CHAPTER VII

DESIRE, CONFLICT, AMBITION AND HYPOCRISY

Barth in his novel Giles Goat Boy satirizes the whole academics of education thereby ridiculing the pursuit of reason and the steps taken towards the advancement of knowledge. Barth’s novels like the works of authors such as Mary McCarthy, Philip Roth, Randall Jarrell and Saul Bellow have a strong concern with the frailties of university teachers and students. In Giles Goat Boy the action is located on a university campus. It must be noted here that in almost all his novels Barth sets an academic background for his major characters. Further Barth also draws upon his own experiences in the University. The setting is mostly the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Penn State and Johns Hopkins University, where he received his B.A and M.A and is now Alumni centennial Professor of English. In Giles Goat Boy, Barth uses the University as a setting and shows the East and West Campus involved in a cold war. “George, who is Giles Goat Boy, leaves his tutor Max in order to matriculate at New Tammany College which has many geographical similarities to Penn State including a goat farm” (Safer: 89).
Barth is always conscious that he is writing for an academic audience. Through his humor he mocks at the educational practices and theories that lie behind them. The reader cannot associate himself with characters such as George Giles because of their foolish actions. Yet he is painfully aware of the crude facts that Barth is presenting behind the humor. The leader not only becomes aware of the painful truths about the university, the university community and himself but he begins to think over those issues which are of concern to the university. Barth, half in earnest and half in jest, questions traditional notions of education. Further he has also developed an ironical counterpart to the traditional novels in his *Giles Goat Boy*. Elaine Safer in his essay “John Barth, the University and the Absurd” points out that Barth questions the traditional notions of a scholar which have been laid down by writers such as Emerson and Cotton Mather. Emerson had elevated the scholar to great heights defining him as the one who converts “dead facts into quick thought.” His active soul is aflame with life and creative energy (Safer: 90). Barth, being a post-modern writer, could not tolerate the reader’s act of placing scholars on a high pedestal. He wanted to show that they were not the “world’s eye” and the “world’s heart.” Neither were they the only ones who were “capable of pursuing the alternate reason of things” (Safer: 90). Also Barth is against the moralistic kind of literature which says that scholars will help “form heroes and saints” nor does he believe that teachers and leaders of colleges, churches and schools comprise a priesthood” (Safer: 90).
While Emerson and Cotton believed that the task of the scholar is to prevent his people from perishing, Barth is strongly against this notion. That is why all his books portray the grossness of human life whereas Mather compares Great teachers such as John Winthrop, John Cotton and Thomas Hooker with Great biblical leaders like Moses and John the Baptist. Barth develops ironic counterparts to these so called great leaders and saviors in his novels.

Barth goes to an extreme level when he ridicules the very power of reasoning and stresses unreason in his novel *The End of the Road*. He cites the case of two lecturers Joe Morgan Professor of history, who fully depends on reason in critical situations and Jake Horner instructor of English, who makes choices at random. Jake follows the advice of his doctor:

If the alternatives are side by side, choose the one on the left, if they are consecutive in time, choose the earlier. If neither of these applies, choose the alternative whose name begins with the earlier letter of the alphabet (E.T.R: 85).

Barth has purposely used the above stated instance in order to parody the Emersonian dictum “Inaction is cowardice.” Barth is against categorization and the traditional notion of dividing objects into
categories based on an “unifying instinct.” That is why even in *Giles Goat Boy*, he is against the classification Animal versus the Human Being, because at one point in the novel George says that the goats were more human than men. But Emerson had given an elaborate definition regarding classification. In his *Works* he says that classification is nothing but perceiving that objects are not chaotic and are not foreign but have a law which is the law of the human mind.

Barth is against the ideal use of words such as reason, light, eyes, eternity, ultimacy, and the cosmic view. Seen in a traditional way the word “light” would stand for education, knowledge, God etc but for Jake who suffers from cosmopsis, the cosmic view, feels that light is nothing but a bright glare in the world. “One is frozen when one has it like the bullfrog when the hunter’s light strikes him full in the eyes” (E.T.R: 74).

Jake is against rationalization. The doctor advises Jake to engage in mythotherapy, a method by which one chooses one’s myths anew in each situation. He advises “Don’t let yourself be struck between alternatives or you are lost” (E.T.R: 85).

