoner.

Another example that manifests love in the novel is that of the French commoners for France, and their own kind. That is shown after the riots started out; when families got together hoping that they would soon be free of the hold the aristocrats had over them.

The novel also has its fair share of hate which is displayed through the likes of Madam Defarge and her fellow knitters as well as her husband, Ernest Defarge, and the Jacques. There is no mistake that we can make regarding the relation between Madame Defarge and the emotion she lives by, Hate. Wherever she goes, she brings Hate around with her. She undeniably loathes the aristocrats and anyone with any relation to the higher breed of France, and we can see that by the conviction of innocent employees of the aristocrats such as the seamstress who saw the love and goodness in Carton. The following text rightly explains that Madame Defarge is a creature of hate.

"See you, I care nothing for this Doctor, I. But, the Evrémonde people are to be exterminated, and the wife and child must follow the husband and father." ... "In a word I cannot trust my husband in this matter, not only do I feel, since last night, that I dare not confide in him the details of my projects; but also I feel that if I delay, there is danger of his giving warning, and then they might escape."

She goes to look for Lucie but is stopped by and accidentally shot to death by Miss Pross. Although the hate between the French commoners and the aristocrats is not as sinister and fearful as that of Madame Defarge's, there are examples of them too. One of the more obvious examples is the storming of the Bastille where the French commoners invade the prison with many various weapons.

"Muskets were being distributed - so were cartridges, powder, and ball, bars of iron and wood, knives, axes, pikes, every weapon that distracted ingenuity could discover or devise. Every pulse and heart in Saint Antoine was on high-
fever strain and at high-fever heat. Every living creature there held life as of no account, and was demented with a passionate readiness to sacrifice it."

The mob is ruthless and almost no one in their registers is spared. Monsieur Defarge and his allies, Jacques as they call themselves are mainly responsible for the revolution in Saint Antoine and organised most of the attacks and riots. Monsieur Defarge once said to Charles Darney that he would do nothing for him, and that his duty was to France and its people. "I am the sworn servant to both (France and its people), against you. I will do nothing for you."

In conclusion, the two themes of Love and Hate are indeed strong and widely shown, one if not the other, by each and every one of the characters. As a result of that, the novel is more engaging and tangible than if it lacked the presence of both emotions. Not only do the characters show that love and hate are strong themes, the events that unfold in the novel are evidence that support it as well. Love and Hate will continue to battle it out for the rest of humanity for purity and virtue, but also for the enjoyment of those who sit back and relax and who love to read books such as 'A Tale of Two Cities'.

**Social Conflict in “A Tale of Two Cities“**

Conflict is a necessary element in a novel to build a historical fiction. It is mainly used to build plot and suspense. In "A Tale of Two Cities "Charles Dickens used the development of a conflict between the French lower class and the French government and aristocracy to build plot and suspense. The nobility (the government and aristocracy) is extremely rich and the French lower classes are exactly the opposite, very poor. The French lower class suffered for a long time under the tight rulings and restraints of the French government and aristocracy. The lives of ignorant French poor people are described by Charles Dickens as dreadful:

“And who among the company at Monsignor’s reception in that seventeen hundred and eightieth year of our Lord, could possibly doubt, that a system rooted in a frizzled hangman, powdered and gold-laced, pumped, and white-silk stockinet, would see the very stars out!"

The deaths of seemingly worthless peasant-like poor people had not affected what so ever upon the wealthy. This created the strong and continual conflict between the two, totally opposite from eachother, classes in France. The poor rebelled against the aristocrats who had been oppressing them for so long and afterwards France took a long time to recover. Darnay was arrested twice mainly because he was born basically as a French aristocrat and revolutionists wanted him killed. With the help of others, Darnay’s conflict was resolved, but no doubt still stands an individual example of the larger external conflict of the Revolution.

It seems that the narrator of "A Tale of Two Cities“ does not want or know to take a side in the conflict between the French lower class and the French government and aristocracy. He does not approve the actions of nobility but he does not approve the actions of the poor people as well. Especially in the first two paragraphs of chapter 15
(book third), the narrator uses very negative and sometimes strong words for the poor people but also for the noble people. Words like **Monsters**, the **carriages of absolutemonarchs**, the **equipages of feuda nobles**, the **toilettes of flaring Jezebels**, **changeless and hopeless** are used quite often. In the entire novel it is also very clear that he sometimes understands the nobility and at another moment he understands the poor people. He also understands the reaction of the poor people but then at the same time he does not approve this. It is shown in the first paragraph already:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way- in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only." (Charles Dickens, p. 3)

Dickens is now contrasting things to show or emphasize how everything has two sides in the time of the French Revolution as well; the side of the nobles and the side of the poor people. The narrator's opines that both sides are not acting rightly and both are making mistakes. The narrator views that the lower class people have good reasons to act the way they do, reasons like the way they have been treated by the nobility but at the same time he thinks the nobility is treated too badly for the barbarous things which happened or which they did in the past.

The main difference in the opinions of the narrator on the social struggles is that of the positivity and sympathizing with one side or both sides. Dickens does not know or seems to not want to choose a side. He thinks both are making mistakes and both are not acting totally correct but still he can understand the poor people as well as the government and aristocracy.

Dickens gives a lot of arguments why both, the nobility and the French lower class, are good in some way or another. He also could have left this out because they both did monstrous things to each other so why should he be kind to forgive them by mentioning their positive sides. This surprises the reader and makes him more able to understand the characters.

To conclude Dickens used the conflict between the social groups to build suspense and the plot. He sympathizes with people and gives the reader different images of the social conflicts. So in the end it is shown again that the way of narrating and using conflict as a kind of storyline leads to a well done work of literature.

**A Tale of Two Cities : Resurrection through Love**

The theme of rebirth is common in Charles Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities*. Many characters are re-born or resurrected as they grow emotionally. They find meaning in
their lives and become better people through love. The love that makes this rebirth possible comes through the character of Lucie Manette. Lucie Manette, the female heroine of this book, is the source of the resurrections of Dr. Manette, Mr. Lorry, Charles Darnay, and Sydney Carton.

Lucie Manette is a compassionate and benevolent young lady who, at the beginning of the book, is only seventeen. Though her age would suggest the girl to still be a child, it is revealed that her wisdom goes far beyond her years. Lucie could be seen as an old soul who is wise enough to be able to find the good in everyone. We are unsure of this when Lucie is first introduced in her meeting with Mr. Lorry, as she seems to be over taken by emotion and fear. Yet Mr. Lorry takes note of her mature nature through the way she contains herself as he describes the perils of her father.

"You speak collectedly, and you – are collected. That's good!" Lucie Manette, after being reunited with her father, devotes her life to restoring is mental and physical health. She finds a purpose and satisfaction in their mutual bond of unconditional love for one another. Lucie is reborn through her new relationship with her father, and through this relationship the window to Lucie's future is opened.

Just as Lucie Manette is given life through her father, her father is also reborn through her. After eighteen long years in the Bastille he is rescued by the Defarges who bring him to their wine shop. This is where he meets Lucie and Mr. Lorry. He is depicted as completely insane, and when asked his name he replies, "One Hundred and Five, North Tower," the number of his old prison cell. Tormented by his days in the Bastille, he is often scared and appears to be completely defenseless. He is wholly incapable of functioning in the outside world. Lucie loves him unconditionally and assists him in regaining his sanity. Dr. Manette makes slow but definite progress with the help of his loving daughter and family friends. It is a long and tiring process but eventually he is fully recovered. As time passes, Dr. Manette becomes increasingly stable and through Lucie’s love he is taught how to be human again.

Five years later we see Dr. Manette at Charles Darnay's trial, and he appears to be rehabilitated. Charles, however, is in danger of losing his life in quite a grotesque way.

"Ah!" returned the man, with a relish; "he'll be drawn on a hurdle to be half hanged, and then he’ll be taken down and sliced before his own face, and then his insides will be taken out and burnt while he looks on, and then his head will be chopped off, and he’ll be cut into quarters. That’s the sentence."

Charles is on trial for treason, and although Lucie’s testimony is very harmful to his quest to be found innocent he can’t help but fall in love with her. Charles is found innocent, despite the testimonies from Lucie and her father. This escape from death is Charles's first rebirth in this novel. After Charles becomes a free man he cannot help but retain his fondness for Lucie. After a year of unrequited love, Charles pays a visit to the Manette household in order to wed Lucie. Charles has become a successful French tutor and is very well off. He has become a new man, renouncing his noble heritage in order to take-out a living of his own. After he and Lucie are married Charles finds bliss with his new wife, and though Lucie wishes to retain a close relationship with her father, this becomes too difficult. Thus, Lucie now has a new life that involves Charles and their new
daughter, Little Lucie. Little Lucie is as beautiful as her mother and has the same gentle nature, and through her daughter, Lucie’s spirit is born again and carried-on.

Sydney Carton was the man who was responsible for Charles’ escape from his death sentence of being convicted of treason. He is inspired to live a meaningful life through Lucie’s belief in him. As the jackal, Sydney was a drunk who believed his life was worthless. He is a clerk for Stryver, the lawyer. He does all the work for Stryver, yet Stryver receives all the credit. Though Sydney has no inspiration, he longs for a life with meaning. He wants to have served a purpose, yet he is convinced that existence holds nothing for him. When he professes his love for Lucie Manette he describes himself as a “self-flung away, wasted, drunken, poor creature of misuse.” He is convinced that his life will never get better, but Lucie discloses her faith in him and says that he is capable of better things. As he leaves Lucie that night, he says he will do anything for her. After this conversation with Lucie Manette, Sydney changes his life. He believes in himself now that he knows the woman he loves has faith in him. He endeavours to become the lion. He stops getting drunk and becomes a better person. It is because of Lucie that Sydney begins a new life. Her love gave him the strength to start over.

It is due to this great change in Sydney Carton that Charles Darnay is saved the second time. While in France, Charles Darnay is sentenced to death due to his family’s past. Carton, who bears a great resemblance to Charles, traded places with him on the day of his execution. Sydney fulfills his promise to Lucie, sacrificing his life to show his love for her. His wish is finally granted; his life serves a purpose. By trading places with Charles he will surely die, but he will live on in the memories of the Darnay’s and their children. Sydney is now resurrecting Charles through this ultimate sacrifice, and though Sydney wasn’t particularly fond of Charles, his love for Lucie was stronger than one can imagine. The resurrection of Charles by Sydney is made possible only by the resurrection of Sydney by our heroine, Lucie.

It is also Lucie who creates significant changes in the minor character, Mr. Lorry. Mr. Lorry is a man who wants nothing to do with human emotion or human sentiment. “Feelings! I have no time for them, no chance of them.” It is through Lucie and Dr. Manette and all of the other’s changed by Lucie’s charms that Mr. Lorry changes as well. Mr. Lorry eventually realizes there’s more to life than business, and thus he truly begins to live. Since Mr. Lorry is not seen as often in the novel as the other characters, we don’t see a gradual change in him. Instead, we see how his humanity has grown by leaps and bounds. “Thank God,” said Mr. Lorry, clasping his hands, “that no one near and dear to me is in this dreadful town tonight.”

It is Lucie who is the central figure of rebirth and resurrection in Charles Dickens’s A Tale of Two Cities. All of these characters, as they reform, have a heavy impact on one another’s lives. Resurrection is prominent theme throughout the book. Lucie resurrects her father, marries Charles, and inspires Sydney to change his life. It is because of Sydney’s rebirth that Charles’ life is spared. Through Lucie’s unconditional love and non-judgmental nature, hope is sparrowed in this otherwise dismal setting.

**Sydney Carton from Zero to Hero**
Charles Dickens extraordinaire (excellent) revolutionist novel *A Tale of Two Cities* portrays an excellent character of Sydney Carton who develops dynamically throughout the novel. Carton overshadows Charles Darnay who is the true lead character by being the actual centre of attention within the plots. Dickens characterizes Carton as the pivotal figure in his novel, not because of his heroic suicide at the end but merely because he embodies all the contrasting elements of the novel. In total, there are three arguments which can be say about Carton which are his character is personifies as Jackal by Dickens because of his personalities, have an affection towards Lucie Manette and one who finally proven himself worthy after all.

At the beginning, Dickens describes Carton as a Jackal due to his negative personality that overwhelms himself. Dickens has also portrays Carton as an alcoholic lawyer with no interest and motivation within his life as well as everyone who is around him. Firstly, Carton is a lawyer that does not really care about his own obligation towards his duty. This can be seen during the trial of Charles Darnay of who is accused for spying in England.

“Mr. Carton, who had long sat looking at the ceiling of the court, changed neither his place nor his attitude, even with this excitement.”

Dickens describes that during the trial, Carton only take a few notes while the rest of the time, he only stares at the ceiling and only speaks when is needed. Carton is a drunken lawyer who takes no credit for his own works. Next, Carton faces a serious drinking issue who like no other chooses alcohol to tranquil himself from his problems and stress. “Think? You know I’ve been drinking.” Here, Carton confesses that he has a drinking issue that keep him from concentrating for his work and socializing with those around him. “Then, bring me another pint of the same wine, drawer, and come and wake me up at ten.”

The relationship between Carton’s character with his moral values are deeply intervened by Dickens when he writes masterpiece based on society ethic. Besides that, Carton is the one who does not care about anyone around him. “I care for no man on Earth, and no man on Earth cares me.” Substantially, Carton’s ignorance towards people around him brought an external conflict between him and the other characters in the novel especially those who care of him.

Despite his moral conflict that is within himself, the ‘forbidden’ love between him and Lucie Manette change Carton over the course period of the novel by interfering with his attitude and personality. Lucie possessing a charismatic charm mesmerizes (hypnotizes) Carton into changing his attitude by saying “There is a great crowd coming one day into our lives, if that be so.” Carton admires Lucie’s cleverness; he tells her how she makes him believe that, despite his ruined past, he still has a shred of goodness deep within him. Slowly, Carton develops the feeling of love towards her but is afraid to let it out. He knows that Lucie will be marrying Darnay and his chances of proposing her will not be accepted and he did not want to get dumped again by a woman. “I know very well that you can have no tenderness to me; I ask for none; I am even thankful that it cannot be.” (Dickens 156) Here, Carton tells Lucie that due to his weakness in his heart, he is contempt to express his feeling towards her.
Next, Carton promises Lucie that he will offer to help her whenever time comes. Due to his feeling of rejected love, Carton decides that, to gain Lucie attention he will do anything for her in whatever circumstances it will be. “Think now and then, that there is a man who would give his life, to keep a life you love besides you!” Carton sacrifices himself at the end, fulfilling what he had promised to Lucie; shows how great and deep Carton loves towards her. Lucie did notice what he has done at the end and silently thanks him for the huge sacrifice.

At the end, Carton finally proves that his life on Earth is worthy after all in which Dickens expresses it as the greatest sacrifice of all. He not only proves to him that he is useful but also advertises that he really cares about those who are around him. When Carton heard that Darnay is captured by the revolts in Paris and is about to be hanged at the guillotine, he quickly plans on how to save Darnay and bring him back to England.

Finally, Carton sacrifices himself and is hanged at the guillotine by the revolts. “I see the lives for which I lay down my life, peaceful, useful, prosperous and happy, in that England I shall see no more.”(Dickens 320) Carton keeps on reminding him on a verse from the bible that a priest had once said during his father funeral that is “I am the Resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”He dies quietly without uttering any words other than praying within his mind. His final quietude is to be accounted for in relation to Dickens aim to let Carton embodies ‘quiet heroism’.

To summarize, Sydney Carton begins his acts as an unmotivated lawyer, drunken and selfish towards himself and those who are around him. However, as the plots develop, Carton starts to change his attitude and personality after having a short date with Lucie Manette which eventually changes his life forever. He now knows his own abilities and starting to realize how useful he is in the world he lives. Dickens designs Carton to be a secretive hero that emerges out from nothing to a great hero in French revolution history.

**Objectivity in A tale of Two Cities**

Dickens, as a novelist, stands out for drawing attention to social evils, his humanism, his philosophic vision of life, his belief in the goodness of man, his characters and his use of humour, pathos and imagination. A Tale of Two Cities is a tale of two cities Paris and London and the French Revolution against which the story of a few characters is narrated. He skillfully weaves private lives and public events, fact and fiction, history and imagination. A tale of two cities is Dickens’s most impersonal novel, especially because of the grand objectivity of historical events with which it deals.

**Fantasy:** - His blend of reality and fantasy is a result of his creative imagination. Though he writes about the Revolution, he has coloured the novel with fantasy. Though he focuses on the Revolution, its causes and effects, his main emphasis is on the meaningless horrors of the Revolution as in the context of the lives of a few private individuals. In doing so he makes use of fantasy.
**Insanity:** - The element of fantasy is a result of his creative imagination. Insanity as a theme also enhances this element. Dr. Manette looks insane after his release and his ghost-like appearance lends an element of fantasy to the novel. He makes shoes to escape from his past. He gradually overcomes his fits of madness due to the love bestowed on him by Lucie. However, when he comes to know that Charles is an Evrémonde, the past haunts him once again and he resorts to shoe-making. The ghost-like man once again borders on insanity. Thus, the state of fantasy becomes an important part of his character.

When Charles is imprisoned the other prisoners appear to be ghosts of their former selves. All this is a part of fantasy having its root in psychic impulse.

**Graphic Details:** - The basic details of the Revolution are interwoven with the effects of Revolution on individuals. The graphic details of its horrific and nightmarish side, the fall of the Bastille and the Grindstone etc., all make the novel a mixture of reality and fantasy. However, to Dickens the Revolution is a lurid story of violence, vengeance and malevolence. He has drawn vivid pictures of execution and the La Guillotine. Insanity and frenzy is seen all round as corpses rot and the tumbrils move to and fro. The revolutionaries are waiting to devour the aristocrats who in their turn are waiting to be guillotined.

**Doubling:** - "Doubling" plays a major role in the novel as a part of fantasy. It appears bit improbable to our natural senses. Dr. Manette is imprisoned and he loses his sanity. He is then restored to normal life by his daughter but this insanity recourse with the unveiling of Charles's actual identity. It is the doubling of his madness. Darnay is re-arrested. Now Dr. Manette is the accuser who was once victim. Sydney Carton resembles Charles Darnay in his appearance. All these have been criticized as improbable or forced but they do contribute to the fast-paced action of the plot.

**A Story of Suffering:** - Against this view of the revolution, Dickens has given another picture that is imaginative. Dr. Manette is a symbol of suffering whose past haunts him throughout. Lucie is sweet loving and compassionate towards all. Charles disowns his legacy to expiate for the sins, of his ancestors. Sydney Carton, the profligate who cares for no one becomes a symbol of self-sacrifice, love, humanity and resurrection.

Thus, the Revolution incorporates personal incidents with history. As a result the larger dimensions of history are ignored. Dickens is not a historian, but a novelist. As an artist, he successfully blends reality and fantasy.

**Use of humour 'A Tale of Two Cities'**

Humour is the quality of being amusing or comic, especially as expressed in literature or speech. A Tale of Two Cities, though tragic and full of bloodshed, violence and hatred, has abundant humour, comic elements, farce and satire. The humour, wit, satire, caricature and farce are an integral part of his work and relieve us of the monotony of endless seriousness and bloodshed.
Dickens' use of new devices of humour was a contribution to English literature at that time. Ungrammatical sentences uttered by the illiterate, fun in the contrariness of inanimate objects, the absurdity of the apt, the humour of the professional and over-riding egoism are the trademarks of his humour. In fact, though his humour is not intellectual, it creates laughter as it arises from contrast and humour of character, situation and theme. Humour is the soul of his work and mingled with pathos, it reflects his attitude to life.

**Humour of Character:** Dickens lives chiefly in his comic characters. His humour of character is unsurpassed and we remember him more for his humorous characters than his stories. In fact he points out social evils with satire and fun instead of being serious. His wit, farce, satire and irony are not biting. He even treats the oddities of character, kindly.

In A Tale of Two Cities humour of character can be seen in abundance. Though Lucie, Charles, Sydney and Dr. Manette command our respect, the other characters are all comical in some way or the other.

**Stryver,** the lawyer is an egoistic character who makes a fool of himself. He is shallow and has no regard for Sydney to whom he owes his success. He is conceited like a lion but is vain and hypocritical from within. He takes credit for Charles's acquittal though actually Sydney had been responsible for it. His marriage proposal for Lucie is ridiculous as he is no match for the delicate Lucie. He is so self-opinionated that he thinks that he is doing a favour to Lucie by considering her as a marriage partner. According to K.J. Fielding, "his decision to honour Lucie with a proposal is magnificently comic with a rightful place in the story." Stryver the lion and Carton the jackal, create laughter. All this is possible in the hands of master of humour like Dickens.

**Jerry Cruncher,** too, is a comic figure. His spiked hair tickles us as much his humorous character and humorous interpretation of his secret profession do. Though he calls himself a "Resurrection man", he is irreligious and resurrects or digs dead bodies to eke out an existence and to promote the cause of science.

His mannerisms in calling himself *"an honest tradesman","* his profession of being a body snatcher, his habit of talking to himself and scolding his wife for "flopping, are a source of comedy in the novel. He fears that his wife's prayers will prolong people's lives, and his profession as a resurrection man, will suffer. The trait of malapropism is conspicuous in his dialogue that induces our laughter. For example, he calls a year "Anna Dominos" instead of "Anna Domini". His belief that "Dominos" is a popular game in England which was introduced by a sport-loving English woman Anna, creates humour and provides comic relief.

However, his presence, besides providing relief, is important for the plot. In the course of his "resurrection business," he digs up the coffin of Roger Cly and finds the coffin empty as Cly had faked death to escape the wrath of his enemies. Later, he escapes to France and became a revolutionary spy. This information helps Sydney in blackmailing Barsad into allowing him to enter Charles' cell in prison and allowing him to die instead of him. So though a comic figure, he is important for the plot.
Miss Pross too is also a comic character who is good at heart. She is described as a wild looking woman, with red hair, covered with a bonnet like a Grenadier's wooden measure. She lays a brawny hand upon Mr. Lorry's chest and makes him fall. After this she fusses over Lucie and calls her "my bird".

Her exaggerated remarks about dozens of suitors who come to visit Lucie, create laughter. Her confrontation with Madame Defarge is comical as well as dramatic and serious. When she tells her "I'll not leave a handful of that dark hair upon your head, if you lay a finger on me", the tussle between the two assumes comic proportions. Though a comic character, she is a symbol of love triumphing over hatred. She also plays an important role in bringing about the death of Madame Defarge. Dickens sums up that the peculiar quality in "her character dissociated from stature was shortness."

Even Jarvis Lorry, 'a man of business' is comical. He keeps on telling Lucie that he is a man of business and this heightens the comic effect at times.

On the other hand, two characters who are comical in a grotesque manner are the mender of roads and Madame Defarge. When he shouts "God save the king, God save the King", he is funny because as a revolutionary he is supposed to hate the aristocrats, and not cheer them for a long life.

Later, again when he compares his wood-cutting activities to Solomon, the guillotine-master, he appears grotesquely funny and humorous. Equally grotesque is Madame Defarge who continuously knits the names of the doomed, inveterately.

