CHAPTER IV

ADAPTATION

The term Adaptation brings to mind highly specific meanings in different disciplines. In psychology it is "the process by which an individual achieves the best balance feasible between conflicting demands". Individuals who cannot tackle the responsibilities of life find it distressing. Weighed down by burdens they are overcome by negative feelings. Frustrated persons might contemplate suicide, murder or any immoral activity. If they learn to adjust themselves to the changes in society and develop a positive outlook they might become useful citizens of the world. "The development of behavioural technologies to improve individual adjustment raises complex ethical considerations, e.g. whether conditioning techniques to solve problems of sexual adjustment can be adopted without consideration of values and morals".

This chapter brings to light the change of the hero's approach to people and events in John Braine's novels *Life at the Top*, *Stay With Me Till Morning* and *The Two of Us*. It also analyses the part played by the 'other woman' in the life of the hero and her state of mind. Any enlightened person wants to lead a meaningful and enriched life. The behaviour of a modern man is conditioned by the repression of the libido, the lack of love, the failure of self-respect, the lack of a right cause to strive for and the lack of wisdom.
In John Braine’s novels *Life at the Top* and *Stay With Me Till Morning* the hero after some years of conjugal life comes to know of his limitations and he learns to live with them. The husband becomes wiser when he knows his wife’s infidelity and he learns to adjust himself to her way of life. The chief reason that Susan gives Joe for being unfaithful is that he uses everybody. As he appears to be full of pride and hatred she thinks that he is not capable of spontaneous affection. Joe comes to know of her views only when she is provoked. From that moment onwards he drops his mask of a tough looking achiever. What he has failed to achieve by his rough exterior Mark has achieved by weeping and coming out with sob stories. "The theme of (Life at the Top) is the acceptance of responsibility or so it seems most of the way through the book".³ (James W.Lee, 1968)

Norah chooses to be his mistress for the simple reason that Joe is a good husband material. She tries to lure him away from his kith and kin by promising to give birth to children. Even when they want to do the wrong thing these characters want to do it for the right reason. "Man is seen to be actively in control of behaviours and able to adapt readily to change. What he decides, prefers, plans for, aspires to is the basis of his behaviour".⁴ Ten years of married life has taught Joe many things in life. Even though he does not like his father-in-law he is glad in a way that he should find pleasure in flirting with a pretty girl. As it is Norah he considers it an endorsement of his own good taste. "Suddenly I was astounded by compassion, compassion for the old man who does not smoke a cigar, who had to leave a party at half-past nine,
and compassion too for Mark, still frightened still expecting a blow. There wasn’t anyone left to hate. I tightened my arm around Susan’s waist”. (L.A.T. p.216). John Braine in no uncertain terms suggests that polygamy is a human quality. This particular phenomenon is repeated in many of his novels. Husbands leave their wives for other women; so do wives. But some of them regret their folly and stage a come back. Their partners also receive them with an understanding and compassion.

"Extra marital relationships and divorce have become more common, a variety of sexual practises are viewed more tolerantly; the mass media portray and discuss the new morality frequently, openly and (what seems to many) supportingly".5 These changes are accepted as part of society. When someone else is wronged it is easier to consider it common and brush it aside. But when it happens to him Joe feels like a fish out of water. Once he comes out of his home he is unable to behave like his normal self. Gone are his smiles, gone are his repartees and gone are his appetite for food and life. He has no mind to enjoy the leisure and pleasure thrown open to him. He could have taken it as a holiday and enjoyed the good company of Norah. But he longs for his children, his wife and his sweet home. Though he pretends to be tough outside, his mother-in-law during her visit to his London apartment manages to evoke the right emotional response from him. Norah instead of getting angry with him feels sorry for him. She is a reasonable lady who understands his predicament and gives him up for his family life.
Braine makes it very clear that after a particular stage it is difficult to uproot a person and plant him in a different soil. He does not commit the mistake he had committed in the novel The Room at the Top by way of destroying the integrity of his personal relationship. "Joe's search for goods and position has been at the expense of his soul as in Room at the Top. Now returning to his familiar characters and surroundings, Braine attempts to show just how soul destroying his success really was". As an intelligent person he can easily guess what he had done to the husband of Alice, somebody has done to him.

When a person is impulsive or emotionally disturbed he is unable to take the right step towards any responsibility. After he grows up and matures into a well balanced person he is able to think of even his past misdeeds in the right perspective.

"Unlike the 'Angries' Braine does not make Joe seem a worse man than he is, he does not make his background excessively sordid or his life more degenerate than necessary". As a lover of worldly pleasures he wants to enjoy the good things of life. "If some thing of his humanity is lost in the getting, so much the worse; but a man may just as easily lose his humanity by settling into his lower-middle class niche, as many of the characters in the book do".

Each and every person needs to create the conditions that will enable him to live richly and joyously. The common moral decencies and responsibilities need to be respected as essential to the very frame work of life.
in the community. " The fruit of the tree of life is wholesome and nourishing, and in eating it we find that its secret is that life is intrinsically good. This is the basic touchstone for the ethics of humanism." So says Paul Kurtz, in his book Forbidden Fruit (1988). Many philosophers insist that the acts of creative living including the sharing of life with others, is the 'summum bonum' of the human condition.