This same view is stressed in Barth’s *Giles Goat Boy*. We find that there is a pre-occupation with nihilism in all of Barth’s novels. Barth does not give any solution in his novels. He is of the notion that all the
material for literature has been exhausted and now what remains is only the narrative impulse. The author must go on with his story and nothing else is to be expected by the reader. This nihilism is very much explicit in the case of Jake in *The End of the Road*. For example, Jake feels that his graduate education at John Hopkins has only resulted in a loss of reasoning power. He says, “There was no reason to go to Crestline, Ohio or Drayton, Ohio or Lima, Ohio. There was no reason either... for that matter to go anywhere. There was no reason to do anything” (E.T.R: 74).

What he seems to advocate is that man should just act the role appropriate in each setting. In *Giles Goat Boy* too we find that Barth ridicules the knowledge which we all gain from universities because nothing can he added to the already existing knowledge in the universe. *Giles Goat Boy* is an allegory:

which takes the university to mean universe, which imagines the entire contemporary scene and history of western civilization, culture, politics even sexuality—as a gigantic universe whose countries are separate “colleges” where men and women instead of seeking to save their souls are obsessed with passing their finals (McConnell: 108).
What Barth is concerned about is not in pointing out that his task is in writing stories but rather in showing the fact that literature has lost its humanizing power and that his work is to “reclaim the humanizing power of literature, of story in an age which appears in many ways to have lost its ability to feel that power” (McConnell: 109).

Though his novels are complex and confusing, yet there is a sense of having “fun” in novel after novel, but that word has to be read of its reference to shallowness and deception. Then we can understand Barth’s merit; behind the humor we can see the underlying grief. This reveals that Barth is concerned about the state of our universities. He himself being a teacher of literature since 1953 has stated that the university allows “the resident poet or novelist to teach as much or as little as he wishes” (McConnel: 112).

Barth’s method is unique for he first creates nostalgia in our hearts for the ideal education as given by Emerson, later he frustrates the readers by creating a contrast to that kind of education. What Barth puts forth in novel after novel is a nihilistic premise that there are no answers to questions. For instance in *Giles Goat Boy* while everyone is looking for the right answers for the passage the only point the novel puts forth is that there are no answers available for the questions that the novel raises. More so the novel attacks itself, the very genre of the
novel and its narrative impulse. As Samuel Beckett had stated, “the artist in the postmodern era has to find a form to accommodate the mess,” “the mess” implying our own lives. Hence every writer has to experiment and Barth too does the same. The mask Barth wears is not to hide his face but to discover his face and also our faces.

What Beverley Gross feels is that the comedy which seems to be everything is really nothing and that it exists to announce its own inadequacy. In other words, the form of the book reinforces the theme, that passage and failure are really the same thing.

Thus, Giles Goat Boy keeps denying the possibility of meaning, identity and it asks us not to look for answers in a world in which these things are always shifting, masked and unattainable. Barth hence makes a mockery of emotions and moral values. The ridiculousness of entirely rationalizing our thoughts and actions is presented in great detail. For example Joe Morgan learns that his wife Rennie and Jacob Horner had impulsively slept together one night and then demands that they keep it up so that he and Rennie can study what is wrong with their marriage. Another instance is that of Maurice Stoker who achieves his highest sexual gratification arranging various arcane couplings for his wife. Barth wants to draw our attention to the absurdity of the situation. The situation described here only provokes laughter but beneath it there is a
kind of grief and hatred at “the impossible strain of human attachment and commitment” (Gross: 32).

Most of the ugly facts of life are turned into comedy by Barth. He offers a kind of solution to the predicament of the modern man through the doctor in The End of The Road. The doctor tells Jacob Horner that he will be all right as long as he avoids problems, decision-making and close relations. “Nihilism disqualifies the very possibility of believing in answers even the answer of nihilism itself” (Gross: 50).

Gross feels that as Barth is against contraries, he can be termed as a “welter of contradictions;” hence all his books can be said to be written by an author without a face, a stance, an identity and a commitment. According to him, all that remains clear of his works is their basic nihilism. “Nothing works in the sense we commonly hope for, a certain Goat Boy has taught me that, everything only gets worse, our victories are never more than moral and always pyrrhic. In fact we know only more or less ruinous defeats” (Cover letter of G.G.B: 19).

Thus the novel nullifies all our educational pursuits and as the university represents the world at large all our other pursuits such as pursuit after wealth, beauty, name and fame are ultimately of no consequence. Hence he has been termed as a “cosmic satirist” and a “novelist of the absurd.”
Barth has thus created:

characters who doubt the existence of absolutes, has undermined the foundations of his authority and has toyed with a profound skepticism that calls into question the concept of a unified and continuous self as well as all systems of ethics and philosophy (Walkiewiz: 1).

