Dedicated to the Memory

of

My Father-in-law Mr. S. Palaniappan I.A & A.S.
CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Lovers of literature consider the 'Novel' as the most sophisticated form of literature. A novel usually deals with the realities of everyday life and this evokes a favourable response from the readers. John Braine's novels offer immense scope for a psychological interpretation because he deals with man's ambitions, desires, emotions, inhibitions, fears, achievements and failures.

The most striking quality of John Braine as a writer is his readability. As a novelist his first concern is family relationship. The importance of family relationship in the novels of John Braine has not been accorded the recognition it so richly deserves. This thesis, an inter-disciplinary study, is an attempt to analyse the spirit of family relationship in the novels of John Braine from the psychological point of view. A close reading of some of the novels of John Braine reveals the contribution of psychology to modern fiction in general and the theme of family relationship in particular.

The inner spirit of every creative work reveals itself in its creation, progress and completion. An in-depth study of the fiction of John Braine reveals that the spirit of family relationship shapes its course of action, development and happy ending. The distinctive part of John Braine's creative work is the practical philosophy embedded in each novel. As he is known for
his clarity, the message is invariably quite clear. The philosophic truth that the incidents convey has its origin in human psychology.

A thorough understanding of John Braine's novels is possible only if a reader has a knowledge of psychology. The important message of John Braine through his novels is that it is the duty of every couple to strengthen their legitimate relationship and help the children to grow in a healthy atmosphere of security. The first duty of every father towards his children is to love their mother. A mutually accepted intimate relationship like marriage is based on agreements to stop looking for alternatives.

Kingsley Amis, a famous modern British novelist declared in his 'Memoirs' that it was impossible to dislike John Braine. He was a good friend of John Braine but he accepted his inability to decide whether Braine was serious about certain things. For example Braine was a heavy smoker who had a small sticker pasted on his cigarette packets with the legend, CIGARETTES ARE GOOD FOR YOU - SMOKE MORE, LIVE LONGER. Amis doubted whether Braine had the characteristics of his famous hero Joe Lampton, "And how like Joe Lampton, the opportunistic anti-hero of Room at the Top, was he really? Not ruthless and cruel, certainly, but how much of what Joe wanted did John really want?"¹ This genuine question of a friend who moved with Braine helps the reader to understand that it is difficult to attribute to the novelist all that happens to the hero. This thesis attempts chiefly to analyse the psychology of the characters created by Braine in his fiction.
John (Gerard) Braine was born in 1922 in Bradford, Yorkshire. His father was a Works Superintendent for the Bradford Council. John Braine had a great admiration for J.B. Priestley who also grew up in Bradford. Braine felt that it was a nourishing city and a city to live. As his father owned a house and earned enough, Braine’s childhood was a period of absolute security. His mother was a librarian and Braine was always in the midst of books and made good use of them. In his foreword for the book titled *J.B. Priestley* (1978) he says, "My most important qualification to write this book is that since the age of five reading has been my chief pleasure". He was educated at St. Bede’s Grammar School, Bradford. He tried his hand at various jobs before he became a librarian - selling furniture and books, working in a factory and a laboratory. He even served as a telegraphist in the Royal Navy. To begin with he wrote articles in the ‘Tribune’ and the ‘New Statesman’ and a verse play ‘The Desert in the Mirror’. Though his background was different from that of Priestley, he felt close to him. He had mentioned in his *J.B. Priestley* what he liked in Priestley most.

