THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHRONICLE NOVEL (3)

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1. Introductory  We have examined a great work of grand scale and complicated structure — WAR AND PEACE — in the last chapter. And here according to the reason mentioned in the conclusion of the last chapter, we begin to consider SAMUEL BUTLER’S THE WAY OF ALL FLESH.

In this book the author’s views about religious truth, human morality and the nature and effect of biological evolution in human beings are expressed. In a sense, the book is a vessel in which the author expresses his idea. But it is also a very important autobiographical document. What I want to say, however, is that THE WAY OF ALL FLESH is a great novel; and anyhow from the structural point of view. The writing of this book began in 1872 and continued intermittently till 1884. And there was no time for this book to be rewritten before he died. So this book was published posthumously. It is said that this book came into the market in 1903. The influence of this book, which is generally said to be traced through G. B. Shaw; or the frame of mind in which Butler considered the disruption of family shackles and the resistance against accepted religion; or Butler’s view of the contemporary literary world; all these might be very interesting for us; but that is not my intention now. It is remarkable, however, that the relation between father and son, doubt about religion and the like, are mainly treated in this book. Nevertheless, no child, no father, for example, is a true proposition. A mere reaction is no proposition here. There is a vaster perspective. And the author of this book, instead of imagining, upon analogies, things that were not, looked steadily upon things as they are and called them by their true names. So we have here a novel which does not look like an ordinary one. It approximates to realism in a true sense, I think. When we think in what position of history Butler is situated — he, in the main, was born, lived, and died in the nineteenth century — we notice obscurely what moves history. Once we open the chapters of history of English literature, we know that English novel was growing in prosperity then. And we are also conscious that Butler does not appear to belong to the same category as those popular authors in that age at first
sight, without referring to particular differences. I think I am able to prove this by the following sentences in the last chapter of *THE WAY OF ALL FLESH*, in which his attitude towards his contemporary men of letters is shown.

He would dislike the literary and scientific swells if he were to come to know them and they him; there is no natural solidarity between him and them, and if he were brought into contact with them his last state would be worse than his first. His instinct tells him this, so he keeps clear of them and attacks them whenever he thinks they deserve it—

in the hope, perhaps, that a younger generation will listen to him more willingly than the present.¹)

I repeat that Butler was a germ of historical development.²) Only those who gaze at reality, being conscious of historical perspective, are able to see reality, indeed. And Butler’s realism seems to be established upon the very perspective of history. So it does not end in mere contemplation of daily life, but rather leads him to believe that a younger generation will listen to him more willingly than the present. What we want to get and at the same time forms the only feature in *THE WAY OF ALL FLESH*, depends upon this attitude of his, I think.

As we can easily presume from the reason that this book possesses an autobiographical element of Butler, we are informed, by F. Jones’ biography of Butler,³) that in this novel much that had been taken to be the work of creative imagination was, in truth, an accurate transcription of facts. Respecting this point, I will quote two or three examples from Jones’ *A MEMOIR*.

the account of Ernest’s shares going up and down with Pryer is, however, taken from what Butler experienced with Henry Hoare.⁴)

Christina’s death-bed is drawn partly from Mrs. Butler’s death-bed at Mentone in 1873.⁵)

Ernest’s life in Ashpit Place is drawn from Butler’s life in Heddon Street after he had come down from Cambridge and was intending to take orders.⁶)

Alethea is a portraiture of Miss Savage in accordance with whose criticisms and suggestions *THE WAY OF ALL FLESH* was often altered and re-written. Regarding the relation between Ernest or Overton and Alethea in actual world, Jones says,

³) H. V. Routh, *TOWARDS THE TWENTIETH CENTURY*, p. 354: “...a new stage in the history of the modern individual seeking his proper place in the scheme of things. Butler seems to have realized his opportunity;”
⁴) VOL. II, p. 11.
⁵) VOL. II, p. 4.
⁶) VOL. II, p. 11.
Butler's difficulty arose partly from his having made Alethea so beautiful. If Miss Savage had been beautiful he might have wanted to marry her, ...

