Ivo Vidan

Perspective of »Nostromo«

The greatness of Conrad's *Nostromo* has had adequate recognition. Some critics, it is true, have objected to the intricacy of the narrative[1] because they have failed to take notice of Conrad's warning to Ernest Bendz:

> »I will take the liberty to point out that *Nostromo* has never been intended for the hero of the Tale of the Seaboard. Silver is the pivot of the moral and material events, affecting the lives of everybody in the tale. That this was my deliberate purpose there can be no doubt. I struck the first note of my intention in the unusual form which I gave to the title of the First Part, by calling it »The Silver of the Mine«, and by telling the story of the enchanted treasure on Azuera, which, strictly speaking, has nothing to do with the rest of the novel. The word »silver« occurs almost at the very beginning of the story proper, and I took care to introduce it in the very last paragraph, which would perhaps have been better without the phrase which contains that key-word.«[2]

This is the most outspoken of Conrad's very few open admissions that he consciously patterned a work as a consistent and unified whole. In this passage he gives a clue to the way in which all the characters are related to each other. He also suggests the perspective from which all the lines of action that constitute the plot appear to come into focus. In order to ap-

---

[1] See, e. g., Joseph Warren Beach in *The Twentieth-Century Novel*, Studies in Technique, New York, 1932; p. 365:

> »The chronological looping method (in *Nostromo*)... is unsatisfactory because no one character or group holds the centre of the stage long enough to grow comfortably interested in him or it... And with all the bewildering distribution of interest there is no Marlow to direct the exploration of the wilderness... A most striking example of... the deformalization of the novel...«

[2] G. Jean-Aubry: *Joseph Conrad, Life and Letters*, Vol. II, 1927, p. 296.

preciate more fully the unity of *Nostromo* and its significance it may be worth while to study the perspective[3] through various aspects of the novel's structure and in doing so to try to go beyond the hints which critics have offered before.

I. A Pattern of Relationships

»There are several stories in *Nostromo*, but all illustrate the corrupting power of the silver mine,« writes M. C. Bradbrook. »Each character illustrates the play of material interests ... The characters are very subtly balanced.«[4] It could be said that the plot of the novel is nothing but a dramatized outline of the characters' attitudes towards the silver and through the agency of the silver to one another. If their inter-

[3] Conrad uses the word »perspective« himself in a letter to Richard Curle in which he discusses an article on the history of Conrad's books which Curle was just writing and in which Curle was stressing the biographical rather than the literary aspect of Conrad's works. Conrad mentions a critic writing in the *Secolo*, who

> »remarked that there was no difference in method or character between my fiction and my professedly autobiographical matter, as evidenced in the *Personal Record*. He concluded that my fiction was not historical of course but had an authentic quality of development and style which in its ultimate effect resembled historical perspective.
>
> My own impression is that what he really meant was that my manner of telling, perfectly devoid of familiarity as between author and reader, aimed essentially at the intimacy of a personal communication, without any thought for other effects. As a matter of fact, the thought for effects is there all the same (often at the cost of mere directness of narrative), and can be detected in my unconventional grouping and perspective, which are purely temperamental and wherein almost all my »art« consists. This, I suspect, has been the difficulty the critics felt in classifying it as romantic or realistic. Whereas, as a matter of fact, it is fluid, depending on grouping (sequence) which shifts, and on the changing lights giving varied effects of perspective.
>
> It is in these matters gradually, but never completely, mastered that the history of my books really consists.« (G. Jean-Aubry, *o. c.*, Vol. II, pp. 316—317.)

The word »perspective« may not be used by Conrad exactly in the same sense in which it is applied in the text (meaning, according to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, figuratively, »relation in which parts of subject are viewed by the mind«, and in the previous sentence literally and figuratively, »view, prospect«). Conrad, like the critic in the *Secolo*, is perhaps nearer to meaning »apparent relation between visible objects as to position, distance, &c.«, especially as he connects »perspective« with »grouping«, and implicitly he is probably referring also to his well-known device of chronological looping, which will not be discussed in this article.