His works question the very concept of power and also nullifies the concept of power because as human beings we have no power over our lives. Barth says that even his joining Johns Hopkins University was an accident rather than by choice. Hence in his profession also he feels he is not an author in the true sense of the term rather he is only imitating the role of the author and his novels only imitate the form of the novel.

The characters in Barth novels feel that if there is no point in living, there is no point in dying. But what is emphasized is the value of experience. He implies that the life process has to be carried on in spite of our successes and defeats. Though the experiences described in the books are unrealistic yet the “sheer value of experience” is “upheld and sanctified” (Gross: 36).
According to Gross, John Barth’s novels put forth:

the nihilistic conviction that there are no ends in life, that activity is baffling, frustrating and self-defeating and that the fruit of experience is simply the wisdom that sanctifies inanition (Gross: 37).

Barth’s *Giles Goat Boy* adheres to the above stated nihilistic conviction. As he is convinced of the exhaustion of the materials for literature, he has tried to re-invent the world through his imagination. Hence he seems to be competing not with the creator of the novel but with the Creator of the world. For this, he resorts to various techniques of fabulation and distortion. Through his bizarre imagination he has given elaborate apologies by the author and the supposed publishers and editors at the beginning of his book *Giles Goat Boy*, the so called publisher at the opening of the novel states that “the reader must begin the book with an act of faith and end it with an act of charity” (G.G.B: 11).

By anticipating the reader’s response Barth in the voice of the publisher asks us to make allowances in our judgement of the novel. The reports of all the supposed editors of the book are negative and the only editor called editor ‘B’ agrees to publish the novel and he assesses Barth’s career as:
I frankly don't know what to make of this one where other writers seek fidelity to the facts of modern experience, he declares it his aim purely to astonish, where others seek for truth he admits his affinity for lies, the more enormous the better (G.G.B: 14).

Barth has thus laid bare his own technique in the voice of the editor. In the foreword of Giles Goat Boy, the mask Barth is wearing is his own mask in which he frets about the future of his novels. Inspite of this disillusionment, he continues to write 800 page novels, Thus Barth being convinced of life's meaninglessness takes pleasure in giving joyful expressions to it. He starts with the premise that there has been an exhaustion of literature which implies that all the subject matter for fiction has been "used up" and the narrative impulse must get along by itself, stating that its material has been "used up."

To carry on with his narration, Barth makes use of the method of Chinese boxes wherein the reader gets into the innermost box only to find that the other boxes have evaporated.

In Giles Goat Boy, the first two boxes are concerning the author and the novel, then comes the narrative and within it the various allegorical planes that the narrative produces. The narrative at this stage
draws from various subjects such as History, Psychology etc by means of allegory. But the narrative here gives equal importance to all. The next box contains two things that are more basic to the novel than the allegorical plane. One is the theme of the problem of absolutes whether they exist or not. The other is George's attempt to fulfill his assignment. These two components relate intimately to each other because each of the seven parts of the assignment depends on the successful handling of a pair of opposites each member of which lays claim to being an absolute. But Barth never reveals whether George succeeds or not. Finally only one thing remains—the process of writing.

The reader after he peels off the layers of the story like an onion finds in the last layer only the impetus of story-telling. What Barth feels is that just as life must go on inspite of its bleakness so also the novel has to continue inspite of its exhaustion. Barth has given a kind of conclusion to this problem. What he feels is that these novels which are so noisy and so immersed with human lives must at last come to an end. That stage he describes as "General Anesthesia, Self extinction, Silence" (Gross: 41). He also stresses that this cannot happen because there is the "demanding reader and the unappeasable creative self." In a most desperate moment in the short story 'Title' the narrator himself gives the answer thus:
The fact is you’re driving me to it, the fact is that people still lead lives, mean and bleak and brief as they are, briefer than you think and people have characters and motives that we divine more or less inaccurately... people still fall in love and out, yes, in and out and out and in and they please each other and hurt each other, isn’t that the truth and they do these things... conventionally dramatic fashion, unfashionable or not, go on, I’m going and what goes on between them is still not only the most interesting but the most important thing in the bloody murderous world, pardon the adjective (Gross: 41).

Thus Barth has given vent to his feelings about fiction by wearing the mask of a narrator. At every point in the story he makes it clear that though convinced of the failure of words and convinced of the failure of actions both in life and fiction, life must go on, Similarly literature must continue its path. By doing so, “He is not quite affirming life but he is negating lifelessness. He is not quite affirming art but he is negating Silence” (Gross: 42).

