CHAPTER II

SOCIOLOGY OF ORWELL’S WORLD VIEW AND CREATIVITY

2.1. Introduction:

The sociology of the writer is an important aspect of the sociology of literature. It studies the relationship between the writer’s worldview and his creativity. In fact, there is very close relationship between the worldview of a writer and his creativity, and the factors such as the socio-cultural background of the writer, the social class or group to which he relates directly or indirectly, the literary tradition in which he works, his educational setup and intellectual orientation, socio-political conditions of the day, government policies and gatekeepers of literature greatly influence this relationship. The sociology of the writer studies the impact of all these factors to know the genesis of his literary works. It also studies the relationship of the writer with his audience and other gatekeepers of literature. In this context Rene Wellek observes: “A study of the economic basis of literature and of the social status of the writer is inextricably bound up with a study of the audience he addresses and upon which he is dependent financially” (99).

In fact, a literary work is an outcome of the socialization of the writer. In the earlier society, the authors were greatly dependent upon the audience and their literary works never get transmitted unless they please the audience. However, this author-audience relationship was affected when the intermediaries like publishers, critics and Medias increased. Like these intermediaries, the role of government is also very useful to foster literary works by offering different facilities to the writers. If it is true that the artist who decides what forms of representation to choose and what new forms to create, it is equally true that these forms of representation are the products of his/her social life. However, the fact is
that the writers are puppets controlled by ‘others’ such as critics, publishers, distributors and readers, and these ‘others’ can decide if their work has literary value or not. In short, the worldview of the writer is shaped by the socio-cultural context of the day but controlled by the gatekeepers of literature.

The sociology of the writer in its first step testifies the personal life of the writers and then the social and cultural contexts of their work because the literary text is a direct outcome of their personality and worldview. The literary patterns adopted by these writers have much to do with the patterns of their life and personal experiences. While discussing the literary creation as an expression of the writer’s personality, W. H. Hudson remarks:

A great book is born of the brain and heart of its author; he has put himself into its pages; they partake of his life, and are instinct with his individuality . . . ‘Personal experience,’ it has been rightly said, ‘is the basis of all real literature’, and to enter into such personal experience, and to share it, is similarly the basis of all real literary culture (15).

It shows that the socio-cultural life depicted by the writers in their works is the outcome of their real personal experience. The characters which the writers present in their literary works are the persons whom they have met in their lifetime, and the misery, sufferings, happiness, frustration and loneliness that we get in their works are the parts of their emotional and sensitive mind. The perceptions, the observations and the experiences the writers have in life make them arrive at a specific stance which would be their worldview. In short the personal experience of the writers is the root cause of their specific worldview and this worldview, in turn, shapes their personality and creativity.
2.2. The Concept of the World View:

The literary creation has been regarded as an imitative and visionary act from Plato to the modern age. However, the modern thinkers and sociologists like Georg Lukacs, Lucien Goldmann, Walter Benjamin and others find a reciprocal relationship between a creator’s life and a creation at one hand, and between art consumption and the existing society on the other. They think that the ‘world view’ of a writer is the product of inherited instinctive talents, familial background, educational set up, economic struggle and socio-cultural and political environment of the day. In fact, the world view of the writer is nothing but a specific way or a characteristic outlook in which the writer sees himself in relation to his world. It includes the record of his conscious and unconscious mind, the emphasis he places on what he sees and the choices he makes from among alternatives he knows. It also includes the hopes, fears, and unfulfilled desires of the writer, his philosophy of life, the ideological image of the writer and the fundamental values of human life.

The world view of the writer is really the projection of the facts of life from the author’s own point of view. The different critic and scholars have tried to define the concept of ‘world view’ by using different terms. For instance, Karl Mannheim used the word ‘weltanschauung’ for world view and defined it as ‘global outlook’ (36). Goldman derives his concept of ‘world vision’ and argues that all great philosophical and literary work embodies, investing them with internal coherence and external validity. While defining the world view or world vision as a ‘significant global structure’, Goldman, in his *The Hidden God*, writes:

A world vision is a convenient term for the whole complex of ideas, aspirations and feelings which link together the members of a social group (social class) and which opposes them to
members of other social groups . . . the men who express this vision on an imaginative or conceptual plane are writers and philosophers, and the more closely their works expresses this vision in its complete and integrated form the more important does it become (65).

The most prominent sociologist of literature, Robert Escarpit, while referring to the concept of world view says “every writer therefore is the prisoner of ideology, the weltanschauung of his milieu. He can accept it, modify it, refuse it totally or partially but he can not escape it” (78). These views about ‘world view’ clearly show that a world view is a total outlook, a global structure of ideas of individuals, especially of the creative writers or philosophers, who develop it during their life time, and George Orwell is not exception of this. In order to understand this global structure or intellectual orientation of Orwell, it is essential to know how he has been socialized in his childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Thus, the study of the biographical development of Orwell is important to find out his world view and creativity.