In all the novels of Braine the family relationship is displayed in its finest moment within the inner circle. There may be petty quarrels and feuds but inspite of everything there is a fabric of expectation and obligation within the family circle that is keenly felt. "More over, a wholesome marriage and family contribute enormously to the basic core of human values, and they need to be defended and preserved". Moral devotion does not depend upon biogenetic attachments only. For that matter a husband and a wife are of different genetic stocks. Braine is good at portraying relationships from different angles. "He has learned a great deal about handling character, his style has been refined, he has set himself the task of exploring more serious themes, and he has been successful (after some faltering) in handling point of view and focus". (James W. Lee, 1968)

People who take others for granted lack wisdom; they cannot think for a while that others can have different opinions as well. Joe in Life at the Top allows himself to be influenced by his wife and father-in-law for quite some time as a result of which he realizes that his individuality is completely wiped out. As Jonathan Glover (1988) observes, "Many of us lead rather undramatic
lives. The identity we create is often shaped, not by some heroic strength but through our choice of partners and friends, by the job we choose, and by where we decide to live. If a person is misplaced in an uncongenial atmosphere due to the conspiracy of circumstances his real nature rebels after some time. "You could only go up, but when Mark's father lost all his money Mark could only go down" (L.A.T. p.267). Joe is touchy when Susan compares him with Mark. He retorts immediately "You're really saying that my beginnings were so low that any change was a change for the better". (L.A.T. p.267).

Joe is angry with Susan, with Mark and with himself. He has caught Susan and Mark red handed and when Susan tries to explain it he yells at her. "Stop it', I said, 'he was safe, and you're safe as long as my daughter's in the house. But I still feel like a pimp". (L.A.T. p.166) His aunt advised him earlier to choose a girl from his own class. But he aimed at the top and got married to a rich lady. Inspite of everything that he has achieved in life he stil suffers from an inferiority complex. According to Adler, "Throughout our early development, we are constantly reminded of our inferior position as our parents, teachers and other significant adults point out our faults and correct us". Though he has fulfilled his long cherished ambition in life the fact that he has no power over his wife upsets him. The feeling that he does not belong to her class aggravates his sense of inferiority. Naturally to get even with her he wants to show his superiority.
Susan tries her best to dissuade him from taking any drastic step. He would not consider her apologies as genuine. "Once a whore, always a whore; no matter what she'd said last night the itch would come again". (L.A.T. p.172). Joe's ego is offended and his image as a husband is threatened. Act, he must, at least to save what little self-respect he is left with. The more he thinks of what took place in the bedroom between his wife and Mark the more hysterical he becomes. "She would not always bother to bolt the bedroom door; lust and fore sight don't go together. And Barbara might not sleep through it next time; I put my hand to my mouth again". (L.A.T. p.172) What fascinates the reader is the way everything is presented. The novelist does not comment on this triangle for he is least interested in developing the romantic tale of Susan and Mark. In his Writing A Novel Braine observes, "It is n't your job to pass judgement on anyone, much less on society. It is n't your job to say what should be, only what is".14

Joe has only one solace in life and that is his four year old daughter Barbara, whom he adores. He just cannot imagine a life without the loving presence of his daughter. "His son has been sent, on the grand-parents insistence, to the right kind of preparatory school, and Joe feels that Harry has been completely alienated from him".15 (Granville Hicks, 1962)

Education should bring people together but in Harry's case it keeps him away from an affectionate father. "But his prep school had long since taught him that all physical expressions of affection between parent and child were - as he'd told me when unthinkingly I tried to kiss him when I came home-
sloppy and embarrassing". (L.A.T. p.197) Joe wants to shower his affection on his children and expects them to respond to his love. He feels that there is an invisible curtain which prevents Harry, his son from getting close to him. The children feel the importance of the father once the father leaves the home. There are many set backs in Harry's attitude and the people at home want Joe back to solve his problems and make him attend his school. Only when Joe stages a come back, normalcy is restored at home and Harry confides in him all his fears and feels safe.

Mrs. Brown plays a major role in changing Joe's attitude towards Susan. Braine is good at portraying the man-woman relationship. He does not confine himself to the romantic aspect of it alone. "The man - or woman who is handsomely endowed with material possessions and yet is unhappy is one of the stock characters of contemporary popular fiction".16

The effect of a woman on the hero of Braine is tremendous. The woman can be a friend, a wife or a mother-in-law. In Life at the Top though Joe has deserted his family he is at a loss to know as to what to do with himself at the London apartment. He is more or less at the beck and call of Norah who is busy arranging for his job. It is not a position he enjoys very much. As he has enjoyed power, he does not want to please people inferior to him for a lively hood. Just when he needs some one to tell him what exactly is good for him, Mrs. Brown, his mother-in-law calls on him. She has come on her own to have a heart to heart talk with Joe. Joe from the beginning is always influenced by older women; his character is such that he
allows himself to be guided by an older woman at every stage of life. Further
her mere appearance reminds him of his wife Susan. She talks only facts at
times hurting and at times consoling. She clearly states that she has not come
as a messenger of peace. His son Harry needs him by his side as he has
developed some problems with his school and she has come to pass on this
information to Joe. When she completes her talk and tries to leave he is really
moved. He wants her to stay on for some more time.

"Need you go?"

