CHAPTER V

CHARACTER IS DESTINY

Life and Gabriella  Vein of Iron
Barren Ground  In This Our Life

The above-mentioned novels validate Glasgow's premise of her heroic legend "character can create destiny." Her fictional world is inhabited by men and women distinguished by the development of their character. According to her a proper heroic legend was rooted "in the realities of experience" and "one that would provide man with insight of a better world and models of behaviour that he could emulate." Life and Gabriella is her first attempt at displaying a proper heroic legend which is further modified in Barren Ground, Vein of Iron, and in In This Our Life. In Glasgow's own words:

These novels are concerned with the place and tragedy of the individual in the universal scheme. They treat of the perpetual conflict of character with fate, of
the will with the world, of the dream with reality.¹

Hence these novels may safely be categorised as "novels of character". They reveal the growth of character and exhibit how the heroines endowed with native courage cultivate the attributes of endurance, fortitude, an iron will, and self-sufficiency. The attributes which make them emotionally and economically independent and spiritually strong. It seems that Glasgow's elective doctrine emerged out of her vast reading of the "Wisdom Literature" of the East and the West. Characters like Gabriella, Dorinda Oakley, Ada Fincastle and her father John Fincastle, Roy and her father Asa Timberlake possess a timeless dignity which they preserve at all cost. It is not that these characters are shown to be superhuman from the outset. They are ordinary human beings with human frailties and weaknesses. These heroines grow and they transcend their circumstances and vindicate their creator's premise "that character can create destiny." John Fincastle and Asa Timberlake possess the wisdom of philosophers. They are self-possessed and fight the

battle of life bravely without turning their face from life and provide the great moral support to their daughters Ada, and Roy respectively.

With *Life and Gabriella* a new phase begins in Glasgow's career as a novelist. It shows her progressive growth both as regards theme and technique, and places Glasgow much above the average woman novelist in America. Just as she matures as a person so does her craftsmanship in novel writing. In Glasgow's own words:

*Virginia* the first book of proposed trilogy treats the "man's woman, the feminine type to which all the sex was forced for so many generations." The next book will describe "woman, the conqueror", the last will depict "Woman of the Indirect methods". The heroine of the future fiction "is going to be articulate. She is not going to speak the man's thoughts with the man's vocabulary in the man's way."

Like the women in ancient Greek drama, "the women of the future will work togeth-
er for the cause that effects woman's happiness."

Though Gabriella inherits from her sister and from her mother the Southern cultural ethos, she is destined to escape from this "Sheltered Life". Glasgow has endowed her with an extra heritage from her Scotch-Irish father. She possesses the "The Berkeley conscience, that vein of iron which lay beneath the awkward softness and incompetence of her mother and sister" (LG. 30). Gabriella revolts against the world of decay and inertia to which her mother and sister belonged.

It was a world where things happened the same way day after day, where no miracles had occurred since the miracles of scripture, where people hated change, not because they were satisfied but because they were incapable of imagination.

Gabriella first decides to work in a local millinery to support her sister Jane and her children. This very decision of hers defies the whole social structure in

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which she lives and shakes the foundations of life in the Southern community, wherein a lady is supposed to teach, to sew, or to do any such thing in her own home but never accept a job in a shop. She, then breaks her engagement with Arthur Pyton, the "legitimate descendant of tradition." She forms her own work ethics to gain her independence. She proves her imaginative and aesthetic sensibilities by suggesting the right type of hats to the people. Her work gradually enables her to evolve a sense of selfhood which is quite different from womanhood ordained by the social code.

Gabriella's journey to maturity moves step by step. Like an ordinary and impulsive woman she too falls a victim to infatuation and love's allurements. She is tremendously attracted to George Fowler and it is as if a dream would come true if he married her. The dream is realised but within three months of marriage, she is disillusioned. In Book II, aptly titled The Age of Knowledge she recognizes the true dimensions of George's character, and discovers that George is totally spoiled, worthless, ungrateful and dependent on his parents. George has no "sense of deeper purpose" in life except self-satisfaction.
Already she was beginning to discover that beyond his expressive eyes he had really very little of importance to express. These prolonged silences covered poverty of ideas rather than abundance of feeling, that his limited vocabulary was less due to reticence than to the simple inarticulateness of the primitive mind.

She has known the result of an unrestrained indulgence of virtues, and of love running waste through excess. She realizes that excessive devotion to duty leads to morbidity. And it strikes her that she should strive for "balance, restraint and moderation." She resolves passionately that she will not become a victim of life. She learns to appear sweet even when her inner spirit demanded a severe exterior. Even when she comes to know that her husband has an affair with another woman, her habit of self-reliance persists and without crying over her humiliation leaves the Fowler home to secure a job.

When Mrs. Fowler (George's mother) accuses her of hardness, she replies, "I suppose I am hard and I am going to stay so. There is safety in hardness." This is an echo of Anthony Algarcife, in Phases of an Inferior
Planet where he answers a similar accusation of Mariana by saying "Hard things survive. They are not easy to smash." A similar sentiment is voiced by Dorinda Oakley in Barren Ground. Gabriella's sole interest, now, is professional competence and maternal solicitude. This emotional pattern resembles Dorinda Oakley's in Barren Ground and that of the other characters whom Glasgow admires. Gabriella becomes tough with herself and decides to face the challenges of life.

The embittering memories of her life with George were submerged in the invigorating waves of energy that flooded her being. Her inert body responded to the miraculous restoration of her spirit (LG. 251).

Without being angry with George she begins a relentless fight against her own weaknesses. At twenty-seven love is over in her life but she resolves to fill the rest of her life with something truer and profounder than love. She wants truth, not illusion. In the midst of disappointment, deceit, shame and humiliation, Gabriella cultivates an attitude that makes her capable of deriving happiness from life. Her theory like those of great
philosophers is rooted not in reason but in character. She believes in life with all the sanguine richness of blood. Of course, it is a struggle but she is one of those vital women who enjoy a struggle, who choose any aspect of life in preference to the condition of vegetative serenity.

Gabriella faces the challenges of life with a stern exterior but at times she is shaken within. Her success and renunciation begin to pall. Her children become independent as she enters her late thirties. She becomes restless and reassesses the life she has lived. Her daughter Fanney is beautiful, selfish and shallow. Her son Archbald is her emotional mainstay. She is about to achieve success but her life seems empty. She reflects:

It ought to be in the nature of things. She felt, to mean so much more than it had meant; it ought to have been so much more vital, so much more satisfying and complete. As it was, she could remember of it only scattered ends, frayed places, useless beginnings, and broken promises. With how many beliefs had she started, and now
not one of them remained with her, - well hardly one of them! The dropping of illusion after illusion - that was what the years had brought to her as they passed, for she saw that she had always been growing away farther and farther from tradition, from accepted opinions, from the dogmas and ideals of the ages. The experience and the wisdom of others had failed her at the very beginning (LG. 386).

