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THE BIOGRAPHIC ELEMENTS IN ENGLISH FICTION

AND

THE RISE OF THE DRAMATIC METHOD

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the

Graduate School of the  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
MINNESOTA  
LIBRARY

by

Esther Anita Hurwich

In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts.

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- Vol. III Pt. 2. "The Adventures and Piracies of the Famous Captain Singleton".
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The Biographic Elements in English Fiction and  
The Rise of the Dramatic Method.

The technique of the novel as conceived in the early part of the eighteenth century, underwent, in the one hundred and fifty years following that time, a gradual, but complete transformation. That transformation, the decline of the biographic method and the rise of the dramatic, is the subject of this study. To show how, when, and why the transformation occurred will be its purpose. From the first English novel in 1719, until about 1875, the biographic novel is the prevailing type; from that time on, the dramatic reigns supreme with only suggestions of the biographic that remind us of its original importance. It will be my aim primarily to show the gradual decline of the first method, but I shall show necessarily the incidental appearance, the slowly increasing strength, and the final predominance of the new type. That our present day novels-from 1875 on-are pre- vailingly dramatic, this paper will take for granted.

The task will be rather to expound novel technique up to the present day.

The reader must be warned at the outset, however, that this survey deals, in a measure, with externals. It is a study of the biographic and dramatic elements in English fiction with their relation to structure, and it is structure in the rather narrow sense of mechanical plan. While that can hardly be called an external pure and simple, it is after all, somewhat deliberately mechanical. Excellence in structure alone does not determine the status of an author, however, for genius cannot be measured. A statement in this paper, therefore, that a novel is poor in structure, does not mean that a novel is poor--it means rather that the novel is only poor in that very important respect. Structure, even though it is somewhat external, is, after all, a fundamental element in any novel.

The first novelists started with the conception that a novel was to be a biography, hence the term,

biographic novel. Such a novel necessarily possesses certain characteristics; in so far as any novel has these characteristics, just so far may it be considered biographic. Baldly stated, these characteristics are as follows; the person's whole life is detailed; the book covers a long period of time, usually from birth to marriage, or later; the title is the name of the person; the plot is a series of incidents. The first two elements are self-explanatory; the third is not of vital importance. It is somewhat significant, however, that the early novelists did use the name of the hero as the title of the book, while the present day novelists do so but rarely. "The Life and Adventures of John Smith", or merely, "John Smith" are the usual titles of the early novels. Whenever such titles were used, the biographic ideal was evidently present in the mind of the author. Perhaps the use of names as titles was a convention; at any rate, it is interesting, if not deeply significant. The last characteristic, the plot scheme, is the vital factor. A biographic novel has no plot in the strict sense of the word, if we accept

the usual definition of a plot as a "complication of events in the relation of cause and effect leading to a final outcome". In a plot, "somebody wants something",<sup>1</sup> there is an inciting motive, rising action, a turning point, falling action, and conclusion. Everything in the novel works to a definite, pre-conceived, carefully planned culmination. But in a biographic novel, the plot is merely a series of incidents, scenes, episodes, and situations in a person's life. They are somewhat interesting, and interesting in varying degrees, but their chief function is to aid in giving a complete life history, rather than to prepare for a strong conclusion. Many picaresque novels, or novels of incident, belong in this category, -their plot is a series of events in a chronological order, many of them unrelated to the final outcome. Indeed this paper uses the terms "series of incidents" and "biographic plot" as almost synonymous, -novels of incident usually describe the events in the life of some person. The terms unrelated, irrelevant, and extraneous as applied to

1. Brander Matthews, Study of the Drama, quoted from Brunetière.

incidents, are also used as synonyms, for these terms produce the same result,-they all make the plot more biographic and less dramatic. They all mean non-dramatic; i. e., not bearing on the final culmination; the difference between them is not one of kind, but of degree. Thus a novel is purely biographic if it is the life story of a person, if it covers a long period of time, if it has a name title, and if it is a loosely-woven chronicle of incidents. In so far as any novel has these characteristics, just so far may it be considered biographic.

A dramatic novel, on the other hand, instead of being the initial product of initial novelists, is the culmination of artistry; it is the present day novel with its chief emphasis on the plot. It conforms somewhat to the requirements of the modern play, but its conformity to that standard is not the criterion of judgment here employed. The term dramatic novel is used, however, because there are many points of similarity between a <sup>modern</sup> drama and a dramatic novel; each has a strong



basal conception; each covers a relatively short, but crucial period of time; each emphasizes plot weaving, the piling up of effects to produce a final, pre-conceived effect. Biographic and dramatic, in our sense, are antithetical terms, but the elements of the two are often present in the same novel; it is the predominance of one type or the other with which this paper is concerned.

First among the dramatic elements is the basal conception. By basal conception I mean the idea that guides the structure of the novel. It may take the form of a moral, a purpose, or a theme. The terms are self-explanatory; the question is, how much at bottom is the whole tissue of details controlled by the basal conception? If a novelist has a definite conception, as in "Hard Times"-- the folly of a purely utilitarian system of education,--and that conception governs the choice and arrangement of material, if everything in the novel goes to prove that conception, the novel is purely dramatic in that respect. If, how-

ever, the conception is vague, general, external, unproved, or in use only in part of the book, the novel is not purely dramatic in that regard; to be dramatic, the conception must be the governing factor. If any trace of a basal conception is present, it is a suggestion of the dramatic. That does not mean that the mere presence of a moral or a purpose is very dramatic. Even the most formless, the most picaresque, the most biographic novels have some purpose or point of view; without that, the books would be absolutely devoid of interest, - a common, usual, pure life history would hardly be written. The difference lies in the strength of the conception and use made of it. To be dramatic, the conception must direct absolutely the choice and arrangement of incidents. A conception that does less than that is but a hint of a dramatic element.

The second dramatic element, though of minor importance compared to the first and third, is the short span of time covered. As apposed to a biographic novel, a dramatic one usually chooses not only the significant events, but also the insignificant,

the crucial time. Thus the tendency in a novel of the dramatic type is to cover but a short period of time.

The third and the most vital dramatic element is the plot. Plot has already been defined in showing that is what a biographic novel does not possess. In its most elemental form, it is opposed to the ordinary biographic scheme of a series of incidents. In a purely dramatic novel, the plot is made up of a number of threads of varying degrees of importance, all closely woven together and leading to a final, preordained conclusion. Or there may be but one very strong thread, everything in the novel making up and strengthening that thread and working towards the culmination, while a basal conception animates the whole. If, however, the thread deals with a large portion of the life of a person, if there is a series of incidents loosely strung together instead of a piling up of effects to produce one big, final, pre-conceived effect, if the plot is a chronicle instead of a complex weaving together, the novel is biographic in that regard. A dramatic nov-

el emphasizes that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points; everything must have a direct bearing on the culmination of the book. The more tight the weaving, the greater the complication, the more intense the struggle, the more striking the cutting of the knot, the more dramatic is the plot. Loose weaving is non-dramatic, -it is biographic. Real plot is the exaltation of plan and method; the lack of plan, the deviation from plan, the change of plan are biographic. Thus how dramatic a novel is depends in a large measure on the perfection of its plan, taking in the skillful interweaving and the number of the plot threads. This does not mean that one thread of plot is not as dramatic as a number; there is more opportunity for artistry, however, in a plot that has many threads and plot is, in our sense, a synonym for the height of artistry.

So far, the characteristics of the purely biographic and purely dramatic novels have been enumerated. A biographic novel is the story of a man's

life; it covers a long period of time; it has the name as a title; it has a loosely woven, episodic plot: a dramatic novel has, or may have, a dramatic conception; it covers a short period of time; it has a well-woven plot. But a study of the novel cannot content itself with only pure types: many novels here considered are mixtures of the two in a greater or less degree. In the early novels especially, there are many which are prevaillingly biographic, yet which have dramatic elements. It is in these novels that I am able to trace the development of the dramatic method in the work of authors who began with biographic novels pure and simple. The prevailing characteristics determine the kind of novel. The characteristics of a biographic novel are more obvious than those of a dramatic one: how then, do I decide? The dramatic conception and the period of time covered are easily recognizable: the difficulty lies in the plot. In a biographic plot or chronicle, there are often dramatic elements: they have to be enumerated and their weight determined as

contrasted with the biographic elements. There may be a strong turning point in the life plot: that is a dramatic element. There may be isolated dramatic incidents, or more properly speaking, in order to avoid the repetition, striking incidents: that is a dramatic element. It is only when those striking incidents are not isolated, when they keep piling up in a regular, pre-conceived fashion working up to a high point of the intensest interest, that the plot becomes a real plot, a dramatic one. These incidents may often become a dramatic sub-plot, a plot when the subject of the biography is not the central figure, but has disappeared from the view, and where a regular plot thread is evolved with all its dramatic requirements: that is a strong dramatic element. Or there may be a number of threads of plot aside from the life plot: if there is any method in them, it is a dramatic element.

In general, the novels are seldom of purely one type or the other: the task will be to

decide which type prevails, prove the point, and discuss the relation of that novel to the trend of the biographic or dramatic movement in fiction technique.

It has been quite impossible to read every novel written in the one hundred and fifty years covered: the authors chosen are the best of their time, and the works chosen are the most representative of the authors. The crucial authors are covered practically in toto. The field of the earliest novels is covered very completely to show the beginnings of prose fiction, and of the biographic and dramatic methods; then a gap is left where nothing new develops and only occasional novels are discussed; then come the important writers in this study, the transitional, crucial, determining authors, who are very fully treated. As I stated in the beginning, the emphasis is always placed on the decline of the biographic rather than on the rise of the dramatic method: of necessity, however, the two must be handled in a somewhat parallel fashion.

In the pages that follow, the rise and decline of the biographic method and the rise of the dra-

matic is traced in each novel considered and in each author. For the early novels in which the elements are rather easily distinguished, they are tabulated, and the tabulation is followed by a summary which indicates the author's trend in the movements. The biographic elements are considered first, then the dramatic, and then the summary.

#### Daniel Defoe.

##### 1. Robinson Crusoe--April, 1719.

Biog. a. Story of life of Robinson Crusoe.

b. Seventy-two years covered.

c. Biographic title.

d. Loosely-woven plot--a series of incidents of a shipwreck and life on an island. Weak ending made up of the uninteresting travels of Robinson Crusoe after he leaves the island.

Dram. a. Defoe says book is allegory of his life, hence basal conception. His statement hardly true.

b. Setting unconsciously dramatic. Slight plot unity in first of book as it is centered around one incident, the casting of Crusoe on the lonely island.

##### 2. The Life and Adventures of Duncan Campbell-May, 1720.

Biog. a. Life of Duncan Campbell ending with explanation of his powers.

b. Long time covered--from before Campbell's birth to middle age.



- c. Biographic title.
- d. Mere series of incidents in life of Duncan--  
illustrations of his marvelous powers.

3. Memoirs of a Cavalier-May 21, 1720.

- Biog. a. Life of the cavalier.
- b. Long time covered--from before cavalier's birth through German Wars and English Civil War to close of latter and restoration of Charles II.
  - c. Biographic title.
  - d. Series of incidents in the wars. Very prosaic ending. No dramatic incidents.

4. Captain Singleton-June, 1720.

- Biog. a. Life of Captain Singleton.
- b. Long time covered--through long piratical career to conversion near end of his life.
  - c. Biographic title.
  - d. Series of piracies in life of Singleton--  
picaresque.

- Dram. a. Only suggestion of dramatic element is in Singleton's conversion to honest life. As he was not converted until he had all the money he wanted, it is hardly a dramatic incident or conception,--it is very weak, though moral is attempted.

5. Moll Flanders--January, 1722.

- Biog. a. Life of Moll Flanders.
- b. Long time covered--from before birth to old age.
  - c. Biographic title.
  - d. Series of thefts and affairs with men--picaresque with female rogue.  
Many incidents after turning point.

- Dram. a. Hint of basal conception in characterization of Moll as a horrible example, but only a hint and not very well realized as nemesis is not logical,--too much good fortune and not enough punishment come to her.
- b. Decided turning point. Disclosure of Moll's hidden parentage is hint of the dramatic.

6. A Journal of the Plague Year--March 1722.

- Biog. a. Record of plague year with various incidents and examples introduced.
- b. Chronicle, not a plot in any sense of the word,--three isolated men occupy thirty-five pages.
- Dram. a. Some of the incidents approach the dramatic in complication, but they do not reach it.
- b. Suggestion of a plan for the book in Defoe's mind, producing unity of tone, but not a dramatic plan.

7. The Life and History of Colonel Jacque.

- Biog. a. Life of Colonel Jacque.
- b. Long period of time--from birth to middle or old age and prosperity.
- c. Biographic title.
- d. Loosely-woven plot--series of thefts, marriages, and other adventures.
- Dram. a. Only suggestion of the dramatic is when Jacques' conversion takes place and he is kidnapped to Virginia. Hardly a dramatic turning point as it takes place about one-third way through the book in the midst of marriages and adventures. Turning point weak and many incidents follow it.

8. The Fortunate Mistress, Roxana--1724 & 1745.

- Biog. a. Life story of Roxana.  
b. Long time covered--from beginning of Roxana's life of crime until after her death.  
c. Biographic title.  
d. Picaresque rogue story--series of crimes and immoralities making a loosely-woven plot.
- Dram. a. Suggestion of basal conception in that moral is attempted. Nemesis much better and more just than in Moll Flanders.  
b. Because of good turning point and nemesis, in spite of being a picaresque novel, the book is Defoe's greatest stride toward plot--there is not real plot, but there is unity of a kind and natural sequence: it is almost a novel.

Defoe, then, is a writer of biographic journals. His books describe the lives of persons; they cover long periods of years; they are biographic in name as well as in fact; and their plots are not real plots at all but chronicles, mere recitals of incidents. The novels are vividly written, it is true, but with the pen of a reporter and not of a novelist. The incidental quality of Defoe's plot scheme is strikingly illustrated in his endings. In dramatic novels the endings are the big elements, first conceived, always in mind: in Defoe's novels, the endings are not only weak, but they are often the weakest scenes of all.

Many of his books do not contain any dramatic incidents or scenes; there are interesting incidents, but to apply the word dramatic to them is hardly correct. Some of the novels, but only very few, do contain some dramatic elements, however. These elements show that even in the beginning the dramatic method was cropping out, very slightly, it is true, but cropping out nevertheless. Robinson Crusoe, in the first part of the book, is unconsciously dramatic in its setting, but instead of having rising interest, it has falling. The Plague Year, too, has a faint suggestion of the dramatic and Moll Flanders and Roxana, as the tabulation shows, have more than faint suggestions. Indeed, Roxana is almost a plot. When Defoe wrote the book, however, his conclusion was this statement: "Roxana and Amy fell into a dreadful course of events". That is far less dramatic than the ending in the 1745 edition, the one usually used, which closes with Roxana's death. Defoe's authorship of that ending is disputed, but at any rate, the novel with its original ending did not have such

a logical and satisfactory conclusion. Whether Defoe wrote the 1745 ending or not, he made an advance in the book toward a real novel. Another element that must be considered before deciding his status is the basal conception. All novels must be written with some kind of a basal conception and Defoe's are not exceptions. He does have a moral, but it has the effect of something thrust in, instead of a vital determining factor. It is but weakly carried out, hence it is non-dramatic. The reader who hunts a basal conception in Defoe will find that it is "as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find them, and, when you have them, they are not worth the search." Defoe, then, the first novelist in the broad sense of the term, is the first biographic novelist. The novel began with the biographic type as an ideal: in his work, it is in an almost pure form,-the dramatic is small and hardly present at all.

Samuel Richardson.

1. Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded--1740.

- Biog. a. Life of Pamela.
- b. Fairly long period of time-Pamela as young girl to her marriage and Volumes II and III take in several years after marriage.
- c. Biographic main title.
- d. Series of scenes and incidents in Pamela's love affair, many of them extraneous. Vols. II and III very poorly unified, filled with mere incidents, children's stories, discussions, on child-rearing, etc., dragged out with many digressions. Vols. II and III unnecessary and weakening to Vol. I--merely written by Richardson because other writers wrote spurious conclusions to Vol. I.

- Dram. a. Vol. I has basal conception as evidenced by sub-title and Pamela's letters to her parents-Pamela's virtue rewarded by her ultimate marriage to Lord B. Moral does not quite ring true to our ears, but Richardson and the readers of his time evidently thought it did, so for them the novel is more dramatic than for us.
- b. Very few strong dramatic incidents, but some-many somewhat forced. In Vol. I., there is an advance over Defoe, as author evidently believes all the incidents work toward the same end, the realization of the moral. The incidents, however, do not become increasingly dramatic, each bringing the end closer--the turning point seems weak,--what precedes it does not make it the less improbable. Vols. II and III have absolutely no dramatic value--there is but one situation in Lord B.'s affair with another woman: the rest of the books is pure essay and biography. The plot of Pamela is, because of these reasons, better considered biographic.