2.3. Sociology of George Orwell’s World View:

The analytical study of George Orwell’s both fictional and non-fictional works shows that his world view or philosophy of life is the major determining force which was greatly promoted by his isolated childhood, the contemporary socio-political situations, his Burma experience, his experience of poverty stricken life in Paris and London, the Spanish civil War, the effects of the First and Second World War and the ideology of the gatekeepers of literature. So while studying the sociology of Orwell’s world vision and creativity one must take into consideration all these social factors responsible for shaping his
worldview and creativity. Besides these social factors, the impulses and motives play a determining role in shaping his worldview and creativity.

In fact, the proper study of Orwell’s worldview and creativity is possible only in the light of his life and career. In order to acknowledge the problem of separating the development of the writer’s worldview and creativity, Orwell, in “Why I Write”, writes:

I do not think one can assess a writer’s motives without knowing something of his early development. His subject matter will be determined by the age he lives in – at least this is true in tumultuous revolutionary ages like our own – but before he ever begins to write he will have acquired an emotional attitude from which he will never completely escape . . . if he escapes from his early influences altogether, he will have killed his impulses to write (SEOE 4).

This view shows that personal experiences and influences play dominant role in shaping one’s worldview.

Being a social animal man cannot keep his experiences, observations, emotions and ideas to himself but imparts them to others in various forms of literature. The impulses behind literature explain not only evolution of literary forms but also the interest of the writer in certain ideologies and forms of literature. It is, however, not only impulses which produce literature but some other aspects such as individuality, the writer’s sociability, activities and problems in the society, environmental conditions and others are equally important in the production of literature. So far as George Orwell’s case is concerned, it is found that he wanted to write “naturalistic novels with unhappy endings, full of detailed descriptions and arresting similes, and also full of purple passages in which words were used partly for the sake of their sound”
(SEOE 3). His early novels such as *Burmese days* (1934) *A Clergyman’s Daughter* (1935), *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (1936) and *Coming Up for Air* (1939) were written in this tradition. However, due to the influence of his private experiences in Burma, France, Spain and his home country and socio-political conditions of the day, he turned towards the serious writing. The trustworthiness of Orwell’s literary work rests on the way he managed to translate his variegated experience into his novels and essays. His experience in life gave him sufficient food for thought to ponder over the great socio-political problems of the age.

2.4. The Impact Factors of Orwell’s World View and Creativity:

As stated earlier the proper study of Orwell’s world view and creativity is possible only in the light of his life and career, motives and the impact of socio-cultural and political conditions of the day. George Orwell was of the opinion that “there are four great motives for writing, at any rate for writing prose. They exist in different degrees in every writer. They are: sheer egotism, aesthetic enthusiasm, historical impulse and political purpose” (SEOE 04). So far as his motives are concerned, it is found that he wrote mainly against imperialism, racism, class distinction, injustice, poverty, the contemporary educational system, industrialization, capitalism, communism and totalitarianism. A careful study of George Orwell’s life helps us understand the inseparable harmony between his world view and creativity. In this connection the importance of his life and personality cannot be overlooked.

2.4.1. The Impact of Early Life:

Orwell’s early life passed in lonely and isolated environment. He did not get love and compassion from his father or mother in his childhood days. He was brought up in the middle class family. The financial condition of his grandfather and great grandfather was very
good but the very prosperity was not passed down to the next generation. So he ironically described his social status as ‘lower-upper-middle-class’. When he was one year old, his mother took him to England and settled at Henley-on-Thames where he took his primary education. He was, thus, separated from his father and apart from a brief visit he did not see him until his retirement in 1912. His childhood memories were quite unhappy, and the most tormented thing was the lack of parental love and care. While describing his lonely and isolated childhood days he writes:

I barely saw my father before I was eight. For this and other reasons I was somewhat lonely, and soon I developed disagreeable mannerisms which made me unpopular throughout my schooldays. I had the lonely child’s habit of making up stories and holding conversations with imaginary persons, and I think from the very start my literary ambitions were mixed up with the feelings of being isolated and undervalued (SEOE 01).

The isolation and fragmentation that Orwell felt in his early childhood left its mark on Flory, Comstock, Bowling, and Winston Smith, the protagonists of his novels. In this regard Christopher Hollis states, “the Orwellian man is always solitary standing out alone in front of it, as Orwell stood in ‘Shooting an Elephant’ refusing obstinately and often unreasonably to make compromise with it . . .” (01).

