



A SHORT STUDENT'S GUIDE TO ENGLISH LITERATURE

XII

TARTU 1982

TARTU STATE UNIVERSITY

Chair of Foreign Literature

A SHORT STUDENT'S GUIDE TO ENGLISH LITERATURE

XII

The second half of the 19th and the
beginning of the 20th cent.

Compiled by A. Luigas

Eesti NSV Kõrg- ja Keskerihariduse
Ministeerium lubab kasutada õppevahendina
kõrgkoolis inglise keele erialal



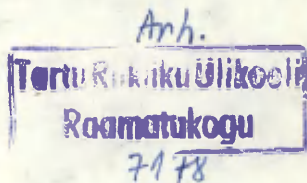
TARTU 1982

Kinnitatus filoloogiateaduskonna
nõukogu 15. veebruaril 1982.a.

P R E F A C E

The present study-aid "A Short Student's Guide to English Literature. XII. 19th century", is destined to the senior students of Tartu State University to be used at special seminars of English literature. Its aim is to provide material for the more important writers and their works in the second half of the 19th century, and the first decade of the 20th century.

The study-aid falls into two parts: Part I: English Realism in the Second Half of the 19th century, 1850-1870; Part II: English Literature in the Age of Imperialism, 1870-1910. In Part I the following authors have been the subject of discussion: George Eliot, and George Meredith. In Part II the representative writers in the Age of Imperialism have been discussed and their works analysed: Thomas Hardy, Samuel Butler, Oscar Wilde and Rudyard Kipling.



A. Luigas

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

	<u>page</u>
<u>Part I:</u> <u>English Realism in the Second Half of</u> <u>the 19th Century 1850-1890</u>	4
1. George Eliot	6
2. George Meredith	22
 <u>Part II:</u> <u>English Literature in the Age of Im-</u> <u>perialism, 1870-1910</u>	 36
1. Thomas Hardy	40
2. Samuel Butler	54
3. Oscar Wilde	61
4. Rudyard Kipling	71

P A R T I

English Realism in the Second Half of the 19th Century 1850-1890

I N T R O D U C T I O N

After 1848, when the general revolutionary movement in Europe and Chartism in England had suffered defeat, reaction set in. Great Britain entered a period of middle-class prosperity at home, and colonial supremacy on the world market. The division of society into antagonistic classes seemed to be decided for ever.

This general spirit of self-satisfaction and conformism is clearly expressed in the literature of the period. In the '50s and '60s of the 19th century English critical realism entered a severe crisis. As compared to the first half of the century, especially to the so-called "hungry forties", there is a marked narrowing in the treatment of the burning social problems. In the works of the representative writers the stress was clearly laid on ethical or psychological issues.

Some writers of the period, George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, Charles Reade, etc., considered themselves to be followers of Dickens. Other writers, such as George Meredith, Samuel Butler, regarded Thackeray their master. Nevertheless, none of these writers could attain the depth and range

of social criticism that was characteristic of their great predecessors.

Of all these novelists George Eliot and George Meredith were by far the most important. If they did not attain the stature of the "Great Pleiads" in the first half of the century, they introduced new trends in their novels, especially in the field of psychological realism. They responded enthusiastically to another stimulus, more typical of their time, "the spirit of science".

The '50s and '60s that marked an over-all political reaction were also years of revolutionary scientific development, on the scale of which England surpassed all other European countries. Charles Darwin's epoch-making "Origin of Species" (1859) refuted the conventional view of the immutability of nature and gave an impulse to the development of botany, zoology, biology and other relevant sciences. New discoveries in histology, especially in the structure of the cell, stimulated research in anatomy, physiology and paleontology. Further research in biology, genetics by such eminent scholars as Th. Huxley ("Man's Place in Nature", 1863, "Physical Basis of Life", 1868) and F. Galton ("The Heredity of Genius", 1869) won a popularity among the radical intellectuals. Discoveries in almost every field of science, physics, chemistry, geology, archeology, etc., contributed to the new dynamic view of nature and helped undermine the religious obscurantism that had ruled for centuries.

Closely connected with the development of natural sciences, positivist philosophy, expounded by such scholars as Herbert Spencer, J.S. Mill, H.G. Lewes, F. Harrison and others, became the issue of the day. Although the French philosopher Auguste Comte was generally considered to be the father of positivism, it became especially popular in England. It also exercised a considerable influence on the literature of the period, and accounted for its slightly pessimistic, naturalistic colouring.

G E O R G E E L I O T

(1819-1880)



George Eliot's literary work, that falls into the 1850s - 1870s, presents a later stage in the development of the 19th-century realism. It is significant that she came into literature when the "Great Pleiads" of novelists - Dickens, Thackeray, Gaskell and the Brontë Sisters, had already created their important social novels, carried by the spirit of radicalism typical of the "hungry forties". Although in many ways she carried on the realistic traditions of her

predecessors and contemporaries, her novels were greatly different from theirs, as different was also the historical and social situation in which she wrote.

George Eliot belonged to the ranks of those radical intellectuals in England who were carried away by the all-round spirit of science. The impact of Darwin's evolutionary theory and the positivism of Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Henry G. Lewes, etc., coloured her whole work as a novelist.

As in her novels George Eliot deliberately drew characters conditioned by their environment, her realism might therefore be called "scientific", but in a sense different from the French naturalists. While such novelists as Zola or the Goncourt brothers aimed at a thoroughly objective presentment of life, leaving the reader to judge their characters from action, George Eliot concentrated her attention on the inner consciousness of her men and women, analysed their moral aspirations, revealing thereby often her own point of view. This moralizing tendency, and a fusion of objective and subjective treatment had always been a characteristic feature of the English tradition of realism, since the Enlightenment period, but George Eliot carried it further than her predecessors. (1:34)

George Eliot's conception of ethics and her deep psychological penetration had brought her the rare distinction as one of the first modern English novelists.

George Eliot was also one of the first English novelists who concentrated her attention on ordinary human experience, whose work emphasized commonplace characters and situations. The favourite objects of her study were people from her native surroundings in Warwickshire, such as rural clergymen, provincial businessmen, professionals (i.e. doctors and lawyers) and common folk.

This was at once her strong and weak point. On the one hand, her rare intellectual and analytical powers contributed to her psychological insight into the motives and actions of ordinary lives and enabled her to reveal the complexity of human situation on the basis of seemingly commonplace and uninteresting subject-matter. As Ian Adam, one of the recent judges of George Eliot's work, has pointed out: "Yet though her subject-matter might be ordinary, the significance derived from it is not. The reason, of course, lies in her far from ordinary mind, not only in its gifts of wit, observation and sympathy, which she shared with other major novelists, but also in its lucid and energetic intelligence: a gift much more her own. As a result she does more than vividly and sympathetically render her material,

she also demonstrates its complexity and importance. George Eliot sees tragedy where others would see a failed marriage, or a complex social organization where others would see a simple village, and she shows why the marriage is tragic, how the village is complex." (2:1-2)

On the other hand, George Eliot's democratism was limited, her scope of social types and scenes, considerably narrow.

Apart from her individual peculiarities, however, George Eliot worked withing a tradition, adopting the Victorian novel form. She shared with her fellow-novelists the most distinguishing feature of Victorian fiction, that of commenting on the actions of her characters, and interpreting the motives of their behaviour. This "convention of omniscient authorial comment", that was severely criticized by later novelists (i.e. Arnold Bennett), reached its highest development in George Eliot's fiction. With her rare intellectual and analytical powers, however, this convention contributed to an extraordinary range of satiric, ironic, or purely comic effects, which have retained their vigour and novelty to the present day.

Life and Literary Career

George Eliot was the novelist's pseudonym, her real name being Mary Ann Evans. She was born in the Midland county Warwickshire, where her father, Robert Evans, was an agent and manager of estates for several landed gentlemen.

In this Midland county George Eliot also spent her youth and the first, most impressive years of her adult life. Since her early childhood she displayed an unusual interest in natural sciences, although she was brought up in an atmosphere of religious piety, of Methodism and Puritanism. She was sent to school at Coventry where she fell under the influence of a group of liberals and post-Hegelian philosophers, the Brays and the HenneIs. Her close contacts with these new friends produced also her initial break with Christianity in 1842, and a great quarrel with her beloved fa-

ther, as she stopped going to the Church. At the same time this friendship stimulated her publicistic activities, her first translations of the philosophic works by Strauss ("Life of Jesus", 1847), Feuerbach ("The Essence of Christianity", 1848) and Spinoza ("Ethics", 1849).

After the death of her father, the recommendations of George Eliot's Coventry friends, as well as her modest fame as a translator, brought her to London, where she soon became the subeditor of the "Westminster Review", one of the central scientific and philosophic periodicals. While herself contributing articles and essays to the "Westminster Review" and other important London journals, she was surrounded by many eminent scientists of the day, such as Thomas Huxley, Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, George Lewes and others. After having united her life with Lewes, she remained abreast of all the major scientific developments of the time. Her publicistic writings and letters to her friends speak of her rare erudition in most different fields of science and literature. She soon acquired the fame as one of the most learned women of her day.

George Eliot's publicistic activities in the '50s form an important period of apprenticeship for her career as a novelist. She was unique among the Victorian writers in that she had formulated her aesthetic views before she started writing her first novel. Apart from her early influences in Charles Bray group, these views were mainly coloured by the current evolutionary theory and positivist philosophy. A declaration of these views in a concise form, however, can be found in her first short story, "The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton", first published in 1856, and later included in her collection "Scenes of Clerical Life" (1857). Referring to her commonplace main character, she writes as follows:

"The Rev. Amos Barton, whose sad fortunes I have undertaken to relate, was, ... in no respect an ideal or exceptional character, and perhaps I am doing a bold thing to bespeak your sympathy on behalf of a man who was so very far from remarkable, - a man whose virtues were not heroic, and

who had no undetected crime within his breast; who had not the slightest mystery hanging about him, but was palpably and unmistakably commonplace; ... But, my dear madam, it is so very large a majority of your fellow-countrymen that are of this insignificant stamp. At least eighty out of a hundred of your adult male fellow-Britons returned in the last census, are neither extraordinarily silly, nor extraordinarily wicked, nor extraordinarily wise ... Yet these commonplace people ... have their unspoken sorrows, and their sacred joys." (3:36-37)

As we can see from this passage, George Eliot reveals her desire to be a realist, to be faithful to the empirical standards of veracity that the "spirit of science" at the "Westminster Review" and positivist philosophy had taught her. The fictional narrator of the story challenges those romantic readers who would have him portray the actions of "ideal" or "exceptional" characters that have no counterpart in real life.

At the same time this early passage also reveals the main limitations of George Eliot's realism. Proceeding from the positivist philosophy like the naturalists, she considers that only the "grey matter" of daily existence and the most commonplace characters can best express the truth of real life.

George Eliot's development as a novelist can be divided into two distinct periods. The first of these periods from 1857-1861 was a period of intense productivity. In these five years she wrote her three best-known novels - "Adam Bede" (1859), "The Mill on the Floss" (1860) and "Silas Marner" (1861).

During the second period, from 1862-1876, she moved away from the "country" or "pastoral novel", and turned to a wider plane of human life. Her four major novels of this period are, "Romola" (1863), "Felix Holt" (1866), "Middlemarch" (1871-1872) and "Daniel Deronda" (1876).

Most of these novels are set in the rural community, in a village or a provincial county town. The only exceptions are the historical novel "Romola", set in the six-

teenth-century Florence, and "Daniel Deronda", an anti-semi-tist novel, with its variety of the more sophisticated English and Continental settings.

The three early novels of the I period, "Adam Bede", "The Mill on the Floss", and "Silas Marner" that made the author famous during her lifetime, are largely based on her own vivid childhood memories, on old legends and stories circulating round the people of the native county Warwickshire. They have an immediacy of impressions, a nostalgic love for the past, and an all-pervading humour, that some of her later, more intellectual works, lack.

In an attempt to find a positive hero and solve the moral problems she was interested in, George Eliot turned to the secluded, self-sufficient rural life at the end of the XVIII and the beginning of the XIX century, before the introduction of railways and the adoption of the Reform Bill of 1832.

In spite of her conscious scientific approach in these novels, however, their patriarchal setting, the main conflicts and moral problems, remind us of those in William Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield", which happened to be the author's favourite book. In this famous eighteenth-century novel the harmonious family of the village vicar, their high moral aspirations and ethical purity, are set in contrast to the depravity and cruelty of the local gentry. Squire Thornhill persecutes the vicar, Rev. Doc. Primrose, seduces his daughter, ruins his son and brings him no end of trouble. A similar polarity between the village rich and the poor, the injurious influence of the squirarchy on the rural community, can also be met in George Eliot's early country novels, especially in "Adam Bede" and "Silas Marner".

"ADAM BEDE"

George Eliot's first novel "Adam Bede" is typical of the period. The plot is founded on a story told to the author by her aunt, Elizabeth Evans - about a confession of child murder.

The heroine, Hetty Sorrel, a pretty, vain and selfish

girl, is the niece of the well-to-do local farmer, Martin Poyser. She is loved by Adam Bede, the serious and high-minded village carpenter. Although aware of Adam's good reputation in the community, Hetty is indifferent to his advances. She is deluded by the prospect of a more profitable marriage with the rich young squire, Arthur Donnithorne. After having seduced Hetty, Arthur breaks all relations with her and leaves temporarily the village. Broken-hearted, Hetty consents to marry Adam Bede, who still loves her. But before the marriage takes place Hetty discovers that she is pregnant. In panic she flees from home to seek Arthur, but fails to find him, is arrested for the murder of her child and transported.

Meanwhile the jilted Adam Bede discovers that he has won the heart of Dinah Morris, the Methodist preacher, whose moral influence pervades the whole village. Adam's brother, Seth, who has long hopelessly loved Dinah, now resigns her, with a fine gesture of unselfishness, to his more worthy rival.

The well-built plot of the novel is not its chief merit. It is mainly the peculiar local colour, the descriptions of village life and customs of the local peasantry that lend the novel its unmistakable charm.

The reader is introduced to all the different walks of society in Hayslope village where the action takes place: the farmers, artisans, labourers, the rector, the squire, the schoolmaster, the innkeeper. In the course of the novel he also comes to know the typical events of the village at that period: in Book I, the assembly of the villagers on the Green to listen to the Methodist preacher; in Book III there is another assembly at Donnithorne Chase to celebrate the young squire's 25th birthday and his coming of age; in Book VI the Harvest Supper, etc. It is an active community in which most men and women are engaged in some work, and their character is affected by that work. That character is also the product of age-old beliefs or superstitions and of religious influences, especially that of Methodism and the traditional Anglicanism. (4:100)

Mrs. Poyser of the Hall Farm, George Eliot's most memo-

rable early humorous portrait, dominates the novel. Wife of a "rough and ready" farmer, she is a great woman. Although she has to struggle against ill-health and old Squire Donnithorne's stinginess concerning the repairs of Hall Farm, she knows how to assert herself. Her capacity of doing her duty is characterized by the cleanliness of her "house-place" and "back kitchen" - "where the only chance of collecting a few grains of dust would be to climb on the salt-coffer, and put your finger on the high mantel-shelf". (5:72)

Mrs. Poyser's wisdom is always coming out, either spoken by herself, by one of her neighbours, or mentioned by the author. Her racy manner of speech is particularly effective when it is necessary to scold her husband, to teach her nieces or castigate the maids for their slovenly habits. It is entertaining to hear Mrs. Poyser talk in her local idiom that often runs into proverbs.