Thus, it can be seen that Dickens' humour is sympathetic and satirical. While sympathetically portrayed characters make us laugh with sympathy, the grotesque and evil characters are portrayed satirically. His sympathetically delineated characters like Micawbers, Pickwicks and Miss Pross are simpletons and arouse our feelings.

Caricatures: - Dickens also evokes laughter by exaggerating the manners and oddities of his characters. His caricatures arouse laughter. Jerry Cruncher's spiky hair, Miss Press's red complexion and red hair and the mender of roads' funny gestures are all sparkle of Dickens's humour. His remarks about Tellson's Bank also create humour. The partners were "proud of its smallness, proud of its darkness, proud of its ugliness, proud of its incommodiousness".

Humorous Situations: - Besides humour of character, he creates humorous situations or scenes or themes. For Dickens, funerals and journeys are a source of comedy. Roger Civ's fake funeral procession is vividly described to arouse laughter.

Pathos and Humour: - Thus, we see that Dickens, the master of humour is comparable to Shakespeare. His humour is mingled with pathos, and this shows his realistic approach towards life. Life too is full of laughter and tears. However, he does try to wring an extra tear by giving vivid details. He does not let the situation speak for itself. For example, when Gaspard's child dies he overstates and exaggerates and does not let the situation speak for it.
Conclusion: - However, all said and done, his humour is commendable. He highlights evils and monstrosities in a humorous vein. His humour is present in his characters, phrases, descriptions, situations and contrasts while Miss Press's eccentricities are a foil to Lucie's gentleness, Cruncher's spiked hair and ridiculous clothes provide a comic contrast to the conservative Jarvis Lorry. The moody, morose Carton is a contrast to boastful, egoistic Stryver whose attitude often becomes out of the way and ludicrous.

John Forster complained that the novel has little humour. In comparison to his other novels, A Tale of Two Cities stands out for the grimness and gravity of the theme where the plot is focussed and characters are not abundant. Within this compact structure, which is absent in Dickens's other significant novels, we get few sparkles of the writer's treatment of humour which are brilliant, vivid and ludicrous with a tinge of irony.

Dickens Art of Characterization in“A Tale of Two Cities”

Characterization is the creation and convincing representation of fictitious characters. A Tale of Two Cities, written by Charles Dickens, has many different characters with interesting personalities. Some of the characters in the novel all share one common fact that Dickens used throughout the book. Charles Dickens based the characters of A Tale of Two Cities on himself and his life.

Charles Dickens based the virtuous Charles Darnay as a version of himself. Dickens portrays himself through Charles Darnay in the fact that Dickens and Darnay have the same initials. Dickens might be portraying that Darnay and himself have so much in common, so Dickens gave Darnay the same initials. Charles Dickens also presents Darnay’s relationship with Carton to himself. Charles Darnay's relationship with Sydney Carton could portray Dickens’ own problem with his honorable and commonly negative side. Darnay's relationship with Carton was strong, as seen in the last book where Carton takes Darnay's place on the guillotine to be killed. Dickens might have done this to symbolize love Dickens had for another friend, just like Darnay had with Carton.

As Dickens based himself on Darnay, Dickens might have also based Dr. Manette as a version of himself. Charles Dickens might have portrayed himself through Dr. Manette. We can trace parallels between Manette's career as a physician and his selflessness in reporting the abuses of the nobility with Dickens’ career as a journalist and advocate for social improvement”. Dickens might have done this through Manette to show what issues Dickens stood for. Dickens portrayed himself through Dr. Manette in one more instance. We can see resemblance in Dickens’s conception of alternative worlds in his books with Dr. Manette's conception of a place where he is only a cobbler. Dickens might have done this to basically resemble the two lives he has lived: one as a child working in a factory, and two growing up and becoming a great author. Dickens went through a lot in his “two lives”.

As Dickens portrayed himself through Dr. Manette, he will now portray Mr. Stryver on a lawyer friend. Charles Dickens might have based Mr. Stryver on a lawyer Dickens knew. A Gale research source says, “It has been surmised that Dickens based the
character on an actual person, Edwin James, a notoriously, unscrupulous lawyer...“Dickens might be portraying Mr. Stryver on this lawyer to show the rudeness and lying nature lawyers sometimes possess. Dickens also might have based Mr. Stryver on one other characteristic. Charles Dickens based Mr. Stryver on a lawyer who had a bad reputation; hence, Mr. Styver gets a bad reputation. Dickens might have chosen Edwin James to portray Mr. Stryver to show that all lawyers have bad names. It is sad that even lawyers back then had bad reputations. Dickens now portrays Dr. Manette in many different ways.

Charles Dickens might have based Dr. Manette on his own father. Dickens’ father was not well with finances, and in 1824, Dickens’ father was imprisoned for debt (Dickens: A Brief Biography”, par 1). Dickens’ father was imprisoned probably for not paying what he owed to other people. In the novel, the confounded Dr. Manette is also imprisoned. A Gale research source says, “Imprisoned in the Bastille for his attempt to imprison the Marquis St. Evermonde’s treachery, Manette was permanently altered from this experience”. Dr. Manette was also imprisoned, but in a different way than Dickens’ father. Dickens might have portrayed his own father through Dr. Manette and his own imprisonment. As Dickens might have based his father’s imprisonment with Dr. Manette’s, Dickens might have also based the emotional and psychological problems with imprisonment on this experience.

Charles Dickens might have based the emotional and psychological side of imprisonment with his father’s and Dr. Manette’s imprisonment. When the finances of Charles Dickens’ family were put to at least partly to rights, his father was released, the twelve-year-old Dickens, already scarred psychologically by the experience, was further wounded by his mother’s insistence that he continued to work at the factory. The young Charles Dickens was hurt emotionally and psychologically because his father was in prison and he was forced to work in a factory with his whole family. Dickens might have portrayed emotional and psychological sickness through Dr. Manette and his experience with prison. Dr. Manette only identified himself as his jail cell number. Dr. Manette is emotionally and psychologically hurt so bad, it has effected his communication and social skills. Charles Dickens might have based his own emotional and psychological problem through Dr. Manette. Charles Dickens might have also based another event on imprisonment.

Charles Dickens might have based solitude and loneliness through work and imprisonment on himself and Dr. Manette. David Cody writes, “His[Dickens’ father] wife and children, with the exception of Charles, who was put to work at Warren’s Blacking Factory, joined him in the Marshalsea Prison” . Charles Dickens must have felt solitude and loneliness when he was put to work and all of his other family members were in jail. Dickens might have portrayed this event in his life through Dr. Manette and his imprisonment. While Dr. Manette was in prison, all he did was cobble, or shoemaking, which was all he learned to do in prison. Dr. Manette was so lonely and in complete solitude, no wonder all he did was shoemaking. Dickens might have portrayed his own case of solitude and loneliness with work through Dr. Manette’s case of solitude and loneliness in prison. As Dickens based imprisonment on solitude and loneliness, he might have also based Lucie rescuing her father on an event in Dickens life.
Dickens might have based Dr. Manette’s rescue by his daughter on an event in Dickens’ life where he was rescued. His father, however, rescued him from this fate, and between 1824 and 1827, Dickens was a day pupil at a school in London. Even though Dickens’ mother wanted him to stay working in the factory, Dickens’ father rescued him from this doom and put him in school. Dickens’ might have symbolized this event through Dr. Manette and when he was rescued. Lucie Manette travels with Mr. Lorry to rescue her father, Dr. Manette. Dickens might have allowed this event to take place to symbolize his own rescue from his father when Dickens was a child. It might have also felt good to remember as he wrote what happened and how his relationship with his father was strong. Dickens also bases some characters off love and relationships.

Charles Dickens based many characters off love and relationships. Sydney Carton loves Lucie Manette so much, he took the place of her, husband Charles Darnay, and Carton died because of his love for Lucie. Dickens might be portraying this relationship of love on Dickens own relationship with Ellen Turnan, an actress who Dickens fell in love. Charles Dickens also bases another relationship of his life off of one relationship between parent and child. Lucie Manette loves her father, Dr. Manette, so much that Lucie takes care of Dr. Manette after he escapes and leaves the prison, La Bastille. Dickens might be portraying his own love for his father through Lucie and her relationship with her father. Dickens’ relationship with his father was much like Lucie’s relationship with her father. Charles Dickens aptly based many characters on love and relationships.

Charles Dickens based the characters in A Tale of Two Cities on himself and his life. Charles Dickens portrays himself through the characters Charles Darnay, Dr. Manette, Mr. Stryver, and different relationships with certain characters. The way Dickens portrayed himself through his characters is brilliant and clever.

**Conflict of interest & clash of characters**

Next to Shakespeare, Dickens has created a world of rich, complex, simple and grotesque characters. His books are like mobs with people running to and fro. His galaxy of characters is individualized, alive and life-like. According to Compton Rickett, Dickens has both normal and abnormal characters. While the normal characters are tenderly portrayed, the abnormal characters are divided into grotesques, caricatures, villains and satirical portraits. The rest are comical and humorous. In general, he focuses on the external characteristics, physical oddities and mental quirks of his characters. He feasts on the face, gestures, clothes, and words of the character. Since he lays greater emphasis on the peculiarity and individuality of the characters, his characters become caricatures. They are exaggerated versions as they are a result of close observation.

**An Artist:** Though his characters are symbols and types who do not develop under the stress of circumstances, they are not abstractions but true to life, individuals and real persons of flesh and blood. He is an artist and not a psychologist and as such his characters are generally portrayed from outside. In fact, he is a like painter, who creates his characters imaginatively.
The Poor, the Rich and the Good: - A Tale of Two Cities is an apt illustration of Dickens' greatness in character portrayal. As a socialist and an advocate of the poor and oppressed, he focuses on the lower middle classes of London. In A Tale of Two Cities the focus is on the poor and oppressed lower middle classes of England and France. He satirises the rich and the egoists, like Stryver. His criterion of character is humanity, goodness and love and these qualities are present in Lucie, Sydney, Charles, etc.

Symbols: - Most of his characters embody ideas or values. While Lucie stands for goodness, Dr. Manette embodies suffering; while Charles Darnay symbolises passive goodness, Sydney embodies action, love, sacrifice and resurrection; while Jarvis Lorry is a symbol of goodness and service, Jerry Cruncher is a symbol of corruption; while Miss Pross is a symbol of love and duty, Madame Defarge is a symbol of evil and hatred.

Individuals: - Though symbolic, his characters are individualized. Dr. Manette is a victim of insanity who is resurrected by Lucie's sweetness and love. Lucie is a typical Dickensian heroine who is sweet and loving. Lucie in her goodness stands apart from Madame Defarge who is full of hatred and vengeance. Miss Pross, too, is different. So are Stryver and Jerry Cruncher. Though Charles and Sydney look alike they represent the dark and light aspects of man. One is passively good and the other is actively good.

Dialogue and Action: - Each of these characters is presented either through dialogue or action. While Charles is presented mainly through dialogue, Sydney is presented through action. His supreme act of sacrifice and love raises him to a divine plane. While the Defarges are presented mainly through action, Jarvis Lorry is presented through dialogues. Thus, both dialogue and action play important part in character portrayal.

The characters of Charles, Sydney, Dr. Manette and Jarvis are normal. Charles is noble, good and sacrificing. However, he hardly thinks or takes any initiative. He is too passive, even though he loves Lucie immensely. He is an honest and sincere man. He renounces his lineage, rushes to Paris to help Gabelle and faces his imprisonment with fortitude.

On the other hand, Sydney is a dynamic man of action. Though he appears as a wastrel and drunkard in the beginning, later he proves himself to be full of zeal instigated by Lucie's faith in him. He is rejuvenated and he sacrifices his life for Charles and humanity. He becomes a martyr and a saint, a symbol of love and sacrifice.

Jarvis Lorry, too, is a good man who is a normal character. He is a man of business with loyalty and devotion towards Tellson's Bank. He is equally devoted to the Manettes to whom he owes his resurrection from a man of business. He goes out of his way to help the Manettes.

Dr. Manette, too, is a normal man who has become insane due to his suffering in the Bastille. His sweet daughter resurrects him and he becomes sane again. However, when Charles is imprisoned, he musters up his strength and desperately searches for any way to have him released. Fate keeps, torturing him and his past keeps haunting him. Eventually, he comes out stronger.
Abnormal Characters: - Besides these good and conventional characters, Dickens delineates some abnormal and evil characters. The Defarges are leaders of the revolutionaries and they symbolise hatred. While Defarge tosses back the coin at Evrémonde, storms the Bastille and digs out Dr. Manette's letter, he has a soft corner for Dr. Manette and Lucie. Madame Defarge is totally inhuman. She speaks less and conveys her attitude by her impassive face, raised eyebrows and her knitting. However, she does act when she beheads the Governor and engages herself in a jostle with Miss Press. She is a symbol of hatred and vengeance.

Vengeance, Jacques, and the mender of roads are also evil characters who are typecast. Their names suggest their characters. While vengeance stands for revenge, Jacques stands for the common man who has no identity of his own. It is a common name and the Jacques are tools in the hands of the Defarges.

Comic Characters: - The third category of characters is the humorous characters like Miss Pross, Jerry Cruncher and Stryver. Their idiosyncrasies and foibles are portrayed through their eccentric physical appearances and their mannerism. While Miss Pross has red hair, Jerry has spiked hair. Stryver, the lion - is stout and odd looking. The red haired Miss Pross has a habit of exaggerating, but she is devoted to Lucie and calls her "Ladybird". Though Jerry Cruncher calls himself an honest tradesman; he is a resurrection man who digs out dead bodies and sells them. His manner of talking is comic. References to his wife's flopping are funny. The tag words attached to these minor characters are an important part of Dickens' characterization.

Stryver, too, has the tag 'lion' attached to him. He is pompous and egoistic like a lion. His proposal to Lucie and his dialogues with Sydney bring out the boorish aspects of his character, and create humour.

Female Characters: - Dickens' women characters are either sweet and loving like Lucie, or eccentric and comic like Miss Pross or shrewish and tyrannical like Defarge. His picture gallery of women characters generally consists of foolish, ridiculous, offensive or sweet characters.

Conclusion: - To sum up, Dickens is a master artist with a vast picture gallery of portraits. Though his characters are conventionally virtuous or vicious, he cannot draw very complex characters. His characters are characters of melodrama and he does not go into their psyche. According to Baker, he deals with characters and not character, with individuality and not a whirlwind of passions. In fact, his characters generally do not develop. However in spite of all this his characters are fantastic creations of his imagination. They are flesh and blood characters and they leave a deep impact on the minds of the reader.

Dickens as a Novelist

English novel in the hands of Dickens and his followers is entirely different from what it was in the hands of Scott. In short, there is now less of romance, more of realism. His is the romance of dreary London streets. Dickens was the first novelist who possessed
extreme sensibility with which he felt the sufferings of the poor, an intense imagination with which he depicted pictures of their lives, and aroused the conscience of the people. Dickens was immensely popular. His popularity is due to the fact that with the exception of Shakespeare, he is the greatest creative genius of England. He is among the greatest humorists of the world and for sheer variety and abundance of invention he has no equal. Dickens' novels are conspicuous for the following characteristics:

**Realism:** Dickens is the pioneer of realism in nineteenth century novel. Chesterton says: "Dickens used reality while aiming at an effect of romance, while Thackeray used the loose language and ordinary appearance of romance while aiming at an effect of reality. Dickens writes realism in order the incredible credible." Dickens' power of minute and keen observation coupled with poetic imagination, retentive memory and remarkable instinctive power of reading character make him a realist of a high order. As a realist he centered his eye on London and low life. To him London was the epitome of contemporary English life. He knew London thoroughly. Hugh Walker remarks: "He knew it topographically, industrially, socially within the limits of middle and lower classes. He could penetrate into all obscure nooks. He was familiar with all its strange trades and with those who followed them—the dustman, the articulator of skeletons, the marine-store dealers, the man who made a living by recovering bodies from the Thames, and many less innocent than he—Dickens knew them all better than we know our next door neighbours. It was from this material that he built his books." He was the first genuine story-teller of London life. He did not know the manners of high society. His gentlemen are colourless abstractions. His best characters are portraits from life, and the life that he knew best was lower class life. Instead of the pageant of the Middle Ages, Dickens showed the Pageant of contemporary English life, strikes and riots, factories and granaries burning, employee shooting employer, underground tenements, workhouses, truck-stores, wretched schools, model prisons, model cottages.

Dickens exposes various evils of Industrial Revolution, especially the employment of child labour. Child labour was inhumanly exploited. The sufferings of David as a child of ten in David Copperfield are the sufferings of many Victorian children. The sordid condition of English Prisons is brought to light in David Copperfield and Great Expectations. His Oliver Twist is a powerful indictment of the education of poor children Pt. his day. Abuses of the legal system and delays in the meeting out of justice are also criticised in David Copperfield. In one novel after another Dickens is sharply critical of poor laws and the working of the work-houses.

**Prophetic Note or Purpose in the Novel of Dickens:** Dickens is a novelist with a purpose. He tended to suspect all institutions, churches, government offices, charitable institutions, laws, reformatories and even schools because he felt that they were attempting to do by mechanical means the good which could only come from the spontaneous action of the individual. He hated all class distinctions and the aristocratic system because they checked the natural free current of benevolence which should flow from one man to another. Dickens "is also a prophet," says David Cecil, "he is out to expound a gospel, a view of life, a score of values which he wishes his fellowmen to accept. As was to be expected, it is a very simple gospel; it does not appeal to the intellect, it is the result of intuition rather than of logic and learning. It centres round a
single belief — a belief in the primary, simple, benevolent impulses of man, his natural affections for home, mother and wife and sweetheart, his unconsidered movements of charity and gusts of gaiety, his instinctive wish to love and laugh and give and share."

**Humanitarian Note: -** All novels of Dickens are characterised by humanitarian note. He attacked the abuses in the existing system and throughout he considered himself as the champion of the weak, the outcast and the oppressed. Hudson remarks: "Humanitarianism was indeed the keynote of his work, and as his enormous popularity carried his influence far and wide, he may justly be reckoned one of the greatest social reformers of his age." Dickens' sympathy was always with the out-castes, the poor, the downtrodden, the exploited and all victims of society. In most of his novels a child is usually presented as a victim of society. Oliver Twist, Little Nell, Florence Dombey and David Copperfield, stand out in celestial innocence and goodness, in contrast to the evil creatures whose persecution they suffer for a season. They represent vividly the complaint of the individual against society. The cruelty the malignant characters inflict on children is a manifestation of social wrong. Bumble's savage blow at Oliver Twist asking for more food, and Squeers' wicked exploitation of his pupils in Nicholas Nickleby expose utter want of human love and sympathy in the existing social system. In his novels we find a deep-seated reaction against the organised authority and established institutions. His three novels, Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby and Old Curiosity Shop established Dickens as the pioneers of humanitarianism. He tried to arouse the conscience of the people against the exploitation of the oppressed and the downtrodden. Dickens saw life from the viewpoint of the poor and oppressed. He had himself known the lot of the persecuted at the root of the zeal for reform was the memory of his own bitter childhood.

**Characterisation: -** The genius of Dickens was for characters, not character. He could portray innumerable kinds of human beings, but he could not analyse the individual. He could vividly describe every detail of manners, appearance, dress and other external details of his characters. "Despite the broad brush of caricature, despite the over-insistence on the externals of his characters, he makes them live; and they live," says Rickett, "by virtue of their humanity."

It is generally said that Dickens gives us types, not individuals. His characters are types of the most abstract kind, something like the figures in the old moralities: embodied hypocrisy, selfishness, pride, and so on, masking as everyday mortals. Mr. Pecksniff is hypocrisy personified; Mr. Dombey embodies pride and Tom Pinch is amiably personified. His characters are oddities personified. But it must be admitted that this remark is applied only to a certain number of satirical portraits and not to his characters at large. Gissing remarks that Dickens "sees in them, not abstractions, but men and women of such loud personalities, so aggressively individual in mind and form, in voice and form, that they forever proclaim themselves the children of a certain country. Clothed abstractions do take hold upon the imagination and the memory as Dickens did from the day of their coming into life. The secret of this subtle power lay in the reality of the figures themselves."

Leaving aside the portraits of children, Dickens imparts some abnormality, some eccentricity of manner, some mental twist, some intellectual slowness to his characters.
He treats his characters primarily from without, and he highlights only such characteristics which may express themselves externally. He fashions his characters from skin inwards, never getting near the heart of them. His characters do not react upon each other; in truth, they do not act at all, they only behave, and show off their unlikeness one to the other. "Dickens," writes Rickett, "was not a scientific student of character; he was a shrewd observer of certain types of character, and although he did not confine his character studies altogether to these types, yet he was rarely successful when he diverged from them."

**Humour and Pathos:** Humour is the soul of the novels of Dickens. Without his humour, he might have been a vigorous advocate of social reform, but as a novelist assuredly he would have failed. Humour is present in his writings from the very beginning. The Sketches have a touch of true humour, but there is much more of merely youthful high spirits, tending to be farcical. The admixture of humour, satire and farce is an important characteristic of Dickens as a novelist. Pickwick Papers is a veritable storehouse of humour and farce.

Dickens’ humour arises from the heart and not from the lips. The farce inch is early work always results from the exuberance of spirits; later he introduces it deliberately, with conscious art, save perhaps at those moments when the impulse of satire is too much for him. The wild absurdity of the Mifflin Company at the beginning of Nicholas Nickleby and the first chapter of Martin Chuzzlewit are examples of his early humour and farce. Dickens reaches the highest point of humour in the scene describing the marriage of Jack Bransby to the great Macstinger. It is the ludicrous in the purest form and it leaves behind it nothing but the wholesome aftermath of self-forgetful mirth.

The humour of Dickens is "broad, humane and creative". He is par excellence in creating humorous characters—Mr. Pickwick, Mrs. Garpn, Mr. Micawber, and Sam Weller. His humour is not very subtle, but it goes deep, and in expression it is free and vivacious. His humour takes a satiric turn when he exposes the evils of his age. His satire covers a great part of English life, public and private likeeducation, charity, religion, social morality in its broadest sense, society in its narrowest legal procedure, the machinery of politics and the forms of government.

Dickens is superb both in pure humour and satiric humour. "Satire, however, is one-half of Dickens' humour," writes David Cecil, "and not the most characteristic half. Dickens' unique position as a humorist lies in his mastery of "pure humour", jokes that are funny not for the satirical light they throw but just in themselves. The humour does not illustrate anything or tell us anything, one needs no extraneous information to see its points, and it is simply self-dependently, intoxicatingly funny.

Dickens' humour and pathos cannot be sharply differentiated. Like his humour the pathos of Dickens is overdone and too long drawn out. It shows lack of self-restraint. The theatrical element is repellent in his pathos. Dickens most effectively mingle humour and pathos when he deals with childhood. Rickett writes: "There we have a humour that caresses, a pathos that brightens, and a rainbow humour where the author is smiling at us through his tears. It is hard to overpraise Dickens' sketches of child life. Dickens did not describe a child—he became a child for the time being. He lived over
again his own childish days. Hence the poignancy and actuality of his pictures." Paul, David and Pip are his memorable studies of childhood, which combine humour and pathos. There is plenty of pathos in his descriptions of prison life. Pathos of the graver and subtler kind is the distinguishing note of Great Expectations. The old convict Magwitch, if he cannot he called a tragical personality, is certainly an impressive pathetic figure. Dickens' gentlest, brightest humour, his simplest pathos occurs in those unexciting pages which depict the everyday life of poor and homely English folk.

