At the outset, if the term 'realism' means anything concrete in Bennett, then it surely stands in some special relationship to the history of the Five Towns and prevailing philistinism, the period and environment that give it native currency. In its reflection of outward reality, in effect, it measures Bennett's realism of representation. But, in this too, it serves an epistemological purpose: as a reflection of the real world it helps to know persons, places and things in the past, present and future by way of relevance and relationship. The historical credibility of Bennett's work does not necessarily mean that it has its meaning and value for its own time, as some historians and critics have supposed. Bennett's serious novels are rooted in the social, historical and environmental conditions and reflect them objectively; but, in a larger perspective, Bennett as a historian of life, is concerned with what he calls the "secular struggle" of the Five Towns men and women. Precisely, this is the central thesis of the present chapter.

This chapter, as a starting-point, proposes to comment separately on History and Novel and develop a synthesis as a whole in terms of continuity between them, between fact and imagination, historical truth and artistic truth, social experience and individual experience and literature and life. Pointing out, the premises of the historian and the novelist, it stresses the similarities in their avowed vocation. Bennett's novels combine historical accuracy and authenticity, tradition
and individual talent that represent his attainment of truth. Bennett works out this synthesis, without sacrificing his romantic and aesthetic outlook on life and reality and reaches a sense of historicity and historical concreteness set by Auerbach in *Mimesis*. The function and purpose of Bennett's novel must be judged in addition to coherence of historical continuity, more importantly by the theme of human existence. This would suggest a reading of his fiction, not as a regional fiction, but a fiction which may open new areas of human experience, an accurate and authentic estimation of Bennett's realism. Bennett's work has not previously been analysed in the light of his empirical outlook, as is done here.

I

Generally speaking, history is an account of the past, of what really happened; fiction is a literary work that portrays imaginary characters and events. Many of the issues involved in the writing of a history are like issues involved in the writing of a realistic novel: history is sometimes referred to as 'narrative' and some novels are called 'historical novels'. It seems difficult to draw a clear line of demarcation between history and fiction. In order, therefore, to draw a plausible relationship it seems essential to define our premises.

In his *Interpreting, Literature: History, Drama and Fiction*, Knox Hill suggests "two basic meanings of the term history: (1) the past itself, and (2) statements about the
The difference is not so sharp as it might seem.

We seek to interpret statements about the past, because we want to be able to learn something about the past itself. According to Carr, Collingwood insists on the "mutual" relationship of the two meanings of the term. The philosophy of history, he says, is concerned neither with "the past by itself" nor with "the historian's thought about it by itself", but with "the two things in their mutual relation." History, therefore, may be employed in two quite different senses: first, it means the events and actions that together make up the human past; and second, the accounts given of that past and the modes of investigation whereby they are arrived at. The first refers to what as a matter of fact happened, while the second refers to the study and description of those happenings. Whatever is the meaning, declares Collingwood, "every historian would agree that history is a kind of research or inquiry." The sources of a historian's evidence depend, of course, upon the kind of history he is writing. But Carr is critical of this kind of history, its accounts of the past and traces of the evidences of the past. He points out: "Of course, facts and documents are essential to the historian. They do not by themselves constitute history; they provide in themselves no ready-made answer to this tiresome question 'What is History?'" He seeks the meaning of history, in its relevance to the present. He says that the "meaning" of history "consists essentially in seeing the past through the eyes of the present and that the main work of the historian is not to record, but to evaluate; for if he does not evaluate how can he know what is
worth recording?" And, for evaluation, Carr suggests, the historian must "achieve some kind of contact with the mind of those about whom he is writing" and be "bound to it by the conditions of human existence." Nelson Blake points out the limitations and requirements of a genuine historian. "Even though he writes about real people and real events, the requirement that he must ignore most people and most events gives his work an abstract or symbolic character. Without imagination the historian could not see any patterns of meaning in past occurrences." Such an insistence on imaginative correspondence between the past and the present leads a historian to the novelist's domain. Because, as Thomas Woolf points out, a novelist is equipped with imagination and is therefore capable of reconstructing history and fiction, and can "convey to his reader what really might have happened — what, in the novelist's experience, is true."

Again, although it is difficult to draw a line between 'what is true' and 'what is fictitious', although they have several differences, historian, fiction writer, and novelist share one element — imagination. According to Blake, "The writer of fiction is a man who has put his imagination to work. He creates people, names them, describes their appearances, reveals their personalities, and manufactures their thoughts and speeches. He puts these imaginary people on to imaginary streets in imaginary towns and cities. He describes their imaginary experiences." The novelist, as compared with a historian or a fiction writer, "creates his characters with a
purpose in mind."¹⁰ This resembles Woolf's view that the novelist "looks at life from a special viewpoint. He differs from other people in his creative impulses, his imaginative powers, and his verbal skills."¹¹ Once again, it is worth while for the present purpose, to quote Nelson's distinction: "The historian needs both statistics humanized by individual testimony and individual testimony measured against statistics." And whereas, "the fiction writer's testimony about his times is written from his own angle of vision", "the novelist is a decidedly special person looking at experience in a way that needs to be understood."¹²

There seems to be at least three basic premises¹³ in which "history" and "novel" can be differentiated or interrelated: first, "The Novelist as Witness to History" — here the novelist may take history and historical personages as a source for his material; second, "History in Fiction" — here the writer takes both historical and fictional characters. Lastly, "Fiction as History" — here a historian uses the materials of novel or fiction as sources of history. According to David Lodge, there seem to be only two distinct categories, "History as Novel" and "The Novel as History". The first is an account of history, of author's own experience of the historical event, which is, in Norman Mailer's words, "'nothing but a personal history which while written as a novel was to the best of the author's memory of scrupulous facts!'" While in "The Novel as History", he speaks of "'the novelist . . . passing his baton to the Historian'," Precisely, in both these considerations,
Lodge is inclined to novelist's contribution because "the 'novel'
has given the 'history' a unique kind of reliability." In
achieving this 'reliability', the historian and the novelist
share a common realist concern and experience similar limitation
in that the historian cannot deal with all factual happenings,
and the novelist cannot write about all human experience.
Therefore, as Blake suggests, a historian must use imagination
to select and organize facts and the novelist must draw upon
the facts of his experience. It is clear that both the
historian and the novelist deal with reality; one endeavors
to reconstruct the past and the other selects and arranges it
to produce a work of art. Collingwood has worked out a
convincing resemblance between the historian and the novelist.

Each of them makes it his business to construct a
picture which is partly a narrative of events,
partly a description of situations, exhibition
of motives, analysis of characters. Each aims
at making his picture a coherent whole, where
every character and every situation is so bound
up with the rest that this character in this
situation cannot but act in this way, and we
cannot imagine him as acting otherwise. The
novel and history must both of them make sense;
nothing is admissible in either except what is
necessary, and the judge of this necessity is in
both cases imagination.

And again, Collingwood suggests:

As works of imagination, the historian's work and
the novelist's do not differ. Where they do
differ is that the historian's picture is meant
to be true. The novelist has a single task only:
to construct a coherent picture, one that makes
sense. The historian has a double task: he
has both to do this, and to construct a picture
of things as they really were and of events as
they really happened.
Whereas the novelist's responsibility lies in creating artistic truth — "Artistic truth consists in correctly rendering the feelings, ideas and thoughts" of people — historian's duty is to maintain continuity — history must have a relationship with the present by means of the validity of truth, the truth that we can experience, Hegel remarks:

The historical is only then ours . . . when we can regard the present in general as a consequence of these events in whose chain the characters or ideas represented constitute an essential link. . . . For art does not exist for a small, closed circle of the privilegedly cultured few, but for the nation as a whole. What holds good for the work of art in general, however, also has its application for the outer side of the historical reality represented. It, too, must be made clear and accessible to us without extensive learning so that we, who belong to our own time and nation, may find ourselves at home therein, and not be obliged to halt before us, as before some alien and unintelligible world. 19

Perhaps the most convincing relationship between history and novel, a relationship between the patterns of historical events and the events in individual's life, is traced by Wilhelm Dilthey in *Pattern and Meaning in History: Thoughts on History and Society* (1961):

The only complete, self-contained and clearly defined happening encountered everywhere in history and in every concept that occurs in the human studies, is the course of a life. This forms a context circumscribed by birth and death, It is perceived externally in the continuing existence of the person during the span of his life. This continuing is unbroken. But, independent of this, there exist experienciable connections which link the parts of the course of a life from birth to death. . . . The smallest unit which describes as an experience is whatever forms a meaningful unit in the course of life.
Thus we come face to face with the category of meaning. The relation contained in it defines and clarifies the conception we have of our lives; it is also the point of view from which we grasp and describe the co-existence and sequence of lives in history, emphasizing what is significant and meaningful and thus shaping every event; it is, quite generally, to the historical world.

But to Tolstoy, the historian and realist, there exists a paradox between the "history as it is actually experienced by the individual and the community. Between the two was an unbridgeable chasm, as between fiction and truth." But Tolstoy also believes that history is "the only place where truth could be found. The meaning of life, the why of human actions and events, had to be looked for not in metaphysical speculations but in the concreteness of historical facts, of individual and collective experiences as they actually occur in space and time." Such a discussion, ultimately, leads to a concern with "Society" and "Self", because with Mark Schorer, "Society and Self are perhaps the basic terms of the realistic novel... as appearance and reality are the basic terms of all art, as ultimately, they are of all life." And further, he says, the novelist's main duty is "to distinguish between these two, the self and society, and at the same time to find suitable structures that will present them together."