"I have an engagement. But it’s nice of you to want an old woman’s
company. Goodbye, Joe", "You’re nice", she said. "Hang on to that, Joe, it’s
more important than you think". (L.A.T. p.271) She just leaves. She has not
advised him to do anything. As an outcome of her visit any decision that he
takes is his. But she has helped him to realise what he misses in life. She
exhibits real maturity in tackling a son-in-law who has independent views. She
succeeds where the father-in-law fails because she knows how to appeal to
Joe’s emotions. Braine as a novelist succeeds in scenes where genuine
emotions are evoked by the very presence of a relative. "All art proceeds from
feeling, and most of all the novelist’s art; if feeling is absent, no amount of
mental cross-breeding between abstractions, and the problems of technique
will take its place as an incentive".17

Sometimes a wife has to think for her husband as it happens in the
novel *Stay With Me Till Morning*. Robin likes her father-in-law but she can
sense his desire to dominate her husband. Her father and Clive's father are of the same age but Clive's father looks younger and he is also richer. Naturally her father is jealous of her father-in-law and passes on a bit of that feeling to her also. Further she wants him to exercise his choice in certain personal matters without fear. "Fear is a useful early-warning mechanism but a crippling master" 18 (Michael Bentine, 1984). No wife likes her husband to be afraid of his father and Robin is no exception to that. She feels that if he keeps accepting gifts from his father Clive would eventually lose his dignity. She tells, "Clive darling, if you let him always get his own way you'll just become his shadow. Phone him and say you've changed your mind". (S.W.M.T.M p.27) When Clive feels that it is not worth the trouble Robin uses sex to change his mind. She presents herself and tempts him in such a novel way on a leopard skin in the fire light Clive has no alternative but to yield to her and change his mind. "Throughout, sex is compulsive, rather than expansive; relief matters more than passion". 19 Fully aware of his psychology she knows how to plant her ideas into his gentle head.

Robin does not want Clive to accept the house gifted by his father. To make him abandon that idea she politely hints, "Wouldn't you like to choose a house by yourself, for yourself, not have someone else choose it for you?" (S.W.T.M. p.32). She leads him by his nose to select the Tower House. Again, it is not her choice, it is his. She makes sure that he does not suspect that she has already made up her mind. Selecting a house is as important as selecting
a spouse for some. "Each party has a responsibility not to be selfish, but to practise thoughtfulness and consideration."²⁰ (Paul Kurtz, 1988).

When Clive voices his doubt that such a big house might cost a lot she immediately tells him that they can return home, hiding her true feelings: "Her heart was beating so fast that she was surprised he did not hear it. She wanted to see inside the house so badly that it was all that she could do not to jump out of the car and run down the drive. But she knew by now how exactly to handle her husband". (S.W.T.M. p.36) And handle her husband she does. He is made to feel that they can have a look inside. He is made to feel that such a beautiful house is offered to him for a comparatively economical price. He is made to feel that he has chosen the house and he has finished the whole deal. What is more important is he is not made to feel that behind every deal there is his shrewd wife watching him and goading him on to do what she wants him to do.

It is Robin's nature to choose and possess what she desires but she is not blind to the noble nature of Clive. After delivering her daughter Petronella she becomes very weak and she wonders whether Clive goes out with some woman. Now that she cannot afford to please him sexually she does not mind if he has an affair with some lady; any way a very understanding wife that she is she wants to know the truth from the very mouth of the horse. "No relationship is perfect, and two partners may not have equal sexual needs. Where there is sexual compatibility, then the obligation is clear: in principle, one cannot or should not stray".²¹
Clive confesses that there is no one: "You nearly dying put me off. It would not have been fair some how". (S.W.T.M. p.44) Tears come to her eyes because she has not thought of his needs and he has suppressed his sexual urge for her sake. He considers her health very important and values her as a companion with feelings and not as a machine to help him relieve his urge. She is now prepared to even risk her health to make him happy. Braine is quite clever at bringing out the noble side of human nature in certain scenes. Russell says, "A marriage which begins with passionate love and leads to children who are desired and loved ought to produce so deep a tie between a man and woman that they will feel something infinitely, precious in their companionship, even after sexual passion has decayed, and even if either or both feels sexual passion for someone else".22

Though Clive goes to Vicky and to Ruth after sensing the sexual relationship of his wife with Stephen he cannot stay away from his wife. He realizes that an occasional fling is entirely different from a valuable relationship with a wedded wife. "People with modern views begin to regard sexual behaviour as a matter of personal rather than public morality. Almost paradoxically they also come to regard adequate sex adjustment between marriage partners as a necessary basis for a stable long-term relationship".23 He learns to adapt to his wife’s ways just as she is prepared to adapt to his ways of life.

Clive learns a lesson from every woman he gets involved with. With her neurotic behaviour Vicky very nearly kills Clive by turning on the gas fire in
the night while they are asleep. As luck would have it Clive smells it and turns it off. That is the end of his romance with Vicky. After his bitter experiences with Vicky he goes to Ruth who has a benign effect on him. Later he is very happy to inform his wife that Ruth has predicted his reunion with his family. It is really heartening to hear a gentleman talking well of another woman to his wife.

Robin exhibits understanding and maturity in accepting his views and accepting Ruth as a friend. "Capacity for diverse relationships in human society is an asset leading to adaptive and successful social living." 24 She also has an independent nature and would have liked to have the freedom of Ruth but now that she has a husband and three children she cannot even imagine that. She must curb her spirit of independence to suit her role as a wife and mother. "Neither husband nor wife seems especially stung by the other's freelancing—until their marriage nearly collapses, and Robin discovers that she can't marry her lover and Clive realizes that he'd hate to marry his." 25

The break-up with Stephen is her own choice. After all Stephen's wife Jean is expecting her baby. The arrival of a wife alters the life style of a man; the arrival of a baby alters it further. She has landed on the 'terra firma' now leaving the clouds and dreams and there is no looking back. There is no 'Receipte' as such for domestic happiness. Every lady is left to devise her own and she has to reject many things before opting for the right course. She has become clever and she understands very well that she cannot cling on to an old romance. Ruth is no threat to her domestic harmony. She is a doctor,
friend and psychiatrist all rolled into one and so she allows her to continue to be friendly with her husband.

