Corelli's method of characterization is direct and mechanical. The characters are types rather than individuals. They represent a certain idea of good or of evil. They are not complex or 'rounded.' They are static. There is very little development in the characters. If a change is introduced in the latter part of their life, it is rather sudden and arbitrary.

Corelli does not show the gradual, psychological evolution of a character. Theos is a sceptic in the first part of Ardath. He is a spectator of the ghastly picture of his former birth in the city of Al-Kyris in the second part. In the third part of the novel he is seen as the propagator of a new religious faith.

The change in his life and outlook is shown in a dramatic way through the descriptions of the three stages in his life. But we are not made to feel that Theos is the same individual all through. We do not visualize the change as organic, as one taking place under the inevitable stress of circumstance. The sudden rise of Tempest from the position of a poor man to that of a millionaire and his equally sudden fall are presented in The Sorrows of Satan without any corresponding psychological motivation. He inherits property from an unknown relative and becomes a wealthy man. His solicitors deceive him at the
end while he is touring on the continent of Europe and so he is poor again. The change in his life is arbitrary and mechanical. Characters like Theos and Tempest behave like puppets in the hands of the novelist. The novelist seems herself to be omnipotent Fate. Some of her characters occasionally become reflective and meditative. They remember their past life, as in the 'dying speech' of Sibyl in The Sorrows of Satan. But Sibyl's recollection of her past life is not 'the stream of consciousness' of a character like Mrs. Dalloway in Virginia Woolf. It is simply the past history of her training and of her family life. Reflectiveness on the part of the characters is itself seen to be nothing more than a device facilitating some inevitable narration.

Again, Corelli's method is mainly narrative rather than dramatic. She narrates how Thelma, Judith, Sibyl, Lotys, Errington, Thord and Guldmar look and behave. She rarely allows them to reveal their feelings and appearances themselves in action or in words. She almost always concentrated on the incidents in her narratives rather than on characterization. She tries to portray her characters mainly through descriptions of their outward nature and through comments of her own on their behaviour. Hence her characters are mostly sawdust figures acting according to the will of their creator. There is the great scene of Sibyl's passion for Lucio in The Sorrows of
Satan which can be taken as an instance of Corelli's elaborate art of portraiture. Her characterization of the passionate. Sibyl is laboured and ornate. Sibyl acts like the heroine of a heroic tragedy. Corelli's method of delineation reveals more the characteristics of her own power of narration rather than the qualities of the character in question. The scene takes place on a moonlit night. Kneeling before Lucio Sibyl says:

"I love you! ... Lucio, I love you, and my love is killing me! Be merciful! - have pity on my passion! - love me for one hour, one little hour. - it is not much to ask, and afterwards, - do with me what you will, - torture me, brand me an outcast in the public sight, curse me before Heaven - I care nothing - I am yours body and soul - I love you! ... Many men would give their lives if I would say to them what I say to you, - ... Lucio! ... Lucio! ... say what you will - ... I am vile - I own it. But is it of much avail to be virtuous? - What pleasure comes from goodness? - What gratification from self-denial? There is no God to care! A few years, and we will die, and are forgotten even by those who loved us, - why should we lose such joys as we may have for the mere asking? Surely it is not difficult to love even me for an hour? - am I not fair to look upon? - and is all beauty of my face and form worthless in your sight, and you no more than men? Murder me as you may with all the cruelty of words, I care nothing? - I love you-love you"! - "and in a perfect passion (says the narrator) of
self-abandonment she sprang to her feet, tossing back her rich hair over her shoulders, and stood erect, a very bacchante of wild liveliness." Sibyl again continues her entreaties and suggests Lucio a secret spot for the fulfilment of her passionate desire. But seeing Lucio's coldness she falls desperately on him: "With a sudden swift movement, she flung herself upon his breast, and circling her arms about his neck, lifted her face to his. The moonbeams showed me her eyes alit with rapture, her lips trembling with passion, her bosom heaving." The whole scene is melodramatic. Corelli's exaggerated descriptions, repetitions and unnatural dialogues are typical of her melodramatic manner of narration. Great artists portray the characters in their novels mainly through action and dialogue. They do not usually stand between the characters and the reader. Corelli not only offers comments on her characters but sometimes even addresses the reader in her novels. Her attempt to make her narration powerful is attained at the cost of vivid characterization.