If such a relationship seems meaningless or unnecessary, it may be pleaded that it is Bennett himself who likes to see British life (especially the Five Towns) and experience in geographical and historical contexts. What is
interesting in Bennett is "the troika of historian, sociologist, and novelist." To Bennett, "as to the realists in general, the three had one aim: to discover, by patience and insight, the truth about the human being as they knew him in their time; and to pass on that truth with the minimum of distortion."23

II

Bennett's central concern is with "seeing life" — a preoccupation with external as well as internal realities, the relationship between appearances and actualities, and with the interconnections between the external and internal worlds. Bennett begins with externals, how he himself has seen and understood reality and life. His theory of "seeing life" has most convincingly been set forth in these words:

Any logically conceived survey of existence must begin with geographical and climatic phenomena. This is surely obvious. If you say that you are not interested in meteorology or the configurations of the earth, I say that you deceive yourself. Beyond question the most important fact about, for example, Great Britain is that it is an island. . . . In moments of journalistic vainglory we are apt to refer to the 'sturdy island race', meaning us. But that we are insular in the full significance of the horrid word is certain. Why not? A genuine observation of the supreme phenomenon that Great Britain is surrounded by water — an effort to keep it always at the back of the consciousness — will help to explain all the minor phenomena of British existence. 24

There are other orders and meanings of the externals, that not only influence man's mind but are influenced by it. Bennett writes:
Geographical knowledge is the mother of discernment, for the varying physical characteristics of the earth are the sole direct terrestrial influence determining the evolution of original vital energy.

All other influences are secondary, and have been effects of character and temperament before becoming causes. . . . If you really intend to see life you cannot afford to be blind to such thrilling phenomena. 25

These two meanings, then, lead to an interconnection between the external world and the world of man's existence in the Five Towns.

Every street is a mirror, an illustration, an explanation, of the human beings who live in it. Nothing in it is to be neglected. Everything in it is valuable, if the perspective is maintained. Nevertheless, in the narrow individualistic novels of English literature — and in some of the best — you will find a domestic organism described as though it existed in a vacuum, or in the Sahara, or between Heaven and earth; as though it could be adequately rendered without reference to anything exterior to itself. How can such novels satisfy a reader, who has acquired or wants to acquire the faculty of seeing life? 26

The corpus of Bennett's writing comprises a peculiar branch of historical-realistic fiction. Bennett's serious novels contain a curious mixture of painstaking historical research, notes, enquires, documents and personal visits to note down the sources or to observe the scenes and situations. Curiously enough, in his sense of serious novel writing, Bennett is most concerned with two factors; the role and importance of the novelist's imagination, observation, intelligence, fact-finding faculty; and, of romance, beauty, grandeur, interestingness in the creation of realistic novel. In the
first, Bennett's knowledgeability is attributed to his journalistic apprenticeship and opportunities; and to which, later on, is added the influence of Taine, Balzac, Flaubert, Maupassant, de Goncourt, and Zola's methods of research, note-taking and diary habits. Bennett sees himself as a realist historian in matters of tracing cause and effect and recording the impact of the passage of time, on the lives of his people. As late as 1907, Bennett acknowledges Taine's influence on him in the following words:

I bought Taine's Voyage in Italie, and was once again fired to make fuller notes of the impressions of the moment, of choses vues. Several good books by him consist of nothing else. I must surely by this time be a trained philosophic observer—fairly exact, and controlled by scientific principles. At the time one can scarcely judge what may be valuable later on. At the present moment I wish, for instance, that some schoolmistress had written down simply her impressions of her years of training; I want them for my novel. The whole of life ought to be covered thus by 'impressionists', and a vast mass of new material of facts and sensations collected for use by historians, sociologists and novelists, I really must try to do my share of it more completely than I do. 28

Bennett's conception of the "true" or "real", "beautiful" or "romantic" seems to be far more liberal than that of most Victorian realists. This is because Bennett has the first-hand knowledge of the fundamental aspects of the life of the Five Towns and he writes from his varied experience. Bennett's belief is that man's life can only be understood best within his own culture, history and environment. His history, therefore, is the record of the life of the pottery manufacturers who have their moral, social and family
responsibilities. And Bennett himself has experienced all these aspects. Such a view resembles James's dictum that "humanity is immense, and reality has myriad forms . . . one must write from experience . . . Experience is never limited, and it is never complete . . . It is the very atmosphere of the mind." Bennett's indigenous experience, observation, reading and reminiscences that form the 'atmosphere' of his mind. He makes the Staffordshire districts as much his own as Hardy makes the region of Wessex or Trollope of Barsetshire. In 1899 Bennett writes in his letter to Stut, "I am absorbed in the Potteries just now: a great place . . . and full of plots. My father's reminiscences have livened me up considerably." And, in a letter to Wells whom "Potteries has impressed emotionally", Bennett writes, "I am . . . very glad to find that the Potteries made such an impression on you . . . It seems to me that there are immense possibilities in the very romance of manufacture . . . and various other matters." "I am quite sure that there is an aspect of these industrial districts which is really grandiose, full of dark splendours, and which has been absolutely missed by all novelists up to date." Bennett sees the lives of the provincial inhabitants with the fidelity of the French realists which he has conscientiously studied. To the everlasting monotony of the industrial environment, however, Bennett introduces an element of romance. It is as if he would have us understood that the difference between realism and romanticism is that of temperament and attitude toward life. Thus, Bennett's originality in his interest in the
The historicity of the Five Towns has to do with his romantic attitude toward the region and the hidden romance of it. As late as 1920, Bennett writes to George Moore: "I wish also to tell you that it was the first chapter of *A Mummer's Wife* which opened my eyes to the romantic nature of the district that I blindly inhabited for over twenty years. You are indeed the father of all my Five Towns books." It is how Bennett learns "to take his surroundings for granted" and sees "to his surprise that they were beautiful." But "it was not the surprise of a visitor who finds something he did not expect; it was the surprise of a man whose eyes are suddenly opened to see in a different light what he had been looking at all his life." Again, it is not that Bennett's interest in the location of the Five Towns is peripheral, objective or artistic; he is deeply concerned with the continuity of humanity, with the continuity of the past into the present. He writes:

> Probably no one in the Five Towns takes a conscious pride in the antiquity of the potter's craft, not in its unique and intimate relation to human life, alike civilized and uncivilized. Man hardened clay into a bowl before he spun flax and made a garment, and a the last lone man will want an earthen vessel after he has ruined house for a cave, and his woven rags for an animal's akin. This supremacy of the most ancient of crafts is in the secret nature of things, and cannot be explained. History begins long after the period when Bursley was first the central seat of the honoured manufacture; it is the central seat still — 'the mother of the Five Towns', in our local phrase—and though the townsmen, absorbed in a strenuous daily struggle, may forget their heirship to an
unbroken tradition of countless centuries, the seal of their venerable calling is upon their foreheads. If no other relic of immemorial past is to be seen in these modernized sordid streets, there is at least the living legacy of that extraordinary kinship between workman and work, that instinctive mastery of clay which the past has bestowed upon the present. 34

Bennett writes in his journal that "Bursley, the ancient home of the potters, has an antiquity of a thousand years", but he shows his acquaintance with the last three generations: "The first generation was of the people, industrial, simple; the second, though raised in the social grade, was still plodding and energetic and kept the business together; the third was a generation of wastrels coming to grief." 35 Later on the notes that he is not as much interested in "the agony of the older generation" as he is in "the visible evidence of the immense secular struggle for existence, the continual striving towards a higher standard of comfort." 36 This gives a clear indication that Bennett is a historian in a double sense: a historian of the external facts and developments and a historian of inner life of a people.

First, in order to be on the native ground, Bennett has entitled his short stories and novels as Tales of the Five Towns, Grim Smiles of the Five Towns, A Man from the North, Anna of the Five Towns, and so on. Bennett mingles in these titles the monotonous, the trivial, and the vapid, 'grim smiles' of the Five Towns, with the tragic and secular struggle for existence. Before becoming a historian of inner life Bennett describes these towns, time and again, like an
objective realist. One of such descriptions is given in Anna of the Five Towns:

Five contiguous towns — Turnhill, Bursley, Hanbridge, Knype and Longshaw — united by a single winding thoroughfare some eight miles in length have inundated the valley like a succession of great lakes. Of these five Bursley is the mother, but Hanoridge is the largest. They are mean and forbidding of aspect — sombre, hard featured, uncouth; and the vaporous poison of their ovens and chimneys has soiled and shrivelled the surrounding country till there is no village lane within a league but what offers a gaunt and ludicrous travesty of rural charms. Nothing could be more prosaic than the huddled red-brown streets; nothing more seemingly remote from romance. Yet be it said that romance is even here — the romance which, for those who have eye to perceive it, ever dwells amid the seats of industrial manufacture, softening the coarseness, transfiguring the squalor of these alchemic operations (pp. 24-25).

Geographically, they lie close together in the upper valley of the Trent in Staffordshire; from north to south they are Tunstall, Burslem, Hanley, Stoke-upon-Trent, and Longton. "By day the atmosphere is as black as the mud under one's feet, while at night the works along the valley, when seen from above by the glare of furnaces through the overwhelming smoke, assume fantastic shapes, resembling, it has been said by those who claim to know, the architecture of hell." But cross comments that "on moonless nights it was for Bennett a romantic scene." These towns as fictionalized — Turnhill, Bursley, Hanbridge, Knype, and Longshaw — by Bennett all combined to be known as the Five Towns of his short stories.
and novels. Drabble, Bennett's recent biographer, tells us that Bennett converted Waterloo Road into Traflagar Road, Swan Bank into Duck Bank and the Potteries have their Paradise Street, their Paragon Road, their pleasant Row and their Sun Street, as well as several Cemetery Roads. This change "of names having been made presumably so as to enable the artist to deal with the typical rather than the merely actual." Or "Perhaps it is aspiration, not irony, that inspires the choice" Bennett, "realist though he was . . . yes indeed", but he thinks "why not imagine better?" Also, by giving pseudonyms to the historically existing Five Towns, Bennett wants to give them an imaginative touch and aesthetic significance. This utilization of pseudonyms also indicates a deeper kind of his conscious artistry. By incorporating the actual with the fictional Bennett tends to maintain aesthetic distance. In Forster's view it gives "a reality of a kind we can never get in daily life"; and it is because of this that "fiction is truer than history because it goes beyond the evidence, and each of us knows from his experience that there is something beyond the evidence." Bennett "needed the distance of art to make the reality tolerable and malleable. One of the experiences he describes frequently is the experience of being aroused to aesthetic appreciation by things read or said, a very real and common experience, which many writers are too vain to admit. Bennett admits it openly. One of such acknowledgements of natural response, to a mingled aspect of truth, beauty and romance of existence in the Potteries is expressed in his journal entry at the outset of his writing career (September 10, 1897):
During this week, when I have been traversing the district after dark, the grim and original beauty of certain aspects of the Potteries has fully revealed itself for the first time. ... One gets glimpses of Burslem and of the lands between Burslem and Norton, which have the very strangest charm. ... It winds through pretty curves and undulations; it is of a good earthly colour and its borders are green and bushy. Down below is Burslem, nestled in the hollow between several hills, and showing a vague picturesque mass of bricks through its heavy pall smoke. ... It is not beatiful in detail, but the smoke transforms its ugliness into a beauty transcending the work of architects and of time. Though a very old town, it bears no sign of great age — but ... it thrills and reverberates with the romance of machinery and manufacture, the romance of our fight against nature, of the gradual taming of the earth's secret forces. And surrounding the town on every side are the long straight smoke and steam wreaths the dull red flames, and all the visible evidences of the immense secular struggle for existence, the continual striving towards a higher standard of comfort.43