**Dickens' Plots:** - Dickens' novels, writes David Cecil, "have no organic unity, they are full of detachable episodes, characters who serve no purpose in furthering the plot. His characters are almost irrelevant to the actions of the books in which they appear. We remember the story for them, but the story could perfectly well go on without them." Dickens' early novels are usually simple in structure. Following the tradition of Smollett and Le Sage, he built his early novels on the picaresque tradition. Pickwick Papers and Nicholas Nickleby are, like Smollett's, bundles of adventures, connected, so far as they are connected at all, only by the characters who figure in them. In Martin Chuzzlewit, Dombey and Son and David Copperfield some effort is made towards greater unification, but even these books belong substantially to the loose, chronicle type. In his later books, however, he gained the power of constructing elaborate plots, and of creating characters of heroic dignity and tragic intensity, such as, Sidney Carton in A Tale of Two Cities, and Lady Dedlock in Black House. It is his first systematic attempt to gather up all the diverse threads of the story into a coherent plot. Little Dorrit, A Tale of Two Cities, Great Expectations, Our Mutual Friend and the unfinished Edwin Drood are planned, but there is still in them a great deal of episodic material. Moody and Lovett remark: "Dickens is remembered not as a dramatic artist in the novel form, but as a showman of wonderful resources. He is a master of vast and fascinating stage, crowded with farcical characters, with grotesque and terrible creatures, more devils than men, and with the touching forms of little children. The action is sometimes merry, sometimes exciting, sometimes pathetic. We have laughter, and horror, and tears; but the prevailing atmosphere is one of cheerfulness, as befits a great Christmas pantomime."

**Dickens' Style:** - Dickens is one of the masters of prose in his own way, though his style cannot be admired for flow of pure idiom or command of subtle melodies. His style is often too much mannered. At its best Dickens' style is neither polished nor scholarly, but it is clear, rapid and workmanlike, the style of the working journalist. His style in the early books is spoiled by funs, cockneyisms, and tiresome circumlocutions. The style of Barnaby Rudge is simple, direct and forcible.

Rickett writes: "None but a genuine dramatic artist could modulate his style as Dickens can so as to take on the mood of the moment." He could picturesquely describe the marshes at the beginning of The Great Expectations, with its creeping fog and flat loneliness in a language which consists of "a mist of words and phrases". In his description of a coach ride, the language quickens and slackens, becomes rollicking or deliberate, according to the pace of the coach. Dickens adopted a lyrical style, a kind of verse-in-prose in his more aspiring flights, in particular, in his deeply pathetic passages. Clutton-Brock says: "Dickens was a master of sound and even classical prose style. His teachers were Smollett, Fielding and Defoe, and he had learned from them thoroughly. He wrote like a man, with a masculine weight, clearness and balance." Rickett writes
about his greatness as a stylist: "With all its mannerisms there is the element of
greatness about Dickens' style. For colour, movement and variety it is a remarkable
style. Tawdry and mannered at times, if you will, but despite this, fascinating, arresting,
and with the impress of the writer's infectious personality."

Dickens' Place: - Dickens, according to Hugh Walker, is the most original novelist of
England. "A hint here and there, a turn of phrase, a situation, the outline of a
character—he certainly adopted, but the substance of his novels comes from his own
experience. Keen observation, a retentive memory and a remarkable instinctive power of
reading character, were the gifts to which he owed his literary success." Dickens has left
us a rich and varied inheritance. His characters, some remarkably humorous and not a
few genuinely pathetic figures, are a memorable contribution to the world of noveldom.
Dickens was a humanitarian who has touched with pity and tenderness the springs of our
national life, and English life no less than English letters.
Mary Ann (or Marian) Evans was born in Warwickshire in 1819, the youngest child of Robert and Christina Evans. She was deeply religious during her childhood and adolescence, a trait she developed partially from her family background and partially under the influence of Miss Lewis, the "principal governess" of a boarding school which Mary Ann attended from 1828 to 1832.

After her mother died and her sister married, Mary Ann ran her father's household. But in 1841, her brother Isaac married and took possession of the house, and Mary Ann and her father moved to Coventry. In the city the young woman's intellectual horizons widened and her early faith diminished; under the influence of Charles Bray and Charles Hennell, she became interested in the "new criticism" of the Bible and anonymously published her first work, a translation of D. F. Strauss' LebenJesu (Life of Jesus), in 1846. She also published a few articles and reviews in a periodical edited by Bray during this period.

Mary Ann cared for her invalid father, who strenuously objected to her changed religious views, until he died in 1849. After traveling in Europe for a time, she returned to England, where she became involved with a group of rationalists, best known of whom was John Chapman. In 1851, she became assistant editor of Chapman's Westminster Review. While in London, she met many prominent people, among them the philosopher Herbert Spencer. Through Spencer she came in contact with George Henry Lewes, a drama critic and author who was separated from his wife, and the pair fell in love. Lewes could not obtain a divorce, and he and Mary Ann decided to ignore the prohibitions of society and live together as man and wife. The union was a marriage in every aspect but the legal one and lasted until Lewes' death in 1878. Two years later, Mary Ann married J. W. Cross, and she herself died on December 22, 1880.

Mary Ann Evans did not begin writing fiction until relatively late in life. Her first pieces were three short stories, "Amos Barton," "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story," and "Janet's Repentance," which were published in Blackwood's Magazine in 1857 and reissued collectively as Scenes of Clerical Life in 1858. They appeared under the pseudonym George Eliot, a penname which Evans used throughout the rest of her career. In 1859, Adam Bede, Eliot's first full-length novel, came out, and her reputation was established. The Mill on the Floss, an autobiographical novel, and Silas Marner both appeared in 1860. Romola, a historical novel set in Renaissance Florence, was published three years later and Felix Holt, the Radical in 1866. Middlemarch, widely considered to be Eliot's masterpiece, came out in 1871-72, and Daniel Deronda in 1876.

Eliot's work represents a definite break with the work of her immediate predecessors in several ways. In Adam Bede, she issued her declaration from convention and announced her intention to write realistically. "So I am content to tell my simple story, without trying to make things seem better than they were; dreading nothing, indeed, but
falsity." We, looking back towards Eliot, may be inclined to dispute her claim; her work may not seem realistic when compared with more modern efforts. But we must not lose sight of the fact that a number of the most admirable qualities in modern fiction derive, either directly or indirectly, from Eliot; her work was revolutionary in its own day and opened new directions for the development of the novel as an art form.

Eliot's writings are more realistic than those of her famous contemporaries in that she habitually presents characters which are not simplistic caricatures of human beings but complex, ambiguous, ultimately indefinable figures like those we meet on the street every day. They are analyzed at great length in the novels, and this psychological approach, in which the subtleties of motivation are laid bare, enables Eliot to present human situations as they really occur; both the mental and physical aspects of action are reproduced. She also attempted, perhaps with imperfect success, to break the stranglehold which popular morality had on the novel by showing that the good or bad fortune which comes to her characters is not the work of some unseen divine hand whose laws have been either followed or violated, but is the result of human will-choices. And finally she made the novel a more serious art form than it had hitherto been by using it as a vehicle for the discussion of significant moral and philosophical issues.

All of these qualities are observable in Adam Bede; indeed, as Eliot's first novel, it is her first experiment in the new fiction. Its revolutionary aspect is generally recognized; many scholars point to 1859, the year in which Adam Bede, Meredith's The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, Darwin's On the Origin of Species, and Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities were published, as one of the major turning points in the breakdown of mid-Victorian certainties. Adam Bede is a test case for a new view of the function of prose fiction; Eliot clearly feels that the novel need not be merely a form of entertainment for those seeking diversion from the problems of real life, but that it could, like poetry, be a vehicle for the expression and teaching of fine and serious ideas about the quality of the human condition.

It is difficult to see how the issue of man's responsibility towards himself and his fellows can cease to be vital, and the resurgence of interest in Eliot in our own day indicates how improbable it is that the relevance of her ideas and the value of the books in which she expressed them will "vanish altogether" in the foreseeable future.

Adam Bede : Summary

Adam Bede follows four characters in the rural village of Hayslope in 1799. It opens with the Bede brothers, Adam and Seth, at work in a carpentry shop. The other men tease Seth about his Methodism and the fact that he is in love with Dinah, the Methodist preacher. Dinah preaches in Hayslope that night and captivates even her skeptical audience. Seth walks her home and asks her to marry him for the second time, but she refuses, saying that it will interfere with her preaching.

Adam returns home to his mother, who is worried that his father is not yet home because he has promised to make a coffin for the next day. Thias Bede used to be an honorable man who taught his sons carpentry, but he has become a drunk in the last few years. Angry with his father, Adam stays up the whole night to complete the work on the coffin. He hears a strange rapping on the door, but nobody is there.
Captain Arthur Donnithorne visits his mentor, the vicar, and tells him about Dinah's preaching. They travel together to visit the Poyser farm so that the vicar can meet Dinah. At the Poyser's farm, Mrs. Poyser's niece, Dinah, and Mr. Poyser's niece are living with their aunt and uncle. Captain Arthur Donnithorne, whose aristocratic grandfather is
the Poyser's landlord, asks to see Mrs. Poyser's dairy, while Dinah impresses the vicar by explaining to him why she feels called to preach. In the dairy, Arthur flirts with Hetty and ascertains that she walks alone to his estate to learn lace-making from his housekeeper.

In the morning, Adam sets out to the village pub to find his father, but he finds him face-down, drowned in a stream. The news of the Bedes' misfortune spreads fast around the village, and Dinah visits Lisbeth Bede to comfort her. Despite the fact that she does not usually like Methodists—or any young women who she suspects could take her place in her sons' affections-Lisbeth takes to Dinah. She stays overnight with the Bedes to help Lisbeth.

Arthur intercepts Hetty in the woods on her way to his estate. He flirts with her and kisses her. After she goes home, he decides that it is not a good idea to lead her on, and he resolves not to see her in the future. That night, Hetty dreams of marrying Arthur, becoming a gentlewoman, and owning beautiful women. Dinah surprises and frightens her by knocking on her door and saying that if she is ever in trouble, she should come to Dinah.

There is a well-attended burial service in the parish for Thias Bede. Adam visits the Poyser's afterward to continue his courtship of Hetty. Hetty's uncle and aunt both approve highly of the match, but Adam is frustrated because he cannot tell whether Hetty loves him or not. After this visit, he attends night-school, where he is learning mathematics to improve his skill at carpentry. Bartle Massey, the schoolmaster, tells him that he would be better off to stay a bachelor.

Arthur's and Hetty's secret affair continues, and he gives her a pair of beautiful earrings and a locket. At a celebration for Arthur's twenty-first birthday, he announces that he has appointed Adam Bede the steward for his estate's forest. This appointment will finally make Adam financially viable enough to ask Hetty to marry him.

Walking through the woods a few days later, Adam is reflecting on how happy he is until he sees Arthur and Hetty kissing. Hetty runs away, and Adam confronts Arthur. The two get in a fistfight, and Adam knocks Arthur down. He makes Arthur promise to write a letter to Hetty that will end the affair. Adam personally delivers this letter to Hetty, who is devastated. The letter says, however, to call on Arthur if she is in any real trouble. Hetty tries to think of how she can get out of her situation and decides that her best move would be to marry Adam. Adam thinks that she has learned from her mistakes. They get engaged.

As the marriage approaches, Hetty grows more and more worried. She gladly accepts as a pretext to run away her uncle's idea that she should leave to fetch Dinah from where she is preaching in Snowden. She takes all of her money and follows Arthur to Windsor where he has been stationed as a soldier. It takes all of her money to arrive there, and when she is informed that Arthur's troops have been sent to Ireland, she faints away. She remembers her cousin's invitation to look to her if she is ever in trouble. Hetty sets off in the opposite direction with the resolution that if she is too cowardly to commit suicide, she will find Dinah.
Hetty's family becomes worried when she does not return after a number of days, and Adam Bede sets out in search of her. When he arrives in Hayslope, he finds that she has never visited to collect Dinah at all. Alarmed, he traces her to Stoniton. When he returns back to Hayslope, the vicar informs him that she has just been arrested for the murder of her own child.

Adam is convinced that she is innocent until he attends her trial and sees the incontrovertible proof against her. One of the witnesses is a woman in whose house she delivered the baby. Another is a workingman who saw her near the spot where she partially buried the baby in a field before it died of exposure. Hetty is sentenced to execution. Dinah visits her in prison, persuades her to confess for the first time, and gives her spiritual counseling.

Adam has sent for Arthur, who receives word first that his grandfather has died, so Arthur returns to Hayslope without knowing what has happened to Hetty. When he hears the news, he rushes to get a special pardon for her. It is delivered in the nick of time. He rides up to where Hetty is riding in the death cart accompanied by Dinah with the pardon. Hetty is re-sentenced to exile rather than death. Adam and Arthur meet again and agree to end their old argument. Arthur says that he is joining the military, and the two shake hands.

Years later, Adam visits the Poyzers as they try to convince Dinah not to leave on her preaching circuit yet again. She insists that she must go because of personal temptations. When Adam says that whatever she chooses will be right, she begins to cry. He brings her home to his mother, who is ill and wanted to see Dinah again. Dinah blushes every time that Adam talks to her, and Seth and Lisbeth see that she is in love with him. Lisbeth informs her son, who, after asking his brother's permission, asks her to marry him. She refuses, saying that her first priority is religion. She leaves for Leeds to preach. After she has been gone for a few days, Adam follows her to where she is preaching. He meets her on a hill, and she admits that she has been listening to her heart and what God is trying to tell her—and that it is to marry him. The two marry, and the epilogue depicts them living happily with their entire family, including two children.

**Adam Bede : Introduction & Appreciation**

**Its Publication; Its Origin:** George Eliot finished Janet’s Repentance on the 9th October, 1857, and began Adam Bede on the 22nd October, 1857. She completed the first volume by the following March: wrote the second during the tour in Germany which followed and after returning to England, at the beginning of September, completed the third volume on 16th November. It was published in the beginning of 1858. When recording these dates in her journal she gives also an interesting account of the origin of the book. It was suggested by an anecdote which she had heard from an aunt, the Methodist preacher, Mrs. Samuel Evans:

“We are sitting together one afternoon during her visit to me at Griff, probably in 1839 or 1840, when it, occurred to her to tell me how she had visited a condemned criminal—a very ignorant girl, who had murdered her child and refused to confess; how she had stayed with her praying through the night, and how the poor creature at last broke out into tears, and confessed her crime. My aunt afterwards went with her in the cart to the
place of execution.....I then conceived the idea of blending this and some other recollections of my aunt in one story with some points in my father’s early life and character.

The character of Dinah grew out of my recollections of my aunt, but Dinah is not at all like my aunt, who was a very small, black eyed woman, and (as I was told, for I never heard her preach) very vehement in her style of preaching. The character of Adam and one or two incidents connected with him were suggested by my father’s early life; but there is not a single portrait in Adam Bede, only the suggestions of experience wrought up into new combinations. When I began to write it, the only elements I had determined on, besides the character of Dinah, were the character of Adam, his relation to Arthur Donnithorne, and their mutual relations to Hetty, i.e. the girl who commits child-murder—the scene in the prison being, of course, the climax towards which I worked. Everything else grew out of the characters and their mutual relations."

**Time of Action:** Though Adam Bede was published in 1859, its action takes place in 1799. Those were stirring times when momentous events were taking place both at home and abroad. But Adam Bede is not a historical novel, and these stirring events are not even mentioned in the novel. The only historical event which is of any significance in the novel is Methodism. The Methodists or non-conformists or dissenters were people who did not agree with the doctrines of the established church. The founder of the Methodist movement was John Wesley, and he had allowed women to preach, but the Second Wesley Conference, 1798, forbade women preachers. This conference is mentioned in the novel towards the close. Methodism has been presented through Dinah Morris “the preacher-woman”, and through her the best in Methodism has been highlighted. Besides this historical event, the novel is concerned with universal human passions, the tragedies of Sophocalian grandeur that take place in country solitudes. Hence the perennial appeal of the novel.

**The Setting:** The setting of the novel is provided by the village of Hayslope in the county of Loamshire, and Snowfield and Stoniton in the county of Stonyshire, in the English Midlands where the novelist had been bred and brought up, with the characters, scenes and sights of which she had been familiar since her childhood, and which had fertilised her imagination. Indeed, the rendering of these country places is so faithful and the evocation of the Midland flavour is marked with such fidelity, that when the novel was first published anonymously, it was at once felt that its writer must be a resident of those parts, and many conjectures as to its authorship were made. No one, of course, suspected that an unknown and inexperienced, woman, like Mary Evans, was the authoress. Various landmarks of the places mentioned above have been given, and devoted scholars and George Eliot-lovers have visited the Midlands and tried to identify the villages and the counties with their real counterparts. However, all such attempts have remained futile, for Hayslope, Broxton Stoniton, etc., are dream countries or “countries of the mind”. It is reality transmuted, glorified and modified by the imagination of the novelist.

**The Characters:** The canvas of the novel is a crowded one, there being a number of characters both major and minor. First, there are the Bedes, village carpenters. The family consists of Adam Bede, the central figure, his brother Seth Bede, and mother Lizbeth and father Thias Bede. Then there are the Poysers, tenants of the Hall Farm. The group consists of Mr. Martin Poyser, his old father, his wife Mrs. Poyser—an immortal
figure of fun—their two nieces Dinah Morris and Hetty Sorrel, and their children, Totty and others. Another group consists of the old Squire or landlord of the village and his grandson Arthur Donnithorne heir to the state. They live at The Chase with a number of attendants. Rev. Mr. Irwine, the Rector of Hayslope and Broxton, his old mother Mrs. Irwine a majestic lady, and his two unmarried sisters complete the list of characters who occupy the front of the stage. In the background, are such figures as Bartle Massey, the school-teacher, Jonathan Burgess, the carpenter, “wiry” Ben, a romping girl called Bess, Molly, the maid servant, and a number of other minor figures. Through these characters, George Eliot has given us a cross-section of village society, of its various professions and occupations, of its sorrows and sufferings of its joys, traditions and customs, of its jealousies and tragedies and of its narrowness and conservation. In this way the novelist has presented a faithful picture of the life and society of Midlands, as she knew it.

**The Story:** - The tragic tale of Hetty Sorrel forms the core of the novel and all other events and characters are related to it in one way or the other. Adam Bede is in love with Hetty Sorrel, a pretty, empty-headed girl who lives on the farm of Martin Poyser, her uncle. Arthur Donnithorne, is unaware that Adam, his old friend, loves Hetty; since he is attracted to her himself, he meets her on several occasions secretly in the woods. As Hetty’s fondest dream is to become a country lady, she encourages Arthur. One day, Adam surprises the lovers in the woods and forces Arthur to fight. The bewildered Arthur tries vainly to make light of the situation. Conscience-stricken, he writes a farewell letter to Hetty and goes off with his regiment, in which he holds the position of a captain. Hetty, to make the best of a bad bargain, then agrees to marry Adam in the spring. But as the wedding day approaches, her pregnancy can no longer be concealed. She thinks of suicide, but vainly goes in search of Arthur. On the way, she prematurely gives birth to her child. In despair, she murders it and is arrested. At the trial her stubborn silence arouses great indignation; she is found guilty of child-murder and is condemned to death. At the last moment, Arthur arrives with a document, showing that her sentence has been commuted to transportation. Later, Adam marries Hetty’s cousin, the gentle Dinah Morris, the Methodist preacher. The novelist had abided an Epilogue to the novel, which shows them living happily together with their two children. Seth Bede also lives with them, and we are told that Hetty is released after eight years, and that she dies on her way back home.

**Greatness of the Novel:** - Adam Bede is one of the most powerful novels in the English language. W.H. Hudson, speaks of George Eliot’s “power of weaving tragedy, and tragedy as poignant and deeply moral as anything to be found in Aeschylus or Shakespeare, out of home spun material”. He shows how the story of Hetty moves “from weakness to sin and from sin to Nemesis”. The story of Arthur and Hetty is indeed so moving, painful and tragic that the novel loses much of its power when they pass out of the narrative.

The novel is outstanding, too, for its rural background the pictures of farm life and the delightfully drawn groups of characters—the tragic Hetty and Arthur; the moral and spiritual Adam and Dinah; the amusing Poyser family; the Squire’s household, the Irwine family and the rustics.
Religion and its Treatment: - Edmund Goose, tells us: “What really made the book remarkable was the manner in which the novelist brought her philosophical training to the study of religious character. This was quite new, and the world, much exercised at the moment by religious questions, saw the souls of Dinah Morris, the Methodist missionary, and of the other converts analysed, by a sympathetic outsider, in accordance with close actual experience, and not caricatured from a distance, as is often the case with Dickens.”

Wisdom and Psycho-analysis: - George Eliot was the most intellectual novelist of her time. She was critical, observant, a deep thinker, highly intelligent and imaginative. Many examples of her wisdom are to be found in Adam Bede:

“When death, the great Reconciler, has come, it is never our tenderness that we repent of, but our severity.”

“Our dead are never dead to us until we have forgotten them.”

“It is the favourite stratagem of our passions to sham a retreat, and to turn sharp round upon us at the moment we have made up our minds that the day is our own.”

“Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds.”

“There is no despair so absolute as that which comes with the first moments of our first great sorrow.”

It is in the novel that for the first trial George Eliot is seen as a modern novelist. The analysis of the motives and the mental processes in this novel would do credit to any of the great psychological novelists of recent times.

Mrs. Poyser, the Cause of the Popularity of the Novel: - However in the final analysis, it is neither the treatment of rural life nor psycho-analysis nor Dinah Morris nor Adam, that at once raised George Eliot to the first rank among English novelists. Says Leslie Stephen, “Adam Bede for most of us means pre-eminently Mrs. Poyser and owes its popularity to her presence. Her dairy is really the centre of the whole microcosm. We are first introduced to it as the background which makes the kitten-like beauty of Hetty Sorrel, irresistible to young Captain Donnithorne. But Mrs. Poyser is the presiding genius. She represents the very spirit of the place; and her influence is the secret of the harmony of the little world of squire and parson and parish clerk and schoolmaster and blacksmith and carpenter and shepherd and carter. Each of these types is admirably sketched in turn, but the pivot of the whole is the farm in which Mrs. Poyser displays her conversational powers. The little rustic world is painted in colours, heightened by affection. There is, it may be, a little more of Goldsmith’s beautifying touch than of Crabbe’s uncompromising realism. But it is marvellously life-like, and Mrs. Poyser’s delightful shrewdness seems to guarantee the fidelity of the portraits. She has no humbug about her, and one naturally takes it for granted that they must be as she sees them. It is, indeed, needless to insist upon her excellence for Mrs. Poyser became at once one of the immortals.” In her later novels one sometimes regrets that Mrs. Poyser did not come to the fore to temper the graver moods. Mrs. Poyser may take rank with Sam Weller as one of the irresistible humorists.
Adam Bede : Major Themes

Honor: - Honor is an ancient theme with special resonance in medieval times, which is fitting in a novel set in a town that has an almost feudal landlord. There are two types of honor in this novel: that of females, and that of males. Female honor is fairly passive and relies entirely on chastity. If women lose this chastity, they are helpless to regain their honor. Male honor is more complicated and more active. Honor is tied up in their profession, land, and overall identity. When Adam runs away as a young boy because of family unhappiness, he chooses to return partially in order to maintain the honor of his family by keeping it economically afloat. He knows that the only way to provoke Arthur to fight is by insulting his honor, so instead of reproaching him, he calls him a coward.