Such views that, because portions of this novel had an exact counterpart in the realm of facts, they had lost value, and that a realism so slavish destroyed all artistic significance, is greatly erroneous, I think. It is the approach from this side that the true greatness and accidental defects of this novel are made clear, for a great work of art has always certain qualities which betray it.

2. Synopsis

To survey the structure of the novel, now it is necessary to recall the main outlines of the narrative which is devised to be written down in 1867 (with a postscript written in 1882) by a Mr. Overton, a contemporary of Ernest's father.

The novel contains the history of four generations of the Pontifex family. At the opening of the book we are introduced to a clever village carpenter, who, according to the Rev. Overton, the father of the narrator of the story, had in him the making of an artist and a musician. Old Pontifex was not only an able man, but he was one of the very ablest man that the world ever saw. He might have been, if he had a chance, a Giotto or a Cromwell.

His son George, at the age of fifteen, is apprenticed to a publisher in Paternoster Row, London. The boy was ambitious and diligent, and succeeded his uncle after the latter's death and became a possessor of a large fortune. His success, probably too great for his spiritual ballance, made him proud of his own importance and we find him developing the less amiable characteristics of his mother, "a Gothic woman,"

when he grew older, and he appears to us as the typical, narrow-minded, selfsatisfied business-man, whose superior brain-power got twisted under the influence of a too easily acquired fortune. He felt admiration for natural scenery and works of art in proportion to their reputation.

Money came pouring in upon him, and the faster it came the fonder he became of it, though, as he frequently said, he valued it not for its own sake, but only as a means of providing for his dear children. Yet when a man is very fond of his money it is not easy for him at all times to be very fond of his children also. Moreover, in the fashion of the day, George bullied all his five children. Alethea, the youngest daughter, was exceedingly pretty and of a lively, affectionate disposition, which was in sharp contrast with those of her brothers and sisters. There was a trace of her grandfather, not only in her face, but in her love of fun. Theobald, as a child, had been violently passionate; now, however, he was reserved and shy, and indolent in mind and body. As George's business had brought him much in contact with clergymen, he thought it right that one of his sons should be devoted
to the church; this might, moreover, be useful to his firm, as he specialized in publishing religious books. Thus Theobald acquiescently followed the career of parson laid down for him. He went to Cambridge. His doubts about his vocation were effectively nipped by his father. He became Fellow of his college, was ordained, and, after some hesitation, having secured a college living, married the romantically religious daughter of another clergyman. This love affair is interposed episodically.

It was five years later since their engagement that they became man and wife. Their long engaged life passed in a religious romanticism, for they once swore each other. Theobald bullied his wife into obedience on their honeymoon trip when the first difference between them arose about ordering dinner at the first inn they were going to put up at. He had conquered in the first battle, and this gives great prestige. And she remained submissive from that time onward.

Theobald and Christina Pontifex settled down comfortably to the pastoral life in the parish of Battersby, a happy couple with not a single doubt in their heads as to the creed they served, the efficacy of their ministrations, their own goodness or the good fortune of all those who were so blessed as to be of their household. Theobald's clerical work consisted in preaching sermons that did not bear on real life, and visiting old woman who suffered on their sickbeds. He tried to convince them of the existence of forgiveness of sins but failed in administering the smallest drop of comfort to a thirsting soul. He saved himself out of the difficulty by pretending to establish himself and his family. He had no vice, and was the selfsatisfied pharisee who stood aloof from the world, to which he brought neither good nor bad. His wife lost herself every now and then in sweet dreams in which she beheld herself and her children seated in places of honour at church and in Heaven. The worthy couple expected their children to think and act like saints, from the very beginning of conscious life.

