

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

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Rose Tremain is a contemporary novelist and short-story writer whose first book is a history of the feminist movement in Britain. She belongs to post independent era. Her novels aim take her readers to places where she cannot literally go herself, sometimes to witness great events shifts in the human condition presented from the off-centre viewpoint of characters whom most would think inconsiderable. Rose Tremain reveals how her fascination with the 17th century is the key that unlocked the world of her acclaimed historical novels.

DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN BRITISH NOVEL :

At the end of the 19th century, the scope of the modern British novel was widened. The Victorian Period marks the beginning of the disintegration of the epoch ushered in a century before by the Industrial Evolution, the epoch in which Britain became the workshops and the banker of the world. After about 1870, the apparently secure foundations of the world of the London and Manchester businessmen began to be shaken. It was not until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 that the full horror became clear but by then for nearly half a century, the process of disintegration has been going on. The late Victorian Period

may still seem as an era of stability, of the respectable elderly Queen and heavy architecture of comfortable middle class income from the stock exchange of the English Sunday and the gradual extension of the franchise and of free education. But it was also an era of desperation, impact of Darwin and T. H. Huxley, William Morris and Bernard Shaw.

The development of modern novel can be explained in two phases :

a) The birth of Modern British Novel,

b) The growth of Modern British Novel.

One of the most striking features of the history of the novel is the speed with which it has developed not before the 18th century which appears as a serious rival to poetry and drama; throughout the 19th century its status grew rapidly in the hands of the Brontes, Dickens, Thackeray and Eliot. Novel's growing importance has been accompanied by serious study of the art of the novelist and from a technical point of view, the progress of the last 60 years is unequalled in all its previous history. The problem of the aim and scope of the novelist is now seriously posed in England for the first time. It marks the beginning of new interests in the novel as an art form. The modern novel has become typically a picture of the middle and upper middle classes for the novelists come from those classes. Scott was the last novelist to treat the poor as human beings. Wells at the beginning of the literary career gave admirable pictures of lower middle class life.

During the 80s the traditional 3 volume novel was finally displaced by the one volume, the normal length of work of a fiction was cut by almost two-thirds. The English novel in the 19th century had been like a holdall into which anything could be stuffed. The one volume novel imposed upon the novelist, the necessity for a much more vigorous selection of incident and material. The aim of the novel was the interpretation of life through a picture of human existence so presented that from it could be gathered the philosophy which author wished to propagate.

The novelists like Evelyn Waugh, Anthony Powell, C. P. Snow, Henry Williamson, Lawrence Durrell and Philip Toynbee who have all written works which are largely focused on the period between 1920 and 1950. The literary lives of Evelyn Waugh and George Orwell ran parallel through the 1930s and 1940s. The dogmatic gap between them still looks unbridgeable: Right against Left, Christian against Secular, Ancient against Modern. Waugh had already praised Orwell's Critical Essays (1946) in somewhat distant term, as representing 'at its best'. A Tourist in Africa (1960) is a travel book. Waugh's novels grow towards realism and Orwell's away from it. English fiction in 1945 was already beginning to return to its 18th century roots-a return confirmed soon after by Kingsley Amis, John Wain and Irish Murdoch where the realism of Defoe and

Fielding was to be self-consciously revised. Orwell and Waugh, older by a generation belonged to an earlier tradition.

In June 1953, Elizabeth II was crowned Queen, an event that promoted music rather than literature, among the arts and design more than either. But though it served as a symbol, it symbolised something real, a revival of realism in British fiction. Joseph Conrad wrote three novels Lucky Jim, Under the Net and Lord of the Flies. Philip Larkin had already published two novels-Jill (1946) and A Girl in winter (1947). John Osborne's first play ever to reach the public theatre was, Look Back in Anger (1956). Literature above all fiction has never been a notably gentleman's profession in Britain as Dickens and H. G. Wells illustrates and the Bloomsbury group had been upper middle class rather than aristocratic. Under the Net (1954), Iris's first published fiction, as technically speaking a memoir novel like, Crusoe or Moll Flanders was being composed as autobiography in the first person, The Sea (1978), Rites of Passage (1980), the first of the Tarpulm trilogy. In post-war Britain it is clear, fiction consciously returned in technique, in morality, even occasionally in style.