Sometimes Corelli delineates characters through reports and talks about them by other characters in the novel. This is the novel. This is one of the devices employed in the interest of vivid characterization both in fiction and in drama. But

even in the use of this device, Corelli seems to lack the delicacy
and suggestive power of a great artist. Lady and Lord
Winsleigh arrange a brilliant social party in their house in
Thelma. While receiving the happy couple Lord Errington and
Thelma, Lord Winsleigh pays a compliment to Errington: "I
realise how very much my friend deserves to be congratulated
on his marriage." The novelist describes the effect of this
praise on Thelma: "Thelma smiles. This little speech pleases
her, but she does not accept the compliment implied to herself."
The tone here is affected. A great artist would have created
this impression of beauty indirectly. Homer does not devote
even a single page in his Iliad to describe the beauty of Helen.
But the power of her beauty is felt in the epic from beginning
to end.

Corelli's characters are generally types and nothing
more. They are static and almost mechanical. Even Thelma
never changes. Her adoration and reverence for her husband do
not decrease even when she is convinced about his supposed
disloyalty to her. It is only the malice of their so-called friends
that separates them for a few days. None of Corelli's char-
acters shows any change of attitude or feeling. The range of
Corelli's vision was very narrow. Her insight into the complexity
of life was not deep. It was shallow and superficial.

She seems to have lacked accurate knowledge about individuals. Although she introduces the theory of the immortality of the soul in her novels, she hardly knows the problems which the soul faces in the course of its progress. The inner world of human life—the hidden motives and delicate relationships of human beings do not appear to have been apprehended by her. That is how she fails in characterisation. Her sketches of Delicia and her husband are not consistent and they are even untrue to life.

Corelli's characters stand uncompromisingly either for good or for evil. They never seem mixed. Caiphas in Barabbas remains to the end a vile and vindictive priest. The Reverend Dyceworthy of Norway, who tries repeatedly to trap Thelma through villainous devices, and the extremely vain Sir Francis Lennox who also tries by every possible base contrivance to win Thelma, do not show any sign of change in their morals. Jacynth Miller in Holy Orders is a rural harlot in the beginning and an urban prostitute at the end. But her ethics never change. A brief reference to the life of the repentant Lady Winsleigh is made at the end of Thelma. But the change is entirely due to the poetic justice done to her by the novelist. Besides Thelma there is another good character, Azleia, in Holy Orders. She remains a source of joy to her husband till her untimely end. The pure love of Lotys for the king in Temporal Power.
asserts itself when she sees him in his disguise as Pasquin Leroy. It remains unaltered even when she discovers him to be the king against whom she had conspired. Her sense of morality and honour does not waver. She dies a martyr to love at the end, but does not expose the king. The essential character of Jane, in the novel by her name, does not change even when she leaves the quiet of the peaceful and simple life in her village and enters into the social whirl of city life. A change of environment in this manner would at least be a challenge or menace to her personality, even if it resulted in no change. Prince Humphry in Temporal Power remains loyal to his wife though she belongs to a low class family and though he has to face the problem of monarchical etiquettes. The chivalrous love of John Walden for the object of his love, in God's Good Man, increases when Maryllia Vancourt, his beloved, becomes a cripple through an accident. There is no objection to this increase in love. A possibility of this kind can be envisaged. But it should have been adequately motivated. Guldmar, the father of Thelma, always lives the heroic and noble life of pagan days.

Corelli had hardly any sense of humour or fun. Sigurd in Thelma is a dwarf. He behaves like an impulsive beast. He is a minor character. Corelli has no comic characters. The old Josey Letherborrow in God's Good Man seems to have some fun while playing with the younger folk. But he is more a moral
guide in his village than a source of mirth. In some of Corelli's other novels like *Thelma*, *Barabba* and *The Sorrows of Satan* there are heard some satiric and sardonic tones and there is neither a Pickwick nor a Kipps in her novels. Humour is supposed to be the attribute of a person of sympathetic understanding and broad outlook. The true humorist laughs at his own expense. He accepts the weaknesses of human beings as part of human nature generally. But there is no humour in Corelli. She was, what Scott-James has called her,—a mouthing prophetess without message. The themes in Corelli's novels show that her bent was towards the serious, morbid and gloomy side of life. Corelli seems to have understood broadly the restlessness and unhappiness of the public of her time and set out to cure it by prescribing a remedy. She had the deliberate intention of introducing a new creed in her novels and explaining and illustrating it almost with the zeal of a missionary.

Although Corelli propagates some new principles, her knowledge of philosophy or religion does not seem to have been grounded in direct perception or experience. It seems to be second hand, and acquired mainly from books. The priests of her creed, like Heliobas and Aselzion, are not real mystics or seers. Their sermons have no note of spontaneity in them. They mostly strike a didactic note. In none of her philosophical characters can we see the absolute sincerity and profundity of
a great philosophical thinker, like the Buddha or Jesus Christ. They seem to play merely the part of microphones in transmitting the philosophical views of the novelist.