"He wanted a society in which diversity would flourish, in which individuality would be cherished, but also a society where the guiding principle would be that we can’t live for ourselves alone, that we depend upon each other." In the year 1951 his mother was killed in a road accident which left him completely shaken. Added to that was tuberculosis, the disease which had disqualified him out of the Navy in 1943. In January 1952 he was admitted at Grassington Sanatorium. With poor health and without any job he found
life miserable. It was during that period that he started writing his novel, *Room at the Top* and his one ambition was to be alive to complete it. He was indeed lucky to complete the novel in 1955 just before his marriage to Helen Patricia Wood. The Novel was rejected four times, but once it was published the novel became very popular and John Braine the novelist had really arrived. "His subject matter a young, lowborn English accountant, Joe Lampton, who gains the world and loses his soul is squarely in the line of the great English social novels." (Whitney Balliett, 1957). He resigned his job as a librarian and became a full-time writer. *Room at the Top* was made into an excellent film and the general public flocked to the theatres to enjoy it. It was an international success and it put him really at the very top. He went on radio and television often. He travelled a lot, enjoyed walking and retained his Yorkshire accent all through his life. He had four children. He died of stomach ulcer in the year 1986.

Though Braine remained a practising Catholic he called himself a complacent one. He admitted his love for the material world; whatever could be heard, seen, touched and smelled appealed to him. He felt that at the Centre of things there was a mystery and Religion was the acknowledgement of that mystery. He was not satisfied with anything that he wrote but as a writer he never tried to please anybody except himself. The personal past, the known place, the home, the physical context and the chores of the household, family relationships which combine continuity and intensity and in particular
the friction and harmony of the young and old are the themes John Braine handles with remarkable ease and felicity.

He was always associated with a group of British Writers who were called the 'Angry Young Men'. Their works reflected the social consciousness of the Post World War II England. John Osborne’s play Look Back in Anger (1956) was considered as a negative symbol of the early 'Protest' movement. The famous character Jim Dixon in the novel Lucky Jim (1953) written by Kingsley Amis was accepted as the archetypal angry young man of fiction. John Waine's novel Hurry on Down (1953) portrayed the fight between the hero and society. Unlike the ‘Angries’ Braine did not make Joe a completely frustrated character from an excessively sordid background. He made him a healthy young man who wanted to enjoy the good things of the World which others enjoyed. He broke away from his working - class background and gained respectability not by hardwork, but by marrying his wealthy employer’s daughter. To achieve that, he rejected the woman who really loved him and abandoned his humanity for power and materialistic gain.

During his life time, he had published Thirteen novels, one book on J.B. Priestley and another book titled Writing A Novel. Braine has made use of the first - person narrative technique in his first novel and in some of the subsequent novels. He affirms in his Writing A Novel that the use of the first - person gives his tale veracity. His novel Life at the Top was also adapted for the silver screen. Catholicism, provided the moral framework for The Jealous God and The Crying Game. In the former novel Catholic faith prevented the
hero from marrying a divorced woman he loved and in the later novel a Catholic journalist who got involved in an immoral way of life returned to his earlier values. In *Stay With Me Till Morning* (published in the United States as *The view from Tower Hill*) he dealt with adultery, jealousy and heart attack. He followed it up with the sequel *The Two of Us* which featured his recurring themes. Rosalind Wade in ‘Contemporary Review’ (1984) says "A nagging certainty lingers that the nerve-shattering affair between Robin Lendrick and Stephen Belgard, the strains of which for Robin’s husband, Clive, in *Stay with Me Till Morning* resulted in a heart attack, was stronger stuff than we are offered in *The Two of Us*. If he dealt with success in *Room At The Top* he chose to deal with failure in *The Vodi*. In his *Waiting for Sheila* the protagonist was shown as a man permanently maimed by his wounding childhood experiences. He authored two espionage novels *The Pious Agent* and *Finger of Fire*. In the novel *The Queen of a Distant Country* a young writer tried to known himself while he explored the character of an older woman who was his inspiration. When people around them were not kind a middle aged writer and a middle aged lady kept up their spirits and love in the novel *One and Last Love*. The romance was continued in *These Golden Days*, the writer · hero insisted on peace and peaceful co-existence.

and it reveals an individual’s journey of self-discovery. After undergoing many painful experiences, the hero attains emotional maturity. The passionate young hero Joe Lampton of Room at the Top matures into a philosophic writer Hamforth of the last novel These Golden Days. Braine uses flash-back technique to make the hero recount his past in his novels. “His flash-backs and descriptions do not intrude like misplaced whales.”6 (Whitney Balliett, 1957).

