CHAPTER IV

IDEALISM AND RENUNCIATION

The Descendant  Phases of An Inferior Planet
The Ancient Law  The Wheel of Life

These four novels reveal Glasgow as an idealist possessing a metaphysical bent of mind. The Descendant, her first novel reveals the failure of its hero Michael who is a pure idealist without pragmatism.

Phases of an Inferior Planet is a story of an altruistic and conscientious person who is always at war with himself because of his scientific beliefs.

The Ancient Law and The Wheel of Life were written immediately after reading the sacred literature of Hinduism, Buddhism and the writings of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. To her neighbour and fellow novelist, Mary Johnston, Glasgow said that she hungered for God, even though she was so uncertain "of his being underneath us all". She felt that metaphysics was the science of the soul of man and the only thing on earth which a human being could take seriously. Having realised that science
had failed her body and orthodox religion had failed her soul she turned to mysticism for comfort from grief and despair. And she was encouraged by Mary Johnston in her quest for truth in the mystical teachings of the religions of the East.

The Descendant, Glasgow's first novel, shows her tremendous interest in science and economics. She had read John Stuart Mill and other radical social philosophers like Adam Smith, Malthus, Sir henry Maine and Walter Baghot. She was deeply stirred by the analysis of poverty in Progress and Poverty. Intellectually she made her break with tradition with the publication of The Descendant in 1897. She felt that she must write of a rebel against society, because the sentimental fallacy of the 1890s was alien to her mind. In the Virginia of that time there were no rebels against society, hence she preferred to place her social outcast in the unfamiliar surroundings of New York without thrusting a revolutionary mood into the conservative pattern - of Virginian culture.

Her plan proved imprudent and hazardous because of her lack of knowledge of metropolitan life. But that at
twenty she was attracted by imprudence and hazard becomes evident in the novel. In her own words the book is "abrupt", "unreserved" and "inadequately written" but it is "well constructed and completely realised as an actuality". Two years later when she grew older and more critical and read the first six chapters of the book she found that the work was "that of an amateur, an adolescent blend of precocious thinking and childish emotionalism". However, the little outcast in the story seems to her to be vital and true.

She writes:

Crude as the book is, and I am under no delusion that it is important, there was never in my mind the slightest doubt as to the reality of Michael Akershem. From the moment I first saw him sitting ragged and barefooted, in the dust and sunshine, he spoke and acted with the dynamic motive of revolution (CM. 56).

In Book I - Variation from Type - we are told about Michael's childhood and his coming of age. We first
recognise his terrible revulsion of feeling and his passionate nature leaping into revolt when the farmer's wife calls him "the offspring of a harlot". With this a maddening rage takes hold of him. He is unconscious of all save rage, blinding blackening rage. He experiences his fingers closing upon something, and closing and closing until the blood runs down. The old savage instinct to kill falls upon him like a mantle.

Michael grows and develops a habit of regarding every situation from a personal standpoint. The changing seasons only serve to render his hold upon life more tenacious and his will more indomitable. Because of his illegitimacy he is relentlessly persecuted by his neighbours. Michael knows that the village doors are closed upon him, and the girls pass by him with averted modesty and turn to look after him and laugh again. Michael in his anguish sneers outwardly while he rages within. And his silent rage in the end freezes into a silent bitterness. In the animosity between a bastard boy and his adoptive family Glasgow anticipated similar tensions recorded by Faulkner between Joe Christmas and McEacherns in Light In August. Discarding the comforting
view that childhood is always idyllic, Glasgow conceived Michael's as squalid and tormented.

At nineteen Michael is lithe and straight as a young pine. He has the look of a sturdy, thick set farmer, but with more than a farmer's breadth of brow. His features are rough with the dark hair in a tangled mat upon his head. His jaws are strongly marked and he has thin, flexible lips that quivered with reserve or paled with passion. Beneath the projecting brows his eyes are narrowed by a constant blinking. According to the school-master he is a bright boy and can easily outstrip the other farmers' boys in the class. And the impassioned pursuit of knowledge is sweeping him onward, and the restless activity of his mind continues. He decides to be self-made. "Self-taught he was and self-made he would be. The genius of endurance was fitting him to struggle, and in the struggle to survive" (Des. 19). Glasgow, while writing this novel, was influenced profoundly by Darwin's *The Origin of Species*. She states:

But the book that influenced my mind most profoundly in youth was *The Origin of Species* and it was in response to this
benign and powerful inspiration that I conceived my first novels (CM. 58).

In Book II - The Individual - Michael's quick rise as the editor of The Inconoclast is shown. He becomes popular and earns respect from the people. Accidentially, he meets Rachel a great artist. She is an embodiment of the transitional period (1870-1905) when new customs are casting off the garments of the old and an illusive spirit of discontent manifests itself in the nation. And theories float around like bacteria in an infected atmosphere, waiting to gain a parasitic existence upon an unsettled reason.

In the first novel itself Glasgow introduces Rachel, the new woman, who is a fore-runner of all other women characters such as Mariana, Susan, Corinna, Gabriella and Dorinda. Rachel, a woman of fearless nature finds "a certain sublimity" in Michael's reckless defiance. It stirs and thrills a responsive echo in her own heart. All the latent capacity for hero-worship that has been dormant since childhood wakes up in her with intensity. She adores Michael's courage and perhaps, feels a fascination for his moral force that is brave enough to
scorn customs, conventions, nay, responsibility itself. She is impressed by his straight manly figure, the heavy brow and the sensitive quivering mouth. She glorifies his defiance and his daring that enables Michael to face her and say, "I owe no man anything - not even a name" (Des. 81).

The inconsistency of his life does not surprise her. In her excitement and fascination she does not see that though he denies religion, he rages because his own birthright has been without the benefit of a clergy. She does not notice the ambiguity in his thinking. Though he opposes marriage he feels ashamed as he is born outside that social convention. On his part Michael starts feeling secure in her presence, he feels sure of a steadfast hold upon faith and strength. He is happy about her quick sympathy, a sympathy which rains upon him from beautiful and deep-set eyes. Both grow fonder of each other and get intensely involved in love. This entanglement in love distracts Rachel from her painting.

But Rachel is awakening to the knowledge that a change is taking place in her life. She experiences that some indescribable distraction, some mental restlessness
is hindering the progress of her work. Her hands falter while painting. The old absorbed concentration is becoming impossible. It seems to her that a devil and an angel are warring within her, one chaining her to the flesh and to the earth, and the other drawing her upward to the heaven of mind. She decides that she will work, but the heart wins over the head. She experiences an intensity of emotions, never experienced before and an illusive happiness takes hold of her.