[4] M. C. Bradbrook: *Joseph Conrad, Poland's English Genius*, Cambridge, 1942, pp. 43 and 45.

dependence, political and economic, were to be analyzed in all its particulars nothing less would do than a minute account of the motivation of every incident. F. R. Leavis may have been the first to remark that »the whole book forms a rich and highly organized pattern. Every detail, character and incident has its significant bearing on the themes and motives of this.«[5] The behaviour and thinking of each character is guided by a dominant preoccupation, which directly or in various indirect ways concerns the fortunes of the silver.[6] It may be merely a crude desire (as with Sotillo), or an ideal for society (Viola). It may be a subtle sense of guilt for transgressing against human solidarity combined with a deep personal affection (Monygham), or a wholesale idealistic commitment to a material aim, which at the same time forfeits existing bonds of personal intimacy (Gould).

The individual characters have often been analyzed at considerable length and several writers have discussed the role of each personality in the moral and political universe of Conrad's province of Sulaco. Douglas Hewitt shows »the complex of motives and emotions which centre on the silver of the San Tomé mine«[7], and F. R. Leavis draws our attention to »a number of personal centres of moral interest and the variety of themes« and considers the »different strands that go to the totality of the action«[8]. Yet the pattern of relationships between the characters seems to be even tighter than is suggested by the action of the novel itself.

A parallel could be drawn between each one of the characters and almost any other. The differences which exist within each of such pairs indicate polarities of human behaviour which are absorbed in the total whole. For example, both Giorgio Viola and Nostromo are men of the people, yet one of them retains his purity to the end, while the other succumbs to the silver swayed by his own vanity. Or Viola and Mrs. Gould: both remain uncorrupted, yet she, supporting her husband's efforts to preserve the silver, is not without her share of guilt. Both Viola and Charles Gould have their own ideal; Gould's is connected with the development of material wealth and is

[5] F. R. Leavis: *The Great Tradition*, London, 1948, p. 191.

[6] One can hardly agree that »although the silver is the thread which binds the book together it has only a superficial or formal connection with some of the most important moral events« (Jocelyn Baines: *Joseph Conrad*, London, 1959, p. 301).

[7] Douglas Hewitt: *Conrad*, Cambridge, 1952, p. 48.

[8] *O. c.*, p. 238. Among more recent studies which discuss the same subject one would specially like to point to Irving Howe's, in his book *Politics and the Novel*, London, 1961. Robert Penn Warren's Introduction to the Modern Library edition of *Nostromo* (1951) must also be mentioned.

therefore corrupting, whereas Viola's, retained as a memory from a different era, is abstract, inefficient and lacks ground. Or, to take two other characters: Monygham and Decoud are both sceptics. The share of each in the salvation of Sulaco is due to his love for a woman. Yet the first is concerned with recovering his personal dignity before his own conscience, while the other, devoid of any ideal, finds it impossible to bear solitude indefinitely. Then there is Mitchell, who, reared on the moral code of the British merchant marine and the standards of middle class living in Victorian England, misunderstands the deeper issues of the Costaguana situation which he describes. Avellanos, on the contrary, is accurate, intelligent, and familiar with the situation. Still, he too is an inadequate historian. His own set of values can no longer be applied after the occurrence of those very changes he himself helped to initiate. If characters as different as Corbelàn and Holroyd both enter the political game with a religious ardour though of a different sort, both Decoud and Gould accept it too and engage in patriotic action each for the sake of his own personal aim. As for the two women: the man Antonia loved dies and she is free openly to cherish his memory, whereas Mrs. Gould is condemned silently to suffer her husband's »subtle conjugal infidelity through which his wife was no longer the sole mistress of his thoughts« (p. 365)[9]. At first sight there cannot exist two more competely disparate characters than Nostromo and Hirsch, the one glorified and wanted, the other cold-shouldered and humiliated. Yet both are outsiders without root in Sulaco or social acceptance by the holders of power. Both die from a shot; and it is Hirsch, not Nostromo, who dies free from illusions and further yearnings for things mundane. The last pair to be considered here shall be Nostromo and Decoud. Neither of them interested in the silver for its own sake, they succeed in saving it, only to perish — both of them — in its immediate vicinity, each ruined by his own particular attitude to life.

This unidentified number of internally juxtaposed pairs has its significance. It testifies that all the psychological and moral possibilities which confront the characters form together a unique total and express an integrated ethical experience. The pattern which emerges does not take a regular and clear shape as it does in a Jamesian plot or, in a very simple form, in Conrad's *The Rescue* or in the later part of *The End of the Tether*. For the moral relationship which is behind the pattern and justifies it, is not constructed on an abstract hypothesis but evolves from a situation repeatedly realized in history. It is

[9] All the pagination refers to *Nostromo* in Dent's Collected Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad.

questionable whether Conrad was fully aware of having created almost a paradigm of a phase in capitalist development. His Costaguana is an »ideal« image of a backward country which, thanks to its own resources, becomes victim of internal violence and foreign economic interference.