2. Clarissa, or The History of A Young Lady,--1748.

Biog. a. Sub-title.

b. Plot has some digressions, some repetitions, and is somewhat long-winded.

Dram. a. Basal conception fairly strong. The moral is well conceived, well carried out.

b. Short time covered--Eleven months, and they are the dramatically crucial ones.

c. Dramatic plot--striking incidents, fairly well woven together into a good complication, strong suspense--not so much from moral as from interest in the characters--strong turning point. Practically purely dramatic.

3. The History of Sir Charles Grandison-1753.

Biog. a. In a way, the life of Sir Charles and Harriett.

b. Not such a long period of time covered except that the past lives of the three leading characters are reviewed in detail.

c. More or less a series of incidents in the lives of Charles and Harriett. Harriett's love affairs make up a number of incidents. Many digressions and recapitulations. Fails dramatically as the struggle is weak and Charles wavers between Clementina and Harriett, loving them equally, and chance has to settle it.

Dram. a. Basal conception is to show an ideal man and it is probably realized according to the qualifications of such a person at that time. The realization of a strong moral is questionable to us.

b. Two fairly strong crises toward which the story works,--confession of Sir Charles--Clementina affair to Harriett and Clementina's renunciation of Sir Charles. Story as stated in biographic elements has no big turning point for though the

Charles-Harriett marriage is evidently the culmination in the author's mind, as she is first mentioned and is treated more fully than Clementina, yet the inanity and lack of motivation of Charles' decision is non-dramatic. Major threads of plot and several minor threads; e.g., the Emily and Danby stories, hence number of plots on the increase.

Richardson, then, is another biographic novelist, but in his work, by accident, as it were, the dramatic first comes forth sharply defined. Pamela and Grandison are biographic novels with a few dramatic elements. Their plots go a step beyond Defoe as they tend, in some measure at least, to prepare for the final outcome. Richardson, as the tabulation shows, evidently thought the books more dramatic in structure than they really are, but the fact remains that while they are largely biographic, they must be considered an advance in technique. In fact, Clarissa is a strongly dramatic novel, the first English one of its kind. True it is that there are some biographic elements, but it is startling to find a novel so pre-vaillingly dramatic thus early in the history of prose fiction. It has all the elements of a good plot,-



rising action, climax, turning point, falling action, denouement, -it even covers but a short period of time; it has logical sequence leading to a logical conclusion. Richardson is probably unconsciously dramatic in Clarissa, for he does not follow the same pattern in Sir Charles Grandison, even though the later book does contain some dramatic incidents and situations. Above all, Richardson is a preacher, hence in his mind, there is always a basal conception. It is more definite than the conceptions of Defoe, but he is not always very successful in realizing it, as the tabulation shows. In a modern novel, the theme is one of the big dramatic factors; Richardson, however, never creates intense interest in his moral except in Clarissa, and there the characters, rather than the moral, make for interest. But he was firm in his conviction that his moral was very strong:

"He never quite freed himself from the puritanical prejudice against fiction; he would have had his books classed not with Robinson Crusoe or Oroonoko or Moll Flanders, but with works of devotion such as Taylor's

Holy Living and Dying, with the Practice of Piety, and Nelson's Fasts and Festivals, not as being worthy of such company, but that they may have a chance of being dipt into thirty years hence;.....they will not be found unworthy of such a chance since they appear in the humble guise of a novel only by way of accomodation to the manners and taste of an age overwhelmed with luxury and abondoned to sound and senselessness."!

Richardson, then, always has a basal conception. In basal conception, in dramatic incidents, and in the plot of Clarissa, Richardson is dramatic; in at least two of his books he is almost purely biographic: as a whole, he may be considered as the first great biographic novelist and the author of the first strongly dramatic novel.

#### Henry Fielding.

1. The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and His Friend Mr. Abraham Adams-1742.

Biog. a. Life of Joseph Andrews.  
b. Long time--from before birth through marriage.  
c. Biographic title.  
d. Series of adventures Joseph Andrews has. Many dissertations, non-relevant incidents, digressions, and three irrelevant stories told by three irrelevant people. Very loosely woven. Novel of incident.

1. Clara L. Thomson: "Samuel Richardson, A Biographic and Critical Study."

Dram. a. Basal conception as Fielding started out to burlesque Richardson's Pamela. He did not adhere to his conception as he changes his mind and becomes friendly to Joseph. Story better because of new basal conception, but not dramatic to change.

b. Fair climax, and strong turning point.

2. The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling-1749.

Biog. a. Life history of Tom Jones.

b. Long time covered-from birth to several years after marriage.

c. Biographical title.

d. Series of adventures, good and bad, in Tom's life, largely when he is travelling about. Ends with his final choice of the right.

Extraneous elements: Man of the Hill story, Chapter digressions of author. Improbabilities in ending scenes weaken them dramatically.

Dram. a. Theme and moral according to Fielding:

"I have attempted to engage a stronger motive to human action....by convincing men that their true interest directs them to a pursuit of her (virtue). For this purpose I have shown that no acquisitions of guilt can compensate the loss of that solid inward comfort of mind, which is the sure companion of innocence and virtue; nor can in the least balance the evil of that horror and anxiety which....guilt introduces into our bosoms. As these acquisitions are in themselves generally worthless, so are the means to attain them not only base and infamous, but at best uncertain and always full of danger. Lastly, I have endeavored to inculcate that virtue and innocence can scarcely ever be injured by indiscretion."

Theme fairly well worked out--even the extraneous

1. Fielding: Dedication of "Tom Jones".

Man of the Hill Story is related to the theme.

- b. Dramatic suggestion in discovery of truth of Tom's parentage. Tom's love story rather well worked out, fairly good turning point. Tom's struggle is good, proving author's theme.

### 3. Amelia-1751.

- Biog.
- a. Life history of Amelia, though not as conspicuously as previous novels of Fielding.
  - b. Long time-from period of courtship to period of happiness after rather long wedded life. Part of time covered merely reviewed.
  - c. Biographic title.
  - d. Ramblings and dissertations by author interspersed. In addition to Booth's life story which he tells in prison and which is part and parcel of Amelia's story, Miss Mathews and Mrs. Bennet relate their life histories. More unrelated incidents than in Tom Jones. Plot a series of incidents.

- Drama
- a. Moral is basal conception. Same as in Tom Jones in idea that good (Amelia) wins victories. An attempt to show prison abuses of the time in part of book, but not much force or space to that conception. Character portrayed story--to show character of Amelia. Not as strong as Tom Jones as character portrayal.
  - b. Several plot threads, well subordinated and joined to main plot. Stronger turning point and conclusion than in Tom Jones. A number of dramatic incidents.

Fielding is another biographic novelist of the picaresque group,--he writes novels of incident--but he

has a few dramatic elements. He calls his books, "histories" throughout, but the following two statements he makes in Tom Jones show that he not only unconsciously believed in the dramatic ideal, but he thought he had carried it out. He says early in the novel that the work is a history, not a life, and so he will omit all unimportant and useless details;<sup>1</sup> he states later that the reader should not judge any incident as irrelevant just because he cannot see the design as yet.<sup>2</sup> Hence he had the dramatic ideal in mind, even though he does not live up to it since he does have irrelevant incidents. He has, however, somewhat more of a plan than Richardson, excepting in Clarissa, for he evidently works more with his final chapter in view; but his looseness of structure prevents him from being dramatic; his work has some evidences of the dramatic, but it can be called almost purely biographic.

Tobias Smollett.

1. The Adventures of Roderick Random-1748.

Biog. a. Life history of Roderick Random.

1. Fielding: "Tom Jones". Bk. II. Chapt. I.

2. " " " " Bk. X. Chapt. II.

- b, Long time covered--from before birth to marriage.
- c. Biographic title.
- d. Very loosely-woven string of adventures of Roderick with almost numberless utterly useless, insignificant, and uninteresting details and incidents; e. g., picking up fellow at sea, teasing of Mr. Medlar at coffee house by roisterers. Eight stories told by other characters. Novel meant to be picaresque--Smollett says his model was Le Sage's Adventures of Gil Blas!

- Dram. a. Supposed to be basal conception as Smollett says Random represents "modest merit". He falls rather far short to average reader.
- b. Very few isolated dramatic incidents, including the finding of Roderick's father. Strong turning point, which is only pure dramatic element.

## 2. Adventures of Peregrine Pickle-1751.

- Biog. a. Story of Adventures of Peregrine Pickle.
- b. Long time covered--from parent's marriage through turning point of Peregrine's life and marriage.
  - c. Biographic title.
  - d. Very loosely-woven, picaresque. More long-winded than even Roderick Random--more unrelated details, many dissertations and moralizations. Details of a Parisian trip described. Eight extraneous stories told.

- Dram. a. Perhaps a basal conception, but very dim; Emilia refuses Pickle because he is insolent, he repents, is forgiven.
- b. Few isolated dramatic incidents. Turning point

## 1. Smollett: Preface to "Roderick Random".

greatly exaggerated. The only thread of story is named in a.

### 3. The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker-1770.

- Biog. a. Humphrey Clinker's past life is reviewed, his parentage is discovered and his marriage takes place, but apart from that, the book does not concern him.
- b. Rather loose plot weaving. The expedition is a trip and the incidents on the trip make up the book. Sometimes an incident is described more than once from different angles by different people. Many extraneous incidents and characters. Many lengthy dissertations on juries, baths, etc. The meeting of Humphrey by the company of people is one of the incidents on the trip. Hethen goes on with them in the capacity of servant until he is discovered, late in the book, to be a son of the man in the party. Some of the threads of plot are in the nature of episodes which continue through but a small part of the book.
- c. Title can hardly be defined. Humphrey does not appear until Book I. P. 129, when his appearance is in the nature of an incident. He is a vital character, but not the most vital. It is his adventure trip as well as that of the rest of the party, but he was a servant to the others. Many pages in which he is not even mentioned. His relationship to the family he serves makes him more connected than he appears at first.
- Dram. a. Humphrey is sort of a reforming-saint; perhaps that could be a hint of a conception.
- b. No real plot weaving, but more dramatic than Smollett's other works. A number of plots, three of them important, - the Humphrey-Win, the Lydia-Wilson, and the Tabitha-Lieutenant

Lismahago; a triple wedding is their outcome. Plots run parallel in one family, Humphrey and Win being servants. Many dramatic incidents. Strong turning point in Humphrey's life. Not so dramatic as Clarissa because no obstacles in two of the three love plots, the emotion not as deep as in Clarissa, and much extraneous matter.

Not only does Smollett fail to advance the new dramatic method, but he is even more picaresque and biographic than the preceding novelists. He must be considered as almost purely biographic, -he writes novels of incident which end, not because there is a rounded-out conclusion, but because they come to a convenient stopping place. Thus Smollett is less dramatic than Fielding. We can understand his idea of a novel from the following paragraph which is adapted from one of Smollett's introductions:

' "A novel is a large diffused picture, comprehending the characters of life, disposed in different groups and exhibited in various attitudes, for the purpose of a uniform plan'. He gives what is at least a characteristic of his own novels when he adds that 'this plan cannot be executed with propriety, probability, or success, without a principal personage to attract the attention, unite the incidents, unwind the clue of the labyrinth, and, at



last, close the scene, by virtue of his own importance.'"

That is the biographic ideal and it is what Smollett practices. His greatest advance toward drama is Humphrey Clinker, and that is still a rambling, biographic, picaresque novel containing but a suggestion of the dramatic.

Lawrence Sterne's The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy (1760) is biographic in what there is of plan in the book. It is without method or reason, it has no plot scheme,-in fact, it can hardly be called a novel at all. Tristram is not born until the close of the thrd volume and his first day of life is not ended until the close of the fourth. The book has neither beginning nor end; it has no one point of view; it gives pieces of scenes and parts of conversations which are never finished; it interjects rambling dissertations and essays in any place at all: it contains characters and incidents, but it has absolutely no coherent story. Whatever story is present does concern the life of Tristram,-it is his

life-but the book is mostly opinions. Sterne is the most formless writer of all-he adds nothing to the technique of the novel. The only reason he is considered is the fact that if he can be called a novelist, he is of the biographic order.

Thus the eighteenth century novel is pre-vaillingly biographic. Now and then there are dramatic elements and there is one dramatic novel, but the general type and ideal is the biographic. After Sterne, nothing new develops until Scott. Jane Austen, however, does make a great advance in dramatic plot, but she exercised but little influence on novel technique-she is an exception. Since it is manifestly impossible to read all the novels written in the one hundred and fifty years covered in this paper, and since nothing new develops, only a few novels and authors between Sterne and Scott are considered.

Oliver Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield (1776) is both biographic and dramatic. The biographic elements are these: it is the story of the life and adventures of the Vicar's family; it

1. George Saintsbury: "The English Novel". Chapt. V.

covers a long period of time—from their childhood through various fortunes and misfortunes to a happy termination; the title is somewhat biographic, but though the Vicar is the central figure, the plot part of the book concerns chiefly his family; the general plot scheme including the fortunes of the entire family, is somewhat loosely-woven with many irrelevant incidents and dissertations and some unrelated poetry. Many of the irrelevancies are dramatic in another sense, however, as they help to carry out the basal conception of the character of the Vicar, an unworldly, generous, kind-hearted man. Thus the basal conception of the novel is the idea of a character. In addition to this, the novel is dramatic in its plot threads. They are well-woven and well worked out, three in number,—the Olivia, Sophia, and George. Olivia's plot is the chief one as it serves best to carry out the conception of her father's character. There is a well-defined turning point in the fortunes of the Vicar's family, which at the same time is a

turning point in each of the plots. The books, as a whole, is biographic in scheme, but the dramatic plays a considerable part in it.

Fanny Burney's Evelina, or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World (1778) is a biographic novel that contains dramatic elements. There is a biographic title in part, and Evelina's past life and every particular of her present is covered,- in her trip to London every detail of the journey and of her stay is related. These details do have a dramatic value in a sense, for while they are irrelevant and minor, they seem to be put in for the purpose of showing Evelina's naive impressions of the world-the sub-title carries out the same idea-and thus they develop the basal conception. Though that is dramatic, the plot is biographic in scheme. There are, to be sure, dramatic scenes, Evelina's love story is well worked out, there is some suspense, and there is a fairly strong dramatic subplot,-Macartney's love affair with Evelina's foster sister-but on the

whole, the book is still true to the old biographic ideal. The presence of the dramatic elements, however, shows the increasing importance of the new methods.

Jane Austen makes a very great advance in dramatic plot but she is an exception. Had her example been followed, the purely dramatic novel would have been the prevailing type long before it was. Her Pride and Prejudice, written in 1796-97, but not published until 1813, is largely dramatic. Its only suggestion of the biographic is the fact that the book deals with the love affairs of one family, the Bennets, and the title concerns the love affair of Elizabeth Bennet and Darcy. Except for these minor biographic elements, the book is purely dramatic. There are three plots; the main one, the one that carries out the title, is the Elizabeth-Darcy plot; and the other two, <sup>the</sup> Lydia and Jane plots. They are all well defined and all fairly well woven together by the family relationship. In the main plot, there are

no extraneous incidents, but on the contrary, strong suspense, gradual revelation of character, and the working towards a strong, inevitable, natural turning point and conclusion. The workmanship, the technique are of a high dramatic order: it is the first novel since Clarissa that is so strongly dramatic and it surpasses even that novel in its plot complication. The new dramatic method is almost exclusively employed.

Walter Scott.

With the exception of Richardson and Jane Austen, Walter Scott is the first writer to aid materially in the advance of the dramatic movement. He usually has a double plot,--a historical plot and a hero plot. The hero plot is usually one of adventure or biography, but it is occasionally dramatic. The historical plot, on the other hand, is the new dramatic element in novel technique. Scott has a strong basal conception as he wishes to portray the life of a certain period, giving a picture of the manners, customs, and events of that time. It is not to his discredit that

he is less dramatic in carrying it out than a modern novelist would be, for he is the first of his kind, and he does contribute a great deal in the way of basal conception to the advance of the dramatic method and the decline of the biographic. The mere fact that he has the two plots well connected and the fact that the hero plot is sometimes dramatic show the progress of the new method.