Book III - Domestication - describes Michael's wavering mind. He has now known success, and won the love of a woman but he is still entangled in the labyrinth of his own complexes and drawbacks such as an inferiority complex, lack of self-esteem, diffidence and distrust. Discroll exposes him to the society. He goes to Hedley Semple's party and comes in contact with Anna Allard who teaches mathematics in a school. Her personality is an enigma to Michael. Michael cannot fathom her depth. For the first time in his life he comes face to face with the inflexible convictions of an incorruptible character. The dominant element of Anna's nature is an almost primitive adherence to principle. She comments:
I work among the poor - the very poor. I see the harm done by useless agitators - by men who write and speak things they dare not act upon, but which ignorant men and women accept as gospel. No, I don't mean Mr. Semple; he does not half the harm that you do (Des. 175).

Her accusing words, relentlessly clear, ring upon Michael like a clarion. They penetrate his heart painfully. She blames him for his latitudinarian teaching, because it works adversely on the simple and ignorant people, she cites the example of a young man who deserted his wife and five small children under the spell of his latitudinarian teaching which released him from his conventional scruples. She tells Michael plainly that his theory is based on pure idealism. It is an ideal humanity with an innate desire to do right and a superhuman recognition of good and evil. And the world as it is today cannot stand his views. As a result Michael is furious with Anna Allard and with the world itself. He might have accused her of impetuosity in his rage, but deep down he knows that she is wholesomely practical and
free from any morbidity of judgement, and that right and common sense are on her side.

Michael experiences a great jerk after meeting Anna Allard. Rachel soon becomes a thing of the past for him. Now he wants far more than Rachel can give. He thinks dubiously about Rachel's purity. He wants the honour from good men and women. He feels that Rachel would spurn passion for principle if she were a pure woman. Rachel's devotional love for him, and her giving up of her artistic pursuit is misunderstood by him. Rachel has thus morally degenerated in his eyes. He stops meeting her. In utter restlessness he resigns from The Inconoclast giving over the charge to Kyle whom he, a little later, kills in a momentary excitement.

After eight years of imprisonment he is released as a tuberculosis patient. By chance he meets Rachel who serves him during his last moments. Marcelle Thiebaux comments on the character of Michael thus:

Michael's life is traced in specifically Darwinian terms. An aspect of the Darwinian thought was that human nature would
develop through a combination of egotism and altruism. On the one hand, there was an egoistic struggle for existence, on the other, the altruistic social sense, the basis of moral behaviour. The irresponsibility that the illegitimate Michael has inherited from his parents is the innate flow that will finally destroy him.\textsuperscript{1}

The character of Michael is convincing. There are persons who regret their low birth or illegitimacy of their birth and grow cynical like Michael. They want to cast off the norms and rules of the society in which they live but ironically crave for the position and honour in the same society. Despite the knowledge of the sham and falsities of the social conventions, the constant twinge of being out of its pale torments them. Michael has no ground for grievance against society. He won prestige and respect as an editor of The Iconoclast. He could go beyond his circumstances, and could show for a period of time that man, if he has a will, could be greater than his circumstances. He could have taken hints from Anna

\textsuperscript{1} Marcelle Thiebaux, Ellen Glasgow xiii. Modern Literature Services (New York: Frederick Unger Publishing Co. 1962) 35.
Allard and could have done something good for society. But he gave vent to his outrageousness and ultimately ruined himself. His strength of will might have been productive had he met society halfway. Frederick P.W. McDowell has rightly said:

even if Glasgow's presentation of her protagonist is flamboyant and sometimes superficial, his disordered personality recalls the much more firmly drawn characters in Dostoevski such as Ivan or Dmitri Karamozov or RasKolnikov.²

Glasgow in her 2nd novel Phases of An Inferior Planet attempts to capture the atmosphere of bohemian New York. The book is better organised and more interesting and gripping as a story than her first, The Descendant. Both the books show the impact of scientific reading on the mind of their creator and her interest in the Darwinian theories. Unlike other novels the first two are set in New York. In her early twenties, without realising the

² Frederick P.W. McDowell, Ellen Glasgow and the Ironic Art of fiction (Madison, Uni. of Wisconsin Press, 1963) 43.
"imprudence and hazard" involved in choosing an unfamiliar setting Glasgow preferred New York instead of Virginia as her setting. Consequently, the pulse of the metropolitan life is missing in both the books. Yet in *Phases of An Inferior Planet* she depicts excellent views of indoor and limited outside areas. The boarding house, Mariana's room, the restaurant, - all indicate the brilliant development of settings in her later novels.

The description of the Gotham Apartment with its numerous imaginative details make sensitive nature of Mariana, the heroine of the novel, conspicuous. Mariana who has come from the South to New York notices how with an inhuman disregard of caste and custom the aberrant shadows the passers by meet and mingle into one another. She feels discomfort in the poorly ventilated dining room with its "tarnished and fly-specked" chandelier. She, therefore, brightens her own room by pinning here and there on the furniture vivid bits of drapery over barren places. Though there is no grand use of a setting typical of her later novels Glasgow has used for the first time the light and dark shadows which make the later scenes effective like Michael, hero of *The Descendant*, Anthony Algarcife the protagonist of *Phases of An Inferior*
Planet, is also one of the dispossessed. He is an orphan brought up by an outstanding High Church Episcopal minister who educated him to be his successor. But Algarcife lacks religious faith and turns his talents to science instead of theology. He is remarkably opposite to Mariana. He is entirely unselfish and devoted to concrete realities. Whereas Mariana is egoistical and thrives on the illusion of transcendent mysteries. Algarcife does not rely upon false shelters while she depends upon them. He creates his environment at his will. He is able to curb his impulse while Mariana is as changeable as wind, as impressionable as wax.

When we first see Algarcife, he is a teacher, saint and scientist. He is reckless from an inborn distrust of accepted dogmas. He would never bow down to the weight of authority hurled upon him. At college he has guts to declare several courses superficial and to refute the fallacies of the professor since he has mastered various systems of philosophy. He tells Father Speares, his patron, "I am not a theologian, but a scientist; I am not a believer but an agnostic; I am not a priest, but a man" (PP. 68).
He seemed the survival of a lost type - of those purified prophets of old who walked with God and trampled upon the flesh which was His handiwork. It was the striking contrast between the intellectual tenor of his mind and its physical expression which emphasized his personality. To the boldest advance in scientific progress he had the effect of uniting a suggestion of that poetised mysticism which constitutes the charm of a remote past. With the addition of the yellow robe and a beggar's bowl, he might have been transformed into one of the Enlightened of nigh on three thousand years ago, and have followed the Blessed One upon his pilgrimage towards Nirvana. The modernity of his mind was almost tantalizing in its inconsistency with his external aspect (PP. 72).

Algarcife is devoted to the search for knowledge. He is struggling at a theory of heredity "which will reconcile Darwin's gemmules, Weismann's germ-plasm, and Gatton's strip" (PP. 51). He wants to discover the germ of
truth in each one of them and then to formulate a theory of his own which will contain the best in all of them. He does not like falsity in conventions, evasive idealism and pseudo-sympathy. He explains to Mariana:

True, we have a thin layer of hypocrisy, which we call civilization. It prompts us to sugar-coat the sins which our forefathers swallowed in the rough; that is all. It is purely artificial. In a hundred thousand years it may get socked in and then the artificial refinement will become real and civilization will set in (PP. 46-47).