Love: - The novel includes a few examples of true love based on mutual attraction. One positive example of mutual love is the relationship between Adam and Dinah at the end of the novel. But it takes others around them to work out their feelings for them, showing that it is not only mutual love that is important, but also a mutual love that is recognized and supported by both of the families of the lovers. Indeed, society matters for love; in other relationships, the complicating factor is always socioeconomic class, because the novel is set in a time period when marriage was more of a contract than a romantic affair. This problem extends to both men and women. Adam Bede is expected to marry Mary Burge merely because it would be an advantageous business proposition. Afterwards, he could become partners with her father, a man who had been his boss. What is more, there are two class-related barriers to a love affair between Arthur and Hetty. The first is obvious: Arthur cannot easily marry someone so far below his social class. The second is more subtle: it is unclear whether Hetty would be as attracted to Arthur if it were not for his wealth. When she does dream of their future together, she imagines the luxuries that he could provide her with, rather than the life that they could have together. There is even an impediment to Adam's courtship of Hetty, a pair who might seem to be of the same social stratum. Before his promotion to steward of the forest, some townspeople say that Adam is reaching too high trying to land the niece of a large dairy farmer.

Nature: - Nature is a constant presence in all of Eliot's novels. Unlike many romantic novelists, she does not make the weather correspond directly with her principal characters' moods or feelings. Rather, she comments on the sort of injustice that the weather always seems to be at its most beautiful when man is going through a particular hardship. This disconnection of natural life from human life is part of Eliot's literary doctrine of painstaking realism. Rather than have the weather reflect her characters' feelings, she quite accurately has her characters mark their memories and experiences in the context of their actual environment. Adam marks his movement from happiness to adulthood by the beech tree that he contemplated moments before seeing Hetty and Arthur kiss under it. Hetty marks her homeward journey not to return to the family farm, but to regain some scenery that is familiar to her. Dinah and Adam always refer to his interception of her in Snowfield and their agreement to marry as "the meeting on the hill."

Industry: - Eliot wrote Adam Bede at the time that the Industrial Revolution was beginning to change the face of life in Britain. More and more ingenious inventions meant that farmers were caught up in industry, and many moved away from their small
towns into bigger cities. The village that Eliot portrays is a holdout against this new lifestyle, but the presence of new industry is indicated by the mill that Dinah works at when she is home. Eliot comments that Dinah is drawn to this town as well as to the industrial town of Leeds which, along with Manchester, was at the forefront of the Industrial Revolution. Dinah is drawn to such towns because of the great misery in them. Eliot seems to side with many poets and authors in lamenting the onset of industry insofar as it alienates people from nature. Eliot personifies the spirit of Leisure in contrast to this new industry, describing him as a portly old gentleman with excellent digestion.

**Motherhood:**  
As a novel which centers on an infanticide by a mother, Adam Bede is necessarily preoccupied with motherhood. The most obvious example of a strong mother figure is Lisbeth Bede, who loves her son, Adam, almost too much. She is constantly worried about where he is, what he is doing, and whether he has had enough to eat. Her constant nagging, which irritates Adam, also ashamed him. Lisbeth's relationship with Seth is a much easier one, perhaps because she loves him just a little less--and therefore nags him just a little less. It is important to note that neither Hetty nor Dinah has a mother anymore. Both of them were orphaned and live with their uncle or aunt, respectively. The lack of a mother figure affects each of them profoundly. Dinah quickly grows into a mother figure herself, looking after and waiting on others before herself. Seth describes a young boy even climbing into her lap to be held during one of her preaching sessions. Hetty, in contrast, lacking strong guidance, grows up vain and petty. When she has a child of her own, admittedly under extremely tough circumstances, she kills it by burying it. She does have some motherly feelings, however, noting that she could not bear to look at its "little hands or little face" before she buried it. She imagines that she continues to hear it crying. This is why she returns to the spot where she buried it, and this is why she is apprehended as a criminal.

**Sacrifice:**  
Because religion (in particular, Christianity) is of such importance in this novel, the issue of sacrifice and its nobility comes up quite often. The character most inclined toward sacrifice, Dinah, is also the most religious. Dinah is content to spend her life serving others if she thinks that she can bring them some comfort. This notion of sacrifice is parodied by Mrs. Poyser, who thinks that Dinah takes the idea to an extreme. Mrs. Poyser is upset that Dinah moves back and forth between different parishes, trying to calculate in which one the life is hardest so that she can choose the one needing the most help. Her aunt says of Dinah that she would only marry if the man were a Methodist and lame, consistent with her doctrine of help and sacrifice. Dinah must struggle against her conscience in order to allow herself to marry Adam, because she thinks that she loves him too much—it would be too little of a sacrifice. Eliot makes it clear that this argument (if not Dinah's whole perspective on sacrifice) is somewhat ridiculous, and besides, Dinah changes her mind in a short time and agrees to marry Adam. Eliot suggests that sacrifice is worthwhile for the most part, but not to an extent whereby it prevents overall personal happiness or other goods such as the creation of a family.

**Female Identity and Autonomy:**  
The issue of female identity is often at the forefront of George Eliot's novels, even in one named after a man, such as Adam Bede. Of course, in the mid-Victorian period Eliot was writing in a male-dominated world; for instance, she saw a need to assume a male pen-name in order to protect her identity...
and popularize her writing. Among the most memorable characters in the novel are women with strong voices who are attached to men.

The most confident female character is Dinah Morris, who asserts her identity to Lisbeth Bede in Chapter Ten, announcing: "I am Dinah Morris and I work in the cotton-mill when I am at home." Dinah is also a confident and effective female preacher. Her resistance to marriage because she is worried that it will curtail her religious teaching is resolved by Eliot in a manner calculated not to upset the male hierarchy. It turns out that Dinah was not in fact prevented from a traditional marriage by religiosity, but rather by the fact that no man that she truly loved had yet asked her to marry him. Indeed, she quiets into a typical housewife at the end of the novel, even consenting to discontinue her preaching because the Methodist men have decided that it is not a good idea.

Another strong female voice in Adam Bede is Mrs. Poyser. She is much more intelligent than her husband, and she has much more control over their farm than he does. She inevitably has her "say out," which involves working up her courage to tell her hated landlord what everyone in the community thinks of him. She prefaxes this opinion with, "Then, sir, if I may speak--as for all I'm a woman, and there's folks as thinks a woman's fool enough to stan' by an' look on while the men sign her soul away, I've a right to speak..." Still, Mrs. Poyser's marriage to Mr. Poyser gives her an added ethos in contrast to that of an outspoken maiden or, in Victorian fiction, the stock character of a dangerous widow.

Hetty Sorrel, in contrast to these stronger women, lacks the power or the initiative to speak up for herself. Hetty does not speak very much, and her preferred method of seduction is to burst into tears rather than to have a conversation. She pays dearly for this quietness, because she is not able to ask for help when she becomes pregnant. When she finally admits to Dinah in the jail cell that "I did it," this first instance of her assertion of agency comes far too late.

**Inner vs. Outer Beauty:** - Eliot contrasts inner and outer beauty throughout the novel to express the idea that external and internal realities do not always correspond. Although Hetty is more physically beautiful than Dinah, she is cold and ugly inside. Hetty’s outer beauty masks her inner ugliness, especially to Captain Donnithorne and Adam. Even when Hetty cries or is angry, she still appears lovely to both men. Adam is so blinded by Hetty’s appearance that he often misinterprets her tears and excitement as love for him. Hetty’s outer beauty also blinds Captain Donnithorne such that he loses control when she cries and he kisses her. Unlike Hetty, Dinah has an inner beauty because she helps and cares for those around her. She comforts Lisbeth through the mourning of her dead husband, and Adam takes notice of this. Adam does not think Dinah is as physically beautiful as Hetty, but he is drawn to her love and mission to help those around her. His feelings for Dinah change after he witnesses Dinah consoling Hetty, and Adam begins to see Dinah as outwardly beautiful. Eliot’s description of the natural beauty of the English countryside also shows the contrast between internal and external beauty. On the day Hetty wanders off to find Captain Donnithorne, the day is beautiful and the countryside is magnificent. However, Hetty suffers enormously under the weight of her plight. Eliot uses this contrast to encourage the reader to look beyond the surface and explore a deeper meaning.
The Value of Hard Work: - One of the chief differences between the good characters and the evil characters is their commitment to working hard. Most of the characters in Adam Bede are hard-working peasants who spend their days laboring on farms, in mills, or in shops. Those characters are generally characterized by gentle intelligence and simple habits. They do their best not to harm others, and they produce goods others can use and value. Examples are Mrs. Poyser, whose dairy supplies the other villagers and whose cream cheese is renowned in the area; Adam, whose skills in carpentry are unmatched and who is a good and fair manager of people and resources; and Dinah, who works in a mill. By contrast, those few malingerers in the novel are generally evil as well as lazy. The strongest example of laziness is Captain Donnithorne, who often complains that he has nothing to do, and whose boredom may well have contributed significantly to Hetty’s downfall. If Captain Donnithorne had been busy sowing fields, he might not have engaged in his illicit and unwise affair. Those who work hard take pride in their work, and they do not harm others because they are careful and meticulous and do not have time for idle self-indulgence.

Love as a Transformative Force: - Love has the power to transform characters in the novel. The characters who love are portrayed as gentle, kind, and accepting. Dinah, for example, is a preacher but is never preachy. She accepts Hetty as she is, even when Hetty is peevish and selfish toward her. Dinah’s love transforms Hetty in jail because she comforts and listens to Hetty and does not judge her. Before, Hetty was selfish and only thought about her own happiness. After, she is sincerely sorry for the shame she caused her family and even apologizes to Adam. Another example is Mrs. Poyser, and how she can be harsh toward those she loves. When Hetty’s crime comes to light, Mrs. Poyser is the only one in her family who does not seem to judge Hetty. Here, Mrs. Poyser transforms from strict and critical to a loving and accepting woman. The one character that is not transformed by love is Mrs. Irwine, who is critical and sharp and never manages to help others. She does not feel, and so she is neither transformed by love nor capable of transforming others. For example, at Captain Donnithorne’s coming-of-age party, one of her presents to a peasant girl is an ugly gown and a piece of flannel. This gift only aggravates the girl and makes her reject the present. Mrs. Irwine thinks she is giving the girls only what they deserve, and therefore she is not transformed by love because she does not care for anyone. Love only transforms the characters that want to help people other than themselves.

The Consequences of Bad Behavior: - Bad behavior and wrongdoing have consequences that extend beyond the wrong-doer, and even relatively small transgressions can have massive collateral effects. The central lesson from Hetty’s experience with Captain Donnithorne is that doing the right thing is important because doing the wrong thing might hurt others in ways that cannot be controlled. Though Captain Donnithorne is not inherently evil, he provokes bad behavior in Hetty because she cannot go to him for help when she learns that she is pregnant. Hetty is ashamed and only thinks of herself when she commits her crime. As she awaits the trial, Hetty does not think about how her bad behavior affected anyone else: she does not consider the shame she has caused the Poyzers or the effect her crime has on Adam. Hetty feels no real remorse for her sins and just wishes to not be reminded of any wrong she has done. Eventually, she apologizes to Adam and asks God for forgiveness, but the lesson of the story is that bad behavior, evil, and wrongdoing cannot be undone.
Adam Bede : Historical Background

The Isolation of Hayslope: - Adam Bede was published in 1859, but its story takes place in 1799. They were momentous times and stirring events were taking place in Europe and in England, but Hayslope, a remote isolated community which forms the setting to the novel, remains unaffected by these events. It is as if they did not happen at all, and the outside world for this agricultural community was a vague, remote entity, of which they sometimes heard, but which did not affect them in any way.

Some Historical Events: - Adam Bede cannot be called a historical novel, for the earth-shaking political events of the day are of no consequence and have no impact on the action of the novel. In the United States the Civil War was fought, slavery was put down, the West was all but conquered, and the Industrial Revolution (and with it the rise of the rich capitalists) changed the form and face of American life for all time to come. Italy saw the emergence of Garibaldi and the drive for Italian unity and independence. Japan stood on the threshold of the door of the world after centuries of self-imposed isolation. And Russia, freed her serfs, whose bondage was prior by hundreds of years to the slavery of American Negroes. Prussia arose as a great European power, first conquering Austria, then France, and then providing the military and political force that culminated in the proclamation of the German Empire. Defeated France fell into the throes of internal strife, and finally there was the establishment of the Third Republic.

None of these momentous events are in any way fore-shadowed in Adam Bede, which takes place, as George Eliot says, in 1799. As a matter of fact, none of the great happenings in the world that were contemporary or prior to the action of the novel seem to have had any effect on Hayslope. The American colonies had fought Great Britain for their independence and won, establishing themselves as the United States. Liberation movements were beginning to flare all over Latin America, and France had executed her king and queen in the ten bloody years of her revolution. Napoleon Bonaparte had begun his far-flung conquests and was on the verge of proclaiming himself Emperor of France. By 1799, England had been at war with France for six years, her great leaders, Wellington and Nelson, battled to contain Napoleon. To these French wars, the only reference in the novel is that Arthur Donnithorne goes out to France with his regiment, falls ill, is advised rest at home and so comes back to Hayslope. Otherwise, all these great happenings sound as remote to the people of Hayslope as if they happened on the other side of the Moon. They have no impact at all on Hayslope life, or on Adam, Seth, Hetty, Arthur and Dinah, the principal figures in the novel. The only historical event that makes its impact on the novel is the movement for religious dissent from, or non-conformity with, the established Church, known as Methodism.

Brief Survey of Religious Dissent—Methodism: - It should be remembered that the established Church of England is based on compromise between Catholicism and Protestantism and there have been dissident movements ever since the days of Chaucer. This tendency towards religious dissent or separatism continued through the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and the Stuarts down to the eighteenth century and even beyond into the 19th century. Methodism or ‘Evangelical Methodism’ was the most important form religious dissent took in the last decades of the 18th century. In the novel the
established Church is presented by Mr. Irwine and Methodism by Dinah Morris, a staunch Methodist preacher and the heroine of the novel, thus providing the novelist an opportunity for comparing and contrasting the two. Methodism may be defined as, “a movement of reaction against the apathy of the Church of England that prevailed in the early part of the eighteenth century”. The name ‘Methodist’ was originally applied to the members of a religious society established at Oxford in 1729 by the Wesleys and other members of the university, “having for its object the promotion of piety and morality. It was subsequently extended to those who took part in or sympathised with this movement.” The term ‘Evangelical’ was applied from the eighteenth century onwards to that school of Protestants which maintains that the essence of the Gospel consists in the doctrine of salvation by faith in the atoning death of Christ. It lays more stress on faith than on action or on grace, and also strictly upholds the verbal inspiration of the Bible. It is the theoretical or philosophical aspect of Methodism.

**Methodism: Its Founder:** - The ‘Methodist’ movement was founded by John Wesley who was born in 1703 in Lincolnshire. He was educated at Oxford, and took holy orders in 1725. He became the greatest religious figure in eighteenth century England. The Methodist society was formed in 1729 when a few young men at Oxford came together under his, leadership. Their purpose was to observe strictly the fasts and festivals of the Church; to celebrate Holy Communion regularly and to keep them unspotted from the world.

In 1739, Wesley experienced great spiritual development. He now felt that he had a special message to deliver. He took the whole of England as his parish and went preaching from place to place. His influence was tremendous and thousands were converted, experiencing what they called “the new birth”. His success was the greatest among the lower classes, which hitherto had often been beyond the influence of the established Church.

**Its Popularity:** - It became essential to have some organization to provide religious discipline for the thousands of converts, and the Methodist Society was strengthened, and its organisation extended to meet the need. Lay preachers were appointed; there were band meetings, class meetings and meetings in houses. Women who were able to preach, were allowed to do so. In the beginning they worked within the established Church but as the society grew, it became more independent, and in 1744, the First Wesleyan Conference was held. Formal separation from the Church of England, did not take place till after Wesley’s death in 1791.

**Dinah, a Typical Methodist:** - Dinah is an example of the most sincere type of Methodist, whose greatest aim was to know the will of God and to follow it. “They believed in present miracles, in instantaneous conversion, in revelations by dreams and visions; they drew lots; and sought for Divine Guidance by opening the Bible at hazard.” Dinah believes in all this, and she consults the Bible in this way whenever she has to take some crucial decision. Thus she consults it when she rejects Seth or accepts Adam.

**Her Sermon and Her Impact:** - Dinah’s sermon on the village green is characteristic of Methodist preaching. The appeal is at the first general, with an emphasis on, God’s love of the poor, then particular, with a rousing call to repentance, painting the misery of
souls lost in sin. Dinah communicated her belief in the visible manifestations of Jesus, so that Christ’s agony in the garden became very real to the listeners. Then came the warning against worldly vanity. Compare the passage on the ear-rings and finery in Dinah’s sermon with the following passage taken from one of John Wesley’s sermons: “Wear no gold, no pearls or precious stones, use no curling of hair, buy no velvet, no silks, no fine linen, no superfluities nor no mean ornaments, however much in fashion. I do not advise women to wear rings, ear-rings, necklaces, laces, etc.” It is also to be noted that the stress throughout is on the poor, and what the saviour would do for them. Chad Bess is moved by the sermon, and tries to hide her large ear-ring, though by and large the people of Hayslope are not affected by it. On the other hand, the poor and suffering people of Snowfield are more receptive to it.

From the Epilogue we learn that after a time the second Wesleyan conference forbade women preachers, for most of them “did more harm than good with their preaching”. Dinah too stops preaching and is thoroughly domesticated. However, this is a loss to the movement, for she is a devout and inspired preacher who did only good, and caused no harm at all, through her preaching. Remember, the way in which she consoles Lisbeth in her grief, and goes to poor Hetty in the prison and moves her to open out her heart and confess. From the way in which she moves Bess Carnage with her preaching, we may safely presume that she must have made many converts from among the sinners and saved their souls. Even Mrs. Irwine, who belongs to the opposite camp, has profound respect for her, and regards her as a force for good.

The Element of Universality: - The fact is that the people in Hayslope are moved by universal human emotions, and the themes, “of God and godlessness, love and jealousy, life and death, sin and repentance, are universal and come about regardless of the Napoleons and the Hitlers, or perhaps inspite of them. What happens in Hayslope in Adam Bede can well happen in almost any agricultural community on earth and in almost any period of recorded history.” The soil was rich and nature was kind, but for a tenant who farmed land he did not himself own, life was always hard, and only the most provident fared well. Despite the establishment of factories in nearby Coventry and other embryonic industrial centres, England was still largely an agricultural country in a time in history when agriculture, handicrafts, and trade were the dominant influences. “Except for the universal emotions, the only significant aspects of the background to Adam Bede in the village of Hayslope were the need to work hard and skilfully in order to survive, and the fermentation caused by Evangelical Methodism.” The upheaval in the rest of England, on the Continent, and in the New World was indeed in another world. It was as if Hayslope existed by and for itself. If these rustics appear quaint to us we should remember that all over the earth, thousands of Hayslopes and their people still work hard for a living and lift their political hearts for a moment to listen to a passing preacher.

In India, of course, there are thousands and thousands of such Hayslopes, where the people live in isolation from the great and historical movements of the day, and still cultivate, plough and reap in their age-old primitive ways. However, tragedies of Sophoclean grandeur and intensity are daily enacted in these remote, isolated rural communities, and the Hetty-Adam-Arthur Donnithorne story is only one such instance.
Adam Bede : Major Moral Conflicts

George Eliot believes in “art for morality’s sake”. She feels that a piece of art must exercise an ethical influence on readers. That’s why all of her novels are “dramas of moral conflict”. Her moral conception can be defined as: “Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds”.

To Eliot, if someone breaks the moral laws, either consciously or unconsciously, the consequent sufferings and punishment are bound to come.

“Adam Bede” also presents a moral conflict aroused by failure, to resist temptation, of both the characters of Hetty and Arthur. Both of them are creatures of “weak moral fibres”, and this weakness invites the intensive tragedy into the story. Thus, Arthur – Hetty story shows: “The movement from weakness to sin and from sin to nemesis”

Eliot does not draw her characters as tempestuous or villainous, but it is always a slight error of judgment or a desire of a character or some weakness, which brings the downfall. Hetty is also drawn simply as a village girl, with her girlish dreams of leading an “aristocratic life” with her prince charming.

In the beginning, she is leading a “protected” and contented life at her uncle’s farm, unaware of the hardships and difficulties of man in the outer world. But she is vain and frivolous, loves finery and always lost in her fantasy world. Adam Bede, an honest, hardworking but poor man, who cannot provide her the “luxuries of life”, loves her. That’s why when Arthur casts admiring glances on Hetty she does not care for Adam and feels that her dreams of splendid life come true, for Arthur is a squire’s son with a huge fortune. As Eliot remarks: “... bright soft glance had penetrated her, and suffused her life with a strange happy languor”.

Through his attention, Hetty becomes “thoroughly aware of her own beauty”, and not considering the “social and economic gap” between Arthur and herself; She presumes that she can lead her desired life, after marrying Arthur. This is the very flaw and weakness of her character, which leads her to the sin and the consequent sufferings.

She and Arthur meet in the woods, until one day Adam, who forces Arthur to put an end to his contact with Hetty, observes them. Thus, there is an abrupt ending to their relationship. This is the time when Hetty’s sufferings begin and all her dreams and fancies, to lead a splendid life, scatter. Here Eliot beautifully exclaims: “There is no despair as absolute as that which cones with the first moments of our first great sorrow”.

Hetty’s desperation becomes acute, when she realizes that she is pregnant and that the marriage with Adam is “out of question”. Torn out by depressive and torturing thoughts, she comes out of her sheltered world and there starts her “physical sufferings”. She reaches Windsor, in search of Arthur but for it is good for nothing. While returning back to Stoniton, she gives birth to a mail child prematurely. Next evening half ashamed by abandoning the child but, naturally, being a mother, fails to stop the haunting cries of baby that follows her, she returns to the child but too late.
This is the point, when Eliot beautifully describes the condition of a weak person, experiences social condemnation. As Hetty has no “guiding principle” to follow, though she attended the church, regularly, but could not absorb a single Christian idea or feeling. Therefore, when she faces “public disgrace” of her trial, Hetty “shut her heart against her fellow creatures”. She is sentenced to death, for the crime of child murder. Later her punishment is reduced to transportation by the efforts of Arthur. Thus Hetty “pays full price of her unthinking folly”.