Adler claimed that there were three key problems which confronted every individual: "the problems of love, friendship and work—and it was made clear that the successful solution of all three entailed a high degree of social adjustment". A man can do his work properly if only he has no problems in his love life or friendship. If he is careful to iron out the differences he can easily adjust himself to the ways of his loved ones.

Vicky is lucky to have a romance with Clive even if it is for a short while. Braine helps the reader to look at the character of Clive from different angles. Her husband Bruce sees everyone as a tool to be used or as an enemy to be destroyed. But Clive never believes in using a harsh word or using another human being to further his interests. He wants actually to set up a home away from Tower House with books, records and good food with Vicky. Whenever there is an opportunity to give a list of good things that a protagonist is associated with Braine grabs it and makes the most of it. "He's still fascinated by the marks of status—the brand of perfume, type of car, newspaper—but as keys to character these status symbols strike me as only a shade deeper than the fleshy automatic cataloguing of Ian Fleming". It gives a clear picture of the sophisticated life led by Clive. But soon he finds out that Vicky lacks the class that he looks for in a companion. He might like to enjoy a good song and discuss a good book with her. But Vicky is made of different
stuff. Naturally he senses the communication gap between them. Even while she is around he wants to distance himself from her.

In the last novel of Braine's *These Golden Days* the hero feels that his lady love is with him even when she is away at her home. Clive believes in drinking in moderation and he never gets drunk. Now he is pushed to that extreme and he is disheartened to see that Vicky is an addict to alcohol. The way she talks affects his sensitive nature. Her description of Bruce coming into her bedroom first shocks him - "I suppose he was getting his money's worth. If you're trading in a car, you drive it until you get the new one, don't you?" (S.W.T.M. p.201) Suddenly he realizes in panic that she is a stranger. He understands that he has mistaken her for someone else. To analyse her problem one has to take her to a psychiatrist. He alone can probe deep into what goes on in her mind. "Fixation at a particular stage of psychosexual development, caused by various factors during the formative years, determines the nature of the manifest problem when the neurosis appears in later life." He has used her because Robin has hurt his pride. He has used her because Robin is absent from his bed in spirit if not in body.

Clive has no time or mind to get entangled with a neurotic woman and spoil the rest of his life. Clive gets the first sign of heart attack only then. The pain expands inside his chest and when he rubs it with his hand it is gone. He understands that Vicky has taken up extramarital sex as other women take up jobs. Neurosis is essentially a problem of maladjustment. Vicky has failed to create a style of life compatible with her circumstances.
The only 'other woman' who is not possessive about her lover is Ruth. The Clive-Ruth romance does not strike anyone as an affair at all. They are drawn towards each other by mutual respect, understanding and compassion. That does not mean that Ruth has no longing for Clive as a lover. She is so outspoken that she even admits her happiness regarding the affair of Robin and Stephen. It might push Clive towards her, she has anticipated. Now that he has come to her she anticipates that he will go back to his family soon. When he denies that she is quite positive that he will.

"Because our lives aren't just other people, they're things and houses and places. You'll go back to Tower House. You'll go back to Lendrick and Sons. I could make my life just you, but you couldn't make your life just me". (S.W.T.M. p.236) Self deception is always problematic. Ruth does not adopt a conscious strategy of concealing an important issue from herself. She has no illusion about her future. She knows that she has to lead an independent life and she has no intention of disturbing the family life of Clive. She must make the best use of the avenues open to her without treading on anyone's toes.

"Adaptation is primarily a reciprocal relationship between the organism and its environment. Psychoanalysis enables us to discern those processes which, by directly and actively changing either the environment or the person, bring about a state of adaptedness between the individual and his environment, and to investigate the relationship between the performed means
of human adaptation and these adaptation processes." (Reuben Fine, 1979)
She does not want to cheat Clive and lead him to his self deception.

_The Two of Us_, the sequel of _Stay With Me Till Morning_ also presents Ruth as a person with a mind of her own. Ruth is pregnant but she does not want to tie Clive down with that responsibility. She does not want to capitalize on Clive’s emotions. She has an eye for what is good for him in the long run. Even when Clive is very vociferous in his love towards her she maintains a balanced attitude. "I love you. I don’t want anyone else". "Oh, that’s a lie". She laughed "I don’t care, darling. But you’re going to want Robin again and she’s going to want you. You’ll work something out". (S.W.T.M. p.236)

She forms a relationship with Clive for the sake of relationship. Braine time and again insists that it is very difficult to find a person like Ruth. A person like her makes suffering less painful and life more meaningful. In his later novels Braine develops the character of Ruth and gives her a different name and uses her to console and comfort the hero when he suffers from a broken home. "The most interesting element in the new book is Clive Landricks flight from ‘materialism’ into ‘art’." Rah introduces Clive to her circle of friends whose only preoccupation is fine arts. Clive is surprised by their attitude and happy to learn things from them which he could not learn from his own colleagues and partners. According to Jonathan Glover, "The main one is that our individuality is not something just given to us, but is, in part, something we ourselves create. The way we think of ourselves, and of our past, has a special role in this self-creation. Other things in the world, and
other people, are not changed directly by the way we think of them.\textsuperscript{31} Shaping oneself is a more important aspect and it should be given a central place in a person's thinking about social and psychological issues. "If the course of personality development has been a healthy one, a feeling of self-esteem accrues from the numerous experiences of success in tasks and acceptance of others."\textsuperscript{32}

The proper function of literature is to describe and to comment on the facts and the problems of human life. Literature ought to be candid but courageous. A writer ceases to be a good writer if he writes only for other writers. He should write for all fellow men. In a way a novelist resembles a psychologist who uses a common-sense framework of theory. "This common-sense framework explains what people do in terms of what they believe, what they want, what they hope for and are afraid of, their moods, what they like, who they love or hate, their ambition, their jealousy, their embarrassment, and so on."\textsuperscript{33} Braine has endowed his characters with human dignity and warmth. The most important human experiences are universal and inescapable. Human beings of all classes are confronted by the same inexorable facts of life and death. The love between husband and wife and between parents and children would provide enough material for any novelist.

