Chapter One

ANTHONY POWELL AND HIS AGE

Anthony Powell belongs to the time that may be divided into two parts: the period of the novel in the modern times that went before him and the period of the contemporary novel. Let us take the former into our consideration. The novel in the modern times has undergone a change in the sense that it has evolved a new method of characterisation -- characters are created without the help of a story. It was not so upto the nineteenth century. In this connection, we may mention the name of Henry James, who invented this new device of characterisation, and this on its part gave birth to a new mode of writing.

Henry James is Thomas Hardy's contemporary, but he is entirely different from him so far as his art is concerned. Hardy's plots follow cause and effect theory--plots portraying the story of the few characters as they move from one point to another in the scale of time covering a long span. On the other hand, Henry James's method of portraying his characters in his plots is quite different. He does not base his plots on cause and effect theory-externalisation. Rather, he portrays the inside of his characters. That is to say.
in his plots we find that he makes his readers see for themselves the very inside -- the thinking processes -- of his characters. He analyses his characters psychologically. He makes them talk to themselves in monologues. He also makes them talk to one another. Thus, in their monologues and dialogues they reveal themselves. The readers come to know them from their memories, ideas and decisions. Of course, the author intervenes here and there. It is he who selects his material and thus he interprets the life he presents. James's method, thus, leads to the almost approximation of the method of the 'stream of consciousness' technique. It does not, however, mean that his method is perfect. It does suffer from certain weaknesses. It leads, sometimes, to obscurity. It is because he does not round up his plots, and so his plots become episodic. The above theory finds an exquisite expression in his book *The Art of Fiction* (1884). In this book, he thinks that everything in life is a fit material for art. It is for the readers to observe it, no matter the novelist also narrates it. This theory finds an expression in his novel *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), wherein the main character, Lady Isabel's consciousness is revealed. The readers see for themselves how things happen, rather than only what happens. The novelist uses the presentation of Lady Isabel's consciousness both as an expression and also as an interpretation.

Then comes Joseph Conrad. He takes this method a little
ahead. As we know, Joseph Conrad deals with sea life. In his novels his characters interpret happenings and incidents. The author's intrusion finds no place in his plots as the main object in them is to express human consciousness in infinite form.

In this connection it will be proper to point out that Joseph Conrad himself thinks in his preface to *The Nigger of Narcissus* that all art appeals primarily to senses and, therefore, his task is to make his readers hear and feel what he writes. 1 It follows then that, according to him, it is the duty of an artist to remain faithful to his vision of life. His novels normally take a different shape. It is because Conrad is an impressionist. He thinks that what happens in a day leaves an impression on a man's mind. Since a novel imitates life, it is also bound to leave impressions. So in his novels he has used the technique of the interior monologue. In his novel *Lord Jim*, Marlowe, shuttling through time in his own manner, makes us know what he knows. In this way, he reconciles with what he gets from his own subconsciousness with his conscious mind. It takes him ahead towards the 'stream of consciousness' novel.

In the mean time Sigmund Freud came forward with his new concept of Id, Super Ego and Libido. It created a revolution, particularly in culture, in Europe in the early 20th century.

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Jung and Bergson made elaboration of his concepts. They pointed out that man's mind moves in flux. In other words, it shuttles across the boundaries of time and space. They think that a man's personality includes his own experiences besides the experience of his own race. As a result of this thinking, the authors started analysing the working of subconscious and unconscious minds of his characters.

D.H. Lawrence (1985-1930) was the first who was influenced by the above theory of psychoanalysis. In his novels, man is at war with himself. His own emotions and unfulfilled desires prey on him. The novelist does not see him as a victim of external forces. Of course, all is not well with his application of psychoanalytical theory. His novels lack proper human relationship. Not only this, even healthy attitudes are not maintained because of his preoccupation with the application of psychoanalytical theory. Besides, in his novels he develops a new attitude to sex and gives up hypocritical Victorian values in this connection. Impulses and natural appetites are given free play and intellect is kept apart. In short, the technique of impressionism and symbolism is used extensively in his novels.

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) takes it further and develops it into a fuller technique of 'Stream of Consciousness'. Naturally, we do not find plot, in the traditional sense of the terms, in her novel, Mrs. Dalloway (1922). A few hours
from the life of Mrs. Dalloway are presented but the life of this brief period is shown so vividly that the readers are able to see a vivid glimpse of the mind of the heroine. This phenomenon, not present in the fiction up to 19th century, was introduced by Virginia Woolf for the first time.