Corelli's characters of both the sexes can be classified into some related groups. Firstly, there are the men who stand for some idealism and chivalric manhood, like Lord Errington in Thelma, the King and Sergius Thord in Temporal Power and the Reverend John Walden in God's Good Man. Some of Corelli's heroines, to whom married life is a sacred thing can also be included in this group. They are Fenken Thelma in the novel of her name, Justitia - the wife of the Roman Governor in Barabbas and Azalea in Holy Orders.

In the second group can be placed some men and women who have intense religious, intellectual or social or political interests. There are some instructors and reformers in religion and philosophy like Heliobas in A Romance of Two Worlds, in Ardath and in The Soul of Lilith, the Reverend Richard in Holy Orders, Aubrey Leigh in The Master Christian, Aselzion in The Life Everlasting, and the old Josey Litherborrow in God's Good Man. There are also some women characters who are interested either in society, in politics, in literature or in an ideal conception of love and life. These women are mostly spinster mothers and they lead an independent life as Corelli herself did. Some of them are novelists, like Irene Vassilius in The
In the third group may be placed some perverted men and women, decadent in their beliefs and doings. They are Sir Francis Lannox and the Reverend Charles Dyceworthy in Thelma, the Jewish priest Caiaphas in Barabbas, Lord Elton the father of Sibyl in The Sorrows of Satan, Lord Roxmouth in God's Good Man, Gifford Carlyon in The Murder of Delicia and the painter Amadis Jocelyn in Innocent. There are some vile women like Judith Iscariot in Barabbas, Sibyl Elton in The Sorrows of Satan, Lady Winsleigh in Thelma and Jacynth Miller in Holy Orders who can also be bracketed with this group.

In the fourth group may be included some sceptics and sophisticated men like Alwyn Theos in Ardath, Mr. Valliscourt in The Mighty Atom and the Philosopher in Love and the Philosophy.
There are numerous other characters in Corelli's novels. There is the dwarf, Sigurd, of beastly instincts, in *Thelma*. A 'brute' child - a product of absinthe, is referred to in *Wormwood*. In some novels like *The Mighty Atom* and *God's Good Man* there are boys, girls and young lovers. Some rustics also appear in novels like *The Treasure of Heaven*, *God's Good Man* and *Innocent*. Spirits and Angels also play an incidental part in novels like *A Romance of Two Worlds*, *Barabbas* and *The Sorrows of Satan*. The plots of Corelli's novels include a vast area of life and are fields full of folk. Numerous men and women come and go. They help the writer's descriptions of gatherings and parties and they mark, in a way, the progress of the narration in her novels. They do not seem to serve any other artistic purpose.

Fate seems to dominate the lives of Corelli's characters when the novelist herself does not do so. The characters are not dynamic. They seem always to be acted upon by the spur of circumstance. The characters seem to be remarkable, not for what they perform themselves, but for the adventures and experiences through which they are compelled to pass in the course of their lives. It is Fate and its tool, environment, that shape the ends of Corelli's characters. Sometimes they appear to be merely passive spectators of the very events which concern them. The heroines in *A Romance of Two Worlds*, and *The
Life Everlasting, and Theos in Ardaith are only observers of the happenings around them. But these happenings bring about ultimately a profound change in their lives. Corelli cared mainly for the rapid flow of her narration. Her characters, instead of furthering the narration, seem to float on the flow of narration. As Bertha Vyver says, Corelli's characters are merely her brain children. They have become puppets in her hands: "Most of her characters sprang to life as the children of her imagination." Every great artist creates his characters on the basis of mental or imaginative impressions which he has gathered all his life. Therefore, in a way, all characters in literature are children of the artist's imagination. But a great artist makes them dynamic and full-blooded. He endows them with verisimilitude. They do not strike the reader as remote and improbable. Even fairies like Puck and Ariel can breathe the human air if they have been created by an artist like Shakespeare. Corelli lacked this imaginative power.