George Eliot's use of the local dialect in the speech of Mrs. Poyser, Old Lisbeth Bede (Adam's mother), and many other characters, is not meant merely for humorous purposes. She uses just so much of it as is necessary to give point and finish to the people of rural life. She has a fine ear to the local idiom and can differentiate the speech of very old people from that of the middle-aged or the young.

Most characters in the novel, refracted through the prism of George Eliot's benevolent humour, are strikingly vivid and life-like. They also give evidence of the fact that humour forms an important element in her realism. When she abandons her impartial humour and starts taking some of her characters more seriously in order to advance her "message", she becomes didactic and less convincing. This concerns mainly such central figures as Adam Bede and Dinah Morris. They both are conceived and presented with almost total admiration by the author and are consequently too good to be true. Adam Bede, like the character of Caleb Garth from the later novel "Middlemarch", reflects the Puritan influences of the author's own upbringing, from which she never got entirely free, and is partly drawn from her father. That

is also the main reason why Adam, who embodies exemplary behaviour and moral severity, too palpably becomes the author's spokesman.

In spite of these lapses into didacticism, George Eliot's first novel is remarkably unique in both vision and design. Her style is particularly apt and rich, and its felicities are not the results of a deliberate country comedy. As the author has striven "after a full vision of the medium in which a character moves as of the character itself" (6: 301) there is no part of the outer circle that does not affect the inner circle. The central tragic story of Hetty Sorrel is intimately connected with the carefully built-up background.

"SILAS MARNER"

The events described in "Silas Marner" are not dated with the same exactitude as is usual in George Eliot's work, but it is clear that they came about in the early years of the 19th century, i.e. on the very eve of the Victorian Age.

It is this remoteness in time and place, this naivety and rusticity that has made it possible for the author to tell the story with the utmost simplicity and with an equal play of humour. Although slight in scope and the least ambitious of her early work, it is, at the same time the most perfect and homogeneous one. It shows in its theme and structure the hand of a writer who has achieved a complete mastery over her craft and subject-matter.

Silas Marner, the sickly and undersized Methodist weaver, a product of the unsanitary mills of the Industrial Revolution, loses his faith in humanity and leaves his native town, when he is unfairly accused of a theft and found guilty by his brethren in the religious sect at Lantern Yard. Almost crazed by the injustice and perfidy of his friends, he wanders desolately through the country, and finally settles down on the edge of a secluded village, Raveloe, to resume his ancient craft of weaving.

The difference between Silas Marner's native Lantern Yard and the remote Raveloe village is so great as to make

communication between him and the new neighbours impossible. To the superstitious villagers it did not seem certain that "this trade of weaving, indispensable though it was, could be carried on entirely without the help of the Evil One". (7:1-2) The sound of the weaver's loom, not far from the edge of a deserted stone-pit was "questionable" and had "a half-fearful fascination for the Raveloe boys", but the gaze of his large, protuberant eyes "was always enough to make them take to their legs in terror". (7:3)

Thus driven to his own devices Silas Marner becomes a solitary man, whose only consolation in life, and a compensation for his daily toil, is the growing pile of golden coins, hidden in a pot under the floor of his cottage.

As was the case in "Adam Bede", the evil-doer of the commonfolk turns out to be the rich man. During Silas Marner's brief absence from the cottage, his hard-earned gold is stolen from him by the local squire's worthless son, Dunstan Cass, who suddenly disappears from the neighbourhood. Dunstan's elder brother, Godfrey commits another crime. Being in love with the rich farmer's daughter, Nancy Lammeter, he entirely neglects his legal wife of lower classes, whom he had secretly married behind the back of his father. Meditating revenge for Godfrey's refusal to recognize her, the unhappy woman carries her child, Eppie, to Raveloe, in one New Year's Eve. The ailing mother dies in snowstorm, but the child Eppie finds her way into Silas Marner's cottage.

Thus in the same magic way as Silas Marner had been robbed of his gold, he finds one day a golden-haired baby-girl on his hearth, as if to compensate for his lost fortune. To the foundling Eppie the weaver devotes himself as ardently as before to his gold. He adopts her, brings her up and wins her love. Like in a fairy-tale the gold has been transformed into human affection. Not only is Silas's love for the child returned, but he is now also accepted by the village community.

Subsequently all other mysteries of the novel are cleared up. After many years, the draining of a pond near Silas Marner's cottage, reveals the dead body of Dunstan

Cass with the stolen gold. Moved by this revelation Godfrey, who is now married to Nancy, but childless, acknowledges himself as the father of Eppie and claims his rights. The child refuses, however, to leave Silas Marner, her benefactor and foster-father.

Perhaps the greatest charm of "Silas Marner" lies in the fact that it is a fairy-tale saturated by realism, and the author's mellow humour. Her humour is, however, greatly different from that in "Adam Bede". This difference becomes strikingly evident in both the presentment of the locality, as well as in the portrayal of the quaint, eccentric rustics.

The first description of Raveloe, which immediately follows the introduction of the weaver, evokes an old-time rural community, fertile, pleasant, but isolated and backward ... "nestled in a snug well-wooded hollow, quite an hour's journey on horseback from any turnpike, where it was never reached by the vibrations of the coach-horn, or of public opinion". (7:4-5)

Gradually, however, the author's detachment from the scene she describes is revealed in the irony of her tone and in the mocking, patronizing manner. The dominant feature of the locality becomes now its slackness, dullness and spiritual torpor: ... "there were several chiefs in Raveloe who could farm badly quite at their ease, drawing enough money from their bad farming, in those war times, to live in a rollicking fashion, and keep a jolly Christmas, Whitsun, and Easter tide". (7:5)

As the narrative unfolds and George Eliot proceeds to depict the life of the leading families, her humorous, condescending tone becomes still more prominent. While in "Adam Bede" the author described with real enjoyment the cheerful, active life of the Poysers' Hall Farm, and the genteel elegance of the Donnithorne Chase that set the style to the whole community of Hayslope village, then in "Silas Marner" she ironically makes the Squire's Red House symbolize the slovenliness, disorder and inertia of the village Raveloe.

If Raveloe has its genuine wisdom, it is folk-wisdom,

a way of life that has scarcely changed over generations. And it is in the depiction of this wisdom, this "grey matter" of commonplace people, that George Eliot's humour acquires a different colouring and vigour.

Although the villagers are masterfully differentiated from one another, they speak, as it were, in chorus. In Raveloe the right opinion is the opinion that other people have, and George Eliot has brought this idea home to the reader in her masterful scenes in the Rainbow Inn. The author's prevalent humour in such scenes makes us feel that she is moving in her own element, among the commonplace "fellow mortals", she referred to in her famous XVII chapter in "Adam Bede" about the genuine realism: "It is these more or less ugly, stupid, inconsistent people, whose movements of goodness you should admire - for whom you should cherish all possible hopes, all possible patience". (5:172)

The scene in the Rainbow Inn forms a turning point in the novel, as in it Silas Marner, who has been, during the first part of the story, leading a solitary existence, and seen mainly through the suspicious eyes of the villagers, comes for the first time into an immediate contact with the community. (7:62-75; 76-83)

The scene in the Rainbow Inn is also typical of George Eliot's democratic view of the rural community in her early novels. She likes to lay stress on the humour of her rustic types, on their daily mannerisms and their merry-making, which also considerably relieves the moralizing tone her narrative is enveloped.

In both "Adam Bede" and "Silas Marner" her sympathy with the commonfolk becomes clearly evident. Beneath their rough exterior and illiterate speech she detects genuine honesty, sincerity and even nobility. Their feelings are benevolent, they sympathize with the sufferings of their neighbours. On the other hand, the rich people, the Squires and their sons are, as a rule, evil, cruel and unprincipled, they cause much harm to the community.

At the same time, one can also feel George Eliot's attempts at social compromise: the poor can be noble and be-

nevolent of spirit, but they must be satisfied with their humble lot. She considers the division of society into different classes normal and everlasting and looks upon any reorganization of the existing order with distrust.

"THE MILL ON THE FLOSS"

Of George Eliot's three early novels "The Mill on the Floss" is universally considered to be her best. It is also the most autobiographical book vivid with the impressions of the writer's own childhood.

The novel contains, however, certain values of its own. While in both "Adam Bede" and "Silas Marner" all "evil" and "immorality", everything that is negative, has been imposed on the farmers' world as if from the outside, from the injurious squierarchy, then in "The Mill on the Floss" George Eliot has for the first time depicted this world as driven by egotism, self-interest and callousness. It is a blankly materialistic world, ruled over by money and a sense of property.

The principal characters of the novel, Tom and Maggie, are children of the honest, but ignorant and obstinate Mr. Tulliver, owner of the Dorlcote Mill on the River Floss. In their childhood the sister and brother are affectionately devoted to each other, in spite of their great differences in character. In their adult life they drift wide apart.

Tom is a prosaic, unimaginative youth of narrow intellect but of a despotic disposition. He likes to exercise his power over other people, Maggie among them. Maggie, on the other hand, is a highly-strung, intelligent girl of great emotional sensitivity, artistic and poetic tastes.

From this conflict of temperaments and from the incompatibility of Maggie's character with her surroundings, the ultimate tragedy of the heroine ensues, which is more poignant and touching than that of Hetty Sorrel in the previous novel.

Maggie's love for her brother is impaired by the latter's utter misunderstanding of her character. She finds in

Philip Wakem, the crippled son of a neighbouring lawyer, a temperament like her own, and the two are mutually attracted. Unfortunately the lawyer happens to be Mr. Tulliver's bitter enemy in his growing state of bankruptcy, and Tom, who takes his father's side in the family misfortune, effects the disruption of Maggie's friendly relationship with Philip. Although Maggie yields to Tom's authority and ceases to see Philip, the first deep split between the sister and brother is the result of it. When after Mr. Tulliver's death Maggie entertains a new attraction for Stephen Guest, an educated and handsome young man from St. Ogg's, who is engaged to marry her cousin Lucy Dean, Tom turns her angrily out of his house, and the small-town society of St. Ogg's ostracizes her.

The novel ends with a dramatic description of the great spring flood which descends upon the Dorlcote Mill, Maggie, whose first thought in the danger is the safety of her brother, makes a desperate attempt to rescue Tom from the Mill; the boat, however, is overturned and both the sister and the brother are drowned.

George Eliot's great achievement in the novel is the masterful presentment of Maggie's character. She shows convincingly how Maggie, like Jane Eyre of Charlotte Brontë's novel, rises above her surroundings, both intellectually and emotionally. The heroine feels poignantly the limitations of its interests and ideals.

At the same time the narrow provincial outlook that George Eliot condemns, is characteristic of the author herself. Apart from her penetrating insight into Maggie's complicated nature, she judges her heroine from the ingrained Puritan viewpoint of her own. Maggie is different from the local moral norms, she revolts against them, and thereby causes the unhappiness of many people - Philip, Stephen, Lucy, her parents. Consequently she herself must be punished and perish.

In the light of this moralizing tendency Maggie's ruin strikes the reader as arbitrary, and the dramatic finale of the novel, slightly melodramatic.

In "The Mill on the Floss" as in the two other novels of the period George Eliot is at her best when she forgets her moralizing attitudes and concentrates her attention on the "local colour", on the particular provincialism of her native district.

The provincial town St. Ogg's is drawn with many masterful descriptions and scenes. The author is especially successful when she sets out to contrast the two different local families, the Tullivers and the Dodsons, Maggie's relatives from her father's and mother's side respectively.

The Tullivers are uneconomical people, more emotional than calculating. They are often senselessly generous, not always thinking of the value of money. The disastrous effect of these family traits finds its expression in the ultimate bankruptcy of the mill-owner, Mr. Tulliver.

The Dodsons, on the contrary, are practical people, who have risen from simple farmers to wealth and prosperity. Thanks to their business acumen and an instinct of hoarding money, they have achieved a firm position in their narrow world.

The Dodsons are also the chief fount of George Eliot's criticism and satire. In the depiction of the various ramifications of this purse-proud clan, the four sisters and their husbands, the author has achieved more magnificent comedy than anywhere else in the novel. Carefully placed near the top of the lower middle class, the Dodsons have attained a respectability which is honourable as well as absurd. The family itself is valued more for the preservation and transmission of the property than for any other, purely human traits. They have a tradition of "good house-keeping", which also accounts for their family pride and self-complacency. They have a considerable contempt for those who lack the qualities of "getting on" in life, and an extreme sensitivity to their neighbours' good opinion. From the same source of family pride and complacency come also their petty rivalries, jealousies, lawsuits and slander. For the Dodsons the life is, in the real sense of the word, a battle for survival. They would let a neighbour starve

and a brother go bankrupt - they give no sympathy to others and require none in return.

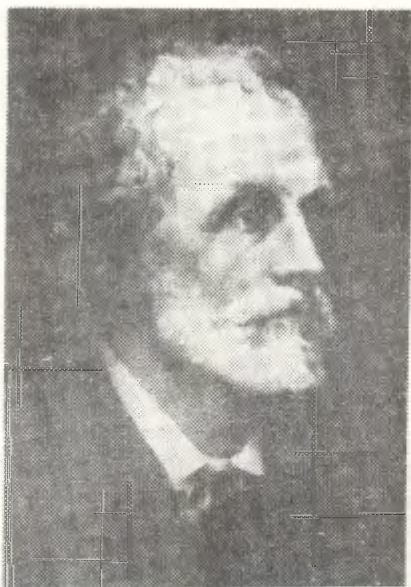
With the depiction of the two rival families, the Tullivers and the Dodsons, the local way of life, the local cast of mind, is vividly brought home to the reader. The author's competent use of the Warwickshire dialect enhances her penetrating observation of the English provincial habits and customs in the first half of the 19th century.

R e f e r e n c e s

1. Decker, C.R. The Victorian Conscience. New York, 1952.
2. Adam, I. Profiles in Literature. George Eliot. - London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.
3. Eliot, G. Scenes of Clerical Life. Everyman's Library No. 468. - London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1925.
4. Allen, W. George Eliot, New York - London, 1964.
5. Eliot, G. Adam Bede. Everyman's Library No. 27. - London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 193G.
6. Allot, M. Novelists on the Novel. London, 1967.
7. Eliot, G. Silas Marner, the Weaver of Raveloe. Everyman's Library No. 121. - London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1928.

GEORGE MEREDITH

(1828-1908)



Like George Eliot, Meredith is prominent among the late-Victorian novelists. The names of the two writers have often been coupled together.