When she is in such a state of mind she moves to London Terrace and happens to meet the rugged Ben O'hara. At first sight she finds Ben O'hara crude, uncouth and raw. But his carefree behaviour, extraordinary vigour to live life, appeals to her most. Under the apparent uncouthness and non-refinement she discerns in him a "kind of spiritual consciousness that makes character". O'Hara stirs her restless mind to further self-examination. Consequently she questions, for the first time, her lack of patience with George who has become a helpless alcoholic. While talking to O'Hara she notices that he is not in any way a quitter, not a person who would slip
away from things. Though devoid of the superficial
convention and ignorant of the books, he has something
valuable to offer. It is his wisdom derived from life by
facing and taking all its varied aspects in his stride.
In his ordinary talk Ben O'Hara imparts to the reader a
wisdom of life which outweighs his lack of breeding and
taste, and lack of superficial conventions.

Without friends, without knowledge, except
the bitter knowledge of the streets he had
fought his fight, and had kept untarnished
a certain hard standard of honour (LG.
457).

His comment, "the virtues don't seem to be able to
work peaceably in one another's company for if they did
I guess we'd have pure saints or pure sinners instead of
the mixed lot we have got to make a world out of," show
his thorough understanding of life.

Gabriella though impressed by Ben O'Hara rejects his
proposal of marriage and to protect herself from emotion-
al involvement decides to go to Arthur Peyton after
eighteen years of separation. Her meeting with Arthur
Peyton flashes an illumination, a sort of flood light on her mind and she realises the big gap between the two personalities, his and hers.

For fear of misstep he had not dared to go forward, from a dread of pain he had refused the opportunities of happiness. She knew not why he had never come to her, and why he had let her slip from his grasp. All that was a part of his failure, of his distrust of life, of his profound negation of spirit (LG. 515).

Gabriella realises that she stands in complete contrast to Arthur. She has done and undone things, has gone in the dark making mistakes and discovering realities, has created illusions and destroyed them. It has been a continuous flux in new and different directions. Hers has been the, "will to be, to live, to love, to create, and to conquer." She muses about Arthur and herself.

There was beauty in his face, in his ascetic and overrefined features, in his sympathetic smile and his
cultured voice, but it was the beauty of resignation, of defeat nobly borne, of a spirit confirmed in the bitter sweetness of renouncement. "It would make an old woman of me to marry him," she thought, "an old, patient, resigned woman" (LG. 520).

With this prompting of soul she decides to go to Ben O'Hara who has never evaded facts, never feared a risk, never shirked an issue, never lacked the hardy adventures of courage, of battle. Her choice indicates that Glasgow too, is searching for a new dimension in experience. Gabriella's relationship with O'Hara manifests Glasgow's early belief in the power and possibility of love. It is more acceptable because it does not necessitate any tragic compromise either of values or of personal progress. It is a sort of earthly paradise inhabited by a man and woman who by their constant striving by their vein of iron and sound character enlarge the scope of their happiness and deepen their faith in life and humanity.

With Barren Ground (1925) Glasgow enters into the realm of supreme self-confidence both as an artist and as a person. In the process of writing novels every two years since 1897, she has learnt to present the interior
self of an individual and also to employ the necessary structure to tell the story of that individual - Dorinda Oakley. Glasgow selects the familiar landscape which unrolls both without and within. As her roots are in the soil, she has known the houses, the roads, the woods, the endless fields of broomsedge and scrub pine from her very childhood. It is with this knowledge of blood as well as brain that she begins her quest of truth and strikes the vein of fundamental humanity.

Dorinda pervades the novel. She moves and acts as if she is the monarch of all she surveys. This appears so because her creator has given her the freedom of choice to mould her life the way she likes. Dorinda remains unique and unusual by her choice and the way she works out her destiny. Glasgow sums up the implicit philosophy in a phrase: "One may learn to live, one may even learn to live gallantly without delight" (CM. 155).

The last part of the phrase, "without delight seems more significant. It is very difficult to say what exactly Glasgow meant by, "without delight", but if one is allowed to add the two words "material and sensual" in between, the phrase will be complete "without material
and sensual delight" and it will be very appropriate for
the character of Dorinda. For, human beings who are
endowed with native courage and fortitude of character do
not seek joy in life. The jolt and adversities in their
life become turning points for betterment. They are made
of such solid stuff that their moral fibre elevates them.
It is not that they turn their face from the joys of life
but they have something greater to lean upon than mere
self-satisfaction. They have capacity to mould their
minds towards something constructive, positive, and
greater than fulfilment of personal desires. Their
passions get transferred from the personal to impersonal
object. An incessant zeal to fulfil every call of duty,
untrammelled will to work without complaints, endurance
without a thought of enjoyment, become their way of life.
They tend to seek a meaning in life. Only such people can
create their destiny and rise above the circumstances.
Dorinda possesses all these attributes and tries to seek
meaning in life.

Although it seemed to her that she had
grown wiser with the years, she had never
entirely abandoned her futile effort to
find a meaning in life. Hours had come and
gone when she had felt that there was no permanent design beneath the fragile tissue of experience; but the moral fibre that had stiffened the necks of martyrs lay deeply embedded in her character if not in her opinions. She was saved from the aridity of infidelity by that robust common sense which had preserved her from the sloppiness of indiscriminate belief. After all, it was not religion; it was not philosophy; it was nothing outside her own being that had delivered her from evil. The vein of iron which had supported her through adversity was merely the instinct older than herself, stronger than circumstances, deeper than the shifting surface of emotion; the instinct that had said, "I will not be broken." Though the words of the covenant had altered, the ancient mettle still infused its spirit (BG. 367).

Dorinda has inherited that vein of iron from her maternal grandfather, and also consanguinity with the solid earth under her feet. Moreover she belongs to the
particular rural class which includes the Greylocks, the Abernethys, the Pedlars and the Elgoods who have been known as "good people" for years in Virginia.

The ancestors of the Abernethys and the Pedlars had felled trees and built log cabins and withstood the red man on the Virginian frontier. Some of them had followed the westward trail of the Indian, and had won back, step by step, the vanishing border beyond the Shenandoah. They had fought in the French and Indian wars and throughout the Revolution, and they had stacked their muskets for the last time at Appomattox. In pioneer days, they were the men in buckskin; they were the lone fighters; they were the sharpshooters; they were the long hunters. And from the beginning to the end, they were inarticulate (CM. 157).

The story of Dorinda like that of Gabriella exhibits a slow and steady upward march. Before Dorinda meets her lover, Jason Greylock, she has been already bored with
the tedious stretch of her present. While at work in Nathan Pedlar's store, listening of the first rumble of the approaching train evokes in her mind the idea of a different future for which she looks forward. And she starts longing for adventure, happiness, even unhappiness, if it were only different.

