

Theme of the novel

Where Angels Fear to Tread is the first novel of E.M. Forster. Although he wrote this novel at very early age but the novel achieved its maturity and immense popularity. It is a sophisticated comedy about a group of well-bred English people. Lilia, the heroine of the novel, marries to a middle class suburban family, the Heritons.

When the story opens, we find Lilia, married to Charles Heriton, as a widow. She has a young daughter of ten, named Irma. Her mother-in-law is unsympathetic and unimaginative. Her sister-in-law, named Harriet is a shabby virgin. Her brother-in-law is Philip Heriton who is a clever and intellectual snob. But he is living under his mother's thumb. Lilia goes to Italy and engages herself with a dentist's son, Gino Carella. Forster gives a true picture of clash between two cultures of Italy and England.

The novelist presents a conflict between and reconciliation between culture and nature. The novelist wrote it about people matter, friendship matters, kindness and sympathy matters. There is conflict between intellect and flesh, and the mind and the body. We cannot imagine body without intellect and flesh without mind. Neither is self-sufficient. When mind and body mixed up it becomes complete.

The novel is about learning and growth. It is a story of questioning

disillusionment and conversion, It is a great criticism about middle class family, It is a novel of sexuality. Henry James presents a conflict between innocence and experience and believes that without experience innocence remains unguarded. The intellect and the body show a tension in his novels and the spirit seldom comes in.

In the present novel there is a pattern of triangle such as - the intellect, the body, and the soul. The novelist argues that these three are essential for a happy life. The theme of this novel is the effect of a foreign country and a strange culture upon insular ideas and provincial personalities, In the 18th century it had been a device of moralist to contrast their own culture with the superior habits of foreign lands. The middle classes learned that only in England or America were things ordered to all. Apart from the above, the theme of salvation is central to the meaning of this novel. besides the theme of transfiguration. Both are an expression of wide spread attempt in a secular age to invest life with meaning and significance by using religious terminology to describe heightened states of being. Salvation forms the moral center of the novel.