Ernest, their eldest child, was born in 1835: two other children followed him. He suffered parental tyranny suppression, overwork and incessant punishment from his earliest years, but not, like his father before him, with a dull acquiescence. So much was he oppressed that he consequently suffered from self-depreciation and introspection almost to an agonizing degree. But a kind of inarticulate revolt, even in childhood, stirred inside him and led him to bewildered questioning and to practical judgements of his parents which convinced him, not them, of sin. This sad conviction of inferiority, which was due to the persistent working of his instincts against his persuasions, pursued him at a school, where he was an unsatisfactory boy. For the moment, however, while he was still under Dr. Skinner at Roughborough, the interest taken in him by his enlightened Aunt Alethea opened him out, developed his mind and body, and purged him of some crudities. He was at first possessed by a melancholy thought at this school. But with the other masters Ernest was ere long in absolute
disgrace: he drank and smoked but he was not actually a young black-guard. Alethea was the only sister of his father's who was not a hypocrite. She settled in the little town where the school was, in order to exercise her influence on him, and to win his confidence. He was a poor sportsman, and in order to provide healthy exercise for him she led him on to learn the trade of a joiner in his spare time, and as the boy was fond of music, he built an organ, as his great-grand father had done before. When she made her will shortly before her untimely death, she appointed Edward Overton her trustee. Ernest was her heir but Mr. Overton was to administrate her fortune till the former has reached his 28th year.

Regarding the inscription of Alethea's tomb-stone, Ernest chose a bar of music from Handel, which astonished Mr. Overton.

There was a remarkable episode during his Roughborough age. While Ernest returned and was staying at home one midsummer, Ellen, a house-maid, was discharged on account of her doubtful conception. With this incident he so much sympathized that he gave her his pocket-money, his watch, and his knife. Shortly afterwards this was discovered to his parents and he was suspected, but through the self-sacrificing defence of John, a servant, the official purity of Ernest was established. Thanks to John, beyond the fact that Theobald kept him more closely to his holiday task, and the continued coldness of his parents, no ostensible punishment was given him. Ernest, however, began to know that he had a cordial and active dislike for both his parents. He considered his conduct at this crisis to have been one of the most serious laches of his life. Now time came at last when he left this ominous school. His state of mind at this period was calm, for he thought all the happenings mattered little.

At Cambridge, Ernest had a good time. As to his character there occurred some alterations. A straightforwardness of character that was stamped upon his face, a love of humour, and a temper which was more easily appeased than ruffled made up for some awkwardness and want of savoir faire. In his last year he came under the magnetic influence of an Evangelic preacher, so much so, that he promised to give up all for Christ. After his ordination he worked in London as a curate and made the acquaintance of a dishonest colleague, who reasoned him into embracing the principles of the High Church doctrine, and coaxed him into providing the money for the foundation of a "College for Spiritual Pathology." In order to obtain a large sum of money, this fellow curate, Mr. Pryer, speculated with the money.

Ernest, however, felt that by collecting money for the education of priests he did not save souls. In his zeal he settled in one of the poorer quarters of the town, and had the same experiences, only in a shorter time. He entered upon his pastoral duties, in spite of Pryer's objections, by visiting people in their homes. He started with his neighbours who lived in the same house. But he failed in his attempt to
convert the poor. He began to have an uneasy feeling as though ere long, unless he kept a sharp look-out, he should drift into being a sham. By and by a subtle, indefinable *malaise* began to take possession of him.

Ernest’s pastoral duties came to a sudden and inglorious end through his lack of common sense. He was unable to distinguish between a respectable girl and one of a different kind. He was condemned to six months hard labour. This event formed the great turning point in his life. Perhaps the shock of so great a change in his surroundings had accelerated changes in his opinions — his belief in the stories concerning the Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ, and hence his faith in all the other Christian miracles, had dropped off him once and for ever.

He realized the rational way of thinking as the test of right and wrong. So Ernest concluded that a man had better follow his instinct than attempt to decide them by any process of reasoning. Instinct is a mode of faith in the evidence of things not actually seen. And so Ernest returned almost to the point from which he had started originally, namely that the just shall live by faith. He had lost his faith in Christianity, but his faith in something grew stronger. All the money that he saved was lost through his friend’s traitorous action. He rejoiced now, however, over his loss of money as well as over his imprisonment. Ernest resolved at once, as he had fallen so far, to fall, still lower promptly, gracefully and with the idea of rising again, rather clinging to the skirts of a respectability. He decided he would be a tailor. By this time he almost got free from his father’s influence and broke completely with him. Time came at last when Ernest was let out of prison.