Many critics echo the feelings of James W. Lee (1968) regarding Braine’s quality as a writer, “With his considerable talent, his tolerance of human weakness, and his total commitment to writing, Braine has the power to become a major figure in modern English fiction.”7

The readability of his novels helps the reader to analyse and understand the behaviour of his characters better. Braine attracts the reader easily because his style does not serve as a fog to hide the meaning of his expressions. To understand the human personality is difficult as the modern mind is complex and if the style is contrived it becomes a hindrance to understand the inner meaning of the action of the novel. Freud and Jung see the human psyche as a complex system, alternating between conscious and unconscious modes of expression, adopted both to meeting the demands of the environment and to the fulfilment of inner needs. For Jung the subjective life of the individual mind is the supreme reality. “We are all in truth so enclosed by psychic images that we cannot penetrate to the essence of things external to ourselves. All our knowledge is conditioned by the psyche which, because it alone is immediate is superlatively real.”8 Room at the Top (1957)
by John Braine (1922) has greater social validity and moral thrust than *Lucky Jim, Hurry on Down*, or for that matter *Look Back in Anger*" says Harry Blamiers in *Twentieth Century English Literature* (1986).

Some of his critics are disappointed with the novels that followed *The Room At the Top*. Perhaps it is because they expected the same type of spirit in his later novels too. "It is Joe’s frank reflections on himself that give psychological depth and moral force to the study." But no power on earth can dictate to a creative writer a particular subject. It is impossible for an artist to remain static in his creative ideas; he has to grow and improve on what he has already done. One can easily detect in Braine an urge to improve or modify what he had already written. Moreover every writer pours out all his pent up feelings in his first book. Considered that way *The Room At the Top* is very powerful and it is hailed as a modern fable on ambition. Critics agree that it epitomizes its age. As James W. Lee records it in his article ‘John Braine’ (1968), "Like Ernest Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* and F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, *Room at The Top* probes deeply and tellingly into a central problem of the times". A spirited youth is likely to make mistakes irrespective of his other qualifications. The writer has to take into consideration his age, experience and background. It has become a modern trend to follow a popular novel with the sequel as the readers are in a mood to know more and more about the characters in the novel. So, *Life at the Top* a sequel to his earlier novel portrays the life of Joe after ten years. There is plenty of improvement in Joe’s life style and naturally Braine’s approach to his
characters also has to change. Any reader of Braine ought to know that what suited Joe of Room at the Top does not suit the Joe of Life at the Top. Further as Peter Buitenhuys remarks in his Book Review, "Mr. Braine has learnt from the old Master how to control and order his narrative through the Central consciousness of his hero, as well as through precision of his style." The old master referred to is Henry James and Braine himself compares a scene in his novel The Jealous God to a scene from a novel by Henry James.