It is hardly accurate, however, to rank Meredith as a successor of George Eliot since his first work preceded hers and his first important novel, "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel" (1859), was published the same year as George Eliot's "Adam Bede". But as his public recognition and his great influence on the subsequent writers came after George Eliot's death, he might be regarded as continuing the realistic tra-

ditions of his predecessor. Like George Eliot, he possessed a philosophy of life based on the current scientific thought. Like her, he was also a representative of psychological realism and one of the first modern novelists.

Life and Literary Career

George Meredith was born in 1828 in Hampshire, Portsmouth of an English family of both Welsh and Irish ancestors. His grandfather had been a prosperous tailor and Navy out-

fitter in Portsmouth. His father was an adventurer (portrayed in the novel "Harry Richmond"), who mixed freely with the Navy officers at the port town.

Young Meredith got a good education at Portsmouth and Southsea. Later he spent two years as a schoolboy in Germany. He was placed in a lawyer's office in London and destined to legal career. Being interested in literature he began to contribute articles to various magazines, edited a provincial paper, wrote poetry, and soon gave up law for literature.

In London Meredith became associated with a group of literary people and radically-minded intellectuals. At his life-time the radicals presented the extreme left wing in the British Parliament. They fought for the extension of electoral rights, and for a reform of the educational system. Their political programme was, however, typical of the liberal petty-bourgeois intellectuals and their views of the antagonism of classes bore a reconciliatory character. Although Meredith's links with the radicals were never very close, he liked to call himself a radical up to the end of his life, showing thereby his protest against the reactionary policy of the British government, especially against its imperialist leanings.

Apart from his contribution to the periodical press Meredith worked for many years as a Reader for the famous publishing house Chapman and Hall. His immediate task was to read the new MSS submitted to the firm and present his reviews. His connections with the publishing house widened considerably his literary horizon. He got personally acquainted with many beginning, promising writers, and was the first to read their works, Thomas Hardy, Samuel Butler and George Gissing among them.

Meredith's own literary career might be divided into three main periods: I period - the '50s and '60s. II period - the '70s; and III period - the '80s and '90s. His creative work during this long and fertile span of time, running into fifty years, includes poetry, novels, short stories and literary criticism.

Meredith began his literary career as a poet. In 1851 he published his first collection, "Poems". About the same time he had temporarily fallen under the influence of a group of neo-romantic poets and artists, including Rossetti and Swinburne. In 1850 the group, known in English literary history as "The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood", had united to resist the existing conventions in art and literature by a return to the aesthetic forms as they supposed to exist in European art before the time of Raphael. Meredith's connections with the pre-Raphaelites did not last long as the latter's attachment to the mysticism of the Middle Ages and to decorative forms of verse were foreign to his nature. His next early collection of poems, "Modern Love and Poems of the Roadside" (1861), was deeply autobiographical, describing the story of gradual estrangement between husband and wife (Meredith's own first marriage had run on the rocks). In these poems Meredith's strong bent for psychological analysis becomes first clearly evident. His poems remind us of the lyric monologues of Robert Browning, who served as one of his models. In the lyric tradition that goes back to Shelley are also written his natural scenes of the different seasons of the year. (1:5). This is also true of the well-known poem "South-West Wind in the Woodlands" from the first collection, "Poems". Meredith is generally considered to be a great master in the depiction of English landscape, its mellow rural scenery, its sea coast, woods and parks. These landscape pictures are to be met in many of his verses, especially in the short popular poem, "Love in the Valley". (1:5)

Although Meredith considered himself to be first and foremost a poet, he has gone into English literary history as a novelist, whose psychological approach to the character exercised a considerable influence on many of the contemporary and subsequent writers.

Meredith's early prose works, a burlesque tale, "The Shaving of Shagpot" (1856), followed by "Farina, a Legend of Cologne" (1857), a Gothic novel, remain his tentative, immature researches. He began his true literary career with

his first important novel, "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel" (1859), a realistic story from the English upper classes. Although the novel brought him popularity among intellectual circles, it did not sell well, and for a long time his means were scanty and precarious. He contributed mainly to periodicals, especially to the "Fortnightly Review", in which much of his later work was published.

The theme of Meredith's first novel "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel", the theme of education, is central in his whole work. He often comes back to this theme, and ultimately it also conditions his endeavours to tackle the burning social issues of his time from an ethic standpoint, like his contemporary, George Eliot.

The main conflict of the novel is between two generations, two different systems of thought. The elder generation is represented by Sir Austin Feverel, a wealthy baronet and owner of Raynham Abbey, who has been deserted by his wife and left with a son to bring up. Sir Austin prides himself on his erudition and wisdom, which in concise form have found expression in his anonymous book of aphorisms, "The Pilgrim's Scip". He has worked out a whole system of education which consists in keeping the son at home as, in his opinion, schools corrupt young people. Above all the father wants to keep the son from his own sad experiences, "the temptation of flesh". The breakdown of Sir Austin's old-fashioned system of education is due to follow. His son Richard, a high-spirited, freedom-loving youth, falls in love with the neighbouring farmer's daughter, Lucy Desborough, a charming, unspoilt girl, who lacks, however, the high birth to recommend her to the old baronet. The attempts to break the attachment between the young people result in their secret marriage and the rage of the father, who cruelly secures the separation of the couple by making use of his son's love for him. The net of intrigues, skilfully spun by Sir Austin and his accomplices, bring Richard more ordeals than he can bear. Ordered to meet his father in London, Richard falls temporarily a victim to the lures of an artful society woman, specially prepared for him by the cynic Lord

Mountfalcon, who meanwhile has "designs" on the defenceless, unsophisticated Lucy.

When Richard learns that he is a father, and after a long absence returns to Raynham Abbey, he challenges Lord Mountfalcon who is said to have been flirting with his wife. In the following duel Richard is seriously wounded, and the loving Lucy, for whom the shock has been too severe, goes mad and dies.

Sir Austin's philosophy of life, laid down in "The Pilgrim's Scrip" and put into practice in the education of his son, is the main object of Meredith's criticism. Already from the first chapters of the novel the author's negative attitude towards this big landowner, "a thorough good Tory", as well as towards the other inmates of the Raynham Abbey, becomes evident. Among the latter the most conspicuous is Sir Austin's widowed sister, Mrs. Doria Forey, who has "a reputation for understanding men; and that with these practical creatures, always means the art of managing them". (2:6) This great lady shares in all respects her brother's conservative Toryism and has "a shudder at young men of republican sentiments". (2:6)

Another of Sir Austin's "intellectual favourites, chosen from mankind to superintend the education of his son" (2:8), is his nephew Adrian Harley. The author calls him ironically "an epicurean; one whom Epicurus would have scourged of his garden, certainly; an epicurean of our modern notions". (2:7) While Sir Austin has difficulties in bringing up his son, "Adrian Harley had mastered his philosophy at the early age of one-and-twenty". (2:7) He was "polished, luxurious and happy", and although he did not solicit the favourable judgement of the world, he was universally proclaimed to be "moral, as well as wise". (2:7) Finishing his thumbnail sketch of this cynic offspring of the aristocracy, the author notes that Adrian "enjoyed his reputation for virtue as something additional. Stolen fruits are said to be sweet; undeserved rewards are exquisite". (2:7)

Apart from his exposure of the landed aristocracy at Raynham Abbey Meredith has introduced a number of their

counterparts in the capital, above all Lord Mountfalcon and his companion, the Hon. Peter Brayder. The first is a notorious lady-killer, whose "gold, his title and his person" have hitherto preserved him from "having long to sigh in vain". (2:407) The other is more openly serving as a parasite for his lordship and doing "his villainies for him". (2:407) Acting secretly according to the orders of Sir Austin, both play a sinister part in the "ordeal of Richard Feverel".

The conflict between the prejudice or stupidity and a more emancipated view of life is also the main theme in Meredith's next novel, "Evan Harrington" (with the subtitle "He Wanted to Become a Gentleman"), published serially during the year 1860 and in book form in 1861. It is the story of a tailor's son, who comes into a clash with the stifling atmosphere of the "high life". Meredith, himself the grandson of a Portsmouth tailor, had to suffer the scourge of social inequality in his adolescence.

In "Rhoda Fleming" (1865) Meredith has widened his scope to deal with the psychology, morals and manners of different social classes. He convincingly demonstrates the decadence and corruption of the aristocratic and bourgeois youth, its links with the criminal world. Indirectly he also allows the reader to feel the sharpening of class contradictions and the emergence of new, democratic forces. The author's point of view has been expressed more clearly than in the previous novels, the style has become considerably free from his typical mannerisms. "Rhoda Fleming" also introduces for the first time the theme of women emancipation that became central in many of Meredith's later novels. It is a passionate protest against the inequality of women in bourgeois-aristocratic England.

The same tendencies to democratism and simplicity are still more clearly to be felt in Meredith's two other novels of the period - "Emilia in England" (1864), later renamed as "Sandra Belloni", and its sequel "Vittoria". (1867) Both books describe the hard life of an Italian singer, Sandra Belloni in the background of the Italian liberation movement. The central theme of many Meredith's

novels - the inferior position of women in bourgeois-aristocratic society - has found here an original interpretation.

In the first novel, Emilia Sandra Belloni, daughter of a poor Italian singer, has fled to England in order to avoid the persecution of the Austrian oppressors. Together with her father she is forced to experience many of the hardships, typical of emigrant life. She is the possessor of a fine but untrained voice, and becomes a public singer. Under an acute inner trouble, an unhappy love-affair, she loses temporarily her voice and cannot take part in performances.

The scene of the novel's sequel, "Vittoria", is laid in Northern Italy in the period of the first national uprising of 1848, at the inspiration of Mazzini, against the Austrian dominion. We next meet the heroine at the "conservatorio" of Milan, where she has come for voice training. Brought up in deep love for Italy by her father, she places her recovered voice at the service of the Italian cause, and the patriots, who look upon her as a symbol of victory, call her - Vittoria. The climax of the novel is reached in a scene at the La Scala where Vittoria, now a famous prima-donna, is risking her life by singing the central aria of an opera composed in the fighting mood of the patriots. The last act, which is meant to be a signal for the Italian uprising, is nearing to its close. The atmosphere in the hall is extremely tense. The authorities of the Austrian government, who are present, try to put an end to the performance as they are afraid of a possible demonstration. A group of the Italian patriots, however, enter on the stage and raise the curtain over Vittoria's head. The people in the hall have stood up and listen enthusiastically to the last words of Vittoria's aria: "Italy will be free!"

During the Italian-Austrian war Meredith himself visited Venice as a newspaper correspondent in 1866, which also accounts for the patriotic mood of the two novels about Sandra Belloni.

Meredith's reputation was growing steadily, until after the death of George Eliot he stood at the head of the Eng-

lish novelists. Especially during the II period of his literary career, in the '70s, his work reveals a great artistic upheaval. Two of his novels - "Beauchamp's Career" (1874-1875) and "Egoist" (1879) - might be called his masterpieces.

"Beauchamp's Career" is extremely varied in the treatment of its subject-matter, but above all it is remarkable for the imaginative creation of the political atmosphere of the '50s and '60s in England.

The hero of the novel, Nevil Beauchamp, the son of a poor colonel, who is adopted by his rich uncle, Hon. Everard Romfrey, comes into conflict with his aristocratic surroundings. Since his early youth Nevil has been inspired by the democratic ideas of the republicans and radicals, his great idol being Thomas Carlyle.

Nevil's career begins in the navy, where he shows himself a gallant officer. The Crimean War opens for him the real possibilities of putting his ideals into practice. He returns from the front more rebellious and freedom-loving than ever. He plunges into politics, standing as a Radical candidate for the parliament. During this hectic time of political activities he falls under the influence of Dr. Shrapnel, a republican and free-thinker, an enthusiastic servant in the cause of humanity.

In the eyes of Nevil's uncle and his conservative friends, however, Dr. Shrapnel represents everything that is detestable and abominable, and they do everything in their power to annihilate his influence on Nevil. Although Nevil's candidature is at first supported by both the Liberals and the Radicals, the Conservatives set up an atmosphere of intrigues around him and his "utopian" political programme, as the result of which he suffers defeat at the elections.

Not only are Nevil's radical ideas a source of distress for his uncle, but also his unconventional love-affairs. Nevil is torn between his love for two diametrically different women - a married French lady and an ideal English girl - and loses both. Harassed and unhappy, he falls dan-

gerously ill. Although he recovers, and finally marries Dr. Shrapnel's ward, Jenny Denham, his happiness does not last long. His "career" comes to a sudden end as he gets drowned while trying to rescue the child of a neighbour from the sea.

One of Meredith's achievements in realistic portraiture in the novel is the true-to-life figure of the Hon. Everard Romfrey. Like Sir Austin Feverel from the earlier novel, Nevil's uncle is a "thorough good Tory", a typical representative of the out-dated hereditary aristocracy, "a medieaval gentleman" with firm convictions belonging to the 12th century. Above all he hates democratic ideas. Thus, for instance, he entertains no fellow-feeling for the Negroes, seeing in them only a certain amount of labour power, a lower human race that should be kept in obedience by the whip. A supporter of the fist-law and violence, he is ready to settle accounts with his political opponent, Dr. Shrapnel, by horsewhipping the latter half dead. At the same time Meredith's attitude towards the Hon. Everard Romfrey is equivocal. Apart from his penetrating criticism of this spokesman of aristocracy, the author admires him for his wilful character, his grim humour and even for his eccentricity. This ambiguous point of view is corroborated by the finale of the novel in which the former enemies - Dr. Shrapnel and Everard Romfrey have been reconciled, holding each other's hand at the dead body of Nevil Beauchamp.

By the end of the '70s Meredith had worked out his aesthetic views. He had first set forth his "philosophy of art and literature" in a lecture delivered at the London Institute in 1877, on "The Idea of Comedy". The same year it was published as a journal essay - "The Idea of Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit", and later in book form. (1897)

In this essay Meredith offers a critical survey of the evolution of comedy, beginning with its rise in ancient Greek and Roman literature, and ending with its decline in the contemporary English and French fiction. He characterizes the nature of the different aspects of the "Comic Spirit" - satire, irony, humour - and their role in litera-

ture and real life. He even brings these aspects into correlation with the different stages in the development of human society.

In Meredith's opinion tragedy serves didactic aims as it "teaches" us. The satirist is a moral agent, often a social scavenger "working on a storage of bile". (3:306) The value of comedy, on the other hand, is "to touch and kindle the mind through laughter". (3:305) A comic character is not only ridiculous, he is also pitiable, and therefore we laugh at him. In this way comedy shows what people really are, although it does not indicate the right way for the future, it prepares this future, makes it, in fact, possible.

As a writer Meredith distrusts satire and irony, he emphasizes the greater importance of comedy in man's life. In his opinion, comedy is the weapon of intelligence against folly, stupidity and dullness. It is the weapon of civilization against barbarism, the best remedy against the ills of modern life. He even holds that comedy is a genuine emancipation of humanity when it has learned the significance of living in civilized society. It is, in fact, a neglected social force.