It is, but to tell half the story, with an account of Hetty’s weakness and its consequences, for Arthur is also responsible for her tragedy as well as his own, rather he holds a much greater responsibility. As Arthur James points out: “A weak woman is indeed weaker than a weak man”.

Arthur Donnithorne is a young, squire’s son, with high and noble ambitions and innate desire to do “good to everyone”. He is naturally good and kind hearted man and his flaw lies in his goodness and his lack of control of his emotions. He is an “admirer of beauty” and when beauty comes in front of him in the form of Hetty, he cannot have power over himself from being tempted by that beauty. Getting conscious of his sentimental state, he tries to forget Hetty, but it results only in the more intensified thoughts of her. It can be seen when he blames Mr. Irwine for his feelings: “If Irwine had said nothing, I should not have thought half so much of Hetty’s as of Meg’s lameness”.

If Eliot has not given the “insight to his mind and thoughts” it would have been very hard to differentiate Arthur from a perfect villain, for he treats Hetty as a “juicy morsel” to satisfy his lust. It is Eliot’s “art of X-ray”, which makes her different from her contemporary writers. Arthur does hectic efforts to overcome his passion to meet, even to see Hetty, only because he is “naturally noble” and does not want to be a part of any scandal. But all his efforts prove in vain, when he finally reaches the woods to see her. Eliot comments: “It is the favourite stratagem of our passions to sham a retreat, and to turn sharply round upon us, at the moment we have made up our mind that the day is our own”.

Thus, through Arthur, the author brings to light the psychological fact that the more he tries to suppress a passion, the more it grows stronger and fierce. The moral weakness in yielding to temptation, results in the devastating tragedy. Arthur also suffers from deep spiritual anguish. He tries his best to make amends and reduces the intensity of the catastrophe, which he had inflicted on himself, on Hetty, on Poyser’s and on Adam but could not save Hetty from transportation. However, by going away for several years, Arthur makes it possible for Adam and Poyser’s to remain at Hayslope. Thus, he “Drinks the bitter cup of repentance to the full”.

In short, the novel is a study in “moral weakness and its terrible consequences”. It seems that Eliot does not spare even the slightest “moral lapse” in her characters, and through their sufferings, gives definite “moral lesson”. “There is a sort of wrong that can never be made up for”.

**Adam Bede : Plot-Construction**
A compact whole: - The plot of Adam Bede is much better constructed than that of many other contemporary novels. This is so because the novel was not published in parts. It was not serialized in a magazine. There is not a single character or even in the whole of novel which doesn’t further its action. The novel is a compact whole. It is like a well-constructed building from not even a single brick can be taken out without damaging the whole structure. The novels are George Eliot are ‘organic wholes’ in as much as the story, the character, the social environment are well-integrated. In AB, the life of Hayslope envelops the tragedy. It is an active society in which most men or women have work to and their characters are affected by that work.

Integrated Four stories and thematic unity: - George Eliot was quite alive to the problem of plot-construction. There are four different stories in the novel: (a) Adam-Hetty love story, (b) Hetty-Arthur love story, (c) Adam-Dinah love story and (d) the mutual relations of Arthur and Adam. The problem was how to integrate the four stories into a single whole. The story of Hetty, the heroine of the novel who is seduced by the Squire and later convicted of a child murder forms the core of the novel. The interlinking of the various stories is made possible by the relation of Adam and Arthur to each other and to Hetty and the marriage of Adam and Dinah rounds up the whole and satisfies the contemporary conventions by linking the lives of the hero and heroine at the close. Even integrating the four stories has not kept away from the thematic unity of the novel. The theme is furthered by each action and event caused by the characters. The story grows up like a plant out of the idea or theme that, a failure to resist temptation is a moral weakness and any yielding to temptation is sure to followed divine punishment and consequent suffering. This theme is interlinked with the theme of moral enlightenment, self-education and regeneration. Such are the themes out of which the story evolves step-by-step, logically and the characters are their stories are exposition and illustration of these themes and ideas.

Social environment & the central tragedy: - The central tragedy is intimately connected with this background. The full effect of Arthur Donnithorne’s yielding to the sensuous appeal of the pretty child-like Hetty depends on the relationship of the two to the world. The pride and well-grounded self-respect of the Poyzers established in the reader’s mind by the vivid pictures of their surroundings, their working, their home life, their Sunday observance and the neighbors’ opinion of them, all play their part in causing the tragedy and in heightening the bitterness of its effect. It is the social background that the Poyzers have provided for their niece and the standard of conduct that make it inevitable for Hetty to take flight before the birth of her baby; it is the esteem in which they are held by which the reader measures their shame. Similarly, it is Arthur’s upbringing, his relations with his grandfather, his high conception of love and esteem, he will earn from all his dependants when he inherits the land that explain the price he pays for the weakness and his suffering. Not only are the story and characters integrated with their social environment, they are well-integrated in the present novel with their physical world. They are symbolic of it. They have the softness and fertility of Loamshire and it hardness, its spiritual deadness. They are not receptive to religion, for their life of ease and self-indulgence has made them spiritually dead. Dinah serves as a link between the two physical worlds. She has come from Stonyshire, rocky, hard and barren, but the people there are more receptive to religion, they are spiritually better alive. So whenever she feels that she is going to be engulfed by the spiritual deadness of
Loamshire, she retires to Stonyshire. It is also to be noted that nature-background changes in keeping with the change in the fortunes of poor Hetty. Her early happy life is lived in the physical environment of Hayslope; from here she goes to the barren and rocky Stonyshire where she is convicted and sentenced to death.

**Major Flaws and Ending of the novel:** Even best of us have their faults and weaknesses so does Adam Bede. Despite being the best constructed novel in the world, its ending has come in for a great deal of criticism. It has been pointed out that the marriage of Adam and Dinah Morris is not properly motivated, so it seems unnatural and forced. It is merely conventional that Hero and Heroin must be united at the close. George Eliot is first a philosopher and her critical and intellectual ability often impedes her artistry in telling a story. The author’s commentary sometimes holds up the story and makes it laboured. For example, the writer labels Hetty as the sinner and she considers Adam and Dinah well-nigh perfect, but the modern reader finds Adam a bore and Dinah an impossibly perfect.

**Melodrama:** The fight between Adam and Arthur in the wood is melodramatic and it was introduced at the suggestion of George Lewes. The story of seduction, a child-murder and conviction of an innocent girl, is the common stuff of a cheap melodrama. According to Robert Speaight, “Too much space has been taken up building up the background.” Joan Bennett says, “If the characterization of Dinah partially fails to produce the effect intended, it is not because she is too virtuous but because of the author’s treatment of the subject.” Dinah is afraid to accept Adam because she thinks that her love would come in the way of her vocation. She retreats to Stoniton to ponder over the issue and accepts Adam when she meets him at the top of hill in Stoniton. Obviously, a change has come over her. But we are not permitted to see the process of this change and this is a major flaw in Dinah-Adam love-story.

Arthur James remarks, “The central figure of the novel is Hetty Sorrel and the story should have ended with the conviction of Hetty. The continuation of the story after the point is fatal to the artistry integrity of the novel. His marriage with Dinah waters off the real sorrow for the tragedy of Hetty. As matter of fact, the further end of the story is a matter for another novel.” Lettice Cooper’s comments are worth-noting here, “The weakness of the book, besides the oppressive virtue of Adam and Dinah is, as with many Victorian Novels, the sacrifice and probability to plot, and the tidiness of the ending. George Eliot was moving towards a new kind of novel in which representation of life was to be more important than the plot. Despite all these life-like and natural situations and atmosphere drawn in AB, the marriage between Adam and Dinah seems like a mechanical device to round off the story.” However, Joan Bennett justifies the marriage of Adam and Dinah on the ground that it enables the novelist to put the last touch to her definition of Adam’s character to make him realize that there was too much of self and pride in him. A better justification for the close of the novel is that life at Hayslope had been shaken and disturbed by the drama of Hetty and it has returned to normalcy because of Adam-Dinah marriage. George Creeger points out that Dinah-Adam marriage is not an anti-climax, but it essential, otherwise Dinah and Adam would remain incomplete human beings, for there can be no fulfillment without love. It also enables the novelist to point out the moral that common suffering
results in sympathy and it is sympathy which is the basis of truelove story. Sorrow is needed to make love true and lasting.

**Conclusion:** - The novel has its faults, but they are minor faults and they in no way detract from the novelist’s skill in construction. It should be judged in the context of the age in which it was written and not by modern standards.

**Adam Bede : A Psychological Novel**

**Introduction:** - George Eliot is one of the founding-fathers of the modern psychological novel. As W.J. Long points out, “George Eliot sought to do in her novels what Browning attempted in his poetry. That is, to represent the inner struggle of a soul, and to reveal the motives, impulses and hereditary influences that govern human action.

Browning generally stops when he tells his story and either lets you draw your own conclusion or else gives you his in a few striking lines but George Eliot is not content until she has minutely explained the motives of her characters and the moral lesson to be learnt from them. It is the development of a soul, the slow growth or decline of moral power, which chiefly interests her. The Characters of Dickens and Thackeray are already formed when we meet them and we know what they will do under certain circumstances, but George Eliot’s characters develop gradually as we come to know them. They go from weakness to strength and vice versa. “ Her novels are a study of mental processes. As A.E. Baker rightly points out, “George Eliot’s sphere was the inner man, she exposed the internal clockwork. Her characters are not simply passive. They are shown making their own history, continually changing and developing as their motives issue into acts and acts become a part of the circumstances that condition, modify and purify or demoralize the will. “ George Eliot’s power of psycho-analysis and her understanding of mental processes are fully exposed in AB. Therefore, many critics have called AB the first psychological novel as later exemplified by Joyce and Woolf because the psychology of the main characters, Adam, Hetty, Arthur and the Poyzers is the theme.

**Analysis of causes and motives:** - The chapter called A Journey in hope; George Eliot spends far more time in Hetty’s poor brain and heart than Hetty spends on the road in her unwise search for her runaway lover. This is psychology and the chapters immediately before and after this sufficient activity to keep the story rolling; there is much more inner activity than outer. George Eliot is deft in her psychological approach. Shortly after the death of Thias Bede, his wife Lisbeth was in the Bede Home alone with the body. After doing the necessary ritual cleansing and purification of the chamber where Thias lay, she slumped into a chair and contemplated her grief. When George Eliot’s characters think we share their thoughts. When Adam accidentally comes upon Arthur and Hetty embracing in the woods, Hetty scurries away, and Arthur saunter forwards to Adam. He thought, “After all, Adam was the bet who could have happened to see him and Hetty together: he was a sensible fellow and would not babble about it to other people. Arthur felt confident that he could laugh the thing off, and explain it away. “ But he misunderstood him. George Eliot’s grip on psychological essentials enables her to draw complex characters much better than her predecessors.
**Temptation and Moral Chaos:** - The field of her most characteristic triumphs is the moral battlefield. Her eagle eye can penetrate though the entire sock and the smoke of struggle. She is particularly good at showing how temptation triumphs. No other English novelist has given as vivid a picture of the process of moral defeat, as Arthur's gradual yielding to his passion for Hetty. She, with clearness, shows how temptation insinuates in the mind. David Cecil says, “Her characters always hang together, are of a piece, their defects are the defects of their virtues. We are not surprised that a man, so anxious for the good opinion of others as Arthur Donnithorne, should selfishly seduce Hetty, because we realize that the controlling force in his character is the desire for immediate enjoyment.” With equal insight, she can portray the moral chaos that takes possession of the mind after wrong has been done. The guilt ridden conscious of Arthur is analyzed and we are shown the scorpions that sting him and prevent sleep. She lays bare the conscious and semi-conscious motives of Arthur. We see the workings of his innermost mind: He had been awake an hour, and could rest in bed no longer. In bed our yesterdays are too oppressive, if a man can only get up, though it is but to whistle or smoke, he has a present which resists the past. For Arthur, the loss of Adam’s respect was a shock to his self-contentment, which suffused his imagination with the sense he had sunk in all eyes; as a shock. Arthur would so gladly have persuaded himself that he had done no harm if no one had told him the contrary.

**Conclusion:** - It is George Eliot’s psychological insight into the springs of human action, the subtle analysis of character and motive accompanying the external action, which gives her peculiar and individual place among the Victorian novelists. She is one of them and yet how every different and original. She is the first of the great modern novelists who have a high conception of their art, who regard the novel as a serious art form, and who are given to the probing of the human psyche, to the subtle analysis of the subconscious and unconscious.

**Adam Bede : A Novel of Rural Life**

**English Midland:** - George Eliot began her career with a loving attachment to the region in which her youth was passed. Her interest was in a particular locality – English Midland which had a powerful pull on her imagination. Even in the simplest of provincial situation, life is revealed clearly, wholly and in depth. The Tragedy of Hetty Sorrel, a tragedy of Sophoclean intensity and grandeur, takes place in this rural setting.

**Major divisions:** - The rural world in AB possesses two major divisions: the counties of Loamshire and Storyshire (With their villages, Hayslope and Snowfield). Loamshire – most of the action takes place here and around the village of Hayslope. Regarded together, the Midland-shire and village constitute a kind of earthly paradise. Loamshire is a region of corn and grass – a fertile and sheltered land. Prosperity is not common and poverty is rare. Exile from this snug land is regarded by its inhabitants as the worst evil so the Poyzers don’t want to leave it. Stonyshire – throughout the novel we are reminded of a different kind of county which is naked and barren under the sky ‘where the trees are few, so that a child might count them, and there is very had living for the poor in the winter’ Poverty is common of these people. Loamshire is apparently soft and
fertile, but it has a core of hardness, so also Hetty beautiful and soft apparently, there is hardness within her which is perceived by Mrs. Poyser. This is expressed in her ‘stubborn silence’ after the child-murder. Dinah tells Mr. Irwine, the Rector of Hayslope, “But I have noticed that in these villages where the people lead a quiet life among the green pastures and the still waters, there is a strange deadness to the world.” Loamshire people are spiritually dead, while those of Stonyshire are more responsive to religion, more spiritually awake though they live in a hard region.

**Sight and scenes:** - The background against which the drama of AB takes place is picturesque and graphic and faithful descriptions of the region are abundant in the novel. Its scenes and sights, landmarks and customs, professions are transitions have been faithfully rendered. The geographical features such as inns, churches, mansions and road life have been honestly recorded. These sights and scenes play an important role in the novels of George Eliot. They appear and reappear in her novels and this imparts to them rare organic whole. The magic of the world works upon the reader in such a way that he finds himself passing through those instances of scenery. George Eliot's novels are highly pictorial and graphic in nature. She is a product of rustic and pastoral environment. She uses rich descriptions in this novel to provide a credible setting and to bring out the individual character of the setting and places where her characters live and to which they are bound by traditions, love, family, memory, work and affection. Finally, George Eliot uses landscapes to define, reinforce and foreshadow the events of the plot and moral situation. There are many scenes in the novel which we should not merely pass over as background materials. Mrs. Poyser is the voice of rural tradition and community, her home, the Hall Farm, provides a background that illustrates her character vividly. The Hall Farm is the center of orderliness, comfort, love, energy, security and peace. As Walter Allan says, “Mr. Poyser’s images with his similes from unripe grain, are those of the farmer: Mrs. Poyser’s those of the housewife.”

**Language, Professions & nature:** - According to Anne Morley, “We do not know if our literature anywhere possesses such a closely true picture of purely rural life as Adam Bede presents it.” The noblest achievement of George Eliot in the novel is the fact that she has succeeded in conveying to us the quality or flavor of the life at Hayslope. Its rude language, its typical dialect and the people in the novel all truly represent the rustic life. The characters in the novel represent a cross-section of Midland occupations and professions. The carpenter, the preacher, the Rector, the clergy, the farmer, the dairy-maid and the dairy hands, the common laborers and the vain village girls are all present in the world painted by George Eliot.

**The symbolic word of Adam Bede:** - George Eliot communicates the meaning of her novel partially by employing symbolism in the description of the physical world in which her characters live. These patterns point up contrasts and support, by an appeal to the visual imagination, some of the book's central ideas.

It is obvious that the names of the two counties mentioned in the novel and the names of the two towns where principal characters live are significant. Snowfield, Dinah's home town, is located in Stonyshire; as the names indicate, this is a bleak, forbidding region in which people eke out a poor living on the rocky hills or else work in a factory. Hayslope in Loamshire, on the other hand, is a pleasant spot where the farmers are prosperous and the workers comfortable; there are no factories, but only small neighborhood businesses like Jonathan Burge's workshop.
The "world" of the novel thus divides into light and dark, or hopeful and gloomy areas. Taking this world to represent life, we can see that Eliot is dividing experience into the pleasant and the unpleasant--giving us symbols for the "light" and "dark" sides of life. Dinah lives in Stonyshire; she is familiar with the darker side of life, accepts human suffering as necessary and inevitable, and knows how to deal with it. Adam, Arthur and Hetty, on the other hand, take a much more optimistic view of things and must learn what Dinah already knows. The crisis of the novel takes place in Stonyshire (in a town called Stoniton, as a matter of fact) and it is here that the three Loamshire people discover the meaning of "irremediable evil."

This division is supported by another one—that between controlled and uncontrolled human actions. We noted in the commentaries that the seduction, the fight between Adam and Arthur, and Hetty's abandonment of her child all take place in the woods. These actions, prompted by "natural" urges rather than by a "civilized" use of intellect and will, form one of the two primary causes of suffering in the novel.

The other cause is that part of reality which is beyond man's control. This area of human experience is symbolized by the tapping at the door in Chapter 4 which, though a superstition, turns out to be a valid portent of death, by the force of blind circumstances, and by God. Religion in George Eliot's novels seems to mean a respectful attitude towards the great unknown. Dinah, the completely religious woman, realistically recognizes the existence of evil and is patient and humble. Adam, who is religious in a naturalistic way, and Arthur and Hetty, who are not religious at all, have pride in them and must learn humility through experience.

Thus the world of the novel is set up to show that man must recognize that life has its less pleasant side and that suffering derives from the nature of things and from a lack of self-control. Like Dinah and Mr. Irwine, he must act upon this knowledge, avoiding evil whenever possible, accepting and dealing with it when it cannot be avoided.

**Adam Bede : Changing nature of individuals & their relationship**

When we compare George Eliot with her predecessors, successors and contemporaries, she enjoys unique position because of many qualities which make her a true artist of prophet like stature. Her understanding of human character and circumstances allows her to portray character with realism as well as sympathy.

Her main concern in all her novel is individual and individual’s relationship with other individuals as well as individual’s relationship with the society he or she lives in. Another quality which we do not find in the writings of other writings is individual’s relationship. Tracing individual’s relationship with the self makes her novels what we now call psychoanalysis. Then relationship is not something static in George Eliot’s writings. They keep on changing and evolving. The final result of this change and evolution is an ideal state. Though this ideal is attained after lot of pain and suffering.

No novelist achieved this before George Eliot. Characters and relationships in the works of her predecessors and contemporaries and successors, to a great extent, are already formed and they remain static throughout their writings. On the other hand George Eliot
shows complete understanding of human relationship. She portrays and shows all the intricacies and complexities which involve human relationship.

In Adam Bede relationship between different characters changes and evolves and it is never static and the changes which the writer shows are based on reality and authentic. The relationship between Adam Bede and Arthur passes through different stages of development and finally reaches an ideally state where Adam forgives Arthur for all the suffering and wrong which Adam has to undergo because if Arthur. If we consider relationship between Adam and Arthur we see how circumstances affect their relationship. Adam and Arthur remain friends till Adam discovers Arthur with Hetty in the woods. His reaction to the situation is natural and rash. His animosity with Arthur continues and Adam really thinks of killing Adam for destroying Hetty's life when latter is arrested for the child murder. George Eliot shows the storms and whirlwinds of hatred building in the mind of Adam. He would have really destroyed Arthur and finally himself in his anger had there been no Irwin to guide him. The relationship remains strained between the two till they finally meet in the forest where they had quarreled once. Here Adam is convinced of sincerity and good nature of Arthur and comes to believe that Arthur would never have done what he did if he had a very slight idea of the consequences of his affair with Hetty. All this has been shown with such skill and dexterity that Arthur finally avoids the demonic status which would have become his fate if he would have been treated anyone else but George.

It is not strange that we do not fond villains in George Eliot’s novel. Actually she had complete understanding of human nature and character; she knew that human beings are product of the circumstance in which they are placed; they are neither devils nor angels.

In Adam-Hetty relationship George Eliot shows us the emotion side of love on the part of Adam. He clings to Hetty even after he discovers her affair with Arthur. He never tries to understand what Hetty wants in her life. His egoism does not let him any other thing. Hetty’s beauty is a madness for him. When Hetty gets ready to marry him, he feels himself in the seventh heaven without caring that he was not the first thing for Hetty. Adam’s relationship with Hetty has all the overtones of adolescent love which is always blind and selfish. George Eliot shows all this like no one showed before.

Arthur-Hetty relationship has also been portrayed with meticulous details. Hetty lets Arthur love her because she thinks that finally Arthur would marry her and she would live a life of a lady with all the comforts and luxuries which she loved more than anything else. She was not wrong; same could have happened if Hetty could have met Arthur during the time of her trouble. On the other hand Arthur’s love for Hetty was based only for the time being for he did not knew the consequences of this kind of relationship. However, once he comes to know the harm he has done to Hetty, his love comes in the fore and he becomes ready to go to any length to save Hetty but alas it was too late then.

So is the case with all the other relationship treated in the novel. In every case the writer seems to be showing her concern as an honest recorder of details of changes which take place in relationship under varying set of circumstances. Everywhere whether it is relationship of Adam’s father and mother or Mrs. Poysers relationship with her nieces and children, the novelist gives us useful insight into human relationship. Adam’s
mother grief over the death of her husband is realistic representation how wives are
affected by the deaths of their husbands whether their husbands are good for nothing.
Mrs. Poysers love for her kids shows the relationship between mother and her children.
Mothers always love their children no matter how fussy they are.

The way Poysers behave when they learn about the allegation on Hetty and the way they
change with the passage of time are very realistic. So is the change in Adam during the
trial of Hetty. All this could not have expected from anyone else. Only George Eliot could
have traced human nature and forces which govern human nature.

Actually George Eliot was unique genius. She was a woman living in Victorian England
but through her observation, deep study and concern to show human being as they live
she achieved superiority over all her predecessors and contemporaries and she showed
characters from the inside of their souls and heads. The result is that she shows human
relationship with all their shades and colours

**Adam Bede : Literary Realism**

Realism means the mode of writing that gives the impression of recording or
reflecting faithfully an actual way of life. The term refers, most of the times confusingly,
both to a literary method and to a more general attitude. But what it interests us here, is
the literary method which is based on detailed accuracy of description (i.e. Verisimilitude- which is very important in this period).

Adam Bede is believed that it is one of the best examples of literary realism in England
and English literature. Realism, as we said above, has to do with 'recording' the life
exactly as it is. So, writers do not have to imagine characters and plots that could fit in
the real world. Furthermore, realists (and here George Eliot) focus more on the
characters than on the plot. Also, realist literature appeared in England in 1840 and
'remained' for about fifty years. It had many differences from the previous movement,
Romanticism, and people in the beginning found it difficult to 'deal with' the new idea of
Realism and its meaning.