To Algarcife all religions are the same. He is entirely free from superstitions and religious barriers. And whether one is Christian or Moslem, or Brahman does not make any difference to him. It is an accident of birth. He does not care whether he is called an atheist, an agnostic or a skeptic. He knows only one thing and is certain about it, that he does not want to acknowledge any one of the gods which men have created and that he leaves the ultimate essence outside his generalization.
According to him the person who is free from all religious barriers and yet believes in good deeds learns the first lesson in knowledge - the lesson of his own ignorance.

Glasgow has expressed a great truth through Algarcife, for awareness of one's own ignorance is necessarily a first step of acquiring knowledge. As mentioned in the Upanishads (Avidya) ignorance is the root cause of all evil and unhappiness. Algarcife is possessed with intellectual passion and has closed the doors of his mind upon the common place. He is convinced that theology which was once sound has crumbled and "its usefulness of a thousand years ago will not save it from the ash-heap of outgrown ideas of today" (PP. 106). His mind is surrounded by the wall of skepticism through which only the toughest facts may penetrate. He is minus the faculty of credulity. Frederick P.W. McDowell comments the character of Algarcife as under:

Algarcife combines the iconoclasm of Michael Akersham and the reverence of Anna Allard. ...... If Akersham is the superman as defiant rebel, Algarcife is the super-
man as Prophet a Zarathustra who in exaltation of the ideal, contemns the flesh for the reason possibly that its desires are so insistent. 3

As against Algarcife we have Mariana, a completely convincing character who craves life in its entirety. Life with passionate colour and emotional fulfilment. She loves singing, dancing and eating and sleeping. The simple sensuousness of life is delicious to her. If she cannot be a human being she would rather be a butterfly in sun-shine. Hers is a pure animal love of existence. She says to Algarcife:

You are all mind, I am all senses. I am only fulfilling my place in nature when I am hearing or seeing or feeling beautiful things. My sense of beauty is my soul (PP. 76).

She admits that she is shallow. But both in her self-esteem and self-depreciation a vein of sincerity is evident. Algarcife and Mariana embodying quite opposite

3 ibid., P. 49-50.
elements, are attracted towards each other. Mariana is
tantalised by his ascetic self-repression, and the utter absence of emotion in the mental heat of his glance. His mental stamina and his power of will subdue her and she assumes feminine submissiveness. If moderation is the dominant characteristic of Algarcife, vivacity and lack of formative qualities are the dominant characteristics of Mariana. With all his scientific and analytical mind Algarcife is perplexed by the extreme mobility of her mood. On each occasion he meets her, his previous conceptions about her, are found to be erroneous. It strangely attracted him. Their mutual attraction culminate in marriage. Mariana's initial dedication to Algarcife partly reminds one of Sally in The Romance of A Plain Man. Starvation or poverty, nothing matters to her if she attains his love. She decides to give up her music and will not mind giving up her acquaintances in the hope that they will be sufficient to each other. But initially enthusiastic, Mariana gets disgusted by the sordidness of poverty and the drabness in her marriage. And she leaves Algarcife. She, like Emma Bovary, in her romantic malaise does not find a suitable outlet for her wayward emotions for her "swift surprises and tremulous changes".
Glasgow's study of human nature is so profound that while talking about a particular person, she underlines universal traits. It is commonly seen that women tend to give up their career soon for their men. Their emotions take a complete hold over them and everything else becomes insignificant. In The Descendant, there comes a moment in Rachel's life when she wants to give up her painting, her artistic pursuit for the sake of Michael. This is possibly due to an inherent psychological and emotional need on the part of women. As it is said that for a woman love is everything while for a man it is only a part of life. But Glasgow's later women like Gabriella and Dorinda are career women. They perceive that there is something like human dignity which is larger than love.

The marriage with Mariana compels Algarcife to write pot-boiling articles and to give up science for money. Her illness has exhausted the small fund he had accumulated. For Mariana and little Isolde, his daughter, he feels a bitter disgust at his own impotence. He feels resentful of the fact that all his knowledge, and all his years of study, all his scientific value will weigh for nothing in the struggle for bread against a moderate capacity for fulfilling the dictates of other men. He
feels exasperated by the ruthless waste of energy. However, he tries to fortify himself with a philosophic acceptance of the authoritative "must" of those unconquerable forces which we call fate. The sordidness of poverty, the death of a child, and the discontent of the restless Mariana ruin their marriage.

In phase II we see Algarcife as a clergyman after an interval of eight years. Algarcife, "the harbinger of a new morality", who could not survive natural competition with the ordinary world, becomes successful as a clergyman. He has undertaken this role of a clergyman as a debt to Father Spears and meets it by the bond of flesh and blood. From the day he has been called into Father Spears's place he has struggled unceasingly to do honour to the deed. Though his intellect revolts he goes on performing his duty without caring for the favours of his congregation. He has developed a detachment towards both censure and praise. He gives utterance in new phrases to the eternal truth that it is good for a man to do right and leave happiness to take care of itself — the one great creed to which all religions and all nations have bowed.
But Algarcife feels the pangs of conscience because all through the eight years in church he has committed the sin of insincerity. He had published a volume of sermons to refute a series of anonymous magazine articles attacking religion from the scientific point of view. In fact, the articles were products of his own pen. The Church gave his altruistic spirit full scope to serve the people with selfless devotion, but could not satisfy his craving for realities. His High Church duties were formal with little content. His wealthy congregation mistook his apathy for humility, the women found his indifference attractive, as a result he is burdened with guilt and self disgust, and thinks of suicide.

The return of Mariana in his life inspires him to escape to a farm in the South and live a free life. But his dream is not fulfilled as Mariana dies.

Algarcife does not believe in religious dogmas, or rituals, but conscientiously does all that he is expected to do, because he is basically altruistic. Had he been able to reconcile science and religion he would have proved a great saint. He might seem absolutely incredible to a matter-of-fact person, and the Americans could not
take his philosophy when the book was published. But a remarkable thing to be noted about him is that above all, he believed in doing right things without caring for happiness. McDowell has rightly said that

while this tone of disenchantment is sustained throughout the book, the "modified idealism" achieved by the main characters not only gives direction and amplitude to their lives for an interval before Mariana's death but inhibits Algarlife from suicide.4

The years in which The Wheel of Life and The Ancient Law were written, are called Glasgow's "mystical phase" by Frederick P.W. McDowell, a period in which she turned to moral and philosophical idealism to give herself a sense of happiness. Glasgow was drained emotionally and was overwhelmed by the crushing grief of personal pain in 1906. She turned to philosophy, not in the modern sense, but as the ancient, predetermined purpose in pursuit of the highest good. She read The Enneads of Plotinus, the

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4 ibid., P. 53.
meditations of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, Pascal, Kant, Schopenhauer and Spinoza. She found a kind of a balm to her sorrow by reading The Enneads of Plotinus. But she lacked the spiritual wings for his flight of the alone to the Alone. Pascal's god 'Known through the heart was not enough for her'. She wanted to know her Absolute through reason as well. She felt irritated by the vagueness of metaphysics. She read Spinoza and she felt that he might have been blessed but he had not been human. She then studied the Upanishads and the Buddhist Suttas in plain and prosy English and The Sacred Books of the East. And in Gautam's teachings she could find the completest analysis of the soul's peace. She expresses her positive response in The Woman Within:

Every religion that is worth the name, every philosophy, warns us to lose ourselves in something greater than ourselves. "Whosoever would save his life, shall lose it". There is exactly the same lesson (WW. 174).

