CHAPTER III

DEVIATION

Novel as a literary form has become very popular from the beginning of the twentieth century. It is difficult to say whether it has eclipsed poetry and drama, but it has managed to compete successfully with the radio and the cinema. Almost every day a number of novels are published and they have a reading public throughout the world. What is noteworthy in the modern novel is a frank and free treatment of the problems of love, sex and marriage. The most popular novel of D.H. Lawrence, The Lady Chatterly's Lover was initially pronounced to be pornographic. Later Lawrence came to be accepted as a philosopher. He considers a perfect spiritual and physical union between man and woman as the only way for the realization of God.

This chapter attempts a psychological analysis of the problems encountered by lovers and marital indiscretions of the couple. The major characters of John Braine's novels The Jealous God, Life at the Top, Stay with Me Till Morning and The Two of Us are settled in their lives but still feel unsettled owing to various reasons. Each one has a different cause for this uncomfortable feeling but the root cause of this uneasiness is always a member of his family.

The answer to why a person is led into any painful situation needs an analysis of intricate relationships. Based on their own nature human beings
keep on groping for relationships which can be more satisfying. A search for
the mirage of perfect compatibility makes a person sometime flit from one
relationship to another. Individuals engaged in this pursuit forget that perfect
unity and compatibility are nearly impossible to achieve. Human nature is
imperfect and a search for a perfect relationship by wandering from one
relationship to another can give momentary happiness but not permanent bliss.
Such a kind of wandering may leave in its wake a trial of misery and
frustration.

Every human being is tied to his home and the family members by
invisible threads of emotion. "When the person changes these ties in someway,
these forces become stressed and the person experiences annoyance, hostility,
confusion, home-sickness or some similar emotional response". Instead of
wandering in search of a perfect companion an effort should be made to make
the existing relationship more meaningful and satisfying.

The novel The Jealous God incorporates John Braine's religious vision
of hope in ordinary life and mortal love. Vincent Dungarvan, the protagonist
of the novel is a person made of virtue and of mortal beauty. Braine through
him explores the range of human possibility by delineating "the human heart
in conflict with itself". He continues his probing into the psychology of his
characters, their lives deeply determined by time.

Vincent Dungarvan's inner conflict is between religion and love. Religion to him is a vocation and love more than an avocation. Time governs
the life of Braine's characters. "He meets and falls in love with (a librarian) the beautiful Laura, a non-Catholic. It is not until he is deeply involved with her that he finds out that she is a divorcée and thus, in the eyes of the church, still married, even though her former husband is a homosexual. Vincent, tries to leave her, but his passion and jealousy prove too strong for him".2 (Book Review Digest, 1966)

Women govern him at every stage be it his mother or lady love or sister-in-law. His mother chooses his vocation as a Catholic priest. He is taught how to love by Laura. His sister-in-law shows him the negative results of spurned love. Maureen finds him better than her husband. Having a rather smart, affectionate young man as a brother-in-law is too tempting indeed for her. His growing concern for Laura and the equal response of affection received by him is indeed too much for her to bear.

"The conflicts are objectified and dramatized, they are seldom discussed in the abstract and even more rarely meditated upon by Vincent himself".3 (Buitenhuys, 1965) Jealously finds only one outlet. Her letter informing Laura's former husband causes trouble in the lives of Vincent and Laura and this chaos gratifies her. Braine reveals in her a case of abnormal psychology. She is possessive of her innocent brother-in-law. "Repressed memories, desires and conflicts are held to be the source of neurotic anxiety which manifests itself as various symptoms".4 Time and again she points out that Vincent is better-looking, more caring and more affectionate than her husband. Having desired for a long period and got him she does not want to lose him out to another
woman. It is again Vincent’s mother who could guess the hand of Maureen’s in the anonymous letter though he receives a little more of her taunts and disapprobation of his life.

The Jealous God is a novel in the third person narrative. Perhaps Braine felt detachment is the only way to achieve verisimilitude since his hero’s primary anguish is his Catholic faith. A sort of philosophical composure is developed in Vincent’s mind. It is more a fight between the head and the heart and is superficially depicted by Vincent’s Catholic faith and his anguish to marry a divorced woman. His religion restricts him to trespass the social code but his heart dictates and leads him to his ultimate peace. Listening to the heart he forsakes his higher ideal.