II. Public and Private Man

Costaguana is a whole state, »imaginary (but true)«[10]. Against a precisely visualized geographical and ethnical background all the essential features of the country's social life are recalled, such as industry, transport, foreign trade and local commerce, army, catering trade, health service, religious institution, legislative body, local authorities, foreign settlers, Jewry, aristocracy, working class, tradition and outlaws. The image of this complete social set-up is achieved through an interaction of characters representing all these institutions or bodies, together with many accessory figures whose brief appearances endow the picture with illustrative details and colour.

If one remembers rightly, of all the great novelists only Balzac has performed a similar feat. He has done it in a more scholarly way, but has hardly succeeded in producing more satisfactory art. *Les Paysans* can be taken as an example. For almost three quarters of the book practically no action takes place. There are long, painstaking descriptions of forests, parks and houses; occasionally, a new character is introduced and a detailed physical and psychological portrait of him is given, but no action, no vital relationship is developed. Instead, all the economic aspects of agricultural France before 1848 are evoked, but mainly by pure description of a considerable mass of legal and financial measures and procedures. At last, a brief, well-constructed drama takes place, involving all the previously elaborated material and powerful in its human implications. But what heavy labour has to be undergone before the imagination is finally captured!

Conrad handles his material much more carefully than Balzac, all the time keeping an eye on his theme. He does not describe the functioning of the financial, legal and administrative mechanism, but takes it for granted. Instead, he purposefully selects facts which are characteristic consequences of that mechanism, and introduces them into the narration as functional, not as merely illustrative details. Nor are his characters given such abundance of life-like details as Balzac's. Yet whatever is said about them is significant in connection with the particular role which they have to perform. Each

[10] *A Personal Record,* p. 98 (in the Collected Edition).

character has a separate moral identity, to which it is entitled as a human being in a divided and split-up world. But the particular concerns and behaviour of each are determined by the character's function in its society. It could even be said that a concern with matters of general interest permeates the intimate feelings of everyone involved in the action and deprives them of the comforts of narrow privacy; the word 'love' is never used in affectionate utterances and very seldom in indirect summary. Conrad's presentation of love has spoiled a number of his works,[11] but in *Nostromo* individual love relations are subordinate to a more absolute motive, and the conception of the integral work allowed him to avoid his weak point.

For the silver of the San Tomé mine is not a gratuitiously chosen centre of the plot, nor is it an arbitrary symbol. It is the authentic, universal intermediary between commodities and between people — the creator of that fetishism which is the basis of man's alienation from himself and from others. This is why the history of the characters' relationship towards the silver — and thus what happens to these people in the course of that history — is in fact a paradigm of human reality. Silver is the concern of each one who takes part in the action, the object of his chief commitments and his activities as a member of society[12]. Yet the motive force of each character's relation to the silver is different and is entirely personal. United on a public level, all the characters involved in the fortunes of the ingots from San Tomé are isolated from each other by their private interests. The »public theme is presented in terms of personal histories or, it might be said, private themes, each having a specific moral significance«.[13]

Within the web of the plot each case is completely distinct, separated from the rest of the character's particular external function, while he remains solitary, with his own dominant ambition, desire or dissatisfaction. Connected, yet separate — that is the fate of human units in a community held together by material interests. The particular isolation of every member of a delimited group creates in its turn a division within each of the characters. In each individual it produces a split which

[11] This aspect of Conrad has been thoroughly explored in Thomas Moser's *Joseph Conrad, Achievement and Decline,* Cambridge (Massachusets) and Oxford, 1957.

[12] F. R. Karl in his *A Reader's Guide to Joseph Conrad,* London, 1960, looks at the silver from the standpoint of the characters as private individuals and sees it as a »symbolic embodiment of personal neuroses« (p. 157). This is a subtle remark, yet it implies that the plot of *Nostromo* is only a fictional construction, without reference to genuine social experience.