Then comes James Joyce (1882-1961), who in his *Ulysses*, takes the 'stream of consciousness' technique to the climax. The hero of this novel is an open book. He is not shown in action. The readers are shown how and what he thinks. James Joyce tried to get hold of a thought even before it is materialised. Naturally, for this purpose he had to evolve a new kind of language with words entangled with one another. They form compound words that fulfil their own purpose in the sense that they give different shades of meaning.

After James Joyce we come across a different kind of novel: the contemporary novel. It is innovative in nature. Critics, like T.S. Eliot, Ortage, Y. Gasset and Cyrill support this statement. On the other hand, there are others like David Daiches, who think that the English novel had some vitality even after James Joyce. They think that in spite of the experimentation of 1920s and 1930s and in spite of the doubts expressed by the critics as to the future of the novel, which some see as an exhausted literary form, the novel has persisted.

in its conventional form, as the maid-of-all work of literature that it became in the 19th century and is still a highly popular form of entertainment. It follows then that novels after James Joyce are different from those written before the Second World War. We may term them as the contemporary novels. The authors of this kind of novel -- Laurence, Durrel, Malcolm Lowry, Anthony Powell, George Orwell, Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, Ivy Comption, Burnett and William Cooper -- started writing even before the War, but the fact remains that their works were brought out after the Second World War. In this connection it is pertinent to point out William Cooper's remark that they meant to write a different kind of novel from that of the 30s and they said that the novel of the 30s, called the experimental novel, had got to be brushed out of the way before they could get a proper hearing. The author has observed in this connection thus: "... the thirties novel, the experimental novel, had got to be brushed out of the way before we could get a proper hearing."\(^4\) Naturally, when we study these novelists, we do not come across the terms like symbolism, impressionism, naturalism, experimentation, psychoanalysis, etc., about them. It is a different matter that occasionally a novelist, like Samuel Beckett, may present his hero with his memories or occasionally Graham Greene may indulge in the psychoanalysis, but the fact remains that they never give any prominence to them in their novels.

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So the genre, the contemporary novel, differs from the modern novel or the experimental novel of the period before the Second World War. If we go deep into these two kinds of novels, we find that the fundamental difference lies in the relationship of the author to his novels.

The contemporary novelist or the novelist of today does not indulge in presenting the very inside of the minds of his characters. He does not examine the unconscious mind of his heroes in minutest details. Rather, he studies the interplay of relationship in the slice of life he presents. He, thus, studies the cause and effect of human behaviour. So, he comments and tells his story like the person knowing all. Naturally, he studies action and reaction and further action because it is these that make a story interesting. In brief, in the contemporary novel the plot has been rehabilitated. In the opinion of Karl, the novelist of the postwar period, "the experimental novel -- especially its treatment of plot -- is no longer viable and that retreat is perhaps expedient."5

Thus, the postwar novelists follow premodernist's love of plot and character. They bring realism into social novel. This revival may be seen in William Cooper's *Scenes from Provincial Life* (1959) and Wilson's *Hemlock and after* (1952).

The contemporary novelists find justification of their love of plot and character and think that it is the novel

that carries culture and values in the strongest possible manner. It is the novel that satisfies the need of the novelty in the experiences of the individual. Not only this, it is this form that leaves permanent impressions on the literary scenes. All these reasons lure the novelist to follow tradition. Thus, the novelist today gets inspiration from Charles Dickens, Flaubert, Tolstoy, Lawrence and Joyce. Their influence on the contemporary writers can be seen in their subject matters, techniques and assumptions. For example, Anthony Burgess' *Inside Mr. Enderby* reminds us of the scenes in Joyce's *Ulysses*. Likewise, in David Storey's *Radcliffs and Tolson*, we see in the relationship between Radcliffs and Tolson the relationship between Berkin and Gerard Crich of Lawrence's *Women and Love*. Consequently, there is no ground for powerful literature to grow. The B.B.C. interviewer Bernard Bergonzi, who interviewed contemporary novelists, finds that the contemporary novelists have borrowed consciously from the novels of the past.