The title can be taken as an insinuation of the higher ideal or God’s envy of mortal love. Love overpowers Vincent and thereby his Catholic faith. It lures him to familial bonds. He realises that an individual’s inner identity is shaped by cosmic love. “It is true that Vincent is supposed to be incapable of feeling enough, is even accused by Laura not being a real person at all”.5 Once love enters the human heart it grows, and finally encompasses the person with the whole universe. Vincent favours love and serves love by being in love to the utter envy of God. He breaks free from the shackles of limiting social structure by marrying Laura. Unlike Shakespeare’s Hamlet, his procrastinating spirit leads him to a primrose path of love, honour and peace.
Braine’s houses, pubs and clubs are not creations of fantasy. They are familiar scenes and the writer does not approximate the remote and familiarize the wonderful. The wild confrontations, accusations, secrets and recognitions are commonplace in any family setup. "The most notable and successful aspect of the novel is its sense of the family group". Life after all is a world of learning, of fumbling, pausing and beginning again. The protagonist demands harmony from the family web. "In typically English fashion, the various sons and their families and the surviving grand parent live in or around the same town; their lives overlap emotionally as well as physically". The demiquaver of theology crystallizes with a beautiful simplicity in the material world.

Braine takes shape as a writer with a sharp eye for some fragmented persistence of meaning and order. His heroes seem moralists out of season. Yet they do not have the Victorian reticence of sex or dyspeptic amour. In The Jealous God one feels that he is in the midst of twilight of the old morality. His novels are electrifying showing his determination to write honestly about his controversial protagonist.

None of his characters are persecuting saints. Hailing from a good family does not prevent Vincent from sharing a little more than an affection with Maureen. He does not regret his behaviour with Laura’s ex-husband. He appears a tragic misfit caught in the whirlpool of expectations and events. His mother expects him to serve religion while he turns out to be a priest of love. He is a rebel with a cause which is love.
Man's love for woman and his marriage with her means that God loves people and is not divorced from them. The likely reason is that Braine sees marriage as a paradigm of the divine - human union and not merely as a reasonable and convenient method of organizing one's life. Braine has implied an irony in the title itself. No God would be jealous of any human being; to complain that God is jealous amounts only to absurdity. If anyone wants to know whether God could be jealous of Vincent's love for Laura the answer is 'no'. "It is not until he is deeply involved with her that he finds out that she is a divorcee and thus, in the eyes of the church, still married".8

The idea planted in the mind of the protagonist that as a Catholic he cannot marry a divorcee makes him rebel against God. "Those who do not successfully negotiate this phase of psychosexual development are vulnerable to obsessive - Compulsive problems in later years".9 A person who suffers from suppressed feelings wants to blame the person who is responsible for it. But here there is no such person who can be blamed. The grandmother even approves of his relationship with Laura. The mother and brothers have misgivings about the marriage because of their traditional upbringing. Till Vincent acquires courage to break such shackles and free himself of such beliefs he would consider God or the system, jealous or bad. When he makes a clean breast of his feelings to the Head master he gives him the best advice.

"But, frankly, be selfish. Have no thought of pleasing anyone else. Don't be in the least guilty if your decision displeases anyone else. It's too important a matter to be squeamish about". (J.G. p.157). "The person with a
low self-concept is constantly concerned with what others think of him. His behaviour is under their control, not his. But Vincent has a positive self-concept and he can easily relate to other people irrespective of their characteristics.

Knowing oneself is not an easy thing; a person may spend a whole lifetime without knowing himself. Sometimes he is brain-washed into thinking that he ought to like certain things and abhor certain things. Such a man becomes a victim of other people’s ideals and he is forced to identify himself with someone else’s ambition as it happens to Dungarvan.

According to A Student’s Dictionary of Psychology. “The super ego is formed in early childhood by internalizing the parent’s system of rewards and punishments, so that the child comes to operate according to these rules even when the parents are not present. It is not quite the same as the conscience as it retains an infantile version of the parent’s rules which is likely to be severe and intolerant”. Only when a person learns the truth about himself he is able to take the right decision and achieve his goal. Vincent’s oscillation is put to an end when his adult conscience takes over and suppresses the other factors responsible for his wavering. “The adult conscience may be much more realistic and sophisticated and so may come into conflict with the super ego”.

Vincent’s mother considers a marriage proposal to a divorced lady while her husband is alive, a mortal sin. Her objection to his genuine desire
and negative attitude to his marriage make Vincent anxious. "Anxiety reactions are usually triggered off by a stressful situation which brings underlying personality problems into painful focus". When she warns him of such a mortal danger Vincent senses a pain in his chest; his anger and physical distress are so great that he cannot find a way of obtaining a relief except by physical violence. When he shakes off his mother's hand she cries, "He's going off to that whore, My fine handsome son's going off to the arms of a married woman. My pride and my joy, my fine clever son who I thought one day would even be one of God's holy priests". (J.G. pp.132-133).

In spite of his mother's tantrums, tears and accusations Vincent feels that Laura is a human being and a fact that she is a Protestant is not her fault. Slowly, very slowly he is trying to have a grip over himself and discard the age old beliefs thrust on him. "What a person thinks of himself is not a closed system encapsulated within the boundary of his own being; on the contrary, it reaches out to manipulate his relationships with others". When he quarrels with his mother he feels desperate and visits his brother Matthew's house and ends up in an affair with his sister-in-law, Maureen.