When The Wheel of Life was published it was remarked in an article entitled "A Group of Novels", 
in The Wheel of Life, Glasgow's style undergoes a marked change. The novelist approaches more closely the analytic and subtle selective process of the day's dominant mode. A vein of Orientalism runs through this novel.5

Roger Adams a gaunt scholarly looking man of forty is an editor of The International Review in New York. He has wrung from suffering a certain high loyalty to human fellowship and a partly humourous and gallant determination to keep fast to it at any cost until the very end. His wife Connie, is a vivacious and outgoing type. He regards her with a frank fatherly tolerance in which there is hardly a suggestion of a more passionate concern. From Connie he has surmised that the feminine mind tends naturally toward material philosophy, toward a deification of the body, a faith in the fugitive allurements of the senses. He has discovered the futility of sensual pleasures which are the source of unhappiness. His love for Connie initially was prompted by mere physical impulse, but he emerges from it with a feeling

5 'Anon "A Group of Novels" Outlook 82 (31 March), 1906.'
of escaping into freedom. Life has meant more to him than a mere series of sensations more than a material allure-
ment. Lord Krishna has beautifully exposed before Arjun the three kinds of happiness in Verses 36 to 39 in Chapter eighteen of The Bhagavad Gita:

And now hear, from me, O Best of the Bharatas (Arjuna), the three kind of happiness. That in which a man comes to rejoice by long practice and in which he reaches the end of his sorrow (Bhagavad Gita. XVIII 36).

That happiness which is like poison at first and like nectar at the end, which springs from a clear understanding of the self is said to be the nature of "goodness" (The Bhagavad Gita. XVIII 37).

That happiness which arises from the contact of the senses and their objects and which is like nectar at first but like poison at the end - such happiness is recorded to be "passionate" (The Bhagavad Gita. XVIII 38).

That happiness which deludes the soul both at the beginning and at the end and which
arises from sleep, sloth and negligence - that is declared to be of the nature of "dullness" (The Bhagavad Gita. XVIII 39).

Sukkam to idanim trividham
Srnu me bharatarshabha
abhuasad ramate Yatra
dukh antamca nigacchati (36)

Yat tad agre visam Iva
Partname mrtupamam
tat sukham sattuikam proktam
atmabudhi prasadajam (37)

Visayendriyasamyogad
Yat tad agre mrutopamam
pariname visam Iva
tal sukham rajasam Smrtam (38)

Yad agre ca numandhe ca
sukham mohanam atmanch

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It seems that Roger Adams has known the source of real happiness. And it is a final triumph of his austere vision that it should mean most of all to him when it seems to a casual glance to contain the least of actual value. In his widening vision he saw that in the spirit of things humanity is one and indivisible, a single organism held together by a common pulse of life. To live or to die, he realises, is beyond the scope of an individual destiny, for in the eye of God each man that lives is the keeper not of his own but his brother's soul (WL. 146). A feeling of compassion persists in his heart and this itself prompts him to rescue his wife.

He has learnt the lesson perhaps in great sorrow that the outward events in life are of no greater significance than the falling of rain or the growing of corn. When under the influence of Kemper, her lover, Laura, the heroine of the novel is emotionally excited for a change and escape from her monotonous life, she expresses her intense desire to Adams in a small sentence, "I want to 'live'". "It may be", Adams coolly adds.
"that you will arrive finally at the knowledge that life is forfeiture in one way or another, and that the biggest thing in it is sometimes to go without" (WL. 235). Life would have no compromises with illusions - not even with the last and most beautiful of desires. This truth is vividly expressed in Dhammapada: 186-187 by Gautam.

Na kahapanasen titti kamesu vijjati
Api divyesu kamesu rati so nadhegachhati

As the fire blazes all the more by oblation so also instead of pacifying the passion, enjoyments increase it. 7

Adams knows that "peace is happiness for certainly. Pleasure is not" (WL. 244). He reflects:

Back and forth swung the oscillation between fugitive desire and outward possession, between the craving of emptiness and the satiety of fulfilment and where was the happiness of those who lived for happiness alone? Where was the mere

7 Dhammapada: 186-187
animal contentment? "Is it only when one says to Fate take this - and this as well - take everything and leave me nothing. I can do without - that one really comes into the fullness of one's inheritance of joy? In renunciation was there after all, not the loss of one's individual self, but the gain of an abundance of life" (WL. 244).

Before she immersed herself in the "Wisdom Literature", Glasgow had studied J.S. Mill in detail and was highly impressed by him. Mill states in Utilitarianism:

It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied, better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool or the pig is of different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question.⁹

⁹ J. S. Mill. Utilitarianism (Longmans - 1907)
When Adams comes to know that his wife is no longer his, he faces the truth in all its nakedness. He draws the string of the poisonous arrow from his wound. Not only does bitterness pass from his shdine but there comes with the relinquishment of the idea of personal wrong a swift rush of exaltation like a strong wind through his soul. Almost unconsciously he submits his will into the hands of God.

Adams' endurance of his will enables him to make whatever sacrifice he is called upon to make and live. He is happy for at last he has learnt that the man who gives up all else willingly, attains God who possesses everything. Even the impulsive, sensual, out and out worldly Arnold Kemper is impressed by Roger Adams. Kemper remembers Perry Bride who had once declared with unspeakable mirth that the thing he liked in Adams was, merely simple goodness in manifest form, and wonders about its truth. He reflects: "Is it possible that what I admire in this man is the quality I have laughed at all my life?" (WL. 168).

Roger impressed him to-night as a peculiarly happy man - not with the hectic
happiness he himself had sought - but with a secure, reposeful and indestructible possession - happiness which comes not through the illusion of desire, but which is bound up in the peace of an eternal reconciliation (WL. 169).

To Adams, the world seen by Laura, the young poetess is the world seen through the haze of a golden temperament, the dream of an imaginative mysticism. In Laura's picture he finds the peculiar quality of her charm, a face that has spiritual glow. If she is obscure it is the obscurity of a star seen through a fog. Her spiritual isolation is of one who is devoted to an inner vision. He finds in her, his spiritual counterpart. He feels a strange mystic assurance that Laura would someday feel his need. But all desires which have roots in physical craving have gone out of him.