Waverley, or 'Tis Sixty Years Since (1814) is a biographic novel as to scheme and plan, but it is the beginning of a new and more dramatic kind of novel. It has a double plot,-the Waverley thread and the historical one. The Waverley plot is biographic in that it is Edward Waverley's life history; it covers a long time, from before his father's marriage-through a varied career of adventure and finally through a turning point to happiness and settlement in life,- marriage, restoration of property, and pardon from the king; the main title is biographic; and the plot scheme is that of a series of adventures which befall Edward

in the Pretender uprising in Scotland. He travels about a great deal, has various adventures, and engages in many undertakings. A very loosely-woven plot is the result, and it is made even more loose by a trait which Edward Waverley has in common with Sir Charles Grandison,—he wavers, not only in sweet-hearts, but also in the causes which he favors. He has no goal toward which he struggles, so the book lacks dramatic intensity; he wavers until chance decides for him. Thus Edward's plot, that of the conventional hero, is loosely-woven and decidedly biographic. Scott himself says of his plot:

"The tale of Waverley was put together with so little care, that I cannot boast of having sketched any distinct plan of the work. The whole adventures of Waverley in his movements up and down the country with the Highland cateran Bean Lean, are managed without much skill. It suited best, however, the road I wanted to travel, and permitted me to introduce some descriptions of scenery and manners to which the reality gave an interest to which the powers of the author might have otherwise failed to attain for them. And though I have been in other instances a sinner in this sort, I do not recollect any of these novels in which I have transgressed so widely as in the first of the series."

1. Scott: General Preface to Third Edition of "Waverley".  
1814.



This not only shows his biographic scheme in the sense that the book is an adventure novel including the life of a central figure, but it also brings us to the dramatic basal conception. Scott says of his plan:

"For the purpose of preserving some idea of the ancient manners of which I have witnessed the almost total extinction, I have embodied in imaginary scenes, and ascribed to fictitious characters, a part of the incidents which I then received from those who were actors in them."<sup>1</sup>

He purposed to picture conditions in Scotland at the time of his fathers.<sup>2</sup> This he does fairly well, and the basal conception, by making the historical plot somewhat dramatic, makes the novel a little more dramatic. Generally considered, the plot scheme of the novel is decidedly biographic; there are, however, other dramatic elements, besides the basal conception. Edward's whole story is, in a way, the illustration of the theme; the Highlander rebellion and the Brodwardine threads in the historical plot are also bound up with the Waverley plot in that either they are factors in it, or it is a factor in theirs: at any rate, the connection between the plot threads is somewhat dramatic. There are also a few

1. Scott: "Waverley". P. 389.

2. See Note I under "The Antiquary".

unconsciously dramatic scenes in the book. There is, moreover, a rather dramatic turning point, though as stated before, the hero is too wavering to be a true hero and to make a very strong turning point. The plot is, after all, biographic. It is perhaps significant to consider that it was the prevailing method at the time to choose a biographic title, the name of the hero. Scott speaks of the difficulty of choosing a suitable title name, euphonious and new. He says he could not do as his predecessors and take any name, the most euphonious and "elect it at once as the title of my work and the name of my hero," as he wished to "use a new name for a new kind of fiction". As shown by the quotations, Scott realizes his plot limitations,--he is not a master of dramatic plot. In Waverley, however, though it is a biographic novel, he has a good basal conception and in that respect, it is dramatic advance over the eighteenth century novel.

Guy Mannering (1815) is a great advance over Waverley in plot complication and intensity. There is

1. Scott: "Waverley". Chap. I.

less exposition and wavering. Scott says of his plan:

"I had imagined a possibility of framing an interesting and perhaps not an unedifying tale, out of the incidents of the life of a doomed individual, whose efforts at good and virtuous conduct were to be forever disappointed by the intervention of some malevolent being, and who was at last to come off victorious from the fearful struggle."

The cause of the struggle was to be the astrological influence on the night of the birth. The whole plan shows Scott's disposition to do the conventional thing in the Gothic romance, but he abandoned it because astrology was not believed in at that particular time. The first few chapters, however, remain as the book was originally conceived. The person whose life was to be a struggle was Harry Bertram and he is also the hero of the novel as it finally stands. This abandonment, or to say the least, this change of scheme, shows how little planned the book was as a whole. As it is now, Mannering comes on the night of Harry's birth, utters a prophecy, and returns years later to see if it has been fulfilled. The events he had prophesied have taken place: Harry, when five years old, is kidnapped and lost

to view. When he appears again under the name of Brown, for he is ignorant of his parentage, he has caused considerable trouble in Mannering's family. The rest of the book deals with the discovery of his real history and his love affair with Mannering's daughter, Julia. The book is somewhat biographic as it stands, both in respect to Mannering and Harry. Had Scott adhered to his original plan, the book would have been more biographic and also more dramatic: more biographic because more of the lives of Mannering and Harry would have been covered in detail, and more dramatic because the basal conception would have been more dramatically carried out. As it is, the book is biographic in a way, but largely dramatic: the looseness of the plot weaving prevents me from calling it purely dramatic; Mannering's motive for returning, to see if the prophecy has been fulfilled, seems hardly adequate. The novel does have dramatic plot threads and weavings, however: the main Harry Bertram-Julia love story is well connected with the Mrs. Mannering-Brown-Guy Mannering and

the Hazelwood-Lucy threads. The Mannering story could be considered the chief plot only in so far as he predicted future events. As it is, the title is somewhat misleading-the change in plan is evident. The book is dramatic in some of its situations and in its turning point, and the threads are more real plot threads than series of incidents, though they retain enough of the incidental character to allow for a difference of opinion in judging them. There is a basal conception as stated before: Scott says he purposed picturing the manners of Scotland in the time of his youth.<sup>1</sup> As a whole the book may be considered a mixture, the dramatic very strong, but the biographic even stronger.

The Antiquary (1816) is, like Guy Mannering, both biographic and dramatic. The plot as a whole is really a series of incidents, but in another sense, it contains several threads rather well conceived and carried out. There are many dramatic incidents, but some decidedly non-dramatic. Scott's plan for this and

1. See Note I under "The Antiquary".

the two preceding novels is expressed in the following:

"The present work completes a series of fictitious narratives, intended to illustrate the manners of Scotland at three different periods. Waverley embraced the age of our fathers, Guy Mannering that of our own youth, and The Antiquary refers to the last ten years of the eighteenth century.

"I have been more solicitous to describe manners minutely than to arrange in any case an artificial and combined narrative, and have but to regret that I felt myself unable to unite these two requisites of a good novel." 1.

Even allowing for Scott's modesty, there is considerable truth in what he says. As he states, he has a basal conception, but there is decided looseness of plot. In respect to title, the novel is even more biographic than Guy Mannering, for while the Antiquary is not a lover any more than Mannering, he is more in mind the entire time as an actor in the plots and as an aid in their unravelling. The Antiquary is friendly to Lovell, the conventional hero, while Mannering is not to Brown. In another sense, the book is both biographic and dramatic in regard to Lovell. When the story opens he is a young man engaged in a fairly dramatic love

1. Scott: Introduction to "The Antiquary".

plot, but later, his hidden parentage and the events in the lives of his mother and father are disclosed: thus his entire story, dramatic and biographic, is brought to light. There are some dramatic incidents and events in his life plot; e. g., the Glenallen thread, and his love affair with Miss Wardour is fairly dramatic throughout. The Antiquary carries out the basal conception, but otherwise, Lovell is the central figure. There are two other hints of plot threads, Miss Wardour's father's money affair and the MacIntyre thread. All the threads are fairly well intertwined, better than in Guy Mannering. As a whole we may accept Scott's own statement that these three novels are rather deficient in dramatic structure, they are largely biographic, yet in the basal conceptions at least, and in some other respects, Scott makes an advance in the dramatic method.

Old Mortality, Tales of My Landlord, First Series (1816), cannot be called biographic and yet it cannot be called largely dramatic. Old Mortality

was a descendant of the covenanters who participated in the rebellion described in the book. He is not even mentioned except in the Preface, he is supposed to have told the story to a certain Peter Pattieson whose papers Jedediah Clieskbothan is publishing under the title, Tales of May Landlord. Peter Pattieson is supposed to have said in his manuscript,

"I embodied into one compressed narrative many of the anecdotes which I had the advantage of deriving from Old Mortality."

Scott evidently worked for plot in this book, as Jedediah says,

"He (Pattieson) hath sometimes blended two or three stories together for the mere grace of his plots-of which infidelity, although I disapprove and enter my testimony against it, yet I have not taken upon me to correct the same."

The Morton-Edith love affair is the central plot with the historical rebellion plot as the chief agent in opposing the course of true love. The author evidently meant to have the basal conception show the rebellion of the dissenting Whigs against the Tory cavaliers at

1. Scott: Introduction to "Old Mortality".



the time of the last Stuarts. With that as a basal conception, he does not carry out the Morton-Edith plot as dramatically as he might have done. The situation is this: the first thirty-five chapters take in the rebellion: this is up to page three hundred forty. The time covered is brief, but two months. Then there is an interval of several years with the incidents told by the author as mere history; there is no dialogue, nothing but exposition. The third portion of the book takes up the time when Morton returns from Holland, his place of banishment. While he has been gone, a complete change in the government has taken place; William and Mary are on the throne. He arrives just on the day of Edith's marriage to Lord Evandale. Edith refuses to wed the nobleman and Lord Evandale is killed after Morton has tried to rescue him. The book closes with his death; Edith has not even noticed Morton's presence until Lord Evandale joins her hands and Morton's. It is only in the postscript, as it were, that we learn that Edith and Morton marry; the chief interest in the last scene is in the dying lord. This plot is some-

what dramatic, but it fails to be dramatic as a whole, first, because the change does not come about through any effort on the part of the couple, it is a change in government; and second, there is no big culmination toward which the book moves. To carry out the rebellion as a basal conception, the change is in place, but the struggle in the affair of Edith and Morton, is not worked out to a big dramatic termination, though there is dramatic intensity and weaving, in a measure, before the closing scene. There is a minor love thread which concerns Cuddie-Jenny, the respective servants of the hero and heroine. There is a great deal of verbosity in the exhortations of the preachers, though perhaps that can be excused as it aids the theme. As a whole, we may say that the book is dramatic in its basal conception, and fairly dramatic in its plot. It still lacks much in the way of drama in its structure, but it is an advance in the new method.

Rob Roy (1817) is another historical novel largely a novel of incident. The conventional

hero, Frank Osbaldistone writes his memoirs for a friend, hence he does not think it necessary to give a detailed account of his birth, etc. It is his life story, however, covering a long period of time, from youth through marriage. There is a fairly strong love plot concerning Frank and Diana, and there are some dramatic scenes, but the book is not strong in plot. The scheme is that of a romance of adventure, Rob Roy contributing part of the adventure in the life story of Frank. He is the historical character; it is his character and his time that the author intended to portray. His life is a series of adventures connected with Frank's plot, by the fact that Rob Roy usually enters at dramatic moments. He does not appear at the first, but he figures largely throughout the book. He rescues the hero a few times, but he does not hold the chief interest. He hardly makes an extended plot by himself, though he makes the historical part of the novel. The drama in the book is not striking-both threads are

largely picaresque--and the novel adds comparatively nothing to the growth of the new method.

The Heart of Mid-Lothian, Tales of My Landlord, Second Series (1817), is a great advance in its own plot structure and in novel technique. It is a very skillful production, showing Scott's transformation into a novelist with dramatic plot. The only biographic elements are these: the book deals with the lives of the two Deans girls and there are some extraneous incidents connected with Davie Deans; after the drama of the novel, the saving of Effie, etc., there is a long dragged-out conclusion covering considerable time and having no purpose except to finish the book in regulation biographic fashion. To be sure there is a moral tacked on to justify the conclusion for Cliesbothan says that the book is supposed to illustrate the truth that guilt suffers, but that is hardly a dramatic conception. Scott merely thrust it in to justify the dragged out final chapters; he did not work with that conception in view. The book is strong in its plot manage-

ment, however, and it is there that we see how great is the advance. It opens with a striking Effie plot which is dramatic, even though it is somewhat episodic. It is Jeanie's refusal to bear false witness even to save Effie's life that makes a plot which is bigger in interest than the Effie thread from which it develops. In fact, the climax of Effie's plot is passed when the book opens. It is the artistic management and development of the two plots that show Scott's skill. He intends to make Jeanie a real heroine and he succeeds; her character portrayal makes for unity and drama of conception. It is unfortunate that Scott has not pruned a little more. Had he left out the incidents of the last chapters where he gives way to the hero mystery plot, he would have produced an even more dramatic novel than he did.

The Bride of Lammermoor, Tales of My Landlord, Third Series, (1820), is another strongly dramatic novel with biographic elements in respect to plot scheme. It seems to be a history of the lives of

Ravenwood and Lucy Ashton at a certain crucial time. This is true, probably, because it seems to be a continuation of family history, as the author relates the former histories and superstitions of the two families. There are many digressions especially in the first volume, but they have a purpose in that some of them show the fidelity of the servant Caleb and the straits of his master. These digressions and the many minor incidents serve to give the novel the semblance of a biography. Aside from these rather minor considerations, the novel is purely dramatic. There is a strong plot working toward a strong turning point; the plot complication is carefully planned and it develops into a well-unified, intensely interesting plot. As a whole, the book is of the same type as The Heart of Mid-Lothian, it is strongly dramatic with a considerable amount of the biographic still evident. Scott has made a great advance in technique in these two novels.

Ivanhoe (1820) contains the same combination of a historical and a conventional hero plot that has been

present in Scott's other historical novels. The two plots work dramatically upon each other; the book is a mixture of the biographic and dramatic. It is hardly a life history of Ivanhoe though it is a series of adventures at a certain period in his life. There is a biographic title and the plot is rather loosely woven, for Ivanhoe goes on journeys in the train of Richard the Lion-hearted and various adventures befall him. Some of these prove relevant later and some do not. The Ivanhoe thread as a whole seems rather secondary; in analyzing it, it is difficult to state just what keeps it from being dramatic. Perhaps it is because the hero does so little and the love thread is so weak. There are dramatic scenes and situations in that thread, however. Most of the interest in the Ivanhoe plot comes through Rebecca, as she makes it somewhat dramatic. The Templar-Rebecca thread is much more dramatic than the Ivanhoe one, while the Richard plot is, like, most of Scott's historical plots, one of incident. As a whole, we may say that

the plot of the book approaches the dramatic in subplot, incidents, number of threads, and weaving, but it does not reach it. There is one strongly dramatic element, however: it is a basal conception, the portrayal of the life in England after the Norman Conquest; This conception makes the novel strong. Aside from this, the book adds but little to the advance Scott has made in the new method.

Kenilworth, (1821), is somewhat similar to Ivanhoe, but the love plot is much stronger and it is better woven. Much more happens to Amy and Leicester, and they themselves do much more than Rowena and Ivanhoe. Their plot leads up to a carefully prepared for turning point, and conclusion with strong suspense and considerable mystery: thus the plot is much more dramatic. The historical part of the novel, the portrayal of the character and time of Elizabeth, makes a basal conception which justifies, in a measure, the minor incidents and details. The title itself, the castle in which the celebration in honor of Elizabeth takes place, carries out the same idea. Thus the book is more dramatic both in its basal concep-



tion and plot than Ivanhoe.

The Fortunes of Nigel (1822) is much less dramatic than the two preceding novels. It is a story of the life of Nigel, particularly of his adventures at the English court. He is the conventional hero<sup>1</sup> and the book takes up his fortunes. The following bits of quotations show his importance:

"We left Nigel, whose fortunes we are bound to trace by our engagements contrasted in our title page."<sup>2</sup>

"Lord Glenvarloch (Nigel) to whose fortunes our story chiefly attaches itself."<sup>3</sup>

In the first quotation, we see the adherence to the biographic form of title. There are, however, some dramatic elements; among them is the basal conception. The English court scenes go to carry out this conception, the portrayal of the court life of the times. George Heriot, whom Scott calls the real hero;<sup>4</sup> i. e., the idealized character, is put in to aid the conception, though he takes a strong interest in the Nigel plot. There are a few other dramatic elements: the Lady Hermione-Dalgarno plot is a rather strong sub-plot; Nigel's

1. Scott "The Fortunes of Nigel". Vol. II P. I.
2. Ibid: Vol. II. P. 77.
3. Scott: "Fortunes of Nigel" Vol. II, P. 174.
4. Ibid: Introduction, 1831.

thread ends with a marriage, and there are a very few other dramatic scenes; Volume II is more dramatic than Volume I, but the turning point is dragged out and the entire book rambles. As a whole, the plot structure is more loose, hence, less dramatic than that in many of Scott's earlier novels. The biographic is again his model.