All Meredith's novels should be read in the light of this essay. His programmatic novel, however, is "The Egoist. A Comedy in Narrative", published in 1879. In his preface to the novel he once again defines the function of comedy: "Comedy is a game played to throw reflections on social life ... In other words ... the inward mirror, the embracing and condensing spirit, is required to give us interminable milepost piles of matter in essence, in chosen samples, digestible." (1:23/24)

Having thus, with the help of the "Comic Spirit" defined the method of his "narrative", Meredith enters, to some extent, into polemics with the strong naturalistic tendencies of the English novel at the turn of the centuries. In the same preface, for instance, he writes that "credulity is not wooed through the impressionable senses, nor have we recourse to the small circular glow of the watchmaker's eye

to raise in bright relief minutest grains of evidence". (1: 23) The amassing of unnecessary details, the eagerness to find the cause of people's unhappiness in hereditary factors, might, in his opinion, belittle the role of their own will and reason. Contrary to the naturalists who often concentrate their attention on the seamy sides of life, Meredith proposes to detect "human nature in the drawing-room of civilized men and women, where we have no dust of the struggling outer world, no mire, no violent crashes". (1:23)

In "The Egoist" Meredith duly follows the aesthetic principles laid down in the preface. The main theme of the novel is the ridicule of an extremely widespread folly of the civilized society - egoism. The author sets out to analyse some ten main characters and several secondary figures in the spirit of a grave "Comedy". The central figure is Sir Willoughby Patterne, member of the landed gentry, a rich, young and handsome man, who is insufferably egoistic and conceited. Meredith does not make, however, his hero an abstraction to illustrate the thesis of egoism, but convincingly demonstrates that he is a typical product of his aristocratic upbringing and surroundings.

In spite of the great privileges of rank and wealth Sir Willoughby does not have any luck in finding a "suitable" life companion. Laetitia Dale, a pretty neighbouring woman with brains, has long cherished a romantic passion for the young baronet, which the latter has not discouraged, but she is too poor, shy and socially insignificant to answer the qualities of a Lady Patterne. Willoughby's relatives and neighbours consider it, therefore, quite natural when he proposes to a more worthy young lady, Constantia Durham. When during their courtship Constantia has found out Sir Willoughby's true nature and suddenly eloped with an officer of hussars, the baronet receives the first blow on his selfishness and conceit. To his great dismay he soon realizes that he is not better off with his second fiancée either. Clara Middleton, the daughter of a professor, a girl of intellect and spirit, rebels against Sir Willoughby's arrogant self-assurance. Clara's liberation is a long-

er affair than that of Constantia, her predecessor, and forms, in fact, the main theme of the novel. It is through the intellectual conflict with Clara that Sir Willoughby is held up to ridicule by the "Comic Spirit", and his egoism best revealed. Sensing Clara's reluctance to obey him blindly, the baronet fights desperately against a second jilting. He cunningly wins the support of Clara's father, who is not indifferent to the privileges of rank and not free from prejudices himself. His haughty mother, Lady Patterne, also does everything in her power to save the son from public disgrace.

On the opposite side are the liberally-minded scholar Vernon Whitford and young Crossjay, son of Lieutenant Patterne, a poor relation, who had been insulted by the baronet and not welcomed as a guest at the Patterne Hall. It is Crossjay, the unruly little lad, who finally becomes the instrument of Clara's release, by unintentionally telling her some uncomplimentary facts concerning Sir Willoughby's behaviour towards his father and Laetitia Dale. When Clara breaks her engagement and marries Vernon Whitford, the baronet finds himself doubly humiliated. Although in the end he manages to win the hand of the twice-rejected and therefore reluctant Laetitia, it is clear that theirs is not an "ideal" marriage. Thus in the treatment of Sir Willoughby Meredith has followed the last words in the preface, meant for the epitaph of the hero: "Through very love of self himself he slew". (1:28)

Clara Middleton is an important character in Meredith's gallery of types as she clearly expresses his views of women emancipation. Largely thanks to this interest he excelled in delineating female characters of a fascinating complexity. In "Diana of the Crossways" (1885), a novel that achieved a wide popularity, especially among female readers, the heroine, Diana Warwick, escapes from her domineering husband and fights her battle single-handed, until after her husband's death, she marries Thomas Redworth, who like Vernon Whitford from the previous novel, is a more enlightened and humane man.

The emancipation of women is also the main theme in Meredith's last three novels of the final period of his career. In "One of Our Conquerors" (1891) two young people, Victor Radnor and Natalia Dreighton fight for their love which is not legalized by marriage. In both "Lord Ormont and His Aminta" (1894) and "The Amazing Marriage" (1895) the revolt is that of the wife against the tyranny of the husband.

Apart from his novels and poetry Meredith has also written a great number of short stories and tales of which the most characteristic are "The House on the Beach" (1877) and "The Case of General Ople and Lady Camper". (1890)

Like George Eliot, George Meredith emerged on the English literary scene when the "Great Pleiads" of novelists, with Charles Dickens at the head, had said their last word. In the new social conditions when all the illusions about the "Victorian prosperity" had been lost, Meredith carried on the traditions of critical realism exposing the egoism and hypocrisy of the English ruling classes, although from an ethic-aesthetic viewpoint.

Meredith's whole work "is marked by a highly intellectual criticism of life, and freedom from sentimentality, by a capacity for coining aphorisms and well-turned phrases". (4:199) His extraordinarily deep psychological insight or introspection lends dramatic tension to his novels and at the same time allows him objectively to depict reality.

Admitting that Meredith belonged to the advanced thinkers of his time, who interpreted man and his life in the terms of modern psychology and the theory of evolution, we can at the same time also detect some faults in his artistic method. His psychological analysis is often impressionistic and fanciful. Incidentally, carried away from the main theme, he diverts from the subject. He expects the reader to be on the same intellectual level with his characters. Moreover, he expects the reader to understand through implications, gestures and intonations, as if the book were acted and not read.

This all makes his analysis sometimes obscure and his novels difficult to read as they lack formal structure. Owing

to these peculiarities of his style and treatment he was for many years lacking a large body of readers. It was only later that he found both ardent admirers and many imitators, John Galsworthy and Henry James among them.

R e f e r e n c e s

1. Meredith, G. The Egoist. A Comedy in Narrative. - M.: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962.
2. Meredith, G. The Ordeal of Richard Feverel. Everyman's Library No. 916. - London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1935.
3. Lovett, R.M., Hughes, H.S. The History of the Novel in England. - London-Bombay-Sidney: Harrap, 1933.
4. Дьяконова, Н.Н., Амелина, Т.А. Хрестоматия по английской литературе. XIX. - Ленинград: Просвещение, 1978.

P A R T II

English Literature in the Age of Imperialism

1880-1910

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Beginning from the 1870s Great Britain enters a new period, imperialism. Like in other European countries this transition from capitalism to imperialism brings with itself many contradictions and a general political and economic crisis. In Great Britain, as a highly developed capitalist country, this crisis is revealed more clearly and in its classical form: 1) concentration of production and capital in larger units, and the emergence of monopolies; 2) the growth of banking capital and its closer links with industry; 3) export of capital and capital goods rather than consumer goods; 4) the joining together of monopolies into international groups, etc. (1:81-82)

Owing to Great Britain's leading position in the world market, however, especially owing to the merciless exploitation of colonies, class struggle acquires a rather sporadic and obscure form. Only at the turn of the century, when a fierce colonial struggle for the division of the world among the imperialist powers begins, and British Empire is threatened by powerful competitors, does class struggle become more organized and purposeful.

The two leading political parties in the British government, the Conservatives and the Liberals, come alternatively to power. Especially the Conservatives have gone into history for their aggressive imperialist policy (Benjamin Disraeli, Joseph Chamberlain).

Already in 1869 Great Britain had obtained her control over the Suez Canal, and in the '70s Cyprus was annexed from Turkey. In 1876 Queen Victoria proclaimed herself as the

Empress of India. Colonial wars were waged in Afghanistan, South Africa and the Far East (Burma). Egypt was occupied in 1881. In 1886 the occupation of Sudan was carried out with extraordinary atrocity, and between 1899-1902 the notorious Boer War took place that became unpopular even in Great Britain.

All these events in British aggressive foreign policy found also, directly or indirectly reflection in English literature of the period. The greater part of English writers took an anti-imperialist position, although, as before, they refrained from openly commenting on the topical political issues. There was only a small group of chauvinist writers - Rudyard Kipling, William Ernest Henley, Henry Rider Haggard, etc. - who approved of British colonial expansion and devoted their work to imperialist propaganda.

While British foreign policy was considered to be a dangerous subject to tackle, the great revolutionary events abroad found more often immediate reflection in the literature of the period. It is especially true of the Paris Commune (John Ruskin, William Morris, Gerard H. Hopkins, etc.), and of the national liberation movement in Italy (George Meredith, Ethel Voynich, Robert Browning, Algernon Ch. Swinburne, etc.). The national liberation movement in Ireland, the fight for Irish Home Rule found reflection in the works of some writers (Bernard Shaw, Matthew Arnold, George Moore, etc.), although it did not become a special theme in English literature. At the same time it marked the revival of Irish national literature (William B. Yeats, John M. Synge).

The close of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century was a period of shifting and contradictory currents in thought and literature. It had, however, some specific traits of its own.

1. One of the characteristic features of English literature of the period is its pessimism, which becomes prevalent in all genres. The optimism of such revolutionary romanticists as William Morris or Ethel Voynich, remains still an

exceptional phenomenon. Even such essentially optimistic and affirmative writers as Samuel Butler, George Meredith, Herbert G. Wells, John Galsworthy and Bernard Shaw become often sceptics. On the other hand, the work of such "apostles of practical activity", the spokesmen of "action-for-action's-sake" as Rudyard Kipling or William Henley, is marked by an undercurrent fatalism and stoicism, which also verges on pessimism.

The great advances of science, which in the conditions of socialism could have consolidated materialist world outlook, exercised a contrary effect on many intellectuals in the bourgeois England. Life seemed to have become a series of chemical symbols and therefore senseless.

Pessimism and a negation of life became first evident in poetry (Edward Fitzgerald, James Thomson, Ernest Dowson, etc.). It reached its highest peak, however, in prose fiction, in the works of such writers as Thomas Hardy and George Gissing.

2. Although the great realists of the late-Victorian period, such as George Eliot, George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, followed the traditions of native critical realism, nevertheless many foreign influences started playing an important part in the development of English literature, especially at the turn of the centuries. Of these influences the most important were: a) the French; b) the Russian; and c) the Scandinavian influence.

The French decadent poets Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, etc., had their part to play in the shaping of English aestheticism and symbolism (Oscar Wilde, Arthur Symonds, etc.). The influence of the French realists and naturalists - Balzac, Flaubert, Maupassant, Zola - was, however, wider, affecting to a greater or smaller extent all the representative writers of the period.

Among the Russian realists, largely read and imitated, were Tolstoy, Turgenev, Dostoevsky and Chekhov.

The Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen played an important part in the revival and rebirth of English drama (Bernard Shaw, Granville Barker, Arthur Pinero, etc.).

3. Another typical feature of English literature of the period is its variety. When during the early and mid-Victorian period English literature was marked by an homogeneous development then towards the end of the century, a disintegration process sets in. A number of smaller literary groupings came into being, such as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, the aesthetes-symbolists, the naturalists, the neo-romanticists, the chauvinists, etc. All these groupings were sharply different from one another, both in their world outlook and conception of art. Taken as a whole, however, they strikingly reflected the deep ideological crisis at the turn of the century.

THOMAS HARDY

(1840-1928)



Thomas Hardy is the greatest representative of the late 19th-century critical realism in England. He has often been called the "last of the Victorians", who continued the democratic tendencies of his famous predecessors - Dickens and Thackeray.

Hardy came to literature at the close of the century when British Imperialism was well under way. As seen from the various decadent currents of the period, bourgeois civilization

and culture had reached an impasse. Although Hardy was among the few democratic writers, who did not join reaction and decadence, his own literary work also reflects the crisis of the period.

Quite early in his career Hardy became aware of the sharp contradictions in the progress of British capitalism, that made themselves felt in the mighty economic upheaval. These contradictions deepened his critical attitude towards bourgeois civilization in general. Living in the solitude of the country, however, away from the democratic movements of the day, he was not always able to analyse the social

sores of his time, still, less to suggest any way out of the crisis. As a result, his work is imbued with a sense of deep pessimism, and with a morose hopelessness as regards human existence in general.

Apart from the contradictions in social reality, Hardy's pessimistic outlook of life was greatly due to the various scientific and philosophic tendencies of his time. Having been a religious man in his formative years, he was greatly affected by the collapse of his faith in Christianity under the influence of the prevailing evolutionary theories. (Darwin, Spencer, etc.). Optimistic in their content, these theories filled Hardy with a sense of the paltriness of the human situation. He was also influenced by the pessimistic German metaphysical systems (von Hartmann, Schopenhauer, etc.). Partly, however, his pessimistic world outlook can be explained by his life-long admiration for the art of the great Greek tragic dramatists (Sophocles, Aeschylus, etc.). Hardy's tragic conception of "fate" comes often close to the Greek tragedians' "moira". According to the ancient "moira", misfortunes might befall man at his happiest moments through sheer chance. In the life of Hardy's characters an unhappy "chance" or "coincidence" frequently plays a fatal role. Ironical fate, as if interferes with the best aspirations of his men and women, and smites them at last. (2:48)

Hardy's pessimistic view of the world, his idealistic conception of "fate" are in conflict with his stern realism. As compared with his great Victorian predecessors, his best work marks a step backward. On the other hand, he was a bold seeker of truth, and the psychology of his characters is often presented with a greater penetration than that of a Dickens or a Thackeray. There is also no denying of his ultimate humanist and democratic tendencies, which become evident in all his works.

Life and Literary Career

Thomas Hardy was born in 1840 at Upper Bockhampton, near Dorchester, as the son of a local builder. He grew up in the countryside and from his boyhood was familiar with its peo-

ple, their customs, stories, legends and songs. Both his grandfather and father had been village musicians, who played in the orchestra of the parish church. They also offered their services at the singing of Christmas carols, the harvest homes, weddings and dances on the village green. Hardy often took part in these musical activities and himself played the fiddle. Thus the future novelist spent his early years in a musical atmosphere, and at the same time got acquainted with the ancient customs of the locality.

At the age of 16 Hardy was articled to the local architect in Dorchester. As the architect's apprentice he was employed in making drawings for the restoration of churches and other ancient buildings. Through this occupation he became acquainted with various family histories and domestic tragedies, which he later turned into good account in his novels and stories.

Six years later he went to London and worked at the office of a well-known architect, Bromfield, intending to take up architecture as his future profession. In London he also improved his education, by reading much, visiting picture galleries and concerts. After his brief stay in the capital, he returned to Dorchester, and remained there the rest of his life.

During his long and fertile literary career, that lasted almost seventy years, Hardy wrote in various genres. He published novels, short stories, poems and controversial articles. He has gone into English literary history, however, preeminently as a novelist, although his poetry, especially the epic drama "The Dynasts", also deserves attention.