He has almost stopped to think of himself as an isolated individual being. It is as if, he has found the key that unlocks his prison (prison of ego), the key which enables him to look at Connie, "as the object of inexhaustible compassion, as the tragedy of mortal
failure". He sees in her the small terrified soul caught in a web of circumstance from which there is no escape. He realises that compassion is the true and necessary key to any serious understanding of life.

While Connie is in the operation theater, Adams feels that every human existence, everywhere is one and the same. Life appears to him as the ceaseless struggle after the illusion of a happiness, which has no part in possession, nor in any object. He has before his eyes living examples of Laura with the radiance of her illusion still upon her, of Gerty groping after the torn and soiled shreds of her life, of Kemper stripped of his illusions and yet making the pretense that it has not left him naked, of Perry Bridewell dragging himself through the defiling mire that leads to emptiness, and of all the multitudes of those who live for pleasure.

Julius Rowan Raper rightly states that

Every character in the novel other than Adams hang helplessly upon the wheel of life, which in Hindu philosophy is a wheel of torture, the terrible wheel of death
and rebirth, temporalized here as the cycle of impulsive desire, pursuit of illusory pleasure, gratification, satiety, spiritual death, and psychological renewal.⁹

Adam's inexhaustible compassion and deep understanding of life elevate him and he has a mystical experience.

At the dawn all the earth and sky showed suddenly as belonging to this same transient manifestation of thought; and gradually as he stood there, his perceptions were reinforced by a sense which is not that of the eye, nor of the ear. He neither saw nor heard, yet he felt that the spirit had moved toward him on the face of the dawn; and the "I" was not more evident to his illumined consciousness than was the "thou". He beheld God, with the vision which is beyond vision; the light of his eyes, the breadth of his body were less

plain to him than was the mystery of his soul. And the universal life, he saw spirit, matter, fibre and impulse, variation of atom and queer of aspiration - was but an agonised working out into this consciousness of God. With the revelation his own life was as by a miracle of nature; night became no longer difficult, but easy; and not the day only, but his whole existence and the end to which it moved were made as clear to him as the light before his eyes (WL. 344).

According to Dana F. Reed the protagonist Roger Adams touches,

"the inner life of the human soul" to an extent rare in fiction.¹⁰

While summarizing the development of Glasgow's artistic career in the context of her earlier works, Rice M. Gordon Pryor states:

The Novel's raison d'être is Roger Adams through whom Glasgow realises her thematic purpose, the "Apotheosis of Goodness." As she traces the steps which led to his complete renunciation of self; as she shows his attitude of perfect pity and tenderness ..., her method reminds us again and again of the simple convincing directness of Tolstoi.¹¹

Laura Wilde, the heroine of the novel finds inspiration in Shelley, Spinoza, and in 'The Imitation of Christ'. Her poetry is chastened and restrained by the sense of perfection which her art possesses. She invests it with the cloistered vision of an unrealised world. Roger Adams sees her genius burning like a clear flame within her and at vivid moments with a still, soft radiance in her face. She is convinced that she is "set apart for a predestined good, and exalted purpose". And Adams, her spiritual mentor is convinced about it.

Her sudden and short-lived passion for Arnold Kemper is understandable. Her life in Gramercy Park with eccentric elderly people like Uncle Percival and Aunt Angela weighs heavily upon her. A restless desire for a change stirs in her heart in the hope that it would obliterate not only the circumstances in which she is placed but even the personal fact of her identity. She sees herself as "a solitary palm-tree" that flourished amid a deserted waste. And she is lost in illusions. One idea "I want to live" takes hold over her. She surrenders to her love completely without coquetry. But even in her passion for Kemper she is often referred to as a captured bird.

With her disenchantment with Kemper she realises that she had desired a great deal more than he had the power to bestow. It strikes her that she has missed in him that finer sympathy of spirit without which all human passion is but the "withered husk where the flower has never bloomed". She feels that all outward forms of expression, all embraces, all words are dead earthly things until the breath of spirit has entered into eternal symbols.
With this kind of illumination, a spiritual battle takes place within her. And she thinks of her soul, not as one but as multiple - as consisting of hosts of good and evil angels who were against one another without ceasing. But suddenly she feels assured that the good or evil host would be vanquished and henceforth she would belong to the victorious side for ever - not for this life alone but for a thousand lives and eternal evolution. At the end she says to Adams,

I am perfectly happy today, but it is the happiness of freedom. It is no longer a mystery - there is only light in it today" (WL. 471).

According to Julius Rowan Raper,

Laura's "ecstasy" closely resembles the ecstasies described by Plotinus in The Enneads, as well as those of Eastern mysticism which Glasgow linked with Neoplatonism.¹²

Once again Glasgow has explored the relationship of two women - Laura and Gerty. We are reminded of Molly and Blossom in The Miller of Old Church, Virginia and Susan in Virginia; Louisa Goddard and Victoria in They Stooped to Folly. Laura and Gerty are in no way similar to each other. In fact their ways of life are quite different from each other. But in the last pages of the novel it is shown that the pure friendship and intimate knowledge of each other need no words. They understand each other and the silent embrace of Gerty soothes Laura. Gerty with all her shallow flippancy recognizes certain great qualities of Laura. She regards the moral sincerity of Laura Wilde and Roger Adams highly. To her "Laura is the most earnest creature alive". She tells Kemper, "I'd walk across Brooklyn Bridge, every step on my knees for Laura. That's because I believe in her, and because, too, I don't happen to believe much in anybody else (WL. 76).

The fourth part of the novel - Reconciliation - suggests the reconciliation of Laura with herself and not with Kemper. Through suffering Laura has learnt that the wisdom in love is the only wisdom which avails in the supreme agony of life.
The character of Kemper is skilfully drawn. He is a happy-go-lucky person and resembles to an extent Jonathan Gay of The Miller of Old Church. Both Kemper and Jonathan gratify at all costs their natural impulses and demand absolute purity in the women they love. Kemper is both generous and a confirmed egoist. Laura's love for Gerty perplexes him. According to Frederick P.W. McDowell

his (Kemper's) refined sadism in a hedonistic temperament is reminiscent of George Eliot's Grand Court and Henry James's Gilber Osmand. (But it) is balanced by a quality they lack (and that is) a sincere tenderness when his emotions are engaged.\textsuperscript{13}

Disappointment in love frustrates Laura for sometime but she rises to great heights from her anguish. She learns through the eye of the mind, rather through the heart and her connection with life is revived. The lesson is taught to her neither by Gerty nor by Adams but through an awakening to the beauty in the sights and

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Frederick P. W. McDowell, Ellen Glasgow And The Ironic Art of Fiction. 85.}
sounds of the green natural world about her. She feels again the energy which is life, flowing through her body. At this instant as if by the divine miracle of resurrection, she begins to live anew, to live not her old life alone, but a life that is larger and fuller than the one which had been hers. As Linda W. Wagner rightly states:

Glasgow has learnt not only to attack romantic myths but also to provide alternatives for them.14

The Ancient law is an outcome of Glasgow's conviction that intense suffering is necessary in order to develop a finer insight into life and a deeper consciousness of the spirit. Though the development of the theme is not commensurate with her talents, the plot of the novel possesses "a classical unity of action and places her, among the American novelists of the rank."