Quentin Durward (1823) has the usual historical novel scheme of Scott's, a conventional hero plot bound up with a historical one. The conventional hero plot is biographic: though Quentin Durward enters when he is twenty, the author relates all his previous life history, and all the incidents up to his marriage. The title is biographic, and though the love story of Quentin Durward is somewhat dramatic his plot as a whole is a loosely-woven series of adventures. Scott says,

"The preliminary chapter (Chap. I) is necessary for comprehending the history of the individual whose adventures we are about to relate".

Quentin's story is largely biographic, but there are

some dramatic situations and incidents. There is, moreover, a strong basal conception, a portrayal of the time of Louis XI. Indeed he is the principal character, for Scott says,

"The selection of this remarkable person (Louis XI) as the principal character in the romance -for it will be entirely comprehended, that the little love intrigue of Quentin is only employed as the means of bringing out the story--afforded considerable facilities to the author." I.

The period covered is the beginning of the decline of the feudal system. Thus the book does have a basal conception, it treats of Louis' quarrels with Charles of Burgundy. Quentin serves the king for a time, but not throughout. A modern novelist would have had this basal conception bound up with a strong dramatic plot, but Scott belongs to the older school. His story plot is largely biographic.

Red Gauntlet, A Tale of Eighteenth Century is a story of a conventional hero, Darsie Latimer, or he turns out to be, Darsie Red Gauntlet, and of his uncle, who is an ardent follower of the Pretender. It is

I. Scott: "Quentin Durward" Introduction, 1831.

the adventures of young Red Gauntlet that the book relates. Though Latimer is twenty when it opens, the author reviews all the previous incidents of his life. The Darsie thread taken alone is biographic, but the dramatic element is the combination of the two threads, Darsie's struggle against his uncle's commands to join the side of the Pretender. There is intense interest, and the dramatic incidents are many. There is the old, somewhat dramatic convention of a hidden parentage which is not explained until the second volume. The Pretender plot partakes somewhat of the nature of a background: the combination of the two plots, the struggle between the two natures, makes the books somewhat dramatic. In that respect, it is more dramatic than Nigel.

Scott, then, is not a master of structure. Though a few of his novels possess good plots, plot was not his forte. A conversation between the Author of Waverly and Captain Clutterbuck, the author of Nigel, discloses Scott's ideal of the novel and his

consciousness of his own structural deficiencies:

Author: "There never was a novel written on this plan while the world stood". (This plan is "a story which should gush and glide and never pause and visit, and widen, and deepen, and all the rest on it; and at length arriving at a final catastrophe as at some mighty haven, when ships of all kind strike sail and yard."

Captain: "Pardon me-Tom Jones".

Author's "True, and perhaps Amelia, also. Fielding had high notions of the dignity of an art which he may be considered as having founded. He challenges a comparison between the Novel and the Epic. Smollett, Le Sage and others, emancipating themselves from the strictness of the rules he has laid down, have written rather a history of the miscellaneous adventures which befall an individual in the course of life, than the plot of a regular and connected epopeia, where every step brings us a point nearer to the final catastrophe.

These great masters have been satisfied if they amused the reader upon the road; though the conclusion only arrived because the tale must have an end-just as the traveller alights at the inn because it is evening."

Captain: "A very commodious mode of travelling, for the author at least. In short, you are of the opinion, with Boyes-"What the devil does the plot signify, except to bring in fine things?"

Author: "Grant that I were so, and that I should write with sense and spirit a few scenes, unlaboured and loosely put together, but which had sufficient interest in them to amuse in one corner the pain of the body; in another, to relieve anxiety of mind;.....in all, to fur-

nish harmless amusement, -might not the author of such a work, however artificially executed, plead for his errors and negligences the excuse of the slave, who, about to be punished for having spread the false report of a victory, saved himself by exclaiming--"Am I to blame, O Athenians, who have given you one happy day?"

Later on, the conversation continues as follows:

Captain: "You should take time at least to arrange your story."

Author: "That is a sore point with me, my son. Believe me, I have not been fool enough to neglect ordinary precautions. I have repeatedly laid down my future work to scale, divided it into volumes and chapters, and endeavored to construct a story which I meant should evolve itself gradually and strikingly, maintain suspense, and stimulate curiosity, and which, finally, should terminate in a striking catastrophe. But I think there is a demon who seats himself on the feather of my pen when I begin to write, and leads it astray from the purpose. Characters expand under my hand; incidents are multiplied; the story lingers, while the materials increase; my regular mansion turns out a Gothic anomaly, and the work is closed long before I have attained the point I proposed."

Captain: "Resolution and determined forbearance might remedy that evil."

Author: "Alas! my dear sir, you do not know the force of paternal affection. When I light on such a character as Bailie Jarvie, or Dalgetty, my imagination brightens, and my conception becomes clearer at every step which I

1. Scott: Introduction to "The Fortunes of Nigel". 1822.

take in his company, altho' it leads me many a weary mile away from the regular road and forces me to leap hedge and ditch to get back into the route again. If I resist the temptation as you advise me, my thoughts become prosy, flat, and dull." /.

Thus, even allowing for the modesty of Scott, we see that he was conscious of his own lack of dramatic plot. He is not a genius in structure, his novels are largely biographic, but he did make an advance in the new movement, however, in the intensification of the basal conception. That he could not combine it with a dramatic plot, is what keeps him from reaching the height of the modern novelist. His influence on later authors is marked—after him, the basal conception becomes even more dramatic.

Charles Dickens.

Dickens' novels become progressively dramatic in plot as his work proceeds; per contra, the biographic element diminishes in the same degree. This is due to a conscious effort on Dickens' part to achieve plot. His first novels are almost purely biographic novels of incident; his transitional novels

1. Scott: Introduction to "The Fortunes of Nigel." 1822.

are skillful combinations of the biographic and dramatic, the very last one being the unfinished Edwin Drood with its chief interests in the drama of its plot. Thus Dickens is decidedly transitional in his technique, passing from the extreme of biography to the extreme of drama.

The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club (1836-7), makes few claims if any, to the title of novel, as it is picaresque story of the Sterne and Smollett type. It is a group of adventures and episodes strung together by the rather weak structural device of having four men, members of the Pickwick Club, travel about in pursuit of adventure. After the first few chapters, even this device is almost disregarded. There are some isolated dramatic scenes, mostly pure comedy, but there is no unified, well-defined, well-woven plot. The only suggestion of it are the four love story threads, -Pickwick-Bardell, Jingle-Rachael, Snodgrass-Miss Wardle, and Winkle-Arabella, but no one of these is prominent all the time, for the main interest lies



in the adventures. Dickens himself says,

"These papers were designed for the introduction of diverting characters and incidents; that no ingenuity of plot was attempted, or even at that time considered very feasible by the author in connection with the desultory mode of publication adopted." /

There are over ten utterly extraneous stories told by utterly extraneous people, thus further justifying the term episodic plot. The book may be considered biographic in the sense that Mr. Pickwick is an actor in or witness of many of the adventures. Dickens has a hint of a basal conception, however, inasmuch as he tries to preach on the evils of prisons, law courts, and elections. This conception is hardly worthy of consideration as it is merely suggested, it is unproved, and it does not run throughout the book. It has no unifying effect on the plot. Pickwick Papers has been considered here largely to show Dickens' almost utter lack of a well-defined plot and pre-ordained conclusion in his first novel: he does not intend to have dramatic structure and he succeeds admirably.

1. Dickens: Preface to "The Pickwick Papers."

Oliver Twist (1837-9) is another picaresque biographic novel for the following reasons: it is an account of Oliver's life; it covers a long period of time-from Oliver's birth until he is about fifteen; the title is biographic; the plot is a loosely-woven series of adventures with thieves. There are also a few dramatic elements: there is a basal conception, the evils of the work-house, but it is only evident in the first of the book and there it is rather weak; and there are some dramatic incidents and scenes in Oliver's life plot among which may be considered the mystery of Oliver's birth and the Monks thread with its strong turning point. This thread, however, is only a big dramatic situation in Oliver's life rather than a separate plot. The Nancy-Bill thread is a strong, dramatic sub-plot, but the Rose-Harry Maylie thread is so weak it is hardly worth mention. Hence the book is a biographic account of Oliver's life and adventures with a fairly dramatic sub-plot, -it is the sub-plot which makes the novel a step in advance of

Pickwick Papers and a step in the direction of the dramatic novel.

The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby, (1838-9), is another novel of the same type. It is a biographic adventure story: it relates the adventures of the Nickleby family, but particularly of Nicholas; it covers a comparatively long period of time, though it differs from Oliver Twist in the fact that Nicholas is nineteen when the story opens, but the important events in the previous history of the family are reviewed; there is a biographic title; and the plot is a loosely-woven series of adventures of the hero, his mother, and his sister in their efforts to earn their living. There are many extraneous, non-dramatic incidents, like Mrs. Nickleby's affair with the mad man, and two extraneous stories which make the plot even more episodic. The dramatic elements are these: there is an approach to a basal conception, as Dickens says he wishes to show evils of the Yorkshire schools, - this conception concerns only a comparatively small part

1. Dickens: Preface to "Nicholas Nickleby".

of the book, however,; there are many dramatic scenes and incidents in the life stories of Kate and Nicholas Nickleby, though none of them are large or separate enough to be called plots; there are more plots in this book than in Oliver Twist-it deals with the fortunes of the two Nicklebys, so the two often separate. The novel is biographic with few, if any, pretensions to real plot,-Dickens as yet has progressed but little in the dramatic method.

Another novel of the same type is The Old Curiosity Shop (1840). It is decidedly biographic: it is the account of Nell's adventures and wanderings with her grandfather; the actual time covered is not as long as in some of Dickens' other novels, but the story opens when Nell is fourteen and continues until her death and a little after; there is no well-woven plot, the book is the record of the events of Nell's career and many times what might have developed into a thread of plot begins and ends soon after, remaining but an incident. There are some dramatic elements,-Dickens has

a suggestion of a basal conception as he says,

"I had it always in my fancy to surround the lonely figure of the child with grotesque and wild, but not impossible, companions, and to gather about her innocent face and pure intentions, associates as strange and uncongenial as the grim objects that are about her bed when her history is first foreshadowed."

There are a few dramatic incidents and scenes; e. g., the grandfather's gambling at night, and Nell's death, but <sup>it</sup> can hardly be said that the book contains a dramatic sub-plot. The Dick Swevellet-Marchioness and the Kit-Barbara intercourses, which are the nearest approaches to sub-plots, are so closely allied to Nell's life plot and are so very thin in themselves, not even containing turning points, that they are really only suggestions of threads of plot. There is a rather strong turning point in Nell's life plot, however, even though it is not an especially well prepared for culmination. The introduction of the Single Gentleman, with its idea of mystery, is another suggestion of drama, and though it is not very skillfully done, the author creates fairly strong suspense.

1. Dickens: Preface to "The Old Curiosity Shop."

His figure in the conclusion is significant:

"The magic reel which, rolling on before, has led the chronicler thus far, now slackens in its pace and stops. It lies before the oval; the pursuit is at an End.

"It remains but to dismiss the leaders of the little crowd who have borne us company upon the road, and so to close the journey."

The plot is not a winding and unwinding as in a dramatic novel, but a "rolling on, a leading on of the chronicler."

The Old Curiosity Shop is a biographic novel of incident.

Pickwick is a picaresque novel and Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, and The Old Curiosity Shop are picaresque, biographic novels, but Barnaby Rudge (1840) is not so easily classified. The biographic elements are these: it is a record of Barnaby's life, for though he is not the most active figure in it, and though his father and mother divide the role of leading character with him, the effect is the same--he is the only figure in the book who is in most of the plots; the title is biographic, and the plot as a whole is somewhat loosely-woven, rambling considerably. The dramatic elements are

1. Dickens: "The Old Curiosity Shop". Page 530.

hard to analyze: there is a basal conception as  
Dickens says:

"No account of the Gordon Riots has been  
to my knowledge introduced into any Work of  
Fiction, and the subject presenting very ex-  
traordinary and remarkable features, I was led  
to project this Tale."/>

There are a number of threads of plot: aside from  
the Barnaby plot, which, in a way, is a dramatic symbol  
of the historical riot plot, there are the Joe-Dolly  
Varden and the Emma Haredale-Edward Chester love plots,  
both more or less distinct from the other plots. The  
most dramatic plot is the Rudge Senior thread, but  
it is so closely linked with the Barnaby thread that  
it is extremely difficult to state absolutely what  
kind of a plot the book has. The same difficulty arises  
in regard to the period of time the book covers.  
Barnaby is twenty-two when the story proper opens and  
all the events in the story proper take place in  
about six years, while five years are omitted between  
chapters XXXII and XXXIII. There is a review, how-  
ever, of the events that happened before Barnaby's  
1. Dickens: Preface to "Barnaby Rudge".

birth until he is twenty-two. These years, from twenty-two on, are the most exciting ones in Barnaby's life, hence the time covered is a dramatic element. There are other dramatic elements: there are some dramatic scenes and incidents; the suspense is fair; and each thread of the plot has a strong turning point. I must employ the impressionistic method to judge this book in part, and judged by that method, the book is both biographic and dramatic. It is a rather dramatic biography used as a symbol of the basal conception-a scheme similar to that which Scott uses in his historical novels. The novel is not well constructed, the very confusion proves that, but it is undoubtedly a step in advance of Dickens' other novels in regard to certain plot unities-there are more plots, they are more distinct in themselves and yet they are more closely united together. The book is a transitional one: that fact probably accounts for the difficulties in analyzing it. It does not especially show the decline of the biographic method, but on the other hand,



it does not show the rise of the dramatic.

The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit (1844), is easier to classify. It has a biographic major and a dramatic sub-plot. The biographic elements are these: the book is the story or account of the life and adventures of the young Martin Chuzzlewit; it covers a long period of time--the hero goes even to America and has adventures there with swindlers; the title is biographic; and the plot is very loosely-woven, containing very, very many extraneous incidents and adventures. There are also some dramatic elements: there is a strong sub-plot, the Jonas Chuzzlewit thread with its strong turning point; there are some dramatic scenes, and incidents in the biographic plot; there are several love-story threads, -Mark Tapley-Mrs. Lupin, John Westlock-Ruth Pinch, and the love affairs in the major and minor plots; there is unity of a sort in the fact that the old Chuzzlewit connects the main plots of the story. Dickens evidently had a biographic novel in mind and then conceived a turning point later, as his contemporary

biographer says:

"Dickens deliberated a long time over the choice of title, when he started to write, it ran thus: 'The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewig, his family, friends and enemies. Comprising all his wills and his ways with an historical record of what he did and what he didn't. The whole forming a complete key to the house of Chuzzlewig.' All which later portion of the title was of course dropped as the work became modified in its progress, by changes at first not contemplated; but as early as the third number, he drew up the plan of 'old Martin's plot to degrade and punish Pecksniff', and the difficulty he encountered in departing from other portions of his scheme were such as to render him, in his subsequent stories, more bent upon constructive care at the outset and an adherence as far as might be to any design he had formed."

Dickens, as the analysis of his later volumes will show, does grow more painstaking in plot structure; in this novel, however, he changes his plan in the course of his writing the book. He realized the dramatic strength of the volume, moreover, as he said to Mr. Forster,

"You know that I think Chuzzlewit is in a hundred points immeasurably the best of my stories."

It is his best story, it is his most dramatic novel

1. Forster: "Life of Dickens". Bk. IV Part I.
2. Ibid. Book. IV. Part I. P. 132.

so far, but it is also a strongly biographic novel.

Dombey and Son (1845) resembles Martin Chuzzlewit as it has both a biographic plot and a dramatic one. It is the biography of the present generation of the Dombey family: the Son's whole life is covered in detail, the Dombey's life is covered from birth of his son to his own old age, and the daughter's life is covered for the sake of reacting on Mr. Dombey. The Preface shows that Dickens conceived Mr. Dombey as the central character, for he briefly analyzes his character there. The purpose of the book is to show Dombey's character, hence the other people and events are put in for the sake of acting and reacting upon the life plot. In common with other biographic novels, the book covers a considerable period of time—Florence is two years old when it begins, and is the mother of two children when it ends. The plot is loosely-woven, a pure chronicle in parts, though as a whole, the plot of the book is much closer knit than Dickens' earlier works. His idea of Dombey's character tends

to produce this somewhat dramatic unification. There are some unrelated incidents in some of the threads of plot and they make against this unity. So much for the biographic elements; these are the dramatic: there is no basal conception unless Dombey's character be called that, and such an interpretation is somewhat far fetched; there are many threads of plot, but some of them are mere series of incidents touching the main trend of the book, and some are extraneous. The Florence and Paul plots, however, have a direct relation to the main life plot and as such, they are important. There is a fairly strong dramatic sub-plot, that of Carker Senior. We might refuse to call it a sub-plot and state that it is merely a dramatic situation as Dombey is in our minds when we read it, but that is perhaps a too nice distinction: as Carker's death is dramatic as well as his life, it may rightly be called a dramatic sub-plot. There are many dramatic scenes and incidents and there is a strong turning point. On the whole, the novel is largely biographic, but the advance

over the earlier books of Dickens shows itself in the dramatic sub-plot and the closer weaving of the general plot. Dickens is growing more dramatic, but as yet, but little less biographic.