Though convinced of failure yet one must get on in life, because failure and passage are the same. According to Barth, life must go on as the process of writing must go on. Hence at the core of Giles Goat Boy is a basic nihilism. Barth asks if reasoning power can be used to reason
this illogical world. He questions the futility of the teaching process where teachers try to reason out things by means of logic. He makes use of parody in order to ridicule both the traditional literature and human beliefs. As in quest literature, Barth does not present heroes who wage battles with supernatural forces and gain power. Rather he presents an inverted version of a hero who is unable to decipher this world, the protagonist is a deformed one who is the “Grimping George who is brought up with the goats not the sheep” (Safer: 68).

Robert Scholes considers *Giles Goat Boy* an “epic to end all epics and a sacred book to end all sacred books” (Scholes: 75). Which implies that since the subject matter of literature has been exhausted the writer should resort to new modes. The writer can also invert the existing sacred texts in order to create a new form of the novel. Barth too has used the form of the bible for his novel *Giles Goat Boy* while at the same time he makes a parody of it. For instance, *Giles Goat Boy* has been divided into two volumes.

As in the Bible the numbers three and seven appear often, three calling to mind the doctrine of the trinity and seven the Sabbath, the seven sacraments, the seven visions of the apocalypse and their subdivision into a seven fold representation of elements and so forth. Barth divides each
volume of *Goat Boy* into three reels and seven subdivisions or chapters (Scholes: 76).

George attempts three interpretation “of the seven assignments, goes down into the belly of WESCAC three times and completes the revision of the New Syllabus at the age of thirty-three and a third” (Safer: 69).

Hence one can see that the Giles Goat Boy is a Barthian version of a Christ figure who spends his life among the goats, later reinterprets the New Syllabus and is eager to set up a new kingdom called Gilesean kingdom. But it is only in the end that he learns that reason is inadequate to explain the complexities of his experience. Also Barth is ridiculing Christ like figures, when he creates an anti-hero in George Giles. The readers are not told much about the childhood of George in the Ag Hill goat Farm. “George himself dismissed the subject with one piece of information” (G.G.B: 5).

“...My childhood has been chronicled in the “journal of experimental psychology.” The author does so deliberately as he wants to draw a parallel between the hero and the monomythic hero whose childhood too was mysterious.
Inside the Belly of the computer, George discerns his love for his Ladyship, which makes him exclaim “Wonderful! I cried. For though the place was lightless and my head pursed in Anastasia I discovered the university whole and clear” (G.G.B: 672).

George the contemporary Christ figure is fated to be a sacrifice to save the studentdom of the western campus. But Barth’s 20th century Christ can no more be innocent and mild amidst the befoulments of his surroundings. His ritualistic stage of initiation or journey to self-discovery drains him of whatever innocence was left in George. Hence Barth’s modern Christ figure progresses from a state of an innocent lamb to the experienced goat. He learns that “the first reality of life on the campus must be the clear distinction between Passage and Failure” (G.G.B: 420).

Because of this notion there is disaster in the personal lives of the characters. But later he tries to reverse the first notion by stating that:

failure is passage which also proves to be a misinterpretation, leading the campus to chaos. This thesis and antithesis lead to the final synthesis that passage and failure are distinct but inter dependent realities that define one another (Shobana: 51).
Actually the Goat boy makes two heroic attempts to solve the enigma and to prove that he is Giles the Grand Tutor. At first he makes an effort to be completely logical and categorical about the words, who shall fail? (go to hell) and who shall pass? (to be saved). He sees passedness or Salvation from that of flunkedness or damnation. Ultimately, he has to make a distinction between good and evil and include the entire studentdom in either of these two categories. But George soon learns that men and events are so complicated. That he cannot make a clear-cut distinction between the two.

George Giles recognizes his inability to decode the baffling assignment sheet and he says:

That circular device on my assignment sheet—beginningless, endless, infinite, equivalence constricted my reason like a torture tool from the age of Faith, Passage was Failure and Failure Passage Yet passage was passage, Failure failure! Equally true none was the answer, the two were not different, neither were they the same and "true" and "false" and "same" and "different" unnameable, Unnameable! Unimaginable! Surely my mind must crack (G.G.B: 650).
George had to answer four questions each time he enters into the belly of the computer—Are you male or female? Have you completed your assignment in no time? Are you the Giles and do you want to pass? During his first attempt he thought that absolutes and opposites existed and so he answers ‘yes’ to each question. He learns that the answers are wrong and the next time he answers ‘no’ to all the questions. Hence both times he had given wrong answers.