[13] F. R. Leavis: *o. c.,* p. 191.

divides the public man from the private man. Yet one private personality cannot approach the other neglecting the public ground on which they meet.[14] This unavoidably implies loss of ethical 'purity' and a degeneration of ideal standards of conduct. This is true not only when these standards turn into their opposite as is the case with Nostromo himself, or into a gesture which kills the thing one loves (Viola) or into destroying one's most intimate and richest human tie (Charles Gould). A shadow falls even over Mrs. Gould, who for her husband's sake engages in the game of the salvation of the silver. For Mrs. Gould's sake Monygham undertakes a course of action which is ethically not unequivocal. He helps Mrs. Gould and, accepting personal danger, achieves redemption for his earlier failings. But he does so by using another person, Nostromo, as his tool; and is he not, at least to some extent, indirectly responsible for the death of Hirsch?

In no other novel, perhaps, is the problem of the two aspects of man's action, private and public, so continuously present and so undisguised as in *Nostromo*.

III. The Complex Point of View

For *Nostromo* is the novel of a whole society in history. In the course of the action most characters develop a double role. Their personal destinies combine into the plot of the novel, and are responsible for the atmosphere which pervades each facet of the narrative. At the same time, the attitudes of all the characters together towards the total situation amount to a complex interpretation of the political and historical events of Sulaco. They understand and experience things on various levels of intelligence and sensibility, and thus lend the plot a number of simultaneous meanings. One feels inclined to take in turn Decoud, Monygham, Mrs. Gould, Nostromo, even Avellanos — and indeed, in an ironic sense, even Mitchell — for the »central intelligence« of the novel. The book could also be seen as primarily the history of the perverse fortune of Viola's ideals or of Charles Gould's ambitions.

This is why *Nostromo*, in spite of occasionally appearing like a picturesque social fresco in the grand manner, does not belong to the traditional 19th-century type of novel. The author,

[14] As Albert J. Guerard says (in *Conrad the Novelist*, London and Cambridge, Massachussets, 1958, p. 191), »men compose the state. Yet these seem to be, in *Nostromo*, two separate areas for inquiry: first, man's propensity to self-deception and his need to »idealize« his existence; second, the failure of institutions to work and the failure of history to make sense«. Yet the San Tomé mine »forces the reader to see private drama as public struggle« (Irving Howe: *Politics and the Novel*, p. 108).

it is true, seems uninvolved and towers over the details from which he has spun his story, like the snowy top of the unapproachable Higuerota over the windless Pacific bay of Sulaco. His work, however, does not impress one as an impersonal and detached account of ways and destinies in a society in progress — though a »Nostromo« could have been conceived also in such a Tolstoyan dimension. *Nostromo* is essentially a multicentric work of art which could be symbolized by a complex graphic design: a number of superimposed polygons each representing the pattern of human relationships as experienced by one participant in the action. The total meaning of *Nostromo* exists only in the sum of these polygons, but now one now another imposes itself most fully upon the imagination of the reader. The various levels of consciousness which thus appear function like prisms, each of which breaks the light which comes from all the others. At the same time they simultaneously give an ironical colouring to all the attitudes presented.

Thus *Nostromo* is not dominated by any fixed point of view from which any beholder (including the author himself) might selfassuredly evaluate the characters and interpret the events.[15] Conrad is one of the first great novelists who have felt that there are no absolute norms which could harmoniously connect society and the individual with the intentions of Providence, or, at least, with the unchangeable and irrevocable course of the world. Yet his image of a society in history is magnificent because it has not been itself blighted by the canker of modern defeatism in art: it is not a sum of fragments, an atomized or arbitrary collection of details. *Nostromo* is the image of a rich variety of human anxieties and fortunes; at the same time its composition develops in the manner of great national epics (Homer, Ariosto, Milton)[16], and shapes a unified and coherent vision. We feel there is a connection between a moral conviction and belief in an ultimate solidity of the world, and a profound consciousness of an unavoidable split in the

[15] Hewitt (*o. c.*, p. 62) notices that in *Nostromo* »there is no mere use of one character to comment on another; the comment also tells us more about the commentator. In this book there are no author's mouthpieces.« Warren sees in it »a chromatic scale of attitudes... each character is also a carrier of an attitude toward, a point of view about, society; and each is an actor in a crucial historical moment.« (Introduction to the Modern Library edition of *Nostromo*, reprinted in *The Art of Joseph Conrad*, a Critical Symposium edited by R. W. Stallman, Michigan, 1960, p. 221).