After his release from prison, he met Ellen in the street while he was looking out for work as a tailor. He fell in love with her, and at her advice, he opened a second hand clothes-shop. Too late he found out that he had thrown himself away on a woman addicted to liquor, who after a few months fell into her old habits, and deceived him shamefully. After the birth of his second child, he found out that she was already married to another man, and he was free. Mr. Overton now came to the rescue, and offered him a situation of 300 pounds a year, as administrator of Overton’s, but really his own capital. Ernest’s children were placed with a respectable married couple. Thanks to his easier circumstances he is now able to travel and starts for Italy. He began to realize his literary instincts more and more, and when, at the age of 28, he found himself the possessor of 70,000, he began to take up writing as a profession. At this time Ernest was reported that his mother was ill and returned to his native country to inquire after her. In this meeting how cruel, how infamously unfeeling Ernest thought he had been. He asked mother’s forgiveness. Except that Joey and Charlotte were more fully developed, the house and its inmates, organic and inorganic, were little changed since Ernest had last seen them. At that time there occurred the toppling over of the whole system of church and the hope that
the absurdities and unrealities of the Church would end in her downfall was welcomed. Theobald himself inclined to accept this. And in his last years he and Ernest continued on excellent terms. When his father died Ernest was overwhelmed with expressions of condolence and respect for his father's memory. He now settled down in London, and began to write steadily. But he stood aloof from society in order to live free from conventions. He studied the customs and habits of the most varied nations in journey that lasted for years, and which led him as far as Japan. He wrote without prejudice, always kindly and broadmindedly, first about the Anglican Church, afterwards about the marriage-laws.

It is now the autumn of 1882 when Mr. Overton concludes this story. In what literary position is he at this time?

With the public generally he is not a favourite. He is admitted to have talent, but it is considered generally to be of a queer unpractical kind, and no matter how serious he is, he is always accused of being in jest. His first book was a success for reasons which I have already explained, but none of his others have been more than creditable failures. He is one of those unfortunate men, each one of whose books is sneered at by literary critics as soon as it comes out, but becomes "excellent reading" as soon as it has been followed by later work which may in its turn be condemned.*

To all this Ernest replies with one word only: "Wait," for his instinct tells him that a younger generation will listen to him more willingly than the present. Such is Ernest's latest development. Now we close the story, but Ernest will still continue to lead his life, encountering another difficulty but conquering it also.

3. The Period Novel

By all that appears, in this novel four generations of the Pontifexes are dealt with. But this attempt, I presume, is an apparent manifestation of scientific ideas which prevailed over the thinking world of that age, as it is said by R. A. Streatfeild in NOTE TO THE FIRST EDITION of the novel. The note reads as follows.

SAMUEL BUTLER BEGAN TO WRITE THE WAY OF ALL FLESH about the year 1872, and was engaged upon it intermittently until 1884. It is therefore, to a great extent, contemporaneous with Life and Habit, and may be taken as a practical illustration of the theory of heredity embodied in that book.1)

According to Butler the appearance of the presumable hero, Ernest Pontifex, is not accidental at all, and we must trace the family history back at least to the generation of his great-grand father to understand his existence. His being has been prescribed by three generations. He has come out to this world, having these burdens of the past from the biological point of view.