Each character looks at a problem from a different point of view and the critic also has his own way of assessing a character and a novel. "Perhaps it was designed as a plain documentary — which stresses that life can be as violent and as messy for the cautious as for the reckless. Or it may mean that
conventional creatures should'nt lurch outside their fences".34 (Nora Sayre, 1971).

The loss of sexual morality and the absence of love in sex is part of a new trend which puzzles the writers. Sex is being converted into nothing but a means of pleasure completely divorced from spirituality. The vibrant spirit of love required to establish sex in its proper place in human life cannot be born of enfeebled life force. Braine also portrays the effect of abnormal love on Norman. Through Ruth he becomes friendly with Clive. Though he is mistaken to be a lover of Ruth his weakness is only for another boy called Gary. He does not let this homosexual relationship affect his personality in any way.

Homosexuality is generally hidden from public view because of severe social disapproval. "A great number of creative individuals have apparently practised or approved of it, including Plato, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Tchaikovsky, Walt Whitman, Gertrude Stein, Virginia Woolf, and Andre Gide?"35 (Paul Kurtz, 1988)

When Gary decides to leave Norman to become a partner with a lady he feels let down and says that Gary has been bought. When he complains to Clive that Gary has deserted him Clive recognises the real anguish in his voice. "People who can be bought are'nt worth having. You're well shot of him Norman?" (T.T.O.U. p.175) Norman just cannot imagine Gary enjoying a close relationship with that lady and tears well up in his eyes. In the past he never displayed any emotion when Clive shared the bedroom with Ruth. Even when
Clive doubted Norman's feelings Ruth assured him. "Norman does not have any feelings towards me or any woman. Think of him like an old nanny—one of the family, that's all. He rather likes it when there's a man about the place, just as an old nanny does. But there is no sex in it". (S.W.T.M. p.236) As a friend of Ruth he is happy there is Clive to take care of her.

One needs courage and motivation to lead a cheerful life. If courage is lost and motivation is gravely impaired it is difficult for a person to continue his life. Norman goes home, has a bath and wears new clothes. He starts taking pills and starts taking brandy. He sees Gary's face and the last sound he hears from the record is "someday I'll find you?" But he has no time to hear the end of the song. "A totally dejected human being, convinced of his our impotence in the face of the world, will yield to whatever urges or pushes him the most—his own fears, other's criticism, the authority of some or whatever".36 (Tibor R. Machan, 1974) The abnormal person who cannot cope up with the reality of life goes into oblivion. The end of Norman's chapter is dealt with by Braine in a poetic way.

Just as Norman drops out, Ruth also drops out from Clive's life in The Two of Us. She does not even want to tell her place of destination even though Clive insists on knowing it. "It's a small country". She said, "It'll be no trouble. I won't be in disguise. You'll know me when you see me, won't you?" (T.T.U. p.172). Norman and Ruth just disappear from the scene without creating any problem for others. Stephen is forced to understand that he can no longer continue his affair with Robin. He leaves the town for everybody's
good. "People leaving-that has always been the predominant metaphor for the
crowd of "look back in anger" novelists and playwrights that dominated the
British literary scene in the fifties".37 (B. Gordon, 1973)

The characters who leave either learn a lesson or teach a lesson to the
characters left behind in the town. Clive and Robin have learnt to face
challenges in life and adjust themselves to the new circumstances in the novels
Stay With Me Till Morning and The Two of Us. After the storm in their life Joe
and Susan have decided to turn a new leaf in their lives forgetting their
difference of opinion in the novel Life at the Top.

When they realize that the youthful energy might disappear at any time
these characters indulge in all kinds of passionate activities. They want to
reassure themselves that they can still go on leading a very active life as they
used to. But time teaches them a lesson and they wake up to reality after
many bitter lessons in life. "The flower of youth fades with passing time, but
it can be supplemented by deeper and more enduring bonds of affection".38
Affection gives a fillip to the sense of belonging of the family members and
helps them to adapt themselves to the new changes in life.

All the major characters involved in the novels discussed in this chapter
are governed by a similar taste. Taste is not an activity and not even
necessarily an achievement. It is an occurrence, outcome of liking, disliking or
preferring. In manifesting one's taste, a man is manifesting his likes and
dislikes. He affirms something to be of a certain assignable value. Joe Lampton
in *Life at the Top* after tasting a rich life is unable to reconcile himself to the unhygienic atmosphere of the apartment in London. He longs for the familiar rooms which are clean and pleasant smelling. The same thing happens to Clive in *Stay With Me Till Morning*. He is repelled by the alcohol — happy Vicky and her speeches are just nauseating. His vomiting in the apartment is symbolic of the atmosphere.