With the advent of inter-disciplinary studies, and a greater emphasis on the importance of extra-literary events to literature it has become more and more difficult to discuss literature without referring to history, politics, psychology and other disciplines. Literature mirrors life, while psychology explains it. The reading of a modern novel would not be complete without a knowledge of psychology. The study of psychology formulated first by Freud and later by Jung brought about a new assessment of human behaviour. "As a rationalist, Freud was firmly convinced that the control of natural impulses was socially necessary and that complete freedom of expression was unthinkable" says Tony Neville in his book The Challenges of Modern Thought (1977). Freud and his followers argued that repressed sex instincts are at the root of neurosis and other kinds of abnormality. The hero in the post-war novel is a person to whom things happen; he is an antihero, a neurotic, a cripple emotionally if not physically. As a result of this there is a collapse of faith in the accepted patterns of social relationships. This results naturally in a search for new patterns.
Though John Braine has written thirteen novels only the novels wherein the spirit of family relationship is predominant are chosen for the present study. All these novels lend themselves to a psychological study as no modern novelist could resist the impact of psychology in his approach to any problem. In these novels, many problems crop up because of psychological aberrations, emotional disturbances and immaturity of mind. It is found often that a solution for the problem of an emotional nature always lies with the sufferer. "Further more, the theory that neurosis frequently arose from sexual repression and that this was a problem which in some degree affected everyone in civilized society, favoured the spread of a more humane and sympathetic attitude towards those who were psychologically disturbed" (Tony Neville, 1977). Eminent psychologists point out how a courageous sufferer can understand and face the problems of the mind. This helps him to know himself first and his fellow beings next. By the time he completes his life's journey he has a clear understanding of self or 'I' as a result of which he is able to reconcile his life with his feelings and the feelings of those with whom he comes into contact.

The breakdown of accepted values has resulted in an increased inwardness, in an increased withdrawal of the individual into his own shell. "Freud believed that facing the facts, however disturbing they might be, was the first step towards adult maturity." His study of Psychology added a new dimension to the study of human behaviour. "Freud's recommendation was that in the struggle between freedom and restraint, animal pleasure and
to imply a judgement of behaviour, which means that the novel is what the
symphony or painting or sculpture is not - namely, a form steeped in
morality."19 Victorian novelists felt so delicate in their expression that they
could call a spade only a garden implement. But the modern novelists call a
spade a spade. Readers prefer novels not only for entertainment but also for
the abundant avenues they provide for a proper understanding of people and
society." And they entertain, or divert, which means to turn our faces away
from the repetitive patterns of daily life and look at humanity and the world
with a new interest and even joy."20

Modern fiction thrives on the curiosity of the reader and for many
questions raised in the course of the novel one has to look up to psychology
for clearer understanding. It is so because the human mind is complex and the
modern novel tries to reflect the modern mind. For the problems locked up in
a literary piece, psychology alone provides a key." But the abnormality, which
produces an obsessional angle of vision and wrenches participants from their
habitual composure, only magnifies and intensifies aspects of the human
condition that are ultimately inescapable."21 The problem of Clive, Robin,
Stephen, Ruth and Vicky in Braine's novels *Stay with Me Till Morning* and
*The Two of Us* and the problems of Joe, Susan and Norah in *Life At The Top*
are analysed with the help of a study of psychology. Critics notice a practical
philosophy embedded in every novel of John Braine. No keen observer can
afford to miss the message wrapped in that philosophy. Anthony Burgess has
included *Room at the Top* in his collection of the best *Ninety-Nine Novels* in
English since 1939 and comments on it. "British society is not really so mobile as it appears: the way up is available only to really exceptional talent equipped with total ruthlessness."22 The most modern novelist may feel that he could do away with any message. One often reads in an interview a novelist confessing that he writes because he has an urge to write and if there is any message he is not responsible for it. It is heartening to find that there are still modern novelists like Braine who wish to share their ideas in their novels. "But the implied moral of Room at the Top is spelt out. Stay true to your class."23 The final aim of every hero of Braine is not to achieve money or fame but happiness. According to the writer-hero, Tom Mitfield of the novel Queen of a Distant Country. "A novel is a bundle of messages: one of the messages of my first novel was that the hero didn't win the battle, that although his mistress was dead, he'd never be able to get her out of his system, that what he had from her would spoil him for any other woman" (Q.D.C. P.120). Here Braine comments on his own hero and hints at the consequences that he may have to face because of the thoughtless treatment meted out to his mistress. Braine has created mostly gentlemen who struggle throughout their lives to be happy and make others happy. A Braine hero loves his family and in his family Braine projects a miniature world. Ericfromm in his paper 'Selfishness and Self-Love' (1979) puts it this way "Love of others and love of ourselves are not alternatives. On the contrary, an attitude of love toward oneself will be found in all those who are capable of loving others."24
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from a psychological despair and puts him on his feet. He starts seeing things in new perspectives.