The relation or conflict between father and son—in the case of the first

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1) THE WAY OF ALL FLESH, p. xxxiii.
Pontifex in the book, Mr. Pontifex, and his son,—is that "old Mr. Pontifex, along with his pride and affection, rather felt also a certain fear of his son..." as the former was a good-natured man and the success of the latter was so remarkable; what was the relation between this George and his children, especially Theobald? George was severe with his children, for "at that time (at the beginning of the nineteenth century) it was universally admitted that to spare the rod was to spoil the child." Theobald once had feelings of resistance against his father secretly. But "if he had ever entertained thoughts of resistance, he had none now, and the power to oppose was so completely lost for want of exercise that hardly did the wish remain; there was nothing left save dull acquiescence as of an ass crouched between two burdens." Towards the generation of Ernest, that is to say, from the middle of the Victorian era downward, the relation between father and son was complicated. And Ernest entertained strong hatred against the bias of Theobald and soon, with his downfall, he decided to give up father and mother for Christ's sake. But it was not simply because he disliked his father and mother that he wanted to have no more to do with them; absolute independence he believed to be his only chance of very life itself—such relations or conflicts between father and son, the author seems to intend to describe. Both Theobald and Ernest became clergymen unwillingly, being forced by their fathers respectively. And in case of the former, Christianity was accepted without any careful criticism by Theobald, while in the other case various doubts concerning religion came out one after another, and at last Ernest had lost his faith in Christianity. He came to keep his faith in something—the unknown God. Here through this fact, in passing, Butler's polemical criticism about dogmatic religion is revealed.

If we are satisfied with the mere superficial consideration of this novel, it is of all importance for us to pursue our study about the above mentioned facts. This, however, would result in making us conscious of the delimitation of a passing phase of the world as a certain period. And this sort of form of novel E. Muir calls 'Period Novel', making a clear distinction between this and what he calls 'the Chronicle.' He continues to say,

It (the Period Novel) does not try to show us human truth valid for all time; it is content with a society at a particular stage of transition, and characters which are only true in so far as they are representative of that society. It makes everything particular relative and historical. It does not see life with the universalizing imagination, but with the busy, informing eye, aiding by the theorising intelligence.}

1) *THE WAY OF ALL FLESH*, p. 9.

2) Ibid, p. 22.


The Structure of the Chronicle Novel

...It lays importance on elements which to a later age will have but an historical interest, the atmosphere of a special period or a particular environment.\(^1\)

And what is worse:
the period novel is really a spurious kind of history which occasionally breaks into fiction.\(^2\)
For the imaginative writer can draw a picture of society; but only an historian can reconstruct a particular society or show us a society in evolution. It is never both at the same time.\(^3\)
As to what he calls "the Chronicle" it is sufficient to confess here that I have written the chapter WAR AND PEACE, understanding his notion, to a considerable extent.

4. The Chronicle Novel

Now, what can take an ill-name of the Period Novel off THE WAY OF ALL FLESH? What is that which affords an effect to see life with the universalizing imagination to this book? To study this will make us understand the purport of this book and at the same time lead us to the conclusion of this paper.

In this book, no child, no father is a true proposition from the structural point of view. Of course, a practical illustration of the theory of heredity is far from it. It is needless to say that these are temporary and subservient elements to the main structure. And also the religious problem appears in this book might have added one better book on the subject to the ecclesiastical world: we are, therefore, easily conscious of its role to be identical with that of the theory of history in case of Tolstoy. When we talk about this book as a work of art, this problem is made its light seem flickering indeed. In other words, a man's cruel revenge upon honestly misguided parents, an unsympathetic and realistic study of the knobby crust Victorian family life cracking under stresses, or a polemic against dogmatic religion is no true proposition of this book.

4-1. The Keynote

"In form the story is," says F. Jones, "like the Book of Job and the Odyssey, that of the good man passing through trials and coming out triumphant in the end."\(^4\) None of us have any objection to this, I think. Butler chose this theme—the theme of Job and of Odysseus—for an unpoetical novel of modern life. Now let us cast a glance at the story of Job.