Soon Jason enters her life. It is like a miracle for Dorinda. She recognizes love with the infallible certainty of intuition. To Dorinda happiness has suddenly come, and her imagination is still spinning from the surprise of it. The flower like the blue of the sky, the song of the birds, the elusive scent of the wild grape all appear to be a part of her rich inner world with its passionate expectancy. The idea that they are to be married in the autumn sounds unreal. Her prudent mind distrusts the ecstasy, but at the same time all doubts and distrusts regarding Jason's love have ceased. She feels fully satisfied and triumphant in life.

Part I, "Broomsedge," thus shows the romantic girl wearing her orange shawl, the girl seeking something adventurous and different. For a time she feels that she has secured the whole world through love and is free to
escape the barrenness and morbid effect of life and land. But her romantic dream is short-lived and ends when Jason betrays her. It is a great jolt. But Dorinda is destined neither to be a woman who would ruin her life if betrayed, nor a woman whose entire life would depend on marriage. She is remarkably interesting because of the choice she makes when betrayed by Jason Greylock. She looks for new options and employs her energy and talents in ways which were not recognised as acceptable for a woman. When betrayed, despair overwhelms her but beneath the rough texture of experience she feels that her essential self is still superior to her folly and ignorance. It is superior even to the conspiracy of circumstances that have hemmed her in.

And she felt that in a little while this essential self would reassert its power and triumph over disaster. Vague, transitory, comforting, this premonition brooded above the wilderness of her thoughts. Yes, she was not broken. She could never be broken while the vein of iron held in her soul (BG. 141).
Glasgow has endowed Dorinda with robust common sense along with a vein of iron. When love is over in her life she decides to leave Pedlar Mill. On her journey to New York, she dimly feels that she is now meeting life on its own terms. She is stripped of illusion, stripped even of idealism except the idealism she can wring from the solid facts of experience. The blow that has shattered her dreams has let in the cloudless flood of reality. "You can't change the past by thinking", she told herself stubbornly, "but there must be something ahead. There must be something in life besides love" (86. 151).

There is no self-pity in her thoughts. The unflinching Presbyterian in her blood steels her against sentimentality. She decides to meet life standing with her eyes open. Wearing borrowed overalls, she withdraws from society that would restrain her until she has made her reputation in the man's world of farming. She starts working initially with borrowed money, uses new methods and knowledge and pours all her physical and emotional resources into the land. With the slow return of fertility to the soil she has passed, by an unconscious process, into mute acceptance of the inevitable. The bitter irony of her point of view has shaded into a cheerful cynicism
which forms a protecting covering over her mind and heart. She has worked relentlessly through the years, but it is work that she has enjoyed, and above all, it is work that has created the new surroundings amid which she lives.

Part II Pine manifests Dorinda's true understanding about her father. Her father's uncomplaining acceptance of death, his fixed gaze in his stoic attention on the pine in view from his window, draw the parallel between the man and the tree. The tree is symbolic of his own resistant, effort to exist. It has grown unexpectedly sturdy from the impoverished land. Both manifest tenacity, fortitude, the ability to exist. Dorinda realises that her father had been like the pine.

In Part III Life-everlasting Dorinda's story of growth culminates in a philosophy of acquiescence. She has learnt to 'live, and dedicates her life to work. "Work is worship' appears to be her sole goal in life, and to achieve that goal she constantly trains her mind so that it stops wandering.
This was the secret of her contentment, she knew, breathless activity. If she was satisfied with her life, it was only because she never stopped long enough in her work to imagine the kind of life she should have preferred. While her health was good and her energy unimpaired, she had no time for discontent. If she had looked for it, she sometimes told herself, she could have found sufficient cause for unhappiness; but she was careful not to look for it (BG. 319).

She disciplines her mind not to neglect even the work she dislikes. She dislikes darning, but she never allows herself to neglect it because her passionate revolt from the inertia of the land has permeated the simplest details of living. The qualities with which she has triumphed over the abandoned fields are the virtues of the pioneers who have triumphed over life.

Dorinda, in the process of growth, is convinced that life is worth living "so long as she could rule her mind". Here once again we are reminded of the Sanskrit maxim,
Mana eva manushyanam karanam bandhmokshayoh,³ and also of Milton in his Book I of "Paradise Lost" where he says:

The mind is its own place and in itself 
Can make a Heaven of Hell, 
A hell of Heaven⁴

Nothing remains to be won for a person who has control over his mind.

At twenty, seeking happiness, she had been more unhappy than other women but at fifty she knows that she is far happier. The difference is that at twenty her happiness depended upon love and at fifty it depends upon nothing but herself and the land.

To the land, she had given her mind and heart with the abandonment that she had

³ Maitre Aranyak 6/34/11 (Sanskrit Ratnakar, Sarvabhom Sanskrit Prasang Sansthanam, Varanasi.)

found disastrous in any human relation."
I may have missed something, but I have
gained more," she thought, "and what I've
gained nobody can take away from me" (BG, 365).

At the end Dorinda achieves a complete serenity of
mind which has transcended all the conflict of frustrated
desires; the storm within has blown over. She thinks that
old regrets may come again but that with the passing of
years they would come but rarely, and grow weaker. As her
eyes wander from horizon to horizon, she experiences a
living communion with the earth under her feet. She
reflects on the endurance and fortitude of the soil. The
seasons bloom and drop, the ancient beneficent rituals of
sowing and reaping move in the fields, and with these
thoughts she feels the spirit of land flowing into her.
She experiences a strengthening of her own spirit,
refreshed and flowing out again toward life. She
recognizes that this is the permanent self of hers. It
has remained with her after the years of anguish had
taken their bloom, and she would find happiness again,
not the happiness for which she had once longed, but the
serene quietude of mind. She realizes that destiny has to
an extent defeated her because it never granted the gifts she had asked for, but still her failure was one of those defeats which are victories. Now she is middle aged and ready to face the future without romantic glamour but with an integrity of vision. With clear-eyed wisdom she visualizes the best of life ahead.

When the novel was published in 1925, most of the Southern reviewers were impressed by the character sketch of Dorinda Oakley and her "extra-ordinary courage," and many called it "an epic of soil" comparing Barren Ground to novels by Knut Hamson and Thomas Hardy.5

Vein of Iron exhibits the strong tradition of fortitude by means of a story of the Fincastle family. The origin of the family may be traced back to one of the earliest pioneers the First John Fincastle, a stout-hearted Presbyterian Minister. Old John, the pioneer, had fought not against men, but against evil passions both within and without the kirk.

Like him many of the pioneer ministers were men of intrepid spirit and intellectual vigour. Their Scottish mind was nourished by metaphysics. They placed freedom to believe above freedom to doubt and valued immaterial safety more than material comfort. In this novel Glasgow tries to analyze the primary elements that composed the Presbyterian spirit and the Presbyterian theology. Her scrutiny seems to show that the chief of these elements was the substance of fortitude (the vital principle of survival) which has enabled races and individuals to withstand the destructive forces of nature and of civilization.