He is in for a surprise when he consults his lawyer brother Paul regarding his possibility of marrying Laura. Paul brushes him aside when Vincent tells him that he loves Laura and wants to marry her.

"I'll tell you when you find out about love. When you have children. Believe me, until then marriage is very nice but there's nothing so wonderful
about it. One little golden casket's very like another". (J.G. p.230). It is obvious that Paul does not want his brother to get wedded to Laura for the sake of passion. His is a practical advice and it indicates his experience in conjugal life and his love for his children. The language used by Braine in such conversations is very simple and it comes from the heart and goes to the heart. It is observed, "His writing is free of the rather lengthy, ornate sentence structure that is considered typically British by most Americans (p.65)".15 (James W. Lee, 1968)

"[In The Jealous God] Mr. Braine shows that he is capable of making a journey beyond the reaches of his own immediate experience, which is the hallmark of a developing novelist".16 Many people who profess belief in God neglect their moral duties and actually break moral principles. So, belief in God has proved time and again to be an insufficient ground for guaranteeing moral behaviour. "John Braine, in short, has not written a Catholic tale that goes very deeply into the mysteries or meaning of Catholic life".17

Moral responsibilities, duties and obligations are grounded in a person's prior commitments and loyalties and in his place within a concrete network of social relationships: as parent child, friend, lover and teacher. It all depends on one's personal relationship to others and various occupations and roles within a social scheme. "The depth, warmth and humanity in the novel The Jealous God are characteristics which attract a lover of novels. It deserves a place in most fiction collections. And a word for the cautious: sex is neither too frequent nor too explicit by what they call 'contemporary standards'".18
Thirty is not too early an age to fall in love with and that is what Vincent does when he meets Laura. The course of a life of a normal person is affected by the abnormal behaviour of a person near him. Thus Laura confesses to Vincent in *The Jealous God* the behaviour of her husband Robert. She is quite a spirited, understanding and loving woman and even she feels that she cannot give him what he demands. "But he wanted always just what I wouldn't give." She put her hand on her breast as if in pain. "If only he'd given me a child. But the idea of me being pregnant made him sick." (J.G. p.210).

Compared to her husband, Laura feels, Vincent is quite a normal person with healthy appetites. She is willing to please him in all possible ways, "You can do what you like with me, you can ask me to keep you and I'll keep you, you can make me pregnant every year and I'll never grumble. You'll never ask me to pretend -"

"Pretend what?"

"I can't tell you," she said (J.G. p.210).

What exactly is the problem of Robert, Laura finds it difficult to tell Vincent. As a woman she might find it difficult to disclose the paticular defect of a man. Braine as a novelist would have liked to keep it a suspense. "Neurosis often springs from a failure in adulthood to achieve satisfaction and purpose from life itself". Anyway Vincent, like the reader is kept guessing. From her clues Vincent arrives at the conclusion that Robert is a homosexual
and so he does not have the normal desire a man has for his spouse. He would make a good case for a psychiatrist as he considers a normal thing ugly and awful looking. But his demands as a husband are so peculiar that even a highly sportive person like Laura finds it embarrassing to oblige. What irritates her more is the fact that he is against having children. It is a common feature of a female character of Braine to desire to have children. Some of them insist on having as many children as possible and Laura is one among them.

It is really strange that Robert should stage a comeback just because he receives an anonymous letter. His innate jealousy is set ablaze by the fact that someone is having a good time with his former wife. If he is not possessive about her he would not have bothered to rush towards her place. He is akin to a person who chases a shadow. People who chased shadows before him ended up only in self deception. "Were a sapling, by some quirk of nature, to fail to grow to its full height, normal blame could be attached to it; equally, an adult neurotic who fails to develop along the natural path of sexual maturity (to genital heterosexuality) may be ‘abnormal’, but is certainly not to be regarded as immoral".20 (The Context of English Literature 1900 - 1930) His presence only creates a scene. Laura is unable to stand a dog in the manger attitude of Vincent and so she calls him a filthy hypocrite. When Robert tries to stop him Vincent hits him on the mouth and he starts bleeding. However much she loves Vincent she cannot stand this physical violence exhibited by Vincent.
It sounds rather strange that the lover should be jealous of the husband. He calls the husband names and wants to know the person who sent him there. Laura shows great courage and a balanced attitude at times of crisis. She does not want Robert to be hurt even if he had illtreated her in the past. She manages the situation in an admirable way while cradling Robert's head on her lap. She says "Mr. Dungarvan's demonstrated his virility now, and he's going home. Going home to Mother. He's a mummy's boy, you see. Don't answer him." (J.G.p.244)

The problem of Robert could be understood only if a case study of his psychological development is made. "A variety of inner and outer forces may combine to oppose the enactment of perverse sexual longing; forces that Freud calls 'shame, disgust, and morality'. Even when he wants to turn a new leaf in life everything ends up the same way as before. Vincent's mother feels that everything repeats itself, Vincent repeats the mistakes of his father. 'Her pious lectures, passionate tirades, melodramatic attitudinizing and general intolerance are superbly handled'. His father had an affair with a married woman and he thought that his pious wife was blind to it. When Vincent wants to know whether she hated her father for that, she confesses with tears running down her cheeks that she loved him.