In Adam Bede George Eliot creates the false illusion of a steady and immemorial rural
world. We can say that it is a realistic novel, first of all, because of the manifesto on
realism in Chapter 17 and because of the plentifully observed details, which are really
important in a realist novel. It also charts the consequences of moral action. The world
of Adam Bede is immemorial and the village that George Eliot had chosen for her book is
really very difficult to change, rather than a city, and many of the conditions of change
would come from the outside (e.g. From cities).

George Eliot establishes the world in which the events of the novel take place, a world in
which we live in, governed by the same natural laws that govern human existence in the
world we know.

The first requirement for a true fiction is the 'hard' presence of a recognizably real world,
and as we can see in many points George Eliot supplies it throughout the novel. For
example, when she describes the workshop of carpenter (Adam's workshop), she tries to
give us the sense of how difficult it is this work, by the use of details and descriptions. Also, in the description of the dairy in which Hetty Sorrel makes butter, we have 'a symphony' in colours and textures. These details make us feel like we watch the whole scene and smell the fresh butter. Adam Bede offers the radical contrast of a world shaped through and through by moral judgment and moral evaluation.

The massively slow movement of Adam Bede is her shape making technique. It is true that we are generally persuaded of the actual slow movement of rural life, and it is rural life – the life of villagers, tenant farmers – that George Eliot describes. Actually, as we can see up to now, George Eliot uses many descriptions, many images and many details in order to succeed her purpose: to write a realistic novel. She also uses facts from common people who live in the country-side and they are much more sensitive to the changes of life. Of course George Eliot has done very well her job and we continue.

The characters in Adam Bede are ordinary in either social class or native endowment and frequently in both, its tragic action grows out of a commonplace seduction, and its setting is humble and representatively agrarian. Perhaps, even more important is the treatment of these subjects: there is a high degree of consistency and historical accuracy in details of time and place, the background is richly and minutely crowded with particulars, and the account of characters' motives always stresses ordinary causes, rationally explicable.'

The distinction between realism of subject and realism of procedure is an important one. Both kinds of realism exist in Adam Bede, as they do in most realistic novels, detailed presentation tending to go hand in hand with the selection of commonplace and usually unfamiliar and unconventional subject. Realism of subject in the novel has perhaps had the most thorough treatment, particularly in discussion of the rustic background and the 'unheroic' nature of the central characters.

Another 'key' of the realistic novel of Adam Bede is the description of the natural beauty of English's countryside, especially in scenes of sadness or evil. For example, when Hetty tries to find Captain Donnithorne, the countryside is very 'luxurious' and the day is beautiful . Many people would think that this appearance of the day, represents also the beauty of Hetty; the outside, but also the outside beauty. But George Eliot here, tries to mislead us and she encourages us to look beyond the surface of people and things to their deeper characteristics. So, Eliot as we can see, tries to pass to the readers some messages about the people in the real life and she wants to make her readers more 'conscious'.

In Adam Bede George Eliot also tries to represent the life of the 19th century in England and especially in the countryside. As we can see from the novel, people faced many difficulties and the community was pretty 'strict'. Even if some people were 'good' sometimes they had to become 'evil' and face the real life and the problems. George Eliot was also very careful about the use of language. She used the every-day language of that period in order to make the novel more persuasive about it realistic style.

An example of the difficulties that people faced in the society of 19th century is the life of Adam. Adam is a hard man who learns, first through the death of his father and then
through the suffering of an inferior being whom he loves, sympathy towards weakness. But what the idea of Adam represents in one's mind is not such a development, but something much more static. What it remains to the readers about him, are the qualities that he has from the first, summed up in his words to Arthur. ('I've seen pretty clear, ever since I could cast up a sum, as you can never do what's wrong without breeding sin and trouble more than you can ever see' (Chapter 16) ). As we can see, Adam is a massive representation of the central Eliotic belief, but his dramatic existence, his learning through suffering, even his suffering itself, are by comparison notional.

As it mentioned in many books, the story of Adam Bede was actually the representation of the real life of George Eliot. In the beginning when people learned about that were a bit confused and 'afraid'. It was pretty hard for them to believe that everything or pretty everything that was written in Adam Bede was in reality the life of George Eliot. This shows us why the novel had so many details and descriptions. Also, because at first, the book was published anonymously, most of the readers believed that it was written by a man.

Finally, to sum up, we could say that Adam Bede is one of the first realist book in England. It represents reality in many different ways, using many descriptions, a lot of details, use of everyday language, representations of landscapes full of colours and 'smell'. Using the right methods and techniques George Eliot managed to write a realist novel which flurried not only because it was the story of the real life of George Eliot, but also because it was from the first novels with a realist context and it was pretty difficult for the readers of that period to understand it and understand its meaning. Unfortunately, there were many who 'fight' George Eliot and Adam Bede but when the years passed, they understood the value of this novel and they used it also in university studies.

**Adam Bede : Social realism**

George Eliot's Adam Bede is realistic novel of Victorian society including the social problem of highlighting the poor social presentation together with the retrace of rural areas of the country. Adam Bede is an example of Victorian literature aiming to reflect the social realism. Almost every literary genre of Victorian literature are engaged in the representation of realism of either kind. In the same vein George Eliot's Adam Bede aims at representing social realism. At the core of Adam Bede lies the basic tenant of social realism. Let's examine in the narrative where the fundamental tenet of social realism lies.

At the central position of Eliot's Adam Bede there lies the basic tenant of social realism. The very rigid Victorian society has been reflected in the novel. Entire gamut of Victorian literature is inseparably linked with realism. Poetry, novel, drama and all pieces of Victorian writings are engaged in the representation of realism of either kind. In the same vein George Eliot's Adam Bede aims at representing social realism. At the core of Adam Bede lies the basic tenant of social realism. Let's examine in the narrative where the fundamental tenet of social realism lies.

Victorian society was rigid. It had a strict view concerning women. Victorian society was affiliated with blazes and prejudices. It has baize against women. If any women tried to move in the world of freedom and employment, she was mocked and ridiculed. Women were also expected to work in confined circles live household work. In this novel George
Eliot represented a character Dinah Morris. She was a Methodist preacher. When Dinah Morris becomes preacher, many people indirectly criticized her. Dinah Morris was beautiful by appearance. People were attracted towards her. Many people used to listen to her preaching. But it was simply pretence. They actually went to listen to her because they were actually tempted to see her beautiful face. Most of those who attempted Dinah Morris's preaching were hypocritical, under the mask of religious devotion of those Sermon listener ran the sexual intention and corrupt selfish psyche.

Victorian age was the age of Thomas Carlyle. Carlyle was extremely critical of the growing Victorian attachment with materialism. People were distractingly crazy for comfort and happiness. They hardly believed in the dignity of work. Victorian people were neglectful of the fact that the worker should derived pride and joy from the work they do. During Victorian time workers were becoming increasingly mechanical. To correct his age Carlyle introduced the most repeated and very much hallowed maximum work is worship. To work is equal to worshipping, God. Through your absolute belief in work you can make God happy. It is work which links you with God. The impact of this maxim of Carlyle was unbelievably pervasive. George Eliot must certainly have been influence by the motto of Carlyle work is worship. That is why her character Adam Bede is shown climbing the ladder of social success by virtue of his belief in work. Adam Bede is a carpenter. He has achieved excellence in his profession. He was popular as a good carpenter. His name spreaded far and near. Due to his growing popularity he was invited to attend the birthday party of Arthur Donnithorne. Even the owner of Hall farm was eager to accept Adam Bede as a partner. Adam had a vision to leave the world more liveable for the further progeny through cultivating an eternal belief and pride in work. Respect dignity and prestige not from birth but from good and excellent deeds was the guiding principle of Adam Bede. And Eliot shows Adam being successful in society by virtue of his cherished beliefs and ideals. From this viewpoints also we can catch a glimpse of one extra brand of social realism.

Social chasm was another problem. The vestige of feudalism was still alive in Hayslop village. Hetty sorrel belonged to working class. Arthur Donnithorne belonged to the feudal class. Feudal class had still certain fascinating charm to the working class people. Hetty Sorrel was madly attracted to Arthur Donnithorne. She was from a poor family. Her family background was not nice. So she had a dream to marry Arthur Donnithorne and be a wife of a respectable feudal man. But such a fantasy driven effort of Hetty ruined her own life. Her tragic end created a deep wound in the psyche of Hayslop people. This accident in the personal life of Hetty Sorrel suggests one bran of harsh reality the society faces when two different unequal classes try to meet at a point through emotion not through reason.

Social realism consists of how several characters were conscious of their class status at a significant social gathering. At the time of Arthur Donnithorne's birthday several people came to see and celebrate their feudal master's son's birthday. People were represented as conscious of their class background. Only Adam was given a respectable place in the birthday celebration because Adam had elevated his position through hard work and labour. This moment of birthday celebrations serves as screen in which social realism concerning the class consciousness of several people get reflected. In this way whether it is the position Adam or it is the position of captain Donnithorne or Dinah or Hetty, even characters gives symbolic reflection of Victorian society. Their depiction has been highly coloured with the image of Victorian society. Overall novel is realistic It includes the
elements like realistic, social presentation, reflection of social problems, highlighting the poor people, setting in rural areas, presentation of Victorian morality, sense of brotherhood, religious, truth etc. are objective correlative to show the social realism in Eliot's Adam Bede.

Adam Bede : Ending of the Novel

George Eliot is a realist story teller. Her stories begin, develop and end realistically. As far as her novel Adam Bede is concerned, it not exception in this regard.

Adam Bede ends optimistically. Adam Bede marries Dinah, the Methodist preacher and they are shown living happily with their children. Seth also lives with them. Adam tells that Arthur has returned from his wandering in very poor health. We get information that Hetty was released from prison and she died on the way. We are also told about Poysers settling on their farm.

However, this ending of the novel has been criticized by many people because of many reasons. First great criticism on the novel is Adam-Dinah marriage. According to them this marriage is contrived and forced as an afterthought. Another criticism on the novel is the pardon which Arthur secures for Hetty through which her capital punishment is turned into life imprisonment and transportation. This seems to be ruin of what would have been otherwise a realistic piece of art. The way Arthur comes on his horseback is an episode which would have been accept in a romance but not in a realistic novel.

According to these critics the last part of novel is superfluous and unnecessary. They say that novel should have ended with the confession of Hetty and her punishment.

Let us see whether or not ending of the novels is satisfactory. Suppose the novel would have ended with the confession of Hetty and her punishment. The Victorian readers might have felt something lacking in the novel who always demanded poetic justice. We must remember George Eliot wrote Adam Bede for the Victorian readers and they always wanted all stories to be finished with a ray of hope. They demanded the punishment of the vile and reward for the virtuous. Both Adam and Dinah are virtuous characters and their union was central to the design of the novel. It is not strange that Dinah is introduced in the very beginning of the novel.

Dinah-Adam marriage provides this ray of hope. And to say that their marriage is contrived and forced as an afterthought lose ground when we see the whole design of the novel and George Eliot’s comments on the story and characters of the novel we feel that from the beginning Dinah was meant to be the heroin of the novel. In fact novel was meant to be show growth of two pure souls and their final union. It is true that the writer does not provide any clue that Adam and Dinah will be married till the time of Hetty’s punishment but does not mean their marriage was an afterthought. Dinah refused Seth’s proposal on religious grounds. But she accepted Adam’s proposal on the same grounds. In fact the novelist wants to show that like souls finally reach one another and Adam and Dinah finally reach other not because of contrivance and force on the part of the novelist. From the beginning it was clear that Hetty was not suitable and perfect match for Adam who was perfect human being in many respects and woman like Dinah should have a husband like Adam.
It does not make any difference that Dinah does not marry one brother and marries the other. It is something very common and we observe it even today when man does not marry a girl but marries her sister or vice versa. So it is not defect in the novel.

Now let us say something about the present ending of the novel and also see any other possible ending of the novel. The most important issue in this regard is if the present ending of the novel is against the principles of realism. Answer is no. it is very much common in real life that people marry someone else if something happens to the girl whom they want to marry. As far as Seth’s love for Dinah is concerned, Seth himself gives his claim of marrying Dinah. It is also very common in real when brother fails to marry one girl and the other succeeds. So it must not be very shocking.

As far as the contention that the novel should have ended with the confession of Hetty and her punishment is concerned, by continuing the story afterwards the novelist shows us the regeneration of her characters. If she had finished the story where critics demand she might have left out a lot of things which she wanted to teach her readers. It is true that realism demands that life in literature should be like the life it is actually lived but this is narrowing down the scope of realistic literature. It should also show how life should be and how life should be restructured and reframed if some catastrophe disturbs actual course of life. We know that catastrophe keep on disturbing life and men should know how to behave and conduct during the time of crisis. This is what the ending of George Eliot’s novel shows.

Still another objection on the ending of the novel is Hetty’s death. Critics demand that George Eliot killed because she did not know the solution of her problems. They say that George Eliot leads her heroines in difficult situations and when she fails to bring them out she kills them through some accidents. They say that she cuts the knot which she fails to straighten or untangle. This allegation is true to some extent. George Eliot was realist to the core of her heart. She once fallen if victim is a woman is fallen forever and only relief is the death.

We can conclude our essay that ending of the novel is appropriate and satisfactory and this ending allows the novelist to convey her message completely and convincingly. If she had ended the novel another way, she might not have told a story through which we erring human beings can learn lessons of care and optimism when we live our lives on this earth where we have but limited options.

**Adam Bede : Maturity and education of Dinah**

**Dinah: Her Immaturity:** It is generally recognised that Adam, in the beginning of the novel, is not a fully integrated and mature personality. The head in him outweighs the heart. He is proud, hard and self-righteous. But this truth is not generally recognised as far as Dinah is concerned. She is also not a fully mature person. She also lacks the balance of head and heart, the sign of maturity. The novel shows how, through her love of Adam, she attains this balance and becomes a fully integrated and mature personality. Thus it is also seen that the marriage of Adam and Dinah is not an artistic fault but promotes the central philosophical and intellectual purposes of the novelist.
**Her Lack of Vitality:** Dinah in the beginning of the novel is mild, compassionate and a true and selfless devotee of God, but she strikes one as having very little genuine vitality. She is all heart. She scarcely seems to breathe in the midst of her enduring calm and takes little or no nourishment—only scant victuals as Mrs. Poyser would say. Confronted by a vigorous fruitful world, she retreats. The cause of her retreat is the fear of selfishness and hardness resulting from too great abundance of world by goods.

**Lack of Involvement in Life:** There is a kind of unwillingness implicit in her fear to become fully involved in life. In this respect she is like her creator, who once said that it was a pity her life could not be managed for her, while she stood by, the passive but interested spectator. Just such a one is Dinah: she observes the human condition, with sympathy and compassion; it is true, but without involvement. Selfless is a word used frequently in describing her but, selfless means not only something different from selfish; it means also lacking in self. To lack this sense of human identity is to become something either less or more than human—a clod, perhaps, or a divinity.” Talking of herself to Mr. Irwine, she says: “I’m too much given to sit still and keep by myself: it seem as if I could sit silent all day long with the thought of God overflowing my soul—as the pebbles lie bathed in the Willow Brook. For thoughts are so great—aren’t they, sir. They seem to lie upon us like a deep flood; and it’s my bestowment to forget where I am and everything about me, and lose myself in thoughts that I could give no account of, for I could neither make a beginning nor ending of them in words.

**Her Retreats:** Such a psychological state represents a complete withdrawal from life, and withdrawal (or retreat) is characteristic of Dinah. Whenever, the going gets rough, that is, whenever life begins, paradoxically, to seem too pleasant and seductive, Dinah flees back to Stonyshire, barren and sterile under the “overarching sky”. The most notable of these strategic retreats occurs after Adam has told her of his love. Following his declaration, Dinah replies that she could return his love save for the fear that she would ‘forget to rejoice and weep with others’, even forget the divine presence. Her peace and joy come from having no life of her own. Adam’s love only raises the fear that she will forget Jesus, the man of sorrows, and become hard: “And think how it is with me, Adam:—that life I have led is like a land I have trodden in blessedness since my childhood; and if I long for a moment to follow the voice which calls me to another land that I know not, I cannot but fear that my soul might hereafter yearn for that early blessedness which I had forsaken, and where doubt enters there is not perfect love. I must wait for clearer guidance: I must go from you”.

Here is clear expression of Dinah’s fear of accepting full maturity; for the land which faces her (i.e. Loamshire and, of course, Adam) is a strange one; and who knows what life there may hold for her? Better, then, to return to the other land (Stonyshire and the self-contained world of childhood). There is at least no risk is run. If Hetty was incapable of growing up, Dinah is afraid to.

**Her Growth and Maturity through Love:** We are not permitted to see the process by which Dinah is enabled to overcome her fear, and it is a serious flaw in the novel that it is so. All we learn is that having been told by Adam of his love for her and
having admitted in turn a love for him, Dinah once more retreats to Stonyshire, not staying even long enough to participate in the Harvest Supper. Adam, after waiting for several weeks, is no longer able to endure the strain and sets out for Stonyshire to find her. As he leaves the Loamshire world and enters gray treeless Stonyshire, he is reminded of the painful past, but in an altered light, for now he possesses what George Eliot calls a "sense of enlarged being", the consequences of the fuller life brought about by his suffering. He sees Stonyshire now through Dinah's eyes, as it were, and if his vision includes the barren land, it also includes the wonderful flooding light and the large embracing sky.

Adam waits for Dinah to return from her Sunday preaching not at her home, but on a hill top. Here, in the midst of her world, he discovers that Dinah has undergone a change, the power of her love for him has in a sense overcome her fears; she feels like a divided person without him, and she is willing to become his wife. He, therefore, takes her back to Loamshire whence she had so fled. It is not, however, to the green and golden world of June with which the book began; rather to an autumnal mature world. Here, "on a grimy morning in departing November", when there is a tinge of sadness in the weather as well as in the joy which accompanies the wedding, Adam and Dinah are married. And it is fitting that the hint of sorrow should be present, for in the world which George Eliot reveals to us, life not only contains sorrow, it needs sorrow in order that there may be love. It is in the fitness of things that they should so come together, for they are bound together by their common suffering for Hetty and by their painful memories. Suffering gives rise to sympathy, and love based on such sympathy alone can be fruitful and lasting.

**Conclusion:** - Dinah is domesticated in the end. It is not to be regretted. It is not a reduction of her exceptional destiny to mere commonplace domesticity. Rather it is the giving up of an impressive but rather an eccentric role for the higher destiny of full participation in the common lot of humanity.

**Adam Bede : Adam’s growth to maturity through suffering**

George Eliot’s Adam Bede is a masterpiece of literature. The novel shows growth of Adam Bede, a carpenter, to maturity through sufferings. It may sound strange to people who are contented with the surface meaning and consequently do not try to read between the lines.

Adam Bede seems to be a perfect human being having outstanding qualities of mind and heart. When it is said that Adam Bede grows to maturity during the course of the story, a common reader feels a sort of shock. He cannot think that a man like Adam Bede can also have some flaw. Here lies the craftsmanship of the writer as far as presentation of character is concerned and understanding of human nature as far as life is concerned.

Nevertheless, Adam Bede and growth appear to be opposites. He has been presented as a successful person, highly admired and loved by everyone who knows him. He is a favorite of his mother: his mother shows more concern for him than his brother, Seth, in spite of the fact that the latter is gentler and milder in every aspect of life. His employer,
the carpenter in whose workshop he works, wants to make him his partner. He has high
esteeem in the eyes of the young landlord of the area- the landlord treats him as his
friend. With all these things on his side, the concept of Adam’s growth appears to be
extraneous- an outside idea.

George Eliot is a realist writer and her understanding of human nature is comprehensible
that she can easily pick flaws in character which seems to be perfect outwardly. In the
very beginning of the novel, the writer tells us that a beggar could easily ask Seth to
give him some money but Adam’s reputation in the area was established as person who
would not give any beggar anything-rather he would scold them for not working and
earning what they needed to live. This description of Adam’s character is clear indication
that Adam does not know the value of compassion and sympathy. This trait of his
character is highlighted with respect to his relation with his parents. When he returns
from his work and finds that his father has not completed the work which he was
supposed to, he becomes very angry and starts working and when his mother asks him
to eat something; he does not listen to his mother and goes on working.

Pride is yet another flaw in Adam Bede. George Eliot furnished many episodes to show
us pride in his character. When he is given the charge of the management of the woods
of the area, Adam’s speech is criticized by many people for being devoid of gratitude and
reflecting pride. In fact, he is a self-righteous person and this sense of self-righteousness
makes him oblivious of the need of gratitude. We see how he finally comes to realize this
shortcoming in his character.

He sees just one side of every issue. Rather he sees what he wants to see and what he
does not want to see, he either shuts his eyes completely on that or at least does not
think why things are not what he wants to see them. Here is lies the tragedy of his life.
This trait of his character pushes him suffering. Though at times his suffering seems to
be unjustified, he comes to admit this flaw in his personality during his second meeting
with Arthur after Hetty’s trial. This meeting is very crucial as for as Adam’s growth is
concerned. Even here Adam blames Arthur his suffering and Hetty’s punishment. It is
with the passage of time that he sees that Adam Arthur is also a sufferer and Arthur’s
suffering is as painful-perhaps more painful than anyone else-as that of Adam.

Yet another flaw in Arthur is his rashness and this rashness throws him in situations
where he suffers more. His rashness is highlighted again and again throughout the
course of the story through action taken by Adam whenever his character is put to test.
It was his luck and presence of some very kind hearted people around that his rashness
does not throw him in the dungeon of permanent suffering. Suppose he would have
killed Arthur during his encounter with him in the Chase when Adam saw Hetty and
Arthur love making, then what? Or he would have killed him in a fit of anger if Irwine-the
country priest had not stopped him, then what?

If we study Adam’s character carefully by shedding our chauvinism and idealism, we can
easily see many defects in his personality. We find him a grown up child who does not
understand the world and life around him. And because of this lack of understanding he
suffers and his sufferings make him mature and Adam Bede at the end of the novel is
different from the Adam we meet throughout the novel. He is compassionate,
understanding and forgiving in everything now. He tells about his meeting with Arthur
and talks about Hetty’s death with words drenched in sympathy and forgiveness.
Many people say that the last part of the novel is additional and that the story should have finished with Hetty’s confession. This is not a sound judgment on Adam Bede. Adam Bede is not about Hetty. Hetty is in the novel because of her relation with Adam. In other words, Hetty is in the novel as experience to bring about maturity in Adam. Hetty stands for physical beauty like the one that of Eve who tempted Adam, the father of mankind, to eat the apple and bring suffering in Adam’s life. Her role is no more than this in spite of the fact that the writer gives a lot of space and attention to her character.

Nevertheless we can conclude our argument once again reiterating that the novel Adam Bede is about the growth of Adam Bede to maturity and this maturity comes through suffering and his rashness, pride and lack of compassion make his suffering inevitable. Adam’s maturity comes through experience and Adam is guided by his luck and some very good people on the path of experience. Without these people Adam’s suffering would have becoming perhaps permanent. Here the writer seems to be showing her faith in the society. Bartle Messy, Irwine, Dinah and Arthur represent this benevolent aspect of society.