Besides, we also find that the contemporary novelists have revived the moral and social values of the past in the postwar European Society. They refuse to pen down the view of the world as it exists today. Naturally, we do not find characters in their novels that have their own standards before them. They are devoid of permanent truths in their lives. So, they do not think that they should sacrifice
their lives for their country, religion, family, etc. Rather, they select a small slice of life and fill it with their own views of the world. They do not take in their novels the major themes as their predecessors did. Like Henry Fielding, they test every thing that comes in their way. Naturally, their novels could not achieve glorious heights. Of course, in this connection, we may make C.P. Snow and Anthony Powell as exceptions. They do treat the social and political conflicts of their times in their works, but they, unlike the masters of the 19th century, have stronger social commitments to the existing social order and, therefore, they were required to reform, moralise or satirise but in the fixed value system in which they worked. Besides, they disregard the class structure of the 19th century. Of course there are a few novels that are exceptions among them. For example, Beckett's heroes are living through the world without acknowledging its existence. Similarly, Laurence Durell's men and women move in both the classes -- their own (ordinary class) and the high society of their times -- with equal ease. Likewise, C.P. Snow's Lewis Eliot only shows traces of real struggle. So, his 'new men' do not break away from the society as they fight only for their personal power. Also, Joyce Cary's heroes move from the condition of opulence to that of need. They do so, but they do not show any enthusiasm for the former and the lack of it for the latter. But, among them, George Orwell, Evelyn Waugh, Anthony
Powell, P.H. Newby and Angus Wilson reveal their awareness of class and race prejudices attached to them.

In this connection, we find that George Orwell has spoken a lot against social injustice and class prejudice in his novels. He lashes out at the deep-rooted evils of class exploitation and apartheid. So, besides the aesthetic motivation, the motivation for political purpose may be appreciated behind all his writings. Thus, his own aesthetic enthusiasm and political purpose led him to behave in this way in his novels. Besides, he conveys his own message in a simple and terse language throughout his novels. However, his language is generally straightforward. Sometimes, he has used fable as in his novel *Animal Farm* (1945). Sometimes, he administered spasmodics in hyperbolic language as in his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1945). In them he jots down the details of life faithfully -- the life may be Indian of the British India or that of Spain during the Civil War of that country. Further, in them his characters are the studies that reveal pathetically what man has made of man. Besides, in them the Hardian view of God is replaced by materialistic greed that devours the peace of not one man but of the whole world. In short, his central characters are isolated beings that are destroyed easily by the external environment. For example, we may take the case of Gordon, the central character of his novel *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (1936). Gordon
belongs to the class enjoyed by the capitalists, like Ravelston. He is an economically depressed man. He struggles only to reconcile to a prosperous middle class fortune. Thus, in Orwell's novels we find the struggle between man's needs and the demands of the society. So, they struggle against the social demands and do it in their extreme poverty.

But this is not the case with the characters of Graham Greene's novels. The characters, rather central characters, of his novels struggle against powerful forces of grace and virtue. Since they confront these powerful forces, they turn into tragic heroes in the end of his novels. Thus, Greene follows Aristotle, so far as the latter's concept of tragedy is concerned, but with a modification in the sense that Greene's hero suffers a fall from grace. In this connection Karl points out that Greene has written Greek tragedies without forsaking a Christian God. In other words, the central characters in Greene's novels possess vision of saintliness. They follow his ideals in their lives, and in acting thus they go through a lot of struggle in their minds because they are not able to carry on their lives according to his ideals. Scobie of his novel The Heart of the Matter, Pinkie of Brighton Book and the Priest of The Power and the Glory, understand the limits of their moral weaknesses. Like

human beings they also suffer from weaknesses. They then 
crave for the help of God in order to keep themselves above 
the sins and devilish acts in which they fall. So, his 
central characters, like Benedix of his novel The End of the 
Affair, Minty of England Made Me, Francis Andrews of The 
Man Within, and Querry of A Burnt Out case, approach God 
when they probe into their sins at a time of their failures. 
Thus, we find that Greene appears to have revived the 
Christian novel like Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. Of course, 
Greene differs from Bunyan in that in Bunyan's novel Pilgrim's 
Progress a good man quests for virtues, whereas in Greene's 
novel sinners and the weak feel the necessity of God. In 
his novel It's a Battle Field (1934), he follows Joycean 
technique as he does in his novels The Man Within and England 
Made Me. So far as his novel Brighten Rock (1938) is con-
cerned, we find that it has been given a background that is 
suitable for Dante's infernal sufferers or Milton's demons. 
It is not suitable for the men and women of the then England.7 
His novel The Power and the Glory shows this motif at 
its highest. It runs from damnation through uncertainty 
to sainthood. In this novel the priest is not perfect 
but a man having faults and weaknesses of a common man. He 
is afraid of the Law that may exterminate his priest-
hood. It is a different matter that he suffers for his 