Robert some how wants to have a grip over himself and settle down with Laura. "There is a kind of sexual 'fixation' from which he is unable to free himself. It is the purpose of psychoanalytic treatment to allow the release of this energy, and thus to allow normal maturation to recommence." (Book
Review Digest, 1965) He even mentions the fact that he would consult a psychiatrist and get himself cured. Finally he wants to have a word with Vincent whom he considers worse than a dog. When Vincent says that he cannot change Laura's mind for going back to Robert because she is doing it from a sense of christian duty. That remark really hurts Robert. But Vincent enjoys inflicting pain on his rival. "You can't have your cake and eat it too. You choose either to be ruled by emotion or by reason." (J.G. p.273). Little does Vincent realize that what he has said is applicable to himself. Robert wants to know whether Vincent is still having an affair with Laura even after he has comeback. Vincent capitalizes on this doubt and hurts Robert by giving an affirmative reply.

Braine in his characteristic way gives the account of the feelings of Vincent. "He was surprised at the quality of his pleasure, which every moment added to; revenge was as sweet as the cliche said but it was a varied sweetness, a cumulative sweetness; differently coloured layers piling up, one after the other, a sundae for adults". (J.G. p.274). Jealousy makes Vincent physically ill. "Jealousy is such a universal experience that most people naively regard it as 'normal'." 24(Reuben Fine, 1979) He tries his best to put Laura out of his mind but the very idea of her husband getting closer to her makes him sad. When Robert demands the truth from him he gives an answer which actually expedites his death. He kills himself consuming too many sleeping tablets.
"Death is inherent in human life itself, and as life is power, so death is defeat of man's power. The defeat may come soon or late, but come it will for every individual." 25 The death of her husband completely shakes Laura and she appears a pathetic sight when she reaches the house of Vincent. Vincent's mother is touched to hear the sad tale and her attitude towards Laura is completely changed when she comes to know that all along she is illtreated by the indiscretions of not one but two men. When she wants him to be kind to her she does not issue any order in her usual way. She makes it a kind of request. Vincent has a vision of Robert washing down pill after pill and he imagines blood on his hands. He feels that he is partly responsible for his death.

Laura confesses to him that Robert had a suicidal tendency even earlier. She is of the opinion that nobody can plumb the depths of human despair and the motives that lead to self-destruction. He had often talked about killing himself before and so she has not taken him seriously. Now as she has taken him to be a reformed person she tells him that she is going to have a baby. But he calls her a filthy cow and wants her to get rid of it. "If people feel no personal control over aversive events, they become increasingly anxious." 26 (R.B. Burns, 1991) In retaliation Laura calls him names and wants him to prove himself a man. That drives him mad and culminates in his tragic death.

"Loss of personal control has a powerful effect on any person who has to be institutionalised." 27 After the emotional outburst she is able to look at
things in a detached manner. According to her Robert was in a trap and so he succumbed to his own mental aberrations.

"Undoubtedly, some forms of depressions are chemical in origin; some underlying psychotic disorders may be gnawing deep within the person's bowels; and he may be unable to control his choices".28 Laura's confession which is spontaneous affects Vincent who also feels like a penitent. When she wants to know whether he is going away he replies that he will not go away anywhere without her. They sit in silence as the Russians do before a journey. When his mother enters the room he does not take his arm away from Laura's shoulders. He realizes that the new order has changed the old order. He has the approval of his mother now to undertake the journey and the copassenger Laura will go steady with him.

James W. Lee's comment on The Jealous God is worth considering as a genuine appreciation. "At best it can be said that his style is clear and pleasant, and in the fourth novel [The Jealous God] atleast, well adapted to theme, character and plot".29 Braine manages to balance man's weakness with woman's strength and vice versa. The development of the novel The Jealous God differs from other novels as the characters behave in an unpredictable manner. Braine himself insists on this quality in his book Writing A Novel. "If they are to be credible as human beings, their behaviour shouldn't be predictable".30
Braine is praised for his characterisation, mainly that of Mrs. Dungarvan in this novel. "She is the most fully realized character and is of such dimensions as to stick in the reader’s remembrance long after Vincent fades into the background". Different aspects of family relationships are handled in this novel by Braine. This is definitely different from his previous novels. The hero does not go after wealth or power but he also succumbs to weaknesses like passion and jealousy. "But it is a good, workman like novel, and it manages to suggest spiritual values far more important than those the author pictured-in the world of getting ahead financially and socially - for his earlier Room at the Top". (Book Review Digest, 1965.)