Hence Glasgow's main concern is to find out if this instinct for survival or what we call the "soul of man" will sink under the dead weight of an age of machine, if this resolute breed will surrender to the disintegrating forces in the modern world. The answer is optimistic and positive, for, the novel ends with a hope for the future. Ada, the heroine of the novel is sure that her ancestors as they were lending her their fortitude, will lend their strength in future, and she can lean back on their strength.
Glasgow, thus starts with a family chronicle and it is naturally not a study of a single character or group of characters alone, but the spirit of a race at a certain time and place. She has selected an appropriate atmosphere of the upper valley of the James. The setting of Vein of Iron is so clearly visualized by her that she is able to draw a map of imaginary Shut-in-Valley. Her knowledge of every field, every house, where every road climbed, where every hill swelled in the plain and every mountain-peak soared into the clouds becomes evident in the novel. Almost all the characters in the novel possess a living cell. They live under the right kind of roof. The old manse in which the Fincastles live is not the typical mountain house but has its peculiar structure, sloping roof that drooped over the window in the upper storey. The older Fincastles had built it and they have been living for three or four generations and unwilling to change their home.

Glasgow has exemplified the force of tradition through Grandmother Fincastle and Aunt Maggie, and the break with tradition through Ada. She puts to test the vein of iron to outward pressure, and measures the exact degree of its strength. In the early chapters of the
novel different points of view are expressed in the family group gathered before the fire in the manse on a December evening. Glasgow has employed this new device only because it is experimental and it meets the need of these reflective views in her creation of the Fincastle family. Glasgow enters into the mental processes of five different human beings, from the old grandmother to the child of ten and engages herself deeply in their separate moods and visions. And for each different point of view she has discovered an appropriate rhythm. Grandmother's figure is tall, strong, and rugged. Her eyes: small, bright ageless are like the eyes of an eaglet who looks out from a crevice under the rock. In her stiff fingers the needles do not slacken. She is immersed in a profound quietude, and rests upon an immovable rock.

Weaving in and out of her body and soul, knitting her into the past as she knitted life into stockings, moved the familiar rhythms and pauses - now - of the house; and moved as a casual wave, as barely a minute's ebbing and flow, in the timeless surge of predestination (VI. 46).
Similarly the same stream of reverie flows on and downward through the metaphysical consciousness of John Fincastle, the practical mind of Aunt Maggie and the flashes of insight that illumine Mary Evelyn's reflections until it finally comes to the surface, in the musical cadences of little Ada's fanciful musings.

John Fincastle inherits his grandmother, Margaret Graham's straight features and her eyes - bright blue, with a crystal gaze that seems to pierce the heart in its search for truth. Grandmother Graham had a fair knowledge of history and language at the time when women were not supposed to be students. It was said about her that she would have felt at home in any epoch in any circle. John Fincastle is born with an otherworldliness of mind and never feels at peace unless he has strained toward something beyond life. He prefers the independence of spirit that comes from not owning things. He is a contemplative philosopher. The external world and all the part of life - his affections, his daily activities, teaching the young, hoeing the garden etc. appear to him fragmentary, unreal and fugitive. He struggles against the sense of exile that divides him from the thought of his time from his dearest and nearest. But all the same,
it is there. For him, his inner life alone, the secret life of the soul, is vital, intimate and secure. He is a clergyman and philosopher who has lost his congregation and church for his own free thinking. It is his plan to write a book on God as Idea, a history of religious thought through the ages. But in the end he has been driven into obscurity, into poverty, into the strange kind of happiness that comes to the martyr.

His wife Mary Evelyn encourages him in all his scholarly pursuits. She believes in the doctrine of predestination and she believes anything John believes and will rather be damned with John than be saved without him. From grandmother Mary Evelyn receives one of the rare caresses she has ever bestowed on her own children. She is very thin, and not strong like the Fincastles but she likes to work till she can. Energy has fastened upon her, like a disease, and nothing can stop her from working.

Aunt Maggie, though better looking than most, has never thought of love-making or marriage. The problem of marriage never worries her. It is entirely left to God's will. She is always happy and has faith in little things.
She is the only member in the family who is never low spirited, not even in the long winters, when sometimes they are snowed in for a whole week.

Ada Fincastle, has inherited the constitution of her father who never suffered a day's sickness. She is born with human instincts. She is as compassionate as her father who is highly impressed by the ancient supplication of the Hindus, "May all that have life be delivered from suffering". She is grieved to see the idiot Toby Waters being chased by the village children. Her love for animals reminds us of Glasgow who also shuddered at the sight of the hunted dog. Ada has stopped to eat rabbit since she has seen a rabbit torn to pieces by hounds. Right from young age she trusts one boy alone viz. Ralph Mcbride. In her maturity she reminds us of Gabriella and Dorinda Oakley.

Each character in Book I is shown to have his or her secret life. Grandmother is a fortress of strength. Aunt Maggie exhibits the practicality and the inflexible faith in tradition. John Fincastle with his philosophical attitude finds peace more lasting than happiness even in many minor activities, even in the part of life which is
fragmentary. His deeper consciousness, the crystal globe holding the light within the light has been always remote and inviolable. Nothing has broken through. Not joy, not pain, not love, not passion, not sorrow, not loss, not life at its sharpest edge, has been able to break or bend this still pointed flame that burns upward. Mary Evelyn, an Episcopalian, in her religious fervour, shows her need of ritual. She believes that life is a sacred and wonderful gift to man by God. She does not have strength of will, whereas Ada combines in herself her grandmother's strength and aunt Maggie's practicality. Each character's potentialities are channelled in a different and singular direction. The family creates an impression of an extraordinarily integrated unit.

Life had been eager, piercing in flashes of ecstasy, tragic at times beyond belief, but never drab, never tedious; never, not even at its worst, when John was standing his trial, had it been ugly (VI. 56).

In Part II - The Single Heart - we are told about Ada's intense and ideal love for Ralph and loss of her love. Though Ralph does not believe in a moral code or
tradition he has become the victim of tradition, and is forced to marry Janet Rowan. The way Ralph is forced to marry Janet, sounds improbable to some readers but Glasgow explains in *A Certain Measure*:

Nor would this surrender of the broken will have been improbable in any long-established society such as existed all over Virginia and indeed over the entire South. I had witnessed one such instance in Richmond and had heard of several others (CM. 174).

Before the great War it was a strict Presbyterian community in which the Calvinist morality prevailed. Their moral code punished an appearance of an error more severely than error itself. And Ralph in his impressionable years has been subjected to it.

When Ada is put in a heart-rending situation, she feels that there is something greater than joy, the vein of iron, far down in her inmost being, in her secret self, will not yield, bend, or break. Her grandmother's words, "Remember, my child that you have strong blood, never let
it be weakened. Thin blood runs to wickedness”, (VI. 21) have a lasting impact on her personality and character. Now, Ralph who has been a part of her happiness becomes a part of her sorrow.

The third part Life’s Interlude manifests the romantic aspect of Ada’s nature. She ventures to go with Ralph to the “Indian Trial”. Six years have passed between the event of Ralph’s marriage with Janet and this meeting. And for each of them this meeting is like being with another and a closer self. They enjoy the consummation of love.