2.4.2. The Impact of Educational System:

Orwell was born and brought up in a middle class family; however he received his early education at prestigious St. Cyprian School. Although his family was not wealthy enough to afford the fees of public school, he got admission on scholarship that allowed his parents to pay only half of the usual fees. Soon after he arrived at St. Cyprian he felt
guilty, shy and awkward due to his habit of bed wetting, middle class mentality and the company of the students belonging to richer families than his own. He always felt that St. Cyprian was “an expensive and snobbish school” (SEOE 297). At St. Cyprian he felt like a goldfish thrown into a tank full of pike because “only rich boys were more or less undisguisedly favoured” (298).

The authoritarian system at St. Cyprian made Orwell aware of one ugly social reality that of class distinction based on economic considerations. In his “Such Such Were the Joys”, he observes:

There were three castes in the school. There was the minority with an aristocratic or millionaire background, there were the children of the ordinary suburb of rich, who made up the bulk of the school, and there were a few underlings like myself, the sons of clergymen, Indian civil servants, struggling widows and the like (303).

It is at St. Cyprian that Orwell developed his world view of class consciousness. The headmaster of the school treated the boys of rich families lovingly and excused them even for big faults. As a result the young Blair felt suffocated and depressed by the obvious partiality of treatment between rich and poor boys. So we can say that George Orwell’s memorable quote “all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others” have its origin at St. Cyprian. Besides the class distinction, the headmistress of the school used to humiliate the poor boys by saying “you know you’re not growing to grow up with money, don’t you? Your people aren’t rich. You must learn sensible. Don’t get above yourself!”(304). This humiliating treatment gave rise to Orwell’s rebellion against money god in *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*. The seeds of Orwell’s criticism on the contemporary educational system in *A Clergyman's*
Daughter are found in the ill-treatment received at the school. This experience shaped and broadened his sensitive mind. The feelings of resentment and hatred against institutional despotism, class distinction, injustice and tyranny developed at St. Cyprian got expression in his *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (1936), *Coming Up for Air* (1939) and *Nineteen Eighty Four*. In short Orwell’s traumatic experiences at St. Cyprian were extremely formative and influential in deciding the future course of his socio-political writing.

The humiliation and injustice at St. Cyprian did not prevent Orwell to join Eton College as a King’s scholar in 1917. When he moved to Eton, he got an opportunity to develop his own individuality and to broaden his outlook. The civilized atmosphere at Eton developed his personality. In fact, Eton fostered a defiant spirit of individuality in Orwell’s adolescence that coloured most of his writing with social, political and economic issues later in life. There, he participated actively in cultural activities, wrote stories and poems and edited a college magazine. The post-war period and its revolutionary waves changed his mind set. Besides the revolutionary ideas, the reading of Galsworthy, Swift, Kipling and H. G. Wells developed his ideas of socialism and nationalism. Under the influence of these writers he started to develop his creative mind. The influence of Wells is seen in his *Coming Up for Air* and *Nineteen Eighty Four*. In fact, Eton left its lasting imprint in his formative years.

Orwell’s academic performance at Eton was quite well, but he could not earn scholarship for further university education, and as his parents could not afford to pay his fees for university education, he decided to give up education and join military services. He appeared for the military examination and passed coming seventh out of twenty seven.
As his grandmother was living in Burma he chose to join Indian Imperial Police in Burma and here we get the complete turn to his world view and creativity.

2.4.3. The Impact of Burma Experience:

Orwell joined the Indian Imperial Police in Burma when he was hardly twenty. This job was totally unsuited to him but circumstances forced him to do it. From 1922 to 1927 he served at Myaungmya, Syrian, Moulmein and Katha in Burma as a Probationer, Sub-Divisional Police Officer and an Assistant District Superintendent. While working there he experienced the effects of poverty, brutality of racism and injustice of imperialism and the very experience transformed him from an admirer of imperialism to a critic of it. He rejected imperialism as he realized, like his conscientious protagonist Flory in *Burmese Days*, that English administrators were despot. The exploitation of the black people from the white authorities made him restless. Being a true believer in liberal culture he rejected imperialism and resigned from the job to face life in all its nakedness. In an autobiographical passage, he writes:

I wanted to submerge myself, to get right down among the oppressed, to be one of them and on their side against the tyrants . . . I could go among these people, see what their lives were like and feel myself temporarily part of their world. Once I had been among them and accepted by them, I should have touched bottom and—this is what I felt: I was aware even then it was irrational-part of my guilt would drop from me (RWP 30-31).