Joe’s attitude towards other women and towards material success is highlighted in Life at the Top. His position in society is going up steadily but he is losing his mental peace slowly. When his personal dignity is affected he neither cares for his wife nor for a wealthy father-in-law. Once he is provoked even his rich enemies are afraid of him. He easily makes up his mind to leave his wife on grounds of temperamental incompatibility. But he hesitates even to think of living away from his daughter and son. Memory of them fills him with sadness when he is separated from them. The lure of the other woman or a lucrative job do not offer him peace of mind.

As the initial euphoria fades every relationship tends to open up and reveals each individual’s inadequacies and imperfections. The characters involved also realize that there is a power above them which controls them. Anyone who acts in the heat of anger or passion cannot arrive at the right
decision. Joe himself feels that at one stage - "A hand had come down and pushed me into her arms; a hand had come down and pushed me to London; a hand had come down and pushed me away from my son". (L.A.T. p.274)

Thus Norah the other woman in Life at the Top feels that she does not stand a chance against Joe Lampton's four year old daughter Barbara. Their plan to settle down as man and wife in London goes haywire once Joe receives news of his children. Life at the Top is a sequel to Room at the Top. As Joe's wife Susan observes Norah is a 'cowtype' and Alice earlier who belonged to that category succumbed to the 'Joe Charm' and died of disappointment. In Life at the Top after ten years of married life to Susan he wants to desert her and the children to make a fresh start at London with Norah.

The main cause of his decision is not just the arrival of a new lady in his life but the new found fact that Susan has been unfaithful to him. The wife has provided him enough reasons to deviate from the trodden path. "Monogamy is among the most dependable of social institutions, for it provides a means of satisfying sexual needs in a stable and secure environment, and it protects individuals from the passion of fear, jealousy, and envy that enter where there is sexual rivalry, competition, and uncertainty".33

The institution of marriage has a social purpose. Compared to all other animals, it is the human infant which is physically and emotionally dependent on its parents for the longest time. For the proper development of the baby a
secure and peaceful shelter which is free of tensions is required. Every novel of Braine insists on a peaceful atmosphere at home for a healthy growth of the children. The husband and the wife have to make small sacrifices often to provide this atmosphere for their offspring.

Every human being is vulnerable to social or domestic pressures. Susan's reasons for her affair with Mark are psychological. Though he is not a macho man like Joe he listens to her, cares for her and cries on her shoulder when he is defeated. A woman has a weakness to care for the weakest person. Mark succeeds in evoking the mother in her. Whereas her husband is full of pride and hatred; he hates his in-laws and hates everyone he works with. He is not afraid of power or influence and he can fight with anybody ferociously like an animal. In reality the appearance of an angry young man is only a mask that Joe wears. When someone shows him love he would do anything that the other person demands. When Susan speaks of her husband's love for their daughter she acknowledges that, "One word from him and she does what she likes," Susan said, "She can twist him round her little finger and she knows it." (L.A.T. p.119). The real Joe is different from what he appears to be outside and that is understood by Norah at a late stage and by Susan at a later stage.

Braine makes it a point to drive home the truth that frustrations cannot be wiped out by drinking heavily or indulging in an illicit affair. When he is "bitter and twisted" all inside, the hero of Braine does not want to have any illusion about himself. Susan's father suffers from egotism and so he has a tendency to overvalue himself and therefore undervalue other people.
Naturally Mr. Brown has an ego clash with Joe. He refuses to allow Joe to take the car while Susan readily gives him the car keys inspite of their serious difference of opinion. For once she silences her father and takes the side of Joe who is emotionally disturbed. He decides not to hurt his wife any further and wants to quit the domestic scene without much furore.

Norah soon realizes that she is only a mistress who is not even privileged to nag her lover. When he hesitates to leave the home because of the children she assures him that she could give him children. The protagonist of Braine is not a shirker of responsibilities, when he leaves his wife and children he decides to have another wife and more children through her.

"Some relationships may be purely sexual, entered into with a wild passion in order to satisfy erotic desires". But Joe is essentially a family man tied down to his domestic duties and loved ones. Only when his ego is hurt he wants to deviate from his chosen path. But at London he realises that he cannot forget his children. Though he does not want to admit his love for his wife he is unable to suppress his feelings when Mrs. Brown, his mother-in-law calls on him, "despite her grey hair, something about the line of her back reminded me of Susan, I was surprised to feel not hatred or pain, but a kind of physical affection." (L.A.T. p.264).

Norah understands the futility of clinging on to an affair when it has lost all its meaning. "Although sexual compatibility is generally a necessary ingredient for a fulfilling marital relationship, it is not sufficient in itself, for
there are other needs and interests that a marital relationship satisfies.\(^{35}\) The separation serves as a kind of shock treatment for both the husband and the wife. It helps them to indulge in a bit of self analysis and arrive at a decision which is good for all. Every activity of an intelligent person is directed towards a quest for some reality. Once the quest is over the person is richer with the knowledge of something about himself. It helps him to see things in a new perspective and lead a better life. Thus Joe realises at the end of the novel that it is not enough to live; one should live well.