Adam Bede : Methodism and its propagation

Methodism may be defined as “a movement of reaction against the apathy of the Church of England that prevailed in the early part of 18th century. John Wesley, who was a student at Oxford and took holy orders in 1725, founded this movement. Methodist society was formed in 1729 when a few young men at Oxford came together under his leadership. Their object was the promotion of piety and morality. The greatest success of this movement was among the lower classes. When the Methodist movement strengthened, lady preachers were appointed to meet the need. First Wesley Conference was held in 1744, in which women were allowed to preach but later they were restricted to preach. In the beginning, this movement worked under the established church, but as the society grew, it became more independent. However, separation was made after the death of Wesley in 1791.

“Adam Bede’ was published in 1859, but the story of the novel takes place in 1799. This was the time of most stirring events all over the world. Civil war was fought in United States, in Italy there raised the Movement of Independence, Japan came out of self-imposed isolation, Russia freed her occupied areas, and France fell to internal strife. But Hays lope in England, in which the action of the novel takes place, remains unaffected by all these events. In “Adam Bede”, the famous religious movement of the time, Methodism, is discussed.

Dinah Morris, who is one of the most devoted and firm Methodist, represents this movement. She is a very influential preacher and her sermons show the characteristics of Methodist preaching. Her first appearance in the novel is in a sermon at Hays lope. This sermon has a purely Methodist appeal. At first there is an emphasis on God’s love for poor, then there is a call for repentance over the sins and in the end there is warning against worldly vanity. This speech is very much similar to one of the speeches of Wesley.
This speech creates a moving effect on the audience. However, by and large, the people of Hays lope remained unaffected by Methodism, while people of Snowfield are more receptive of it.

Dinah is an example of the most sincere type of Methodist. She has a soft nature and has great sympathy for the sinners. Her chief aim is to know the will of God and to follow it. She consults the Bible before taking any crucial decision. Hence, she rejects Seth and accepts Adam after consolation.

Dinah’s Methodist spirit also appears on two occasions. First one is when she visits Lisbeth Bede to console her on her husband’s death. With her soothing words and manners, she helps Lisbeth to regain her self-control. Dinah gets this healing touch through her Methodist learning.

The other occasion comes when Dinah meets Hetty in prison and makes her confess. Hetty has no concept of the agony of soul. She fears only for the suffering of the body. But Dinah makes her feel the physical presence of God with them. She urges Hetty, “To put a new fear within her-the fear of her sin. Thus, because of Dinah’s efforts and prayers, Hetty realizes the sufferings of her soul, confesses her crime and repents on her sin.

The novel also presents the tolerant attitude of the established church towards Methodism. Through a short speech at the end, it is made clear that Dinah is not going to preach anymore. It is because the Second Wesley Conference has forbidden the women to preach. It was felt that women preachers did more harm than goodness with their preaching. But Dinah does not belong to that group of women. She is a symbol of purity and a force of good. Moreover, much of the story involves Methodism and hence it progresses through Dinah. However, Eliot is more concerned with the psychology of the characters and their moral choice. She wants to moralize the people and Dinah’s Methodist approach also highlights the moral elements to be developed in the people.

Adam Bede : Art of characterization

In novel writing, in the same way as the emotional craft the importance of characterization can’t be denied. Especially the current authors lay extraordinary stress on the genuine and mighty outline of characters. The incredible the nature of characterization, the higher is the request of fiction writing. This is precisely what we discover in just about all the extraordinary writings of George Eliot. She is rightly credited with presenting a very nearly progressive change in the depiction and presentation of characters. The authors of later era have completely recognized the significance of George Eliot in this respect. D. H Lawrence, a standout amongst the most powerful present day authors pays tribute to George Eliot in the after words: “It was she who started it all; it was she who started to put all the action inside her characters

George Eliot’s expertise in characterization is currently completely perceived, however it is by and large accepted that this dominance is shown just in “Middlemarch” and all the more especially in the “Plant on the Floss”. To some degree Eliot’s inimitable ability is demonstrated similarly well in “Adam Bede”, her first full length novel. Indeed here her
characters are made impeccably dependable and their intentions are completely settled. It has been specified by numerous commentators that she uncovered all the complex sentiments of soul that strike at the entryways of aggravate cognizant. She depicts the activity before it is submitted. She uncovers the moves when they are making shape into the hearts. When they are conferred their grotesqueness is uncovered. For cases, the character of Arthur is the best case of the change got by the writer herself. In depicting this specific character, she uncovers all the cognizant and in addition semi-cognizant feelings which urge him to activity. We see the working of his inward generally personality.

The characterization in “Adam Bede” is completely vivid and important. In the expressions of a critic, “There is not a solitary character in the novel which is not flawlessly drawn, regardless of the fact that the representation is yet a portrayal still it is a genuine one. Indeed the character of Mr. Irwin, the individual, is precisely drawn and assumes an extremely great part in the last dilemma of Hetty. His religious learning has made him an exceptionally sensible and minding figure. The sufferings and desolations of mankind appear to him his own particular sufferings. He stretches out full participation to anyone who experiences shamefulness, mistreatment and unreasonable treatment. Indeed such a minor character discovers full chance to make an imprint on the pursuers.”

The other critic, Hennery James and Gerald Bullet have discovered a few irregularities in the characterization in “Adam Bede”. For instance, it is their conviction that the real characters like Adam and Dinah don't stimulate the sought investment. They likewise assert that the character of Mrs. Poysers has been over lauded. Her blamelessness, extraordinary enthusiasm toward life, her imparting ability, and incredible enthusiasm toward human mind and her free and forthright disposition in all matters of life make her an extremely finish character, the most suitable for the current fiction.

The entire exhibition of characters, from major to minor, has been delightfully anticipated to make coveted impact. The flawlessness and blemish of the identities of diverse characters comprehend a superb scholarly triumph by the incredible writer. The crest of characterization gets to be undeniable when we look at the mixture of characters, parts they perform and the internal coordination that they display at each level. The mental example of internal speculation is the trademark of unique endowment of characterization of George Eliot. The complex emotions continue adding to the general impact and the topical elucidations of the distinctive portions of the plot. No other writer of George Eliot’s period can claim to have created such grand interlink and mental treatment at such a masterful level. Characterization is doubtlessly an uncommon peculiarity of George Eliot’s craft of novel writing, which is hard to surpass.

To close, it could be said with supreme certainty that the writing of George Eliot are brimming with remarkable characters which are overwhelming. The regular kind of George Eliot's own particular identity gives shade and more extensive measurement to her characters. The inimitable characters are the glad result of solid personality of the author. Adam, Hetty, Dinah and few others affirm this reality.

Adam Bede : Hetty Sorrel represents Loamshire
Hetty Sorrel is a typical specimen of the Loamshire world. The background landscape keeps changes in keeping with changes in her fortune and career. In the novel George Eliot’s presentation of nature-background is strictly utilitarian, as in that of Hardy in Tess of the D’Urbervilles.”

Hetty has the fertility of the Loamshire world and also its beauty but conceals an essential hardness. To think of Hetty as she first appears in the book is to think her a being in certain places, themselves microcosm of Loamshire, the Hall Farm dairy, its garden and the Grove of Arthur’s estate. Each of these places has an individual aura, but all are suggestive of fertility and growth. Furthermore, these places are appropriate to a particular phase of Hetty’s relations with Arthur. Their first meeting occurs in the Hall Farm. George Eliot emphasizes its cleanliness and purity, but it remains subtly sexualized because of its nature and associated imagery. More explicitly sexual is the meeting which takes place in the Grove of Arthur’s estate. Henry James regards Hetty Sorrel as the least ambitious and, on the whole, the most successful of George Eliot’s female figures. He is of the view that Hetty’s misfortune makes her the central figure of the book. The part of the story which is concerned with Hetty appears to him to be the most forcible. He concludes, “About Hetty Sorrel I have no hesitation whatever. I accept her with all my heart.”

A second link between Hetty and the Loamshire world is that of her beauty. George Eliot writes, “a spring tide beauty, the beauty of young frisky things.” Such beauty, at once suggestive of fertility and is difficult to comprehend it effect. George Creeger says, “It is a false beauty because it conceals a core of harness, as does the beauty of Loamshire itself. The people of Stonyshire observe her apparent beauty and those of Loamshire know her hidden hardness as Mrs. Poyser says, “Hetty’s heart is as hard as a pebble.’ She is a heartless beauty or rather a beast personified as beauty. Hetty’s hardness is childish or at best adolescent egocentricity. All people and events have value or significance only as they affect the narrow circle of her own life otherwise they are not important. At the news of Mr. Bede’s death, Hetty is concerned only as long as she thinks it is Adam who is meant; when she discovers her error, she lapses into indifference. She cares little about the Hall Farm, her family, aunt and uncle. So there is a persistent strain of narcissism in her. One thinks of her inordinate love of fine clothes and adornment. In such scenes she looks as if she were a worshipper. Before a mirror she turns up her own sleeves and kisses her arms with the passionate love of life. Even her love of Arthur is tinged with the same quality; in him she finds the objectification of her day-dreaming desires. What she loves in him is not so much Arthur as her own self.”

Loamshire-Hayslope is a sheltered world, an earthly paradise. It is rich, fertile and beautiful world where nature is generous and abundant in this beautiful and fertile world, the poor Hetty has lived a sheltered life, entirely free from cares and worries which are the common lot of humanity. The result is that she has grown up without maturity. Growing up needs struggle; it is a process of facing difficulties and hardships. Childish creatures like Hetty in the Loamshire world are not called upon to face any such challenges; hence they remain immature and childlike. She has fantasies and day-dreaming in which she lives. She has developed a subjective world which entirely prevents her from looking at the objective world with total impartiality. She has always wished finery, clothes and jewelry. She dreams of a majestic life like Mrs. Irwine’s and
finds herself being taken in a splendid carriage. In the chapter entitled, Hetty’s world, the novelist gives us detailed emotional fantasies. She couldn’t marry Adam because he didn’t come up the standard of her conception of a lover. It was only Arthur whom she adored. Hetty’s dreams were all full of luxuries. The admiring glances from Arthur’s eyes intoxicated he and she moved about and worked, lost in the world of her dreams. “A new influence had come over Hetty – vague, atmospheric and full of prospects.” Hetty was quite uneducated - a simple farmer’s girl, to whom a gentleman with a white hand was dazzling as an Olympus god. The Admiration of Arthur is like a strong wine that goes to her head and transports her to a world of fantasy. It is an enchanted world in which Hetty lives and moves. Arthur and Hetty are both wilful children living a sheltered life in Loamshire which may be called an earthily paradise. They are babes who fall an easy prey to the temptations of the devil. They are not mature enough to see the consequences of their actions. They realize only after the fall when it is too late. Much of the tragic catastrophe of both Hetty and Arthur springs from the fact that they are wilful children performing adult actions in an age which is not golden. When the fantasy breaks and the dream are shattered on reading Arthur’s letter, she is dazed and bewildered and heart-rending tragedy is the result. George Creeger points out that “Hetty is as much a victim of Loamshire as its representative.”

To sum up, she has spiritual deadness and hardness so Dinah tries to prepare her for the possibility of pain in life in the early part of the novel, but Hetty remains deaf to all these things because she is self-centered. The effect of Hetty’s ordeal is to externalize the hardness which is concealed in her heart, although she changes towards the end of the story. No one in the Loamshire is ready to accept the actions of Hetty not forgive her or in any way help her, but Dinah Morris is able to restore Hetty to humanity - to a better humanity, at least, than that with which she had been endowed by her own world.

**Being superior to Hetty both in years and in experience of the world, Arthur’s responsibility is much greater for the suffering and tragedy of poor Hetty. Discuss. (P.U. 2006)**

**George Eliot’s’ Moral Concerns:** George Eliot’s novels are all dramas of moral conflict. She did not believe in art for art’s sake, but in art for morality’s sake. According to Leslie Stephen, “George Eliot believed that a work of art not only may, but must, exercise also an ethical influence.” She believed that, “our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds”. If we yield to temptation and sin, suffering and nemesis are sure to follow.

We have to reap the consequences of our own actions. Her characters suffer because they violate some moral code, because they yield to temptation whether consciously or unconsciously, in Adam Bede both Hetty and Arthur suffer for this reason. Poignant tragedy is the result because both Arthur and Hetty are creatures of weak moral fibre. They are unable to resist temptation. This moral weakness results in sin, which is followed by punishment and intense suffering. Arthur-Hetty story traces the movement from weakness to sin and from sin to nemesis.
Hetty: An Intensely Human Figure: - Hetty Sorrel is the central figure in the novel. She is sketched neither as a temptress nor as an innocent virgin ruined by a profligate young man, but simply as a village girl who has romantic dreams of life with a handsome and rich lover. She pays the full price for her unthinking folly. Her suffering makes the reader take a sympathetic interest in the feelings and action of this limited, selfish yet intensely human figure. In respect of the suffering that she undergoes she is regarded as the central figure of the tragedy. In the words of Henry James: “The central figure of the book by virtue of her great misfortune is Hetty Sorrel. Her suffering gives her special eminence. In the presence of that misfortune no one else assuredly, has a right to claim dramatic pre-eminence.”

Her Sheltered Early life: - In the beginning of the novel we find her, happy and contended, in her aunt’s home, looking after the usual work in a diary. Excepting rebukes from time to time from her aunt Mrs. Poyser, who really is fond of her, she lives a sheltered life and has not to face the hardships and difficulties which are the lot of man on this earth. But she is vain and frivolous. She loves finery, and is often lost in a world of dreams and fantasy. She is a creature of weak moral fibre, and is unable to resist the temptation when it comes to her in the form of Arthur Donnithorne.

Moral Weakness: Inability to Resist Temptation: - Hetty is loved by Adam Bede, a skilled carpenter, hard-working and honest, widely admired and respected for his qualities of head and heart. He is a man of whose love every woman would be proud. Hetty, too, is aware of his sterling worth, but he is poor and so he cannot be her prince charming for he cannot provide her with all those comforts and luxuries, all those means to a splendid life, which she yearns for. Vain and frivolous as she is, the admiring glances of Arthur go to her head even during their first meeting in the dairy of Hall Farm. Foolish Hetty is intoxicated; it is her dreams of a Prince sharing come true. Her imagination is excited and she at once dreams of the splendid life she would lead after her marriage with Arthur.

Her Dream World: - The novelist comments on her dream world and writes, "A new influence had come over Hetty—gay, atmospheric, shaping itself into no self-confessed hopes or prospects, but producing a pleasant narcotic effect, making her tread the ground and go about her work in a sort of dream, unconscious of weight or effort, and showing her all things through a soft, liquid veil, as if she were living not in this world of brick and stone, but in a beautified world, such as the sun lights up for us in the waters. The poor child no more conceived at present the idea that the young Squire could ever be her lover, than a Baker’s pretty daughter in the crowd, whom a young emperor distinguishes by an imperial but admiring smile conceives that she shall be made empress. But the baker’s daughter goes home and dreams of the handsome young emperor, and perhaps weighs the flour amiss while she is thinking what a heavenly lot it must be to have him for a husband: and so poor Hetty had got a face and a presence haunting her waking and sleeping dreams; bright soft glances, had penetrated her, and suffused her life with a strange happy languor. Since then her inward life had consisted of little else than living through in memory the looks and words Arthur had directed towards, her—of little else than recalling the sensations with which she heard his voice outside the house, and saw him enter, and became conscious that his eyes were fixed on her, and then became conscious that a tall figure, looking down on her with eyes that
seemed to touch her, was coming nearer in clothes of beautiful texture, with an odour like that of a flower garden borne on the evening breeze”. Hetty was quite uneducated, “a simple farmer’s girl, to whom a gentleman with a white hand was dazzling as an Olympian god”

**Yielding to Temptation:** Hetty was thus tempted, and the grown up child that she was, she at once yielded to temptation. When Hetty realized that Arthur loved her, she became thoroughly conscious of her own beauty. The scene in her bed-chamber shows her at her vainest. Dinah’s serious talk upsets her, not because she responded to it, but because she had the timidity of a luxurious, pleasure-seeking nature which shrinks from the hint of pain.

**Consequent Suffering:** But poor, beautiful Hetty was destined to face great pain and her lovely dreams ended in tragedy. “The parting with Arthur was a double pain to her: mingling with the tumult of passion and vanity, there was a dim, undefined fear that the future might shape itself in some way quite unlike her dream.” Hetty’s girlish happiness died on the night that she received Arthur’s letter of farewell. There is no despair so absolute as that which comes with the first moments of our first great sorrow”. They met frequently, and Hetty continued to live and move in a world of fantasy; till one day they were observed by Adam. The fight in the wood followed and Adam compelled Arthur to write a letter to Hetty telling her in unambigious terms that he could never marry her. All the romantic dreams of poor Hetty were thus shattered.

**And Punishment:** Hetty was tempted and she yielded to that temptation. This sin, the result of moral weakness, was followed swiftly by punishment and suffering. The two chapters—“Journey in Hope” and “Journey in Despair”—the two most powerful chapters in the novel, are the records of her deep spiritual anguish. She is dazed and bewildered by the tragedy that has over-taken her, moreso for when she realises that she is pregnant and marriage with Adam, has, therefore, become out of question. She is driven to desperation and contemplation of suicide by fear of shame and disgrace. She had no guiding principle to follow, for although she had attended church regularly, she had not absorbed a single Christian idea or feeling. Worn out with her wanderings to Windsor and back to Stoniton, she gave birth prematurely in the house of a stranger, Sarah Stone. The next evening, feverish and half-crazy, she went out and tried to escape from her shame by abandoning her baby in the woods. Its cry haunted her and she returned—but too late. Facing the public disgrace of her trial and the knowledge that she was condemned by all, Hetty “shut her heart against her fellow-creatures”. Dinah alone was able, through her loving sympathy, to reach out and help her, convincing her of God’s mercy and removing her dread of perpetual remorse beyond the grave. A sort of spiritual regeneration takes place when she opens out her heart to Dinah, confesses her crime, and prays with her for God’s mercy. But this is not much of a regeneration. For Arthur is able to save her from execution, but not from transportation.

**Arthur—His Weakness:** Thus Hetty’s story illustrates the moral truth that sin—any yielding to temptation—is sure to be followed by punishment and suffering. This truth is also illustrated by the character of Arthur. He too is a man of weak moral fibre, he too yields to temptation, and the result is the tragedy that wrecks poor Hetty’s life, as well as his own. He knew from the start that he could never marry Hetty, still he flirted with
her, and had intimate relations with her. He was a man, superior to Hetty both in years and in experience of the world. As Arthur James points out, “A weak woman is, indeed, weaker than a weak man”, and so Arthur’s responsibility is much greater for the suffering and tragedy of poor Hetty.

**His Responsibility for Hetty’s Tragedy:** - The way in which Arthur seduces Hetty—treats her as a juicy morsel to satisfy his lust—would make him the conventional villain of a melodrama, without the insight that the novelist has given us into his mind and soul. His is the tragedy of a weak man who is unable to live up to his good intentions. R.T. Jones in writes this connection, “the innocence that Arthur represents consists in cultivating friendly relations with everybody; never willingly doing harm to anybody; and being willing to make amends for any harm he may accidentally do. This innocence is a matter of intentions, of meaning well and meaning no ill, and is necessarily presented in descriptions of his thoughts rather than in actions. Without the account of his intentions, his actions, objectively regarded, would be almost indistinguishable from those of calculated villainy.” For example consider the following:

“Do you always come back this way in the evening, or are you, afraid to come so lonely a road?”

‘Oh, no, sir, it’s never late; I always set out by eight o’clock, and it’s so light now in the evening. My aunt would be angry with, me if I didn’t get home before nine.’

‘Perhaps Craig, the gardener, comes to take care of you?’

A deep blush overspread Hetty’s face and neck. ‘I’m sure he doesn’t, I’m sure he never did; I wouldn’t lex him; I don’t like him she said hastily, and the tears of vexation had come so fast, that before she had done speaking, a bright drop rolled down her hot cheek. Then she felt ashamed to death that she was crying, and for one long instant her happiness was all gone. But in the next she felt an arm steal round her, and a gentle voice said—

‘Why, Hetty, what makes you cry? I didn’t mean to vex you. I wouldn’t vex you for the world, you little blossom. Come, don’t cry; look at me, else I shall think you won’t forgive me.’

‘Arthur had laid his hand on the soft arm that was nearest and was stooping towards Hetty with a look of coaxing entreaty……’

Comments R.T. Jones, “If Arthur had been conventionally wicked Squire’s son setting out to seduce the village maiden he could hardly have made a better start. Yet George Eliot enables us to look at this scene—with the additional knowledge that there is no prospect of Arthur’s marrying Hetty—and still remain convinced that he means no ill.”

**His Good Intentions—His Fatal Error:** - For we have seen how Arthur has tried not to allow himself to meet Hetty: “If he lunched with Gwaine and lingered chatting, he should not reach the Chase again till nearly five, when Hetty would be safe out of his
sight in the House keeper’s room, and when she sets out to go home, it would be his lazy time after dinner, so he should keep out of her way altogether.” His error is to underestimate the strength of his impulse to meet Hetty; this becomes more evident in the sentences that follow, but is already implicit in his apparent belief that after-dinner laziness will be an adequate deterrent. He goes, but returns early, and the author’s generalisation serves to make the return intelligible to us and, at the same time, to make us aware of a common inconsistency which we may recognise in ourselves. “It is the favourite stratagem of our passions to sham a retreat, and to turn sharply round upon us at the moment we have made up our minds that the day is our own.”

Stratagems of Passion: - The ‘stratagems of passion’ are seen with illuminating clarity when Arthur, after luncheon, is unable to ‘recall the feelings and reflections which had been decisive in his decision to avoid Hetty’. We are told of his conscious thoughts, and the self-deceptions and distortions of truth that we see in them make, so to speak, a chart of the subconscious force of his impulse to see her—as a strong underwater current, showing nosing on the surface, is yet known to be present by the extent to which its pull on the keel of a ship alters its course. It is in such accounts of motives, conscious and unconscious, that Arthur is created and exists as a character in the novel. Our recognition of his good intentions, self-deceptions and weaknesses of will makes the portrayal real and acceptable to us.

His Suffering and Punishment: - As a result of his moral weakness in yielding to temptation, Arthur too suffers from deep spiritual anguish. His life is also wrecked. He is miserable, wretched and repentant. He tries to do his best, amends but he fails to save Hetty from transportation, and cannot heal the wounds that he has inflicted on himself, on Adam, on the Poysers, and on all those connected with the tragic tale of poor Hetty. However, by going away for several years Arthur made it possible for the Poysers and Adam to remain at Hayslope. He drank the bitter cup of repentance to the full, for, as he said to Adam, “I was all wrong from the very first, and horrible wrong has come of it. God knows, I’d give my life if I could undo it.”

Conclusion: - In short, the novel is a study in moral weakness and its terrible consequences.