In the 1950's John Wain proposed that the task of the movement in verse was to consolidate the tradition of Eliot and Pound. After flirting with modernism in his earlier fiction, John Fowles was to divide the whole idea as late as 1982. Julian Barnes in Flaubert's, Parrot (1984)

entertained the sane subversive point in a novel of impish erudition. Iris's finest treatise, was The Sovereignty of Good (1970). Her philosophy can at moments read like a novel, in its invented illustrations and much like philosophy in unbuttoned mood.

Amis observed in his introductions to, The New Oxford Book of Light Verse (1978), a juggler is not allowed to drop a place. All that suggest self-justifying pride in comic technique, The Green Man (1969), a night man's ghost-story has one of the most ingenious plots in English fiction. If the British are a whimsical, their whims can be well researched like the epigrams of an accomplished conversationalist, carefully planned Monte Carlo and his, A clockwork Orange (1962) and Earthly Powers (1980), suggest a darker vision. David Lodge wrote, Changing Places (1975), Small World (1984) and Nice Work (1988) where farce is sophisticated by literary allusion. In Bradbury's, The History Man (1975), is a fiercely partisan novel.

The fifties were the time of the appearance of a new post war theatre; it was also the time of the emergency of the post war novel. During the decade many of major figures and chief directions of British fiction emerged shaping and influencing the novel to this day. New patterns, new types of discourse, new adventures were an important theme of the writing of the seventies especially among women writers whose work had been invigorated by feminism, the growth of new

publishing imprints and the recovery of many of the classics of women's fiction, some like Elizabeth Jane Howard, Ponderosa Martimer, Nell Bunn and Maureen Duffy who saw the task as one that could be full filled largely within the terms of realism. Other like Emma Tennant, looked to fantastic forms and borderline experiment to bring about the regenerating of fiction. Angela Carter who had begun writing during the sixties under the influence among other things of 'new wave' science fiction. Her early work, Shadow Dance, (1965), The Inagic Toyshop (1967) displayed her departure from realism, her interest in fairy tale and erotic themes. By the seventies, influenced by her experiences in Japan, her interest in post-structuralism and deconstruction surrealism and gothic fantasy, her work was greatly changed and enlarged.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez's, One Hundred Years of Solitude was published in Spanish (1967), English (1978) and quickly become influential. Many notable female and feminist careers flourished over the 70s, deeply changing the flavour of the novel. Books by Elaine Rubens, Swan Hill, Emma Tennant and Rose Tremain changed the scale and terms of female representation enriching the stock of feminist myth and discourse. A number of these stories are of female revenge either on the opposite sex or their own, her character showing a frantic and inventive representative of a world that has side-lined, they show the intimate world of female concerns as well as changing gender values and mores. Even

so, two of the most interesting writers of the new generation did still manage to be male. One was Martin Amis, son of Kingsley Amis who in a fascinating process of dynastic turn ever published his first novel, The Rachel Papers (1973). His first novel is the personal narrative of Charles Highway still only on the edge of the twentieth, who has a similar life journey in mind and hopes to become a literary wonder kind. There was deep disorder rooted somewhere in Amis's world and his next work, Success (1978), went on to explore it. Amis had every kind of self-consciousness-literary, social, sexual, stylistic; it was even possible that these were the writings of a bitter and angrily serious moralist. The next book, Other People: a mystery story (1981), he completed his materials.