sheep. He does it willingly as he believes in the mercy of God. For example, even when he is outlawed in Mexico, because the revolutionary regime does not favour him, he does not deter from carrying on his function of saving a soul from sins in the world so that that soul may be redeemed. R.W.B. Lewis considers the priest as a saint who moves from one situation to another according to the changes in his fortune. 8 Thus, the priest in this novel is a clear example of a picareseque saint, made up of hostile attributes. In his later novels, The Quiet American, A Burnt Out Case, The Comedian, The End of the Affair, we may find that settings shift from London to exotic regions of Saigon, Congo and Haiti. Like his other novels, they too deal with the problem of good and evil and the miserable condition of the people. Of these, his novel The Quiet American is very close to another kind of novel, the novel of adventure. It is because it has its setting in Cockpit of the modern war. Greene felt delighted in writing such novels.

Like Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh is also a catholic novelist, but he differs from him. Evelyn Waugh's Catholicism is profoundly romantic. It is a nostalgic dream of an ideal past by which the present is judged and found wanting. In the words of Walter Allen, "... Waugh's

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Catholicism is very different from Greene's. It is profoundly romantic, a nostalgic dream of an ideal past by which the present is judged and found wanting."\(^9\) Besides, Evelyn Waugh does not show that there is any stronghold of religion on him. However, it may possess some thematic significance in his novels.

His first novel **Decline and Fall** shows his truculent point of-view. His ineffectual hero and his comic approach to the horrors of life support this aspect that we find in his other novels also. It has, like that of **Tom Jones**, self-sustaining, discreet, comic world with its own laws and probabilities, its own distinction, justice and injustice and its notion of comic fortune.\(^10\) In his another novel **Vile Bodies** (1930), we find that the world of comedy that he creates, over-lapse the world of history, with the result that the wooden characters, although given human personalities do not affect us by their joys and sorrows. The vision of economic collapse, disorder and political chaos underlying the story in the novel does not affect us. Likewise, in his novel **A Handful of Dust** we find that London is a dead city inhabited by zombies. It shows the emptiness behind the gay London.

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It is a city where the death of one's son does not draw the attentions of others. It is a city where an affair is begun in order to overcome boredom. It is a city where a divorce case is filed without taking into consideration the feelings of the spouse. It is again a city where worthless ideas are substituted for the real value of beauty and ethics. However, this novel is important in that it represents a myth that dominates the whole of his fiction. In the figure of the hero, Tony Last, one may see, according to Bernard Bergonzi, the first tentative outlines of the myth that was extravagantly magnified in his novel *Brideshead Revisited*.\(^{11}\) Besides, the novel, in its method, is like the early farces *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies*. The characters of the novels are two dimensional in that they suffer from the weakness of deep feelings. It is so because the title of his novel has been taken from T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*. So, what is true of the characters of the poem, is also true of the characters of this novel. In the words of Bergonzi it can be defined like some of Wyndham Lewis' novels as farce in Bergsonian Terms.\(^{12}\) However, Waugh's work is a comedy in the three titles, *Men at Arms* (1952), *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955) and *Unconditional Surrender* (1961). It is they that make his war trilogy *Sword of Honour*. Guy Crouchback is the


\(^{12}\) Ibid., p.106.
central character of this trilogy. His wife is unfaithful to him, but he cannot divorce her because he thinks that it is not religiously correct. He, however, gets a means to save himself from her. He joins the war because he cannot shun his patriotism. However, it does not solve his problem. In short, he is a relic of the age of chivalry. Thus, this trilogy gives us a mixture of comedy, reality, farce and tradition. Even then, Waugh's work is a comedy in the sense that its action has no deeper implication in his novel. He, like a bully, forces us to smile at his comic material. His comedies, in fact, are full of horror.