In 1899, Bennet sets his artistic aim: "To find beauty, which is always hidden; that is the aim. If beauty is found, then superficial facts are of small importance."44 In pursuit of beauty Bennett discards photographic realism and naturalism. This does not contradict our enquiry.45 In pursuit of indispensable beauty, what he ignores, in fact, is the realism of superficial facts and details. He values the realism of externals, no doubt, but he says that his "desire is to depict the deeper beauty while abiding by the envelope of facts." He suggests:

At the worst, the facts should not be ignored. They might, for the sake of more clearly disclosing the beauty, suffer a certain distortion — I can't think of a better word. Indeed they cannot be ignored in the future. The
achievements of the finest French writers, with Turgenev and Tolstoy, have set a standard for all coming masters of fiction.

What the artist has to grasp is that there is no such thing as ugliness in the world. This I believe to be true, but perhaps the saying would sound less difficult in another form: All ugliness has an aspect of beauty. The business of the artist is to find that aspect.

In 1901, reviewing *A Mummer's Wife* (1885), Bennett praises George Moore for a superb and successful effort to show that from life at its meanest and least decorative could be drawn material grand enough for great fiction. Mr. Moore in this book ascetically deprived himself of all those specious aids to effect — nobility of character, feminine grace, the sudden stroke of adverse fate, lovely scenic background, splendour of mere event — which the most gifted of his forerunners had found useful. . . . There is no departure from daily existence at its most usual. . . . And, in practising such a unique austerity, George Moore produced a masterpiece. By the singleness of his purpose to be truthful, and by sheer power of poetical imagination, he has raised upon a sordid and repellent theme an epic tale, beautiful with the terrible beauty which hides itself in the ugliness of life.

Bennett's search for an adequate aesthetic and distancing device that would yet maintain an authentic framework is evinced in all his novels. Bennett depicts such an aspect of hidden beauty in the following passage:

On their left were two pitheads whose double wheels revolved rapidly in smooth silence and the puffing engine-house and all the trucks and gear of a large ironstone mine. On their right was the astonishing farm, with barns and ricks and cornfields complete, seemingly quite unaware of its forlorn oddness in
that foul arena of manufacture. In front, on a little hill in the vast valley, was spread out the Indian-red architecture of Bursley—tall chimneys and rounded eves, schools, the new scarlet market, the grey tower of the old Church, the high spire of the evangelical Church, the low spire of the Church of the genuflexions, and the crimson chapels, and rows of little red houses with amber chimney-pots, and the gold angel of the blackened Town Hall topping the whole. The sedate reddish browns and reds of the composition, all netted in flowing scarves of smoke, harmonised exquisitely with the chill blues of the chequered sky. Beauty was achieved, and none saw it.

Nicholson also quotes the above passage from *Clayhanger* in his essay "Arnold Bennett" and says that "the paragraph is excellent in its plain, straightforward description—shapes, and pattern, enough topography to give sense to the whole, and colour which comes there quite naturally instead of having been put there for effect... Here indeed is the accurate record of outward form, demanded of a Realist novelist, heightened by the vision of a poet or a painter." In comparison with other realist novelists of his period, Nicholson says, Bennett "has a charm which few of his contemporaries had. He was an objective writer, one to whom the world was a spectacle which he observed without passion except for the eagerness of the artist to see and record."

Some observations from realist historians may be applied to Bennett's historical-realistic fiction. To Howells, "the truthful treatment of material" and "the fidelity and veracity of the author's observation" are the hallmark and "the field of realistic fiction." The Goncourt brothers have described the novel as a historical document. In their view
A novel "is made with documents narrated or selected from nature, just as history is based on written documents."

In this way the working-class men and women can be captured only through an immense storing of observation, by innumerable notes... by the amassment of a collection of human documents, like those heaps of pocket sketches which assembled at a painter's death, represent his life-time of work... human documents make good books: books in which there are real human beings on two legs. 52

As regards a plausible relationship between history and novel, literature and life, we may cite James's observations and conclusions. "The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life," James, though a realist of some other type insists "on the fact that as the picture is reality, so the novel is history. That is the only general description that we may give of the novel. But history also is allowed to represent life... The subject-matter of fiction is stored up likewise in documents... it must speak with assurance, with the tone of the historian." 43

Keeping, therefore, all this discussion in view, we may see Bennett, simultaneously, as an external historian and a historian of inner life. That is, the external changes do not take place without influencing the inner life of a people. Their lives are modified by the actions through which they pass. This is one of Bennett's objectives to reveal the inner development as the consequence of man's experience of external and internal reality. Thereby we can illustrate
with the help of his novels, his realism of presentation and the evolving realism of life.

III

A Man from the North (1898) is a veiled history of Bennett’s own life. Richard Larch leaves the Five Towns, comes to London to become a writer, but settles to a mediocre life. The essential feature of the novel is the lack of knowledge and experience in a Five Towns man, that fails him. In bringing a provincial man into a profound world of London, Bennett tends to transport him from the narrow bounds to a wider world to give him a distinctly modern turn by leading a naive and inexperienced man to act according to his ambition.

A Man from the North is also concerned with linking North with London by which link history is shown. The focus is on an individual’s subjective experience of history, not only its impact on his ambition, but more significant ways in which he gains understanding of life.

In closely or autobiographically describing Richard Larch’s frustration, consciousness and understanding of an outer world, the novel presents a view of the subjective nature of man’s historical experience. The title, A Man from the North, itself may be taken to refer to a vision of man as well as his career. In this way Richard Larch is distinguished from the Five Towns men, who can hardly imagine such an experience, knowledge and understanding of life and history and hardly know
themselves. Richard Larch fails because he lacks education, training and experience. History of his life is not only a veiled history of the author but the history of many lives in the North, for there have been people who lacked foresight and failed because of their folly or ignorance. Thus Bennett writes with a close touch of reality, Levin's observation that

The history of the realistic novel shows that fiction tends toward autobiography. The increasing demands for social and psychological detail that are made upon the novelist can only be satisfied out of his own experience. The forces which make him an outsider focus his observation upon himself. He becomes his own hero, and begins to crowd his other characters into the background. This background takes on a new importance for its influence on his own character.54

Bennett's concern in *A Man from the North* is almost similar. He records:

In obedience to my philosophy I made myself a failure... I decided that... Richard Larch, the hero should go through most of my experience, but that instead of fame and a thousand a year he should arrive ultimately at disillusion and a desolate suburban domesticity. ... I come lastly to the question of getting the semblance of life... The answer is that he digs it out of himself. First-class fiction is, and must be, in the final resort autobiographical. What else should it be? The novelist may take notes of phenomena likely to be of use to him... He can use a real person as the unrecognizable but helpful basis.55

In this novel, therefore, Bennett takes his naive provincial man, Richard Larch, away from the historical set up of the Five Towns to the sophisticated world of London. His attempt to escape
provincialism and to explore the possibilities of becoming a writer in London, is a bold attempt; but, ultimately his disillusioned settlement to a mediocre life speaks of the lack of opportunity and training in his native Towns. The explanation of the source of failure in the biography of the author himself not only authenticates the realism by writer's own experience, but also speaks of the protagonist's ability to escape from his narrow world to a broader world. This attempt is made, basically, to teach the ignorant men and women to rise above their station. And this world is the historical world of the Five Towns, in addition to Bennett's own experiential world.

In *Anna of the Five Towns* (1902) Anna is made specifically 'Anna of the Five Towns' because she inherits and represents narrow vision of life, religion, love and marriage. On the historical standpoint she is a representative of Wesleyan Methodism of the Five Towns. She is bound up with a tendency to withdraw into a religious attitude, a tendency which Bennett abhors for its hypothetical colouring. Much of this novel shows the consequences of impractical religion and moral indignation which such a tendency incurs. Anna's response to life is religious, without understanding with religion is. Hers is a routine type religion. But this phenomenon is historical, not of one woman. Much is told about opportunities offered to her but her moral outlook stands in her way; she cannot experience a full measure of love and life. The sufficiency of revival meetings, Anna's Church services, Sunday schools, preachings and penitence
can be emphasized as an evidence on which one may form working generalizations to interpret historical experience. So stuffed is her mind with her morality that she cannot distinguish, know or anticipate her decisions—even create a practical conception of life. As a result, her hypothetical religion renders her unable to engage in effective worldly actions. As a direct consequence of this disenchanted view of religion she lives an ambiguous life. What Bennett aims to suggest is that Anna is not the only woman whose life is governed by this type of religion, but many other women held same view. We might conclude, then, that this phenomenon is historical: the mental frame of the Five Towns individuals is shaped by and linked to its prevailing history. Such a religion is, in effect, the spirit of the age. In a world, on a historical perspective, Anna is made particularly 'Anna of the Five Towns', an incarnation of the Five Towns religious experience, a portrayal which, by its real nature of changes implicit and explicit becomes an account of historical experience.

To Bennett history is an institution, a source of knowledge and learning about persons, places, things and understanding past through the eyes of the present. In this novel, the suicide of Titus Price, the Methodist, the Sunday school superintendent, "the loud champion of the higher virtues", is no less than a historical occurrence. When he is appalled by the fear of humanity and emptiness of his purse, of this debt, he eventually commits suicide, thus cutting ties with the society and his family. He is not the only
individual in the history of the materialistic world of the
Five Towns, nor is he a historical personality. But the
phenomenon gains a historical dimension. Bennett does not
sensationalize or sentimentalize his death. Like a true
historian he notes the impressions of the people objectively.
The effect of his death has several realistic nuances.