Like Amis, with whom he was quickly compared Metwan was a technically complex and intricate writer confidently opening stories out beyond their realistic surfaces in to waves of psychic oddity and internity. In 80s Amis and Metwan had both established themselves as important writers. As the seventies closed a familiar ritual was performed; various soundings were taken to consider whether the English novel was living or dying. In the closing issue of Ian Hamilton's lively seventies magazine, The New Review which shut down in 1978. No one reads novels now, it was generally agreed but perhaps that was because no good new writers appeared anymore; the critics remained as blind eyed as ever and British fiction was failing to adjust to modern times or to respond to the

widening and internalizing world and its climate of experiment typified by Thomas Pynchon and Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

Meantime, in same issue, Granta published a segment of a forthcoming novel by Salman Rushdie which appeared the next year as Midnight's Children. Amis's satirical and disappointed moralist, he is also a version of the author as fragmentary and disintegrating self; even his voice and setting is transatlantic and this is a tale of two apocalyptic cities London and Manhattan. Amis himself was now a figure for the late century urban decadent, romantic, cultivating all the special flavours of disillusionment, cosmic weariness end-of-the-world news. It was again Martin Amis who summed up the apocalyptic culture of the age of what he called Einstein's Monsters in a story collection of that title where he speaks of a planet showing its age, the past and the future equally cheapened, threatened, now huddle in the present.

The traditional novel as well as what Martin Amis called 'post-modern' trickiness went through both an interesting revival and a significant retesting during the course of the decade. Many of these writers themselves graduate in literature: Amis, Ian McEwan, Julian Barnes, Kazuo Ishiguro. Rushdie's, The Satanic Verses is going successfully crazy in an extravagant heat wave. So, common now was end of the world news, disaster vision that it became a relief to find writers who possessed the sceptical arts of comedy as did Amis, Rushdie.

Paul Balley's, Gabriel Lament (1986), is another novel which creates apocalyptic London with Dickensian depth and intensity. Michael Morcak's, Mother London (1988), draws together the Dickensian city with the age of the Blitz and the new age of the 80's. Martin Amis wrote, London Fields (1989).

New writers, new versions and new styles emerged in great numbers; Martin Amis appeared to specialize in wonderfully thatch rite titles (Success, 1978). He wrote, A Suicide Note (1984). The senior generation of novelists that included Lessing, Murdoch, Spark, Wilson, Kingsley Amis and John Fowles. In 1980 Anthony Burgess's published, Earthly Powers and William Goldings, Rites of Passage. Goldings novel had an equally significant place in author's career. In 1979 Golding broke a long literary silence with, Darkness Visible, a book of strong power and vision, through inescapably obscure.

All the writers and the voices became part of post-colonial British fiction and it became ever harder to determine its edges or know whether the British novel had turned in something else an internationalized literature written in English which was now taking its place.

CHARACTERS:

Novel is one of the challenging form of literature. Novelist has an artistic view towards life. One can look towards novel in a different way and character is one of them. Having discussed the story – the simple and fundamental aspect as novel – we can turn to a more interesting topic the 'character' we need not ask what happened next but to whom did it happen; the novelist will be appealing to our intelligence and imagination. The actors in a story are usually human beings because the novelist is himself a human-being. The novelist, unlike many of his colleagues, makes up a number of word –masses roughly describing himself, gives them names to speak by the use at inverted commas and perhaps to behave consistently. These word masses are his characters. The relation of characters to the other is one of the arts of characterisation. Characters in a novel can be understood completely by the reader if the novelist wishes; their inner as well as their outer life can be exposed. We are concerned with the characters in their relation to other aspects of the novel.

We may divide characters into flat and round. Flat characters were called 'humour' in the 17th century they are constructed about a single idea; when there is more than one factor in them, we get the beginning of the curve towards the round. One great advantage of flat characters is that they are easily recognised whenever they come in – recognized by the

reader's emotional eye, not by the visual eye which merely notes the recurrence of a proper name.

A novel that is at all complex often requires flat people as well as round, and the outcome of their collisions parallels life more accurately. The flat people are not in themselves as big achievements as round ones, and also that they are best when they are comic. A serious or tragic flat characters proper, they have already been defined by implication and more need be said. The novelist, can either describe the characters from outside, as an impartial or partial onlooker; or he can assume omniscience and describe them from within; or he can place himself in the position of one of them and is affected in the dark as the motives of the rest.

The literature of Britain has a characteristic strength that lacks almost everything except abundance of gusto with a framed tradition of eccentricity to justify. The British are plainly and predictably good at characters: The world's most wide newspaper readers, they are interested less in news, when they read the daily or weekly press, than in personalities.