He further explains, “I hated the imperialism I was serving with a bitterness which I probably cannot make clear” (RWP 134). According to him, the imperial police in Burma gradually fashioned his critical view of
British imperialist policy, and due to that view he felt imperialism as an immense weight of guilt. Regarding this weight of guilt he writes: “I felt that I had got to escape not merely from imperialism but from every form of man’s dominion over man. I wanted to submerge myself, to get right down among the oppressed, to be one of them and on their side against tyrants” (RWP 180). In his introduction to the French edition of *Down and Out in Paris and London* Orwell confirms: “In 1922 I set out for Burma, where I entered the Imperial Indian Police Force. It was a most unsuitable profession for me; so in the beginning of 1928, during my leave in England, I resigned in the hope of earning my living as a writer” (39). In short, though he was a part of imperialism, he hated it. Practically he had to obey the order of imperialism, but theoretically he was against it and this anti-imperialism is clearly seen in his famous essays “Shooting an Elephant” and “Hanging”, and his fictional and non-fictional works such as *Burmese Days* and *Road to Wigan Pier* respectively.

While working in Burma under the rule of imperialism, Orwell always felt guilty and restless. In order to get relieved of this guilty consciousness, he not only gave up the job but shared the miseries and agonies by living with the oppressed and the poor in London and Paris. In this context Sant Sing Bal states: “It is, in fact, his Burmese experience that brought young Orwell out of the world of fantasy and dream into the world of hard realities and gave concrete shape to his ethics” (40-41).

Besides imperialism and racism, natural scenery in Burma made a lasting mark on his memory. In *The Road to Wigan Pier* Orwell writes, “the landscapes of Burma which, when I was among them, so appalled me as to assume the qualities of nightmare, afterwards stayed so hauntingly in my mind that I was obliged to write a novel about them to get rid of them” (97). In short, the impact of imperialism and colonialism
gave rise to Orwell’s humanitarian and socialistic perspective or world view while natural surroundings in Burma provided setting to his early works.

2.4.4. The Impact of His Tramping Expedition in London and Paris:

After resigning his post as a policeman in Burma, Orwell undertook investigative tramping expeditions in and around London to observe the life of the down and out, and to collect material for writing articles and stories. He stayed in common lodging houses, dressed like a tramp and recorded his experience of the low life. In fact he wanted to expiate his load of guilt that he had in Burma by plunging into the underworld of poverty, getting down among the oppressed, and making common cause with them. In an autobiographical passage, he explains how the overpowering guilt that resulted from his years as a policeman in Burma forced him to seek expiation among the outcasts at the extreme fringe of society:

I wanted to submerge myself, to get right down among the oppressed, to be one of them and on their side against the tyrants . . . I could go among these people, see what their lives were like and feel myself temporarily part of their world. Once I had been among them and accepted by them, I should have touched bottom and—this is what I felt: I was aware even then it was irrational—part of my guilt would drop from me (RWP 130-31).

Orwell wanted to present his experience of poverty stricken life in London in his creative writing, but he did not have proper idea of presentation. In those days Paris, the cultural capital of Europe, offered better hospitality to creative minds and imagination. As Orwell’s budding
artistic impulses needed an authentic habitat, it was natural for him to go to Paris to woo the muse (Bal 76). In order to get a proper way to his sensitivity, he moved to Paris in the spring of 1928.

Orwell’s career as a writer began with the publication of his non-fictional work *Down and Out in Paris and London* and the very creation of it was determined by the worldview developed by his tramping expedition in London and Paris. He lived in Paris for nearly eighteen months in a cheap boarding house. Besides occasional journalistic writing, he wrote several stories and two novels but they were never published. In the mean time his money was stolen and he had to find out work for his living. Regarding his experience Orwell writes: “During the summer of 1929, after I had written my two novels, which the publishers rejected, I found myself almost penniless and in urgent need of work” (Meyers 39). Finally he found a job of a plongeur in Paris restaurant, and while working as a dishwasher, what he experienced is recorded in his first autobiographical work *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), an autobiographical account in two parts on the theme of poverty, hardship and humiliation.

In *Down and Out in Paris and London* Orwell describes the overall impression of filth and hunger and a quietly endured, never-ending desperation for Paris’s poor. The evils of poverty that Orwell encountered in Paris changed his world view and made him inclined towards democratic socialism. Orwell’s Paris experience made him to present the causes of poverty and its debilitating effects on the life of the workers and common men in his fictional and non-fictional works. After returning from Paris, he visited hotels, hospitals, pawnshops and parks to find out the picture of poverty in London. While roaming in London he experienced the effects of poverty and unemployment in his home
country and wrote about it in essays such as ‘Unemployment in England’, ‘Beggars of London’, ‘Day in the Life of a Tramp’ etc. He experienced the wretched condition of the working classes in London and felt that London in some ways was worse than Paris. While comparing the situation in Paris with that of in London, Orwell writes:

I had been in London innumerable times, and yet till that day I had never noticed one of the worst things about London – the fact that it costs money even to sit down. In Paris, if you had no money and could not find a public bench, you would sit on the pavement. Heaven knows what sitting on the pavement lead to London – prison probably (DOPL 137).