The Personal History of David Copperfield (1850), is a transitional novel, the best of his combination novels, if such they may be called. It has a strong biographic major plot, and a strong dramatic sub-plot. The book is a biographic masterpiece, Dickens' last purely biographic plot, while the sub-plot is so strongly dramatic that it arouses keener interest than the main plot. The novel is biographic for the following reasons: it is a record of David's life; it covers over twenty-five years, from David's birth through second marriage; the title is biographic; the life plot is loosely-woven, containing many non-dramatic incidents put in for the sake of having a complete record. There is not even a strong turning point in David's story though there are several climaxes. Among the dramatic elements the Emily sub-plot stands

first. It is very dramatic and loses sight of the nominal hero, thus coming up to the requirements of areal sub-plot. It works up to a strong, pre-conceived turning point and conclusion, a masterpiece of structure. It is so vital that it quite transforms the novel; originally an episode, it grows into a drama so intense that it surpasses the major plot in interest. There are a few other threads of plot; e.g., the Micawber and the Dr. Strong threads, but they are not many in number and they are so closely bound up with either the biographic or the dramatic plot that they belong there. In David Copperfield, Dickens shows, for the first time, that he has wonderful dramatic power. The book is a biographic novel, but the strength of its sub-plot suggests that Dickens will not adhere to the old ideal long.

Bleak House (1853) is the first novel of his dramatic period. The biographic elements in it are not especially strong or marked, yet the book consists, in a way, of the biographic accounts of the three people,

Richard, Ada, and Esther. It is more than the biography of the three wards, however: it contains a strong basal conception, the portrayal of the workings of the Court of Chancery. The stories of the three wards work out dramatically to form this conception, and there are turning points in the stories of Jo, Richard, Lady Dedlock, Esther, and Cally; each little and each big thread is dramatic in itself. There are, in addition, many small threads of plot, not so artistically arranged among themselves, but all contributing to the sum total of effects of the Chancery procedure. The Cally Jelliby plot is one of these, though it wanders considerably afield. There is a decidedly dramatic story of Esther's parentage, the Lady Dedlock plot, an admirably sustained and well developed mystery. Indeed Esther's story is the most prominent in the book in spite of the fact that because she tells the story, she tries to make Dick's life the most prominent. There are many extraneous incidents, characters,

and scenes, but if we consider them as the working out of the dramatic conception, they contribute to the artistic plot unity. Bleak House is a largely dramatic novel with strong dramatic elements: the previous order has been reversed. The biographic elements consist in the little adventures that branch off the main idea, and in the fact that there is still a sort of looseness to the general structure: Dickens has not yet entirely divorced himself from his old picaresque biographic manner, though as stated before, the book is a model of drama. Forster says,

"In his (Dickens) later writings he had been assiduously cultivating this essential of his art (dramatic plot), and here he brought it very nearly to perfection. I remember a remark also made by him to the effect that to read a story in parts had no less a tendency to prevent the reader's noticing how thoroughly a work so presented might be calculated for perusal as a whole".

Dickens, consciously striving to be a dramatic novelist, is making great progress.

His next work, Hard Times, (1854), is perhaps more dramatic as its only claim to biography is

I. Forster: "Life of Dickens". Bk. VII. Part I.P.281.



that it is the story of the Gradgrind children. Their story, however, proves the basal conception, the thesis, which is the insufficiency of a purely utilitarian education. In that light, the book has strong dramatic unity, though there are a few minor non-dramatic incidents and characters; e. g., the circus people. The novel covers but a short period of time; there is a well developed plot which shows one evil result of a utilitarian education after another until the decided turning point and conclusion, the culmination of the evil results; there are a number of plots well united which create strong suspense: the book is largely dramatic. Whether the book is well motivated and whether the plan is carried out to the perfection are considerations that do not concern us here. Suffice to say, there are but a few hints of the biographic ideal: the novel is chiefly dramatic.

Little Dorrit (1857), is, in a sense, a reversion to the older type of novel. It is

both biographic and dramatic, the former predominating. The following are the biographic elements: the book is Amy Dorrit's life story, she is the central figure; It covers a long period of time--from Mr. Dorrit's first entrance into the prison twenty-two years before the story proper opens, through the incidents of Amy's early life in Chapters VI and VII, and through the events, from Chapter VIII on, which cover a fairly long time; the title is biographic; and the plot is a rather loosely-woven record of Amy's life including the incidents of her days of poverty in prison and of her days of luxury afterwards. There are many biographic and unrelated characters and details, and a few unrelated threads of plot; e. g., the Meagles' story, which have no bearing on Amy's plot and touch it but rarely: these characteristics of the plot of the novel make it biographic. Though the book is the life story of Amy, the chief actor in it is not Amy, but Arthur Clemnam. He is introduced as the son of the woman who employs Amy as a seamstress, and he

becomes interested in her. From that time on, most of her affairs are his, and that fact involves him into a dramatic sub-plot. In this sub-plot, however, Amy is not completely forgotten, since the incidents have a bearing on her life. This plot includes Arthur, Mrs. Clennam and Rigaud and turns out to be a conventional mystery plot concerning Arthur's parentage. There is a basal conception, the need of reform in the Marshalsea and in the Circumlocution Office; but it is a rather vague, poorly developed, exposition of a rather lifeless question. Dickens himself, when in the middle of the second number, had "half a mind to begin again."<sup>1</sup> Evidently, he realized the artistic defects of the novel as to plot construction. Perhaps the serial method of publication aided in causing this looseness. Little Dorrit, then, is a mixture, but the biographic predominates. Dickens is using the older formula, or, what is perhaps more strictly true, he is not using much of a formula at all. This absence of plan makes the plot less dramatic.

1. Andrew Long: Introduction to "Little Dorrit": Gadsby Edition, Page 6.

A Tale of Two Cities (1859), on the other hand, is a powerful dramatic novel. Though it covers a period of seventeen years, and, though in a sense, it records the life stories of Dr. Manette, Lucy, and Darney, it has a skillfully constructed plot. There are three strong threads; that of Dr. Manette, of the French nobleman, and of the French Revolution. They are wonderfully dramatic in themselves, and wonderfully connected and woven together. There is intense and growing interest, a strong piling up of effects that lead to the pre-conceived, dramatic conclusion, Wonderful unity of tone is produced by the atmosphere the author creates. The reader is always feeling the horror of the Revolution. The constant struggles of Darney against the forces in the Revolution which seek his destruction, the piling up of climax upon climax is intensely dramatic. Above all stands the masterly portrayal of Sidney Carton, which also deserves consideration in a study of structure. He is a part of the other plots, yet the

author has his character in mind throughout; the incidents in Carter's life increase in importance until the greatest incident is the culmination of the plot of the book. The whole novel is a preparation for that scene. The French Revolution is the historical basal conception, a greater historical plot than Scott ever achieved, as it is a dramatic plot as well. In A Tale of Two Cities, Dickens practically forgets his biographic formula; he writes a purely dramatic novel.

Great Expectations (1861) is another purely dramatic novel. It is, in a way, the account of Pip's life, for he is the central figure and most of the events occur in his life. On the other hand, practically all the incidents are dramatic and they lead up to a pre-conceived turning point and conclusion; thus the novel is dramatic. There is a biographic suggestion in two of the Pip's phrases: he speaks of "the turning point in my life",<sup>1</sup> (Magwitch's return), and of "this leaf of my life".<sup>2</sup> The story begins when he is a small boy and continues until he is twenty-five.

1. Dickens: "Great Expectations" Chap. XXXIX Page 281.
2. Ibid: Page 288.

thus suggesting another biographic element, the long period of time. There are, however, but very few unrelated incidents even in the childhood days of the hero. The most striking illustration of an incident that seems irrelevant at the time but which turns out to be <sup>an</sup> incident that is the most far-reaching in its effects, is the one where Pip helps the convict. The food and file he gives him cause the great expectations. There are a few other plots, the Herbert-Clara, the Estella-Drummler; and the Wemmick threads but they are vital only in so far as they concern Pip's life; considered as separate plots, they are minor and insignificant. Though there is no mention of it as a thesis, the book shows the folly of great expectations, the great expectations make the drama and the tragedy. The novel has a biographic shell, -Dickens still clings to the old convention, but it is an excellent example of his dramatic power, a power which he consciously develops. The dramatic has transformed the old biographic.

Our Mutual Friend (1875) does not equal its two predecessors in construction, not so much because it is more biographic, as because it is less dramatic. It is biographic in the sense that it is meant to be John Harmon's adventures: we do not learn his early history, however, except through retrospect on the part of Boffins and the author evidently tries to make his career when he returns, dramatic. It would be dramatic, were it not so diffuse and so full of extraneous people, incidents, and plots; e. g., the Veneering thread. There are, however, many dramatic incidents in Harmon's career, among them the suggestion of mystery and the turning point. The idea is dramatic: John Harmon returns after his supposed death to test the fidelity of his servants, the Boffins, and to discover the real nature of his sweetheart. The Headstone-Wrayburn-Lizzie Hexam thread is a very strong sub-plot, more intense and more dramatic than the main plot. The novel cannot be called dramatic without qualifications: it is largely dramatic and it

shows a marked dramatic advance over Dickens' earliest work, but it is inferior to some of his other novels. The diffuseness, the episodic character of the parts of the book reveal the fact that the biographic method is still influential.

The Mystery of Edwin Drood (1870), Dickens last and unfinished novel, would probably have been the culmination of his constructive power. Its main attraction was to be its plot; what we have of the novel shows this. So completely is the plot complicated that dozens of people have written as many different solutions. The mystery remains a mystery, though some critics state that they know the solution Dickens had planned. The very fact that the book is capable of more than one logical conclusion shows its dramatic power. Dickens, the former picaresque rambler, becomes, in his last work, a novelist of real plot.

Dickens' use of terms as applied to his novels is rather significant. His early novels, the biographic novels of incident, he usually calls



histories<sup>1.</sup>, chronicles<sup>2.</sup>, or adventures<sup>3.</sup>, and himself he calls a historian<sup>4.</sup> or a biographer<sup>5.</sup> His later more dramatic novels, he also calls tales<sup>6.</sup>, records<sup>7.</sup>, or narratives<sup>8.</sup> When he begins to introduce dramatic plots, he seldom uses the term history; when he writes pure drama, he never uses it. Dickens means by the term history, a life story, for he uses the two terms almost synonymously.<sup>9.</sup> Hence Dickens' terms in reference to his novels correspond, in a measure, to the kind of novel he is writing. How much of this is due to convention, how much to accident, and how much to conscious effort on the part of Dickens, it is hard to determine. The coincidence, if it is nothing more, is suggestive, however.

Thus Dickens' work progresses from the formlessness of his early novels with their biographic schemes to the dramatic complication of his later ones. First he writes in the picaresque manner with the idea of portraying the life and adventures of a person; then in his transitional novels, he introduces a minor

- "Oliver Twist": 'Chap. headings 10, 13, 24, 26;<sup>3.</sup> Chap. headings 28, 34, 35, and Pp. 406, 408;<sup>4.</sup> P. 123;<sup>5.</sup> P. 46.  
 "Old Curiosity Shop": 'Preface and Chap. 3;<sup>1.</sup> P. 530.  
 "Barnaby Rudge": 'P. 322;<sup>2.</sup> P. 139;<sup>4.</sup> Preface.  
 "Martin Chuzzlewit": 'Pp. 12, 91, 345, 726;<sup>1.</sup> P. 345.  
 "David Copperfield": 'P. 8, 809;<sup>1.</sup> Pp 264, 796.  
 "Bleak House": 'P. 797; Chap. V called "A Morning Adventure".  
 "Dombey and Son": 'Chap. heading, Chap. 4;<sup>1.</sup> P. 4.  
 "Little Dorrit": 'Pp. 170, 528;<sup>1.</sup> Preface, P. 4.  
 "Tale of Two Cities": 'P. 9.

dramatic plot; finally he writes purely dramatic novels. In his work the dramatic transforms and finally replaces the biographic through his own conscious effort. What is true in Dickens' work becomes true finally in the whole history of the novel technique, - the biographic formula ceases operation and the dramatic takes its place.

William Makepeace Thackeray.

Thackeray is a strongly biographic novelist, for though his works have dramatic elements, he is not a master of dramatic plots. He does not attempt them or seem to desire them. He does, however, whether unconsciously or consciously, show the advance of the new method in that much of his work in spite of being biographic, is <sup>partly</sup> dramatic. Dickens, in his early career at least, wrote novels of incident, - a character was met, passed by, and forgotten. Thackeray is an advance over him in that he does not do so much of the encountering and forgetting of characters. Rather does he bring them all out and

Footnote-Continued from Page 86.

9. "David Copperfield" Page 235.

"Dombey and Son": Page 176.

"Little Dorrit": Page 175, Chap. heading 21.

introduce them, and then they play their parts, more or less managed by the author. Thus there is a dramatic social grouping which is not present in Dickens, and which shows the tendency toward drama. He is dramatic, too, in that he has a keen eye for dramatic situations, but as a skillful constructor of plot, which has each incident aiding in the accumulation of effects resulting in a strongly dramatic, carefully planned turning point and culmination, he is not successful. Like those of Dickens, some of his books were written to be published serially, hence they were written piece-meal, to fill up a certain number of issues. Character, not plot, is their object. Thackeray always writes a life history. Of the four novelists considered in this paper as transitional authors, Dickens, Thackeray, Eliot, and Meredith, Thackeray is the most biographic as to plots.

Vanity Fair (1846-8) is a biographic novel, largely the record of the life of Becky Sharp with the life account of Amelia Sedley also brought

in, touching the Becky plot in places. The book covers a rather long period of time: Becky and Amelia leave school and while Becky passes through a varied career as governess, wife, mother, widow, and adventuress, Amelia is courted, married, widowed, and married again, and each is the mother of a son of ten or twelve. The plot and plots are loosely-woven, being chronicles, rather than plot complexes. There is no winding up of the threads and then the cutting of the knot: there are projections in the thread that approach the complication of small knots, but that is all. There are some dramatic elements, however. There is no basal conception except the showing of Becky's character: to show character is always Thackeray's motive. There are a number of dramatic situations: the growing situation between Becky, Rawdon Crawley, and Lord Steyne, culminating in Rawdon's discovery of Becky's scheming and lying, would make a dramatic sub-plot, were it not so intimately connected with the life plot. As a part of the life plot, it is dramatic, while it

tends to overshadow the biographic plot, transforming it into a dramatic one, it is not able to do so because of its structural looseness. Hence it is a dramatic situation in a biographic plot. Becky's career does ~~not~~ have a rise and fall, she struggles in the world for position and wealth, but they are not structurally dramatic. The dramatic element that is obvious in Thackeray, as opposed to Dickens, is present here; i. e., the grouping. In the first eleven chapters, the characters come out and bow, then the story goes on; we have the characters all before us and afterwards stray ones do not figure prominently. Another somewhat dramatic element is the title, Vanity Fair. Thackeray said it was the best title he ever wrote. A group of people make up Vanity Fair, and it is their history the author relates. The grouping element is dramatic, the history element biographic. The two most important life threads, Becky's and Amelia's, meet but rarely and by chance, so the plots cannot be said to be skillfully intertwined. The book is a biographic novel with some

dramatic elements: while it is more dramatic than some previous novels examined, it is still decidedly after the old formula, a biographic female rogue story.

The History of Pendennis, His Fortunes and Misfortunes, His Friends, and His Greatest Enemy (1850) is another biographic novel. It is the account of the life of Arthur Pendennis through a rather exciting career which includes several love affairs. There is a biographic title and the book covers a considerable period of time: Chapters II to VI inclusive go back to tell all the previous history of Arthur though the book proper begins when he is a young man, and Chapter VII continues where Chapter I leaves off. The plot is biographic, -it is loosely-woven, with many non-dramatic elements put in for the sake of having a complete biography. The author keeps insisting that he will not put in all the details of Pen's life and he realizes that he must eliminate many of them. He evidently thinks he has lived up to his ideal more than he has.