Character is potent as a literary idea. When an author is at a loss for subject, he writes one: most usually a memoir, since biography had by the 1960s made itself. The most successful of all non-fictional forms, character is classically a mixed mode. Though it tells stories, it is essentially non-narrative, being concerned with achieving a portrait to be

taken and savoured at a glance. A novel too can be an extended character and the character can even be the novelist himself.

Like buildings, characters have inside and outsides; and to know one in life or in a book is to guess or try to guess, how inner being relates to the outer being of appearance, to voice and gesture and how mannerisms reveal a hidden life of being, such a acquaintance need not be intimate. They can be casual or occasional. That is to share a puzzle about personality: how is it that little people, even if they are not actors, can suddenly make themselves look big. Presumably there is something in them larger than their outsides imply. The character of a friend, above all in an intimate paradox since it contains multiple incapability and contradictions.

The spread of characters across the literary kinds of British literature is matched by its spread across a range of emotions which is apparently limitless. Character is secretive, especially in the life of an introspective people tending towards an inward self-sufficiency; and to write of character, at its most profound, is to attempt to solve a puzzle.

ROSE TREMAIN

Rose Tremain's parents both died in 2001. Her mother Viola, known as Jane, was the least favourite child of parents who lost two sons. All her life, she had to fight against the notion of her own unlovability. Tremain's grandparents were well off, and her own childhood was split between a 'rather ordinary' London home and holidays in the country house where they kept servants. Her father, Keith Thomson, a failed playwright walked out on the family when she was 10 losing contact with Rose and her older sister Joanna for many years.

Rosemary Jane Thomson - she became Rose when she was about sixteen born in London on August 2nd, 1943. She attended Francis Holland, a private girls' school, but when her mother remarried, to a cousin of her first husband called Ivo Thomson, who was joint owner of the Yorkshire Post, the family moved to Berkshire. Rose was sent to boarding school at Crofton Grange, Hertfordshire, and acquired a stepbrother, Mark, as an investment banker.

She began to write stories and to paint, like her sister Joanna, who went on to work as an artist before she married and had six children. Sent to a Paris finishing school by her Francophile mother for a year before university, Tremain enrolled at the Sorbonne instead, where she took a diploma in the Cours de Civilisation Francaise. She has retained an enthusiasm for France ever since, speaking the language, setting stories

and novels there and earning a large French readership. In 1994 she spent several months in Paris with Holmes, a stay he has described as “an extended and secret honeymoon”.

After Paris she studied English at the new University of East Anglia where she was taught by Angus Wilson. On graduating, she read film scripts for a while, before taking a full-time position as a teacher at a boys’ prep school in Hampstead. Her first writing job was unglamorous : a short illustrated history of the suffrage movement for a part-work publisher she had joined as a sub-editor. She later wrote a book about Stalin in the same series published by Ballantine.

In 1971, her mother would disapprove, she secretly married Jon Tremain her boyfriend from university. Their daughter, Eleanor, was born a year later. Jon was trained as a teacher before moving into IT, and they set up home in a dilapidated Suffolk farmhouse. East Anglia has remained her home ever since. In 1976, the year her first novel was published, the couple separated, and two years later Rose took the opportunity of a year’s fellowship at Essex University to give up her part-time job as a picture researcher for British History illustrated and commit herself to writing full-time.

Unusually for a young writer, her early novels were much concerned with older people. **Letter to Sister Benedicta** (1979), which followed **Sadler’s Birthday**, is told from the point of view of a

disappointed middle-aged solicitor's wife while **The Cupboard** (1981) recounts the life story of an Eighty-seven year old novelist who is close to death. They were well received, and in 1983 Tremain was chosen, alongside Ian McEwan, Martin Amis, Salman Rushdie, Julian Barnes, among others, as one of Granta's Best British Novelists.

In her fiction Tremain approached her subjects from unexpected angles, concentrating her attention on unglamorous outsiders. Like Kazuo Ishiguro in **The Remains of the Day**, she chose the servant's perspective from which to write about the life of an English country house. But in 1989, with **Restoration**, came a decisive break. Tremain remembers that it was taking her longer to get started on a new novel than previous. In 1999 Tremain returned to the 17th century with **Music and Silence**, the story of an English lutenist at the Danish of King Christian IV. Although **Sacred Country** (1992) and **The Way I Found Her** (1997) where both set in the 20th century, and dealt with such contemporary issues as transexuality, crime and divorce, Tremain's new novel, **The Colour**, looks like cementing her reputation as a costume dramatist.