So Joe ceases to be the Angry Young man he was. He is forced to realize that there is no use of carrying the anger throughout his life. Anger is like a dangerous acid. Its corrosive effect harms the person who has it more than the one at whom it is thrown. Now that he has attained clarity he is not bothered whether Mark is the father of Barbara or not. "People are only human; there may be an occasional affair or experience with someone else, and the marriage can still continue."\(^ {36}\) As far as he is concerned he is her father and there is an end of it.

Estranged couple getting united may be an old theme. No novelist wants to be condemned as a corrupter of human beings. But often some of the novels are changed with elements of corrupting influence because of the way they present certain realities of life. "This does not make adultery right, for if two persons are in love and are sexually compatible, then they have a general primum facie obligation not to break their explicit or implicit vows."\(^ {37}\)
novelist gives the danger signals to the person who deviates from the proper path unnecessarily and courts all kinds of problems in life.

It is an accepted fact that no man can live by bread alone. The same thing is applicable to an affair if the man has a mind to think and a heart to feel. "It is possible that John Braine's Stay With Me Till Morning [Published in the United States as The View from Tower Hill] still expresses the mood of his generation in the 1970s. There's not much left in this sixth novel of the go-getting ruthlessness that made Joe Lampton seems so 'modern' in Room at the Top". A torrid affair could soothe a grief-stricken person for the time being. But it is no permanent cure, the pain comes back again. No intelligent person who really cares for his health would ruin himself by taking too many painkillers.

The title of the novel Stay With Me Till Morning suggests an urgency and plea. It arouses the curiosity of the reader who wishes to know immediately who the speaker is. But any regular fiction lover would surmise that his curiosity will be satisfied only after he completes reading the novel. Modern fiction thrives on the curiosity of the reader and for many questions raised in the course of the novel one has to lookup to psychology for further clarification. Gay bachelors and happy-go-lucky girls get entangled with each other and feel fettered for different reasons.

It is observed in a book of psychology titled The Tangled Wing (1982). "Human males in every society are more aggressive than human females, and
the former account for the overwhelming majority of homicidal violence in all human groups. Such violence is often occasioned by sexual infidelity. Often it is attributed to the indifference of the spouse; a lack of interest in the family affairs is misconstrued as indifference. There are many contributory factors for this lack of interest.

Modern Man is everyday tossed from one end to another facing many problems. A kind of boredom is generally recognised among educated people and it is easily relieved by temporary sensations of sexual excitement and scandal. Studies which focus on fluctuations of mind - Cyclothymia, manic-depressive psychosis - have become very popular. Often illness has been clearly the outcome of hereditary predisposition or it has accentuated personality traits affecting daily life and in the higher levels, affecting also literary, artistic and scientific creations. Even men of genius like Goethe, Cowper and Luther were at the mercy of their emotional ups and downs.

It is sometimes easier in fiction to make things or people turn out as they should - according to formula than in real life. The reader wants to judge society from the standpoint of good and evil and these categories have been reduced to mental health and psychosomatic disorder. Clive a home loving hero of the novel Stay With Me Till Morning deviates from the golden path due to marital indiscretions.

"Stay With Me Till Morning belongs to the dog bitten middle years - disillusioned, backward - looking, pragmatic in human relationships". Robin
his wife is a practical lady and acknowledges him to be an ideal mate. But even she falls a prey to the arrows of Cupid when Stephen her old lover enters into their lives, Robin’s affair with Stephen pushes Clive into the arms of Vicky, a married but frustrated woman.

Anybody who analyses human psychology makes an observation which stands like a philosophic truth. For example Jonathan Glover in his famous book says, "In the Kantian account of our psychology, actions are not autonomous when controlled by desires. Freedom only exists when the Will takes a decision based on reason alone, independent of any desire". Any wise woman could have made use of such an opportunity to heal his wounds and in the process make a life-long arrangement. But Vicky is foolish, gets drunk and very nearly kills both of them. There is no excuse for Clive to plunge into an affair with Vicky just because his wife has a clandestine affair with Stephen. People who take to drinking often blame some sad event in their life. Even after the particular phase of their lives passes they continue drinking. The only good thing about her is she confesses everything to Clive when she is sober. It helps him to analyse everything in a new light. He realizes that life with such a temperamental lady would be miserable.

Man is confident of living away from his wife if the other woman can play the role of a wife well. But a home does not mean only a female companion; it cannot be limited to a single definition. In Life at the Top Joe thinks of even the clean bathroom at home with a sense of nostalgia when he stays with Norah in a rented apartment. The dirty water trickling through the
shower makes him shrink. The fact that a body which is used to certain comforts in life cannot live without them dawns on Joe. Clive in Stay With Me Till Morning tries to create the atmosphere of home in the rented apartment by filling it up with his favourite musical records and drinks. A husband is considered a provider; when the wife strays he feels that there is someone to provide her with all her needs.