In his Introduction to the French edition of *Down and Out in Paris and London* Orwell confirms the authenticity of the book, which was questioned by some reviewers, and feels obliged to apologize for his grim portrayal of Paris and reaffirmed his love for the city. In fact, his Paris experience strengthened his humanitarian and socialistic world view. He further adds, “. . . this book does not pretend to give a complete picture of life in Paris and London, but only to describe one special aspect of it -poverty” (DOPL 39). In fact, his Paris experience strengthened his humanitarian and socialistic world view and the company of down trodden in England paved his way towards democratic socialism.

2.4.5. The Role of Publishers and Critics in His Creativity:

When Orwell returned to England from Paris by the end of 1929, he worked on his experience in Paris and London. After completing it he titled the version as *Days in London and Paris* and sent it to Jonathen Cape for publication. However Cape rejected it. He, then, reworked and expanded the version, changed its title as *A Scullion Diary* and sent it to Faber and Faber where T.S. Eliot was an editorial director. But it was also
rejected on the ground of libel action. As a result Orwell felt dejected, but his literary agent, Leonard Moore, took it to Victor Gollancz who agreed to publish the work subject to the removal of bad language and some identifiable names. Gollancz offered an advance of £40. He changed the title as, *Confessions of Down and Out in Paris and London* but Orwell was not happy with this title. Gollancz, then, suggested another title as *The Confessions of a Dishwasher*. Instead of *dishwasher* Orwell preferred “*Down and Out*”. At the last minute Gollancz shortened the title to *Down and Out in Paris and London* (Kerr 54).

*Down and Out in Paris and London*, after some modifications to avoid possible libel action, was published under the pseudonym George Orwell. The main reasons of publishing it under the pseudonym “George Orwell” was that Orwell himself liked it and secondly it embraced both tradition and culture. “George” was the patron saint of England and “Orwell”, the name of a river in Suffolk where Eric Blair lived. In the same way the name “George Orwell” had the familiar country-sounding ring. It is also thought that being a kind of ceremonial purification, the river Orwell can wash away all the signs of dirt and several filthy things in the society. So he might have preferred the name George Orwell. Another reason suggested by his biographer Atkin is that Eric Blair wanted to move away from the precarious shadow of the headmaster and his wife at Crossgates and thereby achieved a spiritual regeneration. According to Keith Alldritt, Eric Blair changed his name as George Orwell to establish a new social identity. He argues: “The adaptation of pseudonym functions Orwell’s deepest concern with the remaking of the self” (55). In short we get specific ideology of George Orwell in preferring the pseudonym.
Down and Out in Paris and London was published on 9 January 1933 and received favourable reviews. It was subsequently published by Harper and Brothers in New York. After this publication, it received both positive as well as negative reactions. Within a month of publication, ‘a restaurateur and hotelier of forty years’ had written to The Times complaining that the book was unfairly disapproving to the restaurant trade. Orwell responded to the restaurateur’s criticism: ‘I do know that in our hotel there were places which no customer could possibly have been allowed to see with any hope of retaining his custom’ (web). In his Introduction to the French edition of the book Orwell confirms the authenticity of the book, which was questioned by some reviewers, and feels obliged to apologize for his grim portrayal of Paris and to reaffirm his love for the city (Meyers 39). The Times Literary Supplement had previously reviewed the book, calling it “a vivid picture of an apparently mad world” (Meyers 42). In Adelphi, C Day Lewis wrote: “Orwell's book is a tour of the underworld, conducted without hysteria or prejudice . . . a model of clarity and good sense” (42). J. B. Priestley, writing in the Evening Standard, considered it “Uncommonly good reading, an excellent book and a valuable social document. The best book of its kind I have read in a long time”. Compton Mackenzie called it as ‘a genuine human document' written with artistic force. He further explains that, in spite of the squalor and degradation thus unfolded, the result is curiously beautiful with the beauty of an accomplished etching on copper. Following the American publication, James Farrell, writing in The New Republic, called it “genuine, unexaggerated and intelligent” (Meyers 46).