Braine uses material possessions as symbols of the prosperity and the taste of the characters. "Braine's style is very much American in its emphasis on crisp, clear descriptions; on names of products, and on the Americanized culture of Post War Britain with its Cadillac automobiles and Coca Colas".39 (James W. Lee, 1968) Braine has developed a style which suits his subject matter very much. Critics feel that his writing has been shaped by American books and movies. A typical British Novelist is sure to have a rather lengthy and ornate sentence structure and Braine is free of such a style.

Most of his characters are often defined by the brands of goods that they use. Though this device is derided by some critics, critics with a modern approach find it to be perfectly proper. Braine has cleverly used the taste of a character as a cause to send him back to his family members. It is easier to adjust with the familiar surroundings even if there are minor irritants. To start afresh in a new atmosphere without the company of one's own relatives is anathema to a character of Braine.
Freud's theory is that a human being is made up of three interrelated parts: the Id, the ego and the superego. The Id consists of all the fundamental instincts that a man is born with. They include pleasure, pain, hunger, thirst, sex and aggression. The Id is unconscious and the actions revealed inadvertently are called 'Freudian Slips'. They point out the workings of the Id. An understanding of 'Id' and the 'Freudian Slip' helps the reader to analyse the behaviour of Joe Lampton in *Life at the Top*.

Joe is happily married and well settled in life with two children. But he has a romantic streak lodged in him and it gains an upper hand once Norah is spotted in a crowd. He lets the reader have an opportunity to know what goes on in his mind. "Deliberately I continued to stare at her; I wanted to disturb her, at least to make her wonder if there was a smudge on her face or her slip showing. A little to my surprise she did not take out a mirror or look down at her skirt: after a while she returned my stare, but the expression in the large grey eyes was one I'd never encountered before. Now it was I who was beginning to feel embarrassment; I directed my attention to the agenda once more". (L.A.T. p.180)

Joe is sexually turned on by the very presence of Norah. Once a romantic, always a romantic, he had an affair before marrying Susan and he does not intend to put an end to his tendency to have a good time with a good looking woman. Further as Susan herself calls Norah later, Norah belongs to the 'Cow' type which Joe is very fond of. Readers of *Room at the Top* can easily find Norah's resemblance to Alice, another 'Cow' type woman.
with whom Joe has a very passionate affair. Joe’s words reveal his secret desire to have an intimate relationship with her. He keeps staring at her with the idea of disturbing her. He is fully aware of the fact that he is smart looking, influential and rich. Any woman, he thinks would fall for him. Even if she does not reciprocate the message of his eyes he wants her to check up at least whether there is something wrong with her face or dress. But Norah refuses to take out a mirror to see whether there is a smudge on her face or look down at her skirt. She just stares back at him and he feels like a pick-pocket whose pocket is picked. He who wants to embarrass her feels embarrassed. To cover up his disappointment he reverts his attention to the agenda, which is an inanimate thing.

The ‘Id’ of Joe is revealed indirectly through his stare and the lady has got the message from him. She is completely in possession of her self at present. Later she might make use of the information passed through not by words but by Joe’s stare. It is Braine’s conviction that his protagonist should reveal his desire thus. "Bear in mind always that in his person as narrator your character has no shame whatever and no desire to present himself in good light".\(^4\) (W.A.N. p.117)

The ego controls the ways of satisfying the ‘Id’s’ drives in the external world. If ‘Id’ operates according to the pleasure principle ‘the ego’ acts according to the ‘reality principle’. In the novel *Stay With Me Till Morning* Clive develops an escapist attitude. He wants to run away from Tower House, his home, his wife and children "You know", he said, "people in films and
novels are always saying they're tired of running away, my trouble is that I haven't run away before". (S.W.M.T p.228) Though Clive wants to shake off his responsibilities and do the vanishing trick his ego prevents him from doing that. In his case the ego attempts wisely to delay appeasing a desire of the 'Id'.

Ruth the lady with whom Clive shares a beautiful relationship does not approve of his desire to run away. "As long as you've run to me it doesn't matter. I used to dream about this. You've come here to night for the hundredth time, not the first time". (S.W.T.M. p.228) Ruth acts like Clive's alterego. She knows what is good for him and she is not going to permit him to run away from his home. Tower House is not just a home, the mere mention of it has association of ideas for Clive. He can never be happy away from Tower House. A selfish woman might try to capitalize on the situation but it is not Ruth's nature. She is happy that he has come to her which is a 'wish-fulfilment for her'. She has longed many times for this union but she is ultimately for his family reunion. She knows that she can not change people after a particular age. But she can change their attitude towards other people. She does exactly that with Clive. Time is a great healer and Distance helps a person to forget the pain. Ruth helps to heal the wound and forget the pain by her soothing words and practical philosophy.

A person in whom only the 'Id' and 'Ego' are present would be a selfish person. He has to develop a moral standard by his association with his parents, teachers and society. This moral guardian is termed 'Super ego' by Freud. Young children are amoral and they reach for anything that gives
pleasure. They adopt as their own the judgement of their parents after some years of maturity. Soon after, the parent's role is assumed by their own internal self restraint. According to G. Charles (1979), "The Superego, then, acting as Conscience, takes over the task of observing and guiding the ego, just as the parents Observe and 'guide the child'."  

According to Freud the 'Super ego' of an artist compares his 'ego's' actions with an 'ego ideal' of perfection and then compliments or reprimands the 'ego'. The 'Super ego' is always severe in its dealings and there are chances of an artist giving up his desire to create art after knowing that he can never be a good artist. "Ideally, the Id, ego, and superego work in harmony: The ego satisfies the demands of the Id in a reasonable, moral manner approved by the superego. We are then free to love and to hate, and to express our emotions sensibly without guilt".  