"It is not our purpose to describe this oft-travelled tour,"<sup>1</sup>

and

"We are not about to go through Pen's academic career very minutely."<sup>2</sup>

"Let us be allowed to pass over a few months of the history of Mr. Arthur Pendennis' life-time, during which many events may have occurred which were more interesting and exciting to himself than they would be likely to prove to the readers of the present memoirs."<sup>3</sup>

He does, however, go into unnecessary and non-dramatic, but biographic detail. This makes for looseness of plot as does the fact that the book does not even have a strong turning point in the Pen-Laura story: chance comes in to release him from his engagement to Blanche-she has providentially fallen in love with Foker-and he is able to marry Laura. How different is this from the carefully arranged, decisive turning point of a dramatic novel. This is the life of a hero, and by that name, Pen is always called: he is the "hero of the History" throughout. There are some dramatic elements, however, which show, that

1. Thackeray: "Pendennis", Vol. II P. 179.
2. Ibid: Vol. I. P. 171.
3. Ibid. Vol. I. P. 361.

the book is an advance over the early eighteenth century biographies. In the first place, there is evidently a basal conception in the author's mind, though not specifically stated, as the first edition had a drawing by Thackeray

"showing the opposing powers of good and evil personified, struggling for the possession of a young man--on one side, the home, a young woman and children--on the other the world, a siren, and a couple of imps, one of whom is offering the toys of wealth".!

This theme is much stronger than the one in Tom Jones , for instance, but it has not reached the dramatic development and perfection of Meredith. The struggle is dramatic, but the fact that this struggle is not the all-important factor keeps it from the height of drama. Pen's character, which Thackeray has in mind, is another dramatic factor. Even though the book has a biographic plot there are some dramatic scenes and situations: the nearest approach to a dramatic sub-plot is the Blanche-Amory-Cap't. Altamont plot,-it has suspense, fairly strong incidents, and a fairly strong turning point. The biographic, non-dramatic

1. Introduction to "Pendennis", Everyman Edition.



character of the book is acknowledged by Thackeray, when he says,

"If this kind of composition, of which the two years product is now laid before the public, fail in art, as it certainly does and must, it at least has the advantage of a certain truth and honesty, which a work more elaborate might lose. In his constant communication with the reader, the writer is forced into frankness of expression, and to speak out his own mind and feelings as they urge him. Many a slip of the pen and the printer, many a word spoken in haste, he sees, and would recall as he looks over his volume. It is a sort of confidential talk between writer and reader, which must often be dull, must often flag."

Thackeray does not work for plot. The following statement is also significant:

"Perhaps the lovers of excitement may care to know, that this book began with a very precise plan, which was entirely put aside. Ladies and gentlemen, you were to have been treated...by a recital of the most active horrors. What more exciting than a ruffian (with many admirable virtues) in St. Giles's visited constantly by a young lady from Belgravia?.....May, up to nine o'clock this very morning, my poor friend Colonel Altamont was doomed to execution, and the author only relented when his victim was actually at the window.

"The exciting plan was laid aside because,

1. Thackeray: Preface to "Pendennis", Nov. 26, 1850.

on attempting it, I found that I failed from want of experience of my subject; and never having been intimate with any convict in my life,..... the idea of entering into competition with M. Eugene Sue was abandoned".

Think of a modern novelist writing that way without a plan, even if it is only for a somewhat secondary character. Such a situation is impossible, if the author has a dramatic plot with a planned denouement. Thackeray is still adhering to the old formula, even though dramatic elements are present.

"The History of Henry Esmond, Esquire (1882), is a biographic novel. It is the history of the life of Henry Esmond, and it covers a long period of time: The book begins when Henry is twelve and it ends with his marriage and departure to America. In addition, one chapter relates the previous history of the Esmonds, and Henry's daughter describes in the Preface his subsequent American career. The title is biographic as is the plot scheme: it is loosely-woven, more a chronological record of Henry's life than a dramatic tangling and untangling. There are some extraneous

I. Thackeray: Preface to "Pendennis". Nov. 26, 1850.

incidents: i. e., extraneous to a complication. In spite of these biographic elements, the book is the most dramatic of Thackeray's novels. First among its dramatic elements is the double basal conception. Thackeray wishes to present a picture of the life of the time of Queen Anne, for he says<sup>1</sup> that he thinks History can be shown better by pictures and novels than by the newspapers, etc., of the time. He wishes to portray History,—on that account, he introduces the historical Pretender plot. This conception makes for dramatic unity, but stronger than this conception, is the conception of Henry's character with his great act, the renunciation of the Esmond title and property for the sake of his benefactors. Had he not renounced his rights, the book would have been different--he probably would have been successful in his love affair with Beatrix and the whole course of his life would have been changed. As it is, there is the struggle throughout; he has the intense love for the girl which ceases in time, and then the love for her mother

1. Thackeray: Preface to "Henry Esmond".

takes its place. This love for Beatrice exerts its influence on Esmond, even though it passes, as it causes him to engage in numerous exploits to win her approval. Thus, perhaps unconsciously on Thackeray's part, there is drama. Frank Castlewood's love thread is comparatively small, but Beatrice's is a dramatic one, moulding the life history of Henry. Her own story, her love affairs apart from Henry, are incidents in a way, but the final one with Lord Hamilton and then with the Pretender are dramatic, at least in their rise and fall. This skillful plot management and increase in plot complication, even though the book is in its essence or foundation, biographic, makes Henry Esmond the most dramatic, the most artistic of Thackeray's novels, at least from the standpoint of structure, and that is our consideration in this paper. Even the very number of threads is an advance over Pendennis. We see the new method undermining the old, but each is important, each is present in this novel of Thackeray's.

The Newcomes: Memoirs of a Most Respectable Family , (1854), is a novel which does not reach the structural height of Esmond; it bears a close resemblance to Pendennis. It is strongly biographic, being largely the life of Clive Newcome, though the book treats of the fortunes of the whole Newcome family. Clive is always called "the hero of the history", and both Ethel, the heroine, and he are Newcomes. A long period of time is covered, from Clive's childhood until after the death of his first wife. There is a biographic title and a decidedly biographic plot scheme. As a record of Clive's life, the book records much travelling about, and it relates many minor incidents; e. g., Clive's school life is depicted at considerable length. There is not even a strong turning point in Clive's love affair, though his finances turn for the better; it is only in the addenda that the author says Clive and Ethel marry. Perhaps the serial method of publication caused some of the looseness of plot. As to dramatic elements,

1. Thackeray: "The Newcomes". Page 34; Vol. I. Page 13.

there is a sort of theme in addition to the idea of showing character, though the theme or preaching is not the dominant motive in the book.

"I have said this book is all about the world and a respectable family dwelling in it. It is not a sermon, except where it cannot help itself, and the speaker pursuing the destiny of his narrative finds such a homily before him...Don't we light upon such sermons daily--don't we see at home as well as amongst our neighbors that battle betwixt Evil and Good? Here on one side is Self and Ambition and Advancement; and Right and Love on the other; which shall we let to triumph for ourselves?--which for our children?"

This struggle makes the drama, but while it is stronger than that in the very earliest novels, it is not strong enough to equal the struggle in a modern dramatic novel. There is slight social grouping and there are more plots than in Pendennis, hence there is an advance in the sense that there is more complication: Thackeray tells the affairs of a family so there must be more plots. There is also a sub-plot similar to the one in Pendennis, the Barnes-Lady Clara Pulleyn plot. Perhaps we can best see the lack of a dramatic plot plan and the presence of the biographic 1 Thackeray: "The Newcomes". Vol. II Page 402.

scheme by examining some extracts from the book:

"It may not be more amusing in the telling than the chronicle of a feast, or the accurate report of two lovers' conversation; but the biographer, having brought his hero to this period of his life (the studying of art) is bound to relate it, before passing on to other occurrences which are to be narrated in their turn."<sup>1</sup>

"I break the promise of a former page and am obliged to describe the youthful days of more than one person who is to take a share in this story. Not always doth the writer know whither the divine Muse leadeth him. But of this be sure--she is an inexorable as Truth. We must tell our tale as she imparts it to us, and go on or turn aside at her bidding."<sup>2</sup>

"This narrative, as the judicious reader no doubt is aware, is written maturely and at ease long after the voyage is over whereof it recounts the adventures and perils; the winds adverse and favorable, the storms, the shoals, shipwrecks, islands, etc., which Clive Newcome met in his early journey in life. In such a history, events follow each other without necessarily having a connection with one another. One ship crosses another, and, after a visit from one captain to his comrade, they sail away each on his own course. The 'Clive Newcome' meets a vessel which makes signals that she is short of bread and water; and after supplying her, our captain leaves her to see her no more. One or two of the vessels with which we commenced our voyage together, part company in a gale, and founder miserably; others, after being woefully

1. Thackeray: "The Newcomes". Vol. I Page 172.
2. Ibid: Vol. I. Page 106.

battered in the tempest, make port, or are cast upon surprising islands where all sorts of unlooked-for prosperity await the lucky crew. Also, no doubt, the writer of this book, into whose hands Clive Newcome's logs have been put, and who is charged with the duty of making two octavo volumes out of his friend's story, dresses up for the narrative in his own way; utters his own remarks in place of Newcome's; makes fanciful descriptions of the individuals and incidents with which he never could have been personally acquainted; and commits blunders which the critics will discover."

Thackeray is somewhat diffuse and lacks dramatic plot, even though he thinks he has eliminated all minor, extraneous incidents:

"If we are to narrate the youthful history not only of the hero of this tale, but of the hero's father, we shall never have done with nursery biography.....I shall ask leave to say, regarding the juvenile biography of Mr. Clive Newcome, of whose history I am the chronicler only so much as is sufficient to account for some peculiarities of his character and for his subsequent career in the world".<sup>2</sup>

Thackeray leaves in far too many incidents, however, for our modern dramatic plot ideal--he developed his character, but his novels are still considerably biographic.

1. Thackeray: "The Newcomes". Vol. I. Chapt. XXIV. Page 236.
2. Thackeray: "The Newcomes". Vol. I. Chapt. IV. Page 34.



The Virginians, A Tale of the Last Century.  
(1857-9) is another one of Thackeray's serial novels that is almost purely biographic. It is the life story of the two Warringtons, George and Harry, and incidentally, of their mother. It covers a long period of time; in Chapter I Harry arrives in England, and in Chapters III to XIII inclusive, he reviews the previous events of his life; when George arrives he recounts his adventures; the rest of the book deals with adventures of both Warringtons over another considerable period of time. The plot is so loosely-woven, that the plan is best described as that of a biographic chronicle; there is not even a good turning point in the lives of the Warringtons for marriage is merely incidental. The historical part of the book concerning George Washington is probably put in to show his character, hence it has<sup>a</sup> function: there are, however, a number of extraneous scenes and incidents. The book possesses only a very few dramatic elements. In the first place, there is little evidence of a defined theme. When

Harry comes to England, he undergoes a struggle between his good and bad natures, so perhaps that may be considered somewhat dramatic. The novel was merely meant to be a sequel to Henry Esmond, whose grandchildren The Virginians are, and it shows how George and Harry Warrington take opposite sides in the Revolution. This can hardly be considered as a theme, however, as it occupies only a very small portion of the book. In the second place, there is no dramatic plot but only a series of adventures: to be sure, there is a turning point in Harry's fortunes when he is cast into jail and rescued by the providential appearance of his brother, who was reputed dead, but after the rescue, the book continues on for a very long time and more adventures take place. There is no dramatic sub-plot as in some of Thackeray's books, but there are a number of dramatic situations. All told, the book is a biographic novel of incident, adding but little to the new movement.

Thackeray's terms in reference to his

novels are somewhat significant. He usually calls a novel of his a history,<sup>6</sup> or biography;<sup>2</sup> he also uses the words, chronicle,<sup>3</sup> memoirs,<sup>4</sup> and adventures<sup>5</sup> a great deal. He usually calls himself a historian,<sup>6</sup> a biographer,<sup>7</sup> or a chronicler.<sup>8</sup> Occasionally he refers to his work as a story,<sup>9</sup> or a narrative,<sup>10</sup> and occasionally he refers to a particular incident or situation as a story<sup>11</sup> or history.<sup>12</sup> There are very few references to theatre phraseology and when those words are used, they usually refer to a particular incident. One striking exception is where Henry Esmond says, "The drama of my life in England is ended," but he calls his life in England more often adventures,<sup>5</sup> so it is hardly significant. On the whole, Thackeray's prevailing terms are history and biography, but whether the author uses them as a follower of convention or whether he uses them because he considers his novels histories and biographies cannot be definitely determined. Perhaps both reasons underlie the use of the terms, but because his work

<sup>6</sup>"Vanity Fair" Chap. I, Invocation as quoted by W. P. Trent: Introduction to "Vanity Fair", Crowell Edition, 1904.

<sup>7</sup>"Pendennis" Title, Vol. I. Pp. 7, 106, 347; Chap. heading XVI; Vol. II Pp. 488, 511, 607, 685, 719, 746; <sup>3</sup>Vol. II p. 749; <sup>5</sup>Vol. II P. 734; <sup>6</sup>Vol. I. P. 236; <sup>7</sup>Vol. II P. 144;

<sup>9</sup>Vol. II. Pp. 237, 733.

<sup>10</sup>"Henry Esmond": Title, Preface by daughter, Book III, Chap. V; <sup>3</sup>P. 2; <sup>4</sup>Preface Pp. 269, 367, 450; <sup>5</sup>Preface, Book III Heading; <sup>9</sup>P. 293; <sup>12</sup>Pp. 247, 157; P513.

is largely biographic, his use of these particular terms seems significant. Whatever be his reason, he is adhering to the old conventional phraseology, just as he is adhering to the old conventional structure.

Thus Thackeray as a whole, is an old style biographic novelist. Even in Henry Esmond, his most dramatic novel, he has his hero say,

"Master Grandson, who read this, do you look for the history of battles and sieges? Go, find them in the proper books; this is only the story of your grandfather and his family".

Thackeray's novels are all stories of a man and his family. Biographic as they are, his books are nevertheless an advance over Fielding and the earlier writers in that they have not only dramatic scenes, but dramatic sub-plots, strong basal conceptions in character, and social grouping. As a skillful constructor of climatic plots, however, Thackeray is not successful. His artistry does not lie in that direction; he reaches the first rank without excellence

Footnotes--Continued from Page 102.  
"The Newcomes": Vol. I Pp. 13, 34, 143, 126, 160, 236, 238, 293; vol. II Pp. 388, 511, 513, 534, 607, 645, 747;  
<sup>2</sup>Vol. I. Pp. 34, 238, 243, 342, Vol. II Pp. 659, 700;  
<sup>3</sup>Vol. I. Pp. 238, 320; <sup>4</sup>Vol. I. P. 375; <sup>5</sup>Vol. I. P. 134, 319;  
<sup>6</sup>Vol. II, Pp. 674, 772; <sup>7</sup>Vol. I. P. 236, <sup>8</sup>Vol. II. P. 514; <sup>9</sup>Vol. II. P. 665; <sup>10</sup>Chapt. headings I, 47; Vol. II. P. 511.  
"The Virginians": Vol. I. Pp. 1, 172; <sup>11</sup>Vol. I P. 1; <sup>12</sup>Vol. III P. 561; <sup>13</sup>Vol. I P. 114; <sup>14</sup>Vol. I, P. 1; <sup>15</sup>Vol. II Pp 469, 597.

of structure. Characterization and style are, for him, the master traits. Thackeray furthers the dramatic movement but little: he is prevailingly biographic.

George Eliot.

George Eliot is a transitional novelist like Dickens and Thackeray, but she adds much more to the rise of the dramatic method. She surpasses Dickens in that none of her work is purely biographic, while most of it is largely dramatic. Dickens strove to obtain what George Eliot has when she begins, real plot. She surpasses Thackeray in the same quality; his plots are weak, hers are strong. George Eliot does not reach the dramatic height of our modern novelists, but she more nearly reaches it than any other author so far considered.

Her first novel, Adam Bede, (1859) is both biographic and dramatic. It is biographic because it is the life story of Adam Bede; it covers a long period of time, about five years; the title is biographic; and the life plot is rather loosely-woven,

Footnote--Continued from Page 103.