Daniel Ordway, the hero of the novel, a released convict from the prison, begins a new life in Tappahannock. Homeless and penniless in the new town he

looks at everything with wonder. He is filled with a passionate desire for life. He experiences a stronger bond of humanity than he had experienced ever before in the years of his prosperity. He assumes a different name and identity and works as a book-keeper, legal counsel and minister to the simple people of Tappahannock.

During his stay at Tappahannock he happens to come in contact with Miss Emily, sister of the aristocrat Beverly. Emily is an overseer, a manager and a teacher in the town. Her friendliness impresses him and strengthens his confidence in humanity as she has not met rebuffs or disappointments from human nature. Being in her company is being in communion with nature, the symbol of grace and beauty as she is.

Within two years' time the town shows the stretch of ten years' improvement. The town emerges as the child of Ordway's brain. He has given the town, life out of himself, and his love for the town is the love that one bestows upon one's own. But his life at Tappahannock ends with the coming of Wherry with whom he has served the terms in prison. And there remains nothing for him except the new beginning at the old ending. When he thinks of
the future and his life at Botetourt, his own town, he feels that he is pursued by the resurrected corpse of his old life. It contained neither his spirit, nor his will. He realises his mistake - of embezzling as a Wall-street financier. He reflects "Well, I suppose, I've got what I deserved, the price that a man pays for being a fool, he pays but once and that is his whole life long" (AL. 251). He even feels that he has lived a lie. His belief in good deeds reminds us of Algarcife in Phases of An Inferior Planet.

At Botetourt, though his people receive him, they instinctively repulse him. The thing which separates them is a creation neither of their making, or of his. It belongs to the very nature of human beings and is woven with their inner fibre. It is not a creation of the individual but of the race.

The barriers of tradition, inheritance and instinct have created impenetrable sea-gates behind him. In his home he feels that his existence is like a familiar piece of household furniture which is neither commented upon, not willfully overlooked, a thing not necessary, nor to be enjoyed but to be tolerated. Ordway's predicament, the
torture he experiences at the passive indifference of his own people reveal Glasgow's deep insight into human nature and its complexities. For, behind forgiveness and acceptance Ordway can see the condemnation and suspicion in their eyes. Consequently he retreats further and further into spiritual isolation which is like the isolation of prison. However, he tries to be mirthful and keeps in touch with the poor and afflicted - with whom he feels at home. Whereas the impenetrable wall of social tradition keeps him away from his wife, uncle and the member of his own class. Near the end he realises that had he been rough with Lydia, his wife, she might have entertained for him a wholesome wifely regard. But the dominion of the brute is not what he is seeking. For him to have compromised with her upon a lower plane would have been morally repugnant to him.

When he knows about Alice's (his daughter's) act of forgery he does not stoop to lift her. For a moment a furious anger against Alice, sweeps over him but the next moment he takes over the crime of forgery done by Alice, on himself to save her from shame. And finally, leaves the house perhaps for ever without any regret, without
any clinging tenderness. He goes once again to Tappahannock.

Through Ordway's love for Emily, Glasgow explores the possibility of fulfilment in love in the absence of physical passion. Ordway's love for Emily rises to the height of platonic love, which seems to be Glasgow's own ideal. Ordway's love for Emily culminates in the larger love for all mankind. His love for Emily is an ideal realm of feeling in which he possesses her so utterly that meeting cannot bring her nearer, nor parting take her further away. In the exaltation of love his earthly nature departs. Its magnanimity helps him excel the bounds of personality and enter into a larger and freer world.

Glasgow seems to be impressed by the theory of renunciation and annihilation of one's ego by way of surrendering totally to the will of God - advocated by the Eastern Sacred books like The Bhagavad Gita. As Julius Rowan shows,

Her annotations dated 1903 in Annie Besant's translation of The Bhagavad Gita
show her eager to consider a philosophy that promises the peace of the eternal to those who will renounce all works of desires and relinquish the fruit of actions. This search indicated that she had come a long way from her early apprenticeship to Spencer, Darwin, Lecky and their group.15

Her markings do not register any protest when Krishna offered himself as the source of pure knowledge, on the contrary, she seems to be inclined to obey Krishna's command of total surrender,

On Me fix thy mind, to Me, be devoted; Worship Me; revere Me; thus having disciplined thyself. With Me as thy goal, to Me shalt thou come.16


It appears that Glasgow, in the Ancient Law manifests her belief in God through the minor character, eg. Ordway's aunt tells him:

I fought very hard - oh, desperately hard - but now I have learned that the only way to get anything is to give it up. Happiness is like everything else, it is only when one gives it back to God that one really possesses it (AL. 326).

On the suggestion of his aunt Emily, Ordway goes to Crowley his father's clerk as he had worked sincerely and honestly in his father's time. He could see that Crowley displayed "that untranslatable rapture of the mystic" he had observed in the epileptic little preacher who had preached in the prison chapel. He expresses his profound faith to the Lord in simple words thus:

I tell you it isn't the things that comes to you, but the way you look at it that counts, and because you've got a paralysed arm is no reason that you should have a paralysed heart as well. I've had a power-
ful lot of suffering, but I've had a powerful lot of happiness, too, and the suffering somehow, doesn't seem to come inside of me to stay as the happiness does. You see, I'm a great believer in the Lord, Sir," he added simply "and what I can't understand, I don't bother about, but just take on trust" (AL. 351).

Love, renunciation and faith in God are the simple precepts expounded to Ordway by Emily his aunt, Growley and the epileptic preacher in the prison. At the end in the company of Banks, a simpleton, Ordway realises the simple power of the human touch.

In the hour of his need it had been neither religion, nor philosophy, but the outstretched hand, that had helped. Then his vision broadened and he saw that the body of love is one, the members of it are infinite; and it was made plain to him at last, that the love of Emily, the love of Alice and the love of Banks, were but
different revelations of the same immor-
tality (AL. 483).

Marion K. Richard has rightly said that

for Ellen Glasgow the "ancient law" is the
"law of sacrifice ... Before the book
finishes, he (Ordway) must transcend all
personal ties and assume the guilt for all
humanity.  

Glasgow's The Ancient Law received a mixed kind of
reception. To some it was a minor work. To others, it
displayed the "profound depth", of Glasgow's understand-
ing and the "bigness of her grasp of life." The minor
characters, as Marcelle Thiebaux says,

seem to appear unplanned on the scene and
remain unintegrated. 

\[27\] Marion K. Richards, Ellen Glasgow's Development
as a Novelist (SanJose State College 1971) 103.

\[26\] Marcelle Thiebaux, Ellen Glasgow 86.
Thematically, the novel displays the "profound depth" of Glasgow's understanding, as it deals with the liberation of the human soul through the evolution of Ordway's character.