[16] »*Nostromo* fulfils the choric task that belongs properly to the epic« stresses E. M. W. Tillyard in his *The Epic Strain in the English Novel*, London, 1958, p. 166, and he makes a »spontaneous comparison« of *Nostromo* with Homer (p. 167).

human personality, of its simultaneous two worlds, public and private. *Nostromo,* in fact, connects the literature of the 19th with that of the 20th century.

IV. Nostromo and History in Progress

It is true, at the same time, that most readers feel disappointed by the last chapters. The perfect balance of political and private *motifs* does not persist to the end of the book. The political implications of the novel reach their culminating point in the last chapters — yet at the same time the political issues are completely pushed into the background by the personal history of one character — Nostromo. Towards the end of the book Conrad returned to his initial idea in order to work out all the consequences of the adventure of silver stealing[17] which had first set him to work.

For although the author denied him the central place of the hero, Nostromo's position with relation to the silver is different from that of any other character. His connection with the silver is indicated by his very appearance, presented by the author with deliberate crudity. Nostromo wears a silver cord and tassels on his grey sombrero, enormous silver buttons on his leather jacket and down the seam of the trousers, silver plates on the headstall and saddle of his silver-gray mare, and in his position of boss among the stevedores he is equipped with a silver whistle. Nostromo, further, is the only character who speaks of the traditional local legend about the forbidden treasure of Azuera and associates it with the silver of the mine. Silver and Nostromo are pointedly tied together in the very last chord of the narrative.

Nostromo's greatest wish is to be noticed, singled out, praised and needed by everybody, to be unique. Even in the earlier part of the novel in which Nostromo is still on the margin of the action, all the characters refer to him as to an exceptionally faithful, able and resourceful person — yet always as to a man who is employed, who is a kind of servant. His is the status of a subordinate, whom those who rule do not accept into their circle and who is condemned to remain an outsider. And it is being an eternal outsider that corrupts him. He is the only one among the characters who is frankly egoistic about the silver, though, paradoxically, it is not its economic value that impresses him in the beginning. The saving of the silver he considers only as the greatest trial for the unique reputation for which he lives: »Well, I am going to make it the most famous and desperate affair of my life« (p. 265).

[17] *Nostromo,* Author's Note, pp. vii—ix.

The change comes after he has realized that »his fidelity has been taken advantage of« (p. 417) and that those who have done so have never approached him for his own sake. It is when he realizes that other people have made a convenience of *him* that he decides to conceal the *silver* and to grow rich himself by secret visits to the hiding place on the Great Isabel.

Nostromo is thus really outside the circle of the main characters in the novel, and not in its centre. All these characters have a more direct and more intimate relation with the mine and with other characters than he has. The history of all of them is brought to an end in the vision of the troubled, unstable and anything but happy future, which is discussed by the lonely Mrs. Gould and her friends in the Goulds' garden. But the theme of the book has not been developed to its conclusion. On the contrary, a new element has been brought in, namely the people. Both meanings of the word are relevant here. Most of the actors in the plot are high up in the social scale; almost as many of them are foreigners. The people has been present all through the narrative; but only as a tool in actions devised by a handful of influential men, an object of Mrs. Gould's philantropy. Of course, it was the people who formed the live background which provided the plot with genuine atmosphere, but the novel is not a b o u t the people at all. Now, at the end, the theme can be defined only by bringing the people into the story.

Dr. Monygham feels that a change has occurred in the people, as the new epoch lays upon them the same burden as they had to bear earlier, when they were hoping for the arrival of the present state of affairs. The time will come, he expects, when the Gould concession will »weigh as heavily upon the people as the barbarism, cruelty, and misrule of a few years back . . . It'll weigh as heavily, and provoke resentment, bloodshed, and vengeance, because the men have grown different. Do you think that now the mine would march upon the town to save their Señor Administrador? Do you think that?« (p. 511).

In the same conversation Antonia and her uncle, while highly critical of foreign economic power (»We have worked for them« (p. 510), nevertheless hope to export that same order of things to their countrymen outside the borders of the new state. Progress has brought »order and prosperity« (p. 509), and yet, it is implied, nothing has changed in what on an earlier occasion was called »the cruel futility of lives and of deaths thrown away in the vain endeavour to attain an enduring solution of the problem« (p. 364). »Let them beware, then, lest the people, prevented from their aspirations, should rise and claim

their share of the wealth and their share of the power« declares Corbelàn, »the popular Cardinal-Archbishop of Sulaco« (p. 510).