In his essay The World of George Orwell, Richard Mayne considered the book as typical of something that was true of a great deal of Orwell’s later writing. He praised Orwell’s depiction of the true
account of life in a coal mine, prep-school tyranny, the Empire, the Spanish Civil War, the Russian Revolution, the political misuse of language. J. Farrell comments that Orwell’s account is genuine, unexaggerated and intelligent. Possessing a sense of character, Orwell adorns his narrative with portraits and vignettes that give the book interest and concreteness. In addition, he contrasts poverty in France and England, and his contrasts tend somewhat to reveal the differences between the two nations (Meyers 39-49).

It is true that Orwell’s experience in London and Paris is the major force of the existence of this work, but he really gets name and fame due to the publishers and reviewers, so they are equally important in the creation and success of Orwell’s fictional and non-fictional works.

2.4.6. The Impact of the Industrial Visit to North England:

Orwell’s experience in London and Paris confirmed his way to humanism and socialism and it was shaped and strengthened by his industrial visit to North England and his participation in Spanish Civil War. In 1936, Victor Gollancz, the publisher of his earlier books, commissioned Orwell to visit the industrial areas of the North England and write about economic and social conditions of the workers. According to Walter Greenwood, “This book is an account of a tour made by Mr. Orwell in Durham, Yorkshire, Lancashire, South Wales and London. It also provides Mr. Orwell an opportunity to air his views on Socialism, Fascism, and the works of some authors” (Meyers 99). During his visit, what he observed has been depicted in The Road to Wigen Pier.

The book The Road to Wigen Pier is divided into two parts. In the first part Orwell gives a first-hand account of the life of the working class population of Wigan and elsewhere. It is a terrible record of evil conditions, foul housing, wretched pay and hopeless unemployment. So
Robert Hatch calls it ‘an elegy on the spirit of poverty’ (13). In the beginning of the second part Orwell explained the class feelings and prejudices of a member of ‘the lower upper-middle class,’ and declared his adherence to Socialism. He is of the opinion that present methods should be overthrown and everyone must participate in the fight for socialism, and against fascism and war by making the elemental appeal of ‘liberty’ and ‘justice’.

In fact, *The Road to Wigen Pier* is Orwell’s deliberate attempt to compensate for the failure of theoretical Socialism of the day. In a valuable review in the *New Yorker*, Dwight Macdonald compares Orwell with Engels, Mayhew, Jack London and Trotsky and calls his book ‘the best sociological reporting I know.’ He particularly commends the exuberant ‘rhetoric of abuse’ that ‘combines indignation with specificity’ and Orwell’s ‘emotional identification with the people he lives among’ (13). In short Orwell’s visit to the depressed industrial areas of northern England changed his world view and led him towards the liberal socialism but his participation in the Spanish Civil War marked a crucial change in his political beliefs.

2.4.7 The Impact of the Spanish Civil War:

Orwell went to Spain in December 1936, five months after the outbreak of the Civil War, to write newspaper articles. But he immediately joined POUM (Workers’ Party of Marxists Unification) to fight in defence of democracy and against fascism. While fighting against fascism he was shot through the throat by a Fascist sniper. Fortunately, the bullet had missed his main artery but his voice was barely audible. He was, then, admitted to the hospital. Although, he received electrotherapy treatment, he was declared medically unfit for service. In the mean time POUM was declared as a fascist party and its members were investigated
and arrested by the Communist police. As Orwell was a member of POUUM, he was under the threat of the possible arrest. Finally he decided to leave Spain and escaped by train to England. His experience in the Spanish Civil War gave rise to *Homage to Catalonia* (1938).

Orwell’s Burmese experience made him anti-imperialist likewise his Spanish experience made him anti-communist and anti-war and the reflection of this world view can be found in his political novels. According to Spender “*Homage to Catalonia is one of the most serious indictments of communism*” (15). In fact, the Spanish Civil War was his ‘watershed political experience’. While describing the impact of the Spanish Civil War, Orwell writes:

In a peaceful age I might have written ornate or merely descriptive books, and might have remained almost unaware of my political loyalties . . . First I spent five years in an unsuitable profession (the Indian Imperial Police, in Burma), and then I underwent poverty and the sense of failure. This increased my natural hatred of authority and made me for the first time fully aware of the existence of the working classes, and the job in Burma had given me some understanding of the nature of imperialism: but these experiences were not enough to give me an accurate political orientation. Then came Hitler, the Spanish Civil War, etc. By the end of 1935 I had still failed to reach a firm decision. … The Spanish war and other events in 1936-37 turned the scale and thereafter I knew where I stood. Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism, as I understand it (SEOE 5-7).