"One learns from experience that if a marriage is to be viable, one ought to bend, nor to carry a grudge, not to lose one's temper; and if one does, to apologize, to forgive and forget, kiss and makeup, and not be so pig-headed or emotional that one can't discuss a problem".42 But a good father knows in his heart of hearts that no one can substitute him. The very idea of the effect of separation on Petronella, his daughter affects Clive so much that he swoons and falls down.

Young children consider their father a tower of strength. Young Harry in Life At The Top complains that his father was not by his side when he needed him most. Psychologically the children feel better when the father is around; they want to discuss their misgivings and problems. Whether their father can solve them or not the intensity of the trouble is minimised once it is reported. An educated father can easily assume the role of a psychiatrist and treat any psychological problem of his children. Similarly no good mother would fail her children; atleast for their sake she wants her husband to stay with her. "Mr. Braine seems to be saying that money is dull and that sex can be upsetting. Clive and Robin Lendrick are a decent, amiable couple; snug in
the provinces they have always lived 'according to plan', have 'kept to the rules', appreciating their 'solid prosperity'.43 (Nora Sayre, 1971) A conversation at the end between Robin and Clive is very significant.

"Some people would say we were immoral", she said. "But they don't have to live our lives, do they? We've got to come to arrangements without making too much of a song and a dance about it. In the end all we've got is each other."

"Yes", he said, "And a home". He glanced behind at the house. 'I'll not leave here till they take me out in my coffin. Ruth said once —" he stopped.

"Go on".

"She said she knew I'd never stay with her because I'd always be wanting to come back here". (S.M.T.M. p.248). In Stay With Me Till Morning Ruth brings sweetness and light into the life of Clive whereas Vicky brings only problems. "Sexual and affectional needs may also be met in truly loving relationships, so instinct, reality and conscience are all satisfied at once".44 Braine does not intend Clive to be a Hamlet facing problems that he cannot solve. His problem is domestic and he can tackle it with a little bit of luck and tact. He allows for a while the outward agencies to confuse him. But at the end he manages to see things clearly and helps even Vicky to understand her condition. His basic nature asserts itself at the end.
It’s Mark’s wife who tells Robin, "My dear, I’ll swap husbands with you anytime. Joe lives for his children and his work. Mark just lives for his pleasures. His sordid pleasures, his low rotten pleasures." (L.A.T. p.119). Man is influenced by woman. Braine’s hero is influenced not only by the wife but also by his girl friend and his daughter. Clive’s final decision to come back to the family fold is made when his daughter Petronella rings him up. He is so upset for having deserted her, he gets a heart attack. In both the novels Life at the Top and Stay With Me Till Morning the husbands comeback to the home. The character of Joe is clearly revealed by the wife of their family friend Mark, "Your husband does not run after everything in skirts, your husband loves his wife and children, your husband has always had a sense of responsibility." (L.A.T. p.119).

Any good novel reflects the activities of society. The children know their parent’s affairs and they take it in their stride. Towards the end Clive has no objection to Robin seeing Stephen. But she stops seeing him on her own. She calls her affair with Stephen a day for the sake of the children, husband and family. But she does not object to Ruth calling on him. He confesses and she is convinced that he can have only one wife and that is Robin. He hates change and he wants everything to remain the same. Robin understands that Ruth with her knowledge of books can offer him something he yearns for which she cannot give. At the end of the novel both Robin and Ruth grasp his hands with affectionate firmness. They take him inside the home and Clive feels like a patient between two nurses or a prisoner between two warders.
John Braine has developed the character of Ruth, a lover of books in his later novels. Though she offers him a change she never mentions marriage to him. People mistake Norman who stays with her as her lover but she does not bother about what the world thinks of him. It is a revelation to Clive that Norman goes steady with another man.

Clive’s desire for Vicky is compared to his passion for sea food. His intuition warns him that it may not lead him to anything good. "But purely romantic sexual alliances often diminish with age and time, and the frenzy of first sexual encounters often gives way to tired and boring relationships". But the sensitive husband in him wants to be unfaithful to the wife with a vengeance. Vicky says "I make it a rule never to be sorry for anything. Do what you want to do, say what you want to say, and don’t even feel guilty". (S.M.T.M. p.111). When he hears it first, Clive considers her ideas quite novel. But they may not suit his nature. "Those who think before acting under emotional strains and other pressures certainly have a firmer than adhoc guideline on how to deal with others". That she is neurotic he finds out only after encouraging her to be intimate with him. Her bitterness makes her hate everything. Anybody who follows her philosophy would land himself in trouble. She confides in Robin "no man is to be trusted with any woman until the coffin lid’s actually screwed down ... They’re all rotten lying bastards. I’m a bit off men, to tell you the truth". (S.M.T.M. p.128).