The chapter marks the climax in the history of the effects of the San Tomé silver mine. Early in the book the coming of »quite serious, organized labour troubles« (p. 95) was anticipated, and the secret meetings at which Nostromo mentions Monygham »as the worst despiser of all the poor — of the people« (p. 518) foreshadow, to use Conrad's words from his introductory note, »the coming of more Revolutions« (p. xiv).

Yet the way in which the moral lives of the people are affected by the material interests embodied in the silver of the mine is only s t a t e d, and not r e n d e r e d by the course of the novel. Here, at this point, a split has occurred between the two aspects of the human problem in question. The private aspect concerning the characters of the novel has been exhausted, except for Nostromo's personal history, which is dealt with in the remaining chapters. In order to secure permanent access to the silver and at the same time to enjoy the love of young Giselle, Nostromo has to play a sly and exacting game with her father and sister. This episode ends with Nostromo's death, but does not rise to the level of tragedy. The author appears to have lost the balance between the public and the personal aspect of his characters. It is as if he had now concentrated on the private aspect and, after exhausting all the other personal histories, only hurried to make a final knot at the end of the last hanging thread of his enormous tapestry. Yet the public aspect continues potentially to develop and to affect new lives, and eventually also the private aspect of these lives. This, however, is not presented in the novel.

Why, then, instead of concluding his novel with the historical perspective, which has been discussed before, has Conrad continued the story of Nostromo at such length? Do the final chapters of his book reduce themselves simply to a mere romance of love and adventure concerning a picturesque individual?[18]

After having finished the book Conrad wrote to Cunninghame Graham: »But truly Nostromo is nothing at all, — a fiction, embodied vanity of the sailor kind, — a romantic mouthpiece of the »people« which (I mean »the people«) frequently experience the very feelings to which he gives

[18] »And the »conquests of treasure and love«, the words which end the book, cost Nostromo small effort, compared with a dozen of his other feats; they simply do not merit the supremely prominent place they are given... A story of silver stolen by a sailor engendered the whole complexity of the novel, including themes more weighty than itself... Having disposed of his greater themes, he was led unconsciously and unnaturally to inflate the smaller one.« (Tillyard, *o. c.*, p. 156).

utterance.«[19] In the Author's Note to the novel Conrad says of Nostromo that »with the knowledge of his moral ruin locked up in his breast, he remains essentially a man of the People . . . their undoubted Great Man — with a private history of his own.« (p. xiii) In his opinion Nostromo represents the people by his improvidence and generosity, his manly vanity, his »obscure sense of . . . greatness and . . . his faithful devotion with something despairing as well as desperate in its impulses« (p. xii) — and probably by his insistence on the fact that he was the one who acted, who d i d, while the others were standing by using him for their own purpose. Nostromo's private fate is morally, as it were, symbolic of the people. Some critics have stressed the significance of Nostromo's dying scene[20] when no one remains »with the wounded man but the pale photographer, small, frail, bloodthirsty, the hater of capitalists«, who says that »the rich must be fought with their own weapons«. (p. 562). There is more satire than sympathy in this scene, yet it shows the full implication of Nostromo's role in the novel.

The struggles and tensions in history change the form in which they appear, but there is a continuity. Coming after Monygham's pronouncement on the effects of »material interests« (p. 511) and as a conclusion, the last phase of Nostromo's life thus has a special function. Taken separately, the episode could be considered as a good parable, and characteristic of Nostromo's personality and the significant position of one person who a c t s but does not c o n t r o l, which is Nostromo's role in the main events of the novel. But too much is imposed on this episode by its place at the very end of the work, and by the more general connotations given to it by the context of the whole novel. For this reason the episode feels as a disappointing anticlimax.

Thus the subject-matter of *Nostromo* transcends itself: on the point of its climax it is realized that social changes working on the moral integrity of a limited circle of individuals cannot be isolated. Through public life human morality is affected on a much larger and completer scale than the novel has tried to present. However comprehensive and profound, the author's could not be but a limited conception. His subject-matter, being part of the very dynamics of history, could have hardly been rendered in all its implications.

---

[19] G. Jean-Aubry, *o. c.*, vol. I, p. 338.

[20] F. R. Leavis, *o. c.*, p. 194; Arnold Kettle: *An Introduction to the English Novel*, Vol. II, London, 1953, p. 81.