In a review of **Music and Silence** for the New York Review of Books, the critic John Bayley contrasted Tremain with Walter Scott and suggested that hers is "a purely feminine form of history.....her purpose seems to be to use the past as a convenience for her own peculiar brand of literary intimacy: in short, to de-historicise the historical novel".

Tremain has written in the first and third persons, in the voices of men and women and several children-she wonders aloud if the boys in her two most recent novels are imaginary versions of the son she never had. Motion says “I think her treatment of men and women is very even-handed. I don’t feel as I sometimes do reading books by women that this is not for me, perhaps doesn’t even want to include me”. Ian McEwan says, “My own taste has been for taking things to the edge and I sympathise with writers who want to do that. Such writing generates a different drumbeat in the prose and I guess Rose responds to that call. Also, writers who push to the extremes, if they’re English, are usually reacting against a prevailing social realism of the English novel”.

In person Tremain is tall and elegant, sharp but not severe. She speaks fluently about her writing, and says she has learned to enjoy audiences at public events and literary festivals. A tutor on the University of East Anglia’s creative writing MA course from 1988 to 1995, where Andrew Miller, Tracy Chevalier and Erica Wagner were among her students, she says she would have tried to get on the course herself if it had existed when she graduated, and remains a firm believer in its benefits”. Former student Andrew Miller says he found her slightly intimidating, “probably because I was rather unsure about everything myself then. What was good about her was that she was the real thing, I knew that much, and also that she expected to us to responsibility for

what we put down. She's a tough-minded character, who has very high standards herself, and she wasn't looking to make things too easy for us."

Tremain describes William Golding as an influence on her own work. She has also written of her admiration for Gabriel Garcia Marquez's 1967 classic **One Hundred Years of Solitude**, and trace of magical realism is apparent in her vivid imagery : **Music and Silence** took her evocation of the cold, dark wine cellar in which the king's musicians work as its starting –point.

Critics, including Christina Konig, have complained of the 'freight of symbolism' in Tremain's work, but her intense, metaphorical prose has many admirers. McEwan says, 'I think she's a true stylist, which is surprisingly rare. In other words she's a writer who cares about her novels at the level of the sentence.'

In 1982 Tremain married for the second time. Jonathan Dudley was a theatre director who later taught management theory and cousin on her mother's side whom she had known since childhood. He had two sons from a previous relationship, and with Rose's daughter Eleanor, who is now an actress, they formed a family of five. But they drifted apart, and in 1992 Tremain travelled to the Adelaide book festival with Holmes. She says 'Time is catching up with me now. I'm 60 in August and this looming birthday has made me think. My life seems to have gone by so fast I can't

believe it, but I don't believe it's over. I feel full of ideas and power.' She lives in East Anglia.

Her publications includes novels and short story collections and she is also the author of a number of radio and television plays, including, **Temporary Shelter**, which won a Giles Cooper Award and **One Night In Winter**, first broadcast by BBC Radio in December 2007. She was awarded an honorary D.Lit. by the University of East Anglia in 2000.

Her first novel, **Sadler's Birthday**, was published in 1976. This was followed by **Letter to Sister Benedicta** (1978), **The Cupboard** (1981) and **The Swimming Pool Season** (1988), which won the Angel Literary Award, **Restoration** (1989), set during the reign of Charles II, tells the story of Robert Merivel, an anatomy student and court favourite who falls in love with the King's mistress. Her other novels includes, **Sacred Country** (1992) which is about a young girl's crisis of gender and identity. **The Way I Found Her** (1997) a psychological thriller was set in Paris and **Music and Silence** (1999) winner of the Whitbread Novel Award, a historical novel was set in the 17th century, the story of an English flute player-Peter Claire, employed at the Danish Court to play for King Christian IV. **The Colour** (2003) was set in New Zealand at the time of the West Coast Gold Rush in the 1960.