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. Job had many children and a great fortune. And this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. But one day when Satan and other sons of God came out before the Lord, Satan slandered to the Lord that Job's piety was selfish. So began the trial of God to Job, in consequence he lost his whole substance and his kith and kin. Besides he was

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\(^1\) Ibid, p. 123.
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) Ibid.
job opened
his mouth, and cursed his day. He complained that he had better be born in this
world. His three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, supposed, looking at him in
such an unnatural disaster, that this was the result of his sin. Then they accused
him with their experience, theology and common sense, thinking that if he confessed
and repented of the disaster would be wiped out. So they had arguments three times
but Job refused his friends' offer definitely, announcing that he had no remembrance of
having committed a sin. Elihu also tried to persuade him in vain. Now that he could not
rescue him, in spite of himself or others, then the Lord answered Job out of the whirl-
wind. The Lord revealed him what He created, so seeing them Job got a peace of mind at
last. And in the end the story tells us that happiness came over him again. The Lord
turned the captivity of Job, also the Lord gave him twice as much as he had before.
After this Job lived for a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his son's sons,
even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days.

It is sufficient for us to see that Job did not lament his unexpected disaster
uselessly; but that he bravely exerted strenuous effort towards self-regeneration.
There is nothing nobler in man than his capacity for self-regeneration, and no theme
is more absorbing in prose or poetry than that of a just but oppressed man coming to
his own. If we here recollect  
EURAL AND PEACE once more, through Peter and
Andrew in whom the self-portraiture of Tolstoy is said to be shown, we notice that
the struggle for mastery of one's soul is represented. The trial in this case consists
purely in consciousness. Anyhow  
EURAL AND PEACE may be, in this respect, put
into the same category as that of Job.

In the last chapter I did not refer to this point deliberately. But if any interest
of this matter is neglected in  
EURAL AND PEACE, that book will lose half its value. 
Tolstoy, in fact, interweaves this matter with other elements so dexterously with the
deepest precaution, through his genius and especially broad-mindedness that the
development of the soul which is, to some extent, the expression of the author can not
appear its full figure upon the surface. It is not a theme but a keynote, assuredly, of
that story. Now, this development of the soul, in the main, belongs to the author.
But at the same time it is also shared with the reader. In this sense, it has no
personal significance. It is super-personal, universal. It is on account of this that we
take interest in and are absorbed in it. So we may easily notice that there is a great
difference in essence between such a form of story and an autobiography in which a
mere personal career is described, though both of these are alike in shape. If we
recollect C. Brontë's  
JANE EYRE, for instance, we can easily understand it. Eyre
lost her parents in the earlier stage of her childhood and became a dependent of her
aunt, Mrs. Reed. Having experienced hard trials, she married a curate, Mr.
Rochester, and led a happy life. It is not always according to the authoress' less
ability that the book appeals us little. For the story of Jane Eyre belongs to the special category of an autobiography of the authoress; it is lacking in the significance of the whole humanity. Experiences appeared in the book are special ones, but not always those of the reader. In short, it is a story of a woman in the beginning of the nineteenth century and is lacking in universality with which everyone sympathizes.

Then is THE WAY OF ALL FLESH that is before us, an embroidered autobiography or essentially a work of artistic imagination? As we have already pointed out, it is very clear that the theme of this book is outwardly the life-story of Ernest Pontifex towards his middle age. Now I will look into the very book.

4-2. Five Divisions For convenience’s sake I can divide the whole eighty-six chapters as follows.

(1) This part extends from the beginning to Ernest’s ordination. And between them there are Theobald’s marriage with Christina Allaby, Battersby Rectory and Ernest’s boyhood up to the death of his aunt Alethea, and Ernest’s Cambridge life to his ordination. (Chapters I—L)

It seems to be rather extensive in comparison with other divisions, but it has its own reason. For the first of these divisions is seen to have been simply a preparation for those in which the unhappy and exalted young man is deprived almost simultaneously of his beliefs, his money, his self-respect and his liberty.

(2) This part is the movement of Ernest’s disaster and then of his regeneration and liberation. (Chapters LI—LXX)

This is the first real climax of the story, the very point where personal reminiscence gave out. Here the creative imagination of the author, I think, predominates over the story. So high a note has it that I will leave this part to reconsider more carefully later on.