The young folk in particular could with difficulty
believe their ears. It seemed incredible to them
that Titus Price... should commit the sin of
all sins — murder. They were dazed. . .
The elders were a little less disturbed. The
event was not unique in their experience. They
had lived longer and felt these seismic shocks
before. They could go back into the past and
find other cases where a swift impulse had
shattered the edifice of a lifetime. They knew
that the history of families and of
communities is crowded with disillusion. They
had discovered that character is changeless,
irrepressible, incurable. They were aware of
the astonishing fact, which takes at least
thirty years to learn, that a Sunday-school
superintendent is a man. And the suicide of
Titus Price, when they had realized it, served
but to confirm their most secret and honest
estimate of humanity, that estimate which they
never confided to a soul. . . . The old folks
were wiser, foreseeing with certainty that
it only a few days this all-engrossing
phenomenon would lose its significance, and be as
though it had never been (pp. 188-89).

In The Old Wives' Tale (1908) when Bennett conceived
the idea of writing this novel he subtitled it as "A History
of Two Women". He tells in the preface he writes for one of
the later editions that, having settled in his mind that it is
to show the development of a young girl into a stout old lady,
that it is to be the English equivalent of Une Vie, he
resolves that his book must "go one better" than de Maupassant's
tale and give the life-history of two women, not one. Hence
The Old Wives' Tale "has two heroines. Constance is the original, Sophia was created out of bravado, just to indicate that I declined to consider Guy de Maupassant as the last forerunner of the deluge." Presumably, it no longer turns out to be as Bennett conceived (to make Sophia a where—she does not become one). It shows two lives rolling forward—one against the static and conventional background of the Five Towns history and the other against the dynamic and existential background of Paris history. Historically, the Potteries are best described in the first chapter—"The Square". The observation in capturing the atmosphere and description of the location of the Five Towns may be cited as an exquisite example of realism of presentation.

They were surrounded by the country. On every side the fields and moors of Staffordshire, intersected by roads and lanes, railways, watercourses, and telegraph lines, patterned by hedges, ornamented and made respectable by halls and genteel parks, enlivened by villages at the intersections, and warmly surveyed by the sun, spread out undulating. And trains were rushing round curves in deep cuttings, and carts and wagons trotting and jingling on the yellow roads, and long, narrow boats passing in a leisure majestic and infinite over the surface of the stolid canals; the rivers had only themselves to support, for Staffordshire rivers have remained virgin of keels to this day. One could imagine the messages concerning prices, sudden death, and horses, in their flight through the wires under the fact of birds. In the inns Utopians were shouting the universe into order over beer, and in the halls and parks the dignity of England was being preserved in a fitting manner. The villages were full of women who did nothing but fight against dirt and hunger, and repair the effects of friction on clothes. Thousands of labourers were in the fields, but the fields were so broad and numerous that this scattered multitude was totally lost therein.
The cuckoo was much more perceptible than man, dominating whole square miles with his resounding call. And on the airy moors, heath-larks played in the ineffaceable mule-tracks that had served centuries before even the Romans thought of Watling-street. In short, the usual daily life of the country was proceeding with all its immense variety and importance (pp.344).

As a historian, Bennett accumulates a considerable amount of data which goes to the making of *The Old Wives' Tale*. Of the draper's shop, Lafourcade tells us, Bennett has first-hand knowledge as he has during his childhood lived with his grandparents. A large number of details observed and recorded are copied from actual visits and own experience of the novelist. Not only this, Bennett has supplied several important clues. Constance was born in 1847, Sophia in 1848; Samuel Povey's tooth — of which a full account is given — was extracted in September 1863; the shooting of the elephant, which also led up to the death of John Baines, in September 1865; Sophia's elopement in June 1866; the final separation between Gerald Scales and Sophia in May 1870. Sophia dies at fifty eight in 1906 and Constance at sixty in the autumn of 1907, at about the same time when Bennett decides in Fountainbleau to write the 'history of two old women'. In a way, in his conception, by this time, they have grown old and he is at a right time to narrate the tale of two old wives, like a historian. Other clues are contained in the letter that Constance writes to Sophia; in Paris. It may be cited as a historical document, preserving the details of Baines's family. In this way the history is made; but, to be sure, this letter
also depicts the significant changes that time has brought upon the external scene and the lives of the individuals.

I cannot tell you how overjoyed I was to learn that after all these years you are alive and well, and doing so well too. I long to see you, my dear sister. It was Mr. Peel Swynnerton who told me. He is a friend of Cyril's. Cyril is the name of my son. I married Samuel in 1867. Cyril was born in 1874 at Christmas. He is now twenty-two, and doing very well in London as a student of Sculpture, though so young. He won a National Scholarship. There were only eight, of which he was one, in all England. Samuel died in 1888. If you read the papers you must have seen about the Povey affair. I mean of course Mr. Daniel Povey, confectioner. It was that that killed poor Samuel. Poor mother died in 1875. It doesn't seem so long. Aunt Harriet and Aunt Maria are both dead. Old Dr. Harrop is dead, and his son has practically retired. He has a partner, a Scotchman. Mr. Critchlow has married Miss Insull. Did you ever hear of such a thing? . . . Business in the Square is not what it used to be. The steam trams take all the custom to Hanbridge, and they are talking of electric trams, but I dare say it is only talk. I have a fairly good servant. She has been with me for long time, but servants are not what they were (p. 404).

After this terrible interval of time when Sophia reads this letter she is impelled to recount her past and leave Paris for Burley.

She pictured Paris as it would be on that very morning — bright, clean, glittering; the neatness of the rue Lord Byron and the magnificent slanting splendour of the Champs Elysées. . . . She could delve down into the earlier years of her ownership of the pension, and see a regular, placid beauty in her daily life there. Her life there, even so late as a fortnight ago, seemed beautiful; sad, but beautiful. It had passed into history. . . . She had developed from a nobody into the desired of syndicates. And after long, long, monotonous, strenuous years of possession the
The day had come, the emotional moment had come, when she had yielded up the keys of ownership and had paid her servants for the last time and signed the last receipted bill. She was ready to leave Paris (pp. 4 and 8).

Sophia leaves Paris and comes back home to stay with her sister. When they finally reunite, they are full of impressions, past reminiscences and experiences.

The two sisters looked at each other, their faces gravely troubled, aghast, as though they had glimpsed the end of civilized society, as though they felt that they had lived too long into an age of decadence and open shame. Constance's face showed despair — she might have been about to be pitched into the gutter without a friend and with a shilling — but Sophia's had the reckless courage that disaster breeds (p. 471).

This is, in general, the effect of time on the lives of the individuals. Gradually, Constance obtains "a sure ascendancy over her mother . . . merely as the outcome of time's influence on her and on her mother respectively" (pp. 144-45). It is perhaps on such strong marks of time that lead Forster to say that "Time is the real hero" of the book. This passage of time affects all living beings, and Bennett associates it with the histories of their lives and impressions they gain.

In this novel Bennett illustrates the difference between provincial and cosmopolitan experience. At the end of the novel, the meeting of the two old wives, reveals their experience in two different historical settings. Through their realization and understanding of life, we come to understand the whole history of their lives in their process.
of living. Therefore, *The Old Wives' Tale* is a history of the lives of two women from girlhood to death, two ordinary types whose experience of life illustrates the passage of an epoch, the replacement of mid-Victorian era by the late Victorian years and then the dawning of modernity. This history of the lives parallels what Bennett acknowledges he learns from de Maupassant's *Une Vie* which also completes the tragic history of his heroine, Jeane. What is interesting in *The Old Wives' Tale* is the contrast of the experiences of two women, one staid and unromantic, lives out her life in Bursley, marries and dies complacently; the other, energetic and romantic, marries Gerald Scales and makes her own fortune abroad and has interesting experiences during the siege of Paris. *The Old Wives' Tale* remains a history on the march by giving a dynamic view of the two orders — old order and the new order. In the first, Constance represents the class and wants to remain what she is even in opportunities to change; in the second, Sophia epitomizes the fate of an existential individual, who survives all the changes in the Five Towns, London and Paris. Her removal to Paris, does not simply change her environment but the history of her life as well. Her provincial experience acquires a perspective broader than that of Constance. From this perspective, it is impossible for Sophia to adjust herself with Constance when she comes back to her native town. Sophia in Paris, is beyond the history of her native towns but she creates her own history. Finally she links provincialism of London with cosmopolitanism of Paris. In other words, she "foresakes her home-culture and
synthesizes a new world in Paris."

Of this approach, The Old Wives' Tale is the embodiment. We are never allowed to forget that the carefully individualized persons and situations are at variance with historical principles. The measure of Bennett's achievement in The Old Wives' Tale — its limits as well as its success — lies in the application of his conception of realism to the external history of the Five Towns and the internal history of human experience. Bennett's movement from external to internal historian becomes ultimately a critical standard by which to assess all historical experience and make it viable by individualizing it. Wilbur Cross is of opinion that no other novelist has written such a history. He states:

Neither Thackeray, who was fond of memoirs and family histories nor Maupassant, from whom was derived the hint for The Old Wives' Tale; nor Dostoevsky, whom Bennett now put at the head of all the novelists that have ever appeared in the world; nor Balzac, though one may easily imagine Bennett setting out to do for the Five Towns what Balzac had done for all France. 60

Before writing Clayhanger (1910), as a historical document, Bennett records in his journal entry of 19 November 1909, "Yesterday I finished making a list of all social, political, and artistic events, which I thought possibly useful for my novel between 1872 and 1882. Tedious bore, for a trifling ultimate result in the book. But necessary. Today in the forest (of Fontainebleau) I practically arranged most of the construction of the first part of the novel. Still lacking a title for it. If I thought an ironic title would do, I would call"
it 'A Thoughtful young man.' By 3 December he had decided on Clayhanger; and at 9.45 on the morning of Wednesday, 5 January 1910 — as a true historian, conscious of time and place he began the actual writing, at the Royal York Hotel, Brighton. He says he felt less "nervous and self conscious than usual in beginning a book. And never before have I made one-quarter so many preliminary notes and investigations." In his next entry (24 January 1910) Bennett states his aim: "I am trying to lift the whole thing up to a great height", although he is "not very hopeful about the absolutely first-class quality of the whole book," Because of the social and political data it may become bore but it aims to be "honest and conscientious." And if one considers it in the context of other novels, "it seems ordinary, slowly and almost imperceptibly builds up a rich, detailed and dense study of provincial life." According to Lafourcade, his French critic, Clayhanger is "the most patient and disinterested of all his novels. For nearly nine months he accumulated notes and documents to supply an accurate historical background." And, F.R.Leavis, speaking of D.H. Lawrence's "The Lost Girl", writes that "as a rendering of English provincial life, it strikes one as what Arnold Bennett would have wished to have done, though, being the work of a great creative genius." Lawrence's charge that Bennett is an old imitator may, straight away be refuted, for it is a work of a researcher not of an imitator.