The first two novels, The Descendant and Phases of an Inferior Planet were conceived and written as an impassioned revolt not only against the school of local colour but also against the current Victorian tradition in letters, and more specially against the sentimental elegiac tone, this tradition assumed in Virginia. Glasgow broke away with a sense of adventure from provincial prejudices and inhibitions.

Yet as a beginner Glasgow's main problem was the lack of an adequate method. Probably, she herself was not aware of this deficiency. As a result The Descendant contains many unassimilated ideas drawn from her reading of the biological and social sciences and philosophy. Her ideas would have proved effective, if they were expressed through action and character development in her novels. But Glasgow relied only upon description, narration and philosophical commentary. Her witty and epigrammatic
comments were not effective substitutes for the dramatic projection of character.

Intellectually, she had made a break with the tradition when in 1897 The Descendant was published. But her revolt had not yet been subdued to the civilized use of irony. She wanted to write of a rebel against society. But in the Virginia of that time there was not one in the circles in which she lived. She placed her social outcast in the unfamiliar surroundings of New York. She probably thought, she was violating the rule of probability by thrusting a revolutionary mood into the conservative pattern of Virginia culture.

The Descendant is written from the viewpoint of the omniscient author whose centre of interest is Michael. But in the last section of the book interest and sympathy shift to Rachel Govin. This shift seems inadvertent. There are certain improbabilities in the novel. Firstly that angry country boy Michael with no formal training or practical experience could get his first job on a radical journal and could rapidly rise to the position of an editor. Secondly, his increasing indifference to Rachel could cause Michael to shoot Kyle for
a verbal accusation, and a strong man like Michael would quickly succumb to tuberculosis in the prison, finally would go back to Rachel and Rachel would nurse him.

These incidents are not convincing. But the same theme of struggle of the lower class to rise is taken up and the character types are handled effectively in the later works: The Voice of the People, The Romance of a Plain Man, The Miller of Old Church and One Man In His Time. This theme of The Descendant held interest for Glasgow as late as 1922. The love affair between Rachel and Michael is the story of a woman renouncing love for her work, the secondary theme which recurs in the later novels, The Wheel of Life, Life and Gabriella and Barren Ground. The theme of strength of woman, persists till her last novels, Vein of Iron and In This Our Life.

Though the style is frequently trite and overdrawn, the situations often hackneyed and its psychological motivation is unsure, thematically, The Descendant is an important novel. It possesses a vitality which makes it readable. The people in it live, as they had lived for their author. We may not always understand them completely, but we are aware of them as human-beings. Glasgow,
definitely, creates an illusion of life, and that itself
was a distinction for a young writer. The book must be
considered as an important landmark in the evolution of
Glasgow's artistry, and of the modern American novel
itself.

Her faults, like the use of symbols inappropriate to
the theme, ornate and overdramatic metaphors, forced
personification of nature, are improved upon in the later
novels. The reformers and intellectuals introduced in
Semple's home are not fully developed. They show
Glasgow's cynical attitude towards reformers, and the
sardonic cast of her irony affords her an opportunity to
employ a few clever epigrams. But they become an integral
part of her best style, almost thirty years later, when
she turned to the comedy of manners.

Phases of an Inferior Planet, Glasgow's second
novel, is better organised than The Descendant. But both
of them show Glasgow's interest in Darwinian theories.
The title of Phases of an Inferior Planet and the
philosophical speculations of the hero indicate that
Glasgow is expounding a theory that man is a victim of
hereditary forces beyond his control. Though this second
novel carries the same faults of an uncertain style, and an inadequate motivation of the characters, of the first, the pictorial aspect of Glasgow's imagination is well developed. Her conscious use in this novel of light and shadow for aesthetic effect anticipates her later use of this device effectively. Algarcife's black cowl at the end of the book suggests his haunted conscience. This dark tone is in contrast to the sunset lights wherein Algarcife declares his love to Mariana. The minor characters are more clearly sketched than their counterparts in The Descendant. The inhabitants of Gotham, Anthony and Mariana's hotel form a chorus and a link between the two phases of the novel.

The style of Phases of an Inferior Planet reveals some of the faults of The Descendant. Algarcife's long speculations on fate, Mariana's inability to endure poverty and her inadequacy as a mother, weigh down the plot. But the symbols are appropriately used. The whole scene of Mariana's departure is made effective by the symbol of the moth. "A moth circled about the ball of light, showing to her fixed gaze like some black spirit of evil hanging above a planet" (PP. 172).
With the second novel the structure is more balanced. And Glasgow was gradually learning the art of writing. And in her next work, the Voice of The People her manner of writing has remarkably improved.

The Wheel of Life is a major landmark revealing Glasgow's absorption in mysticism and spirituality. It shows her understanding of qualities like renunciation, and the annihilation of ego advocated by The Bhagavad Gita, and the quality of compassion propounded by Gautam Buddha. Artistically, one may say that in The Wheel of Life Glasgow's philosophizing is too direct and intrusive.

The portraits of the sophisticates Perry Bridewell, Gerty Bridewell, and Arnold Kemper provide the novel its chief distinction. These characters who sacrifice their selves to the pursuit of pleasure, however, are not as sharply drawn as the postwar sophisticates in her later comedies of manner. Her use of satire and irony is to attack hypocrisies, ordinarily hidden, in social intercourse. Kemper's views directly expose masculine complacency and conceit. "Men were not born monogamous" - it was
a favourite cynicism of his, for he was inclined to throw upon nature the full burden of his responsibility.

The Wheel of Life, fails as "a social document of convincing veracity" because it lacks the "intimate familiarity with the life with which it deals." Though Glasgow shows a profound insight into human experience, she lacks the clever manipulation of plot. According to Rice Gordon the reach of The Wheel of Life "is greater than that of its predecessors." But as compared to the House of Mirth by Edith Wharton whose characters are projected as vital personalities, but the particular segment of the society they represent makes the strongest impression on the reader. While in Glasgow's book,

one thinks entirely of individuals whose social setting appears as an atmosphere simply.\(^\text{19}\)

Glasgow realises her thematic purpose through Roger Adams, the "Apotheosis of Goodness." And as Rice maintains,

as she traces the steps which led to his (Roger's) complete renunciation of self; as she shows his attitude of perfect pity and tenderness .... her method reminds us again and again of the simple, convincing directness of Tolstoy.

This impact of Tolstoy on Glasgow shows the temperamental affinity between the two. Glasgow had been groping for a suitable technique for the writing of a novel - at least of the kind she was interested in writing. She became disenamoured of both the French and English novelists who had fascinated her earlier. Once she read Tolstoy's War and Peace and Anna Karenina, she knew what she was seeking - a suitable form for her thematic concerns. When Glasgow's first book The Descendant was published anonymously, it had excited curiosity among reviewers, who hesitated either to praise or blame, since they were not sure of the author. Glasgow, on her part, had felt that one novel does not make a novelist. What she wanted was not an inspiration but an art. What she wanted was a firm foundation, and a steady control over her ideas and material. She thought she needed a philoso-

\[\text{ibid., P.32}\]
phy of fiction, and a technique of writing. She felt the supreme necessity of a prose style so pure and flexible that it could bend without breaking.