According to his own classification, Hardy's novels have been divided into three groups:

I. Novels of Character and Environment: "Under the Greenwood Tree" (1872); "Far from the Madding Crowd" (1874); "The Return of the Native" (1878); "The Mayor of Casterbridge" (1886); "The Woodlanders" (1887); "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" (1891); and "Jude the Obscure" (1895).

II. Romances and Fantasies: "A Pair of Blue Eyes" (1873); "The Trumpet-Major" (1880); "Two on a Tower" (1882); and "The Well-Beloved" (1897).

III. Novels of Ingenuity: "Desperate Remedies" (1871); "The Hand of Ethelberta" (1876); "A Laodicean" (1881).

Out of these 14 published novels the cycle "Novels of Character and Environment" (1872-1895) is unanimously considered to be his best and most characteristic work.

The idea of the cycle was not conceived by Hardy right from the beginning. It was many years after the publication of his novels, when preparing his first prose collection in 1912, that he decided to combine seven of them under the general heading "Novels of Character and Environment" or the "Wessex cycle". It is in these novels that Hardy's development as a writer can best be observed. These novels also reveal the strong and weak points of his critical realism.

"The Novels of Character and Environment", or as they are more often called "The Wessex Novels", depict the life in the county of Dorsetshire (Dorset), where Hardy was born and bred and where he lived his long life. As a native of Dorset, he had witnessed the prosperity of the old patriarchal village, and also seen its decadence in the conditions of British industrial capitalism. As he appreciated the vivid past and the weird, ancient customs of Dorset with the love of a patriot, he was dismayed and grieved to see their inevitable doom. His village patriotism partly also accounts for the pessimistic outlook of the Wessex novels.

As a historian of Wessex, Hardy belongs to a long list of English novelists who have made a limited region the main locale of their novels. He is akin to Fielding, many of whose characters belong to Dorset and Somerset. He follows the Brontës (Yorkshire), George Eliot (Warwickshire), Trollope (Barchester), etc. in the development of the literary genre, known as regionalism.

The term "Wessex" in Hardy's novels confines with a fair degree of accuracy to the famous historical area of the Wessex Kingdom (one of the seven kingdoms of the ancient

West-Saxons in the 5th-9th centuries). On occasion, however, Hardy's Wessex somewhat extends beyond those ancient borders. It comprises the whole of Dorset(shire), some parts of Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somersetshire, Devonshire, and Oxfordshire, with occasional references to places in Cornwall and Berkshire. As it becomes clear from Hardy's novels, he divides his "Wessex" into North-Wessex, South-Wessex, Mid-Wessex, Lower-Wessex and Upper-Wessex, thus comprising the greater part of the South and South-Western counties of England. The names of the towns and larger villages are, as a rule, thinly disguised in the novels, but easily recognizable for their geographic situation and Hardy's true-to-life picture of them.

Though Hardy's fictional Wessex comprises a comparatively large area, it is mainly to his home county, Dorset, that he has devoted his loving care and almost scientific study. Dorset also forms the central scene of the "Novels of Character and Environment" and he seldom leaves for long its boundaries.

The Wessex novels, written in the course of 23 years (1872-1895), reflect the development of Hardy's world outlook, his aesthetic views on art and literature. He begins with idyllic pictures of village life and gradually reaches his typical treatment of tragic fates. In all these novels Nature plays an important role. It is not merely an element of the village setting, it takes an active part in the fate of his characters. It embodies the primitive, unsophisticated way of life that comes into conflict with the degrading forces of civilization.

Hardy's pen is never surer than when he is writing about nature, about countryside. His knowledge of the different Wessex "nooks" is not only extensive but also intimate and first-hand. He takes his reader to a county he knows well and finds pleasure in describing.

"UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE"

Hardy's first novel of the cycle, "Under the Greenwood Tree", forms a kind of exception, in the sense that it is

not tragic or pessimistic. It describes the self-contained country world of the 1830s, before the intrusion of industrialism and bourgeois civilization.

The main theme of the novel is a country love-idyll between Dick Dewy, a poor uneducated village youth, and Fanny Day, the local schoolmistress. Dick has two rivals, the village pastor, Mr. Maybold, and a rich farmer. Although the novel ends happily with Dick and Fanny's wedding, the author makes us feel that things have been changing for the worse in the quiet Wessex village, Mellstock.

Subordinated to the main theme, Dick and Fanny's love-story, there is another theme - the dying out of ancient customs and the old-time village unity.

That the old, stable order is gradually passing from the community life, is brought home to the reader by the fate of the Mellstock Quire. This local church quire, that in the Old-English fashion contains violins and wind instruments, binds the village musicians together and they are proud of their union. All their other musical activities, Christmas "rounds", "wakes", wedding ceremonies and dances, are subordinated to their main role - to accompany the church services on Sundays and great holidays. When the new pastor from town, Mr. Maybold, introduces harmonium and dismisses the quire, the village musicians are greatly aggrieved and hopelessly defeated. This defeat is somewhat compensated by their honorable role as fiddlers at Dick and Fanny's wedding. The novel ends with dancing and folk-music under the symbolic green tree. This happy ending suggests that although the old stable order is passing from the community's life, there are still sources for restauration and balance.

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

The action of Hardy's next novel "Far from the Madding Crowd" (1874) takes place thirty years later (1869-1873). It is for this reason that the social setting of this novel is markedly different from the country idyll of "Under the Greenwood Tree". The change in the old-time unity, that the

latter had anticipated, has here become a reality. The march of capitalist economy has not left untouched the quiet village Weatherbury, where the scene is laid.

Although the disintegration of the old patriarchal village is not the theme of the novel, there are many indications of it. We get glimpses of decaying cottages, neglected orchards that the migration of the country folk to towns has caused.

The impoverished farmer, Gabriel Oak, is forced to earn his living as a shepherd on the rich farm of Bathsheba Everdene, whom he loves. The rich mistress is indifferent to Gabriel's feelings, but she keeps him in the farm as a skilful hand. Bathsheba has fallen in love with the village Don Juan, Sergeant Troy, who had previously seduced a poor country girl Fanny Robin. The latter had died in the workhouse. Sergeant marries the beautiful Bathsheba, who will suffer greatly from the brutality of her husband. Bathsheba's third suitor, the neighbouring gentleman farmer, Boldwood, kills Sergeant Troy out of jealousy, is put into prison and goes mad.

Only now, after many hard trials, does Bathsheba marry the poor shepherd, Gabriel Oak, her life-long admirer. But although the novel ends with harmony and compromise between country simplicity and corrupt civilization, the price paid for it is great. Sergeant Troy is murdered, Fanny Robin is dead, Boldwood is in prison. In spite of the happy ending, the fate of the main characters shows that new social forces are at work, that they might threaten the village unity at any moment.

Hardy's protagonist in this Wessex novel is Shepherd Oak. He stands for the primitive life in the lap of Nature, a life which is wholesome and good for the development of man's moral integrity. He is hard-working, honest, accustomed to out-door life and the forces of elements. He is a model Wessex countryman, tempered by foul weather and adversity, always loyal and performing his duty. In his person he embodies the healthy unpretentious country life that Hardy never tires praising. The author believes that only nearness to nature and to simple, unsophisticated people, away

from the "madding crowd", can save man from the ills of civilization. To achieve this ideal life is, however, very difficult in the quickly developing capitalist society, as we can see from the plot of the novel itself.

"THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE"

The tragic undercurrent becomes still more marked in Hardy's third novel of the Wessex cycle, "The Return of the Native" (1878). The hero of the novel, Clym Yeobright, has dreamed, since his youth, of some useful work in the service of mankind. He has lived in London and Paris for many years, and has been successful in his profession as a goldsmith. He flees, however, from "the madding crowd" of the city and returns to his native village on the heath, where he intends to become the local schoolteacher.

But Clym's escape from the town civilization does not save his soul. Soon after his arrival at the village he realizes that human passions there can be as devastating and fierce as in town. He marries the village beauty, Eustacia Vye, against his mother's will, and his life takes a tragic turn. Contrary to her husband, Eustacia is not satisfied with the quiet country idyll, she longs for the busy town and its greater possibilities. Soon after her marriage she enters into a secret love-affair with her former suitor, Wildeve, and together they plan an elopement to town. After having fled from home, however, the confused Eustacia commits suicide and does not see the fulfilment of her desires. Wildeve also perishes in an attempt to rescue Eustacia, who has thrown herself into a whirlpool. Clym's mother, driven to despair at her son's misfortunes, dies from the sting of a poisonous viper on the heath, after a visit to her son's house. And Clym Yeobright, "the returned native", half-blind, left alone in the world, continues stoically his maimed existence as a wandering preacher, propagating patience and resignation, the traditional morality of the Egdon Heath.

In "The Return of the Native" the impact of the nature upon human character acquires a different, symbolic meaning,

The natural scene is here far less attractive than the farmlands and woodlands of the previous novels. The environment of Egdon Heath, a vast territory of wild moorland, is formidably antagonistic to the human society which it sustains. People live, suffer and die, but Egdon Heath remains immutable and timeless. For all its monotony and age, however, Egdon Heath is made to fashion the fate of the characters to a far greater extent than Nature in any other novel of the cycle. It is inimical to those who ignore its solemn monotony and grim beauty. Thus Eustacia's hatred for Egdon Heath proves to be fatal to her, she perishes. But Egdon Heath can also be soothing and friendly to "the returned native", Clym Yeobright, in his loneliness and sufferings.

"THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE"

Although the immediate action of the next novel, "The Mayor of Casterbridge" (1827-1849), takes place some 15 years earlier than that of "The Return of the Native" (1842-1843), the novel reflects more vividly the economic straits connected with the onslaught of bourgeois economy in the Wessex countryside.

The narrative centres round the conflicts of the Free Trade in Corn, and the dire consequences that followed the Repeal of Corn Laws (1846).

The novel tells the story of the rise and fall of a "man of character", Michael Henchard. He is a victim of the circumstances, as well as of his own passions. Being a poor unemployed farm labourer, wandering from place to place in search of work, he starts drinking, and once, intoxicated by alcohol, he sells his wife to a sailor for five guineas. When sobered and ashamed of his abominable deed, he makes a solemn oath never to drink alcohol any more. With hard work and perseverance he achieves prosperity and respect, being finally elected Mayor of Casterbridge, a town in South England (the fictional name for Dorchester). Subsequently, however, misfortunes befall him in quick succession. His wife, whom he had once disgraced, appears suddenly to Casterbridge after the interval of 19 years. Michael next runs into bank-

ruptcy in corn trade. His rival and enemy, Farfrae, becomes the Mayor of Casterbridge. The girl, whom he has adopted after his wife's death and loves dearly, turns out to be not his real daughter, but the child of the seaman, whom he had sold his wife. To crown his misfortunes the girl marries his hated rival and leaves him altogether. Cast down by the vicissitudes of life Henchard leaves the town, which once had made him the Mayor, and starts living in the solitude of the neighbouring heath. He dies alone and forgotten cursing the day when he was born.

The atmosphere of Casterbridge of the '30s and '40s of the 19th century has been drawn with great insight and knowledge by Hardy. Casterbridge looks more like a big village than a town, it is "the complement of the rural life around; not its urban opposite". (3:59) In the following passage rural life has been closely identified with Casterbridge:

"... Casterbridge was in most respects but the pole, focus, or nerve-knot of the surrounding country life; different from the many manufacturing towns which are as foreign bodies set down, like boulders on a plain, green world with which they have nothing in common. Casterbridge lived by agriculture at one remove further from the fountain-head than the adjoining villages - no more" ... (3:64) "Here wheat-ricks overhung the old Roman street, and thrust their eaves against the church tower; green-thatched barns, with doorways as high as the gates of Solomon temple, opened directly upon the main throughfare ... Here lived burgesses who daily walked the fallow; shepherds in an intramural squeeze. A street of farmers' homesteads - a street ruled by a mayor and corporation, yet echoing with the thump of the fail, the flutter of the Winnowing-fan, and the purr of the milk into the pails." (3:92)

Henchard's character, the development of his life drama, is set in relief against this rural environment whose product he is. He is as primitive and unsentimental as his surroundings. That is also the main reason why Casterbridge, its folks and its ancient spirit comes to the forefront and why Henchard's personal tragedy is only a part of

it. This tragedy enacts convincingly the fight between the old patriarchal, and the new bourgeois order. Henchard is the native countryman, and Farfrae, his Scotch enemy, the bourgeois intruder. With his illiteracy, primitive crafts and traditional attitudes Henchard cannot compete with Farfrae's more enlightened business methods, and he perishes.

Such later novels as "The Woodlanders" and "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" have much in common so far as the social background is concerned. When all the preceding novels still dealt with the past times, with a few touches of the imminent change, these two novels have for their setting the years of the contemporary agricultural tragedy. They both describe the sufferings of the poorer peasantry in the Wessex village during the '70s and '80s of the 19th century. (4:36)

"THE WOODLANDERS"

The action of "The Woodlanders" takes place in the years 1876-1879, in a small woodland village, Little Hinton. Even in this far-away Wessex nook many of the burning social problems of the '70s are represented: Lady Day migration, removal from house or cottage, loss of tenure, etc. The whole plot turns upon these issues and upon the loss of the old, patriarchal ties.

Giles Winterborne, the woodlander and protagonist of the novel, has been turned out of his ancestral home, as the lease of his cottage property is dependent on the lifetime of a person. When Old South, a relative on his mother's side, dies, Winterborne and Marty South, the surviving daughter, are made homeless. Though a yeoman and life-holder, Winterborne becomes a victim of the new squirearchy in the person of Mrs. Charmond, who takes no interest in the village life and spends most of her time in foreign cities in pursuit of pleasures.

Hardy has imparted to the reader the gravity of the misfortunes that befall these loyal woodlanders - Old South, Marty South and Giles Winterborne. Like Shepherd Oak of "Far from the Madding Crowd" Giles Winterborne stands for

the worth of agricultural life and skills, the worth of traditional country virtues - loyalty and devotion to the soil. That is why the calamity of the yeoman's loss of tenure, his dependence on such new, degrading influence in the village as the capitalist Mrs. Charmond, has engaged Hardy's most powerful feelings.

When Winterborne dies of grief and ill-health, his death becomes communal. Marty South, his silent admirer, whose love has never been returned, polishes the dead man's tools and brings flowers to his grave. Robert Creedle, his devoted workman, laments on the death of his master. With the loss of the yeoman's family, devoted to the land they till, is also lost the spirit of village community and of the local traditions. The yeomanry, Hardy implies, stands for the "goodness" of the rural life. If this mode of life is impaired, the moral stability of the whole country goes with it.

"TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES"

Though the action of "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" takes place in 1884-1889, i.e. some ten years later than that of "The Woodlanders", we meet here the same grave social issues, only in an aggravated form.

While in "The Woodlanders" Giles Winterborne and Marty South embodied the dignity and vitality of simple country life in the face of the impending collapse of that life, then in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" Hardy's feeling goes beyond pity and nostalgia. What had happened to the Wessex agricultural community by 1890 was irrevocable, and this sense of defeat that the author keenly felt, has gone into the fabric of the novel.