The two landmarks in the history of novel in the present century are: D.H.Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. They are the staunch advocates of the individuality of man. Lawrence thinks that in order to develop sound relationship, it is necessary that there should be proper development of human beings and such developed human beings should respect individuality of one another. This philosophy has been followed faithfully by Joyce Cary (1888-1957) among contemporary novelists. His characters love one another and also respect the individuality of one another. To support it, we can refer to his novels: Herself Surprised (1941), To Be a Pilgrim (1942) and The Horse's Mouth (1944). In Herself Surprised, Sara, the cook, escapes with Wilcher and Gully Jimson. She is a widow and has grown-up children. But, she
renounces everything that comes in the way of her individuality. Human ties fail to bind her. She is, thus, a prototype of Defoe's Moll Flanders. She is a woman who keeps in view only her individual thinking of the present. She differs from Thackeray's Becky Sharp in the sense that she takes care not to hurt anybody. For this she readily accepts changes in her situations and positions to survive. If we consider her character from an Orthodox point-of-view, she is a sinner of flesh like Chaucer's Wife of Bath. In his novel To Be a Pilgrim Wilcher is sorrowful and lonely. He feels so because he is unable to break the existing social norm that man should not marry his own housekeeper. Since he cannot assert his own individuality in his worldly life, his mental power does not find any outlet. So, he acts according to the social norms and not according to his own instincts. The novel, thus, dramatizes the difference between the two generations before and after the First World War. In his novel The Horse's Mouth the novelist views the world with the eyes of an artist. Gully Jimson, in this novel, is an artist. Since the author himself studied painting at length, the novel The Horse's Mouth, is his fine creation. In this novel we find that the author was influenced by William Blake. In his long interior monologues Carry quotes William Blake profusely. Blake's influence on him may also be felt in his (Cary's) use of imagery. Thus, for the sake of art, his characters escape
from the reality of life. They may go to any length in their life. They are prepared even to beg, borrow or steal. It is because Cary's aim was only to give expression to art. Thus, the novelist shows his indifference to the world. He brings the story to the climax in this novel in the sense that he paints a huge mural on the wall of a building that is being pulled down. Here Cary comes close to Oscar Wilde in the sense that the latter too attempted to show how art is indestructible. His novel *Dorian Gray* may be appreciated in this connection. In short, the novel *The Horses Mouth* gives rise to real humour when he satirises critics of art by copying their jargons. However, the satire in the novel is spearsharp. Jimson imagines that the whole world may be changed according to the fancy of the artist.

Cary's other novels, *Prisoner of Grace* (1952), *Except the Lord* (1953) and *Not Honour More* (1955), are political in content. In these novels we find the Orwellian view of politics of the day -- the dirty game in which oppression and violence have upper hand. The central character, Chester Nimmo, suffers from the tendency to imagine and thus he escapes from the reality of life. He falls into political life without calculating any thing and, thus, is imprisoned in that life. However, in the course of time he escapes from it. But the fact remains that his character does achieve heroic proportions. It is a different matter that the time is
not ripe for such characters.

Thus, we find that Cary's characters do play their roles in the life of the day, but their actions connect them to the Victorian period. So, Cary's world resembles Dickens', because Cary adds, time and again, moral bits to what he presents in his novels. Naturally, his characters are what their creator makes them. They possess the author's moral sense and comic vision to the extent that they do not appear normal. Likewise, his plots are also not natural. In short, his plots and characters do not grow naturally.

The contemporary fiction also shows loneliness as one of its major themes. In Orwell's novels we come across political wilderness. In Graham Greene's novels we find isolated souls, while in Beckett's novels, solitariness is very much pronounced. Besides, in Elizabeth Bowen's novels we come across people who are estranged from one another even in normal circumstances. Characters in her novels lead emotional and secluded lives so much so that if they do something or sympathise with others, they are taken as having mean motives. Thus, she creates a world without friends. In this world even a real friend is not accepted, irrespective of the fact that he is very much needed. This is because man's own soul in her world is accustomed to loneliness. Thus, a character does not accept help even when a real friend offers such help. However,
deep-delving into hearts of her characters shows very clearly their suffering and limitations, but she has not exploited it as she likes to write tragicomedies, and thus gives a light touch to all this. In the society of King Edward's time she exploits the generation gap for providing humorous situations in her novels. But this is not all. She studies life but we do not find it either completely dark or entirely bright. Her studies of life are limited to women characters who are generally girls. They are delicate and frail and lack sense of humour. They suffer endlessly, but even in their sufferings they do not convince us. However, it narrows her range as the hallmark of great art of a novelist is that he should be able to study adults that are emotionally and mentally developed.\(^{13}\)