The third time he neither affirms nor denies the existence of absolutes and opposites but tries to make it known that “absolutes” and “opposites” are false categories. The basic question that underlies all the four questions is, are ‘X’ and ‘y’ distinct and opposite? (Shobana: 32).

George and Anastasia answer the questions this time by pressing both the buttons simultaneously that is both “yes” and “no.” So both the answers are applicable to the set of questions and the computer is compelled to accept the answer as correct.

Though George has managed to get mastery over the WESCAC and save the studentdom from the EAT waves, he is not able to teach the doctrine of love to the studentdom. He realizes that it is impossible and he confesses,
"What I “knew” neither “I” nor any one could “teach” nor even to my own tutees" (G.G.B: 703).

Barth’s hero becomes a tragic Christ figure because he cannot give an answer to the question of the student’s salvation. This is revealed to us in the post script of the post tape where J.B. (the one who received the type script of the revised new syllabus (i.e.) John Barth himself wonders:

Where are the joys the hope, the knowledge and the confident strength of the man who... affirmed the candidacies of his tutees and readied himself to teach all studentdom the Answer? Not teachable! Indeed! (G.G.B: 170).

George learns that the answer to the question of salvation is unteachable. He ruminates in the post tape:

I go this final time to teach the unteachable and shall fail, a handful will attend me and they in vain, the rest will snore in the aisles as always make air planes from my notes, break wind in reply to my questions. I know they will steal my lunch, expose their privates in the cloakroom, traffic in comic books under the seminar table (G.G.B: 707).
Barth’s vision stresses the tragic plight of Jesus in his Second Coming as well as the plight of the universities and the students to cooperate with the teachers. He does this in a very subtle way and hints at the tragic condition of the teachers who hope, in vain, that some knowledge will enter into the head of the students who are indifferent. He has portrayed the reality in classrooms wherein students indulge in all kinds of gimmicks other than listening to their teachers. Hence, though the situation is portrayed comically it brings to our mind the sad state of affairs the world over.

In the postscript the legitimacy of George as the Messiah is left hanging. Can there be “one” to save the university and the universe at large? Barth also hints at the failure of Christ to redeem mankind. He is able to attack not only academics but also religion and social ethics, which claim to redeem mankind. Barth also turns away from the modern forms of narration to post modern fabulation that deconstructs the old myths and provides up-to-date versions of them. Robert Scholes has given his definition of fabulation. According to him, “Fabulation is not a turning away from reality but an attempt to find more subtle correspondences between the reality which is fiction and the fiction which is reality” (Scholes: 8).
John Barth utilizes the possibilities of the technique of fabulation as it is futile to picture reality. He further makes use of the pre existing myths and beliefs only to turn them against themselves. Barth puts every nation to ridicule. Even the most revered Easter ceremony and the apocalypse are being ridiculed because students at new Tammany are not bothered about the significance of all these. They have their own festivals just before registration called new Tammany’s Spring Carnival where candidates celebrate the ritual without any knowledge of the significance behind it. Students also engage in “Trial by Turnstile, which theoretically would admit them to the tiny gate somewhere beyond… (and) to the final examination” (Safer: 69).

Giles’s mission is to reprogram the monstrous computer WESCAC and thus to redeem the university folks. He is mainly inspired and directed by the teachings of Enos Enoch. Further George is confident of the worth of Enos, Enos and his Grand Tutor, who acts as a role model for him. But when Max tries to convince him that it is utter foolishness to attempt to be a grand Tutor, because there were no grand tutors even in the past, George interrupts him with his well built belief in Enos Enoch’s capability.

“If Enos Enoch was alive he could change WESCAC’s AIM couldn’t he. And he could convince the whole student body” (G.G.B: 91).
To defend his claim to be a grand tutor, he insists on his likeness to Enos Enoch. He argues thus “I just now realized Max; I’ve been there before I was practically born in WESCAC’s belly wasn’t I? So it must be I’m a grand tutor like Enos–Enoch or else I’ve been eaten already” (G.G.B: 91).

It is with this strong conviction that George sets out to be the grand tutor of the western campus. All through the novel, Barth wants to shake our so-called beliefs in the University and thereby the Universe at large. Whereas spirituality is being stressed in the life of Jesus Christ, Barth stresses physicality in George Giles life, as an individual cannot be entirely divested of his sexual side. Christ was keen on celibacy but the Goat boy is out and out “physical.” Barth wants his hero to be wise in all aspects but not without his carnal nature.