The writer-hero of the novel Tim Hamforth feels. "For being a man in one sense has nothing to do with sexual performance or toughness or physical strength. It has everything to do with kindness, with gentleness, with uncalculated affection." (O.A.L.L. P.114). The last novel These Golden Days continues this story; at the end of the story Vivien is no longer a concubine, she is free to marry him thanks to her husband who is willing to grant her divorce. 'To feel free' is the principle that the characters of Braine live by. Vincent Dungarvan echoes this, "We always have to live as if we were going to die the next moment. Once you realize that you're free, you're more than an animal walking upright, you're a human being" (J.G. P.202). The novel These Golden Days exhibits great maturity on the part of the main characters and it reads like a treatise on peace. Vivien helps Tim like a psychiatrist to come to terms with himself and others.

As Havelock Ellis observes in his famous essay on 'Freud's influence on the changed Attitude Toward Sex' (1973). "It was inevitable that the more penetrating minds among those who sought to their way in this chaos should fix on special lines of advance to which they happened to be individually drawn." Through flashback techniques Braine makes the sensitive hero Tim remember his best days with his loving mother and the worst days with his wives who illtreated him. "When earlier events are relived in memory, they become more vivid, less obscured by more recent happenings, and the pattern
of the inner story emerges more clearly. "27 Tim is plunged into depression, and Vivien cures him of his malady by lending him physical and moral support. Jonathan Glover (1988) feels. "Even leaving aside sex, relationships meet strong emotional needs. We value the things we do, and the experiences we have: if we did not we might as well be unconscious or dead. But we also mind that we have some one to share them with."28 The importance of companionship is stressed always in the pages of Braine's fiction. It is the spirit of 'sharing' that makes life worthwhile. The writer - hero of the novel The Queen of Distant Country Tom deserts Cora after getting her into trouble. But the writer - hero of the novel, These Golden Days Tim makes his lady love Vivien his wife the moment he learns that her husband is willing to divorce her. Tim proves himself worthy of Vivein's care and trust by being sincere to her in thought and deed.

Whatever Braine writes, the focus is always on the human being. In the beginning it is his quest for power and comfort and then it is his quest for peace. For the acquisition of power, happiness and tranquility man depends on woman. Braine makes it quite clear that any achiever needs a woman to inspire and encourage him. Though Braine does not say that man cannot achieve anything all by himself he implies that he who has the support of a woman can surmount any difficult situation. He further emphasises that the success shared with a woman is sweeter. "The need is for mutual awareness in sharing the experience".29 (Glover, 1988).
Most of the heroes of Braine are home loving. They love their homes, children and the women they are married to. Only when circumstances force them, they stay away from their wives. Even when they plunge into affairs they are particular about choosing companions who are as caring as wives. The other women cannot hold them long because the family relationship is so strong that the men return to the family fold after a brief spell. Norah, the other woman in Life at the Top, Ruth the other woman in Stay with Me Till Morning and The Two of Us are flexible and they are able to change when the society demands it. "As a result, they have chosen a role in life that is in harmony with their innerselves."\(^{30}\) (G.Morris, 1979). In certain cases where the wife is very adamant and refuses to function as a wife the husband forms an ideal relationship with an understanding woman, treats her like a wife and finally marries her. This pattern is definitely different from the trend in a modern novel where the hero deserts his girl friend when she is waiting for him with bag and baggage at the railway station or airport. It is difficult for any sensible reader to identify with a rogue who deserts a trusting girl at the last minute. It is possible that frustrations and fears have affected the hero so much that he wants to run away from every responsibility. But he ought to have taken the girl into confidence and made his position and inability clear. It may have a different effect on the psychology of the reader who would be baffled at the end of such a modern novel. Joseph Wood Krutch (1957) feels the same in his book, "Perhaps it would be pleasanter if men could believe what the child is taught - that the good are happy and that things turn out as they should but it is far more important to be able to believe, as Shakespeare did,
that however much things in the outward world may go awry man has, nevertheless, splendours of his own and that, in a word, Love and Honour and glory are not words but realities.\textsuperscript{31}