The impact of the Spanish Civil War is seen in his political novels.
2.4.8. The Impact of Orwell’s Career as a Teacher and a Shop Assistant:

From 1932 to 1933 Orwell worked as a teacher at cheap private schools. This was a small school at Hayes in West London which provided private education to the children of tradesmen and shopkeepers. While working as a teacher he became friendly with a local clergyman and got involved with the local church. Influenced by the church activities, he decided to write on the life of clergyman and church. After the publication of *Burmese Days*, he started working on *The Clergyman's Daughter*. His experience at Hayes gets reflected in this novel. However, he gave up the job of teaching and paid full attention to his career.

In 1934 he went to Hampstead Heath and accepted the job of a part-time assistant in a second hand bookshop. It was the favourite area for writers and artists who were trying to get either literary or artistic recognition. The place boasted of some small Georgian or spacious Victorian houses. The owner of the shop provided him a comfortable accommodation at Warwick Westropes. He was, then, working as a part time assistant in the afternoons and was free to write in the mornings and the evenings. While at the bookshop he enjoyed the company of the several writers who used to come to purchase the second hand books. His experience at Hampstead provided him material for his later novel *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*. Gordon’s insulting comments on the of books, writers and the buyers in *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* could be taken as a parallel to his own satirical observation about the contemporary writers.

Orwell’s stay at Hampstead strengthened his love for popular culture. During this time he wrote reviews and articles for the *New English Weekly*. He, then, gave up the job in a bookshop and started working on *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*. 
2.4.9. The Impact of Working Class Environment:

Orwell was very critical of the middle class but he favoured the working class. According to him the workers are free from any social status and fear of poverty. They are happier than the educated middle class. In his *The Road to Wigan Pier* he gives the details of the saner family life of working class. While describing the impact of working class on Orwell’s worldview and creativity, Swingewood writes:

Orwell describes the working class in terms of an idealized community, putting up with life, that is, with unemployment, the dole queues, and poverty . . . the working class, Orwell repeats again and again, are not revolutionary, they have no deep commitment to the ideals of socialism, still less to communism: to the ordinary working class . . . socialism does not mean much more than better wages and shorter hours and nobody bossing about you (1972: 256).

The impact of this working class environment is seen in his early novels.

2.4.10. The Impact of the Second World War and BBC Work:

On the outbreak of the Second World War Orwell desired to join military service but he was declared unfit to join military services by the medical board. So he joined the Home Guard for three years. During this time he wrote many essays and reviews for various periodicals. He, then, joined the BBC and worked there for two years. This gave him an opportunity to create cultural programmes with the contributions of T. S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, E. M. Forster, Mulk Raj Anand, and others. His experience at BBC during war period gave rise to his essays and reviews.

In the beginning of 1945 he went to France as a reporter for *The Observer*. His experience as a war reporter strengthened his anti fascist
worldview and then he involved in his best known work *Nineteen Eighty Four*. In June 1949 his *Nineteen Eighty Four* was published and he became the most famous novelist of the day. However his health was declining day by day and he was finally admitted to the hospital. While in the hospital he courted Sonia Brownell and married her in the hospital on October 13, 1949. Orwell’s health was in decline again and on January 21, 1950 an artery burst in his lungs, and he was died on the same day at the age of 46.

2.4.11. The Impact of the Socio-Political Conditions of the Day:

Literature is the expression of the writer’s personality but his personality is largely moulded by the socio-cultural and political conditions of the day. The sociology of literature studies the various forces of the society which determine the world view of the writer, his social and familial background and the interrelationship between the writer and the social factors of the day. As the conscious mind of the writer is shaped by the socio-cultural and political conditions of the day, the sociology of literature examines the impact of the contemporary social system. As a novelist of liberal socialism Orwell is not exception to this. His works probe deep into the layers of the society and expose the social discrepancies and anomalies. He attacks on the several social problems and drawbacks such as hypocrisy, class distinction, totalitarianism, poverty, injustice and others.

Orwell’s career as a writer began in the third decade of the twentieth century and during this period different social and political events left their indelible mark on his mind. For instance, the injustice of imperialism and racism in Burma, the class distinction, the grim realization of poverty and unemployment in the economic depression of the thirties, tyranny of totalitarianism, hypocrisy of communism, and the
decline of the traditional values were the cognizable factors in projecting his world view and creativity. He confesses that the socio-political crisis of the day inspired him to write novels and essays. In “The Prevention of Literature”, Orwell writes:

In our age, the idea of intellectual liberty is under attack from two directions. On the one side are its theoretical enemies, the apologists of totalitarianism and on the other its immediate practical enemies, monopoly and bureaucracy. Any writer or journalist finds himself thwarted by the general drift of the society rather than by active persecution (SEOE 215).