The question, "where could I find this by seeking?", constantly haunted her mind. There were some contemporaries who were successful apprentices of Henry James. But Glasgow never wished to be like anyone, not even like Henry James whom she enthusiastically admired. She wanted only to be herself. Yet she read Henry James fully tracing him to his source. She then immersed herself in Maupassant, and Flaubert. After reading Flaubert's Madame Bovary, according to her the most flawless novel, she felt something was missing. She learnt a great deal from Maupassant. And her second book Phases of an Inferior Planet was written when she was under the influence of Maupassant a supreme craftsman, if not a supreme novel-ist. She read Maupassant's Une Vie and found it 'the most beautiful novel in all literature.' But after her initial enthusiasm she felt that something was missing. Her detailed study of Maupassant's short stories made her conscious of an inner recoil from the world as art made it. Hence, she felt that a novel, merely as a form of art was not enough. It must contain not only the perfection
of art but the imperfection of nature. The inevitable
reversal of the situation employed by O'Henry borrowed
from Maupassant's famous trick ending, ceased to impress
her.

She constantly felt, "Life isn't like this. Things
don't happen this way." While she was in this confused
state of mind she suddenly happened to read War and
Peace, and she came to know what she wanted and what was
missing in other novels she had read. She learnt that
life must use art and art must use life. Her first
reading of Tolstoy worked as a kind of revelation and as
the triumph of judgement. It did not evoke in her the
desire to imitate but confirmed her belief that imitation
was futile. She also learnt that one might select
realities but could not impose on "Reality", if one were
honest in one's interpretation, and possessed artistic
integrity. For truth to art becomes in the end simple
fidelity to one's own inner vision.

Glasgow was not prepared to believe the statement
often made by critics that War and Peace proves the
assertion that a great novel can stand on its merits as
fiction "without style". She could not accept the words,
"without style". Because by reading *War and Peace* even in translation, she could see it "saturated with an effervescent flow of a great style, which at its best and truest is not a petrified form, but a life-giving fluid". As she observes:

> Even in a translation, one feels the tumultuous rhythms and pauses of a style that has the power of genius brooding over creation (WW. 126).

Again she herself says, it was not until she came to write *Barren Ground* and her later novels that she felt an easy grasp of technique. In the process of writing she learnt that French sentences had a way of going to one's head too quickly. Maupassant impregnated her mind with artistic integrity. She then passed on from Flaubert's theory of the one, and the only, the exact word for every object, to the rhythms and the minor cadences of English prose.

In her long journey (from European writers to English) in her quest for technique, she learnt immeasurably, from Tolstoy. Her immature vision of life turned
into a transcendent maturity. Tolstoy made her see that the ordinary is simply the universal observed from the surface. One may touch life anywhere and one will touch universality when one touches the earth.

A glance at the difference between Henry James and Tolstoy may be helpful to understand Glasgow as an artist and as an individual, because Tolstoy was her master. James said about Tolstoy:

Tolstoy and Dostoevsky are fluid pudding, though not tasteless, because the amount of their own minds and souls in solution in the broth gives it savour and flavour, thanks to the strong, rank quality of their genius and their experience. But there are all sorts of things to be said of them, and in particular that we see how great a vice is their lack of composition and their defiance of economy and architecture. 21

F. R. Leavis while defending Tolstoy's genius says,

I want to insist that the relation between art and life it exemplifies for us is the characteristic of the highest kind of creativity - a higher kind than James's. If Tolstoy gave no heed to any Jamesian Canons it was not because he failed to give the most intelligent kind of attention to the demands of art.\(^{22}\)

It was so because Tolstoy did not believe in Jamesian economy. The relation of art to life with Tolstoy is such as to prevent any kind of narrowly provident economy.

Tolstoy explicitly rejects the Kantian isolation of art as the realm of decoration and play and all the nineteenth century doctrines of art for art's sake which stem from it. According to John Bayley, as polemic, the effectiveness of Tolstoy's "What is Art?" lies in its rejection of much that was taken for granted in the

\(^{22}\) ibid., p.331.
Tolstoy gives great importance to the wide and involuntary humanity, which unites the writer's consciousness with the human experience that "knew the thing before but had been unable to express it." To give an example from the pictorial art, Tolstoy preferred the bad picture with feeling to the bad picture with none. He deserts art that stops short at beauty. He often compares counterfeit art to eating for gratification. According to him to amuse oneself with art is like amusing oneself with food, or with sex and making a diversion out of something that should be an essential. In his later treatise Tolstoy asserts the comparison that
real art, like the wife of an affectionate husband, needs no ornaments, counterfeit art like, a prostitute, must always be decked out."

In Anna Karenina Vronsky discovers "the eternal error men make in supposing that happiness consists in the gratification of their wishes", art like happiness, is not a question of gratification but of necessities. One might say it is a question of fulfilment rather than gratification. It is through the essential that art and life coincide, e.g. soldiers sing and tell stories as a part of their way of life. Passivity instead of participation, leads to the abuse of art and its decadence. Today we experience this as television viewers.

The relationship between art and life, according to Tolstoy means immensely fuller and profounder involvement in life. He cared more for fulfilment rather than happiness in life. And that is why, possibly he has a strong didactic impulse. When Tolstoy makes critical

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remarks about fiction - and in the course of life he made a good many -

they are seldom about the form of the novel, its constitution, and mode of government, so to speak, but about the people in it and the man behind it. "Anyone writing a novel", he says in his essay on Maupassant, "must have a clear and firm idea as to what is good and bad in life."

Glasgow, too groped her way toward an unattainable meaning in life. The skeptic in her, did not let her trust any religious doctrine, she never lost faith in goodness. Her vague religious instincts leaned toward a distant trust in some spirit, or divine essence which many poets and philosophers have called the Good. Thus both Glasgow and Tolstoy were preoccupied with ultimate questions which are concerned with one's deepest inner loyalty and meaning in life.

The next chapter Character Is Destiny shows Glasgow's protagonists as evolved and mature personali-

\textsuperscript{24} ibid., P.63.
ties. Characters like Gabriella in Life and Gabriella, Dorinda in Barren Ground, Ada and her father John Fincastle in Vein of Iron, Roy and her father, Asa Timberlake in In This Our Life act and behave as per the command of their subtler self (soul). They all possess the strength to create their destiny and prove that man is the architect of his own fate. It also shows Glasgow's artistic maturity almost in all aspects. Her settings become an integral part of the novels. There is a sharpness and clarity in conveying her point of view. Her characterization is sound. There is a fascinating delineation of the complexities of life and an effective rendering of time and space.