Fiction should provide answers for the questions that are bound to arise in its perusal. No reader wants to be left in the lurch groping in the dark to find out whether it is a case of deception, self-deception or both. In some modern novels a girl is shown to be in love with two persons at the same time. The idea is quite simple; if one of them deserts her she has an alternative to settle down in life. But this kind of attitude ridicules the very concept of love. For Freud, "Love" occurs when the well being of another person becomes as important a goal as one's own; thus the gratification of the loved person can be a satisfying substitute for gratification of the self. Moreover, love relationships can be mutual, so one receives gratification and concern in return.\textsuperscript{32} (Raymond E. Fancher, 1990).

But Braine treats love with all the seriousness it deserves in all his novels. His characters have good taste, an innate sense of harmony, rhythm and sense. They are governed by their sensations and by their loving nature; but affection has a greater hold on them than passion. They know that the wings of love are not made for the lens of the microscope and so they can forgive the faults in their loved ones. Braine believes in concluding his novel with an optimistic note. Francis King comments on Braine's These Golden Days thus, "Admittedly, as when one is reading a Victorian novel, one has the vertiginous sensation that the whole edifice may at any moment disintegrate
like something spun out of sugar; but that threat, though constantly present, is miraculously never realized."33

Every novel should give a new insight into life and should help to broaden the outlook of the reader. A human being is not a huge boulder that stays in the same spot for centuries. Life changes; a person has to face unexpected situations. "But the joy of life depends upon a certain spontaneity regarding everything that a person does. Where sex is repressed, only work remains, and gospel of work for work's sake never produced any work worth doing"34 (Russel, 1976). It is always good to swim against the current, there is a hope of escape if a person conquers the fear of drowning. "A good life cannot be founded upon fear, prohibition and mutual interference with freedom"35 (Russel, 1976).

But a large number of people are afraid of many things in life, they suffer from unwanted inhibitions and till they complete the course of their lives, do not know what real freedom is. "As to death itself, it is well known that most people cannot face it except under the wraps of consoling fiction"36 (Yi-fu, Tuan, 1979). People are biased in favour of life, particularly as it is manifested in the health of their bodies. "When we close our eyes and die, the world too enters oblivion."37 Only persons with maturity can understand that it is futile to engage oneself in unnecessary quarrels and get into difficult situations.
Another way of approaching and appreciating life can be learnt from a good novel. When a person is young and immature like Joe of Room at the Top he gets emotionally involved with women and achieves his goal by the wrong means. "Sexual relationships become a means of cerebral satisfaction and of climbing the social ladder" (Harry Blamiers, 1986). But Braine shows that unless a person at some stage in life is able to appreciate the need for psychological balance and be concerned about his own health, he will be a prey to every random passion that may overtake him. Nothing else in the world makes any sense, except, that human beings are only a random collision of atoms and the atoms themselves do not seem too substantial these days. Ordinarily this absurdity matters little, paralleling the life one lives from coffee spoon to coffee spoon. "But the relationship from which the young heroes expect the most satisfaction is love" (Gustav Klings, 1982). The young heroes of Braine have no control over their emotions. "One finds the young men entangled in at least one, sometimes in a whole series of rather complicated, more or less freely described love affairs, which on the whole, though, fail to bring them permanent bliss, though keen enough temporary pleasures." Finally if the hero of Braine finds love all is transmogrified into something worthwhile. If that love be lost, then the world is no longer the old humdrum place but an insane asylum kept by a mad man; marriage is a stay against that. No one can live very long at the high pitch of romantic love, although many try to do by going through a succession of such loves.
Braine's novels clearly indicate that a harmonious physical as well as psychological development helps his heroes to acquire the right values and enjoy life better. The hero of his last novel These Golden Days is sixty years old, he is in no hurry to reach the top and he is not keen on amassing wealth or acquiring any new status in society. "For money is considered as the key to the gratification of the deeper longings stirring obscurely in the breasts of the juvenile heroes."41 The older hero has learnt the practical philosophy of life; to have more one should desire less. "The elderly are generally more tranquil and content with small pleasures, from which they extract the fullest enjoyment so that they make the most of their opportunities in a way generally impossible to the young who are always racing ahead."42 (Michael Balint, 1987).