Thus, by limiting her field, she has put a break on her own power. Consequently, the problem of life and death, upheavals of life, souls in agony, and themes concerning social and material life are left out in her fiction. Rather, she limits herself to day to day existence and thus she dilutes life. So, her first novel *The Hotel* (1927) reflects that life has no aim. Her second novel *The Last September* (1929) shows her homage to her Irish heritage. In her later novels the motive of generation gap is dominant. For example, her trilogy, *The House in Paris* (1936) *Death of the Heart*

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(1939) and The Heart of the Day (1949), shows that innocence is made use of by cunning persons in their favour. In short, Miss Bowen fails to understand life correctly, and so are her characters. Naturally, she finds place among the minor authors of the contemporary fiction.

Henry Greene (1905-1973) is another novelist whose canvas is very limited. Greene belongs to the Joycean tradition in the use of language. Besides, he sees the world as a miniature. So in Greene's novels we come across characters moving from one image to another and from one object to another. They do it with such rapidity that their actions, sometimes, become disjointed on account of missing links. It is a different matter that he has been able to create naturalism. By doing so he makes his plots obscure. With all this the fact remains that Greene as an author is noted for his handling of love and sex. He crossed the barriers of non-intellectualisation of love as emphasized by D.H.Lawrence. His characters are almost promiscuous. In his novel Blindness (1926) the story is presented through the techniques of 'stream of consciousness'. In his novel Living (1929) he deals with the problem of labour, but does not present any philosophy, as we find in the case of Dickens or Orwell. However, he symbolises the working class with domesticated pigeons. Just as such pigeons live in their holes and return to them even if they are free to fly away, so does the working
class. However, the labourers who do not want to follow the set pattern, have been dealt with in his novel Party Going (1939). In his novel Caught (1943) he deals with the war he experiences himself. In this novel his characters follow the pattern of his other novels. They are ordinary men and women. Of course, his characters, as we find in his novels Party Going, Living and Caught, are dissatisfied, but, unlike the characters of Beckett, they survive even when they face compelling circumstances. Besides, they are non-intellectuals and live their physical lives. They are broken thus, We also find it in his novel Concluding (1948). In this novel, the school mistresses practice taboos on young girls, but the girls act otherwise.

Dame Ivy Compton Burnett (1884-1969) is another contemporary novelist worth noting. In her novels she follows the Greek drama and thus reports everything through chorus, with the difference that life in her novels goes on without moving to catastrophe. Besides, we come across refined conversation and well-defined characters in her novels. In this she follows Chaucer's style, particularly in the portrayals of her characters. Her major characters, a heartless father, an imperious mother, an aunt as a guardian of a big estate, etc., realise their own position and act accordingly. However, they do not act heroically. Naturally, in her novels, from Dolores (1911) to The Last and the First (1971), she exposes the
traditional Victorian family with melodramatic action revealing the cruelty and selfishness of large families.

After Burnett’s novels in the contemporary fiction we come across a group of novelists. These novelists are termed angry youngmen. Angus Wilson, Kingsley Amis, John Wain and John Braine may be mentioned among them. Wilson’s first novel *Hemlock and After* (1952) presents how literal values are ineffective in the society full of evils. John Wain and Kingsley Amis, on the other hand, are influenced by the 18th century antiromantics. So, John Wain in his novel *Hurry on Down* (1953) follows picaresque tradition. His heroes are, thus, long-distanced lorry drivers, window cleaners, chauffeurs, etc. However, he makes use of farce and forceful prose, and in them he reminds us of Smollett.


P.H. Newby, then, comes before us as a very significant novelist among contemporary novelists. He is significant in that he writes about the inner self of man — the human psyche. For this he uses irony as his instrument. His
characters persuade themselves to think of their own critical situation as those of third persons. It is only at the end of their long journey of life that they recognise their own situations, and then they enter deep into their own conscience. However, Newby presents life as rich but funny and terrifyingly uncertain. It is because in life there are traps at every stage, but, in spite of all these, man does possess some integrity. 14 So, a character in a Newby’s novel loses himself in the storm of life. The survival is made possible when the character relies on himself, on his own individuality and his own instincts.