The story of Tess Durbeyfield, the village girl and representative of an old country line, who is ruined by the new economic and spiritual forces of the capitalist society, symbolizes the defeat of the poorer peasantry. This story begins with her unsullied childhood in the beautiful Vale of Blackmoor, that has a long past lively with traditions,

and ends in her execution scene in the gloomy Stonehenge. Her tragedy gains in intensity with each successive phase of her life: her departure from home and seduction by the spurious young squire, Alec D'Urberville, her short spell of happiness as a dairymaid at Talbothays, and the following cruel abandonment by her newly married husband, Angel Clare: then the years of dire poverty and privation during which she works as a farm hand at the bleak upland farm Flintcomb-Ash.

Flintcomb-Ash reflects directly the new capitalist farming on its first shaky legs. Tess's predicament is emphasized by the unfriendly machines, by the harsh monotonous labour at the mercy of the domineering landowner. This farm-life contrasts in every respect with the old, more primitive and kindlier life at Marlott or Talbothays.

The novel is imbued by a deep sense of pessimism which is caused by the author's sensitiveness to the cruel injustice that governs the bourgeois world. Tess has been depicted as a victim of the social order in which she lives. This ruthless order persecutes her everywhere, drives her to poverty, shame, despair, and finally to death.

Hardy shows that real social factors in the Wessex countryside at the close of the 19th century logically determine the main action: the pauperization of the countryside, the expropriation of the land of the small farmers by the rich, the exploitation of the farm labourers, especially women. Thus the novel is not merely the tragic defeat of a brave girl. In a larger sense Tess Durbeyfield embodies the Wessex agricultural community at the moment of its ruin. .

It is not accidental that the tragedy of Tess should end among scenes of uprooting and migration. The Durbeyfield family, moving from their ancient home, and the migration of many similar families, refers to the disintegration of the village community. Driven out of their native land Durbeyfields are assisted by their fellow sufferers. The ironical reception of the homeless Durbeyfield family at King's Bere, its ancient home, speaks for itself. Only a place in the family vault remains the home for the offsprings of the former landowners. (4:40)

It is this homeless despair of a family that has lost its rights and independence in the village community that gives Tess into the power of Alec D'Urberville. The same despair, added to the series of humiliations and grave injustice which she has stoically suffered all her life, makes Tess finally kill her evil-doer Alec D'Urberville, when her true love Angel Clare, returns to her. Nobody has ever defended Tess, and now when she for the first time steps forward to defend herself, she turns out to be a criminal before the law. Inexorable fate that has followed Tess and has not allowed her to live because she is poor, has ended its grim game, taking the last that is left - her life.

R e f e r e n c e s

1. Morgan, D. A Short History of the British People, - Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1979.
2. Alltoa, V. Thomas Hardy. - XIX-XX sajandi väliskirjanikke. VII. Inglise kirjandus 1871-1917. - Tartu: TRÜ rotaprint, 1969.
3. Hardy, Th. The Mayor of Casterbridge. - M.: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1964.
4. Luigas, A. The Regional Setting in Thomas Hardy's Wessex Novels. - Tüid romaani-germaani filoloogia alalt. V. Kirjandusteadus. - Tartu: TRÜ rotaprint, 1974.

SAMUEL BUTLER

(1835-1902) .



Samuel Butler's work occupies a very peculiar and original place in the history of English letters. He was a courageous and versatile innovator, who tirelessly polemized with the beliefs and convictions of the Victorian era in the matters of religious dogma, of social institutions such as family and home life.

Butler's unexpected paradoxes, unconventional manner of thought, as well as his provocative attitudes prevented him from acquiring a universal recognition and popularity during his

lifetime. His most considerable fictional work, the novel "The Way of All Flesh", that was published posthumously in 1902, brought him a limited fame. The fact that Bernard Shaw publicly defended him contributed somewhat to his literary reputation in England. Outside his own country, however, he was almost unknown.

At the same time, there is no doubt that Butler was one of the greatest satirists of his time, who followed the traditions of the English realistic novel. Moreover, his work

had a tremendous influence on the subsequent writers, especially on Shaw, Hardy, Bennett and others.

Life and Literary Career

Samuel Butler came from a clergyman's family. He was born in the Rectory of Langar, in the county of Nottinghamshire, where his father was the pastor. His grandfather had been the headmaster of Shrewsbury School and later, the Bishop of Lichfield.

In 1846 he began to attend Shrewsbury School. From his own experience he learned quite early the hypocrisy of British educational system and the conventional upbringing of children in the family. The bitter impressions of his immediate home surroundings and of the school found also continuous utterance in his satirical works.

In 1854 he entered St. John's College of Cambridge University where he studied theology and classical languages. He was destined to a Church career, in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. After a brief experience of parish work among the London poor, however, he gave up religion as a profession, as he felt that the clergyman could in no way ease the lot of the poor. In 1859 he had a serious quarrel with his father, renounced his family, and left for New Zealand, where he became a sheep-farmer.

Having achieved financial independence, Butler returned to England in 1864, after an absence of five years. He took chambers in Clifford's Inn, London, where he devoted himself to the cultivation of his own hobbies. He turned out to be a man of very wide interests in the field of science, literary research, music, painting and art. His preliminary wish had been to become a painter. In the years 1868-1876 he created several pictures and even took part in London exhibitions. He went in for music as well, propagating the works of Handel, and composing himself cantatas, oratorios and piano pieces. As he greatly admired Homer's poems, he translated "Iliad" and "Odyssey" into vigorous English prose in 1888 and 1890.

Butler's contribution to science was limited to his

biological research. His experiences with the breeding of animals in New Zealand had aroused his interest in the problems of evolutionary science, expounded by Charles Darwin in "The Origin of Species". Although he knew Darwin personally and had visited the great scientist twice in the year 1872, his views in natural selection differed. As an evolutionist he was not a follower of Darwin, but rather of the French biologist Lamarck, and of the philosopher Bergson, i.e. representatives of the idealistic school.

Butler denied accidentality in the genesis of biological species. Like Lamarck he held that new qualities arise from the adaptation of the species to their environment; these new qualities become hereditary and are transmitted to the offsprings by "unconscious memory". He laid stress on the function of human will which enables the more vigorous individuals to transmit qualities which make for survival. These views on heredity were later adopted by Bernard Shaw. Shaw's theory of the so-called "vitalism", that forms the foundation of his philosophical system in such plays as "Man and Superman", "Back to Methuselah", has been directly derived from Butler.

Already in his early scientific articles, published in New Zealand press, Butler not only popularized Darwin's teaching, but also criticized some of its main standpoints. Mention must be made of his "Darwin and the Origin of Species" (1862), written in the form of dialogue, and the half-humorous essay, "Darwin Among the Machines", (which might be considered the first outline of his satiric utopia "Trewhon").

In the '70s and '80s Butler continued to publish scientific articles in which he enters already into sharp polemics with Darwin: "Life and Habit" (1877), "Evolution Old and New" (1879), "Unconscious Memory" (1880), "Luck and Cunning as the Main Means of Organic Modification" (1886).

Among Butler's other polemical articles of this period mention must be made of his anti-religious satire, "The Fair Heaven" (1873), published anonymously, like his previous essays. This work presents an ironical mystification, typi-

cal of Butler's manner. It is written by an imaginary clergyman's family, the Owens. Here the author develops the idea of his earlier pamphlets, criticizing the legend of Crucifixion. He holds Christian orthodoxy up to ridicule by ironically defending it.

EREWHON

Butler's only literary success at this period was his satiric utopia "Erewhon", published anonymously at his own expense in 1872. ("Erewhon" is an anagram of the word "Nowhere".) This work holds a high place among literary utopias. The picture of the ideal living conditions among the Erewhonians constitutes a shrewd satire on the corresponding institutions in Western civilization, especially in England.

Having crossed an unexpected chain of mountains in the remote part of a colony (evidently New Zealand), the settler Higgs comes upon a peculiar Kingdom in a deep valley, Erewhon. In this Kingdom all people are beautiful and satisfied with their lot. The institutions he finds there are diametrically different from those of the contemporary England.

At first Higgs is given a warm welcome by these strange people, but soon, for reasons unknown to him, he is put into prison. The daughter of the prisonwarder, Yram (anagram of Virgin Mary) teaches him the local language. Thus gradually Higgs is introduced to the morals and manners of the Erewhonians. It comes out that his great crime was the possession of a watch. All kinds of machines, engines and apparatuses were strictly forbidden in the whole Kingdom. He also learns to his surprise that weak and unhealthy people are brought to trial as they are the proper object for severe punishment. Pulmonary disease is considered to be the greatest social crime. A person, however, who steals, robs or forges bills, etc., evokes general sympathy, as he suffers from severe attacks of immorality. This treatment of crime as a disease which can be cured, and disease as a crime which must be punished, is a well-known example of the way Butler makes use of paradox.

Church is ridiculed under the name of "Musical Banks". In the same spirit parental tyranny, methods of upbringing of children, etc. are criticized. There is also a witty description of the development of machinery to the point that it threatens to overwhelm the local inhabitants. Special laws have been issued against the power of machinery.

Finally Higgs escapes from the strange country in a balloon of his own construction, accompanied by the Erwhonian lady, Yram, with whom he has fallen in love.

30 years after the publication of "Erewhon", Butler wrote its sequel, "Erewhon Revisited" (1901). He dedicated the MS of the book to Bernard Shaw, who helped him to publish it.

"Erewhon Revisited" is an anti-clerical satire. The hero Higgs, who has escaped from the Kingdom of Erewhon, returns to it, driven by an overwhelming curiosity after an interval of twenty years. To his great surprise he discovers that his ascent in the balloon has laid the foundation to a new religion, he is now worshipped as the child of the sun, and a great temple is on the point of being erected to his honour. His bride, Yram, has meanwhile given birth to a child. With the help of the "Musical Banks" the new religion has become widely popular. The most ardent propagators of this new religion are the professors Hanky Panky. Here Butler hints at the well-known English evangelical preachers Moody and Sankey, who at that time were organizing hysterical mass meetings for the conversion of sinners.

Horrified by the crime he had committed, the mischief he had done, Higgs tries to make an explanatory speech. He reveals himself, his real self, but is hustled away by friendly hands. An amusing conference follows between all concerned, to decide what is to be done about the new religion "Sunchildism", and finally Higgs is smuggled out of the country.

"THE WAY OF ALL FLESH"

Butler's only genuine novel, "The Way of All Flesh", was published anonymously after the author's death. He had work-

ed at it for 12 years (1872-1884), without finding any possibility of publishing it.

The book might be considered as one of the achievements of the realistic novel in England at that period. It is full of brilliant wit and satire. Here Butler presents one of his favourite themes, the relation between parents and children, a study embittered by his own childhood recollections.

The story of the Pontifex family has been traced from father to son through several generations. At first we meet John Pontifex, a village carpenter, then his son, George Pontifex, a vulgar, domineering man, who has become rich by publishing religious treatises. Next we get acquainted with George's son, Theobald, who, against his own will, is forced to become a clergyman and jockeyed into marriage with the smug Christiana. And finally we meet Theobald's son, Ernest Pontifex, the hero of the novel.

There is a detailed account of Ernest's childhood, full of suffering. His father has become a cruel despot of the family, a typical "pater familias". Ernest also experiences cruel treatment at Roughborough local school (which stands for Shrewsbury). At the University Ernest meets the same puritan narrow-mindedness as everywhere else around him.

Soon after his ordination, a sudden catastrophe follows. Having started his work as a clergyman in London slums, he tries, at first, to carry into effect the principles of Christianity, but his honesty leads him from one misunderstanding to another. Under the instigation of fellow clergymen, he accuses a young woman of prostitution and is sentenced to prison for six years. This severe punishment also marks the end of his church career. On coming out of prison, ruined, and despirited, he contracts a disastrous marriage with Ellen, the former maid-servant of his family, who turns out to be an incorrigible drunkard. He is saved from the tragic situation by sheer chance. It comes out that his marriage is not legal, as his wife had been married before. A fortune inherited from an aunt permits him to devote the rest of his life to literature.

The whole story has been told by Ernest's godfather

Overton. The novel is largely autobiographical. Ernest is the young Butler, and Overton, the mature, experienced Butler. In Ernest's parents - Theobald and Christiana, his bitterest enemies - one can easily recognize Butler's own parents.

Butler's criticism of the Victorian society in England is utterly negative. All such virtues as honesty, independence, self-sacrifice, sincerity, etc. are dependent on money. When a person is financially independent, he can be honest. The problem, however, how to provide all people with money, is not settled or touched upon.

In spite of a certain narrowness and one-sidedness of the novel, it is nevertheless a passionate, scathing satire on bourgeois society in which moral values are falsified, a society in which family conceals cruelty under the mask of seeming love and respect. It is a society in which family conceals cruelty under the mask of hypocritical love, where there is an insurmountable barrier between the lower and the upper classes.

OSCAR WILDE

(1856-1900)



Oscar Wilde started his literary career in the 1870s, the years which marked a general ideological crisis in Great Britain. In the field of art and literature several decadent currents - aestheticism, symbolism, etc. prevailed.

Wilde became the most important representative of the so-called "art-for-art's-sake" school. In his public lectures and theoretical writings he propagated the idea that art has no social, political or moral significance, that art is primary and life only secondary. Fortunately Wilde's own fictional work contradicts his witty theoretical statements as it often has a deep moral and social undercurrent.

Life and Literary Career

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde was born in Ireland, in Dublin into the family of intellectuals. His father was a well-known Irish surgeon, and his mother a poetess of considerable renown. The intellectual atmosphere

at home was conducive to the mental development of young Wilde. He got a good education at the famous Trinity College in Dublin and later at Oxford University (1874-1879). At Oxford he was influenced by widely different trends in art and literature which were current at that time. He listened to John Ruskin's famous lectures on aesthetics, on the theory of art and literature. Ruskin had become one of the most important progressive figures and democratic spokesmen in England. He applied himself to practical socialism in several of his addresses to working men, and became known as an ardent critic of bourgeois civilization.

Wilde was greatly influenced by Ruskin's social ideas, but at the same time followed quite a different literary authority, who was also lecturing at Oxford University at that time - Walter Pater. Later Pater became the leader of decadence, in fact, its father in England. Pater's doctrine of the brevity of life, and the necessity of following its passing moments with ecstatic sensations, had a great influence on Wilde as a writer.

Wilde started his literary career with the publication of his poems ("Poems", 1881), which were carried by the spirit of aestheticism. After graduating from the Oxford University he joined the Aesthetic Movement and soon became its leader. In 1882 he made a triumphant tour of the USA, where he delivered lectures on English aestheticism. In the USA he also published his first play "Vera or the Nihilist" (1882). Although of meagre artistic value, the book marks the beginning of Wilde's playwright career.