George Eliot as a Modern Psychological Novelist

Psychological Novel: It’s Nature: - George Eliot is a Victorian novelist, but in many ways she is the first of the great modern novelists. She is a modern in her high conception of her art, in her view of the novel as a serious art form and in her interest in the human psyche.

A psychological novelist analyses the motives, pulses and mental processes which move his characters to act in a particular way. He depicts the inner struggles of his characters and thus lays bare their souls before his reader. Thus in psychological novels there is much soul-dissection, as in the dramatic monologues of Browning, and the novel acquires a hard intellectual tone. Samuel Richardson, George Eliot, and George Meredith are some of the pioneers to be mentioned in this connection.
The Inner Action: - George Eliot is an ‘intellectual novelist’ and she brought to bear on the art of the novelist an exceptionally well-cultivated and trained intellect, and extraordinary powers of observation and reasoning. Her concerns are primarily serious and intellectual; she is more concerned with the inner drama, the inner action, than with the presentation of the externals of character and action. She goes behind the external action, analyses the thought-processes, the motives, the springs of that action. Her novels are all novels of moral conflict, and the scene of that conflict is not the external world but the soul of the character concerned. Her novels are remarkable for their psychological realism, and this is her peculiar contribution to the English novel.

Spiritual Conflicts: Moral Disorder: - She goes deep into the obscure recesses of human nature, and deals elaborately and in great variety with those spiritual conflicts and moral disorders which bring about the ruin and downfall of an individual. The tragedies which take place in her novels are all tragedies caused by some moral lapse or weakness, and George Eliot shows how that moral weakness slowly but inexorably operates within the human soul, ultimately driving the individual to his doom. Each individual thus is shown to bear his own fate within him. A.E. Baker rightly points out, “George Eliot’s sphere was the inner man; she exposed the internal clockwork. Her characters are not simply passive, and they do not stand still; they are shown making their own history, continually changing and developing or degenerating as their motives issue into acts, and the acts become part of the circumstances that condition, modify, and purify or demoralise the will.” Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds. Thus she rationalizes life and character, bringing the obscure into clear daylight, with her zeal for truth applying the most rigorous logic to the resolution of each problem, working it out with the accuracy and solemnity appropriate to a judicial inquiry, and issuing verdicts as irrefutable as the results of a scientific experiment. This was to view life tragically, and the novel had to be reshaped to bear the stress of the new conception.

The Internal Drama: - Her novels are all biographies; Middlemarch interweaves the biographies of some fifty individuals. For the merely historical part, the loose epical plan that served Thackeray and Dickens was not inadequate. But the action invariably concentrates sooner or later into a crisis which automatically manifests itself in the inner drama. This is where the implicit idea, the central theme becomes clearly apparent, and the clash of motives and inhibitions which is the working out of the problem, now goes on to the logical conclusion. Such a novel is not dramatic in the sense that the action culminates in great scenes and spectacular events; there is a striking paucity of what usually constitutes incident in her novels. She rarely exhibits characters struggling together as on the stage. The drama is internal, it is the drama of moral conflict. The conflict is that of egocentric impulses, good or bad, with an opposing environment, and the antagonistic forces take many forms.

Portraits of the Inner Man: - Her psychological insight into the springs of human action is best seen in her delineation of her serious characters. She does not begin with the personality that appears to the outward world, but with the psychological elements underlying that personality. Her portrait is pre-eminently concerned with these elements. She may clothe them in outward idiosyncrasy, but this idiosyncrasy is never the principal thing about them. We do not remember her serious characters by their appearance or
the way they talked, indeed we do not remember these things clearly at all. Her portraits are all primarily portraits of the inner man.

**Probing of the Psyche:** - George Eliot’s serious characters are envisaged exclusively in their moral aspect. They are portraits of the inner man, but portraits not designed like Charlotte Bronte’s to exhibit the colour of his temperament, but the principles of conduct—his besetting sin, his presiding virtue. Such a portrait inevitably omits many of those aspects of a man—his manner, his mood, his face—which make living most of the great figures of fiction. All the same, George Eliot’s concentration on the moral side of human nature is the chief source of her peculiar glory, the kernel of her precious, unique contribution to our literature. Her imagination is not a distorting glass like Dickens, vitalising her figures by accentuating their personal idiosyncrasies, nor is it like Charlotte Bronte’s, a painted window suffusing them with the colour of her own live temperament; it is an X-ray, bringing them to life by the clearness with which she penetrates to the secret mainspring of their actions.

**Penetrating Intellect and Observation:** - Her penetrating intellect is the source of her success. Her power of drawing conclusions gave her a naturally sharp eye for symptoms of moral strength and weakness, taught her to discern them in all their varying modes of expression in well brought up girls, in men of the world, a poor weaver, a lusty young man, to note that Dr. Lydgate did not take trouble with an ugly woman, that Hetty always avoided being left to look “after the children.” She could also distinguish between different varieties of the same characteristic; see how Dorothea’s sense of duty differed from Mary Garth’s, Godfrey Cass’s self-indulgence from that of Arthur Donnithorne. “And she took advantage of her observation. She traced these expressions of virtue and weakness to their original source in the character, discovered the spark of nobility, the streak of weakness which are their origin. Finally, her disciplined generalising intelligence taught her to see the significance of her discoveries.” Having analysed a character into its elements, she was able to distinguish their relative force and position. She could deduce its central principle so that, however complex, and inconsistent it might appear, she saw it as a unity. It is this grasp of psychological essentials which gives her characters their reality. We may not see Godfrey Cass as we see Pickwick, but we understand him.

**Psychological Consistency:** - The result of such clear understanding of the inner man is that her characters are all psychologically consistent. They have inner consistency which is lacking in the characters of the other Victorian novelists. They also act under the irresistible force of their directing principle, and so they are always true to themselves. Further, this psychological insight also enables the novelist to sketch successfully the growth and development of a character. The stages in the growth and deterioration of a character are well-marked and logically consistent as, for example, has been done in the case of Lydgate in Middlemarch and Silas Marner in the novels of that name.

**The Central Principle:** - Further, George Eliot’s grip on psychological essentials enables her to draw complex characters much better than her predecessors. Writes David Cecil in this connection, “Drawing from the inside out, starting with the central principle of the character, she is able to show how it reveals itself in the most apparently
inconsistent manifestations, can give to the most varied coloured surface of character that prevalent tone which marks it as expression of one personality. Her characters always hang together, are of a piece, their defects are the defects of their virtues. We are not surprised that a man so anxious for the good opinion of others as Arthur Donnithorne should selfishly seduce Hetty, because we realise that the controlling force in his character is the desire for immediate enjoyment; so that his wish to sun himself in the pleasant warmth of other people’s liking goes along with his inability not to yield to the immediate pleasure of Hetty’s embraces. George Eliot can follow the windings of motive through the most tortuous labyrinths, for firmly grasped in her hand is always the central clue.”

**Source of Moral Defeat and Triumph of Temptation:** - Her power of describing mixed characters extends to mixed states of mind. Indeed, the field of her most characteristic triumphs is the moral battlefield. Her eagle eye can penetrate through all the shock and the smoke of struggle, to elucidate the position of the forces concerned, and reveal the trend of their action. We are shown exactly how the forces of temptation deploy themselves for the attack, how those of conscience rally to resistance, the ins and outs of their conflict, how inevitably in the given circumstances one or the other triumphs. She is particularly good at showing how, temptation triumphs. “No other English novelist has given us so vivid a picture of the process of moral defeat, the gradual steps by which Mr. Bulstrode is brought to further Raffle’s death, Arthur Donnithorne’s gradual yielding to his passion for Hetty, Maggie Tulliver’s to her for Stephen Guest. With an inexorable clearness she reveals how temptation insinuates itself into the mind, how it retreats at the first suspicious movement of conscience, how it comes back disguised, and how, if once more vanquished, it will sham death only to arise suddenly and sweep its victim away on a single irresistible gust of desire when he is off his guard.” With an extraordinary subtlety she describes how Maggie’s passion for Stephen steals into her inexperienced mind, imperceptibly, so that she only realises it when it has become such an obsession that she is unable to see it in its true proportions. Alone in her room she can make the strongest resolutions but when Stephen appears the violence of her desire so overwhelms her that she can’t see her conduct in perspective at all. She lives only in the present, and in the present she is only conscious that she is happy and must at all costs prolong her happiness.

**Portrait of Moral Chaos:** - With equal insight she can portray the moral chaos that takes possession of the mind after wrong has been done. She exposes all the complex struggling of a spirit striving to make itself at ease on the bed of a disturbed conscience, the desperate casuistry by which it attempts to justify itself, its inexhaustible ingenuity in blinding itself to unpleasant facts, the baseless hopes it conjures up for its comfort; she can distinguish precisely how different an act looks before it is done, shrouded in the softening darkness of the secret heart, and after it has been exposed in all its naked ugliness to the harsh daylight of other peoples’ judgment. The guilt-ridden conscience of Arthur Donnithorne in Adam Bede is analysed in this way and we are shown the scorpions that sting him and prevent sleep. With rare penetration and insight George Eliot isolates and detects the various warring elements in Arthur’s mind, his genuine compunction, his horror of being disapproved, of his instinctive resentment at disapproval, however justifiable, his inextinguishable hope that things will come right in the end, his irrational conviction that with him, at least, things always must come right.
One grows quite uncomfortable as one watches so merciless, so delicate an exposure of human weakness. The truth it embodies is universal. In exposing Arthur Donnithorne, she also exposes her reader.

**Conclusion:** It is George Eliot’s psychological insight into the springs of human action, the subtle analysis of character and motive accompanying the external action, which gives her a peculiar and individual place among the Victorian novelists. She is one of them and yet how very different and original. She is the first of the great modern novelists who have a high conception of their art, who regard the novel as a serious art form, and who are given to the probing of the human psyche, to the subtle analysis of the sub-conscious and even the unconscious.

**“Eliot’s Stories Grow Like Plants Out of a Theme or Idea in a Given Social Environment”**.

**A Compact Whole:** The plot of Adam Bede is much better constructed, it is more coherent and well-knit, than that of many a contemporary novel. This is so because the novel was not published in parts. It was not serialised in any magazine, but was even, at first, published in book-form. So revision and excision could be possible. Loose odds and ends were tied up, and everything superfluous was rigidly excluded. There is not a single character or event in the whole novel which does not further it’s action. The novel is a compact whole, it is like a well-constructed building from which not a single brick can be taken out without damaging the whole structure.

**The Four Stories—Their Integration:** From George Eliot’s own account of the genesis of the novel, it is clear that she was quite alive to the problem of construction. There are four different stories in the novel (a) Adam-Hetty love story (b) Arthur-Hetty Sorrel love-story (c) Adam-Dinah love-story, and (d) The mutual relations of Arthur and Adam. The problem was how to integrate these four stories into a single whole. The story of Hetty—the girl who is seduced by the Squire’s son and is convicted of child-murder—forms the core of the novel. The inter-linking of the various stones is made possible by the relations of Adam and Arthur to each other and to Hetty, and the marriage of Adam and Dinah rounds up the whole, and satisfies contemporary conventions by linking the lives of the hero and heroine at the close.

**Thematic Unity:** There is also thematic unity. The story grows like a plant out of the idea or theme that, failure to resist temptation is a moral weakness, and any yielding to temptation is sure to be followed by divine punishment and consequent suffering. This theme is inter-linked with the theme of moral enlightenment, self-education and regeneration. The moment of dis-enchantment, when all illusions and self-deceptions are shattered, comes to all alike. This is illustrated by the stories of Arthur, Hetty and Adam. Such are the themes out of which the story evolves step by step, logically and inexorably, and the characters and their stories are seen but to be the exposition or illustration of these themes and ideas.

**Organic Wholeness:** The novels of George Eliot are “organic wholes” inasmuch as the story, the character and the social environment are well-integrated. The social
environment forms the outer circle which envelopes the inner circle, i.e. the principal characters with whose life and fortunes the novel is concerned. For example, in Adam Bede the life of Hayslope envelops the tragedy. We come to know all grades of its society, artisans, labourers, farmers, rector, schoolmaster, innkeeper and Squire. It is an active community in which most men or women have work to do and their character is affected by that work. That character is also the product of religious influences; we become aware of the impact of Methodism upon the inhabitants of Hayslope and of the more subtly pervasive influence of traditional Anglicanism. In the Third Book the whole community is assembled at Donnithorne Chase to celebrate the young Squire’s coming of age; by that time the pattern of living out of which the central characters emerge is clearly established and their drama is already under way. After the climax, when Hetty Sorrel has been condemned to death, reprieved and deported, and another author would feel that the work was complete, there is a Sixth Book balancing the Third. In it the rhythm of Hayslope life is re-established and, with the inevitable gaps made by the intervening event, a Harvest supper reassembles the same community as celebrated the young Squire’s birthday.

Social Environment and the Central Tragedy: - The central tragedy is intimately connected with this background. The full effect of Arthur Donnithorne’s yielding to the sensuous appeal of the pretty child-like Hetty and of all that ensues depends upon the relation of both characters to their world. The pride and well-grounded self-respect of the Poysers established in the reader’s mind by the vivid pictures of their surroundings, their working day, their home life, their Sunday observance, and the neighbours’ opinion of them, all play their part in causing the tragedy and in heightening the bitterness of its effect. It is the social background the Poysers have provided for their niece and the standard of conduct imbibed from it that make it inevitable for Hetty to take flight before the birth of her baby; it is the esteem in which they are held by which the reader measures their shame and it is the clear sense he acquires of their identification with Hayslope by which he measures the anguish as well as the probability of their contemplated uprooting when the shame is known to them. Similarly, it is Arthur’s upbringing, his relations with his grandfather, the Squire, his high conception of the love and esteem he will earn from all his dependents when he inherits the land, that explain the price he pays for his weakness and his suffering.

There is no part of what we have learnt of the outer circle that does not affect our sense of the inner. The cultured benignity of the Rector, the moral enthusiasm of the Methodists, the simple ignorance of the country-folk, all make their own impact on the central characters and help to determine the events. Although the impression while we read is of a leisurely sequence of naturalistic scenes of comedy or of pathos and of a world richly populated with entertaining characters, when we look back we find that every individual scene or character is directly or indirectly related to the simple story at the core of the book, of the carpenter’s betrothed betrayed by the Squire’s grandson. In its setting this commonplace story becomes widely significant. The simple, well-contrived pattern conveys the sense of a social structure enclosing four human beings as completely as the soil encloses the roots of growing plant and, in so doing, it illustrates one aspect of the author’s vision of life.
Integrations with the Physical Environment: - Not only are the story and character integrated with their social environment, they are also well-integrated in the present novel with their physical environment. They are symbolic of it. They have the softness and fertility of Loamshire, but they have also its hardness, its spiritual deadness. Dinah’s preaching on Hayslope green leaves the audience, with rare exceptions, untouched. They are not receptive to religion, for their life of ease and self-indulgence has made them spiritually dead. Adam is hard and self-righteous, the stubbornness and hardness of Hetty comes out during the trial and Arthur is self-indulgent.

Dinah as Connecting Link: - Dinah is the connecting link between Loamshire and Stony-shire. She has come from Stonyshire, rocky, hard and barren, but the people there are more receptive to religion, they are more alive spiritually. Therefore, whenever Dinah feels that she is in danger of being engulfed by the spiritual deadness of Hayslope, she retreats to Stonyshire to carry on her vocation there. Thus she leaves Hayslope without even participating in the Harvest supper, because she senses spiritual danger in the marriage-proposal of Adam. It is also to be noted that the nature-background changes in keeping with the change in the fortunes of poor Hetty. Her early happy life is lived in the idyllic physical environment of Hayslope; from here she goes to the barren and rocky Stonyshire where she is convicted and sentenced to death. Seasonal changes are also carefully noted, and well-integrated with the changing fortunes of the principal characters. For example, the marriage of Adam and Dinah takes place not on a green and golden morning of spring, but on “a grimy morning in departing November”. There is a tinge of sadness in the weather as there is in the joy which accompanies the wedding. Their painful memories of Hetty colour and subdue their joy in the present.

Parallelisms and Contrasts: - There is thematic organisation of material and there is also close integration of the action of the novel with the social and physical environment. Further, the heterogeneous material of the novel has been organised and patterned through an elaborate system of parallelisms and contrasts. The structure is symmetrical. The six books of the novel divide themselves into three symmetrical parts, each with a central motif of its own. The centre of interest of Book I is the assembly of villagers on the village green to hear the preaching of Dinah Morris. The incident points to the force of Methodism that tends to take the villagers out of themselves, but it also gives a hint; that the Hayslope community is not capable of any drastic change in this direction. Till this stage the two Methodists, Seth and Dinah, loom large before the reader, but eventually it is not the Methodist, Seth Bede, but Irwine’s favourite parishioner, Adam Bede, who will steal the show, in Book III the central incident is the assembly of the villagers at the feast in honour of Arthur’s birthday. This can be regarded as a pivotal incident insofar as the evolution of the Arthur-Hetty episode is concerned. The Harvest Supper in Book VI is a similar focal incident. It restores the balance disrupted by the force generated by the outcome of Arthur-Hetty intrigue. Of all George Eliot’s novels “Adam Bede” possesses the most clearly discernible pattern.

The Rhythm of Rural Life: - It may also be mentioned that the novelist has succeeded in capturing the slow, leisurely pace of rural life, as it was lived in, isolated communities like that of Hayslope, before the coming of the railways. Dorothy V. Ghent says in this connection, “the pace of Adam Bede is set to Mrs. Poyser’s clock, to all that,
slow toil and activity that have made daylight and living valuable. Slower, organically, invisibly slow at the months of Hetty’s pregnancy; the Poyser’s clock, the clock at the Chase, do not keep this time with their eights and nines and half past nines. This other deep, hidden animal time drags the whole pace down to that of poor Hetty’s journey in despair, a blind automatism of animal night where the ticking of the human clock cannot be heard.”

Adam Bede : The Downfall of Hetty Sorrel

The tragic role of the character Hetty Sorrel is one that is central to the storyline of Adam Bede; her heinous crime of infanticide greatly unsettles the fictional community of Hayslope. Hetty aspires for something more than the manual labour of working on her Uncle’s farm; she is initially attracted to the young squire Arthur Donnithorne, Arthur is attracted to Hetty and returns her flirtations without honourable intentions of marrying her, he believes that it would be wrong to marry outside of his own class. During their encounters Hetty naively romanticizes that Arthur will surely marry her, the marriage she visualises however is not one of love but one of luxury and finery, luxuries which would be unobtainable to Hetty as an orphan dependant on the charity of her uncle and his wife. Hetty gives herself to Donnithorne falsely believing that her dreams of grandeur will undoubtedly come true, however she immediately turns her affections to Adam Bede when she realises that Donnithorne will not make her a ‘lady’. The characterization of Hetty Sorrel seems to vary throughout the novel in the earlier chapters she is condemned by the author for her vanity and selfishness, however in the later chapters of her suffering she appears to be dealt with more sympathetically.

Hetty is beautiful and is often described using metaphors symbolic of nature and of animal imagery; she has ‘a beauty like that of kittens, or very small downy ducks’. ‘Hetty’s was a springtide beauty; it was the beauty of young frisking things’, it was a beauty that seemed ‘made to turn the heads not only of men, but of all intelligent mammals, even of women’.

Hetty desires material possessions and she believes that her beauty can be her means to obtain a life of luxury, however, instead of marriage and the life she longs for she gets an unplanned and unwanted pregnancy. It is a pregnancy that Hetty is not emotionally equipped to handle as she repeatedly denies that she ever was and shows little or no emotion at her trial she looks ‘down at her hands’ throughout the trial and has a ‘blank hard indifference’, standing ‘like a statue of dull despair’. Hetty is unsure what she feels for the baby as she says ‘I seemed to hate it’, but she is sure of one thing and that is that she ‘longed so to be safe at home’. Hetty is continually linked with connotations of maternal ideology from her less than caring attitude towards her cousin Totty and baby animals to her subsequent crime of infanticide.

The character flaws of Arthur Donnithorne are not implicated in the events of Hetty’s downfall, though he clearly displays characteristics for which Hetty is condemned. It is after all vanity that drives Donnithorne in his seduction of Hetty. He knows that his desire for her is impractical but he carries on in his seduction of her nonetheless. Arthur
is shallow and is ready to ‘pitch everything for the sake of surrendering himself to this delicious feeling’ that Hetty has created in him.

Following Hetty and Arthur’s encounter in the woods Arthur asserts he ‘had not yet seen the woman who would play the lady wife to the first-rate country gentleman’. Moreover he is annoyed by Hetty’s expectations of marriage ‘her vision was all spun by her own childish fancy’, and he goes on to say ‘but Hetty might have had the trouble in some other way if not in this’, further trivialising Hetty’s fall and his own role in it. Arthur never offers to marry Hetty although he is free to do so, he writes ‘I know you can never be happy except by marrying a man in your own station’, remaining tenaciously class bound throughout the novel. Arthur’s rejection of Hetty is a great shock for her, her earlier dreams of becoming a ‘lady’ are shattered by Arthur’s letter but moreover her ego. At the conclusion of Adam Bede the reader is encouraged to believe that stability is brought about by learning through suffering and accordingly Arthur carries out a form of symbolic penance by going away to fight at war, on his return home he resumes his place as head of the community. Hetty receives no such redemption; she in fact dies during her journey home following the completion of her sentence, thus disposing of her in order to secure the acceptance of Donnithorne back into his position as head of the community.

George Eliot gives Hetty Sorrel the ultimate punishment of death for her ambition of marrying above her station, consequently George Eliot was merely a pseudonym used by Mary Ann Evans to hide her identity as a woman writer writing in a male dominated world. George Eliot continually presents Hetty ‘in exactly the way she envisions herself, that is, as an erotic object’, but that following Hetty’s ‘flight after she discovers she is pregnant with Donnithorne’s child’ that ‘suddenly the narrator’s condescending remarks about Hetty’s triviality and sensuality become veiled accusations against his own sex.

In conclusion the story of Hetty Sorrel’s downfall is essential to the moral development of the other characters in the novel as they ultimately learn to take responsibility for their individual actions. George Eliot aimed to portray through her characters, their relationships with one another and the eventual ‘downfall’ of Hetty Sorrel, that from suffering and pain there could be lessons learned and some good could be gained from an otherwise completely bad situation. It was also Eliot’s aim to express that ‘commonplace life is heroic’, her huge concentration on Hetty Sorrel’s socially taboo story is significantly representative of Eliot’s desire to convey the ‘realism’ of human nature and the power of emotional force, it is this coupled with her attention to detail that marks her distinctive approach to realism. Eliot’s pen name was a conscious decision to popularize her fiction in the world of the male writer, therefore the masculine voice that she adopted within Adam Bede was consistent with her awareness of the patriarchal ordered society that she lived in. It was this awareness that lead to her condemnation of Hetty Sorrel’s vanity, however, it can be discerned that it is the characters around Hetty who have provided her with the notion that she is exceptionally beautiful and that it is her most powerful attribute, it is not surprising that she feels a sense of entitlement and when Donnithorne begins to pay her attention and it is not so odd to believe that she would envision a future as his lady wife, with her at the centre receiving sole admiration from him.