Freud's theory, of 'Id' 'Ego' and Superego' can be applied to the heroes of Braine. In Life at the Top Joe's 'ego' satisfies the demands of his 'Id' in a reasonable, moral way approved by the 'Super ego'. Joe and Susan share a good rapport and enjoy their life. When Susan's 'Id' is dominant her emotions are unbridled and she develops an illicit relationship with Mark which spoils her family life. When the 'Super ego' dominates Joe goes berserk and packs off to London leaving behind a wailing wife and affectionate children. "Anger, fear and sorrow intrinsically involve the cognitive judgement that one's situation is not as it ought to be; whereas joy involves the judgement that one's situation is as it ought to be". (Oliver Letwin, 1987)
Braine shows that the most complex emotions like love and jealousy cannot be tied down to a single judgement. Clive's love for his wife in *Stay With Me Till Morning*, is entirely different from that of his love for Vicky. What he has for Vicky is a physical desire. He indulges in that because of his anger towards Robin and her indifference towards him. Clive's love for Ruth borders on respect. Ruth is able to maintain that till the end while Vicky reveals herself in a poor light and drives Clive away. Ruth succeeds in many things; particular mention should be made of her mastery over her emotion. Vicky seems to be in the sway of a foreign power, once she becomes emotional. She does not know how to talk, behave and treat a gentle man like Clive when they are together. "And this capacity of emotion—indeed, of all passions including urges—to grab people, to render them helpless, is part of what makes emotion disruptive". Vicky is jealous of Robin because of her wealth, loving husband and family background. But her jealousy leads her nowhere. Her emotions make her a divided being. She is rejected by her husband Bruce and she is not sure of her future.

Robin realizes the futility of her relationship with Stephen. She does not see anything wrong in her husband's relationship with Ruth. Any normal wife wants her husband to have good friends. Well-meaning friends not only define life properly but also enhance the charm of living. A wise person like Ruth generally communicates very rarely. But as luck would have it she chooses Clive to speak her mind. She is the first to warn him about Stephen and Vicky. But she has no aptitude for carrying tales or keeping people at logger heads.
This quality helps her to keep a straight face and order Clive to do things. For her genuine affection she expects nothing in return except genuine affection. She never capitalizes on other’s misery. She is a person who can be called a gift of nature to Clive. Clive deserves her because, “He’d kept to the rules all his life, he hadn’t had a day off work since he went to Lenderick and Sons from the Army, he’d never, gone with another woman until she’d given him cause to”. (S.W.T.M. p.198)

Every individual is to a certain extent motivated to live according to what is necessary for his individual growth and that is called ‘self actualization’. The major characters of Braine are the most ‘self-actualizing’ and they think of themselves as complete beings, not as parcels of fear, hunger, ambition and dependency. They respond to any occurrence according to the emotion they feel for it. In Life at the Top Joe comes back from the tour unannounced and witnesses his wife Susan sleeping with Mark. Emotion builds up and he warns Mark to immediately leave his house. Mark does that as he knows fully well that Joe would pull him to pieces if he does not comply with his command. Joe lets everyone know his anger and gives vent to it on everyone including his rich father-in-law. His behaviour saves him from a heart attack.

On the other hand Clive in Stay With Me Till Morning comes to know of the affair of his wife Robin with Stephen and bottles up his emotions. It results in heart-attack. Joe comes from a very ordinary family and Susan from a wealthy family. He is able to shout at Susan and silence her. Clive’s background is much better than that of Robin but he has to suffer his lot silently.
As she also happens to be a reasonable lady she realizes her folly and puts an end to her affair with Stephen. All these characters deviate from their normal course of life mainly because they are emotionally disturbed. As a result of the emotional crisis they get out of their familiar circle. Their adventures outside are not satisfying and they find out for themselves that their happiness lies at home.

A home is not just built of brick and mortar. For the dweller it has association of ideas. It stands for safety, warmth, progress, affiliation and help. Whichever direction he travels it has the magnetic pull to bring him back. No one can refrain from getting emotionally attached to his home and home town. A world without emotion would come to a stand still. A man who is never affected by any emotion would only resemble a painting on the wall. But even a painting on the wall has value only if it has the power to make the viewer react emotionally. "Dante ends his Divine Comedy with perhaps the most cosmic and universal application of emotion to motivation: He speaks of "the love that moves the sun and other stars". Our way of saying it would be, "Love makes the world go round". So do hate, fear, contentment, rage, anxiety, guilt and joy".45 (Psychology, 1979)

It is not an easy thing to change the basic nature of man. An affectionate father remains always an affectionate father. But it is possible to change the attitude of a person towards an object or a person. It is done because of circumstances or the behaviour of the persons one is connected with. Characters like Joe or Clive run away from their homes because of a
change of attitude. Braine shows it clearly that anybody in their place would have done that. If they do not go away for at least a brief period anger would have either made them do drastic things to themselves or their loved ones. Distance helps to cool the temper and helps them to know that the psychic needs best fulfilled by family relationship cannot possibly be satisfied by any other experience however pleasurable or prolonged it might be.

The other woman in Joe's life in Life at the Top, Norah without her knowledge helps Joe to distance himself from a troubled atmosphere. She has helped to avert a major tragedy in the life of Joe. Susan's confession that he is not the real father of Barbara could have even made Joe murder his children in a fit of anger. His wife's affair with Mark and the knowledge that he had not fathered the child on whom he showered affection would have very nearly turned him into an animal. A brief period of distance from home provides him time for introspection. After all he is not also a flawless character; everytime he has an opportunity to indulge in extra-marital relationship he has not denied himself that. Room at the Top shows that he is responsible for the death of Alice, a married lady who simply dotes on his love. If he can have an affair with a married woman and treat it as a normal occurrence of life the possibility of someone having an affair with his wife is also not ruled out.