As the mind of the young hero is always agitated, he does not find his central affinity with any single person. He has one foot on the sea and one foot on the shore and he is never constant in his attitude towards women. "On the other hand, the elderly do not like, and are often incapable of, going from one extreme to the other."43 But whether young or old every person is affected by the way others respond to them, by the feelings each has for the other, by the non-verbal signals of eye contact, smile and voice. Every novelist has his own method of portraying human affections and human relationships. Braine as a novelist never tries to pass judgement on anyone or society. He presents situations and anybody is welcome to choose any line of thought. When Tim and Vivien communicate with each other they act as psychoanalysts to each other in the novels One-and-last love and
These Golden Days. "It is the free expression of repressed emotion accompanied by interpretations from the psychoanalyst that provides catharsis or relief from tension and greater self-insight"44 (Burns, 1991). Any understanding companion can serve as a psychoanalyst and help a depressed person to relieve himself of his tensions and have a new vision of life.

If the aim of psychology is to discover why people behave as they do the modern novelist observes and records the background, behaviour, beliefs, and expectations of human beings. To achieve this he has to do a lot of spade work. Before describing Warley, the place of Joe to create the right impression Braine goes to the place of his hero - "for what people feel about places can be as important as what they feel about human beings"45 says John Braine in Writing A Novel (1974). The novelist has to make the attraction of the place for the hero as convincing as his love for his lady. This idea strikes one as something really novel. "The love affairs is not only between Joe and Alice, but between Joe and Warley"46 (WAN P.79). This approach would definitely help to make a psychological study of the protagonist of the first novel of Braine Room at the Top.

The chapters are arranged in such a way that they record a steady growth in the mental maturity of the protagonist. Each chapter indicates a particular stage in the life of the protagonist - usually the 'I' in Braine's novels. Whether the hero is Joe, Tom, Clive or Tim all the novels are taken as a single unit. Hence it is proposed to study the state of mind, attitude and reaction of the protagonist in each phase of his life.
As man transcends from his Childhood to Youth, his phase of life also alters with experience. *Room At the Top* and *The Queen of A Distant Country* delineate this beginning stage of life where the young heroes falter and fumble. The chapter ‘Upgradation’ chiefly concentrates on these two novels. Since life is in a state of flux man grows up with experience. The heroes of *The Jealous God*, *Life At the Top*, *Stay - with Me Till Morning* and *The Two of Us* have stepped into their middle age and the chapter ‘Deviation’ deals with their problems. The heroes of *Life At The Top*, *Stay - With Me Till Morning* and *The Two of Us* learn that adjustment is the essence of family life and the chapter ‘Adaptation’ is mainly about that. Maturity is marked by an individual’s state of mind and his experience with his growing years. The hero of *One-And-Last Love* and *These Golden Days* has attained the ultimate wisdom during his old age and the chapter ‘Destination’ elucidates this acquisition of wisdom. The hero of the first novel is in his twenties while the hero of the last novel is in his sixties. The thesis has been categorized into the following chapters.

- **Chapter II** - Upgradation
- **Chapter III** - Deviation
- **Chapter IV** - Adaptation
- **Chapter V** - Destination
- **Chapter VI** - Conclusion
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