In Clayhanger trilogy Bennett presents another point of view in regard to the historical process of time. Here he marks the note of transition from Victorian to Edwardian and
Edwardian to modern times. The individual novels — Clayhanger, Hilda Lessways and These Twain — cannot possibly be linked in an organic and living manner, than are through their transitional action. The central unity of action in the series represents Bennett's idea of the cycle of history. This connection shows precisely how Edwin Clayhanger develops, how Hilda Lessways develops, and how both develop — separately and later on together. It is how, he thinks, he would lift the novel. But before we deal with Bennett as the historian of life we may cite at least one example of how he maintains the continuity of time and gives it a human significance. In Clayhanger Bennett grants human characteristics to the "old machine" which is a token of eighteenth century artificers. Bennett allows it a role in the history of three centuries.

Then there was what was called in the office the "old machine", a relic of Clayhanger's predecessor, and at least eighty years old. It was one of these machines whose worn physiognomies, full of character, show at once that they have a history. In construction it carried solidity to an absurd degree. Its pillars were like the piles of a pier. The machine at one period in its career had been enlarged, and the neat seaming of the metal was an ecstasy to the eye of a good workman. Long ago, it was known, this machine had printed a Reform newspaper at Stockport. Now, after thus participating in the violent politics of an age heroic and unhappy, it had been put to printing small posters of auctions and tea-meetings. Its movement was double: first that of a handle to bring the bed under the platen, and second, a lever pulled over to make contact between the type and the paper. It still worked perfectly. It was so solid, and it had been so honestly made, that it could never get out of order nor wear away. And, indeed, the conscientiousness and skill of artificers in the eighteenth century are still, through that
resistless machine, producing their effect in the twentieth. But it needed a strong hand to bestir its smooth, plum—coloured limbs of metal, and a speed of a hundred an hour meant gentle perspiration. The machine was loved like an animal.

The whole cycle of life-history starts with Darius Clayhanger's past, his education and his working in a sweated atmosphere as "a man of seven", Bennett calls "The Child-Man". Darius receives middle-class education in the Widow Susan's School and makes a tremendous success in life.

At this school Darius acquired a knowledge of the alphabet, and from the alphabet passed to Reading-Made-Easy, and then to Bible. He made such progress that the widow soon singled him out for honour. He was allowed the high and envied privilege of raking the ashes from under the fireplace and carrying them to the ash-pit, which ash-pit was vast and lofty, being the joint production of many cottages. A still greater honour accorded to Darius was permission to sit, during lessons, on the topmost visible step of the winding stair. The widow Susan, having taught Darius to read brilliantly, taught him to knit, and he would knit stockings for his father, mother, and sister (p.37).

The section "The Child-Man" describes the horrors of working in a pot bank as a small boy—a faith shared by Bennett with Factory Acts that echoes the pathos of Dickens. "At the age of seven, his education being complete, he was summoned into the world." "The man Darius was first taken to work by his mother. It was the winter of 1835 January." "They passed through the market-place of the town of Turnhill, where they lived. Turnhill lies a couple of miles north of Bursley."
The next morning, at half past five, Darius began his career in earnest. He was 'mould-runner' to a 'muffin-maker'. The business of Darius was to run as hard as he could with the mould, and newly created plate adhering thereto, into the drying-stove. As no man of seven could reach the upper shelves, a pair of steps was provided for Darius, and up these he had to scamper. Each mould with its plate had to be leaned carefully against the wall, and if the soft clay of a new-born plate was damaged, Darius was knocked down. The atmosphere outside the stove was chill, but owing to the heat of the stove, Darius was obliged to work half naked. His sweat ran down his cheeks, and down his chest, and down his back, making white channels, and lastly it soaked his hair.

At eight O'clock in the evening Darius was told that he had done enough for that day, and that he must arrive at five sharp the next morning to work. When he enquired how he was to light the fire his master kicked him jovially on the thigh and suggested that he should ask another mould-runner. His master was not a bad man at heart, it was said, but on Tuesdays, after Sunday and Saint Monday, masters were apt to be capricious.

Darius reached home at a quarter to nine, having eaten nothing but bread all day. Somehow he had lapsed into the child again. His mother took him on her knee, and wrapped her sacking apron round his ragged clothes, and cried over him and cried into his supper of porridge, and undressed him and put him to bed. But he could not sleep because he was afraid of being late the next morning.

These citations evince not only Bennett's realism of description, with meticulous details, but a realism of life. What we notice now is that Darius "learnt from a more experienced companion that nobody would provide him" with anything. Darius's "increasing knowledge of the world enabled him to rise in it"; he becomes one of the "seasoned men of the world", "a self-supporting man of the world" (pp. 39, 41, 42). Darius, "unelastic, relentless... capable of bursting out
emotionally," has "emerged from the pit, and by sheer obstinacy in work" he makes himself "well off with his printing shop, stands out clear as life with all his idiosyncrasies." He becomes a famous printer in the Five Towns. Living through these difficulties of life and prodigious changes, internal and external, Darius makes his own history.

As compared to Darius Clayhanger, Edwin Clayhanger, the hero of this novel, acquires his education in a 'historic school', but emerges as an ignorant man. "He knew, however, nothing of natural history, and in particular of himself"; "as for philosophy, he had not the slightest conception of what it meant." "He had great potential intellectual curiosity, but nobody had thought to stimulate it"; "he had never been instructed for five minutes in the geography of his native country, of which he knew neither the rivers nor the terrene characteristics"; "of English literature, or of any other literature, he had likewise been taught nothing" (pp. 22, 23, 24). Above all, Clayhanger does not know anything about the history of his father's struggle to rise from the abject poverty to the status of a successful printer in the area. "These interesting details have everything to do with the history of Edwin Clayhanger", because "they have everything to do with the history of each of the two hundred thousand souls in the Five Towns" (p. 15). The experiences and hardships to which Darius Clayhanger is subjected in his early childhood make him hard and merciless; he has learnt from experience so he knows the difficulties of real life and is convinced now.
dreams and ideals of youth are frustrated by the thrusts of circumstances. His "father's early history he knew naught" (p.310) rather he develops "an inexpressible disgust for his father" (p. 251). Darius "had never spoken to a soul" about his past history. "All his infancy was a fearful secret. His life, seen whole, had been a miracle. But none knew that except himself... Assuredly Edwin never even faintly suspected it" (p.46). The result is that from the beginning both the father and the son are set apart.

To Edwin, Darius was exactly the same father, and for Darius, Edwin was still aged sixteen. They both of them went on living on the assumption that the world had stood still in those seven years between 1873 and 1880. If they had been asked what had happened during those seven years, they would have answered: 'Oh, nothing particular!' (p.156).

What happens after 'their' 1880, points to the transitional period, the later part of the Victorian era. Both the external and internal changes are recorded by Bennett, with a historian's point of view. During this period

---

. . . the world had been whizzing ceaselessly from one miracle into another. Board schools had been opened in Bursley, wondrous affairs, with ventilation; indeed ventilation had been discovered. A jew had been made master of the Rolls; spectacle at which England shivered, and then, perceiving no sign of disaster, shrugged its shoulders. Irish members had taught the House of Commons how to talk for twenty-four hours without a pause. The wages of the agricultural labourer had sprung into the air and leaped over . . . the bar into regions of opulence. . . . Herbert Spencer had published his Study of Sociology; Matthew Arnold his Literature and Drama; and Frederick Farrar his Life of his Lord (pp.156-57).
Darius's history takes us back to Shushions who has seen him in the 1840s as "the man-child of seven" in a miserable condition. This is told in chapter 4 which also reminds of the fact *When I was a Child*. In fact, it is Shushions, who is responsible for Darius's rise. Edwin knows nothing of his father's past or the history of Shushions. Darius, in addition to making his own history, has known the changes in the history of the Five Towns, has experienced ups and downs of life, and is on the verge of the completion of the history of his life. To him "the difference between the two Englands was so strikingly dramatic ... that he desired no further change. He had only one date — 1846. His cup had been filled" (p.159). What he wants is that Edwin should learn from his experience. Unfortunately, Edwin does not do so.

If Edwin could, only have seen those memories, shining in layers deep in his father's heart, and hidden now by all sorts of ... deposits, he would have understood his father better. But Edwin did not see into his father's heart at all, nor even into his head. When he looked at his father he saw nothing but an ugly, strenuous old man (old, that is, to Edwin), with a peculiar and incalculable way of regarding things and a temper of growing capriciousness (p.159).

The chapter entitled "His start in Life", brings Edwin to his realization of the passage of time and his ignorance and inexperience. Darius Clayhanger hands over his gold watch to Edwin who then occupies his chair, learns to sign the cheques after his father. "Bit by bit he was assuming the historic privileges of the English master of the house" (p.419), but he remains deficient in many factors. He realizes that he "must
change. He must turn over a new leaf" (p. 421). When he does this it is rather late to make adjustment. It is at such moments that Bennett's men and women haul us back into their past and make us aware, as they themselves become, of the passage of time. This is true, not only historically, but psychologically too.