Ada becomes pregnant and decides not to inform Ralph. She wants to spare him. This is shocking to her grandmother. But her father understands her. His unworldliness becomes evident in his words “You are a good woman, my child. True goodness is an inward grace, not an outward necessity”. To Ada, her father is a great moral support which enables her to face the worst kind of fate and humiliation. She has learnt from him that self-pity is the most primitive form of sentimentality. Ada does not want Martha to pity her. She is ready to suffer if she makes mistakes. When she goes in the village, she
is chased by the children, her father takes the philosophical view of the chase, "that chase began many millions of years ago, and it is still going on. It will only stop when the human race becomes civilized". This is an echo of Glasgow's own ideas on civilization.

In Part five The Dying Age Glasgow very effectively exhibits the form of transition which comes and disappears. To John Fincastle who has witnessed all the changes that have come, everything seems speeding aimlessly without a pattern, without a code, without even a centre. He is afraid that American culture will remain neither bourgeois, nor proletarian but will turn infantile and the moron instead of the meek will inherit democracy. To him the new world appears hostile. He feels more at home with the humble folk like Old Midkiff or Otto Bergen, who speak neither the hollow idiom of facts, nor the dead tongues of the schools but the natural speech of the heart. He reflects how the human race can survive upon a material basis alone.

Near the end of his life John Fincastle goes to Ironside and taking his seat in the corner of a bus tries to doze away the sensation of nausea and disgust of a
city life. He waits for his first glimpse of hills and hears an echo within the shell of his mind "May all that have life be delivered from suffering" (VT. 448). In the last moment all his physical pain is suspended and "a peace too deep for happiness, too still for ecstasy", poured into his mind and heart.

Some critics are highly critical of Glasgow's style in Vein of Iron. But throughout her career of writing she had been continually groping toward a method of writing. Consciously or unconsciously she was forming a style. In Vein of Iron she has adopted a flexible style as she believed that no good style could be uniform or expected to fit every subject or to fit every book by one author. She saw excellent material getting spoiled either by a velvet style or an inflated style which would wear out. The term "invisible style" much in fashion seemed to her both far-fetched and indefinite. She believed that style should be no more invisible than a transparent complexion which changes colour in response to the animation within. It should be recognised as a natural part of the organism, not as extra decoration which may be peeled off without impairing the whole structure. She had courage to
go against the literary current and to face the consequences. She states in *A Certain Measure*:

If I have missed many of the external rewards of success I have never lost the outward peace and the inward compensation that come from doing the work one wishes to do in the solitary way in which one wishes to do it (CM. 177).

She has worked toward a personal form which, however imperfect in the abstract, might become in time an appropriate instrument for her transcripts of life. Her fictional milieu has provided ample room for her characters to move freely, and her point of view is clear, straight and restricted to two angles of vision. In *Vein of Iron* from the beginning to the end, the events are registered either in the mind of Ada or in the mind of John Fincastle. The eyes of youth look on life through the courage of emotion, while the eyes of age regard it through that fortitude which wisdom bestows. The style in this novel, thus, springs from the characters and the situations, and is divorced from the personality of the author. It is strong, terse, without any extra adornment
and impeccably true to reality. Donald J. Adams rightly points out:

Glasgow, "One of the finest prose stylist of her day", is "the most fruitfully thoughtful ... the wittiest novelist that this country has yet produced".6

He expressed his regret she did not receive due recognition. According to him "Vein of Iron is Glasgow's best novel - the fullest expression of her mature experience.

Broadly speaking In This Our Life follows the general theme of Vein of Iron but In This Our Life is in no sense a sequel. In both the novels there is an attempt "to divest the human soul of its customary supports, to analyse it and refine it down to that indestructible core on which integrity rests". In Vein of Iron Glasgow has tried to isolate and observe the living pulse of endurance. She examines, in it, that deep instinct which has

enabled man to outlast not only catastrophe but even happiness, and hope. The Fincastles are undefeated. The whole Fincastle family is fully integrated. Life in the Fincastle family is never drab, never tedious. There is no tinge of indifference of one as regards another, however, they differ from each other in their creeds and priorities.

In This Our Life exhibits the total disintegration among the family members of Asa Timberlake. Defeat seems utter and constant. Pride and courage are failing. Asa, as head of family, is disheartened to see the decline of family feeling and moral values.

The hardest thing for me to believe is that family feeling no longer means anything, for better or worse. It has done harm enough, I know, but at least it held things together when the world rocked. Anyway, the family as a unit now seems to be only another habit that has played out (IL. 122).
But he does not surrender. He and his daughter Roy outlast hope and happiness. The vital point about Asa, the protagonist of the novel is the moral fibre of his character which keeps him intact and unyielding in the face of most disturbing events: such as his younger daughter, Stanley's elopement with Roy's husband, Peter's suicide, Roy getting involved in love with Craig, once a lover of Stanley, and again turning away from him, involving Parry, an innocent negro boy in a car-accident committed by Stanley. Asa, ever unflinching, goes on performing his duties, always at service to his children and a demanding hypochondriac wife.

His children were more to him than his individual identity. He would sacrifice both his present and his future for them; yet he had learned, with a breaking heart, that he could not protect them against fate. Time was stronger than all the love and pity of all the living (IL. 227).

At the outset one would feel that Glasgow is dealing with a declining social order but her concern, here in In This Our Life, is with a dissolving moment in time, with
one of those perpetually returning epochs which fall between an age that is slipping out and an age that is hastening in. Through the character of Asa she describes the minds that are sensitive to vibrations taking place in this narrow neck of eternity. The time in which the hostile forces threaten as thunder in the air the hearts of a few isolated free people who with empty hands grasp frantically at the running shadow of happiness. Glasgow describes in In This Our Life the lives of average human beings not as they ought to be, but as they are in the fluid state of time.

The scene, then, in this book is the intrinsic life of a community, as portrayed through the group consciousness. My major theme is the conflict of human beings with human nature, of civilization with biology. In this constant warfare tragedy lies, not in defeat, but in surrender. Time is presented always as flow, not as duration, and the stream of life should appear to move as the tide moves, ebbing and flowing, spreading out, or stealing in rivulets through separate
minds, murmuring away and whispering back in subtle variations, like the sound of a recurring phrase in music, or the familiar repetition of winds and falling waves. For I was groping after that elusive significance of the profound within the simple (CM. 250).

Her theme, as a study of a family in any given society requires, demanded the thought processes of three generations. And the study is done through Asa's mind that had been long a part of the place and also through the fresh and vivid impressions of young Roy, who is sharing the present and also actively engaged in shaping the future. Thus in In This Our Life Glasgow has tried to capture the wandering flow of thought and emotion. Sometimes she exhibits it on the surface, in the conscious reflections, at other times, through the working of the unconscious mind. But the background and movement are those of the inner world. Though light and shadows fall directly, they fall inward, and external objects are perceived through the reflected light.
The novel is called the "Vanity Fair" of our civilization. It has also been called the "Social drama of frustration", it contains a three-fold significance: a family tragedy, a study of frustration and criticism of society. Asa is the pivotal figure in this revolving group consciousness. Through him Glasgow mirrors the tragedy of a social system which lives, grows, and prospers by material standards alone. Glasgow, like the stalwart scientist Carrel, believed that

Intelligence, will power, and morality are closely related. But moral sense is more important than intelligence (CM. 254).