Barth’s goat boy tries but fails to become the savior of the campus and the story attains a pathetic dimension. Since he has both the traits of a human and a goat he is unable to put back certain characteristic traits. For instance, while it is considered immoral and incestuous to mate one’s own mother in the human world, it is considered natural in the case of goats. But for “the goat boy, they are not from a flunked heart but merely from suffering ignorance” (G.G.B: 83).
Also he has a sequence of Oedipal dreaming of mounting all the she goats including his goat mother Mary. The goat boy attempts to rape "Lady cream Hair" (Virginia Hector) who turns out to be his mother. He approves of his dream of mating his goat mother, Mary V. Appenzeller from the goatish point of view. He justifies his deeds thus:

Undeniably I had stuck my keeper once but those were tragic mistakes, one must almost say accidents. They were proceedings not from a flunked heart but merely from suffering ignorance, the same that had assaulted lady cream hair in the hemlocks (G.G.B: 83).

Barth is thus been on totally breaking our edifice of myth, religion and our very own culture. All these are not only put to ridicule but also their validity and origin questioned.

Barth portrays George as gaining mastery over the computer thereby enabling him to answer the questions it puts to him. But this is possible only after he mates Anastasia who happens to be his sister. Thus basic instincts are given preference rather than moral codes of conduct. Barth here points out that if one goes to the origin of man as stated in Christianity one finds that the children of Adam & Eve should have mated with each other in order to propel the species. Christianity, a much-practiced religion all over the world, has incestuous encounters
at its root. Hence Barth ridicules the fact that Christianity harping on universal love & brotherhood has given more importance to sexual urges.

In *Giles Goat Boy*, Max does his best to prevent George from entering into the human world and thereby from “knowing” a woman. But George has in him the same blood of his forefathers and when he beholds the private parts of a woman for the first time he is unable to control himself and he falls into temptation like Adam & Eve.

What madness was it and before our unbelieving eyes, could it be the shift went up again?... by dint of squinting, I discerned her shame that patch as it were on her else pure whiteness... her lip! No drowning comrade to divert me, I couldn’t turn my gaze for all Max warned me to (G.G.B: 116).

Barth’s intention here is to jeopardize the already existing notions of intellectuality, spirituality & sexuality. Though *Giles Goat Boy* is a campus novel Barth has not exalted intellectuality above sexuality. According to him physical needs are as important as intellectual needs. He is against hypocrites who are keen on labeling personalities based on intellectual ability or sexual misdeeds.
“Barth confirms that no character can be given a single identity as every person is at the same time himself and his opposite” (Shobana: 81).

Thus the novel does not privilege any particular quality be it intellectuality, spirituality or sexuality but it merely proceeds and exists. It is different from other novels which have been taken up for study in this thesis because as Scholes says *Giles Goat Boy* has no allegorical levels like Dante’s with one level more important than the others and each of them operating at every point in the story. The novel completely does away with political historical and religious allegories and slowly towards the end what exists “is only the impetus of story telling” (Stark: 121).

The author who uses all the materials for writing, finally shucks away all leaving only the process of writing in the end. Barth does not give any conclusion for this novel. Hence if we go to the novel with any hopes of finding a story, we will be frustrated, because nothing is revealed towards the end of the novel. If *Giles Goat Boy* had been a conventional novel, the hero would have become wiser towards the close of the text. But here, George only becomes aware of the irrationality of such truths. Even the real status of George as a Grand Tutor and hero is called into question.
Since the contemporary world is chaotic, Barth cannot show a resolution towards the end. That is why in the post tape we are shown the broken relationship between Anastasia and George. They do not live happily ever after, rather the transient nature of human life and the triviality of human endeavors are stressed.

Barth is not projecting any message through his 800 page novel rather he presents the world as it is with its misconceptions, prejudices, hypocrisies, false worshipping of gods, its vain desires and ambition. He confirms Shakespeare’s words that all the world’s a stage and men and women merely actors each acting their part in life.

Just as Barth takes up the role of an author and questions our Myths, Culture, Religion & even the process of Writing, it is upto us readers to question ourselves regarding our role in schools and colleges and how we are to act our part well. It is evident that Barth is keen on targeting our society, which is hesitant in leaving its blind faiths in order to help-build a new Universe and a new University. Also his interest in improving our methods of writing is also seen. His method of fabulation, which depicts the hyper reality of today’s world is laudable.