1. Thackeray: "Henry Esmond", Page 293.

containing many unrelated incidents and details that are merely biographic; e. g., the death of Adam's father and the complaints of his mother. The dramatic elements are many and unusual. There is no theme as a theme except the general truth that guilt suffers, but there is an approach to a basal conception in that Eliot is showing the characters of Adam and Dinah. Character, in this study, is considered as but a suggestion of a basal conception: it is the basal conception that Thackeray employs. The general plot of Adam Bede, as was stated before, is biographic, but it contains many dramatic incidents and scenes. The Hetty-Donnithorne thread is intensely dramatic with its rising action, turning point, climax, falling action and catastrophe. Hetty grows more and more enmeshed, she kills her child and then comes the awful period in the prison followed by her death. This thread may be considered as a dramatic sub-plot reacting on the biographic Adam plot, or it may be considered a big dramatic situation

in Adam's plot. It is so intimately related to Adam's life that perhaps the better plan is to consider it a part of Adam's career, a big dramatic situation in Adam's plot--a biographic consideration. In this way the book resembles in its plot The Heart of Mid-Lothian and two novels of Meredith, Beauchamp's Career, and Diana, which will be considered later. While the Adam plot is biographic, it has, then, many dramatic characteristics. Chief among these is the fact that George Eliot works toward a pre-conceived end. She heard of a girl who was hanged for child-murder and it affected her deeply. "She spoke of it to Lewes. He observed that the prison scene would make an effective incident in a story. The novel was accordingly worked out with a view to this climax". This is a very significant fact: the biographic novelists did not begin with the culmination, but wrote on in a picaresque manner with a vague idea of having a satisfactory ending. The dramatic plan, the pre-conceived catastrophe, make the drama in

1. Leslie Stephen: "George Eliot". Chap. V. Page 65.

Adam Bede. Another biographic consideration, though a minor one as compared to the plan, is the time covered. I have already stated that it is biographically long: though it is five years, however, it may be considered dramatic in the sense that these five years are the most significant ones in Adam's career. The book as a whole is both biographic and dramatic: while there are many biographic elements, including a biographic shell, the dramatic elements are more in number and more significant than in many preceding novels,--the dramatic method is coming into general use.

The Mill On The Floss (1860), is much more biographic than Adam Bede, yet it is more dramatic. It is biographic in that it is the life story of Maggie Tulliver largely, though her brother Tom enters in; it covers a long period of time, Tom and Maggie are small children when it opens and it continues until their death as man and woman; the title may be considered somewhat biographic in that

1. Eliot: "Mill on the Floss" Book VI. Chap. III. Page 354.



it is the home of the heroine, but again, it may be considered dramatic, as it is the scene of the action, hence it probably has no significance; and the plot is somewhat loosely-woven with many irrelevant incidents and scenes. The first two books deal entirely with the childhood and school days of the Tullivers, thus carrying out the biographic idea. The author evidently puts in some of these incidents to show character; e.g., the scenes with the aunts at the time Tom's education is discussed, but the characters are interesting largely in themselves rather than in their relation to the trend of the plot, so their introduction is rather episodic. There are some strong dramatic elements, however: the basal conception is the character of Maggie, a girl capable of making such a great sacrifice that the whole plot is built to show her character and to prepare for the sacrifice<sup>!</sup>; there are many strong dramatic scenes and incidents; in the Stephen-Guest-Maggie story, the book is even more dramatic than Adam Bede, for there Hetty's story is not so closely connected to the Adam plot as the dramatic story here.

1. Leslie Stephen: "George Eliot".

In fact, the dramatic plot is Maggie's plot, hence there is more drama in the general plan of the book than in the preceding one. As in Adam Bede, the author began with a pre-conceived culmination, thus working according to the purely dramatic method.

"The first record in George Eliot's diary relating to the book is January 12, 1859, when she went into town and looked in the Annual Register for cases of inundation. This seems to suggest that, as in Adam Bede, she began with the idea of a catastrophe, towards which the whole story was gradually worked up".

Such planning with the culmination decided first of all is dramatic. George Eliot tried to be purely dramatic, but turned out to be more biographic in the first of the novel through love of her subject. In her diary of July 9, 1860, she wrote,

"I return Sir Edward Lytton's critical letter which I have read with much interest.. I recognize the justice of his criticism.. that the tragedy is not adequately prepared. This is a defect which I felt even while writing the third volume and have felt ever since the MS., left me. The Epische Breite into which I was beguiled by love of my subject in the first two volumes caused a want of proportionate fullness in the treatment of the third, which I shall always regret."

1. Esther Wood: Introduction to Personal Edition of "The Mill on the Floss".

The catastrophe, in spite of the author's modest statement, is dramatically prepared for, everything works toward it, though, as she says, the book is slightly deficient in proportion. It has a biographic general scheme: the following statement shows that it is a life story of Maggie:

"But if Maggie had been that lady (well-educated, etc., ) you would probably have known nothing about her: her life would have had so few vicissitudes that it could hardly have been written: for the happiest women, like nations, have no history." /.

The book is a biographic novel in outline, but nevertheless, it is intensely dramatic: the dramatic is transforming the biographic.

Silas Marner, The Weaver of Ravelow (1861), can be considered as a novel for purposes of our discussion, regardless of its length. It is a novel with a biographic shell but an almost purely dramatic interior. Its biographic shell consists of these facts: it is the life story of Silas; it covers many years, though some of them are covered by review and only the crucial ones are covered in detail; there is a biographic

1. Eliot: "The Mill on the Floss". Book VI. Chap. III, Page 354.

title; and the plot in regard to Silas is somewhat loose. This is due to the fact that there are some seemingly extraneous scenes and incidents, the inn scene, the New Year's ball, etc., but most of them furnish the background for the action or show the character of the actors. As a whole, the book is strongly dramatic: there is a well planned and well developed basal conception, the influence of a little child. Eppie enters the life of Silas and she brings him back among his fellows: he becomes a normal man instead of a hermit, miser, and hater of the Deity. The plot is highly dramatic: there are two strong threads, the Silas and the Cass, very skillfully linked by the theft of the money, the arrival of Eppie, and finally, by the refusal of Eppie to return to the father who did not acknowledge her. From the standpoint of construction, the plot is as dramatic as any play which works up to a pre-conceived conclusion. The book conforms slightly to the convention of a biographic novel, but it is even more dramatic than The Mill on the Floss. The dramatic method

is indeed rising.

Romola (1862-63) is a mixture of a much more puzzling kind. It may be called biographic and dramatic: how much of each type the book contains it is difficult to determine. Romola's story seems biographic, she does but little, the events happen to her, she marries and in time discovers that her husband has been faithless not only to her but to his foster father; notwithstanding the use of the biographic title, she seems to serve only as an almost stationary central figure upon whom the dramatic Tito story reacts. The book has a scheme somewhat similar to the one in Adam Bede in this respect. It covers an ordinary number of years, five are covered in detail, and in the conclusion we find that it is about fifteen years since Tito and Tessa first met and the complication began. The Savonarola and the political threads are rather loosely-woven in themselves and not closely bound up with the main current of the story. They are introduced for historical purposes and resemble Scott's

historical plots in the sense that they are not dramatic except that they give a picture of the life of the time. From a dramatic point of view Tito is the most active character. There is a chance for a difference of opinion in regard to the Tito-Tessa and the Tito-Beldassare plots: they may be considered either as strong situations in Tito's biographic plot or as separate dramatic sub-plots closely affecting the central Tito-Romola plot. The Tessa thread shows one side of Tito's nature, the Romola, another, and the Beldassare, still another: his deception of the innocent little peasant girl, his infidelity to his wife, and his utter selfishness to his foster father make clear different sides of his character, yet in their essence, they are all the same: they show how a gentle, but extremely selfish person, seeking comfort and pleasure and following the path of least resistance, became more and more entangled until he descends to actual crime as a natural result. These two threads, both in themselves and in their effect

upon Romola's life, are dramatic: events follow each other in logical climactic sequence until a strong turning point arises in each thread, Romola's included, followed by the inevitable catastrophe which concerns them all, the death of the hero. The Romola, Tessa, and Beldassare threads, are rather skillfully connected with each other by the different meetings of the characters. Perhaps it is something of a defect, however, that chance seems to play such an important part in bringing these meetings about. As a whole, the book may be said to be somewhat biographic,--there is more of the biographic than is present in our modern novels--but in its essence it is so strongly dramatic that we practically lose sight of the few biographic elements.

Felix Holt, The Radical (1856) is even harder to analyze than Romola as it is neither prevaillingly biographic nor dramatic. There is no mention of the hero until the second volume<sup>1</sup> but when he enters, he plays a dramatically important role. The biographic

1. George Eliot: "Felix Holt". Vol. II Page 6.

part of the novel concerns the lives of both Harold Transome and Esther; that they are related, becomes known later. Esther and Harold are grown up when the book opens, but the parentage and the previous history of each are disclosed after the story has continued for some time. The book is a decidedly rambling in point of view, a non-dramatic element: at first the Transomes are the central figures but other characters, especially Esther and Felix, take their places. The careers of Esther and Harold seem more biographic and rather more stories of incident than that of Felix, at least in the first of the book. Esther's life becomes dramatic, or rather has a big dramatic situation when she has to choose between Felix and wealth. Felix's story is largely dramatic: as a radical, he encounters considerable opposition from the world in general and Esther in particular. This opposition, this fighting against indifference, dislike, and even disgust, makes the drama. Even in his plot, however, there are some biographic elements; e. g., his mother's



complaints, etc. Perhaps these can be justified on the ground that they furnish atmosphere, but that idea is rather far fetched. There is a fairly strong character basal conception, the portrayal of the Radical. On the whole, the book may be considered as belonging to both classes, the biographic and the dramatic, not a brilliant example of either or of the combination, but it shows that George Eliot is transitional, that she uses both methods, and that the novel in her time is in the process of transformation.

Middlemarch, A Study of Provincial Life, however, is not transitional, but purely dramatic. It is George Eliot's greatest dramatic achievement. The only suggestions of biographic elements are these: that the story runs in families and that the past lives of some of the characters are reviewed: these, however, are very minor considerations. The book has a basal conception in character as the sub-title shows, but it is in the plot weaving that George Eliot's skill is most evident. There are many threads of plot

all distinct, yet all related; each of the plots has a strong turning point, there are practically no extraneous incidents, everything contributes to the pre-conceived culmination. The Dorothea plot is evidently the central one, as she is concerned in most of the other plots. She has a dramatic life, a development of character: she disagrees with the world and does not allow the world's opinion to influence her; everything in her plot is a preparation for her final decision as opposed to the common sense judgment of her friends. In the Lydgate plot there is also a keen dramatic struggle. He also struggles against the world, but he is influenced more than Dorothea by circumstances, he lets himself be carried along with the current. So it is in every plot in the book; the structure is purely dramatic. The book is dramatic also in that it covers but a short time, about two years. In all, Middlemarch can be called a purely dramatic novel, it is the dramatic artistry; the biographic element is practically a minus quantity.

Daniel Deronda, A Novel (1876) is somewhat more biographic, but there is a strong dramatic element. The novel has a biographic shell; it is Deronda's life story, which describes his previous life, and the lives of his parents and grandparents. There is also a biographic title. The beginning of the story is similar in plan to that of The Virginians: it opens with a dramatic gambling scene with Deronda and Gwendolen present; then from Chapters III to XIV inclusive, Gwendolen's history for the past year is reviewed in detail; after that, the story proper continues. The life plot of Daniel is a somewhat loosely-woven chronicle of incidents, though these incidents are usually dramatic. The rescue of Mirah, for example, is called an adventure by Eliot, and many other important events occur as incidental happenings, but they develop into a part of the real plot. The Gwendolen story is a strong dramatic sub-plot with a well planned turning point. The Mirah story is also dramatic, though it is so closely bound up with the Daniel life plot that it

cannot be considered separately. Thus the plot is generally biographic as to scheme, but prevailingly dramatic as to content.

The book as a whole cannot be put boldly into one class or the other, for there is a chance for a difference of opinion, but it seems to be a very dramatic story of a life or a dramatic story with many of the conventions of a biographic novel. The author says:

"But let it be observed, nothing is here narrated of human nature generally: the history in its present stage concerns only a few people in a corner of Wessex".<sup>1</sup>

There she defines it both as a history and as a dramatic story. At any rate, the book is very dramatic, hence proving our point that in general, the biographic method is declining and the dramatic rising.

What George Eliot calls her books is perhaps somewhat significant. When she refers to her novels, she ordinarily uses the term history<sup>2</sup>; though she calls Adam Bede a story<sup>3</sup> twice. Occasionally she

1. George Eliot: "Daniel Deronda", Chap. IX.  
"Adam Bede":<sup>3</sup> Chap. XVII, P. 245, Vol. I., Bk. II. Chap. heading XVII.  
"The Mill on the Floss":<sup>2</sup> Pp. 109, 268, 354, 485.  
"Felix Holt":<sup>2</sup> Vol. I, Page 168.  
"Daniel Deronda"<sup>2</sup> Chap. IX, Page 77, Chap. IX. P. 78.  
119.

uses history<sup>1</sup> in reference to an incident, and she often uses it as a synonym for a life-story<sup>2</sup>: indeed almost every author here considered has called his novels histories, and has used that term as a synonym for life-story. What has been said of the value of this discussion of terminology in other authors, is true of Eliot: whether she uses biographic terms from convention or whether she uses them because she conceives of some of her books as biographic, cannot be determined. In this respect it is interesting to note that she does not refer to her most dramatic novels, Silas Mariner, Romola, and Middlemarch by the biographic terms.

George Eliot is a transitional novelist: she write biographically, at times, often having a biographic general scheme; most of her work, however, is strongly dramatic, and some of it is purely so. A statement she herself makes shows what she considers the proper novel technique of her own day:

"A great historian, as he insisted on calling himself, who had the happiness to be dead 120

"Adam Bede": Vol. II, Page 191.

"Felix Holt": Vol. II, Page 212.

"Middlemarch": Page 125.

"Daniel Deronda" Chap. XVII Page 163; Chap. XV Page 143,  
Chap. XVI Page 147, Chap. XX, Page 199.

years ago, and so to take his place among the Colossi whose huge legs our living pettiness is observed to walk under, glories in his copious remarks and digressions as the least imitable part of his work, and especially in those initial chapters to the successive books of his history, where he seems to bring his arm chair to the proscenium and chat with us in all the lusty ease of his fine English. But Fielding lived when the days were longer, (for time, like money, is measured by our needs), when summer afternoons were spacious, and the clock ticked slowly in the winter evenings. We belated historians must not linger after his example; and if we did so, it is probable that our chat would be thin and eager, as if delivered from a camp-stool in a parrot-house. I, at least, have so much to do in unraveling certain human lots, and seeing how they were woven and interwoven, that all the light I can command must be concentrated on this particular web, and not dispersed over that tempting range of relevancies called the universe."

George Eliot realizes that a rambling, picaresque novel must be a thing of the past; she herself is almost as dramatic as the present day novelists. She is a transitional writer, however: there are still some biographic elements in her work even though most of it is dramatic.

George Meredith.

George Meredith, the last novelist

1. George Eliot: "Middlemarch", Chap. XV.

considered in this study, is another transitional writer. He has but a few hints of the old biographic ideal in his work: he is much less biographic and much more dramatic than George Eliot. Some of his early novels have a few biographic elements, but they are prevailingly dramatic; his last novels are purely of the newer type. After Meredith, the biographic novel is the unusual production, while the dramatic reigns supreme.

The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, A History of a Father and Son (1859) is Meredith's most biographic novel, yet it is strongly dramatic. It has a prominent biographic scheme: it is the life story of Richard; it covers a long period of time, from Richard's fourteenth birthday--in the first edition Richard is seven when the book begins--through the years of education, love-making, marriage, and marriage difficulties, until the death of his wife Lucy and his subsequent sorrow; the sub-title is biographic; and the plot is somewhat loosely-woven chronicle of the biographic variety, as it is a record of the

history of this portion of the Reverel family. This last statement must be qualified, however, after a consideration of the dramatic elements, particularly of the basal conception. The basal conception is the main dramatic factor. The theme is the folly of applying a certain kind of philosophy dogmatically: Richard's father tries to apply that philosophy dogmatically to him and out of that fact, arises the tragedy of the book. That conception unifies the plot, for incidents which would otherwise be extraneous are, because of that, relevant,-they show the conflicts of the system of education with nature. Thus a biographic plot is changed into a rather dramatic plot, for the theme is the important issue rather than the mere life story; the workings and results of the scheme maintain the interest. There are other dramatic elements: in the title, we have the ordeal named, the tagging of the theme; there is a dramatic sub-plot, Clare Foley's tragic story; and there are a strong turning point and catastrophe in Richard's



life plot. Thus while the book is nominally a biography, the dramatic ideal is transforming it; it is not a group of unrelated situations in Richard's life, but each incident has a bearing on the carrying out of a strong thesis which the author emphasizes by keeping it constantly in the reader's mind. It is a novel with a biographic shell; the kernel, however, is dramatic.