The second aspect of Edwin's history of life in Clayhanger is connected with the history of Hilda Lessways' life. When he meets her he feels "astounding" and realizes, later on, "how blind he had been to the romance of existence" (p. 196). Because of his inexperience he is not able to resolve the conflict of wills. With the transformation of social and historical changes or environment, even his cycle of meeting, separation and reunion does not help him overcome the incompatibility of temperaments. As from his father's history he does not learn anything, so also he fails in establishing a romantic union with Hilda. It is his lack of knowledge of history, geography, literature, life and romance that he has "some shocks in his life" (p. 251). Edwin's frustration delays his adjustment with Hilda, the real woman, who could be located upon the Five Towns map, of which he is ignorant. Hilda marries George Cannon and creates her own history: "The history of Hilda" (p. 434)

She who was his by word and by kiss, and given her mortal frame to be the unknown Cannon — yielded it. She had conceived. At some moment when he, Edwin, was alive and suffering, she had conceived. She had ceased to be a virgin. Quickly, with an astounding quickness ...
had passed from virginity to motherhood... the miraculous sequel! Another individuality; a new being; definitely formed, with character a volition of its own; unlike any other individuality in the universe! Something fresh! Something unimaginably created! A phenomenon absolutely original of the pride and the tragedy of life! George!

And she existed, yet. On a spot of the earth's surface entitled Brighton, which he could locate upon a map. She existed: a widow, in difficulty, keeping a boarding-house. She ate, slept, struggled; she brushed her hair. . . . And she was thirty-four—was it? The wonder of the world amazed and shook him (p. 434).

At this stage, however, we can blame neither Darius nor Edwin for their misunderstanding and misunderstood love. Bennett has plenty of such instances e.g. Ephraim Tellwright and Anna, John Baines and Sophia. The centre of our interest is Edwin. Bennett's aim to "lift" this novel lies in his endeavour to educate and perfect Edwin. We can neither blame him nor his inability to establish lasting relations with Hilda. Epistemologically, Edwin is ignorant and inexperienced; therefore, "One has to experience the relationship as it unfolds in the pages of the novel." 68

On a historical standpoint, Hilda Lessways (1911) is different. Bennett does not do as much research as he does in Clayhanger. The clue can be found in his journal entry.

I didn't seem to be getting near the personality of Hilda in my novel. You scarcely ever do get near a personality. There is a tremendous lot in fiction that no one has yet done. . . . Why? The fact is, the novelist seldom really penetrates. 69
Such a citation indicates that the novelist must know a great deal about the characters he creates. Bennett, we can assert, knows much about Hilda as a woman rather than as a character and his intention in *Hilda Lessways* is to reveal the second aspect of the history of her life spent with George Cannon. The differences are quite obvious. One important example that can be cited here is her meeting (in *Clayhanger*) with Edwin while they are watching the Sunday school centenary celebrations and her meeting with George Cannon in his Office, in Brighton. Both the times she meets alone and observes the difference.

In *Hilda Lessways* the first thing that we notice is that this novel is not entirely on the native ground: most of the scenes are set in London or Brighton, which are far "removed from the central life of the Five Towns, and unconnected thereby with even a tram or an omnibus." Therefore, for quite sometime in the pages of the novel we miss the local colour of the Five Towns. However, this also shows an advance on the part of the novelist as historian — he makes his transition operative. He uses the story of Edwin Clayhanger as a background to lead us to the foreground. We know the history of Edwin's life — leaving the historic school, with his shyness, ignorance, with his desire to be an architect thwarted by his grim old father, entering his father's business and fighting against him for independence, then living in the printing shop in Potteries, and the manner in which Hilda enters upon his brief romantic experience, jilts him for cold sexuality, disappears,
abandoning him to grope again with the commonplace life of the Potteries. In Hilda Lessways, Hilda's struggle with her mother parallels Edwin's struggle with his father. Her mother, Mrs. Lessways, is absurdly unable to learn from experience. The history of the life of Hilda's mother, Mrs. Lessways, ends a few pages later when she suddenly falls ill in the street. A doctor passing in his carriage had come to her assistance and driven her home. Food eaten on the previous evening had 'disagreed' with her. At first the case was not regarded as very serious. Immediately afterwards, the doctor summoned in alarm, diagnosed peritonitis caused by a perforating cancer, Mrs. Lessways had died on the third day after eleven in the morning, while Hilda was in the train. Useless to protest that these catastrophes were unthinkable, that Mrs. Lessways had never been ill in her life! The catastrophe had happened. And upstairs a corpse lay in proof (p. 109).

Thus, her mother's history comes to an end and with this ends the old order. Hilda belongs to the new generation.

Hilda's education and maturing is shown to be idealistic, then romantic, with a readiness for an "instinct for experience", after the sequels of adventures (p. 292). Like Edwin she is also sent to a school of historic importance.

Hilda, owing partly to the fondness of an otherwise stern grandfather and partly to the vanity of her unimportant father, had finally been sent to a school attended by girls who on the average were a little above herself in station — Chetwynd's, in the valley between Turnhill and Bursley. It was still called Chetwynd's though it had changed hands (p. 50).
Hilda's education is also incomplete even in a school of historic importance. She learns only Victor Hugo's verse by heart, that her teacher Miss Miranda insists to children. With this school education she comes in contact with Edwin and George Cannon and plans to move to Hanbridge, "the natural centre of the Five Towns. This was nearly the limit of her knowledge. She neither knew nor cared anything about the resources or the politics" (p.59). She is "entirely ignorant of journalism"; she has learnt typing and is sure of the "sense of her responsibilities" (p.60). This is how she starts her career as a clerk with George Cannon, "the man whose original energy and restless love of initiative was leading him to found a newspaper on the top of a successful but audaciously irregular practice as a lawyer" (p.59). This brings them together. At a certain moment their desires coincide and complement the two histories of life — hers and that of Mr. Cannon. With them we also move through England's provincialism and the reality of Brighton.

The little interior in which they were, swept steadily and smoothly across the central sunlit plain of England, passing canals and brooks and cottages and Churches — silent and stolid in that English stupidity that he was criticizing. And Hilda saw of George Cannon all that was French in him. She saw him quite anew, as something rather exotic and entirely marvellous.

He imposed on her scorn of the provincial. She had to share it. She had a vision of the Five Towns as a smoky blotch on the remote horizon — negligible, crass, ridiculous in its heavy self-complacency... tinged with this odious English provincialism (p.183).
With such an understanding with George Cannon Hilda has a secret adventure, marries Cannon and moves to Brighton.

The train was in Brighton, sliding over the outskirts of the town... Hilda saw steep streets of houses that sprawled on the hilly mounds of the great town like ladders; reminiscent of certain streets of her native district, yet quite different, a physiognomy utterly foreign to her. This, then, was Brighton. That which had been a postmark become suddenly a reality, shattering her perceptions of it, and disappointing her she knew not why (p. 191).

Such like citations are a true reflection of the historically existing world and hence a proof of Bennett's observation, objectivity, minute details, and realism of presentation. When Hilda lands in Brighton, we find

Her first disappointment changed slowly into expectant and hopeful curiosity. The quaint irregularities of the architecture, and the vastness of the thronged perspectives, made promises to her romantic sense. The town seemed to be endless as London. There were hotels, churches, chapels, libraries, and music shops on every hand. The more ordinary features of main streets — the marts of jewellery, drapery, and tobacco — had an air of grandiose respectability; while the narrow alleyways that curved enigmatically away between the lofty buildings of these fine thoroughfares beckoned darkly to the fancy. The multiplicity of beggars, lotus, and organ-grinders was alone a proof of Brighton's success in the world; the organ-grinders, often a man and a woman yoked together, were extraordinary English, genteel and prosperous as they trudged in their neat, middle-class raiment through the gritty mud of the macadam, stolidly ignoring the menace of high stepping horses and disdainful glittering wheels. Brighton was evidently a city apart (pp. 192-93).
Hilda's move to Brighton acquaints us with another part of history, but sets Hilda apart. Whenever she thinks of her past her "early memories" become "a historical event" (p. 43). Her "secret and unhappy adventure" of being married to George Cannon and her sight of Edwin, once again, bring to her mind "the whole history of the past years" (p. 277). In the chapter "A Rendezvous" Hilda's reminiscence takes us back to their earlier meeting and brings their past to our minds, afresh. This establishes a link of past and present with her future and makes her stronger. In the following passage she recollects her meeting with Edwin:

It was romantic, melancholy, wistful, enigmatic—and, above all, honest. She knew that he had desired to be an architect, and that his father had thwarted his desire, and this fact endowed him for her with the charm of a victim. The idea that all his life had been embittered and shadowed by the caprice of an old man was beautiful to her in her sadness; she contemplated it with vague bliss. At their last meeting, during the Sunday School Centenary he had annoyed her; he had even drawn her disdain, by his lack of initiative, and male force in the incident the senile Sunday School teacher. He had profoundly disappointed her. Now, she simply forgot this, the sinister impression vanished from her mind. She recollected her first vision of him in the lighted doorway of his father's shop. Her present vision confirmed that sympathetic vision. . . . She knew, with the assurance of perfect faith, that he had nothing dubious to conceal, and that no test could strain his magnanimity (p. 290).

This novel ends with George Cannon's disappearance from her life. He lands up in jail and her reunion with Edwin brings us back to the Five Towns.
She exclaimed in horror, 'Why are people like that in the Five Towns?'

'It's our form of poetry, I suppose', said he.

She started, sensitively. It seemed to her that she had never understood the secret inner spirit of the Five Towns, and that by a single phrase he had made her understand it...

'Our form of poetry'!

Apparently perplexed by the obvious effect on her of his remark, he said:

'But you belong to the Five Towns, don't you?' She answered quietly that she did. But her heart was saying: 'I do now. You have initiated me. I never felt the Five Towns before. You have made me feel them' (p.311).

It is after her errand to Brighton that Hilda understands the spirit of the historical Five Towns. Bennett, by bringing her back, like Sophia from Paris, reveals the affinity of the soil and a sense of belonging to some place or a person.