Ironically it is Vicky who justifies the title, she requests Clive to stay with her till morning and he does so inspite of his growing uneasiness and irritation
with her. It is a plea of a lady with a complex who can never go back to her husband as Bruce has determined to marry the rich widow Tracy. She cannot continue her relationship with Clive who finds her repulsive. She has come to a Cul-de-Sac. Even her children are looked after by their affectionate aunt. When she declares that she would go to her brother one wonders what sort of treatment she would meet with at the hands of her brother or sister-in-law. Clive does not want to leave her drunk in the apartment. She does not deserve him and that is why she lets him slip through her hands to Ruth. It is really surprising that her husband and Tracy pick him up when he is in a bad shape and nurse him back to normalcy. External agencies help the hero when he is down in many novels as it happens in the last scene of Room at the Top. Friends serve him as crutches to get up and stand on the ground.

Stay With Me Till Morning’s sequel The Two of Us repeats all the incidents that took place in the earlier novel. There is not much of a progress in the course of the novel excepting that Ruth gets pregnant. The novel ends the same way for obvious reasons; A happy ending is brought about and the family ties are kept intact. “Yet despite some misgivings and reservations there is much to enjoy and admire in The Two of Us with its more measured and objective view of the John Braine scene”.*47 People learn from their mistakes and past experiences and Robin is no exception to that. Robin admits that she has got herself into a mess because of her indiscretion.

As a husband Clive is made of a different mould. He does not want to fool around with other women while trying to keep his wife under his thumb.
He realises at the end what he needs most, "May be things will settle down now". His tone was momentarily peevish, "Christ, all I've ever wanted is a quiet life". (T.T.U. p.183). Robin wonders why Clive the most cheerful and undisturbed man showed get a heart attack. She will not be surprised if Donald, his brother who is three years younger than Clive has become a victim of cardiac arrest. He looks ten years older and his job at Lendrick and Sons triggers him with near hysterics and makes him chew antacid tablets. She is complimented by Norman as a well adjusted personality who has come to terms with reality. But even she is not without her weakness and Stephen Belgard is one of them. "she had been tranquil until she'd heard his name, it was nearly a year since she'd seen him last, he didn’t even appear in her dreams." (T.T.U. p.10).

Everyone accepts Clive and Robin are made for each other; they resemble each other physically and temperamentally, they are tall, fairly strongly built and even tempered. People want to touch them and do not mind being touched by them. Where ever they go they create an atmosphere of cheerfulness and so people always like to be near them. Clive lives his life by the rules. He wants his life to flow without having to sweat unduly about organising it.

Clive has a civilized arrangement with Ruth who is a civilized person. They were friends once, turned to lovers now. Even when she becomes pregnant she does not ask for anything except his friendship; "her home is a sovereign independent kingdom" (T.T.U. p.162) but her friend Norman feels
pathetic when he is jilted by his friend Gary. Even the homosexual relationship has its poetic sign. Norman is not goaded on by a violent streak to finish off Gary and his rich patroness. Even while Ruth tries to console him he philosophically replies that what cannot be cured must be endured. It is Clive who feels uneasy and wants to take up the role of a responsible father which Ruth refuses to assign to him.

"Darling, what do you want?"

"May be to find out who I am". She said. "Which is quite a tall order but I've got to find out for myself. I'm not going to have anyone else tell me, Not even you". (T.T.U. p.171) Ruth leaves Clive without even telling him her plans for the future or the destination. She feels that it is a small country and Clive can easily find her out as she will not be in disguise. As Jan. B. Gordon (1973) feels, "people leaving - that has always been the predominant metaphor for the crowd of "look back in anger" novelists and play wrights that dominated the British literary scene in the fifties".48

The husband and wife understand each other so much that they do not want to hide anything from each other. Robin even announces to her husband her intention of leaving the home to join Stephen. But Clive predicts that Stephen would not make her happier. Rosalind Wade while reviewing The Two of Us has this to say about Stephen Robin affair - "The reunion has a bitter - sweet quality and cannot be expected to last, since Stephen now has a wife and baby son".49 (Rosalind Wade, 1976).
The fact that Ruth is going to have a baby through Clive affects his wife in a different way. "But to be in love is not to be reasonable; for some women the act of sex, if they're in love with the man, is bound up with reproduction". (S.W.T.M. p.192). Her reaction comes a shock to the reader as well as Clive, "I'll tell you something Clive. She's got what I'll never have. I can't give Stephen a child, can I? I'll never forgive her that, Never". (T.T.U. p.173). Jealousy makes her blind to the fact that Ruth's future is not going to be as comfortable and secure as her own.

But in life when one door is closed another door opens simultaneously. People should have the sense to know that and make good the loss. Rough weather uproots even a big tree but a small plant escapes by bending as and when there is an outbreak of storm. Clive has learnt this or nature has taught him the trick of surviving rough weather. "He's as happy as ever he was. He bends to the wind and doesn't break". (T.T.U. p.154)
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8. Ibid., p.4.
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