Rose Tremain has published several collections of short stories including, **The Colonel's Daughter and Other Short Stories** (1984),

The Garden of the Villa Mollins and other Short Stories (1987) and **Evangelister's Fan and Other Stories** (1994), **The Darkness of Wallis Simpson** (2006). She wrote for children, **Journey to the Volcano** (1985). Her novel **The Road Home** was published in (2007) and recent novel is **Tresspass** (2010).

Rose Tremain has achieved following Prizes and Awards: 1984 : **Dylan Thomas Award** for four short stories. Three from **The Colonel's Daughter** 1984: **Giles Cooper Award** (Radio Play) for **Temporary Shelter** 1985 : **Angel Literary Award** for **Restoration** 1988 : **Sunday Express Book of the year** for **Restoration** 1990 Shortlisted for **Booker Prize** for 'Restoration 1992 : **James Tait Black Memorial Prize** for **Sacred Country** 1993 : **Prix Femina Etrange** (France) for **Sacred Country** 1999 : **Whitbread Novel Award** for **Music and Silence** 2004 : Shortlisted for **Orange Prize** for **The Colour** 2006 : Shortlisted for **Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award** for **The Darkness of Wallis Simpson** 2007 : **CBE** 2007 : Shortlisted for **Costa Novel Award** for **The Road Home** 2008 : **Good Housekeeping Book Award** as **Best fiction** for **The Road Home** 2008 : **Orange Prize** for **The Road home** In 2009, she donated the short story, **The Jester of Astaporo**, too collection of short stories written by 38 authors. Her story was published in the **Earth** collection.

FEATURES OF ROSE TREMAIN'S WRITING :

Rose Tremain is an historical novelist who approaches her subjects from unexpected angles, concentrating her attention on unglamorous outsiders. A highly original and versatile writer, Rose Tremain explores past ages and present time with equal conviction. The leading characters of her fictions often first-person narrators, range from young children to the very old and may be of either gender. At her best, her work combines wit and humour with wistful, elegiac sadness.

Her early novels are notable, mainly for their unusual settings and unconventional leading characters. In **Sadler's Birthday**, Sadler's unacknowledged longings for love and friendship are rendered all the more moving by Tremain's hard, unsentimental style. **Sadler's Birthday** is an accomplished work whose characters and conversations have the ring of truth and the blend of incident and flashback achieved. **Sadler's Birthday**, **Letters to Sister Benedicta** and **The Cupboard**, from these three novels one feels that Tremain is setting herself a challenge to wring something of value from unpromising material.

The stories of **The Colonel's Daughter** and the novel, **The Swimming Pool Season** move beyond central characters to encompass a network of interconnected lives. The novel and the long title story of the collection have strong similarities written in a firm direct present tense,

they build to make climax through a sequence of brief, sharply visualised incidents. Tremain constructed the interwoven lives of her characters, events unfolding gradually and with deceptive strength to emerge in eventual tragedy.

Tremain's eagerness to explore other forms-evidenced in her radio plays and her children story-is matched by continuing experiment and variety in her novels and short stories. **The Garden of the Villa Mollins** and **Evangeloster's Fan** show a further talent for shorter forms, with stories that explore the feelings and responses of her varied characters with brevity and assurance, her thoughtful prose compressing deep insights in to a handful of pages-'restoration' which marks a radical departure from previous work is a historical rather than contemporary novel.

Sacred Country has her switching to the modern world. Once again Tremain creates a rich, complex, epic, crammed like **Restoration** with evocative symbols and talismans. **The Way I Found Her** is magnificent creation and arguably is author's finest work. The balanced, sedately paced prose fits perfectly, just as the faster-moving style matches, **The Way I Found Her**. With these later works, her writing attains an impressive peak.

Tremain's trademark is the atmosphere recreation of place and personality, tangible details of lives whether peasant or aristocrat. **Music and Silence**, the characters themselves narrate successive sections giving kaleidoscope of different viewpoints. Tremain's book has in common, apart from their difference, is her feeling for oblique and outsider perspective. Her characters look real.