With its disappearance the whole social structure crumbles, Science alone cannot be trusted as a saviour of humanity. Roy, Asa's daughter possesses special qualities of youth, the adventurous heart, the brave impulse to hazard everything upon the first or last chance of happiness. She is a part of life with its softness and hardness, with its strength and weakness. She is not ever on the outside waiting for something to happen. She is stronger than any other member of the family except her father. Asa thinks she is a part of the future and
possesses the pluck of her grandmother. She knows that no man, not Peter, not any other, can ruin what is her own. She wants a heart not of flesh and blood but of flint, a core of flint, and knows that only by being hard and avoiding self-pity can she escape from cruelty.

But I like hardness, Mother. I like almost anything better than sloppiness. Most of our trouble in the south comes from sloppiness, sloppy thinking, sloppy feeling, and sloppy workmanship (IL. 138).

The final incident when Roy meets the stranger in the strange house is actually the beginning of the book because it illuminates the major theme of the novel. It reflects the disorder of the world at large and the minds driven by unconscious fears to the verge of catastrophe. The English man whom Roy meets embodies a modern malady, an individual fear of life is seeking to lose itself in the collective fear of death. According to Glasgow

It is a psychological truth about war and is not to be confused with political or military truth (CM. 256).
Roy recognises that he needs love more than she needs and he is not likely to find it. This recognition serves as a flare of light in the darkness of her own mind. It is agony for him to be alone. Yet he was always alone, and now he is going to war in the hope of finding something bigger than life, bigger than death. It is as if he wants to derive the satisfaction that by going to fight in war, he is fighting what others are fighting, and not all alone against half grown boys. He was the child of a broken home, his mother worked hard for a living. She sent him to school. But the school was a "kind of frigid hell", for him nothing was human. Particularly, the boys, they ragged him and called him scarface, as he had a scar on his face. It was still in his memory. Now, he feels fighting in war and facing the actual fear, may drive his false fear away. And when war is over, he will not be alone, there will be others even worse off than himself. In heart-rending words he says:

This is the first time I have ever felt I was needed ... that I belong with the living .... that I am not drifting outside ... (IL. 372).
Stanley, Roy's sister offers a complete contrast to the character of Roy. Stanley is a fantasy clothed in flesh and made living. She is the perverse life of unreason and the logical outcome of the modern materialism which destroys its own happiness. She lacks moral judgements and is untroubled by convictions. Her father thinks that she has no real existence apart from her effect upon other people. Glasgow seems to depict her the same way. But by all standards she is not evil, nor hard. She is insufficient and so lacking in her moral fibre that she is merely governed by impulses and sensations.

Glasgow has very subtly analysed the modern temper. Stanley, Craig, Peter, Parry, Roy and even to an extent Asa who is larger than any individual character reflect the modern temper in one way or another. Asa and Roy with their strong moral fibre do possess control over their mind and impulses. In spite of all odds and shocking happenings Asa does not lose his poise. But there comes a time when he wants to reject an eternal compromise with necessity.

No, it isn't enough, he was thinking; family ties are not enough, nor is moral
responsibility. He did not want this safe shelter, except, perhaps, in moments of weakness. Like Roy and Stanley and Craig, he also wanted the freedom to lose his head. He wanted an escape. He wanted to live, not according to a rule or a pattern, but in response to the demands of his own nature. With all its strength, his nature rejected the eternal compromise with necessity. His nature rejected this daily life with Lavinia, whom he did not like, whom he had never loved. But that in itself, he perceived, might be the answer he had been seeking. Nor force of will, but weakness of character, might have decreed his sacrifice to some false social security. Was his submission nothing more than the surrender of the small soul to the small gods of respectability and convention? But it will end some day, he assured himself, because he could not face the future with the door of life closed forever against him (IL. 269).
Similarly, Roy's leaving the house in utter confusion reflects an aspect of modern temperament. Peter, though brilliant, lacks the capacity to adjust and commits suicide. Craig is incapable of any motive, lacks discrimination. He has never known what he believes. Almost all of them possess a strong ego. They have never broken through the tight shell of their egotism. For them the world without exists merely as an extension of the confusion and thwarted longings of the world within. No one among them has solved the intricate problem of how one may take one's pleasure and still have it. None of them has a design for living and even a definition. Even Roy and Craig who are superior in so many ways to the youth of the period have not found an escape from the general modern dilemma. All their troubled faces appear to wear exactly the same expression, as if they cover a collective anxiety, a vain striving to hold fast to some shifting surface of confidence. They create the impression that something is wrong, something is missing, something is false. It is a kind of shocked atmosphere and nobody seems normal.

Yet the end is optimistic. The novel ends with a note of mutual hope and faith of father and daughter. In
the last scene Asa's refusal to surrender manifest the strength of character. To Roy's cry, "I want something to hold by, I want something good", Asa answers, "you will find it, my child, you will find what you are looking for. It is there, and you - if not me, will find it" (IL. 379).

The last years of his life Asa wishes to spend in his own way on Kate's farm. He wants to live for himself. After experiencing all vicissitudes of life he has acquired such serenity of mind that all the doubts regarding the choice melt away. He knows his direction, his path. His secret dream is not drink, nor women, but to escape from life, and from all the cities that men have made. To be a hired man on a farm was his dream. When he is on the farm with Kate he feels that age is a state of mind, and nothing more. Kate is not striking, not witty, not vivacious, yet to him, she is everything. His emptiness within, is filled by her presence and she is the only person who has given him a sense of completeness.

The character of Asa fulfills Glasgow's favourite pattern in the creation of characters and that is the
"rare pattern of mankind," which always attracted her as a novelist. She states,

I like to imagine how the world would appear if human beings were really civilized, not by machinery alone, but through that nobler organ which has been called, the heart in the intellect (CM. 39).

Of Asa In This Our Life explains that she was depicting not a failure in life but a man in whom character, not success, was an end in itself.

Donald J. Adams sees the novel as

a reflection of the malaise of contemporary society, one which postulates that the only triumph over life is the refusal to accept defeat.

Both Asa and his daughter Roy refuse to accept defeat. They possess strength to go beyond defeat. In the

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end, only Asa gives Roy a sense that life may be meaning-
ful, despite all disillusion, and the significance of the 
last scene lies in his implicitly expressed faith in 
life. His last words reflect Glasgow's pursuit as an 
artist. "In seeking and in finding there is not ever an 
end, nor is there an end in seeking and in not finding" 
(IL. 379).