Poetic justice is everywhere at work in Corelli's novels. Good persons are rewarded and evil ones punished. The heroine of Vendetta, Nina, meets with a horrible end. A big stone from the roof of the vault falls on her head and she dies instantly. Her jealous husband also lives a penitential life, lamenting

his vindictive action. But Thelma and Errington are saved from the malignant contrivances of their society friends. They escape many dangers in Norway and live happily afterwards. The latter period of the life of Helena, Countess of Elton, in The Sorrows of Satan, was practically a life in death. She was paralysed. She had led a fast life in her youth. Her dead body was even horrible to look at. Lucio says: "The paralysed Helen of a modern Troy? Yes—her countenance of the last was certainly not attractive. Beauty combined with wantonness frequently ends in the drawn twitch, fixed eye and helpless limbs of life-in-death. It is Nature's revenge on the outraged beauty."

On the other hand, when good persons die at the end, their deaths are made glorious and triumphant. The King and Lotys in Temporal Power die for each other's love and honour and they are glorified as the models of true love. Innocent and Delicia, in the novels bearing their names, die at the end, tortured by the brutality of the men whom they adored. But a moral grandeur hovers round their death beds and their deaths are made sublime. The young lovers in The Mighty Atom—the delicate boy Lionel and the angel-like Jessamine,—die at the end of the novel. Sophisticated parents may try to sever them now. But Nature joins them again after death and their love is glorified as immortal.

Footle Justice is a useful artistic convention. It is adopted by many great English novelists of the traditional school, like Fielding, Scott and Dickens. It serves the moral purpose of the novelist. But it should not appear to be unnatural and deliberate. If it is forced, the effect of the novel will be lost. In some of Corelli's novels, poetic justice almost obtrudes itself on the reader. Edwin Muir describes the artistic use of poetic justice in romantic novels in the following terms: "In its course the novel of action will generally deal out death to certain of the subsidiary characters; the wicked will be slaughtered; and some even of the good may safely be sacrificed, so long as the hero returns to peace and prosperity after his tumultuous vocation. The plot, in short, is in accordance with our wishes, not with our knowledge. It externalises with greater power than we ourselves possess our natural desire to live dangerously and yet be safe; to turn things upside down, transgress as many laws as possible, and yet escape the consequences. It is a fantasy of desire rather than a picture of life."1 Corelli's wicked characters die generally in the end and those of them that survive, like Gaston in Wormwood and Fabio Romani in Vendetta, lead a penitent or secluded life. Her good characters, like Errington in Thelma, overcome all dangers

in the course of their life. In some of them like the King in *Temporal Power* die at the end, almost a saintly halo encircles their heads. Many of Corelli's minor characters meet with death or vanish altogether from the action of the novel when their incidental function in the novel is over.

Corelli makes free use of the supernatural element in some of her novels. It adds to the sensationalism which characterizes her stories. Angels appear in them as the companions or guides of mortal beings. An angel Azul guides the liberated soul of the heroine in *A Romance of Two Worlds* in the regions of Heaven. Two angels, in *Barabbas*, descending from Heaven, stand in attendance to receive the resurrected Jesus at the place of his burial. In some of her romances, Corelli institutes blood relationships between angels and human beings. The angel Edris takes the form of a woman to join her earthly lover, Theo, in *Ardath*. Jesus Christ himself appears in the form of the boy, Manuel, in *The Master Christian* to revive the true message of his Gospel. Satan is seen as prince Lucio in *The Sorrows of Satan*. Lucio invites spirits to serve in the pleasure party of Tempest in the same novel. The ghost of Nina seems to beckon Romani with her hand to follow her to the regions of Hell in *Vendetta*: "I see a little white hand on which the jewels cluster thick like drops of dew! The hand moves... it lifts itself, the small fingers point at me slowly, solemnly..."
commanding onward! ... to some infinite land of awful mysteries
where Light and Love shall dawn for me no more! 

... that the most glaring limitation of the Corelli novels is this deficiency in

Corelli introduces supernatural figures as mechanically in her novels as she does many of the mortals. They are puppets or types with hardly any life of their own. She seems to have used supernatural machinery whenever she found it useful for developing the plots in her novels. It produces some sensational effect. But it cannot be said to serve any higher artistic purpose. It does not, for instance, enrich the significance of the whole story as the ghost of the king does in Hamlet, or as the witches do in Macbeth. Nor does Corelli create out of it a fantastic world of comedy as Shakespeare did in A Midsummer Night's Dream. Corelli use of the supernatural strikes one as faint and shadowy in comparison with its use even in the romantic novels of Scott.

On the whole, it must be acknowledged that the most glaring limitation of the Corelli novels is this deficiency in

characterisation, this traffic with shadows. Hardly any character "comes out alive and lives on in our imagination. If we remember some of them, we do so, not for their own sake, but for the golden aura of description which surrounds them. The best in this kind are but shadows. But the worst are shadows of shadows.

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