In These Twain (1916) Bennett picks up the histories of Edwin and Hilda from previous histories and links to the histories of various other people — of old order and new order. Bennett tells us that "in the year 1892 Bleakridge, residential suburb of Bursley, was still most plainly divided into old and new orders." Paramount among the old was the house of the Member of Parliament and after the Member's house ranked such "historic residences as those of Osmond Orgreave, the architect", Fearns, the Hanbridge lawyer, and "the dark abode of High Church parson" (p.9). Then there was "barbaric populace. They too had histories, which many people knew! All this well illustrated the grand Victorian epoch of the Building Society" (p.10). "The traditionalism of Bleakridge protected
even Roman Catholicism in that district of Nonconformity."

"The Member and Osmond Orgreave might modernize their antique houses as much as they liked" (p.11). "In a few months all Victorian phenomena had been put upon their trial, and most of them condemned. And condemned without even the forms of justice! (p.14). During these years the histories of the lives of Auntie Hamps, Orgreave parents and "the history of dogmatic religion had passed definitely out of one stage into another" (p.32). Before the closure of the history of her life Auntie Hamps has told the major "lies of her career," In the chapter "The Family at Home", Clara and Auntie Hamps discussing the houses all over the industrial district of Staffordshire, Cheshire, Lancashire, and Yorkshire, come to discuss drawing room and take us back to the glories of Victorian past, that defied time.

Auntie Hamps in reply told one of the major lies of her career. She said with rapture that she did like the new drawing-room suite. This suite was a proof, disagreeable to Auntie Hamps, that the world would never stand still. It quite ignored all the old Victorian ideals of furniture; and in ignoring the past, it also ignored the future. Victorian furniture had always sought after immortality; in Bursley there were thousands of Victorian chairs and tables that defied time and that nothing but an axe or a conflagration could destroy. But this new suite thought not of the morrow; it did not even pretend to think of the morrow. Nobody believed that it would last, and the owners of it simply forebore to reflect upon what it would be after a few years of family use. They contemplated with joy its first state of dainty freshness, and were content therein. Whereas the Old Victorians lived in the future (in so far as they truly lived at all), the neo-Victorians lived careless in the present (pp. 92-93).
Thus, like a realist historian, Bennett describes the world not only as it was but also as it is. Edwin and Hilda, who belong to the new generation, view things from their angle. When they move to the new house away from Bursley several things happen: they are separated from rest of the Clayhanger family; some relatives and families are forgotten; not only this, a historical era also comes to an end. In *These Twain* Bennett completes the cycle of their history; Edwin and Hilda live their lives separately/together, making adjustments, influencing and influenced by other's histories and environment. In the chapter "The Discovery" Bennett works out the impact of London life on Hilda, He writes:

London indeed had had its effect on Hilda. She had seen the Five Towns from a distance, and as something definitely provincial. Having lived for years at Brighton which is almost a suburb of London, and also for a short time in London itself, she could not think of herself as a provincial, in the full sense in which Edwin, for example, was a provincial. She had gone to London... not like a staring and intimidated provincial, but with the confidence of an initiate returning to the scene of initiation. And once she was there, all her old condescensions towards the dirty and primitive Five Towns had very quickly revived (p.379).  

Thus when Hilda got into the train at Euston, she had in her head a plan of campaign. ... And also she was like a returning adventurer, carrying back to this savage land the sacred torch of civilization. She had perceived, as never before, the superior value of the suave and refined social methods of the metropolitan middle classes, compared with the manners of the Five Towns, and it seemed to her, in her new enthusiasm for the art of life (p.380).
These novels taken together offer a new perspective to Bennett as a historian and realist novelist. To Tillyard, this trilogy "is a loose chronicle, not a tight organism, and contains poor as well as good writing." Tillyard, may be right in so far as Bennett's record of the external scene or history of the family is concerned. But, if we agree with Meredith to whom, to be a novelist is also to be "an internal historian," then Bennett's view of life in this trilogy has deeper psychological implications. It forms a more vicarious experience that is depicted through the struggle of Edwin and Hilda, separately as well as together. To achieve such an end Bennett transfers his attention from the external history to the internal process of change and development of the protagonists. What is more important is that Bennett's account is free from sentimentalism and idealism -- a realistic account in that. According to Drabble, Bennett's "special talent was to take it seriously, criticize it, encourage it, be at times rude to it, and in a very real sense, to educate it." We know Bennett, in an attempt to educate himself experientially, "removed himself, in spirit and body, as far as he could from his origins." So also he moves his men and women from one place to another or one environment to another. On the humanistic scale Bennett touches the concreteness of life and its varieties: humour, ennui, boredom, tragedy, pathos and tedium of common and wearisome life. The drab things attract him and he makes them attractive. The environment that conditions the process of life in general also conditions Bennett's outlook for a fuller and deeper exploration of the life of the Five Towns.
Pritchett sums up this as follows:

A book like The Clayhanger Family has the sobriety as well as the tedium of a detailed engraving; and there is, oddly, enough of the connoisseur in Bennett to induce our modern taste. He is not a dilettante in the ego's peculiarities and he is without interest in elegance; he is the connoisseur of normality, of the ordinary, the awkward, an heir — one might say — of the makers of the Staffordshire. We speak of the disciplines of belief, of art, of the spirit; Bennett speaks of the discipline of life itself, reveres its frustrations, does not rebel against them; kneels like some pious behaviourist to the drab sight of reflexes in process of being conditioned. He catches the intolerable passing of time in our lives, a passing which blurs our distinctiveness and quietly establishes our anonymity; until our final impression of him is as a kind of estate agent's valuer walking with perfunctory step through the rooms of our lives. 75

This way we are shown the Five Towns, but we "don't know Riceyman Steps, King's Cross Road", although they form the best "haunting-ground in London!" The name 'Riceyman' steps "on a signboard, whose paint had been flaking off for twenty years, also enhanced the prestige of the shop, for it proved ancient local associations. Riceyman must be of the true ancient blood of Clerkenwell."76 It is described in Riceyman Steps (1923). Frank Swinnerton, who is believed to have spent his childhood near Granville Square, says (in The Bookman's London) that he thought upon reading Riceyman Steps that it "Isn't Clerkenwell; he [Bennett] does not know it as he knows the Five Towns."77 But, we are told by Margaret Drabble that before writing this novel, Bennett studied misers and the district of Clerkenwell, where he was to set his novel. He visited it in person many times, and read the
history of Clerkenwell, from a book by W.J. Pinks. When he finally sat to write down his novel, he knew "thoroughly, both in its history and in its reality; few of his later novels have so precise a sense of location", as Riceyman Steps has. In this novel, although written on a different standpoint, as compared to his previous novels, Bennett's "curious realism", as explored by Hepburn, lies in his "faithful delineation of the visible world." Hepburn asserts, if someone wants "to be absolutely convinced of the unique reality of the shop" then, "he can go to Burslem in Staffordshire (Bursley in the novel) to find it — standing to this day, now in part occupied by a Woolworth store." It is situated in Clerkenwell, a district in London, below Granville Square — Riceyman Steps in the novel.

Bennett's aim is to get "the semblance of life" not only from without but from within as well. Bennett writes:

The novelist may take notes of phenomena likely to be of use to him. And he may acquire the skill to invent . . . incident. But he cannot invent psychology. Upon occasion some human being may entrust him with confidence extremely precious for his craft. . . . From outward symptoms he can guess something of the psychology of others. He can use a real person as the unrecognizable but helpful basis for each of his characters. . . . And all that is nothing. When the real intimate work of creation has to be done . . . the novelist can only look within for effective aid.

In this novel Bennett 'looks within' and gives rise to psychological realism. Precisely, our first interest is historical because in Bennett "No human phenomenon is adequately seen until the imagination has placed it back into
its past and forward into its future. And this is the final process of observation of the individual." The external phenomenon is objective, so Bennett describes it with the historian's objectivity, which is the aim of all literary realists. Different from other realists, Bennett's is also an epistemological concern. In him men and women attempt to learn the nature of the provincial world, discover meaning of struggle and existence, and acquire a philosophy of life. Bennett calls the 'art of living', art of spending 24 hours a day and make life reasonable. This growth of knowledge and learning in Bennett's protagonists in the history and philistinism of the provincial world brings out his epistemological realism.

In this novel Violet gets married to another miser, Henry, and comes to Clerkenwell. She is always "regarded as a foreigner by the district; she had had no roots there. And as for Henry, though he was not a foreigner, but of the true ancient blood of Clerkenwell" (p.297). Mrs. Violet learns about the persons, places and things from Henry Earllforward. He gave her glimpses of the history of Madame Tussaud's, which he had picked up from books about London. "They do say seeing is believing. She was fully persuaded at last that English history really had happened" (p.93). There is one Dr. Raste, who possesses a historic house, which "was one of the larger houses in the historic Myddleton Square, and stood at the corner of the Square and New River Street" (p.171). Then Bennett gives an interesting account of another house in the chapter "Elsie's Home."
The house which Mrs. Arb decided to enter had a full, but not an extraordinary, share of experience of Roman life. There were three floors of it. On the ground floor lived a meat-salesman, his wife and children, the eldest of whom was five years of age. Three rooms and some minute appurtenances on this floor. The meat-salesman shouted and bowled cheap bits of meat in an open-fronted shop in Exmouth Street during a sixty-hour week which ended at midnight on Saturday. He possessed enormous vocal power. All the children out of naughtiness had rickets. On the first floor lived a french-polisher, his wife and two children, the eldest of whom was three years of age. One child less than the ground-floor family, but the first floor was about to get level in numbers. Three rooms and some minute appurtenances on this floor. The french-polisher worked only forty-four hours a week. His fingers wore always the colour of rosewood, and he emitted an odour which often competed not unsuccessfully with the characteristic house odour of stale soapsuds. Out of ill-will for mankind he had an everlasting cough. On the second floor lived a middle-aged dressmaker, alone. Three rooms and some minute appurtenances in this floor. Nobody but an occasional customer was ever allowed access to the second floor (p.51).