There is also something called poetic justice in life. Dramatists and Novelists have made great use of the literary aspect of this principle of 'poetic justice'. Ever since Lady Macbeth goads Macbeth on to kill Duncan the king in Shakespeare's play Macbeth she loses her sleep. Her 'sleep walking scene'
is considered to be a literary piece 'par excellence'. Shakespeare has beautifully externalized her inner trauma when she tries to wipe off the blood of Duncan from her hands. Finally she succumbs to her deep felt sorrow and dies. Her husband is left to taste the bitter fruit of his misdeeds.

Henry B. Clerk in his book Altering Behaviour (1987) expresses his view that 'EBC' which is his shorthand term for 'experience and behaviour control' can create a great variety of pleasurable sensations and delightful moods. "Our happiness in interpersonal relationships can be augmented by techniques of behaviour therapy that iron out our many routine difficulties in human interaction and that clear up many of the internal states of mind that cause a given individual to have difficulty in relating smoothly to others".46 Just as Olympic athletes make use of novel techniques for muscle - building 'EBC' techniques help people to become diligent, intelligent and productive. "We are from time to time momentarily disoriented by future shock and we make many mistakes - but we also manage to make many necessary or desirable adjustments rather successfully".47 Braine clearly shows through his novels that man can achieve happiness and fulfilment only if he revises his views and adjusts with other human beings. A revision of his attitudes toward sexual morality and family life enables Joe to effect a family reunion at the end of the novel Life at the Top.

Many people cling tenaciously to traditional values. There are some who swear by certain new values. Not everyone can make a shift from the old values to the new. Wise persons try to retain the best from the old values and
adopt the best from the new values. Clive achieves exactly that at the end of the novel Stay With Me Till Morning. He gets united with Robin, his wife and his other family members. At the same time he is able to continue his treasured relationship with Ruth also. If he has prolonged his stay outside 'Tower House' sharing a beautiful relationship with Vicky or Ruth his 'Super ego', the little 'Police man' within would have punished him ferociously and the novel would not have had a happy ending. Ruth stands for 'new values' and Clive learns many noble things from her. Robin feels that Ruth is no threat to her security. To be harmless is good but to be recognised by everyone as harmless is great. Clive is that way very lucky to have both these women attend on him when he is really weak after a heart attack.

Braine has expressed his conviction that a good novelist should be neutral and invisible. The reader has to find out himself what is bad or what is good. Braine succeeds in keeping himself aloof without taking sides. "He told Kenneth Allsop that the novelist's responsibility is "to show his age as it really is .... But a writer must be a civilized and tolerant human being, possessing, above all, intellectual integrity .... The writer doesn't have to inhabit a rarified moral or intellectual plane, but he must always be, no matter how imperfectly, the conscience of society ....". 98

Man is a product of his society. What the society condemns today it might accept as normal tomorrow. Often the behaviour of one person is judged in comparison with that of other persons. Critics of a novel discuss a character thread-bare and pass judgement on him. They can connect his past
misdeeds with his present misery. This approach reflects the conscience of society. The success of Joe Lampton’s character can be also analysed this way. “He is wholly his father-in-law’s man. His relations with Susan his wife have dwindled into a routine of bed and petty bickering. His 10 year old son seems to belong to his wife’s parents rather than to him. His only genuine relationship is with his 4-year old daughter. He is bitterly reaping as he has sown”.49 (Book Review Digest, 1962)

Joe Lampton is portrayed as a very independent individual in Room at the Top. By his passionate nature he plays havoc in the life of Alice who is madly in love with him. But the fact that he is reduced to his father-in-law’s man in Life at the Top proves that time can change the behaviour of a person. He is denied a good rapport with his son because his in-laws take up the responsibility of shaping up his upbringing. It is an irony that he can have relationship with only his four year old daughter Barbara. He who ruins genuine relationship is almost completely denied that. Barbara’s love for him is the only saving grace. Joe is given just one opportunity to prove that he is capable of genuine affection. But what Braine makes Joe face is really an acid test. “The breaking point comes when he discovers that Susan has been unfaithful to him and that his beloved daughter is another man’s child. He leaves Susan for another woman, walks out on his job and goes to London only to return, after a few weeks, to accept things as they are. His children—whether they are truly his is immaterial—need him, and he needs them at least as much”.50
According to Braine all best-sellers are not master pieces, but all master pieces are best-sellers. Life at the Top is often compared to Room at the Top which is Braines master piece. One of the main reasons for the success of Room at the Top is the sense of the actuality of a community which is exciting. Life at the Top conspicuously lacks that. "It deals with a much narrower segment of society, a segment, at that, which it becomes increasingly difficult to respond to with passionate interest-what may be called expense-account society which means, too often, the froth at the top".51 (Book Review Digest, 1962).

It always seems in Braine's hero that his weakness is at once his asset and liability. The characterization of Joe is the asset of Braine that has made Life at the Top a publishable novel. "The representation of Joe's vulnerability and helplessness through the baffled, incommunicable love he bears his children is true and touching; and Joe with his wry honesty about himself, remains an attractive figure".52 So what attracts anyone to a Braine's character is his genuine love for his family members. Many reasons can be attributed for the deviation of these characters discussed in this chapter from the normal course of their lives. But only one reason can be assigned for the normalization achieved at the end and that is their sense of adaptability.
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