Evan Harrington, A Novel, (1861) with its original sub-title, He Would Be A Gentleman, is a purely dramatic novel except for its main title, which is the name of the hero. The book has a strong basal conception, the nature of gentility; the struggle is the struggle within Evan's soul and with outward circumstance as to whether Evan will acknowledge himself as the son of a tailor or not. The drama comes from that struggle, every incident and situation is a part of it. The book covers a small period of time, the vital time for Evan: that is another dramatic element. The plot, the story of Evan's struggle is well-knit and well worked out, leading to a pre-conceived conclusion, the real gentility. There is a

strong sub-plot, Juliana's love for Evan. Evan Harrington is a purely dramatic novel, an advance in the new method over Richard Feverel not only in content but in form; it does not have even a biographic shell, it is all dramatic.

Rhoda Fleming, A Story, (1865) is not as dramatic as Evan Harrington, but it is, nevertheless, strongly dramatic. The title, the name of the heroine, is partly biographic; and the plot is somewhat loosely-woven in the first of the book where the family history of the Flemings is related and incidents like the naming of the girls described: those are the biographic elements. They are of minor importance and aside from them, the book is purely dramatic. The first dramatic element is the thesis, but in this case, the book has a purpose, rather than a thesis. It is a chivalrous championship of a woman: Rhoda represents hard-driving respectability judging the poor woman Dahlia. The purpose is perhaps less a unifying element than

a theme, but it is, nevertheless, a unifying, dramatic element. The plot is dramatic: the dramatic story is the Edward-Dahlia relationship and it is the reaction of this thread to respectability's demands as typified by Rhoda, that makes the drama. Rhoda's own love thread is thin and insignificant: it is her connection and her action in the Dahlia plot that makes it continue a plot. The ball starts winding before Rhoda is aware of it: as soon as she is conscious of its winding, she enters in, attempting to unwind it, but succeeds in only further entangling it. It is that conflict between the two forces, between the erring Edward and Dahlia on the one hand and the forceful, mistaken Rhoda on the other, dragging her uncle and Sedgitt into the whirlpool that makes the plot a dramatic whole. This plot is well-knit, containing many climaxes and a strong turning point: it is somewhat like that in The Heart of Midlothian, but the Rhoda thread is less biographic than the Jeanie one. Here we see an advance, the elimination

of biography, even when the schemes are similar. The book is strongly dramatic, though it does not quite approach the dramatic unity of Evan.

The Adventures of Harry Richmond, (1870-71) is a reversion to the older type of novel, the picaresque. As such, it is biographic: it is the story of Harry Richmond's life and adventures; it covers a long period of time--he is a small boy when it begins and a married man when it ends; the title is biographic; and the plot has a strongly biographic scheme. Harry has a string of adventures with gypsies, burning buildings, and pious captains: many have almost no significance or relation to the plot. Especially is this looseness a characteristic of the first part of the book. No matter how justifiable the introduction of Harry as a boy is in order to prove the theme, there can be no justification, from the standpoint of dramatic plot, for some of the incidents; e. g., the puritan~~ic~~ captain episode. They are in the book because they

are interesting in themselves; they have absolutely no connection with the story except that Harry is in them. Thus the book is strongly biographic in scheme and in much of the content. There are, to be sure, a few dramatic elements. There are some dramatic scenes and situations: among these, the love affair with Ottilia is conspicuous, but while it exerts considerable influence on Harry's life and on the development of the theme, it can hardly be considered as anything but a strong situation,-it does not reach the dignity of a plot and it is too intimately connected to be a sub-plot. It helps rather in the exposition of the theme. The book has a theme, the question of gentility; it has to do with Richmond Roy's, and incidentally, Harry's, efforts to climb to the top of the social ladder. Harry is gradually disillusioned in regard to his father and that fact justifies having the book begin when Harry is a child: it makes some of the incidents relevant. As a whole, however, we cannot say the book is dramatic:

there is a fair turning point, not so much in Harry's career as his father's, but the fact remains that the book is largely biographic. Perhaps the serial method of publication may have contributed to this end; at any rate, it is a novel after the older formula, even though the basal conception is strong enough to be a dramatic element.

Beauchamp's Career (1874-75) is more dramatic than Harry Richmond because the Dr. Shrapnel political thread in it is a strong dramatic current running throughout the book; it is less dramatic than Evan, because it is, after all, the story of a life, and hence it does not possess the dramatic intensity or unity of Evan. It has a very obvious and very strong biographic scheme: it is the story of the life and career of Nevil Beauchamp through a political campaign, three love affairs and a marriage, ending with his death. The title is also biographic, but aside from the scheme and the title, the book is not biographic. The dramatic in the life and in the book are so

important that they really overshadow the biographic. There is, first of all, a strong basal conception, never absent from the mind of the reader. It is the study of Radicalism, of the struggle between a soul animated by the best tenets of that party, sincerely seeking the betterment of conditions, and the sheer commercialism, indifference, and narrowness of the world in general and his own friends and relatives in particular. One striking instance of this is the Dr. Shrapnel horsewhipping thread: it is dramatic in its inciting cause, its development and its end. It has interest in itself, but more important from a dramatic standpoint, it is an illustration and a working out of the theme. In somewhat similar terms can we describe the love affairs. Though they cannot be considered in any way but as dramatic situations in a biographic plot, they still are dramatic. Each one serves to bring out one side of Nevil's nature,--Rene's, the romantic side, Cecilia, the normal side, for she is a fit mate for him, but lost through her and his stupidity, and

Jenny, the common sense side. We cannot consider Nevil's love stories which end in his marriage to Jenny, as dramatic in plot, because, while, as before stated, they are big situations in themselves, they are not serving as a piling up, a weaving together, to a pre-conceived marriage conclusion: i. e., there is not the winding up and the ultimate unwinding in Nevil's love affairs. From that point of view and because of that, the book is considered biographic in scheme. The catastrophe, however, is dramatically prepared for, but not by the love stories: it is the political part of Nevil's life that prepares us for that. The campaigning in the early part of the book is not only biographic as a part of the experiences of Nevil's life, but it is also dramatic in showing his relation to the theme. Another dramatic element is the short time covered; it is just a few years. As a whole, the book may be considered biographic in scheme, - not as biographic as Harry Richmond, but still biographic: the dramatic elements are so many and so



pronounced, however, that the book is worthy of a new term, a dramatic biography. The same transformation is at work here, the biographic is growing dramatic.

The Egoist, A Comedy in Narrative, (1870) is a purely dramatic novel. The drama is largely the subjective, it is largely in the minds of Sir Willoughby and Clara: the subjective element adds to the drama. There is a strong basal conception, the portrayal of the character of Sir Willoughby and his relations to his fellow beings. Thackeray portrayed characters, he portrayed even some conflict in the minds of his characters, but such an intense struggle as goes on in the mind of Sir Willoughby and such a fight as Clara has to make, not physical, but mental, the whole leading up to pre-conceived conclusion, Thackeray did not reach. The construction is wonderfully dramatic; there is not a single irrelevant incident or situation in the book: the minor threads are well subordinated

and well related to the main one: everything works towards the main turning point. The book even conforms to the requirements of modern drama inasmuch as there are but a very few characters, and practically one setting, the Patterne home. It covers only a short period of time, just the duration of a house party, but that time is crucial. The book is pure drama, the dramatic method is prevailing in literature.

Of a similar type to Beauchamp is Diana of the Crossways, A Novel (1885). Because of this similarity, an extended treatment will be unnecessary. It is biographic in that it is the story of the life of Diana, it has a biographic title, and it has a biographic plot scheme. Diana's marriage to Warwick, her love affair with Darcy, and her final marriage to Tom Redworth are incidents and situations in her life,--significant, dramatic situations to be sure, but nevertheless, incidents and situations. The drama in these incidents may overshadow and transform the biographic in them, but they remain biographic. Her marriage to Tom Redworth is a

marriage of expediency, the author admitting that she is not in love; it does not give the effect of a dramatically prepared for conclusion: it is rather a final incident. It may be significant in this connection to state that when the book first was published, it ended with Diana's affair with Dacier, ten chapters before it ends as we have it. The book was very popular in England and in America, ~~the~~ where the shorter edition prevailed--evidently the plot was not the attraction, as it was not completed. A plot that can end before it does, is not a dramatic plot, though it may be dramatic in parts. That brings us to the dramatic elements. While the book does not possess a dramatic plot, it does possess dramatic situations which have a strong influence on the character of the heroine. It is the character of the heroine that furnishes the basal conception. Meredith wrote the book to portray for us the heroine, the leading lady in the modern feminist movement. He makes us love the

woman and admire her nature: that is the dramatic element. Her struggles against public opinion are dramatic, but they are somewhat episodic, or perhaps, spasmodic: they are not one struggle leading to a strong culmination. Meredith himself calls the chapter after the Dacier-Diana situation, "an anti-climax", and he says at that point "The knot of Diana's history has been unravelled". He goes on to state that the book properly closes then and it is only those who are interested in Diana that will wait until the curtain falls.<sup>1</sup> Diana's character, not the plot, is the dramatizing force. Thackeray had similar basal conceptions, but the lives, the characters were not so intense, so concentrated, and so dramatic. The book is biographic in scheme; there is even some extraneous dialogue in it. The showing of Diana's character is the basal conception, but even that, in a way, is biographic, for it deals with the life of a single individual. On the whole, the book, like Beauchamp, is a dramatic biography.

1. Meredith: "Diana of the Crossways". Chap. XXXIX. Page 371.

One of Our Conquerors (1891) is an almost purely dramatic novel. There is a fairly strong basal conception, the folly of attempting to right oneself before the world, and the book treats of the struggles of Victor Radnor and Natalia to gain the tolerance of the world after their union. Natalia and Victor disagree in the tolerance they desire, however, Natalia only desiring quiet and oblivion, Victor desiring public approval: thus there is an inner struggle in addition to the one they have in common, Natalia's struggle against the flaunting of their relationship in the face of the world. These struggles make a well-knit, strongly dramatic plot: the details and incidents pile up with the pre-conceived catastrophe in view, everything is present for a complete drama. The time covered is short, another dramatic element: it is the crucial time, Nasta, the daughter has to be told and it is in her affairs that her father's and mother's conduct comes to light to punish them

and enlighten her. Out of that trouble comes her determination to help unfortunate women: out of that trouble comes her determination to refuse Sowerby, the conservative, rich lover, and to take Fennelon, who will inspire her to good. The fact that the time is the crucial time is important,-- Nesta's career by itself is somewhat biographic as it is her life, but when the consciousness of her parent's case comes to her, a struggle arises in her own breast and we have conflict resulting from other conflict. The book has real drama. Only in the title and in the fact that the previous life of Victor and Natalia is reviewed, or better, suggested, does the book hint of the old biographic ideal. Even then, the previous life is necessary in order to understand the present and to introduce the plot. Like Evan and Egoist, the book is a dramatic novel, modern in its method.

Lord Ormont and His Aminta (1894) is another purely dramatic novel. The only suggestion

of the biographic is in the first chapter where the childhood love of Matey and Aminta when they are at school, is related. The next chapter begins years later when Aminta has married Lord Ormont and Matey becomes his secretary. The first chapter is really a prologue to the main action, thus having a dramatic function. The book can hardly be said to have a strongly defined thesis. Like every book, it must have a point of view, but that point of view or purpose is not the proving of some general philosophic truth. The novel is rather an illustration of the folly of procrastination and stubbornness: Lord Ormont, because he is angry at the English nation and feels abused, retorts by refusing to publicly acknowledge Aminta as his wife. She struggles for recognition, but when he finally does recognize her, it is too late,--she has gone with her childhood lover. The novel deals with this conflict between Lord Ormont and his Aminta; the plot is strongly knit and well unified complication that leads to a strong pre-

conceived turning point. The novel is also dramatic in the time covered,—it is a brief, crucial period. It is a good illustration of the modern dramatic novel.

"The Amazing Marriage (1895) is also dramatic. The title is significant in that instead of being the name of a hero, it is the name of an event. The only biographic suggestion is in the review of the marriage of Chillon's and Carinthia's parents in the first three chapters; these chapters, however, have a dramatic function, for, like Chapter I of Lord Ormont, they serve as a prologue to the main action. Around that marriage of Lord Fleetwood and Carinthia, are grouped all the incidents of the book. Lord Fleetwood proposes on the spur of the moment and the marriage takes place soon after; his ardor cools, however, and the book deals with Carinthia's struggle for recognition. The story works itself up to a strong turning point and conclusion and strong suspense is maintained throughout.



Chillon, the brother of Carinthia, has a love thread, but it is rather thin, uneventful, and uninteresting. The plot, the amazing marriage story, is highly dramatic, making the book another modern dramatic novel.

Meredith, then, is somewhat transitional novelist, but the dramatic predominates. His own terms for his novels in relation to their structure, are rather significant. He uses the term history in some cases, but in his dramatic novels, he is very fond of the phraseology of the theatre. Especially does he like to call scenes and books, comedies. In Richard Feverel, he speaks of two scenes as comedies and of the book as a history<sup>1</sup>. Evan is very significantly called a comedy<sup>2</sup> and the scheme of the Cogglesby brothers is called a plot<sup>4</sup>. Rhoda is called a story<sup>5</sup>, not a history. Harry Richmond, the adventure book, has two chapters headed respectively, An Adventure<sup>6</sup>, and An Episode<sup>7</sup>. There is not a single chapter headed by a term from the drama. Beauchamp's

1. Page 67, Chap. II, Chap. heading Chap. XXIX.
2. Chap. XXV. Page 180.
3. Chap. IV heading, Page 25.
4. Chap. XLI, heading.
5. Chap. I and Chap. heading XXI, sub-title.
6. Chap. II.
7. Chap. XXII.

Career is a mixture of the two types and the author mixes the terms. The Nevil-Renee affair is called a history<sup>1</sup>, the book is called a history<sup>2</sup>, and the author, Nevil's afflicted historian<sup>3</sup>; the boat incident is called an adventure<sup>4</sup> and one chapter is headed, A Little Plot against Cecilia<sup>5</sup>. The terms, like the book, are prevailingly biographic. The Egoist, dramatic in structure, is prevailingly dramatic in its terms: it is called a comedy<sup>6</sup> and the end is the fall of the curtain<sup>7</sup>. Diana mixes terms: the book is called a history<sup>8</sup>; the author is called Diana's Chronicler<sup>9</sup>; various incidents, experiences, and scenes are so named<sup>10</sup>; and in one place, the people are called actors<sup>11</sup>. One of Our Conquerors uses no significant terms. Lord Ormont speaks once of an adventure<sup>12</sup> in the book and of Aminta's visit to Steighnton as a caprice that diverts the current of the history<sup>13</sup> and a small matter producing a memorable crisis. The Amazing Marriage is called a story<sup>14</sup>, the author is called the historian of the Marriage<sup>15</sup> and Dame Gossip,

1. Chap. XXIII Page 200; 2. Chap. XLVIII Page 460;  
 3. Chap. XLII, Page 390; 4. Chap. XXV. Heading;  
 5. Chap. XLII, Heading; 6. Sub-title, Prelude, Page 1;  
 7. Chap. L, Heading; 8. Pp. 328, 371, 258; 9. Pp. 129-181;  
 10. Chap. IV, XI, XVI, XXIII, headings; 11. Page 258;  
 12. Chap. XIX. Page 295; 13. Chap. XVI, Page 244;  
 14. Pp. 177, 233, 333; 15. Page 276;

called the Chorus, discusses the events in three chapters.<sup>1</sup> The use of these terms is somewhat significant in that while the books sometimes adhere to the use of the old terms, as they often do to the old form, they usually are spoken of in corresponding terms. Meredith is transitional in terms just as he is transitional in structure.

Meredith has a few hints of the biographic in his work, but they are few: he is largely dramatic even in his early work, and he becomes purely dramatic. He is the last of the transitional novelists: after him the novel is prevailing dramatic.

Thus the technique of the novel, as conceived in the early part of the eighteenth century, undergoes, in the one hundred and fifty years following that time, a gradual, but complete transformation. We have seen that the first novelists use the biographic formula pure and simple: gradually.

1. Chap. headings I, XIII, XLVII.

however, a new element enters in, growing stronger and stronger, until in 1875,--that is merely an approximate date,--the biographic formula almost ceases operation, and the dramatic takes its place. The new method, the dramatic, has so influenced the technique of the novel that it has completely transformed it: the biographic novel is no more, the dramatic reigns supreme.