Wilde's more important works were written, however, at the end of the '80s. In 1887 he published his famous tale "The Canterville Ghost", and in 1888 a collection of fairytales "The Happy Prince and Other Tales". The next year appeared Wilde's most important work on literary theory. In 1891 this essay was republished in the collection "Intentions", which made him the apostle of the "art-for-art's-sake" school in England. In 1891 was also published Wilde's only novel, "The Picture of Dorian Gray", which made him famous all over the world. The same year appeared another

collection of fairy-tales, "The House of Pomegranates", and his well-known article "The Soul of Man Under Socialism".

Beginning from 1892 Wilde devoted himself almost entirely to writing plays. During the years 1892-1895 he published several brilliant comedies, which have been in the repertory of many theatres till the present time: "Lady Windermere's Fan" (1892), "A Woman of No Importance" (1893), "The Ideal Husband" (1895), "The Importance of Being Earnest" (1895). His only tragedy of that period, "Salome" appeared in France in 1893.

This prolific first period in Wilde's literary career ended abruptly in 1895. This year he was brought to trial with a charge of immorality and sentenced to prison for two years. The years 1895-1897 he spent in the Reading Gaol in London, during which his former ideas and convictions changed diametrically. To Wilde who had been a brilliant society wit and a frequenter of London select salons, the imprisonment was a great shock. He came back as a different man. As he was now ostracized from the smart society in which he had circled, he was forced to leave England. He could not publish any of his works - all the doors of the publishing houses were shut to him.

During the rest of his life Wilde lived mainly in Paris, under the pseudonym Sebastian Melmouth, and wrote very little. From this period of exile only two works can be mentioned: "The Ballad of Reading Gaol", - published anonymously in 1898, and his confessions under the Latin heading "De Profundis" (Out of the Depths), the abridged version of which appeared posthumously in 1905, and the full text as late as 1962.

Apart from his fictional work, Wilde became prominent in English literary history at the close of the 19th century largely due to the theoretical, aesthetic views he gave currency. These views are expounded in the three essays of "Intentions"; "The Decay of Lying". "The Critic as an Artist", and "Pen, Pencil and Poison".

Wilde was a writer who tried to restore certain ele-

ments to art and literature, which, in his opinion, had lost their importance in the course of time. He considered that the most important component of art and literature was Beauty. The task of the writer was to reveal Beauty to his readers. His notion of Beauty had, however, nothing to do with the realities of life. He was convinced that all art was entirely useless. This idea is most concisely expressed in his famous preface to "The Picture of Dorian Gray":

"The artist is the creator of beautiful things.
To reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim...
They are the elect to whom beautiful things mean
only Beauty.
There is no such thing as moral or immoral book.
Books are well written, or badly written.
That is all ...
All art is quite useless." (1:18-19)

Wilde's cult of aestheticism was a reaction against the vulgar materialism of British prosperity he saw around him in the houses of the rich people he frequented. He was, however, an idealist who contradicted himself. Although he considered Beauty an important component of any kind of art, he separated it from art and reached his typical paradox: Beauty in itself is a thing of great importance, but all art is "quite useless".

Another important contention of Wilde's aesthetics is his belief that modern artists have lost the talent of lying. In their attempt to present a truthful picture of life, the writers might outdo life itself. In the old times the writers saw their main task in making facts out of phantasy and lying. Now, vice versa, the writers are doing everything in their power to make phantasy out of facts and consider their greatest asset to be as close to life as possible. This is, in fact, Wilde's criticism of naturalism, that was another important literary trend in English literature at the close of the century. To some extent Wilde is right in his criticism of naturalism, which inclined to accumulate facts about real life without making any generali-

zation. Photographic exactness of presentment was considered to be the first premise of the so-called "slice-of-life" novel.

But in his criticism of naturalism Wilde reached another extreme: he considered all facts about life to be useless. He expressed his ideas by means of paradoxes that often became contradictory and even senseless. In his aesthetics paradox is the greatest weapon that can annihilate anything.

Wilde's third important contention that art has nothing in common with truth and morality, might also be regarded as a revolt against the ethics of Victorianism, which laid down the claim that every literary work should have a moral purpose.

The statement that literature should have nothing in common with truth comes from Wilde's conviction that art and literature are, in fact, connected with lying. The more a writer can lie, the greater artist he is.

The statement, however, that a work of art has no moral purpose is not only wrong as a general statement but also as a particular statement in Wilde's own case. His best works strikingly reflect real life and often have a bitter moral in them. He also contradicts his own theoretical standpoint that every man is an egoist, that only egoism helps him to have endless pleasures.

FAIRY-TALES

Contrary to Wilde's theoretical view that art should not reflect real life, his fairy-tales do reflect its joys and sorrows. One can feel a humanist and democrat behind each of his tale, which teaches altruism, common good and benevolence. Although his heroes are aesthetes like the author, who value Beauty more than anything else, they change in the course of time having gone through many sufferings and hardships. Thus Wilde ennobles suffering and pain which make people see truth and get rid of their egoism. People in real life are often selfish, hypocritical and callous, but true love, friendship and self-sacrifice help them win at

least part of the world's cruelty.

This deeply moral message is revealed in all Wilde's best-known fairy-tales - "The Happy Prince", "The Selfish Giant", "The Nightingale and the Rose", "The Devoted Friend", "The Star-Child", etc. These tales excel in their finished style, in their graceful and lyric narrative. Their vocabulary is rich and colourful. The author is fond of describing beautiful things of art, jewellery, ivory, etc. Therefore, these tales have often been compared to poems in prose. But beneath their formal beauty there is always a bitter truth in each of them which enhances their artistic value, and equals them to moral myths.

"The Happy Prince" opens with a beautiful description of a statue in town: "High above the city, on a tall column, stood the statue of the Happy Prince. He was gilded all over with thin leaves of fine gold, for eyes he had two bright sapphires, and a large red ruby glowed on his sword-hilt". (2:5-6) For a long time he has been considered the only happy person in the town, as everywhere around him there is poverty, misery and hunger. The Happy Prince is ready to give the precious jewels of his eyes, and the gold covering of his body to poor people in their need. When the Happy Prince has given away all his gilt and jewellery, the passers-by become indifferent towards him, because he is not beautiful and decorative any more. The authorities of the town decide even to destroy the statue and erect something more valuable, as, for instance, the statue of the town councillor or the Mayor.

Thus in this fairy-tale Wilde's fancy comes into contact with real life, where egoism and ugliness go hand in hand, where ingratitude is the reward of self-sacrifice.

Another famous tale "The Selfish Giant" also castigates egoism and selfishness. The Giant is a real person, an egoist, who has a beautiful garden. In spring when trees and flowers are in blossom, when birds are singing, his garden is the most beautiful place in the district. One day the Giant notices that children have come to play in his garden, and he drives them cruelly away. Next spring, when he goes

into the garden, he sees that winter still persists there within the walls, whereas outside the garden everything is green and gay. It is only then that the Giant realizes his mistake of having driven the playing children away. He understands his own selfishness and becomes a human being.

"The Nightingale and the Rose" is a tale about a student who has fallen in love with a girl from high society. He is eager to dance with the girl at the coming ball. The girl agrees to dance with him on condition that the student presented her with a red rose. There is no red rose in the student's garden and he is too poor to buy one. The nightingale hears about the student's trouble and wants to help him. A white rose becomes red, for the nightingale sings the whole night, pressing its heart into one of the thorns of the rose. The nightingale dies, but the rose has become red from the blood of the bird's heart. The student takes the rose to his beloved girl, but the nightingale's sacrifice has been all in vain: the girl has found another, richer young man, who can present her with more roses than one.

The theme of self-sacrifice and ingratitude is also central in the well-known tale "Our Mutual Friend". All these fairy-tales prove that Wilde has been striving to express some high moral purpose in contradiction to his own theoretical standpoint that the main aim of a work of art is to embody beauty and not to teach any moral lesson.

"THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY"

Wilde's only novel, that made him world-famous, contained a preface in which the author presented a provocative challenge to the traditions of realism. It was a conglomeration of aphorisms and paradoxes which all boiled down to the main thesis: "There are no moral or immoral books. Books are only well or badly written. No artist can prove anything, he can offer no ethical principles. Art does not reflect life, but the observer himself."

Like his fairy-tales the novel reveals the contradiction between Wilde's literary theory and practice. Not only does the novel corroborate the thesis of the preface, but

utterly denies it. The novel convincingly proves that man's chief purpose in life cannot be a hunt for his own pleasures, that to be good is more important than to be handsome.

The novel centres round the problems of art and reality. It offers a penetrating study of the gradual degradation of an innocent, inexperienced young man, and his moral victory in old age through the annihilation of his own self.

The three main characters of the novel are - Dorian Gray, a handsome, brilliant young man from high society, and his two friends: the painter Basil Hallward, and the cynic nobleman Lord Henry. The artist Basil Hallward is devoted to his work, to his painting. All his life he has been trying to find real beauty in order to get an inspiration and create something great and immortal. Having got acquainted with Dorian Gray, he realizes that he has at last found the embodiment of his ideal. The young man is not only extraordinarily handsome but has also a refined soul, and a brilliant intellect. Dorian Gray strikes him as the most perfect human being he has ever met. He decides to paint a portrait of his young friend and carries out his intention with a great artistic fervour and finish. The portrait turns out to be as beautiful as the original. Basil Hallward has a high moral opinion of his calling. He leads the modest life of an ascetic, entirely devoted to his art. He tries to instil his strict moral principles of life also into Dorian.

Dorian is Hallward's devoted disciple until the rich idler, Lord Henry Wotton comes into sight. The latter tries to influence Dorian in a diametrically different way as compared to that of the artist.

Through Lord Henry Wotton Wilde expresses his conviction that the aim of life should be a hunting for one's own pleasures and an avoidance of sufferings. Youth and beauty can best enable these pleasures. In Lord Henry's opinion it is a sin not to use one's youth and the possibilities given by nature. Dorian should turn his life into art. As Lord Henry is a very cunning and skilful teacher, he succeeds in making use of the weaknesses in Dorian's character.

Soon Dorian makes his way into the world of pleasures. He falls in love with a third-rate actress of a variety theatre, Sybil Vane. Once Dorian takes his friends Lord Henry and Basil Hallward to a performance in which Sybil is playing the main role. Captivated by the girl, Dorian has praised her great talents to his friends. Sybil who has hitherto played considerably well, fails in her acting after the love-affair with Dorian. She is thinking only of Dorian and cannot express any feelings towards her partner, Romeo, on the stage. The girl's bad acting at the presence of his friends makes Dorian angry, Sybil has lost all her charms in his eyes. In spite of Sybil's entreaties, not to leave her, Dorian does not listen to the girl. He has already been infected by Lord Henry's theory that life should be a pursuit of pleasures and avoidance of sufferings. He has become a brutal egoist. He leaves Sybil and the latter commits suicide.

Soon after Sybil's death Dorian begins to lead a double life. Publicly he is still a respectable member of the smart society, a devotee of art and literature. At night, however, he leads quite a different secret life. He makes up his face, dresses himself in rags and frequents brothels and opium dens. He causes many disasters with his charms. His face remains as handsome and youthful as before. It is only his portrait that reveals how ugly he has become. Once Basil asks Dorian to show him the picture, he has not seen for a long time. Dorian is afraid of revealing the artist his secret life, reflected in the picture, and in a fit of neurosis he kills the artist. He kills his former friend for two reasons. Firstly, because the artist has seen the picture and penetrated into his sinful life; secondly, because he himself has started regretting his downfall and his ugly deeds. Sybil's brother, who has been looking for Dorian to avenge his sister's death, finds his victim at last. Dorian asserts, however, that Sybil killed herself twenty years ago, he, Dorian, is, however, only twenty years old, as can be seen from his handsome young face. Sybil's brother starts believing Dorian, and when he meets his death by

an unlucky chance, Dorian's life seems to be out of danger. Both the artist and Sybil's brother, the only witnesses of his secret, are dead.

In spite of all that Dorian cannot follow his path of pleasures as eagerly as before. Unwillingly he often looks at his portrait, and sees with horror that it is becoming uglier and uglier with each of his new vice or crime. The portrait reflects his ugly soul, although his face remains as handsome as before. Becoming aware of this, Dorian wants to destroy the picture with a knife, but kills himself instead. There is an awful cry in his big house, and the servants run into the attic, where Dorian has kept the portrait locked. They see a beautiful portrait of a young man of twenty. On the floor, however, an ugly old man is lying in blood, with a knife in his heart. Only the beautiful valuable ring in the man's finger helps the servants recognize their former master.

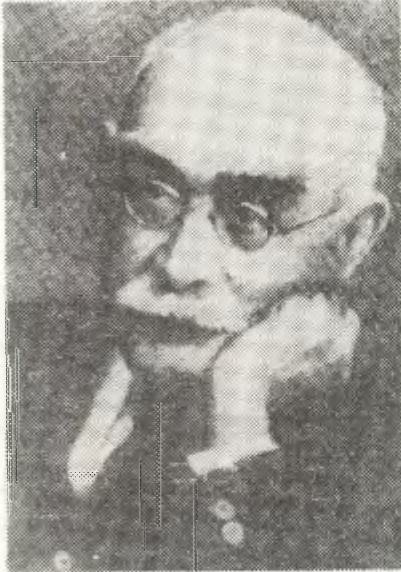
The central idea of the novel goes contrary to Wilde's conviction that art should have no moral purpose. In the story of Dorian's life he has, in spite of himself, presented a moral lesson. The author condemns Dorian's life philosophy and makes the hero kill himself to win a moral victory.

R e f e r e n c e s

1. Wilde, O. The Picture of Dorian Gray. - M.: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1958.
2. Wilde, O. The Happy Prince. - Prague: Svoboda, 1968.

RUDYARD KIPLING

(1865-1936)



The majority of the outstanding writers of the 20th century avoid direct treatment of Imperialism in their works. Only a few of them have exposed the essence of it directly. Rudyard Kipling, however, forms an exception. He is the only talented and really original writer of international renown who has openly come out as a supporter of Imperialism. Moreover, the eulogy of Imperialism has remained Kipling's particular subject-matter that runs through all his works. The supremacy of the Anglo-

Saxon race as compared with other races, has always been his main theme. His famous poem, "The White Man's Burden", has become the classical apology of Imperialism all over the world. Therefore the greater part of the current catch-words of Imperialist propaganda has been derived from Kipling's work. (1:84)

Life and Literary Career

Kipling came from a petty-bourgeois family. His father was a sculptor at the Bombay Art College, then director of

Mayo Art College, and later, for 20 years, the curator of the central Museum in Lahore. Being an artist he illustrated also a great number of Kipling's books, especially "Kim" and "The Jungle Book".

Kipling was born in Bombay in 1865, and spent his early childhood in India. As a boy he mixed freely with the local people, got intimately acquainted with Indian exotic nature, its town and village life. He mastered many local dialects better than English. When he was six years old he was taken to England and lived there till he was seventeen. He spent his schoolyears (1878-1882) in the United Services College, a military school meant for the children of poorer officers. The greater part of the pupils at the school came from India.