Glasgow's journey as a novelist, till she came to 
write her eleventh novel Life and Gabriella moved in a 
straight line, merely bending here and there. Her path 
often wavered, but it always recovered its level, in the 
direction of a single artistic endeavour. There were 
sudden curves but she had to confirm (by way of an inner 
compulsion) to its level which was the source of her 
identity - as a writer.

Her earlier vein of social history in the form of 
fiction was exhausted and was leading to another. She had 
done away with her social history, which covered the 
period from 1850 to 1914, of Virginian manners, because 
what she wanted was accomplished. It appeared to her that 
she had grown in writing, and America too had grown with 
her. Once she was mentally free from the bonds of genteel
Virginian conventions, she began to assemble material, all around her. And by the time war broke out, intimations of truth, though not the whole truth, had become no longer forbidden in fiction. But the South was far behind the great post-war liberation in morality. And because of this restraint Glasgow's fiction even in 1916, was more faithful to the language of the time and the place it recorded.

Hence Life and Gabriella is concerned with woman as an individual, and it is concerned with a complete and final departure from that Virginian genteel tradition. As a youthful writer Glasgow was heartened by the moderate success of the The Descendant, but she made several resolutions to which she had been more or less faithful throughout. Even after forty years she nourished an instinctive feeling that books "live" because of their intrinsic merits, not because of some fortuitous conspiration of events. She resolved that she would never compromise with success. She had in consideration her own disposition. For her only two things were necessary, her identity both as a human being and as a writer, firstly an intense immediate experience and the opportunity to translate that experience into forms of creative imagina-
And she made a resolution never to write for magazines, never to enter a contest and never to write for money. Her interest in fiction was not of a person involved in it as a business or even a profession, but of the artist's interest. She was shocked when she listened to the discussion among the writers at the annual reception of the Author's club, about the prices paid by the leading magazines. Of course, at a later age when she compared this conversation with the talk of intelligentsia in the post war world, she could perceive that the general attitude was not without dignity.

She never lost her interest or enthusiasm for writing, and her creative energy never diminished. She believed that all creative writing is an extension of personality.

Life and Gabriella is an interesting novel in a sense that it combines the characteristics of comedy of manners, the success story of a woman, domestic romance and social history. Gabriella, the heroine is a combination of a free woman and the traditional one. In this novel Glasgow shows herself as a novelist of pure realism. While judging Glasgow's Life and Gabriella
against Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* one finds that James's Isabel Archer seeks romance, freedom and experience, while Gabriella pursues reality, experience and love. Though both the writers deal with almost the same theme and both use the resources of critical realism to create a full-length portrait of a lady, the power of aesthetic distinction of each novel derives from the unique way each transcends the limits of the realistic method. James speaks of the hidden interior of his heroine. Glasgow turns her heroine inside out. She discovered an alternative to Jamesian symbolism as an approach of psychological fiction. The pattern of her psychological development, however, possesses great significance for Glasgow's future development as a novelist.

The process of development in the novel from "the age of faith" to "the age of knowledge" serves the chief structural principles of American realistic fiction. It is a process of deep psychological growth in the structure of the novel.

There are certain drawbacks in the novel. The minor characters such as Mrs. Carr - Gabriella's mother, Mrs.
Fowler - George's mother, George Fowler - Gabriella's husband are not well-developed. It seems, they suffer because of the focus on the central character Gabriella. George Fowler reminds one of Oliver Tradewell in Virginia, both of them are selfish and self-centered who do not think of others and their sensitivity seems to be blunted. But George merely seems to be a motivating element in the plot, whereas Oliver has personality. George has only appearance. As in the earlier novels The Descendant, Phases of an Inferior Planet, and The Wheel of Life, the New York scenes function more as a land of make-believe than as an actual city. They rarely show the conviction of actuality. In the chapters set in Richmond and in Gabriella's visit to her home near the end of the book, the comic vision is evident in her lighter and satirical interpretation, and in her keener penetration into personalities and circumstances. The characters of the New York neighbourhood are drawn from a shifting multitude of visual impressions. Of them all, the improbable character of Ben O'Hara is the only one that conformed to the original model. But for an accidental acquaintance with his counterpart, it is unlikely that Gabriella's break with the past would ever have assumed the shape it did at the end, as Glasgow states in A
Certain Measure. (101) With the courage of a Charlotte Bronte who draws character of her heroine Jane Eyre, Glasgow too makes her heroine Gabriella good, plain and beloved.

It is interesting to note that several times Glasgow used in Life and Gabriella the phrases, "the sheltered life, "vein of iron" which were to become after sixteen years the titles of her later novels. The phrase 'vein of iron' in Life and Gabriella refers to the strength of character. It has not acquired the special significance of a religiously induced force of personality, which it has in Barren Ground and Vein of Iron. Her prose in Life and Gabriella is clear, fluent and effective but lacks the brilliance of her later social comedies. Some of the anglicized words, like 'jolly', used in conversation by some of her American gentlemen destroy the illusion of reality.

When Glasgow came to write Barren Ground she realized that she had tried in her youth an inappropriate long-distance view and the unknown approach to her subject. But now her roots drew her home. Her comprehension of Virginian life and manners was a knowledge of the
blood, as well as the brain, and she instinctively knew that there alone could she break through the surface of appearances, and strike some vein of fundamental humanity. She perceived that the significance of Barren Ground would not have varied even if she had been born elsewhere. The scene in Barren Ground possessed an added dimension, a universal rhythm more fluent than any material texture. Under the light and shadow there is the brooding spirit of place and the whole movement of life. She knew the place so well that the landscape unrolled both without and within. The saturation of her subject with the mood of melancholy is effortless and complete. The houses, the roads, the woods, the endless fields of broomsedge and scrub pine, the low immeasurable horizon—all these images Glasgow saw with the remembering eyes of a child. And time could not blur the impressions.

The heroine of the novel, Dorinda, exhibits some universal traits of human nature. She exists wherever a human being has learnt to live with the spirit of fortitude, and has triumphed over the sense of futility. The book is hers, and all minor themes, episodes, and impressions are combined together with one dominant
meaning that character is fate. They all are blended by life, not imposed by the novel.

The elements of time and space are the dominant powers, in the novel. From the beginning Glasgow tried to evoke a background of unlimited space "where the flatness created an illusion of immensity" and "over the immutable landscape human lives drifted and vanished like shadows." Behind the little destinies of men and women Glasgow could see the unconquerable vastness (of land) in which nothing is everything.

The movement of time is shown to be flowing through the theme of the story. And it obeys the laws of an imaginary universe - leaves budding, leaves falling, sun or snow, rain or dust, youth or age, life or death, - all this sustains the gradually lengthening effect of duration. Both the land and the human characters reflect the slow rhythm, the pause of the seasons, the beginning, the middle and the end of man's warfare with nature. The only thing significant is the triumph of human character over circumstances. And the systems of agriculture are unimportant compared to the human drama of love, hatred, passion and disillusionment.
The slow seasons, the blighted crops, the long droughts, the sudden frost, all these adverse aspects of nature affect Jason's mind and body, and suggest mortal weakness. The minor characters like Aunt Mehitable Green and Fluvanna, the servant and companion of Dorinda are portrayed almost like full-length portraits. Dorinda's parents, Greylock - Jason's father, Geneva Ellgood and Nathan Pedlar, John Abner - Nathan's crippled son, Mr. Kettledrum - the "mail-rider", and even the horses Dan and Beersheba, more or less possess qualities of living creatures - with individual personality.