Industrial Revolution was the key factor in moulding his world view and creativity. During the age of Orwell the Industrial Revolution brought about the substantial changes in the society of the day. Due to industrialization the main stream of the lives of the people underwent serious changes. It declined the traditional agrarian way of life and the age old theory of society. The decline of agriculture precipitated in the decline of the social values and the rise of urbanization. The novelist who were pained to see the ugly marks of this decline depicted man’s cultural and social dislocation in their novels. In the novels of Thomas Hardy, H. G. Wells and D. H. Lawrence we get the comments on the social uprootedness of the people. They bemoan on the heedless industrialization and alienation from nature and past. In Coming Up For Air, the protagonist George Bowling tries to recapture the golden country and all its rich associations. The ills of industrialization and urbanization really made Orwell a spokesperson of the day.

The major consequence of the industrial revolution and urbanization during the first half of the twentieth century was the rise of capitalistic civilization and totalitarianism. Besides this the two World
Wars and the Spanish Civil War greatly influenced his mind. In *Homage to Catalonia* and *Coming Up for Air* he presents both his childhood pleasures of rural country and his fear of war that destroys the life of peaceful coexistence. This presentation shows that Orwell was brought up in age-old agrarian culture of England but industrial revolution and the debasing effects of war changed his world view thoroughly and made him to write against capitalism and totalitarian. In “Why I Write” he confesses: “In a peaceful age I might have written ornate or merely descriptive books and might have remained unaware of my political loyalties. As it is I have been forced into becoming a sort of a pamphleteer” (SEOE 05).

2.5. The Harmony between Orwell’s World View and Creativity:

Inspired and influenced by the war time socio-political situations of the day Orwell contributed in a new movement in literature and opposed human oppression, injustice and tyranny to assert basic human rights. He joined the Spanish Civil War and fought against totalitarianism to serve the cause of socialism. Certain political factors both national and international were responsible for his interest in socio-political activities. In his first novel *Burmese Days* Orwell depicts the Burmese environment and tyranny of imperialism and racism. In *The Clergyman's Daughter* the problems of poverty and education are presented through the traditional technique of plot construction and character. The complexity of human relationship is at the center in *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*. The novel also describes the picture of the underworld and slum life. The aim of his last three novels is chiefly political especially to criticise fascism, communism and totalitarianism. All these novels clearly show that his world view and creativity was really shaped by the contemporary socio-political events. His novels provide a focus into his personal experiences,
family background, his education, and other socio-political conditions of the day. A careful study of Orwell’s life could help us understand the inseparable harmony between his life and works.

It is true that Orwell expresses his socio-political ideology in his works to communicate his inner world or worldview but the base of this worldview is found in his experience at St. Cyprian School, in imperial Burma, on the roads of London and Paris, in Spanish Civil War, the Second World War and socio-political conditions of the day. The school experience made him lonely and isolated while imperialism in Burma made him aware of the tyranny of imperialism and racism. His tramping expedition gave him thorough idea of poverty while the Spanish Civil War made him anti-totalitarian. In short ideological standing was shaped by the socio-political conditions of the day and made him democratic socialist. The sociology of Orwell’s world view and creativity clearly shows that he is thoroughly against the aesthetic and romantic writing. He believes in the social responsibility of literary works. The main purpose of his works is not to entertain the readers but to make them aware of the social problems and social responsibility. In the essay ‘Writers and Leviathan’ he states:

The invasion of literature by politics was bound happen. It must have happened, even if the special problem of totalitarian had never arisen, because we have developed a sort of compunction which our grandparents did not have, an aware of the enormous justice and misery of the world, and a guilt stricken feeling that one ought to be doing something about it, which makes a purely aesthetic attitude towards life impossible. No one, now, could devote himself to literature as single mindedly as Joyce or Henry James (DEME 202).
This view shows his keenness in social awareness. His ‘Inside the Whales’ also criticizes the writers of the twenties for their lack of interest in the social problems.

George Orwell wrote six novels and his main concern in all of them is the problem of society at different levels. In fact, his novels critically comment the social and political situations of the contemporary period. He makes the problems of the day as the subject matters of his novels. He presents those problems in a very free and forceful manner. As a result, the publishers of the day hesitated to publish and distribute his works. He was asked to change and modify the characters, language, and even some passages in his works under the fear of libel action. Sometimes, he was severely criticised for his free thoughts and ideas. However, the readers and gatekeepers supported him greatly to propagate his ideology among the society. In short, his novels are influenced by the socio-political conditions of the day, and determined and supported by the conscious reading public and gatekeepers of literature. On the whole, the main purpose of this research work is to study his novels in the light of the sociology of literature. Keeping in view the theoretical perspectives of the sociology of literature and the sociology of George Orwell’s worldview, the study under investigation attempts to discuss the sociology of George Orwell’s novels in the succeeding chapters.