IV

J.W. Beach has enlisted these virtues of a historian: learning, accuracy, thoroughness, impartiality, critical shrewdness in judging evidence, justness of emphasis, illuminative insight and breadth of interpretation, interest in the familiar details of daily living, concreteness of narrative, firmness and clarity, naturalness and vivid characterization. Keeping these qualifications and the foregoing discussion in view, Bennett the external historian can be distinguished from Bennett the internal historian. He endeavours to view reality, to record it, to understand it, and later on to interpret its internal, dominant character—philistinism. As a historian,
Bennett is a witness to the changing and developing provincial society. Here, Bennett merits his position in a transitional period of English cultural history. The advantage of such a view of the novelist is clear enough: if we wish to understand the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the present century we will do well to take a close look at the novels of Arnold Bennett. The years between 1890s and 1930s, the years of transition, change, and development, are more than often illustrated by Wells and Gasworthy, along with Bennett. In the course of Bennett’s novels we see Potteries get a face lift: horse carts are replaced by trains, and now trains are being replaced by electric trains. The Five Towns are linked to the “District.” And culturally, London is linked with Paris, as Sophia has translated, “The Square” through London. Dick Povey (in The Old Wives’ Tale), who at the age of eleven disturbs the gravity of St. Luke’s Square by riding a boneshaker, becomes as a youngman a salesman of motor cars. Styles change; new methods are introduced into business. Such as the Annual Sale with which Samuel Povey defeats the "Old Order". Constance casts her vote against the agitation for federation of the Five Towns, as it marks the intrusion of a branch of the Midland Clothiers Company. Of Sophia, it seems suffice to say that her history does not remain of the Five Towns, although she returns to Potteries and thus completes the historical cycle.

Through all such changes and transformations Bennett “makes us conscious of the strange, portentous progress of
evolution; of the lapse of time; the changing mind of man; the desperate love of what has been; the inevitableness of what is to come, of what is to replace us, and put us too, on the shelf among outworn things." Bennett demonstrates this growth and change by "picturing with benign humour the ordinary man fighting his own limitations" and "becoming aware of wider horizons and reaching out towards them." In other words, it means to establish a "link of an event with what is going on in the world outside and making history." In this way the whole cycle of history "unfolds the passage of an epoch, the submergence of the Victorian era by the tide of modernity. The Five Towns imperceptibly but inexorably disappear in a vast industrial metropolis." This transition is also concerned with "the contrasts between provincial culture and metropolitan culture, a theme which preoccupied Bennett profitably throughout his life." At the same time, Bennett is aware of the limitations of external history. He notes in his journal that he has "hold of nothing but the bare leading facts" and admits that he is "realistic by dint of laborious and carefully ordered detail." He also feels that his descriptive realism, involving historical research, data and external details is "at variance with my natural instinct." But such external details are also essential because they acquaint us with the characters. Turgenev, whom Bennett makes his model, follows the same method. Bennett tells us:

In drawing character, Turgenev generally begins by sketching the previous history of the person almost from birth, with piquant gossipy detail. The reader, therefore, is made
personally acquainted with the character to start with. A simple trick this, in essence. Yet what perfect art Turgenev puts into the composition of these little biographies! There is no doubt in my mind that he is the greatest master of the modern novel. I can divine, even through a mediocre translation, that his style was simple, natural, graceful and effective.

In the light of such an example, we may recount some of Bennett's virtues. With Pritchett, Bennett's Five Towns novels have become an integral part of the Living Novel. He says:

But the virtues of Bennett lie in his patient and humane consideration of the normal factors of our lives: money, marriage, illness as we have to deal with them. Life, he seems to say, is an occupation which is forced upon us, not a journey we have chosen, nor a plunge we have taken. Such a view may at times depress us, but it may toughen us. Bennett really wrote out of the congenital tiredness of the lower middle class, as Wells wrote out of its gambling spirit and gift for fantasy; and in the end, I think, Bennett's picture, with its blank acceptance of the Sunday School pageant, the Jubilees, the Band of Hope, the fear of the workers, the half-baked attempts at culture, is the more lasting one. It is history. History presented — when we glance back at Bennett's French masters — with the dilettante's and collector's indifference to any theory of what history may be about.

As an internal historian, Bennett's instinctive interest is with provincial man's "immense secular struggle for existence," a history of his experience and learning. History passes from one stage to another — provincialism to metropolitanism and finally to cosmopolitanism. Bennett's realism of life is manifest "in the patient demonstration of growth" of evolution and man's understanding of life through experience. In this Bennett's realism is authenticated.
and validated by his own experience, L.G. Johnson confirms in his book *Arnold Bennett of the Five Towns* (1894) that he was born on the fringe of the Potteries and "in a way... grew up with some of Bennett's characters." He concludes: "Most novelists are rarely quiet one with their subject; a little above or below it. But Mr. Bennett really in his subject, the breath of it; intellectually, in a remarkable way." Like Bennett himself, his men and women leave their native towns on some romantic adventure, meet people, see places, experience life and come back home with some sense of belonging. This serves an epistemological purpose. Bennett shows the provincial travellers "with the confidence of an initiate returning to the scene of initiation. initiation." It is the history of such people that Bennett distinguishes himself from other historians.

The historical world of the Five Town is in transition. In Bennett there are two orders: first, 'old order', represented by the old generation people who embody the spirit of the age and Victorian philistinism; second, the 'new order', represented by new generation, which is in revolt against the static dogmas. This is precisely the subject matter of the following two chapters.
REFERENCES


4 Hill, Interpreting Literature, p. 39.

5 Carr, What is History? p. 19.

6 Ibid., pp. 21, 24.


9 Blake, "Fiction as History", pp. 260-61.

10 Ibid., p. 261.


12 Blake, p. 260.


15. See Blake, p. 263.


17. Ibid., p. 246.


19. Ibid., pp. 57-58.


24. The Author's Craft, p. 9.

25. Ibid., pp. 10-11

26. Ibid., p. 11

27. See for example Hepburn, "The Notebook for Riceyman Steps" PMLA, 78, No. 3 (1963), 257-261. Journals, ed. Swinnerton,
Bennett's every day's object is to take notes and remould them by means of 'technique'. If he misses something he laments that "several impressions have been lost." It is characteristic to cite an example: he spends some days at home to attend the funeral of his sister's fiancé. "The Goncourt brothers would in my place have noted every item of it, and particularly watched themselves. I had intended to do as much, but the various incidental distractions proved too strong for my resolution" —cited John Wain,  *Arnold Bennett*, p. 19. See also S.R. "An Old London Book Shop", *Notes and Queries*, n.s. III (1956), 310-11; Hepburn, "Manuscript Notes for Lord Raining", *English Fiction in Transition*, 5 (1962), 1-5; Hepburn,"Arnold Bennett in Clerkenwell", *Notes and Queries*, n.s. V (1958),263-64.


36 Ibid., p. 69.


38 See Drabble,  *Arnold Bennett*, p.4.

Drabble, p. 4.


Drabble, p. 3.

Journals, ed. Swinnerton, pp. 33-34.

Journals, p. 53. Bennett has discussed his theory of "beauty" in The Author's Craft. He says that "the sense of beauty" is "indispensable to the creative artist." No writer can write without it "what is generally regarded as the sordid ugliness of commonplace daily life" (pp. 16, 17).

Bennett, reviewing George Moore at about the same time, says: by the term 'realistic novel' "I simply mean, of course, one whose aim is to be real, regardless of any conventions which would involve a divergence from life itself. And I do not forget that the realism of one age is the conventionality of the next" — The Author's Craft, p. 144. It is in this sense that Bennett can dispense with superficial realism of art; he aims to "reproduce life in its entirety."

Journals, ed. Swinnerton, pp. 54-55.


50 Ibid., p. 44.

51 Literature and Life, p. 29.

52 See Documents, pp. 245-6

53 Henry James, "The Art of Fiction", contained in Jane Benardete, American Realism, p. 197.


55 Cited by E. Wagenkecht, "Arnold Bennett", p. 447; and also Bennett's The Author's Craft, p. 24.

56 Arnold Bennett, "Preface" to The Old Wives' Tale (New York: Harper & Brothers Pub., 1950), p. vii. Page references in the text are from Everyman Library edition (London: Everyman's Library, 1966). It is worthwhile to point out here that Bennett makes Une Vie and Balzac's La Maison du Chat qui pelote ("At the Sign of the Cat and Racket") his models. Bruce McCullough has traced out several parallels between these two novels and Bennett's The Old Wives' Tale. Leaving aside the minor details in characterization and other things McCullough finds a thematic parallel: "It was to follow the French novel in the essential characteristic that it would show the change; wrought by time"—"Arnold Bennett", The Representative English Novelists, p. 313. For details of other parallels, see pp. 313-15.


58 Forster, Aspects of the Novel, p. 45.

59 Bellamy, The Novels of Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy, p. 20.
See his Arnold Bennett, p. 49. Bennett did a considerable amount of research which we may precisely note from his Journals. On 14 Sep., 1909 he began to reread *When I was a Child*, an autobiography by 'an Old Potter' which had been published in 1903, from which Bennett noted "grimmsih detailed sketch of industrial child-life in 1840". Then what he needed was "Shaw's North Staffordshire Potteries, and tonight (21 October) I re-read the social and industrial section of the Victorian history contains a few juicy items I can use." On 3 November he transcribed "from the Victorian History of Staffs all the notes I want for my next novel." See Lucas, Arnold Bennett, p. 133.

Cited by Lucas, p. 134.

Arnold Bennett, *Clayhanger*, pp. 101-02; hereafter references are given in the text.

This is the title of the chapter in which the history of Darius Clayhanger, father of Edwin Clayhanger, is fully dealt with.

R.A.Scott-James, *Personality in Literature*, p. 88

Lucas, Arnold Bennett, p. 139.

Cited by Lucas, p. 146.


74 Drabble, Arnold Bennett, pp. 60, 176.


76 Arnold Bennett, Riceyman Steps (London: Cassell, 1968), p. 11; hereafter page references will be given in the text.

77 See Hepburn, "Some Curious Realism in Riceyman Steps", MFS, 8 (Summer, 1962), 119.

78 See Drabble, pp. 277, 278.


80 The Author's Craft, p. 24


83 This forms the subject matter of the following chapter.


85 Scott-James, "Arnold Bennett", p. 86.


Ibid., p. 296.

Drabble, p. 143

Bennett, Journals, ed. Swinnerton, p. 23.

Ibid., p. 23.

V.S. Pritchett, "The Five Towns", p. 130

Swinnerton, "Eclipse of the Novel", p. 335.


Bennett, These Twain, p. 379.