(3) This part takes Ernest through the period of his marriage till Ellen is disposed of. (Chapters LXXI—LXXVII)

(4) This part contains the glorious return of Ernest to Battersby, and also his life as a writer. (Chapters LXXVIII—LXXXV)

(5) This part gives a close to the whole story and the present state of the literary life of Ernest is represented. (Chapter LXXXVI)

Besides these, it has an important meaning to the structure of this book, I think. So I will dwell upon this part together with the second part in particular.

4-3. Soul’s Struggle for Mastery Now we can restrict the design of this book to the representation of the struggle for mastery of Ernest’s soul and his fate of a man against whom, biologically, socially, and materially, the dice was cast heavily. From this point of view, I will dwell upon Ernest of division (2) for a while.

Here we see that step by step Ernest, stripped of everything, recovers all that a man in the actual life needs—his health and strength, his reason, his mental vision,
his righteous indignation, his independence of will, the power of self-denial, faith in himself and belief in a fundamental principle of morality. All happened quietly, decisively and inevitably. The hero here represented does not win our admiration with his splendid feat, but he exerts his strenuous effort to gain his soul, and the very agony he experiences during that time might, in its representation, compel and invigorate the minds of us. Indeed it was for no idle great action that Ernest, at last, was trying to give up father and mother.

He had nothing more to lose; money, friends, character, all were gone for a very long time if not for ever; but there was something else also that had taken its flight along with these. I mean the fear of that which man could do unto him. *Cautibus vacuis*. Who could hurt him more than he had been hurt already? Let him but be able to earn his bread, and he knew of nothing which he dared not venture if it would make the world a happier place for those who were young and lovable. Herein he found so much comfort that he almost wished he had lost his reputation even more completely——for he saw that it was like a man's life which may be found of them that lose it and lost of them that would find it. He should not have had the courage to give up all for Christ's sake, but now Christ had mercifully taken all, and lo! it seemed as though all were found.*

The supreme agony came over him when he tore himself apart from those parents whose anxiety, timidity, stupidity, impatience and imperfect love had ruined him. For parents' hearts beat with affection for him no matter how cruelly he has pained them.

By this time he was at the prison gate, and in another moment was at liberty. After he had got a few steps out he turned his face to the prison wall, leant against it for support, and wept as though his heart would break.1)

Giving up father and mother for Christ's sake was not such an easy matter after all.2)

Ernest is truly a heroic figure who, after these bitter moments, "pulled himself together and turned into the labyrinth of small streets which opened out in front of him."3) This is the greatest climax of the story. Ernest Pontifex turns to life anew, strong in the complete mastery of himself. He has still to learn and master the world about him, and in that painful process we subsequently follow him. Concerning this point, F. Jones thinks alike:

The climax is the spiritual and physical emancipation of a human being from the unnatural restraints imposed upon him by the stupidity, folly, and ignorance of those who had controlled his early life.4)

What is worth noticing, by the way, is F. Jones' following remark:
But if he had had no Aunt Alethen, or if Edward Overton had lost the money, that would only

*THE WAY OF ALL FLESH*, p. 299.
1) *THE WAY OF ALL FLESH*, p. 303.
2) Ibid.
3) Ibid.
4) HENRY FESTING JONES: *SMAUEL BUTLER A MEMOIR*, VOL. II, p. 3.
have given rise to different incidents and, after some other trials, some other kind of happiness would have been reached in the end.*

In fact, we have been conscious that this privilege deprives Ernest of urgent necessity.

4-4 **Peace of Mind**  In the last chapter of the book, Ernest's living conditions of the present stage or his attitude, interest, and hope as a man of letter are shown. we feel a sort of peace of mind here. But this feeling does not come from the vast plain but is one which is enjoyed at a mountain pass. It is in this chapter that we restore ourselves to the present time. All the rest were spread before us through the memory of Mr. Overton, the narrator. In this chapter both Mr. Overton and we can perceive Ernest's words and deeds as they are actually being performed. This change is found apparently in the tense of verbs at once. Mr. Overton is now eighty years old and Ernest, forty-seven. So unless we believe in a miracle, it does not appear that Mr. Overton can continue his story. Now the time has come when Ernest is liberated from the hold of the narrator. He will tread on his own course of life that God only knows hereafter. In this respect, we notice that this story is different from a conventional one.