The above presentation brings us to a sequence in the contemporary fiction. Henry Williamson wrote his novel A Chronical of Ancient Sun Light in seven volumes. He shows in them the growth of his hero, Maddison, from his boyhood to his manhood. Besides Williamson, Anthony Powell, C.P. Snow and Lawrence Durell also present the microcosm of the society. C.P. Snow in his novel sequence, Strangers and Brothers presents how the people in England, after the First World War, thought of their own moral conscience. It covered the period of modern history from 1925 to 1933. His novel The Conscience of the Rich covers the period of modern history from 1927 to 1936. Besides, his novels Time of Hope, The Light of the Dark, The Masters, Home Comings, The New Men, The

Affair, Corridors of Powers and The Sleep of Reason, cover the periods of modern history from 1941 to 1955. Also, his novel The Sleep of Reason covers the period of history of the 1960s. His novel Last Things covers the end of the decade of 1960.

One of them, Lawrence Durrell, is noted for his novel sequence Alendaria Quartet. It includes his novels Justine (1956), Balthazar (1958), Mountolive (1958) and Clea (1960), but in his novel Roman Fleuve he appears to be writing a new kind of fiction in which the novelist himself is among the characters of the novel. He, in fact, tries to bring about four dimensional effect. The first three novels of the sequence present the incidents and situation of the same period, whereas in his novel Clea he moves forward in time and thus creates the fourth dimension and presents a landscape as if it were seen through a moving railway train.

Among them Anthony Powell (b. 1905), who emerges as a major English novelist in the 50s and 60s, deals with the life before the Second World War. However, his reputation in the present time rests on his novel sequence A Dance to the Music of Time. He started writing it in the year 1951 with his book Question of Upbringing. He concluded this sequence in the year 1975 with his book Hearing Secret Harmonies. The fact, however, remains that his sequence deals particularly with the life between the two World Wars.
medieval cathedral. It arouses at once laughter and horror. We can appreciate it in the words of the author in the book The Kindly Ones: "... he thinks of her 'grave gothic beauty' and of her men as gothic figures 'carved on the niches and corbels of a medieval cathedral to arouse at once laughter and horror.'" Also, the atmosphere of Saint Paul's cathedral, at the Victory Service, reminds Nick of Jean. It so happens that Nick, along with Isobel, meets Jean and her husband in a party. There Nick looks at her, particularly at her dress. The whole effect on him is that Jean appears to him as an enchantress that one usually finds on the cover of a fashionable magazine. In this connection we may refer to the book Books Do Furnish a Room of the novel sequence, A Dance To the Music of Time. Now if we consider the reason of Nick's application of such images for the description of Jean, we may come to know that it is his own passion that makes him do so. Another reason of such an attitude on the part of Nick is her secretiveness. When he leaves applying metaphors of art in order to describe Jean and resorts to fashion photography for the purpose, he comes to know that it was money after all that Jean really liked. So Nick changes his tools of judgement. This, besides his personal conduct, leaves an impact upon his judgement. So in his last

14 Ibid., p.95
impending revelations in the later volumes, i.e., slow disintegration of established social, political and economic institutions. The established values are questioned in them. We may also observe the touch of irony in the development of the personalities of Nick's friends, Stringham, Templer and Widmerpool. However, his novels *Valley of Bones* (1964), *The Soldier's Art* (1966) and *The Military Philosophers* (1969), present the effect of the war on the upper class English society; the dehumanising effect of the war is illustrated by the petty bickerings and mean jealousies of the military establishment.

But, he shifts the focus to the world of art in his novel sequence *A Dance to the Music of Time*. It is concluded with his novels, *Books do Furnish a Room* (1971), *Temporary Kings* (1973), and *Hearing Secret Harmonies* (1975). In them he introduces a number of artists -- some gifted, other less gifted -- musicians, the painters, the novelists and critics. In his last book *Hearing Secret Harmonies* he presents how the contemporary civilisation is being threatened by different military groups. His novel sequence *A Dance to the Musics of Time*, thus, is remarkable for its plot construction, sensitive characterisation and a good prose-rendering.