Glasgow comes to a sure conclusion, after a long patient exercise of the craft of fiction that the breath of life, the unerring sense of reality cannot be contrived or invented by any formula. They are beyond technique, for they must be distilled from some subtle essence of personality. The power to create life is the staple of fiction. And above all, the world of fantasy, like the world of matter, is for the living alone.

The novel's sections, each bearing the name of a plant, corresponds to the phases of Dorinda's life. Broomsedge, an overtly persistent image, runs like
smothered fire over the melancholy brown of the landscape. Farmers burn it, but it comes back. It is a kind of fate, "it is the smothered fire" in Dorinda's vein. The novel is rich in symbolism, perhaps the richest Glasgow ever wrote. Dorinda, in her conscious states attaches unusual significance to objects and those objects arise spontaneously from her unconscious mind. The latter form the deep structure of the novel and allow the author to communicate information to the reader - while bypassing the character's understanding. For example, a dream Dorinda dreams in New York. In her dream she is back home again, trying desperately to plough one of the abandoned fields, her two horses challenge her, "you'll never get this done if you plough a hundred years." The dream continues showing Dorinda's failure. But Dorinda decides, "I am going to plough them under, if it kills me", and she wakes up.

One tends to believe that the dream must have originated in the unconscious mind of the fictional Dorinda and Glasgow selected the imagery to reveal Dorinda's character.
Glasgow's symbolic use of the land gives a unique spaciousness to the novel. The waste of broomsedge at Pedlar's mill dominates character and action in the novel, much in the way, the bleak Egdon Heath pervades Hardy's The Return of the Native. The relationship between characters and their native region shows that Glasgow was responsive to Southern agrarian sentiment. She anticipates the preoccupation of later 20th century writers with the inescapable influence of soil upon soul. Barren Ground excellently shows that Dorinda is both victim and victor in her struggle with the soil. The novel shows Glasgow's superiority over not only her immediate predecessors but over any of her own previous works.

While writing Vein of Iron Glasgow has stuck to her original intention to depict such aspects of the Southern scene as she had actually known. She wanted to avoid the romantic delusion prevalent in fiction at the turn of the century, that the South was inhabited exclusively by aristocrats and picturesque Negroes, who afforded what used to be called "the comic relief" in the novel.
As regards style and technique Glasgow was disposed by constitution to move always against the literary current. For she always wished to do honest work and to do that she preferred to write in a style which would be recognised as a natural part of the organism and not as an extra decoration which may be peeled off without impairing the whole structure. She was satisfied with the inward compensation that comes from doing the work one wishes to do in the solitary way in which one wished to do. As a beginner, she faced all the odds but as a mature author she was saved from a sense of diminishing vitality, and the odds were even.

In Vein of Iron in handling an austere subject projected against a background of hill and sky, she felt that she required a sober adaptation of style. She saw that sophisticated wit and sparkling irony must be drained away from this bare and steady chronicle of simple lives. Hence, she employed the speech of the heart, not the language of the mind to serve as a revealing medium for her narrative. In Vein of Iron her use of satire would have splintered back from the sober bulk of the Presbyterian mind and conscience of a spiritually proud and materially humble race, who
disdained the artificial tongue of the sophisticated as they would have disliked the lusty tone cultivated by Hemingway and his imitators. She soon discovered that this natural vehicle, perhaps the most difficult of all speech to translate into English prose was the inevitable expression for her novel.

For a generation, style as distinguished from manner, had been among her chief interest and major preoccupation. She worked toward a personal form which, however imperfect in the abstract, had become in time an appropriate instrument for her transcripts of life. Her ear for cadences, as well as, the history of criticism taught her that an unpruned style is a slovenly style. But the search for the exact word to any writer, is a perennial aspiration. Glasgow believed that it is from the living matter that the structure, shape, natural and external lineaments, must be formed either intuitively, as in her case, or by a deliberate act of the will.

In Vein of Iron she strove for a way of writing that was strong, terse, without extraneous adornment and impeccably true to reality. In the very beginning, the rhythm tightens and moves swiftly to the patter of
running feet. Thus the style of Vein of Iron is excellently suited to its purpose. It does not exhibit the brilliantly epigrammatic qualities, the irony of wit and commentary of the three previous novels of manners, The Romantic Comedians, They Stooped to Folly, and The Sheltered Life. The style is perfectly fitted to the people of the book and the movement of their lives. It is rich in evocative imagery. It is successful in its power to suggest clearly the characters as wholly rounded individuals each vivid in his idiosyncrasies, yet never a caricature.

The setting of the novel is created in the imagination of the reader in light and form, in shadow and line. The very atmosphere of Shut-in-Valley and Ironside with the mountains isolating the people who live in their shadows or Queenborough and Mulberry Street with all their human associations become alive.

Glasgow's constant sense of involvement with her characters shown in Vein of Iron through her use of internal monologue rather than the omniscient point of view is evident. It allows the reader to feel an empathy with most of the characters. The living presence of the
mountains, infuse the Fincastles with their rock-like strength. The wilderness has created the power of endurance in these settlers who had had to survive in it. The wilderness in some instances becomes a metaphor for the violence and cruelty of the world and the conditions of life for which one must have the vein of iron to survive.

In This Our Life which won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1942, reveals a sureness of structure equal to that of The Romantic Comedians and The Sheltered Life. It possesses a vitality of characterization that matches with that of Barren Ground and The Sheltered Life. Glasgow's grasp of the atmosphere seems superior to all her works. The novel achieves the chief goals, Glasgow set for it, to recapitulate the major themes of all her books and to embrace "the interior life of a community" in 1938-39. The epoch was "one of those perpetually returning epochs, which fall between an age that is slipping out and an age that is hastening in."

Charles Poore has rightly said:
Miss Glasgow's superb mastery of form, exercised in every department of the novel, compels our attention even when we tend to grow ungratefully restless under the reiteration of characteristics already thoroughly established .... The stream of philosophy and the stream of dramatic action flow side by side .... they come together in the climactic scene in the grand manner, where every one's standards are put to the test.

Glasgow's later books are in some ways very important. Without self-consciousness, and without obvious artifice, Glasgow wrote effectively about life and its problems. Whether the focus is on Eva Birdsong, or on Judge Honeywell, or on Virginius Littlepage, or on John Fincastle or on Roy Timberlake, Glasgow seems to suggest that one must break the bond of fantasy which blurs the distinction between imagination and reality. One may share their pity or terror, but one will pursue neither

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one's desire nor one's idealism far enough to become heroic or tragic as they do.