We see a noble character in him when a man, realizing his own nature and his bygone circumstances, improves his future, in spite of the obstacles in his circumstances and character and what not which are unavoidable in real life except in Utopia. And such a noble character or mind is only found to be important in this sort of books. He does not lament his bygone failure and misfortune in vain. Of course, he falls into heart-rending sorrows in such a case. But he is very busy conquering his sorrows bravely and regenerating himself. Such being the case, his eyes are constantly turned to the future rather than the past. Ernest is this sort of man. He is somewhat in a peace of mind now, after a long spiritual and physical hard-ship, but still his eyes continue to cast their lights on the future. He is "in the hope, perhaps, that a younger generation will listen to him more willingly than the present." And this is not a haphazard. This is caused by the constant frame of mind of Ernest. Then what is his frame of mind? Mr. Overton suggests in his following remark.

..., but I must leave the reader to determine whether there is not a strong family likeness between the Ernest of the College of Spiritual Pathology and the Ernest who will insist on addressing the next generation rather than his own.  

Ernest had noticed that this College of Spiritual Pathology was "the great desideratum

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2) Ibid.
of the age,"' after he considered the social consideration of his age.

a College of Spiritual Pathology where young men may study the nature and treatment of the
sins of the soul as medical students study those of the bodies of their patients. Such a college, as
you will probably admit, will approach both Rome on the one hand, and science on the
other—Rome as giving the priesthood more skill, and therefore as paving the way for their
obtaining greater power, and science, by recognizing that even free-thought has a certain kind
of value in spiritual inquiries."

It aims at cultivating the scientific view of morality. Or its object is to try to give
an ideal salvation by which Theobald once failed to make a dying woman sleep in
peace, and to save souls from torture really. While he was in prison, Ernest woke up
to the following fact "that very few care two straws about truth, or have any
confidence that it is righter and better to believe what is true than what is untrue,
even though belief in the untruth may seem at first sight most expedient."" After all
Ernest is not a pursuer of truth for truth's sake, but of truth for life's sake. In this
respect he corresponds to Butler in actual life, who "established his life upon one
exclusive principle, doubt, and the solitary search for truth."" Using the words of L.
Cazamian, we may say that "the struggle for existence was his starting-point.""
Such is his constant frame of mind. This has led him to "the Ernest who will insist
on addressing the next generation rather than his own.""

4-5 Anticipation Agonies that we have experienced with Ernest, however, have
personal characters in a sense. Now, at the mountain pass at which Ernest has
arrived, we cannot but anticipate depersonalizing concernment with its consequent
agony hereafter. In this sense, the last one chapter of THE WAY OF ALL FLESH
plays an important part in its structure. It proposes a problem on the future that is
most important for us beforehand. We do not ruminate the variety of Ernest's bygone
difficulties or contradictions any longer. On the contrary, we cannot help closing this
book with excitement, taking an interest in how far these contradictions will be
removed by him and his expecting younger generation.

The end of WAR AND PEACE does not coincide with finish of the story. But
in that case the future action of Nicolenka is, for the most part, destined as if it
moves on a definite line. While an unalterable movement of life is shown there, the
movement of life is alterable here. Nicolenka is a mere successor to Peter's
generation. Theobald, though faintly, had entertained a secret revolt his father,

6) THE WAY OF ALL FLESH, p. 410.
George. Ernest, likewise, giving up his father, with courage, who ruined him, acquired absolute independence. He still becomes conscious of contradictions of this age and is trying to negative them. And in doing so, will he not approach to truth a little nearer?

5. Conclusion

Now I will conclude this thesis with the following words: unless we will yield to a vulgar view that history repeats itself, we are not in danger in saying that Butler did something to make up for a defect of Tolstoy's historical philosophy. At any rate, at the very core of the Chronicle Novel, there exists historical philosophy, on which will depend the whole structure of the Novel.