Already at school Kipling excelled in his literary activities. He contributed poetry and shorter sketches to the school paper "The Chronicle". These early works reflect clearly Kipling's typical chauvinist world outlook as, for instance, his ode "Ave Imperatrix", dedicated to the Jubilee of Queen Victoria. The reminiscences of these school-days have partly been recorded in the book "Stalky and Co" (1893).

As a young man of 18 Kipling returned to India. He began to take part in journalism as a newspaper reporter, proof-reader and printer. Later he became the assistant editor for "Civil and Military Gazette" in Lahore.

All Kipling's literary work grew out of his journalism. Journalism also left a deep imprint on his style and treatment. He contributed tirelessly to various papers satirical poems, sketches, feature articles, etc., which he later published in separate collections. The first of such collections was "Departmental Ditties and Other Verses" (1886). This collection did not attract any special attention. His next prose collection, however, "Plain Tales from the Hills" (1887), attained a sensational success.

Stimulated by his success, Kipling plunged into literary work with a still greater ardour and incredible productivity. In the course of one year he published some six

collections of short stories (1888).

As a newspaper correspondent Kipling undertook a longer journey round the world, passing through China, Japan, America and finally settling down in England. He was then 24 and world-famous. In England he immediately made contacts with various writers, especially with W.E. Henley, the leader of the chauvinist group of men of letters. He also contributed regularly to the latter's magazine "National Observer". (1: 86).

Soon Kipling published new fictional works: a collection of short stories "Life's Handicap" (1891), a full-fledged novel "The Light That Failed" (1891), a collection of poems "The Barrack Room Ballads" (1892), which increased his fame as a poet. The same year he married an American woman and spent the years 1892-1896 in the USA at his wife's native place, in the State of Vermont. During his stay in the USA he continued his literary activities. At the same time he extended the range of his subject-matter. In the stories of this period he deals with contemporary engineering, with most diverse backgrounds and professions. He concentrates especially on the everyday life at sea in such stories as "Many Inventions" (1893), "The Day's Work" (1898), "A Fleet in Being" (1898), etc.

During this period Kipling also started writing children's adventure fiction, which he continued also later. Among his famous children's books are: "Captains Courageous" (1897), "Kim" (1901), "The Jungle Book" (1894), "The Second Jungle Book" (1895), "Just So Stories for Little Children" (1902), etc. His children's stories have generally been considered the best part of his fiction.

Kipling's literary work is bulky but at the same time extremely uneven. His best works are carried by a genuine inspiration, at his worst he lapses into obscurity and mysticism.

In the history of English literature Kipling occupies a prominent place in both prose and poetry, but only his short stories and children's fiction have attained international fame. As a poet he is less recognized as the style of

his verse is difficult to translate into other languages.

But even Kipling's best work is often contradictory as his main themes are always in the service of Imperialist propaganda. He is the first writer to introduce the exotic East, especially India, into English literature. He acquaints the European reader with a hitherto unknown world. He is a talented story-teller, many of his tales are captivating in their novelty. At the same time he denies mutual understanding and collaboration between the East and the West. According to his own words the East and the West are two different poles, which can never meet (i.e. "A Ballad of East and West").

In Kipling's work India is, above all a country of exotic beauty, mystery and horror. In this way Kipling's real originality as a story-teller is always closely connected with his reactionary ideology. His colonial fiction, whose main cultivator he was, is captivating and novel, but at the same time also harmful and backward. Perhaps his greatest asset is the democratic language. In his poetry as well as in his prose he uses freely the language of soldiers, sailors, fishermen and common people. He introduces many popular turns of speech, vulgarisms, different dialects. As this language is, however, connected with the reactionary contents, even this democratic tendency of the style and language turns into demagogy.

Kipling's whole production is diametrically opposite to the literary concepts of the so-called "art-for-art's-sake" school. At the same time he propagates unprincipled practicality - "action for action's sake" - landing in another extreme of decadence. Everywhere one can feel a certain vulgarity and cynicism in his imperialist world outlook. His passionate enthusiasm for the exotic theme turns out to be an eulogy of the colonial system.

One can distinguish three definite periods in Kipling's development as a writer:

I. At the beginning of his career his literary work is almost entirely devoted to India.

II. From the beginning of the '90s he suddenly extends his subject-matter, but only at the expense of quality.

III. The last period of his career, beginning from the First World War, is a period of entire decline, he cannot offer anything new.

The Short Story

The short story forms the most considerable part in Kipling's literary output. He is a great master and innovator in this genre. In 1907 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature: he was the first writer and the first Englishman to whom this prize was awarded for the short story. His stories were written quickly and spontaneously. After the great popular success of his "Plain Tales from the Hills" in 1887, a number of other collections appeared in quick succession: "Soldiers Three" (1888), "The Story of the Gadsbys" (1888), "In Black and White" (1888), "Under the Deodars" (1888), "The Phantom Rickshaw" (1888), "Wee Willie Winkie" (1888).

All these stories appeared before Kipling was 24 years old. They testify to his great powers as a story-teller. At first they were published in cheap editions, meant for wider masses of people. They deal exclusively with India's life. The intrigue is often primitive and the characters schematic, but the local atmosphere with its exotic colouring, the general suggestive spirit, striking situations and lively speech show the author at the peak of his powers.

In Kipling's narrative the dialogue occupies an important place. The natives are generally more carefully portrayed than the Europeans. In his detailed descriptions of the India's local colour he often lapses into naturalism. He likes to describe the dirt and squalor of the Indian towns, the misery of the poorer quarters, the spread of epidemics and hunger. He creates a picture of the backward country with such vigour and suggestiveness that, at times, it strikes the reader as an indictment of the capitalist society, of the British administration (i.e. "The City of Night",

"Bridal Procession"). As a matter of fact, Kipling distorts reality, and creates a very one-sided picture of India. His India is backward, fatalistic and patriarchal. It can be saved only by the white man's superior power from anarchy. The colonial nations, on the whole, must be governed by an iron hand.

One can distinguish different genres in Kipling's short stories. At the beginning various intrigues, instances of bureaucracy, love stories, etc., are prevalent. The author's attitude is generally cynic, his manner of treatment rather superficial. Better are his ghost stories of terror, based on genuine Indian folklore. The most successful during this early period, are, however, his sheer feature stories and those dealing with people from various sections of Indian life.

The colourful incidents in these stories are somewhat connected with the recurrence of certain characters, as, for instance, the domideering Mrs. Hauksbee, the intelligence officer Strickland, and especially, the three rank-and-file soldiers - the Irishman Mulvaney, the Londoner Ortheris, the Yorkshire man Learovd.

In the collections published in the '90s - "Many Inventions". "The Day's Work", etc., India is the subject-matter only in a few stories. The action takes place in various parts of the world.

The short story remains Kipling's main genre up to the end of his career, but the later collections, such as "Land and Sea Tales" (1923), "Debits and Credits" (1936), etc., reveal a considerable decline of his craft.

The Novel

The novel has never occupied such an important place in Kipling's work as the short story. His novels represent a sequence of disconnected events and scenes which he has not been able to combine into a whole. Thus, for instance, "Captains Courageous" is sooner a longer story than a novel. The hero is a small boy, a pampered millionaire's son, Harvey Cheyne, who travels with his father to Europe. During the

voyage an accident happens, the boy falls overboard. He is saved by a fisherman who is on a longer sea trip. The rich boy is forced to share all the hardships of the trip, the life on the schooner is not easy as he must do physical work. He gets acquainted with quite a different life. When the son returns home at last, his father is satisfied with the change in him. This change for the better has taken place, however, too quickly and is therefore not convincing.

Kipling's only real novel is "Kim", in which artistic mastery is connected with the most reactionary content. The main character is also a boy, Kim, whose real name is Kimball O'Hara. His father was a poor Irish soldier who had fallen a victim to opium. After his mother's death the boy is brought up by a coloured woman and is dressed like a Hindu boy. Just like Kipling himself, he speaks many local dialects. Having met an old Tibet lama, who is wandering through the world in search of holy water which could wash all sins, Kim becomes the lama's servant, begging alms for his master.

Kim's native foster-mother had always told him that his "totem" was a "red bull on a green field". Thus his father had told her. One day Kim discovers this emblem on a regiment flag and comes into contact with the soldiers of the British administration. The leader of the military secret service, Colonel Creighton, decides to make use of the boy's abilities for secret service and sends him to Locknow's military school. Although at first Kim rebels against the strict European discipline of the school, he becomes later a devoted servant of British intelligence service. He goes through a special training and finally joins his old master lama, and they both become servants of the colonial power.

While in the service of the British agency, Kim does not think about any higher moral motives or ideals, he is ready for any kind of cruelty or meanness to achieve his aim. Espionage is for him a kind of sport.

The book presents a vivid picture of India, its teeming population different religions and superstitions, the life at the bazaars and on the road. At the same time the

novel is full of demagogic slogans which praise the British colonial policy. The main idea of the novel is an eulogy of espionage.

Poetry

Perhaps with no other writer than Kipling are the prosaist and the poet more closely connected. The subject matter and the inspiration are with both the same. The excellent rhymes and swinging rhythms only add to his poetry a musical, choral element in which tones of vigour exclusively predominate. His frequent and efficient use of alliteration "betrays an instinctive affinity of the metre with the Anglo-Saxon line" (2:1302). His poetry is, therefore, rough and popular in character, "its style and lilt remind the reader of the Old English ballads" (Ibid). At times, however, he resorts to the phraseology and the imagery of the Bible, one of the world's most ancient poetical relics, to heighten and ennoble the military terminology and the prosaic facts of life (3:21).

All these stylistic devices make Kipling's imperialist message, his "doctrine of action" only more suggestive and explicit. Thus, for instance, the rhythmic lines of his well-known poem "Boots", that vividly bring home to the reader the desolate, never-ending tramp of marching soldiers under the scorching, tropical sun, celebrate, in fact, the bloody Boer War in Africa, one of the most devoted instigators of which Kipling himself was:

We're foot - slog - slog - slog - sloggin' over Africa -
Foot - foot - foot - foot - sloggin' over Africa -
(Boots - boots - boots - boots - movin' up and down
again!)

There's no discharge in the war!

Differently from the aesthetes, symbolists and other representatives of the "art-for-art's-sake" school at the turn of the centuries, who indulged in the chaos of individualistic passions, Kipling propagates the severe military discipline of imperialism, which often lends his verse a

sharply categoric form as, for example, in the notorious poem "The White Man's Burden":

"Take up the White Man's Burden,
Send forth the best ye breed;
Go, bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need."

Just as in his short stories Kipling celebrates the will-power and endurance, the self-sacrifice and stoicism of his colonial officers and rank-and-file soldiers. No sacrifices seem to be too great for Britain's sake: "since she can give other peoples a better life than had previously been theirs, she must impose that life upon them, even if she must shed seas of blood to achieve it. Cruelty is justified along with other violations of moral laws; even treason will do, if it serves Britain". (3:7)

All Kipling's most important collections of poetry "The Barrack Room Ballads", "The Seven Seas", "The Five Nations", etc., present a curious combination of reactionary content and perfect artistic form. The ideas of violence, brutality, cynicism and a false moral supremacy have been moulded into sonorous, well-turned poetic lines.

Already in the early, and in many ways unequal collection, "The Barrack Room Ballads", Kipling's demagogic "democracy" is fully revealed. In order to win the praise of his wide reading-public, the author does not resort to the conventional war-heroism. On the contrary, he describes in naturalistic terms the daily yoke of the British "Tommy" at the mercy of callous officers who unjustly reap the laurels of victorious battles:

"O, it's "Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' Tommy go
away".

But it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins, when the band
begins to play."

Kipling mimics successfully "Tommy's" illiterate or dialectal turns of speech, he depicts truthfully his vulgar animal-like existence in the hell of war. In doing so, however, he does not express any anti-war sentiments, but rather aims at drawing the attention of the colonial authorities to the hard lot of the "Tommy", the true builder of Empire, to find ways in keeping up his patriotism and fighting mood.

In such later collection as "The Seven Seas" the destiny of the chosen British people, called by Providence "to explore, to exploit and watch over the seas" (2:1297) is the author's main inspiration. In "The Five Nations", written after the war and its great trials, Kipling once again propagates the ideas of unity, ideas of the Commonwealth of Nations.

Children's Books

Kipling's children's stories deserve special attention. Here the author's aggressive imperialist propaganda is driven to the background and he gives vent to his rich imagination.

Already in Kipling's early production there is a collection of children's stories, "Wee Willie Winkie", dealing with the life in India. The heroes of this book are little boys from barracks and military camps. His most famous children's book, however, is "The Jungle Book", translated into many languages and the popularity of which has not diminished even nowadays. This book has greatly been influenced by Indian folklore, the great specialist of which Kipling's father was.

In "The Jungle Book", and in its sequel "The Second Jungle Book", the main characters are animals, but they are strikingly individualized and resemble human beings. It also testifies to Kipling's good knowledge of wild animals. The hero is a Hindu boy, Mowgli, who has been brought up by wolves. He lives among the beasts in the Jungle. His teacher is Baloo, the bear, who acquaints him with the laws of the Jungle. Among his other friends are Bagheera, the black panther; Kaa, the rock python; Hathi, the wild elephant; Rama, the big buffalo. His enemies are Shere Khan, the man-eating tiger; Tabaqui, the jackal; the Bandar-log, the gray monkeys, and the Red Dogs whom Kipling describes as nomads who invade the Seeonee country. In spite of the opposition of the old tiger, who wants to take Mowgli in his service, he has been made the member of a pack of wolves. He has been robbed by the monkeys, but saved by his friends. Next he is driven out of the company of the wolves and goes back to human society, but finally returns to the jungle and kills his arch-enemy the tiger, Shere Khan.

Many other Kipling's children's stories are duly famous, especially those in the collection "Just So Stories".

R e f e r e n c e s

1. Hone, A.R. Rudyard Kipling. - XIX-XX sajandi väliskirjanikke. VII. - Tartu: TRÜ rotaprint, 1969.
2. Legouis, E., Cazamian, L. A History of English Literature. - London-Toronto:Dent, 1937.
3. Diakonova, N. The Poetry of Rudyard Kipling: Romance and Reality. - TRÜ toimetised. 'Tšid romaani-germaani filoloogia alalt. X. - Tartu, 1981.

Аста Л у й г а с.
КРАТКОЕ ВВЕДЕНИЕ В АНГЛИЙСКУЮ ЛИТЕРАТУРУ XII.
Вторая половина XIX и начало XX вв.
Учебное пособие для студентов филологического факультета.
На английском языке.
Тартуский государственный университет.
СССР, 202400, г.Тарту, ул.Вяиксели, 18.
Vastutav toimetaja G. Liiv.
Paljundamisele antud 29.11.1982.
Formaat 60x84/16.
Kirjutuspaber.
Masinakiri. Rotaprint.
Tingtrükipoognaid 4,65.
Arvestuspooonaid 4,39. Trükipoognaid 5,0.
Trüklary 300.
Tell. nr. 1287.
Hind 15 kop.
TRÜ trükikoda. ENSV, 202400 Tartu, Pälsoni t. 14.